

**Comments by
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on

**Illustrating Ageing in Ireland –
Key Facts and Figures
By Paul McGill**

Dublin, 25 January 2010

Introduction

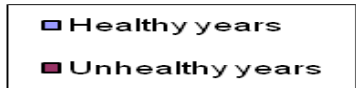
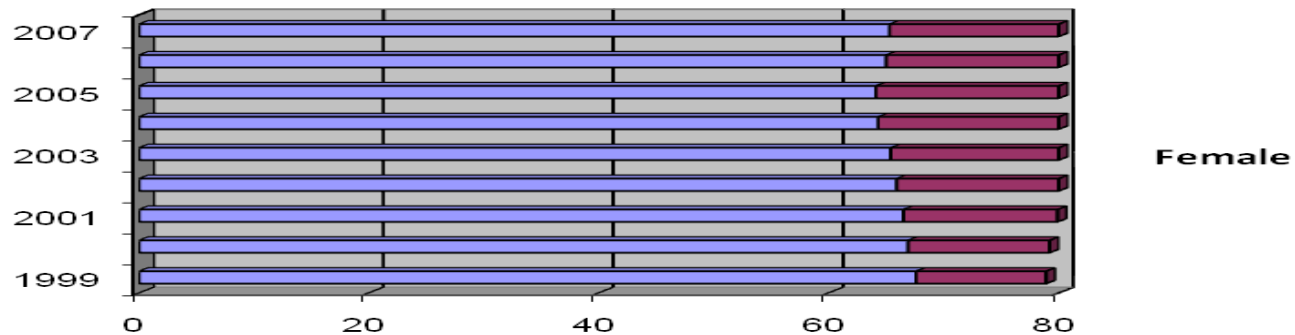
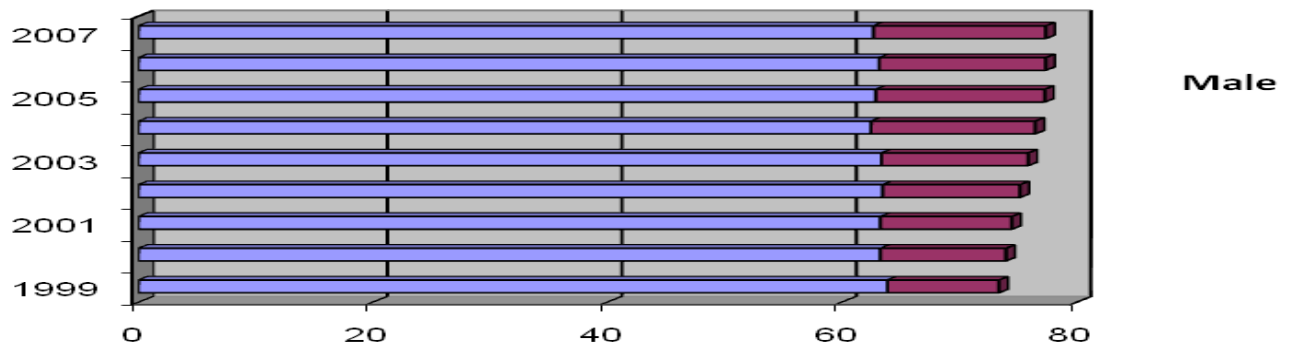
- This paper important because
 - It documents and compares situation North and South
 - It highlights what comparisons are possible and which are not
 - Most important, it can give insights into causal processes arising from differences in demography, social and economic structure, health-care systems etc
- Lots of interesting insights but I'll concentrate on:
 - Importance of migration in determining age structure
 - The meaning of Disability Free Life Expectancy
 - The reasons for strong fluctuations in the “at risk of poverty” measure
 - Increasing labour force participation in both jurisdictions and the effect of the recession
 - Differences in future dependency rates
 - Some comments on producing more comparable data

Migration

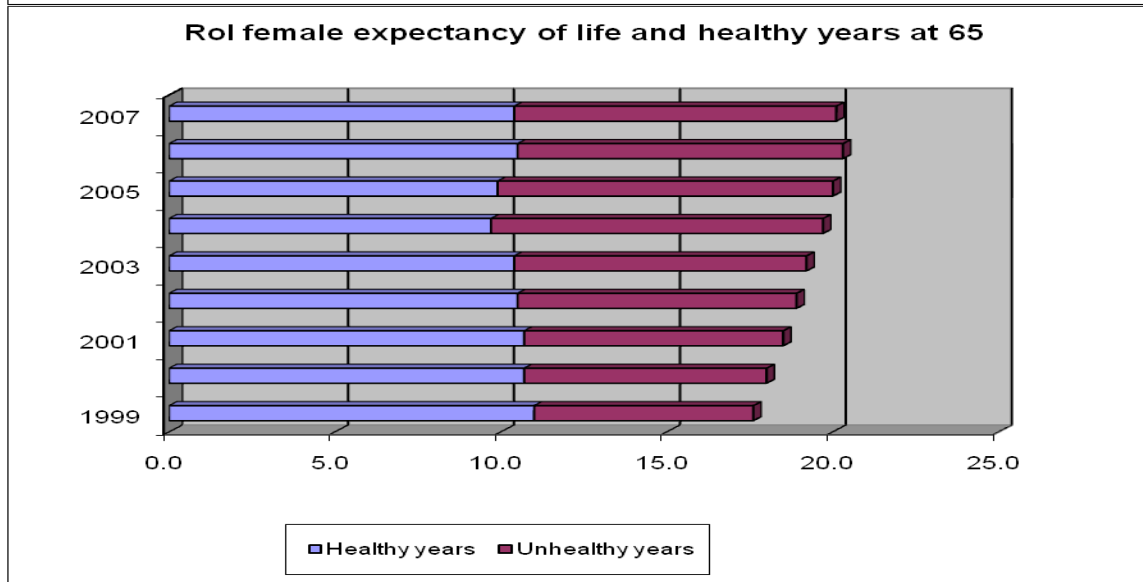
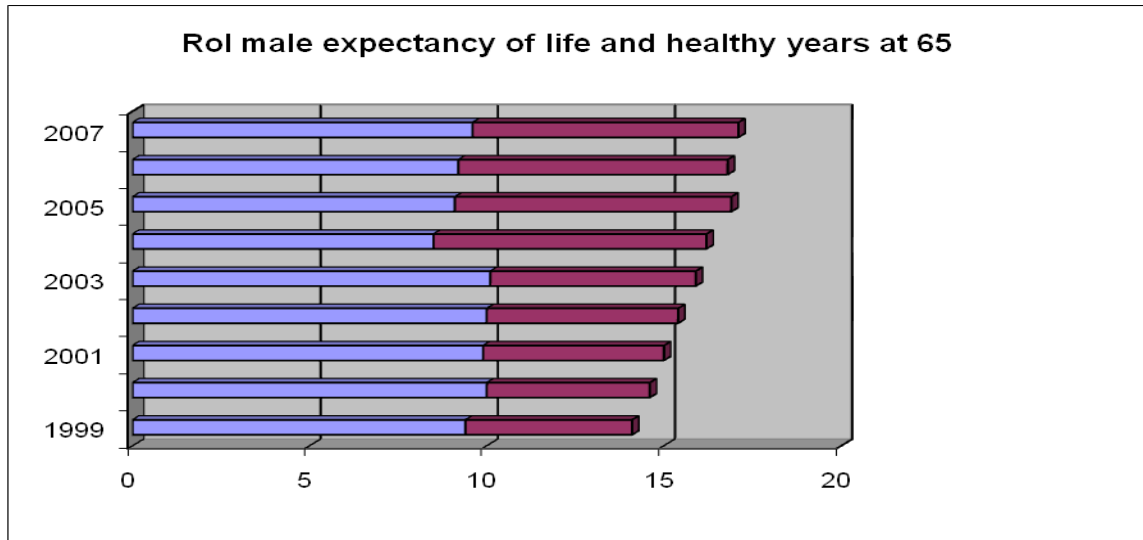
- Migration an important factor in determining the age structure and the dependency level
- Continuous Population decline from 1841 up to 1961
- Emigrants were mainly young (15-25), leading to an excess of older people and high old age dependency
- Strong return migration in the 1970s – mainly young families
- Led to reduction in average age and reversed dependency pattern
- High immigration in the 2000's re-enforced this
- But future behaviour of these immigrants, and of the unemployed young Irish people, now uncertain

Healthy life years at birth

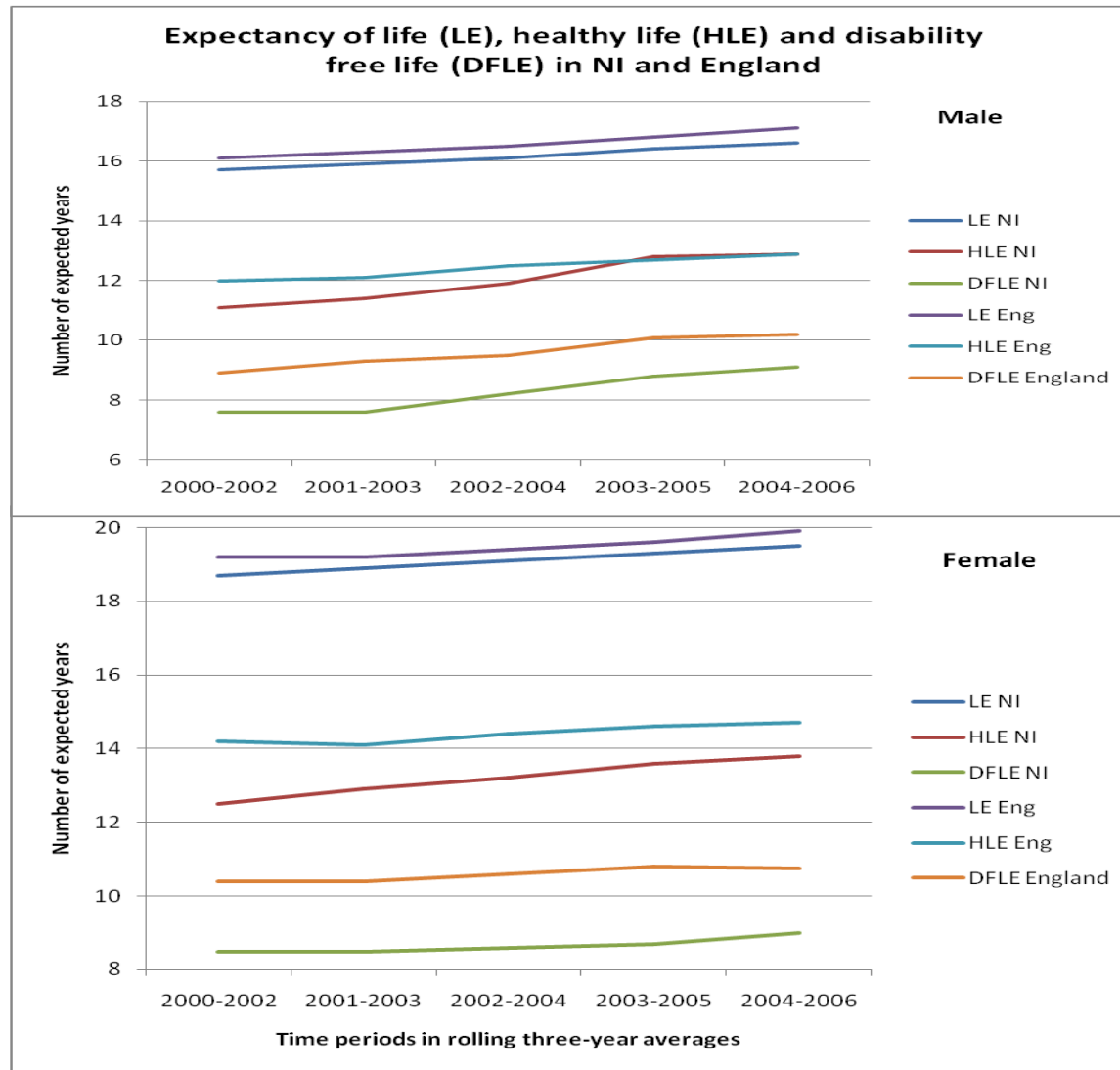
Fig 3.1: Rol total life and healthy years at birth



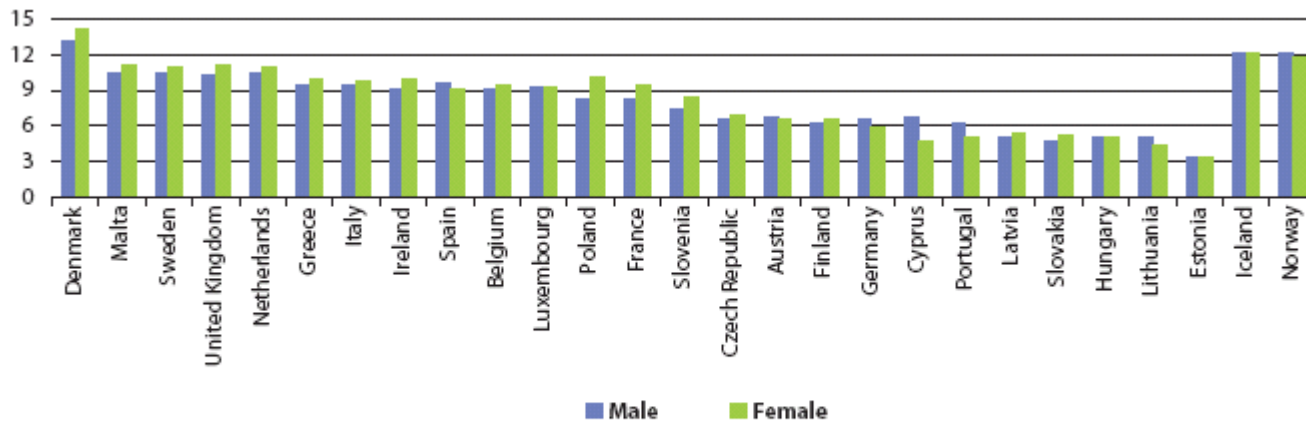
Healthy life years at 65



Healthy life in Northern Ireland



Healthy Life Expectancy – EU 2005

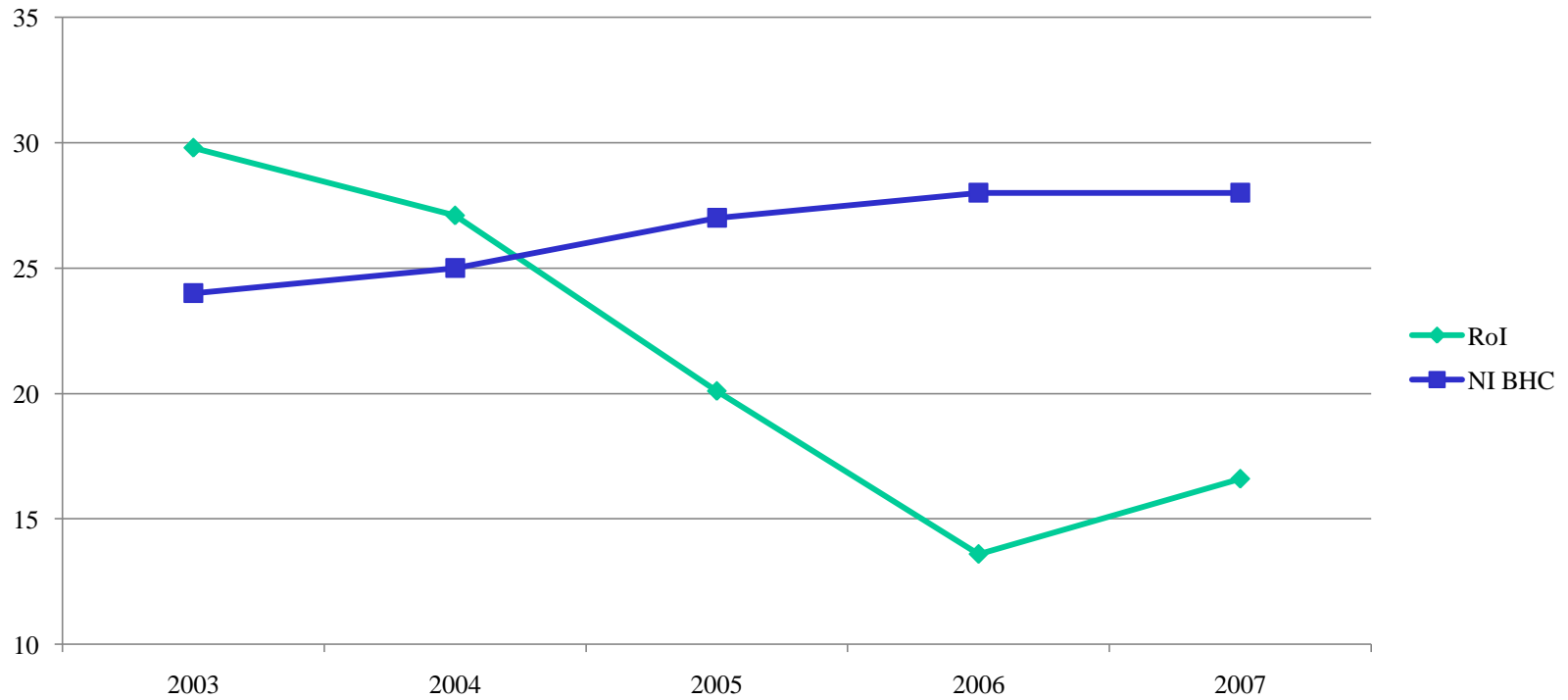


(1) Provisional data; Bulgaria and Romania, not available; the figure is ranked on the average of male and female.

Source: Eurostat (tsdph220)

Poverty

**Fig 3.8: All Ireland risk of poverty of older people (%)
(60% median)**

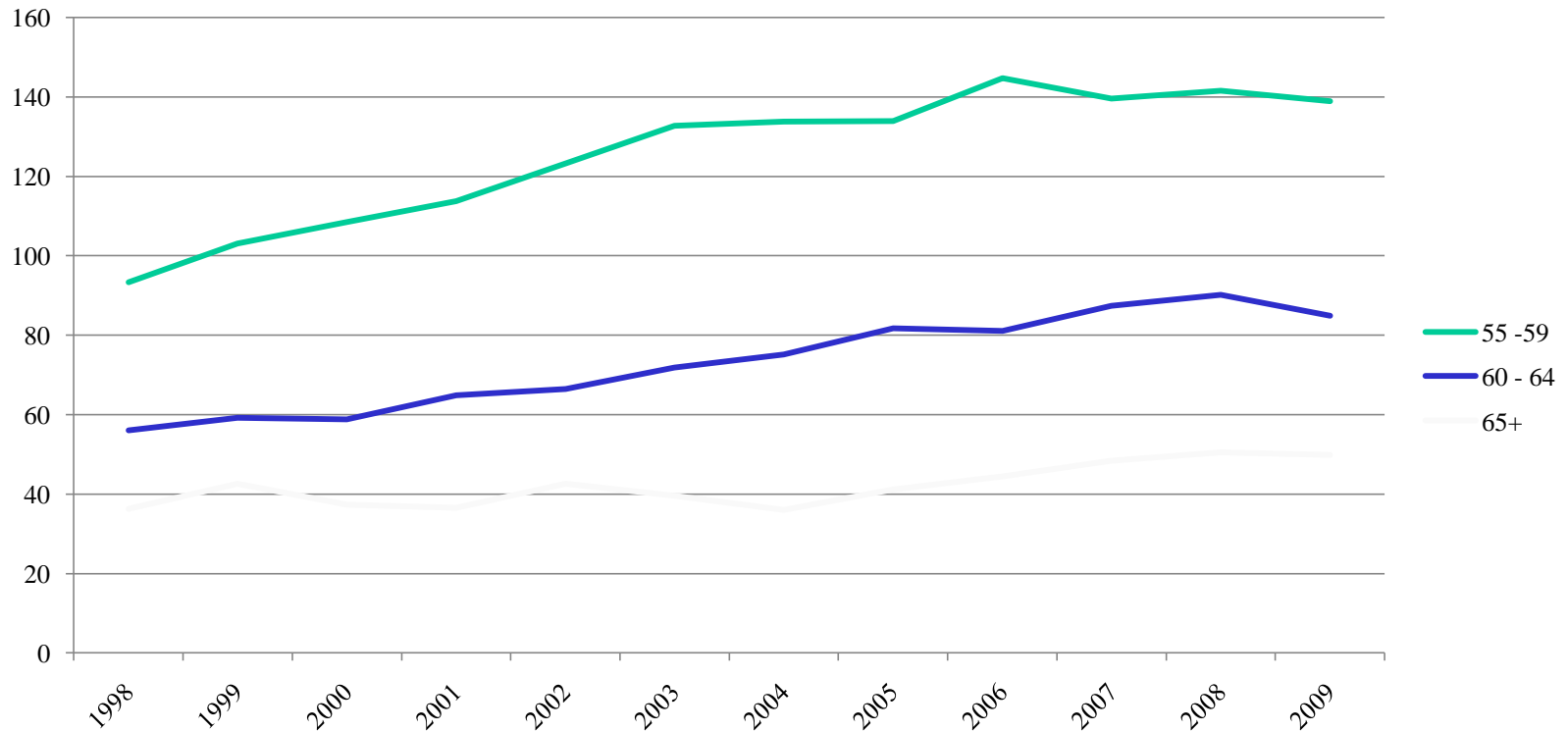


Reason for Fluctuations in Poverty Rate

- Very high number of older people dependent on fixed level state pension
- When the pension rate moves relative to the poverty threshold (e.g. 60% of median equivalised income), large numbers of people can appear to move out of or into poverty.
- Note also the variations between Irish and EU definitions: somewhat different income concepts and different equivalence scales

Older people and work

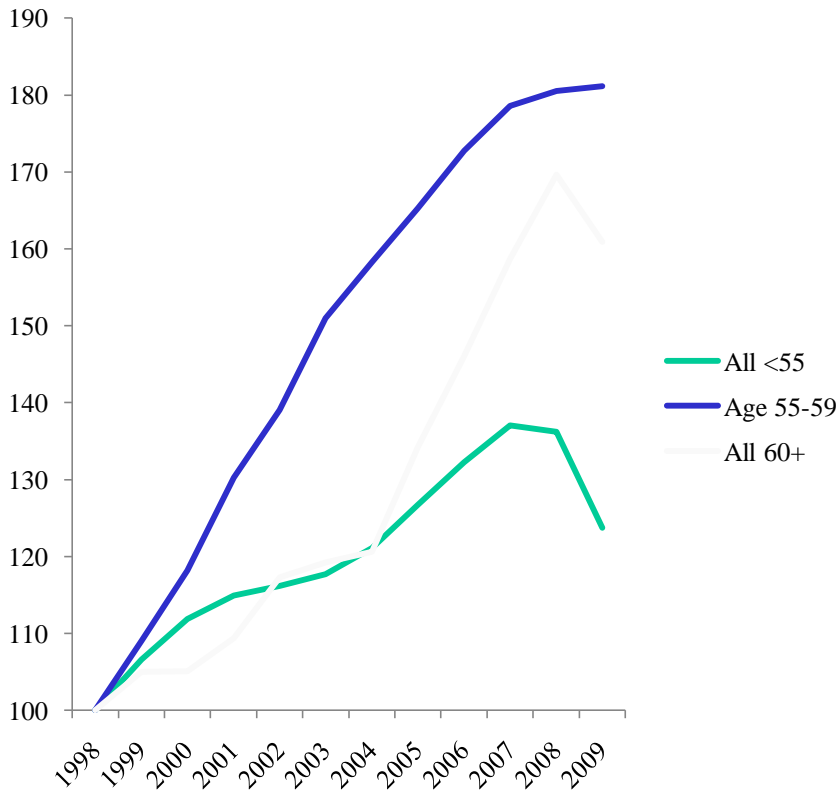
All Ireland numbers in work by age group (2nd Q) 000s



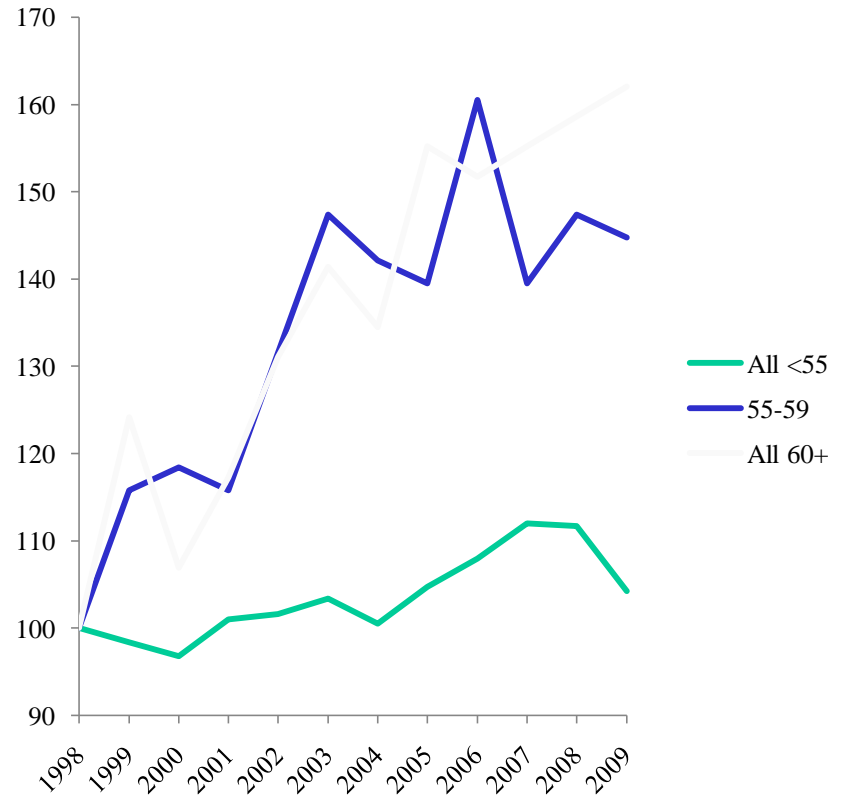
The increasing numbers in both jurisdictions very positive and consistent with OECD recommendations

Recession impact north and south

**RoI numbers in work by age group, 2nd Q
(1998=100)**

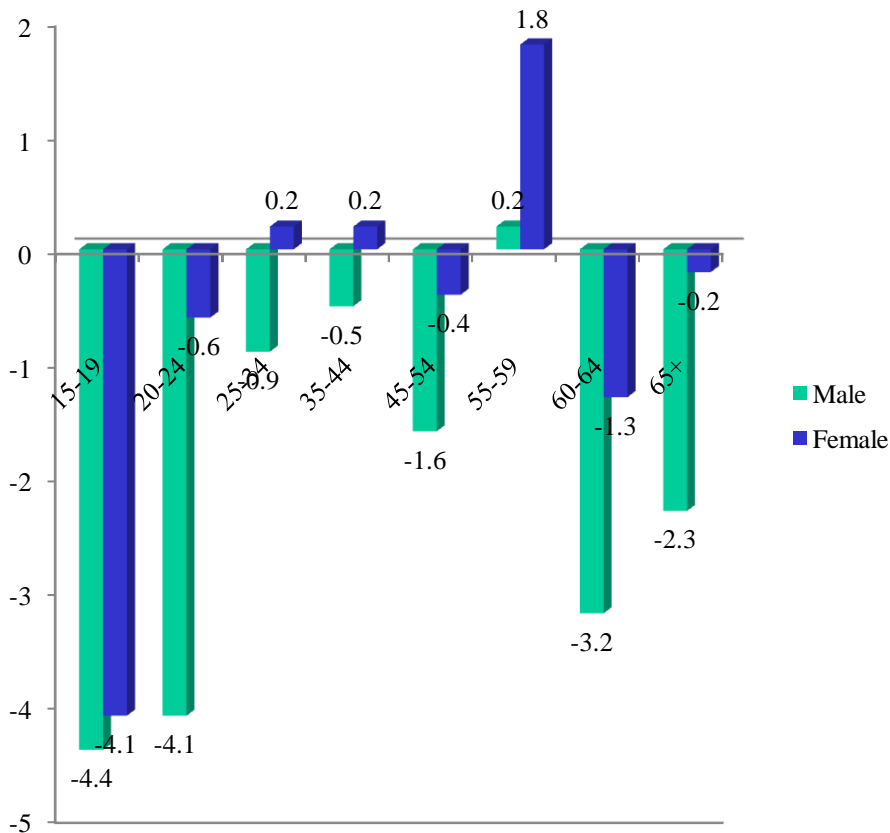


**NI numbers in work by age group, 2nd Q
(1998=100)**

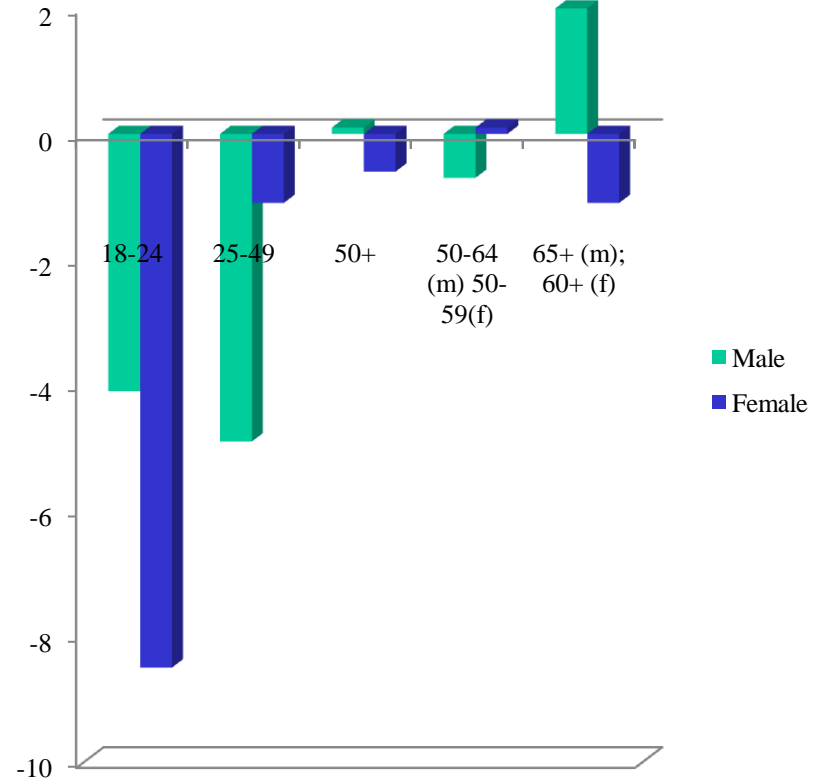


Impact of recession

RoI changes in participation rates 2008-09 by age and sex



NI changes in participation rates 2008-09 by age and sex



Recession Impact

- Interesting to note that :
 - Recession appeared to affect younger age groups most
 - Men more than women
- Probably affected by different impact on different sectors:
 - Private sector more than public
 - Especially strong impact on certain industries (construction, hospitality etc.)
- Consequences for older workers who do lose their jobs likely to be very serious – difficult for them to secure re-employment

Some Issues of Comparability

- Last section of the paper lists many topics on which comparable data not available
- Useful agenda for the future
- Note for instance huge discrepancy in relation to “carers aged 65 or over”. RoI Census gives a figure of 18,152. NI statistics show 22,000 in a population less than half that of the RoI!
- My own experience in relation to self-assessed health in the European Community Household Panel Survey was that Irish people evaluated their health much more positively than other nationalities. This is consistent with the data on self assessed health shown in the report