

The Roscommon Commuter Survey was designed to survey the attitudes of Roscommon people working in Dublin who came home at the week-ends. The questionnaire administered of its nature had to be simple and set out to discover some of the salient characteristics of these travellers. It did not sample Roscommon people living in Dublin who did not travel back by CIE. A study by Nóirín Ní Bhroin some years ago showed that over two-thirds of typists interviewed in the Civil Service offices who came from outside Dublin would have preferred employment in their home areas. Such a finding is an additional ingredient in any interpretation of the present survey.

The first characteristic recorded showed that 53 of the 227 respondents were male and 174 female so that girls were more prone to travel home by CIE. This could mean that girls were less likely to drive cars, that marriage prospects were perceived to be better for them in a home environment or that they felt closer to their families, or found Dublin more lonely at week-ends than men. It could even mean that when boys leave Roscommon they go further than Dublin or perhaps that fewer boys leave than girls. If we knew more about these facts we would know what the finding signifies. As it stands whatever the reason 3 girls travelled home for every boy.

The second characteristic recorded their home location. A variety of methods could be used to analyse this datum. One would be nearness to CIE travel facilities which could determine whether CIE was used rather than a car or perhaps difficulty of reaching home might deter children from frequent travelling. The dichotomy used by Fogarty, who made the preliminary analysis, was to classify people in urban and rural dwellers but other breakdowns are possible if anyone has a reason to believe that different locations would indicate different attitudes or behavioural patterns. The coding used was by District Electoral Division. The classification showed 5 out of 9 came from towns and 4 from rural districts. This could reflect the relative distribution of young populations in Roscommon or it could reflect the CIE links with Dublin which would be better in towns. It could also mean that more townspeople left Roscommon for Dublin than rural people. It might mean that townspeople have a greater tendency to go back. To know more about this we would need to know the answer to some of the other questions.

The third characteristic was the age group of the travellers. Four categories were included on the questionnaire. Under 20 years, 20 - 30 years, 30 - 40 years, over 40 years. The results obtained showed only 3 were over 30 years. By that age the majority had presumably ceased to travel regularly having settled in Dublin or were earning enough to travel by car. We do not know. The two older categories were redundant. If the study was being done again a finer breakdown between 16 years and 26 years might have been more revealing because many of the "older" travellers might have been only 21 or 22 rather than 28 or 29. As the matter stood slightly more than half were over 20 but under 30. The rest were under 20 years of age.

Questions 4 and 5 sought to determine the frequency of travelling and could have been asked as one question. Fogarty classified the answers into 4 groups. Those who came practically every week-end. Those who came about every two months. Those who came about four times a year and those who travelled about twice a year. Three-quarters (172) of the travellers came every week-end and about half of the remainder (29) four times a year. Eleven came every two months and 15 every six months.

If we assume that every week-end 15 came home who only come twice a year so that it is a different 15 each time, then over a six month period there would be 390 people in this category who will have come home. This means that the answers given by the 15 in the sample should be multiplied by 26 on the assumption that they are representative of those who only make it back to Roscommon twice a year. Similar weighting factors need also to be applied to those who come home every two and every three months, i. e., multiplying by 8 and 13. When this is done their answers can be compared with those who come every week-end on a total population basis.

To illustrate this in more detail if we assume that the enquiry picked up all those on buses and trains on the particular Sunday then we get the following picture:

| Travel frequency | Respondents | Percentage of those who travel at stated frequency | Total population |
|-------------------|-------------|--|------------------|
| Every week-end | 172 | 100% | 172 |
| Six times a year | 11 | 1 in 8 | 88 |
| Four times a year | 29 | 1 in 13 | 377 |
| Two times a year | <u>15</u> | 1 in 26 | <u>390</u> |
| | 227 | | 1,027 |

In other words in six months 1,027 different individuals will travel. Any Sunday an enquiry would pick up all the 172 who travel all the time, a different 11 of the 88 that make it every two months, etc., ... If the enquiry sampled, say, every fourth traveller, then 4,108 are assumed to travel: 1,027 x 4, and so on. If we want to study all the 1,027 and know about them the weightings of the less frequent travellers are essential to apply for an accurate assessment.

Question 6 asks about the employers' location. It turns out that all but 10 work in Dublin - 162 in the city centre, 56 in the suburbs and six in the county. Eight work in other counties and two failed to answer. Perhaps this reflects the destination of the CIE trains and buses sampled. Replies to this question could have been analysed in more depth because many respondents gave very full replies - such as Dublin Corporation, Irish Life HQ, Department of Posts and Telegraphs. However not all did so because the question did not require it. A look through the individual replies might reveal differences in attitudes, e.g., between civil servants and commercial employees. The County Development Team might also be more interested in civil servants because their location might be more amenable to political influence.

Question 7 asks about the length of time at work in this employment. It might have been more interesting to ask the length of time since the person first left Roscommon. Perhaps not so many civil servants would have changed jobs but other people would be more mobile, e.g., building workers. It turns out that the replies are as follows:

Length of time in Job

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Less than half a year | 52 | } 125 (55%) |
| Less than one year | 45 | |
| About one year | 28 | |
| About two years | 48 | |
| Three to six years | 33 | |
| Seven to eight years | 14 | |
| Nine to eleven years | 11 | |
| | <hr/> 227 | |

This could give some clues to the ages of those travelling since we know broadly that only three were over 30 and most emigrants leave at particular ages.

Question 8 asks about the type of work and it turns out that 144 are in clerical jobs and 25 at nursing. 15 described themselves as professionals and only 5 as students. The pattern, of course, would differ by the sex of the respondents as the table below shows.

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> | <u>Total</u> | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Manual | 5 | 3 | 8 | |
| Craftsman | 9 | 1 | 10 | |
| Technician | 4 | 7 | 11 | |
| Clerical | 26 | 118 | 144 | } 62% |
| Telephonist | 1 | 15 | 16 | |
| Student | 4 | 1 | 5 | |
| Professional | 5 | 10 | 15 | |
| Nursing | 1 | 24 | 25 | |
| | <hr/> 55 | <hr/> 179 | <hr/> 234 | |

When asked (Question 9) if they'd be interested in working in Roscommon two out of 3 said Yes: 152 for, 75 against; 5 undecided and 2 didn't answer. This finding corresponds with Nóirin Ní Bhroin's finding on typists.

The final question asked whether the person concerned had other unmarried members of the family working in Ireland but outside Roscommon. If so, they were asked the number involved, their sex and occupation. This question could pick up the non travelling family of those interviewed. It could also pick up some of those

who travel less frequently and who were represented by the sample of such less frequent travellers. The results for the respondents were as follows:

| | <u>Brothers</u> | <u>Sisters</u> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | (a) | (b) |
| Those with no brothers or sisters | 172 | 165 |
| Those with 1 brother or 1 sister | 42 | 49 |
| Those with 2 brothers or 2 sisters | 12 | 13 |
| Those with 3 brothers or 3 sisters | 6 | 5 |
| Those with 4 brothers or 4 sisters | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> |
| | 234 | 234 |

Of the 234 interviewed 172 had no single brothers outside Roscommon and 165 had no single sisters. Associated with the total group of respondents were 94 brothers and 98 sisters. In other words for every five interviewed there were 4 others single and living outside Roscommon. If these replies were randomly distributed this would mean 880 others apart from the 1,072 estimated earlier. This figure of 880 would be reduced if these brothers and sisters were actually interviewed on a separate bus or train that weekend or if they were represented by the sample of the less frequent travellers. The actual number could be also estimated more precisely by weighting the replies by the frequency that the respondent travelled. Suppose that those who had no brothers or sisters outside the county were more inclined to come back each weekend then we could look at each return and weight it. Suppose the 15 who came back every six months contained the two who had 5 brothers outside Roscommon then those 10 brothers would be multiplied by 26 i. e. 260 to give the number of brothers in such families in the total families of travellers. If the answer was given by those who travel each weekend only 10 brothers would be estimated in such 5 brother situations. I didn't go to the trouble of weighting the replies to make an accurate estimate but if it was felt that such information would be useful it would be a few minutes work for the computer.

The computer calculated the occupations of these family members as follows:

| | <u>Brothers</u> | <u>Sisters</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Manual | 11 | 3 |
| Craftsman | 18 | 2 |
| Technician | 8 | 3 |
| Clerical | 20 | 40 |
| Telephonist | - | 9 |
| Students | 7 | 6 |
| Professional | 25 | 14 |
| Nursing | <u>1</u> | <u>17</u> |
| | 90 | 94 |

These brothers and sisters were less likely to be clerical workers or telephonists. More of the brothers were professional and more of the sisters nurses or professionals. We do not know, however, what their attitudes to Roscommon would be.

II. Cross Tabulations

Having set out the profile of the respondents we can now proceed to ask questions about them. If we assume that the basic interest is whether they would return to Roscommon or not we can ask who is interested and who is not. A great variety of questions would be asked.

1. Are those who come home most often the most interested?

The table shows up as follows:

| <u>Travelling</u> → | Every week | Every 2 mths | Every 3 mths | Every 6 mths | Total |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Interested | 126 | 3 | 13 | 10 | 152 |
| Not interested | 46 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 75 |
| Total | 172 | 11 | 29 | 15 | 227 |

If we look at a blank table of totals as follows:

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|----|----|----|-----|
| Interested | - | - | - | - | 152 |
| Not interested | - | - | - | - | 75 |
| Total | 172 | 11 | 29 | 15 | 227 |

we would expect the missing values to be as follows if there was no relationship:-

| | | | |
|-----|---|----|----|
| 115 | 7 | 19 | 10 |
| 57 | 4 | 10 | 5 |

This would make all proportions equal.

In fact we find that 6% more of those who come home each week are interested than we would have expected. Those who come home every 6 months are as we would have expected. Forty come home every 2 or 3 months. We expected 26 to be interested but only 16 were. This response was 25% less than we expected. Statistically then there is a significant relationship between the frequency of coming home and the level of interest in getting a job in Roscommon. This result is not surprising. It is however one of the few results that stood up to the statistical testing.

If we are interested in the 1027 (weighted) population of travellers then the infrequent travellers would need weighting and we would get a different table

| <u>Travelling</u> → | Every week | 2 mths | 3 mths | 6 mths | Total |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Interested | 126 | 24 | 169 | 260 | 579 |
| Not interested | 46 | 64 | 208 | 130 | 448 |
| | 172 | 88 | 377 | 390 | 1027 |

This suggests a ratio of 5 out of 9 who travel at any time who would prefer a local job.

2. Does interest in Roscommon relate to the length of time in current employment? The answer is given in Page 5 appended and is "not really" as far as the statistical tests go.

Duration of Current Employment

| | Less than 6 mths | 6-12 mths | 1 year | 2 years | 3-6 years | 7-8 years | 9-11 years | Total |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| Interested | 36 | 29 | 18 | 30 | 24 | 8 | 7 | 152 |
| Not interested | 16 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 75 |
| Total | 52 | 45 | 28 | 48 | 33 | 14 | 7 | 227 |

All those in long term employment are interested and 3% more recently employed than expected but in between from 6mths to 2 years the level of interest is somewhat below average 64% vs. average 67%. In other words the fact that they come home frequently is more important than how long it was since they left home. In all cases the interest in returning is high.

3. Does the age of the respondent change the picture? Emphatically No. Those over 20 years are as keen as younger commuters. (Page 6).
4. Do girls show more interest than boys? No. More boys (74%) were interested than girls (65%) but then there were 3 times as many girls in the survey. Boys who travel back want to return but few boys travel back so what about those who don't? As it stands the difference shown in boys' attitudes is not significantly different from that of girls.
5. Do more commuters from rural areas prefer to return? The results show 72% of the 100 rural dwellers are interested as against 63% of the 121 urban dwellers. The computer is not terribly excited about this result which it reckons could have happened by chance one time in five. It does show a slight preference among rural people but not a statistically significant one.
6. Does the job being done make a difference?

| | Interested | | Not Interested | Total |
|--------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Actual | Expected | Actual | |
| Manual | 7 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Craftsmen | 6 | 7 | 4 | 10 |
| Technicians | 5 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Clerical | 97 | 95 | 45 | 142 |
| Telephonist | 12 | 11 | 4 | 16 |
| Student | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Professional | 7 | 10 | 8 | 15 |
| Nursing | <u>15</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>24</u> |
| Total | 152 | 152 | 75 | 227 |

You can see that the difference of the actual from the expected is small. Where

the percentage is large e.g. more manual workers and fewer professionals are interested the numbers asked were so few as to make too much emphasis on the result unadvisable.

In general then all these factors do not appear to change the basic attitudes of commuters. If they come home frequently they are likely to be more interested. 73% of weekly commuters as against 40% of two to three month commuters. However 67% of half yearly commuters are also interested. Since frequency of visiting is an index of interest it could be interesting to discover what the profile of frequent commuters looks like.

7. Do more younger commuters come back every week? Yes. Of the 113 commuters under 20 years of age 81% come back each week. 4%, 8% and 6% approximately come back at intervals of 2, 3 and 6 months respectively. Over 20 years 71% come back each week with 5%, 17% and 7% returning less frequently. Broadly speaking over 20, 10% fewer come back each week and 10% more return every 3 months. The percentages at 2 months and 6 months are broadly the same for both groups.
8. Do more of the boys travel tend to come each week? No. 64% of the boys come regularly but 80% of the girls. The patterns of return for the 36% of the boys who do not return each week and for the 20% of the girls who also do not are the same. 55% come each 3 months, 25% each 6 months and 20% every 8 weeks. However the answers to this question are clearly only approximations and have been aggregated for the purposes of the analysis. Those coming every six weeks are included with the 2 month group because the numbers would otherwise be too few.
9. Does occupation influence the frequency of visiting? So many are clerks and telephonists the results are not easy to interpret for small groups. A matrix of the actual and expected numbers by occupation and frequency of visit would be as follows:

| Travelling | Each Week | Up to 2 mths | 2-3 mths | Every six monthly or less frequently | Total |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|----------|---|-------|
| Manual | 5 (6) | 2 (-) | 1 (1) | - (1) | 8 |
| Craftsmen | 7 (8) | - (-) | 3 (1) | - (1) | 10 |
| Technicians | 9 (8) | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | - (1) | 11 |
| Clerical | 113 (110) | 6 (7) | 15 (18) | 10 (9) | 144 |
| Telephonist | 14 (11) | 1 (1) | - (2) | 1 (1) | 16 |
| Student | 4 (4) | - (-) | - (1) | 1 (-) | 5 |
| Professional | 8 (11) | 1 (1) | 4 (2) | 2 (1) | 15 |
| Nurse | 18 (19) | - (1) | 6 (3) | 1 (2) | 25 |
| Total | 178 (178) | 11 (11) | 30 (30) | 15 (15) | 234 |

The figures in the parentheses give the pattern if each occupation had the same

pattern as the average. For example 8 manual workers were interviewed. Not knowing we would have expected 6 to come home every week but found 5 did so. Otherwise we would have expected none travelling at up to 2 months intervals, 1 every 2 to 3 months and 1 every six months or so. The pattern we expected was 0, 1, 1 and that recorded was 2, 1, 0. Given the small number involved this was not a great divergence. Even among the 144 clerks the expected and actual did not in any case differ by more than 3. The general impression is that occupation does not influence the frequency at which people make visits home.

- III. If desired more complex studies can be made of the data. Instead of asking whether boys are interested in coming back or whether boys have been working longer outside Roscommon than of girls we could ask whether boys who have left Roscommon recently are more interested than girls with the same experience or than boys who left earlier. This combines the influence of sex and duration of employment outside Roscommon with interest in returning. This makes for a more complex table.

| Every Week | Interested | Duration of Current Employment | | | | | | Total |
|--------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| | | $<\frac{1}{2}$ year | $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3-6 years | 7-11 years | |
| <u>Boys</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | Yes | 12 (7) | 5 | 3 | 3 (6) | 4 | 2 | 29 |
| Yes | No | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 4 |
| No | Yes | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | - | 1 | 10 |
| No | No | 2 | 2 | 4 (1) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | | 18 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 53 |
| <u>Girls</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | Yes | 21 | 19 | 13 | 21 | 14 | 10 | 98 |
| Yes | No | 8 | 10 (7) | 3 (5) | 10 (8) | 3 (5) | 3 | 37 |
| No | Yes | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 (1) | 2 | 15 |
| No | No | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 24 |
| Total | | 34 | 36 | 19 | 40 | 27 | 18 | 174 |
| All | | 52 | 45 | 28 | 48 | 33 | 21 | 227 |

It would be confusing to include all the expected values on the table. Instead some of the more striking deviations are entered. The first row gives 29 boys who come home every week and who are interested in a Roscommon job. A priori we would have expected that 7 of these boys would have been working for less than six months. It turns out that 12 of them were in this category. So recent leavers of Roscommon are more numerous than we expected among the boys who return each week. Only 3 boys who returned took up their employment about 2 years ago. Eight out of nine boys who travel each week are

interested in a job in Roscommon and in this group there is a tendency for the boys to be engaged more recently in their current employment than was usual in the survey. Recent leavers were not different in their enthusiasm for local jobs than the rest of the boys who frequently visited home. Boys who travel less frequent were evenly divided in their interest in a job at home.

Among the girls 73% of those who came home every week were interested in Roscommon jobs. The pattern of the duration of current employment of these 98 girls was identical with the general pattern of the survey which is not surprising, given that they constituted 43% of the total.

37 girls came home each weekend but nevertheless did not wish for a job at home. Half this group had took up their current employment less than a year ago. There was a tendency for girls who were longer away and who came back frequently to be more interested in returning permanently. Girls who did not return each week clearly were less interested in returning. Only 15 out of 39 expressed a wish for local employment. An exception to this rule were the 10 girls whose current employment began 3 to 6 years ago. The six who recorded an interest were more numerous than expected from the general structure of the survey. Only one girl was expected to be in this category. Of the ten 60% were interested in returning against a background of 40% interest among infrequent girl commuters. The total number of girls interested in Roscommon jobs but infrequent travellers was small. These girls tended to be in their current jobs two years or more. Girls who were in the current jobs a year or less and who did not make it regularly back to Roscommon were clearly not interested in returning. Almost three quarters said No.

A similar table can be made up where occupation, rather than length of current employment, is the focus of interest.

| Visit —————→ | <u>Boys</u> | | | | <u>Girls</u> | | | | Total |
|-------------------|-------------|----|------------|----|--------------|----|------------|----|-------|
| | Frequent | | Infrequent | | Frequent | | Infrequent | | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| Interested —————→ | | | | | | | | | |
| Manual | 2 | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 8 |
| Craftsmen | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 10 |
| Technician | - | 1 | - | 2 | 5 | - | - | - | 8 |
| Clerks | 18 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 66 | 24 | 10 | 16 | 142 |
| Telephonists | 1 | - | - | - | 10 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 16 |
| Student | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Professional | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 15 |
| Nurses | 1 | - | - | - | 11 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 24 |
| Total | 29 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 98 | 37 | 15 | 24 | 227 |

Seven of the eight manual workers were interested irrespective of whether they were frequent visitors or not. Craftsmen were less favourably disposed if they were not regular commuters. No male technician was interested whereas all female ones were. These categories were small. Half the boys were clerks. Those who came home regularly were overwhelmingly in favour of local employment. Less frequent commuters were slightly disposed the other way. Two thirds of the girls were clerks. Of these almost 80% were regular commuters and 75% of them favoured Roscommon. The less frequent visitors were clearly in favour of Dublin in 3 out of 5 cases. Most telephonists in the survey were girls who went home each weekend and were decidedly in favour of jobs at home. The few students recorded shared the same outlook. Four of the five male professionals recorded would go back to Roscommon but the females were clearly on the other side. 70% were against moving back. Nurses by and large tended to be somewhat less favourable towards coming back to Roscommon than the survey average. Frequent commuter nurses were less enthusiastic than girl clerks but the less frequent visitors were more favourable. Given the rota arrangements for nurses they would tend to find it difficult to travel each weekend. Both these tables would look differently if the infrequent visitors were weighted by the number of weeks between visits. The small number in the cells could, however, put a lot of strain on the representativeness of the survey findings.

To sum up the best index of interest in Roscommon is obviously what the lawyers call the *animus revertendi* - the tendency to go back frequently. Other characteristics tend to influence this tendency very little. Of the total travellers the majority are girls and the predominant occupation is clerical. The findings tend to confirm Níirin Ní Bhroin's finding that the majority of Dublin-employed non-Dubliners initially at least would prefer to have been able to remain in employment locally where their roots are.

| Appendix | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Question | Variables | | Chi Square * | Degree of Freedom | Significance | Missing Observations | Printout Page No. |
| | 1 | x 2 | | | | | |
| 1 | Interest | Frequency | 17.335 | 3 | 0.0006 | 7 | 4 |
| 2 | " | Duration of Work | 5.332 | 6 | 0.5020 | 7 | 5 |
| 3 | " | Age | 0.0* | 1 | 1.0000 | 7 | 6 |
| 4 | " | Sex | 1.009* | 1 | 0.3152 | 7 | 7 |
| 5 | " | Home Address ⁺ | 1.696* | 1 | 0.1929 | 13 | 8 |
| 6 | " | Occupation | 5.526 | 7 | 0.5961 | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | Frequency | Age | 4.892 | 3 | 0.1799 | 0 | 11 |
| 8 | " | Sex | 6.169 | 3 | 0.1037 | 0 | 12 |
| 9 | " | Occupation | 26.550 | 21 | 0.1863 | 0 | 10 |

⁺ Rural or urban based on DED.

* Corrected Chi square given in this case.