This thesis is all my own work.
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Abstract

Two perspectives guide the present study of female labour in rural Ireland between 1890 and 1914. From one view, this thesis deals with questions customarily asked by labour historians about employment, factors leading to shifts in female work, and the effects of those shifts on women. I argue that we cannot understand changes in female labour without integrating housework into our models of labour supply and demand. Women do not simply choose between work and leisure: their time is allocated between work in the home, work in the market, and leisure. Between 1890 and 1914, the position of women within the Irish labour market deteriorated. Married women came to be increasingly dependent on the husband's wage. Economic opportunities for unmarried and widowed women collapsed. Rural women entered the fields only when demand for female labour peaked. Unpaid domestic production became more important. Rather than applying some vague notion of 'patriarchy' or 'respectability', this thesis discusses the movement of female labour from paid employment and familial farm labour to housework in economic terms. The crucial element is time. Changes in domestic production and productivity increased the amount of time required to perform housework. With the increasing time required to fulfil this primary function, female labour shifted into the unpaid household sector.

From another view, this thesis examines current concerns about 'development' and the impact of public and private investment in agricultural and social reform. The notion that economic growth equals improved human well-being is a central tenet in development economics. This thesis is modelled around the notion that any analysis of well-being needs to take three areas into account: Gross National Product and private consumption, non-economic factors, and distributional factors. These factors are examined in relation to three categories of workers: Paid Workers, Subsistence Entrepreneurs and Houseworkers. The pattern of growth and development in Ireland during this period did improve female well-being: women were better fed, housed, and educated in 1911 than in 1891. However, women
gained a smaller share of the gratifications of affluence. Economic growth exacerbated inequality within the household, making women worse off in relation to men than they had been in 1891. The co-incidence of sectoral shifts in the employment market, investment in the rural economy, and the growth of a labour and capital intensive household sector was crucial.
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Introduction

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Agricultural Development and Labour
Chapter 1

Introduction

It deserves to be remarked that it is in the progressive state...that the condition of the labouring poor...seems to be the happiest and the most comfortable. It is hard in the stationary, and miserable in the declining state. The progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state of all the different orders of the society. The stationary is dull; the declining melancholy.¹

Economic progress is the sine qua non of human progress.²

The notion that economic growth equals improved human well-being is a central tenet in economic thought. Economic growth increases happiness either by satisfying human wants³ or by widening the range of human choice.⁴ Although a distinction is made between economic welfare and total well-being, economists generally agree that economic welfare is 'an approximate index of total welfare'.⁵ Such a position can be maintained only by taking the market place and 'economic man' as sufficient metaphors for human experience.

In the study of development, the focal point of analysis is the process of economic growth. The market is the model of human relations. The price of commodities is an indicator of their relative worth. The 'factors of production' - including human labour - receive their economic value in the process of exchange.⁶ People choose on the basis of

'rational' analysis of economic conditions and prospects. In a growing economy, 'rational' behaviour is followed by increased well-being. Women are rarely mentioned in this literature, but it is usually assumed that women share in the benefits of economic growth: 'for women to debate the desirability of economic growth is to debate whether women should have the chance to cease to be beasts of burden, and to join the human race'.

Economists are aware that growth and development may not always promote individual well-being. A model of well-being needs to consider three aspects: Gross National Product (G.N.P.) and private consumption, non-economic factors and distributional factors.

1. G.N.P. and Private Consumption. G.N.P. is the most common measure of economic growth. As the sum of final products, G.N.P. represents the stock of resources and their potential to satisfy human needs. No G.N.P. series exists for Ireland before World War One. Since this thesis is concerned with the rural community, agricultural output is taken as a proxy for rural G.N.P. (Chapter Two). The economic value of domestic labour is examined separately (Chapter Nine and Appendix Four). Other economic variables affecting well-being include private consumption or material consumption. Improvements in housing, diet and the consumption of household goods are discussed throughout the thesis but are particularly important in the chapters dealing with housewifery. While economic variables do tell us a great deal about well-being, they are limited. Increased production and consumption do not always raise individual well-being. The development of home industries increased household income flow but at the cost of long hours of monotonous labour.


8. The terms 'growth' and 'development' are not identical. In this thesis, 'growth' refers to changes in the income level of rural households. 'Development' is used much more broadly to refer to a series of changes which might result from increased income. I reject both liberal and Marxist development models with their notion of 'stages'. I see no reason to assume that changes resulting from rising incomes need to follow any pattern across time or between cultures.
(Chapter Six). Rising productivity led to redundancies (Chapters Three and Seven).

Increased consumption does not necessarily increase happiness. Once the basic human needs for food, shelter and clothing have been fulfilled, wants constantly change in line with a constant shifting of expectations. The production and consumption of more goods does not necessarily lead to a better life.

2. Non-Economic Factors such as status, approbation, work satisfaction, religion, health, leisure activities, domestic harmony, sexuality, and education affect well-being. What is the role of payment in labour (Chapter Four)? Were women 'better off' working full-time as unpaid houseworkers? How did the move towards housewifery affect female status (Chapters Nine and Ten)? Housework is valued differently to agricultural familial labour or paid employment. Did education for the home increase the work satisfaction of housewives (Chapter Ten)? Economists shy away from these value judgements, partly because many of these variables cannot be quantified. As historians we have more licence to explore beyond the boundaries of quantification.

3. Distributional Factors. We need to know how the satisfaction of needs is distributed over the population. A change which improves the well-being of one section of the community may have the opposite effect on another section. Thus, changes in the dairy industry may lead to improved well-being in terms of increased income or standards of


11. Thus, the comment by David Fitzpatrick that the increased importance of the dowry in post-famine Ireland was a reflection of the 'diminished economic importance of women' is legitimate only if 'economic' labour refers to a very limited range of activities: David Fitzpatrick, 'The Modernisation of the Irish Female' in Patrick O’Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan (eds.), Rural Ireland 1600-1900: Modernisation and Change (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), p.169. We examine some reasons why housework is valued differently to other forms of labour in Chapter Ten.
living for the household as a unit but within the household it may lead to a decline in female status (Chapter Five). Although the value of poultry-rearing increased, female status in the poultry industry declined as managerial control came to be vested in men (Chapter Eight).

There are many ways of estimating well-being. The questions asked in this thesis demand a measurement of the 'flow' rather than the 'stock' of well-being. In principle at least, an 'index' of well-being could have been constructed. The construction of such an index would mean that all the variables would have to be quantified. This approach would exclude too much. Nothing would be added to our knowledge if by some mathematical manipulation we transformed the "profile" into a unitary index - and if it means that we have to only deal with quantifiable inputs, a great deal would be lost. The three 'factors' of well-being interact with each other. For instance, non-economic well-being is liable to be modified by the manner in which income is earned and spent. Similarly, economic variables exert a great pressure on non-economic well-being. People do not live in isolation: the well-being of one individual may directly affect that of another. Equally, the cost of improved well-being for the largest section of the community may be the reduction of well-being for another section. Bearing these complications in mind, however, the model has the advantage of focussing our main concerns. Overall well-being depends not only on economic growth, but also on non-economic factors and - most important - on the distribution of the benefits.

Central to any analysis of female well-being is the integration of housework into

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12. As historians we do not have detailed knowledge of labour demands on family farms (Chapters Seven and Eight). Much of what we must guess about trends of labour on the family farm must be taken from evidence regarding paid employment. For instance, evidence presented about the decline of female labour as dairymaids on other people's farms (Chapter Five) also applies to women's involvement in dairying on their family's farm. Thus, the division of the thesis into three 'parts' (Paid Workers, Subsistence Entrepreneurs and Houseworkers) are not strict divisions. A similar problem is experienced in the more speculative section estimating the number of houseworkers.

traditional notions of labour. The common-sense proposition that housework is 'work' is often ignored in historical as well as in sociological analyses of women and lead to absurd statements that Irish women were denied any 'participation in social production' or that 'daughters were largely redundant'. Historical interest in housework has largely been stimulated by debates in economic theory. In 1930, L. Robbins heralded the modern theory of labour supply with the notion that labour decisions were made by individuals rationally allocating their time between market work and leisure. Jacob Mincer extended the approach to encompass female decision-making. For women the choice was not simply between work and leisure but between work in the home, work in the market, and leisure. Family income determined the total number of hours worked but the individual's relative productivity in the home and in the market determined the location of their work. Gary S. Becker integrated housework into neoclassical economics by applying concepts such as comparative advantage, maximising behavior and equilibrium markets to the family. He attempted to answer the question: why do married women concentrate their labour in the unpaid markets while married men concentrate in the paid markets? According to him, the


17. A. S. Leibowitz, 'Education and Home Production', American Economic Review, 64.2 (May 1974), pp 243-50. The issue of relative productivity is examined in Appendix Four.
crucial point is the relatively efficiencies of each sex in their spheres of labour.\textsuperscript{18} He did not attempt to answer the even bigger question: why? Whatever their limits, the new economics of the family incorporated housewifery as an essential element in the analysis of labour. For the purposes of this chapter, these economic studies suggest that new emphasis should be placed on the household as a unit of production (with consumption as secondary).\textsuperscript{19} This view is not new\textsuperscript{20} but has radical implications for the historical study of labour which has not yet been examined.

The absolute lack of analysis of domestic labour in Ireland reflects a general paucity of work in Irish social history - a paucity which is rapidly being challenged. When dealing with social issues, Irish historiography of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century remains concerned with those urban areas central to the dominant political and nationalist debates. Exceptions either continue to frame their questions in terms of political movements\textsuperscript{21} or they focus on a narrow areas suitable for


\textsuperscript{19} Historical work on housework focusses on the industrialisation of urban households, a focus which makes it especially easy to fall into the trap of emphasising a movement from production to consumption which I do not consider valid: Ruth Schwartz Cowan, \textit{More Work for Mother. The Ironies of Household Technology for the Open Hearth to the Microwave} (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Caroline Davidson, \textit{A Woman's Work is Never Done. A History of Housework in the British Isles 1650-1950} (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982); Heidi Irmgard Hartmann, \textit{Capitalism and Women's Work in the Home, 1900-1930} (Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975); and Susan Strasser, \textit{Never Done. A History of American Housework} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

\textsuperscript{20} Margaret Reid, \textit{Economics of Household Production} (New York: Wiley, 1934).

articles. Two economically-orientated books on Irish agriculture in this period have been written by Raymond Crotty and Cormac O Grada. Although these books surpass anything previously written, their detailed statistical analyses either try too hard to read a political message into the past or shows signs of extreme haste in composition. Neither of these writers deal directly with labour and, although O Grada graces the cover of his book with a depiction of female potato diggers, the peculiar experience of women is ignored.

What this thesis examines, therefore, is the work experience of rural women in Ireland, between 1890 and 1914. During a time of agricultural expansion and rising living standards, female labour shifted from paid employment and familial farm labour towards unpaid domestic production. The primacy of economic factors, rather than some


25. This thesis is not a general history of Irish women, agricultural change before World War One, nor governmental or institutional politics.
vague notion of 'patriarchy' or 'respectability' is stressed. The crucial element is time. Changes in domestic production and productivity increased the time required to perform housework. The issue of choice, though not irrelevant to the discussion, is set aside since by the last decades of the nineteenth century, housework was already seen as the primary responsibility of women. With the increasing time required to fulfill this primary function, women moved into full-time work in the unpaid household sector.

26. For an example of work similar to mine which regards 'patriarchy' as central to explanations of labour change, see Mead Cain, Syeda R. Khanam and Shamsun Nahan, 'Class, Patriarchy, and Women's Work in Bangladesh', *Population and Development Review* (September 1979), pp 405-38. David Fitzpatrick speaks of the increasing respectability of housework, saying that 'the growing refinement of the female was a manifestation of diminished utility rather than raised status', in his article 'The Modernisation of the Irish Female' in Patrick O'Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Rural Ireland 1600-1900: Modernisation and Change* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), p.167. I agree that female status was not raised - but not because of diminishing utility.
Chapter 2
Agricultural Development and Labour

'But you know, pa,' said the farmer's daughter, when he spoke to her about the addresses of his neighbour's son, 'you know, pa, ma wants me to marry a man of culture.'

'So do I my dear, so do I; and there is no better culture in the country than agriculture.'

Between 1890 and 1914, the Irish rural sector experienced rapid economic growth, as measured by the value-added of agricultural products and by levels of investment in the rural economy. In the two decades before 1890, developments in transportation and the refrigeration of food had brought large-scale foreign competition into the English market. New techniques in marketing had revitalised continental agricultural production. An ageing Irish farming population was liable to prove resistant to innovation. Even allowing a wide margin for mis-statement of ages, in 1901 fifteen per cent of the 'heads of households' in the sample of eight rural District Electoral Divisions were over the age of seventy while in 1911 one-quarter were over seventy years. The depression in agriculture lasted from the 1870s until the middle of the 1890s, after which farm prices began rising. Agriculture in Ireland underwent rapid change in the two decades before World War One. Erratic but vital growth had occurred throughout the century but the cumulative impact of these changes hit Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century. Accelerating standards of living across a wide spectrum of classes in the countryside were expressions of this growth.

1. 'Items of Interest', Irish Homestead, 14 December 1895, p.666.

2. The rural sector is defined narrowly as including the farm sector and excluding forestry and fishery.

3. This sample is used throughout the thesis and is discussed in Appendix Two. It consists of seven randomly selected rural District Electoral Divisions and one other chosen Division. The sample size was 987 households in 1901 and 924 households in 1911.

This chapter deals with Ireland as a whole. Obviously, however, regional variations are central to the changes taking place. Farming experiences differed widely between areas. With the exception of Fermanagh and Donegal, Ulster contained small tenant holdings practising crop rotation. Fermanagh was a pastoral and dairying county. Like Connaught, Donegal contained rough grazing land with poor tillage farming. Tiny farms and poor soils contributed to low productivity. Between 1881 and 1890, potatoes per acre yielded (on average) 3.4 tons a year to each statute acre in Connaught, compared with 3.7 tons a year in Leinster. Holdings in Leinster were considerably larger than in other provinces and farmers specialised in pastoral farming, especially in store cattle and fattening. In a triangle drawn north from Kilkenny and Louth to King’s County, mixed tillage and dairying were practised. Eastern Munster farmers were preoccupied with pastoral dairying. The poorer western counties of Munster combined dairying with tillage farming. The importance of these regional variations become clear throughout the thesis.

Agricultural Productivity

Gross Output

The first step in examining agricultural productivity is to look at gross output (see Table 2.1 on the following page). Overall agricultural production in the two decades 1890 to 1910 increased by twenty per cent. The economic value of Irish agriculture grew rapidly between 1860 and 1870 before commencing a decline which was not halted until the 1890s. While average gross production of crops between 1890 and 1910 increased by eighteen per cent, the value of these five crops increased by one-quarter. In the longer term, a very clear decline in both the gross production of crops and the value of crops occurred. Thus, between 1860 and 1910, gross production of crops fell by thirteen per cent.

5. Unless otherwise stated, the raw statistics used in tables in this chapter were taken from the trade and agricultural reports released by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, published annually in the British Parliamentary Papers. See Appendix Three for a discussion on how agricultural value added was calculated.
## Agricultural Production Valued at Current Prices
### 1860-1910
(1,000 pounds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grains and Crops</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>1830.6</td>
<td>1105.0</td>
<td>704.7</td>
<td>347.1</td>
<td>195.3</td>
<td>240.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>5952.5</td>
<td>5596.6</td>
<td>4819.7</td>
<td>3253.2</td>
<td>2801.1</td>
<td>3169.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, Bere</td>
<td>848.4</td>
<td>1237.4</td>
<td>920.6</td>
<td>769.4</td>
<td>713.5</td>
<td>807.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>8110.5</td>
<td>7355.6</td>
<td>5335.9</td>
<td>5930.9</td>
<td>6146.6</td>
<td>7732.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>1008.7</td>
<td>1197.2</td>
<td>1140.4</td>
<td>602.6</td>
<td>405.0</td>
<td>434.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animals and Animal Products</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Sheep</td>
<td>5055.2</td>
<td>7495.8</td>
<td>6346.8</td>
<td>6259.8</td>
<td>6491.2</td>
<td>5866.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool</td>
<td>540.2</td>
<td>629.5</td>
<td>435.4</td>
<td>473.4</td>
<td>322.0</td>
<td>493.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Cattle</td>
<td>9585.1</td>
<td>13527.6</td>
<td>17017.6</td>
<td>15848.0</td>
<td>17154.7</td>
<td>18591.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>7428.2</td>
<td>7519.7</td>
<td>6605.8</td>
<td>5569.1</td>
<td>5889.7</td>
<td>6703.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>4782.4</td>
<td>5794.0</td>
<td>4391.9</td>
<td>4930.0</td>
<td>4672.3</td>
<td>5813.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>1431.9</td>
<td>1759.6</td>
<td>3088.8</td>
<td>3542.0</td>
<td>4076.6</td>
<td>5877.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Crop</strong></td>
<td>17,751</td>
<td>16,492</td>
<td>12,921</td>
<td>10,003</td>
<td>10,262</td>
<td>12,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Animal</strong></td>
<td>28,823</td>
<td>36,726</td>
<td>37,886</td>
<td>36,622</td>
<td>38,607</td>
<td>43,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Agricultural Value</strong></td>
<td>46,574</td>
<td>53,218</td>
<td>50,808</td>
<td>46,626</td>
<td>48,868</td>
<td>55,731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and total crop value fell by thirty per cent. Much of the declining crop value was caused by a fall in the price of flax which affected a geographically small part of the country.\(^6\) However, the increased value of livestock and livestock products caused agricultural productivity to rise. The value of livestock and livestock products stagnated between 1880 and 1890, after what had been a rapid drop in value between 1860 and 1880. However, in the following two decades (1890-1910), the value of livestock and livestock products increased by eighteen per cent. In the 1860s, livestock and livestock products accounted for sixty-two per cent of total agricultural value whereas by the 1910s they accounted for seventy-eight per cent of the total value. Price changes led not only to this shift from tillage to pasturalism, but also to a shift away from dairying livestock towards store livestock. The ratio of milch cows to all other cattle had been declining since the 1860s, reaching 2:1 by the 1890s and continuing to fall.

Another way to examine agricultural growth is through trade data. Gross statistics on export trade in agricultural products show significant increases.

2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Quantity (1,000) 1904</th>
<th>Quantity (1,000) 1913</th>
<th>Value (1,000 pounds) 1904</th>
<th>Value (1,000 pounds) 1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butter (cwts.)</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef (cwts.)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork (cwts.)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacon (cwts.)</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>3620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hams (cwts.)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry (cwts.)</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs (Grt.Hnd.)</td>
<td>5513</td>
<td>6398</td>
<td>2205</td>
<td>3019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total value of the exportation of these agricultural products increased from 5,472

---

thousand pounds to 8,932 (or sixty-three per cent) in nine years.7

Interpretation of these statistics must be made cautiously. An increase in the volume of outputs does not necessarily imply any increase in productivity. Output increases can be achieved by the expansion of cultivated area or by increased labour inputs. Neither explanation applies to Ireland. The amount of land in tillage between 1890 and 1910 decreased by 0.4 million statute acres and the acreage in pasture decreased by 0.5 million. Similarly, output increases were not achieved by an expansion in labour inputs. The number of people 'engaged in agriculture' declined from 936,000 to 780,000 in the twenty years to 1911. Measured correctly, productivity is the increased efficiency with which inputs are processed into outputs. It is useful to discuss the way output changes may be related to changes in each factor of production. The three factors of production are land, fixed capital and labour.

Land Productivity

Land productivity can be measured in a number of ways. Changes in total agricultural output can be related to changes in the area used for crops. Between 1890 and 1910 agricultural output of crops increased by twenty-four per cent while the percentage of the total area used for crops decreased by six per cent. In 1890, every acre of land under crops and hay produced crops to the value of two pounds (on average). By 1910, the value of each acre had increased by almost one-third. In terms of gross production, every acre of land under crops and hay produced fifteen cwts. of crops in 1890 and eighteen cwts. of crops in 1910. Long term trends in the yields of individual crops also show productivity increases.

7 Across all products, the value of exports between 1904 and 1913 increased by twenty-two per cent.
### 2.3 Produce Per Statute Acre
**Ireland, 1880-1915**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1885</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1915</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>1121b</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>1121b</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley/bere</td>
<td>1121b</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>1121b</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>1121b</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pease</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>ton</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnips</td>
<td>tos</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangel, Warzel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beetroot</td>
<td>tons</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>tons</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>141b</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>tons</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Produce per statute acre increased significantly for all crops except hay. For most cereals, yields per acre were higher in Ireland than in Great Britain. Furthermore, the differential increased in the period.

### 2.4 Average Yield Per Statute Acre in Great Britain and Ireland
**1900-1909 and 1907-1916**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Yield per Acre</th>
<th>1900-1909</th>
<th>1907-1916</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat (cwts.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, Bere (cwts.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats (cwts.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes (tons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnips, Swedes (tons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Land productivity can also be analysed by converting crop output into wheat equivalents. This procedure converts agricultural products to grain equivalents, not according to their calorie or other supposedly physical equivalent but according to their relative prices in the wheat market. Thus, if one kilogram of potatoes exchanges in the market for 700 grams of wheat, the WE (Wheat-Equivalent) Factor for potatoes is 0.7. To convert output from physical units to economic units, gross output is multiplied by the WE Factor. Assuming that market price reflects the cost of production, converting physical measures into economic units is a more satisfactory measure of productivity than gross output statistics.

2.5

Wheat Equivalent Factors: Crops 1890 and 1910

1890 (average production 1889-1890-1891)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>Average Price in Value in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production WE 1890 WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890 (kilograms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>27.9 100.0 44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>356.0 1.07 380.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, Bere</td>
<td>61.9 1.00 99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>1009.7 2.29 2312.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>7.0 0.15 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2837.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1910 (average production 1909-1910-1911)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>Average Price in Value in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production WE 1910 WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910 (kilograms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>18.0 100.00 30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>361.6 1.21 439.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, Bere</td>
<td>62.7 1.00 106.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>1281.9 2.27 2905.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>3.5 0.11 0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3482.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14
Land productivity is measured by output per acre. The average acreage of land under crops and hay was 5.006 million in 1881-1891 and 4.704 million in 1901-1910. This is divided by total crop production. In gross production, land productivity increased from 14.8 cwts. in 1890 to 18.7 cwts. in 1910. In WE equivalents, land productivity increased from 0.57 to 0.74 kilograms.

Some of the increased land productivity can be accounted for in terms of regional specialisation and farm amalgamation. Productivity increases where the production of a crop is concentrated in one region. This occurs for two reasons. The region has a comparative advantage in the production of that crop. Supporting industries develop alongside it and the infrastructure alters to suit the regional economy. Markets became concentrated and more accessible. Increased geographical concentration of crops and livestock in Ireland, particularly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, might have been expected to increase productivity.8

As we have already noted, the total acreage being used for agriculture declined. Much of this decline was due to farm amalgamation, a process most rapid in the decade after the Great Famine but continuing into the twentieth century.

### 2.6

**Size of All Holdings Over One Acre**  
As a Percentage of All Holdings Over One Acre  
1841-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>1841</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 30 acres</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increases in average farm size might be expected to improve agricultural productivity by

allowing the move to pastoral farming which was earning higher profits during this period. Larger farms encouraged the use of improved techniques. Horses, for instance, were most useful on land over thirty statute acres. Efficient use of machinery required large farms.

Fixed Capital and Non-Farm Current Inputs

Capital formation is one of the principal requisites of economic growth. It consists of additions to the stock of physical capital in the form of reproducible instruments of production and includes investment in farming implements and machinery, buildings, fertilisers and new techniques. Productivity increases as technical progress allows farmers to produce more from a given level of input. In Ireland a significant proportion of capital investment was channelled through state and private institutions. State intervention into a stagnant rural economy was the answer to questions like those posed by Robert Dennis in 1887:

How is this deplorable state of things to be amended? the obvious answer is, by putting right in detail everything which is wrong. But how is the breed of cattle to be improved? How are the pastures to be transformed from bad to good feeding? Who is to teach the Irish dairy maids how to make butter and provide them with proper appliances?9

Poverty and imperfect knowledge were identified as the causes of rural under-development in Ireland. Irish agriculture required governmental interference. By 1891 the political environment was ripe. Before a detailed examination of the investment can commence, a brief history of the dominant institutions is necessary. The three most influential were the Congested Districts Board (C.D.B.), the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (I.A.O.S.), and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (D.A.T.I.).

The Congested District Board was part of the 'constructive unionism' of men such as the Chief Secretary, Arthur J. Balfour. It was constituted under section 34 of the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1891. Congested districts were initially defined as Poor

Law Electoral Divisions in which the total rateable value of the land when divided by the population gave a sum of less than one pound ten shillings per capita. From a constituency encompassing one-tenth of the population of Ireland, the jurisdiction of the Board eventually included one-quarter of the Irish population and nearly half the land area. The Congested Districts Board was not an ordinary government department. It was not subordinate to the Chief Secretary's office nor to any Ministry. So long as it kept within its budget, it was independent of the Treasury, Dublin Castle and every other state department. The chief aim of the Board was to improve the standard of living in congested districts through agricultural instruction and farm amalgamation. In some areas farming households had to be persuaded that their welfare would be improved by moving to larger holdings elsewhere in the country. Local industrialisation had to be stimulated through technical instruction and the allocation of subsidies. To achieve their aims, the Board was allocated over forty-one thousand pounds a year from the interest on the Church Surplus Grant. They controlled sixty-six thousand pounds in the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund, had access to part of the Sea and Coastal Fisheries Fund and were permitted to accept gifts of personal or real property. Under the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1896 and the 1909 Land Act their grants were increased. With the 1909 Act, the powers and duties of the Board relating to agriculture were transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. This did not signify a decline in their impact on the rural economy since at the same time the Board was granted compulsory powers of land purchase, enabling the redistribution of around two million acres of agricultural land.

In 1895 a special committee, set up by Sir Horace Plunkett, was convened during the parliamentary recess to examine the ills of the rural economy and to suggest remedies. The Recess Committee was supported by the Parnellite section of the Irish Nationalist Party, by the Unionists, and by the Liberal-Unionists. In the autumn of 1896 the Recess Committee presented a report urging the government to establish a Department to foster agricultural and industrial development in Ireland. This led to the establishment of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1899. The Department was financed from both
central and local funds, and an advisory Council of Agriculture consisting of 104 members was formed. A separate Board of Agriculture and a Board of Technical Instruction administered the funds. Each County Council appointed a County Committee to administer expenditure at the local level. The Department stimulated growth in the rural economy through educational schemes and investment based on supplementing capital raised by local authorities. The rate raised by local authorities varied depending on Poor Law valuation. By 1911, the Department was supplementing the rate by a grant of up to 40s for each pound raised locally.

The co-operative movement grew out of the concerns of Sir Horace Plunkett, R. A. Anderson and Rev. Thomas Finlay. Although the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society’s initial successes in the 1890s resulted from their co-operative creameries, they also established credit, poultry, retail, industrial and general agricultural societies. They were run along co-operative lines but during their first eight years the Department of Agricultural and Technical Instruction donated twenty-nine thousand pounds. The Department eventually cut off these funds on the grounds that the I.A.O.S. was associated with hostility to a political party and to certain trading interests.\(^{10}\)

How did these institutions tackle rural under-development in Ireland? The following section looks at specific work done in the areas of fertiliser use, seed quality, weed eradication, mechanisation, livestock quality, and credit facilities.

**Fertilisers, Seeds and Weeds**

In conjunction with state legislation, and the work of many other smaller organisations, these institutions encouraged the use of fertilisers and went some way to improving access to high quality seeds (and reducing access to low grade seeds) and eradicating weeds. The importance of fertilisers in the process of agrarian reform is

obvious: manures and fertilisers supplement the quality of plant nutrients in the soil. A priori, we would expect an increase in soil fertility in Ireland during this period as the number of livestock increased. However, by the end of the nineteenth century sales of artificial manures also escalated. Reforming institutions attempted to counter the two major hindrances to the use of fertilisers: imperfect knowledge and adulterised products. Educational schemes established by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction and the Congested Districts Board stressed the benefits of soil fertilisation. The 1906 Fertilisers and Feedings Stuffs Act allowed the Department to appoint official Samplers to test fertilisers sold throughout Ireland. The results of their tests were widely publicised. State departments sold artificial manures cheaply. Co-operators joined the campaign. To take just one example, co-operative agricultural societies in Tipperary and Kilkenny combined to bring in over two thousand tons of artificial manure, selling it to their members at one-third the customary price. Trade statistics suggest a rapid increase in the use of fertilisers.

By 1914 total imports of fertiliser had increased by forty per cent in ten years while the area of land under crops and hay had increased by three per cent. The changes must not be exaggerated. Irish farmers customarily made little use of fertilisers. Although the level of fertiliser use continued to be low, the increase in its use significantly improved soil fertility.


Total Fertiliser Imported into Ireland
Fertiliser to Each Acre of Corn, Green Crops, and Hay
1904-1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fertiliser (1,000 cwts.)</th>
<th>Fertiliser to Each Acre of Crops and Hay (cwts.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>3,267</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>3,133</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>3,458</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>3,641</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>3,558</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>3,653</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3,924</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>3,865</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>4,524</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>4,513</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>4,569</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shift of resources from crops to husbandry contributed to the efficiency of cultivation through intensifying crop rotation patterns. There was an increasing shift from four to five crops in the rotation patterns of farmers with between five and one-hundred acres.14 As the demand for livestock feed increased, cash crops were replaced with fodder crops which raised soil fertility. The nitrogen-restoring green crops appeared more frequently in rotation patterns. Soil properties were also enriched through the expansion of hay production and the fallowing of the land and its use for grazing purposes.

Improvements in drainage and underdrainage are important in studies of agricultural productivity because they make nutrients available to the plants. Marginal land was converted to hay production and livestock. The removal of marginal land from tillage production probably meant improved drainage qualities for the rest of the land. However, the reduction of the tillage crop area and the bleak prospects for further investment in tillage land offered slight incentive for the maintenance of drainage areas, so Irish

cultivated acreage in general remained poorly drained.\textsuperscript{15}

The other area desperately requiring reform was seed quality. The sale of inferior seeds was difficult to proscribe since poor farmers in the west relied on cheap grass seeds such as inferior low-weight rye seeds, brown and white hayseeds and holcus. Conferences between the Department of Agriculture, seed-cleaning firms and seed-merchants, finally resulted in an agreement whereby firms bound themselves to cease selling inferior seeds. This agreement seems to have held.\textsuperscript{16} Seed testing stations were set up to provide advice and to police sales of seeds. Seed quality was also improved by increased importation of high-quality clover and grass seeds.\textsuperscript{17}

Under the Weeds and Agricultural Seeds (Ireland) Act of 1909 the Department, subject to the consent of the County Council, could require an occupier to destroy weeds such as ragwort, charlock, coltsfoot, thistle and dock within a specified time. Occupiers were fined if they failed to comply. Between 1910 and 1914 the Department served over seven thousand notices annually. This figure underestimates the effect of their work as most occupiers required only a verbal warning from the Departmental inspectors.\textsuperscript{18}

The Estates Commissioners were also entitled, under sections 12 and 43 of the 1903 Land Act to spend money improving the estates purchased (or planned to be purchased) by the Commissioners. Under these sections they could build houses and outhouses, purchase

\begin{footnotesize}
15.Ibid., p.358.


17.The importation of clover and grass seeds (excluding hemp and flax seeds) increased by thirty-eight per cent between 1904 and 1914.

\end{footnotesize}
livestock and equip the farm with seeds, fertiliser and implements. Between November 1903 and March 1913 the commissioners spent 567.5 thousand pounds on such improvements. Nearly one-quarter of this amount was spent on stocks, seeds and manure.\textsuperscript{19}

**Farm Equipment**

At first sight machinery seems to have been pitifully under-utilised. The small average size of farm workloads and the discontinuous nature of crop production meant that many farmers could not realise the economies of scale needed to justify the substitution of fixed capital for labour. Unsuitable terrains, small farms, and financial considerations limited the use of machinery. In Galway, for instance, farmers in the 1880s had to clear their land of stone by building boundary fences before they could even contemplate the use of small ploughs.\textsuperscript{20} Even if the technology to raise productivity was available, farmers had social and personal factors - such as the year-long welfare of labourers hired during harvest, or the welfare of neighbours unable to afford the new technology and dependent on reciprocal labour exchanges - to consider.\textsuperscript{21} In an economy where farms were increasingly inherited by only one child, surpluses might be more socially beneficial if distributed between familial members rather than re-invested in machinery which might raise productivity.

Farmers, however, recognised that the use of new and better implements benefited the household economy by allowing more frequent cultivation of the land, reducing competition from weeds, and cutting labour and time costs. Factory-made implements were becoming available. Using oral sources, Jonathan Bell has verified that specialised implements

\textsuperscript{19}Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Report of the Departmental Committee on Agricultural Credit in Ireland, p.322 [Cd.7375], H. C. 1914, xiii, p.340.

\textsuperscript{20}W. H. Patterson, Irish Tenants at Home. Tenant Farmers and their Poverty. What We Saw in the West of Ireland (London: City of London Printing Company, 1881), p.5.

\textsuperscript{21}For a discussion of reciprocal labour exchanges, see Anne O'Dowd, Meitheal. A Study of Co-Operative Labour in Rural Ireland (Dublin: Baile Atha Cliath, 1981).
such as disc, zig-zag, spring and drill harrows were widely used on larger farms by the turn of the century. While annual exports of agricultural machinery and implements remained under four thousand cwts., the importation of these goods grew. After a temporary high in 1904 when imports reached over 93,700 cwts., Irish imports of agricultural machinery grew from 70,300 cwts. in 1905 to 130,700 cwts. in 1914.

### Quantity of Agricultural Machinery and Implements Imported 1904-1914, cwts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>15020</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72162</td>
<td>3872</td>
<td>2521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>14240</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49704</td>
<td>4138</td>
<td>2199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>11160</td>
<td>2320</td>
<td>48042</td>
<td>3938</td>
<td>4453</td>
<td>2854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>15400</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>48189</td>
<td>3710</td>
<td>3588</td>
<td>3283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>16820</td>
<td>4120</td>
<td>59251</td>
<td>4652</td>
<td>5071</td>
<td>3091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>23040</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>50752</td>
<td>4655</td>
<td>7117</td>
<td>3193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>25040</td>
<td>4900</td>
<td>65995</td>
<td>5767</td>
<td>7936</td>
<td>3813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>32040</td>
<td>4520</td>
<td>74639</td>
<td>5602</td>
<td>7201</td>
<td>3274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>34800</td>
<td>6020</td>
<td>66366</td>
<td>5119</td>
<td>8612</td>
<td>3291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>35540</td>
<td>5760</td>
<td>72542</td>
<td>5219</td>
<td>8426</td>
<td>3102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
1. Agricultural machinery
2. Churns
3. Agricultural implements
4. Forks, rakes
5. Spades, shovels
6. Scythes

The revolution in farm equipment is also apparent in the agricultural statistics. Comparable data exists for only a few implements in 1865, 1875, 1881, 1886, 1890, 1912 and 1917. The table on the following page provides the data for the more common implements. In Ireland there were less than twenty manure distributors counted in 1875.

---


23
### Number of Some Farm Implements and Machinery Used in Agriculture

For Available Years Between 1865 and 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1865</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1886</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1908</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1917</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>12919</td>
<td>15350</td>
<td>10869</td>
<td>13587</td>
<td>76603</td>
<td>96766</td>
<td>108006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>9180</td>
<td>12410</td>
<td>13295</td>
<td>7013</td>
<td>7894</td>
<td>22524</td>
<td>28663</td>
<td>32013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3224</td>
<td>4543</td>
<td>3676</td>
<td>1398</td>
<td>2028</td>
<td>51743</td>
<td>61942</td>
<td>51216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>2118</td>
<td>2255</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>48507</td>
<td>49046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>2071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>8668</td>
<td>13701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>1491</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>103094</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>2124</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>27158</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>391577</td>
<td>362119</td>
<td>334192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>265405</td>
<td>304270</td>
<td>303467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>46815</td>
<td>59783</td>
<td>69671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>2423</td>
<td>2773</td>
<td>3416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. mowers and reapers
2. threshing machines
3. turnip, corn etc. sowing machines
4. winnowing machines
5. manure distributors
6. potato diggers
7. turnip slicers and root
8. hay, chaff and straw cutters
9. cream separators
10. ploughs
11. harrows
12. potato sprayers - knapsack
13. potato sprayers - horse
and 1890. In 1917 there were over two thousand. Potato diggers slowly increased between 1865 and 1890 to just over two-hundred but by 1917 there was one potato digger for every twenty-six acres of potatoes grown on farms under thirty acres in size. Turnip, corn and other sowing machines increased from two thousand to fifty-one thousand between 1890 and 1917 and winnowing machines from fourteen thousand to forty-nine thousand. Although Irish agriculture even today economises on machinery, these increases represent a very real change in technology.

Furthermore, small as well as large farms benefited from the increased use of farm implements and machinery. Data in 1912 and 1917 allow us to examine changes in the use of labour-saving machinery on farms under thirty acres and on farms over thirty acres.

### 2.9

**Percentage Change in the Number of Selected Machines and Implements Used on Irish Farms Less Than or Greater Than 30 Acres in Size 1912 Compared With 1917**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm Acreage</th>
<th>Less 30 acres</th>
<th>More 30 acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn Crushers</td>
<td>-50.3</td>
<td>-15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed Sowing Machines</td>
<td>-17.4</td>
<td>-17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploughs</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carts</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrows</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnowers or Fanners</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshers and Finishers</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mowers and Reapers</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Sprayers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapsack</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manure distributors</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Diggers</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Wheels, Turbines</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binders</td>
<td>144.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, the rate of increase in the use of potato sprayers was approximately the same on smaller and larger holdings.23 Smaller farmers were increasingly less likely

---

than larger farmers to possess carts, ploughs, harrows or corn crushers. However, smaller farmers acquired a large variety of farm implements and machines more rapidly than farmers on land over thirty acres in size. These implements included manure distributors, mowers and reapers, binders, potato diggers, winnowers or fanners, water wheels and turbines, threshers, and threshers combined with finishers.

Institutional encouragement of implements had some impact. Annually between 1901 and March 1913, the Department of Agriculture gave nearly four hundred loans for the purchase of agricultural implements. Loans, averaging eleven pounds each, were given to very small farmers only.24 Capital was advanced for horse sprayers, thistle-cutters, potato diggers, mowers, binders, small threshing machines and sprayers. The borrower had to lodge with the Department one-quarter of the purchase price, together with stamp duty, and supply at least two sureties. Farmers were allowed between three and five years to repay. The Board of Works also lent considerable sums of money, particularly for larger machinery.25

Since ninety per cent of all agricultural machines were powered by horses, it is not surprising to find a more intensive application of horses to crop cultivation.26 Between the 1890s and 1910s the number of acres planted in crops to each agricultural horse decreased from five to three acres.27 The use of horses was stimulated by rising labour costs, the decline in price of animal feedstuffs and the introduction of improved horse-drawn implements.

In the dairy industry, the 1878 invention of the centrifuge separator enabled a rapid

27. This includes approximately half of all horses. Many of the horses classified as 'non-agricultural' would have been employed seasonally for agricultural purposes.
acceleration of productivity, including the establishment of creameries. In the ten years between 1891 and 1901, the number of milk factories and creameries increased five-fold. The number of separators in private establishments increased nine-fold.\textsuperscript{28} As Chapter Five will show in detail, technological and institutional changes in the dairy industry resulted in a massive increase in the production of milk, cream and butter.

Lifestock Quality

Better breeding and feeding improved the quality of livestock. In 1887, under Government sponsorship, the Royal Dublin Society began stock improvement schemes, but until 1902 most of their funds were diverted into breeding horses for sporting purposes. After 1902 they put bulls with wealthy farmers, while providing strong incentives for these farmers to make the bulls available to small-scale stockmen. The Department of Agriculture provided loans for the purchase of livestock, to the extent of sixty-seven thousand pounds between 1901 and March 1913. The D.A.T.I.‘s breeding programme included over one thousand premium bulls by 1909 but by failing to secure the co-operation of the larger farmers, this scheme had a limited impact. In a similar scheme, the C.D.B. offered loans for the purchase of cows or heifers for stock-breeding. Particularly in Roscommon, they gave loans amounting to over three thousand pounds a year. Between 1891 and 1912, the Board spent twelve thousand pounds in the congested districts on livestock improvement schemes.\textsuperscript{29} Cow-testing stations, established co-operatively in 1909, had grown to seventy-two stations by 1913.\textsuperscript{30} Both the C.D.B. and the D.A.T.I. had swine improvement schemes. These schemes were administered in the same way as their stock improvement schemes.

\textsuperscript{28}See the annual agricultural statistics, released by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction and published in the British Parliamentary Papers.


schemes but proved more successful in reaching small farmers. Approximately one-quarter of all swine stock entered the programs. Similar schemes for sheep had limited impact. The regular provision of agricultural shows probably proved most useful for the larger farmers.

Improved feeding was as important as livestock breeding schemes. Under the 1906 Fertiliser and Feeding Stuffs Act, the Department inspected meals sold for calves and undertook to disseminate the results of the tests to farmers. Quantifying this contribution would be impossible. Improved feeding of livestock however can be judged by looking at the importation of feeding stuffs, linseed cake, cotton seed cake and oil cake. While the number of cattle in Ireland increased by eight per cent between 1904 and 1914, the quantity of animal feedstuffs imported into Ireland increased by thirty-two per cent.

2.11

Animal Feedstuffs Imported into Ireland
1904-1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Feedstuffs (1,000 cwts.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1,117.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1,086.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1,061.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1,206.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>1,252.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1,443.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,313.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,210.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1,448.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1,495.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1,480.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of the investment in livestock was channelled into outhousing. Outhousing and farmsteadings increased at the same time as the number of inhabited houses in rural areas was declining (see Table 2.12). Census data provides gross numbers of outhouses. An analysis of outhouses in the eight District Electoral Divisions reveals that holdings increasingly had more outhouses (Table 2.13).
2.12

Number of Outhouses and Farmsteadings Compared With the Number of Inhabited Rural Houses 1881-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Outhouses, Farmsteadings</th>
<th>Inhabited Rural Houses</th>
<th>Number Outhouses to Rural Houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>2,055,732</td>
<td>691,111</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>2,316,597</td>
<td>670,017</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2,438,665</td>
<td>627,046</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>2,598,806</td>
<td>610,832</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.13

Number of Outhouses on Each Holding As a Percentage of all Houses with Outhouses Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Outhouses</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chapter Nine we examine improvements in housing for humans. For the purposes of this chapter, it needs only to be noted that the rural building boom at the end of the nineteenth century could only have stimulated economic growth.32

Capital and Credit

Part of the explanation for the acceleration of capital inputs in the agricultural sector was improvements in knowledge, marketing and infrastructure. Furthermore, farmers had more capital to invest. The shift to pastoral farming meant that a young person

31. The data for Tables 2.12 and 2.13 was taken from the census reports, published in the British Parliamentary Papers.

required capital to obtain land, thus raising the likely capital resources of new farmers.

The best judge of the potential of agricultural investment is post office savings banks and trustee banks deposits.

2.14

Irish Post Office and Trustee Saving Banks
Total Deposits (1,000 pounds)
1870-1913

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deposits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>5696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>10368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>14446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>15779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irish bank deposits increased over fourfold between 1880 and 1913. In the poorer congested districts, post office deposits increased ninefold between 1881 and 1912. Raymond Crotty argues that this capital was not re-invested into the farm. However, if as Crotty suggests, the increased savings were used as dowry payments, then the investments probably did increase productivity by spreading payments across the rural population.

Credit facilities improved. As we have noted already, credit was given a high priority by reforming organisations. And rightly so. Poverty ruled out any schemes which


34. W. L. Micks, An Account of the Constitution, Administration, and Dissolution of the Congested Districts Board from 1891 to 1923 (Dublin: Eason, 1925), pp 221-22.


36. Liam Kennedy provides an excellent summary of credit facilities in the 1890s: 'Retail Markets in Rural Ireland at the End of the Nineteenth Century', Irish Economic and Social History, v (1978), pp 46-63. For an argument that agricultural credit must be given for domestic housing and water supplies because investment which reduces the labour of housework potentially increases agricultural productivity (an argument used at the time and developed later), see Fred W. Gilmore, A Survey of Agricultural Credit in Ireland (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1959).
required a large preliminary capital outlay and the lack of business experience demanded a system which could be understood by all. The Board of Works had provided loans for agricultural purposes from 1831. The Land Improvement Act allowed the Board of Works to give loans of one hundred pounds and over to landowners. Not until the Land Law Act of 1881 did these loans become widespread and available to tenants. Under the 1881 Act, amounts as low as thirty-five pounds could be borrowed. While in the early post-famine period loans for drainage had been the main expenditure, by the 1890s most loans were for purposes as diverse as subsoiling and trenching, irrigation and warping, embanking, fencing, farm road construction, rock clearances, waste reclamation, tree planting, constructing and improving farm dwellings and outhouses and small drainage schemes. Loans for farm buildings (excluding dwelling houses) in the year ending 31st March 1913, for instance, added up to over one hundred thousand pounds. Most of these loans benefited farmers in Tipperary, Cork, Limerick and Kilkenny.37

Large sums of money were lent by the Congested Districts Board for agricultural improvements. Between 1891 and 1912 the total lent was 26.5 thousand pounds. Nearly half was invested in the improvement of livestock with the remainder invested in buildings, outhouses and fencing.38 This sum excludes the Parish Committee schemes run by the Board which set out to encourage agricultural improvements by free grants of money taken directly out of the Board’s funds but administered by local committees. These free grants were given only to landholders with a valuation under seven pounds. In the year ending March 1912, 13.8 thousand pounds was granted to small landholders in the congested districts. One third of this sum was spent on farm outhouses.39 Between 1900 (the year

38. Ibid., p.301 (p.319).
39. Ibid., p.303 (p.321).
the scheme started) and 1913 over 127 thousand free grants were distributed in the congested districts through the Parish Committee Schemes.40

2.15

Loans and Free Grants Made by State Departments For Agricultural Purposes, Year Ending 31st March 191341

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Department</th>
<th>Loans</th>
<th>Advances Repayable with Annuity</th>
<th>Free Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Works</td>
<td>109,795</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.D.B.</td>
<td>6,137</td>
<td>4,538</td>
<td>16,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A.T.I.</td>
<td>12,063</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates Commissioners</td>
<td>127,995</td>
<td>42,611</td>
<td>212,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>255,990</td>
<td>47,149</td>
<td>229,403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private 'self-help' organisations also organised cheap credit. Co-operative credit societies, which began with a total membership of seventy-one in 1895, had grown to nearly twenty-thousand within sixteen years. In this year they granted loans for agricultural development to the value of over 56 thousand pounds.42

Labour Productivity

Technically, labour productivity is calculated by multiplying output per acre by acres per worker. Total annual agricultural productivity for each agricultural worker increased from fifty pounds in 1880 and 1890 to over seventy-one pounds by 1910. Even if we look at the more inefficient sector - that is, crop and cereal production as opposed to livestock - labour productivity gains were substantial. Measuring gross production of crops, labour productivity increased from 79 cwts. in 1890 to 112 cwts. twenty years later. In wheat equivalents this was an increase from 2.9 to 4.4 kilograms.

Labour productivity increased in two ways. First, throughout the period, tightening

40.Ibid., p.306 (p.324).
41.Ibid., p.329 (p.347).
42.Ibid., p.128 (p.146).
legislative restrictions against subdivision of holdings facilitated primogeniture and encouraged emigration from the land of 'surplus' members of the farmer's family. Second, economies of scale obtained when the proportion of land occupied by large farms increased and that of small farms decreased may have led to increases in labour productivity. As farm size became larger, efficiency increased because of the reduction of employment per acre. In Ireland, savings were effected in both family and hired labour. Larger average farm size did not require higher levels of paid labour. The tendency for larger farms to be converted into pasture also reduced labour costs (for a further discussion see Chapters Four and Seven).

**Human Capital**

Capital formation is broader than the concept of physical capital. It also includes human capital investment or, in the words of Adam Smith, 'the acquired and useful abilities of the inhabitants'. This includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and other acquired traits that contribute to production. As is true of physical capital, the acquisition and maintenance of human capital involves an economic cost and promises a future return which may be spread over a period of years. Although human capital outlays are not always motivated by the desire to increase income (people often educate themselves for pleasure), it is often the case that investment in human understanding and health have pecuniary effects. In Ireland we see that while the labour input in agriculture declined, the quality of labour inputs improved. Irish workers were healthier, stronger, better fed and more educated.\(^\text{43}\) For instance, typhus fever killed over sixteen per 100,000 people in the early 1880s, declining each decade until less than one person per 100,000 by the 1910s.\(^\text{44}\) Farmers and farm labourers were more likely to be

---


well educated.

2.16

Percentage of All Male and Female Children Attending School
By Age, 1891 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1891 Male</th>
<th>1891 Female</th>
<th>1911 Male</th>
<th>1911 Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only were boys and girls staying at school longer, the number of days they actually attended also increased, caused as much by reduced sickness among children as declining demand for child labour. Moreover, as employment opportunities for girls declined, they

2.17

Percentage Attending School More than 100 Days a Year
Out of All Girls and Boys Attending School
1861-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45. Data taken from the census tables of 1891 and 1911, as published in the British Parliamentary Papers.

stayed at school relatively longer than boys.

Much of the investment in human capital was motivated by ideas influential today about the urgency of developing human resources as an integral part of general developmental planning. All reforming institutions invested in agricultural education. The Board of National Education had established model farms to train Irish men in farming as early as 1838. However, with the exception of those in Cork and Glasnevin these farms had died out by the mid-1870s. Agricultural techniques were taught in national schools before the 1890s but it was provided only for boys in the sixth standard and fewer than one per cent of all national schools had gardens. By the 1890s agricultural instruction was compulsory for all school boys and an optional subject for school girls. All the major reforming institutions sent agricultural instructors into areas to make arrangements with holders to work a portion of their land in accordance with the advice given by the instructors and, by way of compensation, supplied seed and manure for the plot. Irish farmers gained increased access to information about improved farming techniques through the services of itinerant instructors, model farms and agricultural schools. The Department and the Board distributed pamphlets widely. The effect of these improvements is impossible to measure - in part because of the time lag between the adoption of a new method and the increase in output or productivity, and in part because


of the indirect causal links between the investment and the economic return on that investment.

Land

As we have already seen, the state played a large role in agrarian change in Ireland. Legislation regarding land allocation was crucial. By the Land Act of 1860 the theory of the free contract in landlord-tenant relationships was made law and freed from all restrictions of a customary nature. However, this made eviction without compensation easier. The Act of 1870 gave legal recognition to the Ulster Custom throughout Ireland. It failed because its complexity, and administration was unfavourable to tenants. The most important statute was the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 (extended in 1909) which enabled tenants to buy their land through annual repayments. Landlords were compensated in a lump-sum by the State. By the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts of 1885-1888 and 1891-1896, and the Irish Land Act of 1903, rents were reduced by around thirty per cent. By 1905 virtually all the land was either subject to judicial rents or vested in the occupiers.

Judicial rents were lower than competitive rents. The change in tenure had three effects. It ensured the farmers security of tenure and compensation for improvements. It increased farmer’s incomes to the extent that judicial rents or the Land Commission’s annuities were lower than competitive rents. While the number of holdings remained stable, the share of farm operators who were owners increased from around three per cent in the third quarter of the nineteenth century to sixty-six per cent by 1912, with most of those who remained

50. Return Showing, By Counties, the Average Number of Years' Purchase Under the Different Land Purchase Acts, 1885 to 1903, With the Average Percentage of Reductions, the Number of Holdings Purchased under Each Act, and the Amount of Interest and Sinking Fund Payable by the Tenant Purchasers; Also, by Counties, Return Showing the Same Particulars With Respect to the Purchase Act of 1903, Up to the First Day of November, 1908, pp 1-5 [357.], H. C. 1908, xc, pp 1413-18.
as tenants in possession of secure leaseholds. The land reform measures reduced the cost of the fixed land input in agricultural production by as much as twenty per cent from the third quarter of the nineteenth century to 1914. The reduction of land costs tended to reinforce the profitability of husbandry more than tillage cultivation, since land figured more prominently in the total costs of livestock than crop production.

Land ownership also affected the willingness of farmers to invest more heavily in the land. This was anticipated by the legislators and confirmed later. In the words of William F. Bailey,

In the great majority of cases we found that the purchasers have devoted their energies to the making of improvements in the land and on the buildings. In many districts, more especially in parts of Leinster and Munster, the occupiers have hitherto been more anxious to increase the productive power of their land than add to the comfort or appearance of their houses, though even here considerable improvements are visible....they have not merely maintained the condition of their holdings in the state in which they were at the time of purchase, but they have usually greatly increased their fertility by manuring, top dressing, feeding of stock, draining and reclaiming.

In tillage districts, there had been early ploughing, cleaning of grips and fields, trimming fences, remaking farm roads and reclaiming land. The land reforms increased the industry of the tenants.

Equally important is the social importance of these reforms in land tenure to the


54. For instance, First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Land Law (Ireland); Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix, p.63 [.249], H. C. 1882, xi, p.79, evidence by Denis Godley, Secretary of the Church Temporalities Commission from 1 January 1870 then Secretary to the Land Commission when they were incorporated.
well-being of the populace.

The first and in many respects the most important outcome of purchase is the feeling of contentment which it has given the people. Their minds are at ease. The anxiety as to the future which formerly oppressed them has disappeared.55

In spite of the failings of the tenant schemes, their advantages easily outweighed the costs.56 Bailey attested to the higher standard of living among tenant purchasers as against their rent-paying neighbours, because of the lower payments that tenant purchasers had to make and to the 'greater self-respect that has followed proprietorship'.57 In Leinster and Munster, the extra income was diverted into improving the productivity of the land rather than increased consumption. In the poorer western areas surpluses were absorbed into the household: increased consumption was a prerequisite for increased productivity.58

The twenty per cent rise in the value of agricultural production between 1890 and 1910 was reflected in improvements in the productivity of land and labour. Capital investment was a significant factor in the growth of the rural economy. The general increases in living standards which resulted from the increased production were not necessarily immediately re-invested in agriculture. In poorer areas particularly, capital surpluses and land reforms influenced the rural economy indirectly by being absorbed into


56. For instance, tenants had less flexibility than formerly and by insisting on punctual payments tenants might be forced to sell products at inconvenient times.


the household.
Part One: Paid Workers

Chapter Three: Paid Employment
Chapter Four: Rural Service
Chapter Five: Dairy Maids
Chapter Six: Home Industries
Chapter 3

Paid Work

Because men have become so effeminate that they wish to do women's work, it is no reason why women should endeavour to become so masculine as to invade the sphere of man.¹

For centuries historians and economists have chosen to narrowly define 'labour' as paid employment. From whatever standpoint, analyses of well-being within market-orientated societies gives a peculiar dominance to market labour. Increasingly scholars have been entering the treacherous arena of sex, comfortingly labelled 'spheres' of labour, and have increased our understanding of the work process for women as well as for men. Nearly all men and most women spend part of their life engaged in production for the market. The well-being of both sexes is heavily dependent on the availability of employment, the type of employment individuals perform, the conditions under which people work, and the remuneration they receive. Life choices (and chances) are influenced by perceptions of employment.² Money is needed to buy many of the basic human needs. Unemployment can mean dependency or poverty.

Rapid swings in employment participation, options and status for any large group are obviously significant. Between 1891 and 1911 the percentage of all men designated occupations in the Irish census remained steady at sixty-four per cent. This contrasts with a rapid decline from twenty-seven to nineteen per cent in the number of women designated occupations.³ This unusually rapid decline of female labour in Ireland has

¹ "A Ratepayer", 'Women's Suffrage', Irish Homestead, 6 April 1912, p.277.
³ An estimate has been made for the number of women in professional occupations in 1891 to make it comparable with the 1911 figure which excludes students.
attracted little scholarly attention. Disillusionment with the usefulness of published census data to study labour force participation has discouraged scholars. Studies of Irish labour have either despaired over the impasse caused by the exclusion of 'farmer's wives and daughters' from the census statistics and the ambiguous categories of 'agricultural labourer', 'indoor farm servants' and 'domestic servant', or they have avoided the problem by examining only urban trends. Certain types of labour are ignored. Neither the censuses nor the agricultural statistics can be relied upon for estimates of labour on family farms. Part-time workers may or may not be included. People are rarely credited with more than one occupation. Enumeration of females cause particular problems. Until 1926, Irish censuses say nothing about housewives. Either in their capacity of 'heads of households' or as census enumerators, men generally completed the census forms. Can they be trusted? For instance, in 1901 Kate Carr and her husband of Keeldra were both called farmers. In 1911 her husband again said she was a 'farmer', but this had been crossed out, presumably by the census enumerator, and she was placed in the 'unoccupied' categories of the census. Bridget Heslin also lived in the Keeldra district. In 1901 her stepfather said she was a farmer's daughter. Ten years later her stepfather repudiated his familial link with her (although he was still married to her mother) and claimed that their relationship was that of master to servant. But these are isolated instances and one of the advantages of using manuscript household data is that we can identify different 'hands' at work adding to or deleting from the forms. The researcher has to be cautious. Statistical evidence must be evaluated carefully. Confirmation has to be sought outside the statistical tables.


5. Keeldra District Electoral Division, no.147, P.R.O. Mss Census 1901 and 1911.

6. Ibid., no.20.
The limitations associated with the census do not render a statistical analysis of employment based on the census tables unprofitable. What does the census tell us about employment? While the census severely underestimates the number of people engaged in subsistence production and ignores unpaid occupations, if used cautiously it does provide a broad indication of the numbers of people engaged in full-time paid employment.

3.1

Number of Men and Women Designated Occupations in the Census 1861 to 1911, Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women (1,000)</th>
<th>Men (1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>1169.6</td>
<td>2,342.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>938.2</td>
<td>1,903.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>845.7</td>
<td>1,827.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>817.3</td>
<td>1,665.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>814.6</td>
<td>1,571.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>641.4</td>
<td>1,504.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>549.9</td>
<td>1,413.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>430.1</td>
<td>1,387.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer women were designated occupations in rural areas than in cities or towns. The mean percentage of women employed between 1881 and 1911 ranged between seventeen and thirty per cent in all areas, compared to fifteen to twenty-three per cent in rural areas. Female labour outside the cities was highest on the labour-intensive small farms in crop-producing districts. The south-central counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow, Kings and Queens retained higher levels of employment. Very low female participation in the workforce characterised the western counties, especially Mayo. However, by 1911 only the northern counties, the Dublin hinterlands, and the counties of Limerick, 

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7. Unless stated otherwise, data for all tables in this chapter have been taken from the census reports as published in the British Parliamentary Papers, and from my sample of eight District Electoral Divisions as lodged in the P.R.O. of Ireland (see Appendix Two for a discussion of this source). Appendix One explains the alterations made to the census data to make them comparable. This is particularly important for understanding the 1871 figure.

8. 'Rural' areas exclude all urban county districts and towns with over 1,500 inhabitants.
Waterford and Kilkenny employed one-sixth of their rural female population. In no county did more than one-quarter of rural women claim an occupation.

Do these geographical variations relate to any geographical bias of occupations favourable to women? Over half of the variation in female participation in the workforce can be accounted for by reference to the occupational composition of the county.\(^9\)

Assuming that women were employed in equal proportions within each occupation in all counties, at the beginning of our period women in large areas in the north (excluding Antrim), the south-east and Mayo were favourably placed in terms of the occupational composition of their county to find paid employment. By 1911, only women in the northwest, and south Connaught were favoured in this way. All the cities (except Waterford) favoured female employment. Areas with a particularly low proportion of women employed after standardizing occupational sex ratios were the south-western counties of Munster and the central counties of Leinster.

Age Structure of Employment

The life cycle aspects of female employment can be examined by analysing the age structure of the employed cohorts. In 1891 the percentage of women designated occupations in the census peaked at the age group fifteen to nineteen years, then declined rapidly, levelling off or increasing slightly after forty-four years. By 1911, proportionally more women aged twenty to twenty-four years were in the occupational labour force than women aged fifteen to nineteen years. The decline was steepest between the categories twenty to forty-four. Once again, there was a levelling off or increase in the proportion of women aged over twenty-five years in the occupational statistics. Connaught was remarkable in the increase in the proportion of women (aged over twenty-five years) designated occupations. Among men the pattern is very different. Participation levels stabilised after the age of nineteen (1881) and twenty-four (1911). Male participation rates declined

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\(^9\) The formula applied was: number of women in the occupation multiplied by the all-Ireland sex-ratio within that occupation, divided by the total number in occupation.
only in the elderly age group.

Provincial patterns in the age structure of the 'occupied' female population are striking. Within each age category, the lower rates of participation in Connaught differentiates this province from the other three. This disparity only disappears in the elderly age group. Furthermore, in the decades 1891-1901 and 1901-1911, the percentage of women in each age category in employment declined more rapidly in Connaught than in any of the other provinces.

The occupational levels of men and women under the age of twenty show greater homogeneity. Not only did fewer members of both populations claim occupational affiliation but the total percentage of men and women in this age group who were occupied was more similar (the male percentage ranged from sixteen to twenty-eight per cent and the female from thirteen to twenty-two per cent). The highest percentage of all women under the age of twenty who were occupied was found in Ulster, followed by Leinster, Munster, then Connaught. Taking into account changes in the total population of young people, in every province the proportion of men under the age of twenty who were occupied decreased by twenty-four to twenty-eight per cent. The respective change for young women was between thirty-two and forty-eight per cent. The largest changes in participation occurred in Connaught and Munster.

Marital Status

Between 1881 and 1911, the published census data do not breakdown employment by marital status. Nor do they tell us anything about the relationship between family structure and employment. In 1871, tables were provided showing the employment of married women. In this year, female 'farmer's relatives' were tabulated. In the whole population, between nine per cent (Leinster) and seventeen per cent (Connaught) of women in the occupational tables in 1871 were married. The large numbers of married women within each age group who were designated paid employment is surprising. One-third of wives between ages fifteen and nineteen years appeared in the occupational tables. This proportion
increased at each age category, exceeding the halfway mark in Connaught in the age group twenty-five to thirty-four, and in Ulster in the age group thirty-five to forty-four years. Employment of married women was lower in Munster and Leister but still surpassed the forty per cent mark. The high proportion of married women in the paid labour force in Ulster can be explained by reference to the high concentrations of married women in the linen and textile industries. However, Connaught had few such industries. Eighty-three per cent of the wives in Connaught were listed as engaged in agricultural pursuits, most employed as wives of farmers and graziers.

Data more directly relevant to us can be extracted from the manuscript household census returns for 1901 and 1911. Eight District Electoral Divisions in the counties

### Percentage of Adult Women Designated Occupations

**By Marital Status**

**Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1901 (n=743)</th>
<th>1911 (n=688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeldra</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleek</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| District   | 1901 (n=612) | 1911 (n=581) | 1911 (n=211) |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Unmarried  | Married      | Widowed      |
| Ards       | 3.4          | 1.0          |
| Woodstown  | 4.4          | 13.6         |
| Tullamore  | 8.1          | 2.9          |
| Keeldra    | 7.3          | 2.4          |
| Kilconickny| 4.8          | 1.6          |
| Bellatrain | 13.0         | 7.8          |
| Belleek    | 10.9         | 7.7          |
| Rathmore   | 3.3          | 12.1         |

See Appendix Two for detailed discussion on these districts.
Waterford, Limerick, Galway, Leitrim, Donegal, Monaghan, Fermanagh and King's have been examined. The most rapid decline in female employment occurred in the north-west community of Ards, slowing down in the movement down the coast. The smallest declines occurred in the eastern districts. In 1901, unmarried women were generally categorised as farmers' relatives, married women were predominantly given no occupation and widows were classed as farmers. By 1911 women predominated in the unknown or 'no occupation' category regardless of marital status. However, almost half of all widows were still likely to be farmers and nearly one fifth of single women were domestic servants. The number of married women in Woodstown and Rathmore who were designated occupations increased between 1901 and 1911, despite the overall decrease in the aggregated figures for married women in the eight communities. The increase in these two eastern communities was caused by the entry of a number of married women into domestic service and farm servanthood. If we accept the definition of the census commissioners of 'occupied' as excluding women in the unknown category and excluding women enumerated in the census as relatives of farmers, scholars, or in unpaid domestic occupations, the proportion of women 'occupied' declined within each marital category. The number of 'occupied' single women declined by nine per cent, that of married women by two per cent and that of widowed women by twenty per cent. The small decline in the proportion of married women designated occupations was due to the low initial level. As will be shown later in this chapter, married women designated occupations had particular characteristics setting them apart.

Sectoral Analysis of Employment

Different rates of change were experienced between occupational categories. There was a declining proportion of women in domestic, agricultural and industrial fields while their representativeness in the commercial and professional category increased. In the following few pages, each major category is examined in turn.

11. This analysis only includes women over fifteen years of age.
Women in Each Occupational 'Class'
As a Percentage of All Persons in Each 'Class'
1881-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite, Non-Productive</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 'commercial class' was the sector where female participation increased significantly. It was a small category. In 1891 only 2,161 women were involved in commercial occupations. Female numbers increased to 9,747 within twenty years yet they still constituted less than nine per cent of all people in commercial occupations. The number of commercial men increased from 81,012 to 101,396. "A.G.C.", writing to the Irish Homestead, expressed the typically ambivalent attitude towards women in commercial occupations.

No sensible persons wishes women to do men's work, but the progress of machinery has and is changing our ideas as to what should belong to each. The typewriter, for instance, has displaced many men clerks. This may not be undesireable, but it is no more unjust than the usurpation of women's home work by men working in factories.12

"A.G.C." was correct: changes in the number of commercial women could be traced to an influx of female clerks. Thus, in 1891, forty-two per cent per cent of women in commerce were clerks. By 1911 over eighty per cent were clerks. Female representation in commercial occupations occurred throughout urban Ireland. However, women residing in rural areas did not benefit from the expansion in commerce.

We must be careful when looking at the statistics for professional occupations.

Between the censuses of 1891 and 1901, the criteria for admission into this class changed. In 1901, the enumerators transferred 'scholars' aged over fifteen years from the 'literary

and scientific' category of the professional class to the 'persons of no specified occupation' category. Adjusting the 1891 figure, we can conclude that female representation in the professions increased slightly. In 1891 they constituted twenty-two per cent of all professionals compared to twenty-five per cent in 1911.

This change was caused by the movement of women into the teaching profession. In 1841, women constituted thirty-two per cent of all teachers. By 1911 this had increased to sixty-three per cent. Despite discriminatory wage policies and a glutted market, school teaching was widely billed as 'the most important profession open to women'. Women found promotion easier in teaching. Women constituted over half of all school principals in the counties of Meath, Waterford, Dublin, Westmeath, Kings, Kildare, Wexford, Kilkenny and Carlow. The high ratio of female principals was due to the large number of small, single-sex schools particularly in the south and east. Promotion was less open in the northern counties. An analysis of age statistics show that although female teachers were marginally more likely to die early, their earthly promotional chances in certain grades were improving relative to men. Between 1880 and 1900, female teachers were slightly older than their male counterparts when receiving promotion. But, in 1901, women tended to be four years younger when they were promoted to Class 1(1) and almost a year younger when promoted to Class 1(2). In the lower classes the reverse occurred. Between 1880 and 1900, men and women reached almost identical ages when promoted to Classes 2 and 3. In 1901,

16. 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National Education at their Meeting on Tuesday, 3 March 1914', p.61, National Library of Ireland, statistics taken from a list of the numbers of teachers, provided in response to a parliamentary question by Mr. O'Donnell and referring to all principals, assistant teachers and junior assistant mistresses (formerly called manual instructresses) receiving a personal salary from the Commissioners on 31 December 1912.

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female teachers were older than male teachers. In the earlier period, women were almost a
year older than men when they resigned or were dismissed; in 1901 they were almost a year
younger. However, women were re-appointed to their jobs at a younger age. Age of
retirement increased for female teachers. Between 1880 and 1900 women tended to retire
six-and-a-half years earlier than men. This differential declined to under four years by
the turn of the century.17

The most stunning decline in female employment occurred amongst people engaged in
industry. Compared with Britain, Irish females were in a much weaker position in industry,
with Irish female wages often less than one-third of their British counterparts.18 In 1861
over half of all Irish people designated industrial occupations were female - a much
higher female proportion than in industrial England. By 1891 the Irish percentage had
decreased to thirty-eight. It dropped to twenty-nine per cent by 1911. Declining
proportions of women was less steep amongst persons under the age of twenty, which fell
from forty-eight per cent in 1891 to forty-four per cent by 1911. Proportionally, changes
in the number of men engaged in industry were of a smaller magnitude. In no county did the
number of men in industrial occupations fall by more than sixteen per cent, and in the
south their numbers rose by up to thirty per cent. The number of female industrial workers
decayed in all counties, falling by over sixty per cent in Leitrim, Roscommon, and
Cavan. Women were less affected in Dublin County (excluding the city) and Louth. The
geographical pattern is largely explained by the collapse of the linen market - for
factory workers in the north-east, Waterford and Kildare, and for cottage workers in
Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh.

17. Appendix to the Sixty-Eighth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in
Ireland, for the Year 1901. Section II, p.91 [Cd.1444], H.C. 1893, xxxi, p.596.

Part II. Secretary’s Report on the Work of the Office: Summaries of Evidence (With Index)
and Appendices, p.476 [C.-7421-I], H. C. 1894, xxxv, p.741, Appendix III, mean wages of
women in factories and workshops, 1891-1892, by district.
The pattern is not as uniform as these figures suggest. Within the industrial sector, the most important occupations were milliners, staymakers, dressmakers, shirtmakers and seamstresses. The number of milliners, staymakers and dressmakers increased between 1891 and 1901. These increases were negated in the decade 1901-1911. In this decade, the number of women in in milliner, staymaking and dressmaking trades declined by thirty-five per cent and the number of female shirtmakers and seamstresses (a profession already experiencing decline by 1881) declined by fifty-two per cent.

The occupations which employed the largest proportion of all occupied women - domestic servants - declined numerically and proportionally. In 1891, 640 thousand women were engaged in domestic occupations, dropping to 550 thousand by 1901, then to 430 thousand by 1911. Proportionally, female domestic servants declined by thirty-three per cent compared with a decline of eight per cent amongst male domestic servants. Women in Connaught were hit hardest. Proportional to the number of women in employment, however, the female percentage scarcely changed. In 1891 indoor domestic service employed thirty-two per cent of the female occupied population and less than one per cent of the male occupied population. By 1911 the percentage of all women employed in domestic service was thirty-one. In terms of actual numbers, male indoor domestic servants declined more rapidly than female servants in the last decade of the nineteenth century, then increased between 1901 and 1911 - a period where the decline in the number of female indoor domestic servants was especially rapid. Chapter four is devoted to an analysis of servants.

3.4

Number of Men and Women Employed in the Agricultural Sector
1861 to 1911, Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Women (1,000)</th>
<th>Total Men (1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>904.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>891.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>902.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>845.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>790.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>721.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49
Agriculture was the largest occupational sector, including farmers, agricultural labourers and farm servants. The decline of men in agriculture was insignificant compared with the decline experienced by women. The fastest declines among male agricultural workers occurred in Cork and Waterford. The number of male agricultural labourers in these counties declined by about thirteen per cent, compared with female declines of sixteen and twenty-nine per cent in Cork and Waterford, respectively. Within the female agricultural population, the fastest declines occurred in Waterford, Meath and Dublin, and the slowest declines in Donegal and Westmeath.

However, women were a small proportion of the total population engaged in agricultural pursuits. Their high representation in Cork and Tyrone were unusual. More commonly, women constituted between two and five per cent of all people enumerated as engaged in agricultural occupations. In part this was caused by the elimination of female farmer's relatives from the census tables, while male farmer's relatives were included. Over half of all occupied men were employed in agriculture compared with less than one-sixth of all occupied women. Between 1881 and 1911, the census statistics show a decline in the number of women in all agricultural occupations. The percentage of all women engaged in agriculture declined from four per cent to three per cent compared with a decline of thirty-five to thirty-three per cent in the proportion of all men in agricultural occupations.

Further evidence for a reduction in the number of women in the fields is found in the age structure of the female agricultural labour force. In 1881, sixteen per cent of the male agricultural population, were aged under twenty years compared with eleven per cent in 1911. Among the female agricultural population, fifteen per cent were in the younger age group in 1881, compared with only two per cent by 1911. No other occupational category experienced such a radical ageing. What this changing age composition suggests is that young women just entering the occupational labour force were choosing not to perform agricultural labour.

Within the category 'engaged in agriculture', it is helpful to distinguish between
farmers and labourers. The number of female farmers and graziers increased in the decade 1891 and 1901 - a time when the number of male farmers and graziers declined. In the decade 1901-1911, though, the number of female farmers and graziers declined by twenty-three per cent. The number of male farmers and graziers remained stable. The following table shows the number of male and female agricultural labours and general labourers in Ireland.

3.5

**Number of Male and Female Agricultural and General Labourers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agricultural Labourers (1,000s)</th>
<th>General Labourers (1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>446.7</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>300.1</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>258.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>217.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>195.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An even more dramatic change in the agricultural sector occurred amongst labourers. In the decades 1891-1901 and 1901-1911, the number of women stating their occupation as agricultural labourers declined by thirty-five and seventy-two per cent (respectively) compared with declines of sixteen and ten per cent in the number of male agricultural labourers. Similarly, the number of female farm servants (indoor) declined in these decades by twenty-eight and seventy-five per cent while male numbers declined by twenty-six and nineteen per cent.


20. In the case of general labourers, I have excluded labourers listed in the six county boroughs.

Possible explanations for the declining numbers of women in agricultural occupations are examined in Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight. It is important to note contemporary observations of the rapid movement of women out of agricultural occupations. Women were accused of 'looking down' on agricultural employment. Female members of the small farmer class had begun to regard certain types of agricultural work as inappropriate forms of female labour. Agricultural employers complained that women who had been the 'sheet anchor of the farmer in harvest' now preferred emigration to agricultural labour. This theme dominates reports on agricultural labour. For example, the steward to Lord John Browne, William Davidson of Westport, complained that: 'You cannot now get a woman to work at any price. They all go to the American mills....Boys have taken the place of women in weeding and cutting thistles.' Commentators agreed that women would not work as wage labourers, except during peak seasons. Some alleged that the shortage of female labour in the fields was the cause of the decline in tillage. Not everyone thought the trend was bad. Many reformers promoted the exclusion of women from rural labouring occupations. Men such as George Russell praised the co-operative women's guilds for attempting 'to make women in


23. Ibid., p.81 (p.421), report on the Poor Law Union of Westport (County Mayo).

24. Ibid., p.109 (p.449), report on the Poor Law Union of Skibbereen (County Cork) and Earnings of Agricultural Labourers (Board of Trade, Labour Department), Second Report by Mr. Wilson Fox on the Wages, Earnings and Conditions of Employment of Agricultural Labourers in the United Kingdom, With Statistical Tables and Charts, p.118 [Cd.2376], H. C. 1905, xcvi, p.453.

rural Ireland less like men, less agricultural labourers and more a social force. In the view of some people, it was 'a cruel thing to see women in the fields digging potatoes and putting them into big hampers which they have to put on their backs....some of these sacks are over two cwt.'

Occupations severely underestimated in the census - indeed, generally ignored - include prostitution and begging. The census only counts prostitutes and brothel-keepers in custody. It is easier to establish the nature of prostitution in cities than in the countryside. We know that 'living sins' plagued rural Poor Law authorities and others. We hear of local rural harrassment of prostitutes. Problems of measurement, however, cannot be overcome so we are left with the rather unsatisfactory statement that, although


27. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Ninth Report of the Commission, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Mayo, 21st August to 3rd September, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 80-1 [Cd.3845], H. C. 1908, viii, pp 632-33, evidence by Patrick Sweeney, a general merchant living at Achill Sound.


working outside conventional economic and social structures, prostitution continued to be
an option for women living in country towns. The short supply of prostitutes in small
communities probably had more to do with legitimate fears of community retribution and
limitations of scale than lack of demand.  

Other unenumerated occupations included begging, peddling and the gathering of
saleable goods on the seashore or on the bogs. Peddlers would sell anything from whelks to eels to turf. Begging was an occupation for women and children during slack
seasons and during times of agricultural distress. It could be a remunerative

31. A very full report on the 'Conference of Public Morals' and prostitution in Ireland, is
found in Irish Citizen, 5 October 1912, p.158; 1 March 1913, pp 1 and 322; 31 March 1913,
p.10; 12 July 1913, p.60; and 5 December 1914, p.1. There is a discussion of the
connection between domestic service (in America and Ireland) and prostitution in an
article by Agnes Halpin Downing, 'Women's Part', Harp, December 1908, p.4 and Irish Worker, 9 March 1912, p.2. For an earlier discussion, see a letter from Superintendent
John Mallow to the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, 2 July 1881, in
Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Law Relating to the
Protection of Young Girls, Together With the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of

32. W. H. Patterson, Irish Tenants at Home. Tenant Farmers and their Poverty. What We Saw

33. Meggy-the-eels of Bruff (County Limerick) in Mary Carberry, The Farm by Lough Gur. The
Story of Mary Fogerty (Sissy O'Brien) (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p.20. Also
see W. R. Le Fanu, Seventy Years of Irish Life Being Anedotes and Reminiscences, second

34. S. Laing, A Visit to Bodyke (np, c.1880), p.4.

35. Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, Vol. iv, Ireland, Part ii,
Reports by Mr W. P. O'Brien, C.B. (Assistant Commissioner), Upon Certain Districts in
Counties Carlow, Cork, Clare, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Kings, Limerick, Queens,
Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, and Wicklow, With Summary Report Prefixed, pp 63 and 113
of Mountmelick (Queens' and Kings' County) and Cashel (County Tipperary).

36. Ibid., p.20 (p.150).
industry. Census enumerators responded by classifying them as 'unoccupied'.

Structural Analysis

At this point we can turn to some possible structural explanations for regional differences in female participation in the occupational labour force and in the female share of the labour force. Taking county differences in female labour force participation rate first, one county may employ more women in each occupation than another county because of different numbers of women and men in the county. This can be tested by working out the percentage of all women employed that we would expect given identical ratios of female and male workers in each county. This expected percentage can be compared to the actual proportion of women in occupations within each county. The formula is

\[ \frac{n}{0}=1 \cdot \frac{\text{Fon} \cdot \text{Emoc}}{\text{Pfc}} \]

where \( \text{Fon} \) = the national ratio of female to male workers in that occupation, \( \text{Emoc} \) = the total number of men employed in that occupation and in that county, and \( \text{Pfc} \) = the total population of women in that county (see Figure 3.6).

In 1881, standardising the percentage of all women occupied in each county does very little to explain inter-county differences. By 1911, just over half of the variation between counties can be explained by differing proportions of all women employed in the county. The most interesting thing to notice, however, is the geographical pattern. In 1881 all the counties which experienced a substantially lower proportion of female

Standardization of All-Ireland Occupational Sex Ratios 1881 and 1911
Percentage of Females in Occupations (as a Percentage of All Women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin County</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin City</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louth</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meath</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>30.5</td>
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employment in relation to their occupational composition than we would expect given Irish-wide female:male ratios were located in the central-east and south-east areas. This pattern can still be seen in 1911, although lower rates have spread to the counties of Connaught and to the eastern-most counties of Ulster. Overall, however, inter-county differences persist despite standardising for female:male sex ratios.

Second, is there a structural explanation for county differences in the female share of the labour force? Perhaps an explanation lies in the different occupational composition of the counties. Some areas may have a higher demand for female labour because they had a greater number of those occupations which employed large numbers of women. To test this I worked out the sex ratio of occupations in each county if the sex ratio for each occupational sector which was found in all of Ireland applied to each of the counties. The formula used was

$$n \sum_{0=1}^{\text{Fo Foc}} \frac{Eoc}{Ec}$$

where o = occupation, Fo = national percentage of females in oth. occupation, Eoc = total number employed in the occupation and in the county, and Ec = total number employed in the county (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

The thing to note is that there is less inter-county differences in 1911 than in 1881. I have also worked out the expected percentage of women in the non-agricultural labour force. When agriculture is excluded from consideration there is more inter-county variation. This suggests that county differences in representation in the workforce are a result of variations in the importance of agriculture in the county employment structure. This may simply mean that the labour of women in areas where agriculture is most important is less likely to be recorded in census statistics. The importance of the family farm - depending on the (recorded) labour of the male members of the family and the (unrecorded) labour of the females - may explain county differences in female labour force participation as recorded in the census. But the r-squared shows that between forty-seven
### Standardization of All-Ireland Occupational Structure

Percentage of Females in Occupations (as a Percentage of All Persons in Occupations) Including or Excluding Agricultural Occupations from the Analysis

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r-squared: 16.7
C. V.: 3.7  4.6

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r-squared: 52.9
C. V.: 3.8  3.6
### Standardization of All-Ireland Occupational Structure

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<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meath</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
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<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
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<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork County</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork City</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick County</td>
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<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick City</td>
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<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Waterford County</td>
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<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford City</td>
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<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City</td>
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<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armagh</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermanagh</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyrone</td>
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<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
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<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **r-squared**: 60.1
- **C. V.**: 6.1
and ninety per cent of the inter-county variation in female labour force participation can be explained by the occupational structure of the counties. In 1881, the non-agricultural structure of the counties explains nearly all the non-agricultural variation whereas in 1911 the structural explanation was not very important. The inverse is true when looking at all occupations.

Tables 3.9 and 3.10 show, for the whole country, the change in the number of men or women employed in 1901 (or 1911) in each occupation, given 1891 (or 1901) levels of employment, sex ratios and distributional structures. Three equations show the relative importance of these changes.

1. Total employment effect (holding the sex ratio and distribution constant at 1891 levels)
   \[ \#Nt_i \ (D_i)(F_i) \]

2. Sex ratio effect (holding total employment and distribution constant at 1891 levels)
   \[ Nt_i \ (D_i)(\#F_i) \]

3. Distributional effect (holding total employment and sex ratios constant at 1891 levels)
   \[ Nt_i \ (\#D_i)(F_i) \]

where

- \( D_i = \) the proportion of the total labour force in industry i in 1891,
- \( \#D_i = \) the change in the proportion of the total labour force in industry i 1891-1911,
- \( F_i = \) the proportion of the labour force in industry i which was female in 1891,
- \( \#F_i = \) the change in the proportion of the labour force in industry i that was female 1891-1911,
- \( N_t = \) total employment (female and male) in 1891, and
- \( \#N_i = \) the change in total employment 1891-1911.

Thus, column one gives the actual change in employment (male or female) in that occupation. Between 1901 and 1911, 15,840 fewer women called themselves farmers or graziers. Column two ("total employment") asks to what extent the decline of women in

38. The data in the table excludes male relatives of farmers and, for 1891, excludes scholars aged under twenty years in the professional category.
Decomposition of Changes in Female Employment 1891-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1 Actual</th>
<th>2 Total</th>
<th>3 Distribution</th>
<th>4 Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1474</td>
<td>-124</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>-219</td>
<td>-636</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professionals</td>
<td>2789</td>
<td>-633</td>
<td>3755</td>
<td>-7220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>-27323</td>
<td>-10692</td>
<td>-20957</td>
<td>5356</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>2920</td>
<td>-78</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveyance</td>
<td>-55</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>-3333</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>5421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Agricultural</td>
<td>-7447</td>
<td>-1047</td>
<td>-2173</td>
<td>-3989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, Prints, Maps</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-76</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machines</td>
<td>-72</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses, Furniture</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ships, Boats</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
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<td>-6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco, Pipes</td>
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<td>196</td>
<td>226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food, Lodging</td>
<td>-1536</td>
<td>-891</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>-1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-11432</td>
<td>-4071</td>
<td>-9471</td>
<td>1688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>-9890</td>
<td>-5639</td>
<td>-6397</td>
<td>2148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Substance</td>
<td>-233</td>
<td>-31</td>
<td>-170</td>
<td>-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable Sub.</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>-114</td>
<td>-180</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Sub.</td>
<td>-132</td>
<td>-36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers, Huxters</td>
<td>2177</td>
<td>-817</td>
<td>2342</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics, Labourers</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>-525</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse</td>
<td>-73</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-51</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>-44,891</strong></td>
<td><strong>-28,862</strong></td>
<td><strong>-30,145</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,054</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Actual change in employment 1891-1901
2. Effect of change in total employment
3. Effect of Change in distribution
4. Effect of Change in sex ratio
Decomposition of Changes in Female Employment 1901-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1 Actual</th>
<th>2 Total</th>
<th>3 Distribution</th>
<th>4 Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>-704</td>
<td>-240</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>-790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>-772</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>Other Professionals</td>
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<td>3409</td>
<td>1875</td>
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<td>2752</td>
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<td>Conveyance</td>
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<td>-28</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>293</td>
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<td>-15840</td>
<td>-4230</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>-13579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Agricultural</td>
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<td>-895</td>
<td>-1106</td>
<td>-9708</td>
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<td>Books, Prints, Maps</td>
<td>-90</td>
<td>-106</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machines</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses, Furniture</td>
<td>-181</td>
<td>-56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>177</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carriages</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ships, Boats</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tobacco, Pipes</td>
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<td>285</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>-1000</td>
<td>-712</td>
<td>-2124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-3933</td>
<td>-4300</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>548</td>
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<td>Dress</td>
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<td>-6337</td>
<td>-27429</td>
<td>-1131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Substance</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable Sub.</td>
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<td>237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mineral Sub.</td>
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<td>-37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-82</td>
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<td>-2452</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-3612</td>
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<td>Refuse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>-119,832</td>
<td>-32,894</td>
<td>-51,004</td>
<td>-34,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Actual change in employment 1901-1911
2. Effect of change in total employment
3. Effect of change in distribution
4. Effect of change in sex ratio
agriculture resulted from lower levels of employment overall. Column two holds sex ratios and distribution at the level experienced in the earlier year, measuring the effect of a change in total employment. Given 1901 levels, we could expect to see a decrease of 4,230 in the number of women calling themselves farmers in 1911. Column three ("distributional effect") measures the change in female employment expected given the distributional strength of occupations in the earlier census. Nearly one-and-a-half thousand more women could have been expected to enter farming between 1901 and 1911 because of the increasing relative importance of farming as an occupation. Finally, column four ("sex ratios") holds employment levels and distribution at the level of the previous census and tries to measure what effect a change in the proportion of women, as against men, might have had on that year's levels. Here, we see that eighty-six percent of the decline of women in farming occupations may be explained in terms of a substitution of male farmers for female farmers.

Changes in the sexual composition of occupations worked in favour of male employment, as did changes in the relative importance of occupations. Between 1891 and 1901, the decline of occupied women occurred largely through the decline of total employment (or, in other words, women suffered heaviest in the overall reduction of employment) or through the declining importance of occupations predominantly employing women (such as domestic occupations and dressmaking). Between 1891 and 1901, we would actually expect there to have been more unemployment amongst women. Within the following ten years, female unemployment increased at a higher level. From 1901, distributional changes worked strongly against female employment. By this time the substitution of men for women within occupational categories was also a dominant reason for declining female labour force participation. Changes in total employment combined to reduce female employment. What is striking, therefore, is that in both decades distributional changes were the main reasons for declining female participation, although by 1901-1911 the increasing importance of the substitution of male for female workers was significant.
Looking briefly at some of the more important occupational categories, domestic servants were the hardest hit by the collapse of a market for their labour. Between twenty-one thousand and thirty-three thousand domestic workers would be expected to leave employment in the decades 1891-1901 and 1901-1911 simply because of the declining relative importance of domestic service as an occupation. Although in the decade 1891-1901, the number of female farmers and graziers increased, by the following decade they were being rapidly replaced by male farmers, as were female agricultural labourers, farm servants, and other women engaged in agricultural occupations. The fall of women in textiles (1891-1901) and dress (1901-1911) was due to the collapse of production in these industries. Substitution of male for female workers in these industries was either non-existent (1891-1901) or slight (1901-1911).

Reasons for the Decline

The following section examines some potential explanations for declining female employment. An attempt is made to deal with minor explanations and introduce more significant forces in the more detailed analysis of employment in particular sectors of the market in later chapters.

Vulnerability

The rapidity of the collapse of female employment is less surprising given the structural vulnerability of the female employment market. This vulnerability was most clearly expressed in the concentration of female workers in a narrow (and narrowing) band of occupations. Eighty per cent of female workers were found in ten occupations.39 Between 1881 and 1911, two to six per cent of employed persons worked in occupations composed solely of other women. The number of occupations composed solely of men was not minor. In 1891, 460,000 men - or twenty-two per cent of the total number of all workers -

39. Farmer, agricultural labourer, indoor farm servant, domestic servant, flax and linen manufacturers, milliners and dressmakers, seamstresses, washing and bathing service, schoolmistresses, and general shopkeepers or dealers.
worked in all-male occupations. By 1911, this had increased to nearly 600,000 men - or thirty-four per cent of the total occupied population. In a country with a slight excess of women, less than five per cent of occupied women worked in occupations with a fairly equal distribution between men and women.\(^4\)\(^0\) The crowding of women in a narrow range of occupations depressed the marginal productivity of women within those occupations by artificially increasing the supply of labour.\(^4\)\(^1\)

**Employment Networks**

Exasperating the employment vulnerability of women was their lack of formal networks of employment. Associations to protect their interests were based in cities such as Dublin (Governesses Association) or Belfast (Linen Workers Trade Union). With the exception of organisations promoting cottage industries (which are dealt with in Chapter Six), the Irish Central Bureau for the Employment of Women was the chief association aimed at improving the employment prospects of rural women. This highly-centralised association was founded in 1903 by Lady Dudley to collect and distribute information, and to attempt to bring prospective employers and women seeking employment into communication. They made little impact. The statistics for this organisation shows an abundant supply of labour, frustrated by lack of demand for female labour. For example, in 1903, the bureau had five prospective employees to every employer on their list. Ashamed by their helplessness, they closed three years later, reporting that they found places for only nine per cent of women applying through them for work.\(^4\)\(^2\)

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\(^4\)\(^0\). 'Fairly equal' is defined as between forty-five and fifty-five per cent.

\(^4\)\(^1\). The 'crowding hypothesis' was introduced by Barbara R. Bergmann, 'Occupational Segregation, Wages, and Profits When Employers Discriminate by Race or Sex', Eastern Economic Journal, i.2 (April 1974), pp 103-10.

Tastes and Income Effect

The tastes argument is often used to explain changes in female employment. This argument asserts that at a particular point in time, women decided that they no longer wanted to work for money - that such activity was outside their desirable 'sphere', that it was not appropriate behaviour for them. While economists tend to use 'tastes' as a catch-all word for unmeasurable variables, feminist and marxist historians are most inclined to view 'taste' as a product of socialisation. This argument is compatible with the Irish Central Bureau for the Employment of Women claim that their failure was due to the fact that women looking for work no longer wished to be gardeners - they preferred working as domestic economy instructresses. The other side to this argument stresses the tastes of male decision-makers. Contemporaries sometimes referred to the status bestowed on 'fathers' with 'redundant' adult daughters. Female leisure was a status symbol for the father: 'public opinion forces him to maintain her at home'. This type of explanation is unconvincing in Ireland where the rapidity of the declining female employment preclude any argument based on radical swings in consciousness. Furthermore, there is no clear way to understand the process through which this particular 'ideology' was transmitted.

In addition, 'tastes' were not consistent. While some contemporaries portrayed the employment of married women as an evil, their views were not shared by everyone. Women might be expected to be more sympathetic to the plight of other women attempting to make a living for themselves and their children, with or without husbands present in the household. A series of letters in the Irish Weekly Independent suggested that women were more likely to hire an older woman with young children as a charwoman (even if she was a


poor worker), than a young strong unmarried woman.45

A more plausible version of the tastes argument is the income effect argument. Here, the assertion is that tastes were always opposed to female employment and that when average household income reached a certain level this taste was able to be acted upon, or that there was a threshold effect whereby people reaching a certain income level always disliked female employment and as more households reached this level, more women withdrew from paid labour. Even if we accept the assumptions necessary to this argument, this explanation is not totally persuasive. There does seem to be a broad relationship between wealth and female propensity to find paid employment. Taking the total valuation of land, houses and outhouses in six District Electoral Divisions as a proxy for wealth, there is some relationship between valuation and propensity of adult female members of the conjugal household to be designated an occupation in the census.46 In 1901, twenty-six per cent of women resident in households with a valuation of less than twenty-four pounds were designated an occupation. This contrasts with just over eighteen per cent of women resident in households with a valuation of over twenty-four pounds. In 1911 the respective percentages were sixteen and nine. Table 3.11 shows, however, that the disparity between low and high valuation households is not constant. The broad correlation between wealth and employment may be more reasonably ascribed to other factors, such as increased timidity about declaring an occupation or the likelihood that larger and wealthier farms were pastoral farms with low labour requirements.


46.The analysis excludes all non-relatives such as domestic servants, farm labourers, visitors and boarders as well as ignoring households for which no valuation could be found.
### Table 3.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation (in pounds)</th>
<th>1901 (n=1028)</th>
<th>1911 (n=1009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>less 1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
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<td>5-9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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<td>10-4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
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<td>15-9</td>
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<td>20-4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>25-9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<td>30-4</td>
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<td>35-9</td>
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<td>40-4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 50</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discrimination**

To what extent did discrimination play a role in reducing the number of employed women? This explanation has been influenced by Gary Becker’s argument regarding the ‘taste’ for racial discrimination.\(^{47}\) It typically focusses on only one side of the equation, ignoring the preference of women to work in all-female occupations. This neglect results from conceptual problems: the admission that labour decisions may be affected by self-discrimination leaves no way to discriminate between labour decisions based on the free choice of the employee and those based on the imposition of ‘discriminatory taste’ by an employer.\(^{48}\) The explanation faces similar problems to the more conventional ‘tastes’ debates. What causes ‘tastes’ and how quickly can the tastes of employers change? In

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the Irish context, discrimination is a powerful argument when examined in the context of new forms of labour from which women might be excused. Chapters Five and Eight provide examples of attempts by reforming organisations to move men into new positions opening up in the dairying and poultry industries. However, as the re-organisation in poultry farming illustrates, ideological preferences of employers or reformers are not automatically translated into reality. Another example of discrimination could be taken from commercial occupations. We have already noted the 'feminisation' of this sector, but the movement of women into clerical positions did not proceed smoothly. In 1910, the Metropolitan Water Board, for instance, decided not to employ any more female typists 'because they become hysterical in times of rush and are nervous wrecks before they are two years in the firm'.

Discrimination could also work in favour of women. In primary teaching, women benefited from the notion that men were unfit to teach children under seven years of age. Even in secondary schools, female teachers had an advantage. A secondary school teacher and organiser, Katharine Roche, concluded a speech with the following provocative statement:

I consider teaching essentially a woman's work, and one in which few men will be able to compete with her. I am not advocating the suppression of the male teacher, as I have no wish to oppress men. Besides, I am a believer in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest.

A strong contradiction existed in the place of women in the teaching profession. Notions that women made 'better' teachers because of an 'innate' relationship between women and childrearing was not seen to be in contradiction with the view that mothers

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49."Anti-Sweater", 'Working Women's Column', Irish Worker, 7 October 1911, p.2. The writer noted that any person would become hysterical working the long hours, with poor pay, of typists in the Metropolitan Water Board.


should not be teachers. On 4 April 1911, the Commissioners of National Education decided that, from 30 June, female teachers were to be forced to leave teaching three months before and after childbirth. Furthermore, pregnant teachers were responsible for providing a qualified substitute when their absence coincided with the teaching term. Female teachers angrily protested. They argued that three months was a ridiculously long period of time, when one month’s leave of absence without stoppage of salary (on production of a doctor’s certificate) had ‘always’ been sufficient.52 Others were furious with the Commissioners’ insistence that the women themselves find substitutes.53 The debate widened to include a long-standing resentment against some managers who forced their teachers to resign upon marriage or pregnancy.54 Female teachers were anxious about the promotional implications of the new move by the Commissioners. In a speech to the 1912 Teachers Congress in Cork, Mrs O’Shea noted that teachers were unlikely to win the final merit mark from the inspector (enabling promotion) if she was forced to give her school over to a substitute for three months. She was also concerned with the eugenic implications of the rule, arguing that the mental and physical distress caused would affect the child. Punishment of the mother seemed to be the order of the day.

Then begins a series of fines. The teacher is fined in the salary she pays her substitute. The required merit mark is not obtained. She is fined in her reputation as an efficient teacher, not through her own inefficiency, but thoroughly through that of her substitute, who is probably a perfect stranger to her. She is fined in not securing an increase of salary. In fact, her punishment extends through the whole term of her natural life, as the loss of promotion will reduce the amount of her pension - should she live long enough to claim it.

52. ‘Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National Education at their Meeting on Tuesday, 4 April 1911’, p.123, National Library of Ireland. For a small sample of the uproar, see the protests by teachers in Baltinglass, Tralee, Galway, Kanturk and Donegal in the Minutes for 27 June and 31 October 1911, pp 216 and 372. In 1893 medical officers recommending a three-month compulsory suspension for pregnant linen workers, also noted that such a policy would be fought vigorously by the workers, see Royal Commission on Labour. The Employment of Women, Reports by Miss Eliza Orme, Miss Clara E. Collett, Miss May E. Abraham and Miss Margaret H. Irwin (Lady Assistant Commissioners), On the Conditions of Work in Various Industries in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, p.329 [C.-6894-xxiii], H.C. 1893-94, xxxvii, pt.1, p.877.

53. ‘Women Teachers and Substitutes’, Irish School Weekly, 29 April 1911, p.86.

Female teachers may be excused for wondering how attaining 'the right to the highest and holiest name in our language...that of a virtuous and honourable mother' merited such punishment.55 Faced with the fury of female teachers, coupled with demands for equity, the Commissioners opted to let the rule slip. Discretion was given to the local manager. Some 'fines' which had already been paid were refunded but, after two years of argument, confusion and discretion were the key words.56 As has already been noted, however, female representation in schools increased during this period. In part this is due to the fact that more employed women were unmarried - an important factor when we are trying to explain declining labour force participation of all marital groups. Also, many female teachers in single-sex schools and convent schools remained unthreatened.

Religion

It is significant that much of the debate by teachers against the 'maternity rule' originated in the north among teachers who resented what they saw as 'interference from the Catholic south.'57 Was the Catholic Church responsible for the low proportion of married women in the workplace? The clergy included many men who opposed the employment of women. Bishop O'Dwyer's 1912 Lenten Pastoral condemned the employment of women, except in the case of extreme hardship and, then, only unmarried or childless women.58 Rev. L. McKenna was the most vehement protagonist of employed women.

It is clear that the law of work, though it binds all human beings, has a different application to men and to women. Hence, any application of that law of work which would be incompatible with women's

55.Speech by Mrs. O'Shea reported in 'The Maternity Question', Irish School Weekly, 26 April 1913, pp 185-86.


57.Irish Protestant Teachers' Union, minute book, 19 February 1913, P.R.O.N.I. D517.

58.'Women Worker's Column', Irish Worker, 9 March 1912, p.2.
nature - for example, the imposing on women of work which by its character or by its severity would endanger women's social function - would be contrary to God's ordinance and would be essentially wrong. To the man he assigns external work, the production of wealth; to the woman, motherhood and its consequences, home work and the training of her children.\(^{59}\)

But religious influences were minor. Nearly all married women in the eight District Electoral Divisions were Roman Catholic. In all provinces except Connaught Roman Catholic women were more likely to be employed than adherents of other religious groups. In Connaught, women designated 'other' religious beliefs and Presbyterians were more likely to be designated an occupation. It was Methodist (not Roman Catholic) women in Leinster who moved more rapidly out of employment between 1891 and 1911.

### Household Decision-Making and Female Employment

Central to understanding changes in female employment is the family. An important function of the familial unit involves the care of the household and children. Customarily this function has fallen to women and is thought to reduce female opportunities to work at other occupations. Children require labour and people believed that a woman (preferably the mother) gave this attention best.\(^{60}\) Unsurprisingly, therefore, where alternatives to female family members taking care of children were virtually non-existent, women living in households with young children were less likely to be designated an

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occupation in the census than women living in households with no or few young children.  

3.12

| Percentage of All Adult Women Living in Households With Children Under the Age of Five and Fifteen According to Whether or Not the Woman was 'Occupied' 1901 and 1911 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1901 | 1911 |
| Occupied | Not Occupied | Occupied | Not Occupied |
| Number of Children Under Five Years |
| None | 82.9 | 68.0 | 79.3 | 69.1 |
| One | 7.6 | 14.1 | 5.0 | 12.4 |
| Two | 7.0 | 10.0 | 6.9 | 10.8 |
| Three + | 2.5 | 7.8 | 5.7 | 7.7 |
| Number of Children Under Fifteen Years |
| None | 56.2 | 45.4 | 64.9 | 47.4 |
| One | 16.2 | 17.6 | 11.5 | 16.8 |
| Two | 10.0 | 10.2 | 6.3 | 10.1 |
| Three | 5.5 | 9.6 | 7.8 | 9.3 |
| Four | 4.9 | 5.0 | 3.4 | 6.4 |
| Five + | 7.1 | 12.2 | 6.0 | 9.9 |

The importance of the family life-cycle in regulating female employment can be seen by matching households in the eight District Electoral Divisions in 1901 with 1911. Just over seven-hundred households were matched in this way, that is, nearly eighty per cent of the households in 1911 were matched with households in 1901. The table below shows the percentage of all 'matched' women who had the same occupation in 1901 and 1911, changed from one occupation to another occupation, did not have an occupation in 1901 but did in 1911, or had an occupation in 1901 but did not by 1911. Each of these categories will be examined in turn.

61. Adult woman were defined as any woman over the age of fifteen. Women with the occupation 'scholars' were omitted from the analysis. Strictly, the years 1901 and 1911 should not be compared since in 1901 a significant proportion of women designated occupations were 'farmer's relatives' - an option not open to women in 1911. Women were said to have 'no occupation' if the space for occupation was left blank or if one of the following designations was given: 'housewife', 'domestic duties', 'helping about the house' or 'domestic work at home'. For a discussion on alternatives to familial child-care in rural areas, see 'Irish Mothers and their Critics', Irish Homestead, 22 February 1913, p.150 and Rev. Denis Kelly (Bishop of Ross), Women's Share in the Industrial Revival of Ireland (Dublin: Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1905), p.19.
3.13

Occupational Changes of Matched Women
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of women within the households who</th>
<th>Percentage (n=439)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Had the same occupation in 1901 as in 1911</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changed from one occupation to another occupation</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did not have an occupation in 1901 but did in 1911</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Had an occupation in 1901 but did not by 1911</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly fourteen per cent of women were doing the same job in 1901 as in 1911. Most were widowed or unmarried. Half of women who kept their occupational status were either the only employed person in the household or they resided in all-female households.

3.14

Occupational Changes of Matched Women
Women Doing the Same Job in 1901 and 1911
Eight District Electoral Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percentage (n=61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried (1901 and 1911)</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (1901 and 1911)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (1901), Widowed (1911)</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married but husband absent (1901 and 1911)</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed (1901 and 1911)</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One hundred and eleven women 'gained' an occupation in 1911 which they did not have in 1901. Of these women, one-quarter were too young to have found employment in 1901. In one-third of the households, the 'head' had died between 1901 and 1911, presumably increasing the need for an extra wage-earner. Entry into the labour force generally occurred along two lines. First, approximately one-quarter entered employment in 1911 as female 'farmers'. Their entry was stimulated by the death of the 'head' - usually their husband. In many cases it is clear that the change in occupational title from 'none' to 'farmer' entailed little real change in function.62 Second, thirty-six per cent of the

62. In 1926 seventy-seven per cent of female farmers in the Republic of Ireland were widowed, compared with ten per cent of male farmers (of all women over twelve years of age, twelve per cent were widowed compared with five per cent of all men).
women entering the workforce entered as domestic servants. Forty per cent of the domestic servants finding employment in 1911 entered households which had either aged between 1901 and 1911 and contained a large number of elderly people (and no compensating younger person) or households which contained a large number of very young children which had not been present in 1901.

3.15

Occational Changes of Matched Women

Women Who Had an Occupation in 1901 but not in 1911

Eight District Electoral Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage (n=262)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic servant</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm servant or labourer</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress, dressmaker, sprigger</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop or draper’s assistant</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potter, painter of pottery</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-fifth of women losing occupations presumably retired as the farm and the title 'farmer' were taken over by the son. In sixteen per cent of the cases the woman in 1901 was old and her 'disappearance' from the 1911 household may be presumed to be due to her death, especially since in many of these cases a relative (usually the son) had taken the title 'head'. This is even clearer if we just look at that subset of women called 'farmers' in 1901 but not in 1911.

3.16

Occational Changes of Matched Women

Women Called 'Farmers' in 1901 but not in 1911

Eight District Electoral Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Explanation for Change of Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage (n=68)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presumed died because elderly in 1901</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presumed retired since son is now 'head'</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children grown up and working on farm</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband away in 1901 but present in 1911</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While ninety per cent of women who 'became' farmers in 1911 after having no occupation in
1901 did so after the male 'head' (generally the husband) died, another ninety per cent relinquished the title 'farmer' by retiring in favour of a male relative, or dying.

3.17

Occupational Changes of Matched Women

Women Who were Domestic Servants in 1901 but not in 1911

Eight District Electoral Divisions

Presumed Cause of Losing Job | Percentage (n=92)
-------------------------------|-----------------
No explanation: a young, unmarried, member of family | 20.7
Replaced by another female domestic servant | 30.4
Replaced by a male domestic servant | 6.5
Children in employing household grown up | 16.3
Servant married by 1911 | 1.1
Servant has children by 1911 | 2.2
'Head' of employing household died | 3.3
Servant was old in 1901, in household, presumed retired | 9.8
Servant was old in 1901, disappeared presumed died | 3.3
New female relative doing domestic work in 1911 | 2.2
Household no longer employing domestic servant | 2.2
Multi-servant household in 1901, one servant cut | 2.2

Looking at the other large occupational category where women entered in 1901 and left by 1911, domestic service, the striking factor here is not retirement or death (although this may have affected thirteen per cent of the sample), but rapid turn-over. Two thirds of domestic servants in the sample lost their job between 1901 and 1911. Only one-third were replaced with another female servant. More surprising is the substitution of a male domestic servant for a female servant in 6.5 per cent of the cases. The category 'no explanation' generally referred to daughters within a household who simply 'disappeared' from the household by 1911 - perhaps, by finding a live-in position in another household or by getting married and commencing work in their own household. This group is examined

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63. Where there were more than one possible cause of the servant's 'disappearance', an assumption has been made about the probable importance of the explanations. For instance, it was common to find a household where the servant was elderly (and presumed retired) by 1911 as well as the children having grown up. In this case the former explanation was assumed to be dominant. Similarly, the category 'household no longer employing any female servants' could have been used to explain a number of the changes - it has only been used where no other 'explanation' fits.
in detail in Chapter Four.

Looking at the family structure of households where women either moved in or out of the workforce, or remained in the same occupation, reveals interesting patterns. Over eighty per cent of households where the woman remained in the same occupation between 1901 and 1911 were headed by a woman. This contrasts with half of all households where women 'gained' employment between 1901 and 1911 and one-quarter of households where women left employment. Although part of the differential relates to the greater likelihood that women in female-headed households would claim an occupation (their labour is both more obvious and more acceptable), the large differential also implies that there was a greater likelihood that women in female-headed households would have to find paid employment in order to maintain living standards.

Households where women entered the labour market were larger than those where women left the market or remained in the same occupation. As we would expect, households with small children were more likely to demand the attentions of a woman with no other employment. Thus, women who remained in the same occupation between 1901 and 1911 were least likely to have children under the age of five or fifteen. Women residing in households with the largest number of children were most prone to leave a job they had in 1901.

### 3.18

**Occupational Changes of Matched Women**

**Size of Household**

Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Household (excluding servants)</th>
<th>Occupational Changes of Adult Women</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gained (n=99 hhds)</td>
<td>Lost (n=212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or four</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or six</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over seven</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.19

**Occupational Changes of Matched Women**

**Percentage of Households with Children**

72
Under the Age of Five and Fifteen
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gained (n=99 hhds)</th>
<th>Left (n=212)</th>
<th>Remained (n=57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Under Five Years</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Under Fifteen Years</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Examining changes in female occupational status in individual households within a ten year period illustrates numerous potential motives for changes in female employment. Household structure is most important in explaining why women moved in and out of the paid labour force. As will be argued later in the thesis, shifts in paid employment cannot be separated from shifts in unpaid forms of labour. Thus, women entering the paid workforce between 1901 and 1911 were more likely to come from houses which required less work—that is, third class houses. Less than one per cent of women entering the workforce were from first class houses, compared with over four per cent of women who left the occupational workforce or who remained in the same employment between 1901 and 1911.64 Women leaving employment were most likely to come from larger houses. Chapter Nine argues against the notion that it was wealth (or rising living standards) per se which caused women to withdraw from the market (as a form of conspicuous consumption or an affirmation of status), but that increased living standards, as represented by larger and 'better' houses, increased the workloads in the unpaid domestic sphere. The relative importance of factors introduced in this chapter, such as sectoral shifts, discrimination and household labour, are examined in the rest of the thesis.

64. The number of women in each category are 72, 155 and 48 for women gaining employment, losing employment and remaining in employment between 1901 and 1911, respectively. In this case, I have excluded all non-relatives, generally domestic servants.
Chapter 4

Rural Service

Jane McArthur was in my service for upward of four years as House and Parlour Maid. I found her a faithful servant in every respect, capable of doing her work, willing and obeying. She left me more than two years ago to get married to my coachman. Latterly she had charge of my laundry and in that situation gave me every satisfaction.¹

signed Henry Meteor in a letter of recommendation. Jane McArthur represents one type of domestic servant. In some respects she belonged to an elite of servants. She was no general slavey. Typical of women in her occupation she was a local girl who had filled the years between adolescence and marriage by working as a domestic servant. After marriage she had exchanged full-time service in the home of her employer for full-time service within her own home, supplemented by doing laundry for her former employer. Henry Meteor accredited her with the three traits desired in a servant: she was capable, malleable and obedient. Within two decades of his letter, domestic service was declining. Although the term 'domestic servant problem' came into vogue in the 1890s, the decline of service scarcely merited comment from most former employers and employees. The 'servant question' was answered by the substitution of unpaid labour for the cash nexus.

Domestic service has attracted many British and American scholars. However, explorations of service in Britain and America contribute little to an understanding of service in rural Ireland. Most historians of domestic service concentrate either on

1.P.R.O.N.I. D2957/7, letter of recommendation for laundry work from Henry Meteor, 13 August 1877, Fort Williamspark.
explaining urban patterns or on examining the habits of wealthy employers. Even when examined carefully within this context, many explanations are doubtful. When used to explain the decline of service in Ireland, they are obviously inadmissible. J. A. Banks, for instance, explains the collapse of service as an attempt by employers to maintain the 'paraphernalia of gentility' during the depression by reducing expenditure on servants. Not only does this demand-based argument conflict with evidence which could be drawn from British wage data, it also fails to account for the timing of the decline and places excessive stress on wealthy employers. P. Hom, M. Ebery, B. Preston and T. M. McBride emphasise supply factors. From the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the availability of new forms of employment for women drew women out of domestic service. Aside from the problems in making this argument fit the timing of expanding employment opportunities in England, the argument is obviously inapplicable for Irish females who faced declining alternative opportunities for employment. Heidi Hartmann argues that the decline in domestic service was due to expanding capitalist production. Goods and services previously produced in the home, moved out of the household and into the market. She also argues that a 'taste' for expensive commodities (such as cars) arose to compete for scarce


incomes.\textsuperscript{4} Again, her timing is wrong. Domestic service was unimportant by the time mass private transport took off. Furthermore, she ignores expanding production in the home and seems to consider 'shopping' as a form of leisure rather than labour. Similarly, Edward Higg's argument that the labour of the servant moved out of the home and into the factory, while the housewife began buying products rather than hiring a domestic servant to produce the product did not apply to Ireland.\textsuperscript{5} There was little substitution of processed foods for domestic servants in Ireland.\textsuperscript{6} In fact, Chapter Nine argues both that the labour involved in domestic food production increased as the number of domestic servants decreased, and that the time costs of shopping (for instance) were as high as the time costs of primary production. A popular explanation for the decline of service in Ireland is the failure of Irish cities to grow significantly. But, most Irish servants were employed in rural areas, rendering this argument useless. Clearly new explanations must be called upon if we are to understand the role of servants in rural Ireland.

Nature of Service

The important factor in understanding rural domestic service is that the work was not necessarily 'domestic'. Rural domestic servants were expected to do a wide range of activities, both indoor and outdoor.

The kitchen maid can work or play  
At certain times when not engaged  
Some times she puts the hens to lay  
And more times rock the cradle  
Some times she puts the gees [sic] to hatch,

\textsuperscript{4}Heidi Irmgard Hartmann, \textit{Capitalism and Women's Work in the Home, 1900-1930} (Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), pp 180-81.


\textsuperscript{6}Edward Higgs, 'Domestic Servants in Victorian England', \textit{Social History}, 8.2 (May 1983), pp 201-10. He also suggests that the decline in servants was simply a replacement of the term 'domestic servant' for 'shop assistant' in retailing households. This did not occur in the 1901 and 1911 census sample. Harvey Levenstein, \textit{Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) also ties the decline of servants with dietary changes.
And other times she is cleaving fleas
She'll dress the beds both soft and flat
And sleep til day is breaking.7

Rural service involved a variety of employments.8 For the sum of 25s. a month with rights
to eat in the kitchen but not to board with the family, Miss Harker was expected to teach
three children, mind two infants, cook the dinner, wash the dishes and clean the knives.
She was eventually forced to leave because of a row which developed after they refused to
allow her any holidays.9 Miss Harker was part of an elite of servants: she didn’t have to
work outdoors and the house-cleaning and laundry was done by another servant. The ‘all-
purpose’ servant girl had a different life.

I must have been about ten years old, and in those days there was no school act and you could come
and go as you pleased. A neighbour’s wife took me in, and I helped her with the little jobs around:
calves and pigs, bringing in the cows and housework of every sort. I tell you it would be ten o’clock
before your eyes were closed and you had your clothes off. You’d be that worn out. But you’d never
complain, because there were lots of young people watching out for the first little job that was
coming. I was not unhappy, they were nice and good people. I got ten shillings a month and stayed ten
years. They had old style ways then, and I was young and didn’t take any notice. It was all washing
a’ scrubbing down the floors, plucking fowl and any other little thing….I can’t remember growing up…[sic] you were young, then suddenly you were old and there was little or nothing in between.
’Come here, Annie. Go there, Annie.’ The only free moment in any day was Sunday when I was let off
for two hours. ’Be back around six,’ the Mistress would tell me, ’because of dairying the cows’.10

No clear distinction can be made between women called ‘domestic servants’ and women
called ‘farm servants’. Analysis of the type of work servants performed illustrates the
tension between farm and domestic servants. For example, ”Murphy of Ballygarret” (County
Kerry) hired a woman called Mary Sullivan to be a servant:

It was the harvest time and they were cutting the oats and he was out in the cornfield one day and his
father was inside and this girl walked in the door to him. He welcomed her and he asked her what was
her business.

7.’A New Song on the Hiring Fairs of Ulster’, Australian National Library q 320.945 I68, Box 46 No.844c.
9.”The Governess’, Kings County Chronicle, 10 July 1890, p.3.
Annie Sullivan, ex-maid, aged 82 years, pp 24-5.
"I'm looking for work," says she.
"Well," says he, "can you milk cows?"
"I can," says she.
"Can you bake and keep house?" says he.
"I can," says she.
"Well," says he, "as you can do all those things you say I'll keep you for three months."
And out in the evening she was snapping the oats from the scythe. She was a great servant - able to do everything around the house. 11

Nearly ninety per cent of the respondents to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's questionnaire on hiring fairs included indoor tasks in their list of the activities of female farm servants. Female farm servants cooked, cleaned, washed carpets and blankets, made jams, knitted, baked bread, spun, took care of children, and carried tea to labourers in the fields. Indoor tasks overwhelmed the time schedules of women hired in autumn more than of those hired in spring. Male farm servants rarely did housework. Women called farm servants also performed agricultural work. Respondents noted that female farm servants dropped, gathered and washed potatoes. They cut and stacked turf, threshed, cleaned cattle houses, harvested corn, pulled flax, made hay, fed animals, milked and churned, thinned turnips, tied corn, boiled potatoes for the pigs, took care of the poultry and 'some of the sturdier types would even mow with a scythe'. As a woman from Gilford said: 'No job too hard. No job too dirty. No consideration for women'. 12

However, if there is a connection between domestic servants and farm servants, what about that category of workers called 'agricultural labourers'? 13 The only clear thing that can be said about the difference between the two agricultural classifications is

11. Irish Folklore Commission, interview with "Jack Dick" (his real name was Jack Kelliher), aged about seventy-five years, a farmer from the Lixnax Parish in Clanmaurice (County Clare), interviewed in May 1950, talking about Mary Sullivan (County Kerry), pp 2-3, Mss 1177.

12. Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Questionaire on Hiring Fairs No.2, 1977. The two quotation come from respondents in Kilrea (County Derry) and Gilford (County Down). Richard Breen, 'Farm Servanthood in Ireland, 1900-1940', Economic History Review, series 2, 36 (1983), pp 87-102 also notes the high proportion of domestic duties involved in the work of female farm servants.

13. The total number of agricultural labourers are defined as those called 'agricultural labourers' in the census plus people living in rural areas who were simply called 'labourers' in the 'indefinite' section of the census tables.
P4.1 Irish women from Achill raising green potatoes in July, 1909
that indoor female farm servants were much more likely to perform household work than women called 'agricultural labourers'. Agricultural labourers were more important as short-term hired harvest workers. In the sample of eight District Electoral Divisions less than half a dozen women called themselves agricultural labourers: all were elderly, landless women dependent on hiring themselves out for casual labouring work. This chapter, therefore, concentrates on domestic servants and female indoor farm servants.14

Our problems do not end with admitting to hazy definitions. As we have noticed before, the use of census data limits our analysis. How would a woman who migrated seasonally to Scotland as a labourer classify herself? A dairywoman could be called a domestic servant, an indoor farm servant or an agricultural labourer. She might be given no occupation. Some employers hired male agricultural labourers on the condition that a female member of his family milked the cows, or fed the poultry, or helped during harvest. These women would probably be listed as 'unoccupied'. We can only assume that women working full-time for a wage as a domestic servant would be liable to be given that occupation in the census.

The first part of this chapter examines general trends in domestic service and indoor farm service in order to establish the national demand for servants. The main source for this section is published and unpublished census data. The second part of the chapter uses wage data, household statistics from the eight District Electoral Divisions, and other contemporary sources to examine explanations for the decline of rural service.

The Decline of Service

Indoor farm service employed a small number of women. Between 1891 and 1911 the

14. Only female indoor farm servants were examined since the argument about household work does not apply to male indoor farm servants who only performed farm work. However, it must be noted that young boys hired as farm servants often worked for the mistress, performing such tasks as collecting firing, running messages, picking up the groceries, milking cows and preparing pig food: see the reminiscences of Michael MacGowan, The Hard Road to Klondike (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), pp 29-30. The agricultural explanations given in this chapter could, of course, be applied to female agricultural labourers.
number of women engaged in indoor farm service declined by eighty-two per cent. In 1911, farm service employed just over two thousand women. Numbers in Munster declined less rapidly because the demand for dairymaids remained relatively buoyant.

4.1

Number of Female Indoor Farm Servants
By Provinces, 1881-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Leinster (1,000s)</th>
<th>Munster (1,000s)</th>
<th>Ulster (1,000s)</th>
<th>Connaught (1,000s)</th>
<th>TOTAL (1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By contrast, domestic service was the single most important occupation for women. Eleven per cent of all employed women were domestic servants. It was a female occupation. The percentage of all employed men who were domestic servants dropped from one per cent to 0.7 per cent.

4.2

Number in the 'Domestic Class' in Ireland
1861-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women (1,000)</th>
<th>Men (1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>309.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>343.1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>392.1</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>220.7</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>193.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>144.9</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the census, the 'Domestic Class' included domestic gardeners, private lodge and gate keepers, private park keepers, inn and hotel servants, servants in colleges and clubs,

15. The 1861 statistic is not strictly comparable with later statistics. The 1861 figure used here is the number of female 'farm labourers and servants'. Unless otherwise stated, all data for tables in this chapter have been taken from the census reports or from the sample of eight District Electoral Districts.
non-governmental office keepers, non-domestic cooks, charwomen, washing and bathing servants, hospital and institution servants, as well as general 'indoor domestic servants'. This chapter limits itself to indoor domestic servants, the most significant category of paid domestic work.

4.3

**Domestic Occupations - Females**

**Percentage Distribution Within each Category, 1891-1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Occupations</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Service</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College, Club Service</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Gardener</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Domestic Cook</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodge, Park Service</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inn, Hotel Service</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital, Institution</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charwoman</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing, Bathing Service</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Domestic Service</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment in this sector underwent a crisis between 1891 and 1911. In 1911, 72,000 fewer women worked as indoor domestic servants than in 1891. Domestic service was the only occupation in my census sample where women regularly claimed to be 'unemployed'. For instance, Bridget Leahy was an 'unemployed cook' in 1901. By 1911 she had descended to a 'cockle-picker'.

Women in every province left domestic service. In Connaught and Ulster, the proportion of female domestic servants almost halved and in Munster and Leinster their numbers declined by seventy and forty-two per cent respectively. Since employment contracted in all other occupations, as a proportion of women in employment, domestic service increased slightly in Leinster and Munster and declined slightly in Connaught and

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16. Bridget Leahy lived in the Woodstown District Electoral Division (County Waterford), Public Record Office of Ireland, 1901 and 1911 census manuscripts.
Ulster. The decline of domestic service is most apparent in the area of recruitment. Progressively fewer young women aged twenty to twenty-four years entered domestic service. In Roscommon, Sligo and Longford the number of female domestic servants aged twenty to twenty-four years at least halved between 1891 and 1911. Only in the areas around Belfast and Dublin were young women recruited at a rate resembling former levels and, even there, young domestic servants declined by fourteen and twenty per cent respectively. Declining proportions of domestic servants in younger age groups coupled with an increase in the age categories twenty-five to forty-four and over sixty-five years. Still, domestic servants were young compared with other employed women. Over half of domestic servants were aged between fifteen and twenty-four while thirty-eight per cent of all employed women belonged to this age group.

As expected, domestic servants tended to be single. In 1871 less than four per cent of domestic servants were married in the entire country. Approximately seven per cent of domestic servants in the eight District Electoral Divisions sampled were married while over eighty-two per cent were unmarried. Ninety per cent or more of female farm servants in these eight areas were unmarried.

4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status of Female Domestic Servants and Farm Servants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live-In Domestic Servants Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic Servants</th>
<th>Farm Servants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1901 (n=159)</td>
<td>1911 (n=142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1901 (n=34)</td>
<td>1911 (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decline in the domestic servant population between 1901 and 1911 did not affect the proportion of married servants but led to a sharp decrease in the number of widows in

17. Only one female farm servants was married in both 1901 and 1911. Note the small sample size in 1911 where n=10.
service. Both demand and supply factors may explain this change. Most domestic servants who were widows would have been servants before marriage, stopped when they married, then resumed service after their husband’s death. The increasing difficulties associated with returning to service after marriage suggests declining demand for servants. Old age pensions made it less necessary for elderly widows to find employment and provided younger relatives with an incentive to invite such women into their homes to perform household chores and look after children without payment.

Employers

Who employed servants and what do changes in employers tell us about the changing nature of service? Between forty-four and fifty per cent of households with living-in servants on the day of the census, were ’headed’ by farmers. Within the community, local clergymen, barristers, J.Ps, magistrates and land agents each employed their share of domestic servants. Women giving their occupation as ’ladies’ hired up to ten per cent of living-in domestic servants. However, the employment of a servant in the household was not a prerogative of the wealthy. In Ards in 1911, an elderly, unmarried agricultural labourer

### 4.5

**Valuation of All Households and Households with Live-In Servants**

As a Percentage of All Households With Valuation Over One Pound

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuation (pounds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. I have ignored households for which I could find no valuation.
had a resident servant to do his chores. As the valuation of his land was only one pound, forty year old Hannah O'Donnell probably had to be content with little more than her keep. Although between forty-five and forty-seven per cent of all living-in servants worked in households with a total valuation of over fifty pounds, one-quarter resided in households with a land valuation of between one and nine pounds. Living-in domestic servants were over-represented in households with a valuation of over thirty pounds.

The number of households with resident domestic servants increased on larger farms between 1901 and 1911. The decline in domestic servants hit households resident on holdings between five and thirty acres.

### 4.6

**Percentage of Households With Resident Domestic Servants**

*Non-Relatives, By Farm Size*

**Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>Domestic Servants 1901 (n=415)</th>
<th>Domestic Servants 1911 (n=437)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A different situation emerges with regards farm servants. The number of households with at least one live-in male or female farm servant remained stable at between eight and nine per cent in the District Electoral Divisions between 1901 and 1911. This statistic masks the rapid decline of female farm servants. Because female farm servants were rarely employed and, when required, resided on large farms, it was farms over one-hundred acres that were most affected by the decline in female farm service. At the same time farms over five acres in size hired more male farm servants.
### 4.7

**Percentage of Households With Male or Female Farm Servants**  
*By Farm Size*  
*Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>Women 1901 (n=415)</th>
<th>Women 1911 (n=437)</th>
<th>Men 1901 (n=415)</th>
<th>Men 1911 (n=437)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the most significant features about the change in domestic servanthood is that employers were increasingly wealthy. In 1911, 8.4 per cent of all households in these eight districts hired three or more domestic servants, compared with 4.6 per cent in 1901.

### 4.8

**Number of Live-In Domestic Servants in Each Household**  
*As a Percentage of All Households With Live-In Domestic Servants*  
*Eight District Electoral Districts, 1901 and 1911*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>1901 (n=65)</th>
<th>1911 (n=82)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over Four</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further support for the argument that wealthier households were employing more servants can be found by studying the birthplace of servants. In the eight District Electoral Divisions there was an increase from twelve per cent to sixteen per cent in the proportion of domestic servants who were employed in counties outside the county in which they were born. There was a rapid increase in the proportion of servants who came from outside Ireland. In 1911, thirty-five per cent of all servants in these districts were born outside Ireland, compared with fourteen per cent in 1901. Of those servants born in Ireland, just over one-third were born in neighbouring counties.
Birthplaces of Live-In Domestic Servants
As a Percentage of all Live-In Domestic Servants
Eight District Electoral Districts, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=83)</td>
<td>(n=114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same County as Employed</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring County</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another County</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Outside Ireland</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Birthplace of Domestic Servants Who Do NOT Live-In
As a Percentage of All Domestic Servants Who Do NOT Live-In
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=86)</td>
<td>(n=32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Country as Employed</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring County</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another County</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Outside Ireland</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further sign of the increasing wealth of employers is the tendency for domestic servants to reside with their employers rather than with relatives. In 1901 only half of domestic servants lived with their employer, compared with eighty per cent ten years later.  

Relationship of Domestic Servants to Head of the Household
As a Percentage of all Domestic Servants
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=163)</td>
<td>(n=142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, Wife</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodger, Visitor</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using English data, Edward Higgs suggested that many servants residing with relatives were actually working (without wages) for those relatives. By excluding women declaring themselves simply as 'housekeeper' from my statistics on domestic servants, the likelihood of this confusion is reduced. Higgs was using census enumerator forms rather than the original entries of household heads. If his hypothesis is valid for Ireland, the declining proportion of domestic servants residing with relatives suggests a reduction in the 'employment' status of unpaid housework. Since there has been an increase in the number of dependent females within the household between 1901 and 1911, this could in part be a result of the re-classification of relatives formerly called 'domestic servants' into the nameless classification. This occurred in only one household in my sample of matched households in the eight District Electoral Divisions, so it cannot account for the widespread movement from servants living in households to servants living with their employers. The movement of servants into their employers' households may have resulted in employers assuming greater control over their servants with a corresponding alienation of the servant from her own class and familial ties.

We are now in a position to examine reasons for the decline in rural domestic service. As we saw in Chapter Three, changes in the sex ratio and in total employment would lead us to expect a small decline in the number of women in domestic service (less than eleven thousand between 1891 and 1911) and changes in distribution would lead us to expect a large decrease of women in domestic occupations (between twenty-one and thirty-three thousand). Why did this occur?

PART ONE: SUPPLY OF SERVANTS

Supply of Servants: Tastes of Employers

By the turn of the century, middle class Irish women had identified a 'domestic servant problem'. For them, the problem was straightforward: good servants were

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unobtainable. Employment columns of the newspapers are full of requests for servants and of women seeking employment. Although I have used these advertisements for wage rates, the value of using them to ascertain questions of supply and demand is doubtful. Employable domestic servants and prospective mistresses rarely resorted to newspaper advertisements.

Further, we do not know to what extent Irish mistresses and servants were addicted to 'playing at general post' - that is, perpetually giving or receiving notices.21 In my sample of advertisements in the Irish Times, up until the turn of the century the number of women advertising for employment generally equalled the number of prospective employers calling for servants. After 1901 there were about 1.3 positions for servants advertised to every servant asking for work.22 Newspaper testimonies stress the shortage of servants.

The employment and retention of servants was a major concern for the wealthier women in the community. They complained that servants packed their bags without warning to take up employment with the highest bidder.23 The servants, confident of their status as scarce workers, made their mistresses groan under their independence.24 Naive people muttered

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21. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.15 [C.9345], H. C. 1899, xcii, p.15

22. My sample of advertisements (from the Irish Times) for domestic servants every three years between 1883 and 1913 on the 2nd and 10th or 11th of April included an analysis of 1379 women asking for employment and 1506 employers requesting servants. This sample includes all women enumerated on these days. As not all advertisements contained wage rates, the sample used later in this chapter is smaller.

23. "A Baffled Employer", 'Correspondence. Masters and Servant', Irish Homestead, 26 May 1900, p.330. For a contrasting opinion, see Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.9 [C.9345], H. C. 1899, xcii, p.9 which tentatively explains the older age structure of Irish servants as due to the longer leivity of Irish servants who were indifferent to wage differentials!

that the solution was the substitution of gas fires for coal fires. Others decided that education was the solution. So long as housework was regarded as a menial occupation, mistresses would be denied satisfactory domestic servants. A few disagreed, maintaining that servants were 'too damn educated'. The illiterate, malleable 'girl' of the past was preferred. These people were a minority and recognised themselves that it was impossible to recreate their vision of an idyllic past.

In opposition to this view, other commentators argued that there was an ample supply of servants - but they could not find jobs. In response to criticism of female emigration, Helen Hawthorn (women's columnist for Ireland's Own) retorted that girls were forced to emigrate because they could not find employment as servants, and there were too few alternative options. In the early 1880s, Vere Foster used the low demand for servants as a rationale for his Female Emigration Fund. At the turn of the century, the wife of the unpopular land agent, S. M. Hussey, never had difficulties hiring servants, even during boycott.

27. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.84 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, p.89, comment by Maurice Fitzgerald, smallholder in Dromod and Prior Parish (County Kerry); "Geraldine", 'The Irishwoman's Attitudes', Irishman, 15 January 1916, p.4; and "A Kerry Woman" (of Killarney), 'The Irishwoman's Attitudes', Irishman, 1 March 1916, p.6.
29. Mr. Vere Foster's Irish Female Emigration Fund, Under the Auspices of all the Clergy of all Denominations in the West of Ireland, August 1883, Vere Foster's papers in P.R.O.N.I. D3618/D/10/12.
the schools for the training of domestic servants opening by the 1890s.\footnote{31}

We can attempt to answer the question of employers' demand by concentrating on regional and class differences. Wealthier urban women found the supply of servants insufficient. Their problem was exacerbated by unreliable communication links with potential servants. Urban employers advertised in newspapers. Rural girls were more likely to hear of employment opportunities through the 'American letter' than through the Dublin tabloids. Unlike their English counterparts, urban employers in Ireland were not anxious to attract rural girls into service.\footnote{32} The work involved in training a rural girl to be a servant in the city was too great. Even in the countryside, servant girls were thought to be incompetent.\footnote{33} An interview with the 78-year old farming woman, Eileen O'Shea, summed up this attitude:

Sometimes I had a girl to help me, but God knows, more often than not they were poor slatternly creatures, and it was more hard work looking after them than any little service they did. Some of the things they did, or rather, didn't do would keep me talking for weeks.\footnote{34}

Rural employers wanted super-workers. For a minimum wage, they demanded women willing to invest as much of their labour in the farm as themselves. If they advertised for cooks, they demanded servants who would feed the pigs, milk the cows and take care of the children. They wanted their parlourmaids to be tall and sophisticated, as well as strong laundresses. Nurses were to have impeccable accents as well as being experienced seamstresses, making all the children's clothing and doing all the family's laundry.\footnote{35}

Good servants were 'rarer than white blackbirds': 'Perhaps the upbringing in the

\footnote{31}{Patrick Dougherty, 'Correspondence. Carrigart Housekeeping School', Irish Homestead, 24 March 1900, p.185.}
\footnote{32}{Even today Dubliners regard rural females from their neighbouring county of Meath as inferior housekeepers.}
\footnote{33}{Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.9 [C.9345], H. C. 1899, xcii, p.9.}
\footnote{34}{Peter Somerville-Large, Cappaghglass (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p.21.}
\footnote{35}{Every column included such stipulations.}

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cottage home may not have been of a kind to foster habits of industry'. In the middle of an article promoting domestic service as a profession, Kathleen Ferguson suddenly launched into a tirade against the typical domestic servant, betraying that her fears were not a shortage of servants, but a shortage of 'respectable' women willing to accept employment in this low-paid, menial occupation.

Of course the dirty, ill-kept slattern servant, with shaggy locks, shoes down at the heels, dirty apron, dirty face and hands, is a creature to be looked down on. But why does such a being exist? It is because the respectable girls won't go into service, therefore many servants come from the very poorest classes, and they continue in their servant life the life they were brought up to in the back slums by ignorant, idle parents, given very often to drunkenness.

Typical of her class, Francis Moffit swore that servants were frequently pregnant spinsters, they were commonly alcoholics, they were guaranteed to disturb the household with 'superstitious' fears, and, without exception, they were incompetent. Such attitudes led to proposals that girls should be imported from the 'North of Ireland, Scotland, or foreign parts' to work as domestic servants, with a view to marrying them to local Irish farmers. As one writer reasoned, such a policy would benefit the entire community: the imported servants would improve the standard of domestic service by their example within vulgar society and by rearing a superior stock of future servants.

Who was responsible for the disappearance of the 'good' servant? Employers blamed the decline in the quality of domestic servants on the disintegration of the patronage system in the countryside. This, in turn, was the fault of nationalists. According to these accounts, in the indistinct but relatively recent past a woman of 'superior culture' and 'a little goodwill' might allow peasant girls to visit her home and 'see how things are well done'.

She could let them know not only that civilisation demands that this thing and that thing in the daily contact of life must be done in a particular way, but also the reason why civilisation so demands it.40

These were the days when 'Little Biddy' would cry out to local 'Grand Lady': "Open your door to me, give me a chance!" - and the grand woman, hearing the cry, would pity the child, draw her into her home and begin teaching and punishing the child until she ripened into the ideal domestic servant.41 Patently, local 'ladies' must renew their commitment to the 'Biddies' of their community. Practically, potential women of the Grand Class were assured that local girls would be satisfied with only a few pounds a year (or no wages at all) for the honour of instruction in servanthood; and the mistress must stifle her sense of generosity and pay not one penny more than this minimum stipend.42 In some cases, the employer might profit on the deal. Ladies like "Mrs.A." - who 'lives in a good sized house in the country; her means are small, she has to keep up a certain style of living, and finds it difficult to pay the numbers of servants which are necessary for her work and for her happiness' - should send her name into a to-be-established bureau saying that she will allow two country girls inside her house to work, without wages and, until Mrs.A. had amassed experience training a number of girls, without charge.

The advantage to the employer would naturally be that they would get such domestic service for nothing in return for the training given.43

These schemes, exploitative and fantastic, illustrate more than class alienation. They also provide some insight into the exact nature of the 'domestic servant problem'. Large landholders had been moving out of the countryside and into the cities of Ireland, Great

42. "A Woman Worker", 'Notes of the Week', Irish Homestead, 28 May 1898, p.455.
Britain and the continent for decades. Few required more servants. However, this explanation only accounts for part of the change since employers of domestic servants were decreasing faster in less wealthy households than in wealthy households.

Supply of Servants: Tastes of Employees

Girls and women who, in previous decades, might have gone into service increasingly regarded service as an inferior type of employment.

Many an intelligent farmer's daughter considers it a great come-down in the world, a disgrace even, to become a domestic servant. A sense of slavery and servitude seems to have attached itself to the idea of domestic service.44

Servants recognised their subservience. Tenant farmers objected to marrying former domestic servants.45

There is a great reluctance on the part not only of daughters of small farmers, but also the daughters of labourers to go out to service. This springs partially from pride such as deters farmers' sons from service, and partially from its becoming an obstacle to marriage. In service they become accustomed to a style of dress and a manner of living such as small farmers and labourers cannot or will not afford; hence, if a girl looks forward to marriage she will eschew service.46

Reminiscing about her childhood as a servant, Molly Byrne noted that the clothes of the servants could not be dried next to the clothes of the farmer's household.47 As the social distance between the employing household and the employee widened, so did the


relationship between the two groups. Mrs. Mary McConnell of Enniscorthy bitterly commented to the folklore experts at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum,

This is a matter about which I feel very deeply - nothing gives me more pleasure than to see grass growing on the hearth stones of a farmer's house where servant boys and girls were badly treated - Even yet in our country farmer's sons and daughters would not dance with a boy or girl whose parents or grandparents had been hired hands, and this in 1978!48

Unsurprisingly, girls preferred 'business'. They preferred employment which placed them securely and respectfully behind a counter. They preferred sitting at a desk playing 'that entertaining musical instrument', the typewriter.49 The evidence by Maurice Fitzgerald to the Royal Commission of Congestion hints at the reasons why women preferred other occupations. He commented that, despite offering an annual salary of twelve pounds, he had to search three parishes before finding a willing servant. He noted that his difficulties stemmed from the refusal of women to perform one of the most important tasks of a domestic servant - milking cows: 'It is not easy to get a girl to do rough work now, and they would prefer to be at a place where there were no cows kept, for more money. We farmers blame Waterville [County Kerry] a good deal for that, because they say that they have the easier life in Waterville than they have with the farmers.'50 Employers of domestic servants imposed too many rules: servants resented having to fight for one night off a week.51 Employers responded by blaming 'misplaced pride and also ignorance' for the attitude of the complaining servants.52 There could be no easy solution. Servants attempted to

48. This sheet has been added to the box containing the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Questionaire on Hiring Fairs, No.2, 1977, Mrs Mary McConnell, commenting in 1978.


52. K. Ferguson, 'The Nobility of Domestic Work', Irish Homestead, 19 December 1903, p.1039. Also see the defensive comments of members of the Governesses Association of Ireland, all of whom were employers of domestic servants, Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail, 7 May 1881, n.p.
restrict their duties. Some would 'take no washing'. Others would work 'only in a small family'. The more impertinent servants demanded a minimum wage.\textsuperscript{53} As expected, the average wage quoted by prospective employees was eighteen per cent higher than that offered by employers. There were calls to mistresses to treat their domestic servants with more respect - only by doing this could they plug the flow of servants.\textsuperscript{54}

**PART TWO: DEMAND FOR SERVANTS**

**Demand Factors: The Household and Relative Costs**

Some contemporaries argued that the decline in domestic servants was due to retrenchments in household expenses. The emigration of domestic servants attracted by higher wages and better conditions in America left the Irish rate of wages for servants relatively high, and the standard of service low.

As a consequence of the higher cost of domestic help, without any corresponding increase of efficiency in service, many Irish housewives have in recent years discarded hired help and do their own work - a desirable social revolution, provided the housewives are physically equal to the task undertaken.\textsuperscript{55}

Economists view wages as prices that signal us about the allocation of scarce resources.\textsuperscript{56} What can wage trends tell us about the changing numbers of domestic servants?

There are only two sources of wages for servants in Ireland: newspaper advertisements and wage books. Each has its own advantages. Wage books provide profiles of servants. They allow us to look at individual households over time and say something about relative wage differentials on the farm. We shall examine these first. Newspaper advertisements provide

\textsuperscript{53}Every column includes such stipulations, see Daily Express, 24 February 1885, p.8 and 3 March 1885, p.8.


\textsuperscript{55}"The Man of Figures", 'Domestic Servants', Ireland's Own, 7 January 1903, p.7.

a longer 'run' over time and allow us to differentiate between types of servants.

William Boyd of Blackstaff Flax Spinning and Weaving Company paid his cook and maid eighteen pounds a year. His groom received thirty pounds. Wages for his cook and maid were one-quarter the monthly amount spent on 'hunting trains' (during the season) and one-eleventh the sum given to himself for his personal expenses. Mrs Annet was hired for four shillings a week, and her employer informed her that this sum included free lodging and fire during the time you are with me but if you do not suit the position you will have to leave at a fortnight's notice. Your duties will be: First to keep the house clean and tidy outside and inside and have such things as windows clean and nice. Second, when people go down [it was their country house] you must be kind and good natured with them even if they are disagreeable sometimes. You will have to wash their sheets and bed things but you need not cook for them unless they specially arrange with you first and pay you a little.

Even taking account of the low proportion of their personal expenditure devoted to female servants, these wages were higher than those paid by most rural employers. Scattered remains of wage books confirm lower wages. John Keane, a farmer in Baltacken (County Westmeath), hired a male yard servant on 30 October 1912 for the annual wage of fourteen pounds. A month later, Bridget Poker commenced work as a general servant under Mrs. Keane for eight pounds a year. The parlour maid, Mary Boyce, worked for T. M. Green in the Ballymoney Rural District in 1892 for thirteen pounds per annum. This sum was not fixed at the beginning. For her first month of service, Mary Boyce was paid less than seven shillings. This was raised to one pound a month in August, then to thirteen pounds a year in October.

New servants were expected to work for very little, and appreciate the 'training'.

57. P.R.O.N.I. D1534/5 and 6, 1901-1911, Household account books of William Boyd of the Blackstaff Flax Spinning and Weaving Company.


59. Cork Archives, U251, John Keane, Baltacken, Myvore, Mullingar (County Westmeath).

60. P.R.O.N.I. D1835/4 pp 101-11, T. M. Green, solicitor, Ballymoney Rural District.
they were receiving in the hands of their exacting mistress. In 1899 servants under eighteen years of age were generally paid half the wage of servants over thirty years. The higher average wages of the older servants may not be a result of benefits incurred by increased efficiency. A more satisfactory explanation has to do with the higher proportion of young servants in poorer single-servant households. Older servants were generally found in households with a larger number of servants and in more specialised service categories. For this reason they commanded a higher average wage. In 1899, a cook in her twenties could claim a wage of seventeen pounds while her kitchenmaid in the same age group was paid eleven pounds. A general servant received a pound less. At the other extreme, a 'lady's maid' could receive twenty-four pounds a year. Younger servants also worked in larger households. Thus, in 1901 and 1911, the average size of households employing servants under the age of twenty years was seven persons. Households employing servants over the age of forty generally comprised of four persons. Household size increased only in homes employing elderly domestic servants. Poorer households could only afford to hire young girls.

Clearly, wage differentials varied with the income of the employing family and the types of duties expected from the servant. Thus, households which could afford a few domestic servants paid higher wages. Such households would employ women for specialist


62. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.11 [C.9345], H. C. 1899, xcii, p.11.

63. Ibid., p.13 (p.13).

64. Note that the size of households in this table includes relatives, visitors and boarders, but does not include any domestic servants or farm servant whose relationship to the 'head of the household' was that of servant. In 1901 n=83 and in 1911 n=112. Eight District Electoral Divisions were examined.

65. I have excluded households for which I could find no valuation. Where there was more than one servant within the same age bracket in the household, I included only one servant in the tabulations. These procedures have not changed the relationship between the age groups in any significant way.
4.12

Average Valuation by Age of Resident Domestic Servant
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>1901 (n=63)</th>
<th>1911 (n=93)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 50</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Duties such as parlourmaid, cook, governess and children’s nurse. The function of servants in such households as ‘display’ would also prompt higher wages so the servants could afford the ‘paraphernalia of gentility’. General domestics in one-servant households performed functions similar to those of labourers and were paid accordingly.

4.13

Average Wages of Domestic Servants Classified According to the Number of Servants in the Household, 189966

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Employed</th>
<th>Dublin</th>
<th>Belfast</th>
<th>Cork</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over four</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table gives the average wage for general domestic servants and ‘specialist servants’. The category ‘specialised servants’ is divided into Class One (cooks, lady’s maids, nurses, dairymaids and sewing maids) and Class Two (kitchenmaid, parlour maids, housemaids, laundresses, childminders and scullerymaids) as advertised.

66. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.10 [c.9345], H. C. 1899, xcii, p.10.
every three years in the *Irish Times* on the third and eleventh of April.\(^67\)

### Annual Wages of General Domestic Servants and Specialist Servants

*Irish Times on the 3rd and 11th April, 1880-1913*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General Servants (n=155)</th>
<th>Specialist Servants Class One(^68) (n=126)</th>
<th>Specialist Servants Class Two (n=155)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This wage data suggests declining demand for female domestic servants as their wages rose less than the average for all workers, despite a fall in the number of servants per family. The higher relative price of personal services could be expected to decrease demand for domestic servants. The higher price of servants relative to the cost of maintaining full-time unwaged 'houseworkers' tipped the balance in favour of houseworkers.

**Demand Factors: Agriculture and Service**

The demand for servants must be examined in two distinct spheres: the agricultural and domestic environments. The coincidence of change in these areas radically reduced demand for female servants. The agricultural factors will be discussed in Chapter Seven where the role of public ideology, changes in farm size and type, mechanisation and relative wage differentials between men and women in lowering demand for servants are

\(^67\)When the 11th of April fell on a Sunday, the 12th was used.

\(^68\)The wages for 'specialised servants, Class one' were dominated by the wages of cooks. Between 1889 and 1901 the wages of cooks dropped while wages for other servants in this class remained stable.
discussed. The remainder of this chapter examines influential household factors.

Demand Factors: The Household and Service

On the demand side, changes in household structure may have reduced demand for paid labour in the household. As we have already seen, in the eight District Electoral Divisions the number of domestic servants declined by twelve per cent. However, these changes mask marked differences between districts. For example, in Tullamore, Woodstown and Rathmore, the number of domestic servants increased slightly. This contrasts to Keeldra, Ards and Bellatrain where servants declined by over sixty per cent. Domestic servants in Kilconickny declined by one-third and the number of Belleek servants declined by seventeen per cent. The following few pages will deal with changes in familial structure in the eight District Electoral Divisions which may explain the decline of service in some of these areas.

Domestic servants were over-represented in households with a low proportion of women. For instance, in 1901, fifteen per cent of all households had a male:female ratio of less than one to three, whereas twenty-nine per cent of all households with resident domestic servants had a male:female ratio of more than one to three.69 The corresponding figures for 1911 were eighteen per cent of all households and twenty-one per cent of households with resident domestic servants. If the proportion of households with a sex ratio biased towards men decreased, so would the need for domestic servants. This does not fit the sample districts. While the number of domestic servants was decreasing, there was an increase in the proportion of households containing a low ratio of women. Although the percentage of all-male households increased from six to eight per cent, someone other than a domestic servant was increasingly doing the housework.

Domestic servants were more likely to be found in larger households. While one-fifth per cent of all households had seven or more members in 1901, over one-third of households

69. The ratio excludes female domestic servants.
with domestic servants had seven or more members. Similarly, seven per cent of all households in 1901 and 1911 had over nine members compared with almost one-fifth of all households with resident domestic servants. As the proportion of large households declined between 1901 and 1911, we would expect the proportion of resident domestic servants to decline as well. As households became smaller, the 'head female' (generally the wife, but frequently a mother or sister) could manage the housework without hiring a servant. Looking at the District Electoral Divisions individually, this occurs in six of the eight districts. The district experiencing the most rapid decline in domestic servants (Keeldra) was the district experiencing the fastest decline in household size. The three districts which did not experience a decline in domestic servants were the three districts which saw small increases in the proportion of households with seven members or more. The two exceptions were the northern communities of Bellatrain and Ards which saw small increases in the size of households yet also saw a decline in service.

We may hypothesise that servants were needed in households with a large number of children. Resident servants were over-represented in households with children. For instance, in 1901 twice as many households with three or more children under the age of five had at least one resident domestic servant. At first sight, this hypothesis does not seem to hold for the eight districts since, given the increase in the percentage of all households with three or more children, we would expect an increase in domestic servants. However, once we have broken the statistics down into their Districts, this becomes less of a problem (Table 4.15). Areas experiencing a rapid decline in the number of households with at least three children under the age of five also experienced a decline in domestic servants. The exception were Ards and Bellatrain. In Bellatrain there was a thirty-eight per cent

70. The corresponding figures for 1911 were twenty-two per cent of all households and thirty-nine per cent of households with domestic servants.

71. The corresponding figures for 1911 were seven per cent of all households and eleven per cent of households with resident domestic servants.
### Proportional Change in the Number of Households with Three or More Children, and in the Number of Households with Resident Female Domestic Servants, Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Domestic Servant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>-66.7</td>
<td>-50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>-166.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleek</td>
<td>-33.3</td>
<td>-15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeldra</td>
<td>-75.0</td>
<td>-180.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase in the number of households with at least three children under the age of five, but an exceptionally rapid decline in the number of domestic servants. In part this resulted from the choice of data. The number of households with any children under the age of five declined between 1901 and 1911. Far more serious is the case of Ards where there were fewer young children in the household, yet domestic servants still declined. Although the decline of young children in the household - either through a spacing of children, a reduction in family size, or the tendency for married siblings to reside separately from the parental household with the birth of a child - can explain some of the declining demand for servants, it is insufficient by itself.

The most important explanation refers to increasing labour of unpaid family members in the household. The increasing proportion of adult females in each household without an occupation (these women will be called 'houseworkers') reduced the demand for paid domestic servants. The increase in houseworkers can be calculated in two ways. First, we can look at the number of households where the 'head-female' was given no occupation. If the household was headed by a female, she was designated the 'head-female'. If the household was headed by a male, the 'head-female' was defined as his wife if he was married, or the oldest adult female if he was unmarried (generally his mother or sister). Non-relatives, such as servants or visitors, were excluded. Some households had no 'head-female' and were excluded from the analysis. The following table shows what percentage of
'head-females' in all households were designated occupations.72

4.16

Percentage of All 'Head-Females' Designated an Occupation
Out of all Households with a 'Head-Female'
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1901 (n=920)</th>
<th>1911 (n=800)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleek</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeldra</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 1901 and 1911, the 'head female' was designated an occupation in eighty per cent fewer households.

Second, the number of homeworkers can be calculated by looking at the number of adult (over fifteen years) women within each household who were not designated an occupation. Seventeen per cent more households had at least one homeworker in 1911 than in 1901.

4.17

Percentage of All Households With At Least One Adult Female Without an Occupation
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1901 (n=987)</th>
<th>1911 (n=924)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleek</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeldra</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72.A 'head-female' was said to have no occupation if she was given no occupation or if she was designated the occupation of 'housewife', 'engaged in home duties' or 'farmer's relative'.
The percentage of all households with no women without occupations decreased while the proportion with more than one dependent female increased between 1901 and 1911.

4.18

Percentage of all Households with Certain Numbers of Adult Women Without an Occupation
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Homeworkers</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over three</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The emphasis in this chapter has, therefore, been two-fold. On the one hand, demand for female domestic labour was reduced. Agriculturally-based reasons for the decline in demand are examined in Chapter Seven. On the domestic side, the lower demand for servants was a function of the rising price of domestic service which raised the cost of labour and resulted in a transfer of that labour to unpaid family members. Women increasingly performed domestic labour within their own households rather than for another family. On the other hand, the supply of domestic servants dropped as women who might have formerly gone into paid service remained in their own homes to produce those goods and services increasingly necessary to the efficient functioning of households (this aspect is examined in Chapter Nine). If we take up David Fitzpatrick’s comment that labourers became less and less distinguishable as a class from farmers as they increasingly comprised of small-holders and their sons, it can be maintained that a similar movement occurred for women except that they moved from waged farm and domestic labour to unwaged farm and
domestic labour as wives, sisters and aunts of male farmers. The significance of the decline in domestic service is that housework was increasingly being done by members of the family. The extra burden of housework did not fall evenly on all members of the household and so-called 'labour-saving devices' did not come to the rescue.


Chapter 5
Dairy Maids

On 16 October 1892, Denis Hurley wrote from Carson City to his sister in Cork about their brother.

I believe Tim is foolish to be postponing his marriage so long under the circumstances. As dairy farming is the most profitable, he should get a good looking and affectionate wife that would make first class butter. If you cannot help him to get one in Cork, why I will give him a letter of recommendation to go wife seeking down to Connaught.¹

Denis had emigrated to America twenty-two years earlier: his advice was becoming dated. Butter prices had been declining since Hurley left Ireland in the 1870s. They rose briefly in 1891 and 1892, before falling again. Prices did not pick up until the turn of the century and then remained relatively stagnant for another decade. However, the industry was vital to the Irish economy. In 1912 the production of butter and milk made up twenty-one per cent of the total agricultural income of Ireland.² Astute publicists could see that, with regard to female participation in dairying, the industry was changing. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the practice of farm women milking cows, making butter for family consumption, selling the surplus in markets and shops and using the money to pay off shop debts was no longer the dominant pattern.³ A technological and managerial revolution in the dairying industry was affecting female farm labour in large parts of the

¹. Cork Archives, U170 Hurley Emigrant letters, letter from Denis Hurley to his sister Kate, dated 16 October 1892. His family was from Clonakilty (County Cork). Denis emigrated in 1870. Also see the poem by William Allingham of Ballyshannon (County Donegal), 'The Milkmaid' in Geoffrey Taylor, Irish Poets of the Nineteenth Century (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1951), pp 10-2.


³. Committee on Butter Regulations. Minutes of Evidence to the Interim Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the Board of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Other Industries and Technical Instruction for Ireland to Inquire and Report Upon the Desireability of Regulations...for Butter, With a Digest of Evidence; and Appendices, pp 175-78, 154-56 and 181 [Cd.1039], H. C. 1902, xx, pp 321-24, 300-2 and 327, evidence by (respectively) the Department’s instructresses Miss E. Dundon of County Limerick, Miss K. A. Brown of County Donegal and Miss Ethel Sarsfield of County Cork.
country. This chapter examines these changes. The first section discusses the declining participation of women in milking and butter-making. What caused the movement of women out of these sectors? Historians of the dairying industry stress the rapid growth in the dairy industry in this period. The cost of these changes were high. Women were driven out of the industry. Contemporaries responded to increasing unemployment among women in two ways. Rural reformers attempted to educate women in improved forms of buttermaking. These schemes failed. More realistically, they attempted to divert 'redundant' labour into three areas: home industries, poultry-rearing and housewifery. The economic and social situation meant that the promotion of housewifery was the dominant (and successful) response.

As we noted in the last chapter, job definitions were flexible. Dairymaids could find themselves working for part of every day or year in the kitchen or in the fields. For example, Mary Sheehan worked on the Mount Trenchard estate. According to their wage books which cover the years 1882 to 1887, each week between thirteen and twenty people were employed on the estate. All employees were men until Mary Sheehan appeared on the 6 January 1883 as a milker. While the men worked for six days, she worked for seven days for a weekly wage of 1s 6d. The men were paid between four and eleven shillings a week. Her husband spread manure, cut bog and gardened. By 1884 Mary Sheehan’s weekly wage was raised to two shillings. She was employed irregularly during the year, depending on whether or not the cow was dry. In March of every year she worked in the fields - spending a few weeks cutting then dropping seed. During these weeks, her wage was six shillings a week.5


Women And Men

Census statistics provide information on the sexual division of labour within the dairying industry. People involved in milking and butter making could be categorised under a number of occupations. The decline of female domestic and agricultural servants has been examined in Chapter Four. Women explicitly given dairying occupations were placed in different categories 1881-1891, 1901-1911 and 1926. In 1881 and 1891 they could be called milksellers and dairywomen, or cheesemongers and butterwomen. In 1881 women made up forty-three per cent of all persons within these categories. Ten years later, this had declined to thirty-one per cent. If we then turn to the 1901 and 1911 census, under the heading 'milkseller, dairywoman', the percentage of women declined from twenty-six per cent in 1901 to sixteen per cent by 1911. The 1901 and 1911 census included a separate category for creamery workers. Women constituted almost thirty per cent of this category in 1901 and only twelve per cent by 1911. Only one per cent of employers and managers of creameries in the island were women in 1926. By 1936 this had decreased even further to 0.5 per cent. There were no female foremen/women or overlookers in creameries. Women were concentrated in the general category of 'creamery workers' (where they made up thirty-four per cent of those enumerated) and as skilled makers of food in creameries (sixty per cent of all skilled creamery makers). If we take all those occupations explicitly labelled as employment in creameries or concerned with milk and dairy products, in 1881 over forty per cent of this workforce was female compared with less than one-sixth by the end of the period.

Milking

Men began to take a larger role in dairying. Wealthier households altered their practices first. Women in these families began relegating dairying tasks to hired male

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The first widespread change occurred in milking practice as this was an outdoor job and more easily re-defined as men’s work. The Agricultural Class Book, in its editions of 1848, 1853 and 1860, encouraged young boys to read the chapter entitled 'The Cow - The Dairy - Milk - Butter - Cheese - Pigs' with the words 'possibly some boys, on reading the heading of this lesson, may be so foolish to think it is a fit study for girls only.' It went on to say that although girls milk, make butter and scour milk vessels, the boys should still read the chapter so that they could perform their role of feeding and attending to the cow, helping with particularly heavy churning, and supervising the women if necessary. Women regarded the dairy as their 'traditional' province. Folklore conferred 'natural' superior milking skills on women. But commentators agreed that increasingly men milked.

Long ago it was the women milked the cows, but in later years it was done in a lot of cases by the men.

In days gone by cows were all milked by women. There was no such thing as a man milking a cow. Men would not consider it their work to milk a cow. Whatever be the cause, women have gone out of the

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9. Irish Folklore Commission, Mss 843, story told by Mickey Crowley of Carrigroe (County Cork), aged 95 years, recorded between August and October 1942, p.88. Also see evidence by R. A. Anderson and Henry S. Guinness, Burton Hall, Stillorgan (County Dublin), the owner of a dairy herd near Dublin, in Department of Industry and Commerce, Saorstat Eireann, Commission of Inquiry into the Resources and Industries of Ireland. Minutes of Evidence. Part 1. City Hall Dublin, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th December, 1919, Milk Production and Milk Products and Fisheries (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1919), pp 25 and 50-3.

10. Irish Folklore Commission, Mss 1024, discussion by John Cullen, aged 71, labourer of Bailieboro (County Cavan), collected by P. J. Gaynor of Bailieboro, in January 1948. Also see the comments by Mrs. Anne Prunty, aged 82, housewife of Dromond parish (County Longford), collected by J. G. Delaney, pp 357-58, Irish Folklore Commission.
P5.1 A woman milking a cow in field, c.1904
(Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Archives, WAG 1952)
business, and in a great number of cases, therefore, cows have got to be milked by men and boys.\textsuperscript{11} Although it is easy to perceive the general movement of men into milking activities, precise identification of the timing and locational aspects are more elusive. The evidence is impressionistic and often contradictory. For example, in 1911 a dairy farmer in Bangor stated that male milkers had completely replaced females. He later added that the wives of milkers assisted their husbands in large dairies.\textsuperscript{12} Similarly, in 1911 the vice-chairman of the North Down Agricultural Society said that young boys grew up learning to milk and were engaged in that occupation as adults. This assertion was followed by the comment that the wives of labourers frequently supplemented the family income by milking.\textsuperscript{13}

Two questionnaires of the Folklore Commission and of the Cultra Folk and Transport Museum Archives provide some indication of the changes. In 1958 the Folklore Commission issued a questionnaire on the social aspects of work. Question five asked whether milking was considered 'beneath the dignity' of the 'average farmer' in their district. Eighty-seven respondents replied by specifying whether men or women milked. The questionnaire on hiring fairs sent out by researchers at the Folk and Transport Museum asked for lists of work performed by male and female agricultural labourers. Eight-two replies stipulated whether men or women milked. Examination of the questionnaires reveals a mixed pattern.


\textsuperscript{12}Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Milk Supplies. Appendix to the First Report of the Irish Milk Commission, 1911. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Dublin, Belfast and Newry, 29th November, 1911, to 1st March, 1912, (Inclusive) with Evidence, p.268 [Cd.6684], H. C. 1913, xxix, p.281, evidence by M. Shiels of Bangor. It was very common for a male labourer to be hired on condition that his wife would milk the cows, see the advertisement for an agricultural labourer in Fermoy (County Cork) in Cork Constitution, 19 January 1886, p.4 and also see Mary Carbery, Farm by Lough Gur. The Story of Mary Fogarty (Sissy O’Brien) (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p.9.

Men rarely replaced women entirely in the business of milking. Poorer classes of women were more likely to be engaged in milking. Women did not milk where male wages were high. If the milk was used merely for household consumption, women were more likely to milk cows as part of housework. With the advent of creameries, which regularised production and marketing, men were increasingly likely to take over milking. Furthermore, with increasing wages for male labourers and the rapid substitution of casual labourers for live-in servants, farmers were more likely to hire men who could be employed at other agricultural work during slack milking months. Thus, we see an increase of male farm servants in households with dairies. In the eight District Electoral Divisions, ten per cent of all households in both 1901 and 1911 had dairy sheds. In 1901, while only eight or nine per cent of all households in the areas had either a domestic servant or a farm servant, thirty-five per cent of households with dairies had servants. By 1911 forty per cent of households with dairies had servants. The number of domestic servants and farm servants in these households remained stable. What changed was the sex composition of farm servants. In 1901 twenty-seven per cent of farm servants working on holdings with dairies were female. Within ten years, only eleven per cent were female.

Creameries

Milking was only the first of many jobs in which a predominantly female workforce was replaced by men. The traditional way of making butter, with women churning the milk or cream, was gradually replaced (in all areas except the east) by large scale creameries -
P5.2 A woman churning milk, 1902
(Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Archives, L919/3)
by co-operatively or privately run. The move to creameries was particularly strong in Limerick, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, Cork, Leitrim, Kerry and Waterford. Creameries were initially established in Limerick. Canon Baggot started the first Irish creamery in 1884. In 1889 two partners erected a creamery at Limerick Junction. Farmers in North Cork and County Limerick opened joint-stock creameries. The English Co-Operative Union also set up creameries in Ireland under the Industrial and Provident Societies' Act. The sudden upswing in large-scale butter production came with the growth of the co-operative movement under the managerial encouragement of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. The creameries were managed by a committee elected by the shareholders. Farmers took shares in the co-operatives and profits were shared between the shareholders. People supplying milk were paid according to the highest market price for butter consistent with creamery survival. In most co-operative creameries, the farmer was paid in proportion to the amount of butterfat in the milk. The milk was separated by centrifugal separators and the skim milk given back to the supplier. By 1908, nearly all societies were adopting a 'binding rule' whereby the supplier had to supply all the milk to the society in which she or he held shares. There was also the tendency to restrict acceptance of milk from non-shareholders.

By 1915, the dairy societies of the I.A.O.S. had a membership of over forty-five

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thousand with a turnover of three millions. Propounders of the creameries argued that they were the only salvation for a dairy industry depressed through generations of poverty and land insecurity and facing strong international competition. Irish dairying required creameries because Irish women could not make uniformly high quality butter. Without creameries, the best butter was exported and sold at the same price as the 'rancid productions evolving from a smoky cabin, where one churning lay gathering for weeks.' The industry could not survive if it continued producing butter tasting of peat. What was the good of dairy farmers in Limerick or Cork having 'grass so rich you could grease your boots on it' if no market would accept their butter? Even if women had the training and facilities for making high quality butter, the lack of uniformity in


17. Report from the Select Committee on Industries (Ireland), Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix, p.211 [288], H.C. 1884-85, ix, p.229, evidence by William John Lane, Cork butter merchant. Also see the letter from Mrs Ernest Hart republished from Daily Graphic in Irish Farming World, 4 December 1891, p.788 where she makes similar remarks, finishing with comments on the ignorance of women. This was also the view of Liam Kennedy, 'Aspects of the Spread of the Creamery System in Ireland' in Carla Keating, Plunkett and Co-Operatives. Past, Present and Future (Cork: Bank of Ireland Centre for Co-Operative Studies and University College Cork: 1983), pp 92-110.

18. Sarsfield Kerrigan, Leader, 7 March 1908, p.39. Also see 'Confidential Report [Baseline Reports], Congested Districts Board for Ireland, County of Donegal - Union of Inishowen, Report of Major Gaskell, Inspector, District of North Inishowen', p.3 and Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.72 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, p.75, evidence by the Very Rev. Canon Humphrey O'Riordan, representing the Bishops, the Cahirciveen Rural District and the fish curers.

19. Committee on Butter Regulations. Minutes of Evidence to the Interim Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the Board of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Other Industries and Technical Instruction for Ireland to Inquire and Report Upon the Desirability of Regulations...for Butter, With a Digest of Evidence; and Appendices, p.154 [Cd.1039], H. C. 1902, xx, p.300, evidence by Miss K. A. Brown, dairy instructress for the D.A.T.I. in Donegal.

farmhouse butter meant they would not secure the highest price. Creameries increased the profits of dairy farmers. It was claimed that they raised the average price of the farmers' butter by about 4d. per pound and increased output by as much as ten per cent.\textsuperscript{21} Creameries were said to be superior to the factory (or blending) system because 'responsible' butter-producers received the milk straight, so-to-speak, from the cow's teat, with no intermediate peasant woman to dirty the milk through her methods of setting, preparing and churning.\textsuperscript{22}

You would have to reform the conditions of Irish dairy farming altogether if you wanted to adopt the factory system, and you would have to teach every woman who makes a pound of butter in Ireland how to make it properly, you would have to build new dairies on special and proper principles, and you would have to have a system of inspection which would insure the dairies being properly clean. You must recollect that the bulk of butter which comes from Ireland is manufactured in districts where the people are untidy. I have known cases where some of the butter made in County Kerry was stored in a room where there was a patient suffering from typhus fever.\textsuperscript{23}

Creameries and Female Employment

Historians have generally accepted this view of creameries, portraying them as economically desirable (because they are 'efficient') in areas with a sufficiently large milk-supply.\textsuperscript{24} However, creameries drastically reduced the income potential of many women

\textsuperscript{21} Creameries extracted ten per cent more butter out of the same amount of milk used in home churning: Leader, 21 March 1908, pp 73-4.

\textsuperscript{22} The factory or blending system meant that farmwomen churned the milk in their home, then brought the butter to the factory where it was mixed with butter made by other women in the district, and marketed. Creameries separated the milk and churned the butter.

\textsuperscript{23} Royal Commission on Agriculture. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Subject of Agricultural Depression, with Appendices, Vol.III, p.393 [C-7400-III], H.C. 1894, xvi, part iii, p.393, evidence by R. A. Anderson.

and girls. Creameries lowered female employment.

The inevitable effect of the general adoption of such institutions (creameries) in this country must be, I apprehend, to remove from the wives and daughters of the farmers a healthy, and at the same time, most valuable source of industrial occupation and training; in every way peculiarly adapted to their condition and habit of life for which it will not be easy to discover in any other direction, an equally suitable or sufficient substitute, and the want of which now, on the part of these by no means insignificant classes of the working population, may - it is quite conceivable - in the many possible contingencies of the future, be found to ultimately result in serious loss to the farmers themselves.

Local controversies developed as to the relative advantages and disadvantages of replacing homemade butter production by creameries. This aspect was summarised in the Irish Nation.

The co-operative creameries have and are taking away what was the main occupation and the mainstay of many of the women in this country. Without in any way entering into the comparative merits of home butter-making and calf-rearing, and the co-operative system, it will easily be seen that no farmer's daughter will find working under factory conditions a welcome change from being, as she was after all, mistress of her time, her capital and her labour.

This argument is deceptive, however, because few farmer's daughters were given employment in creameries. The I.A.O.S. defended raising female unemployment by advising farmers to calculate the economic value of the time of their daughters. When a farmer learned about the value of time then he will be able to judge more truly what the creamery system means; where the cream from a 1,000 farms is churned in two churns instead of 1,000, and where two or three girls do the work of many hundreds, and the selling of tons of butter is done at less cost of time and money than the selling.

25. For a comparative study based on the introduction of creameries in Denmark from the 1880s, see Bodil K. Hansen, 'Rural Women in Late Nineteenth Century Denmark', Journal of Peasant Studies, 9.2 (January 1982), pp 225-40.


28. Ibid., p.66 (p.198), report by W. P. O'Brien on Cashel; 'Among the Societies. Killeagh', Irish Homestead, 15 June 1901, p.407; and throughout the reports on co-operative meetings in the Irish Homestead.

of pounds by individuals, and more important, perhaps, still, where you have only one good quality instead of 1,000 of all sorts.30

In a labour-surplus economy, such reasoning only prolonged the debates.

Women were also absent within the creamery labour structure. None of the twenty-seven creameries and dairy societies examined in the Registry of Friendly Societies had a woman on a managing committee.31 Female shareholders were also rare. They were usually women who had taken over the shares after the death of their husbands. Single women frequently transferred their shares to their husband after marriage.32 Only six to nine per cent of shareholders in the Ballyrashane Co-Operative Agricultural Dairy Society (County Derry) between 1908 and 1924 were women.33 Table 5.1 has been constituted from lists of members found within the Registry papers in Dublin.34 With the exception of the last three societies, these statistics show the low representation of women in dairy societies. The last three societies in Limerick, Tipperary and Cork seem to show a large proportion of female shareholders. However, these societies were the only ones which set out to encourage membership by dealing in eggs and poultry as well as in milk and butter. The


31. The following creameries and dairy societies were examined at the Registry of Friendly Societies: Dublin, Pettigo, Killowen, Centenary, Poles, Mayo Abbey, St John's, Drumholme, Moycartkey, Ardrahan, Ballyhadereen, Kill, Kilnaleck, Kiltogher, Lower Ormond, Toher, Kildimo, Thurles, Ballinfull, Ballinode, Busna, Inver, Bruree, Corcaghain, Newtownards, Ballinaglera, and Bennettsbridge. I have detailed accounts for all these societies. They were chosen because they were the only societies for which detailed information existed. Thus, they represent 'successful' societies. Also see signatures to the rules of the Monaghan Co-Operative Creamery in 1900, in Gerr Dunne, Town of Monaghan Co-Op. The First Eighty Years (Monaghan Co-Op, January 1983), n.p.

32. For example, see the letters of Eliza Robinson and Ellen Convoy in P.R.O.N.I. D3076/BA/1, papers of the Deerpark Co-Operative Agricultural and Dairy Society Ltd., Glenarm, County Antrim.

33. P.R.O.N.I. T3132/BA/1 and 2, Minute Book of the Ballyrashane Co-Operative Agricultural and Dairy Society Ltd., Coleraine, County Derry, 28 February 1908 to 17 April 1924. Note the scarcity of female shareholders in the list in P.R.O.N.I. D3076/BA/1, for the Deerpark Co-Operative and Dairy Society Ltd., Glenarm, County Antrim.

34. I have only included those lists which consistently give both forename and surname.
### 5.1 Percentage of Shareholders Who Were Female in Creamery or Dairy Societies

**Registry of Friendly Societies, Dublin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Number</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371</td>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>924</td>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1172</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1172</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>972</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>638</td>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>638</td>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>774</td>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1097</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>693</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The larger proportion of female shareholders in these societies was a function of their role as collectors and sellers of eggs.\(^{35}\)

Few women were employed in creameries. A photograph in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland shows a male dairy-maker and all-male staff. Men sit and stand around carts stacked with cans delivering milk. The only females in the photograph are two small girls with pails, obviously waiting to buy skim milk for the family.\(^{36}\) In the twenty-seven creameries examined in detail, eleven hired no women and the remainder employed one or two. The societies hiring no women were scattered throughout the sample - as likely to be found in Tipperary and Cork as in Leitrim and Roscommon. Most creameries hired more than two men. Creameries had to be significantly larger to warrant the employment of another dairymaid, while new male workers might be required after only a slight increase in production. Furthermore, the larger a creamery, the more likely they

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35. This is discussed in Chapter Eight.

were to prefer men to perform the functions previously designated to women. In part, a technological argument is valid here. Heavier machinery necessary in a very large creamery required 'male' strength.

I do not think that in a large creamery a woman could do the work as effectively as a man. Two women might. I think this is the reason there has been a tendency on the part of creameries that have a large output, to replace women by men. The management would naturally say that it would be better to pay a man once and a half the salary of a woman, than to pay two women their salaries for the work that only one woman previously did. That, and the fact that the work is heavy, that the physical labour is heavy, accounts for it [the decline of female employment in creameries].

Technological arguments have their weaknesses. Even where physical strength was no prerequisite - such as in managerial posts - women were excluded. Photographs show groups of 'Creamery Managers in Training' - all male. Of course, these patterns should not be exaggerated. Regional variations in practices were important. A distinction must also be drawn between creameries and blending societies. Miss Eustace was manageress of the Drumlease Co-Operative Blending Society. Conventional creameries (as opposed to blending co-operatives) were reluctant to employ female manageresses. In 1899, the Erne Co-Operative Dairy Society was the first full-scale creamery to accept a woman on its committee. In reply to a question from a female reader as to whether women were eligible to become creamery managers, the editor of the co-operative newspaper, Irish Homestead, replied affirmatively but warned that the work was 'exceedingly laborious' and hardly suited to anyone not willing to 'rough it with a vengeance'. The editor of the Irish Homestead commented that, although women were dairy instructresses, 'we have not heard so

37. Evidence by Mr. O'Connell, 'Commission on Technical Education, Typescripts of Evidence, 1927', Fifth Installment, no page numbers but 3-4 pages into the evidence given by Mr. J. Mahony, Agricultural Instructor in County Clare and Chairman of the Irish Agricultural and Technical Instruction Officers' Organisations, no.48-49, in the National Library of Ireland.


39. 'Creamery Notes', Irish Homestead, 1 January 1898, p.890.

40. Emily Atthill, 'Notes of the Week,' Irish Homestead, 12 March 1899, p.228.

41. 'Creamery Notes', Irish Homestead, 4 June 1898, p.482.
far that any of them were daring enough to visit creameries and see that the managers kept them in proper order.' Similarly, they had not heard of women being employed by creameries to travel and solicit orders for butter.42

The Registers of Cowkeepers, Dairymen and Purveyors of Milk provide another way of measuring the extent of female participation in dairying. Although some local districts anticipated the nationwide legislation by as much as eight years,43 in 1907 the Local Government Board for Ireland issued regulations imposing compulsory registration of all dairies, cowsheds and milk shops in an attempt to stamp out disease and raise standards of cattle, milk and butter.44 The 'vexations' connected with registration caused many farmers to give up selling milk, while others simply ignored the legislation and hoped for a benevolent inspector.45 Despite these biases, the registers give us some indication of the proportion of female owners of dairy cows and sellers of dairy products, at least in the north of Ireland (see Table 5.2). I have examined four complete registers: Enniskillen Rural District (County Fermanagh), Newcastle Urban County District (County Down), Strabane No.1 Rural District (County Tyrone) and Lisburn Rural District (County Antrim). Women made up a small proportion of registered dairy-owners in all districts except in the Urban County District of Newcastle where women would own a couple of cows in order to sell the milk in the city. Women owned fewer cows than men, and their average herd size increased more slowly than their male counterparts.

43. For example, Larne Rural District. Regulations Made by the Larne Rural District Council With Respect to Dairies, Cow Sheds, and Milk Shops, in the Rural District of Larne (Carrickfergus: "Adviser" Office, 1900), in P.R.O.N.I. LA 44/1E/1.
44. Particularly tuberculosis - their legislation was tied in very strongly with the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908.
### Women Registered as Cowkeepers, 'Dairymen', or Purveyors of Milk

As a Percentage of All Persons Registered

And Average Number of Cows Kept By People Registered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area and Date</th>
<th>Percentage Owned by</th>
<th>Average Number of Cows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1908-12</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-23</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strabane</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisburn</td>
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<td>1908-12</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
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</tbody>
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### Factory Acts

Public debate about the hours and conditions of work of women in creameries further weakened the position of the few women in this industry. The Factory Acts which restricted the employment of women came at the same time as accusations of sweated female labour in creameries and dairies. A writer for the *Irish Homestead* responded to criticisms of sweated female labour in co-operative creameries.

The only fact which might have given the slightest colour to the accusations is that although the hours during which a dairymaid is at work are by no means unduly long, they have sometimes been spread over a longer period of the day than is permitted by the Factory Acts, and that dairymaids are obliged to work on Sundays. There is, owing to the very nature of the work, a long interval in the middle of the day during which there is nothing to be done, and cows in Ireland have a habit of giving milk on Sundays as well as week-days, but even where the letter of the law has been broken, the Inspectors have freely admitted that there was no violation in spirit. The case was simply one which the Acts did not contemplate, and efforts are being made to procure a slight amendment of the law so as to make it consistent with the necessities of the manufacturer.\(^4\)\(^6\)

At the Third Annual General Conference of delegates from co-operative dairy and agricultural societies, R. A. Anderson spoke about the need to lobby the Home Secretary to

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46. 'Notes of the Week', *Irish Homestead*, 17 September 1898, pp 779-80.
exempt creameries from the general rules regarding female labour. For the first time, the I.A.O.S. was able to turn criticism levelled at their creameries on its head: instead of the I.A.O.S. reducing female employment through establishing creameries, governmental legislation, they claimed, had blocked their attempts to employ women in the creameries. If the Factory Acts were strictly enforced, it would be impossible to employ women at all in creameries.

Factory and workshop legislation bore so heavily on creamery work as virtually to penalise the employment of young girls under the only conditions on which it was, in most cases, practicable to provide them with occupation in creameries.

The I.A.O.S. received considerable sympathy for their arguments. Even The Times referred to Irish dairymaids. Lady Frances Balfour on 2 July 1901 wrote a letter to The Times on behalf of the Freedom of Labour Defence League, opposing the Lord's Day Observance Committee. Her letter was reported in the Irish Homestead.

To the Lord's Day Observance Committee it may seem immoral to do any work on Sunday, or it may only be immoral in their eyes to work for hire on that day; but how have they solved the problem of paid domestic service in which the duty of preparing and preserving food is as important on Sundays as on week-days? Is there not a tendency in specialising of this kind, to overlook the true balance of things - to put all weight of immorality on the side of a supposed breach of Sunday observance by Irish Dairymaids, and nothing at all on the domestic service side of Sabbath-breaking for wages in their own homes?

Through a committee appointed by the Irish creamery proprietors, the legislation was amended to allow women and young persons to be employed between 6am and 9am. Creamery managers and co-operative officials argued, however, that this new Order of 9th June gave 'a quite insufficient time for the performance of absolutely necessary work in connection with the preparation of food'.

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48. Ibid., p.53.

49. 'The Factory Act and the Creameries', Irish Homestead, 18 October 1902, p.813.

50. 'Notes of the Week. Irish Dairymaids and Sunday Work', Irish Homestead, 13 July 1901, pp 463-64.

with the business of a dairymaid in a creamery'.52 By further amendment, women were allowed to be employed on Sundays for three consecutive hours at any time between 6am and 7pm that the manager should choose.53 Even so, prosecutions continued, as creamery managers employed dairymaids outside of the three hours they had fixed.54 These infringements were treated lightly by the magistrates: often the managers simply received a caution. Opposed to any form of restrictive legislation, creamery managers continued to complain.

The special exemption allowed under Section 42 of this Act [Factory and Workshops Act] is availed of by a good many creameries, including ourselves, and as we found it impossible to do the necessary work during the three hours on Sunday, we arranged to have one of our dairymaids work from 7am to 10am and the other from 9am to 12 noon, thereby giving ourselves two hours longer for working, and giving one of our dairymaids a decent opportunity of attending early prayers and the other late. The Factory Inspector will not allow this, maintaining that only one period of employment can be worked by all the women, and all at the same time, nor will the Government allow different meal hours for women and young persons. We have been summoned for this Sunday working, and convicted.55

The losers in this legislation and the debate surrounding it were female dairymaids. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction listed eighteen creameries which could not reduce operations requiring a dairymaid to only three hours on Sundays. To continue usual levels of production, they were going to replace their female dairymaids with men. They listed another fifteen creameries which had 'recently' replaced female

52. 'The Factory Act and the Creameries', Irish Homestead, 18 October 1902, p.813 and "Manager", 'Correspondence. Sunday Work in Creameries', Irish Homestead, 29 August 1903, p.715.


dairymaids with male operators. There is no reason to think that these lists fully represent the extent of the substitution. Larger dairies were more likely to be affected than smaller ones. Creameries were likely to be more affected in summer than winter.

Excerpts from the creamery instructor's notes tell the same story:

"Most of the creameries have solved this by employing males. Three hours are not long enough on Sundays in summer."

"In the North West district women are not employed at work on creameries. In the South West I consider that five hours are required to carry out the work during the summer months."

"It would be impossible for female buttermakers in large creameries to get through the work in three hours on Sundays."57

The agitation came to little. During the war, the legislation was allowed to lapse.

Educational Discrimination

Given the importance of the dairying industry and the large number of reforming institutions dedicated to agriculture, it is not surprising that the dissemination of knowledge concerning scientific dairying was a central policy. The revival in the dairy industry was actively promoted by governmental organisations. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction encouraged the scientific breeding of dairy cattle, instigated schemes to improve tillage and the production of dry feeding stuffs, and supplied farmers with the latest information on farm improvements. They inspected dairies and provided credit for the purchase of equipment and the construction of dairies and creameries. Each year the Committee of Agriculture spent over three thousand pounds on butter improvement schemes. The classes in practical dairying were the most significant.

56. From the papers of the D.A.T.I. in the Public Record Office of Ireland, Mss A13881/16 and A20703/19.

57. D.A.T.I. Papers in the P.R.O. AG1 A20703/19. All these reports were confidential reports from Instructors of Dairying. More could be cited. Frequently the name of the Instructor has been omitted but the second quotation has been taken from a letter from Thomas Scott (dairy instructor in Liverfovill) and the final quotation came from a report by A. Alcorn (dairy instructor in Ballymullen, Tralee). Also see the letters between the secretary of the Department and Eliot F. May (Inspector of Factories), at the same location.
of their reforms. Butter-making classes were a response to popular fears that standards of housekeeping would drop as women ceased making butter. The educational schemes were run by County Committees who appointed instructresses and supplied them with equipment. The 'school' moved around districts at regular intervals. The cost of the classes was paid out of the Department's joint fund. Between 1901 and 1912, the number of instructresses increased from one to thirty-three.

It is difficult to assess the effect of these classes. In November 1904 the dairy instructress in Dromore (County Longford) had fewer than ten pupils. The classes were accused of attracting only the better dairy-workers. There was a fundamental contradiction in these educational schemes: why, if 'home dairying is a thing of the past', was all this money being spent on itinerant instructresses?

In addition to itinerant instruction, colleges training women in farm work were established. At first, it seemed as though the colleges would promote men at the expense of women.
of women in their training schemes. The Albert Agricultural College had provided a special dairying course for women in 1883.\textsuperscript{63} By 1895 a course for creamery managers was started - largely attended by men. Finally, when the College was transferred from the Commissioners of National Education to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction by the Act of 1899, it was decided to discontinue all courses for women. They claimed that the system of teaching a course in dairying for women and a course in agriculture for men in separate halves of the year was expensive, duplicated staff and led to inadequate training of the men.\textsuperscript{64} However, female students were not left uncatered for. At the Munster Institute classes for women continued.\textsuperscript{65}

The Munster Institute fulfils for female students the same function as that discharged by the Royal College of Science and Albert Agricultural College in respect to male students. The course of instruction embraces the subjects in which a girl of the farming class needs to be proficient, either for the performance of the work of her own home or for the discharge of the duties which may be allotted to her if she obtains employment in a dairy or a creamery.\textsuperscript{66}

Applications for admission increased each year. For applicants, a period of over a year elapsed between application and acceptance.\textsuperscript{67} Students came from all over the country. For example, in 1902 although thirty-seven per cent of all students came from Cork, nine per cent came from both Cavan and Limerick, five per cent from Kerry, four per cent from Clare and three per cent from each of the counties of Kilkenny, Galway, Sligo, Derry and Kildare.\textsuperscript{68} In 1908 the Ulster Dairy School at Loughry (County Tyrone) accepted

\textsuperscript{63} At different times, this college was called the Glasnevin Model Farm and the Albert National Agricultural Training Institute.


\textsuperscript{65} Also called the Cork Model Farm.

\textsuperscript{66} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Sixth Annual General Report of the Department, for 1905-1906, p.21 [Cd.3543], H. C. 1907, xvii, p.267.

\textsuperscript{67} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Seventh Annual General Report of the Department, for 1906-1907, pp 21-2 [Cd.4148], H. C. 1908, xiv, pp 617-18.

its first pupils. This institute was similar to the Munster Institute, teaching dairying, poultry-keeping, cooking, laundry-work, sewing and cottage gardening. However, between 1905 and 1913, the Munster Institute was the only training center in Ireland for instructresses in dairying.69

Other schools were established for farm women. With financial help from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, communities of nuns set up small schools training women in dairying, poultry-keeping, and domestic work. The Department helped establish the schools, paid the teachers' salaries and contributed toward the cost of pupils. The most successful schools run by nuns were the residential schools at Portumna (County Galway), Westport (County Mayo), Ramsgrange (County Wexford), Claremorris (County Mayo), Swinford (County Mayo) and Clifden (County Galway) rather than the non-residential schools at Loughglinn (County Roscommon) and Beneden (County Clare). The Department also helped private individuals to set up schools to train women in farm work (such as the school at Killashandra, County Cavan). However, the success of these schools depended more on their role in teaching domestic arts than on the dissemination of new dairying skills.70

These aspects were revealed most strongly in the debates about emigration and creameries. By reducing female employment, creameries were accused of increasing female emigration. Furthermore, since women did not have to show proof that they were going onto farms as the men attending the Albert Agricultural College had to ("because a girl cannot very well guarantee to get a husband who is a farmer"), some of the female students used the school as a stepping stone to emigration. The reformers perceived that there was only one solution. It was unrealistic to find remunerative employment in Ireland for graduates

69. After 1913, the Ulster Dairy School began providing similar training for women.
of the school. Demand for their services was not increasing and the days of roving instructresses were nearing the end. Instead, women were to be trained as skilled farmwives. This aim was most explicitly carried out in the itinerant dairying classes and in the Schools of Rural Domestic Economy, but even the Munster Dairy School determined that its students should not become preoccupied with waged labour. Their aim was not so much to train dairy servants as to train women to share the labour of their household’s farm in a more efficient manner. These women required training in domestic arts such as cookery, laundry and needlework and, from 1880, this work was taught by a Ladies’ Committee. Between 1880 and 1901, this committee spent almost one-fifth as much money promoting housewifery as the Governors spent on experiments on water in butter, organising butter shows throughout the country, bestowing prizes on pupils, paying salaries to lecturers and so on. This committee was continued when the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction took control of the Munster Dairy School.

Work for Women or Men?

In the early years, the reforming organisations complained about men’s lack of interest in dairying. It was ‘women’s work’. Professor Carroll commented,

One of the principal difficulties that had to be overcome in the establishing of dairy instruction in the country is the small amount of interest taken in the subject by the male population; indeed, about the period of establishing the Munster Dairy School, a man who knew anything about practical dairy work was looked upon almost with contempt.

For this reason, women were trained as instructresses, even though men were moved into all prestigious positions and all managerial posts. Even the Commissioners of National

71. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Fourth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto p.53 [Cd.3509], H. C. 1907, xxxvi, p.65, evidence by Professor J. R. Campbell. The more popular argument was that creameries encouraged emigration by inflating the number of unemployed females of emigrating age groups, see 'The Problem of Our Future', Irish Homestead 25 May 1901, pp 336-37.

Education who were responsible for Glasnevin before it was taken over by the Department had been concerned with getting men managerial posts in dairying. A 1885 Report of the Commissioners of National Education expounded,

As a rule, in this country, this important industry [dairying] is carried on by the female portion of the farmer's family, the men knowing very little of the subject. The women, confined to the narrow circle of the home, without time for reading or opportunity of seeing improved methods, and frequently having no knowledge of the various qualities of butter required for the market, could scarcely be expected to contribute much towards improvement in buttermaking. It should not be considered that it is desirable that women should be superseded by men in the work of the dairy. The largest portion of dairy work is eminently suited to women, but, taking into account the vast importance of the industry, and that intelligent direction in the dairy would be useful, the question as to how far the training of men in dairy management is advisable is deserving of serious consideration.73

That 'question' had been decided by the following year. The Commissioners introduced at the Albert Institute the first course in dairy management for men. Their policy of pushing men into managerial positions was continued by the Department, which went a step further in promoting men at every level of dairy work.

This policy created strained relations in the 'real world' of creamery management. Creamery managers and dairymaids were frequently antagonistic. Women 'considered that they knew all about it', and so despised any attempts at teaching by men'.74 The most detailed exposition of the tension is found in a letter by "Mejerist".

It is unfortunate that in a good many of our creameries, young intelligent men are installed as managers, who, through lack of sufficient training and experience under expert tuition, are subject to the anomaly of being subordinated to the dairymaid in the primary department of his work, and under his supervision, and consequently his full responsibility for the full control and management of the creamery in such cases is only nominal. With a dairymaid whose qualifications are inferior, under such conditions the management of the creamery can be better imagined than described. It therefore behoves us to make all our young, intelligent creamery candidates pay, first and foremost, attention to the dairymaid's duties, particularly the handling of the cream, so that he may be in a position to assume full responsibility for the proper and efficient carrying out of her work, as well as that of the rest, and that he may be able to dictate instead of being dictated to, and also if necessary that he himself may be capable of performing the work without having to receive instructions first from the dairymaid. Our average dairymaid's understanding of the use of starters and their preparation is very limited, and as in not a few cases her training dates rather far back, since a considerable number of them retain their office not so much by virtue of their qualifications as by ties of kinship, it cannot be presumed that the average dairymaid is qualified to impart instructions to the manager on the scientific principles of up-to-date methods in the treatment and preparation of cream and cream-

73. Quoted in ibid., p.464 (p.476).
74. Ibid., p.464 (p.476).
P5.3 A woman teaching men how to milk cows in the Greenmount Agricultural College, 1913
(Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Archive, WAG 3204)
In the following issue, an angry "Munster Manager" replied to this criticism of dairymaids in creameries, arguing that dairymaids were more skilled than managers. Creamery managers were employed for political reasons: 'This is what has spoiled the reputation of our Irish butter - an auxiliary manager taken into central creameries without knowing how to wash his face. This is how the annoyances arise in creameries. He comes in and dictates to the dairymaid how to make butter, who has never made a bit in his life.'

Other, more general, changes were driving women out of dairying. In counties like Wicklow, Carlow, Kildare and Longford (as well as most of the other eastern counties) the number of milch cows in each county declined by as much as one-quarter between 1891 and 1911. The practice of the wives and daughters of male farm workers being employed as milkers during the summer season remained undisturbed in many areas, but increasingly this work was being performed on large farms hiring a number of labourers, rather than on the small family herd.

Technology

Crucial to all the reforms were technological advances. The invention, in 1878, of a centrifuge 'separator' capable of efficiently separating cream from milk provided the chief way to improve farm-house and factory butter-making. Here, as well as in the educational schemes, the Department attempted to resolve the contradiction between home and factory dairy-making. They promoted dairy equipment at every level of dairy organisation. Beginning in Cork in 1902, small farmers could purchase hand separators with


the help of loans from the Committees. Instructresses sold equipment - especially thermometers - for buttermaking at reduced cost to women in their classes. Dairy societies and creameries also benefited from departmental loans amounting to almost five thousand pounds for the purpose of erecting pasteurising plants. Twenty-six loans were sanctioned, with low interest rates and repayment schemes spread over five years. The Department also encouraged creameries by schemes whereby instructors visited creameries, policed their registration, provided courses of instruction for creamery managers, awarded Creamery Managers' Certificates, held Surprise Butter Competitions, and conducted experiments.

New Work for Women

Creamery promoters had to face the problem of unemployed wives, sisters and daughters. Initially, they planned that women made redundant because of creameries would be given alternative employment. However, policies designed to develop alternative industries failed and, in many areas, were never started. The Reverend Terence C. Connolly of the Manorhamilton Rural Council (County Leitrim) confessed,

I was one of the men who committed what some call the sin of doing what I could to start the co-operative creameries. I spent a good many hard days at it. The idea was where a girl was deprived of the industry of churning she would be turned over at once to a cottage industry like lacemaking or sprigging or something of that kind. I think that matter has not been sufficiently followed up, simply because after the Department of Agriculture was started, those who had asserted it before said,

77. John Donovan, Economic History of Livestock in Ireland (Cork: Cork University Press, 1940), p.327. The 1902 loans were limited to Cork farmers. Even after this date, most of the loans were accepted by farmers in Cork. For instance, in 1907 Cork farmers accepted fifty-four of the eighty-one loans.


79. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Report of the Departmental Committee on Agricultural Credit in Ireland, p.316 [Cd.7375], H. C. 1914, xiii, p.316.

‘There is enough money now; we will do nothing.’  

Reformers, creamery managers and larger dairy farmers hastened to reassure critics, asserting that although creameries denied farm women an important area of productive employment, ‘the farmer’s wife has enough employment to keep her out of mischief without making butter.’ George F. Trench reasoned  

Another objection to creameries is that women of the farms have less to do. This is the ordinary complaint that follows the introduction of any kind of machinery in field or factory; but the wants of men are so many that the female part of the farm family have abundance of occupations with rearing the children, milking, feeding calves, pigs and fowl, keeping everything clean and tidy, needlework, etc. 

In particular, poultry-rearing and increased domestic work were promoted as the main ways in which women could occupy their time. A biting comment promoting poultry-rearing as an alternative to dairying was published in the Irish Homestead on the 29 September 1906. 

After noting the chief charge brought against creameries, the writer commented: 

Many good people have shaken solemn heads over this decay of industry in the home. They have had visions of women yawning about the house, and ready to fall easy prey to that power which finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Better bad prices, hard work, and muscles aching from the churn, than ease and affluence. The dear old geese who talk like this are quite sincere as they cackle about the good old days when the domestic industries were in full swing. One would suppose that there was nothing to replace the churn, that emigration was inevitable, and that women were a useless adjunct to the farmer’s family. These dear old geese have forgotten the poultry yard, where, indeed, many of them should have been born and where they could have cackled to their hearts’ content without doing any harm. We would like to enlarge on the idea that the human form is quite unsuitable and out of place for many people who possess it, but it would lead us into a bye-pass, and away from the subject of

81. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Sixth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Sligo and County Leitrim, 17th to 27th April 1907) and Documents Relating Thereto, p.148 [Cd.3748], H. C. 1908, xxxix, p.928, evidence by Rev. Terence C. Connolly representing Manorhamilton Rural Council and the fishermen of the Leitrim coast. The failure of lace and sprigging classes are discussed in Chapter Six. 


83. Royal Commission on Congestion, Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July, 1907) and Documents Relating Thereto, p.55 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, p.129, evidence by George F. Trench. Also ‘Home Industries in Relation to Agriculture’, Irish Homestead, 7 February 1903, p.102.
The muscular arms of the butter-churning maid will give way to 'a slim young miss looking after poultry'.

We declare...that churning as it used to be done was a most inhuman labour to put women to, especially in the winter and when the whole milk was churned. Anyone who has seen these women, often those about to become mothers, labouring for a couple of hours, and almost fainting over their work, would agree with us that all this talk about home employment of the sort is the worst kind of nonsense [sic]. Our anti-co-operators would have it that if a woman wasn't sweated over a churn she has nothing to do which is a fit and womanly employment for her. We say that the more she has to do with the churn the worst for Ireland, and the more she has to say to the poultry yard the better for Ireland. These silly journalists seem to think that labour-saving machinery is bad for a country and bad for the farmer. We, on the contrary, assert that any device which will enable four hands at a creamery to do work which 100 women were engaged in is good for the country, because those 100 wives do not emigrate and their husbands...but they now make the farm more profitable by devoting their spare time to poultry-keeping, by which Ireland gains quite as much as it does by its butter production. We like to hear of an industrious household, but Heaven save us from cant about it all; from the silly, sanctimonious tongue that wags because people have more leisure in their lives and do not sweat and faint from their labour; which calls farmers lazy because they adopt labour-saving machinery, and wives idle because they are less beasts of burden and can go to bed at night without every joint aching, and can live so that they still preserve some appearance of gracious womanhood at forty, and are not already wrinkled and gnarled and bent like old trees on a seashore.85

Although the extension of poultry-rearing was frequently thrown up as an alternative occupation for redundant butter-makers, another argument was more prevalent. The removal of butter-making from female work-schemes left women more time to devote to their 'proper' duties - housework. At a large meeting of the Dromore Co-Operative Home Industries Society in July 1904, the political economist and ardent supporter of co-operation, Father T. A. Finlay, asserted that the diversion of female labour into housework was ample justification for the existence of creameries.86 Lady Londonderry at the annual meeting of the Ulster Branch of the I.A.O.S. praised the introduction of creameries for leaving women


85. 'Mass Movement Against Co-Operation', Irish Homestead, 27 March 1909, p.242. The poultry industry is examined in Chapter Eight.

more time for recreation and their 'proper domestic duties'.

A "County Cork Woman" argued that freeing women from butter-making was the only way to improve the 'semi-barbarous condition' of rural homesteads. She suggested that home-buttermaking had led to the 'deterioration of the breed of women and children': the transfer of this 'drudgery' to creameries 'saved a needless sacrifice of life, and has protected both mother and child from ill-health'. Critics of the creamery movement consisted of urban journalists: rural households were less likely to disparage the transfer of the energies of women to housewifery. The success of the farm depended on the housekeeping skills of farm women:

They [critics] should know that there was a difference between nominal wages and real wages, one man might be receiving only half the nominal wages of another man, but yet may be receiving equal or more of real wages, for wages for labour depended on the amount of conveniences and the requirements of life which the man enjoyed. Take the man with an income of 50 [pounds] a year and an unskilled wife: all he was getting out of that income would not represent, perhaps, as much of the real advantages of living, of the conveniences and necessaries of life, as his neighbour with a skilled wife was getting from 25 [pounds] a year. For that reason, it was an advantage to the farmers that the women were set free from the rather strenuous task of churning to devote themselves to the study of their proper business in the home.

Related to this stress on housework was the response of the co-operative societies to criticisms that creameries denied children milk. The creamery was satirized as 'a horrible ghoulisht monster' snatching milk out of the lips of starving children and

87. 'Among the Societies. Ulster Branch of the I.A.O.S.', Irish Homestead, 23 April 1910, p.345.
88. 'Notes of the Week. Creamery and Female Labour', Irish Homestead, 11 May 1901, p.303.
89. 'The Education of Munster Farmers', Irish Homestead, 18 May 1901, pp 317-18.
90. 'Among the Societies. Cavan District Conference', Irish Homestead, 22 June 1912, p.510, speech by Father T. A. Finlay. Also see 'Homely Wrinkles', Ark, vi.53, February 1914, p.7.
91. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 148-49 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, pp 236-37, evidence by P. E. Mallon of Doobally, County Down, representing the Enniskillen Rural District Council No.2 and Doobally branch of the United Irish League; "M. O'B", Leader, 14 March 1908, p.58; and "Inquirer", Leader, 21 March 1908, p.73.
frantic parents. This argument, although repeated constantly by the anti-creamery faction, was treated with contempt in I.A.O.S. publications. The Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Milk Supplies showed that creameries could not be held responsible for the shortage of milk. The Dairy and Cowsheds Order was more to blame since registration and inspections reduced the number of farmers willing to sell milk. However, the argument periodically recurred because of its critique of female competence in the home: if Irish women were better housekeepers, they would welcome the opportunity to devote more time to such activities as childcare and would wrest milk for their dependents out of the grasp of creameries.

Conclusion

Of course, many women continued making butter. Not all areas were provided with creameries. Many women churned for family consumption using the weekend milk supplies. During World War One, Irish women took up butter-churning again on a large scale.

92. 'Notes of the Week. The Creamery Vampire', Irish Homestead, 4 May 1907, p.347. Also 'Notes of the Week. Milk for Labourers' Children', Irish Homestead, 2 May 1908, p.349; 'Should We Blame Separators or Souls?', Irish Homestead, 16 May 1908, p.388; Sarsfield Kerrigan, Leader 7 March 1908 p.39 and 28 March 1908, p.91; a report on a speech of John Clancy in 'The Bishop of Elphin and the Co-Operative Creameries', Irish Homestead 13 June 1908, pp 470-73 where he links shortages of milk to the creameries and says that this is why the people drink too much tea and porter in the fields; 'Wexford Women in Council', Irish Homestead 17 January 1914, pp 45-6; and Harold Barbour, 'The Work of the I.A.O.S.', pamphlet printed from the Irish Homestead (Dublin: I.A.O.S., 1910), p.6.


94. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Ninth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Mayo, 21st August to 3rd September, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto p.72 [Cd.3845], H. C. 1908, xli, p.624, evidence by the Very Rev. Canon Humphrey O'Riordan and Mrs. Maxwell (of Dungloe United Irishwomen, County Donegal), 'Opening of the Dungloe Co-Operative Hall', Irish Homestead, 26 November 1910, pp 976-77.

The dairy industry, however, had changed. Farming households were more likely to buy butter than to make it. Some indication of this change can be seen if we look at the amounts of butter being bought from the creamery by the suppliers to creameries. More butter was being bought from creameries by their suppliers - suggesting that these suppliers were no longer retaining some of the milk to churn at home for household consumption. Women training in the Dairy Schools were liable to find that training increased their wages to such an extent that demand for their labour declined as farmers became conscious that seasonal labour requirements favoured the employment of men who could work at other occupations when milk production was low (that is, during winter). If women made butter, they were more likely to be found as the solitary female in large dairies or creameries, overseen by male managers, than in their own homes. The home churn became a less prominent feature of the farm household. Women lost a dominant forum for discussing matters of community interest. Less obviously, a tradition of folklore and folk charms fell into disuse. The 'good people' were not invoked in creameries. May morning charms, prayers and spells lost their efficacy: 'The advent of the separator has, I fear, destroyed nearly all the poetry of these times, and with it the power of the butter


98. Taken from an analysis of the dairy accounts in the Registry of Friendly Societies.

99. For examples of the role played by groups of women meeting to churn or mix butter ('choring'), see the interview of Mrs. Dore (of County Limerick), aged sixty, interviewed by P. Ward in January 1939, typescript in Irish Folklore Commission Mss 591, pp 484-46 and 'Among the Societies. Athea, 24 March General Meeting', Irish Homestead, 30 March 1895, p.53.
Butter-making had become 'as scientific a business as brewing' and women were moved out. Both absolutely and relatively, female workloads in dairying were reduced, along with access to control over cash income. Organisations set up to revolutionise the rural community lamented the declining work opportunities for women but they decided that the Irish farm woman had enough work to do in looking after her family. In most cases, the reforms instigated by these organisations benefited the communities as a whole. The Irish dairy industry would have collapsed without the rationalizations instigated by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. But the adverse affects of the reforms fell disproportionately on the female members of the rural communities. No-one said it as well as 'Peper' in the Ark:

Where is the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with crumpled horn?
She has gone to the town
Where she's now holding down
A job as a skilful typewriter.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, the skills of the milking maid were less likely to be appreciated in the towns and cities of Ireland, England or America, but were more valued when channelled into the home. Although Humphrey James' story Paddy's Woman was written around the same time as Denis Hurley's letter at the beginning of this chapter, James showed more foresight by identifying the element which was to become dominant by the first decades of the twentieth century. Paddy and Barney discuss the marriage prospects of Titia, a skilful dairywoman:

100. R. A. Anderson, 'The Influence of Co-Operation on Dairying', Irish Homestead, 4 June 1904, p.469. For lengthy descriptions of the folklore and folkcharms associated with dairying, see the Irish Folklore Commission, ie. Mss 80, collected by Padraig Mac Greiue of Ballinalee, Edgeworthstown (County Longford), November 1929, pp 45-50, and Mss 1340, collected by James G. Delaney from James Dermody of Columcille parish (County Longford), aged 54, collected in the 1950s, pp 41-2.


"And she's as good as she's nice and clean."
"Them that'll get her, will have a bargain, for if she's so nice and clean, and can sing so well, she
can hardly be expected to milk the cows and make the butter," said Paddy, laughing.
"I'm thinking you and me'd be rich, Paddy," said Barney, "if we had half the cows she could milk or
make butter from - according to what Mickey Coulter, her mother's servant boy, tells me. Besides, any
steel of a girl can feed the pigs and wash the veshels [sic]."
"Ay, but not everyone of them can make it a pleasure for a neighbour to come into your house, and kaly
at your fire." said Pat.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{103} Humphrey James, \textit{Paddy's Woman and Other Stories} (London: T. Fisher Urwin, 1896), pp
107-8.
Chapter 6

Home Industries

They were pretty, good, and cheerful, and supported themselves and an aged mother by working embroidery or 'sprigging' for Mrs Finlay of Churchill, who was an agent for an English firm. On certain days fixed by that lady for receiving and paying for the finished work, and giving out fresh material, one of the sisters always attended, bringing with her the beautifully-flowered pieces into which the deft hands of her sisters and herself had converted the flimsy pieces of drapery supplied by Mrs Finlay; and returning with the scanty price of their ill-paid industry.1

The central elements of this chapter are contained in P. T. McGinley's fairy tale. The story began with Donegal women earning a living through skilled embroidery. One day, a fairy took pity on their plight and assumed control of their work. His intentions were noble, but ultimately unproductive. In late nineteenth century Ireland, the rural reformers played the part of the kindly fairy. Home industries were promoted on an unprecedented scale. This chapter examines the impetus to develop female industries. Various promotional schemes were started but they failed to secure a market for the products. What caused the collapse of home industries? Equally pertinent, why did many women continue working at home industries? Female home industries were inseparable from housework. In the minds of the promoters, the schemes achieved their major aim: that is, to serve as an intermediate form of work between agricultural labour and housework.2

Promoting Home Industries

Home industries were not new in rural Ireland, although most can be traced to


P6.1 A woman knitting
(Roderic O’Conor’s painting, from Anne Crookshank and The Knight of Glen, The Painters of Ireland c.1660-1920 (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1978), p.258.)
philanthropic efforts rather than commercial trade. The industries examined in this chapter - lacemaking, crochet, embroidery, sprigging (white embroidery) and knitting - existed precariously in Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were revived during and slightly after the famine years, then collapsed in the 1860s and 1870s. The exception was the sprigging industry in Ulster which was introduced in the 1830s and only declined substantially from the 1890s. Beginning with small scale projects then expanding with the Congested Districts Board and other state and private organisations, home industries were artificially stimulated again from the 1880s. This chapter examines the failure of these schemes.

Numerically, it is difficult to estimate the extent of these projects. Most home workers were not designated an occupation in the census. Of the fifty-one women active in the Belleek embroidery and lace class (County Fermanagh) during January 1911, fifty-six per cent were given no occupation in the 1911 census manuscripts and four per cent were given occupations other than industrial workers (one domestic servant and one 'farmer's sister'). Statistics like this illustrate the caution with which we must view any attempts to generalise about female employment through the census. Keeping these limitations in mind, what does the census tell us about home industries? In the census, home industries were classed under Dress and Textiles. In 1871 over 276,000 women were employed in this broad category. This number had more than halved by 1911. An unknown proportion of women in this category worked at home. Some home workers were designated


4. The Belleek Needlework Industry (also called the Belleek Lace Class or Lace and Crochet Class) in County Fermanagh was chosen for this study because of the mass of data on the class in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Mss D2149. The process of matching this data with the census manuscript data is discussed later in this chapter.

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separate categories in the census. There were 557 lacemakers in 1891 and they increased by 500 each decade until 1911. The numbers employed in embroidery decreased between 1891 and 1901 and then increased between 1901 and 1911 to a level only slightly higher than the 1891 figure. Four and a half thousand women were employed in embroidery in 1911. Less than 450 women were hosiery manufacturers in the censuses 1891, 1901 and 1911. Home industries were concentrated in Donegal, Derry, Down, Monaghan, Cork, Limerick and Wexford. In these southern counties, the employment gains apparent between 1891 and 1911 had vanished by the next census. In the 1926 census for Saorstat Eireann there were fewer women employed in these three industries than there had been in 1891. These official statistics suggest that there was a temporary but minor increase in some home industries. The census records only small numbers of women employed in these industries. The statistics ignore thousands of women provided with a subsistence income, or an auxiliary income, in the home industries established by the reforming organisations. The following few pages summarises these attempts to stimulate home industries, beginning in the 1880s, then moving to the large-scale projects of the reformers.

Initially, attempts to promote home industries were the work of individual philanthropists, small groups of wealthy women, and school authorities. Early promotions were directed at 'ladies'. These included the Royal Irish School of Art Needlework established in the 1880s by the Countess of Cowper, the Home Arts and Industries Association in 1883, and the Irish Distressed Ladies’ Fund, established in 1886 to relieve ladies suffering from the non-payment of rent by tenants and agricultural depression. Private philanthropists, like Mrs Alice M. Hart who provided employment for Donegal women

5. We cannot estimate the numbers for Northern Ireland. In 1926 embroidery was combined with hemming. In the north, lacemaking and hosiery trades increased between 1891 and 1911 from 177 to 703 women.

6. Helen Blackburn (ed.), A Handy Book of Reference for Irishwomen (London: The Irish Exhibition, 1888), pp 52-3 and 82 provides a summary of these organisations.
in knitted gloves and Kells art embroidery, were influential in the late 1880s. She was followed by more professional industrial promoters such as Mrs Robert Vere O’Brien of Limerick, Alan Cole of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, and James Brennan of the Crawford Municipal School of Art in Cork and of the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin. Irish design in a few communities improved with their efforts.

The Irish Industries Association (I.I.A.), established in 1887, set out to organise home industries, improve communication between local communities, circulate information about competitors and new markets, and provide skilled manual instruction and designs. They spent their first year collecting information about home industries in Ireland. In 1888, under the management of the Countess of Aberdeen, they performed their most useful act by buying Ben Lindsay’s depot for the sale of home products. Their significance after opening the depot rested in international exhibitions and their co-ordinating functions with the other organisations.

Education in industrial arts such as needlework, crochet, lacemaking and knitting were a part of school curricula before the 1880s. Convent schools in particular were well-known for such classes - the most prominent example being St. Joseph’s convent in Kinsale which introduced lace and muslin embroidery in 1847. Serious attempts to promote education in home industries began in 1888 when the Commissioners of National Education

7. Mrs Alice Hart was the wife of Dr Ernest Hart. For further information about her work, see Londonderry Sentinel, 10 September 1887, p.3; Union (A Journal Devoted to the Maintenance of the Union of the Three Kingdoms), 13 August 1887, p.3; 3 September 1887, p.1; 10 September 1887, p.1; 24 September 1887, p.3; and 15 October 1887, p.3; Mrs. Ernest Hart, Cottage Industries: And What They Can Do For Ireland. Being a Verbatim Report of an Address Given by Mrs. Ernest Hart, at the Club House, Bedford Park, May 30th., 1885 (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1885); and Papers of Bishop Michael Logue which includes letters to Mrs Hart, in National Library of Ireland Mss 13827.


appointed the first directress of needlework. The following year they ordered that girls in the higher classes must be taught needlework for at least one hour a day in all schools with a female teacher or workmistress. By the 1890s over 160,000 school girls were being trained in needlework each year. From September 1900 it was compulsory to teach needlework to female pupils of all ages. By 1911, over 320,000 girls were being instructed annually.

In addition to classroom instruction, national schools set up 'industrial departments' to train girls and women who had left school. Most of these departments attempted to sell the final products. In 1895, thirty-seven national schools (nearly all of them convents) had industrial departments. Sixty-four per cent had been established in the previous six years. Ironically, in England educational authorities had been disparaging lace classes and schools for two decades by this stage.

In 1892, the Congested Districts Board began promoting home industries in conjunction with the Irish Industries Association. The I.I.A. managed the industries while the C.D.B. provided the capital and instruction. Initially, the Board was only interested in the tweed industry which already existed in Donegal at this time. They built upon the industry by substituting improved for antiquated looms. The new machine could weave over two-and-a-half times the number of yards a day. The C.D.B. gave loans on easy terms of repayment for the purchase of machinery and tools. They attempted to improve quality by inspecting webs at the monthly fairs of Ardara and Carrick, giving prizes, and holding classes in


12. This data has been extracted from the annual reports of the Commissioners of National Education in the British Parliamentary Papers.


Almost immediately, however, they moved into the lace, crochet and knitting industries. The C.D.B. held classes in Mayo, Donegal, Cork, Leitrim, Sligo, Galway and Kerry (in descending order of expenditure). By providing the initial investment and working capital, the C.D.B. enabled the workers to receive the full sum paid for their work. Ninety-five percent of the classes helped by the C.D.B. were lace classes. Only two were embroidery classes. The old hand knitting industry of Donegal, which had almost disappeared because of mechanised competition from Leicester, was stimulated by the C.D.B. through the provision of knitting machines at cost price and on easy terms. After repayment, workers were free to get work from the Donegal hosiery merchants.

The lace classes were each attended by around thirty women. Girls would attend classes three or four days a week for about eighteen months. Once trained, they attended the classes once or twice a week for payment. Nearly all of the work was done in their homes. The work was sold at the I.I.A. depot. The system of instruction and marketing which the C.D.B. established for the home industries remained unchanged until the 1930s when Gaeltarra Eireann was established in Dublin. In 1902 the Board spent over three thousand pounds on grants for home industries. This sum does not include the substantial portion of the twelve thousand pounds for technical instruction which involved home industries. The earnings of women amounted to almost twelve-and-half thousand pounds in 1902. By 1905 earnings exceeded twenty thousand pounds.

The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society also became involved with home industries through the Irish Industries Association. Instruction and marketing was to be the main

15. Report from the Select Committee on Home Work Together with the Proceedings of the Committee. Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix (London: H.M.S.O., 1908), p.34, evidence by W. J. D. Walker. We have no way of knowing how many of these 'lace schools' switched to knitting during depressions: W. L. Micks, History of the Congested Districts Board (Dublin: Eason, 1925), p.69.

role of the I.I.A. while the I.A.O.S. dealt with organisation. By taking one five shilling share, a woman was admitted to the co-operative society. In 1901 two and a half thousand women were members of co-operative home industry societies. Societies were managed by committees in which women predominated. However, home industries were comparatively neglected by the I.A.O.S. which was much more concerned with agricultural co-operatives.

In 1902, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction had assisted or established twenty-one home industries societies for women in eleven counties. Their activities were generally concentrated in Leinster and Ulster. These classes employed over one thousand women each year. Annual expenditure generally ranged between two and three thousand pounds. The Department stimulated the establishment of classes in county schemes by paying local County Councils three pounds a head for the first ten workers and two pounds a head thereafter. Nearly one hundred industrial instructresses were sent


18.I have examined the accounts, membership lists and committee memorandum in the Registry of Friendly Societies for the following home industries: Foxford Co-Operative Industrial and Agricultural Society (No.1459 R Mayo), Glencolumcille Knitting Co-Operative Society (No.2980 R Donegal), Ballyakerry Co-Operative Home Industry Society (No.442 R Mayo), Dun Emer Guild Society (No.767 R Dublin), Moneyguyneen Co-Operative Home Industries Society (No.706 R Kings), County Meath Home Industries Society (No.615 R Meath), Youghal Co-Operative Lace Society (No.216 R Cork), Dorard Co-Operative Home Industries Society (No.1148 R Limerick), North Donegal Handspinners and Handweavers Society (No.1190 R Donegal) and New Ross Co-Operative Home Industries Society (No.666 R Wexford). They were chosen randomly.

19.'The Organisation of Home Industries', Irish Homestead, 18 July 1914, p.578.


throughout the country. They attempted to teach industries which had already been established in the community in the past. In 1903, the department set up summer courses to teach the technique of lacemaking. Later, book-keeping and business methods were also taught and a more regular school opened in Enniskillen. They conducted inquiries in the continent on home industries and set up exhibitions on Irish products. Their work in policing trade infringements was also important.

Reasons for Promoting Home Industries

What explains the promotion of home industries in Ireland from the end of the nineteenth century, peaking between 1900 and 1908 with the policies of the Congested Districts Board, the co-operative societies and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction? Home industries were adopted because they conformed to the idealised image of the Irish rural community held by the reformers. Conformity occurred in economic and domestic spheres. In their attempts to improve the life of Irish women and men, personal contentment was linked with economic stability. Female unemployment and emigration were ever-present evils. Home industries provided salvation. As important, home industries would promote domestic contentment. The 'immense advantage' of home industrial development, as opposed to factory development, was that home industries protected home life, health and happiness. Finally, the reformers were working within a limited framework. Faced with backward communities, their options were constrained. Choice


24. Their work in this area can be traced through the D.A.T.I. Journal which published annual reports on trade infringements and action taken by the Department against these infringements.

was also limited by their beliefs about development in general and Irish social history in particular.

Rising female unemployment provided the main economic impetus for the establishment of home industries. Unemployment increased poverty. The reforming organisations recognised that they were partially responsible for unemployment amongst rural women: modern methods in agriculture involved finding work for the female members of the farmers' family.26 Agricultural innovations such as creameries reduced female employment: 'The whole economic control of life tends more and more to become concentrated in the man of the family and women must be diverted into home industries.'27 Economic stability demanded that Ireland become 'one of the most eminently female industrial countries of Europe'.28 The special difficulties attendant on women finding employment made bureaucratic intervention necessary.29 Widening employment opportunities for Irish women was the goal of the Meath Home Industries Committee which aimed to enable women 'who would otherwise be obliged to become a charge on their relatives' to earn a living for themselves.30 Work was


30.'Meath Home Industries Exhibition’, Warder, 21 May 1898, p.7.
stimulation: women would be saved from idleness. They would remove the 'brunt of the battle of life' from the shoulders of male breadwinners.31

In these economic analyses, the chief symptom of dissatisfaction was emigration. An economic solution was proposed. Irish women could be persuaded to remain in Ireland if they were provided with employment in the form of home industries.32 Home comfort would increase. In the minds of reformers, the words 'home comfort' embraced both economic prosperity and inter-personal harmony.

The aim was not to employ women indiscriminately. Rural industries were particularly suitable because they were home-based. As a form of employment for women, home industries appealed to rural reformers because they did not contradict the concept that women's economic role in re-building Ireland was located within the household. After praising female home industries, Helen Blackburn exclaimed: 'Long may Irish [female] workers aim at thus keeping their hold of home, and yet winning self-respect which comes of the power of


P6.2 A Corrymellagh (County Antrim) farm kitchen: women spinning and sewing next to a turf fire, 1889 (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, WAG 1961)
earning.\textsuperscript{33} Home industries and housework were complementary activities.\textsuperscript{34} Many claimed that the introduction of home industries improved housewifery skills.\textsuperscript{35} High quality lace or crochet could only be made in a clean environment. Neatness was essential. Much of the white work would be ruined if it had to be washed. Housing had to be reformed in areas adopting home industries. Roofs were sealed to keep out the rain. Chimneys were introduced \textquoteleft so that the fair linen might remain innocent of stain from the turf reek\textquoteright.\textsuperscript{36} The small increase in income would allow the housewife to spend money on domestic fineries, giving her a sense of pride in her home. Rural women would be inspired to astounding feats of model housewifery by creating fine lace or even sturdy woollen gloves. In 1907, Rev. P. J. Dowling asserted that 'every true patriot knows' that economic well-being was only one effect of home industries: there was an equally important moral and social effect.

\textsuperscript{33}Helen Blackburn (ed.), \textit{A Handy Book of Reference for Irishwomen} (London: The Irish Exhibition, 1888), pp 6-7.

\textsuperscript{34}\textquoteleft The Fireside. Women's Work in Irish Homes\textquoteright, \textit{Irish Homestead}, 24 August 1895, p.405; Sylvia Everard (president and hon. secretary of the Meath Home Industries Association in Randlestown, County Cavan), 'Industries. The Meath Home Industries Association', \textit{Irish Homestead}, 4 March 1899, p.174; "Finola", United Irishman, 22 August 1903, p.6; and Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September, to 4th October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.8 [Cd.4007], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.106, evidence by Peter J. O'Malley of Connemara.


\textsuperscript{36}Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, for the Year Ending 31st October 1888, pp 146-47 [C.5697], H. C. 1889, xviii, pp 512-13.
In the first place, you cannot have such industries without order and regularity in the home. The hand and the eye get a training that shows itself in the dress and surroundings of the worker. In particular, such trades as lacemaking, embroidery, and shirtmaking force order and cleanliness on the house where they are carried on. Then, a great sense of self-respect and self-reliance comes to the man or woman who feels that the bread that is eaten is not idle bread. The idler in the home, who is a kind of parasite on the worker, must have a very low standard of self-appraisal, and must feel very sharply the contrast between himself and the worker. Frugality, too, is begotten in such a home. The material must be husbanded, the profits are small, every suspicion of waste must be checked, and this makes the mind of a frugal bent.37

Given the desirability of industrialisation, the Congested Districts Board had no choice but to adopt home industries in districts which lacked transit facilities and local capital. The raw materials and the final product were light enough to be sent by parcel post. Capital outlay was low.38 However, state legislation restrained the distribution of capital. The Congested Districts Board could not own or manage any industrial enterprise.39 Under the Act of 1899, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction could assist small home industries but not larger enterprises such as woollen mills.40 They were allowed to provide technical instruction to a limited number of larger enterprises but the fine distinction between instruction and apprenticeship repeatedly forced them to abandon even these attempts. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society was restricted by the aims and ideals of local communities.

Sentimental attachment to home industries also narrowed choices. This attachment was


based on a version of Irish history which focussed on a vision of the self-sufficient and innately artistic farming household.41 It is only now that we begin to realise what a cruel deprivation the killing of the cottage industries meant. The peasant women took a keen delight in the hand-spinning and weaving. The work refined them, bringing out all the dormant artistic qualities in their nature. These cottage workers never regarded their work as the hard task-master that the mill-hand considers his toil. These hand spinners were like Whitman's 'loving labourer' whose work 'holds him near to God'. They learned to love their work and to put their loves and hearts into it. What painting was to the painter and the sculpture, home weaving and spinning was to the cottage workers of a bye-gone time. And in addition to this gain, there was the material advantage, the money it brought.42

The fact that home industries used to flourish in Ireland would increase chances of success - after all, Irish peasants had an 'almost inherited skill in knitting'.43 Rural reformers had a responsibility to restore home industries to women and to the farming household.44

Finally, notions of rural development led reformers to adopt home industries. Ultimately (they acknowledged), economic recovery required large-scale industrialisation. Home industries were seen as a precursor to the creation of an industrial Ireland on the Scottish and English model.45 W. J. D. Walker of the Congested Districts Board claimed that attempts to regulate home industries by imposing legislation to improve working conditions, control wages and license premises would


45.This argument is re-told by development economists and theorists of proto-industrialisation today.
abolish all possibility of later on having larger industrial developments founded on the hereditary skill and application of the trained worker accustomed to a Wages Scale. If you take Hawick and Galashiels, and even Lancashire, the entire industry there is based on the previously existing home industry developed by steam and power into the modern factory, and whenever you find an industry such as in Darvel, or any of those towns in Scotland, you will find that the industry there has grown up from the previously industrially-trained population at hand-work.46

Industrial growth depended upon the development of an industrial character. Unlike the Irish, English children grew up in an industrial environment, inheriting a 'natural aptitude' for industrial life.47 In Ireland, the first task was to develop home industries.

The Failure of Home Industries

The range and financial resources of these organisations did not guarantee success. Classes and societies were established, thrived for short periods, then died. After 1906 a society was fortunate to experience even a short period of affluence. Private charities were the most unstable. Even the well-managed enterprise of Alice Hart had disappeared by the early 1890s. The Irish Industries Association survived but as a faded assembly. The generous financial resources of the large organisations encouraged private groups to withdraw. However, eventually even the large organisational efforts crumbled. Receipts from the Congested Districts Board's home industries increased more slowly than expenditure. In 1904, and drastically in 1906, they were forced to cut expenditure on home industries.48 Their work continued but they never achieved self-sufficiency.

The number of co-operative home industries in Ireland grew most rapidly between 1900 and 1902, peaked in 1903 with twenty-eight societies, but was falling again by 1904. In


47. 'Notes of the Week. Technical Education', Irish Homestead, 27 January 1905, p.64.

1909, sales were lower than they had been in 1899. Those societies which survived were unstable. Few managed to balance their accounts for more than a couple of years. For instance, in 1912 sixty members of the Ballykeery Co-Operative Home Industry Society in Mayo purchased 385 pounds worth of materials, but could only sell 344 pounds worth of goods. The following year purchases amounted to 373 pounds and sales to 371 pounds. The Moneyguyeene Co-Operative Home Industries Society in Kings' County balanced their books, but with declining profit margins until 1916. The County Meath Home Industries Society sold lace work and knitted products to the value of 486 pounds in 1912. By 1914 sales had declined to 256 pounds, with expenses totalling 339 pounds. When they closed in 1916 'for the duration of the war' (and never re-opened) they were selling only 42 pounds worth of goods, although expenses were 68 pounds. Sales of the co-operative home industry societies increased from 1900 to 1903, declined suddenly in 1904, then slowly increased again until 1906. There was no recovery after 1906.

The home industries classes of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction suffered a similar fate. Expenditure peaked in 1902, declined between 1903 and 1910, then temporarily increased until 1913. In spite of the increase in expenditure in the two years after 1910, sales never recovered after the collapse of the crochet industry in 1906. As one worker said, 'The failure of the crochet was as bad as the cattle disease itself'. In 1912, the instructress of home industries for the Department, Miss Anderson, noted that instruction in home industries had almost disappeared from the


50. Registry of Friendly Societies, Files 442 R Mayo; 706 R Kings and 615 R Meath.

51. From the annual reports of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, published in the British Parliamentary Papers.

Leinster schemes and was declining rapidly from the Connaught schemes. In the west, only County Mayo still held classes in home industries. The extension experienced in Ulster was minor.53

World War One affected all the home industries. The shirtmaking and knitted wool industries boomed as demand from private commercial firms and the military grew. By shutting off Austrian competition the war helped sales of coloured embroidery.54 However, the industries boosted by the war collapsed quickly. Overall, the war sped up the process of decline. Demand for crochet, lace and sewed muslin waned. Women withdrew from home industries because of increased demand for agricultural labour. The fixed rates of pay instituted by the Board of Trade led experienced workers to quit. Companies hiring medium-skilled workers sent their work to cheaper sewers abroad.55

The wages received by women for their work provide some clues to the failure of home industries. Wages were low. Furthermore, they declined in absolute and real terms. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find wage series for home industries. Work was paid by piece. For the most part (but not entirely) we have to deal with fragmented pieces of evidence. Most important, we usually do not know how many hours women worked for their wages. The examples given here refer only to women working 'full-time' at home industries - although we are still unable to state categorically how many hours this actually constituted. Further, we have no way to measure differences in skill. Elizabeth Boyle, the historian of Irish 'flowerers', asserted that 'individual earnings seem respectable'.


She claimed that wages in this period ranged between ten shillings and one pound per week.56 My examination of the records show much lower wages. Five hundred women at S. E. Donaldson’s guipure and applique lace industry were earning 10s a week in 1877 and 1878, but these were peak years, and wages declined thereafter.57 In 1894, thirty-one elderly and highly skilled lacemakers working for Mrs Robert Vere O’Brien of Ennis, County Clare, earned 7s a week.58 During the same period, knitters could earn only 3s a week.59 Some women in Donegal worked for 18d a week.60 In 1899 the minimum wage for an outside hem-stitcher working in Banbridge (County Down) was 2s5d. A year later, the minimum wage had dropped to 1s7d. Folders in the same place earned between 3s7d and 8s in 1899, and between 4s1d and 7s6d in 1900. Other female workers were paid an average of 3s a week. No male employee was paid less than 9s.61 Sewers in Tullamore could earn a maximum of 4s a week in 1905.62 Spriggers in Donegal used to earn 8s a week early in the century but this had fallen to 3s or 4s by 1906. Women used to be paid 3s for sprigging a dozen shirts: in 1906 the return was 18d a dozen.63 In Rathmullen women were earning between 8s and 10s a week.

61. John Johnson’s hem stitching factory in Banbridge (County Down), statistics from wage books of 23 June 1899 and 22 June 1900, P.R.O.N.I. D1042.
63. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Second Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Donegal, 8th to 19th October, 1906), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.38 [Cd.3319], H. C. 1907, xxxv, p.54, evidence by Rev. James Maguire of Inishowen and Fannet in the parish of Clonmany.
The Fermanagh sprigging industry brought workers 6s to 9s a week. After three months training, crochet workers in Mayo earned an average of 5s to 7s a week in 1907. In 1908, the average crochet worker in Cavan earned only 2s a week. The maximum wage was 6s. Handkerchief clipping was one of the most skilled jobs in the sprigging industry. In 1908 a clipper could 'lift' eleven to twelve shillings a week. By 1910 no women could earn as much as half of this sum. This wage had been reduced to between 2s9d and 6s3d. A clipper commented, 'they just keep reducing and reducing, and when they don't reduce the price they increase the work.' Generally, average wages between 1908 and 1910 ranged between 4s to 7s in home industries as diverse as Donegal embroidery, lace made in congested districts, and Limerick lace. As average wages, this hides extremes. Although the average lacemaker in Kenmare earned between 4s and 12s, the best

64.Ibid., p.21 (p.37), evidence by Rev. James Gallagher of Rathmullan.


66.Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Ninth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Mayo, 21st August to 3rd September, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.83 [Cd.3845], H. C. 1908, xli, p.635, evidence by Patrick O'Donnell of Newport, member of the County Council of Mayo.

67.Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 141-42 [Cd.3785], H. C. 1908, xl, p.229, evidence by Patrick Clark, a farmer and shopkeeper of Swanlinbar (County Cavan).


worker earned 1 pound. Beginners earned less than 4s. Similarly, the range of wages earned in 1908 in the Derry shirt industry was between 4s and 15s a week. In the same years, rural women lettering handkerchiefs were earning 2s to 4s a week.

We can examine wages for two groups of home workers over the period 1903 and 1917. The Belleek and Cashelnadrea lace and sprigging classes, under the County Fermanagh schemes of technical instruction, have left a daunting array of wage and account books. I have converted daily wage rates into yearly, monthly and weekly totals. Whenever possible, I quote weekly payments since this allows us to make comparisons with the wages of agricultural servants. The first thing to notice is the low average wage. Converting the daily wages of the eighteen women in the Cashelnadrea lace class into weekly rates, in the years 1905 and 1906, the most highly paid worker (Catherine Gallagher) earned 6s a week. The average worker earned 3s. The highest wages were paid during the harvest period - presumably assuring continued labour of women in the industry during these months. This is confirmed in another set of statistics for this class which indicate that during the months of highest demand for casual agricultural labour, payments to workers exceeded sales. The individual long-term trend of wages followed the pattern

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72. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.121 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, p.195, evidence by the Very Archdeacon David O'Leary.


75. Belleek Needlework industry (County Fermanagh), wage books, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/3/10.

76. Belleek Needlework industry (County Fermanagh), wage books, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/3/3.
set by Winny Carmy. Carmy joined the Belleek sprigging class in 1903. In her first year she earned 3s a week. By 1904 this had increased to 5s, then to 7s in 1907. After this date, her earnings declined. By 1908 she could earn only 1s a week. Since the number of workers in the Belleek and Cashelnarea classes remained relatively stable until 1916, aggregate sums paid to workers provide a useful indicator of wage trends. Wages paid to women increased between 1909 to 1911, then declined rapidly. Thus, in 1912 wages were lower than they had been in 1909. The difference between minimum and maximum wages earned had also increased. Highly skilled workers were able to maintain their rate of payment, while the average sprigger was paid less and less.

Wages increased again at the end of 1913 but this lasted only until July 1914. Except for the period October 1913 to July 1914, the average wage of seventy-one women for which detailed wages exist was less than 2s a week. The daily amounts of money paid to twenty-three pieceworkers who worked in the Belleek class between August 1903 and January 1915 have been analysed. These workers had different levels of skill. They occasionally discontinued work, then resumed at later dates. In an attempt to look at general trends, these payments were averaged by month.

Trade increased steadily until the middle of 1905 then dropped suddenly between 1906 to 1909, rose until 1911 (with a small decline mid-1910) and then fluctuated at levels much lower than 1904-1905. At their peak, women were earning an average of 8s a week. By the pre-war period, they were lucky to earn half this sum.

Low wages were a source of embarrassment to the promoters of home industries. The Congested Districts Board was able to justify the wages by reminding critics that the cost of living in congested areas was much lower than in the rest of Ireland. To make the

77. Winny Carmey of Foxtown, P.R.O.N.I. D3239/4/1.
78. Belleek Needlework industry (County Fermanagh), wage books, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/3/4.
79. Belleek Needlework industry (County Fermanagh), wage books, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/6/2.
80. Ibid.
point, they exaggerated the differential. Rent was low and the acquisition of fuel demanded an expenditure of labour and time rather than capital. The land provided households with their food. Dress was simple. Amusements were spontaneous. In the west, families did not buy seats at picture-houses, nor did they pay gate-money at spectator sports. The co-operative societies, based in more wealthy areas such as Leighlin (County Carlow), Youghal (County Tipperary), Carrickmacross (County Monaghan), and Crossmaglen (county Armagh), were more prepared to confess that they never intended to provide a 'living wage' but only to supplement earnings while providing women with 'pleasant and comfortable employment in their own homes.' Home industries were not full-time occupations. Women embroidered or knitted before and after housework. Wages were paid accordingly.

The main justification for the low wages used by the institutions establishing home industries were that the women were learning skills which were at least as important as the monetary return on their labour. Female labour should not be judged in the same way as the types of labour performed by men. All forms of employment for women had to be weighed against their chief form of labour, housework. By knitting or embroidering women were learning domestic skills.

Their earnings may be small; but small earnings and habits of tidiness and economy are better than no earnings and habits of untidiness and wastefulness.

The relationship between housework and home industries was increasingly emphasised, at the

83. 'Among the Societies. Dunleer and Clogher Head', Irish Homestead, 30 November 1901, p.798.
expense of home industries.

The Persistence of Home Workers

Why did women continue embroidering or making lace when their labour was so poorly paid? In depressed areas they had little choice: there was simply no other form of income-earning employment. In the 1887 Irish Industries Association pamphlet on home industries, Rev. John MacKerna of Pettigo (County Donegal) pleaded for the establishment of home industries for unemployed women in his district 'who have not a day's work to do and who would work for anything sooner than be idle'.85 Women took up home industries as a 'temporary occupation until some more profitable employment offers'.86

We can speculate on the economic motivations of home industries by looking at the Belleek sprigging class. I have matched women employed in the class during January 1911 with the census manuscripts for 1911. A matching has only been made when both names agree and where there are no other likely candidates. Duplications of names has meant that I have matched only seventy-two per cent of the sample. In 1911, the Belleek District contained 171 households or over 500 adults. The workers all came from the Belleek District Electoral Division. Three-quarters of the workers came from the townlands of Derrynon Glebe, Belleek town and the Commons. Almost one-third of all households in the Belleek district had at least one home worker. The chief factor distinguishing these women from all other women (aged over fifteen years) in the District was that they came from households which might be expected to be poorer than average. This is clearly seen in Table 6.1. Households with industrial workers were larger, had more dependent kin, and fewer males than households without home industries. Childcare requirements in households

6.1

Characteristics of All Households
Differentiating Between Households With No Home Industries
And Households Where At Least One Women Employed in a Home Industry
Belleek District Electoral Division, 1911

Households with/without Home Industries with/without
                                         (per cent)   (per cent)
Households with 5 or more members        45.1  33.6
Households with dependent kin            33.4  31.6
Households with less than 40 per cent men 43.0  32.0
Households with over 2 children over 15 years 15.7  24.0
Households with at least 1 child under 5 years 13.0  24.8
Households with 'head' given no occupation 26.1  12.0

Characteristics of Women
Employed or Not Employed in a Home Industry
1911, Belleek District Electoral Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Not Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were married</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were widowed</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were unmarried</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were 'heads'</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were not members of C.F.U.</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult women who were wives</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

with home industries were lower than in all households. While almost one-quarter of all households had dependent children, only thirteen to sixteen per cent of households with industrial workers had dependent children. This suggests that home industries were not adopted by women 'trapped' at home because of childcare requirements: the shortage of alternative employment opportunities was crucial. The workers' relationship to the 'head of the household' was also skewed. First, home workers were much more likely to be the 'head'. Second, fewer were wives and none were non-relatives (whereas seven per cent of all women over fifteen years in Belleek District Electoral Division were servants,

87. Households may contain more than one of the characteristics, thus the columns do not add up to 100 per cent.
Poor woman knitting next to turf fire
boarders or visitors). Third, a higher proportion of industrial workers were 'relatives' but not members of the conjugal family unit - they were sisters, nieces, mothers living with married sons or daughters, and aunts. More home-workers were unmarried. The economic dependence of home workers in Belleek is clear when we note that while eleven per cent of all adult women not working at home industries were widows, over one-quarter of industrial workers had lost their husbands. Households containing home industries were more likely to have a larger number of adult females without a designated occupation and their heads tended to be older. In twenty-six per cent of households with industrial workers, the head was not designated an occupation - compared with only twelve per cent of households without home industries.

Given the economic vulnerability of households with home industries, women continued working at home industries because even their low wages could be indispensable to the household economy, particularly if more than one woman in the family worked at them. In the matched group of Belleek workers, one-fifth of all workers in home industries lived in households with more than one industrial worker. The small wages of one or two female members of the household could mean the difference between abject poverty and the balancing of accounts.

A more important explanation for the persistence of home workers lies in the nature of trade fluctuations. Until 1906 depressions in the industries had been followed by

periods of stability and even prosperity. Competition required constant application of the manual skills involved in lacemaking and crochet. During the periodic depressions women had two options: they could learn new skills and spend a few more years on apprentice wages with a slight hope of 'coming out' during a boom, or they could retain and improve the skills they possessed and wait for a resurgence of trade. After 1906, however, trade depressions were long-term affairs and some industries never revived. In the words of one sprigger, 'We’re lost we women that work at home'.

Economic rationales are not the basis for all human action. In trying to explain why women continued working at home industries despite low wages, creativity cannot be ignored. For some, lacemaking or knitting provided their chief form of self-expression. It was legitimate leisure. They enjoyed the touch of fine threads and linens. Knitting brought a sense of accomplishment. Linen crafts were an imitation of the higher classes of women as portrayed in penny-readers and the bible. It helped to while away the evenings.

These earnings may seem small, but they have brought the margin of comfort to many poor hearths in the past seven years, and that out of time redeemed from mere idling. Nor is the money the sole return. This knitting brings the girls some of the pleasure of skilled, intelligent work. To make a good jersey or a well-proportioned pair of gloves, and to adapt the article to the various requirements of the various customers requires some 'faculty', and gives the work sufficient individuality to save it from the machine-like repetition which is so foreign to the versatile Celt.

The symbolic value of industrial work was also important. In an economy which offered them few opportunities to contribute monetarily to the household, home industries allowed them to snatch some (albeit little) independence. As Miss L. Reynolds (co-operative organiser of home industries) argued in Ballyshannon, women had to establish a lace industry if they were to 'earn money and independence'. Eighty women agreed, and


established the industry. The word 'independence' had more than rhetorical value. Home industries were a way of combining the new virtues of housewifery and domesticity with attempts to earn a living.

**Why Home Industries Failed**

Given the willingness of well-endowed organisations to invest capital and other resources in home industries and given the docile (even desperate) labour force, why did the schemes to promote home industries in Ireland fail? An examination of three relationships provides the answer. The relationship between the bureaucracy and the rural community was fraught with tension. Administrative inefficiency and ignorance contributed to the failure of local industries. This explanation says very little about the intrinsic problems of establishing home industries. The relationship between the rural community and the market was never satisfactory. Home workers were inefficient. Their industries were severely damaged by the competition of large-scale factories and home-producers in other countries. Fundamental marketing deficiencies were never remedied. Finally, forces within the communities thwarted development.

Local leaders were frequently justified in placing the blame for the failure of home industries on the bureaucracy. The 'starchy paste-board little men from the Department' often destroyed local plans for extending home industries by enforcing rules rigidly. For example, in 1909 rolls plummeted when the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction decreed that students of lace and crochet at technical schools had to attend design classes one evening a week in addition to practical classes. Some women resented being treated as school children sitting at desks with pen and pad. Others were annoyed...

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92. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 71-2 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, pp 145-46, evidence by Cano Humphrey O’Riordan, representing the bishops, the Cahirciveen Rural District and the fish curers.

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when their household commitments would not allow the extra time.\textsuperscript{93} Competition between organisations promoting home industries frequently destroyed classes, as in the notorious conflict between the D.A.T.I. and the I.A.O.S. over the Lissan Co-Operative Home Industry.\textsuperscript{94}

Non-bureaucratic benefactors also played a role in ruining the industries they established. Many of the cottage industries were really charities. Failure was caused by the disorganised dispensation of charitable capital by people unacquainted with business methods, the market, and even the objects of their benevolence. The instability of such enterprises was frequently exposed during the first crisis: the first attempt to sell the products, a depression in the industry, or the absence of the leading benefactor caused panic. The tendency of these fairy godmothers (and occasionally godfathers) to promote the most ornate, decorative work also lent a predictability to their economic ruin. Co-operators legitimately accused them of treating home industries as a form of 'personal benefactory' and leaving 'the sense of personal responsibility unawakened' amongst the workers.\textsuperscript{95} Workers no longer accepted such charity gratefully. Dignity demanded that a woman earn her own living rather than depending on patronage.\textsuperscript{96}

The lack of skilled teachers denied home industries a solid technical base. Competent technical leadership was lacking. The ineptitude of amateur organisers of home industries frustrated potential buyers. For instance, the Belleek home industry depended on large orders from Ireland Brothers and Warings of London, yet the incompetence of Miss M. A.

\textsuperscript{93} "A Mere Woman", 'Women's Work in the Technical Schools', Leader, 25 June 1910, p.401.

\textsuperscript{94} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland). Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Departmental Committee of Inquiry, p.460 [Cd.3574], H. C. 1907, xviii, p.527, evidence by Mr. L. Bradley, secretary of the Tyrone committee of technical instruction.

\textsuperscript{95} 'Home Industries', Irish Homestead, 17 June 1905, p.470.

\textsuperscript{96} 'Keep a Tight Grip on your Business. Rural Industries Ahead', Irish Homestead, 25 January 1908, p.61.
Dolan led to annual confrontations which threatened to destroy relations. Co-operative societies relied on the leadership of the local committee. Particularly in home industries, an independent, business-minded committee was essential to direct the workers. What we find, however, is a high proportion of employees on the committee. In all co-operative enterprises in Ireland, less than one per cent of the members of the committee were also workers. However, in the Irish lace and embroidery co-operatives, forty-four per cent of all committee members were employees. Given the economic and social status of workers in home industries, their near-dominance in the managerial committees is significant.

Finally, reforming organisations, although striving to make the classes self-sufficient, discovered that the cost of establishing the classes frequently exceeded the income generated by the industries. Societies were small. Management was wasteful. The maintenance of the industries entailed an expenditure of public money large in proportion to the earnings. While such expenditure was expected to decrease after two or three years, the combination of trade fluctuations and high emigration rates among the most skilled workers meant that return on expenditure was low.

Irish home industries competed unsuccessfully with producers in other countries. Industry in England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Lebanon, Syria, China, Japan, the Philippine Islands, Germany and parts of the United States were more efficient than the

97. Belleek Needlework Class (County Fermanagh), Correspondence between Miss M. A. Doland and Ireland Brothers and Warings of London, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/8/1.


Irish lacemakers.100 For example, the Austrian government profitably established home industries amongst its poor. They developed more effective marketing methods. In particular, the market for raised crochet was affected by imports of creative Austrian work and tasteful machine-made imitations.101 Machine embroidery from Switzerland was cheaper, and often more stylish, than the local product. Irish manufacturers of cambric continued sending their linen to Switzerland to be embroidered.102 English lace factories reached their peak in 1907, employing over forty thousand workers.103 World markets were becoming restricted. "McKinley's" tariff of 1891 increased American duties on knitted goods. A prohibitive tariff on lace was introduced in the United States in 1909. The industry's dependency on overseas markets made it especially vulnerable.

We do not have to argue that the promotion of home industries was a plot encouraged by British governments and other villains (such as John Redmond!) to keep Ireland industrially under-developed, to accept that the encouragement of home industries was at odds with the mechanising tendencies in other countries.104 Mechanisation of industries such as embroidery, lacemaking and knitting in other countries destroyed Irish cottage industries:

The spinning wheel gave place to the 'spinning jenny', the handloom to the powerloom, the knitting


needles to the 'Automatic', and now the 'tambour' is yielding to the Swiss Embroidery Machine.\textsuperscript{105} Outworkers in the sprigging industry declined by fifty per cent between 1903 and 1913 because of improvements in machinery and the popularity of machine-made coloured shirts.\textsuperscript{106} There were four outworkers for every factory worker in 1860, but this had declined to two outworkers for every factory worker by 1908.\textsuperscript{107} Cottage production was too slow. Mechanised industries produced a standardised product at greater speed. Only the finest work was given to hand-sewers: the average worker could not compete with the machine.\textsuperscript{108}

Reformers were concerned with the issue of mechanisation and its relationship to the problems of marketing.

But in watching an industry of such a type [home industry] carefully one finds that after twelve months or so he can see no further progress being made. The sales are kept up, but there is no increase, and the industry remains too small to be run economically. On inquiry one finds that while the people in the district are very sympathetic, it is quite impossible to secure a larger market. For instance, if they come to Dublin seeking to obtain custom, the large houses will say, 'We shall be very glad to give you an order for so many thousand dozens, prepared according to this sample, and we must have them delivered in such a time', and the small industry finds it impossible to meet these conditions. Having only a few workers, it is impossible to complete the orders in time, though they have a market for the goods. They cannot buy the plant needful for the execution of such an order, and altogether they fail to hold the general market.\textsuperscript{109}

Communities most desperate for home industries lacked the capital for their successful development. Even during periods where demand for their products was high, supply could


\textsuperscript{106}Ireland of To-Day. Reprinted, With Some Additions, from The Times, With Illustrations (London: John Murray, 1913), p.332.


\textsuperscript{108}Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Twelvth Annual General Report of the Department, for 1911-1912, p.185 [Cd.6647], H. C. 1912-13, xii, p.665.

\textsuperscript{109}George Fletcher, 'The Functions of the Department in Relation to Rural Industries', D.A.T.I. for Ireland Journal, 7.4 (July 1907), pp 667-68, address at the eleventh meeting of the Council of Agriculture on 17 May 1907.
not increase because of the lack of credit.\footnote{110}

It was not only a question of capital. Associations of rural reformers were torn by debates regarding the advisability of introducing simple mechanical aids into the Irish home. On one side sat those who argued that home industries could not compete without some mechanical innovations. Economic considerations were paramount in their arguments. Minor mechanical aids would prepare the peasant community for large-scale industrialisation. Mechanisation would create a prosperous peasantry. On the other side sat those who stressed the non-economic purposes of home industries. They argued that mechanisation would not benefit the rural household: it would retard housewifery. Other justifications for this stance included the notion of preserving the Irish craft of embroidery or lacemaking. These promoters reminded listeners of the history of Irish home industries, calling for a preservation of the old traditions irrespective of economic viability.\footnote{111}

This later group generally prevailed.

In the few instances where Irish home industries were mechanised (while remaining in the home), female employment decreased. For instance, the mechanical carding machine temporarily boosted the male-dominated weaving industry, but threatened to eradicate female employment in carding.\footnote{112} It was claimed that knitting machines would improve female home employment but, without the subsidies and loans given by the Congested

\footnotetext{110}{Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Report of the Departmental Committee on Agricultural Credit in Ireland, p.333 [Cd.7375], H. C. 1914, xiii, p.351.}

\footnotetext{111}{For a lengthy example of such debates, see Irish Technical Association Annual Congress. Killarney...1914 (Cork: Guy and Co., 1915), pp 62ff and Katherine Roche, 'The Lady Teachers’ Own Page’, Irish School Weekly, 15 November 1913, p.266.}

\footnotetext{112}{Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth Report of the Department. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September to 4th October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.60 [Cd.4007], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.158, evidence by Christopher O’Connor of Letterard in Clifden, representing the United Irish League.}
Districts Board, few could afford them. Knitting machines forced Irish home workers to compete even more directly with large factories. If they had any effect it was to accelerate declining wages and female unemployment.

The main problem was that the Irish market for home industries was small. Few people in Ireland could afford luxurious lace and wealthy households preferred foreign luxury goods. Imported lace was cheaper than the Irish-made variety. When the fast tourist steamers of the Cunard and White Star lines ceased calling at Queenstown, the southern lace market was drastically reduced. Irish cottage lace was exported. Distance from the market became an major problem given the poor (though improving) Irish infrastructure.

The Irish promoters struggled with marketing. The Irish Lace Depot, established by Ben Lindsay and then taken over by the efficient Countess of Aberdeen, distributed the products of the C.D.B. and D.A.T.I. classes. A small number of middle-class rural women might be able to sell their products through urban groups such as the Wife and Maid Club of the Irish Weekly Independent but all others relied on the efforts of inefficient shopkeepers, stumbling local patrons and the erratic marketing arrangements of government departments and co-operative societies. Local marketing arrangements were the major problem. Particularly in the northern sprigging industry, shopkeepers were the agents.

The shopkeeper received a commission of about ten per cent but this scarcely paid for the


114."O'S", United Irishman, 5 April 1902, p.6.


labour involved in collecting, sending and accounting for the products. Rather, the shopkeeper's return was in the form of custom in her shop and general approbation. Most critics blame the failure of home industries on trucking practices of the local shopkeeper which drove down wages. However, it was hardly in the economic or social interest of the shopkeeper to engage in this sort of activity. The incidence of trucking has been exaggerated. The problem was one of non-specialisation. Shopkeepers were inefficient. So long as she maintained a steady flow of incoming work, the quality of products was irrelevant. Indeed, it was in her interest to encourage unskilled women to work at the industry. Delays in collecting and sending were habitual.

Home industries were susceptible to sudden swings in trade.

The lace trade is most fluctuating and though we have more orders than we can execute in one season, we may have almost nothing to do in the next, and stock accumulates to a very large extent; then, I regret to say, none but the experts can get constant employment.

Two months of rushed work might be followed by three months without a single order. Between 1897 and 1898, sales of Ardara home-spun plummeted by thirty-five per cent without warning. The market for lace was precariously dependent on rapidly changing tastes. The death of King Edward precipitated a decline in sales of white lace work in


England. The promotional work of the Gaelic League in the United States caused a brief boom. A maker of cosy covers described how she would earn 8s a week for a few months then was lucky to earn 3s and had to supplement her wages by taking in washing and charing. Low earnings drove women to produce as much as possible in the shortest period of time. In depressed years, their labour was wasted. In better years, prices were rapidly driven down by over-production. The market could not absorb the large scale production of low quality, poorly-designed lace.

The third main threat to home industries came from within the communities. They could not sustain home industries. Industrial reformers hoped that the classes would stop, or at least reduce, female emigration. This did not occur. Instead, home industries were continually weakened by emigration. The Reverend Mother of the Sisters of Poor Clare complained that their lace classes had stagnated because all the skilled workers emigrated. In one year, half of the women in the Cama lace class emigrated. Home industries actually encouraged emigration by increasing the sense of independence in young


126. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September, to 4th October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.53 [Cd.4007], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.151, evidence by W. J. D. Walker. Similar evidence is provided by Rev. Michael McHugh, parish priest at Cama, in the same report, p.49 (p.147).
women\(^{127}\) and by raising expectations of remunerative employment which could not be fulfilled for more than short bursts.\(^{128}\)

The level of technical education was low. Education for the industries consisted of a crash-course by an itinerant instructress or a hotchpotch series of practical lessons conducted by an amateur practitioner, often in philanthropic guise.\(^{129}\) The attempt to resolve the problem of technical education - that is, by employing instructresses to work with the classes - did not improve the popularity of the local industries: nationalists were affronted by the employment of instructresses and specialised workers from England, Scotland and Wales, the geographical dispersal of the classes meant that the teachers could spend only short periods in each area, and the teachers were alienated from the communities.\(^{130}\) Lacemaking was a skilled employment requiring about three years to learn.\(^{131}\) Roving instructresses did not have the time to teach women to make high quality products. Workers were not skilled enough to experiment. Design inflexibility reduced the value of their product.

The isolation of many of the communities hindered the successful establishment of


130. Irish Technical Instruction Association Annual Congress. Killarney....1914 (Cork: Guy and Co., 1915), reply by A. O'Shaughnesy to J. F. Crowley's paper on the woollen industry, p.76 and 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Technical Instruction Committee, Thursday, 4 August 1904', p.62, in Minute Book, Cork Archives, U189. The Department, for example, had a rule that Irish instructresses could not be employed in their home county.

131. 'Notes of the Week. Over-Production in Lace', Irish Homestead, 11 July 1903, p.562.
home industries. Roads were poor and transport facilities unreliable. A severe rainstorm might delay orders for weeks. Women rarely had any contact with workers in other communities. They had little idea of the needs of the market and rarely had access to new designs. It was scarcely surprising that Irish workers were berated for lacking 'individual initiative' so vital for successful industrial production. Isolation discouraged any attempts by the worker herself to innovate. They were reluctant to exchange designs learned from their mother or grandmother for new designs. The absence of a centralised organisation qualified to give advice increased their reluctance. Change was resisted. Despite hopeful comments to the contrary, Irish lace design continued to consisted of 'a distorted harp, a few caricatured shamrocks, and an Irish deerhound with a round tower beside him as though it were his kennel'. Over-production of the same designs led to periodic lack of demand and falling wages. The result was poor quality work, lagging behind market demands. The women's columnist for Ireland's Own gave the most damning criticism of Irish home products she could imagine when she claimed that 'no-


133. The Irish Year-Book 1908, Issued by the National Council (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1908), p.207.


one but a nigger would fancy them'.\footnote{Helen Hawthorn, 'Dress, Gossip and Cookery', Ireland's Own, 17 June 1903, p.12.} Certainly, English and American women periodically looked wryly at Irish products:

The isolation of the communities, the agricultural cycle of production and demands made on female members in the household led many rural reformers to complain, with some justification, that Irish home workers lacked the traits necessary for a successful modern industry. Workers did not place the 'proper' value on time. They were unpunctual. They worked irregularly. Orders were delayed.\footnote{Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Tenth Report of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland, for the Year Ending 31st March, 1901, p.44 [Cd.681], H. C. 1901, ix, p.45 and Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Fourteenth Report of the Congested Districts Board, for Ireland for the Year Ending 31st March, 1905, p.33 [Cd.2757], H. C. 1906, xcvi, p.387.} The Countess of Arran accused her Irish workers of lacking 'energy and enterprise'.\footnote{‘Monthly Reports’, Irish Textile Journal, 15 February 1894, p.21.} Simply, home industries failed Irish women.

**Purpose of Home Industries**

The promoters of home industries had little difficulty accepting the economic failure of their schemes. The low priority of schemes for female employment may be a reason for their nonchalance, but this sort of response begs the question.

We can edge towards an explanation by looking at the relationship between home industries and agricultural labour. Home industries were promoted to supplement agricultural work. The classes were aimed at occupying female members of small farming households. It was assumed that women would be unable to devote all their time to the industries. Besides the performance of housework, women on small farms had to work during planting and harvesting periods on the farm. Thus, the output of lace, crochet and

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embroidery dropped in the spring and autumn when agricultural labour demand peaked.\textsuperscript{140}

Miss Mary A. Dolan, manageress of the Belleek lace class, explained to Ireland Brothers:

\begin{quote}
Sorry for the delay on hurried goods. I could not get them from the workers. They workers [sic] aren't doing half as much work as they used to owing to have [sic] to work out in the fields this year.\textsuperscript{141}
\end{quote}

Promoters found no difficulty with this, claiming that what was important was remunerative occupation for women during the parts of the year where their labour was not required on the farm.\textsuperscript{142}

Why did parents object to their daughters learning skills such as lacemaking and embroidery? The reason they gave: 'they never knew a lace school started which did not make the girls useless'.\textsuperscript{143} Home industries reduced the casual female agricultural workforce. A Ballinrea landowner (County Cork) grumbled that girls would not work for him during peak seasons because farm work spoiled their hands for lacemaking.\textsuperscript{144} There were two sides to the problem. Women found it difficult to make good lace if their hands were hardened by years of farm work.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{140} Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Sixteenth Report of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland, for the Year Ending 31st March, 1907, p.27 [Cd.3767], H. C. 1908, xxiii, p.313. The attendance statistics given in the Daily Report Book of Industrial Instruction by the workmistress at the Carclinty National School confirms low attendance at the needlework classes (both absolutely and relative to attendance at other classes) of women during the months of April through to June and in August, P.R.O.N.I. SCH 548/8C/1.

\textsuperscript{141} Belleek Needlework Class (County Fermanagh), correspondence, letter dated 21 May 1908, P.R.O.N.I. D2149/7.


\textsuperscript{143} "Keilam", 'Household Hints. The Power of the Purse', Irish Homestead, 19 January 1901, p.44.

\textsuperscript{144} Royal Commission on Congestion for Ireland. Appendix to the Eighth Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Kerry and Cork, 3rd to 19th July, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.189 [Cd.3839], H. C. 1908, xli, p.635, Captain Richard W. Cooper, farmer of Ballinrea (County Cork), representing the Landowner's Convention.

\textsuperscript{145} W. L. Micks, History of the Congested Districts Board (Dublin: Eason, 1925), p.67.
their hands by resuming farm work. During the early years of the home industries movement, when wages were higher than those received from farm labouring, women withdrew from agricultural work. During periods of slump, they were reluctant to resume farm labour, hoping instead for another industrial boom. Until 1906 the booms came sufficiently often to encourage this practice. During periods of slump they were more likely to increase the quantity and quality of housework than to resume agricultural work. Where cottage industries were established, women moved out of the fields and into the homes.146

On farms where male family labour was insufficient and where the household economy could not afford to employ outside labour (or where such labour was unavailable) women in the household were given the lightest agricultural labour in an attempt to protect their hands and to safeguard what their hands were coming to symbolise - gentle, mothering appendages in contrast to the hard, practical hands admired in menfolk.

The relationship between home industries and housework goes deeper. Rural reformers used home industries as a halfway-house between female employment in agriculture and full-time unpaid labour within the home. The Department confessed that they were not concerned with the failure of home industries.

The want of success that has attended the efforts to establish lace industries was to be expected, and need not be regretted. The centres where female labour is in excess of home and farm demands had been previously provided with expert [domestic economy] instructresses of trained ability, and in agricultural districts it is much more important that future wives and mothers should be afforded facilities for becoming good housewives, vegetable gardeners and poultry-rearers.147

The Department made it compulsory for women attending their home industry classes to attend an equal number of classes in housewifery.148 Father Finlay, Horace Plunkett and

146. Maria Mies, The Lace Makers of Narsapur. Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market (London: ZED Press, 1982), pp 33ff makes similar comments when discussing the introduction of the lace industry in India.


Miss O’Conor Eccles (the author of an Irish domestic economy textbook) transformed one of the most successful lace classes into a centre of domestic instruction. Horace Plunkett warned the Congested Districts Board against spending too much energy and capital promoting home industries. He warned: 'the limitations of the home industry must always be kept in view and care taken - with regard at least to women workers - that they are also trained to look properly after the interests and economies of the home.' The Congested Districts Board did not need reminding. They were also concerned that women would become diverted excessively into home industries:

Another point that has to be noted is that these industries sometimes tend to a certain extent, though in a less degree than do the factory industries in English towns, to diminish the usefulness of girls at home, by causing overmuch attention to be directed to the industry, because of the money value of such work. Hence it is important to see that lacemaking classes should be supplemented by a course of domestic economy.

In schools, instruction in needlework was increasingly promoted as instruction in housewifery rather than industrial instruction. The committee of ladies, led by Alice Spring Rice, who visited schools in the Limerick district to provide extra needlework instruction for girls, were motivated by domestic aims. The inspector for the area

149. The St. Macartan’s Co-Operative Lace Industry was one of the few remunerative lace classes, with 200 workers. 'Among the Societies. Dromore', Irish Homestead, 30 July 1904, p.632 and 'Co-Operation and the Improvement of the Home. Sir Horace Plunkett Visits Dromore', Irish Homestead, 22 October 1904, p.892.


commented: 'The Committee do not, I believe think it practicable to start cottage or home industries. Their primary object is to make the girls good housewives.' The encouragement of housewifery was the primary consideration during discussions by all reformers promoting home industries.


Part Two: Subsistence Entrepreneurs

Chapter Seven: Household Agriculture

Chapter Eight: Poultry Rearing
Chapter 7

Household Farming

The farming labour force of the family was primarily made up of adult males.¹ Historians have difficulty dealing with the labour of women in peasant farm production. The problems intrinsic to all analyses of female labour are exacerbated by the paucity of statistical data on family farms. The census proves to be useless: it eliminates the labour of female members of the household on their farm entirely while assuming maximum levels of labour power from all adult male members of the household. Every census between 1881 and 1911 asserted that farmers’ sons, grandsons, brothers, and nephews, over fifteen years of age, would be designated 'employed in fields and pastures' if they had not been given another occupation. Corresponding female relatives would be referred to the 'unoccupied' category.² Excluding farmers' wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters and nieces from the agricultural tables of the census, while including farmers' husbands, sons, brothers, grandsons and nephews, seriously distorts any representation of the structure of the unwaged agricultural labour force.

In part, census enumerators and agricultural specialists can be excused for excluding women. The organisation of agriculture into small family-operated farms makes the collection of any sort of accurate statistics difficult. There are other problems. Female employment in agriculture tended to be less secure and more seasonal than male

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A woman working in the fields during harvest would be less likely to classify herself under this occupation in the census than a seasonal male labourer. Individual classifications were problematic. What occupation would a female landowner earning her living through growing potatoes, raising poultry and making lace be given? If the census was conducted in April, how would a woman who annually laboured bringing in the harvest on the family farm classify herself?

Statistically, two sources are available. Agricultural data collected by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction offer more promising estimates of levels of family farm labour than the census. These statistics are examined first. Second, the sample of eight District Electoral Divisions also proves useful.

In June 1912, the Enumerators of Agricultural Statistics collected information regarding the number of persons 'actively engaged in agriculture' on the first of that month. They divided the statistics by age, sex and farm size, and noted whether workers were members of farmers' families, other permanent labourers or persons temporarily employed. Before we can analyse these figures, how accurate are they? The 1912 statistic for the number of male farmers and farmers' relatives was twelve per cent lower than the 1911 census statistic while the 1912 figure for paid labourers was almost nine per cent

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higher than the 1911 census statistic. Although the differential is significant, it is not outrageous. The 1912 statistic was taken on one day of the year. Account has to be taken of the different criteria for classification. For instance, in 1911 'heads of households' were asked to give themselves an occupation while in 1912 the local constabulary were asked to count the number of persons actually engaged in agriculture in their area. Many of the men working as 'labourers' on 1 June 1912 owned land and counted themselves as 'farmers' for the purpose of the census in 1911. Given the total neglect of female relatives in the census, the 1912 data is essential in quantifying the unpaid female agricultural population. The 1911 census tables enumerated 54.7 thousand female farmers and no female farmers' relatives. In 1912, 223.9 thousand female farmer's and farmer's relatives were actually engaged in agriculture. Women working casually in agriculture were much more likely to be classified in the 1912 data. The following table summarises the number of men and women working on their own farm on the 1 June 1912 and Tables 7.1 and 7.2 on the following pages give the percentage of all persons working in agriculture who were employed as temporary paid labourers, permanent paid labourers, or unpaid family labourers and the proportion of women within each category.

### Number of Men and Women Working on their Own Farm
**By Age and Size of Holding**
**Ireland, 1 June 1912**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Men Under 18 (1,000s)</th>
<th>Men Over 18</th>
<th>Women Under 18 (1,000s)</th>
<th>Women Over 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 1 acre</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>116.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>136.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 200 acres</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the majority of female and male agricultural workers laboured on the family's farm. In 1912 over eighty-five per cent of all female agricultural labourers worked for
7.1

Persons Actively Engaged in Agriculture, 1 June 1912
Percentage of all Persons of One Sex and Age Group
Employed as Temporary or Permanent Labourers, or as
Labourers in the Family Farm, By Farm Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
<th>KEY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>77.92</td>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(A)Members of Farmer's Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
<td>68.73</td>
<td>17.66</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>69.81</td>
<td>17.14</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>80.91</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(B)Other Permanent Labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
<td>86.36</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>85.20</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms Under Thirty Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>89.53</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
<td>95.20</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>93.98</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms Over Thirty Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 Years</td>
<td>70.62</td>
<td>17.68</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>76.27</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>75.10</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Women Actively Engaged in Agriculture, 1 June 1912
As a Percentage of Women in Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On All Farms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>37.93</td>
<td>31.73</td>
<td>37.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Years or Over</td>
<td>26.65</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>11.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>28.35</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Farms Under Thirty Acres</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>44.02</td>
<td>31.09</td>
<td>36.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Years or Over</td>
<td>25.94</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>13.01</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Farms Over Thirty Acres</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 Years</td>
<td>31.36</td>
<td>31.93</td>
<td>36.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Years or Over</td>
<td>27.73</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>14.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ages</td>
<td>28.37</td>
<td>13.72</td>
<td>16.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**
- (A) Members of Farmer’s Family
- (B) Other Permanent Labourers
- (C) Temporarily Employed
their own family. This was particularly true for women over the age of eighteen years, eighty-six per cent of whom worked on the family farm compared with sixty-seven per cent of adult male workers. On farms under thirty acres - seventy per cent of all farms in Ireland - practically all female agricultural workers worked for their family. Larger farmers were more likely to hire male and female non-relatives. Forty-four per cent of young members of the family working on small family farms on 1 June 1912 were female. Employers of temporary labour on smaller farms were more likely to hire men than employers hiring temporary labour on larger farms. Age, not farm size, was the more important criterion in employing female members of the family and other permanent labourers.

This data can be used to estimate the value of female farm labour, relative to male farm labour. According to the table at the end of the chapter (Table 7.15), a high proportion of labour value on the farm came from family labour, especially in the poorer western counties of Mayo, Leitrim, Galway, Roscommon, Kerry, Clare and Donegal (column one). Familial labour was proportionately less important in the counties of Dublin, Kildare and Meath. Looking only at adult family labour, approximately eighteen per cent was female labour (column four). This proportion was highest in the Munster counties and in Wexford and Carlow where over one-quarter of the labour value was created by female family labour. Looking at the labour of people under the age of eighteen years, girls were valued at almost one third of boys. Female children were relatively more important in the south, and in the northern counties of Armagh, Derry and Antrim (column five). Child labour was more interchangeable in terms of the skills required for performance of the

5. Combining this data with wage data, I have assumed that permanent labourers received the maximum winter wage and that temporary labourers received half the maximum summer wage. In designated a value to the work of family members, I assume that full or part-time employment of family members on farms occurred in the same ratio as their sex and age peers in the paid agricultural labour force. Then I divided males and females (differentiating them by adult or child status) into their proportions as permanent or temporary workers and assigned to them their respective wage. The bias would underestimate the labour of family workers in relation to paid workers.
labour and in terms of time restraints.

Farm Activities of Women

What type of agricultural work were these women performing? Women laid potatoes, spread manure, collected stones for drains, fed the cows in busy times, hand-raked the meadows, prepared turf and bound corn. They rarely herded or sold cattle.6 Women occasionally ploughed, although more commonly performed spade-work.7

Female labour was essential to the peasant farm economy. In the poorer, congested districts, attendance at lace, crochet and domestic classes declined during the seasons when women were needed to work on their family’s farm, increasing again in the slack months.8 Even on more wealthy Ulster farms in the 1890s, female familial labour was essential.

Land is for the most part easily worked and fertile in these settlements, and it is the custom for the people to work it 'amongst themselves'. This means that the farmer and his family all work in the fields, the women weed flax, gather potatoes, and bind up corn, as well as making butter and attending to poultry.9

This last quotation introduces the most important aspect of female labour on their own, or their family’s farms. Women worked at most agricultural occupations at planting and harvest, but throughout the year specific tasks were seen as 'women's work' on farms: farm women earned money for the household through feeding pigs, raising poultry and dairying.


P7.1 Irish man and women "lashimg"
(From E. E. Evans, Irish Heritage: The Landscape, People and Their Work (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1942), p.48)
In each of these areas, important changes occurred between 1890 and 1914. Chapter Five looked at female participation in dairying on the farms of other people. The same arguments apply to the work of female family members milking cows, churning butter and marketing the produce. Chapter Eight (the next chapter) looks at poultry-rearing in particular. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to examine what evidence is available regarding the broad trend of female labour on the family's farm.

### The Change

Contemporaries noted that 'there is a growing indisposition on the part of females to field labour, except on their own holdings'. Unfortunately, the only statistical data we have on this change refers to the Republic of Ireland in 1912 and 1926.

#### 7.4 Percentage Change in the Number of Male and Female Members of Family Working on the Family Farm in Saorstat Eireann

**By Age and Farm Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Under 18 Years</th>
<th>Over 18 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>-61.3</td>
<td>-69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>-50.6</td>
<td>-61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>-49.9</td>
<td>-63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>-45.0</td>
<td>-62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>-51.2</td>
<td>-67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200 acres</td>
<td>-49.3</td>
<td>-67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 200 acres</td>
<td>-50.4</td>
<td>-70.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On farms under five acres, between 1912 and 1926, there was a faster decline in the number of male family members on farms. In part, this is because of higher productivity gains on the smallest farms and in part because of expanding alternative employment.

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opportunities for rural men, causing them to move out of agricultural production even faster than women. On farms over five acres, the number of adult women workers on family farms declined between 1912 and 1926 by approximately twenty-two per cent while the number of male family labourers on these farms increased by approximately ten per cent. Children living on farms rapidly ceased working for their families, with girls moving out of agricultural labour on the family farm fastest.

Labour Demand

Another way to analyse labour demand on farms is by regarding the farm household as an integral unit of labour, and differentiate labour demand within this unit. The size of household varied with the size of the farm, with larger farms supporting more people than smaller farms where surplus labour was pushed off as early as possible. Therefore, in 1901 nearly three-quarters of households on land with acreage of between one and five acres contained less than five members, compared with less than one-third of households on land between thirty and fifty acres. By 1911 household size on land had increased.

7.5

Size of Household by Farm Acreage
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm Acreage</th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-8</th>
<th>Over 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901 (n=441 households)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 (n=430 households)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. This analysis excludes households with land acreage under one.
The following table shows the number of adult men and women residing in each household, by farm size.

### 7.6 Average Number of Adult Men and Women Per Farm

**Waged Labour and Unwaged Family Labour**

**Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm Size</th>
<th>1901 Men (n=380)</th>
<th>1901 Women (n=387)</th>
<th>1911 Men (n=406)</th>
<th>1911 Women (n=429)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male labour requirements in farming households were larger than female requirements. For farms between one and fifteen acres, female labour requirements declined. On farms between fifteen and thirty acres the number of women remained stable, they increased on farms of between thirty and one-hundred acres and declined on the largest farms. The question is: to what extent were the changes a result of changing 'mix' between unpaid family labour and paid labour? Was the rapid decline in the number of women on farms over one-hundred acres in size caused by the reduced demand for the paid labour of female domestic servants and female farm servants? After all, demand for male labour on these farms declined only slightly during the same period. Is there any evidence that male farm servants were replacing female farm servants? As we saw in Chapter Four, the changes cannot be accounted for in terms of an increase in the proportion of households with paid domestic servants. Farms over one-hundred acres were more likely to have paid female domestic servants. An important decline occurred in the number of female farm servants and this

---

12. This analysis excludes households composed only of men or woman. The term 'adult' includes people between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five years.
would have reduced the amount of female labour on farms, particularly on large farms.

7.7

Percentage of Households With Domestic Servants
Non-Relatives, By Farm Size
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>1901 (n=621)</th>
<th>1911 (n=597)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.8

Percentage of all Households With Male or Female Farm Servants
By Farm Size
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>Women 1901 (n=387)</th>
<th>Women 1911 (n=429)</th>
<th>Men 1901 (n=380)</th>
<th>Men 1911 (n=406)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demand for the labour of female members of the family on Irish farms also diminished. Thus, in 1901 every farm had, on average, 1.5 female members of the family between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five. This had dropped to 1.4 within the decade. However, looking at these changes by farm size, a differential emerges.

7.9

Average Number of Female Family Members Per Household
By Farm Size
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Holding</th>
<th>1901 (n=621)</th>
<th>1911 (n=596)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female family labour declined fastest on farms of between one and five acres. What is most striking is that on farms between fifteen and thirty acres in size, (that is, over one-quarter of all holdings in the sample), the labour of female familial members increased.

Family members from small farms were more likely to find paid employment. For the small family economy, their money income was more necessary to household stability.

7.10  
Percentage of Female Family Members Given an Occupation in the Census
Women Aged 15-65 Only, By Farm Size
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>1901 (n=415)</th>
<th>1911 (n=437)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100 acres</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In agriculture, a number of forces may have been reducing demand for female labour on the family farm and on the farms of other people. What was the role of public ideology in lowering the demand for female labour in the fields? How influential were changes in farm size? What part did the shift from tillage to pasturage play? Was mechanisation significant? What was the impact of relative wage differentials? Finally, alternative demands on female labour led to a contraction of female labour supply available for agricultural production. The rest of the chapter examines these explanations, attempting to explain not only the decline of female family labourers, but also to supplement the discussion on the decline of paid female labourers (see Chapter Four).
Tastes and Investment in Children

Changing attitudes towards female labour in agriculture were reflected in the notion that 'modern' women were weaker than men.

The women them times were different to those now. They were never ashamed to take their turn doing an honest day's work, where there was a wage to be earned, and they could do handy jobs that a lot of the chraythers these times 'id get weak at, if their men wasn't knockin' around. 13

There was general disapproval of women - particularly mothers - working in the fields. Poverty drove women to perform heavy agricultural labour 'leaving her children to the tender care of Providence', causing commentators to moan, 'if children are allowed to drift without proper care, and if mothers are maimed and distorted with hard and heavy work, how is the country going to prosper or have a healthy and vigorous manhood?' 14

Women of small farming and labouring classes no longer wanted to feed pigs, as they had done in the past.

The standard of living and ideas of the farmers' daughters are too high and they will not do this work. This has a retarding effect, and the result is that more direct labour has to be depended on. 15

"Connemara Girl" tried to explain why men in Connemara work their women so hard:

The only explanation I can offer is the temperaments of the men of Connemara, owing to the hardships they are obliged to endure, have become soured, and consequently have lost the chivalrous feelings they ought to bear towards the women. As for the women, they accept the hardships of life and the additional hardships given them by the men with a cheerfulness and willingness to oblige that is the characteristic of all women. 16


15. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Departmental Committee on the Irish Pig-Breeding Industry. Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, p.69 [Cd.8004], H. C. 1914-16, vi, p.948, evidence by T. J. Byrne of Rosnakegh, Dundalk (County Louth), member of the Council of Agriculture, a tillage farmer with pigs. Also see p.54 where P. Maher (from Ivy Hall, Templemore, County Tipperary, a farmer and breeder of pigs) noted that female farm servants refused to feed pigs.

After describing the agricultural work of women in the west, the following statement was made: 'In Connemara one can see the most beautiful young girls in Ireland. One rarely sees a beautiful woman over forty there.' There was a continuous stream of statements noting that the wife of a small farmer was one of continuous hard work, with many privations and little leisure.

Women are not intended for manual labour, and yet how many of them work more than the men, especially among the small farmers. This is one of the evils we want to remedy. If money can be made by light and pleasant work there will be something to pay the skilled labourer with.

The employment of children was becoming less acceptable. This, in turn, affected female labour. Farm servanthood was probably the most important occupation for children in rural Ireland. The wages earned by children hired out between the age of ten and fourteen were important to the family economy. In the Royal Commission on Agricultural Labourers, we constantly hear:

Under ordinary circumstances, the lot of the married labourer, until his family are able to go to service, must be one of hardship, but after some of them are employed, his condition rapidly

17. 'Notes of the Week. Those Left Behind', Irish Homestead, 5 February 1910, p.103. The editor was responding to a letter by "Observer" who argued that the system of migratory labour in Connaught was responsible for the hardship of women on small holdings, the letter was entitled 'Migratory Labour and Women's Work on the Farm', p.110.


19. 'Among the Societies. United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 28 May 1910, p.452, paper read at the meeting to discuss forming the United Irishwomen, held at Ballynadara, Enniscorthy (County Wexford), by unidentified woman.

20. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.85 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, p.90, evidence by Rev. Thomas McCann, parish priest of Kildress (County Tyrone).
improves.\textsuperscript{21} However, as wage differentials between children and adults narrowed (as we shall see below), the employment of children became relatively less efficient. Furthermore, the age at which parental investment in children could be realised was receding. Children stayed at school longer.\textsuperscript{22} Local government boards set up school attendance committees to examine the extent of child employment and to enforce compulsory school attendance legislation.\textsuperscript{23} Compulsory education made things more difficult for married women because it meant that older children were no longer available to look after the younger children. Dependent children limited the opportunities for mothers to seek employment even during harvest. In this way, educational investment in children limited the employment role of women.

Ownership of Land

David Fitzpatrick used the argument that there was an 'increasing integration of farm workers within the farming class' to explain the decline of male agricultural labourers.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{22}This was discussed in Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{23}For example, see P.R.O.N.I. LA 16/7AA/1, the minutes of the Ballymoney Rural District School Attendance Committee where in 1901 they repeatedly bemoaned the large number of girls under the age of fourteen not attending school because of employment and Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.85 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, p.90, evidence by Rev. Thomas McCann, parish priest of Kildress (County Tyrone).

Opportunities to own land increased (Chapter Two). However, there is no evidence to suggest that opportunities for female agricultural labourers to raise their status by their own labour increased. Women did not benefit directly from land redistribution schemes. Increased access to land for male agricultural labourers may have enabled the wives, daughters and sisters of these upwardly-mobile labourers to stop working in the fields of other farmers, but not on their own holding.

**Effect of Farm Size**

In Chapter Two we noted that economies of scale on larger holdings meant that fewer labourers were required on each holding. As Irish farms grew larger, we would expect to find few persons employed in agriculture. The following table shows the number of permanent labourers employed on every one-hundred holdings of a certain size.\(^{25}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Holding</th>
<th>Leinster</th>
<th>Munster</th>
<th>Ulster</th>
<th>Connaught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 acre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{25}\)Combining this data with wage data, I have assumed that permanent labourers received the maximum winter wage and temporary labourers received half the maximum summer wage. In designed a value to the work of family members, I assume that full or part-time employment of family members on farms occurred in the same ratio as their sex and age peers in the paid agricultural labour force. Then I divided males and females (differentiating them by adult or child status) into their proportions as permanent or temporary workers and assigned to them their respective wage. The bias would underestimate the labour of family members in relation to paid workers.

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As the farm size becomes larger the total number of labourers increased while the number of labourers per acre decreased. Data from 1912 shows that although female workers were less likely to be employed on farms of all sizes, they were even less likely to be employed on large farms. As farm sizes in Ireland increased, we would expect to see female labourers (within a given area) moving more rapidly out of paid agricultural employment than male labourers. This does not occur. The proposition was tested by assuming that the same proportion of male or female labourers enumerated in 1912 within each size of farm bracket, was employed twenty years earlier, in 1892.26 Males and females were tested separately. Provincial and age variations were examined for each sex. The formula was tested for permanent paid labourers, temporary labourers, and unpaid family labourers.

The table on the following page shows that changes in average farm size cannot explain changing labour patterns. Only in Connaught could we predict lower employment on farms based on changes in farm size between 1892 and 1912. In Connaught, changes in the size of holdings might have resulted in a four to eight per cent decline in both male and female employment on farms between 1892 and 1912. In all other provinces, slight and insignificant (with the exception, perhaps, of Munster) increases in labouring employment might have been expected.

26.1912 was the only year for which employment data by size of farm was available.
Establishment of Full and Part Time Agricultural Labourers And Unwaged Family Labourers
Actual Numbers Employed in 1912 (For Every Size Holding)
And Estimated Numbers Employed in 1892 After Standardising for Farm Size in 1912
By Sex and Age Group and Province

### A. Permanent Labourers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group and Year</th>
<th>Leinster</th>
<th>Munster</th>
<th>Ulster</th>
<th>Connaught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>3191</td>
<td>3859</td>
<td>4446</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>3141</td>
<td>3732</td>
<td>4365</td>
<td>1051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>46563</td>
<td>35494</td>
<td>35423</td>
<td>8966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>45813</td>
<td>34391</td>
<td>34769</td>
<td>9712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>1288</td>
<td>2635</td>
<td>1572</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>1272</td>
<td>2541</td>
<td>1545</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>3859</td>
<td>8350</td>
<td>3249</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>3806</td>
<td>8062</td>
<td>3191</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Temporary Labourers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group and Year</th>
<th>Leinster</th>
<th>Munster</th>
<th>Ulster</th>
<th>Connaught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>2192</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>2881</td>
<td>1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>2132</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>2857</td>
<td>1367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>25135</td>
<td>22258</td>
<td>33284</td>
<td>17795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>24443</td>
<td>21081</td>
<td>33002</td>
<td>17637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>1479</td>
<td>1257</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>1456</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>4798</td>
<td>3886</td>
<td>2871</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B. Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Leinster</th>
<th>Munster</th>
<th>Ulster</th>
<th>Connaught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>10189</td>
<td>17092</td>
<td>22255</td>
<td>24187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>9833</td>
<td>16134</td>
<td>22250</td>
<td>23170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>86319</td>
<td>122124</td>
<td>162018</td>
<td>121761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>83499</td>
<td>114344</td>
<td>161728</td>
<td>116712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>6214</td>
<td>13246</td>
<td>12060</td>
<td>13535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>6173</td>
<td>12509</td>
<td>12070</td>
<td>12967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual 1912</td>
<td>27772</td>
<td>66429</td>
<td>45452</td>
<td>39155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated 1892</td>
<td>26760</td>
<td>61911</td>
<td>45501</td>
<td>37534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of Farm Type

Further, the argument that the movement from tillage to pasturalism resulted in reducing female participation in agriculture is only partially sustainable. If we correlate the number of milch cows, cattle and poultry per one-hundred acres and the amount of crops planted per one-hundred acres by the number of adult women working as 'permanent labourers' in 1912, we get the following table:

7.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Coefficients: Permanent Adult Female Labourers</th>
<th>By Acreage in Crops and Number of Milch Cows, Cattle and Poultry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per 100 Acres, By Farm Size, 1912</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Size</td>
<td>Crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 acres</td>
<td>-0.0150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 acres</td>
<td>-0.0814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50 acres</td>
<td>0.1689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100 acres</td>
<td>0.3347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High numbers of milch cows on farms of all sizes encouraged the employment of women. Similarly, on farms over thirty acres, crop production would lead to the employment of women. On small farms, high poultry numbers and high proportion of land in crops did not favour female employment. However, on farms over fifteen acres, cattle numbers did result in lower proportions of female workers.

Technology

The introduction of horses and equipment may have marginally reduced women’s role in agriculture. Machines reduced female employment in a number of ways. First, it reduced...
total number of labourers required to work on farms. Second, women were excluded from training for the equipment which was seen as 'masculine'. Chapter Five pointed out how women were excluded from creamery technology. Tillage implements such as drill ploughs, cultivators and harrows were predominantly in the north while hay rakes, reapers and mowers were in the provinces of Leinster and Munster. Connaught had very few of these machines or implements. This mechanical argument can be tested by examining a farm activity which men and women performed together, but where separate tasks were allotted to each sex - for instance, reaping and binding. Men reaped and mowed, followed by women who bound the grain. Machines came to be used increasingly for these processes. A number of reaping and mowing machines would be required to each binding machine.

7.14

Number of Reaping, Mowing and Binding Machines
Ireland. 1908, 1912 and 1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reapers and Mowers</th>
<th>Binders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>79,603</td>
<td>7,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>91,766</td>
<td>9,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>108,006</td>
<td>14,296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, while reapers and mowers increased by thirty-six per cent in nine years, the number of binders increased by eighty-eight per cent. Another example would be women's role during the 'little harvest' - that is, the harvest on the family's small farm. Women used


reaping hooks and men used scythes. As scythes took over from reaping hooks as the most efficient method of harvesting, women might have been expected to move out of this sector of farm employment.

Seasonal Migratory Labour

As seasonal employment for men and women declined, so did the work of females on their farm. Women worked intensively in the fields during those times, and in those areas, where the male members of the household left for seasonal employment in England, Scotland, or elsewhere in Ireland. Although most seasonal migrants from Achill were female, in Ireland as a whole the majority were male. For example, in each year between 1902 and 1907 over one thousand women left for seasonal employment, compared with between seventeen thousand (1903) and twenty-five thousand (1906) men. While so many men were away in England and Scotland, the care of the holdings was left entirely to women and children. Michael J. F. McCarthy commented

I have often been struck in harvest time at seeing mere children cutting corn in the little fields; some of the boys so young that a farmer in the south of Ireland would be afraid to entrust them with the use of a scythe, and the girls who followed the youthful mowers so small that they should have been at school. A gentleman who lives in the locality informed me one day that the fathers and elder brothers of some children at whom we were looking, were at that time, in England, to his knowledge, with packs on their backs.

In Ballymena during the 1890s, it was not uncommon for men to work in factories at some distance from their homes while the women and children remained at home to work in the

31. Irish Folklore Commission, Mss 107, Patrick Martin of Ballymitty (County Wexford), talking to Tomas O Ciardha on 5/4/35, p.36.

32. From the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction’s reports and tables on Irish agricultural labourers, published in the British Parliamentary Papers, 1903-1910.

household's fields.34 In certain coastal areas of Donegal, women tended the farms while men fished.35 The Royal Commission on Agricultural Labour (1893-1894) pointed to a decline in the number of male seasonal migrants caused partly by the introduction of machinery on English farms from the 1860s. As fewer men were needed to work seasonally in the fields of Scotland and England, this type of labour by women declined.

Decline of Traditional Areas of Female Labour

With the collapse of some areas of family agriculture where female labour predominated, we would expect a decline of female labour. In the next chapter poultry-rearing is examined in detail. The other example is the care of pigs. For small farmers and labouring families, the pig had a traditional place of importance in the household economy. Nineteenth-century descriptions of Ireland never failed to mention the 'gentleman that pays the rint'.

But almost certainly the pig will be there [by the fire] with the family, waiting for his share of the rough meal cooking on the fire. For the pig represents the future means of existence of the family for several months. On the little money which it will fetch at the next fair the father, mother, children, and the old parents will exist until next season.36

Women were responsible for the rearing of pigs. After the turn of the century, there


35.Copies of a Report from the Local Government Board for Ireland, Dated 25th Day of April 1883, With Regard to Distress Existing or Apprehended in Certain Parts of Ireland, p.5 [.92], H. C. 1883, lxxi, p.37, report by H. J. MacFarlane, Local Government Inspector for Donegal.

was a movement of women away from this form of agricultural labour.\textsuperscript{37} Although the statistics on the total number of pigs in Ireland show a series of peaks and troughs with only a slight decline, after 1911 fewer small farmers and labourers reared pigs.\textsuperscript{38} Certainly, the low pre-war price of pork and the high cost of bonhams, coupled with the decline of tillage and the dearness of animal foodstuffs bought in shops, must have discouraged small farming households from investing in a pig. The decline might also be blamed on the difficulties of obtaining labour, sanitary restrictions in towns and the lack of a suitable pig-stye in many of the cottages built for agricultural labourers by rural district committees.

\textbf{Wage Relativities and Housework}

Wage data tells us more about supply and demand than any other single source. This section examines trends in wages for men and women, then looks at the implications of these changes for the employment of each sex. Wage data for agricultural labourers exists for both men and women for the years 1890 to 1906.\textsuperscript{39} Female wages were most competitive in summer when they were about one-third the size of their male counterparts in most parts of the country. In winter female wages were just over half the size of men’s. In Cork, Kerry,

\begin{footnotesize}
37. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Departmental Committee on the Irish Pig-Breeding Industry. Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, p.3 [Cd.8004], H. C. 1914-16, vi, p.881.

38. Statistics taken from the agricultural statistics released by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and published annually in the British Parliamentary Papers.

39. Between 1890 and 1906 the wage data was given in the annual reports on agricultural statistics released by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. After 1906 wage data was given in the annual reports on migratory labourers but since only male wages were given, they are not useful for this analysis. The following analysis uses the statistics on the maximum summer and winter wages of agricultural labourers in each constabulary district to calculate the average rate for the county. The footnotes to the wage rates makes it clear that the wages refer not simply to harvest or strictly agricultural labourers but also to what this chapter calls ‘farm servants’. For instance, dairymaids, charwomen and domestic servants are mentioned as some of the activities performed by these women. For a comment on problems with these statistics, see David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Disappearance of the Irish Agricultural Labourer, 1841-1912’, Irish Economic and Social History, vii (1980), pp 80-81.
\end{footnotesize}
Limerick, and Tipperary less significant seasonal changes in agricultural demand meant that female wages changed very little in summer and winter. High wages were received in areas where the supply of labour was reduced by competition from other industries and in those areas most affected by seasonal swings in labour demand. Thus, wages in summer were highest in the eastern counties and in the northern counties of Antrim and Down.

The most striking change in wage rates is the narrowing differential between male and female wages. Occasionally the wages of young girls even exceeded those of young boys. This occurred with the summer wages of girls in Queens’ County and County Cork in 1890, and in Kings’ County in 1906. Relative to men, in 1890 female wages were particularly poor in Fermanagh and Leitrim. In these counties women received less than half the wage of men. By 1906 women generally received over half the male rate - although scarcely half in Antrim, Cavan, Roscommon, Galway, Leitrim, Donegal and Sligo. Adult female wages followed male wages closest in Westmeath and Wexford in 1890 where they were only one-quarter the size of male wages, and in Kings and Tipperary in 1906 where they received one-third of the wages of men. In most counties, the summer wages of female agricultural labourers increased between 1890 and 1906. The only exceptions were female labourers in Kildare, Kilkenny and Roscommon. Significantly, both summer and winter female wages increased faster than their adult male counterparts. The summer wages of women and girls rose between 1890 and 1906 by twenty-nine per cent while their winter wages increased by eighteen per cent. The mean increase for adult males was nineteen per cent in summer and seventeen per cent in winter. Only the wages of young boys increased faster than those of adult women. In terms of rates of change, the wages of female more closely resembled the wages of young male labourers, than adult male labourers. The wages of women and girls resembled each other much more closely than the wages of adult and young boys. The first effect of the shortage of female labour was the hiring of boys to perform work.
previously given to women.40 Young men could replace women in certain agricultural jobs without loss of manliness. By the turn to the century, escalating relative wages for young boys led to the movement to employ men.

With the narrowing wage differential, men became relatively cheaper. Employers traded wages against expected output and since men were expected to be stronger and more productive, narrowing differences between male and female wages resulted in substituting male labourers for female.

Part of what seems at first to be productivity differentials are related to certain 'costs' involved in employing women rather than men. These costs were related to the economic responsibilities of women in the household. The requirements of housework meant that employers allowed (and expected) women to work shorter hours than men. The morning duties of women - such as care of poultry and preparing breakfast for the household - required half an hour of daylight. Similarly, children had to be woken and sent to school, or dispersed to relatives and friends. Men in Bailieborough (County Cavan) and Ballyshannon (County Donegal) started work in summer at 6:00 - their wives at 7:00.41 In Balrothery (County Dublin) female labourers arrived at work one-and-a-half hours after

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40 Royal Commission of Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, Vol.iv, Ireland, Part iv, Reports by Mr Arthur Wilson Fox (Assistant Commissioner), Upon Certain Districts in the Counties of Carlow, Mayo, Roscommon, and Westmeath, With Summary Report Prefixed, p.81 [C.-6894-xxi], H. C. 1893-94, xxxvii, p.419, on Westport (County Mayo), concerned with the replacement of women by boys in weeding and cutting of thistles on Lord John Browne's estate.

their male relatives. In Roscrea (County Tipperary), men and women started labouring at the same hour of the morning except when men had to work before dawn at 5:00. Then, women would begin half-an-hour later. What this suggests is that housework played a crucial role in predicting labour force participation rates of women, whether the women are married or unmarried. To take an example of household agriculture mentioned earlier, pig-rearing was a time-consuming job which got in the way of housework. Irish households customarily fed their pigs with cooked meal and potatoes. The cost of preparing pig food was huge, particularly as the boiling was generally done in the kitchen.

There are but twenty-four hours in one short day, and how can a woman feed, clothe, educate her children, and minister to her husband’s needs, to say nothing of her own, if she has to labour on the farm and feed farm stock as well? Who can blame her if she neglects to cook proper food, to provide sufficient clothes, or to make her home what it ought to be? She has not time to think of her responsibilities, or, if she has, she is too tired to meet them.

As was argued in Chapter Four when we examined reasons for the decline in servanthood, the time demands of housewifery are central in explaining why women reduced the amount of work they did on their family farm.

Conclusion

The gradual movement of women out of many types of farm work was not regretted. Mrs. W. J. Starkie had this to say about the changes:

With regard to women’s work in the country districts, it will become, I think, daily more interesting and more important, for a revolution has taken place, though quietly, in the ideals of farming, which will give women a place of increasing importance in her own domain.


43. Ibid., p.37 (p.301).


Shifts in agricultural practices and increased investment in children combined with swings in wages which made it relatively more productive to employ boys or men, resulted in the slow movement of women out of the fields - in both the waged and unwaged spheres. For the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of farmers, the demands of household labour were increasing. The most apt 'slip' was made by Sir Horace Plunkett in his address to the Federation of Women's Institutes. The title of a paper was 'How I feed my pig'. Plunkett suggested deleting the word 'pig' and inserting the word 'baby'.

### Estimates of 'Wages' for Paid Labourers and Family Labourers
As Percentage of Total 'Wages', 1912
(method explained in text)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>24.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>48.2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meath</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<td>69.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key:
1. Percentage of total 'wages' earned by family members
2. Percentage of total 'wages' earned by female family members
3. Percentage of total 'wages' earned by male family members
4. Percentage of total adult family 'wages' earned by adult women
5. Percentage of total child family 'wages' earned by female children
Chapter 8

Poultry Rearing

I heard that there were no hens in Ireland at one time, and when the Danes invaded the country they brought them with them from Denmark. They brought them to do harm to the Irish people. The hens would go up on the roofs of the houses and start scraping and they'd scrape the covers off the houses and let in the wind and rain. The Danes were doing awful things till Brian Boru made war on them and defeated them at Clontarf. He wasn't going to make war on them only for the way they were plundering the Irish and knocking down their houses and churches and selling the materials in them for money. They were taking and selling the gold ornaments and vessels. They brought over the hens to scrape the roofs off the houses. The Irish people found that the hens weren't going to do all the rascality that the Danes intended. And the Irish people kept the hens.1

In this way, folklore explains how poultry came to Ireland. During the period examined in this chapter, rearing poultry for sale was one of the most important occupations of the farm woman. Indeed, despite the impassioned debates and controversial decisions concerning the poultry industry from the 1890s, one thing was agreed: for better or (more commonly) for worse, the poultry industry was dominated by women. In the words of the vice-president of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, T. W. Russell, 'women have a distinct ability in this direction'.2 Successful poultry-rearing demanded 'minute personal care and supervision....exactly the requisite which the wife and family of the cottager can bestow'.3 Women were more successful poultry-rearers than men, allegedly because they understood the temperamental character of the fowl and were therefore 'more careful about the little details'.4 With the exception of the exportation

1. James Arguel of Galbroke, aged 91, speaks to P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan), in December 1952, p.606, I.F.C. Mss 1310. For a similar story, see P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan), speaking to a number of people in Counties Meath and Cavan in January 1953, pp 326-32, I.F.C. Mss 1321.


of eggs and fowl, practically the whole industry was in the hands of women. As reformers were to discover, poultry-rearing was a woman’s industry which they found ‘impossible to induce Irishmen’ to adopt. This chapter is a study in discrimination. It examines poultry-rearing in Ireland, illustrating how institutional policies attempted to change the nature of poultry farming for farm women.

The Poultry Industry

Poultry were reared on small arable farms. In 1912, the average number of poultry (per one hundred acres) on holdings less than one acre was 2,833 compared with 735 on holdings between one and five acres. On holdings larger than two hundred acres, the average number of poultry was under 28. Geographically poultry-rearing was particularly important in the central counties of Ulster and in the southern-most counties. The main product was eggs, but in the south and south-east (especially Wexford), table poultry had a particular importance.

For women of the labouring and small-farmer class, poultry keeping enabled them to contribute substantively to the household economy. A little rhyme of 1914 expresses the importance of eggs for the moderately well-off small farmer.

Cackle here and cackle there,
Lay your eyes just anywhere;
Every time you lay an egg,
Down the mortgage goes a peg.
Cackle, cackle all the day,
Who can find a better way
For to get ahead again
Than to cultivate a hen?

5. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.186 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, appendix iv, p.200.


7. Ark, vi.55 (April 1914), p.7. Also see the ditty which includes the line, 'They sell eggs for to purchase a veil' in 'New Pedigree of the Buttermilk Danes', ballad in Cork University Archives Mss U203, bald.no.829.
P8.1 Women feeding poultry, c.1890
(Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, D 1422/13/16)
In contrast, the poor in County Tyrone depended on the sale of poultry products for the bare necessities of life. Poultry was 'the chief source of income to many a poor woman who depends upon her egg money for many little purchases which could never be procured from the husband’s hire'. The Royal Commission on Congestion commented that 'a very considerable part of the income of farmers, particularly of small farmers, cottagers and labourers is derived from the sale of eggs and fowl'. Women in County Wexford were noted for rearing fowls and 'the close attention obviously given by the labourers’ wives here to this branch of domestic industry has proved an important element in the additions they are able to make to their small resources'. Similarly, at Naas, in County Kildare, although fixing a precise money value on poultry-rearing proved difficult, 'there can be no doubt that they contribute very materially to better the general condition of the class'. Roger C. Richards claimed that in Bailieborough, in County Cavan, wives made


10. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.186 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, appendix iv, p.200.


as much cash in one day by selling eggs as their husbands made in a week.13 Wives of bibulous men testified to the importance of eggs in the household budget.14 The farm near the border of Meath and Kildare which won first prize in the Small Farm Competition held by the County Committee of Agriculture earned twenty pounds a year from two-hundred fowl.15 Taking the earnings of this farm into account, the Department of Agricultural and Technical Instruction may have been exaggerating when they claimed that women on small farms in certain areas earned between twenty pounds and sixty pounds a year in 1911 raising poultry. However, there can be little doubt that in many households the receipts from eggs paid the rent and provided the household with groceries.16 In North Longford, the money commonly received from poultry on a twelve acre farm would buy a quarter pound of tea, two pounds of sugar, a four-pound loaf of bread and an ounce of tobacco each week.17


17. Hugh Corrigan, aged 60 years, of Drumlish (County Longford), speaking to James Delaney of Battery Rd, Longford, about 'Life on a Farm of Twelve Acres in North Longford Fifty Years Ago', p.436, in I.F.C. Mss 1458 and Simon Smith of Carnagarve, speaking to P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan), in January 1953, p.317, in I.F.C. Mss 317.
It often happened that a poor person ran short of money and wanted it badly to buy groceries for the house and they’d put a few hens in a basket and bring them to the town and sell them to a fowl buyer. That often happened in a day that wasn’t a market day at all. There are farmer’s wives and farmer’s daughters and they make as much selling fowl as buys most of the groceries for the household. Folklore notes that egg money brought luck when invested in expensive agricultural items such as horses. The importance of poultry as a source of income can also be seen during those times, and in those areas, where disease struck poultry, throwing many families into extreme poverty. In areas where farmers forbade women to raise poultry (fearing that cattle would not eat grass soiled with poultry droppings or that poultry would be ‘destructive to tillage’) families struggling to make a living on small plots suffered. It was hardly surprising that poultry-rearing was hailed as the one 'healthy and

18. Michael Gargan of Tierworker, speaking to P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan), p.319. Also see in the same collection discussions by Margaret Argue of Galbolie (County Cavan), p.318, in I.F.C. Mss 1321.

19. Letter in the U.F.T.M. from Mrs. Robert Pailsey (born Lucinda Macartney) from near Clones. She lived her childhood at Scotstown and Clabby then lived near Clogher and Fivemiletown (County Tyrone). She worked as a household help and farm labourer and was forty-four years old. The letter was written on 15 February 1957 and is inserted in the box containing Questionaire on Hiring Fairs. For reference to this belief as well as other folklore regarding the production and sale of eggs, see interview by P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan) of various women and men, pp 310-97, in I.F.C. Mss 1321.


21. Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Sixth Report of the Commissioners, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Sligo and County Leitrim, 17th to 27th April, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.31 [Cd.3748], H.C. 1908, xxxix, p.811, evidence by John George Guilty of Drumcliffe, a shopkeeper and small farmer belonging to the North Sligo Divisional Executive of the United Irish League.
Reforming the Industry

Because of the obvious importance of poultry to the rural community, by the last decade of the nineteenth century various institutions set out to rationalise the poultry business. No one had any illusions about the difficulties of the task. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (I.A.O.S.) noted the 'technical' ignorance of women raising poultry - accusing the women ('into whose hands this part of the farming operations naturally fell') of being out of touch with modern farming methods.

The hens roamed at large over the estate or picked up their living along the 'long pasture'. Winter egg production was as unusual as winter dairying. An expert would have found great difficulty in identifying the constituent breeds of the ordinary Irish fowl; its chief characteristic was a rich and unproductive old age. The marketing arrangements were crude and inefficient. Eggs were collected from the fields and hedges as the necessities of the moment, the visits of the egg collector, and the energies of the owner directed. No attempt was made to keep them clean or sizeable, no attempt to ensure a really fresh product. The egg collector was among the most virulent of the middleman class....If there were no egg collector, the shopkeeper at the crossroads played his role with equal distinction. Eventually the eggs found their way to the market; dirty, ungraded and badly packed.

Not only was the industry in a deplorable state, but the very nature of poultry farming was antagonistic to the imposition of structural reforms. Canon Barry of the North Kilkenny Co-Operative Poultry Society aptly summed up these difficulties

It is the industry of very many scattered individuals, persons of small means, and of little influence frequently, with no bond uniting them, removed as a rule from the centres of population, often in remote parts away from railway stations, out of touch with the great markets, dependent on interested parties for their knowledge of prices, and hence too often the victim of the private buyer and barterer.

It would be difficult to effect change within a group which was politically marginal, geographically scattered, and female, as well as divided regarding the value of any


reform. Intervention, however, was seen as imperative. The Congested Districts Board, the co-operative societies and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction poured money and other resources into attempts to increase the quality and quantity of eggs and poultry produced in cottages throughout the country. In conception, the schemes were ingenious. In execution, the enthusiasm engendered by the schemes seemed to promise success. The following pages provides a detailed look at the schemes. Success was unforthcoming. Explanations for the performance of the projects are complex.

The Congested Districts Board instigated a poultry-improvement scheme in 1892. Attempting to persuade rural women that poultry-rearing was more than simply a way to pay the shopkeeper, the Board set about distributing new breeds of cockerels and pullets and providing a market for eggs in remote areas. In the first year, they distributed 1,600 cockerels and pullets. Providing live poultry, however, soon proved 'both too liberal and too expensive' so they began distributing eggs instead. Soon after 1896, half a million eggs (most of the Black Minorca, Indian Runner and Plymouth Rock breeds) had been distributed in the setting season and a female poultry expert had travelled extensively around the congested districts advising women on poultry-rearing. By 1908, the Board had spent nearly seven thousand pounds trying to improve the breed of poultry.


In 1897, independent societies for poultry were started by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Marketing preoccupied these societies. In some areas, they collected eggs, but more commonly they demanded the delivery of eggs to the creameries where clean, fresh eggs would be bought by weight (rather than by the dozen or score) and then packed in wool-wood into non-returnable cases. Although I.A.O.S. publications generally state that capital for the societies was provided by shares of one pound (payable either in eggs or by installments of cash), papers of individual societies held in the Registry of Friendly Societies show that local societies, mindful that potential co-operators were poor women, generally sold shares for five shillings. The price of shares was a problem faced by dairy societies which wanted to include eggs and poultry into their co-operative. Dairy farmers could afford one-pound shares, unlike women raising a few chickens. When the Sessagh O’Neill Co-Operative Dairy Society (County Donegal) wanted to deal in eggs, R. A. Anderson wrote to Daniel McMonagle (secretary of the local society) advising that ‘the majority of people who have eggs to sell belong to a poorer class than the average farmer and one pound shares might have a detrimental effect on them.’ Lists of shareholders show that most women only paid the 2s6d required for the honour of selling their eggs through the society and never paid for a complete share. Loans could be received through the society. The management of each society was vested in a committee elected by the shareholders. In turn, the committee would appoint a manager. Profits went to the shareholders. Interest, at a rate not exceeding five per cent. on paid-up capital, was a first charge on the net profits, after which the residue of the profit was allocated among the members in proportion to their trade with the society. Only a few societies dealt exclusively in the egg business. By 1915 there were thirteen active

30. Letter dated 6 February 1903, Co-Operative Societies Collection, P.R.O Dublin, 1088/826/1.

31. For an example, see Registry of Friendly Societies, No.353 R Cork, Newmarket Co-Operative Poultry Society, 1915 list of shareholders.
co-operative poultry societies with a membership of four thousand and a turnover of 85,000 pounds.\textsuperscript{32} The creameries set up by the I.A.O.S. also collected, graded, packed and marketed eggs for their members. Some even dressed poultry.

The I.A.O.S. appointed Henry de Courcy, an experienced poultry farmer and distinguished graduate of the Reading University Extension College, as their 'poultry expert'. Until 1898 he had worked with the I.A.O.S. as an unpaid volunteer, but from 1898 affiliated societies had to pay his travelling expenses.\textsuperscript{33} They also invited a Danish poultry expert, Viggo Scharz, to Ireland to advise them on packing and grading methods. Again, his services were offered to affiliated societies willing to pay travelling expenses. The I.A.O.S. paid his salary. Unlike the other organisations involved with improving poultry during this period, the I.A.O.S. appointed these instructors only reluctantly, declaring that technical instruction was not the proper function of a co-operative society. With the setting up of the Department, their educational activities ceased.\textsuperscript{34}

The most successful co-operative societies were those which sent around collectors - thus performing one of the functions of the egglomer. The North Kilkenny Co-Operative Poultry Society which operated over a radius of 380 square miles in northern Kilkenny and parts of Queen's County employed two vans which travelled about forty miles daily visiting

\textsuperscript{32} Ministry of Reconstruction. Summaries of Evidence Taken Before the Agricultural Policy Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee Appointed in August, 1916, to Consider and Report Upon the Methods of Effecting an Increase in the Home-Grown Food Supplies, Having Regard to the Need of Such Increase in the Interests of National Security, p.93 [Cd.9080], H.C. 1918, v, p.333, evidence by R. A. Anderson, secretary of the I.A.O.S. In Lionel Smith-Gordon and Laurence C. Staples, Rural Reconstruction in Ireland: A Record of Co-Operative Organisation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), pp 174-75 it is claimed that there were 'eleven active societies' and the seven societies for which statistics exist showed a turnover of 85,000 pounds.


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p.53, appendix D, comments by R. A. Anderson at the third conference of delegates from the co-operative dairy and agricultural societies.
twenty centres. Thomas Booth of Collumbrone collected eggs for the Augher Co-Operative Agricultural and Dairy Society (County Tyrone). He was paid a rate which varied seasonally. Payment also depended on the delivery of clean and fresh eggs. Collectors, however, substantially reduced profit margins. For instance, in 1907 the isolated Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society (County Antrim) was forced to pay only 6d. a dozen - a price well below that offered by egglers - because of collecting costs. In September of that year they purchased 76 pounds worth of eggs out of which they paid the collector nine per cent. Furthermore, this collector, reproached by the managers of the co-operative society for being 'extremely slow', was very popular. Management complained that members 'seem more attached to the carter than to the society, and last year they were willing to give their eggs of him when he temporarily left the Society's service.'

Management was also a problem. The shortage of experienced managers for these poultry societies forced the I.A.O.S. to provide a seven-week crash-course in management during the winter of 1902. The expansion of training for the poultry industry had to wait for the intervention of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction aimed to provide capital to farmers and farmers' wives, enabling them to build up their poultry business. From 1902,


37. Report by Richmond Noble during his visit to Cushendall between 10-14 September 1907, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1. Note that a departmental memorandum sent to (and at the request of) Miss McDonnell and W. Noble on 2 October 1907 regarding the average cost of collection in five other poultry societies estimated the sum of 3 1/2 d.

38. Report by Richmond Noble during his visit to Cushendall between 10-14 September 1907, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1.

39. I.A.O.S., Report of the Irish Agricultural Society, Ltd., for 1902 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker, 1903) p.22, the courses were held in Dunboe (County Derry) and Dervock (County Antrim).

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the poultry scheme was presented to the county committees. While the Department took charge of all the general costs (such as the training of teachers, the appointing and payment of inspectoresses, expert advice, marketing problems, and scientific experiments), the county councillors provided overall management of the scheme and appointed committees to deal with day-to-day management. With the exception of Antrim, all counties set up egg centres which hatched high quality eggs to be sold at low prices to farmers. Only 'authorised' breeds could be raised in egg distribution centres. The manager of the centres had to supply locals with at least seventy settings of eggs each season at 1s. per dozen, for which the Department paid a premium of five pounds. In 1906, three-quarters of the managers of egg distribution centres were women. These centres tried to introduce fresh blood into poultry breeds, reduce disease, provide eggs, increase egg quality and size, and give advice to individual rearers. Although the Department singled out the congested districts as requiring the distribution of eggs more urgently than any other area, the schemes covered a much wider area. In the year 1911-12, almost four hundred egg distribution centres were scattered in every county throughout Ireland. The most successful stations were located in Cork (paid premiums totalling 295 pounds), Mayo (247 pounds), Galway (174 pounds), Donegal (170 pounds), Kerry (148 pounds), Down (126 pounds).

40. In 1901 they experimented with this scheme in one county.

41. Before 1905, the number of settings a manager had to provide was sixty. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Provisions of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, p.149 [Cd.3572], H.C. 1907, xvii, p.954, 'Memorandum on Certain Agricultural Questions Prepared at the Request of the Chairman by the Hon. John Dryden and Referred to in the Report as Mr. Dryden's Report'.

42. In fact, there was a great deal of variety between counties. In Galway and Sligo there were no male managers, whereas in Kerry sixty-five per cent of the managers were male. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd. February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 211-12 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, pp 225-26, appendix iv, 'Documents put in by Professor J. R Campbell in Connection with the Evidence Given by Him Before the Commission'.

pounds), Roscommon (120 pounds), Westmeath (111 pounds), Meath (100 pounds) and Wexford (96 pounds). At the turn of the century, 24,000 dozens of eggs were being distributed annually. By 1914 this had risen to over 86,000 dozen eggs. In addition, nearly 400 hen and duck centres, 660 pure-bred turkey centres, 383 geese centres and a school for the training of poultry fatteners had been established.

In conjunction with the distribution centres, in County Tyrone a novel way of instructing people in poultry farming was established: the 'portable poultry farm'. This farm was equipped with two pens of fowl, modern fowl houses and runs, one pen of ducks, means for artificial incubation and rearing of young chickens, and a small fattening plant. The farm would be set up at an egg distribution center or on other land for six weeks, classes would be held, then the farm would be moved on.

The county committee at Antrim adopted a quite different scheme. Instead of egg distribution centres or 'portable farms', they established a twenty-two acre poultry farm at Cullybackey, keeping over one-thousand birds. From this farm, young chickens and eggs were distributed (often by post) at moderate prices to people throughout the county. They encouraged women to visit the farm for advice and practical instruction. This scheme was

44. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Tenth Annual General Report, for 1909-1910, p.40 [Cd.5611], H. C. 1911, ix, p.46.


47. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report of the Commissioners. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.119 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, p.207, evidence by P. G. Dalliager, secretary of the County Council of Tyrone and representing the Committee of Agriculture.
An important component of all the poultry schemes run by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was the itinerant poultry instructresses lecturing on poultry-keeping, visiting poultry runs, giving advice, and conducting classes on fattening, killing, plucking, trussing and preparing fowl for the market, and on grading, testing and packing eggs. These poultry instructresses 'galloped over the country teaching hens how to lay'. They gave lectures both on a daily basis and (particularly after 1912) in the form of tutorial classes lasting from ten to twenty days. Initially, only four counties appointed instructresses in poultry-keeping but by 1911 all counties employed them. Rules governing instructresses were strict: they could not work in their home county, could not be paid more than two pounds a week in addition to travelling allowances, and their contracts automatically terminated at marriage. They were bound to avoid discussing the pertinent issue of organisation - joint-stock or co-operative.

The extent of their work can be illustrated by looking at the report for the year 1911-12. In this year, thirty-six instructresses visited 15,905 private poultry runs and held 1,600


50. The County Donegal Committee of Agriculture and Technical Instruction tried to force the department to change the residential rule. Eventually, the economic sanctions applied by the department forced the County Donegal Committee to end the deadlock while registering a strong protest against the department's despotism. See 'Department of Agriculture and Donegal. The "No Natives Need Apply" Order', Frontier Sentinel, 22 October 1904, p.7 and Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Conference on the Poultry Industry, Dublin, May 1911, Report of Proceedings (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1911), p.201, 'Appendix: Scheme no.11: Instruction in Poultry-Keeping 1910-1911'.

51. Leader, 7 March 1908, p.41.
classes on poultry-keeping.\textsuperscript{52} Most instructresses lectured between October and March, and visited farms between April and September. Every farm had to be visited at least once.\textsuperscript{53} These schemes were expensive. In 1906-7, 9,000 pounds was spent by the Department on their poultry schemes. Sums of between 400 and 600 pounds were spent in each of the counties of Donegal, Tyrone, Antrim, Galway, Kerry, and Cork alone. This was considerably more than the 3,000 pounds spent on all the butter-making schemes.\textsuperscript{54}

What type of women became an instructresses? Miss Mary J. Brody was born in 1894 in Doon, Borris-in-Ossory (Queens' County). According to the 1911 census, she came from a Catholic farming family. Her mother, a widow with four children, was the head of the household in 1911, and at 56 years of age called herself a farmer. Mary was the youngest sibling although a five-year old grandchild also lived in the household. Their house was second-class but they had eight outhouses, including a stable, cow house, calf house, dairy, piggery, boiling room, turf shed and fowl house. Mary Brody trained at the Munster Institute for eighteen months then, at the age of twenty-two, was employed by the Department. She received 100 pounds per annum, a sum which included the cost of maintenance, required one months' notice to quit and was entitled to an annual vacation of twenty-four week-days.\textsuperscript{55} With promotion, her annual salary might have increased to just over 122 pounds but promotion was unlikely if she did not qualify to teach dairy farming.

\textsuperscript{52} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Twelvth Annual General Report of the Department, for 1911-1912, p.48 [Cd.6647], H.C. 1912-13, xxii, p.578.

\textsuperscript{53} Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report of the Commissioners. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June 1907), and Documents Related Thereto, p.119 [Cd.3785], H. C. 1908, xl, p.207, comment by P. G. Dalliager of Tyrone, secetary of the County Council of Tyrone and representative for the Committee of Agriculture.

\textsuperscript{54} Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.192 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, p.206, appendix iv, 'Documents put in by Professor J. R. Campbell in Connection with the Evidence Given by Him Before the Commission'.

\textsuperscript{55} Record of Service of Itinerant Poultry Teacher, Miss Mary J. Brophy in P.R.O, D.A.T.I. Papers, AG1 A1400/16 and 1911 Census manuscripts, Queens 19/9 no.5, in the P.R.O.
as well as poultry rearing.\footnote{P.R.O Dublin D.A.T.I. Papers, AG1 A37366.}

The demand for itinerant instructresses like Mary Brody required the establishment or extension of colleges to train women in farm work. The organisers rapidly discovered the absence of qualified Irish teachers in poultry keeping. Admittedly, when they first advertised for teachers they received three hundred applications. However, only three applicants had any training or experience, and only one passed the qualifying examination.\footnote{Miss. L. Murphy, 'Women's Sphere in the Poultry Industry', D.A.T.I. for Ireland Journal, 1919, pp 294-95.}

Training schemes were imperative. At first, it seemed as though men would receive priority in such advanced training. When the act of 1899 transferred the Albert Agricultural College from the Commissioners of National Education to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, the agricultural courses for women were abandoned.\footnote{At different times, the Albert Agricultural College was called the Glasnevin Model Farm and the Albert National Agricultural Training Institute. See Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Provisions of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, p.22 [Cd.3572], H.C. 1907, xvii, p.829.}

However, with financial help from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, communities of nuns and private individuals set up small schools training women in poultry-keeping, dairying and domestic work. The Department gave grants to set up the schools, paid the teachers' salaries and contributed toward the costs of pupils.\footnote{Daniel Hoctor, The Department's Story - a History of the Department of Agriculture (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1971), p.62.}

At the Munster Institute the classes in poultry-keeping, dairying and rural domestic economy for women continued.\footnote{Also called the Cork Model Farm.} Each pupil had to take a preliminary course in all three subjects. After six months, a limited number of girls were allowed to specialise. Pupils wanting to become poultry instructresses would complete the full course in eighteen to
twenty-four months. Until 1905, when this scheme of training women in advanced poultry-keeping became operative, the pass certificate in poultry-keeping of the Reading College Poultry School at Theale was accepted as a qualifying certificate. However, the short course held at Theale was too costly for the average female student from Ireland, and the training women received there was too theoretical for hopeful Irish instructresses. Strenuous competition for places at the Munster College was unsurprising. Applicants often had to wait over a year between the acceptance of their application and a vacancy in the College.61 In 1908 the Ulster Dairy School at Loughry, County Tyrone, accepted its first pupils. This institute was similar to the Munster Institute, teaching poultry-keeping, dairying, cooking, laundry-work, sewing and cottage-gardening to farm women. However, between 1905 and 1913, the Munster Institute was the only training centre in Ireland for instructresses in poultry-keeping and dairying.62

Women trained as instructresses could be employed under the county committees as instructresses in poultry-keeping. A few obtained positions as poultry-keepers on model farms or at egg distribution centres. Some were employed in private houses and some as servants. Others emigrated. Some female students used the school as a stepping stone to emigration.63 Repeatedly, commentators on the agricultural schemes expressed the fear that the education women received would simply provide these women with the skills, and confidence, to emigrate. Their training in poultry-rearing would not help Irish agriculture.

As well as the educational schemes mentioned above, the D.A.T.I. gave attention to


62. After 1913, the Ulster Dairy School began providing similar training for women.

63. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th to 23rd February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.53 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, p.65, 'Documents put in by Professor J. R. Campbell in Connection with the Evidence Given by Him Before the Commission'.
the marketing aspects of the poultry industry. Numerous conferences were held and experiments conducted in an attempt to improve access to egg markets, particularly in Britain. As a part of this campaign, displays of Irish poultry products appeared in nearly every grocers' and agricultural exhibition both in Ireland and Britain.

**Women and Men**

Despite comprehensive planning and management, the schemes proved problematic. From the start, the organisers worried about the dominance of women both in their poultry training courses and in the poultry farming community at large. All three societies believed that none of the schemes would ultimately succeed unless men were induced to make poultry-rearing the 'serious business of their lives'. Without men, 'maximum expansion of the industry cannot be secured'.64 Part of the ambivalence felt towards female poultry-keepers resulted from simple misunderstandings about the agricultural practices of female poultry-farmers. Relations between the societies for poultry and women raising poultry were often tense.

The fact that this industry is largely in the hands of the women has endowed it with particular problems of its own. They have considered it their perquisite and resented the introduction of the [co-operative] societies, whose members are usually men, thus putting an end to a source of 'pin' money. Thus far, experience would indicate that Irishwomen are far less co-operative than Irishmen. The sex, largely on account of the nature of its life hitherto, has generally shown a lack of associative qualities. Trade-unionism makes slow progress among them, for the same reasons which make them poor co-operators. The allurement of the glittering pan of the pedlar or of the half-penny more per dozen he willingly offers for a time in order to put an end to the co-operative society is often too much. The bargain is made with the result that the society starves and disappears.65

The reformers felt that improvement of the poultry industry depended on replacing

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female poultry-keepers by male poultry-keepers. This would be difficult. Generally, male farmers disliked poultry - men were more likely to be caught 'casting missiles with evil intent at some particularly offending hen' than pandering to each individual hen's needs. The few men who were interested in poultry-rearing were more concerned with large-scale fancy-poultry farming than utility poultry. However, the Department still hoped that one day the poultry industry in Ireland would be raised 'to the worthy position it occupies in so many other countries where farmers and their sons - and not only wives and daughters - find in poultry-keeping an interesting and profitable occupation'.

Attempts were made to encourage men to take poultry more seriously. Agricultural journals stressed the success of male poultry farmers. One man wrote that 'he no longer looks on it [poultry-farming] as a woman's job' but simply as 'one of the biggest jobs ever tackled'. Mothers were encouraged to instruct young sons in poultry-rearing.

The I.A.O.S. offered special courses for men to train as managers of poultry societies.

From 1907, the Department made arrangements with certain co-operative poultry societies to


67. Miss L. Murphy, 'Women's Sphere in the Poultry Industry', D.A.T.I. for Ireland Journal, 1919, p.293. The dominance of men in specialised and large-scale poultry farming can be seen in the 1926 census for the Republic of Ireland which provides a category for people involved with the 'professional' egg and poultry industry. Women constituted only seventeen per cent of this category in 1926 (ten per cent in 1936) and were much less likely to be 'employed on own account' (27 per cent of all men in the poultry industry were 'employed on own account' compared with 16 per cent of women in 1926).


71. The Training of Managers for Poultry Societies, Irish Homestead, 23 August 1902, p.660.
pay travel expenses, training fees and subsistence costs to young men training as managers
of poultry societies. Even this scheme failed to entice young men into the industry. J.

A. Tuckey of the Munster Agricultural School reasoned that men had to be introduced at the
level of instructors, rather than at the managerial level.

If some of the Instructors in Ireland were male Instructors - that is, if we got a few men to take up
the work instead of leaving it entirely to the ladies, we might to something to remove the prejudice
and the ignorance which exists amongst farmers on this subject. It is a very common thing for men to
think that poultry are altogether beneath their dignity; that they do well enough for women, but that
a man was only wasting his time in dealing with such a small matter. I think possibly the appointment
of a few men as Instructors might counteract that feeling, and might impress on farmers that the
subject was well worthy of the consideration of men.

But such attempts also failed, despite offering male instructors over one hundred pounds
per annum. Representatives of the D.A.T.I. admitted that the few male instructors they
had managed to recruit had been 'a ghastly failure'. In 1901, the Department lamented

Of the 23 Instructors at work last year [1901], 20 were women and 3 young men. Notwithstanding the
liberal salaries offered, it has been found impossible to induce young men to take up the development
of poultry-keeping with enthusiasm.

In 1901, the Department was lucky to have enticed even three men into the business - by
1908 there were none.

72. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Eighth Annual General Report of the Department, for 1907-1908, p.63 [Cd.4430], H.C. 1908, xxii, p.467. See also Michael Kirwan, Irish Cottage Industries; How Best to Develop Them (Cork: Guy and Co., 1909) pp 9-10, essay which won the contest of the Cork Catholic Young Man’s Society, University College of Cork Archives, MP 418.


74. Ibid., p.11.

75. Ibid., p.71, comment by Canon Young of Monaghan County Council of Agriculture.


These attempts to move men into the poultry business should not be exaggerated. The usual poultry farmers - women - had to be encouraged meanwhile. Organisations such as the I.A.O.S. discovered the folly of ignoring women in their poultry societies. They admitted that at the start of the co-operative attempt to reform poultry raising, they were 'stupid enough to ignore the women and to attempt to secure an egg supply to a society composed of "mere men"'. Rapidly they discovered that this was a mistake, noticing that the huxter had thrived by ignoring the men and making 'his terms with the women'.

Irish women had extensive experience in poultry-rearing; men did not. Not surprisingly, the women on the poultry committees were credited with keeping the societies afloat.

The I.A.O.S. were more willing than other organisations to publically acknowledge the importance of women in poultry reorganisation. Their journal, the Irish Homestead, advised 'women who have to earn their own livelihood':

Perhaps one of the most interesting of all country pursuits is that of poultry keeping. There seems to be a fascination about it to those who take it up. It is easy work as well as interesting. And that it is profitable hardly needs to be proved....Beyond a doubt there is money in poultry for the woman or girl who undertakes to keep them with industry and care. In poultry rearing you have a profession.

It must be pointed out, however, that the I.A.O.S. had particularly powerful reasons for encouraging female poultry farmers. They were being attacked for the way their creameries pushed women and girls out of employment and defended themselves against such attacks by declaring that their encouragement of the poultry industry provided the female members of the farming community with an alternative, and more remunerative, occupation. At a meeting of tenant farmers to consider establishing a co-operative dairy in Tralee, R. A. Anderson argued

They might be told that their wives and daughters would become demoralised from having nothing to do if creameries were started, but there was nothing to prevent them creating a tremendous trade in eggs.

78. Ibid., p.125, comment by R. A. Anderson.

79. Ibid., pp 11-12, comment by R. H. Prior-Wandesforde, chairman of the North Kilkenny Co-Operative Poultry Society.

80. Irish Homestead, 12 October 1895, pp 515-16.
and fowl, at which their wives and daughters could be much more profitably employed.81

The unease of the co-operators with promoting women as poultry-keepers is clear. On the one hand, they aggressively asserted that poultry-keeping was a serious agricultural industry requiring the active labour and management of men. On the other, they promoted poultry farming as an integral part of housework, as opposed to farmwork. In their propaganda, they argued that girls must be taught 'how to feed poultry and make shirts'.82

Yet they could also say

We have sometimes heard it said that the education of our girls at our primary and intermediary schools is on mistaken lines, that they are...afflicting themselves with the hardships of piano-playing when they ought to be learning how to rear poultry. We have the greatest respect for the arts of the dairy and the poultry yard,...but we cannot help expressing our sympathy with the art needlework and the piano in moderation.83

In practice, the individual co-operative societies differed widely in the extent to which they accepted female poultry-keepers as active members of the society. At a poultry meeting of the Burriscarra (County Mayo) Agricultural Society no women were present, although women were important organisers in the society.84 The commitess of the co-operative poultry societies of Shanagolden and Foyne (County Limerick), Sessiagh O’Neill (Donegal), Rathkeale (Limerick), Borris (Carlow), Athlone (Westmeath) and North Kilkenny were composed only of men. The entire committee of the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society, the Forth Co-Operative Poultry Society, the Dervoy and District Co-Operative Poultry Society and the Erne Co-Operative Poultry Federation - including one person who

81. 'Among the Societies', Irish Homestead, 9 March 1895, p.6, meeting of tenant farmers about setting up a co-operative dairy at Tralee (County Kerry), address by R. A. Anderson.
82. 'The Fireside. Women's Work in Irish Homes', Irish Homestead, 24 August 1895, p.405.
84. Irish Homestead, 23 April 1898, p.351, 30 July 1898, p.646.
signed the rules with his mark - were men. The Kinvara and Tynagh societies were largely composed of women. In North Carlow, one of the three officers was a female. In 1914, the Clonbrock and Castlegar Co-Operative Poultry Society could boast that although the manager, treasurer and secretary were male, three out of the remaining four officers were female. In 1910, Miss Barbara MacDonnell of Monavert was secretary of the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society. The committee of the Irish Poultry Keepers' Co-Operative Society, based in Templeogue (County Dublin) was evenly divided between men and women.

A similar situation is seen if we examine the proportion of shareholders who were female.

8.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-operative Poultry Society</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonbrock and Castlegar</td>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>348</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rathkeale</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>276</td>
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<td>Borris</td>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>380</td>
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<td>Carlow</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>379</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


86. Registry of Friendly Societies, Files 883, 471, 659, 705, 1187, 808, 311 and 795.

87. Co-Operative Societies Collection, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1 and 2.


89. The data has been taken from the lists of shareholders held in the Registry of Friendly Societies. All lists which contained both first and surname were used.
The range is wide. The explanation for the low percentage of women in the Athlone society is that it was primarily a collecting body. Five male collectors moved through the country buying eggs from women who were not members. The society was a large one (six other societies were affiliated), but with a very small individual membership. In the three societies for which we have data for two years, the proportion of female members was declining.

Employment in the societies also favoured men, but not exclusively. In addition to a full-time male secretary, the Athlone Co-Operative Poultry and Farm Produce Society would employ two or three men to work in the spring in their store. From July until shortly after Christmas they employed one storeman. Throughout the year, five male collectors moved around the county. Women were only employed for one week at Christmas to pluck turkeys. Ten to twenty women would be employed at this job. Similarly, the Forth Co-Operative Poultry Society only hired women to pluck fowl for 1d a bird. The societies at Newmarket, Shanagolden and Foyne, and Sessiagh O’Neill employed between two and four men and no women. The Rathkeale society employed two men and two women in 1913 but gradually within four years they were employing five men and no women. In all the societies employing women the number and proportion employed declined rapidly between the years 1913-1919. But whatever the ambivalence as to the role of women as managers, committee-members or employees, one thing was clear: women could not be excluded at a grass-roots level.

Effect of the Schemes

Men failed to be enticed by poultry-rearing, so the schemes came to depend on the organisational talents of poultry reformers and farm women. The schemes were harshly

90. Forth Co-Operative Poultry Society, report by the manager of the fattening station at Tagoat, 31 January 1907, P.R.O Dublin 1088/428/1-3. Feathers could be a remunerative field for poultry societies. For instance, the Rathkeale Co-Operative Poultry Society (County Limerick) in 1918 made five per cent of its sales from feathers, see Registry of Friendly Societies, No.705.
criticised. The D.A.T.I. was accused of supplying fowl only to affluent farmers, and thus effecting no general improvement of fowl. Critics claimed that poor cottagers rarely benefitted. In Cork, only four out of the sixty egg distribution stations in 1909 were held by cottagers. Cottagers could not even afford to buy settings from the stations.

The chief agriculturalist employed by the Congested Districts Board, Thomas Porter, told the Royal Commission on Congestion, that the schemes were unsuccessful in the long term and 'in not more than five per cent. of the poultry in the congested districts is there now any trace of the work of the Board in the shape of an improvement'.

Admittedly, their task was difficult. County committees were constrained when deciding what breed of fowl to encourage in their stations by local pressure. In some areas, women simply refused to go along with schemes claiming to improve their efficiency. In other areas, drunken men expressed their hostility during lectures by a poultry instructress. R. A. Anderson, secretary of the I.A.O.S., spoke about the continued existence of 'many localities where the hen of other days, untainted by any cross or foreign breeds, may still be found living the simple life, and where the

91. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to Seventh Report of the Commissioners, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 84-5 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, pp 172-73, evidence by Rev. Thomas McCann, priest of Kildress (County Tyrone).


96. 'Notes of the Week. Poultry Keeping in Longford', Irish Homestead, 21 March 1908, p.226, at lectures in Longford by Miss Hogan.
housewife has refused to listen to the voice of the instructress or organiser'. 97 The introduced breeds were 'aristocratic birds accustomed to more luxurious methods of living'. 98 Although new breeds of fowl laid a bigger egg, the increased profits did not cover the costs of feeding the larger fowl. Instead of using the introduced fowl for breeding purposes, women preferred to sell the improved breeds and earn a little extra money to spend on household necessities. 99

Co-operative attempts to improve poultry-rearing faced special organisational resistance. Women disliked sending their eggs to the creameries, even if they were paid more for the eggs. When they sold eggs to the creameries, the money was added to the milk account and paid in a lump sum to the husband, father or brother when he collected the family's monthly account, whereas if the woman sold the eggs at a market or to the higgler she was able to control the money herself. 100 No one doubted that egg money was more profitably spent when controlled by farm-women than when controlled by farm-men. 101 Since payment by the creameries was made in a monthly lump-sum, the advantages of a small but regular flow of money into the household should not be minimised.


98. 'Notes of the Week. Poultry Keeping in Congested Districts', Irish Homestead, 17 November 1906, p.933.


Despite the rhetoric of co-operation, the abrupt introduction of some co-operative societies helps to explain their inefficacy. A society was doomed if it failed to win the support of the priest or local politicians. Within a few weeks, the manager sent to work for the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society (County Antim) had made himself so politically unpopular that he had to be placed under police protection. At the earliest opportunity he abandoned the open shop and jumped on the mail cart bound for Belfast.

Women selling eggs were much more attached to the sociable carter, a member of their community, than they were to the society. The person who started the Cushendal Co-Operative Poultry Society, Barbara M. McDonnell, wrote to R. A. Anderson on 28 August 1908 informing him that the society was collapsing and might be closed.

I fear it was a mistake to try co-operation among people so ignorant and behind the rest of the world as ours here are - they are not ready for it and will not understand that it is not a joint stock company or private enterprise - but their own.

Typically, Horace Plunkett lacked a certain empathy with his audience. Plunkett visited the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society on 25 March 1908 and spoke to the people in this insular mountain community suffering the effects of a poor harvest and a fowl epidemic about international trade competition.

Societies frequently faced powerful trade opposition within the community. Higglers 'spare nothing to tempt the people to leave the society'. Shopkeepers applied sanctions

102. P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1-2 for the failure of the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society to win support of these powerful groups in 1910.

103. Letter from Miss B. MacDonnell to Mr Adams, 15 February 1908, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1.

104. Letter from Barbara M. McDonnell to R. A. Anderson, 28 August 1908, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1.

105. Report by Mr J. C. Adams, 25 March 1908, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1.


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by refusing to buy butter or to give credit to women who traded with co-operatives.\textsuperscript{107}

Where women resisted poultry schemes, a direct offensive aimed at pressuring women to sell their eggs to the co-operative was launched. For instance, in districts where 'egglers' or 'gombeeners' were a particularly powerful threat to the societies, the co-operative poultry societies paid an inflated price for the eggs to compete with the equally inflated prices offered by the local dealers.\textsuperscript{108} Attempting to break the opposition of the shopkeepers in 1907, the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society paid shopkeepers who handed eggs to the collector 1/2d. for each pound of eggs. This raised the costs of egg collection unrealistically as henwives, shopkeepers, collectors, packers and members all took large shares of the takings.\textsuperscript{109} Propaganda included placards with the crude message, 'Every egg sold to the higgler is an egg nearer the workhouse' and 'Every egg you sell to the higgler you will eat six months later in the emigrant ship'.\textsuperscript{110}

Crucially, the organisers had misjudged the significance of the higgler. The financial exploitation of women by some village egg-collectors or grocers could be immense.

The current market price of the day, as registered in the daily papers, was 10d. and 11d. per dozen; the price fixed by the egg collector was 6d. per dozen. The 6d. was not, however, given in coin; its value in tea and sugar was delivered instead. Two ounces of tea and one pound of sugar was the equivalent substitutes for the 6d. These commodities, valued at current retail prices, were worth about 2 3/4d. or at the most 3d. So that, for 10d. or 11d. worth of eggs, the dealer gave 3d. worth of commodities, and on these had, moreover, the usual retailers' profits.\textsuperscript{111}

But, other egg collectors did not make as much profit. The agricultural inspector for the D.A.T.I., Thomas A. Porter, claimed that the shopkeepers who took eggs did not make a

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{108} Irish Year-Book, 1908, Issued by the National Council (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1908), p.206.

\textsuperscript{109} Report by Richard Noble, 1-2 August 1907, P.R.O Dublin 1088/312/1.

\textsuperscript{110} 'Notes of the Week. Battle for Irish Eggs', Irish Homestead, 7 April 1906, p.262.

\textsuperscript{111} T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Cama', New Ireland Review (April 1898), p.72.
'great profit' on the transaction, but did it to retain customers. What the reformers recognised only dimly was the important role these higglers played in the lives of housewives. Porter noticed the role of higglers but failed to point out its significance in relation to the poultry schemes.

The housewife, however, appreciates the saving of time and trouble afforded either by selling to the higgler who comes to her door, and not only purchases her eggs, but supplies the necessary groceries, or by selling to the neighbouring shopkeeper, from whom she obtains household supplies. When these systems prevail she will usually accept a lower price than is obtainable in the wholesale markets. Against the small loss thus incurred there is usually a very considerable saving of time, and, in addition, the avoidance of the risk of breaking or chipping eggs when taking them to market. It would therefore appear that both the higgler and the shopkeeper who takes eggs are useful persons to the poultry-keeper in those districts in which there is no other organised system of egg collection.

The housewife, selling or exchanging her eggs with the local shopkeeper or higgler, was acknowledging the economic value of her time and energies.

Finally, the attitude of I.A.O.S. officials and outside managers betrays their alienation from the very people they were trying to co-operate with. Miss L. Reynolds, visiting the Cushendall Co-Operative Poultry Society between 7-25 September 1908 noted that higglers retained their hold over the people by periodically offering them 1/2 to 1 d. more than the society. She concluded that uneducated women were easily tempted:

They do not see how this action tends to their own eventual loss. They are in intelligence like children and must be treated accordingly. If a child at school does not learn the first or second year, the effort to teach on the part of the school master is not given up. He goes on teaching and eventually the lesson is learnt. We must go on teaching and our lesson - co-operation - will be learnt.


113. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Conference on the Poultry Industry, Dublin, May 1911, Report of Proceedings (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1911), p.168. Also see the discussion on egglers in I.F.C. Mss 1321, P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough (County Cavan), interviews various (named) individuals from Bailieborough, Killan, Shercock, Kingscourt, Muff, Moybolgue, Mullagh, Killinkere, Coss, Knockbrid Virginia, Ballyjamesduff, Mount Nugent, and Kilnaleck in County Cavan and Tierworker, Kilmainham-wood and Moynalty in County Meath, recorded in January 1953, pp 400-2. The egglers were spoken of favourably and their business described as being efficient.


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Even if the hen-wife agreed to deposit her eggs at the poultry society or creamery, other problems were apparent. Marketing problems were experienced at every level. We have seen a good many complaints about rotten eggs from our societies lately. This is too bad. Farmers' wives, we are informed by the secretary of a poultry society, have been keeping over their eggs on account of the low prices, hoping with the optimism which curiously springs up about the wrong way of doing things in Ireland, that prices would rise, and that buyers were fools in England....Women are proverbially more penny wise and pound foolish than men. Whether this is true or not we won't say, but it lies with them to disprove it by not keeping back their eggs and palming them off later on as fresh when prices rise.115

These types of marketing problems were exactly the same as those expressed by the earlier export marketers of eggs: the shippers. Mr. Caulfield, the principal speaker at a conference of western shippers in Claremorris (County Mayo) in November 1897, declared that the blame for English complaints lay with the 'mischief' wrought by county shopkeepers and farmers' wives who were incapable of providing them with fresh eggs.116 As the D.A.T.I. noted, in response to threats by the Liverpool and Glasgow egg merchants that they would cease buying Irish eggs unless they were fresh, clean and properly packed, improvements in the quality of eggs were unlikely since no guarantee of higher prices for fresh, clean eggs could be given to the women selling the eggs.117

Amidst an outpouring of criticism, occasionally a person (usually an official of one of the reforming organisations) was willing to praise the schemes.

The result of our poultry instructress's work is apparent all over the country. No one can fail to notice the remarkable improvement that has taken place in the quality of the various fowls reared by the farmers and the cottiers both for egg laying and table purposes. The puny non-descript breeds that prevailed a few years since have now given place generally to some of the very best breeds that the world can produce. The poultry exhibits at Nenagh and Thurles Shows surpassed anything of the

115. 'Elections Not Near - Poultry Societies, Notice!', Irish Homestead, 14 October 1905, pp 751-52.

116. 'Notes of the Week', Irish Homestead, 20 November 1897, p.776.

kind held in former years in any provincial town, both for number and quality.\textsuperscript{118}

The increased price of eggs was noted. For example, in County Tyrone a poultry society was established in March 1902. In 1900 the average price of eggs per dozen in one market town in Tyrone was 9s. 47d. By 1905 this had increased to 12s. 2d. The average price of a pair of dead poultry had increased from 2s. 6d. to 3s. Over all Ireland, the price of 120 eggs increased from 7s. 3d. in 1881 to 9s. by 1911.\textsuperscript{119} However, it would be foolish to ascribe these increases in prices to the reforms. The profits made by rearing poultry had been increasing well before the instigation of the poultry schemes. Forty years before the poultry schemes were even thought about, profits from poultry products escalated with the doubling of the price of eggs and the declining price of grain such as Indian corn and wheat.\textsuperscript{120} The latter change may have been extremely important, since profit margins of poultry production were largely determined by the price of foodstuffs.\textsuperscript{121} The rise in the price of eggs in the early years of the new century was a world-wide phenomenon.\textsuperscript{122} Noticeably, however, the returns of the poultry societies do not show outstanding profits. Summing together the profits and losses of the twenty-six poultry societies of the I.A.O.S. in 1901, the net profit added up to over 174 pounds and the net loss added up to

\textsuperscript{118} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Departmental Committee of Inquiry on the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, p.341 [Cd.3574], H.C. 1907, xviii, p.407, evidence by Rev. B. Crowe, Chairman of the North Tipperary Committee of Agriculture.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p.427 (p.493), evidence by Percy G. Dalliager, secretary of the County Committee for Tyrone.

\textsuperscript{120} H. Villiers Stuart, Prices of Farm Products in Ireland from Year to Year for Thirty-Six Years, Illustrated by Diagrams, with Observations on the Prospects of Irish Agriculture (Dublin: Figgis and Co., 1886), pp 15-6.


\textsuperscript{122} Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Conference on the Poultry Industry, Dublin, May 1911, Report of Proceedings (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1911), pp 146-47, comment by Mr. W.T. Parker of Bristol.
over 78 pounds. Most the poultry societies made a loss that year. Detailed examination of the accounts of seven poultry societies confirms this impression. Poultry societies expanded only after 1917. Before this date, poultry societies stagnated or increased only very slowly in response to increased membership. If these societies attempted to implement their wider goal of improving the technology of poultry farming (as opposed to simply working as a marketing organisation) their success was limited. Only one of the societies examined sold 'agricultural requirements'. This part of their operations were small and fluctuated with the success of egg production.

The quantity and value of eggs imported into Ireland did not decrease during this period, and began increasing after 1915. For instance, in 1904 McLean and Company imported Russian, Canadian and Danish eggs into Belfast through Robert Telford of Glasgow. The importation of dead poultry peaked in 1908 and did not really decline until after 1915. Although egg and poultry exports from Ireland after 1905 increased slowly, there was no acceleration until after 1917. From 1905, a higher proportion of all poultry imported into the United Kingdom came from Ireland, but the expansion in egg exports into the United Kingdom did not occur until the crisis of 1914.

A series of statistics quoted by Raymond Crotty helps perpetuate the view that the number and quality of eggs laid increased from 1891. Crotty noted that the number of poultry increased from 15.3 million in 1891 to 24.3 million in 1907. However, this

125. 1905 is the earliest date for which export statistics are available.
126. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Provisions of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899, pp 51-2 [Cd.3572], H.C. 1907, xvii, pp 857-58 for examples of such praise from all over the country. Also see the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report, Evidence, and Documents Relating Thereto, 1908, p.19 [Cd.3785], H.C. 1908, xl, p.107, evidence by W.R. Bell, clerk of Newry Union, secretary of Newry No.1 and No.2 Rural District Council, member of the County Armagh County Committee, and honorary secretary of the Newry Agricultural Society.
increase was caused by a change in the method of collecting the statistics. Making allowance for the statistical revision of 1906-7 reveals no unexpected acceleration in the number of poultry.\textsuperscript{127} Claims that the schemes were responsible for heavier eggs may be questioned once we notice that the weight of eggs had been increasing progressively before the schemes started. \textsuperscript{128} The average fowl continued to lay few eggs. Even as late as the 1950s, average egg production for the whole country was less than 110 eggs for each bird a year.\textsuperscript{129} In the congested districts of Mayo, Galway, Roscommon and Sligo, nondescript old fowl were laying as many eggs in 1892.\textsuperscript{130} Even the poultry competing of prizes under the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction failed to show consistent production increases each year.\textsuperscript{131} Production was so low that the advertisement - 'Poultry for Sale - 5 hens and a cock, all laying, apply' - was amusing rather than libellous.\textsuperscript{132} Furthermore, the societies failed to alter seasonal differences in poultry production. Eggs continued to be scarce between September and June, when prices were high, while

\textsuperscript{127} R. D. Crotty, \textit{Irish Agricultural Production, its Volume and Structure} (Cork: Cork University Press, 1966), p.61. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. \textit{Agricultural Statistics of Ireland with Detailed Report, for the Year 1909}, p.17 [Cd.5382] H.C. 1910, cviii, p.544 stressed that the increase in poultry numbers between 1906-7 was due to a more complete record being made of young birds.

\textsuperscript{128} 'Poultry Show', \textit{King's County Chronicle}, 3 January 1895, p.3 gives the average annual weights of eggs at the poultry show held in Mullingar (County Westmeath).


\textsuperscript{130} 'Congested Districts Board Base-Line Reports, Confidential, General Report by Mr. [Henry] Doran on the Counties of Mayo, Galway, Roscommon, and Sligo', appendix A, 'Appendix to the General Report of Mr. Doran, Dated 30 April 1892', p.9, Trinity College Dublin Library.

\textsuperscript{131} Average egg production of thirteen breeds of pullets competing for the prizes exists from 1908 in annual reports in the \textit{D.A.T.I. for Ireland Journal}.

\textsuperscript{132} 'Notes of the Week', \textit{Irish Homestead}, 18 September 1897, p.567.
flooding the market between February and August.\textsuperscript{133}

I have a large Buff Cochin hen.
I keep her in a gaudy pen,
And there she fusses all the day
And never takes the time to lay.

In summertime when eggs were cheap,
That hen would lay eggs in her sleep.
She laid enough to feed a troop;
She piled them all around her coop.

I used to take those eggs of hers
And throw them at the passing curs;
For all the world was daubed with eggs;
They fetched 3 cents per dozen kegs.

But now that winter raves and groans,
And eggs are scarce as precious stones,
That silly hen just loafs all day
And doesn’t earn her corn and hay.\textsuperscript{134}

Poultry organisations claimed that their efforts had led to substantial improvements in marketing arrangements. At the 1911 conference on the poultry industry in the United Kingdom, held in Dublin during May, Ireland was shown to hold first place among countries supplying eggs and poultry to Great Britain. The value of Ireland’s exports in eggs and poultry to Great Britain in 1910 and 1911 amounted to four-million pounds a year (an

\textsuperscript{133} Department of Industry and Commerce, Saorstat Eireann, Committee of Inquiry on Post-Emergency Agricultural Policy, Second Interim Report, Poultry Productions (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1951), p.5. See also John Busteed, Agricultural Bulletin No.2, A Statistical Analysis of Irish Egg Production, Prices and Trade (Cork: Cork University Press, 1926) p.3; Percy A. Francis, superintending poultry instructor for the Department, in Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Conference on the Poultry Industry, Dublin, May 1911. Report of Proceedings (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1911), p.60; "R.N.", "The Expensiveness of the Easier Way", Irish Homestead, 24 February 1906, p.146 which contains the following verse: "Mary had a little hen/ It caused her many a tear;/ It used to lay when eggs were cheap/ and quit when they were dear."

\textsuperscript{134} 'Winter Egg Laying', Irish Homestead, 10 June 1911, p.462. The Cochin breed, originally a fancy Chinese fowl, are noted for their high winter egg laying.
increase of almost one-million pounds over 1904). Even this triumph of organisational skill is undermined when we hear the defence of shippers and other local traders, arguing that the poor marketing facilities of earlier years had been exaggerated by the new organisers. For example, at the 1911 conference, the shipper Geo. Steedman of Coleraine spoke about his reaction to the criticisms levelled at him when the poultry movements began.

It was rather amusing, to say the least of, to hear the opinions of the farmers on the subject and the criticism the shippers had to listen to; in fact, it appeared as though the doom of the shipper was an accomplished fact, and the man who had been buying eggs at 2d. and 3d. per dozen too cheaply for years back were to be wiped out, and the farmers were to do the business themselves, and receive this extra 2d. and 3d. per dozen right away. They have now had a trial of the new system, but the extra payment, as far as some districts are concerned, is still a thing of the future, for the co-operative movement, in places, is simply a diversion of the shipping from the original buyers to a new class without a corresponding increase to the producer, except in those cases where the eggs are over 16 lbs. to the hhd., and even then the shippers paid higher prices to the suppliers of large eggs long before the movement was contemplated.

Profits made through improved marketing benefited middlemen and the larger poultry farmers rather than the farm woman: 'Someone was gaining, but the producer was not gaining'. Complainants from England about poor packaging resulting in breakages of eggs, and stale eggs continued flowing into the Department. In the 1920s eggs were still more likely to be sold through higgler or exchanged in the country shops than to go through any of

135. The value of poultry supplied in those years by Ireland to Great Britain exceeded in value that supplied by all other countries in Europe combined: Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Eleventh Annual General Report of the Department, for 1910-1911, p.79 [Cd.6107], H.C. 1912-13, xii, p.85. For the 1904 data, see Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Fourth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 14th. to 23rd. February, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.186 [Cd.3509], H.C. 1907, xxxvi, p.200, appendix iv, 'Documents put in by Professor J. R. Campbell in Connection with the Evidence Given by Him Before the Commission'.


137. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to Third Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in London, 3rd. to 20th. November, 1906), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.38 [Cd.3414], H.C. 1907, xxxv, p.384, evidence by Thomas Porter, chief agriculturalist employed by the Congested Districts Board.

the more formal marketing networks established.\textsuperscript{139}

Conclusion

By attempting to change and control the poultry work of farm women, the various schemes tended to transfer managerial power to male members of the family or to male organisers in poultry societies. Certain improvements did help women raising poultry. For example, risks of destitution caused by disease among poultry populations decreased, providing increased security for women keeping fowl. But the improvements and expansion in poultry numbers urged on women by the organisations were ineffective because of the nature of farmhouse poultry-keeping. For farm women, poultry-keeping was a side-job, important, even vital to the household economy in the earlier years, but still a secondary concern. There was simply no time available in a day to cope with increased poultry numbers, or to spend on improved poultry care. Before the intervention of poultry societies, 'a score of hins was aqual to one cow'[sic] since hens scratched around for their own living, while a cow meant trouble and expense for Irish country-women.\textsuperscript{140} The reforming organisations tended to dismiss the labour costs of women in the home. Co-operative societies gave up fattening and cramming because it was too labour-intensive, and thus too expensive - so the I.A.O.S. recommended that the industry should be carried out in the houses where there was 'practically no cost as regards labour'.\textsuperscript{141} The organisers acknowledged (and, in the case of the I.A.O.S., hoped) that the reformed poultry industry would mean more work for the farm-wife. In contrast to the light-hearted way the agricultural community used to speak about poultry-rearing, by the second decade


of the twentieth century, a series of one-line sayings dealing with the hard work entailed in poultry-keeping appeared in agricultural papers.

Like the housewife, the henwife's work is never done.\textsuperscript{142}

The working hours of the poultry-woman extend from early to late; there are no holidays.\textsuperscript{143}

Good luck and lazy poultrywomen are strangers.\textsuperscript{144}

For promoters of poultry schemes, it was a commonsense principle that poultry-rearing required poultry houses. Poultry houses, however, increased labour costs.

There is no necessity for us to consider whether the use of houses in essential or not, for it is taken as an axiom that without them no profitable results can be obtained....Every house should be raked over each day, the litter dug over each week, the ends of the perches dipped in paraffin to ill the insect life, and thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed each quarter. This is a most important consideration, and unless the places are kept perfectly clean good results can never be obtained.\textsuperscript{145}

Poultry women were expected to work. At seven o'clock the fowl had to be released from their roosting-houses. They were then fed from troughs in the yards. Farm women had to prepare the food, carefully differentiating between the food fed to different types of fowl. After breakfast, the troughs were cleaned and filled with fresh water. Coops were scrubbed. At noon the fowl were given a smaller feed of green stuff or corn. Then eggs had to be collected and the evening meal prepared. In addition, each week the fowl houses required scouring. Every month insects-destroyers were applied. Houses were lime-washed quarterly.\textsuperscript{146} If farm women complained about the extra work entailed in reformed poultry-keeping, the organisations advised,

One objection sometimes raised to increasing the poultry production of the farm is that it will add to the care and labour of the farmer's wife, sometimes already over-burdened for want of sufficient and efficient help; but this ought not to be. If poultry-keeping pays at all it should be a recognised

142. 'Poultry as a Lucrative Branch of Farming', \textit{Irish Homestead}, 18 April 1896, p.104.

143. Ark, iii.48 (September 1913), p.12.


145. 'How to Make Poultry Pay', \textit{Kings' County Chronicle}, 2 January 1913, p.4.

branch of farm labour; and while the mistress of the house could superintend, all such work as feeding, watering, and keeping the houses in order should be the work of farm labourers or servants. The poultry business should not be conducted merely for pleasure or pastime, but as a branch of farm industry likely to bring in more profit, considering the investment, than any other farm product.\footnote{Ark, ii.51 (December 1913), p.13.}

Given the economies of small farming, such a proposal was unhelpful. The extra burden of improved poultry farming would have to be borne by the family of the farmer, or not at all. While the proportion of households with fowl-pens increased from thirty to forty-nine per cent between 1901 and 1911 in the eight District Electoral Divisions, the proportion of households with fowl pens who had either a domestic servant or a farm servant declined from thirty-one to twenty-seven per cent. The argument suited the political aspirations of a vulnerable co-operative movement being slammed for reducing female employment in rural areas.

More general changes within the agricultural community also affected the poultry-rearing work of farm women. While the labour required in poultry-rearing increased, as the twentieth century progressed poultry became a proportionally less crucial element in the family budget. Farmers experienced an expansion in profits for cattle. Housing improvements in rural areas meant the removal of chickens from inside homes, where the farm woman could easily care for them while cooking the family meal or looking after children, to outside chicken-runs. Schemes to disseminate portable poultry houses throughout the small-farmer community had as their raison d'etre moving chickens as far as possible from the 'tainted farmyard where the poultry have probably been thickly kept for years past' to distant fields.\footnote{Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Conference on the Poultry Industry, Dublin, May 1911, Report of Proceedings (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1911), p.60 and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, 'Portable Poultry Houses Leaflet No.50. Revised', p.1.} Chickens were thus removed out of the farmyard and into the fields where they formed a part of crop rotation schemes: out of terrain convenient for female workers and into distinctly male territory. Higglers gradually stopped...
collecting eggs from door to door. Shops slowly ceased exchanging food and other household necessities for eggs. Instead, women had to deliver the eggs themselves to the co-operative societies, creameries or egg centres - or entrust the delivery of eggs to their menfolk. What the organisations attempting to promote poultry-raising in Ireland saw as best for the poultry-industry was not what farm women perceived as best for them.
Part Three: Houseworkers

Chapter Nine: From the Beginning - Housework

Chapter Ten: Education for the Home
Chapter 9
From the Beginning - Housework

A woman’s work is never done let her do her best and try.
From morning until bedtime I’m sure you can’t deny...
So men don’t grumble at your wife for I’m sure there’s none of you
Can tell the daily labour that a woman has to do.¹

The home is a site of labour. For women, household labour was (and continues to be) a central form of work. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that changes in the actual or expected quantity or quality of goods produced by the houseworker (such as food, children and a clean house) might substantially alter the labour process. In the Irish countryside between 1890 and 1914, changes in housework raised the productivity of domestic production, resulting in a shift from paid employment and familial farm labour, to unpaid domestic work.

Defining Housework

What is housework? The term 'housework' suggests work inside the 'house' - although not necessarily one’s own house. But what are the boundaries of the 'house'? Childcare takes place in parks as well as inside houses. If a mother enjoys taking her child for a walk, should her activity be called housework or leisure? In rural households, what is farmwork and what is housework? Housework is not clearly different from other economic tasks carried out by rural women.² Is an Irish woman feeding chickens from her front door performing housework - that is, if the eggs will be eaten by the household rather than


sold? Much ‘farmwork’ is performed inside the house. Urban theorists frequently define housework as ‘use-value’ production, that is, production for the household rather than production for the market (‘exchange-value’). This terminology cannot be easily applied to a small-farming economy where much of what is produced ‘in the fields’ is consumed by the household, and leads to the empty judgement that, in rural communities, housework is ‘use-value’ production which can be carried out just as well in non-agricultural households as agricultural households.³

Casual alternation between the terms ‘housework’ and ‘housewife’ confuse the issue of unpaid domestic labour. Much housework is performed by single women (such as daughters and nieces) or by women not married to the ‘male head of the household’ (such as mothers, sisters and female in-laws). Only one-third of those women who called themselves housewives in the eight District Electoral Divisions sampled were wives.⁴ Furthermore, men also perform housework.⁵ The term ‘housekeeper’ has certain ideological overtones drawn from a later period. The words ‘domestic worker’ are liable to be confused with ‘domestic servant’. It seems more appropriate to call people who perform housework ‘houseworkers’, irrespective of marital or familial status. However, to work in a house is not enough. Paid domestic servants and piece-workers need to be excluded. For the purposes of my work,

3. This is the definition of housework used by Christine Delphy in Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women’s Oppression (London: Hutchinson, 1984), pp 85-87.

4. Eight District Electoral Divisions were examined. The occupations ‘housewife’ or ‘engaged in domestic duties’ (non-servants) were given to 165 women in 1901 and 28 women in 1911.

housework is defined as uses of household time, outside the arrangements of paid-markets, aimed at the production of goods and services which might be replaced by market goods and services. Housework is unremunerated.\textsuperscript{6} Crucially, housework can be performed by a 'third person' without any reduction in its utility function (unlike leisure activities).

Definitional problems hide a basic consensus about what houseworkers actually do. They work for 'the family'. They prepare food, take charge of pre-consumption service and ensure some degree of post-consumption cleaning. The home and the ground immediately around the home is their responsibility. In the words of Rosie Hickey, a schoolgirl from Kilgarvan High School (County Kerry) in 1910, housework involved living up to the old rule: 'A place for everything and everything in its proper place'.\textsuperscript{7} Clothing and furnishings are often produced by homeworkers, and are generally serviced by them. Homeworkers take care of the family, manage the household and ensure that the relationship between 'the market' and 'the household' remains amicable. They are managers of capital investment and human resources. Their role as mediators between the patriarchal 'head' and the 'children' cannot be ignored. Housework is the reproduction of labour power - that is, it reproduces the capacity for work on a daily and generational basis. Labour power is used up daily - the value created by housework recreates labour power. Its 'use-value' is transferred into 'exchange-value' whenever labour-power is sold.\textsuperscript{8} If housework was seriously regarded as 'work', it would be the largest sector of the labour market. The value created by housework is extremely large, often estimated as exceeding half of

\textsuperscript{6} For a discussion on why 'remuneration' is important, see Christine Delphy, \textit{Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression} (London: Hutchinson, 1984), pp 88-91. Even my definition is problematic. Some may argue that the 'marriage market' is tightly tied into the 'money market'. Dowries are an example.

\textsuperscript{7} Letter from Rosie Hickey of the Kilgarvan High School in Kerry, 'For Wife and Maid', \textit{Irish Independent}, 6 August 1910, p.9.

conventional valuations of national income. The cost of maintenance and reproduction is much smaller when it is performed by a houseworker than it would be if these goods and services had to be brought on the market. Consumption cannot occur without housework: it transforms income into consumable goods. Housework is production.

In all areas of housework, significant changes occurred between 1890 and 1914. Most of these changes have a longer history but the central alterations were firmly centred within this period. Rev. Joseph Guinan's response when in 1915 he revisited Rathmore where he had been a curate in the 1890s symbolises these changes. On entering the parlour-drawing room of the parochial house, he discovered that during his twenty years' absence the hearthstone fireplace and turf barrel had been replaced by a grate and coal-box, and a piano stood in the place of the old chest of drawers. Improved living standards and changes in food technology - these are only two of the changes houseworkers faced.

Numbers of Houseworkers

A few statistics are available about houseworkers. Most were women. In 1926 (the only

9. This is examined in detail in Appendix Four. For one of the earliest economic work in imputing values for housework, see Colin Clark, 'The Economics of House-Work', Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, 20 (1958), pp 205-11.


12. The argument that increased prosperity leads to more housework has also been used by Sally McMurray, Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America. Vernacular Design and Social Change (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 88-9. However, she contends that the impetus was a 'scrambling to meet new standards of housekeeping, gentility and childrearing' (standards taken unchanged from the middle-class urban populace) whereas I argue that the material or physical labour requirements increased.
year for which any Irish census counts the number of people 'engaged in domestic
duties'), 550,147 female houseworkers in the Republic outnumbered a mere 1,593 male
houseworkers. In most areas, between thirty-seven and thirty-nine per cent of all women
over twelve years old were 'engaged in home duties'. Higher proportions of houseworkers
lived in the counties of Meath, Longford, Cavan, Roscommon and Leitrim while lower
proportions lived in Dublin and the three Munster counties of Kerry, Limerick and
Waterford. Rural women were more likely to be classed as houseworkers than urban women.
While the average percentage of all women who were houseworkers was thirty-eight per
cent, the corresponding rural percentage was forty per cent. Ninety per cent of all
married women claimed to be houseworkers. This percentage was fairly evenly distributed
over the country - reaching a low of eighty-seven per cent in the Waterford County Borough
and a high of ninety-three per cent in Meath. Higher proportions of unmarried women were
houseworkers in the province of Connaught, and in the counties of Donegal, Meath, Kings'
(now Offaly), Longford and Cavan than elsewhere. Where paid employment opportunities were
higher - in cities and in County Dublin - fewer unmarried women depended for their
livelihood on the performance of unpaid domestic work (see Table 9.2 on the next page).
Widowed women were less likely to claim unpaid domestic work as their occupation in
Connaught and in the western counties, and much more likely to designate themselves
houseworkers in the south-east and in cities (especially the county boroughs of Dublin and
Cork).

There are two ways of estimating the number of houseworkers in Ireland before 1926.
The simplest way involves the assumption that adult women not designated an occupation in
the census were houseworkers. Using published census data, between 1891 and 1911 the
number of houseworkers over the age of twenty increased by eleven per cent. Defining all

13. This understates the number of full-time houseworkers. When more than one person in a
family of six or less was described as being 'engaged in home duties', census enumerators
only counted one person and the other person/s was given no occupation: Census of
Population. 1926. Volume ii. Occupations of Males and Females in Each Province, County,
### Percentage of all Single, Married or Widowed Women Who were Houseworkers. Women Over Twelve Years Only

**Saorstat Eireann, 1926**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin County Borough</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Four Urban Districts</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin, Other Districts</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kildare</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laoighise</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louth</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meath</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offaly</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork County Borough</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork, Other Districts</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick County Borough</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick, Other Districts</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary, North</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary, South</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford County Borough</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford, Other Districts</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adult women in the eight District Electoral Divisions without occupations as houseworkers, it is clear not only that their numbers increased but that households were increasingly likely to contain more than one houseworker.  

9.1

Number of Houseworkers in Each Household
As a Percentage of all Households With at Least One Houseworker
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number per Household</th>
<th>1901 (n=784)</th>
<th>1911 (n=758)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This method of estimating the number of houseworkers ignores the tendency for employed women to do a substantial amount of housework.  

The second method attempts a less conservative estimate of the number of houseworkers by acknowledging that women who have occupations also perform some housework. This method assumes that 1. only women between the ages of twenty and sixty-five years did housework, 2. women not designated an occupation in the census were full-time houseworkers, 3. every 'unoccupied' women doing full-time housework relieved an 'occupied' women from doing housework, 4. 'occupied' women who did not have an 'unoccupied' woman to substitute for her labour did half the housework of 'unoccupied' women, and 5. the presence of a domestic servant in the household supplemented rather than substituted for the work of at

14. 'Adult' status was achieved at the age of fifteen. Visitors were excluded. Relatives of farmers or labourers (for instance, farmer's daughters) were not considered to have an occupation. Scholars over the age of fifteen years were excluded from the analysis.

least one other houseworker.16

9.3

Estimated Number of Waged and Unwaged Domestic Workers
Ireland, 1881-1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full-Time (1,000s)</th>
<th>Part-Time (1,000s)</th>
<th>Domestic Servants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>747.9</td>
<td>195.0</td>
<td>232.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>797.5</td>
<td>389.6</td>
<td>197.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>818.5</td>
<td>424.4</td>
<td>166.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>819.1</td>
<td>524.9</td>
<td>128.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the assumptions above, between 1881 and 1911 there was a transition from paid domestic work to unpaid domestic work. Counting only full-time houseworkers, in 1881 twenty-four per cent of women doing housework were being paid for it compared with thirteen per cent in 1911. If we count full-time houseworkers and assume that two part-time houseworkers make up one full-time houseworker, then in 1881 twenty-one per cent of houseworkers were paid, declining to eleven per cent by 1911. The rest of this chapter uses the more conservative definition of houseworkers (the first method).

These general changes obviously affected different types of households in different ways. Assuming that the housework of 'unoccupied' women was more productive than the housework performed by 'occupied' women, where did the demand for unpaid domestic female

16.My definition of houseworkers is similar to the definition used by E. Lindhal, Einar Dahlgren, and Karin Kock, Wages, Cost of Living and National Income in Sweden 1800-1930. Vol.III. National Income of Sweden 1861-1930, parts 1 and 2 (London: P. S. King and Son, 1933), when he calculated the national income for Sweden. See this book for a defense of these assumptions. For a survey of the empirical literature showing that the presence or absence of servants does not reduce the amount of time the mistress spends on housework, see Heidi Irmgard Hartmann, Capitalism and Women's Work in the Home, 1900-1930 (Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), pp 249-53.
labour increase fastest? Although the data source restricts us to a ten year period, within this time the demand for unpaid domestic labour increased more rapidly on larger farms than on smaller farms. On average, farms under thirty acres required the same number of 'unoccupied' women in 1901 as they had in 1911. The change occurred on farms over thirty acres in size.

9.4

Average Number of 'Unoccupied' Women, By Farm Acreage
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=328 households)</td>
<td>(n=361 households)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 100</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Farmers living on larger holdings were much more likely to require the labour of three or more houseworkers than farmers on smaller holdings. While three-quarters of families with a holding of between one and five acres needed only one houseworker, half of families with farms over fifty acres needed at least two houseworkers. The important point in Table 9.5 is that unmarried women were also forced to make their labour force decisions in a household context. The labour of the wife was insufficient. The production of other women within the house has to be considered.

17. This assumption is valid given American studies on the relative work loads of employed and unemployed women. Although (as noted earlier) employed women still did a substantial amount of housework, unemployed women continued to spend from one-third to one-half more hours working in the home than employed women; J. N. Hedges and J. K. Barnett, 'Working Women and the Division of Household Tasks', Monthly Labour Review, 95.4 (April 1972), pp 9-14; J. P. Robinson and P. Converse, Sixty-Six Basic Tables of Time Budget Data for the United States (Michigan: University of Michigan, Survey Research Centre, 1966); and J. Vanek, 'Time Spend in Housework' in Alice H. Amsden (ed.), The Economics of Women and Work (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp 85-6.

18. This table and the following table exclude farms less than one acre in size. They only include women over the age of fifteen years who were not designated occupations. Farmers' relatives were classified as unoccupied. Households with no unoccupied women were excluded.
Number of 'Unoccupied' Women in Each Household,  As a Percentage of All Households  
By Farm Acreage  
Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of 'Unoccupied' Women</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>5-15</th>
<th>15-30</th>
<th>30-50</th>
<th>50-100</th>
<th>100+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901 (n=328 households)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 (n=361 households)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conventional response to the link between wealth (measured here by farm acreage) and higher numbers of 'unoccupied' women involves an argument about 'conspicuous consumption'. This response is based on the misguided notion of what actually constitutes 'consumption'. 'Consumption' is eating a meal, not preparing it. It is misleading to link increased consumption with 'leisure' (particularly leisured women). Increased consumption required increased production - whether that production refers to the preparation of primary materials or to the labour involved in shopping for processed materials. Individuals within households do not consume unprocessed products from the farm or the shop. Potatoes are washed. Cabbages are cut and cleaned. Consumption does not start when the cow is slaughtered. Higher living standards result in higher levels of

19. This contrasts with Jacob Mincer's view that only the labour of married women has to be explained differently from men. The general consensus among American researchers is that single women make labour force participation decisions in the same way as men, see W. G. Bowen and T. A. Finnegar, The Economics of Labour Force Participation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

20. Earlier in this chapter I defined 'labour' as any activity which could be performed by a 'third person' without any reduction in its utility function. This definition is crucial if we are to distinguish between leisure (or consumption) and labour.

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consumption which require higher levels of household labour and management.  

What, therefore, explains the increased numbers of houseworkers? Forces pushing women out of paid employment have already been discussed. In communities experiencing a contraction of employment, women chose to maximise their possible economic contribution by focussing their energies into familial domestic work. But this chapter argues that there were also forces drawing women into housework. There was simply more housework to do. The theme was repeated: 'In the home there is no limit to the possibilities for employment'. Economic growth released capital (as well as labour) for investment in the household sector. The following section examines some areas where this occurred, focussing particularly on housing, diet, standards of cleanliness and child-care.

Housing

The house is the workplace. Improvements in the housing of rural households radically affected labour requirements inside houses. In the nineteenth century, Irish houses


22.'For Wife and Maid', Irish Weekly Independent, 19 April 1906, p.10.

23.These factors cannot be estimated in a statistically sophisticated manner given the limitations of the data.

were reputed to be the worst in the United Kingdom. Tiny rural cabins were over-crowded. Animals slept with humans. Poor women cogently argued that house cleaning meant loss of manure reserves - but reformers were unsympathetic. The general standard of many houses was extremely poor.

Floors of mud; roofs of rotten thatch; one wretched chamber often doing duty as a kitchen by day, and as a bedroom, pigsty and stable by night; one bed, or a truss of straw having often to accommodate the whole family of all ages and both sexes.

Housing was, however, improving. Each decade between 1841 and 1911 data was collected on the 'class' of inhabited housing in rural and urban areas. Houses were divided into four categories, judged by the number of rooms, the number of windows, and the materials from which the house was built. Fourth class houses were small mud huts. Third class houses had between one and four rooms, windows and were made of sturdier materials. Second class houses were good farm houses, having five to nine rooms and windows. First


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class houses were generally 'gentleman’s houses'. Do these categories represent real differences in housing? In Ballinrobe No.2 Rural District in 1901 ninety per cent of the houses reported by the medical officer as being 'unsanitary' were in class three or four.28 In six District Electoral Divisions in 1901 and 1911, all houses in 'class four' and ninety per cent of houses in 'class three' were valued at less than one pound. Nearly three-quarters of houses in 'class two' were valued at between one and two pounds and half of houses in 'class one' were valued at over three pounds.29 The following tables, therefore, do provide some indication of improvements in rural housing. As Tables 9.6 and 9.7 show, while in 1891 nearly half of all rural houses were third or fourth class houses, within twenty years nearly three-quarters were first or second class houses. In the eight District Electoral Divisions, between 1901 and 1911 roofs and walls

9.6

Percentage of all Rural Houses Within Each 'Class' Ireland, 1861-191130

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. ‘Minute Book of the Medical Officer of Health, Report on Unsanitary Dwellings, Ballinrobe No.2 R.D.C., 1901’, twenty-five were examined, P.R.O. of Ireland Mss 12328 and 12329.

29. From an analysis of the six District Electoral Divisions which were matched with the valuation records at the Valuation Office in Dublin. For a more general discussion of housing improvements, including a discussion of the expanding size of houses, the social desirability of privacy within homes and the development of the parlour, see F. H. A. Aalan, 'The House Types of Gala Island, County Donegal', Folklife, 8 (1970), pp 32-44 and Alan Gailey, 'Changes in Irish Rural Housing, 1600-1900' in Patrick O'Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan (eds.), Rural Ireland 1600-1900: Modernisation and Change (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), pp 86-103.

30. The data for this table has been taken from the censuses.
were made sturdier. Houses were more likely to have windows. Within ten years the percentage of houses with three or more rooms increased from twenty-two per cent to twenty-five per cent.

The other way of examining changes in housing is through the sanitary officers’ reports. The problem with this method is that sanitary officers celebrated broadening legislative powers by rooting out offenders of housing laws. Thus, between 1909 and 1911 Dr. R. Henry, Medical Officer for the Newtownards Rural District Council, increasingly accused people in his district of having earth floors, fowl in privies (or no privy at all), windows which would not open, and unplastered walls. The Sanitary Officer in the Ballycastle Rural District constructed a long list of houses which lacked privies, dripped with dampness, were over-crowded (and thus morally suspect), were filthy and smoky, possessed permanently closed windows and hingeless doors, and had rotting roofs

31. For a summary of these laws, see Mary E. Daly, Dublin. The Deposed Capital. A Social and Economic History 1860-1914 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1984), pp 257-64.

and walls. In spite of these criticisms, the long term trend in sanitary offences was one of steady decline. Most offences never reached the courts, but of those between 1892 and 1911 which did, the number decreased four-fold. Furthermore, the type of sanitary problem changed.

9.8

Complaints Made by Sanitary Officers in Ballymoney Poor Law Union
As a Percentage of all Complaints
1875-1877 and 1905-1907

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaint Relating to</th>
<th>Percentage 1875-1877 (n=243)</th>
<th>Percentage 1905-1907 (n=141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cesspools and drainage</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals in house</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filthy house</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking a privy</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls and floors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House used to slaughter animals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least in the Ballymoney Union, problems with drainage and cesspools were reported less. The practice of keeping livestock inside the house declined. This was commented on by sanitary and medical inspectors throughout the country. The new reasons for complaining

33. The officer was applying for labourers’ cottages to be built, Ballycastle Rural District, the Sanitary Officer’s Certificates for November 1910, P.R.O.N.I. LA 11/12b/1.


about house sanitation had to do with issues of waste disposal and general uncleanliness.

Housing reform has been seen by reformers in many different countries as one of the most effective instruments of social change. In Ireland, Acts in 1856, 1860, 1870, 1872 and 1881 aimed to encourage landlords and Poor Law authorities to improve the housing of their labourers. By in large, they were ineffectual. After 1883 local authorities in Ireland had been empowered to provide dwellings and gardens for labourers but at the end of the decade the attention of the House of Commons was again called to the failure of the Labourers' Acts in Ireland. Up until 1892 the Labourers' Acts had been acted upon only in Leinster and Munster where nearly twelve-thousand cottages had been built. Less than ninety cottages had been built in either Ulster or Connaught. Under the Labourers' Act of 1906 the powers of local authorities were extended. Four-and-a-quarter million pounds was set aside for loans to rural authorities for housing operations. The act empowered local councils to provide all manual workers earning under fifteen shillings a week with cottages. The average agricultural wage in Ireland was under eleven shillings. Local councils began seriously investing in housing.

Other state bodies invested heavily in housing. The Congested Districts Board claimed

37. For a discussion, see Clifford E. Clark (Jn.), 'Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vii.1 (Summer 1976), pp 33-56.

38. 'The Labourers' Cottage Failure', Kings' County Chronicle, 15 March 1888, p.4. Also see 'The Labourers' Cottages', Kings' County Chronicle, 19 June 1890, p.1. The clearest summary of the Acts before 1892 can be found in Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer. Vol.v. Part II., Miscellaneous Memorandum, Abstracts and Statistical Tables, by Mr William C. Little (Senior Assistant Agricultural Commissioner), Section III-E, p.1ff [C.-6894-xxiv], H. C. 1894, p.597ff.

39. These loans were repayable in sixty-eight and a half years by annual installments of 3.25 per cent, covering principal and interest.

40. Larn District Council, discussions about the proposed labourers' cottage, 1911, P.R.O.N.I. LA 44/12e/4.
that their schemes to improve houses were their most 'productive' work.\textsuperscript{41} Housing was central to four schemes: the parish committee scheme, the house improvement scheme, the migrant scheme, and the estates scheme.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{9.9}

\textit{Schemes to Improve Housing - Congested Districts Board}

\textit{Number of Works Executed and Expenditure, to 31st March 1909}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>No. Works Executed</th>
<th>Expenditure (pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish Committee Scheme (not repayable)</td>
<td>26,983</td>
<td>49,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Improvement Scheme on estates (partly repayable)</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>73,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings for Migrants and in re-arrangement of holdings (partly repayable)</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>99,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans to tenant purchasers on estates previously owned by C.D.B.</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2,694</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Housing Improvement Scheme applied only to estates purchased by the Board. Householders would receive a repayable advance and a free grant to build or substantially improve dwelling houses and outhouses. The 'advance' would be included in the sale price of the holding and would be repaid with the price of the land by half-yearly annuities.\textsuperscript{43} Generally, the building was done by the landholder under the supervision of Congested District Board officials. If the household could not carry out the work themselves, the Board might approve a second loan repayable in fifty half-yearly installments. Loans in either case never exceeded twenty-five pounds. Parish Committee Schemes provided capital for the erection or substantial improvement of dwelling houses and outhouses, drainage and fencing, the repair or construction of roads and the reclamation of waste land. Grants of 1.5 thousand pounds in its first year of operation (1897) had reached 10.7 thousand

\textsuperscript{41}Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Eighteenth Report of the C.D.B. for Ireland...For the Year Ending 31st March, 1909, pp 11-12 [Cd.4927], H. C. 1909, xvi, pp 11-12.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., pp 11-12.

\textsuperscript{43}These loans were given at a rate of three and a half per cent. a year, over sixty-eight and a half years.
pounds by 1907. The value of the labour was generally four or five times the amount of the
grant, which was usually used for buying materials needed.\(^{44}\) In Donegal the Board’s
system of grants was replaced by a system of prizes given to occupiers improving or
building dwellings. In all congested districts except Donegal, the parish committee
schemes were supervised by a committee consisting (ex-officio) of the clergymen of all
denominations in the parish, the poor law guardians for each electoral division in the
parish, the resident landlords or their agents.\(^{45}\) In addition, six additional members
would be elected onto the committee by the ratepayers in the district. Shopkeepers and
members of their families were ineligible. Between 1900 and 1908 nearly eight thousand
dwellings were built or substantially improved under the scheme, and over ten thousand outhouses for cattle were erected.\(^{46}\) No grants or prizes were given to occupiers
whose land and house valuation exceeded seven pounds. The scheme had to be discontinued in
1908 because of lack of funds.

9.10  

The Work of the Parish Committees in the Year to 31 March 1907\(^{47}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Work Done:</th>
<th>Donegal</th>
<th>Other Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erection of New Houses</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Existing Houses</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>1,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erection of New Outhouses</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>1,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of Existing Outhouses</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage, Fencing, Roads, Reclamation</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{44}\) Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Final Report, p.31 [Cd.4097], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.760.

\(^{45}\) In Donegal the resident magistrates had control.


\(^{47}\) Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Final Report, p.31 [Cd.4097], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.760.
What did reformers expect from improved housing? Housing was a moral and social question. Its political content was understated. At the very least, improved houses would mean improved housewifery.48 Human surroundings either 'elevate or degrade'.49 If Ireland was to contain a 'moral, sober, intelligent, healthy and industrious people' they must have improved homes.50 The idealisation of the labourers' cottages, attractively managed by women, reached exalted heights with Bishop Browne of Cloyne declaring in his 1911 Lenten pastoral that

I have seen many of these new cottages, outside and inside. It is a pleasure to visit them. The outside walls fresh with whitest limewash, the windows kept regularly painted, the woodbine and the clematis winding round the door, an indication of the development of taste; inside the house, the floor is brushed and unspotted, the walls are decorated with suitable prints, the simple household furniture is neatly kept and arranged, and the mother of the home, the proud queen in her own little realm, is surrounded by healthy, happy children. It is a blessed change, hopeful of the future of our country.51

Improved houses would (and were expected to) increase female workloads. Poor planning and construction had a similar effect. Housing built by the reforming institutions did not always meet the requirements of prospective residents. Certainly, ideas of 'respectability' were integrated into the designs. In the Lisburn Union, for example, cottages were built with a closed panelled front door (complete with knocker) with varnished sheeting on the ceiling.52 But, labourers' cottages aroused 'bitter complaints'


51 Bishop Browne of Cloyne's Lenten pastoral, quoted by T. P. Gill in 'The Management of a Cottage Garden', D.A.T.I. for Ireland Journal, xii.1 (October 1911), p.14. He went on to warn his listeners that the forces of evil were never completely conquered, drawing an analogy between uncleanness and sin.

from labourers’ wives whose domestic labour requirements were ignored. Labourers’
cottages built in the 1890s were too small to accommodate the large households of many
agricultural labourers. Spokeswomen christened the cottages ‘bird baskets’. Women
complained about smoking chimneys, damp walls, the ‘want of rendering in the slating’,
the absence of a loft, the coldness of the houses, and kitchen grates which were too
narrow for pots. Ill-planned labourers’ cottages caused ‘much domestic worry and
unnecessary labour’. In 1906 Miss C. O’Conor Eccles persuasively pointed out that
questions of cupboard room, of the best position for lights and water taps, larders etc., can be more
easily resolved by women than men since these matters come under their notice daily and they have to
suffer from the inconvenience if any. No woman would design a house with a step down from the street
that lets water run into the hall or living room in wet weather, or with raised thresholds or
hearthstones that make the sweeping out of dust impossible. We find such stones and thresholds in many
houses.

Problems with the hearth were the most serious, and the extreme measures District
Councils were often forced to take had profound effects of the labour of houseworkers. For
instance, the Newtownards Rural District Council (County Down) built forty-three cottages along the shore between Ballywalter and Mill Isle and in Portavogie. Since the backdraughts of these cottages would not draw, the Council was forced to put small 'Plantress' stoves into each house.\textsuperscript{59} They then had to teach women how to use the stoves.\textsuperscript{60}

The second most serious complaint with the new cottages was their distance from water. With rising standards in house cleaning, more water was required. The president of the United Irishwomen, Mrs. Harold Lett, protested against the number of labourers' cottages in County Wexford which were built over half a mile from water supplies.

I wonder if many people realise what this means to a woman with young children. Try and put yourself for a moment in the position of some of these labourers' wives, and imagine yourself trudging half a mile up a hill carrying in one hand a can of water and with an infant tucked under the other arm, while one or two mites hang onto your skirts. This is a common sight in the country. The woman must take the children with her on her numerous pilgrimages to the well, put out the fire or lock the door, leaving the children outside until her return.\textsuperscript{61}

She pointed out that an 'ordinary family' would require about nine gallons of water a day, with an extra nine gallons on washing day. By washing once every nine days, she would be required to use an average of ten gallons a day. If a woman could carry two gallons of water at a time (weighing about twenty-four pounds in a can), labourers' wives living half a mile from a water supply would have to walk at least five miles a day for water.

Even the floors in improved houses were seen as relevant in discussions about housework. In 1884 a disagreement between Charles Phillip Cotton (engineering inspector

\textsuperscript{59}These stoves were brought for three pounds each from the Belfast firm of John Currie and Co.

\textsuperscript{60}Newtownards Rural District Council 1901-1911, Reports of the Committees of Public Health, Water Supply, Finance and Lighting, meeting of 29 January 1910, report by Walter K. Walker of Bloomfield on the cottages built by the Council, P.R.O.N.I. LA 61/3c/l.

\textsuperscript{61}Paper read by Mrs. Harold Lett (president of the United Irishwomen) at the first annual general meeting of the United Irishwomen on 15th November 1911, Irish Countrywomen's Association papers, Minutes. The United Irishwomen send a deputation to the Local Government Board regarding water supply to the labourers' cottages on 10 January 1912: Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland For the Year Ended 31 March 1912, Being the Fortieth Report, p.xlvii [Cd.6339], H. C. 1912-13, xxxvii, p.47. For other complains about distance from water supplies, see "Working Terrier", 'Man, The Blatherer', Irish Homestead, 19 February 1910, p.151.
for the Local Government Board of Ireland) and the Colonel King-Harman (Commissioner for the Select Committee on Agricultural Labourers in 1884) centred around the type of floors the new cottages should have. No one doubted that the floors must be sealed as unsealed floors were cleaned too infrequently. King-Harman recommended concrete floors, allowing women to slosh them down with water. Cotton opposed concrete floors on the grounds that women found them difficult and time consuming to clean, recommending instead timber or tile floors.62 Later reformers continued these debates. In plans for the labourers' cottages, one of the seven 'essential requirements' was 'strong smooth floors which can be thoroughly cleaned by washing, with boarding in bedrooms'.63 Floors were being sealed in older houses as well. Dr Brendan MacCarthy, medical inspector under the Local Government Board for the north-western quarter of Ireland, noted that although earth floors were still 'fairly common', their numbers were declining rapidly as 'public opinion was being formed against the use of these floors to a very remarkable extent'.64 Sealed floors showed dirt more clearly. They created work.

Cleanliness

Housing reform cannot be separated from attempts to disseminate notions of cleanliness. At the same time that "Brigid" of the Irish Homestead jested that the word 'tidiness' was a grating Anglo-Saxon word, she was heavily engaged in the campaign to


63. 'Memorandum in Relation to the Model Plans and General Specification for Labourers' Cottages Issued by the Local Government for Ireland', 24 June 1907.

appropriate the word into Irish culture. Women were encouraged to sweep regularly rather than wait for the annual spring-clean or even a weekly clean.

A wonderful housewife is Mrs. O'More,
Every Saturday morning you'll see
A whirlwind of dust from window and door,-
Such a thorough sweeper is she.
No whirlwind of dust from window or door
Of her neighbour across the way;
That's because the neighbour of Mrs. O'More
Sweeps a little up every day.  

Reforming organisations attempted to stimulate cleanly behaviour directly. Although it is impossible to judge their effect, policies aimed at improving standards of house cleanliness were widespread. Private organisations such as the Faughanvale Gardening Society (County Derry) and the Irish Peasantry Society generously rewarded tidy and 'healthy' householders. Since sanitary officers could not deal with the widespread problem of domestic sanitation, the Congested Districts Board (under the Parish Committee Scheme) awarded money to householders who removed animals from inside houses or cleared away manure heaps. These prizes were derogatorily called 'parish doles', given to people 'for what they should obviously do of their own accord'. The Board justified their actions on the grounds that the history of poverty in the congested districts had led to 'habits that would never have been formed under happier conditions'.

From 1901 the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction awarded prizes to

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66. 'Homely Wrinkles', Ark, vi.71, August 1915, p.6. Also see "Brigid", 'Household Hints. A Woman's Work is Never Done-II', Irish Homestead, 4 January 1902, p.11.


'ideal' cottagers. Judges looked for cleanliness and the general orderliness of the house and its grounds, the cultivation of garden, general management of livestock (with particular attention given to poultry) and provision for manure. As the Irish Homestead advised, to win a prize wooden floors had to be white from scrubbing. Similar criteria applied to the competitions for small farms, but in addition to home cleanliness, cropping practices and the care of land were examined. Between three and five thousand householders entered the competition annually and nearly fifty-four thousand pounds were given in prizes under the schemes.

The purpose of cleaning changed. Sweeping the floor became less a ritual linked with visiting fairies and festivals and more of a 'scientific' dirt control movement to combat disease. In the nineteenth century, before going to bed, an Irish peasant woman might sweep the hearth and arrange chairs in front of it for the comfort of the dead. In the twentieth century the younger generation watched their elders perform these functions. John O'Donaghue, born in an Irish cottage in 1900, remembered seeing his grandmother sweeping the fireplace before going to bed, especially on stormy night because, she said, 'the dead might be coming in for shelter. If they find the place untidy...they might talk about it among the neighbouring pookies because the dead have endless time for gossip.' Good fairies were still said to visit only clean houses but it was more important that visiting good neighbours were impressed.

70. 'Queries and Replies. The Best Kept Cottage', Irish Homestead, 10 October 1903, p.829.
71. Data taken from the annual reports of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, published in the British Parliamentary Papers.
74. Arensburg, Conrad M., The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1933), p.188.
Household Goods

The material of the home vitally affected housework. The improving economy saw increased investment in household goods. Some reformers saw this movement as essential to general 'development'. A regular columnist for the women's page in the Irish Homestead commented:

Honest Tommy Traddles felt himself compelled to defer his marriage with the dearest girl in the world (prepared to wait for him twenty years if necessary), when he counted what the plenishings [sic] would cost - the sheets and pillow-cases and tablecloths, and the gridirons and saucepans and salamanders. Of course, you may talk about artificial wants! but nobody has been able to trace a beginning of what we call civilisation; and the more people give up in this respect the more they degenerate.  

Others claimed that household equipment - euphemistically called 'labour-saving devices' - was the solution to the problem of female status. By reducing the drudgery of housework through the introduction of 'labour-saving' devices, the 'courtesy given to women' would increase. What historical studies today show, however, is that the average time spent on housework does not decrease with technological advance. In fact, in the case of Ireland, investment in household goods substantially increased the amount of work women performed in the home both by altering expectations of goods and services which homeworkers should supply and by increasing the time spent on maintaining the new products.

One indicator of increased investment in the home can be found by looking at the

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77. 'Notes of the Week. Lines of Progress', Irish Homestead, 26 March 1910, p.251.

importation of household goods, which increased by fifty per cent in the nine years between 1904 and 1913, and by a further twenty-three per cent in the years 1913 to 1914.79

9.11

**Value of Imports of Household Goods, 1904-1914**

(In Pounds and Indexed 1904=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value (1,000 pounds)</th>
<th>Index 1904=100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1,068.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1,164.0</td>
<td>108.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1,258.0</td>
<td>117.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1,276.5</td>
<td>119.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>1,291.4</td>
<td>120.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1,307.5</td>
<td>122.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,439.6</td>
<td>134.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,491.4</td>
<td>139.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1,606.4</td>
<td>150.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1,603.9</td>
<td>150.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1,852.4</td>
<td>173.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures refer only to imported household goods, ignoring the proportion of these products which were produced locally. The expansion in household furniture is an example. Local traders capitalised on improving living standards in the countryside and from the 1890s expanded their businesses to handle cheap furniture.80 The Congested Districts Board was concerned that people were being resettled in new houses yet lacked the utensils and (particularly) the furniture to make proper use of the houses. The scanty furniture of the former houses was transferred to the new cottages. Since the Land Purchase Act had authorised money only for the building of the cottages, not for furnishings, the Congested Districts Board established classes in 'manual instruction' where boys and men were taught

79. A detailed trade series for Ireland only begins in 1904. Household goods include: candles, lamps, electro-plated ware, mats and matting, washboards, bedsteads, brushes and brooms, chinaware, clocks, ranges and ovens (including parts), pots, pans and buckets, cutlery, polishes, carpets, matresses, picture frames, and furniture.

80. 'Pages for Irish Countrywomen. United Irishwomen', *Irish Homestead*, 24 November 1911, pp 946-47, speech by Mrs Harold Lett at the first annual general meeting of the United Irishwomen on 15 November 1911.
to make their own furniture. Furniture requires daily arrangement and maintenance. The introduction of a kitchen table results in patterns of food consumption which entails the labour of setting the table, bringing food from the cooking area to the table and finally clearing the table. Widespread dissemination of special furniture for the parlour means more work for a wider class of women. Chests of drawers require folded clothes and elaborate drawing-room tables requires careful arrangement of crockery.

Another example of types of household investment in goods which increased domestic labour is floor coverings. Increasing numbers of people brought carpets. Between 1904 and 1911, the value of imports of carpets and matting increased by thirty-six per cent. In houses with dirt floors and resident animals, the process of cleaning was irrelevant to the household. With the removal of animals to outhouses and the sealing of floors, a new form of household labour was created with investment in carpets, rugs and linoleum. Women were warned that unclean carpets spread disease and had to be cleaned regularly. The new ideology came hand-in-hand with investment.

Implements were important in cookery: ‘there’s little use in talking about improving the cookery in her [Ireland’s] small households, without first improving their facilities for cooking’ asserted "L.de K.K." of the Irish Homestead. Minor cooking equipment - such as spatulas, mixing and serving spoons, and a variety of pots and bowls - undoubtedly increased. In 1913 Maguire and Gatchell, a Dublin company established just after the Famine, noted their rapidly increasing trade in cooking apparatus during the previous

\[\text{\textsuperscript{81}}\text{W. L. Micks, History of the Congested Districts Board (Dublin: Eason, 1925), pp 93-4}\] and 'Pages for Irish Countrywomen. United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 24 November 1911, pp 946-47, speech by Mrs Harold Lett at the first annual general meeting of the United Irishwomen on 15 November 1911.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{82}}\text{"For Wife and Maid", Irish Weekly Independent, 14 December 1905, p.10.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{83}}\text{"L. de K. K.", 'Household Hints. The Homestead and its In-Dwellers', Irish Homestead, 29 April 1905, p.348.}\]
couple of decades. Larger consumer goods were less influential. Most women continued cooking over an open hearth fire. As late as 1944, forty per cent of households cooked over a range, another forty per cent over an open hearth fire and the remaining twenty per cent over an open grate. Since most of the ranges had been installed after 1920, we must assume that the open hearth fire and grate were the most common way of cooking in the period before World War One. All the same, stoves were popularly advertised. Coal and anthracite stoves were marketed as efficient and durable; oil cooking stoves dispensed with 'the kitchen fire and cookery'; gas stoves were clean; and electric stoves were 'absolutely safe'. It is unlikely that many of these stoves reached ordinary country houses and the number of stove and kitchen-range warehouses listed in Thom's Directory remained at seven throughout the period. What is important, however, is that the widespread dissemination of information about these new technologies created a demand in poorer rural households which could not be fulfilled. In 1886, for instance, free classes in Cork teaching cookery on gas stoves attracted only a small number of women, but by the turn of the century girls in itinerant cooking classes were demanding to be taught to cook on ranges (which they did not possess in their own houses) rather than in the

84. Illustrated Record. Maguire and Gatchell, Ltd., Dublin, September 1913 (Dublin: Maguire and Gatchell, 1913), pp 118-57 and 229-56.


86. 'The Tortoise' slow combustion stove in Daily Express, 1 December 1885, p.1; kitchen ranges in Cork Constitution, 18 January 1886, p.1 and 24 February 1886, p.4; fire kitchen ranges in Warder, 6 August 1894 p.4 and 5 January 1895, p.8; Frank Rippingille's oil cooking stove in Warder, 12 September 1896, p.1; the 'Frugal' cooking range in Dublin Trade and Labour Journal, May 1909, p.2; anthracite coal stove in Irish Weekly Independent, 5 November 1910, p.6; Salamandre stove in Irish Weekly Independent 12 November 1910, p.12; gas stove in Irish Weekly Independent, 30 July 1910, p.9; and electric cooking in Leader, 21 May 1910, p.331.


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customary pot-oven. In her study of Irish embroidery and lace-making, Elizabeth Boyle reproduced the attitude of rural women when discussing the activities of Miss Florence Irwin, a domestic economy instructress who travelled through rural districts selling cheap kitchen utensils.

Miss Irwin’s aim on her jaunting-car rounds was to sell cheap items to farmers’ wives who were not by local standards poor, but were remote from shops and would produce the family wash basin when she asked at demonstrations for a bowl in which to mix a few ounces of flour and fat. Unfortunately the policy of the Department was to teach rural girls in poorer districts the use of homely articles they knew such as these very pot ovens, rather than modern toys like turf or coal-burning ranges. The decision was taken in order to counter emigration but it was not popular, and girls in one centre asked for schools with the two 'R.s': residence (so they need not walk long distances) and ranges.

Domestic instructresses realised that stoves meant more work for the houseworker. Ranges in this period cooked unevenly. Most had to be cleaned daily with black lead and the grate had to be emptied of ash every day. More important, they led to increased specialisation of the process of cooking, and encouraged a movement to time-consuming baked foods.

Fuel

Fuel collection was an essential role of the homeworker. Peat was the most important fuel in Ireland throughout the period. As late as 1920 over sixty per cent of Irish households burned only peat. The housework involved in having a peat fire consisted of obtaining and preparing the fuel. Obtaining the fuel was a job for the entire household, from cutting the peat, transporting it to the spreading field, spreading it over the field

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88. Cork Constitution, 3 May 1886, p.1, classes by Miss E. Thorne, classes held at the Assembly Rooms, Cork, between May 5-8.


P9.1 Women digging turf, nd
(Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, L918/1)
to allow its water content to fall, then stacking and finally transporting the peat to the house.

Once peat was inside, little housework was required. Peat fires were easily laid and kindled, and needed less attention that wood or coal fires where bellows had to be used. Baking with the use of coal was difficult for coals placed on the lid of the pot-oven would go out, unlike peat.\(^{92}\) Savings in the time and the labour costs of using peat were sufficiently high to make households in the 'congested districts' reluctant to move to superior land offered to them by the Congested Districts Board when that land was some distance from peat reserves.\(^{93}\)

However, coal was used by wealthier and urban households, poorer households using it when forced by landlords refusing them access to turf, by heavy rain preventing the turf from drying, or from shortage of labour to save turf. Ireland had few coal deposits so most had to be imported and taken inland by rail. Partly because of the poor transport networks in the west and north-west, coal was rarely used in these areas. Electricity could be afforded only by the wealthy. The Dublin Electrical Works was opened in Fleet Street in 1892. In 1904 there were only 650 consumers, mostly business premises in the centre of Dublin.\(^{94}\) Electricity cost twice as much as gas and was much more expensive in


Dublin, at the turn of the century, than in England. For those who did not have access to peat and could not afford coal, the alternatives were straw, wood and cow dung.

In the case of fuel, therefore, most classes of rural-dweller experienced continuity. Peat continued to dominate. The difference was that with the same labour-intensive types of fuel, homeworkers now had to cook more elaborate meals.

Diet

Diet had been rapidly changing since the famine. Assuming that increased imports of food products meant increased consumption of these goods rather than the substitution of imports for home production, we can get some measure on the extent of dietary expansion. Data on imports exists after 1904. If we compare import levels in 1904 with 1911 levels, sugar (and sugar-manufactures), tea and cheese imports increased between six and ten per cent, imports of fruit and vegetables increased by almost twenty per cent, imports of spices and condensed milk increased between forty and fifty per cent, and imports of luxury items such as chocolate increased by 132 per cent in the seven years.

Contemporaries noted higher levels of protein intake by rural households. In 1914, James Stewart of Strabane testified that agricultural labourers who never used butter in the 1880s were now using at least one pound a week. This was a sign that people were

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95. The average cost of production per unit in 1898 was 3 8d in Ireland and 3 5d in England. The average price was 6 1/2d in Ireland and 4 1/2d in England according to a lecture by Professor Barrett at the Royal College of Science, called 'The Practical Application of Electricity', Warder, 9 April 1898, p.3.

'better off' 97 Farming households ate more of their own eggs. 98 Between 1904 and 1913 the estimated number of eggs produced increased by thirty-two per cent while exports of eggs increased by only sixteen per cent. 99 Agricultural statistics show increased vegetable cultivation. 100 At the turn of the century, approximately twelve thousand statutes acres of land was planted in fruit, compared with fourteen thousand acres ten years later.

Not all changes in diet increased female labour. Other food goods became popular because they entailed a reduction in time costs for the houseworker. 101 For instance, the move to bakers' bread was frequently lamented. 102 Although some people accused women of ignorance about the correct baking of bread, more commonly the move to baked bread was considered rational.

a woman with a large family has quite enough to do, especially in country districts and on the farm, without baking bread if she can get it from the baker’s man when he passes along the road....It is the tired woman who is the ally of the baker. 103


99. Assuming an annual laying capacity of ninety-six eggs.

100. Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.82 [Cd.3785], H. C. 1908, xl, p.87, evidence by Patrick Treanor of Pomeroy and Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Sixth Annual General Report of the Department, for 1905-1906, p.48 [Cd.3543], H. C. 1907, xvii, p.289.


102. Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Vol.iii - List of Witnesses and Minutes of Evidence, pp 358-59 [Cd.2210], H. C. 1904, xxxii, pp 503-04, evidence by Dr. C. R. Browne of Dublin talking about rural districts.

P9.2 Woman baking on an open fire, nd
Poorer households were ashamed to bake their own bread.\textsuperscript{104} Similarly, women started using rolled oats rather than oat meal for porridge. Not only was the price of oat meal increasing relative to rolled oats but also rolled oats more than halved preparation time.\textsuperscript{105}

We can also get some idea of changes in dietary expectations by looking at the food of farm labourers. Labourers had to be fed better if farmers were to be able to attract them.\textsuperscript{106} One large farmer in Cashel complained that whereas in the past labourers were fed only potatoes and milk for breakfast and dinner and oat stirabout for supper, in the 1890s labourers demanded eggs for breakfast, meat for dinner four or five days a week and the other days butter and 'very often' tea for supper.\textsuperscript{107} The manager of the Armaghbreague National School, J. McMurdie, wrote to the Reverend Fletcher de Cobain

John Griley left here this morning, he said he would stop no longer on the meat he was getting, that it was not sufficient for a working man. He wanted some eggs to [sic] his breakfast and beef for dinner and without butter he said he would not stay.\textsuperscript{108}

For both employers expected to feed their workers and the homeworker cooking for the household, meat became a larger part of the diet, in part because of the declining relative cost of meat. Belfast and Dublin were the only two centres (out of eighty-eight) in the United Kingdom with a population of over 100,000 where meat prices declined


\textsuperscript{105} Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Milk Supplies. Appendix to the First Report of the Irish Milk Commission, 1911. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Dublin, Belfast and Newry, 29th November, 1911, to 1st March, 1912 (Inclusive), with Evidence, p.59, [Cd.6684], H. C. 1913, xxix, p.64, evidence by Professor W. H. Thompson of the University of Dublin.

\textsuperscript{106} Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. First Appendix to the Seventh Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Ireland, 16th May to 11th June, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.115 [Cd.3785], H. C. 1908, xl, p.120.


\textsuperscript{108} Letter from J. McMurdie, manager of the Armaghbreague National School, in the Rev. Fletcher de Cobain papers, National Library of Ireland Mss 17740(3).
between 1905 and 1912. As incomes increased, meat consumption increased. The fall in the consumption of home-cured bacon by the household was made up by the increased consumption of American bacon, brought in shops. Meat required more time to cook and a more extensive array of cooking equipment.

As diet diversified, so did the degree of specialised knowledge required by houseworkers. No longer was cooking a job which could be 'properly' performed by everyone in the household. A degree of elementary training was required. One of the things which gives status to certain types of food is preparation time. Food variety had higher time costs, in terms of preparation and administration.

Shopping

In her right hand her grip and ten parcels she bore -
A feat that would stagger her big brother.
In her left hand her bag and twelve parcels more,
While she held up her skirt in the other. 111

There was general agreement that women were buying more freely and a better class of goods. 112

The fear of taking trouble is the root of the evil. Why, instead of making a substantial dish of Irish oatmeal stirabout and milk (mush), wholesome and nourishing for her family, does the housewife spend her money at the village store in buying tea? Because it is less trouble to make tea than to make porridge. Why does she buy bakers' bread instead of using good Irish barley or wholemeal? Because the trouble is less. Why have shoddy goods from Bradford and inferior stockings from


111. Ark, April 1914, p.5.

Nottingham replace the good old home-made woollen webs, and stockings knitted from yarn spun by the housewife? Not because they are cheaper, for when a man has a few sheep, these worthless bought things are actually cheaper; but because going to the shop is 'the readiest way'.

The process of shopping involved labour. What changed was that the type of labour women chose to perform altered. With widening expectations of home production and services, priorities of domestic labour shifted. Improved access to commercial establishments changed the labour from the production of goods in the household with the use of primary materials, to the labour involved in gaining access to goods partially or completely processed.

Labour and Consumption

The labour involved in food does not stop with buying processed or unprocessed food and preparing those foods. The ritual of consumption entailed work for the houseworker. In the family life each meal time should be looked forward to as a time of pleasure - a rest and refreshment for the mind and body. The woman of the household should set the example of always sitting down to the table neatly dressed, and of having the room, whether it be the kitchen or any other room, where the meals are served in perfect order, and the table should be as temptingly set out as possible...all jarring subjects of conversation should be put aside.

Hospitality was labour. Women were responsible for feeding all members of the household, including the increasing number of male farm servants. The work involved in 'entertaining' can be illustrated in the memoirs of R. A. Anderson, the co-operative adviser. In a home he visited on his travels, Anderson revelled in the 'unrestrained hospitality'. After a 'gargantuan feast' of ham, geese, duck, mutton (one leg boiled and the other leg roasted), chickens, cabbage and potatoes, the 'host' turned to his wife and two daughters who had waited on them during the meal, commanding them to bring the whiskey and sugar tumblers,


115. 'Household Hints', Irish Homestead, 4 March 1899, p.173.
and 'be continually [sic] bringing hot water!' We must assume that it was only after the men had finished consuming that the wife and daughter were allowed to begin. It was the responsibility of the wife or the 'most senior woman' in the household to 'manage' consumption. Just after her marriage, Mrs. Scott was instructed by her mother-in-law how to feed the husband/son: 'Mrs. Scott [mother-in-law] told me he could not eat much food or coarse food, so it was necessary to give him whatever he liked in every way.' The comment that 'the home is, or ought to be, the woman's kingdom, and that she must rule it wisely, she must serve it well' can be read at different levels.

Clothing

Changes in clothing during this period are symbolised by the differentiation between the shawl and the fashionable hat. Both sexes increasingly brought their clothes from drapers or wandering dealers, and they were prepared to spend large sums on Sunday clothing. Rural journals in the 1880s had encouraged girls to make their own clothing, but by the twentieth century girls were sternly warned not to make their own clothes. Certainly there was a booming trade in ready-made clothes. Sales of 'ready-mades' by the


117. Mrs. C. Scott papers, P.R.O.N.I. D1884/6/1.

118. 'Household Hints', Irish Homestead, 4 March 1899, p.173.


company of Young and Anderson between 1888 and 1913 increased by 151 per cent while haberdashery and other less-processed goods increased by less than twenty per cent.\(^\text{121}\)

The time devoted to laundry increased. People not only had a greater number of clothes, they also washed them more frequently. Poets might imagine a leisurely scene down by the river

Of leafy bush, or gown-skirt overhead,  
Or wash’d and beetled by the shallow brook,  
Or sung their ballads round the chimney-nook\(^\text{122}\)

but washing was the most disliked of all household chores.\(^\text{123}\) The irritation with the chore of clothes-washing stemmed from the labour involved in carrying the water.\(^\text{124}\) Piped water to individual houses was rare. As late as 1944, the Northern Ireland Housing Survey reported that eighty-seven per cent of all rural houses lacked both piped water and a toilet.\(^\text{125}\) Anyhow, in households with a close water supply, women received less help in carting water from other members of the family. The availability of additional water generated more work for women as they were expected to do more washing and cleaning. In

\(^{121}\)Young and Anderson Ltd., Wholesale Drapers, Belfast, business records, P.R.O.N.I. D3641/c/1.


response to these sorts of pressures, the women’s pages on the newspapers admonished women not to overstrain themselves:

The woman who will overwork on washday and take the rest of the week to recuperate is not an economist but a spendthrift. She who uses up her strength in a day’s housecleaning, who strains her muscles with heavy lifting, and is afterwards compelled to keep to her bed, perhaps for a week, nursing a twisted back, does herself and her family a serious harm. 126

The proposed remedy was ingenious: instead of concentrating a week’s, fortnight’s or month’s washing into one day, women should wash small amounts every day. This ‘solution’ was guaranteed to increase female labour in the home.

A more efficient remedy might have been to resort to the market for laundry requirements. However, women’s columns and domestic education courses stressed that the washing of clothes must be done at home not in laundries where the machines tore the clothes and where (it was alleged) disease was rife. 127 Most women would have been forced to do their own laundry since laundry facilities (usually at the local convent) were poor. 128 Significantly, the market alternative to home-laundry was never developed. 129

Children

Much less time was spent on childcare than cleaning and cooking. In part this is a function of environment. In the countryside, children are supervised less. 130 The labour


130. Ibid., p.254 argued that it is urbanisation and industrialisation which increase the time costs of child-care.
of child-care was undergoing change, however. Children were an important part of housework. An infertile marriage rebounded on the wife. A large number of children was economically rational on these small farms, even though only one son was needed to take over the farm and ensure the attachment of the name to the land. Additional children drew on the family purse most heavily when both parents were at their peak producing-period. At the age of greater physical weakness and reduced alternative employment opportunities, emigrating children were the most secure form of investment. The 'correct' care of children was a source of status within both the community and the household. Evidence for the changing attitude towards children can be ascertained by looking at the importance of toys in child-rearing. We do not have data on domestic manufacture of toys but imports of toys and other fancy goods increased from 11,890 cwts in 1904 to 18,249 cwts by 1911, an increase of fifty-four per cent in seven years. Booming domestic production of toys is suggested by the increased exportation of toys from only 99 cwts in 1904 to 701 cwts by 1911, an increase of seven-fold.

Family size, and the age of children, were significant factors in determining the amount of time spent in housework, as well as the marginal productivity of the labour of the housekeeper. Demographers disagree about fertility trends. According to R. E.


P9.3 Child-care and cooking in a cottage, 1889
(Ulster Folk and Transport Museum Archives, L919/12)
Kennedy, the number of legitimate births per 1,000 married women aged 15-44 years increased from 284 in 1881 to 305 in 1911. Between 1881 and 1891 marital fertility increased by one per cent, by 2 per cent in the next decade, and by 4.4 per cent between 1900 and 1911. On the other hand, Brendan M. Walsh argued that marital fertility between 1871 and 1911 declined slightly. In the eight District Electoral Divisions, households were slightly larger. In these districts, 17.8 per cent of all unemployed adult women lived in households with more than two children under the age of five years in 1901, compared with 18.4 per cent ten years later. Women living on smaller farms were increasingly likely to find themselves with more children to take care of during this period. While families living on holdings of between thirty and fifty acres in 1901 contained one more child under the age of fifteen years than families living on holdings of between one and five acres, by 1911 the differential had decreased, with average number of children under fifteen years decreasing on the larger farms and increasing on the smaller farms.

9.12

Number of Years Between Children Aged Up to Fifteen Years
Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Between Children</th>
<th>1901 (n=896 hhds)</th>
<th>1911 (n=797 hhds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>45.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over six years</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


135. In the eight Districts, 55.9 per cent of unemployed adult women in 1901 lived in households with more than five members compared with 56.4 per cent in 1911.
Children were spaced closer together, increasing the dependency period as well as potentially (though not actually) shortening the time required for full-time child-care (Table 9.12). Children were dependent for longer. This change can be seen even in the ten years between 1901 and 1911. If we examine boys aged between twelve and fifteen, in 1901 nearly one third were either designated an occupation or were said to be occupied on the farm as a 'relative'. By 1911 this had decreased to less than one-quarter of all boys. Most of the change was caused by boys remaining longer at school.136 The movement of women into the household allowed more time to be devoted to child-rearing, or the formation of human capital.137

Elderly

Along with the care of children, the elderly required more work. If a new ethos was increasing the standards of care children required, a similar ethos was developing towards the elderly. The provision of pensions to old people provided incentives to 'retire' and reduced pressure on them to compensate for their 'dependency' by performing domestic labour. Even allowing a wide margin for veracity in order to qualify for the pension, people were living longer and were likely to spend their final years inside their own, or their children's, household. In 1901 every nine households contained at least one person over the age of seventy-five years. By 1911 every six households contained an elderly person.138

136. Eight District Electoral Divisions have been examined. Girls have been left out so the issue of unemployment specific to females does not distort the trends. In 1901 there were 178 boys between twelve and fifteen years, compared with 150 boys in 1911.


138. The analysis was based on eight District Electoral Districts. In 1901 987 households contained 113 persons over seventy-five years and in 1911 924 households contained 156 persons aged over seventy-five years.
Men and Housework

If there was more housework to do, the distribution of the extra work requires further analysis. Children might have been expected to do less housework as their dependency within the household increased with extra schooling and the dissemination of an ideology regarding the vulnerability of children. Elderly persons also might be expected to do less housework as the notion of 'retirement' gained force. What about men? Did they take a larger share of housework?

Today economists sometimes claim that the employment of women in a household increases the amount of housework performed by men. Did the opposite happen when women moved out of paid employment? We are all familiar with exhortations regarding the primacy of female labour in child-care.

'Adam', said Eve, 'you can take care of the baby now, while I go to the club'. Then it was that Adam began raising Cain.

In discussions by reformers, the only role men seemed to be expected to play in the domestic revolution was in encouraging their wives and daughters. At the establishment of a local branch of the United Irishwomen, men attending the meeting were reported as giving a sympathetic chorus of approval when the speakers touched on more attention to be given to food and cooking.' The only other time men raised their voices was when they protested at being excluded from managerial committees. The men argued that 'they would


140. 'Homely Wrinkles', Ark, January 1914, p.7.
P9.4 George Grattan’s ‘The Labourer’s Return’
(From Anne Crookshank and The Knight of Glen, The Painters of Ireland c.1660-1920 (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1978), p.181)
Mrs. W. J. Fennell, a subscriber to the Public Health Committee, rebuked men for their indifference to home affairs: 'She thought if men when they go home from their work expressed the pleasure that their wives’ efforts in connection with their home gave them it would be a great encouragement, in place of jokingly wondering how they put in their time.' However, even here the responsibility placed on men was revoked by the statement, 'It rests chiefly with the women to secure the encouragement so persuasively pleaded for by Mrs. Fennell.'

But we cannot dismiss men from housework so easily. In Nora Tynan O’Mahoney’s short story entitled ‘Old Friends and True’, a male lodger did a considerable portion of child care and casual kitchen work. Old men in the Aran Islands rocked baby-cradles.
The nursing of children was naturally left to the woman except when the woman would hand the child to the man of the house to mind it for a while if she wanted to do something about the house. 'Twas very unusual to see a man baking or washing.

More commonly, fathers began assuming ‘airs of proprietorship’ when the child reached twelve years of age. Men might help with the shopping, particularly of bulk goods.

‘Noa’ of the Ark expected men to bring in the fuel, as she nagged in her column:

Peter, did you fetch some coal this morning before starting out for the field? Why not? Do you think a woman can make bread, pie and cake, boil potatoes, and get a good meal, without coal? Don't grumble

141. 'Pages for the United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 28 October 1911, p.859.
142. 'Topics of the Times', Irish Weekly Independent, 11 January 1906, p.4. In 1905 the Public Health Committee was at the height of their campaign for neater and cleaner houses.
145. Irish Folklore Commission, Mss 1210, Richard Denihan, aged 86, of Barony Seanaid (County Limerick) in January 1951, talking to Colm O Danacain, p.179.
146. 'Notes of the Week. United Irishwomen in Conference', Irish Homestead, 8 October 1910, p.832. Also see Richard Denihan, aged 86 years, of County Limerick, talking to Colm O Danacain in January 1951, p.179, I.F.C. Mss 1210.
147. John Cullen, aged 71, a labourer of Bailieborough (County Cavan), speaking to folklore collector P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough, January 1948, pp 381-82, I.F.C. Mss 1024 and United Irishman, 12 July 1902, p.5.
because you have so much else to do. 148

Certain traditions to do with cooking included men. Men were involved in the food process at its earliest stage, such as slaughtering pigs, digging potatoes, or providing grain for bread-making. Male visitors were expected to 'give the meat a spin' when cooking meat on spits and men took part in cooking meats for 'special' occasions, such as cooking the goose at Christmas. 149

Young boys might be expected to do more housework than older men. James Cousins, born in Belfast in 1872, spoke about his childhood chores of lighting the kitchen fire and sweeping the floor. 150 A letter in the Irish Weekly Independent's 'Children's Cosy Corner' suggests a certain rebellion against this practice by boys. When children were invited to describe the opposite sex, one little boy responded haughtily,

Girls, generally speaking, are very useful for indoor or household work, a great deal more than boys. This, of course, is not an exaggeration, for boys are so careless about household business while the girls are otherwise. Most women are very weak and timid creatures, and, taken all in all, boys are the best. 151

Contemporary explanations for the household sexual division of labour frequently included comments regarding distribution of skills and strength. Thus, women fed pigs because 'they were better at doing that than the men': men fed cattle. If there was a man in the household, he would do the churning since 'it was too heavy a work for women,...but if there was only one man in the house, the woman would keep at it.' 152

148.'Notes by Noa', Ark, III.33, June 1912, p.3. For similar comments, see 'Notes by Noa', Ark, III.46, July 1913, p.3.

149.Dr. Patrick J. Quinn from the District Electoral Division of Mourne (County Down), manuscript essay 'Recollections' in the U.F.T.M. questionnaire on 'The Hearth, Its Equipment and Traditions', p.3 and W. A. Greer, manuscript entitled '18 Years, 1896-1914', written between January and July 1967, P.R.O.N.I. T3249/1.


152.Irish Folklore Commission, John Cullen, aged 71, labourer of Bailieborough (County Cavan), p.375, Mss 1024.
'Heavy' forms of housework were more likely to be seen as male responsibilities but there were as many definitions of 'heaviness' as there were household tasks. Further, the sexual division of labour within the house was not simply between men taking care of 'house' (outdoor work such as carpentry and whitewashing) and women taking care of 'home' (indoor or 'clean' work). The women's columns and domestic instruction books took it for granted that women would be repairing creaky hinges, cupboard handles, broken plaster-work and rough wooden doors.

In 1958, the Irish Folklore Commission sent out a questionnaire entitled 'The Social Aspects of Work'. Question six read: 'What part, if any, did men take in housework? Did men ever cook or wash dishes? Did men sweep, clean, or whitewash the house?' Thirty-seven people, mainly from the counties of Tipperary, Clare, Cork and Galway, responded. Fifteen per cent claimed that men did no housework. Patrick Finn of Loughrea (County Galway) commented that a man who did more than whitewashing 'would inspire some local raftery'. Over half said that the sole form of housework performed by men was whitewashing. The only other jobs which more than one respondent claimed men performed were sweeping the yard, cleaning the chimney and churning. Three respondents said that single men might be forced to cook. Men only washed, cooked and cleaned inside the house when there was no other adult women in the household.

Men that lived alone had to do all that class of work [housework] themselves. Some of them could bake and cook and wash as good as any woman. Some men could do their own knitting, and there were men that

153. Charlotte O'Conor-Eccles instructed men to carry water and turf in order to 'free' women from all the other housework; Simple Advice to be Followed by All Who Desire the Good of Ireland, and Especially by Gaelic Leaguers (Dublin: An Clo-Cumann, 1905), p.6. The very heavy job of washing clothes was relegated to women while repairing cupboard handles was often performed by men.

154.'For Wife and Maid', Irish Weekly Independent, 27 May 1911, p.9.

155.Of course, women also whitewashed the outside and inside of houses: Irish Folklore Commission, informant was John Cullen, aged 71, labourer of Bailieborough (County Cavan), January 1948, p.379, Mss 1024.

156.Irish Folklore Commission, Mss 1828, 'The Social Aspects of Work', 1958; and Mss 1523, 1669, 1670 and 1829.
could sew as well as any woman. They could patch their clothes, and there were men that could make up butter as good as a woman would do it - they'd make it better than some women. There was many an unfortunate man that his wife died and left him with a family of small children, and that poor fellow had to wash and clean the children and cook and mend for them, and do all the work about the house and try to do his own work along with that. You'd see two or three old brothers living together, and no woman in the house, and one of them would have to do the baking and cooking and mending and washing and all the work that a woman would do about a house. In some cases like that they'd get in a woman once in a while to do the washing or any mending that was a wanting to be done.\textsuperscript{157}

Men suddenly left without a female houseworker found the transition difficult. Some men hired women (generally elderly women) to 'keep house' for them.\textsuperscript{158} Others simply failed to perform other functions satisfactorily. In May 1901 and in October 1912, Samuel H. Kingston, principal of Tullywest National School, struggled unsuccessfully to get to his classes on time. In 1901 his excuse was the lack of a servant girl for two weeks. By 1912 he was married but his wife's sickness caused the same problem.\textsuperscript{159}

If men generally performed housework only when a female worker was unavailable, we would expect more male houseworkers. In the eight District Electoral Divisions, five per cent of all households in 1901 had no resident female relative or female domestic servant. This had increased to seven per cent by 1911. Much of this change was due to the decline in the number of female domestic servants resident in households with no female relative. Thus, nearly fifteen per cent of households with no female relative had a resident domestic servant in 1901 compared with nearly eight per cent in 1911. What is interesting, therefore, is the marginalisation, or privatisation, of men from ideologies of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{157}John Cullen, aged 71, a labourer of Bailieborough (County Cavan), speaking to folklore collector P. J. Gaynor of Bailieborough, January 1948, pp 380-81, I.F.C. Mss 1024.
\item \textsuperscript{158}"A Guardian of the Poor", \textit{The Irish Peasant. A Sociological Study by a Guardian of the Poor} (London: Swan Somenschein, 1892), p.9.
\item \textsuperscript{159}Tullywest National School, Inspector's Observation Book, 25 May 1901 and 2 October 1912, the inspector on both occasions was W. Macmillan and the principal was Samuel H. Kingston, P.R.O.N.I. SCH 192/9/2. For a humorous story of what happens when a wife or female servant is absent, see "Tullyneill", 'Cooking', At Home in Tyrone. Sketches and Short Stories (Belfast: Quota Press, 1945), pp 15-23.
\end{itemize}
Nevertheless, housework was predominantly a female occupation. If we examine male-headed households in the eight District Electoral Divisions, even households without a wife usually had another woman present to perform the tasks required.

### 9.13 Male-Headed Households: Presence of Woman to do Housework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of that Woman to the Male Head</th>
<th>1901 (n=744)</th>
<th>1911 (n=712)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One man only in household</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No women in household, more than one man</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife in household</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter (adult) in household</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand-daughter</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried sister</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married sister or sister-in-law in household</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neice or cousin in household</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter-in-law</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant, Domestic</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, very good reasons existed for women to wish men to do less housework. Especially as alternative employments for women were contracting, male participation in housework jeopardised their chief access to power. Similarly, as we noted in Chapter Four, women increasingly performed housework without the help of domestic servants. By

160. The relatively high proportions of all-male households in Ireland contrasts with contemporary rural societies where rigid sexual divisions of labour in the domestic sphere meant that households without at least one healthy woman could not survive. For a discussion based on households in Senegal, see Maureen M. Mackintosh, 'Domestic Labour and the Household' in Sandra Burman, *Fit Work for Women* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp 173-91.


1910 the Irish Weekly Independent could say that man’s ideal woman 'must be a splendid Housekeeper and not require any servants'. Advertisers quickly exploited this shift in their market by promoting their products as 'just as good as' a domestic servant or even declaring that their products were domestic servants. Housework came to be regarded as work performed, without payment, by female members of the household. Even in the small proportion of households without potential female houseworkers, the labour was regarded as fundamentally feminine.

Conclusion

By acknowledging that housework is a form of necessary labour, it becomes clear why domestic production is such a primary factor in female decisions about other forms of employment. Looking at the changes in the material culture of housework provides a framework for down-playing strictly 'ideological' factors which develop more slowly than material changes and may remain out-of-step. As female productivity in the household increased relative to their potential productivity in the waged and subsistence labour markets, women moved out of these markets and into the household. In this chapter increases in household production have been traced through changes in the demand for domestic labour. Appendix Four carries this argument further by analysing wage relativities both between men and women and between employed women (or women working on their family farm) and houseworkers. Districts where the imputed wage to houseworkers increased fastest relative to the imputed wage for women engaged in other occupations were also those districts experiencing the most rapid shift from paid employment and work on

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163. 'For Wife and Mother', Irish Weekly Independent, 12 February 1910, p.9.

164. For example, see the advertisement for "STOBIE" in Irish Peasant, 6 December 1905, p.4 'If Mothers of Young Families Only Knew its Virtues as a Household Servant They Would Never be Without It...Stobie will Destroy Every Living Thing in a Child's Head in One Hour.' Also see Irish Weekly Independent, 30 April 1910, p.9.
the familial farm to housework. Although this shift was particularly important in rural areas where houseworkers produced a larger proportion of goods for household consumption from raw materials, even for urban houseworkers the time requirements of preparing processed foods for consumption was significant. Houseworkers were not only more prepared for domestic work in terms of education and health but the time they spent in housework was liable to be greater with increased female unemployment, changing technologies of housework and alterations in family structure. Their output of goods and services increased in line with increased labour and capital investment in the home. It was not only social status and levels of conspicuous displays of consumption which were enhanced by increased labour in the home. Improvements in basic economic status were more crucial. While houseworkers saved labour-time in some areas (such as in the making of clothes), they increased their labour-time in other areas (such as in shopping for clothes and washing clothes). Rising living standards resulted in an increase of household labour for lower classes of women. Women found that there was more work for them to do inside the home.

165. See the micro-analysis in the second part of Appendix Four where I impute a wage to all adults in matched-households in six District Electoral Divisions between 1901 and 1911. As the average value of unpaid labour (housework) rose relative to the average value of paid employment (or work on the family farm), women moved from the paid to the unpaid sector. The first part of this appendix contains a macro-economic analysis of the value of housework, intended for use in G.N.P. estimates. The appendix also examines the problems inherent in attempts to impute wages, using either the market price model and the opportunity cost model.


Chapter 10

Education for the Home

She [Mrs Moore] walked in, an' she sat down there in the chair. She was asking about the child an' this thing an' that thing, but in the end she began telling me, about a meeting they had in the church, the ministers wife was lecturing she said, an' telling the women what to do. They should have a nice "clane" house an' a good fire before their husbands when they'd come into their meals, a nice meal before 'em an' a smiling face, to make 'em cheerful and happy. Yerra, I don't know how many more things she said but in the end when I was sick out of her [sic] an' I couldn't be listening to her any longer. 'Tis easy for the ministers wife to talk, says I, if she were here trying to boil a pot o' praties often with a wet green bush, an' a child 'longside her crying with the hunger. I wander [sic] what sort of face she'd have on when her husband would come to his dinner. She had to laugh at me.1

From the 1880s, the poor housewifery skills of Irishwomen began attracting comment as one of the more serious causes of distress in rural Ireland.2 By the 1890s, these calls had become increasingly vocal.3 This chapter looks at the educational attempts to stimulate the changes experienced in housework which were examined in the last chapter. Despite the diverse range of organisations devoting capital to educational schemes in domestic labour, their aims were similar. Several prominent aims (such as health, national pride and ideologies regarding "Womanhood") are examined but, in the final analysis, what they have in common is their vision of a prosperous countryside which could only be realised by increased and improved expenditure of unpaid labour in the home.

1. Story told by Paddy Murphy about a couple with seven children living on a farm 'seventy years ago'. The tale was recounted by Mickey Crowley of Carrigroe (County Cork), between August and October 1942. Crowley was aged 95 years at the time of recording. In Irish Folklore Commission Mss 843, pp 91-2.

2. Report of the Select Committee on Industries (Ireland). Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index, pp 370-71 and 298 [.288], H.C. 1884-85, ix, pp 370-71 and 298, evidence by William H. Keating (small proprietor, shareholder and Irish agent in an English manufacturing and warehouse company) and evidence by Lieutenant Colonel James O’Hara (chairman of the Town and Harbour Commission of Galway, auditor of the Poor Law Board for Mayo, Galway and a greater part of Clare, and chairman of the Jute Spinning Company in Galway Town).

Objectives of Educational Schemes for Houseworkers

Concern over the level of human capital were one stimulant for the establishment of classes to teach women to be better housekeepers. As in England, France, America and Australia at the turn of the century, educated men and women in Ireland panicked about the health of its poor. The National Women's Health Association (W.N.H.A.) was formed out of this scare and justified its intervention to the domestic sphere by drawing attention to Ireland's high infant mortality and tuberculosis rate. Improved housewifery provided the key to improving the health of the people. A song written by the W.N.H.S. 'Girls of Wexford' broadcast

We'll bravely fight and conquer
In this our native town,
Our work is to endeavour
To keep consumption down;
And we shall win the day,
Our hope - fresh air and sunshine -
Will sweep the germs away.
[Chorus:]
We are the girls from Wexford,
Who'll fight with heart and hand,
Dirt we'll put down and cleanse our town,
On health we'll take our stand.

Although the W.N.H.S. was the principal agency promoting domestic economy for health reasons, all other reformers shared their concern. Local schools could claim a fee for their work in domestic economy only if instruction was given in hygiene - a policy warranted by statistics showing a 'startling increase in the ravages of consumption


during recent years'. The Irish Agricultural Organisational Society (I.A.O.S.) claimed that domestic economy would cure the 'hollow-eyed, dyspeptic remnant of a once stalwart people'. They drew a connection between an improper diet, consumption and insanity. The tubercule was 'a sort of burglar who crawls around in dark and dusty corners, and it is our business to see there are no such corners left for him.' Even as late as 1919, the Irish Technical Association affirmed that compulsory 'training for home life' was essential if child mortality and consumption were to be lowered.

Occasionally linked with this concern over health, some arguments for domestic economy classes focussed on national pride. Hyper-sensitive reformers of the educated, urban elite shrunk under the supposedly scornful looks of people abroad when discussing the standard of Irish domestic life. These reformers argued that the government must do something about this humiliating image 'so that we can be thoroughly respected abroad.' National respectability depended on differentiating the education of the 'offenders' from

7. Seventy-Second Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, School Year 1905-6, p.18 [Cd.3154], H.C. 1906, xxix, p.656.

8. 'Notes of the Week. A School for Making Homes', Irish Homestead, 19 September 1908, p.758.


the rest of the community. Educationally, therefore, females were targeted. Generations of economic poverty and political abuse had damaged the housewifery skills of Irishwomen. In 1912, the United Irishwomen reasoned

Now, we believe that the work of women in the house requires as much knowledge, as much intelligence, and as much education as the work of men on the land. Will it be contended by anybody that it is a more intellectual task to rear cows than to rear children? Is it easier to feed a family of human beings than it is to prepare a mash for the cows? Is it easier for a mother to make clothes for a family that it is for the man of the house to run up a shed to shelter his cows or a sty for his pigs? We assert that the work within a house, the rearing of young beings with the promise of immortality, where tone by tone, word by word, the young spirit is moulded wither for the bright or dark eternity, is infinitely more important, and the work outside the house on the land is merely in aid of the labour of moulding human life and character, which is mainly the labour of women.

However prominent arguments about the health, national respectability and even the 'place of women' might have been in the propaganda of the period, their purpose mask more

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15. 'The Reasons for United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 26 October 1912, p.864. Also see Irish Technical Instruction Association. 15th Congress. Dublin: June 4th, 5th and 6th, 1919 (Athlone: Athlone Printing Works, 1919), p.79. In educated Dublin circles, the stress on domestic education was translated into a demand for the teaching of domestic economy in universities, thus obscuring the more central argument concerning the admittance and place of women in Irish universities: see Countess of Aberdeen, 'The Sphere of Women in Relation to Public Health', Dublin Journal of Medical Science, 1 September 1911, cxxxii.477, p.166, her presidential address to the Health Congress, Dublin, under the auspices of the Royal Institute of Public Health; articles and papers on women in universities by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Mary Hayden in N.L.I. Mss 22262; letters from Hanna Sheehy Skeffington to Mary Hayden in N.L.I. Mss 24009; and Mary Hayden's paper, 'Not Worth Mentioning' in N.L.I. Mss 24010.

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potent driving forces. George Fletcher told participants at the 1913 congress of the Irish Technical Instruction Association that we need to recognise more clearly that the services of a woman in the home have as real a money value... The housewife who saves by her economies is as true a wage-earner as the man who provides the income.

He confessed that he was concerned that home industries would lead to 'a neglect of the ordinary duties of the home, the performance of which, though it does not directly increase the family income, makes for prosperity by diminishing unnecessary expenditure and raising the standard of home comfort.' In 1905, the chairman of the Carlow Technical Committee advised men to marry girls trained in domestic economy because these girls 'would be far more valuable to their homes than girls who had got no such training but happened to have a few pounds more than the former in the way of a dowry.' Bad housekeeping was one of the most important sources of 'economic impotence and its attendant evils in the emigration of the more vigorous of our young men and women and the thriftlessness and lethargy of many of those who are left'.

To men and woman alike, a home in the real sense, which includes spiritual and material elements in happy fusion, is the surest incentive to industry, and to those virtues attendant on industry - providence, temperance, and domestic peace - which plays so large a part in the evolution of 'the economic man', which, among other things, the movement in which co-operation plays so large a part is

16. For more direct statements about the 'place of women', see 'The Economic Problem and Domestic Life', Irish Homestead, 3 June 1905, p.438, on the domestic education scheme in Dromore (County Tyrone) and Menlough (County Galway) and T. P. Gill, 'Newry Technical School. Re-Opening of Second Session', Irish Technical Journal, II.22 (December 1904), p.150.


19. 'Items of News', Irish Homestead, 9 September 1905, p.672. The chairman was the Most Rev. Dr. Foley, speaking in August 1905. The Irish stress on production contrasts with the American stress on teaching management of consumption, see Susan M. Strasser, 'The Business of Housekeeping. The Ideology of the Household at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', Insurgent Sociologist, viii.2 (Fall 1978), p.149. In Ireland domestic instructresses discouraged investment in consumption goods, encouraging instead investment in productive goods: 'United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 25 November 1911, p.950, speech by instructress for the United Irishwomen, Miss Reynolds.
constantly seeking to produce. No sounder economic work can be done therefore than that which elevates the homes of the people and helps them to make the most of their means of subsistence.

People of this kind were cautioned against worrying about the loss of earning-potential caused by creameries: the diversion of women from dairying to full-time housework would yield a bountiful economic harvest.20

National school inspectors linked the need for domestic economy instruction with improved living standards. As the inspector of the Galway circuit commented, the urgent need to reform 'the systems of living that have established themselves within recent years in the homes of our rural population' justified compulsory education in housewifery in all National Schools.21 "Noa" of the Ark reminded her male readers,

A woman's strength is the most valuable asset the farm has. Remember this next wash-day, and turn the washer and wringer.22

As contemporaries stressed, 'we could never afford to lower the ideal of home'.23

In response to this preoccupation, private and public organisations developed schemes designed to teach housework to Irishwomen. The major organisations dealt with here are (in ascending order of significance) the Women's National Health Association W.N.H.A.), the United Irishwomen (U.I.), the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society A.O.S.), the Congested Districts Board (C.D.B.), the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (D.A.T.I.) and the National Board of Education (N.B.E.).24

22. 'Notes by Noa', Ark, iii.47, August 1913, p.3.
24. These are the main institutions in the rural areas - many similar organisations were engaged in this work. For instance, the urban equivalent to the United Irishwomen was the Irish Co-Operative Women's Guild.
Private Institutions

The Women's National Health Association was inaugurated on 13 March 1907. This urban, privileged group of patrons, led by the Countess of Aberdeen, undertook to rouse the women of Ireland into bearing their responsibility for the health of the country through education in cleanliness. Imitating the Americans, they introduced caravans ostensibly for educating people about tuberculosis but, since the key to the prevention of tuberculosis lay in improved forms of housewifery (both in the menial form of dusting, sweeping and scrubbing and in the more elevated form of child-care), itinerant programmes featured domestic education prominently. The first caravan, "Eire", visited 370 rural centres and performed for around 74,000 people with the slogan brightly painted on its sides,

Our Enemies are Bad Air, Bad Food, Bad Drink and Dirt. Our Friends are Pure Air, Pure Food, Pure Milk and Cleanliness.25

By 1911, they had active branches in every county. Colourful and musical promotional strategies, coupled with easily assimilated educational programmes, assured their popularity in entertainment-starved rural communities.

In addition to itinerant classes, from 1908 they established Baby Clubs where mothers were taught child-care.26 For young girls, local branches supported 'Girl Guides of Good Health'.27 An examination of the rules these girl guides subscribed to illustrates the connection between the tuberculosis campaign and education in housewifery. They swore to practise all the laws of health. They learnt the dietary requirements of the body, and how

25.See the photograph in Countess of Aberdeen, Ireland's Crusade Against Tuberculosis. Being a Series of Miscellaneous Lectures Delivered in Connection with the Tuberculosis Exhibition, Together with Other Papers Dealing with the Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign and the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908, III (Dublin: Maunsel and Co., 1909), p.120.


27.The W.N.H.A. suggested setting up a male equivalent to the Girl Guides of Good Health. Boys would be taught to help keep the house tidy and 'would undertake not to smoke cigarettes until they are twenty-one': Women's National Health Association. Organisation of Local Branches (Dublin: Dollard Printing House, c.1910), p.13.
to keep all food free from contamination. In addition, girls reciting the rules promised to learn how to prepare meals in an appetising manner, to study first aid, and to take every opportunity of learning how to take care of young children and the sick. They swore to learn how to keep houses ventilated and in a 'sanitary condition'. They were taught how to make and repair clothes. Finally, W.N.H.S. girls promised to masticate their food well, breathe through their noses, keep their backs straight and repudiate tight stays and high heeled shoes.28 The range of activities carried out by the W.N.H.S. may be illustrated by looking at its Wexford branch. This branch employed a District nurse (with the financial help of the Samitarian Fund), set up weekly entertainment in the Town Hall, offered generous financial prizes for the winner of the title 'Best Kept Cottage', introduced schemes in which young mothers were visited by matrons who initiated them into the rites of mothercraft, started a small lending library, and bribed young girls to attend classes of visiting speakers with promises of prizes. The concerns of the W.N.H.A. were summarised in a letter written by E. S. McManus, President of the Killeaden Branch, on 10 April 1911:

We, the Members of this Branch, a body of nearly 100 women and girls, realise we are banded together to fight the great enemy, Consumption, the Dragon with many heads, and to meet this foe we muster suitable forces in opposition. Cleanliness against Dirt, Cheerfulness and Good Comradeship against wretchedness and depression of Poverty. Beauty of surroundings against squalor and disorderliness; wholesome variety of food (we are particularly strong on this point) against the usual unvarying soda-cake, potatoes, and cow-cabbage diet....we mean to cook many simple dishes, the ingredients of which are within our reach in nearly all the surrounding village shops; Irish-stews, suet rolls, to be eaten with golden syrup, and cakes of cornflour, and mutton, and chicken broth for our sick....At the General Branch meetings our leaders sound trumpet calls to the girls of the 16 villages we number to make their homes and surroundings as neat and beautiful as any in the world....As regards cleanliness, the path has been a delicate one to tread. At our meetings we speak boldly to the women of coming house to house visitation.29


membership by 1910, it was doubtful whether Ireland needed any other women's organisation. However, the first United Irishwomen opened a branch in Bree (County Wexford), then rapidly expanded into the other counties of Leinster, as well as into Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Clare, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Tyrone, Antrim, and Cavan. Associated branches in London, Montreal and Chicago raised funds. The primary goals of the U.I. and the W.N.H.A. coincided. But, while the W.N.H.A. represented the Anglo-Irish elite, the U.I. represented aspiring, middle-class Irishwomen. The U.I. defended their links with the co-operative movement, and scorned the despotism of The Countess. They believed that the efficiency of the W.N.H.A. had been irremediably hurt by its politics. Each U.I. branch was independent, leaving the central organisation as an 'organising organisation'.

United Irishwomen claimed that the feminine consciousness which expressed itself in agitation for the vote in England would express itself in Ireland in improving the condition of rural women. Whatever tenuous connections they may have made with the emphasis of the English women's movement, in Ireland they were organised, used and supported by a bastion of male bureaucracy - the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Although local U.I. groups may have refused to allow men on their committees, they welcomed them in the powerful, and non-responsible, role of 'Associates'. Within the co-

30.'Harvest', 'Women's National Health Association', Irish Homestead, 11 June 1910, p.488.
32.'New Life for Irish Women', Irish Homestead, 1 April 1911, pp 245-46.
34.'Pages for the Irish Countrywoman', Irish Homestead, 28 October 1911, p.859. For information on the links between the United Irishwomen and the I.A.O.S., see the correspondence between Horace Plunkett and Lord Monteagle in Monteagle Papers, National Library of Ireland Mss 13414.

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operative movement United Irishwomen carried out the third portion of Plunkett’s maxim: ‘Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living’. They would teach cooking, promote temperance, disseminate co-operative principles, organise charity, ensure that women got proper representation on local boards and obtained legal assistance or redress when required, secure competent sanitary officers, and ensure that the prize granted by the Irish Peasantry Society of London was properly administered. The U.I. appealed to fathers to educate their daughters, informing them that ‘knowledge and ideas are more to a woman than men think’ and reasoning that ‘it is much pleasanter to boil a cabbage when science explains what is going on inside the cooking pot. It is quite enchanting to cook porridge in the belief that it will make bone and muscle for present and future generation’.35

Women’s co-operation would ensure the success of the entire co-operative movement.36 This drawing together of women ‘without regard to class, politics, or religion’ was seen as vital if Ireland’s difficulties were to be solved.37 As most members of the U.I. had fathers and brothers within the I.A.O.S., their naive confidence in their elevated place in the co-operative movement and in the future ‘improved’ Ireland is pardonable.38 The attitude of co-operative men towards the United Irishwomen was ambivalent. During a statement by George Russell that the emerging U.I. would give Irish women ‘an opportunity of justifying their existence’, the Hon. A. Broderick interrupted with, ‘the existence of Russell himself was justification for the existence of women’. After prolonged applause and ‘Hear Hears’, Broderick argued that women’s greatest need was to be trained herself before she could train others: ‘Before a woman could adequately help she must be

38. ‘New Life for Irishwomen’, Irish Homestead, 1 April 1911, pp 245-46.
adequately trained.39

Commentators pictured the typical United Irishwoman triumphantly extending 'her interests beyond the home' in reformatory zeal, but failed to note that this extension was to occur only into areas uncontentiously regarded as woman's proper sphere in the first place.40 Indeed, the U.I. keenly encouraged women whom they saw as 'outside the home' to return. They crusaded against female agricultural labourers.41 At the same time, they wanted to move men out of what they saw as women's sphere.

The Irish Peasantry Society of London provide, we are told, 25 [pounds] to this Union for prizes for the best kept labourer's cottage, and a similar sum to two adjoining Unions. This fund is administered by men, and, with all due deference to the sterner sex, we wonder what they think they know about how the interior of a cottage should be kept. Probably they know less than nothing. Women should protest against men coming in to mismanage what is obviously women's work.42

World War One heralded in the decline of the United Irishwomen. They were not to be revived until the 1930s, under the name 'Irish Countrywomen'. In 1914, the Council for the United Irishwomen dropped plans for a library, dissolved the goat club, closed the milk depots, ceased providing cocoa for school children, and applied themselves wholly to war work.43 Their funds had always been very limited. They received one grant from the I.A.O.S., the services of two temporary instructresses from the C.D.B. and, for the rest, depended on the affiliation fees of its branches - a nominal sum - and the generosity of

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40. 'Notes of the Week. United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 28 May 1910, p.441.

41. 'Among the Societies. United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 28 May 1910, p.452, a paper read at a United Irishwomen's meeting in Ballynadara (Enniscorthy), does not say who read the paper although it was the main paper presented. She wanted these women to be replaced by male labourers, paid out of money women earned through cottage industries and saved by being full-time houseworkers. Also see D. Figgis, Irishmen of Today, AE (George Russell). A Study of a Man and a Nation (Dublin: Maunsel and Co., 1916), p.90.


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In 1915 the grant of 1500 pounds from the Pembroke Trust Fund ran out and the residue of the Home Brightening Committee was depleted. Small financial encouragement in 1914 from the Congested District Board, the Spiddal Gaelic College and the London Branch could not halt the disintegration.

Despite rhetorical avowals of independence, the United Irishwomen worked under the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. The words 'before a woman could adequately help she must be adequately trained' provided the justification sought by the I.A.O.S. to intervene in the domestic sphere.45 At their grandest, the I.A.O.S. planned centralised cooking halls and kitchens, and, using their estimate of one hall for every thirty to forty families, this would have entailed the building of around 2,700 kitchen-halls.46

More economically, they encouraged the teaching of cookery in local co-operative societies, particularly in societies set up to promote home industries. Ironically, they attempted to undercut the monetary basis of female home industries by propagating the notion that home-based industries were justified even without a market. The justification of industrial labour lay in the notion of improved house-care.47

The final non-state institution which was influential in domestic educational schemes was the Church. A number of priests actively attempted to change the dietary habits of the people. The Bishop of Ross, a Tipperary-born man who worked in Ennis (County Clare) and Cork, said in 1904 that the priesthood did not generally think it was their job to educate

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the people in such matters. However, he confessed to exercising his power at
confirmations, preaching the importance of providing children with milk and special
'management'. He modestly claimed to have had 'some success'.\(^{48}\) Harold Begbie had a more
humorous story to tell.

And in the next room the Bishop demands, 'Now how many girls had stirabout for breakfast this
morning?'
Titters and confusion from this elegant class of young ladies almost marriageable.
'What, only one! Shameful! Dreadful! Well not let is see: how many had tea?'
A general unraising of elegant hands and slender arms.
'Appauling', cries the Bishop; 'oh, shocking, shocking!'
Laugh, simpering, and naughty whispering among the fillies....
Then he explains, smiling, that poor people in Ireland lose their teeth and their appetites, become
wretched and feeble, because they destroy their digestion with horrid black stewed tea.
The Reverend Mother whispers to me with a tolerant smile, 'The Bishop is always going on about stewed
tea. It's one of his fads. But he really has made a difference in the habits of the people - he is
always telling them about open windows, milk, cleanliness, and proper cooking. He's a regular
reformer.\(^{49}\)

State Institutions

The Congested Districts Board (C.D.B.) pioneered itinerant classes in 1898 and,
within three years, held ninety courses in housewifery (each lasting four months) within
the 'congested districts' - that is, training 5,000 women.\(^{50}\) The popularity of these

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\(^{48}\) Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Minutes of Evidence Taken
Before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Vol. iii - List of
Witnesses and Minutes of Evidence, p.412 [Cd.2210], H. C. 1904, xxxii, p.557, evidence by
the Bishop of Ross. For other evidence of the priest's influence in changing the diet of
their constituency, see Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth
Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September to 4th
October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.15 [Cd.4007], H. C. 1908, xlii, p.20,
evidence by Rev. John Flatley representing Clare Island and the diocese of Tuam and the
Minutes of the United Irishwomen, 17 July 1913, p.14, held by the Irish Countrywomen's
Association.


\(^{50}\) Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Ninth Report of the Congested Districts Board
for Ireland...For the Year Ending 31st March, 1900, pp 39-40 [Cd.239], H.C. 1900, lxvii,
pp 221-22.
classes is confirmed by long waiting lists and over-crowded classes.\textsuperscript{51} Itinerant classes were imperative if the ‘congested districts’ were to avoid becoming the cloratic cousin of a developing Ireland.\textsuperscript{52} As their only unwaged scheme, the classes in domestic economy were an anomaly and caused tension between the D.A.T.I. and the C.D.B..\textsuperscript{53} However, despite territorial disputes between these organisations, the Congested Districts Board extended their domestic schemes until the entire Board was dissolved in 1923.

In a typical course held in a small Donegal community, Glencolumbkill, fifty out of a total of seventy women attending a course in 1906 received certificates of proficiency after four months. Attendance was high and, it was alleged, local standards of housewifery improved.\textsuperscript{54} The girls were taught basic cookery, including the making of tea and coffee, bread-baking, the cooking of meat and vegetables and invalid cookery. Lessons in laundry included instruction in the washing and drying of different types of materials, starching and stiffening, ironing and folding. One-third of the course was devoted to general housekeeping. The girls were instructed in bed making, table setting and correct cleaning


\textsuperscript{52}Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Final Report, pp 206-7 [Cd.4097], H.C. 1908, xliii, pp 954-55, Patrick O’Donnell writing on ‘Practical Primary Education in Congested Districts’.

\textsuperscript{53}Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Nineteenth Report of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland...for the Period 1st April, 1909, to the 31st March, 1910, pp 36-7 [Cd.5712], H. C. 1911, xiii, pp 432-43.

\textsuperscript{54}Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Second Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Donegal, 8th to 19th October, 1906) and Documents Relating Thereto, p.143 [Cd.3319], H.C. 1907, xxxv, p159, evidence by the Very Rev. Canon Sweeney.

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of everything from the fire grate to the human body. Although the course stressed economical use of everyday utensils, the organisers clearly wanted to raise expectations of housewifery by introducing novel methods, dietary variety and new home-made utensils.

Fired by the obvious popularity and alleged effectiveness of the C.D.B.'s itinerant schemes, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction assigned itinerant domestic instructresses to educate rural housewives in the rest of Ireland. Each year, the D.A.T.I. itinerant scheme in rural domestic economy educated between seven and fifteen thousand women. Although the itinerant schemes were not the only way they educated housewives, in rural areas the impact of the itinerant instructresses was paramount. Itinerant schemes were particularly important in the southern counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Kerry. Once an application for a domestic course had been accepted by the county committee, a local managerial committee would be formed. The success of the course depended largely on the efficient working of this local committee. The itinerant classes were exceptionally popular, sometimes with a waiting list of a year or more. In January 1914, at the same time as a crochet class in Fermoy (County Cork) closed because of small enrolments and attendances, the domestic economy class had to be extended from six to ten weeks because of demand. Bureaucrats in the department's treasury frequently refused to pay the full grant applied for by the technical committees, on the grounds that the number of students exceeded the maximum of twenty per course. The classes also


58. Minutes of the Meeting of the County Cork Joint Technical Instruction Committee, Thursday, 15 January 1914, p.83, Cork Archives Institute U189.

59. Ibid., p.46.
P10.1 A typical D.A.T.I. cottage used for classes in housewifery, 1911 (from D.A.T.I. Journal for Ireland, xii.1 (October 1911), pp 76-7)
proved popular amongst younger girls, technically refused entrance to the classes on the
ground that departmental funds should not be used to educate pre-pubescent girls as they
were the responsibility of the Commissioners of National Education. The schemes were
limited by the paucity of trained instructresses.

The Department affirmed the centrality of these classes to the rural economy.

To this form of instruction the Department attach special importance, as it affects directly the home
life of the people. They aim at making subservient to it the teaching given by the instructors in
poultry-keeping, horticulture, home industries, and manual work. The teaching embraces the subjects
which a thrifty housewife ought to know, including cooking, laundry-work, home-sewing, and, in rural
districts, poultry-keeping, buttermaking, calf-rearing, and some elementary gardening.

With this argument in mind, they introduced compulsory instruction in cookery in all their
agricultural and industrial courses for women. Annually they conducted courses for
teachers in domestic economy, and gave one thousand pounds (on average) each year to
secondary schools throughout Ireland for cooking equipment.

In addition to these schemes, they established rural domestic economy schools,
providing scholarships to facilitate the enrollment of poor students. The Department also
assumed control of schools for domestic economy which were already operating, such as the
Killlamey School of Housewifery. 'Béan-an-Tigue' schools were established in rural
centres, generally in the home of a religious community or an enterprising individual. To
qualify as a rural centre, a farm had to contain at least twenty-five statute acres with
suitable accommodation for farmyard animals, a small dairy and a kitchen garden. Although

60. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, 'Council of
Agriculture, 11th meeting, Friday, 17 May 1907, Report of the Proceedings', discussion by
George Fletcher, p.73, in N.L.I.

61. 'Notes of the Week. Wanted, Technical Instructresses', Irish Homestead, 22 November
1902, pp 923-94.

62. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, Fourth Annual General
Report of the Department, for 1903-4, pp 5-6 [Cd.2509], H.C. 1905, xxi, pp 271-72.

63. 'Munster Dairy and Agricultural School', Irish Farming World, 23 October 1891, p.692
and Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, 'Council of
Agriculture, 11th. Meeting, Friday, 17 May 1907, Report of Proceedings', discussion by
George Fletcher, p.85, in N.L.I.

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the kitchen had to have at least two open hearths, it did not need a range. Students were
to be taught only those dishes which could be made from locally grown products on an open
hearth and using the most basic utensils.64 An advertisement for the Convent of St.Louis
Rural Domestic Economy School at Ramsgrange (County Waterford) illustrates the main
thrust of the schools.

This school is not intended for girls who propose emigrating or devoting themselves to domestic
service. [It is] THE school for FARMER'S DAUGHTERS.65

Finally, after a large public organisation such as the D.A.T.I. had demonstrated the
extent of demand for domestic training, domestic economy came to be formally pushed by the
official education boards. Before official steps were taken in the 1890s, cookery and
laundry had frequently appeared in the curriculums of Irish schools, particularly convent
schools. By the end of the nineteenth century, pressure exerted on the Commissioners of
National Education made it impossible to ignore the issue any longer. Following the lead
of the D.A.T.I., the Board of National Education began by employing itinerant teachers.66
In 1905, the Board of National Education gave permission for National School children to
attend D.A.T.I. classes in domestic economy in lieu of training by their National School
teacher.67 Where large numbers of children attended the scheme at a technical school, the
Board of Education reimbursed the technical school authorities 7s. 6d. per pupil.68

In 1900, cookery and laundry became a recognised, and examined, part of the

64.Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction Papers, assorted papers from 1907,
included with a letter to Professor Campbell from E. Gallagher of the Agricultural
Station, Athenry (County Galway), 19 January 1907, discussing the proposed rural domestic
economy school in the Convent of Mercy, Clifden, P.R.O. AG1 A13317/16.

65.Irish Weekly Independent, 3 December 1910, p.45.

66.The Sixty-Third Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, for the
Year 1896-97, p.34 [C.8600], H.C. 1897, xxvii, p.34.

67. 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National Education at their Meeting
on Tuesday, 29 August 1905', N.L.I., p.392.

68. The Seventy-Seventh Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland,
School Year 1910-1911, p.11 [Cd.5903], H.C. 1911, xxii, p.329.
curriculum, and pressure began to be exerted on all schools with female teachers to introduce these subjects. In 1907 the Commissioners of National Education received Treasury sanction for the payment of a special fee of five shillings a head for girls attending courses in cookery and laundry, ostensibly to pay for equipment and materials. Payment of this fee allowed a girl to attend classes for a maximum of one (laundry) or two (cookery) years. Burgeoning classes necessitated alterations in the syllabus of female teachers' training colleges. In 1908, the committee appointed to examine the provision of cookery and laundry instruction in the teachers' training colleges decided that eighty hours would be devoted to cookery and twenty to laundry - this time to be found by giving less time to English, drawing, elementary science and vocal music.69

Teachers opposed the compulsory teaching of cooking and laundry in the schools. A few argued that such subjects were outside the scope of a primary school and should be left to technical schools, and that the function of the National teacher was 'to educate, to develop the mind and to train the senses' which they did not see as fulfilled by cookery which could be learned later in life.70 The more prevalent, and powerful, argument drew attention to the implications of the scheme for female teachers competing with male teachers. With compulsory teaching of needlework, and plans to add compulsory teaching of cookery for another two hours, women teachers would have to teach an extra five hours a week.71 Since the inspection system meant that teachers' wages depended on favourable

69.'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National Education at their Meeting on Tuesday, 20 October 1908', N.L.I., p.405.
71.'Queens Count Association. Eloquent Address by Miss Mahon and Mr. Mansfield', Irish School Weekly, 27 March 1909, p.165. Also see 'Suffrage Meeting in Birr', Kings' County Chronicle, 1 February 1912, p.4.
reports by Inspectors, such considerations were important. By 1909 teachers in all counties adopted resolutions against the compulsory teaching of domestic economy.72

Their opposition went unheard. There was a rapid increase in the number of schools teaching domestic economy. By 1914 nearly half of all schools (including all-male schools) taught domestic economy. Educating school girls in cookery and laundry met with general approval. Even teachers were unanimous that Irish girls had to be taught housekeeping at some time.73 Parental pressure on school curricula was exerted most forcefully in the case of Irish and domestic economy; and strongest with domestic economy. Cookery was popular amongst the students and there was widespread comment that the classes increased enrolments and attendance of girls at school.74 Hampered in some areas by the lack of the necessary fittings and appliances in single-roomed school houses, cookery lessons were

72. 'Educational News of the Week', Irish School Weekly, 3 April 1909, p.204.

73. Alice Spring Rice (of Foynes, County Limerick), 'Correspondence. Housekeeping Instruction in National Schools', Irish Homestead, 26 March 1898, p.281.

74. For example, see the autobiography of Francis Moffett, I Also Am of Ireland (London: Ariel, 1985), p.50 where she quotes from a letter she wrote between 1912 and 1914 saying how much the female students looked forward to cookery day. See the inspector's reports from the circuits of Waterford and Cork No.1 as well as the specialised reports by Miss Prendergast (on industrial instruction) and Miss Catherine M. Shuley (on cookery and laundry) in Appendix to the Seventy-Sixth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, School Year, 1909-1910. Section I. General Report on the State of National Education by Inspectors and Others, pp 134, 148, 174-5 and 186 [Cd.5491], H.C. 1911, xxi, pp 237, 250, 276-77 and 288; J.P. Dalton's report on the Galway Circuit in Appendix to the Seventy-Fifth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, School Year, 1908-1909. Section I. General Report on the State of National Education by Inspectors and Others, p.78 [Cd.5062], H.C. 1910, xxi p.173; and T.P.O'Connor's report on the Cork No.2 Circuit in Appendix to the Seventy-Eighth Report of the Commissioners on National Education in Ireland, School Year 1911-1912. Section I. General Report on the State of National Education by Inspectors and Others, p.133 [Cd.7061], H.C. 1914, xxvii, p.455.
nevertheless introduced gradually and consistently.75 Convent schools, in particular, eagerly adopted the Board's scheme for teaching domestic economy, even before the compulsory clauses for older students, but it was secular teachers who flocked to the classes run by the D.A.T.I. to train them to teach cookery and laundry.76 A dramatic increase in the number of classes after 1908 is hardly surprising since, from this date, special fees were offered to schools teaching domestic skills. From 1908, therefore, less-endowed schools in the west quickly introduced domestic instruction. Grants paid by the Department to secondary schools teaching domestic subjects increased after 1905, rivalling the amount paid to manual instruction classes from 1908 on, and leading to an increase in domestic classes. Naturally, progress was slow and, even with the help of generous grants, equipment remained primitive in some areas. For instance, in the school

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year 1912-13 the teacher for Kingscourt and Bailieborough (County Cavan), Miss Acheson Smyth, reported that cookery equipment was incomplete in nearly half of the eighty-five schools in her area. By 1910, female teachers were offered an extra incentive to teach cookery and laundry as the board began refusing salary increments to female teachers not teaching domestic economy 'without sufficient reason'.

**Attendance at the Classes**

Geographical variations are central to understanding the economic importance of domestic education schemes. We can use the statistics on domestic economy classes instigated by the national and intermediate school boards and the various government and co-operative societies to estimate the areas expressing a demand for domestic skills. Because, as we shall see, the demand for domestic training was strongest in areas assigning a high value to housework, we can get some idea of the relationship between paid employment or familial farm labour, and housework by examining geographical variations.

Domestic economy classes in national schools were taken up first in the south, particularly in Wexford and Limerick and the central counties on either side of the Munster-Leinster border. Increasingly they spread both east and west of this line, especially into the grassland areas of north Leinster. They were not common in Ulster until 1909. Introduction of the classes was slowest in Donegal, Leitrim and Wicklow.

The most basic point about who attended the classes is that only females attended. Men, in the role of passive spectators, achieved an active status only as chivalrous funders and gallant coaxers. The other basic point is that once a woman had reached a particularly high rung in the socio-economic ladder, she would no longer be expected to

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78. This debate is found throughout the 'Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of National Education', such as at their meeting on the 18 March 1909, p.171, National Library of Ireland.
improve her domestic skills in any public fashion. Mrs. Starkie, wife of the Commissioner for National Education and author of at least one article on domestic instruction, was not expected to learn any domestic art herself. Her daughter commented:

My mother thought it fitting as the wife of my father to take an interest in the domestic training side of the education, and she, who could not sew herself, used to examine carefully specimens of needlework; she, who in those days had no knowledge of cooking, used to question the girls closely on the dishes they were cooking and on the methods of preparation.79

To what class of women did promises of economic betterment by housework appeal? There were accusations that conversion to new notions of housewifery were occurring only within the middling ranks of the rural population.80 Precise background detail exists for girls attending itinerant schemes run by the D.A.T.I. The Department’s itinerant (non-agricultural) schemes for women were largely schemes of domestic economy, cookery, laundry and housekeeping. Between 1902 and 1919 departmental statistics show the occupations of women attending the courses. From 1903 the statistics are comparable. By contrasting the data for 1903 and 1911 with the occupations of women aged fifteen to twenty-four in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, we can get some idea of the occupational composition of the women. Table 10.1 must be interpreted cautiously. The extent to which the courses were attended by farming women is of limited usefulness since the census statistics exclude the wives or daughters of farmers. Similarly, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion from the under-representation of domestic servants in the schemes. The schemes tended to be held in remote rural areas with a smaller proportion of domestic servants than the all-Ireland proportion. Still it is interesting to note the much lower proportion of domestic servants in the domestic schemes. Shopkeepers, saleswomen and teachers were over-represented in

79. Enid Starkie, A Lady’s Child (London: Faber and Faber, 1941).
80. See the comments by Mr H. de F. Montgomery regarding the classes in County Tyrone, in Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, ‘The Agricultural Board, Minutes of Proceedings, Confidential, 39th. Meeting’, April 23, 1907, p.152, in N.L.I.
Occupations of Women Attending D.A.T.I. Itinerant (Non-Agricultural) Course

1. Percentage of all women attending the course in 1903 and 1911
2. Percentage aged fifteen to twenty-four in the census of 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Census 1901</th>
<th>Scheme 1903</th>
<th>Census 1911</th>
<th>Scheme 1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Service</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmakers, Milliner</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Industry</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Factory Work</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lace, Crochet etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers, Saleswomen</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks, Cahiers, Civil Servants</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Occupation</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>464694</td>
<td>392996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schemes, compared with an under-representation of textile workers. As the period progressed, the proportion of saleswomen, shopkeepers, dressmakers and milliners decreased while the numbers given no occupation, and teachers, increased. The percentage of civil servants and cashiers remained very low, but slowly increased. Women in the lace, crochet and embroidery trades increased in the early years of the century, only to decline again before 1919. The percentage of women attending the classes from farming occupations peaked during 1909 (at forty-nine per cent) and always remained over one-quarter. Those attending from school or college reached seventeen per cent in 1905 but, with the deterioration of relations between the Department and the Boards of Education, they declined steadily. The obligation of teachers to attend classes held in school premises after hours, as well as an obligation to have some knowledge of the subjects on the curriculum, may account for the high number of teachers attending the schemes. That one-quarter to one-third of all female teachers retired from the profession each year to marry suggests that some of these teachers may also have used the classes as preparation for marriage and subsequent retirement. It seems, then, that much of the demand for domestic economy classes came from daughters of the farming and shop-keeping classes.
If we look at the students attending other courses, we see the impact of regional influences. For example, the Waringstown Girls School was located in the Rural Lurgan No.2 Country District (County Down), an area which, although employing fewer domestic servants than the province as a whole, had a higher than average level of female employment, particularly in linen and flax manufacture (sixteen per cent of all female employment over the age of twenty in the area). It was also an area of rapidly increasing female unemployment. In the Rural County District of Lurgan No.2, the number of females employed in the flax and linen industries halved between 1891 and 1911. Total female unemployment in this district had increased by eleven per cent. Table 10.2 (at the end of the chapter) sets out various social characteristics of women attending the class in 1905. Most women attending this evening class were employed in the flax and linen industry. All the students were aged between fifteen and twenty-three years and, given the average age of marriage, were probably all unmarried. The level of education was generally low.

The Waringtown evening class can be contrasted with statistics from the D.A.T.I.'s schools of rural domestic economy in Westport, Clifden, Claremorris, Swinford and Portumna. A close study of successful applicants in 1916 yields the results in Table 10.3

81. Taken from the reports of the Commissioners of National Education, 1879-1916, in N.L.I.

82. In Ulster in 1901, five per cent of the total female population and nineteen per cent of the total occupied female population were domestic servants. The corresponding figures in the Lurgan No.2 County District for women over the age of twenty were two and three per cent.

83. It is difficult to know whether the occupations stated were actual or desired occupations. Looking at the ages of the women, those without occupations and those who claimed that they worked in the house or were housekeepers were the youngest women. Veiners, wareroom girls, stitchers, weavers and teachers were older. This suggests that actual employment was being stated.
(at the end of the chapter). In these schools of rural domestic economy, women generally came from farming households or from upwardly mobile households combining retail with farming. Most gave their occupation as housework and farming. A few were domestic servants. These women also tended to be younger than the girls attending the evening classes in domestic economy.

Impact of the Classes

As with most educational schemes, it is easy to exaggerate their impact. A story was told of a poor woman sitting on the steps of a hall in a provincial town where a W.N.H.A. housewifery lecture was being delivered.

Another women approached her, who asked, "And what are they talking about in there?" "Sure" replied the former, "they're tellin' us to be clane, and ain't we are clane as we can be?"84

Contemporary analyses of the effect of schemes are generally partisan. In the case of the domestic economy classes, much of the criticism of the courses arose out of the shortage of capital. Criticism by Alice Spring Rice was aimed at improving the funding of the schemes, not eliminating them.85 Educationalists frequently argued that the classes were inefficient because they were compulsory only for females in the higher standards of schools. This was an argument for extension, not abolition.86 Keeping the schemes

84. Sir Robert Matheson (Registrar-General for Ireland), A Review of the Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign in Ireland. Paper Read Before the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Held in Dublin, September, 1908 (Dublin: Alex. Thom and Co., 1908), p.8.

85. Alice Spring Rice (of Foynes, County Limerick), 'Correspondence. Housekeeping Instruction in National Schools', Irish Homestead, 26 March 1898, p.281. For a similar argument, see Mary Power Lalor, 'Housekeeping Instruction in Ireland', Irish Homestead, 7 May 1898, p.396.

practical was a constant concern. Others complained that courses were too short, so that the girls scarcely found time to learn before the teacher moved on. Trenchant criticism was received about the 'British' content of some of the recipes - most insidiously represented in recipes calling for the use of lard.

At the other extreme, some reformers imagined stupendous changes following intinerant classes.

If you re-visit some village in the wilds of Donegal or Connemara, that you knew a few years ago, you would probably notice changes. Houses and cabins are cleaner and better kept, windows are made to open, the manure heap is less evident to eyes and nose, the porridge-pot disputes the monopoly of the hob with the little black 'taypot', and the miller has a tale to tell of busier meal mills. If you comment on these changes, you will probably learn that the health caravan has passed that way, and the doctor, 'that had the Irish', and the lady that had the wonderful way with the cooking, had told of what came of keeping out the fresh air and letting in the pig and poultry, of having the manure heap by the front door, and giving the children tea and white bread instead of oatmeal and milk.

We are more likely to accept less enthusiastic analyses of the schemes. Educational critics were generally positive about the effect of the classes on their rural communities. Improvement could be judged by simple signs, such as open windows. Clergymen praised the effect of the domestic schemes on the housewifery of women in their districts. For example, the Reverend Canon McFadden applauded the cookery classes run by

87. Joseph Kelly (schoolmaster in Cashel), *Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September to 4th October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto*, pp 64-5 (Cd.4007), H.C. 1908, xlii, pp 162-63.


the Congested Districts Board,

We priests have a habit of visiting our parishes twice a year to hold "stations". We take breakfast in these houses and I notice the change. They can give you potatoes whole, potatoes mashed, potatoes in chips, and they can give you boiled eggs, and scrambled eggs - it is simply marvellous. I say the result is simply marvellous, and with the desire to put the priest in good humour, they generally get one of those instructed girls to look after the breakfast.93

Unpaid Housework and Emigration

The relevance of these classes in domestic economy to the discussion of female labour is that, in theory and in practice, they aimed at providing Irish women with a rationale for remaining in Ireland to provide (without payment) the 'improved' goods and services to support a 'developing' rural economy. One of the key elements in these attempts to enhance the standard of housewifery was ensuring that the labour remained unpaid. Chapter Four discussed the declining demand for domestic servants. Most of the women attending the classes in domestic economy did not intend becoming domestic servants. Women attending these courses tended to hail from classes repudiating domestic service as a respectable occupation. A cooking instructress in 1909 said that out of the hundreds of girls she had taught, only two had shown interest in becoming cooks.94 Furthermore, the demand for schools of domestic science specialising explicitly in training domestic servants was far less than the demand for the itinerant or housewifery courses. A number of schools were set up specifically for domestic servants. Lady Castlerosse established one in Killamey...

93. Very Reverend Canon McFadden, Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Second Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Donegal, 8th to 19th October, 1906), and Documents Related Thereto, p.92 [Cd.3319], H.C. 1907, xxxv, p.108. For similar reports by local clergy, see the letter from a clergyman in County Leitrim in Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Eleventh Report of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland...For the Year Ending 31st March, 1902, p.39 [Cd.1192], H.C. 1902, lxxxiii, p.109; Rev. John Doherty, Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Second Report. Minutes of Evidence (Taken in County Donegal, 8th to 19th October, 1906) and Documents Relating Thereto, pp 48-9 [Cd.3319], H.C. 1907, xxxv, pp 64-5; and Rev. Michael McHugh, parish priest at Carna, Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. Appendix to the Tenth Report, Minutes of Evidence (Taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, 18th September to 4th October, 1907), and Documents Relating Thereto, p.51 [Cd.4007], H.C. 1908, xlii, p.149.

in 1900. Then, there was the Dublin School of Cookery, Laundromaking and Dressmaking in Kildare Street (renamed the Irish Training School of Domestic Economy); the Dublin School of Domestic Training in Charlemont Street; the Belfast School of Domestic Training in Clanchatten House; and the Carrigart Housekeeping School, all of which catered for women requiring training in paid domestic service. Although in the early years, domestic economy classes were introduced in those wealthier counties with a high proportion of women in paid domestic occupations, by 1911 there was no relationship between the two variables. For those girls able to secure employment in Ireland as domestic servants after completing a course in cookery or laundry, there was an increasing likelihood that they would leave their employment on marriage and assume the responsibilities of enlightened housewifery within their own household. For women settling in Ireland, there were good reasons to prolong their schooling, or to attend classes out of school hours, so that they would get adequate training in housewifery. Attendance at the courses was an attempt to maintain or improve their own, or their family's, standard of living in an economy offering them fewer alternative jobs. They hoped to improve their status as unpaid housewives by training.


96. The proportions of women involved in paid domestic occupations regressed on the proportion of women attending domestic economy classes, by the 32 counties; in 1901 the correlation is +0.6248 (t-statistic 10.42) and in 1911 it is -0.0015 (t-statistic 1.87).

From the start, the organisers of the schemes stressed that they were not training women to become domestic servants. The itinerant instructresses taught housekeeping as it would be experienced by women in their own homes, rather than in the homes of women keeping servants. They were more likely to teach the girls to cook on turf fires than on stoves. Explicitly, the policy was to 'train housewives, and not domestic servants, nor future teachers of domestic economy.'

Of all the schemes, the organisers of the Congested Districts schemes were the least reluctant about sending women into domestic service. They frequently remarked that the certificates of proficiency given to women completing their course in domestic economy might enable the women to get higher wages as servants. However, with declining opportunities in paid domestic service and slowing emigration, the more likely beneficiary of the classes were the girls remaining in their own homes. The course outlines and suggestions given each week by Nora Nectar and (later) M. E. Graham in the Irish School Weekly were basic, involving a great proportion of dusting, cleaning and scrubbing. The textbook, Cookery for School Girls. Ten Elementary Lessons starts with the question 'Why we cook our foods' and concludes with 'The best way to boil an egg'. Similarly the utensils required for the classes were minimal. Utensils consisted of merely 1 frying pan,


99. Minutes of the United Irishwomen, re. a letter to the D.A.T.I., 11 December 1913, p.73, held by the Irish Countrywomen’s Association.


101. Congested Districts Board for Ireland. Twenty-First Report of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland...For the Period 1st April, 1912, to the 31st March, 1913, With References to Subsequent Transactions, and with Accounts for the Year Ended the 31st March, 1913, pp 30-1 [Cd.7312], H. C. 1914, xvi, pp 1126-27.

102. See the Irish School Weekly from 14 November 1908.

103. May Ross MacDonald, Cookery for School Girls. Ten Elementary Lessons (Dublin: Blakie and Son, c.1900), price 3d.
3 saucepans, 2 pot-ovens, 1 kettle, and 2 iron tripods. Total cost for these utensils was one pound and five shillings. In addition to these necessities, a school might require 2 pudding basins, 2 rolling pins, 1 bread tin, 1 cake tin, knives, forks and spoons, 1 tea pot and 1 coffee pot, 3 jugs, 2 bowls, 2 pie dishes, 2 meat dishes, plates, 1 egg beater, 4 scubbing brushes, 1 knifeboard, and fluid measures, at cost of one pound and ten shillings.104

Furthermore, it is difficult to see that these classes were simply used by the girls as a way of attaining skills necessary for emigration. David Fitzpatrick’s article on the connections between emigration and education can be easily defended in general terms.105 There is little doubt that increased schooling helped make emigration a more feasible option, and also that many young Irish people were encouraged to improve their education for the purpose of emigrating. However, there is some evidence to suggest that girls who attended classes in domestic economy may have been more likely to settle in Ireland. It was in the economic interest of women not emigrating to stay longer at school just to attend domestic classes.106 Certainly, promoters of domestic economy believed that educating girls to be good housewives would stop, or at least, reduce emigration.107 For instance, the cessation of female emigration from Dromore was attributed to the domestic economy classes.108 Girls planning to emigrate were more likely to take industrial courses than cooking. Classes in domestic industries such as lace-making and crochet

104. 'The Month’s Work', Irish School Monthly, 1.2 (October 1900), pp 57-8.
108. 'Irish Clergy and Irish Civilisation', Irish Homestead, 7 October 1905, p.733.
raised the earning potential of women intending to emigrate in search of respectable paid employment. Industrial classes brought in cash required by potential emigrants. In a letter to Professor Campbell in 1907, E. Gallagher argued that, because girls in Swinford and Carna wanted to emigrate, they were unlikely to attend courses in domestic economy which held out little money earning potential in desirable occupations. Potential emigrants demanded industrial courses.\textsuperscript{109} There are examples given of entire lace classes emigrating but no examples of emigration of entire housewifery classes.\textsuperscript{110} The market for domestic servants in the United States was rapidly declining. Particularly after 1910, female emigrants were more likely to be emigrating to work in commercial and industrial establishments.\textsuperscript{111} Furthermore, from the turn of the century, black women in America took over domestic service jobs from the previously dominant European and Irish groups.\textsuperscript{112}

Statistically, the connection between emigration and domestic education is tenuous. In part, the relationship depends on how the regional distribution of emigration is calculated. By dividing the number of women in the county in 1901 (or 1911) by the number of women emigrating from the county, according to the Registrar-General's statistics, in the decade 1891-1901 (or 1901-1911), some indication of county differentials of emigration can be calculated. In 1901, correlating emigration between 1891 and 1901, with the percentage of all schools with domestic economy classes, the higher the number of classes, the lower the rate of emigration, suggesting that counties with a low emigration were the first to introduce domestic economy classes. The correlation is extremely weak. The relationship is stronger in the other direction by 1911 where the greater number of

\textsuperscript{109}Concerned with the proposed rural domestic economy school in Swinford and Carna, D.A.T.I. Papers in P.R.O. AG1 A13317/16.

\textsuperscript{110}For example, the Ballyjamesduff Convent National School lace class emigrated: Appendix to the Fifty-Ninth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the Year 1892, p.166 [C.-7124-i], H.C. 1893-94, xxvii, p.496


\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., pp 40-45.
classes, the higher the rate of female emigration.\textsuperscript{113} If we use statistics on cohort depletion for both sexes as our measurement, the effect of emigration is even more slight, and negative, for the years 1901 and 1911.\textsuperscript{114} As the classes were more established by this time, this could be interpreted to mean that the classes encouraged emigration or that classes were introduced in areas with high emigration to stem the tide. Weight is lent to the second interpretation by looking at the change in emigration. Using David Fitzpatrick's county statistics on the emigration of women aged twenty to twenty-five years, we can work out the change in young female emigration between the years 1876 and 1895, and 1896 and 1914.\textsuperscript{115} These statistics show very clearly that rapidly declining emigration was prevalent in areas with domestic economy classes whereas rapidly increasing emigration occurred in the counties with the lowest concentration of domestic economy classes. Looking at the top quartile of domestic economy classes, in six of these counties there was an extremely rapid increase in emigration of women between the ages of twenty and twenty-five years in 1876-1895 (before the classes), reversing after the introduction of the domestic classes in 1896-1914. This contrasts with the eight counties with the lowest proportion of domestic economy classes. These counties experienced an acceleration of emigration between 1876-1895 and 1896-1914, in all cases. In two of these counties (Wicklow and Down) the decline in emigration experienced in the earlier period was reversed between 1896-1914 (see Table 10.4 at the end of the paper).

Conclusion

Domestic classes proved popular because they attempted to find a place within Irish society for girls and women who decided to remain in a country which offered them a narrowing range of economic activities. In communities experiencing a contraction of

\textsuperscript{113} The correlation in 1901 is -0.18 (t-statistics 4.35) and in 1911 is +0.3513 (24.52).

\textsuperscript{114} The correlation in 1901 is -0.3893 (4.42) and -0.0520 (11.90) in 1911.

\textsuperscript{115} Personal communication of unpublished data by Dr. David Fitzpatrick.
employment in textiles or in domestic service, women chose to maximise their possible economic contribution by funnelling their energies into familial domestic work. Education in housewifery was one expression of this maximisation process. An auxiliary role of the classes was changing tastes and expectations. In the words of Miss Reynolds, an instructress for the United Irishwomen, her job was to 'lay before them that we in Ireland are very backward indeed'. Given the economic importance of housewifery, the dynamics of Irish development could be threatened should the problems of the 'farm wife' prove a disincentive to new entrants. Standards of housework could be raised by education and it was precisely these 'standards' which were essential to stimulate and sustain economic growth.

116. 'United Irishwomen', Irish Homestead, 25 November 1911, p.950, speech by Miss Reynolds at the annual general meeting of the United Irishwomen.
### Occupation, Age and Level of Schooling Attained by Women Attending the Warington's Girls National School's Evening Class In Domestic Economy, 1905

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>veiner</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stitcher, machinist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weaver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>housekeeper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maid servant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ironer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>'works in house'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.2</td>
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<td>book keeper</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
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<td>vi</td>
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### Occupation of Student and Father, Age and Level of Schooling Attained by Women Attending Some Rural Domestic Economy Schools in 1916

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<tr>
<th>Occupation of Fathers</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>farmers</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>66.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopkeeper/farmer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmer/police pensioner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopkeeper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>herd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmer/teacher</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenant farmer</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmer/JP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmer/carpenter</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
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<td>contractor</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>cardriver</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shunter</td>
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<tr>
<td>police pensioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>commercial traveller</td>
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<td>draper</td>
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<tr>
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6 deceased (including 4 men with no occupation when died, 1 mason and 1 farmer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade they left school</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1.69</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.32</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Jnr</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>sewing</td>
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323
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</table>
## Emigration and Domestic Economy Classes

**Rates of Emigration of People Aged 20-25 (David Fitzpatrick’s Raw Data)**

**And Quartile Distribution of Classes in 1914**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in emigration</th>
<th>1876-1895</th>
<th>1896-1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Top Quartile (eight counties with largest proportion of schools teaching domestic economy, in order):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1876-1895</th>
<th>1896-1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>-116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>-328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>-192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>-328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>-310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bottom Quartile (eight counties with lowest proportion of schools teaching domestic economy, in order):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1876-1895</th>
<th>1896-1914</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armagh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow</td>
<td>-54</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louth</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>-52</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Chapter 11: The Human Significance of Development

Appendix One: Census Statistics
Appendix Two: Census Statistics: The Sample of District Electoral Divisions
Appendix Three: Agricultural Production
Appendix Four: Economic Value of Housework

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Chapter 11

The Human Significance of Development

Girl (aged 8): "If I am married shall I have to marry a man like papa?"
Mother: "Yes, I suppose so, my child."
Little Girl: "And if I don’t marry, shall I be an old maid like Aunt Julia?"
Mother: "Yes."
Little Girl: "Well, it's very hard on women."¹

Introduction

On one level, this thesis deals with questions customarily asked by labour historians about employment, factors leading to changes in female work, and the effects of those changes on women. In Ireland between 1890 and 1914, the position of women within the labour market deteriorated. Married women were increasingly dependent on the husband’s wage. Economic opportunities for unmarried women collapsed. Even forms of paid employment for women shifted into the home. Thus, reforming organisations invested in home industries rather than factory production. Women took in boarders.² Rural women entered the fields only during times of peak agricultural demand. Unpaid domestic production became more important.

On another level, the thesis examines current concerns about 'development' and the

¹ Irish Homestead, 9 July 1898, p.584.
² For a discussion on the role of boarders in America, see Joan M. Jensen, 'Cloth, Butter and Boarders: Women’s Household Production for the Market', Review of Radical Political Economics, 12.2 (Summer 1980), pp 14-24. In 1901 two per cent of households in the eight District Electoral Divisions contained boarders compared with four per cent in 1911. In 1901, n=987 and in 1911 n=924 households.
impact of public and private investment in agricultural and social reform. The effects of improvements in living standards differed for men and women. The pattern of growth and development did improve female well-being: women were better fed, housed, and educated in 1911 than in 1891. However, women gained a smaller share of the gratifications of affluence. Economic growth exacerbated inequality within the household, making women worse off in relation to men than they had been in 1891. Economic progress brought new aspirations. The desire for domestic labour intensified. At the same time, rising living standards provided the means of fulfilling those aspirations in a way which would benefit rather than penalise the household, that is, in a way which strengthened existing power structures within the home as well as maintaining power between a particular household and its neighbours. Inevitably, the dynamic relationship between housework and rising living standards was complex. Improving living standards stimulated housewifery which, in turn, raised living standards. Similarly, the collapse of certain employment sectors conventionally reserved for women stimulated a shift of female labour into the home which, in turn, encouraged the substitution of men for women in the employment market. The co-incidence of sectoral shifts in the employment market, investment in the rural economy, and the growth of a labour and capital intensive household sector was crucial.

The costs of the movement into full-time unpaid domestic work were substantial. The following section looks at the negative effects in three parts: general changes in living


standards, female exclusion from paid employment, and increasing female focus on housework.

The Costs (To Women) of Unpaid Domestic Labour

'Development'

Although improved living standards 'across the board' could only have improved female well-being, the fact that the number of female suicides between 1891 and 1911 increased at twice the rate of male suicides is ominous.5 The problem set out in the introductory chapter remains: how to identify the recipients of the benefits of economic growth.

'Power' within the household is difficult to quantify, but an argument could be mounted for the view that the person called the 'head of household' in households which did not contain both a husband and a wife carried a certain status within the community (although not necessarily within any particular household). Women were less likely to be found as 'heads' of households. In the eight District Electoral Divisions, one-quarter of households in 1901 were headed by a woman. This dropped to just over one-fifth in ten years. Declining marriage opportunities meant that single men and women were slightly more likely to become 'heads' in 1901 than in 1911, but representation of married and widowed women in the ranks of 'heads of households' rapidly declined. In 1901 ten per cent of female 'heads' were married compared with six per cent in 1911. The proportions of widowed women dropped from seventy-eight to seventy-six per cent.6

We would expect discrimination against women to increase as the household became wealthier. The more wealthy a household, the more importance would be placed on the need for a son to keep the name on the farm. In poorer families, women are more likely to be employed and marriage costs are lower. With increased standards of living came surpluses.


6. 984 households were examined in 1901 and 924 households were examined in 1911.
In the discussions on housework (Chapter Nine), general improvements in diet were noted. The most common types of inequality are those relating to food. Children, the aged and women received less food than men of 'working' ages. When there was meat it was generally for the 'breadwinner' of the family. Similarly, housing did not improve for female 'heads of households' as rapidly as it did for male 'heads'. The proportions of women in female-only households living in first or second class housing improved between 1901 and 1911, but the improvement was not as great as that experienced by men living in men-only households. Female households became increasingly prone to poverty.

11.1

**Housing 'Class' of Households Composed Solely of Men or Women**

Eight District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1901 Men (n=58)</th>
<th>1901 Women (n=78)</th>
<th>1911 Men (n=74)</th>
<th>1911 Women (n=51)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1 and 2</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3 and 4</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.2

**Valuation of Households Composed Solely of Men and Solely of Women**

Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation</th>
<th>1901 Men (n=32)</th>
<th>1901 Women (n=40)</th>
<th>1911 Men (n=37)</th>
<th>1911 Women (n=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-30</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 30</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, although in ten years women living in households composed entirely of women were increasingly residing on wealthier holdings, their position vis-a-vis men living in households composed entirely of men deteriorated. A similar story is told if we look at another indicator of wealth and poverty: the number of elderly people in the household.

Female-only households always contained more elderly people. While one-third of men-only households contained at least one elderly person in both 1901 and 1911, the proportion of female-only households containing at least one elderly person increased from thirty-six per cent in 1901 to over half in 1911.8

Aged people were vulnerable, particularly elderly women. In 1901 sixty-eight per cent of women in the Roscrea workhouse were over the age of sixty. Nearly eighty per cent of women in the Glenties workhouses were elderly. Elderly women were particularly vulnerable if they had remained unmarried. In an analysis of two Donegal workhouses in 1911, between seventy-one and seventy-seven per cent of the women had never been married. Most of these women claimed to have been domestic servants.9 Against this argument must be set the greater value of elderly women in the house, compared with elderly men. Elderly women remained productive by performing domestic tasks from which elderly men were increasingly excluded. An important (unanswerable) question is, in terms of status, what is important: production or leisure? Is status more likely to be attained by an old patriarch smoking by the fire and creating work for other members of the household or by an elderly woman busily minding children and repairing stockings?

In Ireland, women's choice was not simply between working or marrying.10 Rather, Irish women chose between employment; marriage and dependency in the husband's household; and non-marriage and dependence within the parental household. The latter option was becoming more common in Ireland because of a low marriage rate and scarce opportunities to gain independent access to the chief resource - land.

8.In 1901 there were sixty-one men-only households and eighty-one female-only households. In 1911 there were seventy-seven men-only households and sixty-one female-only households.

9. Workhouses of Glenties and Stranorlar in 1911 and Roscrea workhouse in 1901. From census manuscripts Donegal 149 and 56 and Tipperary 120, in N.L.I.

Employment

One of the main ways the female position within the community deteriorated was through the narrowing of their employment opportunities and the correlative reduction of female access to cash resources. The direct impact of agricultural growth on women depended on their access to income-earning opportunities. This is not to ignore the indirect impact of agricultural growth which may improve the household’s economic position. In the dairying industry, capital was transferred to the male head of household. In the chapters on dairying and poultry-rearing, women expressed concern with the way control over the household’s income affected household consumption. Many women ceased receiving the money from the sale of butter or eggs: ’her lord taking this regularly to the nearest bank to deposit’. Thus, through the dissemination of institutions which focussed on the needs of male ’heads’, women increasingly lost their right to independent control of the products of their own labour. For female members of small farming families and for female labourers, the seasonality of their work increased, limiting their independent access to an income to particular times of the year. Lack of access to land by women was exacerbated by the land ’reform’ acts. Many of the reformists’ activities excluded women. Houses for agricultural labourers were generally given to male heads of households. Local councils even debated whether women could really be classed as ’labourers’. Houses were disproportionately given to families containing young male labourers, on the grounds that if men were persuaded to remain in Ireland, young women would ’naturally’ remain behind also, attracted by increasing marriage opportunities. Current owners of the relatively scarce factor of production - land - benefitted from the changes to a much greater extent than other groups.

By not earning cash themselves, women became more dependent on the generosity, or

11. United Irishman, 12 July 1902, p.5.

'love', of the male earner.

Before that I went out to day [sic], my wife she said says she, Be very careful of your pay, and bring it home to me, You know you're wanting a Sunday hat and the children wanting shoes, So bring me home yez overtime and not go on the booze. Says I, my darling that I will, I'll bring yez ivery cent, For your the girl knows the way that money should be spent But I'm absent minded and the warning soon forgot, I got a drop, and now of course I mean to spend the lot.13

The increased female dependency occasioned by the movement of women out of the waged market should not be exaggerated. Wages may increase female independence, widen their number of choices and provide access to status outside the family. The extent to which this could actually occur is doubtful, however, as female employment options in rural areas were customarily based on the social standing of the male 'head' and opportunities to move beyond this depended more on geographical mobility than on the labour market.

**Housework**

The most startling change was the movement of women into full-time housework. Although statements such as 'For the labourer, who is abroad from early morning to nightfall, a wife is a necessity' were common, male dependence on female domestic labour did not require any transferal of power.14 Indeed, male dependency itself drew some of its acceptability from the increased status it gave to men.15 There is no strict relationship between the economic value of labour performed by an individual and the social status bestowed on that individual, especially when the labour is unwaged. Is it not rather the fashion to consider household duties as beneath the notice of the (so-called)...

13. 'Working Overtime', music sheets, no date., National Library Australia.
15.In the same way that the dependency of a female householder on the services of a domestic servant increases the status of the female householder.
educated woman?\textsuperscript{16}

The stress on housewifery carried certain threats with it. Domestic violence centred increasingly on accusations of poor housewifery. Assaults were admitted by husbands ('he said it [aggravated assault on his mother] was too little for her') but excused because the woman was not performing her duties adequately ('as she had no supper ready for him').\textsuperscript{17} "Grania" of the Irish Homestead was not at all surprised that men 'drink and beat their wives' and she wished men would 'beat them a great deal more, until they served proper meals, and kept the children in order.'\textsuperscript{18} Lawyers testified that only if a woman was a good cook and housekeeper could she be confident that her husband would not abandon her.\textsuperscript{19} The basis of domestic bliss was good housekeeping and bad housekeeping was criminal.\textsuperscript{20}

The truth is, and few women blink it now, women have made a mess of their business, the home....After thousands of years' apprenticeship to their trade they are as ignorant of it as the poor woman who when remonstrated with on her improper feeding of her infant said, "You needn't teach me how to bring up children, I buried nine of them." Women have murdered their homes, their health, their children and their husbands for long enough, and have been as thoroughly satisfied with themselves as our friend who had only nine victims. But they are awakening to a conviction of their criminality...\textsuperscript{21}

Child mortality was explicitly made personal. Improved housewifery brought new sense of guilt and responsibility.

As we have noted already, the fact that women were more productive within the


\textsuperscript{17}Quoted from the Evening Mail, probably 1901, by Michael J. F. McCarthy, Priests and People in Ireland (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co., 1903), p.300.


\textsuperscript{19}'Homely Wrinkles', Ark, March 1913, p.4.

\textsuperscript{20}T. B. Cronin, 'Systems of Primary and Secondary Education Relative to Industrialisation', United Irishman, 18 November 1905, p.7.

\textsuperscript{21}'Notes of the Week. Feeling Their Way', Irish Homestead, 4 July 1914, p.537.
household did not necessarily increase their power within that household. Their productive work was invisible. The problem with the production of 'use-values' (such as the production of children) is that there is a long time-lag before what is produced can be converted into 'exchange values' (when the labour-power is sold). We would expect a lowering of female status as male-female wage differentials increased, particularly when this is accompanied by the movement of female productive labour into the 'invisible' sphere. The model daughter in Nora Tynan O'Mahony's short story, 'The Unwelcome Guest' experiences the invisibility of housework. Lillian had spent days preparing a room for her godfather. Lilian's mother (an over-worked widow with many children) commented

'As for Lilian, poor girl,' she went on, 'though I long to see her happy, I'm sure I don't know how on earth I should manage without her. She is so good, so helpful and unselfish in the house. I wish you saw her pure and perfect joy she got out of doing this little room for you - it was her won. She papered the walls and painted the woodwork herself, and washed and ironed the curtains and draperies all with her own hands, and no-one to help her...

And for the first time John Dennison looked about him, and realised to the full all the daintiness and beauty and sweetness and freshness that had been so thoughtfully contrived for him.

The ideal houseworker would work all day, and no-one could notice.

Consumption is not problem-free. John Kenneth Galbraith noted that rising standards of consumption are only attractive if the consumers do not have to labour preparing the goods for final consumption. For instance, an elaborately prepared meal is only desirable if the eater is not required to spend hours preparing the food and cleaning up afterwards. Steffan Linder and Thorstein Veblen made the same point, but ignored the fact that the maintenance of consumption goods is often done not by the consumer but by another person - the houseworker.

Power is measured by the amount of control a particular group has over crucial


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societal resources. We have already noted that one of these resources is land. The other is children. Housework within marriage involved child-bearing and the childless wife could be stigmatised by the community. In Ireland women's reproductive capacities were accorded greater, and increasing status, but fewer women were allowed access to the only legitimate means to attain this goal - marriage. In 1891 seventeen per cent of women who remained in Ireland between forty-five and fifty-five years were single, compared with one-quarter by 1911. Economists and historians often assume that by becoming a houseworker a woman increases control over her labour.

Men had bosses; married women bossed themselves, deciding what needed to be done according to the task and not the clock, controlling their own work process.

However, housekeepers are not in control of their work in the home. They work within their own institution (and are highly controlled by the institutional structures governing other members of the household) within which they are subordinated.

Women's role as the mediator between the 'head' and the 'children' is not always easy. On the one side the wife has to provide the communication link with the father. On the other side, her power to achieve her goals against her children lies with him. Mrs Hogan had to explain to her husband that their son had decided not to return to school:

How to so arrange matters with her husband that Jack's surrender may be prevented is now the poor woman's critical perplexity. Even with his own family Tom Hogan is very distant. His word is law; his command never disobeyed or questioned. Tomorrow evening he is expected home, and being naturally supposed after his retreat to be in the state of grace, and consequently in good humour, he will, Mrs Hogan hopes, be comparatively easily managed.

Not only were women supposed to create ideal housewives out of themselves, they were also responsible for 'making an ideal husband' - and the recipe was difficult, ranging

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from 'feed him well' to being always entertaining and making 'him feel that your interest centres chiefly in him'.

Mothers have equalled onerous obligations: 'Don't forget to live so that your memory will be the tenderest and holiest upon earth to your children'.

The tendency for women to receive less leisure than men was accentuated when the primary labour was housework. The theme is stressed in the papers of the period:

In a home there is no limit to the possibilities for occupation, and when leisure time does come it brings with it the opportunity for assisting those less fortunate.

A man often works much harder than a woman whilst at work, but through all his labour runs the consciousness that it has a finish. The busy wife and mother has no such consciousness to sustain her in her manifold duties and worries...and when utterly too tired and worn out to do another hands turn, [she] turns to the family mending basket as a source of recreation.

The two facts noticeable in connection with womenkind in rural districts are: Their recreation is non-existent and their work is never done. That mythical gentleman who was perpetually employed in rolling a stone into a place where it would not stay is the prototype of the modern country girl; at least he has no counterpart nearly so accurate in our time - the only thing differentiating the daily routine of brushing, sweeping, cooking and cleaning from the eternal stone-rolling process being the zest for usefulness.

The housewife does not know any real sabbatical rest - after the half-hour mass, her duties resume. Housework is a continual process - no sooner is the house cleaned that it is dirty.

If 'choice' is an any way a 'good' then Irish women must be seen to have become 'worse off' in this period. They were even excluded increasingly from nationalist

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29. 'Don't For Mothers', Irish Peasant, 18 November 1905, p.7.
30. 'Women Workers' Column', Irish Worker, 19 August 1911, p.2.
31. 'For Wife and Maid', Irish Weekly Independent, 19 April 1906, p.10.
32. 'For Wife and Maid', Irish Weekly Independent, 27 October 1906, p.10. Also see 'For Wife and Maid', Irish Weekly Independent, 3 September 1910, p.9.
33. United Irishman, 12 November 1904, p.3.
34. Ibid., p.3.
35. 'Women Worker's Column', Irish Worker, 19 August 1911, p.2 and 'The Country Girl', United Irishman, 12 November 1904, p.3.
aspirations. For instance, Sinn Fein published a column aimed at women, entitled 'Letters to Nora'. The letter on the 19 May 1906 began:

The work is calling, I said. It awaits us in our own homes. We must be clear about that point. No Irishwoman can afford to claim a part in the public duties of patriotism until she has fully satisfied the claims her 'home' makes on her.36

After this the writer declares that "Nora" may feel that the burden of housework is too great for her - but she is not afraid of hard work and, after all (it concludes), 'it is a step in nation building all the same'.

The Benefits (To Women) of Unpaid Domestic Labour

On the other hand, reformers were convinced that their actions would increase female status within the home. Anything which alleviated poverty was seen to be in the interests of women. Why weren't women given 'courtesy' in the home, they asked? Because the state of the house, poverty and over-work have 'a degrading effect'.37 Women did benefit from many of the changes. In agricultural communities where work is physically demanding, monotonous and heavily dependent on factors such as the weather, women (and men) might prefer working inside.38 The general improvement in diet, health care and living standards benefited women giving birth. For every thousand births in 1903, 6.5 women died compared with 5.7 in 1911.39 Legislation gave some women increased status within the community. Old age pensions enabled elderly women (whether married or not) some freedom from the constraints of family.


37. 'Notes of the Week. Lines of Progress', Irish Homestead, 26 March 1910, p.251.


39. Forty-Eighth Detailed Annual Report of the Register-General for Ireland Containing a General Abstract of the Numbers of Marriages, Births and Deaths Registered in Ireland During the Year 1911, p.xxxv [Cd.6313], H. C. 1912-13, xiv, p.35.
When the affairs of house or land
Go clean against her will,
She boasts: 'I have my Pension
And I'm independent still'\(^{40}\)

Housework had certain benefits. The fact that domestic work is unpaid does not necessarily make it less satisfying than work that is paid. The move into the home allowed women to expand into other areas of life, outside the strictly economic realm.

Marriage on a farm, as we understand it, is a contract based on quite other foundations than a salary. A woman wants something to love and look after, and wants somebody to love and look after her. She has her home and the affection of her husband and children, and these are her wages for long and tiresome labours, and if she is happy in her home, she counts herself well-paid.\(^{41}\)

We simply cannot quantify the psychic benefits potentially experienced by women able to devote their time to domestic work without any of the pressures peculiar to paid labour.

The Participants

The role of the state in these developments is crucial. Although the state does reflect and reproduce class relationships (in our case, British urban relationships), individual state elites do have some autonomous power to shape economic and social relationships, particularly when (as in Ireland) economic and legitimacy crises threatened the basis of the state.\(^{42}\) In Ireland the state assumed wide powers of intervention. The role of domestic labour becomes more significant for capital in crisis.\(^{43}\)

Why did the state prefer women to be working in the home rather than the market? Part of the explanation must lie in the recognition that improved forms of housewifery would improve the labour force.

\(^{40}\) 'The Mother that Didn't Die' in Jack Lane and Drendan Clifford (ed.), Ned Buckley's Poems (Aubane Historical Society, 1987), p.23, Ned Buckley was a Duhallow poet, 1880-1954.

\(^{41}\) "Poor Economist", 'Notes of the Week. The Wages of the Family', Irish Homestead, 23 March 1907, p.225.

\(^{42}\) A good example of the elite who exerted considerable individual power is Horace Curzon Plunkett.

\(^{43}\) For further discussion see Jean Gardiner, 'Women's Domestic Labour', New Left Review, 89 (1975), p.51.
If children are allowed to drift without proper care, and if mothers are maimed and distorted with hard and heavy work, how is the country going to prosper or have a healthy and vigorous manhood?44

Women’s work inside the home was crucial because the value it creates was absorbed immediately into the household economy, making it more profitable. If any surplus was created, this surplus was re-invested immediately in productive economic ventures. The existence of an efficient labour force was important. Emigration could be reduced by providing men with employment: if men stayed, women would also remain in Ireland, to marry and bear children. The historical dimension played a role. Women were already performing housework: intensification of this on the English and urban model required increased specialisation. Finally, the role of women performing labour necessary for consumption was crucial. The expansion of a market for commodities required the energies of women. It was this final reason which galvanised nationalist opinion behind the movement. 'Buy Irish' was a direct call for the reproduction of capital - that is, Irish capital. Ironically, although initial attempts to redirect female labour were British-based, Irish nationalists willingly complied with this aim while using it for politically subversive policies.

Government had a direct fiscal and political interest in the profitability of all economic sectors of the community - from the agricultural to the household sector. Just as land reform was intended to meet certain social and political ends, and only incidentally concerned with agricultural productivity, domestic reforms were part of a value-laden New Unionist policy.

Counterfactuals: Alternatives to the Unpaid Female Houseworker

Without the changes in the rural and domestic economies, everyone would have been worse off. However, given the increased time requirements of housework, it was not inevitable that the extra work would be taken up within the unpaid or 'private' sphere.

44."Ireland’s Eye", 'The Lot of the Farm Woman’, Irish Worker, 31 May 1913, p.1.
Market alternatives to housework were unsuccessful and undeveloped. For instance, co-operative societies could have established bread-baking societies. The fact that the one co-operative bread-making society which was established had a membership nearing one thousand suggested that it was not lack of a viable market which restricted the establishment of domestically orientated co-operative societies. Similarly, the collection and delivery of water and the washing of clothes remained inside the residential home and continued to be done by women in the household rather than by paid laundresses. The number of people classified in the census as 'engaged in washing and bathing service' actually dropped by one-fifth in the twenty years between 1891-1911. The final alternative outcome entailed reducing the sexual division of housework, with men and women dividing up the 'new' tasks evenly between them. This thesis has suggested a number of economic reasons why this did not occur, including wage relativities, differential education, and sectoral shifts in desirable skills in other labour markets. The conventional neo-classical argument that tiny differences in comparative advantage (such as women's biological ability to bear children) result in large differences in the division of labour could also be cited. Faced with highly unsatisfactory, partial explanations, this thesis only attempts to describe how, given an established economic and social system, women were designated certain forms of labour. The bigger question will have to be left for someone else.

45. Registry of Friendly Societies, No.817 R Dublin, Industrial Co-Operative Society. Other examples could be the consumers societies or co-operative stores such as the Shamrock Co-Operative Store Society (papers held at No.10 R Cork) and the Dublin Consumers Co-Operative Society (papers held at No.1235 R. Dublin).

46. The most important argument along these lines is Gary S. Becker, A Treatise on the Family (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1981), esp. pp 14-37.
Appendix One
Census Statistics

Problems with using census classifications of occupations are churned out in every historical study using census data, and scarcely require repeating. However, a comment on changes in census classifications in Ireland is necessary. Although my major concern is with changes in census occupational classifications after 1881, a short note on the comparability of the data in the census tables from 1841 is required.

From 1841, women appeared separately in the occupational tables. In both the 1841 and the 1851 censuses, occupations are divided into two categories: people under fifteen years of age, and people over fourteen years of age. I added the two sets of figures together. A similar classification was adopted for the 1861 census, with an expansion of the number of 'classes'. The 1861 census divided the occupational categories into five-year age groups, and provided tables on the occupation of women by religious profession. During the 1860 International Statistical Congress in London, discussions for a uniform classification of occupations resulted in the preparation of special occupational tables based on the system used by the census commissioners in England and Scotland. Greater changes were made in the following census. In the name of standardized census results in the United Kingdom, the occupational tables for Ireland in 1871 placed all occupied married women in a separate category of the Domestic Class entitled 'Wives (of specified occupations)'. The Irish commissioners harshly criticised this procedure, noting that 'nothing...could be more erroneous in principle than such a classification.'

A wife of specified occupation may be a milliner or dressmaker, a draper, a governess or schoolmistress, a millhand in a linen or cotton factory, a folder in a printing establishment, a bookbinder or a seamstress. In all these occupations - and we have enumerated but a few at random - she belongs, unless as governess or schoolmistress, to what we would call the Industrial Class, while the governess or schoolmistress, or music or drawing mistress, would belong to the professional Class. The Domestic Class, however, under the scheme at hand, abstracts, at a clean sweep, every wife of a professional or industrial calling from the class to which she is naturally referable, and transfers her to a class which represents in great part not so much a calling as a relation.

Fortunately, the Irish Commissioners (unlike their English counterparts who dropped
the scheme before the 1861 census) created a separate table showing the specific occupations of these 'Wives (of specified occupations)'. This table provides us with the only break-down of female occupations by marital status. To make comparisons between censuses, the number of wives enumerated as employed in each occupation only needs to be added to the number enumerated in the general tables. The additional table allows us to study employment differences between married and unmarried women.

The census alterations of 1871 led to a massive increase in the number of women designated occupations. In 1861, twenty-nine per cent of women were given occupations and in 1881, thirty-one per cent. However, due to the revision, in 1871 forty-four per cent were enumerated. Thus, between 1841 and 1911, while the percentage of men designated occupations ranged from fifty-nine to sixty-five per cent, the comparable female statistic ranged from nineteen to forty-four per cent. If the 1871 percentage is ignored, the new range of nineteen and thirty-two per cent becomes more plausible. Why was the 1871 percentage so high? Occupational classifications were revised in 1871. In this process, the Commissioners re-worked the 1861 occupational data into the new classifications of 1871. Using the 1861 classification system, twenty-nine per cent of women in 1861 were 'occupied'. The 1871 classification system concluded that thirty-one per cent of women in 1861 were 'occupied'. This small increase in the numbers enumerated suggests that the high increase in 1871 cannot be explained by reference to what was classified as 'work'. Furthermore, the percentage of men designated employment in 1871 actually declined. Because of the changes in layout of the tables, the way the percentage was calculated could have caused the aberration. Re-calculating the number of women in the population as against those designated occupations (excluding from the total population 11,884 women of rank and property who did not return any office or occupation and 1,502,602 others who had no stated occupation), the original percentage of forty-four was confirmed. A clue to the reason for the high percentage of women contained in the census tables in 1871 can be found when the category 'wives of specified occupations' (the occupations were specified in a separate table) were subtracted from the total number of women. In this calculation,
thirty-one per cent of women were either not included in the occupational tables because they had no recognised market occupation, or their market occupation was ignored because of their marital status. This statistic fits better with the other percentages. By making an effort to record the market activities of married women, the census commissioners in 1871 included in the census statistics a section of women whose market activities had been previously subsumed under their domestic activities. I have subtracted the category 'wives' from the total number of women designated occupations in 1871.

The 1881 census continued dividing the occupational tables by age, and cross-tabulating occupation with literacy (first used in the 1871). As with the 1871 census, the English scheme of dividing occupational groups into professional, domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial and indefinite or non-productive 'classes' was accepted.

The classification system used from 1881 in Irish occupational tables are comparable, with a few minor adjustments. The number of classes in 1871 and 1881 remained at six. However, in the censuses from 1881, the number of orders was 24 (as opposed to 18 in 1871) and the number of suborders was 80 (as opposed to 81 in 1871). Furthermore, in the later censuses there were fewer special headings. Persons tabulated in 1871 as peers, shareholders, land proprietors, or shareholders had been classified in 1881 as 'persons not returned as following any specified occupation', along with vagrants. Farmers' daughters or granddaughters who were tabulated separately in 1871 were included in the same order as vagrants and peers. In 1871 374,258 women were designated occupations as wives of innkeepers, wives of shopkeepers, land or house proprietors, gentlewomen, annuitants, capitalists, shareholders, ship owners or vagrants. In 1881 all these women were placed in the 'persons not returned as following any specified occupation' category. Thus, the increase in the number of unoccupied women between 1871 and 1881 from 1,522,208 to 1,826,900 is diminished if we add the 374,258 women to the 1871 unoccupied figure - making the number of women without a specified occupation in 1871 1,896,466.

The main difference between the census classifications of 1881 and 1891 is that in
1891 wives and other relatives of the head of the household who were returned as 'housekeepers' were placed in the 'indefinite or non-productive' category as opposed to under the heading 'engaged in service' in the Domestic Class. If we readjust the 1881 figure to make the number of people in the 'indefinite or non-productive' category comparable we would have to add to the 1881 figure 139,092 women tabulated under the heading 'others in service'. By doing this, we find that in 1881 seventy-four per cent of the population were 'unoccupied' (according to 1891 census classifications) rather than the unaltered figure of sixty-nine. This significantly alters the trends. Rather than a decline in female participation in the occupational labour force between 1881 and 1891, in three of the provinces there was a slight increase.

The 1891 and 1901 censuses differed from the earlier schemes by including detailed tables on the age and 'occupation or social position' of inhabitants of the Dublin Registration District, and inhabitants of the suburban parts of the Dublin Registration District. The main difference between the census classifications for occupation from 1901 is the transfer of 'scholars' aged over fifteen years who were classified in the professional class in the 'literary and scientific persons' category to the 'persons of no specified occupations' category. Based on the supposition that persons between the ages of fifteen and nineteen who were classified as 'literary and scientific' persons in the censuses of 1881 and 1891 were students, we can work out what proportion of 'unoccupied' persons would be in these years if the classifications used in 1901 and 1911 were applied. Making these changes, the basic pattern remained unchanged. Much more serious, however, is the effect that this change has on the percentage of women in professional occupations out of all persons in professional occupations. In 1891 thirty-five per cent of professional persons were women, and this declined rapidly to twenty-five per cent by 1901. If we subtract the number of scholars (once again, defined as those persons aged between fifteen and nineteen years of age in the 'literary and scientific persons' category), instead of a decline between 1891 and 1901 there is an increase from twenty-two per cent to twenty-five per cent.
Appendix Two

Census Statistics: The Sample of District Electoral Divisions

Irish historians are blessed with the original census forms for the entire country for the years 1901 and 1911. These forms are superior to the census enumerators forms available for analysis in Britain because they contain the raw data and are thus more likely to show up the perspective of the household heads. This, of course, should not be exaggerated as literate heads of households were expected to read the instructions provided by the commissioners and the non-literate had their words translated and interpreted by local enumerators. Examining the original forms allows us to avoid the coding clerk, bewildered on one side by constantly changing occupational definitions to learn and relearn, and on the other side by imprecise definitions. It also allows us to choose small areas and match households between years, and thus attempt to capture some of life-cycle changes. We can ask many more questions than is possible with published census data.

Within each year, the census manuscript forms are divided by County, District Electoral Division, then Townland. I have examined eight District Electoral Divisions, and all the Townlands within those districts. Seven districts were chosen randomly with the use of a computer-generated random numbers program. Random selection was limited by two rules: the districts had to be rural and in different counties. Later in the year, I added the district of Belleek (County Fermanagh) to facilitate my study of home industries. The information on each original census form was typed into the computer verbatim. No alterations were made to the information. The household or co-residing group remained the unit of analysis. A spreadsheet program (Sc3) was used to collect the data. Each individual was coded with the following information:

1. Year - 1901 or 1911.
2. Household number. Each member of the household was given his/her unique manuscript classification number.
3. Surname of the person designated 'head of the household'. This facilitated identification of households between 1901 and 1911, although was insufficient in itself.

4. Name of the individual.

5. Relationship of the members of the household to the person designated 'head of household'. In two households there was no person designated 'head'. In the first case, this was a large and wealthy household consisting of children and servants, none of whom would be considered 'heads'. In the other case, a household of five grooms, living in a separate building on the land of their employer, was not given a 'head'. In all other cases, households consisted of a 'head' followed by people related to him by way of wife, husband, father, mother, son, daughter, step-child, sister, brother, grandparent, niece, nephew, in-law, servant, assistant, boarder, visitor. In a few cases, we are only told that the person was a 'relative'.

6. Religious affiliation.

7. Whether the individual could read and write. In a few instances we are told the person could only write - presumably sign their name. When the 'head of the household' could not write, the form was completed by the enumerator and the 'head' was invited to make his/her mark. Frequently the literacy of young children was not declared. In these cases, I assumed that all children under the age of seven could neither read or write.

8. The sex of the individual.

9. Occupation of the individual (1). This information was vital to my work and was, therefore, typed in precisely as written.

10. Occupation of the individual (2). In this column I standardised the entries. Spelling was made uniform. Various types of servanthood were distinguished (domestic servant, general servant, farm servant). People given no occupation were provided with a separate code. Women who designated themselves as 'engaged in home duties' or 'busy at home' or 'housekeepers' (and related to the 'head' as wife, sister or daughter) were labelled 'houseworkers'.

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11. Marital status.

12. County of birth. If the country of birth was Ireland, the county was given. If the county of birth was the same as the county the individual was living in, they were coded as '0', otherwise the county name was given.

13-15. In 1911 only, if a presently-married wife was living in the household, she was asked how many years she had been married, how many children were born to her and how many of these children were alive at the time of the census. In a few instances, this information was also given by widowed women.

Data 16 to 40 were entered by the local census enumerator, not the 'head of the household'.

16. Number of outhouses and farm buildings on the property occupied by the household.

17. If the walls of the house were made of stone, brick or concrete the code was '1'. If the walls were made of mud, wood or another perishable material, the enumerators entered '0'.

18. If the roof of the house was made of slate, iron or tiles, the code '1' was entered. If the roof was made of thatch, wood or other perishable material, the code '0' was entered.

19. The following codes were given to houses with different number of rooms: 2 to 4 rooms, code 2; 5 or 6 rooms, code 3; 7 to 9 rooms, code 4; 11 to 12 rooms, code 5; 13 or more rooms, code 6.

20. Number of windows in front of the house.

21. The total of numbers 17 to 20.

22. The class of house was decided by the total in number 21. If column 21 was 1 or 2, the house was fourth class; if the total was 3 to 5, the house was third class; if the total was 6 to 11, the house was class two; if the total was 12 or over, the house was classified as first class.

23-40 were for the types of outhouses. In particular, I was interested in dairies, fowl
houses and laundries. However, all the information was collected, in the following order: stable, coach house, harness room, cow house, calf house, dairy, piggery, fowl house, boiling house, barn, turf house, potato house, workshop, shed, store, forge, laundry, and 'others' (generally specified).

This individual data was then supplemented in two ways.

First, the census data for the districts were matched with the valuation records held at the Valuation Office in Dublin. A computer 'bug' erased the valuation records for Belleek and Keeldra after returning to Australia, leaving a sample of six districts with valuation data. As the valuation was ordered by District Electoral Divisions and Townlands the process involved finding the closest year to the census and attempting to match the households. The inability to match a household could be due to a number of factors. A person might not occupy any valuable land - for instance, most 'heads of households' who were labourers could not be located. In other cases, the household might reside in a different district from the district where the land was held. I attempted to examine neighbouring districts but this 'hit and miss' type of exercise missed more frequently than not. The small number of cases where this was the problem did not warrant the vast expenditure of time. Based on the valuation records, the following data was collected:

41. A brief description of the type of holding, ie. land, outhouses, residence.
42. Acreage held by the household.
43. Valuation of the land.
44. Valuation of the house.
45. Valuation of any outhouses or farm buildings.
46. Total valuation. (that is, the total of numbers 43 to 45).
47. Name of the previous occupier, date of transfer and, if available, the next occupier or owner.
Second, the household data was entered into each individual’s data. This job was supplemented continuously as new questions needed to be answered. The data entered included:

48. If the household carried out shopkeeping functions (for instance, if the 'head' was a provisions merchant as well as a farmer, or if there was a store on the premises), each individual within that household was coded '1'. All other individuals were given the code '0'. This does not include travelling salesmen who might be visiting the household, for instance, two Germans selling cheap jewelry sleeping the night in the household of an Ards family in 1901.

49. The number of male farm servants or labourers in the household whose relationship to the 'head' was that of 'servant' or 'labourer'.

50. The number of female farm servants or labourers in the household whose relationship to the 'head' was that of 'servant' or 'labourer'.

51. The number of female domestic servants in the household whose relationship to the 'head' was 'servant'.

52. The number of female domestic servants in the household whose relationship to the 'head' was that of a relative such as daughter or sister.

53. The total number of persons in the household.

54. Percentage of all persons in the household (excluding domestic servants who are not relatives) who were female.

55. Number of children fifteen years and under in the household, excluding farm servants, labourers and domestic servants in the household who were not relatives.

56. Number of children five years and under in the household.

57. Number of persons in the household given no occupation (including women labelled housewives, housekeepers or 'engaged in domestic duties').

58. Number of females over the age of fifteen in the household given no occupation (including women labelled housewives, housekeepers or 'engaged in domestic duties').

59. Number of women in household labelled housewives, housekeepers or 'engaged in domestic duties'.

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M2.1
Location of the Eight District Electoral Divisions
(1901 and 1911 Census Manuscripts of Ireland)

Ards (County Donegal)
Belleek (County Fermanagh)
Keeldra (County Leitrim)
Bellatrain (County Monaghan)
Kilconickny (County Galway)
Tullamore (Kings' County)
Rathmore (County Limerick)
Woodstown (County Waterford)
duties'.

60. Number of 'non-immediate kin' in the household. If the 'head' was married, immediate kin included the spouse, children and step-children. If the 'head' was unmarried, immediate kin included parents and siblings.

61. Number of boarders in household.

62. Number of visitors in the household.

Since we have 59 (1901) and 62 (1911) pieces of information on each individual, this represents a database of some 529,000 individual pieces of information.

### Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number Individuals</th>
<th>Number Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>Kings</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballatrain</td>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleek</td>
<td>Fermanagh</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeldra</td>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>4536</td>
<td>4215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An obvious concern brought out by this table is the vastly different size of the districts. Keeldra is four times the size of Rathmore and any analysis of the whole sample will be skewed in favour of Keeldra, Belleek and Ards. For this reason, most analyses take account of regional variations. Generally, however, the range of communities is wide. Map 2.1 (Chapter Two) gives the location of the districts. The sample includes areas with high land valuation (such as Rathmore) as well as poorer holdings (such as in Ards). Some of the districts lost population during this ten year period (for instance, Keeldra) while other had growing populations (Woodstown). In the three communities in the west, and in Woodstown, practically all inhabitants were Roman Catholic. This contrasts with the Ards community where one-third of the population belonged to the Church of
Ireland, and around six per cent were Presbyterians. Ards could even boast of having one Freethinker. One-fifth of the population of Tullamore attended the services of the Church of Ireland. In literacy, again, the communities vary, with adult men and women in the two northwest communities of Ards and Keeldra being less liable to be able to read or write. The sexual differences in literacy between the communities are more startling. Women in Rathmore, Bellatrain, Belleek and Keeldra were more likely to be literate than men in these communities. In Kilconickny, however, nearly one-quarter of adult women had defective literacy, compared with fifteen per cent of men. The districts have differing experiences of emigration. Kilconickny had the third highest annual emigration rate in the country between 1891 and 1911 while Tullamore than one of the lowest rates in the country. All these indicators (and others which could be listed) suggest that the eight districts provide a reasonably representative sample for the study of female employment across the country.
Appendix Three
Agricultural Production

My estimates of agricultural productivity were based on data in the annual returns of the Agricultural Statistics in the British Parliamentary Papers. Estimates of the amount used for seeds, the proportion of the crop 'wasted', and average figures on the production of butter and eggs were taken from John Busteed, W. E. Vaughan, M. W. Towne, Cormac O Grada, and the Agricultural Output statistics in 1908. All the gross agricultural figures are three-year averages (thus, the 1890 production statistic is actually the average production for the years 1889, 1890 and 1891).

Individual Products:

Wheat output has been estimated at eighty-six per cent of total production.

Oats output has been estimated at seventy per cent of total production.

Barley and bere output has been estimated at eighty-six per cent of total production.

Potato and flax output has been estimated at ninety per cent of total production.

The value of turnips, mangels, rye and hay were ignored on the grounds that their value would be realised in sales of livestock.

Milch cattle yielded meat weighing four cwts. (per head) and 0.2 per cent were sold in the

year. Other cattle (under two years) yielded meat weighing five cwts. and the share sold was 0.5 per cent.

Milch cows each produced one cwt. of butter.

Store sheep produced meat weighing 0.6 cwt. each. Sheep under one year realised forty per cent of their value while sheep over one year realised all their value. Sheep over one year also yielded an estimated six pounds of wool a year.

Pigs yielded two cwts. of pork a year.

Each chicken produced eight dozen eggs a year. The number of poultry in the 1909-1911 estimate of numbers had to be altered to account for the change in the enumeration of young birds after 1907. I assume a two per cent increase between 1906-1907 and after 1907 assume that the rate of increase is the same as that experienced in the higher statistic.

Thus:
1906 - 18977 thousand poultry
1907 - 19357
1908 - 19122
1909 - 19180
1910 - 19359
1911 - 20241

The price of these products was taken from the average prices listed in the Parliamentary Papers and reviewed by Thomas Barrington. The method used to calculate production statistics has been chosen for comparability with former estimates but is not intended to provide more than a general picture.

Other estimates of the performance of the Irish economy could be used to illustrate increased wealth. L. M. Cullen and T. C. Smout calculated that Irish G.N.P. (at 1911 prices) per head lay between Belgium and France. Emmet Larkin's estimates of national income per head between 1841 and 1901 shows constant growth from the famine. Cormac O Grada's agricultural output statistics for 1876, 1908 and 1926 show a small decline


between 1876 and 1908 which is not evident in my data. Unfortunately, he had provided no information about how he made these estimates and, in his 'note on the output estimates' confesses (without further explanation) that Michael Turner's output estimates for the period from 1876-1885 to 1906-1913 show an increase of 15.5 per cent.5

Appendix Four

Economic Value of Housework

What is the economic value of housework? My efforts to quantify the value of housework are examined in this appendix. The economic value of housework was a question grappled with throughout the period. For instance, the failure of the Department of Agriculture's model farms to make a profit was justified by the argument that the Department had to pay people to perform the labour customarily performed by the farmer's wife and family. In this case, departmental officials estimated that the labour of a farmer's wife was equal to the labour of three waged female servants.\(^1\) It is difficult, however, to accept this generous (though not excessive) valuation at face value. At the very least, the farmer's wife might be expected to equal the labour of a servant girl.

For our purposes, housework can be valued at a national, macro-economic level or at the level of the individual household. The macro-economic approach will be examined first. At this level, valuing domestic labour entails the imputation of an economic value to this labour for the purposes of improving G.N.P. estimates. This method has the advantage of placing female labour in the broader economic context. It sets domestic labour firmly within what constitutes 'economic labour'. Although a number of methodological problems plague this work, it is still worth seeing what happens when we apply this methodology to Irish data.

Domestic Labour and G.N.P.

Gross National Product purports to be the sum of the economic value of final products. Housework is not generally included in G.N.P. estimates because of the

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\(1\) 'Notes of the Week. The Wages of the Family', Irish Homestead, 23 March 1907, p.225. For other letters in the debate, see 'Notes of the Week. Advice to the Department to Marry', Irish Homestead, 16 March 1907, pp 202-3; "Poor Economist", 'Example Farms', Irish Homestead, 30 March 1907, p.258; and "A Poor Economist", 'Correspondence. State Farms', Irish Homestead, 23 March 1907, p.234.
difficulties involved in finding a measure by which a value could be imputed. However, ignoring domestic production seriously under-estimates the magnitude of the G.N.P. and vitiates comparisons between economies with different market and non-market structures. Excluding domestic labour from G.N.P. estimates leads to a number of anomalies. If a domestic servant leaves a household to work in a factory and her labour is taken over by the female household head, total goods produced (as calculated in traditional G.N.P. estimates) increase by the value of the factory work but decrease by the value of the wage of the domestic servant, although the goods and services formerly produced by the domestic servant are still being provided. If a domestic servant leaves her employment, gets married and works in her own household, and her former employer does the work previously performed by the domestic servant, national income would decline although production actually increases. If a man marries his paid domestic servant, G.N.P. will decline whereas production remains the same. These anomalies, coupled with the obvious importance

2. The best description of the history of governmental debates on imputing a value for domestic labour is in Z. Y. Hershlag, "The Case of "Unpaid Domestic Service"", Economia Internazionale, xii (February 1960), pp 25-40.


of unwaged domestic labour in the production of goods and services, illustrate the necessity of including some estimate of domestic labour in G.N.P. statistics.

The only way to incorporate housework into G.N.P. estimates is to impute a monetary value. Imputing value is an accepted procedure in G.N.P. calculations. The most commonly imputed value is rental income. Where a property is owner-occupied as opposed to rented, a monetary value representing the amount which would be received if the property was let is imputed. Imputation is, therefore, a legitimate way of placing a monetary value on goods or services which may be exchanged for money in the market. Even with the shortcomings of imputation, economists customarily assume that it is better to impute a value for non-market production than to assume that no value exists.5

Two models have been proposed for imputing a value for domestic labour: the opportunity cost model and the market price model. These models are examined in the note at the end of this appendix. The opportunity cost model imputes to domestic labour the actual or potential earnings foregone by an individual allocating time to housework.6 Under the market price model the cost of hiring someone to do housework is made to determine its value. This could be done by summing the results of application of prevailing wage rates to each of the jobs performed by housewives,7 or estimating the replacement cost of a substitute mother,8 or by imputing the wage for a general domestic


The market price model is best suited for our work.

**Measuring Domestic Labour: Macro-Economic Market Price Model**

Graeme Snooks developed a way of measuring non-market domestic services using the market price model. Dealing with Australian domestic labour between 1891 and 1981, his formular specifies

\[
NMHS = (H \times W_f) + (0.25[H] \times W_m) + (O \times W_f) - (Nd \times W_d)
\]

where

- \(NMHS\) = value of non-market household services
- \(H\) = number of households
- \(O\) = other female relatives engaged in non-paid housework
- \(Nd\) = number of paid domestics (male and female) employed by private households
- \(W_f\) = annual market wage (full year) for female domestics
- \(W_m\) = annual market wage (full year) for male domestics
- \(W_d\) = annual market wage (working year) for male and female domestics

He justifies estimating non-market household services on a household basis by referring to results of American time-use surveys which show a constancy in the amount of labour performed by the housewife by household. The number of hours of labour put in by the housewife on domestic work fluctuated very little over the century. This stability in

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hours of housework over time means that the absence of time-series data will not skew the results. For our purposes, this is the chief problem with his formula. My work suggests an increase in the hours spent in housework. The comparative discongruity is mitigated once it is pointed out that the American time-use surveys confuse housework and familial farm labour. Thus, American women may have been performing less work on the farm and more work in the household while these studies show a constant number of hours spent in non-paid labour. Of course, this does not solve the problem of using his formula in the Irish context.

Snooks also points to American time-series data to justify his assumption that the average household could be maintained by one full-time female domestic servant and one quarter-time male servant. He notes the need to add on the domestic services of women who are not the principal female domestic workers but still perform domestic labour in the home. Here he is referring to daughters, aunts and similar groups of women. Finally, he excludes from his calculations the wages of men and women who are paid to perform domestic work. These people have already been included in G.N.P. estimates.

Snooks' methodology has the advantage of being adapted to situations where the researcher has limited data. Unlike American formulae which use time-series data (unavailable in Ireland and, indeed, much of the world), he uses census and wage data. I have made a few alterations to his formula. The revised formula excludes the male contribution to housework. There is no wage data for male domestic servants in Ireland and male servants made up less than three per cent of all domestic servants. The final estimate will be conservative since we are assuming a constant number of hours spent performing housework. The revised equation is

\[NMFHS = (Fm \times Wf) + (O \times Wf) - (Nd \times Wf)\]

where

- \(NMFHS\) = non-market female household services
- \(Fm\) = number of families
- \(Wf\) = annual market wages of female domestic servants
- \(O\) = other females engaged in household tasks. Assuming that
each family has one full-time houseworker, this figure is calculated by subtracting the total number of 'unoccupied' women over the age of twenty years from the total number of families. 

Nd = number of paid female domestic servants. Male domestic servants are excluded from this category because they were numerically unimportant, wage rates for them are statistically insignificant and the labour of male domestic servants is less likely to affect the amount of labour performed by female non-wage homeworkers.

The final results are given in the table below. The wage data comes from the average wage of general servants as advertised in the *Irish Times* on the 2nd and 10th (or 11th) of April.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{The Value of Non-Market Female Household Service (NMFHS) 1881-1911, Ireland}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NMFHS 1,000 pounds</th>
<th>NMFHS per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>5,518.9</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6,362.1</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8,260.8</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>10,517.7</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This conservative estimate shows a continuous increase in the value of household service performed outside of the market. The most rapid jump occurred between 1901 and 1911. This data can also be broken down into two parts: the value of Total Female Household Service (TFHS) and the value of Private Domestic Servants (DS). The formula for calculating Total Female Household Service is

\[ TFHS = TFS + TOFS \]

\[ TFS = Fm \times Wf \]

\[ TOFS = O \times Wf \]

where

TFHS = total female household service  
TFS = total female service  
TOFS = total other female service  
Fm = number of families

\textsuperscript{12}These wages are given in Chapter Four. The other data comes from the censuses.
O = other females engaged in housework
Wf = average wage of female domestic servants

### a4.2 Total Female Household Service (TFHS)
1881-1911, Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TFS 1,000 pounds</th>
<th>TOFS 1,000 pounds</th>
<th>TFHS 1,000 pounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>8,951.2</td>
<td>-1,340.5</td>
<td>7,610.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>8,389.0</td>
<td>-245.8</td>
<td>8,143.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>10,015.6</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>10,094.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>10,929.0</td>
<td>1,130.2</td>
<td>12,059.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The formula for estimating the value of Private Domestic Servants (DS) is

\[
DS = FDS \times WD
\]

where

DS = estimated value of private domestic servants
FDS = number of female domestic servants
WD = average wages of domestic servants

### a4.3 Estimated Value of Female Domestic Servants (DS)
And DS as a Percentage of TFHS
1881-1911, Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DS 1,000 pounds</th>
<th>DS as Percentage of TFHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>2,091.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1,781.1</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1,833.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,541.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is important about these two tables is that the paid element in household labour became progressively less important. The labour of unpaid female members of the household was substituted for the labour performed by paid domestic servants.

Differential wage rates for domestic servants allow us to calculate provincial variations in the value of household labour only for 1901. If we do these calculations,

13. The wage rates used in the provincial analysis come from the Board of Trade (Labour Department), Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants, p.10 [C.9345], H. C. 1899, cxii, p.10. The Ireland-wide wage quoted in this report was less than five per cent higher than the wage calculated from the Irish Times.
we find that the value of Non-Market Female Household Service (NMFHS) was highest in the poorer county of Connaught. NMFHS per capita was twenty-five per cent higher in Connaught than in Leinster. As expected, female domestic servants made up a much smaller proportion of the value of Total Female Household Service in Connaught than in the other provinces. For instance, in 1901 the Value of Domestic Servants (DS) as a percentage of the value of Total Female Household Service (TFHS) was ten per cent in Connaught, compared with fourteen per cent in Ulster and between twenty-two and twenty-five per cent in Leinster.

Problems and G.N.P. Comparisons

This method of measuring domestic labour has been developed for use in G.N.P. estimates. It ignores the fact that some of the labour has already been accounted for in G.N.P. estimates. For instance, home repairs and maintenance is reflected in the imputed rental value of owner-occupied houses. Some production is double-counted. More seriously, the measurement assumes that women work either in the market or in the home - whereas women working in the market were likely to work also in the household. As we have already noted, qualitative evidence suggests very strongly that the time Irish women spent performing housework increased between 1890 and 1914. The formula do not avoid the usual problems associated with the market-model approach (see the note at the end of this appendix).

In the case of Ireland, the usefulness of this macro-economic approach is limited by the absence of conventional G.N.P. estimates. Until 1921, Irish G.N.P. was included in the United Kingdom estimates. A number of economists have noted the need for separate estimates but no-one has met this challenge yet.14 On the basis of three assumptions, Phyllis Deane attempted to estimate Irish G.N.P. for the purpose of excluding Ireland from the United Kingdom estimates. She assumed that in 1830 average G.N.P. for Ireland was half the average for the United Kingdom, the Irish average did not change between 1840

and 1850, but between 1830-1840 and 1850-1910 Irish G.N.P. per capita grew at the rate of ten per cent each decade. On the basis of these assumptions, Irish G.N.P. in 1900 was a total of 71.53 million pounds or 16.09 pounds per capita. In 1910, my calculation of total G.N.P. was 77.53 million pounds or 17.69 pounds per capita.

Using these crude estimates, the importance of domestic labour in national production can be quantified. In Ireland at the beginning of the century, Non-Market Female Household Service (NMFHS) and Total Female Household Service (TFHS) would be a large component of G.N.P. if it was included in the estimates. Including NMFHS in the G.N.P. would result in an increase of 12.6 per cent and in the case of TFHS in an increase of 15.4 per cent.

Why is my estimate low compared with American estimates? The method of estimating used in this appendix is based on rigid assumptions about the 'family' supply of domestic labour rather than on time spent by all members of the household in unpaid production. All domestic labour performed by women who also work for money (whether part or full-time) is ignored although this would be a substantial part of domestic labour. Furthermore, the National Income estimates used may be inappropriate in estimating the labour of rural women.

**Measuring Domestic Labour: The Micro-Economic Approach**

The other way the value of female labour can be estimated is at the household level. This can be done using the the six District Electoral Divisions for which we have data on land acreage. The sample includes landed households for which we have data in both 1901 and 1911. A wage was imputed only to familial members of the household, and excluded the very young and the very old as well as individuals referred to as 'sick' or 'imbecile'.

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16. This is about twelve per cent lower than the rates calculated by Emmet Larkin for 1901 because of the different assumptions used: Emmet Larkin, 'Economic Growth, Capital Investment, and the Roman Catholic Church in Nineteenth Century Ireland', *American Historical Review*, lxxii (April 1967), pp 879-82.

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1901 2,055 individuals were analysed and a wage was imputed to 1,284 adults. The respective figures for 1911 were 1,979 and 1,238. The factors which affected most strongly the value of unwaged domestic labour of women were assumed to be family size and the age of the youngest child. On these assumptions, I have imputed a 'wage' for houseworkers between the ages of fifteen and seventy-five.

**Imputed Wage for Female Houseworkers Aged Between Fifteen and Seventy-Five**

For Micro-Analysis of Houseworkers in Six District Electoral Divisions 1901 and 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Wage of General Servants</th>
<th>With Children Under 5 Years</th>
<th>With Lodgers or Boarders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-64</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-64</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the wages for homeworkers were estimated at the same rate for all districts,


18. The wages for general servants were taken from my sample of wages in the Irish Weekly Independent, using the age graduations in Board of Trade (Labour Department), *Report by Miss Collett on the Money Wages of Indoor Domestic Servants*, p.1ff [C.9345], H. C. 1899, cxii, p.1ff. Where there was a child in the household, the wage imputed was the wage of a nurse, that is, thirty-five per cent higher than the wage of a general domestic servant. Where the household included lodgers or boarders, the wage of the housemaid was imputed (twenty per cent higher than the wage of a general domestic servant). Where the houseworker had both children and lodgers, the wage for children was imputed. Only one woman was given the extra wage due to the presence of children or lodgers.
the wages imputed for adult men were based on the wages for the County District within which the sample District Electoral Divisions were located. For the 1901 figure, I used the breakdown of wages as given in the Agricultural Statistics for 1901. The daily rates were converted into annual rates (300 days) and were imputed to farmers and male farmers' relatives in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship in Household</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Wage Estimated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head male</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>maximum adult winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>minimum adult summer wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 30</td>
<td>maximum adult summer wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male relatives over 20 years</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>minimum adult winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>maximum adult winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 30</td>
<td>minimum adult summer wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male relatives under 20 years</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>minimum 'boys' winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>maximum 'boys' winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 30</td>
<td>minimum 'boys' summer wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female farmers</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>maximum female winter wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>minimum female summer wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 30</td>
<td>maximum female summer wage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the time we come to estimate the wages for 1911, the agricultural statistics were less complete. We were only given minimum and maximum male wages for ploughmen, general labourers and boys. I estimated the wages for agricultural workers on farms under fifteen acres in the manner described in the next table, then used the proportional difference in wages in 1901 to estimate the wages in 1911.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship in Household</th>
<th>Wage estimated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head male</td>
<td>minimum wage for general labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male relatives over 20 years</td>
<td>maximum wage for 'boys'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male relatives under 20 years</td>
<td>minimum wage for 'boys'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>minimum wage for [male] general labourers, reduced by the 1901 ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All women and men designated an occupation other than 'none', 'domestic duties', farmer and farmer's relative were given a wage appropriate to their occupation. These wages were estimated from newspaper sources or other compilations of wage data. The following table provides the final data.
### a4.5

**Imputed Wages for All Adult Familial Members of Households**

The Average Female and Male Wage, Proportion of Total Familial Wage Which Came From Female Labour, and the Average Wage Per Person

**Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Average 'Wage'</th>
<th>Average 'Wage'</th>
<th>Proportion Total 'Wage' Female</th>
<th>Average 'Wage' Per Person (all ages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imputed Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### a4.6

**Imputed Wages for All Adult Familial Members of Households**

Average Imputed Wage for Women Designated (and Not Designated) Occupations, and Percentage of All Adult Women Designated Occupations

**Six District Electoral Divisions, 1901 and 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bellatrain</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilconickny</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ards</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodstown</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Average imputed 'wage' of women designated occupations
2. Average imputed 'wage' of women not designated occupations
3. Percentage of all women designated an occupation

Using the summaries above, we can analyse the responses of women in the six districts. Bellatrain (County Monaghan) was the only district where the average imputed wage for women was much lower than the wage for men in 1901 but much higher by 1911. In 1901 Bellatrain had the highest number of employed women, suggesting that the lower the wage received in the unpaid sector, the higher proportion of women found employment. The number of women employed declined by seven per cent as the female wage in the unpaid sphere increased.

In Tullamore (Kings' County), the average wage of employed women decreased slightly (by 0.6 per cent) while wages in the unpaid sphere increased slightly (by 2.2 per cent). In 1901, wages of unpaid female workers were nearly twelve per cent lower than the wages of employed women, but by 1911 they were over three per cent higher. This resulted in a 5.5 per cent decrease in the number of employed women.

In 1901 and 1911 the wages of unpaid female workers in Kilconickny (County Galway) were higher than those of employed women (1.9 per cent higher in 1901 and 7.5 per cent higher in 1911). Female employment decreased by 3.7 per cent. Female employment declined because the average wage of unpaid women increased at almost twice the rate as paid women (1.4 per cent compared with 2.4 per cent).

In Rathmore there was a stable number of women employed between 1901 and 1911. The average wage of unpaid women was considerably lower in both years than the wages of employed women - caused by the very high value of the average wage of employed women in this Limerick community. Further, the average wage of employed women increased fastest in this area (by 6.8 per cent). At the same time, however, the value of unpaid labour also increased (by 4.4 per cent). Thus, the stable numbers of women in the employment market is unsurprising. Paid and unpaid sectors moved in the same direction, with market restrictions working slightly in favour of unpaid labour.
There was a large decline in the number of women employed in the Donegal district of Ards. At the same time, the wages of unpaid women increased relative to the wages of employed women. As the wages of employed women decreased, women left the paid sphere and entered the unpaid sphere. The decline in the number of employed women was greater in Ards than in Bellatrain (County Monaghan) because the average wages for paid and unpaid workers were considerably lower in Ards, making the relative value of unpaid labour much higher in this district. Further, domestic servants were cheaper in Bellatrain than in Ards, so that although the wage differential between paid and unpaid female workers was greater in Bellatrain, the substitution effect was lower.

The wages of female paid and unpaid workers increased most rapidly in Woodstown (County Waterford). The wages of employed women between 1901 and 1911 increased by 5.4 per cent and the wages of unpaid female workers increased by 8.1 per cent. However, the wages of unpaid workers were much lower than those of employed workers, although the differentials declined from 38 per cent lower to 18 per cent lower in the ten years. The faster relative increase in wages of unpaid female workers led to a 7.5 per cent decline in the number of employed female workers.

What this analysis confirms is the importance of relative wage rates between paid and unpaid labour. As the value of unpaid labour (housework) rose relative to the value of paid employment, women moved from the paid to the unpaid sector.

* * *

Note to Appendix Four

Opportunity Cost Model

The opportunity cost model imputes to domestic labour the actual or potential earnings foregone by an individual allocating time to household work. The imputed wage consists of the net return to paid work. Although most opportunity cost imputing deals with average market wage or after-tax wages, a more correct application of this model
would measure net return to paid work (either in the form of average wages plus supplements to these wages or after-tax compensation minus wage-related costs). This model is attractive to economists trained to think of the cost of one good as equal to the loss of opportunity to produce another good. It assumes that the rational individual allocates time until its net return is equalised at the margin. One use of time is paid work. To the individual in equilibrium, 'the marginal value of an hour of housework will be equated with the foregone net return to a marginal hour of paid work.' Ignoring non-pecuniary returns, the net return to a marginal hour of paid work is the marginal hourly compensation rate minus the marginal costs of work.

For the historically-trained, the main objection to this model is that it does not seem to represent the way decisions are really made. Rational choice is inhibited by tradition. When a woman becomes a full-time housewife because of tradition or social pressure, it is not clear that the value of her work at home is at least equal to her potential take-home pay. Similarly, when a man does very little work at home because he perceives this as 'women's work', it does not prove that the value of his contribution would be less than what he earns on the job. After she has been out of the labour force for many years, she may not have a good idea of what her earnings may be. If her estimate is too low, it is no longer safe to assume that the value of her housework is at least as high as the potential value of her work in the labour market. Furthermore, a woman may choose home or market labour because she derives more direct satisfaction from one or the other. Thus, the value of the two are not equal. She may give up some earnings in order to gain more leisure rather than to increase home production. A person is likely to


21. Ibid.
decide on market or home labour in part because of the satisfaction she derives from each. Thus a woman who has been raised to consider a career unacceptable for a good wife and mother may choose to forego a high salary to be a full-time housewife. This does not necessarily mean that her work at home is worth as much as her work in the market would be since the satisfactions people obtain from their work is not part of market output. As Snooks has also pointed out, as an equilibrium concept this model does not take account of unemployment or situations of disequilibrium. People do not always have the choice of working in the market as much as they would wish. If they cannot find work, the value of home production is likely to be lower than the wage rate. If they have to work longer hours in the market than they would like to, the additional earnings gained will not be as great as the value of home production they have to give up. It may be argued that the unemployed have a lower opportunity cost than the employed. For women, however, in times of increasing unemployment, household labour (and the value of that labour) might increase. The opportunity cost of people in equilibrium but not working for pay is unknown.

Just as serious is the fact that the value arrived at does not relate to the product itself. For example, by this method a doctor washing dishes creates more value than a labourer washing dishes even though the product (clean dishes) is the same. The model ignores the fact that a person working in the home is self-employed, contributing to the production process both her labour services and her entrepreneurial capacity. The 'producer surplus' generated by housewives is ignored. The model also ignores the fact that the person who enters the labour market typically reduces the time spent on housework but continues to do a great deal of it. Thus, we cannot assume that the value of housework equals (or is greater than) the earnings of the market-worker. Rather, the value of housework and the value of her leisure equals (or is greater than) the value of

22.Ibid.
the housework of the market-labourer and the value of her leisure.

The model only tells us that the value of non-market work cannot be less than the net pay. It provides only a lower-bund estimate and does not allow for cases where potential market earnings are low and domestic labour high because of family size. The worth of home-labour might be higher than potential market earnings and could fluctuate considerably while potential earnings remain the same or even change in the opposite direction.

Empirically the model poses problems. Marginal rather than average values should be used in calculating the net return, but estimating marginal tax rates and work-related costs is difficult. Compensation is based in wages and salary earnings whereas taxes are based on income. Assumptions are required about the relationship between earnings and income. The work-related costs and non-pecuniary benefits of paid work pose problems of definition and identification. It is not always clear when such costs are fixed and when they are marginal. Work by M. A. Ferber and B. G. Birnbaum using data on the earnings of female clerical workers to estimate the opportunity cost of home-labour for these women over the life cycle (adjusting for level of education and work experience etc.) show that the difficulties of the opportunity cost approach are so fundamental as to render the model useless.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Market Price Model}

Since G.N.P. is a measure of final production at market prices, the market price model is a preferable way to impute value for G.N.P. estimates. This model uses the cost of hiring someone to do housework to determine its value. It evaluates labour inputs and has the advantage of being product-related.

The wage can be imputed from a replacement or a service cost angle. The service model

imputes the wage rate from a variety of market specialists such as cooks, gardeners, laundresses and so on. It assumes that households substitutes specific types of paid labour for specific types of household work. In practice they might not because workers are generally not available for irregular, short periods of time. It does not take account of the high time costs of searching for several workers. There are also problems in determining the appropriate market equivalent occupations and the associated wage rates. The measurement is highly sensitive to the choice of market-equivalent occupations. Who could adequately replace the home-worker? In valuing the time, should we use the wages of an apprentice or a specialist. If tasks are done simultaneously (such as cooking and childcare) should the cost of each be added, or only the cost of the 'primary' task? What is the 'primary' task? What is work and what is leisure? Is taking a child for a walk in the park 'work'?

The replacement cost model is superior to the service cost model. It eliminates the need to estimate the hours the housewife spends at each task she performs in the home. The wage rate necessary to hire someone to come into the home has all of these jobs embodied in a single wage. In legal matters it is a good measure of the damages suffered by the family because it is equal to the actual sum of money required by the family to hire a replacement for the housewife. However, there are problems associated with this form of imputation. Because of specialisation both in the household and in the market, there are types of household work a single market replacement cannot undertake. Again, the estimate is highly sensitive to the choice of a market replacement occupation. Market wages do not reflect differences in quality and efficiency between the household and the market. It has trouble accounting for overall differences in productivity. Preparation of a meal in the household might entail higher capital investments and lower labour costs than the preparation of the same meal in the market sector. Market processes are seldom identical to non-market processes: they can be alternatives rather than direct substitutes. Market enterprises are subject to monetary accountability such as scale economies, investment in labour saving devices and so on, whereas households are small
scale, personalised, with low overhead and distribution costs. The household's productive activities are determined to a certain extent by non-economic considerations. Empirical work shows that when substitute household workers' wages have been used as a basis for evaluation, urban-rural variations of those wage rates have yielded lower values for the product of rural households while their output in kind is greater than the output of urban households.

Both methods provide a figure which only tells us what value would have been produced had the same amount of work been performed in the market, but only if it had not been produced in the market. If the labour had been performed in the market, the value would decline drastically because of labour surpluses. Furthermore, labour market circumstances which are unrelated to household work bear on market wage rates, distorting the evaluation of non-market household output. Both approaches assign to home production prices which have been explicitly rejected by the household as a true measure of its productivity. The household could have bought the home services in the market but preferred not to do so either because they found the prices too high or the quality too low.
Bibliography: Apology

Histories of events as commonplace as housework require a broader scan of library shelves and archival boxes than is usual. The time invested in this work confirms our suspicions: women are everywhere. Female labour permeates every text. This bibliography is not intended to be a list of all the texts examined in the course of my research. Only material considered directly relevant to the central argument of this thesis has been included. Parliamentary Papers have been listed only when cited in footnotes. Contemporary articles (quoted in full in the footnotes) are too numerous to list separately, thus I have only listed the newspapers and periodicals examined. Where a newspapers or periodical series have been examined only for a selection of years, these dates are given. Secondary sources not referred to in the thesis have been omitted.

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Catholic Girls Insurance:
   No.1409 R Dublin, Catholic Girls Insurance
Co-Operative:
   No.989 R Leitrim, Ballinaglera
Consumers Co-Operative:
Co-Operative Agricultural Societies:
No.677 R Cavan, County Cavan
No.830 R Donegal, Templecreone
No.836 R Kilkenny, Kilkenny
No.924 R Donegal, Inniskeel
No.1000 R Donegal, Downstrands

Co-Operative Agricultural and Dairy Societies:
No.152 R Tipperary, Moycarkey
No.153 R Tipperary, Lower ormond
No.215 R Galway, Ardrahan
No.275 R Mayo, Mayo Abbey
No.280 R Mayo, Ballyhadreen
No.371 R Roscommon, St John’s
No.374 R Donegal, Pettigo
No.465 R Donegal, Drumholme
No.472 R Leitrim, Kiltoghert
No.542 R Limerick, Toher
No.547 R Tipperary, Thurles
No.560 R Cavan, Kilnaleck
No.633 R Monaghan, Corcaghan
No.638 R Monaghan, Ballinode
No.648 R Kerry, Busna
No.651 R Donegal, Inver
No.693 R Cork, Killowen
No.774 R Cavan, Kill
No.783 R Limerick, Kilmallock

Co-Operative Agricultural and Industrial Societies:
No.190 R Limerick, Kilmallock
No.916 R Tipperary, Tipperary

Co-Operative Beekeepers Societies:
No.567 R Galway, Ahacragh District
No.595 R Cork, Sugarloaf

Co-Operative Creamery Societies:
No.959 R Cavan, Poles
No.972 R Kilkenny, Bennettsbridge
No.1097 R Limerick, Bruree
No.1172 R Limerick, Kildimo
No.1230 R Tipperary, Centenary

Co-Operative Dairies:
No.109 R Kerry, Newtownards

Co-Operative Development and Transit Society:
No.1082 R Kilkenny, Callan

Co-Operative Farmer’s Society:
No.387 R Wexford, Ballybarney

Co-Operative Industries:
No.442 R Mayo, Ballyakeery
No.817 R Dublin, Dublin
No.1148 R Limerick, Shannon

Co-Operative Home Industries Societies:
No.591 R Wicklow, Dorard
No.615 R Meath, County Meath
No.666 R Wexford, New Ross
No.706 R Kings County, Moneyguyneen

Co-Operative Industrial and Agricultural Societies:
No.831 R Donegal, Templecrone
No.1349 R. Roscommon, Athlone
No.1459 R Mayo, Foxford
Co-Operative Lace Society:
   No.216 R Cork, Youghal
Co-Operative Poultry Societies:
   No.311 R Galway, Clonbrock and Castiegar
   No.353 R Cork, Newmarket
   No.471 R Limerick, Shanagolden and Foynes
   No.659 R Donegal, Sessiaghoneill
   No.705 R Limerick, Rathkeale
   No.795 R Kilkenny, North Kilkenny
   No.883 R Carlow, North Carlow
   No.1043 R Cavan, Ballyhaise
   No.1187 R Carlow, Borris
Co-Operative Poultry and Farm Produce:
   No.808 R Westmeath, Athlone
Co-Operative Store:
   No.10 R Cork, Shamrock
Co-Operative Wholesale:
   No.1081 R Dublin, Irish
Dun Emer:
   No.766 R Dublin, Dun Emer Industries
   No.767 R Dublin, Dun Emer Guild
Handspinners and Weavers:
   No.1190 R Donegal, North Donegal
Irish Agricultural Organisation:
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Irish Homestead:
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