

# Industrialization in ireland

Economics



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When Ireland began to industrialize in the 1960s and 1970s, why did it mostly occur in rural Ireland and what were the consequences for the rural residence? Industrialisation in the 1960s and 1970s. When most people in the world think of Ireland, they imagine green fields with farm animals, old cottages, stone walls, rocky roads, people riding around on horse-back and men working in the bogs. However Ireland actually has one of the quickest fastest economies in the world. Rural Industrialisation played a huge role in this growth. Industrialisation is a very important part of Irish history.

It was a new beginning for the Irish people living in rural areas and it created a change in gender composition within the labour force. Women were now earning their own money from working in the factories, they were attending social events and they were more independent as they did not need permission from husbands, fathers or brothers to attend such events. It has been the catalyst of social change. However there were consequences that came with this new development that cannot be forgotten. Industrialisation began mainly in rural areas in the 1960s and 1970s.

Before it occurred, Mayo had the second highest percentage in population decline and the unemployment rates were seventy percent. It also had very high rates of poverty and emigration. A percentage of fifty six of the working population was in agriculture, a percentage of twenty nine worked in services and fifteen percent worked in industries. In 1996 the census showed that most of the male population worked in industry while sixteen percent of the female population worked in services. The main industrial areas at that time were Cork, Dublin, Waterford and Limerick.

In 1958, the civil servants decided protectionism was a failed strategy. They decided to set up the IDA as a source of employment. The multinational firms were set up post World War 2 in rural areas. They provided two thousand one hundred jobs throughout Irish rural areas and one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five of these jobs were held by women. The multinational companies chose rural areas in Ireland to set up their firms. They moved from core regions to peripheral regions because farmers were powerful in the 1950s therefore they could provide resources such as farm produce, tanning and spinning wool for the factories.

Because of that they located in areas such as Shannon and Mayo rather than the core region of Dublin. They wanted to employ women in these firms as they felt that women ‘naturally’ had a dexterity that men didn’t have. Men never engaged in those types of activities whereas women would have learned them from their mothers. Ireland at this time had low labour costs and export profit tax relief and this was very beneficial for the multinational firms. These factories like to be isolated so that they will have no connection with local areas except for a labour force and this was possible in rural areas.

Multinational firms are ‘footloose’, they can be located anywhere around the world. They have remained in Ireland since 1952 so that they can remain in the European loop. There were many consequences for the residence of these rural areas. The local politicians felt under pressure as their door was knocked on if there were any disputes with these multinational companies. Families went to politicians with their disputes, the politician would go to the IDA with the dispute, the IDA would investigate the dispute and inform the Taoiseach.

This became known as dependant industrialisation. There were consequences in households where women worked in the factories and the males roles were changing. The man of the house would do the washing up and the school run instead of the woman for the first time. Farm work was substantially lower for part time farmers than for full time farmers. This was due to part time farmers working full time in the industrial factories and working part time on the farm. This resulted in less labour intensive production on their farms.

Some families were also losing family members to work on the farms as half of the women who worked in these firms were from farming backgrounds and some of these women would move to Ballina during the weeks therefore they were unable to do farm until the weekends. This also affected family relationships as the women no longer experienced the world solely with their families. Women would usually be given land from their fathers to build a family home however with them now receiving their own wage from the factories some would build their houses elsewhere with their spouses to maintain their independence from their fathers. Their independence also caused family diversity on religious views as women weren't following the traditional Irish way of life. As they were not under supervision, they could travel to other towns to buy condoms, going against their religious faith. Diversity developed between the entrepreneurial middle class and the working class in the rural areas as there was differences in wages, education and jobs. This meant that the interclass was blurred creating a class-less society.

Hiring of women had some consequences for trade unions. Since the 1970s we have seen the increasing of trade unions militancy in the state sector leading to them declining in the private sector. This is because of their lack of attention to the needs and rights of the women working in these factories. Three ways the trade union could have provided for these women working in the factories are equal pay, creches and maternity leave. Creches were not seen as an important issue in the trade union. The mothers were also partly responsible for this issue.

There was a sense of shame felt by women who would bring their young children to work as it gave an impression of a neglected child with an uncaring mother. The ITGWU argued against the trade union in favour of providing creches in factories. The trade union argued that the women had not demanded creches therefore it was not an issue as far as they were concerned. The rights of Women were ignored within the trade union as they did not take their arguments seriously. Bargaining over sick pay, closed shop, holidays etc. had been seized.

A huge consequence to that affected the life of the women working in the factories was that there was no maternity leave, therefore they could either give up work permanently or leave for a few months and return. This effected women rights and they were often pressured by friends, relatives and husbands to give up work and raise the child after birth. Equal pay was another issue ignored by the trade union at this time. Men were receiving higher wages than women, even if both genders were doing the same job. Women are encouraged to attend ITGWU meetings regularly to become involved or they are sent to Dublin to do courses.

However the women have said that they are hardly ever told when they are holding a meeting or they are told at the end of work when they have to travel home and don't have the time to attend these meetings. Women think of themselves as the opposition of their fellow male workers and of the management in the factory. Women look at the union as an organisation that takes money from their wages while they get nothing in return. Although there were many consequences for the residence of these areas, there were some positive outcomes of industrialization. Women became more independent as they were making their own money.

They would give their earnings to the male 'breadwinner' and he would spend it on household goods. He would give her pin back money to spend on luxury goods. This began their lifestyle. They became the catalyst in the consumer society in the west of the Shannon. The demand was met by the opening of boutiques and the first record store in the west of the Shannon. Buying luxury goods was a celebration of their status. They could make their own decisions and go to the pub without the permission of their fathers, husbands etc. Another positive outcome was the sense of community felt by the women in the factories.

Women from the towns and the rural areas were mixing and they built strong friendships, this created their identity in society. Industrialization had a huge impact on the farmers of these areas. Before the industrialisation began farmers found it extremely difficult to take money from the banks for farming. However, when these women brought in wages a lot of the households that were between the multinational companies and farming were granted loans from banks and some of them began to open B&B's

which encouraged tourism in the area. Farmers became part-time farmers and full time multinational employees.

At certain times of the year the multinational companies would have some absentee employees because of lambing or calving seasons. The multinational companies eventually gave them an ultimatum and there was a decline in the farming sector. Industrialisation has been the catalyst for social change over last four decades. This influx of multinational organisations gave people, particularly women the opportunity to enjoy a lifestyle completely different to which they had experienced before, giving them independence from husbands, fathers, brothers, traditional responsibilities and their religion.

This growth and industrialisation ultimately caused the farming sector to decline because of the enticing luxurious lifestyle working at these multinational firms could offer the people, particularly women instead. Without the diversity which occurred over gender inequalities in these organisations, Irish people in rural areas may not be living the same lives they do today. Men may still receive higher wages than women, women may still be forced to leave work to look after children at pre-school level and maternity leave may still not be available to women.

The class-less society has a positive outcome which can be seen throughout Ireland today. People form friendship with all classes of people and there is less controversy over education, wages and professions. Although industrialisation had many consequences in the past, it has helped shape the Irish society we live in today. Bibliography: \* Lecture Notes: 23/10/2012 \* Slater, E. 2012, Lecture Notes: 23/10/2012 \* Slater, Eamonn. 2012. <https://assignbuster.com/industrialization-in-ireland/>

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