

FAS Labour Market Up-Date Paper: 1/2000

Regional Aspects of Ireland's Labour Market¹

1. Introduction

The regional aspects of Ireland's economic growth and development have come under close scrutiny in recent years, and the regional spread of economic activity has become prominent in national policy and governmental planning across sectors.

This paper assesses regional labour market trends, scale differences and the extent to which regional positions are converging or diverging. Ireland is regionally split at two levels. Firstly, there are eight "regional authority" or "NUTS III" regions, which have been in place for some time. Secondly, there are two "NUTS II" regions (which are groupings of the NUTS III regions). These have been more recently organised, and are the basis upon which the current National Development Plan is regionally delineated. The following table shows the county make-up of these regions.

Table 1: NUTS II and NUTS III Regions¹			
Border, Midland and Western NUTS II Region		Eastern and Southern NUTS II Region	
NUTS III Regions:		NUTS III Regions:	
Border	Cavan Donegal Leitrim Louth Monaghan Sligo	Dublin	Dublin Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Fingal South Dublin
Midland	Laois Longford Offaly Westmeath	Mid-East	Kildare Meath Wicklow
West	Galway County Borough Galway County Mayo Roscommon	Mid-West	Clare Limerick County Borough Limerick County Tipperary North Riding
		South-East	Carlow Kilkenny Tipperary South Riding Waterford County Borough Waterford County Wexford
		South-West	Cork County Borough Cork County Kerry
¹ NUTS is the French acronym for "Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics"			

¹ The assistance of Fitzpatrick and Associates in the preparation of this paper is acknowledged.

The paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2 examines regional breakdowns of geographical area, population and Gross Value Added (a regional measure of economic output). It also identifies regional trends in economic outputs and incomes;
- Section 3 examines regional trends in population, the components of population change, the labour force and labour force participation;
- Section 4 deals with regional employment. It assesses overall, sectoral public sector and agency-assisted employment trends across the regions;
- Section 5 deals with unemployment across the regions, including levels, unemployment rates, unemployment by age and long-term unemployment;
- finally, Section 6 summarises the findings.

2. Population and Economic Outputs and Incomes

2.1 Area, Population and Output

Table 2 presents the proportion of the State's land mass, population and output that was accounted for by each region in 1997 (the most recent year for which regional economic output data is available).

	% of Area	% of Population	% of GVA
S&E Region	52.6	73.5	81.1
Dublin	1.3	29.3	39.7
Mid-East	8.6	9.8	8.6
Mid-West	11.7	8.7	7.8
South-East	13.4	10.7	9.0
South-West	17.5	14.9	16.0
BMW Region	47.4	26.5	18.9
Border	17.6	11.1	8.5
Midland	9.5	5.7	3.6
West	20.3	9.8	6.8
State	100	100	100

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO), Census of Population and Regional Accounts

The figures illustrate that significant variations in population and economic activity exist across Ireland's regions. Of particular note are the following points:

- the Southern and Eastern (S&E) region accounted for approximately 53% of the area, 73% of the population, and 81% of the economic output of the

State in 1997. This indicates its stage of development relative to the rest of the country;

- by contrast, the Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) region covers a comparable geographical area, but significantly less population and share of economic output;
- there is considerable variation of population and output within these regions, and the regional influences of Dublin and to a lesser extent, Cork, are evidently driving this variation.

2.2 Economic Output Per Person

Table 3 presents regional GVA per capita data for 1993 and 1997.

Table 3: Gross Value Added Per Person 1993-97				
	1993 £	1997 £	Change 1993-97 £	% Change 1993-97
S&E Region	9,369	14,411	5,042	53.8
Dublin	11,318	17,682	6,364	56.2
Mid-East	5,811	11,367	5,556	95.6
<i>Dublin plus Mid-East</i>	<i>9,967</i>	<i>16,095</i>	<i>6,128</i>	<i>61.5</i>
Mid-West	7,978	11,827	3,849	48.2
South-East	8,054	10,984	2,930	36.4
South-West	9,603	13,952	4,349	45.3
BMW Region	6,618	9,328	2,710	40.9
Border	7,004	9,996	2,992	42.7
Midland	6,296	8,424	2,128	33.8
West	6,358	9,092	2,734	43.0
State	8,633	13,064	4,431	51.3

Source: CSO, Regional Accounts

GVA per person in the State stood at £13,064 in 1997. Cumulatively, this had increased by 51% in the four years since 1993 (in current prices), reflecting the national economic expansion over the period. A number of significant observations can be made regarding the regional trends:

- output (GVA) per person, in 1997, was 54% higher in the S&E than in the BMW region. Moreover, it increased faster in the S&E region, showing divergence in per-capita economic output over the period;
- at regional level, it can be seen that Dublin and the Mid-East are significant contributors to this divergence. While Dublin easily has the highest GVA per person, the Mid-East has experienced the fastest growth. This is widely felt to reflect the extent to which the Mid-East is growing as a residential base for Dublin commuters;

- looking beyond Dublin and the Mid-East, the regional variations are much less pronounced. The other parts of the S&E region have a slightly higher GVA per person than in the BMW region, but growth rates have been generally comparable.

2.3 Regional Incomes Per Person Trends

The output produced within a region does not necessarily equate to the income that remains within that region. For instance, the profits of companies operating within a region may not necessarily accrue to residents of that region. Furthermore, some of the workforce that contributes to a region's output may bring its income home to another region. Also, household incomes may include social welfare payments that are not counted in output figures.

A new data series from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) shows that total income per person in the State rose 32.8% to £10,641 between 1993 and 1997.² Table 4 shows the regional data.

Table 4: Total Income Per Person 1993-97				
	1993 £	1997 £	Change 1993-97 £	% Change 1993-97
S&E Region	8,346	11,086	2,740	32.8
Dublin	9,467	12,685	3,218	34.0
Mid-East	7,404	10,392	2,988	40.4
Mid-West	7,790	10,262	2,472	31.7
South-East	7,271	9,289	2,018	27.8
South-West	7,872	10,172	2,300	29.2
BMW Region	7,104	9,407	2,303	32.4
Border	7,215	9,458	2,243	31.1
Midland	6,983	9,218	2,235	32.0
West	7,046	9,458	2,412	34.2
State	8,013	10,641	2,628	32.8

Source: CSO, Household Incomes Regions and Counties 1991-1997

The regional picture which emerges as regards incomes is somewhat different to that regarding outputs. While the regional rankings of income per head are quite similar – with Dublin the highest and the Midlands region the lowest, the range of variation is smaller than with output. In terms of GVA in 1997, Dublin was some 110% higher than the Midlands. In terms of incomes, it was only 38% higher. This probably reflects the effects of income re-distribution measures.

Income per capita growth has also been less regionally variable than output. Between 1993 and 1997, income per capita grew by 32.8% in the S&E region, and by a comparable 32.4% in the BMW region. The income gap between these two remained at approximately 17% over the period.

3. Population and Labour Force Trends

3.1 Population Trends

Over the period April 1993 to April 1999 Ireland's population is estimated to have risen by 170,600 to 3.74 million, the highest level since the census of 1881. The population of the S&E region grew by 5.4% to 2.75 million over the period accounting for almost 83% of the national increase. The BMW region's population grew less rapidly by 3.1%.

	1993 (‘000s)	1999 (‘000s)	Change 1993-99 (‘000s)	% Change 1993-99
S&E Region	2,616.9	2,757.7	140.8	5.4
Dublin	1,038.1	1,096.7	58.6	5.6
Mid-East	337.4	378.3	40.9	12.1
Mid-West	314.9	325.8	10.9	3.5
South-East	387.3	400.9	13.6	3.5
South-West	539.2	556.0	16.8	3.1
BMW Region	957.1	986.8	29.7	3.1
Border	405.2	411.0	5.8	1.4
Midland	203.3	209.5	6.2	3.0
West	348.6	366.3	17.7	5.1
State	3,574.1	3,744.7	170.6	4.8

Source: CSO, Population and Migration Estimates Special Request

All eight “regional authority” regions experienced positive population growth over the period, ranging from a 12.1% increase in the Mid-East, to just a 1.4% increase in the Border region.

In absolute terms, Dublin and the Mid-East regions together accounted for 58% of the State's population growth over the period.

² Total income is defined as primary income (i.e. income of self employed plus compensation of employees plus rent of dwellings plus net interest and dividends), adjusted for social welfare benefits and other current transfers.

3.2 Natural Population Increase and Net Migration

Table 6 shows the components of population change i.e. the natural change and net migration for the period 1991-96 (the most recent year for which regional migration estimates are available).

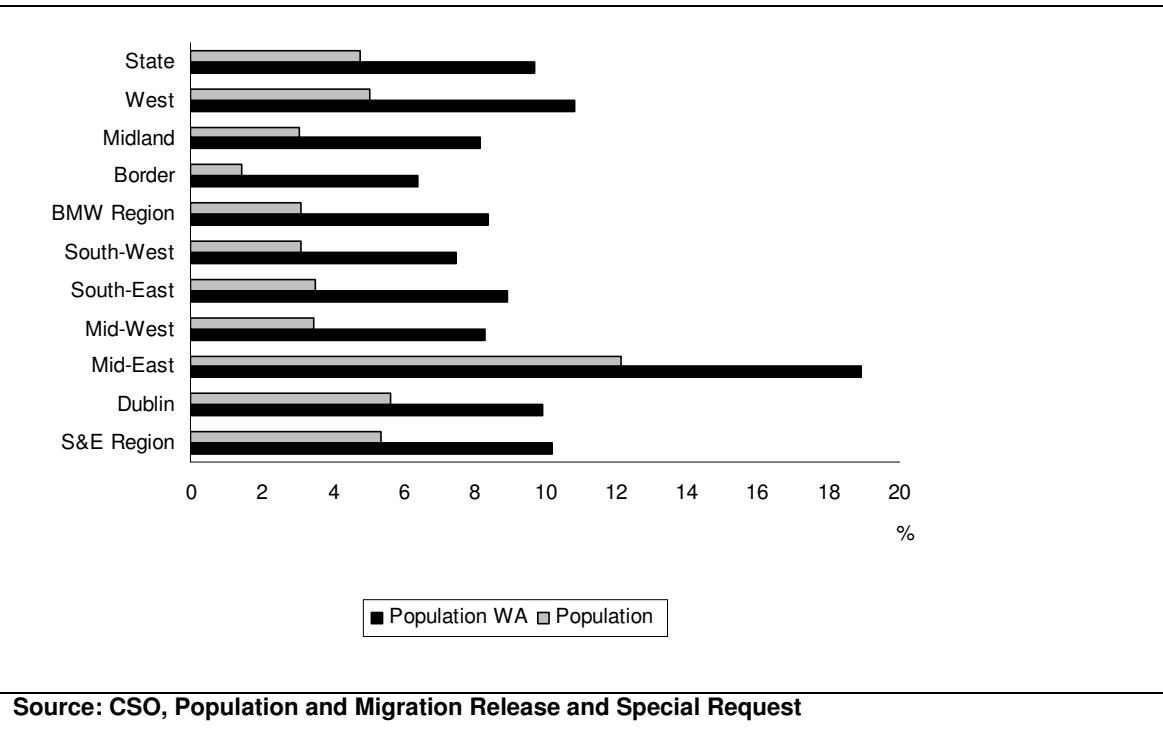
Table 6: Components of Population Change 1991-96				
	Natural Increase	Estimated Net Migration¹	% of Regional Population Change Accounted for by:	
			Natural Rate of Increase	Estimated Net Migration
S&E Region	76,663	7,460	91	9
Dublin	36,570	-3,610	111	-11
Mid-East	13,723	8,393	62	38
Mid-West	7,411	-1,070	117	-17
South-East	8,804	-475	106	-6
South-West	10,155	4,222	71	29
BMW Region	15,403	842	95	5
Border	6,418	-2,110	149	-49
Midland	4,665	-2,107	182	-82
West	4,320	5,059	46	54
State	92,066	8,302	92	8
1 A positive figure indicates net immigration and a negative figure indicates net emigration				
Source: CSO, Census of Population				

All regions experienced a positive natural increase in population over the period (i.e. an excess of births over deaths). However regional differences occurred in regard to migration, with some regions experiencing net immigration and some net emigration. The Dublin region, including the County Borough, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and South Dublin, experienced net emigration over the period, although there was a high level of net immigration in the surrounding counties which together make up the Mid-East region. This reflects the increasing suburbanisation of the capital, with growth in residential development around a wider area around the city. Nevertheless this data does not cover the period from 1997 onwards when net immigration to Ireland increased significantly and it may not reflect current patterns.

3.3 Population of Working Age

Figure 1 compares growth rates in the overall population with those for the population of working age (i.e. those aged 15 years and over).

Figure 1 Regional Population and Population of Working Age Growth 1993-99



In all regions there has been growth in the working age population at higher rates than overall growth, with the Border region showing the largest differential. This signifies falling rates of population dependency in all regions, and the degree to which the age structure of the population has been a factor in labour force growth.

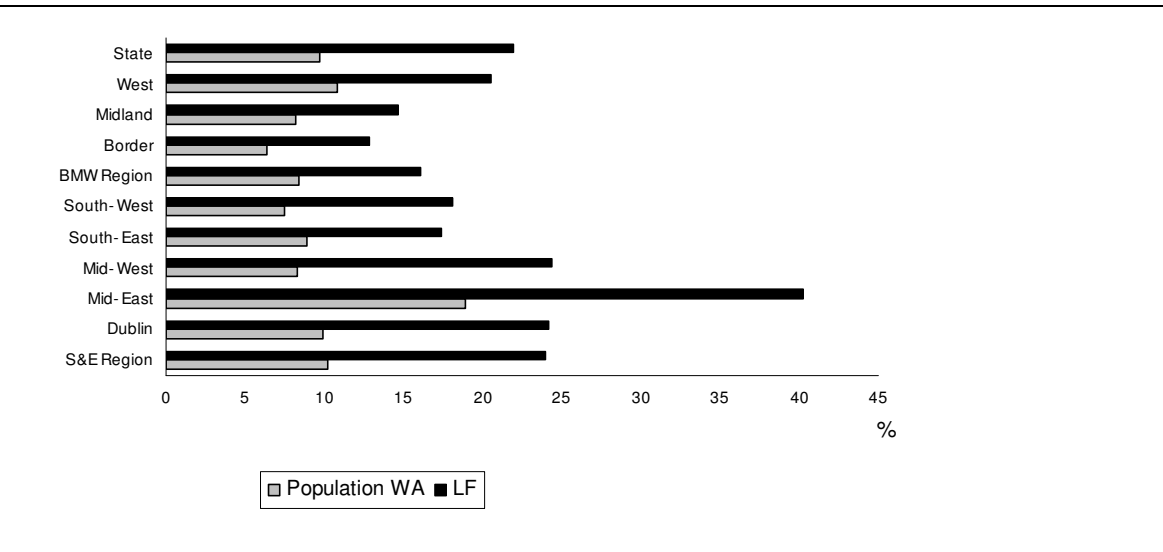
3.4 Labour Force Trends

Over the period 1993-99 Ireland's labour force grew from 1.4mn to 1.7mn, or by 21.9%. Growth in the S&E region was 24%, to 1.28mn, and in the BMW region, 16%, to 422,600. The S&E region therefore accounted for 81% of national labour force growth.

All NUTS III regions experienced positive labour force growth over the period, with the highest growth rates in Dublin (24.2%), the Mid-East (40.2%) and the Mid-West (24.4%). Dublin and the Mid-East regions accounted for over half of the growth in the State's labour force over the period.

Figure 2 compares labour force growth rates with those for population of working age.

Figure 2 Regional Population of Working Age Growth and Labour Force 1993-99



Source: CSO, Population and Migration Release and Special Request

A labour force increasing faster than the population of working age indicates growing labour force participation. The participation rate for the State as a whole stood at 58.7% in 1999, up from 52.8% six years earlier. In the S&E region participation rate growth was more rapid than that in the BMW region, up 6.7 percentage points to 59.9% compared to a rise of 3.7 points to 55.4%.

Participation rates in the Mid-East (52.8% to 62.3%), Dublin (55.2% to 62.4%) and the Mid-West (50.9% to 58.5%) increased particularly rapidly while the increase in participation rates in all other NUTS III regions was below the State increase of 5.9 percentage points. The Mid-East currently has the highest labour force participation rate.

4. Employment Trends

4.1 Total Employment

Table 7 shows the growth in employment across all regions over the period 1993-99.

Table 7: Regional Employment Growth 1993-99¹				
	1993	1999	Change 1993-99	% Change 1993-99
S&E Region	878,200	1,221,700	343,500	39.1
Dublin	366,600	517,400	150,800	41.1
Mid-East	105,700	171,400	65,700	62.1
Mid-West	102,400	140,100	37,700	36.8
South-East	126,600	162,700	36,100	28.5
South-West	176,900	230,200	53,300	30.1
BMW Region	304,900	394,000	89,100	29.2
Border	126,800	157,000	30,200	23.8
Midland	62,700	81,600	18,900	30.2
West	115,400	155,400	40,000	34.7
State	1,183,100	1,615,700	432,600	36.6
1 Figures for 1993 relate to April while 1999 figures relate to the unweighted average of the four quarters				
Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey				

For the State as a whole employment grew by almost 433,000 or by 36.6% over the period 1993-99. Employment in the S&E region grew by 343,500 or by 39% and accounted for almost 80% of the overall employment growth in the State. Employment grew by 29% or by 89,100 in the BMW region.

At the lower level of regional data, all regions experienced high and reasonably similar rates of employment growth. Three regions had growth rates greater than the 36.6% experienced for the State as a whole. These were Dublin, up 41.1%, the Mid-East, up 62.1%, and the Mid-West, up by 36.8%. Employment growth in Dublin and the Mid-East accounted for half of the total growth in employment. Given the similar rates of growth, the regional share of total employment remained stable in most regions.

4.2 Sectoral Employment

Table 8 shows employment growth by economic sector for the period 1994-99 (comparable data for the 1993-99 period are not available).

Services employment in the S&E region grew more rapidly than that in the BMW region, 42.9% compared to 27.1%. The opposite is true of the industrial sector where the BMW region grew by 43.9% and the S&E region grew by 29.9%. Agricultural employment declined most rapidly in the BMW region, down by 7.6%, compared to 3.8% in the S&E region.

Table 8: Regional Employment Growth by Economic Sector 1994-99¹				
	% Change in:			
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
S&E Region	-3.8	29.9	42.9	35.0
Dublin	57.7	23.1	41.3	37.0
Mid-East	1.7	36.2	56.2	44.0
Mid-West	-3.4	32.3	43.2	32.8
South-East	-9.6	35.2	47.8	32.8
South-West	-7.6	31.9	35.1	27.6
BMW Region	-7.6	43.9	27.1	24.8
Border	-5.1	27.8	22.1	19.5
Midland	-18.2	41.0	23.8	20.6
West	-4.4	70.9	34.7	33.4
State	-5.5	33.6	39.4	32.4

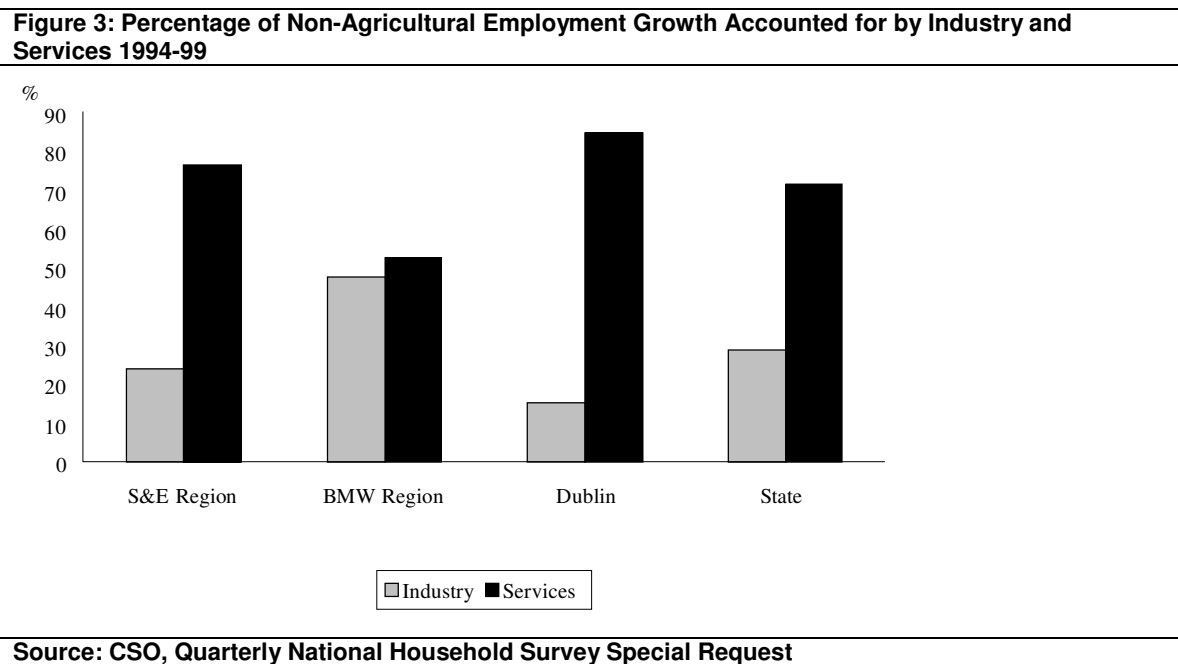
¹ Figures for 1994 are for April while 1999 figures relate to the unweighted average of the four quarters

Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey and Special Request

The NUTS III regions which experienced the largest employment growth rates (Dublin and the Mid-East) were also those where services employment increased most rapidly. Industrial employment rose the quickest in the Midlands and West regions. Agricultural employment declined in all NUTS III regions except for Dublin and the Mid-East.

4.3 Non-Agricultural Employment Growth

Figure 3 shows the variation in employment growth outside of agriculture accounted for by industry and services.



A marked regional divergence is evident with regard to the sectoral source of employment growth. In the BMW region there has been a balanced increase in

employment between services and industry. In the S&E region, and most markedly in Dublin, the services sector has been by far the greater source of new employment over the period.

4.4 Public Sector Employment

Table 9 presents estimates of public sector employment at regional level for the period 1994-99 (equivalent figures are not available for 1993). The table shows that over three-quarters of public sector employment is located in the S&E region and that over a third is located in the Dublin region. The figures relate to employment in public administration, defence, social security, education and health.

Table 9: Estimated Public Sector by Region 1994-99¹				
	1994 (‘000s)	1999 (‘000s)	Change (‘000s)	Regional % Share of Total Public Sector Employment in 1999
S&E Region	186.6	220.7	34.1	76.2
Dublin	89.8	102.5	12.7	35.4
Mid-East	23.1	30.7	7.6	10.6
Mid-West	18.9	22.1	3.2	7.6
South-East	20.6	27.3	6.7	9.4
South-West	34.2	38.2	4.0	13.2
BMW Region	61.5	68.9	7.3	23.8
Border	26.4	28.3	1.9	9.8
Midland	12.9	13.6	0.7	4.7
West	22.2	27.0	4.8	9.3
State	247.9	289.6	41.7	100.0
¹ Figures relate to employment in public administration, defence, social security, education and health				
Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey Special Request				

All regions experienced increases in public sector employment, ranging from an approximate 700 increase in the Midlands, to a 12,700 increase in Dublin. The data show that public sector employment has generally followed the geographical distribution of population and private sector employment.

4.5 Agency-Assisted Employment Trends

Forfas provides annual data on employment in agency-assisted firms (i.e. manufacturing and traded-services firms assisted by IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Shannon Development and Udaras na Gaeltacht). Table 10 shows the growth in permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted firms by region over the period 1993-99.

Table 10: Permanent Full-time Employment Growth in Agency Assisted Firms 1993-99¹				
	1993	1999	Change 1993-99	% Change 1993-99
S&E Region	156,933	217,730	60,797	38.7
Dublin	58,655	91,611	32,956	56.2
Mid-East	16,604	25,536	8,932	53.8
Mid-West	23,304	31,768	8,464	36.3
South-East	25,142	28,222	3,080	12.3
South-West	33,228	40,593	7,365	22.2
BMW Region	60,487	72,729	12,242	20.2
Border	30,746	33,325	2,579	8.4
Midland	10,901	12,895	1,994	18.3
West	18,840	26,509	7,669	40.7
State	217,420	290,459	73,039	33.6
1 Figures relate to employment in IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Shannon Development and Udaras na Gaeltachta assisted companies				
Source: Forfás, Special Request				

In general, agency-assisted firms account for approximately one in five full time jobs in the economy. Outside the direct public and semi-state sectors, these firms are also those open to the greatest state support and influence. The Table shows that permanent full-time employment in agency-assisted firms grew by 73,039 or by 33.6% over the period, a rate comparable to the national increase in employment.

The regional trends of employment in such firms mirrored the trends elsewhere, with higher absolute and percentage growth rates in the S&E region, particularly strong growth in Dublin, but also steady rates of growth in the BMW region. In overall terms, Dublin and the Mid-East accounted for a large overall share of the total employment growth. Two regions experienced growth well below that of the State, namely the South-East (12.3%) and the Border region (8.4%).

5. Unemployment Trends

5.1 Unemployment Levels

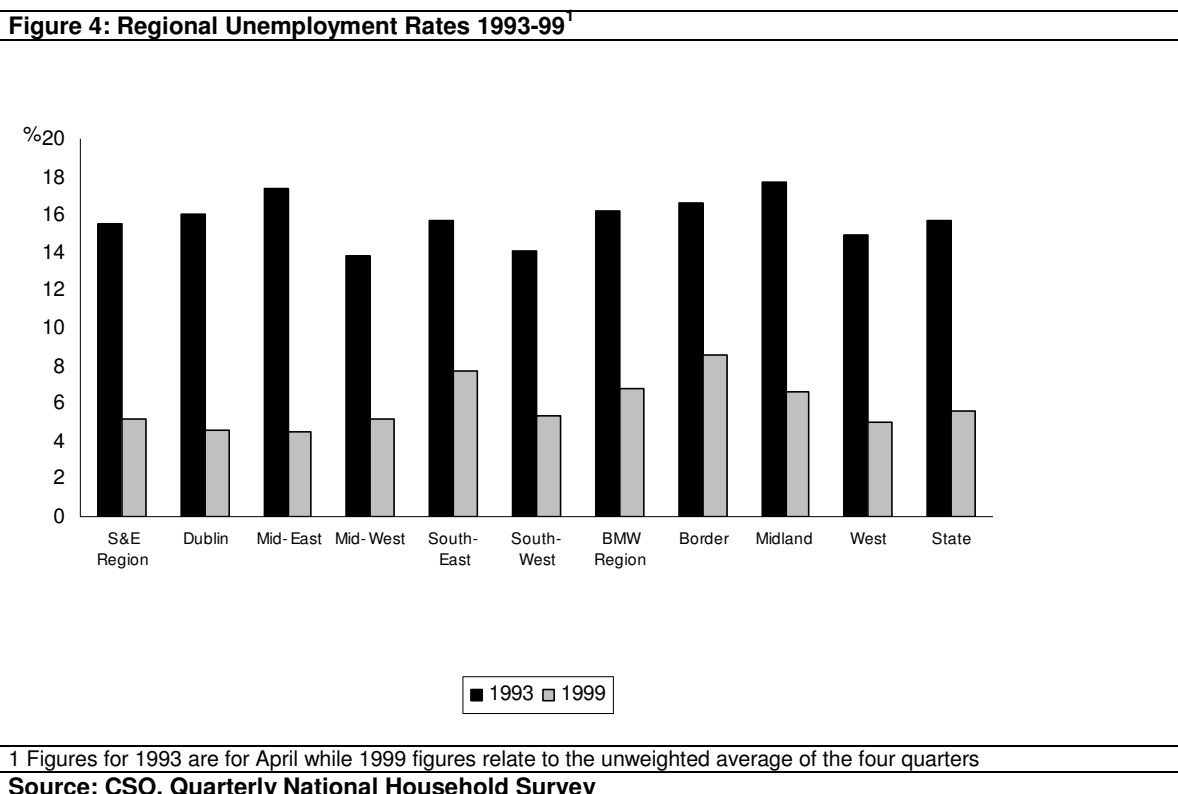
Total unemployment in the State fell by almost 125,000 or by almost 57% over the period 1993-1999. In the S&E region it fell by 94,200 or by 58.4%. The S&E region accounted for three-quarters of the fall in total unemployment. It fell by 30,500 or by 51.6% in the BMW region. All NUTS III regions experienced reductions in unemployment of at least 40%. Table 11 shows the details.

Table 11: Unemployment 1993-99¹				
	1993 (‘000s)	1999 (‘000s)	Change 1993-99 (‘000s)	% Change 1993-99
S&E Region	161.1	67.0	-94.2	-58.4
Dublin	69.9	24.6	-45.3	-64.8
Mid-East	22.2	8.0	-14.2	-64.0
Mid-West	16.4	7.7	-8.7	-53.0
South-East	23.6	13.6	-10.0	-42.3
South-West	29.0	13.0	-16.0	-55.2
BMW Region	59.0	28.6	-30.5	-51.6
Border	25.3	14.7	-10.6	-41.9
Midland	13.5	5.8	-7.7	-57.2
West	20.2	8.1	-12.1	-60.0
State	220.1	95.5	-124.7	-56.6
1 Figures for 1993 are for April while 1999 figures relate to the unweighted average of the four quarters				
Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey				

It can be seen that the rapid economic and employment growth of recent times has resulted in balanced reductions in unemployment across the regions. All regions have experienced significant falls in total unemployment, relative to the 1993 position.

5.2 Unemployment Rates

Figure 4 shows the fall in unemployment rates (i.e. those unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force) experienced in regions over the period 1993-99.



The State unemployment rate fell from 15.7% in 1993 to 5.6% in 1999. The unemployment rate in the S&E region was 1.6 percentage points lower than that of the BMW region in 1999 compared to a difference of 0.4 points in 1993, reflecting a slight divergence experienced over the period. While the Mid-East region had the second highest unemployment rate of all NUTS III regions in 1993 at 17.4%, it had the joint lowest rate in 1999 of 4.5%. It was therefore the region with the greatest relative fall in the unemployment rate over the period.

5.3 Regional Unemployment by Age Group

Table 12 shows the fall in regional unemployment for people aged less than 45 years of age and for those aged 45 and over. Firstly it shows that across the regions there is a reasonable similarity in the age group of those unemployed. The proportion aged over 45 years ranges from 18 to 23% in all regions. Secondly, the rate of decline in unemployment in each region has been greater for those aged under 45. Across all regions, therefore, the unemployed aged less than 45 have been gaining employment quicker than those older.

Table 12: Unemployment by Age Group 1993-99¹						
	<u>Unemployment 1999</u>		<u>% Change 1993-99</u>		<u>% of Total Regional Change 1993-99</u>	
	<45 (^{000s})	45+ (^{000s})	<45	45+	<45	45+
S&E Region	132.1	29.0	-60.8	-47.7	85.3	14.7
Dublin	57.5	12.4	-66.3	-57.7	84.2	15.8
Mid-East	18.4	3.8	-66.6	-51.3	86.3	13.7
Mid-West	13.4	3.0	-56.7	-36.7	87.4	12.6
South-East	19.4	4.2	-45.6	-26.8	88.7	11.3
South-West	23.4	5.6	-57.7	-44.6	84.4	15.6
BMW Region	48.3	10.7	-54.9	-36.9	87.0	13.0
Border	20.5	4.8	-45.4	-27.1	87.7	12.3
Midland	11.4	2.1	-60.7	-38.1	89.6	10.4
West	16.4	3.8	-62.7	-48.7	84.7	15.3
State	180.3	39.8	-59.2	-44.8	85.7	14.3

¹ Figures for 1993 relate to April while 1999 figures relate to the unweighted average of the four quarters

Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey Special Request

5.4 Regional Long-term Unemployment

Long-term unemployment, i.e. those unemployed for 12 months or more, fell nationally by over 85,000, or by 68%, between 1993 and 1999, again highlighting the positive labour market impact of the economic expansion. The number of long-term unemployed people declined more rapidly than the total unemployed, i.e. short plus

long-term unemployed, over the period. In fact there were more people in long-term unemployment in 1993 than there were total unemployed people in 1999.

The number of long-term unemployed fell by almost 65,000 (71%) in the S&E region, which accounted for three-quarters of the overall decline. It fell by 20,600, or by 62% in the BMW region.

All NUTS III regions experienced reductions of at least 50% in long-term unemployment over the period. The decline was particularly rapid in the Dublin, Mid-East and Midlands regions.

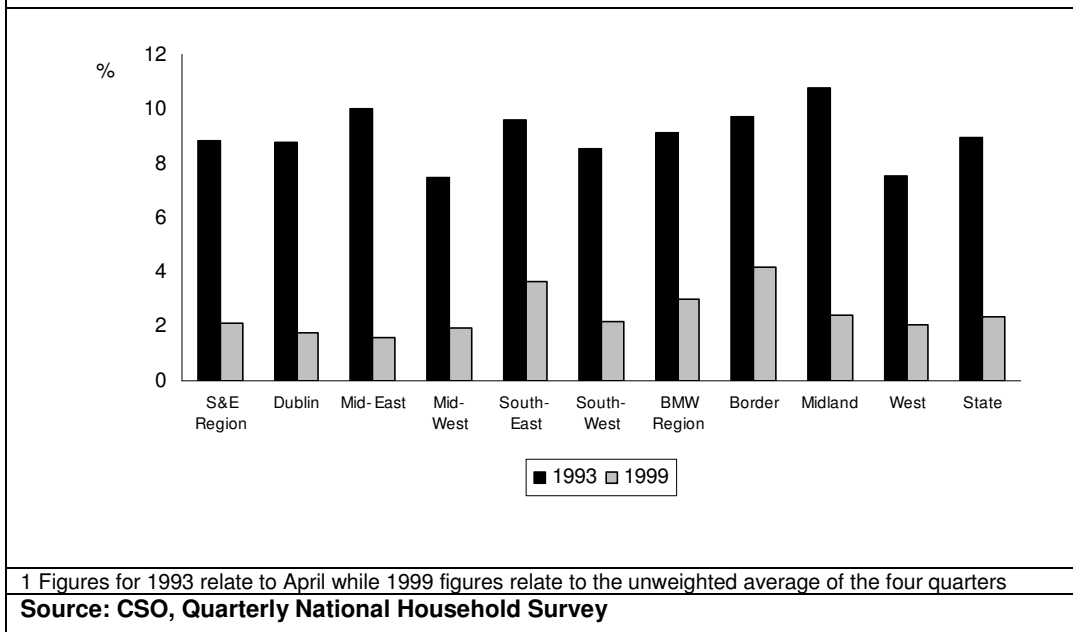
	1993 (‘000s)	1999 (‘000s)	Change 1993-99 (‘000s)	% Change 1993-99
S&E Region	92.0	27.1	-64.9	-70.5
Dublin	38.3	9.7	-28.7	-74.8
Mid-East	12.8	2.9	-9.9	-77.3
Mid-West	8.9	2.9	-6.1	-68.0
South-East	14.4	6.4	-8.0	-55.6
South-West	17.6	5.3	-12.3	-69.9
BMW Region	33.2	12.6	-20.6	-62.0
Border	14.8	7.2	-7.6	-51.4
Midland	8.2	2.1	-6.1	-74.4
West	10.2	3.3	-6.9	-67.4
State	125.4	39.8	-85.6	-68.3
¹ Figures for 1993 relate to April while 1999 figures relate to the unweighted average of the four quarters				
Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey Special Request				

5.5 Regional Long-term Unemployment Rates

Figure 5 shows that the long-term unemployment rate (i.e. those unemployed for 12 months or over as a percentage of the total labour force), declined nationally from 8.9% in 1993 to 2.3% in 1999.

Long-term unemployment rates in the NUTS II regions diverged slightly, as the rate in the S&E region was 0.2 points lower than the BMW region in 1993 (8.9% compared to 9.1%) but 0.9 points lower in 1999 (2.1% compared to 3%). The divergence was not of a significant scale however.

Figure 5: Regional Long-term Unemployment Rates 1993-99¹



All NUTS III regions experienced a fall in long-term unemployment rates over the period. Moreover the regional spread of rates of long-term unemployment declined slightly over the period.

Here, also, then the message is that the economic expansion has positively impacted on long-term unemployment, and has done so across all regions to a broadly similar degree.

6. Summary of Findings

- The Southern and Eastern (S&E) region covers a comparable land area to the Border, Midlands and West (BMW) region. It has a higher population density and yet a higher concentration of economic activity. Dublin and its environs are a major factor behind this divergence.
- Output (GVA) per person in the State grew by more than 50% over the period 1993-97. Output (GVA) per person is approximately 50% higher in the S&E region, and has been growing faster than in the BMW region.
- Incomes per person are also higher in the S&E region, but the regional spread of incomes is much less regionally marked than that of outputs. Between 1993 and 1997 the regional gap between per capita income has remained constant.

- In all regions the population of working age has been growing faster than the total population, and labour forces have been growing at comparable rates. Once again, Dublin, the Mid-East and the Mid-West account to a large degree for the slightly higher rates being experienced in the S&E region.
- There has been considerable employment growth in all regions of the country, with slightly higher rates in the S&E region;
- The services sector has been much to the fore in new employment growth in the S&E region. In contrast, both industry and services have contributed significantly to employment growth in the BMW region.
- Both public sector, and agency-assisted private sector employment mirror quite closely the geographical distribution of population and total employment.
- There have been marked falls in unemployment and long-term unemployment in all regions over recent years. While the speed of the decline has been slightly faster in the S&E than the BMW region, all NUTS III regions have seen unemployment fall by at least 40%.