THE STRUGGLE FOR SPECIAL VISA ALLOTMENTS FOR IRISH: THE IRISH IMMIGRATION REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE IRISH LOBBY FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

A dissertation presented

by

Amanda Crabb

to
The Department of Sociology and Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of
Sociology

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
March 2015
THE STRUGGLE FOR SPECIAL VISA ALLOTMENTS FOR IRISH: THE IRISH IMMIGRATION REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE IRISH LOBBY FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

by

Amanda Crabb

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities of Northeastern University
March 2015
ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines two Irish lobby groups, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (1987-1990) and the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (2005- ), each of which pushed for special visa allotments for Irish immigrants in the United States, Diversity Visas and E-3 Visas respectively. Data was collected from archives, interviews, social media sites, newspapers, and government documents and statistics. This research explores the organizational structure, strategic efforts both inside and outside of each organization, and justifications used to promote visa allotments for Irish. The history of Irish immigration, relevant United States legislation, and impact of a changing technological landscape are all examined.

In this study I found that the organization of each group differed vastly. The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform is a top down, ad hoc organization that has experienced three distinct stages, whereas the Irish Immigration Reform Movement was well organized with elected officials, branches, and official members. In addition, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement played a dual role of political and social activism. These differences are due in part to the political dilemmas faced by each group. A context of reception framework (labor market, governmental response, ethnic community, public opinion) is used to advance our understanding of how internal and external constraints impact the structure, strategy, and presentation of immigrant each lobby group. While each context is significant, the harsher political climate since 2001 has had a profound impact upon the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform. I conclude that the overall contexts of reception were more favorable for the Irish Immigration Reform Movement.
Acknowledgements

This project was guided by the committee of: Drs., Thomas Koenig, Gordana Rabrenovic, Mindelyn Buford, and Rachel Rosenblum. I thank each of them for their patience, comments, and valuable suggestions that improved this project. In particular thank you to Dr. Koenig, whose prompt and encouraging feedback motivated me to stay on track.

I would like to thank all the members of the Irish community who were part of this research. In particular, the women and men who took time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed. Thank you to my Irish friends who were always willing to answer my random questions about their experience as an immigrant and Irish culture or put me in touch with potential interviewees. A special thank you to one person who always found my questions odd, but still, he answered them. This project would have never launched if it was not for the Irish migrants who were willing to informally share their story with me over a pint. It was during these interactions that my curiosity about unauthorized Irish immigrants was piqued and ultimately led to this project. Each one of these experiences and people made this research richer.

This project would not have come to fruition if it was not for the support of my family and friends. Thank you to all my friends from Curry College. Without their support, willingness to discuss my research, read sections, meet for study dates this project would not have succeeded. In particular thank you Dr. Melissa Anyiwo, Dr. Katherine Morrison, Dr. Carrie Cokely, Dr. Becki Paynich, Dr. Jennifer Balboni, Dr. Sandra O’Neil, and Sarah Smith. I appreciate every moment that you spent listening to me rattle on about Irish immigrants.

Thank you to the Alabama committee (Tai Hicks, Jennifer Hodge, Dr. Anna Mitchell Mahoney) and all my Boston friends. No words can express how much I appreciate their love
and support. Thank you especially to Marc Sherman and Dr. Jeremy Furtado who always reminded me that I can do this and Jessica Tripp who was willing to be my partner in crime. Thank you to Tai Hicks for not only proofreading this project but for being one of my biggest supporters. The biggest thanks is owed to Dr. Anna Mitchell Mahoney. Without her texts, emails, phone calls, in person meetings where she reminded me that any time I felt like I was going off track I was actually right where I needed to be. Without her “Go Teams” this team would not have gone.

And finally my biggest supporter of all, my Mother. Without her love and belief that I can accomplish anything and everything this would not have been possible. She has always encouraged my academic pursuits and never doubted that I would find my way. The sacrifices that she has made for me are innumerable and each day I just aim to make her proud.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 2
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. 4
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................. 6
List of Charts ......................................................................................................................................... 9

**Chapter 1: Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 11
  Immigrant Lobby Groups .................................................................................................................... 11
  Purpose ................................................................................................................................................ 13
  Irish Immigration Reform Movement ................................................................................................. 14
  Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform ................................................................................................. 15
  Network and Community .................................................................................................................... 16
  Contexts of Reception ......................................................................................................................... 24
  Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 24
  Terminology .......................................................................................................................................... 25
  Chapter Preview .................................................................................................................................... 26
  Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................ 27

**Chapter 2: Literature Review and Methodology** .......................................................................... 28
  Social Movement ................................................................................................................................. 28
  Contexts of Reception ......................................................................................................................... 34
  Social Networks ................................................................................................................................. 40
  Methodology ......................................................................................................................................... 44

**Chapter 3: History of Irish Immigration and U.S. Immigration Legislation** ............................ 59
  Irish Immigration .................................................................................................................................. 60
  Reasons ................................................................................................................................................. 77
  Emotional Connection ........................................................................................................................... 81
  Legislation .............................................................................................................................................. 83
  Unauthorized Immigrants ..................................................................................................................... 101
Chapter 4: Irish Immigration Reform Movement.............................................. 106
  Structure ........................................................................................................ 109
  Strategic Efforts ............................................................................................. 117
  Justifications ................................................................................................. 136
Chapter 5: Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform.................................................. 155
  Structure ........................................................................................................ 157
  Irish Government ........................................................................................... 160
  Funding .......................................................................................................... 161
  Social Media .................................................................................................. 163
  Political Clout ................................................................................................ 167
  Three Stages ................................................................................................... 169
  Dissention ...................................................................................................... 181
  Justifications ................................................................................................. 185
  Contexts of Reception .................................................................................... 190
  Labor Market .................................................................................................. 191
  Receiving Government ................................................................................... 194
  Ethnic Community .......................................................................................... 200
  Public Opinion ............................................................................................... 207
Chapter 6: Findings and Analysis ...................................................................... 222
  Structure ........................................................................................................ 222
  Social Networks and Immigrant Support Organizations .................................. 225
  Political Context ............................................................................................. 228
  Three Stages of ILIR ....................................................................................... 230
  Other Ethnic Groups ...................................................................................... 233
  Justifications ................................................................................................. 236
  Irish Government ........................................................................................... 237
  Technology ...................................................................................................... 239
  Future Research ............................................................................................. 242
Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 246
Appendix A – Interview Schedules ........................................................................... 248
Appendix B – Irish Code ............................................................................................. 251
Appendix C – Sample letter and script ....................................................................... 252
References ..................................................................................................................... 253
List of Charts

**Chart 1**  Lexus Nexus Search Results  
**Chart 2**  Reviewed Hearings  
**Chart 3**  Class of Admission of Irish Immigrants to the US  
**Chart 4**  Irish Immigration Reform Movement Action Group Names and Descriptions  
**Chart 5**  List of Irish Immigration Reform Movement Branches and Year of Founding  
**Chart 6**  Irishvoices.blogspot.com Posts by Year  
**Chart 7**  Rates of Unemployment, January 1987-December 1990  
**Chart 8**  Rates of Unemployment, January 2005-October 2014  
**Chart 9**  Relevant Legislation by Party Votes  
**Chart 10**  Irish Legal Permanent Residents  
**Chart 11**  Irish Visa Types, 1987-1990  
**Chart 12**  Irish Visa Types, 2005-2013  
**Chart 13**  Thinking now about immigrants – that is, people who come from other countries to live here in the United States, in your view, should immigration be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?  
**Chart 14**  Overall, would you say most recent immigrants to the United States contribute to this country, or do most of them cause problems?  
**Chart 15**  Does the presence of illegal aliens in this country concern you a great deal, somewhat, or not at all?, How much do you personally worry about illegal immigration?  
**Chart 16**  Do you think immigrants mostly help the economy by providing low-cost labor, or mostly hurt the economy by driving wages down for many Americans?
Chart 17  Do you think illegal immigrants do more to strengthen the U.S. economy because they provide low-cost labor and they spend money, or do illegal immigrants do more to weaken the U.S. economy because they don't all pay taxes but use public services?

Chart 18  Do you think the immigrants coming to this country today mostly take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans don’t want?

Chart 19  Considering everything you know or have heard about United States immigration policies, do you think our policies need revisions, or are they about right as they are?

Chart 20  Do you think immigration policy in this country works pretty well and requires only minor changes, do you think it needs major changes, or do you think it needs to be completely rebuilt?

Chart 21  When it comes to…dealing with immigration, which party do you think will do a better job – the Democrat Party, the Republican Party, or both about the same? If you think that neither would do a good job, please just say so.

Chart 22  What should be the priority for dealing with illegal immigration in the U.S.: one, better border security and stronger enforcement of our immigration laws; OR, two, creating a way for illegal immigrants already here to become citizens if they meet certain requirements; OR, should BOTH be given equal priority?

Chart 23  Do you favor or oppose a law that forbids the hiring of illegal aliens?

Chart 24  Would you favor or oppose each of the following proposals…Imposing fines of tens of thousands of dollars on employers who hire illegal immigrants.

Chart 25  Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be towards illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States? Should the government deport all illegal immigrants back to their home country’ allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States in order to work, but only for a limited amount of time; or allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States and become U.S. citizens, but only if they meet certain requirements over a period of time?

Chart 26  Thinking about immigration into this country from various parts of the world, do you think the number of immigrants now entering the U.S. from each of the following areas is too many, too few, or about the right amount? …European countries.

Chart 27  ILIR Social Media Postings by Stage
Chapter One

Introduction

At the March 12, 2014, Irish Lobby Day on Capitol Hill, Ciaran Staunton, Co-founder and current President of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, announced that when people say “Happy St. Patrick’s Day,” the response should be “We’ll be a lot happier when Irish people can come legally to the United States” (Dunne 2014). He went on to say that the “No Irish Need Apply” sign which has been hung in the U.S. since 1965 needs to change. These sentiments are neither new nor is the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (“ILIR”) the first Irish organization to make such statements. Since 2005 the ILIR has been politicking for immigration reform that would be beneficial to Irish. In the late 1980s another group, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (“IIRM”), worked for the same thing. The IIRM was successful in their campaign when Diversity Visas were made permanent by the Immigration Act of 1990 (“1990 Act”).

This dissertation looks at these two social movement organizations, including their structure, strategic efforts, and justifications for special visas for Irish. Social Network and Context of Reception (labor market, receiving government, ethnic community, and public opinion) frameworks are used to ground how external factors impacted each group. The external factor of the receiving government and group leadership dynamics has had a significant impact upon the structure and strategic efforts of these two Irish organizations.

Immigrant Lobby Groups

While social movement literature is vast, few studies look at the structure of an immigrant social movement organization or focus on groups whose goal is to change national
legislation. Studies that look at immigrant social movement organizations have been on strategic efforts and framing of their message (Fujiwara 2005; Stephen 2008; Sziarto and Leitner 2010), niche-openings (Nicholls 2014), clout or establishment of an ethnic community (Kurien 2007; Lee 2007; Winders 2011), and impact upon local legislation (Steil and Vasi 2014; Vonderlack-Navarro and Sites 2015). In their 2008 study Faccini, Mayda, and Mishra found that the lobby efforts of pro- and anti-immigrant interest groups had a significant impact on changes to visa legislation. As their study was focused on employment visas, their sample was not limited to ethnic, immigrant-led interest groups but included union and labor interest groups as well.

Okamoto and Ebert (2010) found that political opportunities and resources both deter and encourage immigrant collective action events. While the percentage voting Democrat in a metropolitan area increased the probability of a protest event, the likelihood of a protest event decreased in metropolitan areas where immigrants had greater access to incorporation via citizenship, college education, and voting (Okamoto and Ebert 2010). The sample includes events that made claims for a specific ethnic community as well as those that addressed the broader immigrant community.

Past research has generally addressed one component of an immigrant social movement, which fails to uncover the multitude of dynamics and external factors that are involved in a social movement organization campaign. The Okamoto and Ebert (2010) study begins to address the literature gap as it recognizes the impact of external factors upon social movement organizations’ strategic efforts. My study builds upon this research by limiting the sample to one ethnic group. By examining the entirety of a social movement, we can better understand the effects of external factors upon the structure and strategic efforts of these organizations.
Purpose

The genesis of this research project began nearly ten years ago, due to location and personal life experiences. At the time I was living in one of the Boston suburbs where Irish migrants tend to settle. I found myself frequenting several local pubs where the majority of the clientele and bartenders were Irish. In the pub setting migrants not only informally shared their experiences with me, but many admitted that they were here illegally or had been illegal at one point. It was through these interactions with migrants in the pub that my interest in the topic was piqued and eventually led to this project. As I began to investigate where unauthorized Irish fit into the greater immigration debate I became increasingly interested in the formal, political Irish response. Exploring these formal Irish lobby groups became the object of this dissertation.

This research project begins to fill gaps in the literature by looking at two social movement organizations that had the same goal, special visa allotments for Irish, but are separated by 25 years. By focusing on these two lobby groups, I was able to compare and determine how the structure, strategic efforts, and justifications of the two groups differed and what external factors had the greatest impact upon the groups. IIRM and ILIR have both been included in previous academic literature however neither group has been the focus of a research project (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1990; Duffy 2014; Jacob 1992; O’Hanlon 1998). A significant difference between these two groups is their structure. While the IIRM had formal documentation and clearly established leadership roles, the ILIR is an ad hoc organization with a top-down structure.

The first research question addresses these differences: **How did the structure and leadership organization impact the strategic efforts of each group?** While IIRM and ILIR
had the same goal the two groups used different rationalizations. The second research question addresses this: **How are special visa allotments for Irish justified?** To answer this research question I first identify and explain the justifications used by each group. Then I examine the differences between the two groups including the factors that led to changes in their rationalization.

The second goal of this research is to provide insight into how external factors influenced each group. The technological landscape between the two groups is notably different. To account for the increase in access to and usage of technology I asked the following question: **How are social movement organizations impacted by the rise of the Internet?** The final research question addresses four specific factors: **How have the Contexts of Reception affected the efforts of each lobby group?** While this framework is typically used to discuss socioeconomic assimilation, it is my claim that this framework provides a useful lens to view how the external factors of the labor market, receiving government, ethnic community, and public opinion impact the structure, strategic efforts, and justifications of an immigrant social movement organization.

**Irish Immigration Reform Movement**

The Irish Immigration Reform Movement was formed in May 1987 by a group of concerned citizens from the County Cork Association in NYC. When Ireland’s economy fell into a depression during the mid-1980s, Irish began to migrate to the U.S. in large numbers. This cohort, many of whom were in the U.S. illegally, was referred to as the New Irish¹ (Black 1989; Sebben 1992). The strict employer regulations that were established by the 1986 Immigration

¹ The origin of the term New Irish is unknown, however it is believed that IIRM coined the term as they were one of the first groups to use it.
Reform and Control Act (“IRCA”) threatened to leave 135,000 Irish unemployed. The impact of these regulations upon the Irish community prompted the founding of IIRM (IIRM Archive Box 1, folder 3).

Their objectives were threefold: amnesty, establish a pathway for future flow, and address problems of the New Irish. To accomplish these objectives they worked with the Irish Government, Irish-American community, New Irish, other ethnic groups, and American citizens and legislators. New Irish had neither a vote in the U.S. nor a political voice in Ireland. They had nothing to lose by being vocal about the conditions of their legal status. The IIRM leaders leveraged this precarious condition of the New Irish to further the cause.

IIRM was a formal organization with a constitution and bylaws. The constitution defined the governing structure and established six action groups. The action groups were designed to divide and conquer tasks to make sure that all aspects of the cause were covered. Each branch was run by a steering committee that consisted of four elected officials: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a chairperson from each of the six action groups. The entire organization was governed by a national council which consisted of delegates from the steering committees of major branches. The national council was headed by a chairperson, who could speak for the whole of the organization. To become a member of IIRM, a person filled out an application form and paid yearly dues. By 1989, IIRM had expanded to branches in 17 cities and had 5,000 members.

Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform

The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform formed in December 2005 to provide an Irish voice to the greater immigrant social movement. The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act
of 2006, known as the McCain-Kennedy bill, included provisions of legalization for current unauthorized, but failed to address future flows (Staunton 2014a). Ciaran Staunton and Niall O’Dowd organized a community meeting in NYC with Bruce Morrison to discuss the McCain-Kennedy bill. Approximately 150 people attended (Staunton 2014a). After the meeting, Staunton and O’Dowd received calls from other Irish communities around the U.S. who were interested in the cause and “that is how we came” into existence (Staunton 2014a).

Like IIRM, their purpose was threefold: regularization of status, sustainable pathway for future flows, and encourage a culture of compliance with a fair immigration system (Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform 2012). ILIR is an ad hoc organization. They do not have a constitution and maintain little formal paperwork. The organization is governed by an executive board and advisory board. The executive board has fluctuated between three to five members over the years and is headed by a chairman and president. There are no official branches or members. Board members use established social networks to find constituents who are willing to participate in strategic efforts be it mailing a letter or participating in a Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. When a politician or state is targeted, an ILIR representative reaches out to that area’s local Ancient Order of Hibernians (“AOH”) and Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”) clubs for assistance (Staunton 2014a).

Networks and Community

Social networks provide migrants with material, financial, informational, and emotional assistance during the migration process (Boyd 1989; Choldin 1973; Gallo and Bailey 1996; Levitt 2001; Menjivar 2000). They are especially important for unauthorized immigrants who rely upon assistance from co-ethnics (Aroian 1993; Corcoran 1993; Kuo and Tsai 1986). The
Irish usage of social networks is well-documented (Aroian 1993; Christopher and Kulig 2000; Duffy 2014; Gleeson and Buttmer 2005). Corcoran (1993) and Lobo and Salvo (1998) both found that the New Irish readily used social networks to obtain employment or find housing. However, this wave was less likely than the 1950s wave to join formal networks such as County Associations and Hibernian societies. The lack of participation in formal societies has only become exacerbated with today’s cohort. This is due in part to technological advances that have made it possible for migrants to maintain a stronger connection with home through internet livestreams and Skype.

Access to preexisting social networks can impact social movement organization’s recruiting efforts and their ability to create cohesion (Klandermans and Oegma 1987; McAdam 1983; Snow et al 1986). IIRM formed from an established social network. This allowed them to form and build a membership base rapidly and have established resources at their ready. While ILIR did not form from an established social network, they used the executive board’s resources and networks to establish themselves within the community. In addition, they used social networks, in particular the AOH and GAA clubs, to garner constituents when needed. The usage of social networks by the two groups is significant. It impacts not only the structure but also strategic efforts and group cohesion.

Irish pubs have consistently functioned as an entry and focal point of interaction between newcomers, established migrants, and Irish visitors. The pub is a place where community bonding occurs, business is done, and the parameters of social and cultural life are defined (Corcoran 1993). Both IIRM and ILIR utilized the aspect of the pub as community center by using this locale to disseminate information and hold meetings and fundraisers.
IIRM played a dual role in the community, both political and social. During monthly public meetings a majority of topics consisted of social issues, such as how to obtain a driver’s license or open a bank account. These types of questions were entertained as there were limited resources available to migrants. Migrant supporting institutions function as a complement to immigrant social networks and help assist incoming and current migrants (Massey et al 1998). In the Irish community, migrant assisting organizations first appeared in 1987 with the founding of the Irish Pastoral Centre in Boston and in 1988 the founding of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center in NYC. The Emerald Isle Immigration Center was founded by members of IIRM. Even after the appearance of support organizations, IIRM continued to deal with social issues. Things are different for ILIR. Because of the prosperity that immigrant support organizations have established during the past 25 years, they have the luxury of dealing with only the issue of legislative reform. Irish support organizations exist in 10 U.S. cities. In 1996, a Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers was formed to represent the organizations that support Irish immigrants on a national level. Migrants are redirected to these support organizations with non-political questions.

**Contexts of Reception**

Portes and Böröcz (1989) state that a migrant’s assimilation is determined by the favorability of the four contexts of reception that they encounter upon arrival in the receiving country. These four interrelated contexts are conditions of the labor market, policies of the receiving government, characteristics of the ethnic community, and public opinion in the receiving country. When contexts are favorable, an immigrant group has more access to resources, a smoother integration into society, and the group’s social networks are able to assist
new co-ethnics. The two most important contextual changes between the IIRM and ILIR are the
government and ethnic community.

**Government**

The IIRM formed in response to legislation that was viewed to have created harsh
conditions for unauthorized Irish. IIRM claimed that one of the main reasons that Irish were in a
legal status predicament was the visa changes enacted by the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act (“1965 Act”).
The 1965 Act eliminated the visa quota system and established a system that preferences visas
based on family reunification and immigrant’s skills (Daniels 2004; Law 2002; Weissbrodt and
Danielson 2011). An unintended outcome of the 1965 Act was an increase in the number of
people migrating from Asia and Latin America. Prior to the 1965 Act, nearly 70% of immigrants
came from Europe or Canada; less than 30% were from Asia or Latin America (Bean et al 1990).
These percentages are now reversed. Approximately 80% of immigrants into the U.S. come from
Asia or Latin America, less than 15% coming from Europe (Motel and Patten 2013).

Irish and other European groups claimed that the 1965 Act was discriminatory towards
European immigrants (Jacob 1992; Ting 1995). Due to the lower migration rates in the decades
prior to the passing of the 1965 Act, Europeans found it difficult to migrate legally after the Act,
as they did not have access to a first generation contact (Daniels 2004; Hayes 2001; Lobo and
Salvo 1998). Prior to the 1980s, the last sizable wave of migration of Irish occurred in the 1950s.

When IIRM formed there was no larger social movement on immigration reform in place.
While the 1965 Act is the most oft-cited legislation by both IIRM and ILIR, the Immigration
Reform and Control Act of 1986 (“IRCA”) functioned as a catalyst for IIRM’s founding. IRCA
provided amnesty to 3million people however few of the recipients were Irish, or even European.
Seventy percent of the people who received amnesty were Mexican and another 20% came from non-European countries (Daniels 2004). Many of the New Irish did not migrate to the U.S. prior to the January 1, 1982 cutoff date and were therefore ineligible (Black 1989; Sebben 1992).

In response to IRCA and the continuing perception that the 1965 Act was discriminatory against European countries, IIRM campaigned for a Diversity Visa Program. This campaign was successful and these visas became permanent by the 1990 Act. To be eligible for a Diversity Visa, one must be a citizen from one of the 36 countries that was deemed to have been underrepresented since 1965 (Jacob 1992; Hethmon 2002; Law 2002). Irish citizens, those from the Republic and Northern Ireland, were on this list. The Diversity visa program was not without critics. Opponents saw this legislation as discriminatory, a return to the pre-1965 system as most Latin and Asian countries were not eligible for Diversity Visas. At congressional hearings Hispanic and Asian groups were in direct opposition to IIRM.

While IIRM started from a point of contention and worked with legislators to create legislation from scratch, the ILIR formed in response to proposed legislation, the McCain-Kennedy bill. During the tenure of ILIR, interest in immigration reform has waxed and waned. A social movement is impacted by the openness of the political environment and must adjust strategy accordingly (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Morris 1984). To account for the political changes during their tenure I have divided ILIR into three stages: 2005 to mid-2007, mid-2007 to 2012, and 2012 to present. In Chapter 5 I detail each stage and how strategic efforts and structure were adjusted. I will briefly introduce each stage below.

In the first stage CIR was prominent on the national stage. The proposed Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 failed to provide any
legalization provisions or visa reforms and would have classified all unauthorized immigrants as felons (Feldman 2013; Rosenblum 2011). This heavy enforcement legislation spurred action from within immigrant communities. The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, known as the McCain-Kennedy bill, was seen by the immigrant community as a more fair approach to immigration reform. While it included criminalizing aspects of migration and more deportations it also included a clause for “earned legalization” (Feldman 2013). ILIR was most active and community-driven during this stage in terms of meetings, fundraisers, Lobby Days, and dissemination of information. Additionally, the Irish community was the most active and invested during this stage.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform (“CIR”) discussions came to an end in mid-2007 when the bill failed to invoke cloture marking the beginning of the second stage of ILIR (Wasem 2003). It was at this point that they changed their message and began to politic for Irish specific visas. In 2011 two legislation that would have provided Irish with 10,500 E-3 visas were introduced, Charles Schumer’s (D-NY) Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2011 and the Irish Immigration Recognition and Encouragement Act of 2011 which was co-sponsored by Senators Scott Brown (R-MA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL). Both bills included an educational requirement but only Schumer’s bill provided a waiver for unauthorized Irish (Bolduc 2012). Neither legislation passed; however a provision to expand E-3 visas to include Irish is part of the 2013 immigration bill. During this stage ILIR became increasingly top-down in structure. Much of the lobbying was done by the executive board and little information was disseminated to constituents.

---

2 E-3 visas are trade visas that are currently only available to Australian citizens.
3 Korea has also asked for 10,500 E-3 visas in the 2013 the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act.
The third stage began in 2012 once CIR talks began again in earnest. In June 2013 the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act ("2013 Act"), sponsored by Schumer, passed in the Senate. This Act includes provisions on border security and enforcement, employment eligibility verification, revision of immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, and legalization of the unauthorized population (Bruno et al 2013; Feldman 2013). It was introduced to the House and referred to various subcommittees in October 2013. As of March 2015, this bill had not passed in the House. Once again, the greater immigration reform social movement has emerged to campaign for favorable legislation. While ILIR is still active in the movement, their voice has been quieter than it was during the 2005 to 2007 CIR time. They are choosing to maintain a lower public profile than they did during the first stage as they do not want to be seen as overkilling their part of the bill. Since the failure of CIR in 2007, there has been an overwhelming sense of defeat within the Irish community. It has been more difficult for ILIR to garner support.

When ILIR formed at the end of 2005, a social movement on immigration reform was already in place on a national stage. The ILIR founders wanted to make sure there was an Irish voice in the reform discussions. Since their inception, ILIR has worked with the wider immigration community. They have joined forces and participated in campaigns organized by other ethnic social movement organizations and use language that notes that all ethnic groups are in this fight together. This message of unity with other ethnic groups was not as present during IIRM. Some ethnic groups, Hispanic and Asian, stood in resistance to IIRM’s goal. The changing political context has necessitated that ILIR be more wide-ranging in their message. The
influence of other ethnic social movement organizations has increased. Irish influence has diminished.

*Ethnic Community*

The Irish ethnic community today is noticeably different from that of the 1980s. Between IIRM and ILIR’s tenures two notable events occurred: Celtic Tiger economy in Ireland and 9/11. From 1995 to 2008, Ireland experienced a phenomenal economic boom. During these years, which are known as the Celtic Tiger, more jobs and opportunities were created in Ireland and rates of emigration decreased. The booming economy led to a wave of Irish migrants returning home to take advantage of the increased economic opportunities. The Celtic Tiger came to an end in 2008 when the Irish economy collapsed into recession (Healy et al 2012).

In the U.S. the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in NYC led to increased efforts to control unauthorized immigration. Since 9/11, immigration issues have been increasingly linked to national security concerns (Hagan and Phillips 2008). Efforts to prosecute, deport, and prevent further unauthorized immigration have increased since 9/11 (Cochrane 2007; Koslowski 2011; Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011).

While legislation since 9/11 has not specifically targeted the Irish community, Irish who are unauthorized have inevitably been caught in the crossfire. The economic and political clout, which had protected unauthorized Irish immigrants from arrests and deportation, has been significantly weakened (Doherty 2002). While small in comparison to other nations, the rate of Irish being apprehended, removed, and returned has increased since 2001. The feeling of vulnerability and fear of deportation has become a real concern within the Irish community.
The rate of Irish leaving Ireland has increased since the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy. Today’s wave is similar to the New Irish wave as many are single and have some form of higher education (Glynn et al 2013; Sheridan 2012). One noticeable change is that today’s cohort is choosing new destinations. Irish have increasingly chosen to migrate to Canada or Australia where there is employment and visas, rather than to the U.S. where contexts are less favorable.

Methodology

This mixed-methods case study uses a variety of sources. The main source of information for IIRM came from the Irish Immigration Reform Movement Records Collection housed at the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University in NYC. This collection contains IIRM correspondence, notes, organizational and lobbying materials. Additionally, oral and written statements and testimonies from congressional hearings were used. An IIRM representative testified or entered a written statement at five different hearings between October 1987 and September 1989. Testimonies from IIRM allies were also reviewed.

For ILIR, two groups of interviews were the primary source. In the first group, purposive sampling was used to target individuals knowledgeable about the ILIR. This group consisted of members of the executive board, immigrant attorneys, and people from Irish immigrant support organizations. The second group of participants came through snowball sampling and included members of the Irish community. Another source was ILIR’s website, irishlobbyusa.org, and their social media sites: Irishvoices Blog (2005-2010), Facebook page (2010- ), and Twitter account (2013- ). Finally, newspaper articles from U.S. papers, Irish ethnic newspapers in the U.S., and Irish newspapers were used. To examine the demographics of the Irish ethnic
community and visa usage statistical data was obtained from the Yearbook of Immigration Statistics published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Ireland’s Central Statistics Office, and the 2013 Émigré Project published by the University College Cork.

There are several limitations to this study. As this is a case study, results are not necessarily applicable to other ethnic lobby groups. A second limitation is that only two of the five executive board members participated. While I reached out to every member of the executive board and several advisory board members contact was made with only three people. One person refused to be interviewed. The third limitation is that there is no finality to ILIR. They are still active in their lobbying efforts and continue to put out materials and hold events.

**Terminology**

When discussing the unauthorized immigrant population, wording is an important issue, especially as migrants move between illegal and legal status fluidly. The variety of terms that are attached to migrants – unauthorized, undocumented, irregular, clandestine, sans papières – indicates the intensely politicized nature of this topic. The term undocumented may not be accurate as some migrants have documents, just not the right ones; irregular implies that regular migration is orderly; and clandestine suggests that they are hidden population, which is often not the case (Haines and Rosenblum 1999). The most contentious term, illegal, has come under fire from human rights organizations and immigrant communities. The term is seen as dehumanizing; a person’s entire identity is determined solely by their legal status. Over the past few years academic scholars, the AP Stylebook, and major news media have stopped using the term illegal. All efforts have been made to use the preferred term in academia, unauthorized, in this study as it
most accurately describes the population (Anderson and Ruhs 2010). However, when needed unauthorized is used interchangeably with illegal, undocumented, clandestine or irregular.

**Chapter preview**

I address the research questions in the following chapters. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework for the project is established. Here I present how context of reception is used to frame the discussion about external factors impact upon social movement organizations. In addition, I address how Irish migrants utilize social networks. The second part of Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the study including a description of the research design and limitations. Chapter 3 begins with historical background on Irish immigration, including economic and cultural reasons why Irish migrate and their emotional relationship to migration. The Irish have been migrating to the U.S. in significant numbers for more than 150 years. This background information is important to understanding IIRM and ILIR. This chapter also provides information on relevant immigration legislation from the past 50 years. In Chapters 4 and 5, I provide detailed information on the Irish Immigration Reform Movement and the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform respectively. In each of these chapters, I examine the organizational structure, the strategic efforts that they employed, and the justifications used by each group. At the end of Chapter 5, I provide a comparative analysis of the group’s contexts of reception. In Chapter 6, I summarize my findings and return to the research questions. In this final chapter, I discuss the significance of the structure of each group and the impact that the changing political context had upon the strategic efforts of ILIR. Finally, in this chapter I outline recommendations for future research.
Conclusion

Scholars who have examined immigrant lobby groups have tended to focus on a larger group of grievances, both social and political, and look at the community-at-large, rather than the efforts of one specific lobby group. While the main goal of this project is to build upon literature on immigrant social movement organizations it also expands the literature on Irish immigration to the U.S. There is much written about Irish migrants but few of the studies focus on newer cohorts, the 1980s to present. Particularly, there is little academic writing since the late 1990s which detailed the experiences of the New Irish (Almeida 2001; Aroian 1993; Cochrane 2007; Corcoran 1993; Hayes 2001; Lobo and Salvo 1998; O’Hanlon 1998).

While each lobby group has the same goal, additional visas for Irish, the journey to achieve that goal is markedly different. The structure of each organization plays a significant part in identifying what types of strategies each group uses as well as the way that they justify special visa allotments for Irish. ILIR is a less cohesive group than IIRM. This is in part due to a top-down structure but also reflects the impact of external factors. Technological advances, the Irish ethnic community, and political contexts have reinforced the formation and endurance of a top-down structure.
Chapter Two

Literature Review and Methodology

In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical framework for the study. As the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (“IIRM”) and Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (“ILIR”) are both social movement organizations, I begin by introducing relevant components of social movement literature. Next, I establish the main theoretical framework, context of reception. The four contexts that Portes and Borocz (1989) identify will frame the discussion of how external factors impacted the two groups. In the last part of this section, I address social network literature. In the second part of this chapter, I explain the methodological orientation. The sources used in this research come from archives, interviews, newspaper articles, social media sites, congressional testimonies and hearings, and governmental statistics. The chapter ends with a discussion on limitations and biases and an introduction to the two case studies.

Social Movement

Social movements are a form of collective action that aims to change some element of the social structure of a society (McCarthy and Zald 1977). A social movement organization is a component of the movement; it is a formal organization that identifies its goals with those of the greater movement (McCarthy and Zald 1977). In addition to being oriented towards changing a goal or grievance, social movement organizations create campaigns that are carried out in the public setting and entail some form of organizational structure (Tilly 2004). While both IIRM and ILIR are organizations within a larger immigration reform social movement, the movement during ILIR’s tenure is larger, and more active, than it was during the time of IIRM.
While much discussion in the literature has been on why social movements form, Resource Mobilization theorists ask how they form. Grievances always exist therefore the formation of a social movement depends upon resources, group organization, linkages to and dependence on other groups, and a cost benefits ratio (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Resources are defined as money, time, members, and communication networks. In addition, sustainability and success of a movement is impacted by the political processes in which movements are enmeshed; the public and political arena must be accepting of societal change. The combination of an open political environment and successful management of resources lead to successful campaigns by farm workers and civil rights movement (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Morris 1984).

Participation in a social movement organization is a rational decision made by weighing the costs and benefits to participations including looking to see if the movement participation falls in line with their identity (Klandermans 1984). Another factor that influences participation is if a specific recruiting attempt is made towards the potential member (Klandermans 1984; Klandermans and Oegma 1987; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Snow et al 1986). Snow et al (1986) identify four main ways to recruit members: face to face with strangers in public settings, via mass communication, face to face in private settings (e.g. door to door), and social networks that are sympathetic to the movement’s goals. Pre-existing social ties and social networks are important during recruitment and in maintaining solidarity among the members once they become part of the movement (Klandermans and Oegma 1987; McAdam 1983; Snow et al 1986). Organizations with social ties form more rapidly and use fewer resources than a group of unattached individuals as the movement organization is able to use preexisting networks lines of communication, places of assembly, leaders, and basic organizational and administrative
resources (Crossley 2002; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Morris 1984; Snow et al 1986). In these cases, it is less about people coming together and more about the people who have already gathered changing an established network into a movement (Crossley 2002). Both IIRM and ILIR used social networks to form, recruit, and further their goals.

Since the 19th century, organizations have shifted to be more professional in nature, which means having a small group of professional leaders and a large but mainly passive membership base who only participate in the rare mass public demonstration (Tarrow 1998). In their renowned article McCarthy and Zald (1977) identify the various roles in social movement organizations. The member base consists of adherents, who are individuals and organizations that believe in the goals of the movement, and constituents who provide resources, e.g. time or money. In addition, there are conscience adherents and conscience constituents who have the same roles as adherents and constituents, but do not stand to benefit directly from the success of the movement (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Decisions of the movement are made by the cadre, who devote substantial time and resources to the organization. Those who give time intermittently to organizational tasks are workers. Transitory teams are composed of workers who have been assembled for a specific task. Members of transitory teams, which are often led by cadre members, tend to have more extensive involvement than adherents and constituents (McCarthy and Zald 1977).

Gamson (1990) notes that there are three variables that impact the success of an organization: bureaucracy, centralization of power, and factionalism. Bureaucracy helps movement organizations be prepared to call members into action when needed, “By creating a structure of roles with defined expectations in the place of diffuse commitments, a challenging
group can better assure that certain necessary tasks will be routinely performed. It gives the challenging group a higher readiness for action” (Gamson 1990, p91). The three minimum characteristics of a bureaucratic group is that they possess a written document which states the purpose and provisions for operation, maintain a formal list of members, and possess three or more levels of internal divisions (Gamson 1990). In this study, IIRM fits into this category, but ILIR does not. More detail on the structure of each organization will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The second factor, centralization of power, is when there is a single center of power within the organization. This can come in the form of a single leader, executive committee, or national board. Both IIRM and ILIR had well-established power structures that were centralized in the form of a National Council for IIRM and an Executive Board for ILIR. The third variable, factionalism, arises in an organization in the form of disagreements on strategy, tactics, and goal prioritization (Gamson 1990). IIRM had little dissention within the organization; however ILIR had several challengers.

Technological advancements have made communication easier between members and leaders as news and questions can be shared through mail, email, and the internet (ie newsletters, social media). However, while technology has reduced communication cost, increased geographic range, and linked participants with other users of the technology, it has also separated participants from nonusers of the technology thereby excluding people who are unable to access new forms of technology (Tilly 2004). Tilly (2004) warns that too much emphasis has been placed on technological advances and, that while technology has changed social movements, political and organizational contexts continue to have a greater effect. Face to face interactions
must be recognized and appreciated as technology cannot substitute the personal network ties that are created in these face to face interactions (Hanagan 1998).

Besides the organizational structure of social movement organizations, strategies, tactics, and resource disbursements affect the success of movements (Gamson 1990; Martin 2007). In the past forty years, the use of non-contentious forms of collective action, such as petitions and peaceful demonstrations, has increased (Tarrow 1998). New media (i.e. faxes, emails, and the internet) has changed the way that tactical strategies are employed as online mobilization is possible and plausible (Della Porta and Diani 2006). Effective tactics are those that can be employed by masses of people, do not require day to day work of members, and gain media publicity (Della Porta and Diani 2006; Morris 1984; Tarrow 1998). The goal is to build collective action within the organization, mobilize supporters, and transform the public and political elite into sympathizers, or even participants. The choice of tactics is influenced by interorganization support and resources (McCarthy Zald 1977).

Strategies need to be altered according to the openness of the larger political environment (McAdam 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1998). Movements need to be able to commit resources and devise strategies to push their demands when political opportunities create political leverage (McAdam 1983). When a favorable governing coalition is in power, a reform movement can offer electoral support in exchange for support of the movement’s goals (Jenkins 1983).

Identity symbols can be used to motivate participants, recruit new members, or be used to transport their message to the public. This includes the use of songs, slogans, and flags to identify themselves and the cause to the public (Staggenborg 1998). Movements must negotiate
how they want to present themselves to the public, framing their message (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Organizations can present themselves as a group of persons who are deprived of rights and are fighting for that specific cause or as a cross section of the public who are working to benefit all members of the general population (Tilly 2004). Snow et al (1986) point to the peace movement who framed “their mobilization appeals in the language of cherished democratic principles” (p 469). This frame redefined the movement’s public interest in such a way that the cause was put forth as not just beneficial to the movement but that it was in the best interest of the country.

Tilly (2004) uses WUNC (Worthiness-Unity-Numbers-Commitment) displays to explain how social movement organizations create identity claims and show them to the larger public. Social movement organizations show Worthiness through a neat appearance and the presence of dignitaries and Unity through matching attire, marching together, and via songs and symbols. Numbers refers to the headcount of people who are willing to sign petitions and provide a constituent voice. Finally, Commitment is that members are devoted to the cause enough to brave weather and visibly resist repression (Tilly 2004).

Worthiness of Irish was illustrated by both IIRM and ILIR through their justifications. Irish immigrants are respectable and are here to work. They want to become part of American society. Unity was illustrated by each group through t-shirts and buttons with slogans and theme songs. The Number variable of this equation is where the two groups differ. IIRM had official branches and memberships, a more consistent constituency. On the other hand, ILIR has neither a formal process of creating branches nor membership applications. These numbers fluctuate, accessed when needed. Both groups have illustrated Commitment through campaigns of
substantial proportion, i.e. petitions, postcards, Lobby Days. Commitment was also displayed for IIRM by participation in monthly meetings, fundraisers, and events. For ILIR, it is less about events and more about social media. At no point in either campaign have members had to visibly resist repression. The most tenuous part for some participants is risking being caught if they are out of status.

**Contexts of Reception**

Traditional assimilation theorists suggest that, with time, immigrants enter into the mainstream (Gordon 1964; Park and Burgess 1969; Warner and Srole 1945). However, segmented assimilation theorists acknowledge that different factors such as immigrant skills, resources, and social reception determine the way that newcomers are incorporated into the host country (Hirschman 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1994; Waters 1994). Portes and Borocz (1989) point to four contexts of reception that impact incorporation: the labor market, policies of the host government, characteristics of their own ethnic community, and public opinion in the host country. Immigrant groups who experience a favorable context are able to capitalize on resources and influence the host political system (Portes and Borocz 1989). When contexts are not favorable, an ethnic group will be less able to integrate into the socioeconomic or political mainstream of the host country. Recent studies have expanded the idea of contexts of reception to discuss the effect of changing race relations in new destinations (Marrow 2005), influence of media (Chavez 2001; Padin 2005), newer versus older countries of immigration (Tsuda 2011), how contexts vary within a nation (Marrow 2005; Stepick and Stepick 2009; Xiong 2013), effect upon naturalization rates (Bloemraad 2002; Van Hook et al 2006), and role of a city’s history and culture (Landolt 2008). Applications of context of reception theory have
tended to focus on socioeconomic integration and less on political participation. Using this framework will enable a better understanding of factors that impact the resources (skills, money, knowledge) that are available to the ethnic community, and in turn the two lobby groups.

Demand for specific kind of labor, wage differentials, and current economic conditions are parts of the labor market (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Positive reception is when an ethnic group is viewed as reliable, motivated, or capable of performing work in certain fields. Portes and Borocz (1989) note that working class immigrants seldom meet privileged contexts unless they are part of an advantaged flow. When contexts are favorable ethnic employers are able to provide preferential treatment to co-ethnics in hiring practices and offer employment to unskilled, low skilled, or unauthorized members of the community. Within the Irish community, the practice of hiring from within the community has translated into a higher concentration in healthcare and childcare for women, construction for men, and hospitality (i.e. bar and restaurant) for both men and women (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1993; Hayes 2001). Ethnic groups who encounter unfavorable contexts are less able to support working class members.

The second context is the host government. Governmental policy can determine the size of the flow and the form it will take. Regular legal migrant flows can only exist with governmental consent, however in some instances unauthorized immigration occurs with “tacit official consent” (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, p 93). Numerous studies have shown that unauthorized Irish have experienced this tacit official consent as authorities are aware of the population but have not targeted them (Almeida 2001; Aroian 1993; Corcoran 1993; Daniels 2004; Hayes 2001). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) point to three governmental responses: exclusion, passive acceptance, and active encouragement. While exclusion precludes legal
immigration and forces immigrants into an underground existence, passive acceptance neither facilitates nor impedes the process of migration. Since 1965, Asians have been the beneficiaries of a passive acceptance reception in the U.S., while Latinos, Mexicans in particular, have faced more exclusionary receptions (Cornelius 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). The negative reception received by Mexicans has led to them reducing their expectation of what is possible for them to achieve in the U.S. (Portes 2000). Mexican incorporation into skilled employment and political integration has been slow.

The third response is when the government takes active steps to encourage a flow from a particular country. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) state that since the 1970s active governmental intervention has been restricted to selected refugee inflows. I am claiming that Irish have also experienced active encouragement. Diversity Visas provided a solution for unauthorized Irish who resided in the country, giving them the opportunity to come out of the shadows and integrate within society. While the E-3 visa campaign has not been successful, as of yet, these visas have been written into current comprehensive immigration reform legislation. If legislation is passed that includes Irish eligibility for E-3 visas, the Irish would once again receive active encouragement to migrate to the U.S. Continuing this argument other ethnic groups also receive active encouragement. Since 2005, Australians have received active encouragement in the form of E-3 visas.

An established ethnic community is able to cushion incoming migrants and protect them from outside prejudice and initial economic difficulties (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In the case of favorable reception, ethnic communities are an asset, not a liability (Portes and Borocz 1989). Stepick and Stepick (2009) found that the favorable reception that Cubans received in Miami
empowered them to create a social, economic, and political environment where speaking Spanish was not a negative attribute but an advantage. Many Cubans who immigrated after 1965 settled in Miami. In this local area, being an immigrant or child of an immigrant was not demeaning, but rather a point of pride. The power of the Cuban ethnic enclave was multiplied by their geographical concentration in South Florida. Cubans used cultural capital, numbers, and economic sway to empower co-ethnics within the political arena (Portes and Borocz 1989). Both Democrats and Republicans have sought the votes of this community and supported Cuban candidates, which suggest that ethnic groups who build political resources are likely to be outreached to and mobilized by established political actors (Xiong 2013). The Irish experience is akin to the Cuban experience in Miami. As discussed in the previous chapter, Irish were able to use resources in the late 1800s to influence and enter the political arena and were courted for their votes by Democrats.

In their study comparing two Northeast cities, Jaworsky et al (2012) found that the culture of a city created a local context of reception. Immigrants who arrived in Portland, Maine were welcomed and cultural diversity was accepted, while in Danbury, Connecticut there was fear and concern over the entering migrant population. Local culture impacted the city’s governmental policies and public opinion of the residents (Jaworsky et al 2012). In Portland, migrants were viewed as a way to revitalize the economy. Increased diversity was celebrated and used as a platform to grow a tourism industry (Jaworsky et al 2012) On the other hand, immigrants were viewed as threats in Danbury and anti-immigrant movements have grown.

While the Jaworsky et al study, and the Cuban example detail local, rather than national, both are salient to this study. IIRM and ILIR are based out of NYC with local chapters across the
country. These chapters are mainly concentrated in areas where Irish have what I call a multiplied favorable context. Nationally, Irish have a favorable context, but in local areas where Irish have history and geographical concentration context is even more favorable. The multiplied favorable context functions on several levels. It shelters an ethnic group, at least partially, from the national contexts that may be unfavorable. Another function is that it fosters a local culture where being part of an ethnic group is an asset. This instills members of the community with the belief that they can have a positive impact upon the local economy, social scene, and government. Cubans in Miami are another example of a multiplied favorable context.

The final context is public opinion in the host country. Attitudes towards immigrants are shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors (Hix and Noury 2007). In favorable receptions immigrants are seen as being a part of the society and welcomed. When contexts are not favorable, immigrants are viewed as being a political threat or bringing disharmony to the nation (Jaret 1999). Since 9/11, American nativism and anti-immigrant sentiments have increased. Hagan and Phillips (2008) argue that for the public controlling immigration has less to do with deterring illegal crossings and removing immigrants than it does with symbolically reasserting national and territorial sovereignty.

Anti-immigrant sentiment is framed around unauthorized immigrants and immigrants of color (Buckler et al 2009; Chavez and Provine 2009; Jaret 1999; Johnson 2007; Kim et al 2011). Specifically today’s anti-immigrant sentiment often translates into Anti-Mexican sentiment who are assumed to have illegally crossed the border (Jaret 1999; Johnson 2007; Stepick and Stepick 2009). Puig et al (2009) claim that at the heart of the anti-immigrant debate is America’s self-identity as a melting pot. Today’s migrants compartmentalize their identity; they simultaneously
incorporate and reject norms of U.S. culture. This ambivalence has led to distrust and resentment by native born Americans (Puig et al 2009). The American public has consistently viewed the way that the government handles immigration negatively, especially in regards to unauthorized immigrants (Lapinski et al 1997; Segovia and DeFever 2010). Polls also reveal that Americans continue to view Europeans in a positive light and believe that European immigration is at about the right level (Daniels 2004; Lapinski et al 1997; Segovia and Defever 2010).

Donata and Armenta (2011) claim that contexts of reception are more complex and contradictory for today’s unauthorized immigrant than they were in the past. While unauthorized immigrants have some protection under U.S. laws, there has been an increase in state and local governments passing restrictive legislation geared towards unauthorized persons. Unauthorized immigrants inhabit a liminal space as they are no longer part of the society they left and they are unable to fully incorporate into the society around them. Their status affects their emotional and physical health and leaves them with limited access to social services and little redress when they are victims of crime or human rights violations (Aroian 1993; Kim 2009). Context of reception generates “a plurality of experiences between and within immigrant groups” (Menjivar 2000, p 235). Even when reception is favorable for the ethnic group as a whole, individual identities impact personal reception. The status of being unauthorized affects one’s personal reception, making the reception less favorable than it is for the ethnic group as a whole. One way to help reduce the psychological distress of living in a state of fear is through social networks.
Social networks

Social networks are important in sustaining migration flows (for example by providing information, accommodation and employment for incoming migrants) and provide an important link between the individual actor and the structural context that fashions migration flows. If we are to explain an individual’s decision to migrate we must combine accounts of structural context (in which structure is seen as both constraining and enabling) with situational, micro-level misunderstandings. (Kofman, et al 2000 p.28)

Social networks are cross-border ties between family, friends, and co-ethnics. These networks provide economic, informational, and emotional assistance before, during, and after a migration. They affect a migrant’s decision to migrate, settlement patterns, employment, housing, and socialization (Boyd 1989; Gallo and Bailey 1996; Hagan 1998; Menjivar 2000; Vertovec 2003). In addition, they help reduce the psychological costs to migrate by reconstructing family and friendship structures that existed in the home country and provide a sense of community (Banerjee 1983; Delaney and MacRaild 2005; Gleeson and Buttimer 2005; Jenkins 2005; Lever-Tracy and Holton 2001; Levitt 2001; Vertovec 2003). Using social network theory allows researchers the ability to explore how individuals are interdependent upon co-ethnics and to view individual action within the context of larger structural configurations (Galaskiewicz and Wasserman 1994).

Networks are not static institutions, but are in constant flux. Their structure and needs change as new members arrive (Bashi 2007; Hagan 1998; Menjivar 2000; Vertovec 2003). The size and density, or extent to which members know each other, factors into the stability and permanence of the network. Networks that have members in several different social networks (e.g. family or political affiliations, club memberships) will stratify and increase the resources available to the whole network (Vertovec 2003). If no new members arrive, a network can
weaken and access to resources can wane or disappear (Levitt 2001; Menjivar 2000).

Maintaining a connection to the home country is essential. If migrants transfer political and economic loyalties to the host country, the network can weaken (Levitt 2001; Teitelbaum 2000).

The Irish usage of social networks has been well established (Aroian 1993; Christopher and Kulig 2000; Gleeson and Buttmer 2005; Lobo and Salvo 1998). A facilitant to migration is the influence of friends at home or friends and relatives abroad, which often gives rise to chain migration. Corcoran (1993) found that most of the New Irish had a social network in place when they arrived in NYC, especially unauthorized Irish who are unable to access formal institutional support. These networks were used to obtain employment, housing, and were a way to maintain ethnic identity. Established Irish provided newcomers with employment and in turn the New Irish breathed new life into the social network and neighborhood (Corcoran 1993).

In an interview with the researcher Siobhan, a previously unauthorized immigrant, spoke to the depth and various uses of social networks by Irish. Prior to her migration two of her older brothers had lived in Boston for a time.

The friends they made then become automatically your friends because of that connection, you know what I mean? So through them I got a job and that’s how, there’s just this network of Irish people that you automatically get to know because your older brother knew them and it’s almost like you are related somehow, but it’s not it just seems that way because you have that closeness without even knowing each other. You know what I mean? They take care of you and stuff and whatever and make sure you have got a job and invite you over for Easter and things because you weren’t home, you couldn’t go home. (Siobhan 2013)

Siobhan’s brothers’ prior migration lessened her migration costs, as she was able to use the network to find employment and build sense of community.
A place where Irish social networks are fostered is the pub. The pub serves as a focal point of interaction, community bonding, place to do business, and an entry point for new arrivals into the community (Corcoran 1993). Pubs run parallel to bodegas and social clubs that other groups use for ethnic socialization. Within the pub, the parameters of social and cultural life are defined (Corcoran 1993). Bartenders are keepers of information about jobs, provide a place for workers to cash their checks, and facilitate social network connections and growth. Extending the bartender role, many Irish pubs in Boston have *The Irish Emigrant* newspaper readily available for patrons to read. This paper contains information about happenings in Ireland as well as the local Irish community, including a help wanted and housing classifieds section. Another culturally based social network is the Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”). Being involved with the GAA opens the doors for employment, housing opportunities, and socialization (Corcoran 1993). New members in the GAA typically are newly-arrived migrants, who tend to be younger. The GAA has been away to keep Irish social networks refreshed.

Context of reception influences the viability and decisions made by immigrant social networks. “All ethnic groups seek to protect and promote their own, but how they do so varies significantly across these situations” (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, p 95). Favorable context positively affect the dynamics of social networks as members have access to better resources. Favorable governmental policy often results in chain migration (Boyd 1989). As discussed in the previous section, favorable contexts facilitate co-ethnic employment that is fostered within the social network (Gallo and Bailey 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). When contexts are not favorable social networks become more important as they provide a safety net for newcomers.
(Palloni et al. 2001). However, when contexts are not favorable it is more difficult for a social network to access resources and be able to incorporate new members.

Menjivar (2000) found that the stability of Salvadoran networks was impacted by the opportunities and context of reception that each wave encountered. Contexts of reception “determines if they will have access to the goods and services of society, or if they will become some of its most vulnerable members” (Menjivar 2000, p. 156). One of the most important resources was a friend or family connection who would assist with information, economic support, and housing. The few number of Salvadoran business owners was not large enough to create an ethnic economic enclave that could support and employ new arrivals. This impacted Salvadorans ability to send remittances home. Menjivar’s findings fall in line with Landolt (2001) who also found that the unfavorable government and labor market impacted Salvadoran network assistance to new arrivals and remittances to El Salvador.

In addition, Menjivar (2000) found that contexts impacted the relationship between established and newer arrivals, the former group having experienced more favorable conditions. These two groups, which differed in class background and political ideology, did not co-mingle. These differences impacted the type and degree of assistance given to new arrivals by established migrants and hindered the creation of an ethnic enclave. Corcoran (1993) found a similar circumstance within the Irish community in NYC. While the two groups interacted with one another, it was limited and the established Irish approached the New Irish with ambivalence. As one of Corcoran’s (1993) interviewees said, “We're using them, and they're using us” (p. 131).

Another salient part to Menjivar’s (2000) study is the idea of reciprocity, people should help one another and that payment for assistance is expected. Again, contexts factor in as during
unfavorable times repayment was difficult and put strains upon relationships. Reciprocity and solidarity continues a circular flow of resources (Faist 2000). I point to the notion of reciprocity as I foresee this idea factoring into justifications of IIRM and ILIR. Several interviewees noted how even though they are not impacted by legislation that they support and want to aid co-ethnics who may need the help.

Migrant supporting institutions complement migrant networks (Massey et al 1998). Formal networks, such as Hibernian Societies, help establish immigrants’ ethnicity and cultural awareness within the community through political and social involvement (Delaney and MacRaild 2005; Gleeson and Buttimer 2005). Churches and other private groups were able to pick up some of the resources that family and friend networks were unable to provide during an unfavorable reception for Salvadorans (Menjivar 2000). These formal organizations are of increasing importance in times when information ties are weak (Schrover 2006). Choldin (1973) found that organizations were accessed less frequently than family and friend networks and that when a migrant did seek assistance from an organization it was typically within their ethnic group. Menjivar (2000) found that Salvadoran migrants befriended people who work with migrant organizations and personalize the relationship so that they could call upon them outside the structure of the organization. Within the Irish community migrant organizations that aid Irish immigrants have been around since the late 1980s.

Methodology

This mixed methods research addresses how different external factors, such as contexts of reception and technology, impact immigrant lobby groups. The research questions were best addressed by using a comparative case study format. Case studies allow for an in-depth
examination and formulation of an understanding of how a person, event, or, organization operates (Berg 2004; Saldana 2011). The case is often chosen for its unique nature to the research topic. By focusing on a single phenomenon, the researcher can uncover the interactions of the significant factors that are characteristics of the phenomenon (Berg 2004). This case study can be used to draw inferences on how immigrant lobby groups function within the U.S. political system.

This dissertation is primarily qualitative in nature; however quantitative data is used to strengthen the argument. Qualitative resources provided the data needed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the two groups. However, the best way to situation each time frame, in particular demographics of the community, public opinion, and labor market in the U.S. and Ireland is through quantitative data. My research questions are explained below.

**How did the structure and leadership organization impact the strategic efforts of each group?**

IIRM had formal documentation, clearly established leadership roles, and frequent in-person meetings. On the other hand, the ILIR is an ad hoc organization with a top down structure. Leadership roles and membership are less defined and meetings are sporadic. This research question addresses how the type of structure is precipitated or reinforced by external factors. To answer this question I drew upon archival data and interviews.

**How are special visa allotments for Irish justified?**

The Irish have been active in U.S. politics since the late 1800s. In addition, the Irish are one of the few European groups who have been consistently and publicly active in immigration reform.
Both IIRM and ILIR have focused on Irish specific legislation and broader, more systemic reform. Within this question I explore the similarities and differences between the two groups rationalization for favorable Irish legislation. Archival data, interviews, social media postings, and newspaper articles were used to answer this question.

**How are immigrant social movements impacted by the rise of the Internet?**

A quarter of a century passed between the tenure of the two groups. During that time modes of communication changed radically. In particular the usage of the internet has changed the way people interact in the world. This question explores how the changing technological landscape has impacted ILIR’s operations, communications, strategic efforts, and cohesion. Social media sites were the primary source used to answer this question.

**How have the Contexts of Reception affected the efforts of each lobby group?**

I used Portes and Borocz’ theoretical framework, contexts of reception, to determine if any one context has more impact than another and how the differences between the two times impacted the strategic efforts, justifications, and structure of each group. Archival data, newspaper articles, statistical data were all used to answer this question.

*What I expect to find*

I hypothesize that the justifications of the two reform movements will fall into two categories: Historical/Emotional and Acclimation. Historical/Emotional addresses two points. The first is that Irish have been migrating to the United States for centuries. The largest wave occurring in the 1800s, nearly a century before post-1965 Act groups began arriving. I expect that each group will readily assert that the Irish helped build the U.S. The second prong of this justification is that Irish
ethnicity is the second most claimed heritage in the United States, after German. Roughly 36.9 million Americans claim an Irish heritage (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). The Irish are a part of the fabric of the U.S. in a way that most other groups cannot claim. I suspect that historical/emotional reasoning will be used by each group to justify why Irish should be provided with special visa allotments; it is their due.

The second justification, Acclimation, focuses on how Irish immigrants successfully assimilate into the United States. Irish do not have barriers that other groups have; they are white and speak English. They readily find employment, do not cause trouble, and do not disrupt the cultural fabric of the U.S.

Archives

The primary source of information for the IIRM was obtained through archival research. When carefully studied, these documents, both informal and formal, can suggest and reveal much to the researcher (Saldana 2011). The Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University houses a 19 box collection of files on the IIRM and the Emerald Immigration Center, an Irish support organization located in NYC that was formed by IIRM members in the late 1980s. The archive was donated by the Emerald Immigration Center in 2006. The collection is divided into six series: Administration, Fundraising, Legislation, Lobbying, Publications, and Nonprint materials. During two separate visits, I accessed 13 of the 19 boxes. My review focused on the folders that contained background information, correspondence, organizational documents, meeting minutes, newsletters and other materials distributed to members, fundraising and events, commentary about legislation, lobbying efforts
including plans and correspondence with the lobbyist, speeches, and press releases.\textsuperscript{4} The 6 boxes that were not reviewed contained signed petitions and membership forms, newspaper clippings, computer disks, and non-written materials (i.e. bumper stickers, t-shirts, plaques, photographs).

While three of the boxes contain information about legislation many of the folders contain only text of the bill; few folders include commentary, correspondence, or notes about the legislation. The congressional testimonies of IIRM members are also located in these boxes. I did not copy the bills or hearings from the archive, but used the listing of bills and dates to direct my online legislative search, which is discussed later in this chapter.

\textit{Interviews}

Between May 2012 and October 2014, 15 interviews were conducted with people who are involved with ILIR or are members of the Irish community. Several of the interviewees had also been involved with the IIRM or the 1980s reform. Before any interviews were conducted approval was obtained from Northeastern University’s IRB. The interviews, which lasted between 15 and 65 minutes, were conducted over the phone or at the location chosen by the participant. Prior to starting the interview, the informed consent was reviewed. All of the interviews were taped, with the knowledge and consent of the participant. I was the only who listened to or accessed the taped interviews.

While interview schedules were used, the most effective schedule contains open-ended questions where the respondents are given the opportunity to tell their story and experiences with the least amount of interference from the researcher (Cornelius 1982). Semi-structured interviews give the researcher the opportunity to focus the conversation on issues that they deem

\textsuperscript{4} A complete listing of folders/documents for this archive can be found at: http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/aia_016/aia_016.html
important to the project (Brinkman 2013). The schedules are attached as Appendix A. The semi-structured format allowed the participant to direct the conversation. One constant was the final question asked of each participant, why they thought the Irish are so invested in immigration reform.

The primary group of interviews was selected using purposive sampling. According to Schutt (2004) purposive sampling is used when the researcher wants to target individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic. Purposefully selecting the participants was the best way to answer the research questions in this study. This group consisted of members of ILIR’s executive board, immigration attorneys, and people from Irish immigration support organizations. The purpose of the ILIR interviews was to gain a greater understanding of the group’s organization, justifications, strategic efforts, and involvement in the current comprehensive immigration reform. I spoke with two of the five ILIR executive board members, including several follow up interviews with the one participant. I reached out via email and telephone to all current executive board members and several of the advisory board members but received no response. One person refused to participate. In addition, I spoke with the former lobbyist of ILIR.

The focus of the interviews with attorneys and immigrant support organization employees was on legal issues and demographics and changes within the Irish ethnic community. Two immigration attorneys from the Boston area were interviewed. These two attorneys handle the majority of Irish cases in the Boston area and both volunteer at various legal clinics, including those sponsored by the Irish Pastoral Centre and Irish International Immigration Center. I spoke with two people from the Irish Pastoral Centre and four from the Irish International Immigration Center, both located in the Boston area. Irish immigrant support
organizations in NYC and Chicago were contacted via email and phone, but my attempts were not returned.

Participants in the secondary group of interviews came from snowball sampling, where the names of additional participants are provided by other members of the population (Babbie 2001). In each interview, I was given at least one name of a person to whom I should reach out. There was crossover and some names were mentioned by more than one interviewee. Most of the suggested people were contacted about participating. In addition, several participants were found through everyday casual conversation and friendship networks of the researcher. After hearing about the research topic, people put me in touch with possible participants. Upon contact, two participants agreed to be interviewed. Additionally, data from interviews with three previously undocumented Irish were used. In total, 15 interviews were conducted across all of these groups of participants.

Observation

While ILIR held regular events and town meetings in 2006 and 2007 few were held during the research timeframe. Only one ILIR town meeting was held in Boston, July 2013. I attended the July 2013 meeting where there was approximately 100-150 attendees. Several town meetings occurred in NYC and Virginia as well as a Lobby Day in Washington, D.C.; I was unable to attend any of these events.

Review of Social Media

Other than interviews the primary source of information for ILIR came from their website and social media accounts, which includes a blog, Facebook page, and Twitter account. The analysis of online groups allows researchers the means to research social issues that extend
far beyond the internet (Hine 2013). While use of Facebook and other social media forms in one’s analysis can be slippery, this is less so when the posts are for open internet access (Saldana 2011). In the case of ILIR, their social networking sites are the main way that they share information with members, the Irish community, and public at large. When asked one of the ILIR executive board members noted that basically everything they have can be found online. Their blog, Facebook page, twitter account, and website have become a virtual archive.

The Irishvoices blog ran from December 2005 until August 2010. During this timeframe 681 posts were made. Numerous posts included a url to an article, video, or sound recording. A companion blog, the 33rd county, was also reviewed. While it was not an ILIR publication, many posts were about or by ILIR members. This blog ran from 2007 to 2010 and had 74 posts in total. The Facebook page began in March 2010, as a replacement for the blog. As of December 2014, there are 278 posts and 135 pictures. The picture section includes documents, such as calling sheets. Approximately 3,000 people like ILIR’s Facebook page. The twitter account was established in November 2013. As of November 2014 there were 42 tweets and 140 followers.

ILIR has maintained a website since 2007, irishlobbyusa.org. This website includes organizational information, press, and links to their other social media accounts. While searching the website I located archived sections from 2007. These pages were more populated than the current version of the website. More detail on ILIR’s online presence is discussed in Chapter 5.

Newspaper and internet searches

Another source for ILIR was media coverage. LexisNexis searches were run through Northeastern University’s library for terms related to both IIRM and ILIR. The search terms
were: Diversity Visa, E-3/E3 Visa, Schumer Visa, Morrison Visa, Irish Immigration Reform Movement, and Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform. Two other searches were conducted. A search for Brown Visa produced no relevant results\(^5\) and a search for the Irish Immigration Reform and Encouragement Act retrieved five results, all of which were captured under the E-3 search. A second search for ILIR was conducted in December 2014 to capture additional articles. Duplicate results were removed from each search. If an identical article ran in more than one publication, both stories were included in the total. The results of the searches, including how many of the articles were related to Irish immigrants and were from an Irish press are found in **Chart 1.** Most of the stories that discuss or are directly related to Irish immigrants were located in Irish presses. The main Irish newspapers were: *The Irish Times*, *Irish News*, *Irish Examiner*, and *The Irish Independent*.

**Chart 1 – LexisNexis Search Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Search Date</th>
<th># of results</th>
<th>Irish related</th>
<th>Irish Press</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Visa</td>
<td>2/12/14</td>
<td>506(^\wedge)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-3, E3 Visa</td>
<td>2/12/14</td>
<td>162(^*)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schumer Visa</td>
<td>2/12/14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison Visa</td>
<td>6/30/14</td>
<td>198(^@)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIRM</td>
<td>3/29/14</td>
<td>39(^+)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILIR</td>
<td>3/29/14</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/31/14</td>
<td>7(^#)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\wedge\) articles were primarily announcements about deadlines, application information, scams, and from 2012 onward potential reform/elimination of the visas  
\(^*\) 84 were about Australian E-3 visas, 3 about Korean E-3 visas  
\(^@\) articles were primarily references to Bruce Morrison and stories about people who received a Morrison visa  
\(^+\) articles were primarily about how someone was involved/connected with IIRM, not the organization as a whole  
\(^#\) total includes only the articles after 3/29/14.

While the LexisNexis database includes international newspapers it does not capture articles that are written in Irish ethnic newspapers that are published in the U.S. No formal

\(^5\) This result was not surprising as the IRE Act was not referred to as Brown Visas, like the Diversity (Morrison) and the other E-3 (Schumer) visas were.
content analysis was conducted on Irish ethnic newspapers. However, numerous articles were used from *The Irish Emigrant* in Boston and Irishcentral.com’s daily email. Irishcentral.com, published in NYC, bills itself as the largest Irish website in North America and “is at the center point of major news announcements affecting the Irish community. Our editorial staff operates 24/7 to bring the latest in Irish news, politics, entertainment, sports, opinion, and craic to our readers. If it's Irish, it's on IrishCentral!” Irishcentral.com’s focus on reform and unauthorized Irish is not surprising as Niall O’Dowd is the CEO and Editor-in-Chief. O’Dowd was a member of IIRM and is one of the founders of ILIR. Irishcentral.com is part of a media group which includes the print publications, *Irish Voice* and *The Irish Emigrant*. The *Irish Voice* was founded by O’Dowd in 1987 in NYC with the main audience target being the New Irish. *The Irish Emigrant* began in 1987 as an email newsletter from Ireland. In 1994, Connell Gallagher began printing and distributing the paper in Boston. The final ethnic paper is the *Irish Echo*, the longest published Irish newspaper in the U.S. The *Echo’s* focus tends to be more on social aspects and news from Ireland rather than legal reform or political activities. Many of the *Echo’s* articles on reform were opinion pieces and were captured in the LexisNexis searches.

In addition, I established Google Scholar and Google alerts that were sent via a weekly email. Search terms in Google Scholar were: “Diversity Visa,” “Irish immigrants,” undocumented immigrant, and “illegal immigration.” The Google alert search terms were: “Irish immigrants,” illegal immigrants, Irish emigrants, Massachusetts illegal immigrants, and undocumented immigrants. There was crossover among these terms and some articles appeared

---

6 [http://www.irishcentral.com/about/](http://www.irishcentral.com/about/)

7 In early 2012 *The Irish Emigrant* and *Home & Away* (a Niall O’Dowd publication) were combined and began to operate under Irishcentral.com. *The Irish Emigrant* continues to publish under their name, but their daily emails and online presence is now captured under Irishcentral.com.
in more than one email alert. Articles from U.S. and Irish newspapers, Irish ethnic press, blogs, and opinion websites were all captured in the Google alert emails. There was also crossover between results from the Google alerts and articles from the daily Irishcentral.com email.

**Bills, Hearings, and Testimonies**

One of the best ways to understand the motivations and justifications of each group is through their presence at congressional hearings. An IIRM representative testified or entered a written statement at five different hearings between October 1987 and September 1989. In addition, the testimonies of several allies to IIRM and notable politicians were reviewed. Niall O’Dowd testified twice, July 2006 and May 2007, on behalf of ILIR.

To locate the testimonies, hearings, bills and acts, congress.gov was searched. This website provides information about bills including the current status, actions taken, related bills, and full text of bills prior to 1993. The IIRM archive was a rich resource and provided a comprehensive list of important hearing dates and pieces of legislation that IIRM was interested in or involved. For ILIR related documents, I began by searching the Schumer and Brown E-3 visa bills and comprehensive immigration reform bills from 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2013.

Testimonies and hearings were accessed through the Proquest Congressional database from Northeastern University. To make sure that all relevant hearings were captured, additional Proquest searches were done for: Irish Immigration Reform Movement, Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, Ciaran Staunton, Niall O’Dowd, Don Martin, Harris Miller, Sean Minihane, and Brian O’Dwyer. See **Chart 2** for a listing of the reviewed hearings.
**Chart 2 – Reviewed Hearings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 23, 1987; December 11, 1987</td>
<td>Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs on S. 1611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7, 1988</td>
<td>Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law on H.R. 5115 and S. 2104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16, 1988</td>
<td>Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law on H.R. 5115 and S. 2104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3, 1989</td>
<td>Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs on S. 358 and S. 448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12, 2006</td>
<td>Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on Examining the Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Part II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 2007</td>
<td>Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law on Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Perspectives from Faith-based and Immigrant Communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistics**

It was important to establish the demographics of the Irish ethnic community. Most of the statistics about the current community and visa usage were obtained from the Yearbook of
Immigration Statistics published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. These yearly publications are available online at www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics. Some older statistics are not available online. This additional information was obtained from direct contact with a member of the Immigration Statistics staff through emails. In addition, some older demographic data came from Lobo and Salvo’s 1998 article, *Resurgent Irish Immigration to the U.S. in the 1980s and early 1990s: A Socio--demographic Profile*.

Information was also obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics website, www.bls.gov, and Ireland’s Central Statistics Office website, www.cso.ie. Another Irish source, the Émigré Project published by the University College Cork in 2013, provided data on Irish emigration and public opinion.

Data used during the public opinion discussion came from a search on the iPOLL Databank accessed through Northeastern University, pollingreport.com, and gallup.com. Additional polling information is from articles by Lapinski et al (1997), Segovia and DeFever (2010), and Muste (2013).

*Risks, Limitations, and Biases*

There were minimal risks to participants as most interviewees are known throughout the community for their roles in immigration reform or Irish organizations. In fact, numerous participants are frequently contacted by media to discuss CIR and/or Irish immigrants. Interviewees were not paid for their time.

There are several limitations to this study. As this is a case study, these results are not necessarily applicable to other ethnic lobby groups. Another limitation was that only a few ILIR

---

8 This databank, from the Roper Center, is a comprehensive, up-to-date resource for U.S. public opinion poll data.
9 Pollingreport.com is an independent, nonpartisan resource on public opinion trends.
Board members were interviewed, only two of the five executive board members. The third limitation is that there is no finality to the current group. The act of comparing a group from 25 years ago to a group that still exists during the research timeframe was a challenge. While information about IIRM is static, ILIR is still active in their lobbying efforts and continue to put out materials and hold events. In lieu of this, a cutoff date was set for the research, November 30, 2014. In addition, the type of sources that were used to discuss each group differed widely. The primary source for IIRM was the archive, whereas interviews, ILIR’s website and social media accounts, and newspaper articles were used to provide information on ILIR.

One bias of the research is that the Northeast, in particular Boston and NYC, is overrepresented in this study. This bias is inherent to this research as both IIRM and ILIR were based out of NYC, the most active branches of each lobby group are in the Northeast, and this area is the most common locale for Irish migrants to settle. Additionally, relevant legislation was introduced by congressmen based in Northeastern states.

The main participant bias is that interviewees may give untruthful answers or tailor their answers to make their plight seem worse (Heckathorn 1997). This bias has minimal impact to this research as this study explores the justifications and strategic efforts of each group. How they portray themselves during the interview falls in line with the organization’s rhetoric.

The researcher brings forth an additional source of bias to the study. My knowledge and relationship within the community made me inherently more favorable towards their experiences and sympathetic to their plight. During five of the interviews, the participant asked about my connection to Irish immigrants or how I came about this topic. When asked, I explained that my interest about unauthorized Irish immigrants grew from living in Boston and meeting Irish
immigrants. This topic was first generated during casual conversations at Irish pubs, where more than once a migrant disclosed that they had been, or currently were, unauthorized. My interest was piqued by the lack of hesitation to share their legal status with a stranger. Additionally, my background includes Irish descent; several participants inquired about that.
Chapter Three

History of Irish Immigration and U.S. Immigration Legislation

To understand the two lobby groups, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (“IIRM”) and Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (“ILIR”), it is important to first frame the discussion in a historical context. The first section of this chapter looks at Irish immigration to the U.S. including their involvement in politics. I begin as far back as the 1800s, as the groundwork that immigrants established during this time continues to impact Irish immigrants in general and politically. More attention is placed on the last forty years which is the time frame encompassing IIRM and ILIR. Next, I discuss the economic and cultural reasons why Irish migrate and the emotional relationship Irish citizens have with migration. Ireland has had a culture of emigration for decades; repeated waves of Irish leaving have made emigration a norm.

The second section of the chapter reviews relevant immigration legislation and reform of the past 50 years. It begins with the 1965 Hart Cellar Act; this watershed legislation is repeatedly referred to by both IIRM and ILIR. I then briefly discuss the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 before directing most of the attention on Diversity Visas, the Immigration Act of 1990, and the comprehensive immigration reforms of the 2000s and 2013. The section concludes with a brief look at unauthorized immigrants in the U.S.
Irish Immigration

The largest wave of Irish immigrants occurred in the 1850s, with smaller peaks in the 1950s, 1980s, and today. These consistent waves of migration between the U.S. and Ireland have built a cultural relationship linking the two countries. This link is perceptible in the large number of Americans claiming Irish heritage, approximately 36.9 million, which is second only to German, and in the relationship between American and Irish politicians.

Prior to 1900

Approximately one million Irish migrated to the U.S. prior to 1844 (Miller 1985). Between 1820 and 1849, Irish were the largest group of migrants to enter the U.S. During this time 878,434 Irish entered; German (515,913) and British (319,258) migrants were the second and third largest groups (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014).

In 1845, a fungus caused a severe potato blight in Ireland which rotted the crop leading to widespread hunger, disease, and death. The potato was the main food source for many poor, rural Irish who worked the land for British landlords. The blight, which lasted for nearly five years, hit during a period of economic stagnation and rapid population growth (Hachey and McCaffrey 2010; Kinealy 1995). Governmental response failed to meet the needs of Irish citizens as little public relief was available and landlords continued to export food. Since many poor Irish had little redress at home migration became the main way to escape severe landlord control and starvation. During this time at least 1.5 million Irish died and another million migrated. The U.S. and England were the popular destinations. Between 1850 and 1859, the peak decade of Irish migration, 1,029,000 arrived on U.S. shores (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014).
Conditions were not favorable for early Irish migrants. Irish were portrayed as drunkards and welfare cases, and were blamed for the rise in crime, particularly in cities in the Northeast (Doherty 2002). They lived in slums and tenements and were employed in manual labor jobs where free blacks were their biggest competition. At this time their status was equal to that of free blacks; they were seen as ignorant and inferior to natives (Takaki 1993).

To improve their social standing Irish worked towards whiteness. To accomplish this they showed deference and acceptance of the American racial hierarchy by attacking free blacks, keeping them out of jobs, and making them into the “other” (Akenson 2005; Ignatiev 1995; Takaki 1993). Employment and politics were the two institutions that the Irish used to accomplish whiteness. The Industrial Revolution created an expanded manufacturing sector which allowed Irish to move into higher skilled jobs (Corcoran 1993; Kenny 2000). With the increase in skilled employment, more Irish joined unions and entrepreneurs expanded outside of the segregated market. This upward movement helped Irish establish greater acceptance from natives. This greater acceptance in turn aided the rise and influence of Irish in American politics (Kenny 2000). The Irish were a large voting bloc and in exchange for support the Democratic Party were willing to help them assimilate (Corcoran 1993; Ignatiev 1995). The Democratic Party did not question their whiteness.

By the late 1800s, the Irish political machine was making its presence known. In 1880 William Grace was elected mayor of NYC and four years later Hugh O’Brien was elected mayor of Boston; both were Irish born (McCaffrey 1992). Three factors that led to Irish political success was the time period, their understanding of the electoral system, and view on the vocation of politics. In the late 1800s, there was a low ebb in politics which gave immigrant
groups the opportunity to create a foothold in political institutions (Shannon 1966). By this time the Irish were one of the more established ethnic groups, and since Irish are native English speakers, they were well placed to take advantage of this situation. The Irish was no longer the “other” as other ethnic groups, mainly from Southern and Eastern Europe, had begun to migrate in substantial numbers; they were now defined as the undesirable group.

A second factor was that Irish were familiar with political pursuits due to years of experience with fighting for Catholic emancipation, land reform, and home rule on Irish shores (Almeida 2001). Irish understood that politics was about power and control and that you can exploit public office to amass loyalty and build a power base (Almeida 2001). Politicians linked the misery and troubles that Irish citizens experienced with the hardships suffered by American citizens to garner support (Gleeson and Buttimer 2005; Jenkins 2005; McCaffrey 1992). This tactic sped up acceptability and respectability of Irish immigrants by making them into a likeable segment of ethnic America (McCaffrey 1992). They built political power through friendship, neighborhood connections, loyalties, and electoral machines. The majority of Irish political power and notoriety was restricted to city governments during this time, which is a result of the focus upon neighborhood connections. Tammany Hall10 in NYC is the best example of Irish influenced machine politics. This political machine served as a social organization that assisted impoverished New Yorkers, in particular Irish, and worked to register and naturalize immigrants. Bosses from Tammany procured municipal jobs and building contracts for Irish, in exchange for votes and candidate support (Shannon 1966). In Boston, no central organization like Tammany Hall existed but rather a loose set of citywide connections among bosses and candidates. The Irish in Boston also used neighborhood connections to “build islands of political power”

10 Tammany Hall was at first a nativist organization that slowly welcomed Irish into their fold.
(Shannon 1966, pg. 198). These machines arose from the bottom up, coming from the pubs and clubhouses of the working class neighborhoods (Erie 1990).

The third factor was that politics was a chosen vocation by Irish. Politics provided employment for Irish, as few were business owners. Those who did go into business tended toward trades or service fields; Irish were not economic moguls. More so than natives and other ethnic groups of the time the Irish found politics to be a noble profession, a way to improve the society around them, which is illustrated by the quote below.

\begin{quote}
The old tradition had held that politics is dirty business unfit for gentlemen, that the business of America is business and therefore only second raters and failures go into government and that government is best when it is smallest and governs least. The Irish, because of their circumstances in American life, had never shared these genteel beliefs and illusions. They knew that government is power, and power exists to be used. They knew that politics is no dirtier than the human beings who participate in it. They knew, further, that politics in its highest form is the search for justice and that those who decry politics and big government are usually men and interests who do not want any public agency to redress the private balances of power. The positive view of politics and government traditional in the Irish community was familiar in city halls across the country. (Shannon 1966, p363)
\end{quote}

While the federal government now handles the welfare and employment functions that these machines once provided, the legacy of this welfare type organization can be seen in IIRM and ILIR. These two groups continue to help “destitute” immigrants legalize their status so that they can move away from a liminal existence into permanent members of society. These groups are exerting an Irish voice into politics, in a vein similar to the machines. The Irish and Irish-American political clout of the 1900s and 2000s is due to the pioneers and machines of the 1800s. These machines established the political Irishman as the type of Irishman that most Americans are familiar with, at least in the Northeast and other Irish dominated cities (Shannon 1966).
1900-1970

During the first three decades of the 1900s the number of Irish migrating to the U.S. was decreasing; annual average was 23,767 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). After 1929, the rates dramatically decreased.\footnote{Rates remained high in the 1920s, 20,000 annually, mainly due to political conflict in Ireland.} Between 1930 and 1970, the U.S. received an average of 3,300 Irish immigrants a year (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). This decrease is due to fewer people leaving Ireland as well as a change in migration patterns. Between 1880 and 1921, 87% came to the U.S. and 10% went to England, this reversed and between 1930 and 1979, 75% of people leaving Ireland went to England (Barrett and Mosca 2012).

In the 1950s, a stagnant economy in Ireland motivated Irish to leave. During this decade the U.S. received an annual average of 4,719 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). This economic stagnation ran counter to other post-war economies that were growing. Young people in particular were affected by the lack of job opportunities, which is illustrated by the outflow concentrated in the 15-24 year old age group (Almeida 2001).

The Irish government welcomed the increased migration of the 1950s as it disguised the true rate of unemployment (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1993). However, the loss of citizens forced Ireland to overhaul economic and social programs. Beginning in the 1950s the Irish government began to promote free trade as a way to boost the economy and improve the educational system (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1993). The standard of living increased, which led to a decrease in people leaving.

Arguably the most notable Irish-American politician is John F. Kennedy. His election in 1960 as the first Catholic president of the U.S. provided the Irish with a deep sense of
accomplishment and pleasure. Any lingering sense of social inferiority or insecurity was
removed with Kennedy’s election (McCaffrey 1992; Shannon 1966). Kennedy personified
political traditions that were specifically Irish and Catholic, such as the emphasis on pragmatic
interests and loyalty (Shannon 1966). At the same time, he was able to distance himself from
negative Irish stereotypes thanks to his wealth and education.

As other ethnic groups began to claim power in cities, and machine politics waned, Irish
politicians turned towards state and national offices. Irish surnames, including President
Kennedy’s brothers Edward and Joseph, were found more frequently in the Senate and House
roll calls. This generation of Irish-American politicians took a different view on politics. Instead
of keeping things status quo, this group saw themselves as agents who could make changes to
society.

1970 to 1995

Lobo and Salvo (1998) break this timeframe into three distinct phases. The first phase, 1972 to
1977, consisted of a 1,500 annual average. One reason for a small flow was the family
reunification clause of the 1965 Hart Cellar Act. Many Irish migrants did not have a first
generation family contact and therefore were unable to obtain a visa. However, the main reason
for the lower rate was an improved Irish economy. In the early 1970s, Ireland joined the
European Economic Community which provided subsidies to foreign companies to stimulate
industry, and continued to invest in education and social welfare programs (Almeida 2001; Healy
et al 2012). The efforts of the government to improve the state of Ireland were being felt. In the
1970s, the rate of people leaving decreased and returnees began to come back to Ireland for new
job opportunities (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009). Even though there was an increase in people
returning, a persistent out migration in the 15 to 34 age group continued. Corcoran (1993)
suggests that this is because jobs were going to returnees who brought back skills and
experiences that they had honed overseas. Youth were forced to leave the country to find
employment. Of the Irish immigrants to the U.S. during this phase, 52.7% were in their 20s
(Lobo and Salvo 1998).

This phase illustrates a significant difference between emigrants who were born after the
1950s and previous groups: increased education. Because of improved educational and social
programs, this cohort was obtaining higher degrees and professional qualifications. This meant
that visas in professional or executive occupations were more sought after. During this phase,
45% of the employment visas were concentrated in professional or executive occupations (Lobo
and Salvo 1998). These visas became highly selective as a limited number were available.

The second phase, 1978-1986, saw an even smaller flow of 1,200 people annually (Lobo
and Salvo 1998). At the beginning of this phase a favorable Irish economy was still in place.
However in the early 1980s, Ireland entered a recession. The country was unable to maintain the
manufacturing and building sectors and the higher standards of living (Corcoran 1993; Fitzgerald
and Lambkin 2009). Between 1979 and 1985, the unemployment rates in Ireland rose from 7.8%
to 18.2% (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009). Unemployment rates were magnified by two factors:
women and youth. Cultural shifts had carved a pathway for women to pursue higher education
and enter the workforce in greater numbers. At the same time, there was an overall increase in
young workers due to a 1960s baby boom. Out migration of educated people continued in this
phase as the Irish economy was unable to meet employment needs. The rate of unemployment of
graduates rose from 20 to 40% during the 1980s (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009). During this phase, the number of visas for professional or executive positions remained substantial, 44% (Lobo and Salvo 1998).

The demographics of this phase differed slightly from the first phase. While 42.3% were in their 20s, the number of migrants in their 30s increased seven and a half percentage points from 17.7% to 25.2%. Also, during this phase the sex ratio becomes nearly equal, 1,001 females for every 1,000 males. During the first phase, for every 1,000 males there were 1,214 females. The biggest demographic change is in regards to marital status. During the first phase the majority, 53.0%, were single, but during this phase the majority were married, 61.7%. In the second phase over 40% of the flow consisted of people looking to join a spouse (Lobo and Salvo 1998).

The third phase is from 1987 to 1995. The annual average during this time was 8,570, a substantial increase from the first two phases (Lobo and Salvo 1998). However, this number is a bit deceiving as all of the annual averages stated here are for legal permanent residents. In the 1980s, many Irish entered on tourist visas and overstayed to work. Irish were one of the largest groups of unauthorized immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s (Daniels 2004). It was estimated that at the peak, there were between 40,000 and 250,000 unauthorized Irish, the majority located in NYC and Boston (Aroian 1993; Daniels 2004). In 1999, Immigration and Naturalization Services estimated that between 1981 and 1997 88,000 Irish living in the U.S. did not have proper legal status (Almeida 2001). Many unauthorized Irish legalized through the Diversity Visa Programs. Some who are counted in this phase actually arrived during one of the first two

---

12 There is high discrepancy in these numbers as the unauthorized population is notoriously difficult to count. The higher number comes from IIRM. Critics claimed that IIRM inflated the number to help their cause.
13 Aroian (1993) estimated 20,000 to 30,000 in Boston at the time of her study in 1990.
phases. The importance of Diversity Visas to Irish immigrants cannot be overstated. During the third phase, 79% entered on a Diversity Visa (Lobo and Salvo 1998). During this same time, 15% entered under family visas and 5% under employment visas (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Diversity Visas will be discussed in depth later.

While Diversity Visas were the dominant pathway during the third phase, the number of people entering on employment visas dramatically increased. In the first two phases, the annual average was 932 and 622 respectively, in the third it was 6,120 (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Besides the sheer number, the other noticeable difference is that professional and executive occupations now only accounted for 31% (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Technical, Sales, Administrative and the Services categories combined accounted for 41.6% of the employment visas (Lobo and Salvo 1998). This is nearly a 15 percentage point increase from the first phase of 28.4% and ten percentage points higher than the second phase, 31%. It is important to note that while family reunification visas only accounted for 5% during the third phase the annual average was 2,040 which is higher than the first phase, 1,002 (67.3% of all visas) and second phase, 873 (75.6%) combined. With more Irish arriving, the family reunification clause, which had been closed, was now a plausible avenue.

Irish immigrants from the 1980s are oftentimes referred to as New Irish. They were young and overwhelmingly single. In the third phase, 59.7% were in their 20s and 69.0% were single (Lobo and Salvo 1998). The sex ratio during this phase was 810 women for every 1,000 men. In the 1980s, the number of jobs for women in Ireland increased while the jobs for men decreased, explaining the reversed sex ratio between the first and third phases (Lobo and Salvo 1998). These demographics do not differ from the previous waves which were also heavily
populated by young and single people. Like previous waves, this cohort also settled in established destinations: NYC, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Even though this cohort had more education than previous waves they were still concentrated in the same fields: construction, health care, and service jobs (Corcoran 1993; Daniels 2004). The main reason for underemployment was legal status.

One substantial difference was that this group was less interested in assimilating than the 1950s cohort, who welcomed the U.S. as their new permanent home. This wave had mobility and travelled more often between the U.S. and Ireland (Ní Laoire 2007). The boundaries between home and away were blurred as this group viewed themselves as being a part of both nations. Corcoran (1993) suggests that the term New Irish illustrates a distancing of oneself from Ireland while embracing their Irishness at the same time. It recognizes that they do not belong to their home culture anymore, nor do they belong to the U.S. culture or even Irish-American ethnic culture. Many of the New Irish were not looking to make the U.S. their permanent home, but rather they were interested in taking advantage of the economic freedom in the U.S. and gather work experience. New Irish maintained that Ireland was their home and planned to return at some point (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1993).

New Irish tended to socialize with fellow unauthorized migrants rather than established Irish. Peers were able to relate to their liminal status and the complications that accompanied it (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009). In a study of unauthorized Irish in Boston, Aroian (1993) found that many of her participants felt uncertain about their future and feared deportation. While this finding is not surprising, what is notable is that fear decreased the longer a person was in the U.S. They learned that authorities tended to be lax when it came to the surveillance of Irish
immigrants (Aroian 1993). Unauthorized Irish internalized that they were an outsider group because of their legal status, but learned that they were also a protected group thanks to the Irish political clout. Daniels (2004) refers to unauthorized Irish as an “open secret” that is largely ignored by law enforcement. The plight of unauthorized Irish was also a secret to established Irish. Since the two groups did not mingle, established Irish migrants were largely unaware of circumstances facing the new cohort. Bringing awareness to the previous generation was one of the goals of the IIRM.

This all meant that New Irish built community in different ways. Niall O’Dowd founded The Irish Voice in 1987 and billed it as a newspaper for the New Irish. They also created formal organizations to support and assist migrants. While well-established social organizations, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (“AOH”) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”) handled some assimilation aspects, the main purpose of new organizations was to provide employment networks, advice on legal issues, and other information that would assist the New Irish. The Emerald Isle Immigration Center, formed by members of the IIRM, opened in 1988 in NYC. The Irish Pastoral Centre and Irish International Immigration Center, both in Boston, were formed in 1987 and 1988 respectively. In the 1990s, other Irish immigrant organizations were opened in San Francisco, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Like previous waves, the pub remained as a place of community for the New Irish. The pub is not just a recreational place but a place where people meet, hire workers, cash checks, and hold political meetings (Stivers 1976). Cororcan (1993) found that pubs were an entry point for new arrivals into the community and served as a place where they could be integrated into the community. Socialization and being able to share values and experiences with co-ethnics is such
an important part of the pub that even non-drinkers frequent establishments (Cassidy 1996; McGovern 2002).

1995 to present

From the mid-1990s to 2002, Ireland experienced phenomenal economic growth. Linkages that were formed in the 1980s fostered an arena where international and multinational corporations could settle into Ireland (Munck 1999; O’Hearn 2000; Ó Riain 2000). During this economic boom, known as the Celtic Tiger, the number of jobs in Ireland grew by 50% (Kline 2004). Ireland was heralded as a European economic success story (Linehan and Ni Laoire 2006).

Because of the Celtic Tiger economy, Ireland became a country of immigration rather than emigration. An estimated 200,000 foreigners entered between 1996 and 2003 (Kline 2004). Prior to the Celtic Tiger only 2% of the population was foreign born (Honohan 2010). The 2006 census estimated that migrants accounted for 12.5% of Ireland’s population; five years later the census reported a similar number, 12% (Central Statistics Office 2014a; Fanning et al 2011). Ireland quickly became a multicultural society with this influx of migrants (Flanagan 2007; Honohan and Walsh 2002; Kline 2004). This cultural change has not always been smooth. Immigrants have reported political and social struggles, racism and violence (Flanagan 2007; Gilmartin 2008; Healy et al 2012; Tormey 2007). These struggles are exacerbated by the Irish government having failed to create support for the integration of newcomers. In addition to the increase of non-nationals, Irish returned to work at an astounding rate, approximately 12,500 between 1995 and 2000 (Kline 2004; Munck 1999; Ó Riain 2000). Returnees were encouraged
by Irish state agencies as this group had high skill levels and international knowledge, both of which were valuable to the growing economy.

With signs of a slowing economy and rising unemployment, the Celtic Tiger came to an unofficial end in 2002. The combination of a labor market which relied upon inward migration, a banking and public finance crisis, and an over-expanded construction and property sector all led the Irish economy to enter a recession in 2008 (Healy et al 2012). The Celtic Tiger era created a polarization of wealth making Ireland one of the most unequal societies in the western world. This has become increasingly noticeable as poverty is increasing and deficiencies in healthcare and education are emerging (Healy et al 2012).

Unemployment rates dramatically increased from 4.2% in 2006 to 14.2% in 2011; levels which had not been seen since the mid-1980s (Healy et al 2012). Long term unemployment also increased. In April 2014, the unemployment rate was 11.7%, the lowest level in five years (Central Statistics Office 2014b).

With increasing unemployment, the rates of emigration dramatically rose between 2006 and 2011 from 36,000 to 76,400 (Healy et al 2012). In 2013, the Central Statistics Office reported that 89,000 people had emigrated the twelve months prior to April 2013 (Central Statistics Office 2013). While Irish nationals are leaving, part of the outflow is non-nationals returning home or heading to another host country. In 2006, 42% of the outflow was Irish nationals (Healy et al 2012). In 2011, it rose to 53% and rose again in 2013 to 57% (Central Statistics Office 2013; Healy et al 2012). O’Brien (2012) notes that while people are leaving, the surprising migratory trend is that returnees are continuing to come back. This is exacerbating the rates of unemployed youth. The National Youth Council of Ireland found that the intention to
emigrate was great among the 18-24 group, 50% stated they would consider leaving (Glynn et al 2013). The main motivation for this group was lack of employment opportunities.

The cohort leaving Ireland today is akin to the 1980s wave. An Irish Times survey found that 85% who left had some third-level qualification (Sheridan 2012).\(^{14}\) The Émigré Project\(^{15}\) reported similar findings (Glynn et al 2013). The age of this cohort is similar to previous waves as 70% are in their 20s and single (Glynn et al 2013). However, there has been a significant increase of people in their 30s and 40s who are leaving; 15% of emigrants are in their 30s (Glynn et al 2013).

Continuing the framework established by Lobo and Salvo I suggest that the era from 1996 to the present be divided into three phases. The first, 1996 to 2001, encompasses the Celtic Tiger era. During this time, the annual average of Irish moving to the U.S. was 1,220 (Office of Immigration Statistics 2014; United States Department of Homeland Security 2013). It is important to note that all of the data used by Lobo and Salvo and myself to discuss the demographics of the cohorts are for legal permanent residents; unauthorized immigrants are not included in these numbers. As discussed previously in this chapter, the Celtic Tiger economy created more jobs in Ireland and rates of unemployment dramatically decreased during this phase from 11.9% in 1996 to 3.7% in 2001 (Central Statistics Office 2002). Between 1995 and 2000 approximately half of the 248,100 people who immigrated to Ireland were returnees (Fanning 2012). In addition to returnees, the number of people emigrating from Ireland decreased from

\(^{14}\) In 2012 Ipsos MRBI conducted a purposive sampling of Irish nationals who had left since 2008 through telephone interviews.
\(^{15}\) The Émigré Project, funded by the Irish Research Council was conducted between 2006 and 2013 by using Irish household surveys, online emigrant surveys, jobs fair surveys and in-depth interviews.
31,200 in 1996 to in 26,200 2001. The average annual emigrant rate during this time was 28,200 (Central Statistics Office 2012).

The lower rate of migration to the U.S. is only partially due to the Celtic Tiger economy. Lobo and Salvo (1998) predicted that, with no special allotment for Diversity Visas, a backlog of family reunification visas, and employment visas being geared toward highly skilled professions, Irish immigration would decline. Their prediction becomes true as there is a dramatic decline during this phase: from 5,300 in 1995 to 1,731 in 1996. One main cause for the decline is that special allotments of Diversity Visas were no longer set aside for Irish after 1995; 31.2% arrived on this visa during this phase which is much lower than the 79% of the previous phase, 1987-1995 (Chart 3). Between 1999 and 2000, the number of people entering on a Diversity Visa dramatically decreased from 32% to 18% (United States Department of Homeland Security 2002a and 2002b). During this phase, 48.8% arrived on a family visa and 19.2% on employment visas.

**Chart 3 – Class of Admission of Irish Immigrants to the U.S.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual average</th>
<th>Family, Immediate Relatives</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-2001</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>48.78%</td>
<td>19.24%</td>
<td>31.17%</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2007</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>67.30%</td>
<td>26.82%</td>
<td>5.14%</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2013</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>64.14%</td>
<td>31.44%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second phase is from 2002 to 2007. The annual average is slightly higher at 1,574 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008, 2009). This increase reflects an increase of emigration from Ireland. While rates of emigrants from Ireland remained in the 20,000s from 2002 to 2005, it jumped to 36,000 in 2006 and again in 2007 to 46,300 (Central Statistics Office 2012). The special allotment of Diversity Visas for Irish ended in 1995 and the impact of this is noticeable as the annual average to only 5.1%. During this phase, family visas become more dominant, 67.3%, and employment visas increased by seven percentage points to 26.8% (Chart 3).

A significant difference between these two phases is the political and cultural shifts in the U.S. that occurred after 9/11. The Irish government estimated that 14,000 of the 20,000 Irish immigrants who lived in NYC returned home between 2001 and 2006 (Krikorian 2008). While this is partly due to increased economic opportunities, it is also due to increased enforcement and stricter immigration laws in the U.S. Immigration legislation that followed 9/11 made it more difficult for Irish to remain and work in the U.S. legally. The annual average of Irish immigrants to the U.S. during the third phase, 2008 to present, was 1,520 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014). The visa distribution is nearly identical to the second phase, 64.1% Family, 31.4% employment, and 4.3% Diversity (Chart 3).

The third phase encompasses the increased emigration of people from Ireland. There are three reasons that while the number of Irish leaving Ireland has increased, the number of visas for Irish has not dramatically risen. Many Irish professionals who returned to Ireland in the 1990s and 2000s already had a Green Card or U.S. citizenship; therefore they would not be included in the number above upon returning to the U.S. A second reason is that Irish are

---

16 Data is from 2008 to 2013.
choosing locations other than the U.S. The United Kingdom and Australia are the two most popular destinations for current Irish immigrants (Glynn et al 2013). Irish head to Australia, and increasing numbers to Canada, as there are available jobs and visas. To meet this demand, Canada increased visa allotments for Irish from 1,000 in 2012 to 6,350 in 2013 and to 10,700 in 2014 (Kenny 2013).

The final reason is that an increasing number of Irish are choosing to remain in the U.S. even if they do not have proper documentation. Lobo and Salvo (1998) predicted that this might happen if once again the Irish economy was unable to offer employment and visas were difficult for Irish to obtain. The unauthorized Irish population in the U.S. is estimated at 50,000. This cohort typically arrives under the Visa Waiver program17 and overstays. Today’s Irish are in the same predicament as the 1980s. Unskilled Irish are not eligible for employment visas therefore family visas are the most popular way to legalize, but these are limited. The wait time for a non-spouse, child, parent visa is currently 12 years. One of the few ways that an unauthorized Irish can legalize, without incurring a penalty, is by marrying a U.S. citizen.

Like New Irish, there is little need for today’s cohort to join social or cultural groups such as AOH and GAA in order to recreate a home away from home (Cochrane 2007). Even more so than the New Irish, today’s migrant can maintain ties to home via email, phone, and Skype. Glynn et al (2013) found that 75% of Irish migrants use Skype regularly to communicate with people from home. Additionally, 90% use Facebook and other social networking sites. However, unlike the previous cohort the option to go home for a visit and return is not available. Entry and

17 The Visa Waiver Program permits visa free travel to the U.S., for up to 90 days, from countries with very low nonimmigrant visa refusal rates.
exit regulations have become much stricter since 9/11 and reentering the U.S. after a trip home would be difficult, if not impossible.

**Reasons**

In the 1800s, a major push factor for migration was anti-Irish and anti-Catholic laws (Mac Laughlin 2000). Immigrants saw these laws as a way for England to rid Ireland of the Irish by maintaining British control over the population and evading any potential nation building that would lead to a free Ireland (Mac Laughlin 2000). This sentiment deepened during Famine times when Irish nationalism reinforced the notion that emigration was not a choice, but a form of exile (Corcoran 1993; McCaffery 1992). In his 1861 book, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, John Mitchel wrote that the Irish were not perishing quick enough from hunger and disease for the English therefore they were trying to get rid of them through migration (Glynn et al. 2013). While the involuntary exile motif was strong, Miller (1985) claims that few emigrants were compelled by force or famine to leave Ireland. Many who left in the second half of the 1800s did so voluntarily to search for better economic and social opportunities (McCaffery 1992; Miller 1985).

Within Irish shores, migration was viewed as a solution to a growing population. During the 19th century, the Irish economy was unable to sustain large families, particularly those in rural areas that resulted from a population boom. Reducing population through migration allowed Ireland to transition from a traditional society to a more modern one as the country was able to better maintain the smaller population (Hatton and Williamson 1998; Mac Laughlin 2000).
Since the 1800s the Irish government has repeatedly asserted that migration is a positive experience for the nation (Corcoran 1993; Lentin 2007). Ireland’s role as a long time emigrant nursery is put forth as a badge of pride. In the 1950s, the Irish government openly welcomed increased emigration (Almeida 2001; Corcoran 1993). In the 1980s, the Prime Minister, Charles J Haughey, stated that Ireland’s emigrants were climbing social ladders in other nations and that Ireland should be proud of her global citizens (Mac Laughlin 2000). The idea being touted was that Irish citizens who were leaving were benefiting themselves, Ireland, and the world in general. Today, the government claims that many who are leaving are doing so out of choice, not economic need, and should be supported and seen as ambassadors for Ireland (Glynn et al 2013; Lentin 2007).

Diaspora has been a key component of Irish identity during the last 30 years. Mary Robinson, Ireland’s president from 1990 to 1997, stated that her duty was not to only represent citizens living in Ireland but also those who are living abroad (Gray 2002). Robinson and the succeeding president, Mary McAleese, identified the diaspora as the fifth province (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009). This is best illustrated by the debate on voting rights of those living abroad, which has flared up at different points since the late 1980s. The extension of voting rights would represent an expression of commitment and solidarity that the voice of all of Ireland’s citizens matter. It would recognize that an emigrant has stake in the nation, even if they no longer live within Irish shores. This issue is particularly salient to those who plan to return to Ireland at some point. Gray (2002) states that by defining Ireland as a diasporic population, Robinson opened up the definition of Irish and allowed all Irish, those living at home and abroad, to view themselves as fluid members within the global capitalist structure.
Critics claim that by focusing on the positive aspects and voluntary nature of migration the Irish government is sidestepping issues happening at home, some of which are causes for migration, and absolving themselves of blame for how an underperforming economy or outdated social programs may be factors. One of the best examples of this is from 1951 when Irish President, Eamon de Valera, put the blame upon migrants. In an *Irish Times* editorial piece, de Valera noted that there were jobs at home and a better standard of living than they would find overseas (Glynn et al 2013). Mac Laughlin (2000) claims that Irish emigration has been individualized rather than viewed as a social or national problem, which allows social issues such as unemployment, urban and rural decay, and urban poverty to be sanitized. Adventurous spirit is used to explain away larger ills that are causes for migration (Mac Laughlin 2000; Ni Laoire 2007). By accepting emigration to be natural or traditional the narrative of an Irish emigrant has been changed from exile to adventurer (Corcoran 1993).

*Economic*

Neo-classical theorists state that migration occurs when there are imbalances between labor demands and wages in sending and receiving countries (Massey et al 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). People search for a country where they can maximize their economic opportunities. At the micro-level, a person makes the choice to migrate dependent upon a personal cost-benefit calculation (Borjas 1989; Massey et al 1998). Each individual’s cost-benefit calculation differs according to human capital, social conditions, and access to social networks.

High levels of unemployment have been the bane of the Irish economy and the lack of opportunities in employment has traditionally motivated emigration (Lobo and Salvo 1998). In
the 1950s and 1980s, Ireland’s economy was unable to generate enough jobs for all workers. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the lack of jobs was exacerbated by the increase of women and young people entering the workforce in the 1980s. Unemployment continues to factor into the current cohort. The Émigré Project reported that almost one-quarter of the respondents was unemployed when they migrated. The main reason this group migrated was to find a job, 76% (Glynn et al 2013). The Irish Times survey echoed these results as 83% of unemployed respondents gave the reason for leaving to find work (Sheridan 2012).

People who are underemployed or employed are also migrating. Choosing to leave Ireland even when employed has become a strategic maneuver. By going abroad one can earn more money and gain skills that they would be unable to acquire in Ireland. Ideally, these skills provide the migrant with greater job opportunities when they return to Ireland, which is the plan for many (Gray 2000; Lobo and Salvo 1998). Forty-seven percent of Émigré Project respondents were employed full time prior to leaving. While their reasons for migrating were more varied than the unemployed (i.e. to travel or to experience another culture), 43.6% reported that they left to find another job or attain work experience that they could not get from staying in Ireland (Glynn et al 2013).

Cultural

Focusing on economic reasons fails to acknowledge social, cultural, and religious factors that encourage people to migrate. Social attitudes in Ireland have been slow to change. Irish have repeatedly given the desire to live in a society with a more liberal social attitude or gain a global outlook as a reason for migration (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2009; Sepulvado 2012). Immigrants of the 1950s gave the desire to escape a country that was clinging to historical ideals and not
improving standards of living as a reason for migration (Almedia 2001). In a 1980s study conducted by Ian Shuttleworth, social and cultural factors were highly significant. Shuttleworth’s results revealed that the chance to escape the restrictions of life in Ireland was a leading reason for migration (Gray 2000). Today’s immigrants have echoed previous generations and give escaping a depressed atmosphere as a reason for leaving (Glynn et al 2013).

**Emotional Connection**

Emigration is the curse of the Irish. Here we are again throwing ourselves at the tender mercies of other countries. People are leaving for the prospect of new lives with well-paying jobs, as well as the chance to get through an entire day without hearing phrases such as "negative equity", "burning bondholders" or how vitally important it is that we separate ourselves from the Greeks.

It seems now as if that boom period when Ireland was the destination of choice for people looking for a better future was just a temporary blip in our blighted Irish destiny. We're back, it seems, to where we are always destined to be.

~ Alison O’Connor, 2012

This 2012 Op Ed piece by O’Connor in *The Irish Independent* illustrates the frustrations, feeling of defeat, and economic despair of the Irish. For the past two centuries every Irish person has had a direct experience with migration, be it their own or a family members. The notion of Ireland and Irishness has depended on and been reinforced by constructions of migration and emigration stories; these stories are of enormous importance to Ireland (Ni Laoire 2007). The question of when you will migrate, not if, is an intrinsic feature of Irish society (Mac Laughlin 2000). Emigrating is viewed by youth as a fad; those who do not leave feel like they miss out on a mass cultural experience.
Repeated migration waves have created a culture of emigration (Corcoran 1993). Corcoran (1993) found that for the people in her study leaving was equated with the courage to explore new frontiers while staying implied stagnation and the inability to remove oneself from a rut. While economics and sense of adventure were motivating factors, other influences factored in. These included the influence of friends and family abroad, representation of successful emigrants in the Irish media, and intolerance of marital breakup (Corcoran 1993). The culture of emigration was especially true for younger people. Those who stayed behind had few companions their own age.

Ireland’s culture of emigration is a prime example of cumulative causation, each act of migration alters the social context of Ireland and this change affects subsequent migration decisions and makes additional movements more likely (Massey et al 1998). Migration becomes collective behavior, wherein emigration becomes a social pattern and individual motivations are not as relevant (Petersen 1958). It also illustrates the use of social networks by Irish immigrants. One migrant I spoke to, Patrick,\(^{18}\) came to Boston when he was 22 years of age, over 20 years ago (Patrick interview 2012). He came on a 90 day visa and ended up overstaying and working. He came to Boston specifically because his brother’s friend lived here. In addition to living with the friend for several months, it was through him that he found his first job. After getting settled in the U.S., Patrick contacted a friend in Ireland, Dermot, and let him know that “the craic is good.”\(^{19}\) He arranged for a job for him before he arrived and let him stay with him for several months. Several years later Patrick found jobs for another friend from home, who happened to be Dermot’s nephew, and his own nephew. Patrick found each of them jobs prior to them migrating

\(^{18}\) All names used in this example are aliases.

\(^{19}\) Craic is an Irish slang term meaning good or fun.
and again let them stay with him for several months. Patrick legalized several years ago when he married an American citizen. I do not know the current legal status of the other three men.

O’Connor’s Op-Ed speaks to the deeply set vision of oppression and victimhood that Mitchel laid out in his book 150 years prior. This notion, that emigration is a fated destiny or curse of the Irish, has been particularly strong post Celtic Tiger. Alan Barrett, Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Ireland, states that the return of emigration is the most traumatic element of the Irish collapse (Carter 2012). The Celtic Tiger brought hope that things were different and the new standard of Irish life would be one where migrants could return home and afford to live. With the latest economic downturn, it seems that the Celtic Tiger boom was a fluke, not a new normal. There is a noticeable difference in the mood of the country, as those who are leaving have little idea when they will return (Sepulvado 2012).

While the Irish are used to friends and family migrating, the event is still viewed as being tragic and traumatic to those remaining on Irish shores. This is exacerbated in rural regions where emigration is being felt more severely. Stories about broken hearts and feelings of anger that Irish are once again leaving are not uncommon in Irish media (Glynn et al 2013). The Émigré Project found that 75% believe that emigration is having a negative effect on Ireland; two-thirds stated that their local community has been negatively impacted by emigration (Glynn et al 2013). Émigré Project respondents noted that the increase in migration has led to the loss of vibrancy that is associated with younger residents, to fewer people being involved in community activities or the Gaelic Athletic Association, and a lack of skilled workers.

Legislation
The regulation and legislation of immigration has been a hot button topic in the U.S. for almost 150 years. Until the mid-twentieth century, immigration laws were enacted in effort to replicate the nation, rather than expand and diversify the cultural makeup. The Quota Law of 1921 and the Immigration Reform Law of 1924 both used census data to cap future flows of immigration according to past numbers. This maintained flow from Western European countries, and hindered immigration from other countries around the world. Since the 1970s, the focus of legislation has often been on immigrants of color and unauthorized immigrants. This part of the chapter introduces the key legislation of the past 50 years that has impacted the efforts of IIRM and ILIR. I begin with a brief introduction to the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act, which is widely referred to by both the IIRM and ILIR, and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The remainder of the chapter focuses upon legislation which IIRM or ILIR were actively involved in, Diversity Visas, the Immigration Act of 1990, and Comprehensive Immigration Reform (“CIR”) discussions of the last decade, including E-3 visas.

1965 Hart Cellar Act

In 1965 the Hart Cellar Act (“1965 Act”) eliminated the national origin system and transformed the four preference system into a seven preference system. Four of the seven preferences are family based. The 1965 Act demolished the Asia-Pacific Triangle, which limited people from Asian countries to 2,000 visas a year (Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011). Included in the 1965 Act was a labor certification requirement. Prior to migrating, a person needed to obtain a certificate from the Department of Labor. This certificate stated that there were not enough workers who were willing and qualified in the immigrant’s intended occupation, and that the wages of natives would not be adversely affected. This certification, which was sympathetic to
the demands of labor unions, was expected to restrict access to people in developing countries, as they would be less likely to have the skills needed for the labor certification (Reimers 1983).

The 1965 Act fell in line with the other civil rights legislation of the time. The quota system was seen as embarrassing and insulting to U.S. allies (Reimers 1983). This legislation was expected to end discrimination, but not have a major impact upon the U.S. Proponents stated that this reform would not inundate the U.S. with immigrants, nor would it cause a major shift in the ethnic makeup (Daniels 2004; Graham 2004; Law 2002; Massey and Pren 2012; Reimers 1983; Schuck 1991; Ting 1995). Sponsors of the 1965 Act downplayed the law’s significance (Tichenor 2002). Even President Lyndon Johnson, who signed it into law, stated that it was not revolutionary and would not reshape the structure of the lives of Americans (Tichenor 2002). The 1965 Act was seen by many as a redress of wrongs done to Southern and Eastern Europeans; it was expected to clear the backlogs for countries such as Italy, Greece, and Poland (Daniels 2004). However, the new preference system opened up a pathway for people from Asia and Latin America and led to a dramatic rise in immigration. Asians used chain migration to bring family members in under the immediate family category; Europeans did not do this. In the 1960s, Europeans were not anxious to migrate as Europe was prosperous during this time (Daniels 2004).

The numbers before and after the 1965 Act are dramatically different. The number of migrants between 1965 and 2013 has more than tripled. In 1965, 296,697 people entered the U.S.; in 2013, it was 990,553 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). Approximately 80% of immigrants today come from Asia or Latin America while less than 15%

---

20 To read a dissenting view Chin (1997) states that politicians were fully aware that migration from Asia would increase.
come from Europe (Pew Research Center 2013). Fifty years later, the impact from this watershed
Act is still being felt and has impacted subsequent immigration laws.

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act

The most comprehensive revision of immigration law since 1965, the Immigration
Reform and Control Act of 1986 (“IRCA”), was the first law to single out unauthorized migrants
(Bean et al 1990). The passing of IRCA was due in part to the lobbying efforts of pro-Hispanic
groups. Advocates of ethnic and religious groups garnered enough supporters in Congress that
they were able to prohibit an employer sanctions bill that did not include legalization (Bean et al
1989; Samers 2001). IRCA had three goals. The first was to reduce illegal immigration by
legalizing illegal immigrants who were already in the country. Seventy percent of the three
million21 people who received amnesty were Mexican; another 20% came from non-European
countries (Daniels 2004). Since many of the New Irish did not enter before the January 1, 1982
cutoff date, they were ineligible for amnesty. Less than 1,500 Irish were legalized under IRCA
(Office of Immigration Statistics 2014).

The second goal was to reduce future flows by imposing penalties on employers who hire
unauthorized persons. Employers were required to verify work eligibility for each employee. If
an employer hired a worker who was not authorized to work in the U.S., they were subject to
fines and even jail time (Bean et al 1990). Employer sanctions were seen as a key element of
enforcement. The U.S. needed to eliminate economic motivations and become less attractive to
unauthorized workers. By placing sanctions upon employers who knowingly hire unauthorized

21 Under IRCA 1.7 million formerly undocumented immigrants were granted legal status and 1.3 million
applied for legal status as special agricultural workers (Bean, Edmonston, Passel).
workers, the number of job opportunities would decrease which would in turn decrease one of the pull factors for this group.

IRCA’s third goal was to increase border enforcement (Bean et al 1990). Immigration and Naturalization Services received substantial financial increases for the U.S. Border Patrol (Bean et al 1989). The budget was also increased for the Wage and Hour Division and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in the Department of Labor to handle the increase of paperwork that was required by employers (Bean et al 1989).

IRCA was meant to show strength and take back the border, which had been compromised since the 1965 Act (Daniels 2004). Tichenor (1994) claims that not only did this law not restrict “new immigration” but it actually produced forces that led to an increase in migration from Asia and Latin America. The employer enforcement component was never fully established and an underground industry of fraudulent documents allowed the flow of unauthorized workers to continue (Tichenor 1994). In addition, IRCA failed to make provisions for continuing and increasing demands for workers, particularly in low skilled employment (Chishti and Kamaski 2014). Changes to the visa system were addressed in IRCA. Another flaw of IRCA was the backdated cutoff date of January 1, 1982. Because it was set five years prior to IRCA’s enactment date, the amnesty provision excluded approximately 50% of people who would have otherwise been eligible for amnesty. With a later cutoff date, many more migrants would have been able to apply for amnesty. This is particularly the case for Irish migrants as the 1980s wave did not start with any real earnest until 1983.

*Diversity Visas and Immigration Act of 1990*
The groundwork for these visas was established in the 1970s. In 1973 John Collins, on behalf of the American Irish National Immigration Committee, testified at a House Immigration Subcommittee stating that Irish were being prevented from coming to the U.S. because of their lack of close family ties and that “the stringent application of labor clearance makes it impossible for them to qualify for a non-preference, third preference, or sixth preference visa” (Law 2002, p8). The labor certification clause that was attached to non-preference visas in the 1965 Act substantially impacted Irish as many worked in low or unskilled labor fields (Law 2002). Many Irish could not meet this requirement and therefore could not enter the U.S. legally. Italian groups were also active in the early 1970 visa reform discussions. Italian immigrants were backlogged by 100,000 people in fifth preference and they were looking for a ways to eliminate this (Law 2002). Italian involvement fizzled out in the latter half of the 1970s as Italians lost interest in coming to the U.S. and the need for more visas was no longer present (Law 2002).

NP-5

NP-5, the Diversity Visa pilot program which was an IRCA amendment, provided 5,000 non-preference visas per year for two years to people from countries that were adversely affected by the 1965 Act. Thirty-six countries were identified by the Department of State as having experienced a decline in immigration since 1965. The intention was that these visas would provide a way for new “seed” immigrants who bring special skills or economic benefits to the U.S., but are not able to apply under one of the family preference categories (Lungren 1995). The visas were a temporary measure to increase the diversity of immigrants in the U.S. (Sebben 1992). The Department of State received an astonishing number of applications, 1.4 million, during a seven-day registration period in January 1987 (Law 2002).
NP-5 Program visas are known within the Irish community as Donnelly Visas. Representative Brian Donnelly (D-MA) became aware of visa difficulties for the Irish after meeting his nephew’s elementary school teacher, an Irish immigrant, in the late 1970s. Her and her husband’s status was in limbo as they awaited hearing if their visa would be renewed. “He had no idea that there was an issue. So he basically took information from us and we explained to him that things had changed and that there were a lot of people that wanted to come out and as the economy nosedived in Ireland in the early 80s more and more people wanted to come. We started the ball rolling. He started looking into things” (Woods 2014).

Thirty-five percent of these visas were designated for Irish (Lobo and Salvo 1998; Sebben 1992). The visas that were not set aside were distributed in order the applications were received. Irish were eligible to apply for this portion as well. IIRM contacted the post office and figured out which post offices near DC would get the applications there the quickest. They then organized a caravan from NYC to Washington, D.C. in hopes of getting many of these first come first serve visas. Thanks in part to this campaign, some of the visas that were part of the general lottery were awarded to Irish. It is estimated that nearly one-third of the Donnelly recipients who were Irish were unauthorized (Corcoran 1993). Due to the success, Donnelly visas were extended for two years and an additional 15,000 were made available in 1989 and 1990 (Lobo and Salvo 1998).
Berman Visas (OP-5) allotted 10,000 visas in 1990 and 1991 to underrepresented countries. Underrepresented countries was more broadly described than it was in the NP-5 program, 162 countries were included. Only 1% of these visas went to Irish (Hethmon 2002).

**Immigration Act of 1990**

Diversity Visas became permanent with the Immigration Act of 1990 (“1990 Act”). The program was rolled out in two parts: a three year temporary transition and a permanent plan. The transitional phase ran from 1992 to 1994 and allotted 40,000 visas annually (Daniels 2004). Representative Bruce Morrison (D-CT), the Immigration Subcommittee Chairman at the time, was an author of the bill. Morrison was, and still is, a vocal advocate for the Irish. Applicants had to prove that they were admissible; came from an adversely affected state which was defined as a nation that did not have a cumulative total of 50,000 immigrants in the previous five years; had resided continuously in the U.S.; and had a firm commitment of employment for at least a year (Daniels 2004; Hayes 2001; Jacob 1992). Unauthorized immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to January 1, 1990 were eligible to apply. Recipients were exempt from the labor certification which was required under the preference system (Newton 2005). These visas provided an opening that previously had not existed for many unskilled workers.

Forty percent of the transitional visas were set aside for Irish (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Lisa Johnston, Legislative Director for the IIHRM, speculated that the Irish received a high percentage

---

22 The Immigration Act of 1990 is notable besides Diversity Visas. This act expanded country limits, readjusted preference categories, restructured employment based entry provisions, lessened restrictions on people from communist countries, addressed concerns about increasing crime by putting bars in place for certain crimes, created the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform (Daniels 2004; Graham 2004). Annual caps were raised: 700,000 annual for 1992-1994 and then reduced to 675,000 from there on (Daniels 2004).
of these visas because previous attempts at Irish amnesty programs did not pass (Jacob 1992). In 1987, a bill was put forth by Representative Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) that would have provided amnesty to people from Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Irish Permanent Resident Adjustment Act (Black 1989). This bill did not garner much support as critics claimed that this bill was discriminatory as only one ethnic group could apply. It did not pass. The special allotment of Diversity Visas was a nod from Irish-American politicians to the Irish circumstance. A total of 9.3 million applications were received in 1991 during the application period (Jacob 1992). Irish applicants won 20,000 of the 50,000 visas which were chosen as finalists. Polish applicants received the second most visas, 12,060 (Jacob 1992).

The permanent diversity track began in 1995. Each year, 55,000 Diversity Visas are to be awarded through a random selection process, a lottery (Sebben 1992). People who are eligible must be from a low-admission state and no single country can be awarded more than 7% of the available visas in one year (Sebben 1992). Immigrants must demonstrate that they have either a high school education or equivalent, or that they have at least two years of work experience in a job requiring at least that amount of training or experience (Jacob 1992; Newton 2005). Once Diversity Visas became permanent, no special visa allotments were set aside for Irish. However, Northern Ireland is treated as a separate state. This means that people from the Irish isle can earn up to 14% of the total visas.
**Proponents**

Proponents saw Diversity Visas as a reversal of the discrimination that Europeans experienced since the 1965 Act. The focus on family reunification had essentially shut out Irish, as well as other Europeans, therefore the 1990 Act is corrective (Sebben 1992). These visas gave Irish the same opportunities for amnesty that other unauthorized immigrants were able to qualify for under IRCA. It was not about keeping out “others,” but to provide the diversity that had been missing since 1965 (Legomsky 1993). According to Sebben (1992) the Irish should be seen as a special case since the country’s economy fell after the IRCA cutoff date; had the cutoff date been more reasonable many Irish would have been eligible. The special allotment of Diversity Visas to Irish recognized and addressed a specific country and their specific immigration problem (Black 1989). Therefore it was not a case of favoritism.

**Critics**

Critics saw the Diversity visa program as affirmative action for white Europeans. While proponents claimed that they were corrective, others saw this logic as the very reason for how they were anti-diverse (Newton 2005). The use of the term diverse is “an ironic twist of political jargon” (Johnson 1998, p 1135). The Center for Immigrants’ Rights argued that the real rationale behind these visas was the idea that the wrong kinds of people were entering (Sebben 1992). Since many post 1965 immigrants were not white, these visas were another example of racist legislation. These visas were a way for Congress to influence the ethnic distribution of our immigrant population by placing geographical restrictions that replicate cultural homogeneity
(Legomsky 1993). The geographical eligibility requirements give a leg up to some people simply because of what country they reside in. Legomsky (1993) claims that this program makes no sense as it based on countries and people migrate, not countries. Asian and Hispanic interest groups found the diversity lottery idea repugnant because of its clear return to national origin considerations (Law 2002). Proponents responded to the critiques that Hispanics and Asians were excluded from these visas by saying that these groups do not need to be included as they already have access to visas (Sebben 1992).

Another controversial component to the Diversity Visa program is that it is not based on family or employment (Newton 2005). The fact that these Diversity Visas were considered at all was highly unusual given the primary goals of American immigration to reunify families and secondarily employment (Law 2002). Some feared that since these visas do not require employment nor family connections they could be an easy way for terrorists to enter the U.S. (Newton 2005).

2005 - 2007 reforms

Between 2005 and 2007, three major pieces of comprehensive immigration legislation were put forth. In December 2005, the House of Representatives passed the Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) sponsored Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (“2005 Act”). It was known as an enforcement-first or enforcement-only approach to immigration reform. If passed, this bill would have included building a wall along the Mexican border and broadened the role of state and local governments in regards to enforcement (Montesino and Sherr 2008; Wasem 2013). The 2005 Act also mandated employer use of the “Basic Pilot” program to verify legal status of employees and increased penalties to those who
hired unauthorized migrants (Leal 2009; Wasem 2013). No changes to visas were included, except for the elimination of the Diversity Visa program.

The most radical provision of the 2005 Act was that it would have criminalized all unauthorized immigrants by making their presence a felony offense. People who were found to be in the U.S. without proper documentation would be sentenced to 366 days in jail (Leal 2009). The 2005 Act also made it criminal for not-for-profit organizations to provide any type of assistance to unauthorized migrants. This would have put social works, religious officials, and health providers at risk of going to jail (Leal 2009; Montesino and Sherr 2008).

Proponents believed that if strict punitive measures were enacted the pull factors for unauthorized migrants would reduce; this would lead to a decrease in the inflow of unauthorized people coming to the U.S. to work. Those who were not in the country legally would leave either by their choice or from deportation (Montesino and Sherr 2008). These enforcement measures would also improve homeland security, keeping terrorists from entering the U.S.

This enforcement-first, enforcement-only legislation led to numerous rallies throughout the spring of 2006 (Leal 2009). Hundreds of thousands of people protested against the 2005 Act in particular and restrictionist immigration reforms in general (Leal 2009). The social movement began in big cities and spread to medium size cities and small towns. Organizers called for more humane immigration reform that would protect the country against the “real” terrorists and stop blaming unauthorized immigrants for social ills (Montesino and Sherr 2008). The overwhelming majority of immigrant communities insisted that the 2005 Act did not provide any real solution to the immigration crisis. In fact, these measures would make matters worse for both
undocumented and documented migrants and since the focus was upon migrants of color the 2005 Act was yet another example of racist immigration law (Montesino and Sherr 2008).

While the 2005 Act passed in the House, a similar Senate bill that was introduced by William Frist (R-TN) failed to invoke cloture. Soon after the Frist Bill died, a compromise bill was introduced. The bipartisan bill was introduced by seven senators, Arlen Specter (R-PA), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Mel Martinez (R-FL), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), John McCain (R-AZ), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Sam Brownback (R-KS). As it included many of the provisions laid out by McCain and Kennedy it became known as the McCain-Kennedy Bill. The McCain-Kennedy Bill had many similar provisions as the 2005 Act, but placed greater emphasis on the use of technology and called for increased communication and cooperation with Canada, Mexico, and Central American countries to combat future flows of unauthorized immigration and smuggling (Wasem 2013).

Different from the 2005 Act the McCain-Kennedy Bill would have increased Legal Permanent Resident (“LPR”) admissions in both family and employment categories and amended STEM (Science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields) visas so that recipients could adjust their status to LPR without waiting in queues (Wasem 2013). It also included an expanded guest work visas.

One of the key provisions of the McCain-Kennedy Bill was that unauthorized immigrants could earn legalization if they met certain criteria. Applicants needed to establish that they were present in the U.S. on or before April 5, 2001, had not departed between then and April 5, 2006, and had been employed for at least three years (Wasem 2013). They were also required to pay fines and back taxes, pass a criminal background check, show evidence of learning English and
civics (Leal 2009). Eligible recipients would not go to the front of the line but be processed
behind others who were already in the queue. Migrants who could not meet these qualifications
but had been present and employed since January 7, 2004 could apply for Deferred Mandatory
Departure where they could stay for three years (Wasem 2013).

While the McCain-Kennedy Bill included components of the 2005 Act, the two chambers
were unable to reconcile their differences and finalize a bill that could be agree upon. The bill
expired when the 109th Congress came to a close. In the end, only one immigration bill passed in
2006, the Secure Fence Act23 (Leal 2009).

In 2007, Kennedy and Specter introduced a bill that was a compromise between the
amnesty program of the McCain-Kennedy Bill and the enforcement aspects of the 2005 Act
(“2007 Bill”). Like the previous two legislation the 2007 Bill increased border security,
expanded employment verification measures, and increased worksite enforcement penalties.
However, this legislation would have substantially revised legal immigration and temporary
worker programs.

The 2007 Bill aimed to end chain migration by limiting the potential number of
beneficiaries in family based immigration. Siblings and adult children would no longer be able to
petition for family visas. A points system, similar to that used by Canada or Australia, was
proposed. Points would be awarded for an immigrant’s education, job skills, English proficiency,
family members living in the U.S., and whether they had been offered a job (von Sternberg and
Jones 2008; Wasem 2013). The labor certification requirement would have been eliminated in
lieu of this points system.

---

23 The Secure Fence Act authorized the building of 700 miles of barriers along the Mexico-U.S. border and
increased the number of checkpoints, lighting, and use of technology (i.e. cameras, satellites) along the border.
Almost all unauthorized immigrants could be legalized under a new Z visa. All non-citizens who were living in the U.S. since January 1, 2007 would be eligible to remain in the U.S. indefinitely and obtain a Social Security card (Wasem 2013). A Z visa holder could adjust their status to LPR after eight years and upon paying a $2,000 fine and back taxes (Leal 2009). Before these visas could go into effect, certain enforcement benchmarks or triggers needed to be met. Triggers included the installation of vehicles, fence, and camera towers along the Mexican border; increased detention space; and the implementation of an electronic eligibility verification system (Wasem 2013). The 2007 Bill did not have much support and failed to invoke cloture. The legislation was pulled from the floor and the discussion of immigration reform came to an end (Wasem 2003).

Immigration restrictionists saw the failure to pass any comprehensive immigration legislation during the 109th and 110th congresses as a victory (Leal 2009). Especially since immigration reform would be tabled for the immediate future as a major presidential election was on the horizon. Frustrated by federal inaction, many state and local governments began to implement local legislation. State legislatures passed over 150 laws in 2007 alone, many of which were intended to restrict immigrants' access to public benefits and increase immigration enforcement; others aimed to improve immigrant integration (Mittlestadt et al 2011; Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011).

_E-3 Visas_

In December 2011, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) added a provision to bill S.1983 that would have provided Irish with 10,500 E-3 visas. Two days later, Senators Scott Brown (R-MA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced a similar piece of legislation, the Irish Immigration
Recognition and Enforcement Act (“IRE Act”). The only nationality that is currently eligible for E-3 visas are Australians. The program, which grew out of a trade pact with Australia in 2005, was seen as a reward for Australia’s support of the U.S. military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan (Bolduc 2012). To be eligible, applicants must work in a job that requires a college degree and have secured employment in the U.S. E-3 visas last for two years, and have an unlimited number of renewals (Bolduc 2012). Visa rights are extended to spouses and children, who are also eligible to work in the U.S.

While the Schumer bill provided a visa waiver to unauthorized Irish workers, the IRE Act did not. The Brown and Kirk bill required people to return to Ireland in order to apply. While the IRE Act was a standalone bill, Irish visas were only one provision in the Schumer bill. S.1983 also proposed eliminating the per country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrants and increasing per country numerical limitations for family-sponsored visas. In January 2012, Schumer dropped the Irish amnesty provision from his bill.

Brown and Kirk’s bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee where it stalled. One vocal opponent was Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) who claimed this legislation played favoritism and that in a time of an economic downturn it is hard to support visas that would give employment to non-American workers (Bolduc 2012). To opponents this law seemed like an amnesty for Irish. When Brown sponsored the IRE Act, he was in a tight race for reelection as a Massachusetts senator. Brown’s opponent Elizabeth Warren (D) was in favor of in-state tuition for unauthorized immigrants and the DREAM Act. Brown opposed both of these legislation and favored the Secure Communities program. Critics suspected that Brown was sponsoring the IRE Act to garner support from Irish constituents as well as to pander to the Tea Party members of
the Republican Party by showing he would fight for white immigrants (Gunasekaran 2012; Kelly 2012).

Current Comprehensive Immigration Reform

While the talks of Comprehensive Immigration Reform began in earnest in 2012, statements on proposed reform were not released until early 2013. On January 28th, a Gang of Eight senators put forth a bipartisan framework on how to change the broken immigration system. The plan was based upon four basic legislative pillars: create a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants, reform the immigration system to recognize the importance of characteristics that will help build the American economy, create an effective employment verification system, and establish an improved process for admitting future workers (Gang of 8 2013). The next day, President Barack Obama put forth his own points for successful immigration reform. His plan also included four tenets: continuing to strengthen border security, cracking down on employers hiring undocumented workers, earned citizenship, and streamlining legal immigration (White House 2013).

In April 2013, Schumer introduced the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act to the Senate (“2013 Act”). The 2013 Act was an extension of the Gang of Eight’s framework. It proposed significant changes to the visa system including a new two track Merit Based visa program to replace the current system. Under Merit Based Track One, 120,000 visas would be allocated according to a points system. Non-citizens could earn points for attributes such as advanced degrees, employment experience, needs of U.S. employers, and whether they had family in the U.S. There is no cap for the Merit Based Track Two. These

24 Senators were Chuck Schumer (D-NY), John McCain (R-AZ), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Lindsay Graham (R-SC), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Jeff Flake (R-AZ).
visas are available to people who have been waiting in employment and family visa backlogs for at least five years or those who have been legally present for at least 10 years. The visas would be allocated over a seven year time frame (Bergeron 2013). Included in the 2013 Act is an adjustment of the E-3 visas to include an allotment of 10,500 visas for Irish and Koreans. Other visa changes include the elimination of Diversity Visas and visas for siblings of U.S. citizens. Two new visa categories are added: V visas available to family petitioners to live and work in the U.S. while their visa is being approved and W visas for low-skilled workers. Like the 2006 and 2007 legislation, the 2013 Act favors employment based visas in STEM fields. An increase in these visas would help U.S. employers compete for the best and brightest workers. The provision also includes a cap increase for H1-B visas, specialty occupation work visas. While some Irish enter on H1-B visas, 2,000 to 4,000 per year, the majority go to people from Canada, China, India, and South Korea (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014).

The 2013 Act mirrors the 2007 Bill by granting unauthorized migrants a pathway to legalization. If passed, unauthorized immigrants who arrived in the U.S. on or before December 31, 2011, were continuously present, had a relatively clean criminal record, and had satisfied all federal tax liability would be eligible to apply for Registered Provisional Immigrants (“RPI”) status. Applicants would pay an application processing fee and a $1,000 penalty fine. RPI status would be for six years, with renewals permitted. After 10 years of RPI status, one could apply for citizenship. However, these applications will not be processed until certain triggers were met. One trigger is that the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) needs to demonstrate that its border control plan is substantially operational and that the fencing plan had been substantially completed. Additionally, DHS will have to certify that a mandatory electronic employment
verification system and an exit verification system at air and sea ports of entry had been implemented (Bergeron 2013).

In July, the Senate passed the 2013 Act. Joe Garcia (D-FL) introduced the bill in the House in October. It was referred to committees, and as of the end of 2014 no progress has been made. Like the previous discussions on comprehensive immigration reform, the most controversial aspect is its creation of a pathway to legal status for certain unauthorized immigrants. Critics argue that the legalization provisions are too generous and that the mechanisms that are being proposed to reduce legal backlogs will lead to higher flows of immigration. Representative Jeff Sessions (R-AL) released a memo in January 2014, arguing that the House bill would be harmful to American workers. Immigrant advocacy groups have also criticized the bill for focusing too much on immigration enforcement (Bergeron 2013). Other criticisms have been on the requirements to achieve RPI status. The requirements of obtaining past employment records and learning English may not be plausible (National Immigration Law Center 2013). The costs associated with the application have also been a point of concern (National Immigration Law Center 2013). There was speculation that immigration reform failed to pass in 2014 as it was an election year. However, IRCA was signed into law during an election year and CIR could be a way for Republicans to woo Hispanic voters to help their 2014 reelection campaigns.

On November 20, 2014 President Barack Obama announced an Executive Action of deferred action for unauthorized immigrants who met certain requirements. During his speech Obama noted that he was putting forth this legislation due to the lack of movement on
immigration reform in Congress. In February 2015, a temporary injunction was issued to block the Executive Action.

**Unauthorized Immigrants**

Unauthorized immigration in the U.S. first became a widespread issue in the 1970s. During this decade, the ramifications from the 1965 Act and the ending of the Bracero Program were felt. Ngai (2004) and De Genova (2002) both argue that the foundations for the contemporary crisis of unauthorized immigration are rooted in the 1965 Act. While the 1965 Act abolished national origin quotas, it set country visa limits, reducing the number of visas available to Mexicans and Europeans making legal migration more difficult (Donata and Armenta 2011; Menjivar 2000).

In the 1980s, unauthorized immigration received attention from the media and the U.S. government. The 1981 SCIRP Report claimed that undocumented immigration was the country’s number one immigration problem (Daniels 2004). The 1981 report was one of the factors that led to the enactment of IRCA. After IRCA the number of unauthorized immigrants decreased; however rates rose again after the 1990 Immigration Act. The issue of unauthorized migration once again came to prominence in the mid-2000s with increased media attention and pending legislation (Buckler et al 2009). Today, most conversations about immigrants and immigration legislation are focused on controlling and reducing the unauthorized population, not on legal migrants. The terms “unauthorized,” “undocumented,” and “illegal immigration” have become synonymous with border crossers and Mexican immigrants.

---

25 The Bracero program was a program that offered foreign born workers temporary employment in the agricultural industry. It ended in 1964.
Discussions about unauthorized immigrants falsely collapse the group into a homogeneous category. A key difference is how migrants enter into the country, as an Enter Without Inspection (“EWI”) or visa overstayer/abuser. EWIs are people who clandestinely cross the border, primarily the Mexican-U.S. border (Bean et al 1990; Briggs 1984). While border crossings occur along the Canadian-U.S. border, they are not as common nor do they receive as much media or governmental attention. The increased concern and attention about border crossers during the past decade has led to greater use of technology, the building of fences, increased number of border agents, and has been fodder for much of the CIR discussions (Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011). A visa overstayer or abuser is a person who enters the U.S. legally and overstays their authorized period of residence, or works even though they do not have the proper visa to do so, or presents false documents or uses another person’s documents. Since 2005, each of the proposed CIR legislation has included a provision regarding entrance and exit programs which would help identify visa overstayers.

Buckler, Swatt and Salinas (2009) claim that the contemporary focus on controlling unauthorized immigration is due in part to the demographic makeup of migrants. The majority of the 11.4 unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. are from North or Central America, 8.9 million (Baker and Rytina 2013). Approximately 300,000 are from Europe (Baker and Rytina 2013). EWIs tend to be migrants from Mexico or Latin America while visa overstayers are from Europe (Keeley 2009). It is estimated that 55% to 66% of the unauthorized immigrant population is EWI (Keeley 2009; Papademtriou 2005). However, reporting methods used do not account for double

---

26 Most unauthorized immigrants from non-Latin American countries come from Philippines, India and Brazil (Hoefer et al 2011).
counts, i.e. one person being apprehended multiple times along the border, and the number of EWIs may be inflated (Briggs 1984).

While most of the Irish who are unauthorized overstay their visas, some are EWIs and cross the border. When one Irish woman that I interviewed, Siobhan,\(^{27}\) did not receive a Donnelly visa and was twice denied a holiday visa she decided to enter the U.S. through the Canadian border. Siobhan flew into Montreal to meet her boyfriend and then drove to the U.S.-Canadian border at Niagara Falls. Once at the border she walked across the Peace Bridge as her boyfriend, a Donnelly visa recipient who was living in Boston, drove across and met her in the U.S. All of her choices were strategically made to ward off any questions. She chose to fly into Montreal as she had a childhood penpal from there. If questioned she had an address and reason for being in Montreal, to visit a friend.\(^{28}\) When it came to crossing the border she walked rather than rode in her boyfriend’s car, she did not want to jeopardize his legal status. Siobhan left all her possessions in the car, wore a fanny pack, and carried a camera as she crossed the bridge. The idea was to look so touristy that they would never suspect that she was planning on moving to Boston. “It was the longest walk of my life, crossing that bridge” (Siobhan 2013). When she was asked at the immigration station her purpose she answered to do some shopping; she was surprised at how easy it was. Even though she had crossed the border the fear did not subside until she was in Boston. Siobhan noted how green she was that she thought that toll booths along the highway were immigration stations. As she recounted this story, she smiled and joked, but the fear she felt was evident; she noted that she was sweating buckets the whole time until she arrived in Boston.

---

27 This is an alias.
28 She was no longer in touch with the penpal.
Being native English speakers, Irish do not encounter language barriers and are perceived as having higher IQs (Corcoran 1991; Doherty 2002; Hayes 2001). In addition, most people, including members of the Irish community, do not associate Irish immigrants with being out of legal status. Irish, both documented and undocumented, are able to utilize well-established ethnic communities, heritage ties, and a cultural background similar to that of the U.S. (Aroian 1993; Christopher and Kulig 2000). Corcoran (1991) suggests that because of these privileges unauthorized Irish are “an invisible population” (xiii).

On the other hand, their precarious legal status impacts their economic stability, emotional and physical health, and social integration (Kim 2009). Unauthorized immigrants in general are more mobile, have greater job turnover, and are less likely to have fixed employment than legal migrants (Hanson 2007; Menjivar 2000). Work credentials are oftentimes difficult to verify or transfer; many are unable to use their education or previous training which results in underemployed (Keeley 2009).

Aroian (1993) found that the Boston unauthorized Irish immigrants who participated in her study feared being apprehended or deported. This fear caused them to view their future as tentative and uncertain. Nearly a decade after Aroian’s study, Hayes (2001) found that unauthorized immigrants, again in Boston, had a greater need for services for issues related to depression, stress, health, drug/alcohol abuse, and marital/family problems. Additionally, unauthorized immigrants have limited access to social services and little redress when they are victims of crime or human rights violations (Aroian 1993; Kim 2009). Alcohol abuse, depression, and suicide have increasingly been addressed within the Irish community by immigrant support organizations and the press. In 2014, there was a campaign to bring people
out of the shadows, letting them know that it was okay to talk about their hardships and seek help. One way to reduce psychological distress is to find a supportive relationship within a social network or seek out the services of an immigrant support organization (Banerjee 1983; Kuo and Tsai 1986).
Chapter Four

Irish Immigration Reform Movement

The Irish Immigration Reform Movement ("IIRM") was formed in NYC in May of 1987 by concerned members from the Cork County B.P & P. Association of NY. From the start, IIRM implemented structure and organization. Within the first year, they had recorded a Certificate of Incorporation and bylaws with the New York Secretary of State, December 1987 and January 1988 respectively, and drafted a constitution. The bylaws named three directors: Mae O’Driscoll as vice president, Sean Minihane as president, and Susan O’Donnell as secretary. The constitution set forth IIRM’s Objectives, Means, Statement of Policy, Membership, Election and Duties of Officers, Six Action Groups, Steering Committee, National Council, and the Conduct of Meetings.

The Objectives and Means noted in the Constitution were:

(i) to secure an amnesty for illegal aliens presently in the United States of America.
(ii) to establish a large annual non-preference quota of immigrant visas for Ireland and the other thirty-five (35) countries adversely affected by the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act (as documented by the U.S. State Department).
(iii) to address the problems of the new Irish immigrants, both documented and undocumented.

(IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 10a)

To accomplish these objectives IIRM stated that they would mobilize the Irish Government, Irish-American community, and the New Irish; initiate contact with other ethnic groups; and campaign for the support of the American people and legislators (IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 10a).
The stated purpose of the organization in the Certificate of Incorporation was:

To promote full participation of the Irish community in American life by:

1) disseminating information on immigration opportunities
2) promoting interests and values of an educated and informed citizenry
3) cooperating with other social and civic organizations and agencies concerned with social, civic and cultural welfare.

To promote fellowship and extend acquaintanceship by means of social gatherings; to promote social intercourse among the members by means of dances, dinners, musicals, and other forms of entertainment; to engage generally in any causes or objects similar to the above mentioned in order to promote the social and mental welfare of the members.

To exercise, promote and protect the privileges and interests of the community, to foster a healthy interest in the civic affairs of the community; to develop good citizenship; and to inquire into civic abuses and to seek reformation thereof. To do any other act or thing incidental to or connected with the foregoing purposes or in advancement therefor, but not for the pecuniary profit or financial gain of its members, directors, or officers except as permitted under Article 5 of the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law.

To promote patriotism and encourage the demonstration of respect and honor to those who have contributed to the upbuilding and preservation of the United States, its institutions and ___ to publish and disseminate information concerning their lives and their patriotic activities to symbolize patriotism in our ____ as a virtue gloriously shared to American citizens of all races and creeds.

(IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 8)

The constitution, as well as other documentation, stated that the IIRM was meant to be a single-issue, apolitical, non-partisan, non-sectarian organization. Yet, Sean Benson, a member of the NYC branch Steering Committee, called IIRM a political organization with social responsibilities (IIRM Archives Box 3, Folder 23). While the main purpose and objective of IIRM was creating a legal pathway for the Irish, the Constitution’s third objective, addressing problems of the New Irish, received nearly as much attention as legislative issues in monthly meetings.

IIRM was not truly a single-issue organization. In actuality, they were a two-issue organization that dealt with both social and political issues. The Stated Purpose in the Certificate
of Incorporation notes fellowship, social intercourse, and to protect and promote the interests of the community. The daily life problems experienced by unauthorized Irish were widely reported and discussed during Steering Committee and General Public meetings. I argue that IIRM had no choice but to address social issues. During the beginning phases of IIRM, immigrant support organizations run by and for Irish immigrants did not exist. It was not until 1987 and later that organizations, such as the Irish Pastoral Centre and Irish International Immigration Center, both in Boston, and the Emerald Isle Immigration Center in New York City, were formed.

One of the best examples of the dual social and political role that IIRM played is the Irish Code, Appendix B. This document was constructed to inform the New Irish how best to behave and assimilate in America. It asks them to be aware of and active participants in immigration reform. The New Irish, who tended to be young single men, had drawn attention for misbehaving around the NYC area. The organizers of IIRM were worried that the unruliness of their behavior, including drunken disorderliness and rumors of drug use, and any arrests or altercations with law officials would harm the Irish’s chances for legalization. There was fear that these incidences posed “a direct threat to public sympathy and support for measures sympathetic to the Irish Community” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 31). To combat this, the New Irish Action Group of the NYC branch drafted the Irish Code, which was released at the July 1987 public meeting. During the meeting “it was stressed by the chairman that the young Irish immigrants would have to avoid any kind of misconduct. They are illegal in the country and have to prove themselves to the established American community” (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3). The political cause would be improved if the New Irish were seen as responsible, viable citizens.
Besides the Code, IIRM published news bulletins and reports that reported encounters between Irish citizens and Immigration officers, steps to take if you are stopped and questioned by INS officers, and fact sheets on one’s rights and privileges. Hotlines were set up by several branches, including Boston, Philadelphia, and NYC, where migrants could call about questions on driver’s licenses, report workplace exploitation, and with job opportunities. These hotlines were manned by IIRM members several nights a week.

**Structure**

As set forth in the constitution, each branch had ten elected officers who formed a Steering Committee: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and a chairperson from each of the six Action Groups. The duty of each officer is laid out in the constitution. In addition to these ten officers, a branch needed to elect a spokesperson. If this person was not already a member of the Steering Committee, they would become one by virtue of this position. The final elected branch position was a director of membership. This person must be a member of the Fundraising Action Group but being a Steering Committee member was not a requisite. Each Steering Committee was headed by a chairperson who organized meetings and prepared monthly update bulletins on the activities of the branch. The Steering Committee kept the rest of the branch updated on the progress of the six Action Groups and were the primary people who suggested events, fundraising opportunities, and interacted with politicians. Steering Committee members were the most stable, visible, and active in the community members of the branch.

**Action Groups**

The Action Group structure provided IIRM with the ability to divide and conquer areas to make sure that all aspects of the cause were being covered. Action Group members were
expected to share information and work with their counterparts in other branches. The purpose and role of each Action Group is explained in the Constitution. The Action Groups and summary of each Group’s purpose are noted in Chart 4 below.

**Chart 4 – Irish Immigration Reform Movement Action Group Names and Descriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Group</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Irish Action Group</td>
<td>Educate, mobilize support from Irish-American community, lobby elected representatives, initiate contact and garner support from mainstream American organizations, mobilize support from schools and colleges which have strong representation of Irish-American students, compile and update mailing list of all Irish-American organizations in its geographic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Government Action Group</td>
<td>Ensure that the Irish government does its utmost to resolve the problem of illegal Irish in the U.S. by educating and mobilizing Irish people, urge Irish friends and relatives to lobby their representatives, organize with the IIRM Ireland branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Irish Action Group</td>
<td>Educate and mobilize New Irish community, establish and staff a hotline advice center, identify and contact sympathetic attorneys, conduct a full liaison with all organizations and agencies who deal with the problems that New Irish encounter, document cases of exploitation against New Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Contact Action Group</td>
<td>Work in cohesion with other adversely affected nationalities, maintain an awareness of developments in other ethnic immigrant groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Action Group</td>
<td>Spearhead fundraising activities, investigate and apply for grant aid from government or agencies, coordinate membership drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations Action Group</td>
<td>Initiate and maintain contact with radio, television and print media at local, national, and international levels; type updated bulletins and share with other branches, coordinate with other branch PR groups to compile and maintain media mailing lists, promote the activities of the other five Action Groups, compile and maintain press cuttings from relevant media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 10a)
These Action groups illustrate the dual role of IIRM. The most prominent goal is that of educating and mobilizing various groups, which is represented in three of the Action Groups: Irish American, Irish Government, and New Irish. The New Irish Action group directly addresses the social aspects. These Action Groups illustrate how widespread the audience was that they were aiming to reach. IIRM identified four different groups of people: American Irish, New Irish, Irish government, and other adversely affected ethnic groups. Interestingly, American politicians are not addressed under their own separate Action Group, instead they are captured under the American Irish Action Group.

Membership and Meetings

To become a member of IIRM, one submitted an application which was reviewed by the branch Steering Committee. Membership had a two-fold purpose: to increase revenue and coordinate a large body of persons sympathetic to the objectives of IIRM. At the top of the application, which was quite simple, the three objectives of the IIRM were listed. The only information required was name, address, telephone, and a signature that the person agreed to uphold the declared non-partisan, apolitical aims of the movement and abide by the constitution. In order to vote in an election one must have a current membership. The yearly membership dues were $10.

It was recommended that each branch hold a monthly general public meeting. The goal of these meetings was to impart useful information to New Irish, members, and the public on the progress and activities of the branch, IIRM, and campaign-at-large. The agenda of these meetings was fairly set and controlled by IIRM; all invited speakers were previously determined and arranged for by the Steering Committee and only IIRM material was made available. At the
meetings each Action Group was expected to give a report on their activities. In addition, each branch held twice-monthly Steering Committee meetings. At these closed meetings, each Steering Committee member was asked to report on their activities since the last meeting. While some information from these meetings was taken to the public meetings, these proceedings were to be viewed as confidential information.

**Branches**

By 1990, branches were founded in at least 13 states, Washington, D.C., and Dublin, Ireland. The first branch to open outside of NYC was in Boston on September 16, 1987. In Chart 5 below the branches and their year of founding are listed.

**Chart 5 – List of Irish Immigration Reform Movement Branches and Year of Founding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Year of Founding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City, NY</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield, MA</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford, CT</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft. Lauderdale, FL</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose, CA</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas-Missouri</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Valley, PA area</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooster, MA</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose, CA</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
San Diego, CA | 1989
San Francisco, CA | 1989
Dublin | Unknown
San Antonio, TX | Unknown
Pittsburgh, PA | Unknown
New Jersey | Unknown
Minnesota | Unknown
Arizona* | Unknown
Los Angeles, CA# | Unknown
NY state subchapters: Albany, Brooklyn, Kingsbridge, Mid-Hudson, Suffolk County, Peekskill, Woodlawn@ | Unknown

*an Arizona member attended the April 1988 National Council meeting, but I was unable to locate mention of an AZ branch in the archives.
#found a discussion that a branch in LA was going to form, but did not find confirmation that this branch opened
@Woodlawn chapter was located in Queens and was frequently mentioned within the NYC chapter archives. The other New York branches were mentioned in the archive to a much lesser degree.

**Funding**

Funding came primarily from fundraising events, member dues, and donations. Details on the type of fundraisers held are discussed later in this chapter. In addition, grant money was received from NYC, Friends of Fianna Fáil,29 Consulate Division of Foreign Affairs Irish, the American Ireland Fund, and the Irish Government. Funding from the Consulate was designated for hotline services. The funding from the American Ireland Fund was also meant for outreach services and the dissemination of information to New Irish. The money from the Irish government did not come easily. IIRM repeatedly requested financial funding from the Taoiseach,30 Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and other Irish politicians. In 1989, the Irish government granted 200,000 Irish pounds to Irish service organizations in the U.S. IIRM was

---

29 Fianna Fáil is a conservative political party in Ireland.
30 Taoiseach is the Prime Minister of Ireland.
one of the organizations that received a portion of this amount. This money was used to establish the Emerald Isle Immigration Center in NYC.

**National Council**

The National Council consisted of delegates from the Steering Committee from each Major branch. The designation of Major Branch was determined and set by the National Council. The National Council was the supreme executive level; they coordinated and controlled the activities of all individual branches on a national basis. Decisions made by the National Council were binding upon all branches. It was headed by a chairperson, who had the authority to speak for IIRM on a national basis and the person responsible for drafting policy statements. The other elected member of the National Council was a political action coordinator. This person was responsible for coordinating political action on a national basis and chaired the political action committee. The National Council was to meet at least twice a year. Their inaugural meeting was on November 7th and 8th, 1987 and involved New York and Boston delegates. At this first meeting, the National Council drafted the constitution and Sean Minihane was elected as the first National Chairman.

The National Council reviewed possible legislation and discussed if IIRM should support or get involved with the proposed legislature, and in what ways to become involved. At the meetings, details of national lobbying plans were outlined and goals were established for the coming year. In addition, each branch was expected to provide a review of the status and difficulties being experienced by New Irish in their area and their branch’s activities since the last meeting. Other topics that were on the agenda included the discussion of logo, corporate sponsorship, and creation of an advisory board. In 1988, the National Council discussed the
hiring and coordination of a Washington lobbyist. In July 1988, Harris Miller from the firm of Miller Holt was hired as a lobbyist for IIRM.

The National Council was also responsible for a national budget. Each branch was expected to contribute to this fund. The amount each branch was asked to contribute varied throughout the years. At one point branches were asked to share half of their membership dues with the National Council, later on a specific amount per each individual branch was agreed upon. This amount was dependent upon their size and activity and the amounts varied from $500 for a smaller branch to $8,000 for a Major Branch. At another point, contribution was determined by a formula, sharing 25% of fundraising proceeds until a specific amount of contribution was achieved, at which time the branch would only share 10% of fundraising profits. The money in the national budget was primarily used to pay for lobbying efforts, including the fees for the Washington lobbyist, and the creation and distribution of a National newsletter.

The New York branch appears to have held more sway than other branches. This is not unexpected as the movement originated in NYC and many unauthorized Irish settled in the greater NYC area. Another reason that the NYC branch took a lead is that leaders of the National Council were also current or former leaders in the NYC branch. Sean Minihane, who held the position of chairman of the NYC Steering Committee for a time, was named as the first president on the Certificate of Incorporation and held the office of National Chairman.

In the archives, I located an Information Report template. This document was meant to be used by area representatives to report information about the status and experiences of New Irish in their area (i.e. unemployment, incidences of threats or discrimination, contact with authorities, engagement in unlawful or unsociable contact, legal or social problems encountered), as well as
job opportunities, ideas, event suggestions, and possible new members (information sheet). While I located the template, I found neither a completed form nor mention of these reports during a Steering Committee meeting. It is plausible that the oral reports made by each Action Group chairperson during Steering Committee meetings took the place of filling out these weekly Information Reports.

A pivotal year for IIRM was 1989. At the National Council meetings in 1987 and 1988, the discussions centered around organizational structure and legislation. However, starting in 1989 National Council meetings focused more on the progress that the IIRM as a whole and each branch were making and less on obstacles and procedures. Their policies and responses were more organized, detailed, and standardized. As a whole, they demonstrated a better understanding of the steps it took to hold successful fundraisers. By 1989, most branches had established a foothold into the Irish American community within their area, and were reaping the benefits of this interaction. While smaller branches existed (i.e. the Wooster branch noted only 17 members) it appears that those involved were a relatively strong core of dedicated persons.

Little infighting or dissention within the organization appears in the meeting minutes. Many votes within the NYC Steering Committee and National Council are unanimous or only have one nay vote. However, one noted complaint came at the September 1989 National Council meeting. Delegates felt that the National Office was not forthcoming with information, nor were materials received in a timely fashion. It was suggested that they needed to form a proper forum to build consensus, create a mechanism of communication between national meetings, and more structure. It is possible that the lack of information sharing was exacerbated as nine months had passed from the previous National Council meeting.
Strategic Efforts

In this section I discuss the strategic efforts and tactics employed by IIRM. Members of the community, in particular established Irish, thought that the IIRM was too aggressive and that their tactics were brash (Almeida 2001). Their assertiveness alienated some ethnic political lobbies and established Irish American groups, as well as Irish and U.S. government leaders (Almeida 2001). Over the years, IIRM struck a more moderate balance between aggressive tactics and compromise, especially as more legislative victories were achieved.

I have divided IIRM’s tactics into inside and outside efforts, as the purpose of each strategy was vastly different. Inside strategic efforts included outreach to the entire Irish community, including Irish and Irish-American groups. Outside efforts are those that focused on other ethnic groups, the general American public, and politicians.

Inside Strategic Efforts

The main goal of the inside strategic efforts was to disseminate information to members, Irish American organizations, and Irish Americans. While it was important to impart information and successes to members, IIRM understood that it was also important to involve the greater Irish and Irish American communities. Community presence aided in funding and tactical efforts. The main ways that IIRM established their presence within the community was through monthly meetings, fundraisers, appearances at Irish Festivals, and media including mainstream and ethnic newspapers, television appearances, and radio shows.

Meetings were critical to the success of IIRM. As laid out during the first National Council meeting, General Public meetings were “to impart useful information to the New Irish, and to inform the public as to the progress of the branch, the Movement and the campaign-at-
large” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 6). Many meetings focused on three areas: fundraising, legislation, and social issues and services.

As IIRM was a non-profit organization, fundraising events were an important part of inside strategies. During General Public meetings, upcoming events were highlighted and members were encouraged to attend and bring friends. Fundraisers provided visibility in the community as the events were advertised through flyers in bars and in the local ethnic Irish press. The most common fundraisers held were dances, music seisúns,\(^\text{31}\) and social events held in bars or function halls. Other fundraisers included benefit concerts by Irish performers, the most notable group being The Wolfe Tones, a popular Irish band that plays traditional Irish music; a 5K fun run; a golf tournament; 50/50 raffles at dances; and donation jars in Irish pubs. In 1989 IIRM held the first formal dinner dance and reception. The NYC branch sponsored two of these dinners and the San Francisco branch held a Gala.

One of the group objectives for 1989 was to send fundraising letters to high-rollers, regular people, and bars, etc. While fundraising letters are mentioned in the group objectives, the use of this strategy does not appear to be common. I found only a few fundraising letters or requests for money at the bottom of press releases or news bulletins. It is possible that these efforts were verbal requests and therefore not recorded. Another one of the 1989 objectives was to investigate corporate sponsorship (IIRM Archives Box 3, Folder 23). I did not find evidence of IIRM receiving any corporate funding.

In regards to fundraising, IIRM also sold promotional materials including shirts, buttons, and stickers. For example, a button with a green shamrock in the middle and the words “I wrote

\(^{31}\) Seisúns are sessions where musicians gather in a pub to play traditional Irish music. There is no set list and anyone who wants to play can join in.
to my congressman to legalize the Irish. I care. Do you?” These items were sold during IIRM events and at Irish Festivals. Steering Committee members of the New York branch attended Irish festivals in the greater NYC and Upstate New York area. Members from other branches attended festivals in their local areas. The reason for festival appearances was threefold. They benefitted IIRM financially through the sales of promotional materials, increased their visibility in the community by informing patrons about the movement, and were a way to recruit new members.

Legislative updates were the second focus of General Public meetings. These updates comprised of the status of current legislation, upcoming hearings and votes, politicians that IIRM members had met with, and encouraging members to participate in IIRM’s tactical campaigns. These reports fluctuated in length and substance depending on what was happening in the legislature (e.g. an upcoming vote). In the later years, this part of the meetings included updates on Donnelly Visa applications and clearing up misconceptions about these visas that were circulating in the community. The portion of meetings spent on political aspects was less than I expected. General public meetings appear to have been geared towards social issues while legislative discussions occurred in the Steering Committee meetings.

The third focus, social issues and services, was a dominant feature in many of the General Public meetings. At almost every meeting of the NYC branch, obtaining a driver’s license, establishing bank accounts, health insurance, workplace exploitation, and interaction with NYPD32 were discussed. Again, here the dual role that IIRM played is evident. One of the

---

32 The meeting minutes section about the recurring guest speaker, Detective David Goldberg of the NYPD, become quite humorous. Detective Goldberg attended and spoke at every NYC Branch public meeting. The Minutes in the beginning give a detailed report that he states that undocumented Irish have nothing to fear from the police as
draws of these public meetings was the discussion on social needs and issues being experienced by the New Irish.

It is unclear if the social dimension of meetings was the case for the NYC branch only, or if it was the case for all branches. Other branches noted that their member base was mainly Irish Americans, not New Irish. At the April 1988 National Council meeting, Boston delegates noted that New Irish in their area were wary of joining the movement. They reported the same thing the following year as did the Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia\textsuperscript{33} branches (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 7). Other branches (Connecticut, Kansas, Rhode Island) also reported that few New Irish were members.

One feature of the meetings, and IIRM principles in general, was to encourage members to become active within the community. A Boston delegate to the National Council made a proposal that New Irish should be encouraged to join Irish/American organizations to assimilate better into the community (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 6). At a NYC General Public Meeting, Donald Martin, who was the Irish American Action Group chairperson, reminded attendees that the personal, local approach is an important part of immigration reform. People should join organizations and share their stories so that the undocumented problem was no longer an abstract issue for people, but one where they knew a person who is involved/affected (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 4). This includes becoming involved with other ethnic group organizations, especially if you have ties to that ethnicity.

\textsuperscript{33} Many migrants who settled in Philadelphia were from Northern Ireland. Participation and support waned because in preliminary proposals Northern Ireland was grouped with the United Kingdom, which meant that Northern Ireland immigrants were ineligible for the independent immigrant visas as the UK was not classified as an adversely affected country.
As immigration reform ramped up, more Irish community groups placed focus upon immigration, participated in letter writing campaigns, and collaborated with IIRM. These groups included Emerald Societies, County Associations, American Irish Political Education Committee, Irish American Labor Coalition, the Irish American Unity Conference, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (“AOH”), and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. At the May 1989 General Public Meeting, Donald Martin stated that it is “sometimes necessary to have a concrete problem in order to engender a reawakening of political activity in the American-Irish Community at large. One of the helpful things about the immigration issue is that it is something that requires involvement not only by the American Irish Community but also by the undocumented” (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 4). At the December 1988 National Council meeting, a motion was passed that IIRM should participate in all events where the Irish-American agenda is promoted, as long as immigration is on the agenda, and the event has no military overtones. Being present within the community was important, which is reinforced by the goals of the American Irish and New Irish Action Groups. The strongest partnership between IIRM and an Irish group was with the AOH. In August 1988, the AOH passed a resolution to actively pursue lobbying for reform which included assisting IIRM (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3). Throughout the years, IIRM and AOH joined together on letter writing campaigns and members of IIRM spoke at AOH conventions (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3 and Box 11, Folder 7).

One organization that the IIRM appears to have had little contact with is the Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”), an Irish sports organization that also functions as a form of socialization and builds a sense of community. This would have been a particularly salient
organization to utilize as members tend to be younger, newer immigrants. One of the few mentions of athletic clubs is in the Group Objectives for 1989 where it is noted that these organizations, as well as other young Irish groups, should be contacted requesting that a person from the organization be nominated to serve as a liaison with IIRM. At the September 1989 National Council meeting the Chicago branch noted that their members regularly attend local football and social events and impress upon these organizations that no Irish organization can ignore the plight of the young Irish (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 7). I found little evidence that fundraisers or events were held at Gaelic Park, the New York venue for Gaelic sports. In 1987, a field day at Gaelic Park was suggested as a possible fundraiser, but I did not find evidence that an event occurred there.

The GAA and AOH serve two distinctly different groups, the New Irish and Irish-Americans respectively. Focusing on relationships with the AOH rather than the GAA was strategic. The GAA does not have much, if any, political sway within the U.S. however the AOH is a well-established group with political capital. In addition, AOH members are more likely to be registered voters than people who are associated with the GAA.

Outside Strategic Efforts and Tactics

While IIRM’s outside strategic efforts involved lobbying Irish politicians and the American public, including other ethnic groups, the main group they focused on was American politicians. At the September 1989 National Council meeting, it was stated that it needed to be made clear to politicians that if they are not the solution to the problem they are the problem and IIRM needed “to go to town on them” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 7).
The April 1988 Lobbying Plan released by the National Chairman Sean Minihane, identified the main strategic efforts that IIRM branches were to tackle in order to push the Kennedy-Simpson bill, which became the Immigration Act of 1990. At the time of this plan the bill had passed in the Senate but had yet to come to a vote in the House. The plan identified the first target as the House Judiciary Committee; then as the bill progressed the target would shift to all congressmen asking for their support of the appropriate bill and favorable amendments. The plan was to have IIRM members set up office visits; arrange a letter drive within the IIRM and coordinate these efforts with Irish organizations; and publicize congressmen’s info in local and/or Irish-American media, including, if possible, a half page sample letter that people could clip and send. To fully equip branches to make appropriate decisions on how best to use and focus their resources, Minihane included the details of a 1982 Government Public Information study that listed the 14 most effective ways to communicate with a member of congress (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 2). While this Lobbying Plan was specific to passing the Kennedy-Simpson bill, the tactics and steps listed were used throughout IIRM’s existence. Below is a discussion of the tactics mentioned above as well as Lobby Days, the use of a lobbyist, and written congressional statements and testimonies.

*Letter writing, postcard, phone call campaigns*

One of the most consistent campaigns by the IIIRM was asking members to write, call, send postcards, or mailgrams to their politicians. Participation in these campaigns was a frequent request at the General Public meetings, in press releases and news bulletins. Requests increased in volume when a vote was coming up, an amendment had been proposed, or an IIRM Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. was upcoming (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3, 4, and 21; Box 3,
Folder 23; Box 11, Folder 7). One of the biggest campaigns was the AOH sponsored Project One Million. The goal was to have one million calls, letters, and postcards sent to representatives urging them to pass H.R. 4300, the Immigration Act of 1990 (IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 1).

Strategic timing was important; in the April 1988 Lobbying Plan it is stated that calls should be tactical and be made right before a vote (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 2). In the 1990 Lobby Alert, members were encouraged to participate in a Congressional wake up call every Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. This day and time was suggested as congressmen tend to be in Washington Tuesdays through Thursdays and immigration reform should be the first thing they hear when they start their work week (IIRM Archives Box 8, Folder 17). Another strategic component to the letter writing campaign was to reach out to personal contacts in other states asking for their assistance. In 1988, Rev. Matthew Fitzgerald, President of the New York Branch, wrote to Monsignor O’Neill in Wyoming asking him to contact his state Senator, Alan Simpson. At the time, Simpson was opposing a bill that IIRM found favorable (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 6).

IIRM encouraged members to reach out to the President of the United States. At the December 1988 National Council meeting, it was agreed upon that a goal for 1989 was to have each branch contact the White House on a weekly basis to put pressure on President Ronald Reagan to sign an executive order, which would give amnesty to unauthorized Irish. Once George Bush was sworn in as President, the communication was to change to a letter writing campaign asking him for an executive order (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 6). Again, in July 1990, members were asked to continue sending postcards to President Bush; 20,000 had been distributed to date (IIRM Archives Box 8, Folder 17).
While IIRM wanted members to reach out to Congressmen they knew it needed to be well informed communication. IIRM created documentation that provided members with tips on what the letters to their representative should say. These tips included: keep it short and to the point; refer to bills by author, name, and subject; be specific; show awareness and understanding of the issue; show how the issue affects you, your state, or the country; infer that you expect a reply (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 1). A sample letter was provided. The letters should demonstrate awareness of the issue and make it personal by illustrating how immigration reform was impacting people in the politician’s district. While it was suggested that everyone write, even unauthorized Irish, it was noted that in particular voters should contact their representatives. Sample documentation is included as Appendix C. One reiterated point was that the person should be honest and not overstate the case. A similar document was created with tips when calling representatives.

Meetings with politicians

Beyond writing, IIRM encouraged members to visit their Congressmen, in either their home or Washington, D.C. offices. It is unclear how often members of IIRM made these visits. I identify these meetings between a general IIRM constituent and a politician as a non-targeted meeting. The purpose of these meetings was to disseminate information to the representative, making him or her aware of the plight of unauthorized Irish, and to gauge their position on the issue.

It appears that the main contact between politicians and IIRM was with branch steering committee members, people involved in the American Action Group, and members of the National Council. These formal meetings had a higher level focus than the non-targeted
meetings. They were with congressmen who were targeted as they had either previously demonstrated interest in the Irish issue, or were seen as being sympathetic. The purpose was more than making them aware of the issue but to ask for support and partnership. The two most successful relationships that IIRM established during this time were with Representative Bruce Morrison (D-CT) and Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY).

The Connecticut branches were the first to make contact with Bruce Morrison. At the December 1988 National Council meeting, the Connecticut branch noted that they had formed a good working relationship with both Morrison and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 6). Once Morrison was elected to the House Immigration Subcommittee, the National Council became more involved in pursuing his support. A contingency of eleven people, including members of the Connecticut branches, the National Chairman, National Political Action Coordinator, and Presidents of several Northeastern state branches met with Morrison on April 8, 1989. During this meeting they provided him with background on the Irish condition in the immigration system and explained their proposals for change (IIRM Archives Box 6, Folder 20). IIRM declared this meeting a success and by mid-1989, IIRM and Morrison had a seemingly strong bond. Morrison actively participated in IIRM events, including sponsoring a legislative breakfast at the June 1989 Lobby Day, speaking at the September 1989 National Council meeting, and soliciting colleagues participation and participating himself in the 1990 Lobby Days.

IIRM had a similar relationship with Charles Schumer. One of the first meetings with Schumer, also a member of the House Immigration Subcommittee, was in June 1989. In a news bulletin, IIRM reported that Schumer, who was drafting an immigration bill, assured them that
he would keep their interests in mind. He also agreed to let IIRM review all bill drafts prior to introduction (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 13). IIRM Members, along with AOH members, met with Schumer again in October of 1989. At this meeting, they presented their ideas on the Diversity program, definitions of natives v. nationals, and the inclusion of Northern Ireland as an entity separate from the United Kingdom (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 13). IIRM followed this October meeting up with several memos on proposals which had been revised to incorporate Schumer’s suggestions (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 4).

Two other politicians who were vocal allies of Irish were Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative Brian Donnelly (D-MA). While they are referenced in the archives, I found little documentation about meetings between Kennedy or Donnelly and IIRM members. One possible reason is that they were both already on board therefore IIRM not need to apply pressure to them; their focus was on attracting new politicians. Another reason is that the majority of documentation and information in the archives references the activities of the NYC branch. Boston had an active branch and it is likely that they were the main contacts with both Kennedy and Donnelly.

*Written Statements and Testimonies*

In addition to meetings, IIRM drafted written statements explaining their position on immigration reform. In August 1989, they published a Position Paper on S.358, the Immigration Act of 1990. In this paper, they critiqued sections of the bill including, but not limited to, the points system, labor certification, and definition of eligible applicants (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 19). The following year they created a two page document where they named and explained the provisions of H.R. 4300, Family Unity and Employment Opportunity Immigration
Act of 1990 that IIRM supported. The IIRM document also identified the important ways that this bill addressed imbalances in the immigration system (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 3).

Other statements were written for legislative hearings. Between 1987 and 1990, Don Martin from the IIRM testified in two hearings, September 16, 1988 and September 27, 1989, and three written statements were submitted by: IIRM on October 23, 1987; Sean Minihane, the National Chairman, on March 3, 1989 and September 21, 1989. The testimonies and statements laid out how the Irish, and other European countries, have been affected by the 1965 and 1986 Acts, as well as their criticism of the proposed point system, position on existing preference categories, definition of eligible applicants, and proposed an alternative solution in the form of Replenishment Visas.

In addition, there were favorable testimonies submitted by IIRM allies: Raymond Flynn, Mayor of Boston on October 23, 1987 and Thomas J. Flatley, Massachusetts business owner on September 7, 1988. There were several politicians who included Irish friendly remarks in their statements during bill hearings. The most notable were made by Kennedy and Donnelly.

Lobby Days

The IIRM held four Lobby Days: September 16, 1988, June 21, 1989, March 14, 1990, and September 18, 1990. The two part goal of these events was to find out the position of representatives and to make them aware of the issue. Similar to the writing campaigns, the IIRM fully prepared the delegates with information. Prior to the Lobby Days, members were informed of the schedule, their roles and duties, what to say during the meetings, even how to find their way around the building. Participants were provided recap sheets which they were to fill out and give to the National Office. The information on what to say when in the office was quite
detailed. Similar to the letter writing campaigns, the main points were to inform the representative on why they were seeking immigration reform, how the 1965 and 1986 Acts impacted Irish, and how the proposed bill would improve and bring increased diversity to the immigration system (IIRM Archives Box 13, Folder 6 and 8).

Each Lobby Day was more involved and organized than the ones that preceded it. At the September 1988 Lobby Day, IIRM members made cold calls on representatives. The next Lobby Day included a breakfast sponsored by Morrison and on June 20th, the day previous to the Lobby Day, faxes were sent to representatives letting them know that IIRM would be on the capital and they looked forward to speaking to them. The final Lobby Day was preceded by a Dear Colleague letter from Morrison, Hamilton Fish (R-NY), Thomas Manton (D-NY), and Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) introducing IIRM and asking colleagues to take a few moments to talk to them when they come to their office. This Lobby Day ended with a press briefing where Eugene Nestor, from the Chicago branch, addressed the crowd and an evening reception.

The March 14, 1990 Lobby Day was an outlier. It was a smaller and more targeted event. Approximately 15 IIRM members participated. Each person was assigned a specific role, which included attending hearings where they were to wear IIRM stickers and hand out the Position Paper.

Lobbyist

IIRM existed for a year before hiring Harris Miller and his firm Holt Miller to advise them on their best strategy. During his first four months, Miller was able to assert IIRM positions into immigration reform discussions by helping draft Donald Martin’s testimony and successfully pushed for a scaled back version of H.R. 5115, Immigration Amendments of 1988
(IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 28). In a November 1988 memo, Miller stated that he believed that IIRM had a great opportunity to influence the direction of the reform debate, especially if they start early. He laid out a nine part plan. He referred to it as a “shoe leather” approach where you identify the target population and communicate with them early and regularly on the goals and message of IIRM. Miller’s role was to assist IIRM in effective delivery of the message to the targets by drafting a list of goals and working on the presentation.

In addition, Miller helped them identify the key House and Senate members, other allies, and groups and individuals who were opposed to the goals that IIRM proposed. Being located in Washington, D.C., Miller met consistently with the key members to educate them about IIRM’s goals. Miller also sent memos to IIRM national chairperson detailing hearings on bills, and worked on scheduling and the arrangements of the Lobby Days.

*Efforts in Ireland*

The second group that IIRM actively politicked was Irish citizens and government. They took advantage of the viable, emotional connection that people living in Ireland had with migration. While U.S. immigration reform did not directly impact Irish citizens, it was likely that someone they knew was impacted.

The first goal was to inform Irish citizens and politicians about the plight of unauthorized Irish in the U.S. This included establishing a Dublin branch. To disseminate information IIRM sent press releases to Irish newspapers on a regular basis to keep people aware of the issues, status of the legislature, and the Irish government’s involvement. Imparting information was one of the goals of a 1989 tour. In 1989, four IIRM members toured Ireland to inform people about the plight of unauthorized Irish in the U.S., answer questions about how to obtain a visa, and the
immigration process to the U.S. Other goals were to spread the goals and achievements of IIRM and garner support for IIRM and immigration reform. IIRM members gave frequent interviews on the radio, TV, and newspapers while in Northern Ireland and the Republic. The group planned to meet with Irish politicians, however there was a distinct lack of interest and follow through when it came to meeting with the delegation, and few meetings occurred (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 11).

While being informed was important, IIRM also asked Irish citizens to become involved. People living in the U.S. were urged to reach out to family and friends living in Ireland, to ask them to put pressure on the Irish government (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3). They were asked to write and call their Irish politicians requesting that they support U.S. immigration reform and assist the IIRM. In December 1987, over 3,000 signed petitions, which called for the Irish government to take action, were delivered to the Irish government. At one point an Irish politician turned the tables and asked his constituents to reach out to their friends and family in the U.S., asking them to become involved in immigration reform and write their representatives (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3).

In addition, IIRM directly lobbied the Irish government. Requests were made during in-person meetings when Irish politicians came to the U.S., through articles submitted to Irish papers, and in personal correspondence. They were quite forthcoming with their requests and at times demanding of the Irish government. IIRM repeatedly asked for assistance in regards to their active participation in lobbying for immigration reform, sharing of information with IIRM, and funding. IIRM was quite critical of what they saw as the Irish government’s lack of interest and support of Irish citizens living abroad.
One example is their interactions with Brian Lenihan, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1987. In a letter to Lenihan, members from the New York New Irish Action Group implored the Irish government to stop ignoring the plight of unauthorized Irish who have been forced out due to the economic crisis. The Irish government had a moral obligation to take the lead in addressing the needs of its young people (IIRM Archives Box 10, Folder 10). Several days later when IIRM members met with Leninan during his visit to NYC they asked that the Irish government “coordinate fully with the I.I.R.M. on all diplomatic and political initiatives which it undertakes towards solving this problem,” and “instruct all Irish civil service, state, and semi-state bodies in the U.S. to cooperate fully with the I.I.R.M. in working towards it’s objectives” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 35). At this meeting, they urged the Irish government to exert diplomatic and political pressure on U.S. administration. IIRM apparently did not come away with a positive feeling from this meeting. In a press release after the meeting, they stated “It is obvious that the Irish government does not understand the crisis situation in which approximately 150,00 (sic) young undocumented Irish citizens are living on a day-to-day basis in the U.S.” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 35).

The following year IIRM once again stated that the Irish government was ignoring the plight of unauthorized Irish. In a November 1988 press release, IIRM reported that the Irish government seems to see the current mass exodus of young people as a temporary phenomenon; officials express the opinion that many will return in the future and use their skills and experiences gained abroad at home in Ireland34 (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 15).

34 This letter ends with IIRM stating that at a minimum emigrants, in their temporary absence, should be given the ability participate in the Irish political process by having a vote. This discussion of if those living abroad should have the right to vote continues today.
In a presentation to Taoiseach, Charles Haughey in April 1988, IIRM claimed that because of their “high profile and because it is comprised of young Irish immigrants, it is an important and necessary medium between the undocumented Irish population and American and Irish agencies” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 26). At this meeting, they once again asked for funding and support by the Irish government to help rectify “this completely unacceptable immigration crisis” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 26). A similar statement is made the following year during the Minister for Foreign Affairs’ visit. IIRM requested unconditional support in regards to immigration reform and the campaigns being conducted by IIRM, AOH, and other Irish American organizations; that they share information with IIRM; and provide funding (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 18). One way to support the campaign is to send a senior Government Minister to the U.S. to lobby for immigration reform. In addition, the Taoiseach himself should write congressmen who are friends of Ireland to implore them to secure immigration reform.

IIRM received pushback from the Irish government. Junior Minister Frank Fahey denied IIRM funding during his 1987 visit, stating that he does not see the government being able to justify financial assistance. These sentiments were also echoed by the Counsellor Head of Consular Affairs, Conor Murphy. During a meeting with the 1989 tour delegation, Murphy noted that the consulate was doing tremendous work and establishing hotlines for the emigrants. Therefore he questioned IIRM on the qualification of their staff and “Where the beef is in your organizations work. Is there a gap in the market? And how do you suppose to fill it?” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 11). The counsellor questioned why they should support IIRM,
especially as the Irish in Britain were in a much more dire condition economically. The perception was that Irish people were doing well in the U.S.

*American public, including other ethnic groups*

The final group that IIRM focused strategic efforts on was the American public, which included other ethnic groups. Through mass mailings, Americans were asked to contact their representatives to have them push for immigration reform (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3). There was also a minor letter campaign to colleges and universities, asking the student body to stand beside the Irish. This campaign did not garner much response.

The main ethnic groups that IIRM worked with were Italian and Polish organizations. It appears that much of the contact with these groups was between a steering committee member and Father Joseph Cogo of the American Committee on Italian Migration and officers at the Polish and Slavic Center in NYC. In several different meeting minutes, the plan to meet with Jewish groups was noted. While communication was made to find out their position on bills it does not appear that IIRM worked directly with any Jewish group.

IIRM understood that they could not do this alone, or at a minimum it was dangerous to push Irish only agendas. In 1988, the National Council discussed an amnesty bill being proposed by Joseph Kennedy (D-MA). It was originally billed as a law to help only Irish. IIRM decided not to support the bill unless it was introduced as a bill which would help solve America’s labor shortage (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 6). By 1989, the success and influence that IIRM had generated was recognized by other ethnic groups. Donald Martin noted that at the Immigration Forum in Washington D.C., a meeting of various ethnic groups lobbying for immigration reform,
it was made clear that IIRM is seen as a key player by other groups (IIRM Archives Box 3, Folder 23).

One of the main ways that IIRM reached out to the public at large, and members, was through media. Information was disseminated through news bulletins, legislative alerts, press releases, flyers, and branch and national newsletters. News bulletins typically covered social issues, i.e. updates on cases of Irish being caught by INS, while press releases announced funding and meetings with politicians. IIRM used ethnic papers to announce meetings and fundraisers, and upon occasion placed political statements in them, e.g. a full page letter to President Reagan. Other publications produced by the IIRM included seminar materials regarding Donnelly Visas, Morrison Visas, and New Irish Handbooks. Beyond print, the Boston branch participated in a weekly radio show (IIRM Archives Box 3, Folder 23).

Over the years the plight of unauthorized Irish and IIRM were featured on local NYC television shows, including short news pieces and news talk shows; local radio programs; in articles in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post. The cause also received attention in the national media in the form of news segments on NBC, CNN, Fox, ABC, and articles in the Christian Science Monitor and Time Magazine. In addition, IIRM sent press releases to major Irish papers and members were interviewed by RTE. In each year around St. Patrick’s Day in March, there was increased media attention about the plight of unauthorized Irish and the events in which the IIRM was participating.

---

35 RTE, Raidió Teilifís Éireann, is Ireland’s national television and radio broadcaster.


**Justifications**

This section will discuss the various justifications that IIRM used to garner support for legislative reform that was friendly to Irish. The justifications fall into five categories: adverse effects of the 1965 Hart Cellar Act (“1965 Act”) and Diversity, 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (“IRCA”), Ireland’s economy, skill set and training of Irish immigrants, and emotional pleas.

*Adverse effects of the 1965 Hart Cellar Act and Diversity*

One of the most often cited justifications was that since the 1965 Act, Irish, and European immigrants in general, have experienced discrimination. The reference to 1965 is not only seen often, but also early. The second objective of the group is to establish visas for countries which were adversely affected by the 1965 Act. IIRM claimed that the passing of the 1965 Act made it nearly impossible for Irish immigrants to legally migrate to the U.S. The last major wave of Irish immigrants occurred in the 1950s and 1960s; the present wave of immigrants did not have an immediate family contact that could sponsor them. In much of their correspondence, IIRM references the justification that countries have been adversely affected.

The focus of IIRM National Chairman Sean Minihane’s September 21, 1989 submitted testimony was the 1965 Act. Minihane argues that although it was not the objective, the 1965 Act excludes immigrants from traditional source countries. “In our view, it was not a reform in the true sense at all, but a change with unanticipated, negative consequences” (Minihane 1989). While he does not want to return to national origins law it is IIRM’s opinion that the past is relevant and should be taken into account. Minihane makes this statement again in his March 3,
1989 written testimony. The 1965 aimed to create a diverse immigration pool, but this has not been achieved; therefore changes in the law must be made to achieve this goal.

One of the most interesting exchanges on the issue of the unexpectedly discriminatory nature of the 1965 occurred during Panel III of the September 7, 1988 hearing between Representative Romano Mazzoli (D-KY) and Thomas Flatley.

**Mazzoli:** You were in the audience when I asked an earlier panel about whether or not inequity is the correct word to describe the situation which ensued since 1965. You did not use that term but you used the term reverse discrimination. Is the 1965 Act discriminatory against Ireland any more than it is preferential to, say, an Asian nation like China or something like that? Tell me how you see this question.

**Flatley:** I am speaking of Ireland but we could expand it to many other countries in Western Europe. In 1965, Ireland had 18,700 visas available to them for the asking. Since that time, they have been able to achieve 1000 a year while there has been a demand for 15,000 or 20,000 a year.

**Mazzoli:** Isn’t that a result of the way the 1965 Act was written? It isn’t that they were trying to take it out on Western Europe but they were going to make it more opportune for people from other countries to come into the United States. Is it correct to say it has been discriminatory against Western Europe?

**Flatley:** I would go for the affirmative action. Somebody mentioned that. At no time including the people who brought this through did they anticipate that this would occur. We called it reverse discrimination as it occurred. It was not the intent. Certainly what you say is true but on the other hand it depends on what side of the fence you are on.

(Panel III 1988)

The claim of discrimination due to the 1965 Act and the desire for a diverse immigrant pool are closely knit together by IIRM. During his October 23, 1987 testimony Raymond Flynn, the Mayor of Boston, does not directly reference the 1965 Act but he focuses upon how the proposed legislation would bring more diversity to the immigration pool, in particular it would aid countries that helped build America.
The idea of diversity was woven through the Lobby Days. In the June 1989 memo to prepare for the Lobbying Day, IIRM members were given the talking point that, “Everyone agrees that in order to encourage diversity in the immigration pool, countries such as Ireland and Italy need a chance to have more immigrants come to this country” (IIRM Archives Box 13, Folder 5). Similar language was included in the communication for the September 1988 and September 1990 Lobby Days.

IIRM, as well as Kennedy and Donnelly, stressed that there was no desire to return to a national origins system, but the idea they were presenting was a way to correct these shortcomings without departing from the fairness and equity of the 1965 Act.\(^{36}\) The idea of non-preference visas, in particular, would create a pathway for the old seed sources of our heritage, as Kennedy referred to them (Kennedy 1987; Kennedy 1988). These visas would be in addition to, not in place of, other visas. They are meant to provide a balance in the system (Donnelly 1987; Donnelly 1988). Neither IIRM nor these politicians were suggesting that family reunification be eliminated. Donnelly claims that while the cumulative policy of the last 20 years has been to discriminate against traditional source countries, one cannot solve the problems of discrimination by ending it for some and creating it for others (Donnelly 1987). To make the point Donnelly justifies the need for these visas by highlighting the success and outpouring of requests that were received for the NP-5 program (Donnelly 1987).

The 1990 Lobby Day materials included a clause that “the Irish do NOT want to hurt any other immigrant group” (IIRM Archives Box 13, Folder 6). The desire for diversity, without

\(^{36}\) There were numerous group and politicians who did not see it the same way; it felt like these proposed changes were going back to national origins law, a back door way to increase European immigration and limit immigration from Asia and South America. The two ethnic groups leading the charge against these visas were Asians and Hispanics, including the Organization of Chinese American, Inc., Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, National Council of La Raza, and Federation for Immigration Reform.
disadvantaging other ethnic groups, was the main topic of the speech of Eugene Nestor, a
member of the Chicago Branch, at the 1990 Lobby Day. Nestor noted that, “With America
having the richest diversity of cultures in the world, it is appropriate that our immigrant stream
should continue to reflect that diversity” (IIRM Archives Box 13, Folder 6). According to
Nestor, the proposed legislation, H.R. 4300, would not only benefit Ireland but also dozens of
other countries.

The most compelling case for the 1965 and diversity justification is Donald Martin’s
testimony on September 27, 1989. IIRM’s solution is to establish a visa program to bring
diversity to the immigration stream. Martin admits that these visas are not fair and balanced in
themselves, but they are not meant to be. They are meant to be placed beside other provisions in
current law to create balance in the system as a whole. During this testimony, Martin puts forth
IIRM’s alternative of Replenishment Visas. If Congress decides not to go forward with the
Diversity Visas, IIRM suggest that 30,000 visas annually for 15 years are made available to the
36 adversely affected countries. These visas are meant to replenish the European stream to the
U.S. The only eligibility requirements are being from one of the 36 adversely affected countries,
have basic educational achievement, be between 18 and 41, have a guaranteed job offer, and pass
a basic test of knowledge of American government and history. Redress/Replenishment Visas
are defined in the August 1989 IIRM position paper. In this paper it is noted that those who have
lived and worked illegally in the U.S. should not be excluded from applying for these visas; they
should be given an automatic waiver of penalization.
1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act

IIRM claimed that IRCA left many Irish, and other European immigrants, out in the cold because of the cutoff date of January 1, 1982. Most Irish immigrants did not migrate to the U.S. until 1984 or later and therefore were ineligible for amnesty. Only 600 eligible Irish applied for amnesty through IRCA.

While the cutoff date was problematic so was the employer sanctions clause. One of the goals of IRCA was to impose sanctions upon employers in hopes that they would no longer hire unauthorized workers, which would ideally reduce unauthorized immigration. These stricter regulations made it more difficult for unauthorized Irish to find work; it forced some to leave their jobs because they were unable to produce the appropriate papers, and others had to remain in less than ideal positions. In an IIRM report on the New Irish, employer sanctions are stated as having had a detrimental effect on undocumented Irish and having severely impacted the community (IIRM Archives Box 8, Folder 21).

While IRCA was the most recent law to impact Irish immigrants this justification was not used readily. When Irish had a difficult time finding jobs because of employer sanctions, it was in conjunction with another justification. Few details or examples were provided to illustrate this justification.

Ireland’s Economy

IIRM claimed that many Irish were being forced out of Ireland from lack of jobs and a depressed economy; they were not migrating out of choice. Economically there was no option for them in Ireland. This predicament should be taken into consideration when reforming U.S. immigration policies. One of the most intense examples of this justification is found in a June
1988 press release by the Connecticut branch. They refer to Irish immigrants as highly motivated, educated, and talented people. But because of the economy they have no opportunity to return to Ireland and should be seen as “economic refugees” (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 13). In an August 1990 Statement IIRM claims that because of the economic situation Irish people have had to make a difficult choice,

Faced with a Hobson’s choice, - utter despair and joblessness at home, or the uncertainties of illegal status in the United States – many have chosen the latter. They come educated and have a desire to improve their status through hard work. Their legal status makes day to day living a chore and they are unable to do routine activities such as open a bank account or apply for a driver’s license. (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 28)

Part of this justification is that if Irish immigrants were forced to return to Ireland, it would have a negative effect on the nation. In an undated Draft Statement Concerning EVD, one of the reasons given for why Irish should be offered Extended Voluntary Departure status is that an inflow of unauthorized Irish returning to Ireland would present a significant threat to the political stability of Ireland (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 15). Other reasons to offer EVD status were that Irish do not pose a threat to the U.S. economy and they are being forced out of the U.S. economy because of IRCA. The drafters of the statement remind the reader that the U.S. has shown investment in the future political stability of Ireland through their support of the Anglo Irish accord.

Skill set and training of Irish immigrants

A corresponding justification to Ireland’s poor economy was that those who were leaving Ireland were well educated; many had college or vocational training. The Irish people are hardworking and they want to use their skills to better the U.S. However, because of their legal
status many were unable to use their skills and had to take jobs that were outside of their training.

In press releases, correspondence, and testimonies the IIRM frequently referred to the report by the Department of Labor which predicted a shortage of workers in the U.S. If they had freedom to search for jobs and work in the field in which they were trained Irish immigrants could help fill this void. The irony of this situation was demonstrated in a November 1988 press release about five Irish who were detained while on the job: while there is a shortage of workers, talented and educated people who want to work are being denied employment because of the immigration system (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 12 and 30).

This justification was frequently used and was included as one of the Lobby Day talking points. The September 1988, June 1989, and September 1990 Lobby Day plans all noted that IIRM members should tell representatives that the U.S. will be facing labor shortages in the next decade and that additional immigrants will not take jobs away from Americans but will make the U.S. more competitive in the global market (IIRM Archives Box 11, Folder 2).

*Emotional plea*

The emotional plea was woven through much of IIRM’s position and documentation. They note that Irish immigrants have been a major part of the fabric of the U.S. for over 150 years, when they started arriving in large numbers in the mid-1800s. They helped build the nation. Since Irish have been here for so long there are many Americans who can claim an Irish heritage. America and Ireland have a close bond and this should matter.

The history of Irish in the U.S. is first demonstrated in The New York State Certificate of Incorporation, “To promote patriotism and encourage the demonstration of respect and honor to
those who have contributed to the upbuilding and preservation of the United States.” In a 1988 fundraising letter, Father Matthew Fitzgerald, president of NYC Branch, states that “If today’s federal laws were in effect when your family came over, they would have been turned away or gone into hiding like the young Irish today” (IIRM Archives Box 10, Folder 11).

A frequent technique was to mix the emotional plea with justice. In a June 1988 press release, the small number of green cards that Irish are granted a year is said to be “an insult and injustice to a people who have played such a major role in the building of America.” The authors of the press release note that Irish are the largest ethnic group in the U.S. and all one needs to do is look at all the prominent Irish-Americans to see the major role that Irish have played (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 18).

Another example is a November 1988 press release about Irish citizens who were detained. The last paragraph reads, “For 300 years the history of the United States has been soaked in the blood, sweat and tears of Irish immigrants. In the year of 1988, it is unthinkable that Irish immigrants whose only crime is the desire to work for a decent living should be arrested like common criminals and be treated in such a barbaric fashion” (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 18). This language was used in several different press releases at this time.

The phrase, “No Irish Need Apply” is used in almost every testimony to Congress, is included in press releases and fundraising letters. Pete Foley, PEC liaison to IIRM, notes that the Irish who came in the 1840s faced poverty, discrimination, and exploitation, but they stayed and worked in dangerous jobs which helped build the country. Foley claims that once again Irish are finding “No Irish Need Apply” signs, even though America has always been a land of opportunity for the Irish (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 10).
Emotional pleas were not just made in words, but also actions. On Memorial Day in 1989, a wreath was laid on the Celtic Cross, one of the memorials to the Union Army’s Irish Brigade, in Gettysburg. While the contingency who attended the wreath laying was small, the message was to remind Americans of the role that Irish people have played in America’s history, including their military service. By commemorating the bravery of Irish who fought in the Civil War, IIRM was hoping to highlight the present tenuous status of Irish in the U.S. (IIRM Archives Box 12, Folder 18). The reference to Irish’s participation in the military was frequent. In a January 1989 letter from Donald Martin, National Political Coordinator for IIRM, to President Reagan, the 257 Irish immigrants who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor are referenced (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 15). These honorees were brought up in every written testimony and statement that IIRM presented to Congress, as well as in other speeches and correspondence.

A justification that I found rarely used was how Irish are English speakers. One of the few examples comes from the General Public meeting of the NYC branch where Donald Martin notes that Irish have an advantage as they speak English (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 3). The times when being able to speak and write English was referenced it was in regards to proposals on the point system and if one of the criterion should be English speaking. In his March 3, 1989 testimony, Sean Minihane notes that English is a universal tongue spoken widely all over the world and including this in the points system does not only benefit the Irish (Minihane 1989).
Multi-Justification Examples

Oftentimes two or more of these justifications were intertwined and used in testimonies, speeches, and correspondence. In this section, I will discuss specific examples of multi-justification documents.

The first example is an August 1987 letter from Father Matthew Fitzgerald, President of NY IIRM, and Susan O’Donnell, co-Chairman, to Senator Kennedy and Representative Donnelly. The letter was in regards to the bill that they had introduced. According to Fitzgerald and O’Donnell the bill did not go far enough to help the 150,000 unauthorized Irish who chose to emigrate to marginal employment and security over staying in Ireland and face unemployment. Oftentimes these immigrants are not able to use their educational and vocational training, which in turns means that their skills are not benefitting the U.S. The proposed bill fails to do anything “for the thousands victimized by existing inequities in U.S. immigration law,” namely the unreasonable cutoff date of IRCA which once again impacted the adversely affected nationalities from the 1965 Act (IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 13). The letter ends on a personal note,

You are both aware that Ireland’s tragedies have long been. A first opportunity her people have come to our shores fleeing famine and oppression, swelling ranks of American labor, law enforcement and the military, contributing greatly to arts and educational richness of our country. The Irish have risen to serve highest posts in the land, and your own achievements as lawmakers are testimony to the vitality of America’s proud immigrant heritage. It will be a dark chapter in the history of the Irish in America if these 150,000 young men and women, so similar in need and aspiration to the generations that came before, are simply abandoned to a stateless existence. We turn to you and ask for your leadership, your moral courage, and your immediate response.
(IIRM Archives Box 1, Folder 13)

A March 1988 letter to President Ronald Reagan from Father Fitzgerald begins by detailing how the 1965 Act altered the immigration status for Europeans. Fitzgerald immediately
makes the issue personal by referring to Reagan’s family who emigrated from Ballyporeen, Ireland. When discussing IRCA, Fitzgerald focuses on how stronger employer sanctions have burdened Europeans and the Irish, “it has been nothing less that (sic) a disaster.” He also includes how the Irish economy has been in a steady decline and the number of unemployed is high. In this letter Fitzgerald speaks to how today’s Irish immigrants are like previous waves, “like millions of their ancestors before them, they view our country as their last hope for a decent, free and just life.” And like their ancestors today’s Irish are getting a chilly “No Irish Need Apply” reception. Fitzgerald mentions the report by the Department of Labor that indicates a pending lack of skilled workers in the marketplace and how Irish, and other Europeans, could help fill this gap if immigration laws were changed. Like the Kennedy/Donnelly letter, Fitzgerald ends with an emotional plea, “for the last two hundred years, Europe has given her people to the building of this country. Now it is time for this country to give something back to Europe” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 15).

A third example is the written report regarding the April 1989 meeting with Representative Morrison. IIRM representatives note that because of a break in family chains the Irish are “effectively locked out of America as were the victims of the National Origin system” (IIRM Archives Box 6, Folder 20). They acknowledge that groups, namely Asians and Latinos, were discriminated by the 1965 act, but today the discriminated groups come from the adversely affected countries. Today’s Irish immigrants just want to be like their forefathers and build a life here in the U.S. However, IRCA has forced them into a “tenuous and uncertain existence in the underground of America” where they are subjected to abuse by unscrupulous employers and landlords (IIRM Archives Box 6, Folder 20). This is one of the few documents that notes that
there is fear of being denied reentry if they leave. The drafters note that legalizing the unauthorized Irish is in the best interest of the U.S. as Irish skills are not being fully utilized; if they were legal they could help fill labor shortages. This presentation also explains why people are migrating out of Ireland, those in the North are being forced out due to violence and discrimination and in the south they leave to escape unemployment and poverty. During this presentation, IIRM asks for a redress visa option. According to IIRM, this request is not unreasonable as in the past America has developed “a nuanced immigration policy that looks at discrete groups of people, at discrete points in time, with discrete needs, and attempt to focus a policy that takes that into account” (IIRM Archives Box 6, Folder 20). They recommend that the creation of temporary, redress visas would help alleviate the needs of the unauthorized Irish. To help their cause they note that Ireland is a small country and that they would only ever be a relatively small piece of the immigration pie. This last point is reiterated in the August 1989 IIRM Position Paper. In this Paper, IIRM states that while the media has been portraying S.358 as pro-European or pro-Irish but this is not the case. This bill will only be a marginal improvement over the law. After the initial three years of the program, Ireland will again be competing for visas with people from across the globe. As Ireland is small, the applications from other countries will likely render this category useless; which is what occurred during the Berman Visa program where Irish received only 362 Berman visas out of a possible 20,000 (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 9).

These justifications were not only used by IIRM and American politicians, but also by the Irish government. In a press release for St. Patrick’s Day in 1988, Irish Minister Padraig Flynn noted that “The Irish take great pride in the contribution which previous generations of
emigrants from our relatively small island have made in the shaping of your great society” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 19). He asserts that today’s immigrants are highly motivated and qualified and have much to offer the U.S., like their forefathers did. It is in the interest of the U.S. that these people who have skills that are in demand are given a legal path. The words and tone of this document emphasizes the long standing connection and relationship between Ireland and the U.S., “Past generations of Irishmen and women helped the United States establish its present pre-eminence in the world. Current generations of Americans are now returning the compliment in many practical ways” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 19). Flynn gives the illusion that Ireland and America are family; America being the big brother who has aided Ireland in economic and political ways and in turn Ireland, the little brother, who has helped America succeed and become great.

In his April 1988 speech to the Friends of Fianna Fáil in NYC Taoiseach Haughey states “Forty million Americans of Irish descent are a political and spiritual resource of enormous potential. Their very existence has been a source of encouragement for the Irish people at home and has in the past sustained them through dark and difficult times” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 26). Haughey approaches the emotional plea from a different angle; America has supported Ireland over the past 30 years and the Irish government asks them to continue to support Ireland, including the Irish citizens living on American soil. The people in Ireland can overcome the obstacles they face but it would be easier and quicker if they had the strength and mobilization of political and economic power of Irish America behind it. “Since the 1980s a new generation of Irish have arrived in the United States in search of opportunity. They are well educated with many skills and, like their predecessors who helped build this great country, they
have much to contribute. Many, however, face special difficulties because of their unclear status and uncertain legal position and their situation is a cause of concern to my Government” (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 26). Haughey ends his speech by saying,

I do not think there is any need for me to remind this gathering that the Irish nation is far wider in its full cultural and political dimensions than the island of Ireland. Ireland is fortunate in that millions of people of Irish descent all over the world, but particularly in America, look upon it as their ancestral home; rejoice in its cultural inheritance; seek to understand its history; and share its hopes for the future. No country of the old world is looked upon with quite the same affection in the new. It has millions of friends who wish it well. (IIRM Archives Box 9, Folder 26)

*Multi-justification Testimonies*

The best examples of multi-justification documents are the testimonies and written statements that IIRM members, and associated witnesses, presented or submitted during the various hearings.

The first written statement by IIRM was submitted to the October 23, 1987 hearings on S.1611, the Immigration Act of 1987. The statement begins by explaining that nations who do not have close relatives are effectively ineligible to apply for 80% of visas because of the heavy emphasis on family reunification in the 1965 Act. The majority of the statement is devoted to the proposed point system, in particular labor aspects. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts a labor shortage of skilled workers. Many immigrants legalized under IRCA are concentrated in lower skilled occupations and therefore will not be able to fill this need; however, “the needs of the labor market mesh with the abilities and critical current generation of aspiring immigrants from Ireland” (Irish Immigration Reform Movement 1987). Ireland is currently reeling under a recession with rates of unemployment around 20%, but this is not from lack of education.
As in the time of famine and oppression, Ireland’s tragedy offers immediate opportunity and benefits to the U.S. Deprived of a future in their own country, young Irish men and women are nonetheless the benefactors of a superb educational and vocational preparation system hailed as one of the very finest in Europe. Their preparation is particularly outstanding in those areas where Secretary of Labor William Brock has predicted the most critical shortages; teachers, nurses, the skilled and semi-skilled repair categories, child care, and the services sector. The motivation and work ethic of the Irish immigrant is beyond question. (Irish Immigration Reform Movement 1987)

Employer sanctions of IRCA are forcing skilled Irish to go to Britain, which means that the U.S. is missing out on the best and brightest that Ireland has to offer.

One of the objectives of the point system is to re-open America to the nations who have helped build the U.S. from the earliest days, “Without the historic contributions of these countries, in peace and at war, there would be no United States of America to immigrate to” (emphasis in original) (Irish Immigration Reform Movement 1987). The history of old seed countries needs to be factored in as there is a long history between these nations and the U.S.

This is especially the case for the Irish, whose connection with the U.S. is undeniable. Not only is the connection felt amongst people in Ireland but also in America as 44 million Americans consider their Irish heritage a treasured part of their identity.

In the case of the Irish contribution, the histories of Ireland and America are so long interwoven that it is not possible to write the history of one without consideration of the other. The Irish sought to escape injustice and oppression and to contribute to the vitality of this country in government, the arts, business, the military, and education. Their experience and triumph over the discrimination symbolized by the ‘No Irish Need Apply’ signs of old paved the way for other immigrant groups that followed (Irish Immigration Reform Movement 1987)

The second testimony is not from an IIRM member, but Thomas J. Flatley, owner of The Flatley Company in Massachusetts and an Irish immigrant from the 1950s. Flatley was an ally of IIRM. His testimony on September 7, 1988 regarding H.R. 5115 and S.2104, Immigration
Amendments of 1988, begins by applauding the 1965 Act and making sure that it is understood that he does not want to take anything from the progress of this Act. However, one of the consequences of this Act was reverse discrimination. Like the IIRM testimony in October of the previous year, Flatley states that college graduates are leaving Ireland; however they are not coming to the U.S. as they cannot find work in their field due in part to the current immigration laws. These migrants choosing to not come here is a loss for the U.S. They are hardworking and law abiding people who are simply looking for a better life. If allowed they would participate as full members in society and would help fill the labor shortage.

Flatley ends his testimony on a philosophical note,

We have a philosophy, and I have a philosophy I learned from my parents a long time ago, as we step out and help other people, we don’t turn our back on our own. I believe the battles were fought and the prairie was established by many of the people who came here years ago and it is awfully difficult for the young people today to feel that they can’t follow their aunts, uncles, and grandparents in a limited amount during an interim period of time. (Flatley 1988)

On behalf of IIRM, Donald Martin testified and submitted a written report during the second half of the H.R. 5115 and S. 2014 hearings on September 16, 1988. During his oral testimony Martin stated that we need policy that helps our nation’s economy and preserves the continuity of history – American-Irish history. The two bills being proposed are better than the current immigration laws as they will help expand diversity in the immigration pool; diversity in the pool is what drafters of 1965 wanted. The authors of the 1965 Act aimed to remedy past injustice, but in an unintended and ironic consequence, diversity has shrunk from the traditional countries, which are now virtually shut out. Martin concludes that the NP-5 program should continue as it is a small, temporary step to rectify this consequence. It is not a return to national
origins. Martin’s oral testimony is very matter of fact and contains little emotive speech. However, his written statement is longer and emotionally charged.

Martin starts the written statement with a historical lesson on how the Irish have been in the country, before there even was a U.S. He notes that the first St. Patrick’s Day parade in NYC occurred prior to the U.S.’ independence in 1776. In the 1800s, Irish felt a gravitational pull towards America, but they also felt like outsiders as they faced discrimination.

He also notes numerous examples of Irish American politicians who have championed for other ethnic groups. Martin takes a different spin on the 1965 Act. He recognizes the role of American Irish in passing the Act and addresses IIRM’s take on the act.

Now the American Irish community comes before the Congress and asks for a redress of its grievances. We in the IIRM do not choose to characterize ourselves as the victims of ‘reverse discrimination.’ We believe that the truth is more complicated than that: we are the victims of unforeseen events and unexpected consequences. The Congress in 1965 attempted to achieve diversity in our immigrant flow and to redress another set of grievances. It attempted to bring in people from all over the world in a way befitting a great country with global interests. But we also believe that the Congress did not intend to repeal the past, or to sever the bonds of culture, tradition and affection which have existed for so long between the people of America and the countries of Europe.

(Martin 1988)

This statement was repeated by Sean Minihane in his March 3, 1989 testimony and again by Martin in his September 27, 1989 testimony.

This written testimony also touches upon the labor market and the predicted labor shortage. He notes that the skills of Irish are compatible with the fields where job shortages will occur. Besides filling labor needs, if given the chance Irish will help fill military needs, as they have done in the past. The Irish and IIRM do not want to interfere with the structure of family
reunification, but create balance in the system through the creation of an independent immigrant category.

Martin also addresses the small number of unauthorized Irish who were eligible for legalization under IRCA. Only 600 Irish applied for amnesty. This has left approximately 150,000 unauthorized young Irish.

These people, obliged to leave their own country because of political unrest in the North and economic recession in the South, are not flagrant lawbreakers. Rather, excluded under the present system, but inspired by the spirit of their forebears and eager for the opportunity that is America, they are willing to leave a generous social welfare system at home and risk all to become part of the American dream. Due to the need for skilled workers, and their ability to assimilate immediately, these people are already contributing members of the U.S. economy, although they are ignored by our current laws.

(Martin 1988)

Martin’s written testimony is the best example of the multi-justification approach. He touches upon each of the five justifications to varying degrees. It is the longest, most thorough testimony presented by IIRM. The following September, Martin once again testified when S.358, H.R. 672, H.R. 2448, and H.R.2646 were being debated. Many of these points were reasserted in that testimony.

It is important to note that IIRM worked on two points of contention that arose during the immigration reform discussions: designating Northern Ireland as a separate country and including Nationals who were not born on Irish soil. Since Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, they were not identified as an adversely affected country; therefore citizens of Northern Ireland would not be eligible for the independent visas. IIRM argued that this is not fair; Northern Ireland should be seen as its own country in the same vain that Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China are treated as separate countries (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 3 and
9). IIRM documents repeatedly note that the IIRM fights for all 32 counties, the 26 counties of the Republic and the 6 counties in the North.

The second contention was that eligibility requirements were based on what nation one was born in and not on what nationality the person claims. Since many Irish migrants are young, it is not uncommon for them to start their families abroad. Ireland recognizes the children born of Irish parents as full Irish citizens; however the way the U.S. law is written they are not recognized as such as they were not born on Irish soil. IIRM claimed that Irish citizens regardless of birthplace should be eligible for the Diversity Visas (IIRM Archives Box 7, Folder 9).
Chapter Five

Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform

The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (“ILIR”) formed in December 2005. Earlier that year, the McCain-Kennedy bill, which included provisions of legalization for current unauthorized immigrants, was put forth. This bill was an improvement upon the previous bill sponsored by Sensenbrenner, but failed to address future flows. ILIR formed to support the McCain-Kennedy bill and to respond to the growing struggles of unauthorized Irish in the U.S. It was important to have an “Irish dog in the fight” (Staunton 2014a). Ciaran Staunton, one of the founders, noted that while the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (“IIRM”) started from scratch, ILIR had a bill that they were “hitching their wagon to” (Staunton 2014a).

The first community meeting, in NYC, was organized by Staunton, Kelly Fincham, and Niall O’Dowd. Approximately 150 people attended this meeting. A representative from Senator Kennedy’s office, Bruce Morrison, and the three founders spoke about the pending legislation (Staunton 2014b). A few weeks later, a second meeting was organized at Rory Dolans Pub in NYC. This meeting was packed with an estimated 800 people (Staunton 2014a). After the New York meetings, ILIR received calls from other communities, including Boston, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and “that is how we came” into existence (Staunton 2014b).

From the beginning ILIR had a two track strategy: (1) to work with the broader immigration community to address the needs of people from around the world who are in the country illegally and (2) develop a pathway that addresses the specific problems that Ireland faces with respect to the immigration system (Morrison 2014). The two track
strategy is reflected in their statement of purpose on the website:

The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform supports proposals which will mean comprehensive and fair immigration reform for all with the right balance between access and enforcement, and the inclusion of proposals for future flow to the United States. We believe that America, as a nation of immigrants, has benefited greatly from proper and legal immigration. We are seeking a fair and equitable system to:

1. Allow those here to regularize their status
2. Ensure long term and sustainable future flow of immigration
3. Encourage a culture of compliance with a fair immigration system
   (Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform 2012).

In addition to a statement of purpose ILIR has a mission statement. On Facebook it reads,

“Lobbying on behalf of the undocumented Irish in the U.S.”37

The mission statement posted on their website is more detailed:

The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform was established in December 2005 to ensure there was an Irish voice in the nationwide debate over immigration.

We support comprehensive immigration reform.

We strongly supported the effort spearheaded by Senators John McCain and Senator Edward Kennedy to achieve comprehensive immigration reform.

We are a proud member of the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform and strongly support their principles.
   (Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform N.d.)

While ILIR has been incorporated in New York State since 2006, they have an informal structure, i.e. no constitution. Staunton noted that ILIR did not need as much formal structure as IIRM because the current group began with a bill (Staunton 2014b). Starting from scratch forced IIRM to create more structure. In addition, they were an organization of young, politically

inexperienced people. ILIR board members have experience and knowledge on how to get things done in Congress (Staunton 2014b).

**Structure**

ILIR is a top down organization. The concentration of power is in a small group. In the 1980s, tasks were divided amongst Action Groups, each branch had officers, and the entire group was organized under a National Council. However, ILIR is run by an Executive Board and an Advisory Board. Currently there are five members on the Executive Board: chairman, president, two Boston representatives, and one San Francisco representative. In the past, the Executive Board has consisted of only three people: a chairman, president, and a communications person. While members can be mobilized when needed, much of the consistent work, especially since mid-2007, has been done by members of the Executive Board.

Niall O’Dowd was the chairman until 2009 when he left to focus on the two publications he founded, the *Irish Voice* and Irishcentral.com. Since 2009, Bart Murphy has been the chairman. O’Dowd remains active in ILIR and sits on the Advisory Board. From 2006 to 2007, Grant Lally was president. In November 2007, Lally stepped down and Jeff Cleary stepped into the role until 2008 (Drew 2007). Ciaran Staunton has been the president since 2008. Staunton, Murphy, and O’Dowd were all involved in IIRM. While there is some crossover in members between the two lobby groups, Staunton noted that many of those who are involved in ILIR were not part of IIRM (C. Staunton 2014a).

Members of the Advisory Board consist of business people, academics, and former politicians. The Advisory Board was formed by O’Dowd and Staunton. They felt that it was

---

38 Articles about ILIR and immigration reform are frequent in both these publications.
important to bring together a group of people from the Irish-American community into ILIR who generally agree that the immigration situation for Irish immigrants is not working and this is bad for the Irish and Irish-American communities (Staunton 2014b). O’Dowd and Staunton strategically chose non-partisan people whose name would be recognized in the community. At the current time, 10 people sit on the Advisory Board including Fincham and O’Dowd, who are both co-founders.

There is little need for board members to meet in person every three to six months as IIRM did. Members from around the country participate virtual meetings via Skype or conference call from their home state (Staunton 2014a). For example, in 2013, representatives from over 30 states were part of a conference call (Staunton 2014a). The frequency of conference calls changes according to what was occurring in the legislature. During the 2006/2007 CIR discussions, conference calls were held weekly to discuss bill mark ups, positions of congress members, and lobbying efforts. Currently conference calls occur on an as needed basis (Staunton 2014a). Staunton describes the conference calls as all business; the idea is to lay out what needs to be discussed and come to a consensus so that everyone can get back to their daily jobs (Staunton 2014b). Decisions are made in a matter of minutes by a consensus vote amongst the members of the Executive and Advisory Boards.

It is vague how members and chapters are defined. There is no formal membership application nor are there yearly dues. At one point, there was a link to sign up on the ILIR website; currently the link is broken. In February 2006, ILIR reported had 5,000 members (McInerney 2006). Later that year, O’Dowd claims that the group has a mailing list of 25,000 people (Moscoso 2006). In 2007, the estimated number of members fluctuated from 28,000 in
March to 34,000 in April to 35,000 in May and 17,000 in November (O’Brien 2007; Stanage 2007; O’Dowd 2007).

On their website it is noted that:

Members of the ILIR include key officers from the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Gaelic Athletic Association, Irish American Democrats, the Irish American Republicans, the Friends of Ireland, Federation of Irish American Societies, Irish American business owners, immigration centers, community leaders and professionals from across the spectrum of Irish America. We have major chapters in key political states such as California (San Francisco (SIC), 8th District) and are the fastest growing Irish American grass-roots organization in the country. (Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform N.d.)

ILIR uses established social networks to find people willing to participate in strategic efforts be it mailing a letter or participating in a Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. One of the Executive Board members explained that when a politician or state was targeted, he reached out to that area’s local Ancient Order of Hibernians (“AOH”) and Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”) club for assistance. This has proven to be a reliable method of garnering constituents. Having these formal social networks which they can access allows the Irish Lobby the freedom to not have to define members in terms of dues and applications.

ILIR has been strategic in their outreach and focus on Republican Senators and Representatives, not on Democrats, who for the most are pro-immigration reform, nor on Republicans who will not budge on the issue. Therefore, as needed is defined as areas of the country where there are moveable Republican leaders. States that have been targeted include Iowa, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. In addition, ILIR has targeted the House Judiciary Committee Republicans.
Chapters were sometimes formed in these needed areas, but again there is no formal structure. The only chapters that have consistency are the Boston and San Francisco chapters. Both of these chapters have at least one member who sits on the Executive Board.

**Irish Government**

“The difference in our campaign this time as against the one in the 1980s is that this time the Irish government are fully on side. That is a huge advantage. The government has powerful access and influence in America on Irish issues. We look forward to working with them on the issue at an increased level over the next few months.” This quote is from Niall O’Dowd after meeting with Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform N.d.). In March 2006, Ahern vowed to put legalization of Irish in the U.S. at the top of his agenda (Bernstein 2006). Ahern’s Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern also pledged support to ILIR. Over the next year, ILIR met several times with Bertie Ahern and in 2007 he noted that “ILIR is proving highly effective on Capitol Hill and beyond in communicating the Irish dimension to the documented issue and I have been happy to support it financially.” (Carton 2007)

Upon his election in 2008 as Taoiseach, Brian Cowen reaffirmed the support of the Irish government when he stated that this issue was a priority of his administration (Sheahan 2008). Staunton noted that Cowen understands the issues better and is willing to look into a bilateral agreement and his election will be good for ILIR (Sheahan 2008). In the same year the newly elected Foreign Affairs Minister, Micheal Martin, noted that ILIR had made a lasting and positive impression on political figures in Washington and that he was determined to continue Government support for finding a solution to the unauthorized Irish problem (News of the World 2008).
The current Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, is described as the best Taoiseach that ILIR has ever met when it comes to understanding the issues (Marlowe 2011). Taoiseach Ahern is from Dublin, where immigration is not felt as drastically, and neither Ahern nor his government seemed to grasp the issue of unauthorized Irish (Staunton 2014b). According to Staunton, Taoiseach Kenny understands the impact of immigration better than his predecessors as he hails from the west coast of Ireland, an area that has been impacted dramatically by immigration. The current group of Irish politicians has been more vocal about the problem. Taoiseach Kenny has publicly admitted that America is not open to Irish immigrants, a statement others have failed to make in public (Staunton 2014b).

ILIR understands the important role that the Irish government plays in immigration reform. They are “a key part of this effort; they have the resources to reach into the very heart of Capitol Hill and the White House” (Fincham 2007). However, in 2008 the groups had a public disagreement, which will be discussed later in the chapter. More recently, ILIR was critical of the Irish government’s approach. In 2013, Staunton claimed that the script had not changed and that the Irish government was more concerned with diplomacy than pushing real change and that they are using outdated tactics (Irish Examiner 2013).

**Funding**

During their tenure ILIR has received substantial funding from the Irish government. In 2006, they received two grants one for $30,000 and one for $50,000 (Gerson 2006a; D. Staunton 2006b). Over the years they have received approximately $324,637 from the Irish government (Irish Examiner 2013). A couple of years ago, ILIR stopped accepting funding from the Irish government. The reason for this change is threefold: the economy of Ireland has taken a
downturn; ILIR wanted to make it clear that they are an independent, American organization and are not representing the interests of a foreign government; and the Irish Embassy and Consulate thought that since the Irish government was providing funding to ILIR that they needed to heed their directives (Staunton 2014a).

Besides grants from the Irish government, ILIR funding has come from selling promotional materials such as “Legalize the Irish” t-shirts and wristbands. These items are available for purchase at meetings, events, and Irish festivals that members attend. Another promotional item was a song produced by Frank Carroll “Legalize them all.” This song was billed as ILIR’s theme song and all proceeds went to ILIR.

In addition, funding has come from fundraisers. These include informal events such as bars donating an evening’s profits, to formal events such as comedy shows and music performances. Formal events oftentimes involved local and international celebrities. Comedian Des Bishop, the band Black 47, singer Mickey Harte, and actor Seamus McDonagh have all performed at least one ILIR fundraiser. Fundraisers were held in combination with other Irish organizations; in 2007, the AOH held a fundraiser in NYC and a joint fundraiser by the Pastoral Center and local GAA was held in Philadelphia. At these fundraisers, speakers pointed out the importance of American support and involvement.

39 The internet sensation, Hallelujah Priest, was to perform in 2014, but the concert was cancelled.
41 Additional Irish celebrity support was noted in blog posts and articles. The most notable is John Duddy, an Irish boxer, and how he once was unauthorized. In support Duddy would frequently wear his “Legalize the Irish” shirt to bouts, on interviews, etc. Another celebrity who made a public stand of support was Fionnula Flanagan, an Irish actress (Irishvoices blog 2008).
In 2010, ILIR began holding an event, the Annie Moore Dinner,\textsuperscript{44} where an annual award is handed out. The annual award honors prominent Irish-Americans for their efforts on behalf of the Irish immigrant community. This dinner is currently their main source of funding for the year; suggested donation is $500 per person. ILIR also receives funding from personal donations, in particular Morrison and Donnelly Visa recipients who remember the trials of the unauthorized population and want to help the current generation (Staunton 2014a).

**Social Media**

At various points, ILIR has maintained a Blog, Facebook page, Twitter Account, and Website. The blog, Irishvoices.blogspot.com (“Irish Voices”), started in December 2005 and was updated until August 2010. After August, updates and information was posted on the Facebook page. As the Communications Board Member, Kelly Fincham was the main person responsible for maintaining the blog. The goal of the blog was to pass along information, share stories of unauthorized Irish, encourage people to support the McCain-Kennedy bill, and announce meetings and events. The majority of the posts were in 2006 and 2007. A breakdown blog posts by year can be found in Chart 6.

\textsuperscript{44} Annie Moore was the first passenger to be registered through the immigration station on Ellis Island in 1892.
The first blog posts were a series of stories from unauthorized immigrants. The stories discussed why the person chose to come to America, why they stay, and the difficulties that they have experienced. Many of the posts ended with a plea to have people take notice of and get involved in immigration reform. This theme was present throughout the four years. One of the most passionate blog writers was Nina. Her posts, which were positive and encouraging, often included emotional pleas for people to become involved and make sure that the Irish were part of the ongoing immigration debates. She maintained that change was possible.

Many blog posts included links and videos about general immigration reform from national news sources, as well as links to articles from Irish presses in both the U.S. and Ireland. In addition, there were posts about specific legislation (i.e. 245i and J visas), factors in Ireland that impact emigration (e.g. downturn in the economy), and American native-born’s attitude towards immigration. ILIR meetings and events were featured on the blog prior to the event and were often times recapped afterwards. Another frequent feature of the Irish Voices blog was pictures: people or inanimate objects (i.e. statues) wearing “Legalize the Irish” t-shirts, members of ILIR meeting with politicians, ILIR public meetings, and Lobby Days.

### Chart 6 – Irishvoices.blogspot.com Posts by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From November 2007 to April 2010, a related blog, 33rdcounty.blogspot.com, existed. The tagline of this blog was that “The undocumented Irish in America ARE the 33rd County. We are their families and friends.” Far fewer posts were made on this site, only 74 in total. 33rd County posts included ILIR meeting announcements, updates on the ILIR campaign and many of the same articles as the Irish Voices blog.

The Facebook page was created in March 2010. Postings include links to articles written about ILIR, general immigration reform, and E3 visa legislation. Linked articles are from both U.S. and Irish presses, many are from Irishcentral.com. In addition, on the page are announcements about meetings and events and recaps of meetings that ILIR Board Members had with politicians.

The majority of pictures on the site are of rallies, politician meetings, and public meeting announcements. Documents, such as information sheets and press releases, are also posted as pictures. Between July and December 2013, call in sheets were posted providing the name and number of representatives in 20 states. In addition, there was a call sheet asking all Irish-Americans to contact Speaker John Boehner. Each sheet included a script, “The Irish-American community supports immigration reform and the Congressman should too,” and the percentage of people from that state who claim Irish heritage. After October, the percentage of Americans claiming Irish heritage in the state was deleted was deleted from the call sheets. In its place were the following points: the 1965 Act effectively locked the Irish out of the U.S.A and between 2002 and 2011, Ireland only received 15,389 green cards, which was 0.001% of the total, ranking Ireland as 85th on the visa list.
The ILIR Twitter account, ILIR_Tweets, was established in November 2013. This medium is not widely used. As of November 2014, there were only 42 tweets, and 140 followers. Primarily tweets are links to articles, in particular Irishcentral.com articles, about immigration reform and Irish involvement.

ILIR’s official website is irishlobbyusa.org (“Irish Lobby”). On the website, you find details on the organization: statement of purpose, list of Executive and Advisory Board members, and a brief history of their formation. There are pictures of meetings with politicians and Lobby Days and links to both their Facebook page and Twitter account. The most detailed part of the website is Press. In this section, there are articles on general immigration reform, information about upcoming events, recaps and pictures of past events and Lobby Days. Beginning in 2013, postings are authored by “ILIR staff,” while previous posts are listed as Clippings.

Several archived portions of the Irish Lobby website are accessible. It is unclear when any of the Irish Lobby pages, both current and archived, were last updated as no dates are listed at the bottom of any page. However, much of the older version appears to be from 2007 as events and article links are from that year. The older website is more in-depth and includes brief bios on Bart Murphy (chairman), Ciaran Staunton (co-founder and vice chairman), Kelly Fincham (executive director), and Niall O’Dowd (co-founder and board member), a page listing companies and individuals who support ILIR, a listing of U.S. chapters (13 states are noted),

---

45 There is an outlier tweet topic, the Hallelujah Priest performance/fundraiser on May 13, 2014. There were 15 tweets about this event.
facts and figures on Irish immigration,\(^4^6\) ILIR store where you can purchase t-shirts, and a listing of upcoming banquets, fundraisers, and rallies.

On the archived website there is a Take Action tab, which links to websites where one can find the position of elected officials, the name and contact information of your congressman, FAQs on who can call a legislator and what one should say when talking to a legislator, call sheets with discussion bullet points, and an agenda for the March 7, 2007 Lobby Day. As in the newer version of the Irish Lobby website, the Newsroom tab is populated with links to direct news source.

When asked if ILIR puts out press releases, Staunton noted that instead of press releases he communicates events, meetings, etc. with news outlets who publish the information. He speaks with Ray O’Hanlon, editor from the *Irish Echo*, each week and has a direct link to Niall O’Dowd, who runs both the *Irish Voice* newspaper and Irishcentral.com.\(^4^7\) In addition, Staunton regularly communicates with the *Irish Times* American Correspondent and RTE\(^4^8\) News in Ireland.

**Political Clout**

ILIR understands the benefits of employing the Irish political clout that is discussed in chapter three. Irish are “good” at immigration reform; they achieved political victories in the U.S. in the 1980s with the Diversity Visas and in the 1990s with the Irish Peace Process. Success begets success and these past victories have given credibility to Irish immigration groups (Staunton 2014b). While the number of unauthorized Irish is relatively small, it is a high political

---

\(^4^6\) The four stats listed on this page regarding Green Cards and Lottery Visas are from 2005 or 2006. 
\(^4^7\) O’Dowd and Staunton are brother-in-laws. 
\(^4^8\) Raidió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland's National Public Service Broadcaster.
risk to ignore the Irish because of their political sway (O’Hanlon 2006). Part of the sway comes
from the romantic attachment that Congressmen and Senators place on their Irish heritage and
part is from the 40 million people who claim Irish heritage (Lavery 2014). A yearly example of
this romantic attachment is the shamrock ceremony in March between the Irish government and
the U.S. President.

In 2006, Senators Schumer (D-NY) and Hillary Clinton (D-NY) announced their support
of an earned citizenship pathway in front of Irish immigrants (Gerson 2006). It is not uncommon
to have influential politicians, including presidential candidates, attend and/or speak at ILIR
events. At a December 2006 rally Schumer noted, “Without the Irish this [immigration reform]
would be very difficult to get done. The Irish are a hugely important part of the lobby on this
issue. They have proved in the past how successful they can be when they address this topic and
I am delighted to be working with them.” The Irish are good at the game and this is why big
names are attracted to ILIR rallies and lobby days (Bernstein 2006). According to Morrison,
when the Irish organize, they change the nature of the debate and make it more likely that
immigration legislation will pass (Corrigan 2009).

ILIR has repeatedly noted that all ethnic groups are in it together, “When you fire a stone
at an undocumented from Nicaragua, you’re hitting one from County Kerry. We’re all in it
together,” (Emery 2010). The presence of Irish in the debate broadens the discussion and makes
Americans realize that the immigration issue is not just about Latin Americans (Cullen 2007).
“We are leveraging our national experience of over 200 years of immigration for the benefit of
all immigrant groups in the U.S. Like Thomas the Tank, we just happen to be the useful engine
of this particular train,” Bart Murphy (Donovan 2007). ILIR, like IIRM, is seen by some ethnic

49 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/12/schumer-says-its-v-for-victory.html
groups as a leader in immigration reform. They bring a history of organizational strength, sense of community, and a template that other ethnicities want to follow (Stanage 2007). However, some groups fear that the Irish are only concerned with their own group (Bernstein 2006).

**Three stages**

The political context has changed during the span of ILIR. I have divided ILIR into three stages: 2005 to mid-2007, mid-2007 to 2012, and 2012 to present. During the first stage ILIR was actively involved in Comprehensive Immigration Reform (“CIR”) which was happening on the national stage. In mid-2007 when reform fell through, ILIR’s focus turned to a bilateral trade agreement between the U.S. and Ireland, the E3 visa. In the third stage, focus has once again been on CIR. In the sections below I discuss the different characteristics of each stages.

**2005 to mid-2007**

ILIR was most active and community-driven during the first stage. By the time that the ILIR joined the cause, a national social movement around immigration reform was already in place. Their focus was on CIR, specifically the McCain-Kennedy bill. Starting in the summer of 2006, ILIR began holding weekly meetings in NYC. These meetings ran until 2007. At these meetings, attendees heard reports from ILIR representatives who attended hearings, updates on legislation, and were provided information about upcoming events.\(^5\) During these meetings, the fear and anger of the attendees about the inability to get visas and the increasing difficulties being incurred by not being able to obtain a driver’s license was addressed (O’Dowd 2006). According to Staunton, many of the undocumented who attended an ILIR meeting were empowered by meeting others in their same position and spurred to take action (D. Staunton 2006).

---

\(^5\) http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/07/legalize-irish-summer-campaign.html
Attendees were “not just some guy or woman in the Bronx, you are part of a movement” (Bernstein 2006). This sentiment was reiterated by O’Dowd in Boston, “You walked in here as undocumented, but you leave here as political activists” (Black 2006). Fincham noted that meetings would be a key part of ILIR’s lobbying efforts. It was important for people to turn out as it sends a message that the Irish American community is concerned about immigration reform (Irish Echo 2006). By March 2006, more than 1,000 people had attended an ILIR meeting (D. Staunton 2006).

Outside of NYC, rallies, town hall meetings, and informational meetings were held in Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Chicago. Like the NYC meetings, the focus was on the pending legislation. Information was disseminated on how to contact representatives and people were encouraged to compile documentation on their continued presence in the U.S. (McInerney 2006). More than 1,500 people attended a February 2007 informational meeting and rally in San Francisco, in the middle of Nancy Pelosi’s 51 district. While Pelosi did not attend, she sent along her support and stated that she would make resources available to ILIR in both her Washington and San Francisco offices (Donovan 2007). The difference between a rally and a meeting appears to be fluid and in many instances there is no significant demarcation between the two.

In April 2007, ILIR held a rally in Dublin for friends and family of the undocumented. In the weeks leading up, the rally was heavily promoted on the Irish Voices blog; those living in the states were asked to reach out to people living in Ireland and encourage them to attend. An estimated 1,500 people attended the rally where ILIR and Irish governmental officials spoke. The rally had a threefold purpose: provide information about the situation to those living in Ireland, show support for emigrants abroad, and pressure Irish politicians to take up the cause.

---

51 Pelosi became Speaker of the House January 2007.
After the rally, ILIR helped organize support groups for parent and families in Ireland (Hennessey 2006).

ILIR repeatedly asked people to get involved by contacting their congressman via phone, fax, or in person visits. Posted on the blog were faxes that could be printed and sent. In addition, there were phone scripts,

Tell them that you support the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform. Let them know you want them to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation. Let them know that you support earned legal status for the 50,000 undocumented Irish living in this country. Tell them you want to give the undocumented Irish a chance to earn their way to legalized status and prove they are worthy of being allowed to stay.52

No sample letters were provided as they stick out as artificial. Instead, ILIR encouraged people to write letters in their own language as these have more impact and are more reflective of the grassroots effort (Staunton 2014b).

ILIR targeted specific congressmen. After the 2006 midterm elections, members were encouraged to contact freshman members of Congress asking them to support CIR and oppose enforcement-only policies.53 At a Philadelphia meeting, O’Dowd asked people to deluge the offices of Congressman Rick Santorum (R-PA) and Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) with emails, voicemails and phone calls, “Senator Specter is waiting for your call, he just doesn’t know it yet” (Irish Echo 2011). In June 2007, people were asked to make a phone call or send a fax to four senators: Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Harry Reid (D-NV), and Mitch McConnell (R-KY). Over 6,000 faxes were sent to these four senators within a three day span.54

---

52 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/07/legalize-irish-summer-campaign.html
Members were also encouraged to contact President Bush asking him to make a statement in favor of CIR.  

In 2006, ILIR participated in the September 20th National Call In Day, organized by the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (“Coalition”). They also participated in the Call In days the following year, March 28th and 29th, May 1st to 3rd, and May 7th to 11th, and the Coalition’s Day of Action in Washington, D.C. on May 16th. One nationally coordinated event that ILIR chose not to participate in was the May 1, 2006 Day without Immigrants. ILIR feared that this protest was counterproductive and could alienate the American public (D. Staunton 2006; D. Staunton 2006). Instead, ILIR encouraged people to let their fingers do the marching and call their congressman on May 1st (D. Staunton 2006).

During the summer of 2006, hearings were held around the country on the pending immigration legislation. The goals of the hearings were to highlight flaws in the bill passed by the Senate and build public support for an enforcement-only measure (Gaouette 2006). These hearings were viewed as being a ploy by House Republicans to stall and delay immigration reform. The authors of Irish Voice blog posts referred to the organizers of these one-sided “sham” hearings as Know-nothings/Do-nothings. ILIR encouraged people to wear their “Legalize the Irish” t-shirt and attend any sham hearing that occurred near them. ILIR representatives attended the first sham hearing in Philadelphia on July 5th as well as those in Washington, DC, Tennessee, Texas, Florida, Washington, Indiana, and New Hampshire. Their presence was noticed, one of the things you can guarantee at a hearing is that there will be people wearing “green-and-white T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan, ‘Legalize the Irish’” (Moscoso 2006).

55 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2007/05/bush-steps-up.html
During this stage ILIR held four Lobby Days: March 2006, June 2006, September 2006, and March 2007. Interested parties could email their local ILIR representative or sign up in pubs in NYC and Boston. Buses from Boston and New York and plane trips from San Francisco were coordinated. Participants were both Irish born and Irish-Americans, the breakdown differed according to what area of the country they came from. According to Staunton, it is a strong message to bring constituents to Washington, D.C. Most legislators are used to dealing with lobbyists and they do not have many constituents visit them in their Washington office (Staunton 2014b).

Lobby Days began with people meeting with legislators during scheduled appointments and knocking on doors looking for additional walk-in appointments and ended with a rally. At the start of the day, participants were issued packages containing their scheduled appointments, contact information for each official, and details on what to say. Participants were asked to write down who they met with, their immigration contact person, and their position on immigration reform (Staunton 2014b).

More than 2,000 people attended the March 8, 2006 rally, which was twice as many participants as expected (Staunton 2006). At this rally, guest speakers included Senators McCain, Kennedy and Hillary Clinton. At the June 28, 2006, rally speakers included Senators McCain and Kennedy, Sam Brownback (R-KS), and several New York and Massachusetts state representatives. The agenda for the March 7, 2007 Lobby Day included a morning session at Washington court where selected speakers spoke about immigration reform, a procession to the office building behind a bagpiper, four hours of lobbying on the Hill, and ended with a rally.

57 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/06/irish-storm-hill.html
Again, Senators McCain, Kennedy, Schumer, and Clinton spoke at the rally. The estimated number of attendees at this rally varied widely from 600 to 2,500 people.

During this stage, ILIR Board members and the Irish government met with U.S. politicians. These behind the scene meetings were not widely reported or highlighted in the Irish Voices blog. In addition, Niall O’Dowd, as a representative of ILIR, testified at two different hearings: the July 12, 2006 hearing on Examining the Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the May 22, 2007 hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Perspectives from Faith-Based and Immigrant Communities. His testimonies and accompanying written statements laid out the status of Irish and how they have been affected by 9/11. He emphasized the history of Irish in America and in the May 22nd testimony detailed particular areas of the proposed legislation that ILIR found favorable.

As previously discussed under the Funding section, ILIR held comedy shows, hosted bands, held dinner dances and banquets where congressmen attended or were guest speakers. In addition, ILIR coordinated fundraising events with the AOH, GAA, and other Irish immigrant organizations. The majority of their fundraising efforts occurred during the first stage. Like IIRM, members attended festivals and parades. At festivals, ILIR members wore and sold “Legalize the Irish” t-shirts and wristbands and passed out flyers asking people to contact their representatives (Hendricks 2006). ILIR consistently requested that people wear their t-shirts to events and around town. One person noted that wearing his t-shirt at the Dublin, Ohio Irish festival elicited numerous questions, which gave him the opportunity to hand the person

58 In 2007, the theme for the St. Patrick’s Day parade in Atlantic City was “Legalize the Irish.”
information on the cause and how to contact their congressmen.\footnote{http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/08/report-from-dublin-irish-festival-in.html} A similar experience was reported at the Hunter Mountain Celtic Festival.\footnote{http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/08/steve-reports-from-hunter-mountain.html}

During this stage, ILIR and the Irish government both mentioned the possibility of a bilateral trade agreement. However, both groups were more interested in pursuing comprehensive immigration reform. After the McCain-Kennedy bill failed, Ireland’s Foreign Minister, Dermot Ahern, noted that the Irish government would now focus on securing a separate deal for the Irish (Staunton 2007).

\textit{Mid-2007-2012}

In June 2007, the CIR bill died in the Senate. At this point, the ILIR and the Irish government turned their focus to pursuing a bilateral trade agreement in the form of an E3 visa. The trade agreement was put forth as being advantageous for each nation; it would create a permanent pathway for Irish to come to the U.S. and would provide easier entry for Americans who were interested in moving to Ireland for work. Not all iterations of the E-3 visa included a clause for Irish who were currently in the U.S. without proper authorization. The version put forward by Senator Schumer and co-sponsored by Senators Pat Leahy (D-VT) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) was the preferable bill as it included such a clause (Muldoon 2011).

In a June 2007 blog post, O’Dowd states that CIR is dead until after the November 2008 election, but ILIR will follow another path to achieve their aims. Several days later another blog post notes that this is the beginning of a new phase for ILIR. They had achieved so much and educated many people along the way and these achievements will be the foundation to build upon the next phase of the campaign. East Coast Cailin, a frequent blogger during this time,
posted a rousing speech about how the Irish are not going away and are staying to fight the battle. To assist in these new efforts, ILIR hired Bruce Morrison as the lobbyist in September 2007.

The sentiment that there was a still a fight was reiterated several times during this stage. In an April 2008 blog post, Fincham notes that ILIR’s goals are the same as they were in 2005 and that it was time to lift the ambition level to find a solution to reverse the consequences of the 1965 Act.61 Again in January 2009, Kelly Fincham notes that ILIR is gearing up for a new campaign.62 This renewed spirit was spurred on by the inauguration of President Barack Obama who named immigration as a key issue. In addition, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who is a friend to the Irish, and Congress noted interest in moving forward immigration reform.

The structure of ILIR changed during this stage. Meetings of the Executive and Advisory Board became even more ad hoc and few general public meetings or rallies were held around the country. In February 2008, it was noted on the blog that ILIR Town Hall meetings would be upcoming. However, the only evidence I found of meetings in 2008 occurred in October in both NYC and San Francisco. The next meeting did not occur for another six months, April 2009 in Boston. The goal of this meeting, which drew a crowd of 350 people, was to explain the details of the proposed E3 visa.63 A similar meeting was held in NYC in May where an estimated 500 people attended. In 2010, a Boston meeting was held in February and a series of meetings in NYC in April. Once again these meetings were to update people on the state of immigration reform.64 In addition, Staunton conducted a whistle-stop tour in 2010. He spoke to Irish

61 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2008/04/raise-ambition-level-on-immigration.html
64 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2010/04/theres-work-to-do.html
organizations in Phoenix, Tucson, and Denver in March and Texas and Florida in May. The only other public meeting to occur during this stage was January 2012 in Philadelphia. At these meetings, it was typical that crowds were addressed by ILIR board members, Bruce Morrison, AOH representatives, GAA representatives, local politicians, and people from Irish support or cultural organizations. While the goal of these meetings was to impart information, they were also to encourage people to be active.

It is during this stage that ILIR became increasingly top down in structure. Celine Kennelly, the San Francisco Executive Board Representative, noted that ILIR has a different, quieter kind of campaign now. This campaign involves more work behind the scenes, the days of frequent, massive lobbies in Washington was over (Irish Echo 2007; O’Dowd 2007). The main work, meeting with politicians, was being done by members of the Executive Board. Irish officials held conversations with the Bush administration and lawmakers, including senators Schumer and Kennedy, about the possibility of increasing the number of visas for Irish immigrants (Garland 2008). Staunton and O’Dowd met with members of Obama’s administration. On local levels, ILIR members approached and worked with Senators Brown and Schumer to construct and implement E-3 visas.

Fundraising during this stage was limited. There were a couple of fundraisers in 2008 and an ILIR Day at Gaelic Park in 2010. In 2010, the ILIR established a yearly Gala Dinner, the Annie Moore Awards. This formal dinner is ILIR’s main fundraising event.

---

65 No Lobby Days were held during this stage.
66 Annie Moore, a 15 year old, was the first passenger who was registered at an immigration station on Ellis Island in 1892.
According to Staunton, Schumer made it known that the Irish needed to be part of the national immigration debate (Staunton 2014a). It was a turning point for ILIR when Schumer became chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security. After this, ILIR’s main goal was to convince Senators to vote for the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act bill that included the E-3 clause. ILIR focused on areas of the country where there was a Republican leader and a large Irish American community. They hired a polling agency to analyze census data to find out how many people in a district were Irish born or have Irish heritage (Murray 2013). Staunton stated that they knew that some senators were never going to vote for immigration reform, so they targeted those who were maybes (Staunton 2014a). Once an area was identified, ILIR reached out to local AOH and GAA chapters asking them to contact their Congressmen. GAA members were a massive help in lobbying efforts (Dermot 2014). Once the bill passed in the Senate, they turned their focus to House members and used the same tactics.

Meetings have been as infrequent during this stage as they were in the previous one. In 2013 meetings were held in Philadelphia, Boston, and NYC in June and July; Virginia in November; and West Chester, PA in December. In addition, ILIR had a booth at the national GAA event in Cleveland in September 2013.

At the meeting I attended in 2013 in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the atmosphere was more akin to a pep rally than informational meeting. Speakers included people from the AOH, GAA, Irish Pastoral Centre, and ILIR representatives: Hugh Meehan, Niall O’Dowd, and Ciaran Staunton. The speakers briefly explained the legislation to the several hundred people in
attendance. The primary message was that the CIR fight was once again starting and that people needed to get involved. Attendees were encouraged to contact their representatives and to take advantage of the phone banks that the Irish Pastoral Centre had set up. Numerous references were made to the previous CIR debate.

On March 12, 2014, ILIR held the first Lobby Day since the first stage. The day began with a briefing session, and then 50 delegates from 15 key states67 headed to Capitol Hill to meet with Republican members of the House (Dunne 2014). Delegates, wearing “2014: No Irish Need Apply? Why?” t-shirts, provided representatives with the number of Irish-American voters in their district, explained the impact of the 1965 Act upon Irish immigrants, and asked them to support immigration reform (ILIR Staff 2014). The day ended with a reception hosted by the United States Council on Irish Immigration.

A substantial increase of meetings, publicity, and events by ILIR during this stage would be expected as CIR discussions have increased on the national stage. However, this has not been the case. O’Dowd noted that they “don’t want to be seen as over-killing on our particular part of the bill. Compared with McCain-Kennedy, we are definitely playing it down." (Bogardus 2013). During interviews, people noted that during the 2006/2007 CIR talks, Irish were excited and put in a lot of work. When that legislation failed, the community felt defeated. There was a lot of momentum at the time and it was shocking to the community that the CIR did not pass (Dermot 2014). “A lot of people lost heart after” the McCain-Kennedy bill failed to pass (Dermot 2014). Many who would take up the current CIR fight remember this devastation. Getting community involvement has been more difficult; people are hesitant to put the time and energy in again.

67 Targeted states were Virginia, New Jersey, New York, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Nebraska, Washington State, Pennsylvania, Ohio, California and Texas (http://irishlobbyusa.org/irish-america-targets-gop-on-immigration-reform-2/)
While it is not to the same degree as the first stage, ILIR has again begun asking people to contact their representatives. Many of these requests come via Facebook posts and coincide with events in the legislature. In May and June 2013, the CIR bill was being marked up by the Senate. During this time people were asked to contact congressmen in the key states of Pennsylvania, Maine, Ohio, Illinois, Nevada, and their own representatives every day. A script was provided:

As an Irish American/ Resident of _____ State/ Person of faith, I urge the Senator to SUPPORT all immigration amendments being offered by Senator Blumenthal, and Schumer #5, which would protect immigrant workers.

I also urge you to OPPOSE amendments that would hurt immigrant workers, specifically Sessions #3, Lee #19, Hatch #19 and #20, and Grassley #73 and #74.68

That August, people were asked to contact their representatives in their home offices with the message, the “Irish American community wants Senator X to vote for immigration reform.” (ILIR Staff 2013). As discussed in the Social Media section call in sheets with Representatives’ information and talking points were posted for 20 states on ILIR’s Facebook page between July and December 2013. A November 2013 Facebook post notes that “call your Representatives - this is the most important thing you can do for the Irish community right now!” Again in December 2013 and January 2014, people were encouraged to call Boehner and Republican representatives as once again there was talking of possible immigration reform.69

As in the previous two stages, meetings amongst ILIR members and politicians have been prominent. In January 2012, ILIR members met at the White House with representatives from President Obama’s domestic policy council, the state department, and the department of

homeland security to discuss support for the E3 visa (Fitzgerald 2012). In a 2013 Facebook post ILIR notes that they have been meeting with Republican Senators\textsuperscript{70} to make sure that the Irish dimension is part of this crucial phase of the immigration debate (ILIR Staff 2013). ILIR stopped employing Morrison as the Lobbyist in 2013 due to lack of need; he remains active in the organization. Morrison joined ILIR members at a 2014 “listening session” meeting at the White House. At this meeting, they put forward remedies that would allow for an increased future flow of immigrants and assist those who are here undocumented (McGoldrick 2014).

A main theme that has run throughout ILIR’s tenure is the need to capitalize on CIR discussions. The theme was strongest during the first stage. After the 2006 midterm elections, there was a renewed spirit by ILIR as Democrats picked up additional seats in the House and Senate. At this time, there was a sense that immigration reform had to happen during this Congress or it wasn’t going to happen for quite some time. At an ILIR meeting, Fincham noted that immigration reform runs in cycles, “It seems like every 20 years the Irish have to battle for legal acceptance in the U.S. This is the year to win the battle once and for all” (Irish Echo 2007). In addition, ILIR’s focus has been that the next reform needs to include a permanent pathway, not another Band-Aid solution like the Donnelly and Morrison Visas (O’Dowd 2006). The Irish need a systemic fix, i.e. E-3 visas, so that this conversation does not occur every 20 years.

**Dissention**

Over the years, several groups and people within the Irish community have disagreed with the tactics and goals of ILIR. The Boston Irish, a group formed by unauthorized Irish, claimed that ILIR had lost sight of the plight of the unauthorized Irish. According to the Boston

\textsuperscript{70} The targeted states were listed as: NH, PA, OH, IL, ME and NV, WI.
Irish, ILIR’s focus was on their political gains; they were not being honest about the educational level provision nor the lack of an inclusion of a waiver for current unauthorized. This shift occurred after CIR died when ILIR began focusing on E-3 visas. In addition, the Boston Irish felt that ILIR was not willing to take suggestions from other community organizations and did not want to hear arguments for alternative directions. When asked about the Boston Irish, an ILIR Board member noted, “from day one those guys were not on board with us. I don’t know what their issue was” (Dermot 2014). One member of the Boston Irish noted that, while they have disagreements, he respects the ILIR as no other group could have gotten the legislation further than they did (Lavery 2014). The Boston Irish still exist, but are currently dormant, since reform is not impending.

The Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform (“Chicago Celts”) formed in 2006. The launch meeting occurred the night after a CIR rally at the local Gaelic Park. Organizers reported that the meeting was well attended and that a 12 member CIR committee was being formed this week. The degree of divergence between the two groups is unknown. A blog post a few days after the May Day rallies read, “What’s with that Chicago Irish crowd anyway? They don’t seem to like the idea of unity; keep turning up at rallies with the wrong t-shirts!!!” Another cryptic blog post followed the next day, “Solidarity is the key and hidden agendas won’t help. The only agenda is to ‘legalize the Irish’ no other t-shirt will do, this is not about individuals it is about the group and the group must stick together and support one another.” Any rift between the two groups appears to have been resolved as the ILIR and Chicago Celts, in particular the group’s Chairman Billy Lawless, work together on immigration issues.

---

71 The Chicago Celts participated in the May 2006 Day without Immigrants, which ILIR boycotted.  
72 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/05/day-without-immigrants.html  
73 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2006/05/focusing-on-problem.html
In 2007, Niall O’Dowd had a public spat with Trina Vargo, the head of the U.S.-Ireland Alliance. In an Op-Ed piece in the *Irish Times*, Vargo wrote that advocates for undocumented Irish should wait for comprehensive immigration reform and not look for a special deal. According to Vargo, “a special deal that would single out illegal Irish immigrants for preferential treatment would be morally wrong, could harm the U.S.-Ireland relationship, damage the high regard in which Irish-Americans are held, and lead to a divisive debate in the U.S. between the Hispanic community and the Irish-American community” (Vargo 2007). She disagreed that Irish were getting short changed on visas; other larger European countries received fewer green cards than the Irish. The Australian type of visas, which ILIR were lobbying for, were not a solution. The Australian visas dealt with the movement of trade and professionals and not unauthorized migrants. Vargo suggested that it would be better to focus the future of the U.S.-Ireland relationship on business, cultural ties, and academic exchanges. (Vargo 2007).

O’Dowd’s response to Vargo’s commentary was that ILIR, as well as the Irish government, has been working with other ethnic groups to pass a comprehensive immigration bill. However, after CIR failed they turned their focus to a bilateral trade agreement. ILIR’s aim was never to limit visa opportunities for other countries, only to improve Irish circumstances to be as favorable as other countries (i.e. Chile, Australia, Singapore, and Nicaragua). O’Dowd claimed that Vargo was trying to condemn the young Irish who are living in the shadows by saying that they could return to Ireland to work rather than remain in the U.S. without proper authorization.

A similar disagreement occurred between O’Dowd and Patrick Hurley, a member of IIRM and president of the County Cork B.P. & P. Association of NY. Hurley believed ILIR’s
tactics were jeopardizing, rather than improving, Irish chances of getting green cards. He claimed that ILIR rallies and making the Irish case public had alienated Congressman Peter King and others. According to Hurley, there had been talks in Republican and conservative circles about creating an annual 5,000 visa quota for Irish. The possibility of any quiet deal was destroyed once ILIR made the plight of undocumented Irish public (Hurley 2006). King echoed Hurley’s criticism; many people in the federal government were probably not even aware of Irish undocumented until the ILIR began making a stink (Stanage 2007). Another criticism by Hurley was that ILIR was not respectful of how things have changed since 9/11. They failed to adjust their strategies to reflect the change in culture (Coleman 2006).

O’Dowd responded by saying that Hurley’s comments were fueled from a personal vendetta against ILIR. He dismissed Hurley’s claim that ILIR has an alternative agenda by saying that their purpose has always been to legalize the unauthorized. O’Dowd suggested that what Hurley truly found to be problematic is that they have joined forces with other ethnic groups to push for CIR (Coleman 2006).

In early 2008, ILIR and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern had a public disagreement. While the Irish government had previously supported a bilateral agreement, their stance in early 2008 was that they would not put any such proposal through as it would not go anywhere. Little could be done for the unauthorized Irish.74 ILIR disagreed and claimed that presidents of other nations had worked with American politicians and established bilateral deals. Instead of using their political chops to deal with immigration issues and pursuing a bilateral agreement, Ahern had chosen to push for J-1 student visas (O’Dowd 2008). Bart Murphy claimed that while both Bertie and Dermot Ahern had made public and private commitments to support a bilateral agreement, it

74 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2008/03/taoiseach-bertie-ahern-turns-his-back.html
was clear that they were stating one policy publicly and pursuing another policy entirely (Cox 2008; Murphy 2008).

In March, during a speech on the steps of the U.S. Capital Ahern stated, “uninformed people were giving the wrong impression regarding a solution to the situation. These people should stop that because they are not on the inside. They really are talking from a position of sitting in the bar and talking nonsense.” (Drew 2008). This comment caused ILIR members to ask why ILIR had been promoting something that there was no backing for (Drew 2008). ILIR retorted that they had submitted a viable proposal on what steps the Irish government could take to create an agreement and this is another example of the Irish government abandoning their citizens who live abroad75 (Drew 2008) Ahern’s response was that his governmental record has been second to none when it comes to emigrants and that they are heeding the advice of their Washington contacts who claim it would be difficult to build the necessary political support to push a measure through (Ahern 2008). The dispute continued until May of that year when ILIR and Dermot Ahern met. At that meeting they “wrote a new chapter in the push for immigration reform” and made a vow to work together.76

Justifications

The justifications that ILIR used for Irish-friendly legislation fall into three categories: there is no line for Irish, status of the Irish community, and emotional pleas.

75 http://33rdcounty.blogspot.com/2008/03/ilir-is-not-talking-nonsense-in-bars.html
76 http://irishvoices.blogspot.com/2008/05/immigration-effort-back-on-track.html
Until the 1965 Act, Irish were able to migrate legally with little issue. This Act has worked in a significant way against the Irish and according to Staunton, “Many people see the ‘65 immigration bill as the Irish Exclusion Act” (J. Staunton 2013; O’Dowd 2007a). During interviews, Lobby Day speeches, and ILIR meetings Staunton repeatedly notes that since the 1965 Act, Irish have been locked out; there is no way for Irish to come to the U.S. legally (Dunne 2014; O’Callaghan 2013; O’Dowd 2006b). There is no line.

This rationalization is also found on the Irish Voices blog and ILIR’s Facebook page. Kelly Fincham posted a blog response to John Flanagan, a New York representative, who suggested that Irish get in line, “Flanagan and his ilk live in a dream world where immigrants wait patiently for some mythical visa. Memo to Flanagan. THEY”RE AIN’T NO VISA PROGRAMS OUT THERE.” In a press release supporting the Senate passing of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, the Irish dimension needs to be highlighted “because for over 45 years, Ireland has received the short end of the stick when it comes to legal migration to the U.S. An unintended consequence of the 1965 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act has been that little or no scope has existed for legal migration from Ireland to the U.S.”

ILIR is not looking for preferential treatment, but a fair place in line like everyone else (Dunne 2014). During his House testimonies, O’Dowd noted that only 2,000 of the one million green cards went to Irish in 2005 (O’Dowd 2006b; O’Dowd 2007a). Statistics were also used to make the point in press releases: in 2011 Irish people only received 1,371 U.S. Permanent

---

Resident visas, .1% of overall total and between 2002 and 2011 Ireland received only 15,999 of the 10.5 million visas, .001% of the total. This last statistic was included on the congressional calling sheets posted on Facebook.

Diversity Visas were only a temporary fix and are no longer a viable option for Irish (O’Dowd 2009). Since 1995, Irish have only obtained one-half of one percent of the Diversity Visas, approximately 2,800 (O’Dowd 2006b; O’Dowd 2007a). The proposed E-3 visa acknowledges that Ireland has been relegated to the backlogs of the immigration system for nearly half a century. They are a permanent way to reverse the 1965 Act (O’Hanlon 2013).

Aspects of the Irish community

The second justification is that Irish can, and want to, contribute to the U.S. However, this is becoming harder for them to do. Irish immigrants are hard-working, good people (Ludden 2007). In an RTE interview, Staunton notes that they come to the U.S. to roll up their sleeves and work (Dungan 2013). If they remained in Ireland they would be able to collect welfare, but they choose to come to the U.S., knowing that they will not receive any handouts from the U.S. government, nor do they want them (Dungan 2013). This sentiment is reaffirmed by community members, workers at immigrant support organizations, and the Irish Voices blog. The blog featured numerous stories from unauthorized migrants who had made built a life in the U.S. and made it their home which includes having children, creating businesses, employing people, and paying taxes. The substantial amount of time, 10 years or more, that many Irish immigrants have been in the U.S. is often noted. This justification is exemplified by the ILIR theme song,

“Legalize Them All” by Frank Carroll. This ballad tells about how the Irish built NYC but now are being forced out even though they have a lot to offer and are willing to do any job.

While Irish want to be active members in U.S. society, social mobility has become increasingly restricted as they cannot obtain nor renew driver’s licenses and Social Security Numbers are needed to apply for jobs, open bank accounts, rent an apartment, etc. (Barry 2006; Hendricks 2007). They feel as though they are under siege; everything that they have worked for is falling in around them, which leaves them living in a constant state of fear (Fergus 2006; O’Dowd 2006a). These emotions are only increased by the additional burden of not being able to return home to Ireland, as they would then face a 3 or 10 year bar from entering the U.S.

The third prong to this justification is that the community is diminishing. Due to the stricter legislation new migrants are choosing to go to other countries (O’Dowd 2007a). The relationship between Ireland and America depends on an active Irish immigrant community and without immigration reform, this community will cease to exist (Hook 2008; Irishvoices Blog 2006). This relationship is important as Ireland is an important strategic ally and friend to the U.S. Senator Brown’s camp pointed to governmental data showing Ireland to be one of the top 20 sources of foreign direct investment in the United States to justify the E-3 visa (Gunasekaran 2012). Not only are cultural heritage important, but so are economic and trade ties between the U.S. and Ireland (Gunasekaran 2012).

**Emotional**

The language of this final justification, emotional pleas, mirrors the same justification used by IIRM; they have been in the country for a long time and it is important for Ireland to continue to have a footprint in the U.S. Irish immigrants have helped build this country, have
been loyal contributors, and have repeatedly illustrated their love for the U.S. (Black 2006; Irishvoices Blog 2006; McGrath 2007). “We built the roads, the bridges and the railroads but now they won't let us drive or ride on them. We built the place and now they won't let us in” (Irish Echo 2005). Dick Durbin, a co-sponsor of Schumer’s E-3 visa, stated that there might not even be a U.S. if it was not for the Irish as they were instrumental in the fight for independence (Durbin 2012).

In his July 2006 testimony O’Dowd stated, “I think that if you look at any area of American life, the Irish-Americans have contributed greatly.” (O’Dowd 2006b). To reinforce this claim the contributions of past presidents such as Andrew Jackson, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan is referenced in O’Dowd’s testimonies, stated at ILIR meetings, and is used in Lobby Day materials. Not only does ILIR mention the contributions of these Presidents, but that if the relatives of these Presidents were to migrate today they would be unable to do so under the current law.

Like IIRM, ILIR highlights Irish contributions by noting their military service. In his July 2006 testimony O’Dowd mentioned the service of previous generations of Irish, including those who served in George Washington’s Army. In addition, in speeches at ILIR meetings and press releases, it is noted that more Irish have been awarded Medals of Honor than all other foreign-born ethnic groups combined, 258.

A legal flow of new immigrants is needed to maintain this heritage and keep the relationship fresh and vibrant for the future (Irishvoices Blog 2007; Kennelly 2013). As discussed in the previous justification, this is at jeopardy because of stricter legislation which is leading to a diminishing Irish community. Again, O’Dowd is one of the most vocal purveyors of
this justification, “one of the greatest contributors to the success of this Nation will be no more,” (O’Dowd 2006b) “Irish neighborhoods are dying - we're in great danger of losing one of the great ethnic inspirations in New York,” (Gerson 2006) “Without legalizing the Irish here and allowing a future flow of Irish immigration to America, I believe we are seeing the inevitable passing of one of the great emigrant streams in American history” (O’Dowd 2007a).

Another component to the emotional aspect is current and historical discrimination that the Irish face. Historically, ILIR points to the No Irish Need Apply (“NINA”) ads and signs of the 1800s. References to NINA are included on Lobby Day materials and in speeches at meetings. Current discrimination is framed around 9/11. Irish worked at the twin towers alongside rescuers and thousands of Irish-American fire and police officers on 9/11 (O’Dowd 2006b; Irish Independent 2006). The toughening immigration laws which has led to more difficult living conditions and increased fear feels like a slap in the face to the Irish community who have also been affected and suffered from 9/11 (Irish Independent 2006). NINA is used to tie the two eras together at the March 2014 Lobby Day, “U.S. immigration today has a sign that says 'No Irish Need Apply,' and we want them to take down that sign” (Dunne 2014). At this Lobby Day, participants wore shirts that said “2014: No Irish Need Apply. Why” and were told to ask Representatives that exact question.

**Contexts of Reception**

In this section I return to the theoretical framework, contexts of reception, established in Chapter Two. The four interconnecting contexts that Portes and Borocz (1989) identify are labor market, public opinion of the receiving country, governmental response, and ethnic community.
Contexts of reception are used to frame how outside factors impact strategic efforts and justifications of the IIRM and ILIR.

**Labor market**

Economic conditions and the demand for specific skills and labor types are key components of the labor market. Some economists, Borjas being one of the most well-known, argue that workers who are not authorized to work in the U.S. depress the labor market. Employing unauthorized immigrants lowers wages for less educated native-borns and creates a more competitive market in lower skilled jobs. Other labor economists find the opposite, that unauthorized workers increase wages and employment. Even more, their presence stimulates the economy through the goods they purchase. In 2010, the United Farm Workers union created a campaign to confront the idea that immigrants “take our jobs.” They invited citizens and legal migrants to apply for agricultural work. Three months into the campaign three million people had visited the website, 8,600 expressed interest in a job, and 7 followed through (Chomsky 2014). This example works to dispel the notion that in times of economic downturn native-borns will take any job, rather than be unemployed.

In the early 1980s, the U.S. experienced an economic recession, with a high of 10.8% unemployment in 1982. In 1983, the economy began to rebound and unemployment rates decreased. By IIRM’s tenure (1987 to 1990) unemployment was between 5 and 7% (Chart 7).
While IIRM existed post a recession, ILIR (2005 to present) weathered a recession, from December 2007 to June 2009. During this time unemployment rates spiked. Since 2011 rates of unemployment have been steadily decreasing (Chart 8).

Chart 7 – Rates of Unemployment, January 1987-December 1990

(Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014)

Chart 8 - Rates of Unemployment, January 2005-October 2014

(Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014)
While the rates of unemployment during IIRM were steady, the rates have fluctuated vastly during ILIR’s time. In the first stage, 2005 to mid-2007, unemployment rates remained low; they were not a significant factor. Indeed, these low rates even helped silence the debate on negative effects of labor migration (Hericourt and Spielvogel 2012). However, the 2007-2009 recession has complicated CIR discussions. Rosenblum (2011) contends that high unemployment rates make it difficult to justify a bill that creates new employment-based visas, which was a main feature during the 2006 and 2007 CIRs. In addition, labor unions are less inclined to step away from opposition to temporary worker programs and the business groups who rallied Republican support are less engaged (Rosenblum 2011). It is unclear if this will once again reverse now that unemployment rates are decreasing. While the current CIR discussions began after the latest recession, rates of unemployment were still around 8% when the Senate passed the 2013 bill.

One of the justifications that IIRM used was that Irish immigrant skillsets matched with the occupations where shortages were predicted. IIRM claimed that Irish immigrants were unable to fill these jobs because of legal status, if this changed them, and the U.S., would benefit. From 1987 to 1995, over half of the Irish reported their employment as “Professional and Executive” or “Technical, Sales, and Administrative Support” (Lobo and Salvo 1998). Since 2003, the average number of Irish who became a Legal Permanent Resident (“LPR”) and reported that they are in one of these occupations is 27.3% (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014) However, each year the categories “Unknown” and “No

80 On November 20, 2014 President Obama announced an executive action on immigration. The following day a presidential representative was asked why President Obama had not created this executive action sooner. His response was that when Obama was elected the economy was in recession and that the administration needed to focus on that.
occupation/not working outside home” was at least 60%. ILIR has made few connections between job shortages and Irish skillsets and training. However, they have warned that legislation focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) visas would not be beneficial to Irish.

The subjective perception of the impact of immigrants upon the labor force impacts native-born opinions (Hericourt and Spielvogel 2012). In times of economic downturn, public discourse around social problems becomes increasingly fervent and widespread and migrants are more likely to be vilified (Buonfino 2004; King et al. 2012). This and other aspects of public opinion will be discussed in that section.

Receiving Government

IIRM’s tenure immediately followed the passing of the most sweeping immigration revision since the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (“IRCA”). In the 1970s and early 1980s, it was perceived by the American public and politicians that the country had lost control of its borders (Bean et al. 1990). The benefits from migration were outweighed by costs incurred by the presence of migrants, in particular those who were in the country illegally. IRCA was a response to this discontent. While IRCA provided amnesty to 3.1 million people, the legislation also included employer sanctions and increased border enforcement. The employer sanctions clause made it more difficult for employers to hire workers who did not have proper authorization, but not impossible. This clause was never fully established; therefore did not have the intended effect of reducing future unauthorized flows.

While the IRCA amnesty did not encourage unauthorized immigration, in the short or long run, it also did not discourage new migrants from coming (Orrenius and Zavodny 2003;
Bean et al. 1990). The legislation failed to address the visa system and create legal pathways, which would help stem future unauthorized flows. The Immigration Act of 1990 (“1990 Act”), which made Diversity Visas permanent, addressed the visa system. The 1990 Act was strategically placed, it came soon after IRCA but before public nativist sentiments began to rise.81 In addition, the Act dealt with the less contentious issue of legal migration, in particular, how legal migrants could fill the nation’s economic needs (Rolph 1992).

The most influential event on immigration policy between 1990 and 2005 was the September 11, 2001 terror attack. This event has led to stronger enforcement and increased linkages between immigration and national security (Hagan and Phillips 2008). One example is the U.S.A. Patriot Act signed into law by President George W. Bush in October 2001. This legislation expanded law enforcement power in regards to monitoring and detaining suspected terrorists, allowed the government to detain foreign nationals for up to seven days before deciding if criminal or immigration charges would be filed, and strengthened border enforcement (McCabe and Meissner 2010). In 2003, the Immigration and Naturalization Service was abolished. Since then, immigration issues have fallen under the Department of Homeland Security.82

Most of the significant changes since 9/11 have been in regards to screening, border and interior enforcement, worksite enforcement, and electronic employment eligibility verification (Cornwell and Roberts 2010; Middelstadt et al 2011; Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011). There

---

81 Daniels (2004) claims that the degree of nativist sentiments during 1990s was comparable to that of the early 1900s.
82 Weissbrodt and Danielson (2011) claim that putting immigration enforcement under the control of the Department of Homeland Security is the biggest impact of 9/11 on immigration. This move has led to increased persecution and removal of unauthorized immigrants, border patrol, and the unintended consequence of state and local laws.
have been few changes made to the visa system. Increased enforcement has made it more
difficult for an unauthorized migrant to leave the country and quietly re-enter. Security concerns
have also led to increased removals. In 2004, there were just under 250,000 removals. By 2013,
the number of removals was 438,421 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014).
The number of Irish removals has gone from 294 between 1992 to 2001 (29.4 yearly average) to
Hagan and Philips (2008) and Kanstroom (2007) both argue that enforcement is less about
stopping illegal crossings and more about symbolically asserting national sovereignty.

Race is wrapped up within this notion of security and national sovereignty. Secure
Communities is one of the latest examples of immigration legislation that discriminates on the
basis of race. The program, which was piloted in 2008 and discontinued in November 2014, was
a system that checked a person’s legal status in a database after they were booked in jail. While
the government claimed that Secure Communities is nondiscriminatory, at least 90% of the
people caught under Secure Communities have been Latinos (Garcia and Keyes 2012). Romero
(2008) claims that this program identifies a migrant as being suspicious through racial profiling.

Another way that racism is apparent through immigration legislation is the attention and
resources that have been placed on Enter Without Inspections (“EWIs”) versus Visa Overstayers.
EWIs are people who clandestinely cross a border. In the U.S., the Mexican border receives
substantially more attention than the Canadian border. Over the past few decades there has been
increased use of technology, number of border agents, and building of fences along the U.S.-
Mexican border (Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011). Visa overstayers are people who enter and
overstay their authorized period of residence, work without the proper visa, or present false
documents/use another person’s documents. The majority of unauthorized European immigrants enter with a visa and overstay (Keeley 2009). Entrance-Exit programs, such as U.S.-VISIT which uses biometric data to monitor arrival and departures of foreign nationals, have made it more difficult for people to overstay and then return to the U.S. at a later date (Koslowski 2011).

Since 2005, state and local governments have increasingly introduced and enacted their own immigration legislation. That year, 300 bills were introduced in state legislatures (National Conference of State Legislatures 2014). In 2007, for the first time all 50 states considered at least one proposal on immigration, a total of 1,562 pieces of legislation were introduced (Chavez and Provine 2009; Weissbrodt and Danielson 2011). Between 2005 and 2013, 2,179\(^{83}\) laws have been enacted on the state level (National Council of State Legislatures 2014).\(^{84}\) These bills, both restrictive and favorable in nature, have primarily focused on employment, housing, educational opportunities, healthcare, identification, language, and social services. In particular, driver’s licenses and in-state college tuition eligibility have been hot topic issues. As of November 2014, 10 states had extended driver’s license eligibility and 18 offered in-state tuition to unauthorized immigrants (National Council of State Legislatures 2014).

According to Montalto (2012), state level immigrant legislation is being driven by demographic trends, political calculations of governors, work of immigrant rights activists, investments in community organizing by major foundations, and policy oriented research supportive of an integration agenda. Economic benefits, such as paying into the Social Security

---

\(^{83}\) During this time frame over 8,000 pieces of legislation were introduced on the state or local level. Since 2007, the average of immigration bills being introduced each year is 1,300; with 200 being enacted (http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/2013-immigration-report.aspx).

\(^{84}\) In 2010, the Governor of Arizona signed the nation’s toughest bill on unauthorized immigration into law. The bill gave broad discretion to law enforcement officers to verify the immigration status of anyone suspected of being in the country illegally and made the failure to carry immigration documents a crime. Since passing portions of this bill have been struck down, but not before it created a ripple effect and other conservative states, including Utah, Indiana, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina, also enacted strict immigration legislation (Liu and Ingram).
System, are felt on a national stage, while local and state governments shoulder a majority of the economic burden. Services which unauthorized immigrants use, i.e. education, health services, are funded by state governments.

The IIRM crossed over two presidencies, Ronald Reagan and George Bush, both Republicans. During IIRM’s time, both the Senate and the House were Democratic majorities. ILIR’s political landscape is more complicated, partly due to how long they have existed. When ILIR formed in 2005, there was a Republican President, George W. Bush. A Democrat, Barack Obama, was elected president in 2008 and reelected in 2012. Both Bush and Obama named CIR as a top legislative goal. From 2005 to 2007, both chambers were a Republican majority. From 2007 to 2010, Democrats were the majority in both chambers. From 2011 to 2014, the Senate had a Democrat majority while the House had a Republican majority.

Both Reagan and Bush were able to gather bipartisan support for IRCA and the 1990 Immigration Act respectively. However, since 2001, immigration has become increasingly polarized along party lines. The contentious issues of strengthening the border and legalization of unauthorized immigrants have been the biggest differences by party line. Social conservatives define immigration as an issue of national security and identity, while Democrats are more apt to be favorable to immigrant rights (Jeong 2013). During ILIR’s tenure, there have been two major immigration reform pushes, 2005-2007 and 2013. Chart 9 below illustrates the breakdown of votes for proposed legislation during IIRM or ILIR time.
## Chart 9 – Relevant Legislation by Party Votes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Senate Yes</th>
<th>Senate No</th>
<th>House Yes</th>
<th>House No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Act of 1990</td>
<td>40D, 41R</td>
<td>14D, 3R</td>
<td>171D, 93R</td>
<td>54D, 64R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006</td>
<td>38D, 23R, 1I</td>
<td>4D, 34R</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007</td>
<td>Failed to invoke cloture</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Library of Congress 2014)

In 2014, President Obama put forth an Executive Action of deferred action for unauthorized immigrants who met certain requirements. He addressed the partisan issues surrounding immigration during his November 20th speech to the nation,

Meanwhile, I worked with Congress on a comprehensive fix, and last year, 68 Democrats, Republicans, and independents came together to pass a bipartisan bill in the Senate. It wasn’t perfect. It was a compromise. But it reflected common sense. It would have doubled the number of border patrol agents while giving undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship if they paid a fine, started paying their taxes, and went to the back of the line. And independent experts said that it would help grow our economy and shrink our deficits.

Had the House of Representatives allowed that kind of bill a simple yes-or-no vote, it would have passed with support from both parties, and today it would be the law. But for a year and a half now, Republican leaders in the House have refused to allow that simple vote.

Now, I continue to believe that the best way to solve this problem is by working together to pass that kind of common sense law. But until that happens, there are actions I have the legal authority to take as President — the same kinds of actions taken by Democratic and Republican presidents before me — that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just.

…
And to those members of Congress who question my authority to make our immigration system work better, or question the wisdom of me acting where Congress has failed, I have one answer: Pass a bill.

I want to work with both parties to pass a more permanent legislative solution. And the day I sign that bill into law, the actions I take will no longer be necessary. Meanwhile, don’t let a disagreement over a single issue be a dealbreaker on every issue.

(Obama 2014)

**Ethnic community**

An established ethnic community is able to cushion incoming migrants and protect them from outside prejudice and initial economic difficulties. In Chapter Two, I introduced the concept of multiplied favorable context. Nationally, Irish have a favorable context compared to other ethnic groups because of their race, native English skills, heritage, and historical connections. In local areas where Irish have traditionally settled (i.e. NYC, Boston) context is even more favorable. This multiplied favorable context helps shelter the Irish community and foster a local culture where being part of this ethnic group is an asset. It not only instills members of the community with the belief that they can have a positive impact upon the local economy and social scene, but also within the national political environment. A connection between the Irish community and governmental officials has been built through decades of political involvement and voting sway.

While the multiplied favorable context still exists, it is decreasing. In 2007, O’Dowd noted that Irish political clout was dying, “Our heroes are not getting any younger. Ted Kennedy is 75. Where is the next generation of Irish community leaders?” (Stanage 2007). Irish politicians in NYC and Boston are neither the norm nor as common as they were in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, both prongs of the Irish lobby are fraying: Irish-Americans have moved to the suburbs
and identify with the wider category of white ethnic rather than Irish, and the number of new migrants arriving has waned (Stanage 2014). The Irish-American voting bloc has diminished. As Irish have integrated, they have moved away from the Democratic party, creating a less consolidated, though more bipartisan, Irish caucus (Stanage 2014).

As discussed in the previous section, the number of removals of Irish persons has increased since 9/11. Within the Irish community there is an increased sense of fear and vulnerability that was not present prior to 9/11 in NYC and Boston. Stricter legislation has made it more difficult for unauthorized migrants to open a bank account, renew driver’s license, get a job, or return to Ireland for a visit. The AOH and Irish government have both been outspoken about the harsher legislation’s impact upon the Irish community, especially during the Bush administration (Cochrane 2007).

The stricter legislation in conjunction with increased return to Ireland in the early 2000s to take advantage of the Celtic Tiger economy has created a diminished Irish ethnic community. O’Dowd repeatedly notes in interviews and articles that Irish neighborhoods are crumbling and predicts that within a generation, if there is no immigration reform, the community would be severely diminished. While the rates of Irish leaving Ireland has again risen, the number of Irish coming to the U.S. has not equaled that of the 1980s. Irish are choosing to migrate to other destination countries, in particular Canada and Australia, where there are more pull factors such as visas and employment. Cochrane (2007) claims that a lack of new incoming migrants creates a fissure in U.S./Irish relations, a relationship that is important and valuable to both countries.

The demographics of the ethnic community during IIRM and ILIR differs in several ways. In the 1980s, estimates of the unauthorized Irish population ranged from 40,000 to
250,000. The lower estimates came from the Irish government, while higher estimates came from IIRM. The current estimate of unauthorized Irish is between 20,000 to 50,000. Again, the lower number comes from the Irish government while the larger is used by the ILIR. Not only is the estimated number of unauthorized Irish lower now, so is the number of Irish Legal Permanent Residents (“LPR”). Fewer Irish have come to the U.S. since 1996, which is illustrated on Chart 10.

Between 1992 and 1995, the number of Irish who legalized skyrocketed, a total of 48,377 LPRs. In 1996, the number dropped off and since the annual average of Irish LPRs is 1,438 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). One reason for the decline is that in 1995, the clause in the 1990 Act that set aside a specific number of Diversity Visas for Irish ended. Another reason is the booming Celtic Tiger economy in Ireland, which enticed Irish citizens back to Ireland’s shore. While the Celtic Tiger economy officially ended in 2002, many effects, such as an increasing unemployment rate, were not felt until 2008.

From 1987 to 1995, 59.7% of LPRs were between the age of 20 and 29 (Lobo and Salvo 1998). From 2005 to 2012, 49.6% of LPRs were between the ages of 25 and 34, 23.4% between the ages of 35 and 44 (United States Department of Homeland Security 2014). One of the most dramatic changes is marital status. From 1987 to 1995, 29.5% of LPRs were married while from 2005 to 2012, 76.1% were married (Lobo and Salvo 1998; Department of Homeland Security 2014). This change is not surprising when one looks at what visas Irish legalized under. Between 1988 and 1990, the most popular visa was Diversity with Immediate Relative the

---

85 Critics of IIRM claimed that they inflated the number of unauthorized in the US to enhance their case.
86 As of November 2014 the statistics on the Profiles on Legal Permanent Residents had not been released for 2013.
87 5.5% were between the ages of 18 and 24.
Chart 10 – Irish Legal Permanent Residents

Legal Permanent Residents

IIRM

ILIR
second most common. As the number of Irish Diversity Visa winners has waned, Immediate Relative is how the vast majority legalized between 2005 and 2013. These changes are illustrated on Charts 11 and 12.

One demographic constant between the two groups is destination states. The most popular destination states during both times were: New York, Massachusetts, California, New Jersey, and Illinois (Lobo and Salvo 1998; United States Department of Homeland Security 2014).

Another significant change between the two groups is the increased use and sophistication of technology. New methods of communicating, such as the internet, email, and Skype have provided an avenue for migrants to maintain linkages with their home country. Technology does not completely replicate the experience of visiting home, but it does make it easier for migrants to keep abreast of news from Ireland, see and hear friends and family (i.e. Skype), and virtually participate in events. One of the latest examples of virtual participation is Funerals Live. For a fee, this Irish company provides a livestream of funeral masses and burials to those who are unable to attend.

One constant of the ethnic community between the two eras is the use of social networks. The history of the strength and usage of Irish social networks has been well documented (Aroian 1993; Christopher and Kulig 2000; Corcoran 1993; Delaney and MacRaild 2005; Gleeson and Buttmer 2005; Lobo and Salvo 1998). Social networks are used by Irish to find employment and housing, as well as help alleviate homesickness, provide socialization, and garner political and/or

---

88 Between 1991 and 1997 the majority of Irish legalized under Diversity visas. In 1997, the number of Diversity visa recipients leveled off and Immediate Relative became the most common visa in 1998.
89 In the past few years Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Pennsylvania have also been one of the top five destination states (Department of Homeland Security 2014).
Chart 11 – Irish Visa Types, 1987-1990

Chart 12 – Irish Visa Types, 2005-2013
social involvement. Networks are both informal, such as loose-knit interactions in a pub, and formal, such as Hibernian Societies and the GAA.

The socialization aspect of the pub cannot be understated. For Irish, the pub is not only a place of socialization, but also where one can cash a check, hear about job opportunities, or attend a legal clinic sponsored by an Irish immigrant support organization. Both IIRM and ILIR used this established setting to their benefit and held fundraisers and meetings in pubs.

Increased technology has made it easier to obtain information and maintain contact with the homeland, therefore reducing the need to read ethnic newspapers or join a social or cultural organization to help recreate home. There has been a decrease in readership of U.S. Irish ethnic newspapers, such as the Irish Emigrant from Boston. The gap filled by the Irish Emigrant paper, keeping people up to date on the stories and sports scores from Ireland, has become obsolete as this information is easily obtainable online. The membership numbers of the AOH has been steadily shrinking since the 1990s. Part of the reason for the decrease in membership is the notion that the AOH is stuck in the 1950s and is not representative of younger Irish persons (Cochrane 2007). Like the AOH, GAA membership has decreased. The GAA provides recreation, Irish camaraderie, and resources to newly arrived migrants. It goes beyond a sports club as oftentimes coaches and fellow players are able to help migrants find housing and employment. One migrant I spoke with, who played in the GAA when he first arrived over 15 years ago, contacts coaches when he needs new employees for his masonry company. It was through the GAA that he found his first job in the U.S. and wants to repay the favor.

Increased technology is only one reason for the shrinking GAA; the inability of Irish people to emigrate legally is the other reason. The decrease of number of players and teams in
Boston and NYC was particularly noticeable in the mid-2000s when players were returning to Ireland to take advantage of the Celtic Tiger economy. The GAA’s decline is being furthered as the typical GAA player, a man or woman in their early 20s, are migrating to countries other than the U.S. Potential players have been refused entry as it is presumed that they are not only coming to play in the GAA, but also work.

Public opinion

The final context of reception, public opinion, is impacted by the labor market and political landscape, as well as cultural and historical factors. Public opinion is swayed by the number of migrants in the country, the perceived impact that they are having upon society, and economic and security events that are relevant to immigration (i.e. elections, 9.11). In favorable receptions, immigrants are seen as being part of the society and welcomed; while in unfavorable receptions they are seen as a political threat and bringing disharmony to the nation.

Group threat theorists view anti-immigrant sentiment as a response to economic or demographic developments (i.e. growth of an immigrant population) that seem to undermine the interests and social position of an established ethnic group and create competition between groups for available resources (Quillian 1995; Vallas, Zimmerman, Davis 2009). The larger a subordinate group grows, the more fear and dislike is illustrated by the dominant group (Berg 2009). Anti-immigrant sentiment expanded in the 1980s as a backlash to IRCA and in response to an overall atmosphere of national dissatisfaction with many aspects of American life (Berg 2009; Daniels 2004). The turn against immigration began in earnest after IRCA and peaked in the mid-1990s (Daniels 2004; Reimers 1998).
People’s perceptions of immigrants are shaped by their own identities and statuses within society. Kunovich (2013) found that group threat is higher in people who are unemployed or see their job as the most important aspect of defining who they are. On the other hand, individuals who are younger, Democrats, women, people with more education, people with political interest and knowledge, and those who live in cities expressed lower levels of threat (Berg 2009; Hericourt and Spielvogel 2012; Kunovich 2013). Individuals who have more interaction with immigrants have more lenient attitudes towards immigrants (Berg 2009). Americans seem to distinguish between immigration at the national level and personal level and are apt to associate positive traits with individuals than groups and rate experiences with individual migrants as favorable (Lapinski et al 1997). In addition, Kunovich (2013) found that preferences for restrictive policies are lower among those living in the New England, East North Central, and West South Central census regions.90

Immigration questions were not included in public opinion polls with any frequency until the late 1980s/early 1990s. Even since its inclusion, data on this subject has been sporadic. There are large time gaps between non-academic polls and academic survey organizations, (i.e. General Social Survey (“GSS”) and few questions cross an extended time series (Muste 2013). The lack of consistent data makes it difficult to draw conclusions, however inferences can be made using data from surrounding or following years (i.e. 1986, early 1990s).

General and Illegal Immigration

The question: *Should immigration be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?* is a good indicator of restrictionist sentiment (Chart 13). Between 1986 and 1993, the number of

---

90 New England states: Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island; East North Central states: Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana; West South Central states: Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas.
people reporting that immigration should be decreased dramatically rose, from 49% to 65%, which coincides with the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment of the time. Since 2005, the number of respondents saying that immigration should be decreased has fluctuated between 35% and 50%. The highest percentage in 2009 coincided with a downturn in the U.S. economy; since 2009, it has steadily decreased. The biggest change is respondents who answered increased. In 1986, only 7% were favorable towards an increase in immigration compared to 27% in 2014.

Chart 13
Thinking now about immigrants – that is, people who come from other countries to live here in the United States, in your view, should immigration be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased? (Gallup)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1986*</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1993</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1995</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1999^</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2000</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2002</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2003</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2004</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2005</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2006</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gallup 2014)
*CBS/NYT poll
^Asked of a half sample
The view of immigrants as being beneficial to American society has dramatically
increased since IIRM’s time. In 1986, 34% believed that immigrants contributed to the country.
In 2007, the number spiked to 57% and remained favorable in 2010 with nearly half, 49%. From
1986 to 2010, the number of respondents stating that most cause problems decreased from 44%
to 31% (Chart 14). Since 2001, between 52% and 72%, of Americans have responded favorably
to the Gallup question, On the whole, do you think immigration is a good thing or a bad thing for
this country today? In 2002, the opinion dropped 10 percentage points to a low of 52% in
response to 9/11 and again in 2009 after the 2008 economic crisis by 6 percentage points to 58%;
the highest rating of 72% was in 2013 (Gallup 2014).

Chart 14
Overall, would you say most recent immigrants to the United States contribute to this country, or
do most of them cause problems? (CBS/NYT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>8/86</th>
<th>6/93</th>
<th>1/94</th>
<th>12/01</th>
<th>5/07</th>
<th>5/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to this county</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most cause problems</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (vol)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends (vol)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/no answer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,618</td>
<td>1,363</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Muste 2013)

In the June 1986 CBS/NYT poll, 49% thought that immigrants who had moved to the
U.S. in the past few years were here illegally, that number increased to 68% in the June 1993
poll. The number dipped in the December 2001 poll to 53%, and then dramatically rose to 75%
in the May 2007 poll (Segovia and DeFever 2010). When asked if they worry about illegal
immigration, one quarter to nearly one half of respondents answered great deal, 10% to 18%
reported not at all (Chart 15).
Chart 15

Does the presence of illegal aliens in this country concern you a great deal, somewhat, or not at all? (Time/YSW, Time/YP) 1985, 1993

How much do you personally worry about illegal immigration? (Gallup) 2001-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat/Fair Amount*</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a Little</td>
<td>^</td>
<td>^</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,014</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gallup 2014, Lapinski et al 1997)


^This response was only available in the Gallup 2001-2014 polls
In an April 1992 Roper survey (N=1,100), 60% of Americans thought that illegal immigration was more of a problem than it was 10 years prior (Federation for American Immigration Reform 1992). Results were similar in 2013 polls. In the April 2013 Fox News Poll (n=1,009), 47% answered that illegal immigration was more of a problem than it was five years ago, 10% said less, 42% same, and 2% were unsure (Polling Report 2014). The June 2013 Pew poll (n=1,512), results echoed these answers. When participants were asked for their best guess, 55% said the number of immigrants entering the U.S. illegally is higher than it was 10 years ago, 15% lower, 27% about the same, 3% unsure (Polling Report 2014).

**Economy**

Americans have had a consistently negative outlook upon the impact that immigrants have upon the economy. Between 1993 and 2005, the number of respondents who stated that immigrants mostly hurt the economy has decreased 15 percentage points, but has consistently been around half of all respondents (Chart 16).

**Chart 16**

*Do you think immigrants mostly help the economy by providing low-cost labor, or mostly hurt the economy by driving wages down for many Americans? (Gallup)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7/93*</th>
<th>2/99</th>
<th>9/00</th>
<th>1/04*</th>
<th>6/05*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly help</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly hurt</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither (vol.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (vol.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>2,264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Segovia and DeFever 2010)  
*Asked of half a sample, 1,003 is the full sample  
*Included oversampling of Black and Hispanics. Results are weighted to be representative of a national adult population.
While the number of people who think that immigrants have a beneficial impact upon the economy is increasing, the belief that illegal immigrants weaken the economy has remained strong. Responses are overwhelmingly negative when the question is asked specifically about unauthorized immigrants. Negative responses are consistent with more than two-thirds of respondents stating that illegal immigration weakens the U.S. economy (Chart 17).

**Chart 17**

*Do you think illegal immigrants do more to strengthen the U.S. economy because they provide low-cost labor and they spend money, or do illegal immigrants do more to weaken the U.S. economy because they don't all pay taxes but use public services? (CBS/NYT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5/06</th>
<th>5/07</th>
<th>4/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaken</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Polling Report 2014)

The most consistently negative responses about immigrants’ impact upon the U.S. economy have been regarding concerns about jobs. In the 1984, 1992, and 1993 Gallup polls, 61-62% agreed with the statement that immigrants take jobs from U.S. workers (Lapinski et al 1997). Responses in the 2004 (N=1,061) and 2008 (N=2,102) American National Election Studies polls continue to illustrate a belief that recent immigrants take jobs away from people - 20% responded extremely likely, 25% very likely, 40% somewhat likely, 14% not at all likely91 (Muste 2013). However, the notion that the jobs that immigrants take are unwanted by native-born Americans has increased, from 52% in 1986 to 66% in 2014 (Chart 18).

---

91 In 2008 extremely likely was 19%, somewhat likely was 41%.
Chart 18

Do you think the immigrants coming to this country today mostly take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans don’t want? (CBS/NYT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6/86</th>
<th>6/93</th>
<th>1/94</th>
<th>2/96</th>
<th>7/03*</th>
<th>1/04</th>
<th>5/06</th>
<th>5/07</th>
<th>5/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take jobs away</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take unwanted</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,618</td>
<td>1,363</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lapinski et al 1997; Segovia and DeFever 2010; Polling Report 2014)

*Sample included an oversample of Hispanics. The results were weighted to be representative of a national adult population.

Government

While polling data is spotty in other aspect that is particularly the case for data on public opinion regarding the government’s response to immigration prior to the mid-2000s. Strong anti-immigrant opinions were present in the early 1980s due to concerns of the high volume of non-European immigrants, increasing unauthorized population, and economic fears. However, concern and hostility noticeably decreased in the second half of the decade (Barkan 2003). In the late 1980s, Americans, and polling organizations, were more concerned with economic and domestic and international issues (Barkan 2003).

It appears that Americans have become increasingly cognizant of immigration policies. In April 1990, 22% answered don’t know when asked if they thought immigration policies needed revisions (Chart 19). Two years later, only 7% said don’t know. The number of respondents saying don’t know has remained under 10% since. From 1990 to 1992, the answer that revisions were needed substantially rose, from 48 to 80%. Since 2006, about 4 in 10 believe that major changes needed to occur (Chart 20). In May 2007 and May 2010, nearly half responded that the
system needed to be completely rebuilt, compared to only 27% in February 2006 and 35% in May 2013. Conversely, the number of those answering that only minor changes were needed was substantially lower in 2007 and 2010 (8%), than in 2006 and 2013 (23 and 21% respectively).

Chart 19

*Considering everything you know or have heard about United States immigration policies, do you think our policies need revisions, or are they about right as they are?* (Roper)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4/90</th>
<th>4/92^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs revisions</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lapinski et al 1997)

^Sample include 1,000 nationwide plus an additional oversample of 100 interviews in California. The national results are weighted.

Chart 20

*Do you think immigration policy in this country works pretty well and requires only minor changes, do you think it needs major changes, or do you think it needs to be completely rebuilt?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2/06</th>
<th>5/07</th>
<th>5/10</th>
<th>5/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only minor changes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major changes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely rebuilt</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/R</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>1,125</td>
<td>1,079</td>
<td>1,504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Segovia and DeFever 2010; Polling Report 2014)


For the tenure of ILIR, the opinion on which political party does a better job with immigration has been split (Chart 21). Democrats have had a slight edge, between 3 and 12 percentage points, over Republicans from November 2005 to July 2013, except for in May 2010. In the May 2010 and July 2014 polls Republicans topped Democrats by 7% and 2%, respectively.
Chart 21
When it comes to...dealing with immigration, which party do you think will do a better job – the Democrat Party, the Republican Party, or both about the same? If you think that neither would do a good job, please just say so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>11/05</th>
<th>6/06</th>
<th>1/07</th>
<th>5/10</th>
<th>7/13</th>
<th>7/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Same^</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither (vol)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>4,373</td>
<td>1,805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Segovia and DeFever 2010; Polling Report 2014)
11/05-1/07 - NBC/WSJ/Hart and McInturff Research Companies; 5/10- Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, 7/13 Gallup, 7/14 Pew
^Equal was a voluntary response in the 5/10 Fox, 7/13 Gallup, 7/14 Pew

The April 1990 Roper poll (N=1,144) asked about the pending legislation, the Immigration Act of 1990. Seventy-three percent of Americans responded that illegal immigration was a serious enough problem to require a lot of government attention (Federation for American Immigration Reform 1990). Only 18% responded that it was not worth that much attention.

When asked, currently, immigration laws allow about 600 thousand immigrants each year into the United States. The Congress is considering legislation that would allow about twice that number each year over the next 15 years. Do you think the congress should or should not pass this legislation? only 20% were in favor of passing, 73% thought that it should not pass (Federation for American Immigration Reform 1990).

ILIR has seen several CIR bills put forth. The March 2006 Time poll (N=1004) asked about the pending legislation, The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.92 Twenty-five percent of respondents preferred the approach which made

---

92 This bill, sponsored by Sensenbrenner (R-WI) was an enforcement-first, enforcement-only. It included building a wall along the Mexican border, broadening the role of state and local governments in regards to enforcement, and would have criminalized all unauthorized immigrants by making their presence a felony offense.
illegal immigration a crime, 72% preferred allow work visas and the ability to earn permanent residence. The June 2007 CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll (N=1,029) asked about the proposed Senate bill, The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007. While 30% favored the bill, 28% opposed it as it went too far, and 15% opposed it because it didn’t go far enough (Polling Report 2014). The CNN/ORC June 2013 Poll (N=1014) asked about the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, 51% were in favor, while 45% opposed the senate bill (Polling Report 2014).

Four in every 10 respondents put border security and pathway to citizenship as equal priority, one quarter prioritized pathway to citizenship, and one quarter to one third answered border security (Chart 22). Several facets are repeatedly addressed when discussing immigration reform: border security, hiring of unauthorized workers, and how legislation should handle the current unauthorized population.

Chart 22
What should be the priority for dealing with illegal immigration in the U.S.: one, better border security and stronger enforcement of our immigration laws; OR, two, creating a way for illegal immigrants already here to become citizens if they meet certain requirements; OR, should BOTH be given equal priority? (Pew Research Center)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6/12</th>
<th>2/13</th>
<th>8/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Border Security</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway to Citizenship</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Equally</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these (vol)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Polling Report 2014)

93 This bill was a compromise between the amnesty program of the 2006 McCain-Kennedy Bill and the enforcement aspects of the 2005 Act.
While the number of people favoring use of military personnel to patrol the U.S./Mexican border has decreased, from 80% in April 1990 to 62% in March 2006, the number of Americans favoring a wall or fence built along the border has increased, 27% favorable in July 1993 to 53% in November 2011 (Segovia and DeFever 2010; Polling Report 2014). 85% of respondents to the June 2013 Bloomberg National Poll (N=1,002) were in favor of strengthening border security and creating a system to track foreigners entering and leaving the country (Polling Report 2014).

Polls have shown a consistently favorable view of legislation that would impact employers who hire unauthorized workers. In the May 1990 and April 1992, polls more than one third of respondents were in favor of legislation that forbid the hiring of illegal aliens (Chart 23). These responses are echoed in later polls, 58% to 71% respondents were favorable to imposing fines upon employers who hire illegal immigrants (Chart 24).

**Chart 23**

*Do you favor or oppose a law that forbids the hiring of illegal aliens? (Roper)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5/90</th>
<th>4/92</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lapinski et al 1997)

**Chart 24**

*Would you favor or oppose each of the following proposals...Imposing fines of tens of thousands of dollars on employers who hire illegal immigrants. (CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6/06</th>
<th>10/06</th>
<th>5/10</th>
<th>7/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Polling Report 2014)
Less than one quarter of respondents think that illegal immigrants should be deported (Chart 25). Nearly one third of respondents think that people who are currently in the U.S. illegally should be given the opportunity to become citizens. However, Americans do not think citizenship should come with a free pass, but that in order to apply for citizenship immigrants must meet certain requirements.

Chart 25
Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be towards illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States? Should the government deport all illegal immigrants back to their home country’ allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States in order to work, but only for a limited amount of time; or allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States and become U.S. citizens, but only if they meet certain requirements over a period of time? (Gallup/U.S.A Today)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4/06</th>
<th>5/06</th>
<th>6/06</th>
<th>3/07</th>
<th>6/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deport all</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain in the U.S. in order to work</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain in the U.S. and become citizen</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Segovia and DeFever 2010; Muste 2013)

The three most frequently referenced requirements are residency, pay a fine and/or taxes, and demonstrate ability to speak and understand English. In the May 2006 Gallup poll (N=1,013), 74% said that in order to apply for citizenship illegal immigrants should have lived in U.S. for at least five years, 57% said they must pay a fine, and 89% that they learn to speak English (Gallup 2014). In the June 2013 Pew/U.S.A Today poll (N=1,512), 56% said they need to pay a fine before gaining legal status, 76% demonstrate they can speak and understand English (Polling report 2014). The October 2013 CBS News poll (N=1,007) found 77% in favor of
allowing illegal immigrants already in the country the opportunity to become U.S. citizens if they meet the requirements listed above and pass a criminal background, 20% opposed (Polling Report 2014).

Race

Even during times of anti-immigrant sentiment past immigration, European migrants, is still viewed in a positive light (Daniels 2004). The May 1985 Yankelovich, Skelly, and White and July 1993 Gallup Polls asked respondents about specific nationalities, I’m going to read you a list of people of various nationalities, races, and religions who have immigrated to the United States. As I read each one, please tell me whether you believe their presence has generally benefited the country or generally created problems for the country. Irish (78% in 1985, 75% in 1993) and Polish (72% in 1985, 65% in 1993) immigrants were overwhelmingly viewed as benefiting the country, not creating problems. Chinese and Korean immigrants were also viewed favorably while Cubans, Haitians, and Iranians were the least favorable with fewer than a third of respondents answering that their presence benefited the U.S. (Lapinski et al 1997). Twice as many people, 11% compared to 5%, noted that Irish cause more problems in the 1993 poll.

In the Gallup poll question which asks about specific geographical regions, immigrants from European countries have consistently been seen as favorable. Nearly half of the respondents answered with about right, and only 20% to 36% saying too many (Chart 26). The answer of too many was highest during the early 1990s when this response increased for all regions. The increase of this response illustrates the anti-immigrant sentiments of the time. While there has

94 The question was asked about 9 countries: China, Cuba, Haiti, Iran, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Poland, Vietnam
been little change to responses about European countries, vast differences have appeared in responses regarding Latin American, African, and Asian countries. For each of these regions the number of respondents answering about right has increased substantially, between 10 and 21 percentage points. In addition, the response of too many has decreased by 6 to 18 percentage points for all three of these regions. In the 2006 poll, the responses for African countries nearly paralleled European countries responses.

Chart 26
Thinking about immigration into this country from various parts of the world, do you think the number of immigrants now entering the U.S. from each of the following areas is too many, too few, or about the right amount? …European countries. (Gallup)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6/84</th>
<th>8/90</th>
<th>2/92</th>
<th>2/95</th>
<th>6/02</th>
<th>6/06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too many</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too Few</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gallup 2014; Lapinski et al 1997)
Chapter Six
Findings and Analysis

This study has looked at the entirety of two social movement organizations, the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (“IIRM”) and Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform (“ILIR”), who had the same goal, special visa allotments for Irish, but are separated by 15 years. By focusing on these two lobby groups, I was able to compare and see what external factors had the greatest impact and how the structure, strategic efforts, and justifications of the ILIR differed from those of the IIRM because of these factors. I found that leadership, the ethnic community, and political contexts were the factors that had the greatest impact upon these organizations.

In Chapter One, I posed four questions: (1) How did the structure and leadership organization impact the strategic efforts of each group?; (2) How are special visa allotments for Irish justified?; (3) How are social movement organizations impacted by the rise of the Internet?; and (4) How have the Contexts of Reception affected the efforts of each lobby group? In this final chapter, I review the findings from the previous chapters and address these research questions. After discussing my conclusions I touch upon what this research has to offer to the body of literature on immigration and questions for future research.

Structure

The structural differences between IIRM and ILIR and the impact this has on the two groups is the most significant finding of this research. When IIRM formed, there was neither pending legislation nor an active immigrant social movement. This lack of being part of a greater social movement is reflected in their justifications, which were primarily focused on
rationalizations favorable for Irish. Their limited interactions with other ethnic communities narrowed their vision of social change to asserting an appeal for legislation that was favorable for Irish.

IIRM was a structured organization. The entire organization was governed by a National Council which consisted of delegates from the steering committees of major branches. Branches were run by a steering committee that consisted of four elected officials: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and a chairperson from each of the six action groups. The National Council was headed by a chairperson. The roles for each of these elected positions were laid out in their constitution. Additionally, the constitution established policies and procedures, including but not limited to, frequency of meetings, list of topics that were to be addressed at meetings, and details on the six action groups.

To become a member of IIRM, one filled out an application and paid yearly dues. In turn, the person received a membership card, and had the ability to vote in elections. For much of IIRM’s tenure, branches held regular public meetings. Cohesion amongst members and the leaders was fostered through these meetings as well at fundraising events, such as dances and music seisúns.

In contrast, a larger immigration social movement was already in place when ILIR formed. They formed in response to the pending McCain-Kennedy legislation and to bring an Irish voice to the movement. ILIR is governed by an executive board and advisory board. The Executive board has fluctuated from three to five members over the years and is headed by a
chairman and president. There are no official branches or members\(^{95}\) and little in the way of formal documentation that establishes roles, policies, or procedures. The lack of documentation makes the distinction between roles within the organization ambiguous at best.

Ciaran Staunton, current ILIR president, stated that ILIR does not need the formal structure that IIRM had as they began with a bill and the founders are politically knowledgeable. While IIRM leaders established links with politicians as the organization evolved, ILIR began with little understanding and experience with the American political system. The experience of the ILIR founders stands in exact opposite to that of the IIRM leaders. ILIR leaders have honed their understanding of American political system through business connections and fostered relationships with U.S. politicians during the Irish Peace process.

In ILIR, power has been centralized in the hands of the executive and advisory board members, in particular Ciaran Staunton and Niall O’Dowd, two of the founders. The charismatic leadership, rather than bureaucratic organization, of ILIR is a factor in their lack of activity within the community. Staunton and O’Dowd were both part of the New Irish cohort. Staunton was an active member of the Boston Branch of the IIRM. Since the 1980s, he has owned Irish pubs in the NYC area and started the Rory Staunton Foundation. This foundation is named after his son who died of sepsis in 2012. In 1987, O’Dowd started the *Irish Voice* newspaper as a publication billed towards the New Irish. Not only has O’Dowd worked on immigration reform but he was also part of the Northern Ireland Peace talks of the 1990s. In 2006, he was named as one of New York’s most influential people by *New York Magazine* and has been featured as one of the “People You Should Know” on the Paula Zahn program.

---

\(^{95}\) This may not have always been the case. On the archived ILIR website there is a “Sign Up” tab. The broken link takes you a Democracy in Action Page Not Found page, ILIR is noted in the url: http://www_democracyinactionorg_dia/organizationsORG/ilir/signUp.jsp?key=1640.
In addition to the centralization of power, Gamson (1990) claims that bureaucracy is a variable that impacts the success of a movement. The bureaucratic aspect of IIRM was one of the keys to their success; policies and structure kept them on target. ILIR lacks written provisions regarding operations, does not possess three or more levels of internal divisions, and fails to keep a formal list of members. The lack of bureaucratic structure has allowed ILIR to evolve into an organization that is run by few key individuals, namely Staunton and O’Dowd, rather than an organization run by the community. With neither formal membership nor frequent social events, the cohesion within the community that IIRM was able to build is missing from the ILIR. In fact, some members of the community even feel that ILIR has lost its focus on the community. Instead of fighting for the plight of the unauthorized Irish, the leaders are pushing forward their own personal goals. This was most evident in ILIR’s support of the version of the E-3 visas that did not include a clause for regulation of status and would therefore only address future flows.

Social Networks and Immigrant support organizations

IIRM was formed by members of the County Cork B.P.& P. Association of NY, a pre-established social network. As noted on the County Cork B.P.& P. Association of NY website, “Keeping true to the goals and ideals of the founders of the Association which simply stated is ‘to take care of our own’, the Irish Immigrating Reform Movement (IIRM) was born at a general meeting of the Association in May 1987” (County Cork B.P.& P. Association of NY 2014). The founders were able to turn a preexisting social network into a movement, which allowed them to form quickly and use few resources (Crossley 2002). In addition, to working with formal Irish social networks such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (“AOH”) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (“GAA”) they also encouraged their members to become active in the community
and join other groups. IIRM members in the community would put a face to the problem, strengthen the cause, and build a support base.

ILIR uses social networks in a notably different way. When needed, ILIR reaches out to specific people in the community, oftentimes AOH and GAA clubs, to establish branches and mobilize members. One of the Executive Board members explained that when a politician or state was targeted that he reached out to that area’s local AOH and GAA clubs for assistance. Having these formal social networks, which can be mobilized when needed, allows ILIR the freedom to not have to define members in terms of dues and applications. The size of the constituency ebbs and flows according to the needs of the time, which are determined by the executive board.

The AOH and GAA each have a unique role within the Irish community. The AOH is a long-standing organization whose members are more often U.S. citizens of Irish descent. On the other hand, GAA membership is comprised of younger, newly arrived migrants. The GAA is an organization that new arrivals often seek out for socialization, recreation, and employment. In order for social networks to remain strong, they need to be replenished by incoming migrants (Menjivar 2000). For Irish, the GAA is a well-established source of replenishment into the community. Due in part to their membership and organizational purpose, these two groups view reform differently; the AOH aims to help unauthorized migrants whereas GAA members include unauthorized Irish.

Within the community, IIRM played a dual role, both political and social. One of the objectives laid out in their constitution was to address the problems of the new Irish immigrants. During monthly public meetings, a majority of topics consisted of social issues, such as how to
obtain a driver’s license or open a bank account. These questions were entertained by IIRM as there were few organizations that migrants could be redirected to for answers. The organization had no option but to address these social topics in meetings and publications. Immigrant support organizations founded by Irish started to appear in 1987. The support organization that formed in NYC, the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, was founded by members of the IIRM. Even after support organizations appeared, IIRM continued to address social issues. Their continuance of this practice illustrates how integral social issues had become and speaks to the community cohesion of IIRM. The organization was from the community and for the community.

Because of the prosperity that Irish immigrant support organizations have established over the past 25 years, ILIR has the luxury of dealing with only the issue of legislative reform. Migrants are redirected to support organizations with non-political questions. ILIR is able to focus on the larger comprehensive immigration reform (“CIR”) picture rather than smaller issues that affect the community. However, the separation of political and social issues reduces cohesion within the organization. Since updates to political changes do not come as rapidly as updates to social issues, it is not as necessary for ILIR to hold regular meetings. Not having regular meetings to bring together constituents, in conjunction with limited social functions, means that identity is not built within the community. It is possible for a person to be interested or affiliated with ILIR but never interact with another ILIR constituent in person.

A benefit of these immigrant support organizations is that they connect ILIR to a larger social network. Interviewees from the Irish International Immigration Center (“IIIC”) and Irish Pastoral Center (“IPC”) noted that they support ILIR’s work. These groups work with other immigrant support organizations in the Boston area, are present at CIR rallies, and suggest that
their contingency get involved in immigration reform. When ILIR holds an event in Boston, both the IIIC and IPC encourage people to attend and mention the event in their weekly *Irish Emigrant* newspaper section. Ironically, when the IPC formed in 1987, it was seen as a competing organization to the IIRM Boston branch; the two groups competed for funding and resources from the City of Boston and Irish community (IIRM Archives Box 2, Folder 4). Today, immigrant support organizations and ILIR are distinctly different. They are complementary to one another.

**Political Context**

Immigration reform is a more complicated, multilayered issue today than it was in the late 1980s. Legislation has not only become more comprehensive in nature but also increasingly bipartisan since the 1980s. Both the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (“IRCA”) and the Immigration Act of 1990 (“1990 Act”) dealt with one element of reform. While IRCA focused on controlling unauthorized immigration, the 1990 Act focused on legal migration and reforms to the visa system. Conversely, the proposed bills of the 2000s are comprehensive. These bills highlight workplace enforcement and border security to help stem unauthorized migration and address visa changes which would create paths for future flows and a more fair system.

IRCA and the 1990 Act both passed with bipartisan support. However, for the past decade immigration legislation has been drawn across party lines. The three immigration bills that have come to vote, in either or both chambers of Congress, have been clearly divided. The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (“2005 Act”) was heavily favored by Republicans while the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006
(“2006 Act”) and Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (“2013 Act”) were both favored by Democrats. The main difference between the 2005 Act and the 2006 and 2013 Acts is the degree of enforcement, which was the focus of the 2005 Act. Republicans tend to favor stronger enforcement legislation while Democrats favor legislation that strikes a balance between enforcement and changes to the visa system that is more favorable to immigrants. In response to the lack of nationwide reform, there has been a considerable increase in states passing either favorable or restrictive legislation since 2007.

President Barack Obama addressed the congressional stalemate on immigration reform during his November 2014 Executive Order speech. Parts of the speech were directed toward members of Congress. He urged them to find compromise, that divisive issues need not become deal breakers. The Executive Action was Obama’s response to the inability of Congress to pass legislation. If Congress passes legislation, Executive Action would be unnecessary. It is unknown if Obama’s Executive Action will spur Congress to pass a CIR bill, reform the system via piecemeal legislation, or drop the issue of immigration altogether.

Furthermore, the political context has changed as immigration has been linked with terrorism since 9/11. Since 2003, immigration regulation has been handled by a division of the Department of Homeland Security rather than the Immigration and Naturalization Services, which has been disbanded. The prominence of border security is noticeable simply by looking at the names of legislation, Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 and Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. Laws are stricter for those who are in the country without proper authorization. This
harsher legislation, such as the inability to renew driver’s licenses, has impacted the Irish ethnic community’s mobility and employment opportunities.

**Three stages of ILIR**

Strategies employed by social movement organizations are adjusted according to the openness of the political environment and are influenced by the resources that they have access to (McAdam 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1998). IIRM altered their strategies little as the political environment changed little. During their tenure, they had letter writing campaigns, phone call campaigns, meetings with politicians, and Lobby Days. ILIR’s strategies, on the other hand, have varied greatly due to the waxing and waning of politics. In chapter 5, I established that there are the three distinct stages of ILIR: (1) 2005 to mid-2007 where the focus was on immigration reform in general; (2) mid-2007 to 2012 where ILIR was quieter, focus was on E-3 visas, much of the activity occurred behind the scenes and was done by board members and selected constituents; (3) 2012 to present, where focus is on nationwide CIR that includes an E-3 visa clause.

As previously noted, by the time the ILIR formed and joined the cause, a social movement around immigration reform was already in place. It was in this first stage that ILIR was the most active and community driven. They held meetings and fundraisers on a regular basis and regularly disseminated information. During this stage, there were 509 posts on the Irish Voices blog. In addition, four Lobby Days were held between March 2006 and March 2007. The Irish community was the most active and invested during this stage.

The second stage began when the CIR talks failed in mid-2007. It was at this point that ILIR refocused and honed in on visas for Irish. The focus became passing a bill that would
expand E-3 visas to include Irish. While ILIR has always been top down in structure, it became increasingly so during this stage. Most of the lobbying for E-3 visas was done by the executive board. Since neither of the E-3 bills had much support within Congress, and failed to make it to a vote, community support was not essential. The only community event that occurred during this time was the annual Annie Moore black tie dinner which started in 2010. During this stage, there is a significant decrease in information dissemination and postings on social media, only 252 blog and Facebook posts.96

In 2012, when CIR talks once again began in earnest, ILIR entered the third stage. In April 2013, they ramped up their campaign and began to hold meetings around the country and in March 2014 held the first Lobby Day since March 2007. Additionally, there has been an increase in information dissemination and postings on social media, 120 Facebook posts and 57 tweets. However, ILIR has been markedly quieter during this CIR. O’Dowd was quoted as saying that they are choosing to maintain a lower public profile than they did during the first stage so as to not be seen as overkilling their part of the bill (Bogardus 2013). The ethnic community has played a part in the decision to maintain a lower profile. Every person that I spoke with noted that since the failure of CIR in 2007, there has been an overwhelming sense of defeat in the community. There is a sense of disillusionment by unauthorized Irish about legal options (Millar 2014). It has been more difficult to garner support as the community is less willing to participate as compared to their efforts during the 2005-2007 CIR discussions led nowhere. In turn, this inability to assemble a significant number of constituents has reinforced the top down structure of ILIR.

96 In 2010 ILIR stopped posting to the Irish Voices blog, instead they posted to a Facebook page.
It appears that the lack of support from the ethnic community is failing to spur the leaders of ILIR to action. This inaction is stymieing growth of a constituency from within the ethnic community. ILIR is not fostering cohesion around the issue of immigration reform within the community. Even though CIR talks spurred action within the immigration reform social movement the lift by ILIR has been minimal. There have been fewer than ten public meetings in the third stage and ILIR has failed to capitalize on President Obama’s Executive Action on immigration. There were several Facebook posts by ILIR prior and post Obama’s announcement, including one that meetings would be announced in the near future. However, no additional information has been posted and no meetings have been scheduled. Irish immigrant support organizations in Boston, NYC, and San Francisco all held meetings within weeks of the announcement. The Board members themselves seem to be wearier and less invested in this round of CIR. After nine plus years, the founders are seemingly in different places in their life and have different priorities than during the first stage. In order for ILIR to be reinvigorated they must involve the community to a much more extensive level and elicit participation from new constituents.

Disillusionment is not the only variable in the ethnic community. Each generation’s cohort, from the 1950s to the 1980s to the 2000s, has reached out less to formal Irish organizations. The 1980s cohort maintained strong connections with the homeland and many planned on returning to Ireland rather than making the U.S. their permanent home. The current cohort has the benefit of technology which allows them to remain virtually in touch with friends and family from home. Migrants can keep abreast of daily life and happenings in Ireland by reading online stories, streaming Irish radio and video stations, and live stream sporting events.
A virtual version of home is recreating home therefore there is not as much need to join an organization which fosters and reinforces Irish identity.

Today’s Irish cohort is demographically and socially different. This group has experienced the Celtic Tiger economic boom and bust, which has led to the return of high unemployment and immigration rates, in Ireland and 9/11 in the U.S. Younger migrants are post-Tiger cubs who grew up during a time of prosperity in Ireland. Demographics have shifted, there is an increasing number of people over 30 and family units leaving Ireland. Additionally, the U.S. is no longer a primary destination. Irish have increasingly chosen to migrate to Canada and Australia, where there are available jobs and visas. The shrunken flow of incoming migrants to the U.S. has altered the ethnic community and, in turn, Irish social networks and organizations.

**Other ethnic groups**

Another way that changing political context is felt is in regards to interaction with other ethnic groups. Both lobby groups worked with other ethnic organizations, however ILIR’s interactions have been more substantial. While the objectives laid out in IIRM’s constitution mention blanket amnesty for illegal aliens and visas for all 35 adversely affected countries, their focus was Irish first and foremost. Ethnic Contact was one of the six action groups, however this group mainly worked with other adversely affected nations, namely Italian and Polish/Slavic organizations. In fact, Hispanic and Asian groups stood in opposition to IIRM. Diversity Visas were seen as discriminatory, a return to the pre-1965 system as most Latin and Asian countries were not eligible for these visas.

I found no example of IIRM working with a general immigration organization or them joining another ethnic groups’ campaign. IIRM had the luxury of standing alone, or limiting
interaction with other ethnic organizations, as there was no larger national social movement in place. In fact, IIRM was viewed as a leader, forerunner in immigration reform by some ethnic groups.

ILIR, on the other hand, has a more complicated interaction with the wider immigration community. They have joined forces with and participated in campaigns organized by other ethnic social movement organizations and are a member of the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. They frequently use language that notes that all ethnic groups are in this fight together; Irish are just one piece of the pie. None of ILIR’s stated objectives on their website mention Irish specifically, but rather, reference the immigration system as a whole.

ILIR needs to be wide-ranging. The influence of other ethnic social movement organizations has increased. Irish influence has shrunk. Irish-Americans are becoming more diverse politically and bipartisan, which makes the Irish caucus less powerful. Political clout is waning due in part to this and fewer notable politicians who have strong Irish ties. There are fewer connections to politicians even in traditional Irish destinations. One example is the 70 year-old Boston tradition, the St. Patrick’s Day breakfast. Over the years, fewer speakers\textsuperscript{97} have had Irish surnames and since 2014 the emcee for the event has been a Haitian-American politician, Linda Dorcena Forry. Governor Deval Patrick, a black man, started his 2014 St. Patrick’s Day Breakfast speech by noting that “This is what a Forry and a Patrick looks like these days!”

However, Irish influence is still prevalent. ILIR meetings and Lobby Days continue to draw notable politicians. In 2006, a New York politician noted that he was one of the few elected

\textsuperscript{97} Speakers at the St. Patrick’s Day breakfast often include the Governor, Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts Senators and Congressmen, and members of the Massachusetts state government.
officials in attendance at the ILIR meeting who was not running for President of the U.S. (Gerson 2006b). Irish politicians have a standing meeting with U.S. politicians every March. The visit includes a symbolic Shamrock Ceremony where the Irish Prime Minister hands the President of the U.S. a crystal bowl full of shamrocks. This appointment, which continues because of the history between the two countries, provides Irish politicians with access to the U.S. President that few other smaller countries are afforded.

Having previously built political clout and experience provides ILIR with the freedom to choose which nationwide events to participate in and the ability to leverage clout when desired. ILIR chose not to participate in the nationwide May 1, 2006 Day without Immigrants boycotts and protests, which they viewed as counterproductive and alienating to the American public. Instead, ILIR suggested that their members let their fingers do the marching and call their representatives (D. Staunton 2006a). In an April 2006 article, an executive board member was quoted as saying, “The last time there was a rally, they were waving Mexican flags and chanting in Spanish. I really don't think that's the right approach. We're here with our American flags to say that this isn't about Ireland, it's about the future of America. If people get that idea, then we'll win this fight” (O’Driscoll 2006). In these instances, ILIR chose an approach where the benefit of immigrants to America is the focus. For example, ILIR often highlights that Irish are hardworking. Their spin is that many Irish migrants have started businesses, had children, and built lives for themselves in the U.S. Immigration reform is not about benefiting Ireland, but the future of America.

ILIR’s political clout is seen by other ethnic organizations as being useful; the Irish help strengthen the argument for immigration reform and bring a voice of experience to the cause.
However, some fear that if the Irish get a chance to push for Irish-specific legislation, they will take it. This fear was actualized in the second stage when ILIR turned their focus to E-3 visas for Irish.

**Justifications**

The justifications used by each group are another way that different interactions with other ethnic organizations are illustrated. IIRM’s justifications fell into five categories: Adverse effects of the 1965 Hart Cellar Act (“1965 Act”) and Diversity, IRCA, Ireland’s economy, skill set and training of Irish immigrants, and emotional plea. ILIR used fewer justifications, only three were identified: there is no line for Irish, status of the Irish community, and emotional plea.

The most frequent rationalization used by each group was that since the 1965 Act Irish have been discriminated against in the visa system. IIRM often combined this justification with the notion of diversity. Diversity Visas were meant to diversify the system. They were careful to make their message clear that these visas were not meant to take visas away from other ethnic groups nor return to the quota system but they were meant to provide a pathway for people from adversely affected nations. For ILIR, diversity is not connected with this rationalization, it is not viable. They are part of a wider social movement looking for comprehensive changes. Irish are not looking for preferential treatment but a fair immigration system. However, this is a thin line. On call sheets and in congressional testimonies it is noted how Irish have been negatively impacted by the 1965 Act. They illustrate their claim that there is no line for Irish and that they are essentially locked out, with statistics showing that less than 1% of visas go to Irish. However, this is not a uniquely Irish condition. Other nations experience similar circumstances. ILIR fails
to make strong connections between their perceived discrimination and the similar experiences for other ethnic groups.

In Chapter 2, I hypothesized that the justifications used by IIRM and ILIR would fall into two categories: Historical/Emotional and Acclimation. While both used historical and emotional justifications, neither group used acclimation in the way I expected. Under acclimation, I specified five facets: white, speak English, readily find employment, do not cause trouble, and do not disrupt the cultural fabric of the U.S. While each group used these traits to strengthen their argument, they were not put forth as a justification. For example, being a native English speaker was referenced as being a beneficial trait. However, it was also noted that since English is a common language, an English skills provision would not be beneficial just to Irish but to others as well. Additionally, Irish were portrayed as hard-working and decent citizens. Again, while this is not a formal justification, Irish advocates use these traits to illustrate the benefit that Irish could have upon American society, if they were only legal. The fifth trait, disruption of cultural fabric, was part of the emotional plea justification. Irish do not disrupt the fabric; they are part of the fabric. Both groups frequently wove into their message that Irish have been part of U.S. life for centuries. To demonstrate the deep connection between Ireland and the U.S. both groups reference the history of Irish service in the U.S.’ military, political achievements, and their loyalty and patriotism to the U.S.

**Irish Government**

Each group’s relationship with the Irish government is strikingly different. While IIRM’s relationship with the Irish government was contentious, ILIR has had their support from the beginning. Niall O’Dowd said it best, “The difference in our campaign this time as against the
one in the 1980s is that this time the Irish government are fully on side. That is a huge advantage."

IIRM was quite critical of the Irish government and its failure to support their cause. According to IIRM, the Irish government failed to understand and address the crisis that faced unauthorized Irish because the exodus of young people was seen as a temporary phenomenon. Instead, the Irish government viewed migration as a positive thing for Ireland, as migrants foster skills abroad that they can bring back to Ireland. The repeated requests from IIRM that the Irish government share information, contribute resources, and actively participate in lobbying were not answered favorably. Irish politicians repeatedly stated that the Irish government was unable to justify financial assistance, questioned the competence of IIRM, and downplayed the American experience by saying that Irish in the United Kingdom were worse off than their U.S. counterparts. The Irish government eventually provided funding, but it was designated for the establishment of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center in NYC.

The relationship between ILIR and the Irish government is entirely different. Every Irish Prime Minister, and many of the Foreign ministers, during ILIR’s tenure have given the issue of immigration a high priority in their administration. The Irish government has been willing to address issues of immigration reform with U.S. politicians and have provided substantial funding to ILIR, over $300,000. ILIR has ceased accepting funds from the Irish government as they want to make it clear that they are not representing a foreign government, but Irish America (Staunton 2014a). There have been disagreements between ILIR and the Irish government throughout the years. ILIR has claimed that the Irish government has not gone far enough, and the Irish government has claimed that ILIR is not fully aware of the political context and happenings

98 http://irishlobbyusa.org/press/AhernVisit.php
between Irish and U.S. politicians. However, for the most part the Irish government has viewed ILIR as a good and effective advocate for Irish.

**Technology**

Technological advancements have impacted communication and interaction amongst the group’s leaders and constituency. ILIR executive and advisory board members communicate with each other primarily through conference calls, email, and Skype. Conference calls are scheduled only on an “as needed” basis and can be coordinated quickly. This differs from the steering committees and National Council of IIRM who met on a regular basis. Many of the questions and concerns that were addressed by IIRM during their monthly public meetings can be answered today through an Internet search. While IIRM was responsible for distributing information and garnering support for the cause, ILIR can focus on getting their message out to others. ILIR’s role of providing information to the community is less critical.

Technology has changed the way and type of information that each group disseminated. IIRM primarily disseminated information via position papers, press releases, news bulletins, and general statements. While ILIR has put out a few position documents online, their documentation is more informal in nature, such as social media posts, and articles in Irish, U.S., and Irish ethnic newspapers. One ILIR board member noted that he speaks to someone from the *Irish Voice, Irish Echo*, and newspapers in Ireland on a regular, if not weekly, basis. Instead of putting out a press release they go directly to newspapers asking them to run a story. This is evidenced by the vast difference in articles that mention each group, 39 for IIRM and 345 for ILIR. Since ILIR posts most of their documentation online and print little of their material, their costs are lower.

---

99 See Chapter 5 more details on disagreements.
Disseminating information via the internet has two notable benefits: increasing geographical range and decreasing the amount of time it takes to communicate with constituents. Since today’s communication can occur more rapidly, it is plausible that calls to action will be answered more swiftly by ILIR constituents than they were by IIRM members.

In addition, technology has impacted the type of information and resources that is distributed. In IIRM’s constitution, it stated that only IIRM materials, or those that have been approved, can be distributed at meetings. This clause limited materials, making them specific to the Irish population. On the other hand, the information disseminated by ILIR is not limited to Irish specific stories. The Irishvoices blog and Facebook page both contain a substantial number of links to articles from mainstream U.S. newspapers that are about CIR in general. This wider net of information is a reflection on how the campaign is less insular and part of a greater CIR cause.

While technology is beneficial, there are several downfalls. Frequent IIRM fundraisers created cohesion within the community. With fewer financial burdens, the need for ILIR fundraisers is minimal. The lack of fundraisers, which are events that bring the community together, impacts the solidarity of the group. However, there are few opportunities for interaction that is not online; therefore ILIR constituents do not have the opportunity to build community with other constituents. Since the majority of ILIR documentation is open to the public, anyone with access to the Internet can follow the happenings of the group. This means that, in a sense, a person can become a default member simply by visiting ILIR’s website and social media pages. Sample letters and call sheets are available to all. Anyone has the ability to speak on behalf of the ILIR if they choose to contact their representative and use the language provided on the call.
sheets that are posted on the Facebook page. Posting key information on social media sites and not having membership application forms reinforces fluidity in membership and the top down structure.

Even though their website and social media accounts are the main way that ILIR communicates with the public, these sites lack potency, as shown on Chart 27. During the first stage when CIR was a hot button issue, the Irish Voices blog was updated frequently. The executive director was tasked with communication duties and the majority of posts are made by her. Since her departure from that role, postings have become infrequent. In the second stage, the Blog was replaced with a Facebook page. Even though CIR is once again being debated on the national stage in the third stage, postings on their Facebook page or website are sporadic; oftentimes nothing is posted for months at a time. Their twitter account is severely underutilized.

Chart 27 ILIR Social Media Postings by Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irishvoices Blog Posts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irishlobbyusa.org Articles on Press Tab</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Jan-June

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Two: Mid-2007 to 2012*</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irishvoices Blog Posts</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irishlobbyusa.org Articles on Press Tab</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Posts</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*July-December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Three: 2013-2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irishlobbyusa.org Articles on Press Tab</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook Posts</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ILIR_Tweets” Tweets</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, there is less information on the website than on their blog or Facebook accounts. The purpose of the website is to inform people about ILIR’s message and garner support for that message. The website postings are static; the comments function is turned off on the website. While garnering support for the cause is one purpose of the social media accounts, the primarily goal is to inform people about the plight of immigrants and provide updates on immigration reform. While the social media postings can stand on their own, these platforms elicit comments and create a conversational area for interested parties.

The lack of posting on social media sites speaks to the top down structure and lack of community cohesion of ILIR. The leaders fail to maintain contact with constituents and inform them of happenings. The latest example occurred in March 2015. On Wednesday, March 4th, ILIR held a Lobby Day in Washington. The event was posted only on Facebook and was not announced until the Friday prior to the event. By not keeping constituents informed of events, they are lessening the possibility that they will be able to participate. This is illustrated by one of the comments made on the Facebook post that announced the Lobby Day, “Okay again, I would love to go to this. But by announcing it 1wk before is just too short notice for ANY of us to get our jobs covered!”

**Future Research**

This project is just the beginning of the ILIR and immigrant social movement organizational story. The focus of this project was the structure and message from each organization. Further research would be to expand beyond the formal message and hear the voices from others in the community. The most natural place to start would be with the Irish migrants themselves. One interviewee, who is legal, noted that, while CIR does not impact him
directly, he knows many who are not legal. This issue is one that impacts the entire Irish community; therefore for him it was obligatory that he support his fellow co-ethnics. While this notion of helping out fellow countrymen and women was reiterated by other interviewees, the sample of Irish migrants who were not affiliated with an Irish organization was small. A research project of this venture would not only fill the void of the voice from within the organization but also address identity literature. Participation in a social movement becomes more likely if the cause falls in line with one’s identity (Klandermans 1984). Does the usage and reliance upon strong social networks extend beyond employment and housing assistance to politically supporting co-ethnics? Is this a continuation of the ethnic identity or fall outside? As the Irish ethnic community is changing does the willingness to participate in immigration reform change as well?

While the message and strategic efforts of each group was questioned to some degree, only ILIR’s opposition has come in the form of splinter groups. The Boston Irish and Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform are two groups that formed and, at times, have stood in opposition to ILIR’s efforts. Of particular interest is the Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform. It appears that they originally did not cooperate with ILIR but now appear to be an ILIR ally. A future project would explore how and why these groups formed and their relationship with ILIR, U.S. and Irish politicians, and the Irish ethnic community. Did the formation of these groups impact ILIR, and was this impact significant?

Sources used in this research are primarily from the viewpoint of the lobby group or the U.S. Irish perspective. Any voice from Ireland is filtered through the lens of the IIRM and ILIR. How do Irish politicians and citizens view the plight of unauthorized Irish, these lobby groups,
and the impact of the changing political contexts and CIR upon the Irish/U.S. relationship? Additionally, the working relationship between the Irish government and ILIR was much improved to that of IIRM. What factors led to this change?

This story can be furthered by exploring the relationship of IIRM and ILIR with Irish formal social networks, other ethnic social movement organizations, and immigrant support organizations. While I touch upon the working relationship of IIRM and ILIR with the AOH and GAA in this project the viewpoint is that of the two lobby groups. Have the AOH and GAA, as well as other formal networks such as Hibernian societies and county associations, supported or disagreed with the strategies and mission of the two lobby groups? Has the relationship been mutually beneficial? Similar questions can be posed to other ethnic social movement organizations. At times both IIRM and ILIR claim that other ethnic groups look up to them, understand that their involvement brings experience, political clout, and legitimacy to the cause. To what degree have other ethnic groups collaborated with IIRM and ILIR? What is their impression of IIRM and ILIR? Has their relationship been mutually beneficial?

Immigrant support organizations had a significant impact upon the structure and efforts of IIRM and ILIR. While it would be worthwhile to ascertain these groups’ impression of IIRM and ILIR, the more valuable research project would be to form a greater understanding of the interplay between immigrant support organizations and ethnic lobby organizations. Is the Irish case unique or have other ethnic groups been impacted by formal support organizations? Has the existence of support organizations impacted the structure and strategic efforts of other ethnic organizations? This project need not be limited to immigration reform organizations, but
expanded to include ethnic social and political organizations. For example, have immigrant support organizations had an impact upon the GAA?

This project begins to fill the gap on immigrant social movements, in particular movements whose goal is to impact national immigration legislation. In the case of IIRM and ILIR, political context, leadership, and the ethnic community were significant factors. Is the Irish story unique? Which contexts of reception and external factors have had the greatest impact upon other ethnic groups? Did these external factors in turn impact the structure, strategic efforts, and justifications used by other ethnic groups? How have immigrant social movement organizations evolved?

Since 2007 there has been an increasing number of local and state immigration legislation passed. The focus of IIRM and ILIR is on nationwide reform. An area of further study would be to look at how structure, strategic efforts, justifications, and external factors differ or are similar for immigrant social movement organizations that are focused on national or local legislation. Has there been a rise in local social movement organizations with the increase in state legislation?

Finally, while there is much written about Irish immigrants, the focus on the later cohorts, the 1980s to present is less. Particularly, there is little academic writing since the mid-1990s which detailed the experiences of the New Irish of the 1980s. This project begins to fill this literature gap, but in a preliminary fashion. To fully understand the current Irish cohort (1995 and later) additional scholastic research, including but not limited to ethnography, should be undertaken.
Conclusion

The Irish tend to disappear from the immigration debate because of race, destination, and size of the population. Media portrayals of illegal migrants are of people of color who cross over America’s southern border, not the image of the Irish. In addition, over the past few decades migrants of color have begun moving into new destinations, making this population more noticeable, while Irish have continued to settle in the same geographical areas (Durand et al 2005; Logan 2001; Marrow 2005; Suro and Tafoya 2004). Finally, the Irish disappear as they are a statistically small number, even though they are a large European group. The largest estimate in the 1980s was 250,000, today it is 50,000. Even if this latest estimate is correct that would make Irish less than 1% of today’s estimated 11,400,000 unauthorized migrants. As Daniels (2004) noted “the Irish are a special case” (p 140). Besides being nearly absent from the unauthorized discussion the Irish have another unique status, their long standing activity in U.S. politics.

Both IIRM and ILIR have been components of previous academic research, but not the focus. By focusing specifically on the structure, strategic efforts, and justifications used by the groups I have aimed to broaden our understanding of not only these groups but also how external factors impact lobby groups. This example has shown that external factors and constraints impact a lobby group a significant amount. Technological changes, political contexts, and ethnic community have led to ILIR altering strategic efforts and creating a different structure than that which IIRM used.

IIRM was successful when the Immigration Act of 1990 passed making the Diversity Visas permanent and including a special allotment for Irish for several years. The social aspects
of IIRM were picked up by the Emerald Isle Immigration Center in NYC and other immigrant support organizations. The ILIR has existed for nearly three times as long as IIRM and has yet to be successful in passing legislation. However, ILIR has had success. The CIR discussions of 2005 to 2007 did not have any clause that was specific to Irish, but the 2013 CIR bill contains a provision to extend E-3 visas to Irish. If this bill passed as is, the Irish would be recipients of an additional 10,500 visas a year. This inclusion is due to the efforts of ILIR and their relationship with U.S. politicians. The future of ILIR is unknown.
Appendix A
Interview Schedules

**Immigrant organizations**

**Background information on interviewee**
How long have you been at ___?
What is your role?
Did you work with Immigrants prior to this position? Explain.
Were they Irish?

**Interactions with Irish immigrants**
What type of legal questions do you see the most often?
How do you choose what goes on your *Irish Emigrant* page? On the legal page of your website?

**Diversity Visa specific questions**
How often do you get calls about Diversity visas?
Can you talk about if the Irish’s relationship with DVs has changed over the years and how so?
Is there an emotional attachment to the DVs?

**Current CIR**
Are you involved in the current immigration reform? Professionally, personally, both?
Please explain the type of involvement.
Have you partnered with other organizations?
Part of the CIR is the addition of E3 visas, what do you know about them? Justification for, history, tactics.
Have you been involved in any politicking to move these visas forward?
Have you received inquiries about E3 visas from constituencies?
Part of the CIR is to delete the Diversity Visas. Will this impact Irish?
Are there similarities between DVs of the late 1980s and current E3?

How will the CIR affect your population?

Why are the Irish so involved/invested in immigration reform?

**Attorneys**

**Background information on interviewee**
How long have you been doing immigration legal work? Legal clinics?
In your practice how many of your clients are Irish?
Demographics of your population? Age, marital status, employed. Has this changed?
Does the population that you see have papers or are they unauthorized?
Legal Interactions with Irish immigrants
What type of legal questions do you see the most often, in regards to Irish clientele? Questions about visas, citizenship, legal infractions
What types of visas do Irish inquire about?
How often do you get calls about Diversity visas from Irish?
Can you talk about what changes in visa questions that Irish have asked over the years?

Current CIR
Are you involved in the current immigration reform? Professionally, personally, both?
Please explain the type of involvement.
Have you partnered with any organizations?
Part of the CIR is the addition of E3 visas, what do you know about them? Justification for, history, tactics.
Have you been involved in any politicking in regards to these visas?
Have any clients inquired about E3 visas?
How will the CIR affect your population?

Why are the Irish so involved/invested in immigration reform?

Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform

Background information on interviewee
How long have you been involved with ILIR?
Why did you get involved?
Did you work on immigration rights, etc. prior?

Background information on ILIR
Please discuss the history of how ILIR came to be.
What was ILIR’s role in the 2006/2007 reforms?
What types of events did you hold?
Was ILIR active between the 2006/2007 reform and today’s CIR?

Current CIR
What is ILIR’s role in the current CIR?
What types of events are you holding? What tactics are you using?
How are these different than the ones used in 2006/2007? Why?
Please talk about the history behind the E3 visa legislation. Justification
What efforts has ILIR taken to secure E3 visas?
If CIR fails to pass will you continue to push for E3 visas?
Part of the CIR is to delete the Diversity Visas. Will this impact Irish?
Is there similarity between DVs of the late 1980s and current E3?
Work with other groups
Over the years has ILIR partnered with other immigrant organizations? Who? Other Irish groups?
ILIR has works with the Irish government. What is their role in the reform movement?

Why the names of IIRM and ILIR chosen?

Why are the Irish so involved/invested in immigration reform?

Lobbyist Questions

IIRM
How did you first get involved in immigration reform?
Discuss your involvement with Morrison visas, Diversity Visas. Justification for these visas.
How did you garner support for diversity visas?
What was your role with IIRM?
Did you approach IIRM or did they approach you?
Did you work with Donnelly?
Did you work with anyone on the 1990 bill that made them permanent.

ILIR
What is your role with ILIR?
Did you approach ILIR?
Talk about the history behind the E3 visa legislation. Justification for these visas.
What are similarities/differences between Diversity visas and E3 visas?
How are the two groups similar or different?
In what ways have you politicked for E3 visas

Work with other groups
Over the years has ILIR partnered with other immigrant organizations? Who? Other Irish groups?
ILIR has works with the Irish government. What is their role in the reform movement?

Why are the Irish so involved/invested in immigration reform?
Appendix B
New Irish Code

THE NEW IRISH CODE

The state of the Irish economy is such that repatriation for the vast majority of New Irish aliens will not be realisable for many years to come. However, current U.S. legislation does not provide legal residency for this community of New Irish aliens.

A campaign has been initiated by the Irish Immigration Reform Movement (IIRM) to secure an amnesty for all undocumented Irish aliens in the United States, and to secure just immigration laws for the Irish people.

In order to achieve these objectives, the IIRM will need the complete support of the Irish-American community, and considerable support from the mainstream American community.

You can support the campaign of the IIRM by adhering to the following code in your everyday lives:

1) YOU MUST NOT ENGAGE IN ANTI-SOCIAL CONDUCT, which might reinforce adverse stereotypes or generalizations of the Irish character e.g. "the drunken Irish" or "the fighting Irish". SUCH CONDUCT WILL ALIENATE VALUABLE SUPPORT FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF THE IIRM.

IF YOU DO BECOME THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION, LET IT BE FOR POSITIVE REASONS, such as your "Irish work ethic", your "Irish sense of humour" or for the humanitarianism that is common to the Irish character.

2) YOU MUST INTEGRATE WITH THE IRISH/IRISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND REINFORCE THE COMMON SENSE OF UNITARY IDENTITY. This can be done by joining the county associations and other Irish-American organizations.

3) YOU MUST, THROUGH YOUR REGULAR CONTACT WITH IRELAND, EXERT ENORMOUS INDIRECT POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE IRISH GOVERNMENT TO ACT ON YOUR BEHALF. This can be done through your frequent letters and phone calls to your people in Ireland, and by signing IIRM petitions directed at Irish politicians.

4) BE AWARE OF EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN IRELAND WHICH MAY CONCERN YOUR STATUS. In particular, keep abreast of changes in U.S. Immigration laws. Know about social services to which you may be entitled. Monitor the campaign of the IIRM, and know if your support is specifically required. READ IRISH-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, AND LISTEN TO IRISH-AMERICAN RADIO SHOWS.

New Irish Action Group
Irish Immigration Reform Movement
Appendix C
Pointers for Letter Writing and Sample Letter for Irish Immigration Reform Movement

POINTERS FOR LETTER WRITING

1. KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT.
2. NAME THE BILL BY NUMER AND AUTHOR
3. INFER THAT YOU EXPECT A PROMPT REPLY.
4. REPLY TO THE REPLY YOU RECEIVE - STATE WHETHER YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH THE REPLY OR ASK FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION.
5. MAIL A COPY OF THE REPLY YOU RECEIVE TO YOUR LOCAL I.I.R.M. BRANCH.
6. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A PROMPT REPLY, REWRITE.
7. LETTERS TO BE SIGNED BY REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY.

SAMPLE LETTER (preferably written in your own words, but you may copy the sample letter word-for-word, if you wish).

* * * * *

Senator/Representative (Name). Your Address, Date.
Address.

Dear __________

In accordance with the aims and objectives of the Irish Immigration Reform Movement, I respectfully urge you to cosponsor Senate Bill #S1611 or House Bill #H.R.3143 (Kennedy/Donnelly immigration legislation) in its present form and to support any proposed legislation that will grant amnest to approximately 150,000 undocumented Irish immigrants currently living and working in the United States.

I look forward to your prompt response on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Signature.
References


Cullen, Kevin. 2007. “Going full circle - Native land's new prosperity has many reversing their exodus.” *Boston Globe*, March 19.


Gleeson, David T. and Brendan J. Buttimer. 2005. “‘We are Irish Everywhere’: Irish Immigrant networks in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia.” *Immigrants & Minorities* 23.2-3: 183-205.


Irish Immigration Reform Movement Records; AIA 016; Archives of Irish America, Tamiment Library New York University, 19 boxes.


ILIR Staff. 2014. “No Irish Need Apply? It’s time to fix the 1965 Immigration Act!” March 17 (http://irishlobbyusa.org/298/).


---. N.d. “About Us.” (http://www.irishlobbyusa.org/about.php)


Keown, 2006.


McInerney, Sarah. 2006. “News - Irish united in states of anxiety; Thousands of Irish 'illegal aliens' in the US are lobbying against a law that will force them to leave the country where they have made their lives.” Sunday Tribune, February 26.


O’Callaghan, Miriam. 2013. “Miriam Meets... Ciaran and Orlaith Staunton” (http://www.rte.ie/radio/utils/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!/rii=0%3A20141741%3A0%3A%3A&type=doPlayThis&detail=)

O’Connor, Alison. 2012. “Alison O’Connor: Those emigrating today, who lived and worked through the boom, would have imagined Ireland would always provide.” Irish Independent, March 10 (http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/alison-oconnor-those-emigrating-today-who-lived-and-worked-through-the-boom-would-have-imagined-ireland-would-always-provide-26830566.html)


---. 2007b. “Illegal Irish are a long way from galas and golf.” The Irish Times, November 20.


