

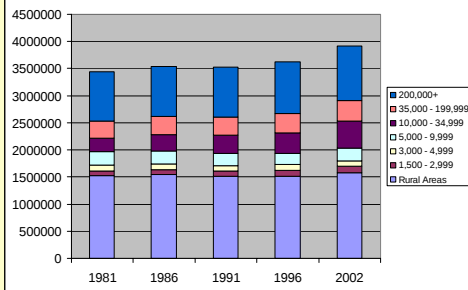
The Future of the Irish Urban System?

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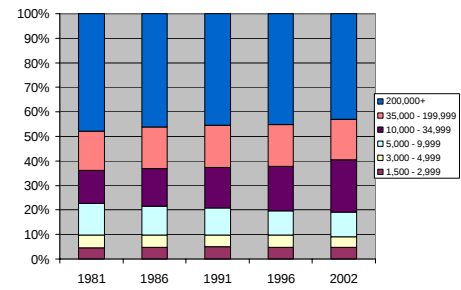
Structure of Presentation

- Recent trends in the Irish urban system
 - The size distribution
 - The spatial (regional) distribution
- Future development paths(?)

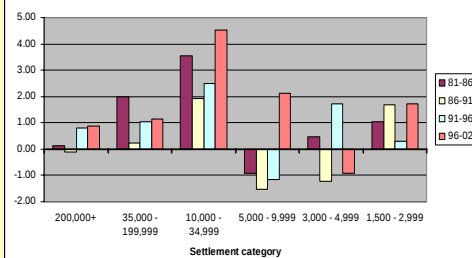
Population by Settlement Type 1981-2002



Urban Population Share 1981-2002



Annualised Inter-censal Growth Rates



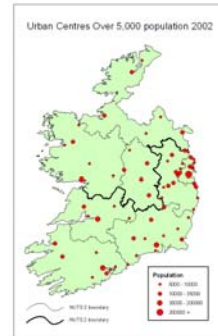
Number and Average Size of Centres 1981-2002

Size Category	No. of centres 1981	No. of centres 2002	Change in average size 1981-2002
200,000 +	1	1	9.78
35,000 – 200,000	4	4	25.86
10,000 – 35,000	16	28	10.37
5,000 – 10,000	35	33	0.35
3,000 – 5,000	27	25	7.19
1,500 – 3,000	40	53	-2.83

Summary Measures of Concentration in the Urban System (centres over 5,000 population)

Year	Primacy Ratio	Gini Coefficient	q value
1981	1.128	0.767	1.77
1986	1.046	0.755	1.72
1991	1.020	0.744	1.70
1996	1.006	0.736	1.69
2002	0.900	0.715	1.62

q value from the rank-size model: $P_r = k r^{-q}$

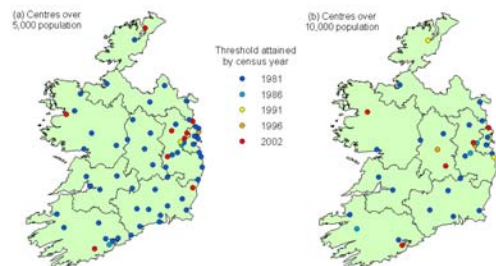


Density of Urban Centres by Region

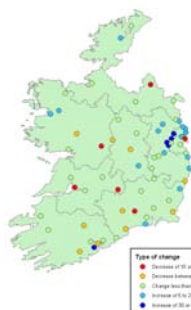


Region (NUTS 2 and NUTS 3)	No. of centres per 1,000 sq.kms:		
	All Centres > 5,000	Centres 5,000 – 10,000	Centres > 10,000
Border, Midland & Western Region	0.54	0.24	0.3
Border	0.57	0.24	0.32
Midland	0.75	0.15	0.60
West	0.42	0.28	0.14
Southern & Eastern Region	1.30	0.68	0.62
Dublin	7.60	3.26	4.34
Mid-East	2.64	1.32	1.32
Mid-West	0.61	0.36	0.24
South East	1.16	0.63	0.53
South West	0.74	0.41	0.33

Development of the Urban System, 1981-2002

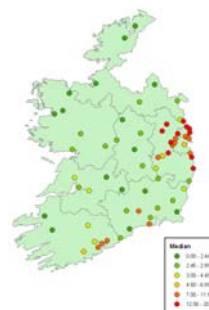


Change in Urban Ranks 1981-2002

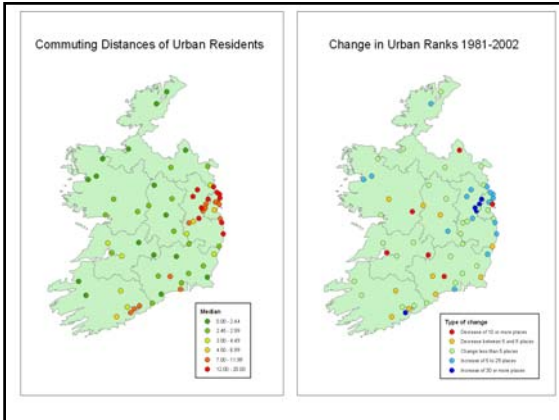


Town	% Change Pop.	Change in Rank
Dunboyne	265.58	66
Ashbourne	173.63	49
Maynooth	199.62	41
Celbridge	249.47	39
Carrigaline	169.86	32
Ballinasloe	-4.04	-10
Carrick-on-Suir	0.36	-10
Shannon	7.04	-11
Monaghan	-5.40	-13
Portmarnock	2.00	-13
Thurles	-2.86	-13

Commuting Distances of Urban Residents



Town	Median
Laytown-Bettystown	19.67
Skerries	17.82
Balbriggan	16.33
Rush	14.07
Maynooth	14.05
Navan	13.92
Greystones	13.67
Wicklow	13.57
Ashbourne	13.42
Trim	13.36
Naas	12.43



Summarising Recent Trends

- Some deconcentration of urban population
 - Diffusion down the urban hierarchy
- Decentralisation within the Greater Dublin Region (Dublin and Mid-East)
 - Neighbourhood diffusion
- Little evidence of inter-regional decentralisation

Factors Affecting Future Patterns

- Economic change and restructuring
- Transportation and communication technologies
- Energy costs
- Residential preferences
- Trends in household size
- Labour force participation – esp. of women
- Changes in working time
- Planning and infrastructural investment

Projecting Future Trends

- How will urbanisation be distributed (hierarchically and spatially) in future?
- Three theoretical perspectives / frameworks:
 - Classical urban systems theory (Henderson, 1974)
 - Theory of Differential Urbanisation and the concept of the urbanisation cycle (Geyer & Kontuly, 1993)
 - New Economic Geography (Krugman 1996)

Projecting Future Trends: (1) Urban Systems Theory

- Size patterns are the outcome of specialisation patterns
 - Importance of localisation and urbanisation economies
- Changes in pattern of demand, and hence production, lead to changes in the urban system
- Increasing importance of high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services suggests greater concentration

Projecting Future Trends: (2) Differential Urbanisation

- More a descriptive than predictive model
- Three phases of development of the urban system:
 - Primate city phase (urbanisation)
 - Intermediate city phase (polarisation reversal)
 - Small city phase (counterurbanisation)
- Ireland currently in phase 2?

Projecting Future Trends: (3) New Economic Geography

- Increasing importance of trade, and diminished importance of the domestic market leads to decreasing concentration
- “More open economies, as measured by the share of exports in gross domestic product, tend to have smaller biggest cities [for given size of economy] ” (Krugman, 1996, p.13)

Conclusions

- On balance, theoretical perspectives suggest continuing deconcentration
- However, the spatial dimension is neglected in all these models... issue of decentralisation therefore remains open
- Strong planning controls are essential!!