

a new paradigm, kinship by design, and then distancing that paradigm from modes of family formation that relied on commerce, sentiment, intuition, accident, or simply common sense. Advocates of this new paradigm were social welfare, human science, and public policy professionals located in the U.S. Children's Bureau, the Child Welfare League of America, and elsewhere. They faced stubborn resistance from the public and succeeded only partially in subjecting adoption to new forms of practical authority, such as agency regulation and legal standardization. Yet their moral vision of family-making—an operation so systematic and saturated in knowledge that risks would be minimized and outcomes improved—helped to move childhood and kinship into the public sphere, pry a significant measure of power away from parents, and transfer decisions previously considered beyond the legitimate reach of state power to representatives of government and allied helping professions. Kinship by design also popularized child adoption and increased its cultural visibility.

Abstract: Moira J. Maguire “Foreign Adoptions and the Evolution of Irish Adoption Policy, 1945–52”

In recent years it has become increasingly common for childless couples from the U.S. and Western Europe to look overseas—to Eastern Europe and Asia—to adopt the “unwanted” children that are no longer so readily available for adoption at home. In Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century the fact that Irish couples are enthusiastic participants in this “trade” has been juxtaposed with the stark and unpalatable reality that, as late as the 1960s, thousands of healthy Irish children were sent to the United States for adoption because they were illegitimate and thus “unwanted” at home. Until the 1952 Adoption Act provided for the legal transfer of parental rights from biological to adoptive parents, the only alternative to an institutional existence or an insecure boarding-out arrangement for these unwanted children was adoption by foreign, primarily American, families. From the early 1940s to the mid-1960s thousands of Irish children were sent abroad under an informal (and probably illegal and unconstitutional) adoption scheme. This article examines the story of Ireland’s overseas adoption scheme, and the evolution of Ireland’s adoption policy in the 1940s and 1950s, and is part of a twentieth-century Irish social history that has for the most part been neglected by historians.

Abstract: Richard Jensen, “‘No Irish Need Apply’: A Myth of Victimization”

Irish Catholics in America have a vibrant memory of humiliating job discrimination, which featured omnipresent signs proclaiming “Help Wanted—No Irish Need Apply!” No one has ever seen one of these NINA signs because they were extremely rare or nonexistent. The market for female household workers occasionally specified religion or nationality. Newspaper ads for women sometimes

did include NINA, but Irish women nevertheless dominated the market for domestics because they provided a reliable supply of an essential service. Newspaper ads for men with NINA were exceedingly rare. The slogan was commonplace in upper class London by 1820; in 1862 in London there was a song, "No Irish Need Apply," purportedly by a maid looking for work. The song reached America and was modified to depict a man recently arrived in America who sees a NINA ad and confronts and beats up the culprit. The song was an immediate hit, and is the source of the myth. Evidence from the job market shows no significant discrimination against the Irish—on the contrary, employers eagerly sought them out. Some Americans feared the Irish because of their religion, their use of violence, and their threat to democratic elections. By the Civil War these fears had subsided and there were no efforts to exclude Irish immigrants. The Irish worked in gangs in job sites they could control by force. The NINA slogan told them they had to stick together against the Protestant Enemy, in terms of jobs and politics. The NINA myth justified physical assaults, and persisted because it aided ethnic solidarity. After 1940 the solidarity faded away, yet NINA remained as a memory.

Abstract: Lyndon Fraser, "To Tara via Holyhead: The Emergence of Irish Catholic Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Christchurch, New Zealand"

This paper explores the historical processes of becoming in the everyday social lives of Irish Catholic immigrants in nineteenth-century Christchurch, New Zealand. My central argument is that newcomers effected a transition to colonial life by creating and sustaining durable social networks based on ethnic ties which transcended pre-existing affiliations and represented a powerful means to domesticate a new environment. The formation of ethnic consciousness was a complex phenomenon shaped by the constantly evolving interaction of Old World forms, cultures and expressive symbols with colonial social settings. In Christchurch, ethnic identification turned upon a number of critical factors, including local opportunity structures, patterns of migration, external discrimination and intra-group conflict. Notwithstanding the diversity of outlooks and interests among the immigrants, religious identification offered a useful resolution of ethnic tensions and traditions, while ensuring the continuing vitality of a separate spiritual, educational and social life alongside the dominant local system. In this sense, "the shortest way to Tara was via Holyhead" because it led to the development of a shared identity that fused the potent elements of "Irishness" and "Catholicity."