

Integration or segregation? Social geographies of Ireland's Atlantic Gateways

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Despite its centrality in urban studies, residential segregation has received little attention to date from social scientists in Ireland. This is partly due to the relatively high degree of racial, ethnic and cultural homogeneity which prevailed until recently, and partly the result of data limitations, specifically the lack of small area data for urban areas. With the surge in immigration in the last decade, and the availability of Enumeration Area (EA) data for cities in the 2006 census, neither of these conditions continues to hold. This presentation reports the results of an analysis of census data for the cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, which together form Ireland's so-called 'Atlantic Gateways'. The analysis involves, first, the use of the Dissimilarity Index to measure cross-sectional (among cities) differences in the degree of segregation of social groups defined on the basis of race, and nationality, as well as social class, housing tenure, employment status, family composition, and educational attainment. Next the reliability of the results is checked with particular reference to the issue of scale dependency. Finally, a longitudinal analysis (at ED level) of trends in segregation since 1991 is presented for Limerick and Galway, the two cities for which some of the most pronounced differences in contemporary segregation levels are observed.