

population and social issues. Each section contains four or more chapters that focus on specific issues. Each chapter provides a relatively broad overview of trends and policies, with specific points and arguments illustrated using example material. Individually they provide detailed introductions to specific aspects of Ireland and the transformations since the late 1980s, collectively they allow the creation of a fuller picture of Ireland at the start of the twenty-first century and a sense of how Ireland might progress in the future.

## Part I Planning and Development

### Introduction

Planning and development are key aspects of economic and social progress. They provide the regulatory and policy context for change. The chapters in this section provide an overview of the planning system, the strategies employed to try and stimulate and manage development, and their effects upon different aspects of the economy and society across contexts and scales. What the chapters highlight is that since the 1960s a whole series of policies and new legislation have been formulated and implemented that have had varying degrees of success in improving the economy and society. Some policy was poorly conceived, some poorly implemented, some had effects that were not anticipated, and some worked to great effect. In general, policy was determined at a national level in response to pressure from actors on the European, regional and local scales. The strategies employed to implement policy and attain objectives were charged to different parties, usually national agencies and regional and local authorities, but also other sectoral and private interests.

While the overall governmental aim of strategic planning and development is to ensure that all sections of economy and society, and all parts of the country, grow and develop, with the exception of initiatives such as the National Development Plan and National Spatial Strategy, planning and development in Ireland largely focuses on particular areas (e.g., urban or rural) or sectors (e.g., transport or utilities). This can cause tensions and contradictions between policies aiming to achieve different ends. For example, the *industrial* policy of developing Dublin to compete economically on the global scale seems to run counter to *regional* policy that stresses balanced regional development and argues for the transfer of services and industries away from Dublin to other areas of the country. Balancing the needs of different sections of society, and different parts of the country, is then a difficult task. It means assessing the benefits and costs to different parties, for example weighing up national benefit vis-à-vis local cost.

In the opening chapter in the section, Brendan Bartley provides an historical overview of planning in Ireland, charting three distinct phases. Focusing on the latter he highlights the adoption of an entrepreneurial form of planning in the mid-1980s which targeted specific areas for investment and development, and

Tiger economy. For example, the first urban development corporation – a public-private partnership – the Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA), was charged with developing a key site in central Dublin for the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) that subsequently attracted significant banking and financial company investment in Ireland. Bartley notes that the evolution of successive National Development Plans and their recent convergence with the National Spatial Strategy, 2002, constitute a move away from an ad hoc piecemeal approach to development towards a more coherent planning-led approach. This blending together of spatial planning and long-term funding programmes involves a major rationalisation of Ireland's customised entrepreneurial approach. It seeks to secure more integrated and balanced development across a range of scales and to provide a strategic framework for managing future, large-scale development of industry, housing and infrastructure.

Complementing this account, Jim Walsh details policies and strategies designed to promote development within and between regions, albeit often working in tandem with national policies. Given the population and economic dominance of Dublin and the mid-East region, together with the spatial variance in other aspects of Irish economy and society, there are a number of regional disparities in wealth generation and quality of life within Ireland. These disparities have a number of important implications for the viability and sustainability of regional economies. As a result, there is a long history of policies designed to pursue balanced regional development. In recent years, these policies have had to try and cope with a Celtic Tiger economy that selectively promotes development in some places, notably the principal cities and their hinterlands, and a rural economy that is increasingly becoming less sustainable.

Des McCafferty identifies imbalances associated with the destinations of inward investment, which are in large measure a consequence of the nature of the urban system. Many industries require substantial pools of skilled labour, and these can be principally found in the cities. Ireland's urban system is characterised by a dominant city (Dublin), with four other principal cities with populations over 35,000 (Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford). Other towns are growing rapidly, but often as commuter towns for the principal cities, placing considerable strain on local services and transport infrastructure. Inevitably, inward investment is attracted to already large and growing places, and increasing urbanisation has accelerated the shift from a predominantly rural population to an urban society. McCafferty provides an interesting comparison to Northern Ireland, which has a similar urban system within which Belfast dominates.

Andrew MacLaran and Sinéad Kelly provide a detailed picture of the policies and processes at play within cities, focusing in particular on property development and the supply of business space and residential units in Dublin. They outline the various ways that property development has been both a stimulus and an outcome of economic growth, especially over the last 15 years. In this period there has been a significant growth of both office developments

costs, offices have been developed extensively around the city, not just in the city centre. In contrast, many new dwellings have been built in the city centre whilst other central residential areas have been significantly gentrified. Given the demand for these desirable units, property prices have spiralled to such an extent that many local people can no longer afford to live in this area. As a result, there has been a growth of the suburbs and commuter towns transforming a relatively compact city into a sprawling, multinodal city and in the process adding enormously to city congestion. Resolving these issues, while sustaining economic growth, poses significant challenges to policy, problems that they argue have so far been neglected.

In contrast, John McDonagh provides an examination of rural development in Ireland from the early 1970s to the present, concentrating on the period from the 1990s to the time of writing. Given the historical importance of the rural economy and rural way of life in Ireland, allied to the rural nature of many parliamentary constituencies, rural issues have received much attention recently. The focus of this attention has largely been on how to reinvigorate and maintain a rural economy that is in decline. As McDonagh notes, there are no easy solutions to this problem, and indeed it represents a significant challenge to government. He provides an overview of the policies being implemented, often driven by European directives and plans, and provides two case studies of specific initiatives, the LEADER programme and the REPS scheme.

Transportation infrastructure is one of the most important sectoral issues associated with social and economic development. It provides the stabilising character or structural glue that enables much development to occur and also constitutes the connective sinews that unify otherwise disparate places. James Killen details the state and capacity of various forms of transport in Ireland – road, rail, air and shipping. He notes that transport infrastructure and the various services they support (e.g., passenger travel by car or bus, or freight) have long been under-developed. He points out that despite enormous increases in investment in recent years, the latest transformation of the economy, together with major population changes, has placed enormous pressures on the various transport systems. To address the infrastructure deficit the government has turned to public-private partnerships to co-fund and build new systems such as the Luas (a light rail network) and to expand the motorway system. Killen suggests that these developments are often piecemeal and tend to serve specific communities rather than general need. He predicts that existing problems of road traffic congestion and overcrowding on public transport will continue until there is comprehensively planned and systematic development across the various infrastructures. This will require a co-ordinated, integrated transport policy for the country as a whole that recognises the needs of specific locales, including rural areas and cities.

The final chapter in the section, by Michael R. Murray and Brendan Murtagh, focuses on spatial planning in Northern Ireland. Although the system they describe has had little effect to date on planning and development strategies in the Republic, despite there being some similarities in structures, procedures and

maximise cooperation and aid the development of an all-island economy. Their chapter then highlights present thinking in the North, and comparison with the other chapters in the section provides a means to envisage how planning and development might develop on an all-island basis, with for example an alignment of spatial strategies. As many policy analysts and politicians, North and South, are realising and arguing, such an alignment will be important for sustaining the economy in the South, stimulating the economy in the North, and promoting peace and reconciliation. Judging by the proliferation of significant initiatives in this area – including the PEACE programme, the formation of North/South bodies such as the North South Ministerial Council and *InterTradeIreland*, and recent announcements by administrations in both jurisdictions concerning infrastructure spending – cross-border co-operation will be a significant part of future development plans.

In combination, the chapters provide an insight into the role of planning and development in shaping Ireland's economy and society. More particularly, they highlight how spatial strategies and policies operating on different scales have shaped the landscape of the Celtic Tiger. While the economy has been highly significant in providing the platform for change, planning and development controls have provided the regulatory context and structure for inward investment and associated changes in transforming Ireland's landscapes through processes such as urbanisation, urban renewal, rural development, property growth and construction of new infrastructure.

## 2

# Planning in Ireland

*Brendan Bartley*

The way planning is structured and implemented varies from country to country and the context provided by the legal and political systems of each country influences the exact nature of planning as it is experienced in each setting. In the Irish case two main organisations presently have primary responsibility for planning within central government: the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and An Bord Pleanála (the Planning Appeals Board). As the main overseer of the planning system in Ireland, DoEHLG is responsible for the framing of planning legislation as well as the preparation and issue of policy formulation and guidance. Ireland is unique among European countries in that it has an independent, third party planning appeals system which is operated by An Bord Pleanála. The appeals board provides an arbitration forum in which any decision made by a planning authority on a planning application can be reviewed at the request of the applicant or another interested party. In 1993, decision making on major environmental matters was transferred to a new organisation, the Environmental Protection Agency, thereby restricting planning to consideration of land-use issues (Bartley and Waddington, 2000). At the local level, all tiers of local government – county councils, city councils, borough councils and town councils – are recognised as planning authorities except those town councils which are former town commissioners. The present physical planning system in Ireland is, accordingly, run by 88 local planning authorities: 29 county councils, 5 county borough corporations, 5 borough corporations and 49 town councils. The Minister for the DoEHLG is responsible for planning legislation (Grist, 2003). The contemporary planning system in Ireland has three main functions:

- making development plans;
- deciding on planning permissions through the assessment of planning applications (unless exempted development applies), including appeals against planning decisions;
- planning enforcement.

This system has developed through three phases of macro-economic strategy and associated physical planning (see Table 2.1): the preindustrial, minimal planning

## Part II Economy

### Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the key driver in the economic and social transformations that have occurred in Ireland during the past 15 years or so has been the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' phenomenon. From an economy that was struggling in the 1980s flowered a vibrant, high-wealth-generating economy in the 1990s that was the envy of nations around the globe. As we have discussed in Chapter 1 there are many reasons for this economic turnaround, and the chapters in this section provide further explanation and in-depth empirical material to illustrate the changes that occurred. They also detail that while the economy as a whole was resurgent the fortunes of particular sectors have not been so favourable – for example agriculture, once the backbone of the Irish economy. Even industries that were key to kick-starting the economic boom, such as computer manufacturing, have gone into decline to be replaced by other industries. Importantly, the replacement of some industries by others has generally worked in Ireland's favour with low-skill industries such as some manufacturing and call centres being replaced by higher-skilled, better paid work, in areas such as, for example, high-end manufacturing, marketing, accounting, research and development, and so on.

The chapters also reveal the uneven spatial variation of different sectors, highlighting that the Celtic Tiger phenomenon has not affected all places equally. They demonstrate that some areas of the country have especially benefited from foreign inward investment and domestic, indigenous growth, notably the principal cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway, whereas others have stagnated such as the rural areas of the Northwest. In other words, the chapters reveal a complex economic landscape that varies across and within sectors (primary, manufacturing and services) and across the country depending on the location of different industries.

In the opening chapter in the section, Chris van Egeraat and Proinnsias Breathnach discuss the evolution of manufacturing industry in Ireland and its various sectors, focusing in particular on developments during the 1990s. They note that the manufacturing sector from the 1960s onwards has been dominated by foreign-owned plants that increasingly account for a large proportion of product exports. The nature and location of these firms has been changing

being replaced by high-tech plants employing highly skilled labour increasingly located near to Dublin and the other principal cities. These firms are attracted by low taxes, skilled labour and other incentives. Given the benefits of clustering and their supply nature, indigenous firms tend to locate near to foreign-owned business. The authors note that manufacturing in other parts of the country has steadily declined due to the lack of large pools of suitable labour thus increasing their economic peripheralisation. They illustrate their argument by providing two case studies of the computer-building and pharmaceutical sectors. Both sectors have undergone the transformation from low-skill to high-skill labour and have gravitated to sites near to large cities.

In the following chapter, Proinnsias Breathnach notes similar processes at work in relation to service industries, presently the most important part of Ireland's economy in terms of overall employed labour and GDP generated. Indeed, he notes that services accounted for almost four-fifths of employment growth over the period 1991–2002, and that this growth was important for attracting women into the workforce. During this time all service sectors grew, but some expanded more rapidly, notably wholesale and retail and other business services. And while many service sector jobs are relatively low-skilled, Ireland has been successful at attracting higher-skill jobs that have enabled a knowledge economy to develop. He provides useful overviews of both producer services such as finance and banking, software development and back-officing, and of consumer services such as shopping and entertainment.

Agriculture and food production have long been an important aspect of the Irish economy. In 1926, over 50 per cent of workers were employed in agriculture alone. As Jim Walsh observes in the next chapter, the situation is now markedly different. Agriculture and the food industry together now account for 8 per cent of employment and 10 per cent of GDP, although the food industry accounts for more than half of total exports by Irish-owned manufacturing. Agriculture, in particular, is under threat given its reliance on EU and Irish government subsidies, both of which are presently being refocused and reorganised, especially the Common Agricultural Policy. The result is that farmers are ever more reliant on off-farm sources of income to survive or are simply giving up farming. Walsh notes, however, that the changes have differential effects depending upon type of farming and size of farms, creating an array of responses to different problems. In some cases, farmers who adapt well are caught on a technological treadmill to maintain their position; those who do not adapt become more disadvantaged.

Tourism, as Catherine Kelly highlights, is seen by many to be a small, but relatively important, part of the economy. The number of visitors to the country and the amount that they spend grew steadily throughout the 1990s. However, the nature of tourist visits has been changing with an increase in city-breaks and niche-based holidays, while domestic tourists are increasingly going overseas for their holiday breaks. What this has meant is a rethinking about how to market Ireland as a tourist destination and an upgrading of the product supplied. One aspect of this, as Kelly notes in detail, is the heritage industry, one that often

offer one means of attracting both domestic and foreign tourists. Overall, she notes that an integrated approach to tourism is necessary to build upon recent growth and to sustain tourism in the long term.

Taken together the chapters provide an overview of how the economy has developed across sectors and place. Other important parts of the economy such as construction and property development are discussed elsewhere in the book (see Chapters 5, 7, and 18). While forecasts seem to be universally positive for the Irish economy in the short to medium term (up to 2015–20), the contributors to this section also offer some important caveats. Ireland has managed to sustain its growth by constantly being proactive in its economic strategy rather than reactive; it has constantly sought to adapt and attract higher-skilled jobs rather than to rely on the first waves of investment. That said, Ireland's reliance on foreign direct investment still potentially leaves the economy open to the flight of capital as firms seek cheaper labour and infrastructure in other locales to reduce their costs and increase their profits. The strategic response has been to try and embed companies into networks and relationships that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere, and to encourage the siting of high-skill functions in Ireland that require labour that other cheaper locales could not provide. How long this can be maintained is where analysts disagree, with some fearing that the Celtic Tiger could end sooner rather than later. Moreover, some sections of the economy, notably agriculture, look set for continued decline, and tourism seems less assured especially given the rising costs of visiting Ireland and the switch to short breaks. With new investment flocking to the cities, including tourist visits, certain areas of the country, especially those dependent on the rural economy, face serious challenge to their long-term sustainability. As explored in the previous part of the book, the cities face problems concerning infrastructure and services given sustained population growth and new property developments. As a result, the spatial unevenness of investment and development pose a number of often quite different and sometimes contradictory concerns to policy makers and those charged with implementing the strategies adopted to ensure that the economy continues to grow while regional inequalities are not exacerbated. For us, and the authors writing in this section, this necessitates that the recommendations of the National Spatial Strategy be fully implemented and that spatial planning be a central feature of the next and future National Development Plans.

## CONCLUSION

Tourism is changing rapidly in terms of its characteristic product/consumer expectations and in how it does its business; Ireland will have to keep abreast, if not one step ahead, of such challenges if it is to continue to survive successfully. As such, the tourism sector must account for changing societal and cultural changes that advocate high standards, unique experiences, cheap access and instantaneous online information, and cater for the consumer who 'wants it all – now!' in the face of increasing world competition. 'Integrated tourism' is essential – where tourism is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human structures of the region in which it occurs (Gillmor, 2004). The sustained sharp growth of Irish tourism throughout the 1990s is a well documented success story. Today the sector lies at a critical point of transition. In essence, Irish tourism is now in somewhat uncharted territory as it seeks a route to sustainable and regionally balanced growth. Past remedies are certainly no guarantee of future success – and there are no quick-fix solutions (Fáilte Ireland, 2005). Heritage forms an important part of the tourist experience and is therefore a key aspect of the tourist industry in Ireland. However, heritage as a concept, sector and 'industry' has been subject to much change and confusion in Ireland over the past decade. Such confusion matters less, perhaps, than the need for integrated strategies that draw together academic, populist and decision-maker perspectives on the best way to move forward. Heritage as a form or expression of national and cultural identity is something to be nurtured and cherished, whilst the essence of such heritage forms a major part of how the tourism sector portrays Ireland and Irishness to others. Maintaining an awareness of the nuances of delicately balancing these variable objectives is crucial as we move forward and as the Celtic Tiger matures. Indeed, increased tourism mobility and the on-going march of economic and cultural globalisation forces will be interesting to assess in terms of heritage-tourism responses in Ireland.

## Part III Political Landscape

### Introduction

Interestingly, the economic and social transformations that have occurred in the Republic of Ireland have been accompanied by wide-scale political change with regard to governance, government, citizenship, and the peace process. This change has had important implications in fostering economic growth and social development by providing a stable political climate that is attractive to inward investment. For example, the social partnerships developed in the mid-1980s created the conditions for good relations between employers and employees and largely heralded the end of militant union action. The need for coalition governments has created an environment in which long-term policy can be played out without the government always being on the verge of collapse, as was the case in the late 1970s through to the late 1980s, or being subject to radical change at the whim of one party. And the peace process has nullified the negative effects of 'The Troubles' and made inward investors more confident about locating in Ireland. The influence of the European Union has also driven a largely positive citizenship agenda that has sought to enhance civic engagement and combat discrimination and disadvantage. This is not to say that the political landscape is now universally positive or benign. For example, the peace process has largely been in limbo since the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2002; in the same year the social partners failed to come to an agreement, meaning that some partners left the process; and Ireland has failed in many cases to deliver on its citizenship agenda, most notably in relation to Travellers. In this part of the book, the authors examine these issues and their implications.

In the opening chapter, Adrian Kavanagh examines the political system operating in the Republic and the effect of its geography on its make-up. He initially details the nature of the electoral system, noting how multimember and multiparty constituencies shape the local and national political landscape. In particular, he notes that the Irish system breeds strong localism in voting and clientism in political action, especially given the weak ideological differences between the main political parties. As a result, he notes that since the political crises of the 1980s the smaller parties and independent candidates have generally held the balance of power, especially given the need for coalition governments to

perform within different types of election (local, national, European), and the patterns of voting in Ireland, which often differ from other European nations due to the effects of localism. Given the political and electoral landscape, it seems likely that coalition government is likely to be a consistent feature of Irish governance for some time.

In the following chapter, Joe Larragy and Brendan Bartley chart the transformation of governance through the development of the social partnership process. They detail that since the mid-1980s there has been a steady growth in governance practices within Ireland; that is, decision making by institutions that are not formally part of government, such as business and communities. While there have always been governance arrangements, the present process of widening and deepening participation started in earnest in 1987 with the Programme for National Recovery, a collaboration between government and social partners (employer, trade union and farmer organisations) that sought to stabilise industrial relations and rationalise spending by agreeing to a set plan of pay growth for ensuing years. This social partnership model has operated ever since with its partner base widening in subsequent agreements through the inclusion of community and voluntary partners. In the early 1990s, the social partnership model was broadened to include local development through the creation of local and area-based partnership 'companies' (i.e., based on the business market model) designed to drive local change. In the late 1990s, partnership companies were modified to include local government elements to make them more democratically accountable. In addition, the government itself took on some of these ideas, particularly those of New Public Management, changing its own working practices to become more dynamic, proactive, market-responsive and user-oriented. Whereas the shift to governance is often seen as a move away from government, in the Irish case central government has maintained its dominant position, carefully shepherding the governance process. Larragy and Bartley note that the Irish case blends an interesting mix of European and American influences, and that the Irish experience has itself shaped governance thinking in the EU. They point out that the social partnership agreements and new modes of governance such as area-based partnership companies have been important for the Celtic Tiger transformation by providing labour market stability and flexible modes of operation capable of reacting opportunistically to new challenges and possibilities. It is clear from their account of recent developments that orthodox government and political systems have not disappeared but have accommodated the new processes of governance that have appeared in the Irish institutional landscape.

Honor Fagan and Michael J. Murray discuss one aspect of governance, namely waste management. They discuss how Ireland's new affluence, growth in population, expansion in construction, and changing lifestyles have led to an increase in waste production and a crisis in how to manage that waste. They note that between 1995 and 1998 waste flows in Ireland increased by 89 per cent. the majority of which ended up in landfill sites. The pressure on Ireland's

EU directives on waste management have led to political mobilisation around the issues of where to locate waste disposal sites, the costs of disposal, and forms of waste governance. Waste is now a hot topic in Ireland, and despite some changes in policy and practice, Fagan and Murray argue that the waste situation continues to deteriorate, posing a significant challenge to government and society alike. They chart the modes of governance being introduced on different scales and their likely success in tackling the waste issue.

The final chapter considers the situation in Northern Ireland, a matter of critical, political importance on the island, and examines some of the issues affecting progress and paths forward. The peace process, started by the first ceasefires in 1994, and politically cemented by the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, heralded a new era in Northern Ireland and changed the nature of the Ireland's relationship with its northern neighbour. This was quickly followed by the North South Ministerial Council, cross-border bodies, and the EU PEACE programmes' funding of reconciliation projects. While there has been real change to the lives of the Northern Irish population and those living along the border counties in Ireland, the political situation has dissolved into one largely of stalemate. Interestingly, it appears that the Irish and British governments are much closer in their thinking and ideas about how to progress the process than either government is to nationalist or unionist thinking in the North. There is also clearly a long way to go before sectarian tensions and violence become things of the past.

Brian Graham provides a detailed discussion of identity and its political constitution in Northern Ireland with a particular focus on loyalism. He argues that despite the tendency to reduce identity to binary distinctions (e.g., nationalist versus unionist), in reality identities are much more fractured and diverse. That said, loyalism is characterised by a coherent sense of betrayal and bitterness based on a sense of being marginalised in relation to the United Kingdom and the peace process. This, as Graham notes, poses a challenge and a threat to a process that seeks peace and reconciliation for all sides. To a large extent, loyalist strategy has sought to frustrate and opt out of cooperation and attempts at power sharing. And yet they are an integral part of the whole process. This clearly raises serious questions about how to maintain the peace process in the face of intransigence and victimhood, and to develop strategies that are inclusive of loyalist identity and views.

Both internally, and on a cross-border basis in relation to Northern Ireland, the political landscape on the island of Ireland has been reshaped in interesting and significant ways. It can be argued that democratic politics has been enhanced, both North and South, by widening participation, addressing issues of inclusiveness, citizenship and reconciliation, and devolving power, albeit with varying degrees of success in these political processes. While many of the processes originated in Ireland itself, the influence of the European Union, and the role of the US in the peace process, have been critical in shaping the Irish political landscape. As Ireland moves forward, all of the progressive

many other issues will require serious consideration. These include, perhaps, stronger cross-border linkages and co-operation; a further decentralisation of power to regional assemblies; stronger interventionist policies around certain key issues such as health, education, transport, and regional development, and a concerted effort to address the deep social and spatial divisions in Northern Irish society.

## 13 Elections and Voting

*Adrian Kavanagh*

This chapter studies the political landscape of the Irish State, with a specific focus on analysing the geographical patterns evident in recent Irish elections, relating to patterns of support for political parties and electoral participation and the institutional and socio-structural contexts that shape these. Different electoral contests are held in the Republic of Ireland, including general, presidential, local, European, by-election and referendum electoral contests, each of which has its own specific characteristics. 'Politics is local' in Ireland and place-based concerns also matter in terms of explaining Irish electoral behaviour.

### THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The proportional representation by single transferable vote (PR-STV) electoral system, used in the Republic of Ireland, allows voters to rank-order candidates when casting their ballots, with the range of preferences limited only by the number of candidates. Another key element of the Irish electoral system is its use of multimember constituencies, with between three and five candidates elected from general election constituencies, and between three and seven candidates elected in local election contests. Sinnott (1995) argues that Irish general elections effectively amount to 40, or more, separate electoral contests, as each constituency has its own peculiar circumstances and local concerns, and the relative influence of national factors varies between different constituencies.

Electoral contests generally involve a series of counts. To be elected, candidates are required to attain a threshold proportion of the valid votes cast (quota) at any stage during these counts.

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Total number of valid votes}}{\text{Number of seats} + 1} + 1$$

The quota amounts to 25 per cent of the total number of valid votes (excluding 'spoilt' votes) cast in three-seat constituencies, 20 per cent in four-seat constituencies, and 16⅔ per cent in five-seat constituencies. If a candidate exceeds the quota before the final count, their surplus – the amount by which their

## Part IV

# Population and Social Issues

### Introduction

It is no surprise that population concerns and related social issues should accompany a rapidly changing and spatially uneven economy. Societies adapt to take advantage of prevailing conditions. In the case of Ireland, the population and social transformations that have occurred have been as dramatic as the change in the economy. This in many ways is due the conditions in the late 1980s, where Ireland was deeply affected by mass out-migration, high levels of poverty, and poor social mobility. Family sizes were still large by European standards, the demographic structure was one of low dependency with over 40 per cent of people aged under 25, and only a small percentage of married women worked. The Catholic Church continued to play a dominant role in education, welfare and in regulating social issues. By 2000, all of this had been turned on its head. As the chapters in this section illustrate, by then Ireland was a country of net immigration; family sizes had fallen; women had entered the labour market in droves; household income increased dramatically, and society became increasingly secular. The chapters also highlight many of the problems of the 1980s that persist in the economic-miracle era in addition to the new problems generated by the Celtic Tiger itself. The following illustrative examples are far from being an exhaustive listing of these predicaments, which provide policy makers, government and communities with serious and on-going challenges:

- not everyone has benefited financially to the same extent, resulting in continued high rates of relative poverty;
- house prices have spiralled to record high rates, giving rise to growing local authority waiting lists for social housing as well as creating affordability and homelessness difficulties;
- queues for hospital beds and in Accident and Emergency departments of hospitals have reached crisis levels;
- development has been uneven, with population growth strongest in the cities;
- new housing and industry have placed inordinate pressures on local services:

- two-earner and time-poor households have become common;
- long-distance, time-consuming commuting has become a way of life for many; and so on.

In the first chapter, Piaras Mac Éinrí examines immigration to Ireland. He details the transition from a net-emigrant country to a net-immigrant country, charting the huge growth in the 1990s of both Irish people returning to Ireland and new immigrants to Ireland. Focusing on the latter, he first examines the flows of asylum seekers and refugees and labour migrants throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium. Next, he details the Irish State's reaction to these immigrants and the main policy interventions implemented to try and regulate immigrants. As he notes, Ireland faces huge challenges in both managing migration and achieving integration, something that has to be undertaken with respect to EU policy and the Common Travel Area arrangement with the UK. Mac Éinrí concludes that given the predictions for continued, sustained immigration over the next ten years and the knock-on consequences of population increase as regards services and housing, coherent immigration policies are vital.

Mary Corcoran, Karen Keaveney and Patrick Duffy focus their analysis on the issue of housing. They reveal how population change, migration and changing lifestyle preferences (e.g., 'back to the country' or second/holiday homes) have all placed enormous pressure on housing provision and house prices, and have led to a boom in housing developments that has often been supported by poor planning practice. Moreover, they highlight that the last 15 years has seen the housing market become more differentiated and flexible, with a range of different unit styles and sizes being built that cater for people who are at different stages of the property market, have varying lifestyles, and are buying for different reasons (e.g., as investments, retirement homes). They identify four key processes shaping housing provision: urban regeneration schemes, suburbanisation, social housing schemes, and the growth of rural living and second homes in the country. To illustrate their arguments they provide two case studies, the Fatima Mansions sink estate in inner-city Dublin and rural housing in Clew Bay, County Mayo.

In the following chapter, Trutz Haase provides a spatial overview of poverty and deprivation, noting that whilst new prosperity is leading to new housing estates in urban areas, and one-off housing and holiday homes in rural areas, places of long-term poverty remain the same, with the exception of some inner-city areas that have been gentrified with former poor residents displaced to other persistently poor places. As a result, in Ireland, as with many other countries, poverty has been tackled through area-based responses since 1991. Haase notes that area-based initiatives need to be broadened to take account of multiple forms of deprivation and neighbourhood effects. He also argues that they need to be supplemented by structural policy responses, such as tax and welfare reform, that benefit people who do not live in the identified poor areas. Haase stresses that deprivation needs to be conceptualised spatially and

to 2002. In the final section of the chapter he charts the development of specific policy initiatives and outlines the changes he believes are necessary to tackle long-term, systemic poverty and deprivation.

Many analysts have noted a strong link between poverty and health, though as Frank Houghton and Dennis Pringle detail in their chapter, the relationship in Ireland is complex with, for example, Donegal having the highest life expectancy despite being the poorest county in the State. In their chapter they discuss general trends and spatial variations in health and disease in Ireland, the relationship between social capital and health, and also the structuring of the health system, an issue of on-going debate given the supposed crises in healthcare. In Ireland, as with other developed nations, non-infectious diseases such as heart disease and cancer are now the primary cause of death. Whilst medicines account for the decline in infectious disease, changing lifestyles have contributed to non-infectious rates reflecting diet and exercise rates. They note that health provision has been radically reorganised recently following the Hanly Report, but that Ireland still does not use an objective formula (i.e., based on population characteristics and need) to allocate health funding. They suggest that such a formula is needed if Ireland's health problems are to be tackled more effectively.

The changes in the health of the nation are related to changes in lifestyle and patterns of consumption. Denis Linehan examines 'the way we live today' and how cultural values and practices have altered since the start of the Celtic Tiger period. His wide-ranging analysis discusses issues of obesity, alcohol consumption, sexual freedom, identity, secularisation, pet keeping, housing lifestyles, disposable income, high debt, food consumption, declining social capital and community cohesiveness, and placelessness (the erosion of a distinctive Irish landscape to a hybrid American-European blandness). In short, he documents how Ireland has become a consumption-driven society and how RoI now stands for 'Rip-off Ireland' (rather than Republic of Ireland). Through these changes he suggests that the nature of Irishness has changed, although he notes that this is not necessarily a bad thing, but rather the inevitable response to changing contexts.

Population and social change in Ireland have been remarkable for their speed and nature. The country is almost unrecognisable to those returning immigrants who left in the 1980s. Whilst much of the change that has occurred has been positive, as these chapters highlight by no means of all of it is. Moreover, the positives and negatives are not universally distributed but are unequal and uneven in their processes and effects across the country. The challenge for the future is to sustain the positive trends, but to also work much harder at addressing the very real challenges that face people in their everyday social lives. This challenge needs to be met by government as well as individual citizens and communities and requires a commitment to continue the process of creating innovative interventions that address issues of inequality, promote sustainability and improve the quality of life for all who live on the island. Without this commitment the perception that Ireland is a highly desirable place to live