

Demographics and the changing face of Wales

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Presentation overview

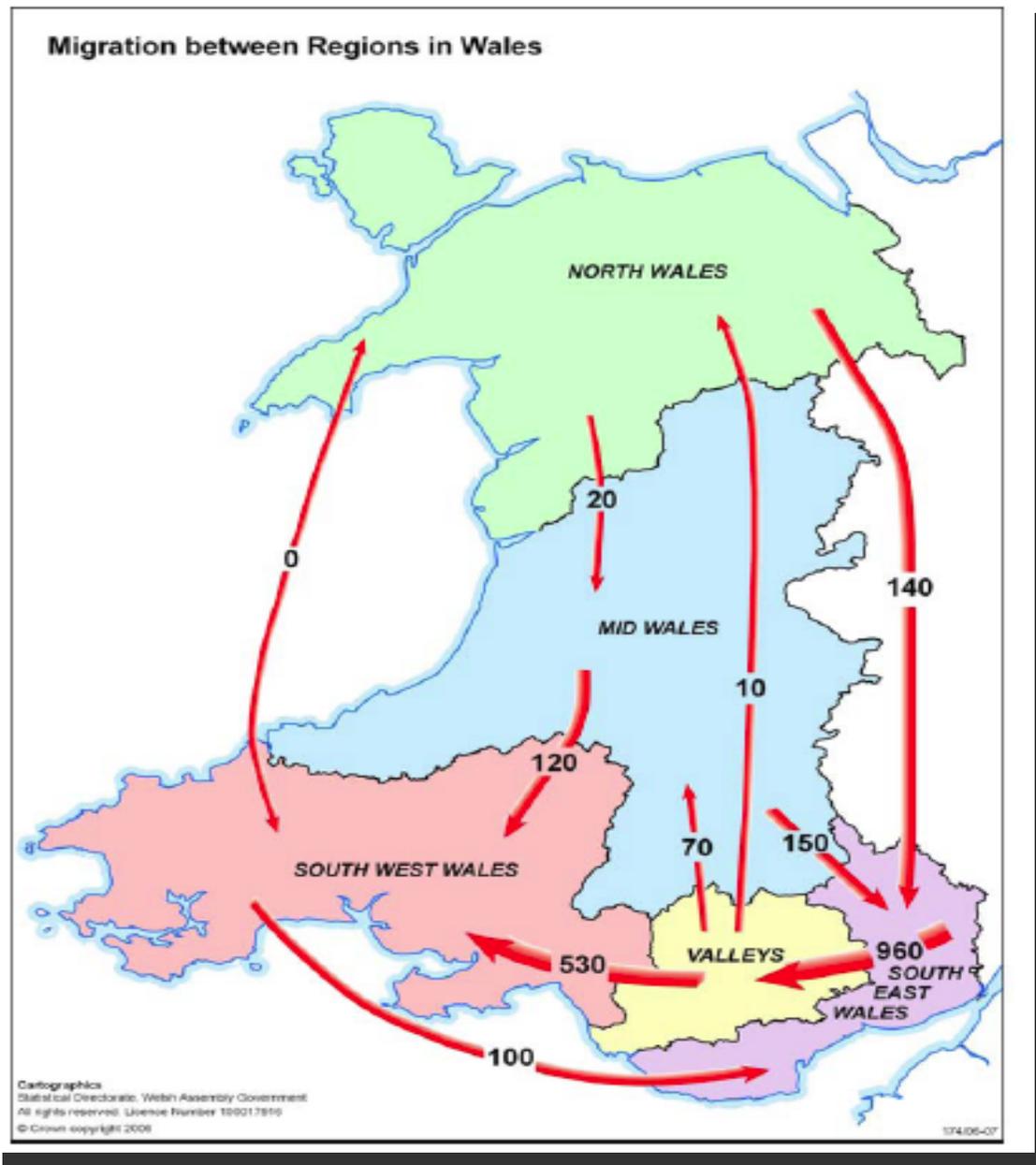
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Demographic trends and patterns

- Wales's population stood at 2.94 million in 2006 and is set to top 3 million in 2008
- 75% of those living in Wales at the time of the 2001 Census were born in Wales, with 20% born in England
- Wales continues to show a growth in population, most noticeably in recent years due to net inward migration from England. However, some local authorities within Wales have declining population levels due to low birth rates and the outward migration of young people
- Growth between 1981 and 2005 in North Wales, Central Wales and Pembrokeshire Haven was above the Welsh average, particularly so in Central Wales, but there was an overall fall in population in the Swansea Bay area, and below average growth in South East Wales
- Growth in South East Wales was not, however, uniformly distributed across the region, with marked falls in the Heads of the Valleys area, more than offset by significant growth in the City Coastal Zone.
- In 2005 there were 88 per cent more people aged 75 and over than in 1971

Internal migration

- Migration within Wales has no effect on the overall population but can be important in terms of local housing and labour markets
- Over the period year ending mid-2001 to year ending mid-2005 the South West and the Valleys were the only regions of the five in Wales to experience a net inflow of migrants from the other regions combined
- There was a net outward migration from the South West to Cardiff whilst the other three authorities in the South East experienced a net outflow of migrants to South West Wales
- Mid Wales had an average net outflow of migrants to both the South West and South East - predominantly in the 16 to 24 age group
- Despite having a net inflow of migrants from North, Mid and the South West, the South East had an average net outflow of around 570 people per year. This is due to a large outflow (960 people per year) over the period to the neighbouring Valley region



Source: Patient Register Data System reproduced by Statistics in Wales (2005)

National (cross-border) migration

- Wales has historically seen periods of considerable inward and outward cross-border migration. The second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries saw huge increases in the population of South Wales associated with employment opportunities in the coal industry (129,000 between 1901 and 1911). Conversely between 1919 and 1939 almost 500,000 people left the valley communities to look for work elsewhere
- England accounts for the majority of cross border migration movements to/from Wales. In the year ending June 2005, migration from England accounted for 96 per cent of all cross-border inward migration
- A high proportion of Welsh-born individuals also leave the country, with 22% of the Welsh-born population who lived in the UK in 2001 residing outside the country of their birth. This group includes a significant number of students and graduates who move around the UK to university and to pursue careers each year, leading to concerns about 'brain drain'
- Rates of outward migration to England have declined over recent years
- During the period 1981 to 2005, Wales's inflow of cross border migrants exceeded the outflow, creating a net flow of migrants from the rest of the UK

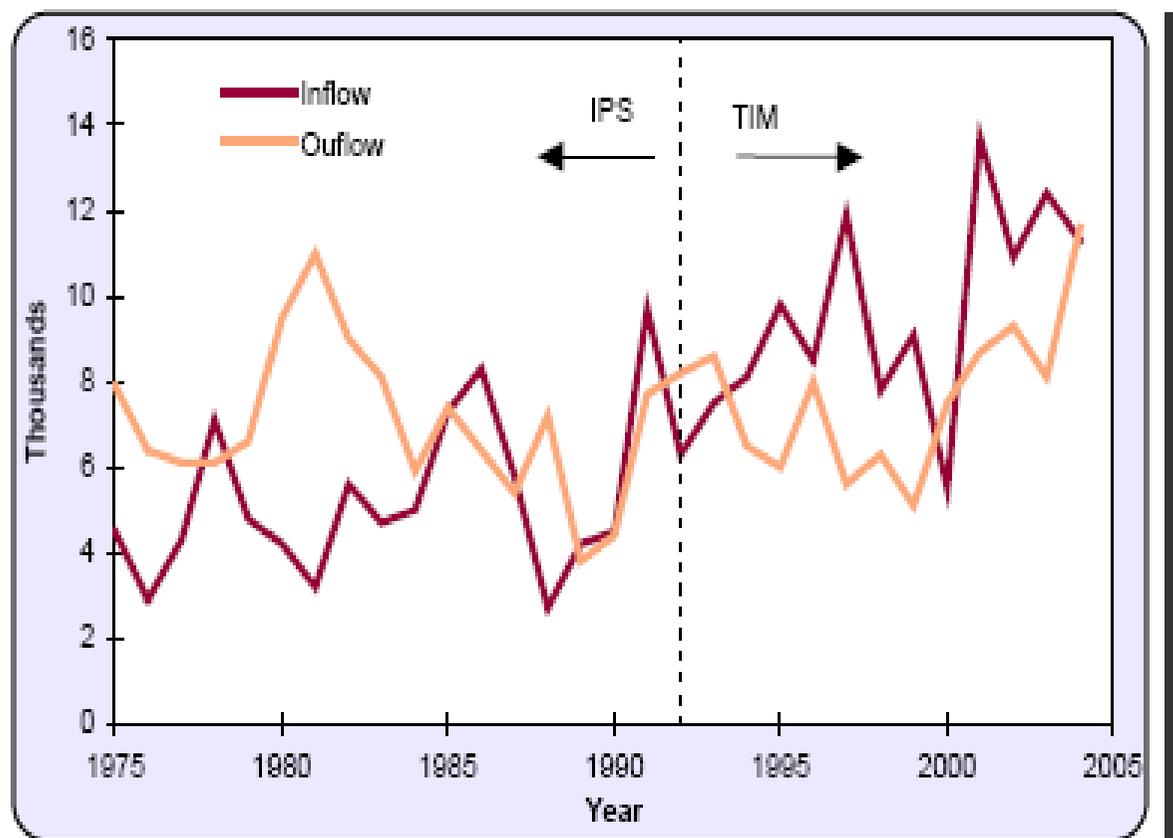
The global context

- Migration has been a significant and influential feature of human history
- The dynamics of international migration have been transformed by the process of globalisation
- At the global level, international migrants numbered 191 million in 2005
- The number of international migrants has doubled in the past 25 years, although as a proportion of the world's total population it remains rather modest, at around three per cent
- In 2005 there were just over 9 million refugees globally but a further 10 million internally displaced people. Pakistan hosts the largest number (11% of the total number of refugees worldwide)
- Almost half (48.6%) of all migrants are women, a growing proportion of whom are migrating independently
- Human mobility is not only becoming larger in scope and scale, but also increasingly complex

International migration

- International migration to and from Wales is nothing new. There has been Welsh emigration to the Americas, Patagonia and Canada since the 17th century. In the 1880s Somali seamen were drawn to Cardiff to work in the docks and the city is now host to the largest British-born Somali population in the UK
- On average, between 1975 and mid-2004 nearly 7,500 people per year migrated from Wales to overseas destinations, while 7,100 people migrated into Wales from overseas destinations
- More recently (since 1994) there has been a net inflow of international migrants from abroad, with the exception of 2000 and 2004
- Since 2001 asylum seekers have been dispersed to Wales. Those arriving to date come from 78 different countries and speak at least 25 different languages
- Since May 2004 more than 16,000 migrants from Eastern Europe have registered to work in Wales (1% of total employment) with over half the applications in four local authority areas (Carmarthenshire, Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham)
- There are few (if any) signs of major adverse labour market effects in Wales but both the scale of future migration and its social, political and economic implications are complex and difficult to predict

International migration flows to Wales, 1974-2004



Source: Statistics for Wales 2005

Ethnic minorities and those 'born abroad'

- In 2001 just over 2% of the population of Wales said they belonged to an ethnic minority
- Only Cardiff and Newport had significantly more than 2% of their population made up of residents of minority ethnic background (8% and 5% respectively) In both cases Asian and Mixed were the most predominant ethnic backgrounds
- Within the UK, Wales has the lowest proportion of residents born abroad at 2.66% of the population. Although 23% more people born abroad lived in Wales in 2001 than in 1991, this still represents the slowest rate of change compared with other parts of Britain
- Cardiff, Swansea and some other areas like Wrexham have also seen change through the asylum dispersal system, although most of this happened after the census
- Regional differences → eleven areas of Wales have seen decreases in people born abroad. The Welsh valleys have the lowest numbers
- Before EU Accession, migrants from South Africa migrants were the single largest group coming to live in Wales

Population projections

- Population projections provide estimates of the future population and are based on assumptions about future fertility, life expectancy, national and international migration
- Population increases in Wales over the last twenty years have been increasingly driven by net migration from the rest of the UK and abroad. However, the inflow and outflow of migrants fluctuates from year to year, making it difficult to project the number of migrants in the future
- The population of Wales is projected to increase gradually from an estimated 2.95 million in mid-2004 to 3.20 million by 2024
- The total population is projected to increase in all regions between 2003 and 2023, with the greatest percentage increase being seen in South East Wales
- Part of this increase will result from increased life expectancy and part from increased national and international migration
- The population of Wales will gradually become older with the median age of the population rising from 40.2 years in 2004 to 43.6 years by 2024
- By 2026 about 29% of people in Wales will be over 60 years old

Challenges for the future...

- Demographic change and the unprecedented global movement of people seeking protection, employment and family reunion poses economic, social and political opportunities and challenges
- As is the case for much of the Western world, population projections for Wales indicate an ageing population, with implications for service planning and provision
- We can expect an increase in dependants compared to those of working age with potentially more benefits being claimed and fewer people paying taxes
- In some areas of Wales the net out-migration of younger individuals and net inflow of older and retired individuals, will exacerbate the general ageing of the workforce, and may have significant implications for the dynamism of local labour markets
- In other areas, inward migration to meet labour market demands and economic growth will create challenges for integration and social and community cohesion, the delivery of public services and local housing markets

...and opportunities to be grasped

- At present the Welsh workforce numbers around 1.3 million and the working age population is projected to increase by a further 105,000 over the next decade
- Growing numbers of young people are in further and higher education and formal work-based learning
- An educated and productive population is one of Wales's key competitive assets
- The UN's Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) recently concluded that the international community has failed to capitalise on the opportunities associated with international migration
- Migrants are often amongst the most dynamic and entrepreneurial members of society
- Migrants are not only employed in jobs that nationals are reluctant to do, but are also engaged in high-value activities that local people lack the skills to do
- Remittances play an essential role in sustaining national and local economies across much of the developing world

Implications for policy and politics

- Current and anticipated changes to the demographic structure, ethnic composition and mobility of the population of Wales clearly have implications for the planning and provision of public services as well as for economic growth and development and for social and community cohesion
- Understanding the ways in which the population of Wales has changed - and will change in the future - is key to many policy issues (health, housing, education, provision of social care, employment and training)
- Although the Welsh economy has been successful in the recent past in creating new jobs, greater attempts should be made to create high-value jobs and to implement development strategies which distribute such jobs across the country in order to retain and attract talented workers
- Need to encourage migration into the most deprived parts of Wales, for example, through educational, training and employment initiatives and reforms of the housing sector (which can impede mobility)

- Although the Welsh Assembly Government is not responsible for policy on immigration and asylum, it is responsible for many of the policies and services in Wales that can help support the social and economic integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers
- Just as importantly the Welsh Assembly Government has a vital role to play in building strong communities and improving understanding and communication between different groups
- The *politics* of managing the consequences of demographic change may prove critical in determining the direction and content of policy making
- The implications of demographic change in Wales need to be better understood through research, evaluation and policy analysis to ensure that policies are evidence-based and outward as well as forward looking
- *Ideas Wales* has an important role to play in generating this knowledge and understanding and in bringing together academics, policy makers, politicians and practitioners to respond to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead

Sources of information

Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) (2006) [Beyond Black and White: Mapping New Immigrant Communities](#). See also the BBC's [Born Abroad: An Immigration Map of Britain](#)

National Statistics (2005) [Focus on People and Migration](#)

Statistics for Wales (2006) [Wales's Population: A Demographic Overview 1971-2005](#)

Statistics for Wales (2007) [Statistics on Migrant Workers in Wales](#)

To find out more

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Or email migration@swansea.ac.uk

