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URBAN CHANGE IN DUBLIN

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In a sweet essay on Dublin's development, Laura Watts shows how our capital city has expanded "like a confectioner's waistband". Through a baker's dozen of causes, structural and policy induced, Dublin came to resemble a doughnut by the 1980s. The Haughey's administration attempted to fill the void at Dublin's centre by incentivising inner-city development. Ms. Watts compares two beneficiaries of the policy, the IFSC and Templebar areas, and asks if Dublin has received its just desserts.

Introduction

Dublin is the capital and primate city of Ireland. The 'core' area consists of the 'inner-city', located between the Royal Canal in the north of the city, and the Grand Canal in the south. The 'periphery' consists of the expanding suburban area of Dublin, which forms a ring around the inner-city. Population, demographic, employment and land-use changes have occurred in the inner-city and suburban areas in the past number of decades. I wish to examine the market- and policy-induced factors, which have prompted these changes, along with some of the policies adopted to deal with the problems created by such changes. I have paid particular attention to the policies and initiatives, introduced in the Custom House Docks and Templebar areas of the inner-city, to deal with the changes there. The problems faced by the residents of Cherry Orchard are examined and possible solutions are briefly explored.

Dublin – Background

A city with over one million inhabitants, Dublin is the largest urban centre in Ireland. Half of the total urban population in the country live in Dublin, which is about a third of the total national population. Its population is six times the size of

Cork, the next biggest urban area.[1] It is both the capital and primate city of Ireland. It is the locus of commercial, financial, administrative, cultural and social activities in the State. Yet, while acting in these capacities as a single metropolitan entity, it is also a collection of villages and neighbourhoods.[2] More and more towns are being subsumed into the fabric of Dublin. It now embraces at least seven local authorities and is constantly expanding '*like a confectioner's waistband'* [3]

Population Change

Migration or 'population dislocation'[4] is a common phenomenon in Irish life, with Census figures showing a consistent decline in aggregate rural population, with a consistent increase in aggregate urban population.[5] In Dublin over the past few decades there has been a trend of 'centrifugal'[6] growth, an ever-greater spread of urbanisation, or suburbanisation, with population growth occurring on the perimeter.[7] This has been facilitated by increased personal mobility due to the rise in car ownership, which has allowed people to commute from areas 'where they can enjoy the perceived amenities of essentially rural areas'.[8] This outward growth of population in the peripheries has, up until recently, been accompanied by a decrease in population in the core or inner city. This is a similar situation to the experience of British cities over the same timeframe.[9]

However, over the last several years, continued centrifugal growth has been accompanied by an increase in the population of the core, 'centripetal' growth.[10] The 1996 Census showed an increase in population in Dublin County Borough for

[1] Drudy, P.J. & MacLaran, A. (1994) *Dublin: Economic and Social Trends.* Vol. 1. Dublin: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, TCD. p. 6.
[2] Bannon (1999) 'The Greater Dublin Region: Planning for its Transformation and Development' in Killen, J. & MacLaran, A. (Eds.) (1999) *Dublin: Contemporary Trends and Issues for the Twenty-first Century.* Dublin: GSI & CURS, TCD. p. 1
[3] Keirnan (1998) in Bannon (1999) *op. cit* p. 1
[4] Bannon et al (1982) *Urbanisation: Problems of Growth and Decline in Dublin.* Dublin: NESC Report No. 55. p. 39
[5] *Ibid*. p. 39
[6] Bannon (1999) *op. cit* p. 1
[7] Bannon (1982) *op. cit* p. 47
[8] *Ibid*. p. 49
[9] *Ibid*. p. 49
[10] Bannon (1999) op. cit pp1

the first time in several decades.[11] Until recently, the pressure of rural outmigration was taken off Dublin, as many emigrated out of the State. However, the phenomenon of net-immigration is now being felt.

From 1991 to 1996, the population of the core increased by 10,000.[12]. The Dublin Sub Region, as a whole, increased its population and proportion of the national total. In 1961, Dublin accounted 25.5% for the national population; by 1991 this figure had risen to 29.1%.[13]

Land Use Changes

Market Factors

There are many market factors that brought about the outward growth and increased suburbanisation of the region. High land prices and high return on investment in core areas encouraged the development of 'high value' land uses, such as office functions. Housing and industry are considered to be 'low value' uses. Industrial decline in the inner city encouraged outmigration, as workers moved to live near industrial zones in the periphery. The lack of space, coupled with the high land prices, meant that expansion of industrial firms in the inner city was often not feasible, therefore influencing the outmigration of industry to the suburbs. Technical change, which is best exemplified in the inner-city by the Docklands where containerisation and mechanisation of goods handling were introduced, reduced local labour requirements. Traffic congestion too caused problems for firms, as it increased the cost and time of production. Firms were not the only actors to see the benefits of a peripheral location; individuals too wanted to leave the inner city due to the high levels of pollution, traffic congestion, and the perception of high crime rates.[14]

Policies

Policies adopted at various levels of government, too, promoted the growth of the periphery. The zoning policies of Dublin County Council led to private residential development on greenfield sites. This, coupled with the deterrent of high land prices in the city centre, encouraged the construction of housing in suburbs. Local authority housing developments occurred mostly on greenfield sites, in order

[11] Drudy & Walker (1996) 'Dublin in a Regional Context' in Drudy, P.J. & MacLaran, A. (1996) *Dublin: Economic and Social Trends.* Vol.2. Dublin: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, TCD. p. 11
[12] Bannon (1999) *op. cit* p. 5
[13] Drudy & MacLaran (1994) *op. cit* p. 7
[14] *Ibid* p. 10

to its achieve low density policy. Central government policies too induced suburbanisation on greenfield sites. The remission of stamp duty on new houses, the abolition of rates in 1977 and the mortgage interest tax-relief which encouraged owner-occupation all contributed to the outward growth of the region.[15] The policies of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) tended to attract firms and industrial developers to suburban areas, where the industrial estates they built were located.

There was an increased problem of dilapidated and derelict buildings in the city as buildings in the core were abandoned. In a 1986 survey, there were 600 cleared sites or derelict buildings, which accounted for 65 hectares of inner-city land. This dereliction prompted a visiting architect from the Finnish Ministry for the Environment to comment, in a letter to The Irish Times, that it seemed that the "*historic core was left to rot*".[16]

Changes in Employment

From its very beginnings Dublin has always been a centre for trade and commerce. Its primary industries tended to be distilling, brewing, and some food and textiles.[17] However, over the last number of decades changes in the nature and composition of employment in the region have occurred. This is due to the suburbanisation of industry and the decline of some of the city's traditional service employers, such as the Docklands, along with an increase in the number of office-based activities.[18] As a region, Dublin's share in the total national employment has risen from 32.7% in 1961 to 41.7% in 1997.[19] This is due to agricultural decline, industrial stagnation and restructuring, coupled with the rapid growth within the high-tech and services sectors.[20] However, the growth in employment was not shared by all in the region. The inner-city became increasingly subject to the evils of unemployment. For example, in the north inner-city in 1986, 26% of the labour force was unemployed. For the Dublin sub-region as a whole, this figure was 19

[15] *Ibid*. p. 11
[16] MacLaran, A. (1999) 'Inner Dublin Change & Development' in Killen, J. & MacLaran, A. (Eds.) (1999) *Dublin: Contemporary Trends and Issues for the Twenty-first Century.* Dublin: GSI & CURS, TCD. p. 22
[17] Bannon (1982) *op. cit* p. 54
[18] *Ibid*. p. 55
[19] Bannon (1999) *op. cit* p. 6
[20] *Ibid*. p. 6

percent.[21] Some inner-city areas had long-term unemployment accounting for 60% of unemployment.[22] The reason for this is linked to the 'surburbanisation' of industry, and structural and technical change I have outlined previously.

'Peripheral' Problems

The continued outward growth of Dublin means a widening of commuting fields, which in the mid 1990s already encompassed towns within a 50km radius of the city-centre.[23] Bannon (1999) feels this is due to a lack of planning, leading to '*urban scatter which is unsustainable, a misuse of resources, and a visual intrusion into the rural environment*'.[24] Traffic congestion, due to commuting and a lack of a public transport infrastructure in the periphery, had become an increasingly serious problem.

There are a number of issues which have arisen with the growth in the population of the periphery, and the establishment of new towns. As they have yet to be recognised as separate entities. Tallaght, for example, had a population of over seventy thousand in 1993, making it the third largest urban population in the State. Yet, up until recently, it was without any separate local authority.[25]

Cherry Orchard: Case study of a suburban area

Despite rapid economic growth in recent years, in particular in the Dublin region, there exist 'pockets' of deprivation in certain areas.[26] Cherry Orchard, a local authority housing development in the suburbs of Dublin, is one such area. Its inhabitants are semi-skilled and unskilled workers. 65% of the population of the area are under 25 years old. It is described as an unemployment 'black-spot', as it has 64-70% unemployment. There are very low levels of educational attainment in the area, with more than 70% leaving school by 15 years of age, and only 1%

[21] McKeown, K. (1991) *The North Inner City of Dublin: An Overview.* Dublin: Daughters of Charity. p. 19
[22] MacLaran, A. (1999) *op. cit*. p. 22
[23] MacLaran, A. (1993) *op. cit Dublin: the Shaping of a Capital* Dublin: Belhaven Press. p. 50
[24] Bannon (1999) *op. cit* pp6
[25] MacLaran (1993) *op. cit* p.72.
[26] Bartley & Saris (1999) 'Social Exclusion & Cherry Orchard: A Hidden Side of Suburban Dublin' in Killen, J. & MacLaran, A. (Eds.) (1999) *Dublin: Contemporary Trends and Issues for the Twenty-first Century.* Dublin: GSI & CURS, TCD. p. 81

remaining in education beyond their twentieth birthday.[27] It is a low-rise, low-density development. However, there is very poor infrastructure *in situ* for the residents. For example, there is no primary or post-primary school in the area, no post-office, post-box, public telephone, shopping centre, playground, or public house.[28] This lack of service-provision in the area is exacerbated by the low level of mobility in the area, due to low car-ownership and a limited public transport system.[29]

This is indicative of the situation faced by many suburban low-income groups, whose physical isolation is a manifestation of their social and economic marginalisation.[30] This hinders continuance in the education system, especially considering the lack of schools in the area. The lack of meeting-places in the area both decreases the opportunities for interaction and limits the establishment of local neighbourhood networks.[31] This is a serious problem in 'new' areas.

The social marginalisation, lack of opportunities and lack of activities have been responsible for high drug usage in the area. Drug abuse has created a downward spiral, as it stigmatises the area, further limiting its development.

Unfortunately, such areas in the periphery have had limited focus from local and central governments. In the last few years, however, 38 independent local partnership companies have been established under the Local Development Programme in order to tackle the issues of long-term unemployment and social exclusion that have afflicted such areas. These companies have representatives from the community, from statutory agencies and from the social partners. They represent a grass-roots, bottom-up approach to the development of these areas.[32] However, such talk-shops will have little fruition if there is not a massive injection of investment into the physical infrastructure of such areas.

Urban Renewal: Outline

Until the mid 1980s there had been piecemeal and uncoordinated approaches to the problems encountered in the inner-city.[33] The new integrated approach coincided with a sustained and rapid economic growth in the State.

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[27] *Ibid*. p. 83
[28] *Ibid*. p. 86
[29] *Ibid*. p. 86
[30] *Ibid*. p. 82
[31] *Ibid*. p. 88
[32] *Ibid*. p. 83
[33] MacLaran (1999) *op. cit* p. 23

Changes in lifestyle and attitudes meant that the inner-city took on a new importance in the residential arena. There existed an increased preference among young adults to move out of the parental home; this was aided by the growing economy. Large-scale private sector residential development gentrified the inner-city,[34] so that young white-collar workers were willing to live in hitherto undesirable inner-city locations. This was accompanied by property-based renewal polices adopted by central government to encourage the construction of apartments for rental, in the form of tax-incentives.[35] [36]

Up until 1985, Dublin had the 'advanced symptoms of a doughnut city', with a total loss of a middle-income population in the inner-city and with large areas of dereliction. In response to industrial decline in Dublin, the government granted Designated Area status to the inner-city in 1982, which was a limited incentive based initiative. However, this was a failure due to high land prices, congestion and lack of space, the same reasons which had contributed to industrial decline in the core initially.[37] However, the Urban Renewal Act (1986) was the first major step in which the government took active responsibility for the capital city.[38] Up until this point, the IDA focused mostly on the western seaboard; Dublin was left to its own devices and consequently suffering a massive loss in its industrial sector. Between 1971 and 1991, there was a 29.7% decrease in industrial activity in the Dublin sub-region, while there was a 15.5% increase in the rest of the country. IF There was an increase of 36.1% in service activities in the region, the rest of Ireland had an increase of 47.1%.[39] Central government was disaffected with local government policy and their ability to deal with these issues; thus, independent agencies were established in order to avoid "bureaucratic inertia"[40]. Area-specific authorities were established in order both to create long-term plans for the areas in question and to administer the investment incentives. Most notable among these are the Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) and Templebar Renewal Ltd.

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[34] *Ibid*. p. 21
[35] *Ibid*. p. 24
[36] MacLaran (1996) 'Private Residentrial Development in Central Dublin' in Drudy, P.J. & MacLaran, A. (1996) *Dublin: Economic and Social Trends.* Vol.2. Dublin: Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, TCD. p. 20
[37] Drudy & MacLaran (1994) *op. cit.* p. 19
[38] Gleeson (1999) 'Changing Approaches to Planning in Dublin's Inner City' in Killen, J. & MacLaran, A. (Eds.) (1999) *Dublin: Contemporary Trends and Issues for the Twenty-first Century.* Dublin: GSI & CURS, TCD. p. 49
[39] Drudy and MacLaran (1994) *op. cit* p. 15
[40] MacLaran, (1993) *op. cit* pp 72/73

Custom House Docks

The Custom House Docks Development Authority was set up in November 1986 under Section Eight of the Urban Renewal Act, after the failure of attempts to interest private developers. CHDDA was the planning and development authority for the area. Financial incentives were established in order to attract investors. These took the form of tax allowances, rate remissions and rent allowances. A central part of the plan was to develop an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).[41] High specification offices were mandatory under the CHDDA Planning Schemes. Between 1986 and 1995, the area received 24% of designated area investment, in order to encourage the lucrative financial services information-based industry.[42] However, the main beneficiaries have been the large-scale investors and financiers, whose incomes are already quite high.[43] There was high level of relocation of firms to avail of the incentives, which resulted in no more than a moderate gain in employment. In general, the scheme did little to give employment to the existing local community to lessen the problem of local unemployment.

The area is inanimate after business hours. The overall impression is one of "an introverted office precinct which dies after the working day."[44]

> "The ambience is muted in contrast to the bustling vibrant mixed use development mooted in the 1987 Planning Scheme. Its links to the rest of the city are weak both by virtue of its introverted urban layout and boundary environmental conditions."[45]

This does little to foster of a sense of community between the existing residents and the incoming population.

The Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) was created in 1997 and encompassed the role of the CHDDA. Its aim was social and economic regeneration on a sustainable basis.[46] It recognised the need to place more emphasis on education and training opportunities for residents of the area and to create a mix of housing, in an attempt to redress the lack of integration which has occurred thus far.

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[41] Drudy (1999) 'Dublin Docklands: the Way Forward' in Killen, J. & MacLaran, A. (Eds.) (1999) *Dublin: Contemporary Trends and Issues for the Twenty-first Century.* Dublin: GSI & CURS, TCD. p. 37

[42] KPMG (1996), *Study on Urban Renewal Schemes* Dublin: Dept. of the Environment. p. (ii)

[43] *Ibid*. p. (v)

[44] Gleeson (1999) *op. cit* p.51

[45] KPMG (1996) *op. cit* p. (viii)

[46] Drudy (1999) *op. cit* p. 39

Significant increases in house prices in recent years have been aggravated by investors purchasing in the area for rental purposes. This further marginalises existing residents and directly contradicts a central tenet of the new housing strategy; owner-occupation was to be encouraged in order to create a sense of community and provide stability in the area.[47] Blackwell and Connery (1991) estimated that about half of the recent investment in designated areas would not have taken place without incentives.[48] This, of course, implies that half of the investment would have occurred anyway; due to the economies of scale generated by agglomeration, this investment may have even attracted more. Therefore, we cannot be certain how beneficial incentive schemes have been to urban renewal.

Templebar

Templebar is an area just south of the River Liffey. In the mid-1970s, Córas Iompar Éireann began acquiring the core of the area, with the intention of putting in place a central bus depot. However, the area began to take on a 'bohemian' and cultural aura. The plans for the depot were abandoned when, in May 1991, the then Taoiseach Charles Haughey told the Dáil that the objective of the development of Templebar

"is to build on what has been already taking place spontaneously in the area and to create a lovely bustling cultural and tourist quarter which people will visit in significant numbers and which many more will work and live."

Has this vision been achieved? The figures speak for themselves. Within the 24 acre area, there are now at least 44 restaurants, 28 licensed premises, 15 nightclubs, 12 hotels or hostels, 12 cultural centres, 1,200 employees, 1,500 residents, and an average of 100,000 visitors per day. When the project began there were 17 cultural organisations; now there are 65. Architecturally, it has been a massive success, as the area has won many awards in recent years. The existing local authority housing in the area have added to fostering a sense of community within the area. This community has, to a certain extent, been incorporated into the projects of the area, including the 'Greening of Templebar' project. Crampton Buildings for example has a 'wormery' to provide organic feed for the trees and shrubs in the courtyard.

However, the area has not been without its problems. Residences are now very expensive, even allowing for the increase in housing prices over the last several years. The bustling and vibrant nature of the area brings with it its own set of

[47] *Ibid*. p. 44
[48] Drudy and MacLaran (1994) *op. cit* p. 35

difficulties. Clearly a huge number of licensed premises in such a small area has led to annoyance for those living in the area. One resident of the area has commented that "*I'm sick to death of all the vomit and urine"*.[49] However, this issue is being dealt with. Publicans, who have benefited from the tax incentives, now contribute towards the cost of street cleaning, and 'stag-party tourism' is no longer encouraged officially.

Templebar is not just a tax-driven development, as direct public sector funding and co-funding under a number of EU projects and programmes have also provided for its redevelopment.[50] The development of the area under the auspices of Templebar Renewal Ltd. has not simply been a function of the tax-incentives introduced, as many business in the area are too small to avail of these incentives. In a survey to establish the factors of attraction and retention in the area tax-incentives ranked fourth, behind improvements in infrastructure and environment. Perhaps the unique control that Templebar Renewal Ltd. exerts means that a certain type of business is attracted to the area, which allows it to live up to Haughey's mission statement. Thus, while still having teething difficulties, Templebar is perhaps an exemplar of urban renewal in that it has reverse the damage of dereliction and, indeed, continues to do so. It has achieved what the IFSC has not, in creating an open and accessible urban space, providing the 'missing-link' between the north and south of the city.

Conclusion

In summation, Dublin has undergone a consistent expansion of its suburban areas, which in the last number of years has been accompanied by an increase in the population of the inner-city. The increase in the peripheral population and previous decline in the core population were caused by inter-related factors. The out-movement of industry, caused by market and policy-based factors, led to changes in employment and housing demands, which continue to encroach further into the peripheral greenfield sites. The ensuing difficulties with urban stagnation and decline have been addressed by central government with the establishment of a number of area-specific schemes, backed up by legislation for tax-based investment incentives. The Designated Area policy coincided with the upturn in the Irish economy, and a shortage of office space in the Dublin area. The extent to which these policies are responsible for the turnaround in these areas, or indeed for causing the upturn, are unknown.

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[49] McDonald, F. 'Work in Progress' in The Irish Times 5/8/00
[50] KPMG (1996) *op. cit* p. (vi)

Designated Areas programmes with adjacent inner-city communities have not addressed the issues that are central to the regeneration and sustainability of these areas. Unemployment is still a problem, in particular long-term unemployment. There remains a lack of adequate public amenities. The issue of education, training and youth development continues to be ignored for the most part. Inner-city communities are generally impeded from benefiting from development led by tax incentives, as firms and individuals do not have sufficient tax liability or capital to partake in such schemes. Escalating land prices in these areas, fuelled by the economic regeneration, further compounds the social exclusion that is already in action. There are a number of suburban communities which are immobile both physically and socially; due to a lack of co-ordinated planning, they fail to provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the transport, commercial, industrial and educational needs of these communities. There is a need for an intermediate level of public consultation, whereby local community involvement could become being more proactive rather than reactive.[51] These problems have been recognised by those in power and, while there have been attempts to solve them, it is clear that more needs to be done.

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[51] Ibid., pp (x-xi)

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