LIMERICK
Profile of a Changing City

By
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Prepared for:
LIMERICK CITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
L I M E R I C K
Profile of a Changing City
Foreword by the Chairman of Limerick City Development Board,

COUNCILLOR DIARMUID SCULLY

Limerick: Profile of a Changing City

This report “Limerick: Profile of a Changing City” provides much needed information, facts and figures on the current position of Limerick City and environs. As Chairman of the Board who commissioned this work, I am sure it will be a valuable source of information for both research and general information purposes, in particular it will inform the future work and planning of the City.

The need to coordinate and draw together statistical information and then interpret this information in a usable format was first identified in 2001 when the City Development Board published the first of these statistical reports. The report is based on the 2002 small area population statistics and is the only report of its kind which provides a comprehensive picture of the City and its environs and we are sure that this will be a very useful tool to have for organisations and individuals.

I would like to thank the members of the Board for supporting this initiative particularly those organisations who made resources available. In particular, I would like to thank Des Mc Callery, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, who compiled the research and prepared the report on our behalf.

Councillor Diarmuid Scully
Chairman
Limerick City Development Board
Introduction to Socio-Economic Profile

Limerick City Development Board is delighted to launch the Socio-Economic Profile of Limerick City following compilation and interpretation of the data from the 2002 Census. This publication will serve as a valuable reference for all sectors of our community, particularly in the creation of new policies to address the ever-changing landscape that is Limerick City.

Limerick City has witnessed significant developments in the past decade. We are now the undisputed hub of the Mid-West and the centre for high technology manufacturing and internationally traded services. We have seen the development of a strong retail base and there have been huge improvements in the built fabric of our city, particularly in the city centre.

Yet Limerick City still suffers from acute socio-economic polarisation with some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country as a whole. The nature of such social exclusion has changed since 1996 with a range of new ‘at risk’ groups emerging. These are real and pressing challenges of all of us in going forward.

The research and recommendations of this publication will help to inform the nature and delivery of services for the future. Moreover, it will help to focus attention on the need for all stakeholders in the city to work together to reverse such polarisation.

We hope this publication will be of use to all readers. I thank sincerely Des McCaffery, Mary Immaculate College for interpreting the complex data and presenting it in a reader-friendly manner. The research and recommendations of this publication will help to inform the nature and delivery of services for the future. Moreover, it will help to focus attention on the need for all stakeholders in the city to work together to reverse such polarisation.

We also wish to thank the Mid Western Health Board and Limerick City Council for funding this initiative, this project could not be completed without their financial support.

PAT DOWLING
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE

LIMERICK: PROFILE OF A CHANGING CITY
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Limerick, the third largest urban area in the State, and the capital of the Mid-West Region, has undergone extensive and profound change in recent years. This change is most readily discerned in the built environment, but accompanying the physical transformation there have been significant economic, social and cultural changes. While some of these changes have local, endogenous causes, others have been driven by external processes operating at the national and international scales. The purpose of this profile is to chart the outcomes of recent change by providing a comprehensive account of the present day social and economic geography of the Limerick urban area, drawing on information from the census of population and other sources. The profile looks first at the city in its regional and national context before going on to examine the detailed internal geography of the modern city.

**The Local and Regional Economy**

In line with the growth of the national economy, both the Limerick urban area and the Mid-West region performed strongly in the late 1990s. Employment in the urban area increased by 25 per cent between 1996 and 2002, and per capita disposable income in the wider Limerick City and County area was up by close to two-thirds between 1996 and 2001. Economic growth has been accompanied by considerable restructuring, one aspect of which is greater reliance on foreign-owned firms that have been attracted to the area in recent years. In 2003, the foreign sector accounted for two-thirds of all jobs in the City and County, in companies assisted by the industrial promotion agencies. However, despite the greater orientation of newer firms towards the high technology sectors, the overall level of productivity (output per worker) in the City and County is comparatively low, at just 66 per cent of the national level.

**Population Distribution and Change**

The population of Limerick City and its suburbs stood at 86,998 in 2002, having grown by almost 10 per cent in the preceding six years. This rate of growth exceeded both the national average and the average for the country’s five largest urban centres. Population growth varied considerably throughout the urban area, but one of the most significant contrasts is that between the administrative City and the suburban Electoral Districts (EDs), with the latter showing a rate of increase that was almost five times higher. This differential has been established for some time, and the result is that the suburbs now contain over two-fifths of the population. As a consequence, Limerick is a significantly under-bounded city, in which the administrative boundaries come nowhere close to encompassing all of the city’s population, built-up area or economic activity. Within the City itself there were huge variations in population change. At one end of the spectrum the city centre showed exceptionally high rates of increase, while at the other end, population levels declined quite precipitately in part of the Southill area. In general however, decline was widespread in the City, with two-thirds of City EDs losing population in this period.

**Age Profile**

The differential pattern of population change is both cause and effect of significant contrasts in age profile between areas. Several of the public housing estates, including those experiencing decline, have quite young age profiles with relatively high proportions of population aged less than 15 years of age. The association of population decline with youthful populations is somewhat unusual; where it occurs it is usually due to the out-migration from the area of older householders, often those aged in their 40s and 50s. The city centre is the domain of the young adult age groups, while the older residential areas in the City have comparatively high proportions of middle and older age groups. In general, with the exception of the city centre and some public housing estates, the age profile of EDs within the City is significantly older than that of the suburban EDs, and this is reflected in higher elderly dependency ratios.
Household and Family Structures

The census data reveal marked differences in level of educational attainment throughout the urban area. By modern standards those whose educational attainment did not extend beyond lower secondary levels only are a minority of households in the city centre. Whereas the deceased had a higher proportion of those of professional and managerial social class, this is not true of the city's population in general. Much higher levels of educational attainment are prevalent in the areas where there are high levels of educational attainment. These include the North and South Circular Road areas of the City, and the southern suburbs.

Housing

Housing conditions in Limerick have improved significantly over the last decade. The high level of real estate development in the urban area has resulted in a significant increase in the number of households accommodated in new housing. Alongside this, the number of households living in substandard accommodation has decreased. The sector with the most significant rate of growth in the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled, is the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled. In the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled.

Labour Force and Employment

Housing

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Education and Social Class

Industrial restructuring and, particularly, the shift towards high technology sectors with greater requirements for skilled workers, has meant that educational attainment has emerged as perhaps the most important determinant of the individual's labour market prospects. The high level of real estate development in the urban area has resulted in a significant increase in the number of households accommodated in new housing. Alongside this, the number of households living in substandard accommodation has decreased. The sector with the most significant rate of growth in the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled, is the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled. In the private rented sector, where the number of households almost doubled.

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Travel, Transport and Communications

Analysis of the census data on daily travel reveals a significant level of congestion in Limerick, linked partly to high levels of car usage. The median distance travelled to work, school or college is 2.5 miles for city residents and 3 miles for those in the suburbs. Analysis of the census data on daily travel reveals a significant level of congestion in Limerick, linked partly to high levels of car usage. The median distance travelled to work, school or college is 2.5 miles for city residents and 3 miles for those in the suburbs.

Migration, Nationality and Culture

The 2002 census reveals a considerable degree of mobility in the population of Limerick urban area, with 12 per cent of the usually resident population reporting a different address one year prior to the census. Mobility levels are highest, at over 40 per cent, in the redeveloped areas of the city centre. Some of those who have changed address may have moved a comparatively short distance, possibly within the city itself. However, it is likely that a large number of people have moved to or from the city itself.

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Travel distances depend on the mode of travel used, as well as the accessibility of workplaces and schools. Surprisingly, less than one-third of commuters resident in the city centre travel more than two miles, implying that the majority have destinations located outside the urban area, but are generally closest in the centre and in the local suburban areas. In contrast, almost half of households in the outer authority estates have two or more cars, and typically 70 per cent of households in these areas travel by car to workplaces and schools. High levels of car ownership are particularly evident in the more deprived areas—some of which cannot be substantially understood in terms of four key areas in the city vary in terms of (i) the degree of urbanism; (ii) socio-economic status; (iii) labour market engagement; and (iv) the degree of population ageing. When these four dimensions of variation are taken into account, the sub-areas can be grouped into six distinct types of social area. These are: (a) ‘urban areas’ that have high degrees of engagement; (b) the city centre, which, despite its economic status, is also inhabited by highly educated workers; (c) mature working-class areas, distinguished by older populations and low socio-economic status; (d) prosperous older areas in which high income levels are concentrated; (e) local authority estates characterised by low socio-economic status and high levels of market engagement; and (f) student areas, where low levels of market engagement reflect large student populations of third-level students.

The geography of deprivation has remained relatively stable in recent years. While all areas in Limerick show an improvement in their affluence/deprivation scale between 1991 and 2002, levels of improvement tended to lag behind their relative deprivation scores, so that most areas disimproved in terms of their relative deprivation. Despite the economic growth of the late 1990s, social exclusion remains a major problem in the Limerick urban area. The depth and extent of the problem is revealed by the data that, since 1991, Limerick City has consistently ranked as the second most deprived area in the country. While almost all areas showed an improvement between 1991 and 2002, levels of improvement varied between areas. The single most deprived census tract in the city is located in the City Centre and the most deprived area in the country, based on the 2002 census. The City Centre is a very high proportion of areas that are either economically or socially disadvantaged. The City Centre is a very high proportion of areas that are either economically or socially disadvantaged. The City Centre is a very high proportion of areas that are either economically or socially disadvantaged. The City Centre is a very high proportion of areas that are either economically or socially disadvantaged. The City Centre is a very high proportion of areas that are either economically or socially disadvantaged.
See section 3.1 for a precise definition of Limerick urban area.
1. introduction

Limerick City is located at the lowest bridging point of the River Shannon. It has been a centre of trade since Viking times, and is one of the oldest chartered cities in Ireland. The original city occupied a defensive island site located between the Shannon and its tributary, the Abbey River. This area of King’s Island forms the historic core of what is now the third largest urban area in the State, and the industrial, commercial, administrative and cultural capital of the Mid-West Region.

Limerick has undergone extensive and profound change in recent times, as an array of processes operating at the global, the national and the local level have transformed the place and its people. Ireland’s on-going integration into the global system of production has been reflected in the restructuring of the city’s economic base. Older, indigenous businesses, in traditional sectors such as the food industry and textiles and clothing, have gone out of existence, to be replaced by newer, overseas employers, many of them in the so-called high-technology sectors such as bio-technology and electronics. In hand with this economic change, the physical fabric of the city has been radically overhauled, and Limerick is currently in the midst of the most extensive re-construction since the development of Newtown Pery at the end of the eighteenth century. All of this has occurred in a context of intense demographic and social change, with the ‘baby boomers’ of the 1970s swelling a labour force already greatly expanded by increased rates of female participation. For many of the younger workers, increased prosperity and changed social norms, in conjunction with the physical developments in the city centre, have allowed a style of living that is radically different to that of a generation ago. Finally, the city’s economic boom has attracted to it a significant wave of new immigration that has greatly increased the cultural diversity of its population. No less than the presence of transnational companies on the city’s industrial estates and business parks, or of international retail chains in its shopping centres, the new immigrants attest to the on-going globalisation of the local economy.

The purpose of this profile is to chart the outcomes of these changes, by providing a comprehensive and systematic account of the present day social and economic geography of the Limerick urban area. To achieve this, a range of data sources is used, but the most important of these is the small area population statistics derived from the census of population. The profile commences (Section 2) with an overview of the role of the city as a regional capital, and, in the context of the National Spatial Strategy, a centre of emerging significance in national terms. Particular attention is given to the main forms of economic restructuring that have occurred in recent years. The central part of the profile (Section 3) examines the highly differentiated way in which that restructuring has been played out in the city, by looking at the geographical distribution, at the level of the census district, of a wide range of demographic, economic, social and cultural variables. In Section 4 an analysis of these variables is undertaken that allows the complex social geography of the urban area to be distilled into a series of five summary maps, the last of which divides the city into six distinct types of social area. The profile concludes (Section 5) by identifying a number of key emerging issues in the city’s development that must be addressed if the growth of recent years is to be translated into sustainable forms of development.
2. limerick in its national and regional context
The population of Limerick City and its environs was recorded as 86,998 in 2002, having grown by almost 10 per cent in the preceding 6-year period. This growth rate exceeded that for the State as a whole (8 per cent) and placed Limerick second highest among the country’s five major urban centres. The city dominates the local settlement system of the Mid-West Region, with a population almost four times that of the next largest centre, Ennis (Table 1). The region in fact is relatively rural in character, with 57 per cent of its population living in rural areas compared to just 40 per cent for the State as a whole. Limerick accounts for over one-quarter of the region’s population.

The relative strength of the city-region economy can be ascertained from some summary indicators for Limerick City and County and the Mid-West Region (Table 2). Between 1996 and 2001 per capita disposable income in Limerick City and County grew by over two-thirds. This was the fastest rate of increase in the region, and exceeded the national average. The result was that by 2001 Limerick had consolidated its position as the third most prosperous county in the State in terms of per capita disposable income.

Employment growth in manufacturing and internationally traded services was central to the performance of the local economy in this period. Employment in industry grew by just under 7,000 jobs, with Limerick City and County having 65 per cent of agency-assisted jobs in the City and County in 2003 as compared to 1996 (Table 3). Remarkably, 84 per cent of foreign-owned firms accounted for almost the entire net job gain, and the industrial base now shows a strong orientation towards the high-technology sectors. This is also true in Limerick, yet not accompanied by a redrawing of activities. Towards the advanced stage of development, the Limerick economy stands at a level of 50 per cent for the State as a whole. Nationally, the relative strength of the city-region economy can be ascertained from some summary indicators for Limerick City and County and the Mid-West Region (Table 2). Between 1996 and 2001 per capita disposable income in Limerick City and County grew by over two-thirds. This was the fastest rate of increase in the region, and exceeded the national average. The result was that by 2001 Limerick had consolidated its position as the third most prosperous county in the State in terms of per capita disposable income.

Limerick: A Profile of a Changing City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement size</th>
<th>Population Size</th>
<th>Percentage of Region’s Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>192,830</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 – 10,000</td>
<td>27,440</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 – 50,000</td>
<td>27,051</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 – 100,000</td>
<td>18,998</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 – 300,000</td>
<td>86,998</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300,000 – 500,000</td>
<td>22,051</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 – 1,000,000</td>
<td>22,440</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000 – 2,000,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>280,000</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
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Table 1: Distribution of Population, Mid-West Region


Table 2: Per Capita Disposable Income, 1996-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Disposable Income Per Capita (€)</th>
<th>1996-2001 % Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limerick City &amp; County</td>
<td>9,740</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-West Region</td>
<td>9,481</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>9,641</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CSO County Incomes and Regional GDP, 2001. Data is not available for Limerick City alone.

Figure 1: Employment Trends in Agency-Assisted Firms

Source: Forfás Employment Survey Database, 2004

Figure 1: Employment Trends in Agency-Assisted Firms

Source: Forfás Employment Survey Database, 2004

The area covered by the Limerick Planning, Land Use and Transport Study includes not just the built-up urban area but also many rural areas that can be described as peri-urban in character. The region’s population is estimated at 236,000 in 2002, representing 69 per cent of the Mid-West total. According to the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), this is projected to grow to 360,000 by 2020, if current trends in economic growth and population distribution continue. However, under a scenario of somewhat higher economic growth and more importantly, with re-distribution of economic activity and population consequent on the adoption of the NSS, the city-region could reach 280,000. A region of this scale is capable of sustaining a very broad level of functions that can provide the basis for a dynamic approach to regional development in accordance with the objectives that underpin the National Spatial Strategy.
Urban renewal has greatly increased the attractiveness of Limerick as a centre for tourism and business investment. This in turn is contributing to the city’s role as one of three Gateways designated in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) fundamental to the thinking underpinning the Gateway concept is that these centres will be internationally competitive in terms of attracting foreign direct investment. In order to fulfil this function, Gateways must provide the kinds of locational advantages demanded by advanced manufacturing and information-technology service enterprises, in addition to access to international transport and communications, underpinned by the kinds of knowledge and research infrastructure that these enterprises need to operate successfully.

Manufacturing is the dominant employment sector for the labour force of the city, both in absolute terms and also relative to the national employment profile. Altogether this sector employed 15,534 people in 2002, or 36.8% of the total labour force. The Food and Drink and Textiles and Clothing sectors are the largest contributors to this employment base, with 4,426 and 3,459 workers respectively. These industries are heavily dependent on foreign direct investment and have undergone substantial restructuring in recent years, as newer industries such as electronics and computers have superseded older, more traditional activities in the food industry, and in textiles and clothing. Employment in these sectors is more likely to locate on the industrial estates and business parks on the outskirts of the city. The largest of these, at Raheen, Corcanree, Galvone, the Ballysimon Road and the National Technological Park now constitute significant employment locations relative to the city centre. Other manufacturing centres are also significant sources of employment for city residents. With workers commuting and from these centres, the city now forms the hub of a complex multi-modal functional region.

The decline of traditional industries in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the decay and dereliction of large parts of the urban fabric. However, the urban renewal scheme introduced nationwide in 1986 has rejuvenated the city centre. Limerick was a beneficiary under the scheme, with high levels of investment in the city during the last three years of the programme. The importance of recent construction is unparalleled since the development of Newtown Pery in the late 18th century. In summary, recent developments and the current thrust of spatial policy have elevated Limerick from the status of a regional capital to that of an urban centre of national significance. The city has a key role to play in encouraging more balanced development and can play a key role in attracting the highest levels of investment in the State.

In summary, recent developments and the current thrust of spatial policy have elevated Limerick from the status of a regional capital to that of an urban centre of national significance. The city has a key role to play in encouraging more balanced development and can play a key role in attracting the highest levels of investment in the State. The current spatial policy framework is designed to achieve the development of a complex multi-modal functional region.

Limerick Mid-West Ireland: 1. Net full-time employment gain 1,018 1,167 49,972 1996-2003, all firms 2. Net full-time employment gain 6 -203 22,207 Irish-owned firms 3. Net full-time employment gain 1,012 1,370 27,765 foreign-owned firms 4. Percentage of full-time jobs in foreign-owned firms 065.3 064.2 050.3 5. Net output per person engaged 139.9 103.6 210.1 (€000s)

Table 3: Industrial Indicators for Limerick City & County and the Mid-West Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number at Work, 2002</th>
<th>Sector's Share of Total in %</th>
<th>Sector's Share of National in %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communications</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>07.4</td>
<td>09.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
<td>4,055</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>09.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2,780</td>
<td>08.0</td>
<td>06.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social work</td>
<td>2,290</td>
<td>08.6</td>
<td>06.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Employment in Selected Sectors, 2002, Limerick City and Environs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number at Work, 2002</th>
<th>Sector's Share of Total in %</th>
<th>Sector's Share of National in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communications</td>
<td>2,720</td>
<td>07.4</td>
<td>09.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
<td>4,055</td>
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<td>08.6</td>
<td>06.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIMERICK IN ITS NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The decline of traditional industries in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the decay and dereliction of large parts of the urban fabric. However, the urban renewal scheme introduced nationwide in 1986 has rejuvenated the city centre. Limerick was a beneficiary under the scheme, with high levels of investment in the city during the last three years of the programme. The importance of recent construction is unparalleled since the development of Newtown Pery in the late 18th century. In summary, recent developments and the current thrust of spatial policy have elevated Limerick from the status of a regional capital to that of an urban centre of national significance. The city has a key role to play in encouraging more balanced development and can play a key role in attracting the highest levels of investment in the State.

The current spatial policy framework is designed to achieve the development of a complex multi-modal functional region. This is achieved through the urban regeneration of the city and the development of the urban centre outside Dublin. On the capital axis, the city has a key role to play in encouraging more balanced development and can play a key role in attracting the highest levels of investment in the State. The current spatial policy framework is designed to achieve the development of a complex multi-modal functional region. This is achieved through the urban regeneration of the city and the development of the urban centre outside Dublin. On the capital axis, the city has a key role to play in encouraging more balanced development and can play a key role in attracting the highest levels of investment in the State.

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2. Throughout the text, the terms 'City' and 'Limerick City' (capital C) are used to refer to the legally bounded area administered by Limerick City Council. By contrast, the terms 'city' and 'Limerick city' (small c) are used to refer to the larger urban agglomeration. The latter consists of two components: the City itself plus those areas that, for census purposes, are deemed to form part of the continuously built-up area. These areas are referred to as the environs of the City. A third territorial concept, 'Limerick urban area' is explained later.

3. The five urban centres and their growth rates are Dublin (5.5 per cent), Cork (3.5 per cent), Limerick (9.9 per cent), Galway (15.3 per cent), and Waterford (5.8 per cent).

4. Rural areas are here defined as the Aggregate Rural Area, which consists of the open countryside and all nucleated settlements with less than 1,500 population.

5. The Atlantic Gateways project is managed by Shannon Development under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
3. the urban mosaic: a socio-spatial profile of Limerick
3.1 Defining the Urban Area

Like all large urban centres, Limerick is a complex mosaic of demographic, economic and social patterns. This part of the profile looks in turn at these aspects of the city’s internal geography, focusing on key indicators that are representative of each dimension. The commentary is based on a series of maps that show the variation of each indicator (or variable) across spatial units known as Electoral Divisions (EDs). The variables are calculated from data taken mainly from the 2002 census of population.

Supplementary data from earlier censuses are also used occasionally to illustrate change over time. The geographical area covered by the maps includes the administrative City of Limerick, consisting of 37 EDs, plus a further 6 EDs in County Limerick and County Clare that contain significant parts of the environs of the City, as defined for census purposes. The EDs in question, and the main suburbs that they contain, are listed in Table 5. The ED of Ballyvara in County Limerick, which also contains part of the environs, is not included in this analysis, partly because of its greater distance from the City, but mainly because a much lower proportion of its population is located in the environs (Table 6). The location of all the EDs covered by the analysis is shown on Map 1. Together the City and the 6 suburban EDs will be referred to henceforward as the Limerick urban area.

**Table 5: Suburbs of Limerick included in the Map Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ED Suburbs Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Limerick</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballycummin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dooradoyle, Raheen, Ballykeefe, Gouldavoher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballysimon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millroad, Castletroy, Monaleen, Kilbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick North Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahirpadivin, Aylesbury, Clonmacken, part of Moyross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick South Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bawnmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxborough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballysheedy, Ballyclough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Clare</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyglass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Banks, Westbury, Parteen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6: Population of EDs containing Limerick Environs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ED Suburbs</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Population in Environs</th>
<th>Percentage in Environs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballycummin</td>
<td>13,435</td>
<td>12,382</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyglass</td>
<td>4,938</td>
<td>3,851</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballysimon</td>
<td>9,675</td>
<td>8,380</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick North Rural</td>
<td>6,932</td>
<td>6,427</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick South Rural</td>
<td>0,980</td>
<td>0,959</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxborough</td>
<td>1,678</td>
<td>0,544</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,638</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,543</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyglass</td>
<td>3,740</td>
<td>0,432</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,378</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,975</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several points need to be made in relation to the construction and interpretation of the maps. First, because of their lower population density, the suburban EDs are much larger in area than those located inside the City boundary. As a result, the former EDs tend to dominate the visual impact of maps of the urban area, even though large parts of them have little, if any, resident population. This is potentially misleading itself, and by reducing the scale at which maps can be produced, it makes the discernment of patterns within the City more difficult. To overcome this problem, representation of the outlying EDs on the maps is confined to just the built-up area adjacent to the City. This area was identified and delimited for each suburban ED by examining the distribution of population across a series of 0.5 kilometre square grids (i.e. each grid square has an area of 0.25 km2). This methodology can be considered to give a close approximation to the environs of Limerick as used by the census authorities, though the use of grid squares gives to the maps a slightly over-regular, ‘geometric’, appearance in the outlying areas. Second, almost all the maps are based on the categorisation of the 43 EDs into just 5 different classes. While this is done in a way that groups similar areas together, it is inevitable that in some cases there may be a considerable difference between EDs within the same class. Finally, it should be borne in mind at all times that the descriptions that follow are profiles of areas and not of individuals: it must not be assumed that a given individual, family or household in an area will exhibit the aggregate characteristics of the area.
Map 1:

Limerick City and Environs
Electoral Divisions

THE URBAN MOSAIC: A SOCIO-SPATIAL PROFILE OF LIMERICK
3.2 Population Distribution and Change

Limerick urban area (i.e. the 43 EDs in total) showed strong population growth in the period 1996-2002. However, population increase was unevenly distributed. The City, which grew by 3.8 per cent, accounted for one-quarter of the overall increase, while the suburban EDs, growing at a rate of 18.6 per cent, accounted for the remainder. This divergence in growth as between City and suburbs persisted throughout the 1990s (Fig. 2). As a result, the suburban EDs now contain 41 per cent of the total population of the urban area. Clearly, Limerick is a significantly under-bounded city, in that the administrative limits come nowhere close to encompassing all of the city’s population or built-up area.

There was even greater variation in population change at the level of the EDs. Generally speaking, the highest growth rates were recorded in the city centre and the suburbs, especially those to the south of the City (Map 2). The growth in the city centre was due in large part to on-going urban renewal activity in the form of apartment construction, especially in the area along the quays, which has induced a high level of migration into the area (see Map 29). This continues a trend first established in these areas in the early 1990s, and represents welcome evidence of population recovery in the urban core, after a prolonged period of decline. The most spectacular growth was in the ED of Dock A, which extends from Steam Boat Quay to the Crescent and from Mallow Street to St. Alphonsus Street. Here an increase of 1,212 persons resulted in almost a trebling of population. Other areas within the City that showed significant growth, both in percentage and absolute terms, included the South Circular Road / Courtbrack Avenue areas, Market ED, and Rhebogue. All of these areas have seen significant new housing construction in recent years (see also Map 34). By far the highest absolute level of population growth – an increase of over three and a half thousand persons – was recorded in the suburban Ballycummin ED to the south of the City, which contains the suburbs of Dooradoyle, Raheen and Gouldavoher. This reflects the continuing spread of suburban development in this area.

With the exception of the city centre EDs, population decline was widespread within the City boundary, where almost two out of every three EDs (24 out of 37) lost population between 1996 and 2002. This included all of the EDs on the northside of the river with the sole exception of Kileely A, which showed just a marginal increase. In many of these areas, decline is the result of population movements associated with the maturing of older residential communities, and in some the absolute level of decrease is not very high. The districts that stand out as having high rates of decrease that involve significant numbers of people are the EDs of Galvone B and Rathbane, which correspond to the Southhill area of the city.

Galvone B, which contains the estates of O’Malley Park and Keyes Park, lost close to one-fifth of its population (462 persons). This rate of decrease is so high as to suggest that there is an element of differential out-migration involved, i.e., out-migration in excess of what might be expected from the normal maturing of the area. The population of Galvone B has shown consistent decline at every census since 1981.
Map 2:

Population Change 1996 to 2002
Percentage Change
-40 to -18% (4)
-20 to -40% (6)
0 to 20% (8)
-7.5 to 0% (12)
-19% to -7.5% (13)
It is with respect to the age structure of the population that some of the most marked contrasts are found between different areas of the city. These contrasts are evident in terms of the distribution of the elderly population, with relatively high proportions of elderly residents occurring in the north and south of the city, particularly in the older established residential areas, while the elderly population is relatively low in the newer, developing areas to the south and west of the city centre.

The vitality ratio (Map 6) measures the vitality of the population in the main family forming age range (20-44 years) relative to that in the older age group (60 years and over). As such, it is a measure of the demographic potential of the population. This ratio is particularly high in the developed areas of the city centre, specifically the quayside EDs of Dock A and Shannon A, which, as illustrated above, are characterised by concentrations of young adults. However, it is not possible to determine whether the high vitality in these areas is due to the presence of young adults or to the absence of elderly people. However, these areas are likely to be located along the North Circular Road, as this is the main route for moving young people out of the city centre.

The vitality ratio (Map 6) is also high in the city centre and quays, reflecting the predominance of private rented housing in the main family forming age range (20-44 years). As such, the vitality ratio (Map 6) is high in these areas, which are likely to be located along the North Circular Road, as this is the main route for moving young people out of the city centre.
Map 3:

Population Aged 0-14 Years
Percentage of Total
- 28.4 to 33.9 (3)
- 21.4 to 28.4 (12)
- 17.8 to 21.4 (7)
- 12.9 to 17.8 (11)
- 5.6 to 12.9 (10)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 4:

Population Aged 15-24 Years
Percentage of Total
- 33.5 to 41.8 (5)
- 28.3 to 33.5 (5)
- 17.4 to 28.3 (13)
- 14.6 to 17.4 (17)
- 12 to 14.6 (3)
Map 5:

Population Aged 25-44 Years
Percentage of Total
- 37.4 to 45.7 (9)
- 31.6 to 37.4 (9)
- 29.9 to 31.6 (4)
- 24.6 to 29.9 (13)
- 22.6 to 24.6 (8)
Map 6:

Population Aged 45-64 Years
Percentage of Total

- 23.8 to 27.7 (9)
- 20.7 to 23.8 (10)
- 17.8 to 20.7 (9)
- 13.7 to 17.8 (10)
- 6.9 to 13.7 (5)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 7: Population Aged 65 Years and Over Percentage of Total
- 22.3 to 35.7 (3)
- 13.9 to 22.3 (14)
- 11.5 to 13.9 (4)
- 8.5 to 11.5 (3)
- 3.8 to 8.3 (14)

Legend:
- Green for 22.3 to 35.7
- Light Green for 13.9 to 22.3
- Medium Green for 11.5 to 13.9
- Yellow for 8.5 to 11.5
- Light Yellow for 3.8 to 8.3

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

Scale 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland (OS) Map No. 7 2001
Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland & Government of Ireland
Limerick City Council

Reproduced by OS 2002
Map 9:

Elderly Dependency Ratio 2002

- 373 to 701 (3)
- 198 to 373 (14)
- 127 to 196 (10)
- 89 to 127 (7)
- 42 to 89 (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 10:

Vitality Ratio
2002
- 10.8 to 14.4 (2)
- 3.2 to 10.8 (15)
- 1.8 to 3.2 (11)
- 1.2 to 1.8 (10)
- 0.5 to 1.2 (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland, Permit No. 7793
Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland & Government of Ireland

Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
3.4 Household and Family Structures

As suggested above, it is not just the distribution of a population across the age spectrum that determines its reproductive capacity: the family and household structures of the population also play a significant role. The family cycle starts with the young couple, and the cycle proceeds through stages such as the pre-school stage, and then on to the empty-nest stage, when all the children have left the family home. The needs of families of different kinds of support and services depend on which stage of the cycle they have reached. The distribution of families across the stages of the family cycle is illustrated in Figure 4. For 1996 and 2002 an increase of 8.7% (65 per cent) in the number of pre-family households is evident, while the number of families in the more advanced stages of the cycle decreased by 3.7%. The only notable exception to this pattern is the Castletroy area, where, despite its suburban location, a relatively high 43 per cent of households are non-family based. This is due to the significant student population in that area.

The most numerous type of non-family household in Limerick urban area is that consisting of a single person. Single-person households account for 65 per cent of all non-family households and for 22 per cent of all households. Not surprisingly, therefore, the distribution of these households is largely dependent on the location of the area. The rate of single-person households is highest in the city centre and lowest in the outer suburbs. The rate of single-person households is also highest in the city centre and lowest in the outer suburbs. In this area, the rate of single-person households is very low, reflecting the significant student population in that area.

The next three maps focus on family-based households and illustrate the distribution of families across different stages of the family cycle. The concept of the family cycle is based on the notion that families go through a series of life stages that can be operationally defined with respect to the ages of the female partner and the children. The cycle starts with the young couple and the children. The cycle then proceeds through stages such as the pre-school stage, and then on to the empty-nest stage, when all the children have left the family home. The needs of families of different kinds of support and services depend on which stage of the cycle they have reached. The distribution of families across the stages of the family cycle is illustrated in Figure 4. For 1996 and 2002 an increase of 8.7% (65 per cent) in the number of pre-family households is evident, while the number of families in the more advanced stages of the cycle decreased by 3.7%. The only notable exception to this pattern is the Castletroy area, where, despite its suburban location, a relatively high 43 per cent of households are non-family based. This is due to the significant student population in that area.
Map 11:

Family Based Households
Percentage of All Private Households

- 78.9 to 85 (6)
- 72.1 to 78.9 (9)
- 62.4 to 72.1 (10)
- 48.8 to 62.4 (10)
- 29 to 48.8 (8)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland. Permit No. 7759
Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland & Government of Ireland
Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Map 12:

Single-Person Households
Percentage of All Private Households:
- 49.2 to 52.2% (2)
- 32.3 to 49.2% (10)
- 23.7 to 32.3% (14)
- 16.6 to 23.7% (10)
- 10.8 to 16.6% (7)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanized sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 15:

Empty-Nest Families
Percentage of All Families

- 13.9 to 14.9 (3)
- 11.3 to 13.9 (11)
- 8.9 to 11.3 (12)
- 5.8 to 8.9 (13)
- 2.3 to 5.8 (4)
This section of the profile looks at some key aspects of the economy of Limerick, with a particular focus on labour force and employment patterns. The labour force of the Limerick urban area grew from 35,020 to 41,082 between 1991 and 2002, a growth rate of over 17.00 percent. Much of this growth can be attributed to demographic factors, in particular the fact that the age profile of the Limerick urban area is young. In addition, the population of the city centre also contributed to the growth in the labour force, with an increase of over 4,000 in the period 1991-1996. 

The relationship between the labour force and the population base is governed by the labour force participation rate (LFPR), also known as the activity rate, defined as the percentage of those aged 15 to 64 years who are in work, or actively seeking work. In Limerick, the participation rate of males is higher than that of females, reflecting the traditional gender roles in the labour market. 

The spatial pattern is similar to that of the aggregate LFPR, with EDs near the city centre showing the highest values. This is an important influence on the female activity rate, due to the fact that women workers tend to be more active in the labour market. The employment opportunities for female workers are also a significant factor in the high LFPR in the city centre and Limerick Regional Hospital. 

The spatial pattern is similar to that of the aggregate LFPR, with EDs near the city centre showing the highest values. In addition to having a favourable age profile, these areas are also characterised by good access to local employment opportunities. This has an important influence on the female activity rate, due to the fact that women workers tend to be more active in the labour market. The employment opportunities for female workers are also a significant factor in the high LFPR in the city centre and Limerick Regional Hospital.

In the period 1991-96, employment in the Limerick urban area increased by 17 percent, reflecting a growth of over 4,000 in the number at work. Growth accelerated in the period 2002-2006 with an increase of 25 percent, giving an extra 8,723 at work. Most of the growth was in the city centre EDs and the southern suburbs. Despite the overall growth in numbers at work, ten EDs experienced employment decreases: without exception these also declined in terms of population. 

While the growth in the urban economy was instrumental in the overall level of employment growth, the pattern identified above suggests that demographic and labour force change were the main drivers of local employment growth in recent years. To investigate the nature of employment growth in more detail, Map 19 depicts the absolute change (measured in percentage points) in the employment rate in each ED. The pattern that emerges is different from the previous map in a number of respects. First, the number of areas showing decreases is now much smaller, which is consistent with the general growth in employment. Secondly, the areas with the greatest increases are now seen to correspond with areas with high population growth. This pattern is more pronounced in the city centre and the southern suburbs, where there was substantial growth in housing development.

One of the most significant results of the analysis is the finding that there was less variation in the employment rate in 2002 as compared to 1996. 

Among the more significant sources of labour force growth in recent years has been the increasing rate of female participation in the labour force, which is tied into changing patterns of marriage and fertility. Although the overall female participation rate in Limerick is lower than the male rate (33.5 percent compared to 73.2 percent), it shows a higher degree of variation between EDs, and can contribute more to explanation of variation between the employment rate in each ED. In other words, any change in the labour force is allowed for in the data underpinning this map. The pattern that emerges is different from the previous map in a number of respects. First, the number of areas showing decreases is now much smaller, which is consistent with the general growth in employment. Secondly, the areas with the greatest increases are now seen to correspond with areas with high population growth. This pattern is more pronounced in the city centre and the southern suburbs, where there was substantial growth in housing development.

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Map 17:

Labour Force Participation Rate
Females 2002

- 65.1 to 75.1 (4)
- 57.2 to 65.1 (11)
- 52.9 to 57.2 (12)
- 44.3 to 52.9 (13)
- 35.7 to 44.3 (3)
Map 18:

Change in Employment: 1996-2002
Percentage Change
- 100 to 275 (2)
- 40 to 100 (7)
- 25 to 40 (7)
- 0 to 25 (17)
- -23 to 0 (10)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland. Permit No. 7793
Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland & Government of Ireland
Limerick City Council
Source: OSO 2002

Kilometer
Map 19:

Change in Employment Rate 1996-2002
Absolute Change (percentage points)

- 10 to 20 (10)
- 5 to 10 (13)
- 3 to 5 (4)
- 0 to 3 (12)
- -15 to 0 (4)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Boundaries
Electoral Division Rounds
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey
Copyright CSG, Limerick City Council
Irish Government of Ireland
2002
The employment rate is one measure of the engagement of an area’s labour supply in economic activity, based on the assessment of each individual’s principal economic status. However, individuals who are described in terms of their principal economic status as unemployed, or not in the labour force (e.g. students and retired persons), may actually work on a part-time or occasional basis. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure of labour market status is based on whether the individual undertook any employment for payment in the week before census day. This measure allows for the classification of individuals according to the number of hours of employment. Using these data, a measure of part-time employment can be derived by focusing on the proportion of the total employed (according to the ILO definition) that worked under 20 hours in the reference week.

Not surprisingly, the geographical pattern of part-time workers (Map 20) shows high concentrations in areas with a substantial student population (Castletroy and Dock D). More generally however, the pattern is almost the inverse of that for labour force participation: areas with high activity rates tend to have low levels of part-time workers, while areas with low participation rates (such as the O’Malley Park area) have high concentrations. This suggests that in-depth analyses of labour market performance need to go beyond simple dichotomous measures of economic activity such as the activity or employment rates.

Altogether two-thirds of those at work in Limerick in 2002 were employed in three broad industrial groups: manufacturing, commerce, and professional services. Manufacturing employs 21 per cent of workers, though its significance is considerably greater than this in economic terms, due to the dependence of many other sectors on demand that is generated by manufacturing firms and their workers. Workers in this sector show comparatively high concentration in areas to the southeast of the city centre, including Singland, Janesboro, Kennedy Park, Rathbane, and Ballinacurra Weston, as well as in Ballycummin ED (Map 21). The correspondence with the city’s industrial geography is noticeable: these areas are close to the major industrial estates located on Ballysimon Road and Childers Road, as well as in Raheen. However, proximity alone does not explain the distribution of manufacturing employment. The tradition of industrial employment in these areas is also important, as is the nature of the local skills base.

Commerce, which includes insurance, finance and business services, as well as retailing, employs 29 per cent of those at work in the urban area. Reflecting the strong concentration of these jobs in the city centre, areas close to the centre (e.g. along the lower Ennis Road) have high proportions of workers engaged in this sector (Map 22). Commerce is also the dominant employment sector for workers resident in the Castletroy area, some of whom are employed locally in services companies located in the National Technological Park. Employment in professional services, which includes education and health, presents an inverse image to that of the manufacturing sector, with particularly high levels in the North and South Circular Road areas, the southern suburbs, and the university area (Map 23). Employment in this sector is also significant in the Prospect / Weston and O’Malley Park areas of the city. However the occupational status (or skills level) of the jobs involved differs widely between the latter areas and the former. This is evident from the next section, which examines factors directly related to occupational status.
Map 20:

Part-Time Workers (Under 20 Hours per Week)
Percentage of Total Employed (ILO)

- 15.9 to 20.5 (7)
- 13.2 to 15.9 (8)
- 11 to 13.2 (11)
- 9.3 to 11 (8)
- 6.5 to 9.3 (8)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 8 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 21:

Employment In Manufacturing
Percentage of Total at Work

- 26.6 to 30.3 (3)
- 22.9 to 26.6 (7)
- 19.2 to 22.9 (15)
- 15.5 to 19.2 (12)
- 11.8 to 15.5 (6)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 22:

Employment in Commerico

Percentage of Total at Work

- 33 to 36.4 (6)
- 29.8 to 33 (8)
- 27.8 to 29.8 (12)
- 25.8 to 27.8 (12)
- 20.3 to 25.8 (5)
Map 23:

Employment in Professional Services
Percentage of Total at Work

- 19.6 to 24.5 (10)
- 15.7 to 19.6 (9)
- 13.3 to 15.7 (8)
- 11.2 to 13.3 (8)
- 8.5 to 11.2 (8)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
3.6 Education and Social Class

As noted earlier, the economic base of the urban area has undergone significant restructuring in recent years, one aspect of which is the shift in employment towards more highly skilled occupations. Because these occupations demand higher levels of formal qualification, education has emerged as perhaps the most significant determinant of the labour market prospects of the individual: those with lower levels of educational attainment are less likely to gain access to higher status, more remunerative, occupations. Likewise, differences in levels of educational attainment between areas reflect variations in the skills levels of the available labour force. Areas with high concentrations of less educated, lower skilled workers, tend to be less attractive to modern manufacturing and service industries.

Reflecting the changing norms in education and employment, workers whose education extended to lower secondary level or less can be considered to be at a disadvantage in the labour market. When the number of such persons is expressed as a percentage of all those whose education has ceased, the resulting variable shows a high level of variation across the urban area. For the urban area as a whole, the percentage with lower secondary level education or less is 41 per cent. However, this rises to over two-thirds in the EDs containing the residential areas of Moyross, Ballynanty, Kileely, St. Mary’s Park, Garryowen, Prospect, Rathbane and Southill (Map 24). Not surprisingly, this pattern is almost identical to that of early school leavers, defined as those who have left education aged 15 years or younger (Map 25). At the other end of the educational spectrum are those who have attained a postgraduate qualification. For the urban area as a whole such individuals constitute a relatively low percentage – just 2.6 per cent – of those who have ceased education. However the percentage with postgraduate education is comparatively high in the EDs containing the North and South Circular Roads and the university, as well as the suburbs of Ballyclough and Ballysheedy (Map 26).

While educational attainment strongly influences occupational status, occupation in turn is used to determine the individual’s social class; and consequently the geographical pattern of social class corresponds closely to that of educational attainment. Professional workers and managerial/technical workers together with their dependants (social classes 1 and 2 combined) form a relatively high proportion of the population in areas where higher levels of educational attainment are more common, notably the North and South Circular Road areas and the southern suburbs (Map 27). Conversely, the highest relative concentrations of population in social classes 5 and 6, representing semi-skilled and unskilled workers respectively, are found in those areas identified above as having lower levels of educational attainment (Map 28). These extend from the local authority housing estates in the northwest of the City, through the city centre, and out to the estates that form the southeastern boundary of the City.
Map 24:

Education to Lower Secondary Level 2002
Percentage of those who have Ceased Education
- 68.7 to 87.9 (9)
- 56 to 68.7 (7)
- 39.2 to 56 (8)
- 26.9 to 39.2 (10)
- 14.9 to 26.9 (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 25:

Early School Leavers 2002
Percentage of those who have Ceased Education
- 36.6 to 62 (9)
- 21.4 to 36.6 (10)
- 14.1 to 21.4 (8)
- 9 to 14.1 (8)
- 3.6 to 9 (8)
Map 26:

Postgraduate Education 2002
Percentage of those who have Ceased Education
- 4.79 to 6.94 (8)
- 2.79 to 4.78 (8)
- 1.94 to 2.79 (8)
- 0.62 to 1.94 (6)
- 0 to 0.62 (13)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Map 27:

**Social Class 1 & 2**

Percentage of Total Population

- 46.3 to 56.2 (5)
- 31.7 to 46.3 (10)
- 21.6 to 31.7 (9)
- 14 to 21.6 (6)
- 2.5 to 14 (13)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

Scale 1:80,000

City Bounds

Electoral Division Rounds

City Locations

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Source: CSO 2002

Limerec City Council
Map 28:

Social Class 5 & 6
Percentage of Total Population

- 35.9 to 48.6 (5)
- 25.8 to 35.9 (9)
- 16.2 to 25.8 (11)
- 10.6 to 16.2 (11)
- 3.3 to 10.6 (7)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
3.7 Migration, Nationality and Culture

In Limerick, urban area as a whole, the percentage of non-Irish-born population in 2002 stood at 8.1 per cent. Roughly one in twelve of the usually resident population, one year prior to the census.

The census of population provides two different ways of estimating in-migration to an area. First, a measure of mobility that includes not just migrants from overseas but from elsewhere in Ireland is high as one in four (Map 30). Higher concentrations are found in the city centre areas, where ratios are as high as one in sixteen. In the city centre one of the highest concentrations is in the Docklands and Shannon A and B electoral districts (Map 30). Higher concentrations also reflect the local availability of employment and housing for rent. Outside the city centre, lower levels of mobility are found due to the focus of high concentration on the Docklands.

The second measure of migration focuses specifically on immigration (i.e. in-migration from abroad) and is derived from information on the individual’s country of birth. The period 1996-2002 was unique in Irish demography in that it is the first period in the history of the State in which a high level of population growth was fuelled not by natural increase but by the excess of immigration over emigration. While much of the immigration of recent years reflects the return of those with birthplaces other than Ireland or the UK, this also suggests a higher degree of residential assimilation of those people. Many of these born outside the State hold Irish citizenship, or otherwise consider themselves as Irish. This is reflected in the fact that while the foreign-born population of the urban area in 2002 was 13.8 per cent, the number of persons describing themselves as non-Irish in terms of nationality was somewhat less at 12.3 per cent. It is likely that the latter group comprises more recent arrivals in Limerick than the general category of those born outside the State and that it corresponds more closely with immigrants attracted to Ireland by the economic growth of the late 1990s. However, once again their geographical distribution relative to the usually resident population is focused largely on the city centre (Map 22). Several of the accommodation areas have been high concentrations of the city’s non-national population.

The result is that Irish society has become considerably more multicultural. In Limerick urban area as a whole, the proportion of non-Irish born population in 2002 stood at 8.6 per cent. This represents a high level of variation between EDs, with the highest relative concentrations found in the city centre areas, where ratios are as high as one in four (Map 30). Higher concentrations are found in the Docklands and Shannon A and B electoral districts (Map 30). Higher concentrations also reflect the local availability of employment and housing for rent. Outside the city centre, lower levels of mobility are found due to the focus of high concentration on the Docklands.

Not all of the cultural diversity of Ireland is the result of immigration. The Travelling Community, represents an indigenous ethnic group. Numericaly, it is quite a small community in Limerick, with 464 members making up 0.5 per cent of the total population. However, its distribution is focused largely on the city centre (Map 22). This reflects the high level of mobility that characterises Travellers. The travelling population is highly mobile, with many Members of the Travelling Community, including children, working and living in other towns and cities. Indeed the degree of concentration in these areas is even greater than for persons born outside the State. This is evident in the fact that the four central EDs, which together account for 10 per cent of the usually resident population, contain less than four per cent of the usually resident population, contain

The census small area statistics do not provide detailed information on the country of origin of foreign-born persons, other than for those born in the UK (including Northern Ireland). In Limerick, 5 per cent of the usually resident population were born outside the State, and 2 per cent of those born outside the State have UK residences. When this component is filtered out, the distribution of those born outside the State is focused largely on the city centre (Map 30). Thus the map of the city centre EDs of John’s Cross and Dock A coincides with the highest absolute number of foreign-born (over 10 per cent of the usually resident population) and includes a high proportion of those born outside the State.

THE URBAN MOSAIC: A SOCIO-SPATIAL PROFILE OF LIMERICK

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Map 30:

Non Irish Born
Percentage of Usually Resident Population
- 19.6 to 26.7 (4)
- 11.7 to 19.6 (7)
- 7.2 to 11.7 (10)
- 4.4 to 7.2 (15)
- 2.4 to 4.4 (7)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 8 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 31:

Non Irish or UK Born
Percentage of Usually Resident Population
- 14.2 to 24.3 (4)
- 6.9 to 14.2 (6)
- 3.2 to 6.9 (7)
- 1.6 to 3.2 (12)
- 0.1 to 1.6 (14)
Map 32:

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
3.8 Housing

One of the main axes of differentiation between households in any city relates to the nature of the housing that they occupy. This section examines three of the key dimensions of housing differentiation in Limerick, namely age, type of construction, and tenure status.

The high level of real estate development in the urban area in recent times is borne out by the fact that 26 per cent of all private households are accommodated in housing that has been constructed since 1990, and 17 per cent (i.e., one in six households) in housing built since 1995. Most of the new housing has been built in the suburbs, and therefore the age profile of housing in these areas is younger than that in the City (Fig. 5).

Nevertheless, 44 per cent of the stock built in the six years to 2002 is located in the City. This is again a reflection of the recent high level of renewal activity. Three main areas of new construction are evident in the post-1995 period (Map 34). These are the city centre, including both the quays area and Market ED which extends from Mungret Street to Cathedral Place and along Mulgrave Street to the Fair Green; the Rhebogue area off the Dublin road; and the South Circular Road / Courtbrack Avenue area (ED of Ballingcurra A). In these areas roughly one in three households occupy new housing. In contrast, there has been comparatively little new housing construction on the north side of the river.

The most significant contrast between the city centre and the suburban areas in housing terms relates to the type or style of accommodation provided. The predominant form of new construction in the city centre has been apartment blocks, and flats and apartments now accommodate over 85 per cent of households resident in this area (Map 35). In suburban areas of the city this style of housing rarely accounts for more than 10 per cent of the stock. This contrast between city and suburbs is of course driven in the first instance by the economics of property development, and specifically the higher price of land in the centre, which necessitates more intensive use. In turn it is one of the main factors underpinning the contrasts in household and family structures that were noted earlier.

The period 1991-2002 witnessed some significant changes in the tenure status of housing in Limerick urban area. These changes occurred in the context of a one-third increase in the total number of households. This increase reflects the high rate of net immigration to the urban area in the 1990s, as well as the very high rate of household formation, both of which contributed to rapid growth in demand for housing and the consequent escalation of house prices. Higher demand was accompanied by increases in both the number of households owning their dwelling and the number renting in the private sector, but the numbers in local authority rentals, and on tenant purchase schemes, decreased (Fig. 6). The sector with the most significant rate of growth over the decade was the private rented sector where the number of households almost doubled, from 2,720 (11.8 per cent of households) to 5,330 (17.5 per cent of households). In contrast, the number of households in local authority rentals decreased from 3,387 (14.7 per cent of households) to 2,688 (8.8 percent). These figures suggest that part of the increase in private rentals was due to households leaving the local authority sector, an inter-sector migration that was facilitated by rapid growth in the rent supplement scheme in this period.
Map 34:

Housing Built Since 1995
Percentage of Permanent Private Households
- 31.6 to 37.9 (7)
- 17 to 31.6 (7)
- 8.3 to 17 (7)
- 4.4 to 8.3 (9)
- 0 to 4.4 (13)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Boundaries
Electoral Division Boundaries
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland. Permit No. 7763
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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Map 35:

Households in Flats & Apartments
Percentage of Permanent Private Households
- 85.3 to 96.6 (4)
- 73.7 to 85.3 (6)
- 61.1 to 73.7 (9)
- 38.5 to 61.1 (11)
- 0.1 to 33.3 (13)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:00,000
City Boundaries
Electoral Division Boundaries
City Locations

Based on Ordnance Survey Ireland. Permit No. 7760
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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
The geographical pattern of tenure status is quite complex. While the level of owner occupancy tends to increase away from the city centre, there are also marked differences among suburban areas. Levels of owner occupation are highest, at 85 per cent or more, in four main areas (Map 36). These are the northern suburbs of Corbally and Westbury, the Singland and Janesboro areas, the southern suburbs of Ballyclough and Ballysheedy, and the North Circular Road / Ennis Road area. In contrast, levels of owner occupancy are relatively low in the city centre and the Moyross / Ballynanty and Southill areas. In the latter areas the predominant tenure status, at over 40 per cent of households, is renting from the local authority (Limerick City Council), and this is also relatively high in the Kileely, King’s Island, Prospect and Rathbane areas (Map 37). Private renting is by far the most prevalent tenure status in the city centre, and is also notably high in the areas with student populations such as Castletroy and Dock D (Map 38). In the quayside EDs of Shannon A and Dock A approximately 3 in 4 households rent their dwelling in the private market.

The highly differentiated geography of housing tenure suggests that the shift of households between tenure categories noted above may be a side effect of inter-area mobility. Given that different areas are characterised by different tenures, then relocation of households within the city will almost inevitably result in changes in the numbers in different tenure categories. However, the relationship between inter-sectoral migration in the housing market and spatial mobility is quite complex, and further investigation is needed to clearly distinguish cause from effect.
Map 36:

Owner-Occupied Housing
Percentage of Permanent Private Households
- 84.7 to 94 (10)
- 76.2 to 84.7 (5)
- 62.5 to 76.2 (8)
- 40.8 to 62.5 (11)
- 2.8 to 40.8 (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 37:

Local Authority Rented Housing
Percentage of Permanent Private Households

- 24.7 to 43: 9
- 13.5 to 24.7: 6
- 7.2 to 13.5: 6
- 1.7 to 7.2: 7
- 0 to 1.7: 15

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
3.9 Aspects of Accessibility: Travel, Transport and Communications

The decentralisation of manufacturing and services employment from the city centre to suburban and ex-urban areas has been a feature of the changing geography of Limerick over the past 25 years. As employment opportunities have decentralised, commuting distances for the public at large have generally increased. In this context, access to reliable and economic means of transportation has become increasingly important for individuals and households.

The distribution of distance travelled to work, school and college for the City and the suburban EDs is illustrated in Fig. 7. The modal (i.e., most frequently reported) travel distance for residents of both areas is between 1 and 2 miles, but, as would be expected from the distribution of employment and of schools and colleges, distances travelled are generally less in the City. This is reflected in an estimated median travel distance for the City of 2.5 miles as compared to 3.3 miles in the suburbs. However, when travel times are examined, the differences between City and suburbs are less pronounced (Fig. 8). As expected, travel times are lower on average in the City, but the estimated median of 17.4 minutes, is only slightly below that of 18.4 minutes in the suburbs. This narrowing of the differential between City and suburbs, together with the relatively high value of both travel time medians compared to the corresponding median distances of travel, is consistent with a significant level of congestion within the City. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that roughly two out of three of those commuting do so by motorised means of transport (i.e., car or public transport – see below).

Some indication of the variation in travel distance within the city can be obtained by focusing on the percentage travelling under two miles to work, school or college (Map 39). Two miles is often considered critical in commuting studies, as it is the distance above which employment locations and other destinations for travel cannot be accessed easily on foot. The pattern revealed by the map is quite complex. There is a general tendency for the percentage travelling under two miles to increase towards the city centre, as would be expected given the high concentration of employment opportunities in this area. However, there are also exceptions to this pattern, such as the less central Southhill and Castletroy areas where almost half of the commuting population travels less than two miles. Two factors explain lower commuting distances in these cases. The first of these is the availability of local employment opportunities – the Galvone and Tipperary Road industrial estates in the case of O’Malleys Park, and the university and National Technological Park in the case of Castletroy. The second factor is that, as both areas have relatively low labour force participation rates (see Map 16), a high proportion of travel is not work-related, but involves third-level students in Castletroy, and, because of its demographic profile, school-children in O’Malleys Park.

The map also reveals, somewhat surprisingly, that under one-third of commuters in the city centre EDs of Shannon A and B travel under two miles, implying that the majority of commuters in these areas travel to destinations located outside the centre.
Map 39:

Travel to Work and School: Distance Under 2 Miles
Percentage of Persons Aged 5+ Who Travel

- 44.6 to 50.7 (8)
- 38.1 to 44.6 (10)
- 33.3 to 38.1 (8)
- 28.9 to 33.3 (12)
- 15.6 to 28.9 (7)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Commuting distance is one of two main factors influencing the mode of travel used: the other is the availability of various modes, and in particular private transportation. Nationwide and locally, levels of car ownership have increased steadily in recent years. However, access to private transportation in Limerick varies considerably between households and between areas. Altogether just less than 40 per cent of households in the City have no car, while 20 per cent have two or more cars. The corresponding figures for the suburbs are 14 per cent and 46 per cent respectively, indicating a considerably higher level of ownership in the outlying areas (Fig. 9).

Households with no cars are relatively more numerous in the city centre, accounting for between one-half and three-quarters of all households (Map 40). Low levels of car ownership here might be expected on the grounds that this is the area of greatest accessibility to employment and services: in other words, there is less need. However, given the fact that so many commuters from the centre travel over two miles, other factors must also be involved. These might include the fact that the city centre is the area best served by public transportation, and that, as indicated earlier, household sizes tend to be smaller here (other things being equal, larger households would be expected to have higher levels of car ownership). The rate of occurrence of car-less households is also high in the suburban areas of O’Malley Park and, to a lesser degree, Moyross / Ballynante. In part, this reflects lower commuting distances and related factors, as noted above, but it is also a reflection of lower household income levels. According to the 2002 census, over two-thirds of households in the O’Malley Park area have no car.

The distribution of households with two or more cars is largely a mirror image of the previous variable (Map 41). Four areas in particular stand out as having relatively high car ownership, where between approximately one-half and three-quarters of households have two or more cars. These are the suburbs of Westbury, Castletroy and Raheen / Ballyclough, as well as the North Circular Road area. Again the pattern is partly a reflection of need (lower accessibility levels leading to greater travel distances to work and to services) and partly due to higher household income levels in these areas. In the case of Castletroy, the high proportion of short commutes noted previously suggests that the latter factor is the more important of the two.

Given that approximately 60 per cent of households own at least one car, it is not surprising that this is the most popular mode of travel to work, school and college (Fig. 10). Among commuters for whom information on mode of travel is available, over 56 per cent in the urban area, and 49 per cent in the City, travel to work, school or college by car. The highest levels of car usage are found in suburban areas with high levels of car ownership, in both the northern and southern suburbs usage levels are typically in excess of 70 per cent (Map 42). These levels of usage are increasingly problematical. Taken in conjunction with the particular geography of employment in Limerick and the difficulties for travel created by the insufficiency of river crossings, they are giving rise to chronic levels of peak period congestion on the city’s road network.

Traffic congestion impacts negatively on public transport, which is used by only 8.5 per cent of commuters, the great majority of whom travel by bus. However, usage of public transport is in excess of twice this level in the Southill area and in the city centre (Map 43). With an essentially radial bus network based on the city centre, the latter is the area best served by the bus service. Although the problems facing attempts to increase usage of public transport are complex and deep-rooted, there is some evidence here to suggest that supply side improvements in the bus service may help to induce a greater level of usage.
Map 40:

Households with No Car
Percentage of Permanent Private Households
- 60.6 to 74 (9)
- 49.8 to 60.6 (10)
- 37.2 to 49.8 (4)
- 19.8 to 37.2 (9)
- 3.7 to 19.8 (11)
Map 41:

Households with 2+ Cars
Percentage of Permanent Private Households

- 46 to 75.2 (6)
- 31.6 to 46 (7)
- 17 to 31.6 (6)
- 8.9 to 17 (11)
- 3.8 to 8.9 (11)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 8 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
The above discussion has highlighted some differences between areas in levels of accessibility. An increasingly important dimension of accessibility in its widest sense relates to digital communications and in particular the Internet, which provides access to a wide range of services, often on a discounted basis. With the advent of the so-called ‘tele-cottage’, increasing numbers are working from home, using the Internet to maintain contact with places of employment and customers. Though there are many issues surrounding tele-working, one of the undoubted benefits for the individuals concerned, as well as for the wider society, is the potential to reduce the volume of commuting and thereby improve traffic conditions on the roads. The 2002 census included for the first time a question on household Internet access. Although still a relatively new medium of communication, almost one-third of Internet access in the home. The likelihood is that this level is currently even higher, as levels of PC ownership continue to increase, and the recent availability of broadband has improved connection speeds.

The geographical pattern of Internet access shows a high degree of variation. Between two-fifths and one-half (40 to 50 per cent) of households in areas such as the north circular road, the southern suburbs, Castletroy, and the northern suburbs (Corbally and Westbury) have home access to the Internet. This contrasts with less than 14 per cent in Kileely, St. Mary’s Park, the older parts of the city centre, Prosper and Southill (Map 44). The pattern is remarkably similar to that of social class (cf. Maps 27 and 28). Essentially the areas with the highest levels of Internet access are those with high proportions of the professional and managerial social classes, the areas with lowest access are almost identical to those with concentrations of the semi-skilled and unskilled social groups. This correspondence suggests that access at home to the Internet is largely determined by household income levels, and that it may be regarded as an indicator of relative disadvantage. It is to this issue that we turn next.
Map 44:

Households with Internet Access
Percentage of Permanent Private Households

- 40.3 to 55.7 (7)
- 30.1 to 40.3 (9)
- 19.1 to 30.1 (8)
- 13.3 to 19.1 (9)
- 2.9 to 13.3 (10)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 16 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000
City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
3.10 Social Exclusion

Several of the variables discussed above have suggested the existence of considerable disparities between communities and areas in Limerick, in terms of access to employment opportunities, levels of income and consumption. These disparities are a reflection of the social and economic consequences of the processes that have shaped the city in recent decades. The rapid growth in employment in the local labour market in the late 1990s was largely absorbed by the expansion of the labour force in the same period. Of the total increase of 7,323 jobs in Limerick, only 5,588 were registered as permanent positions, indicating a significant increase in temporary and part-time employment. As a result, the unemployment rate decreased by over 5 percentage points, from 16.1 per cent to 10.6 per cent. The pattern of change at the level of areas has already been illustrated in terms of educational attainment, social class and housing tenure. In general, those areas with relatively high levels of unemployment, such as the O’Mally Park area and the castletroy area, have experienced a drop in the level of unemployment rate, while areas with lower rates, such as the city centre and the outer southern suburbs, have experienced an increase. The geographical pattern, which was remarkably stable from 1996 to 2002, closely mirrors that of the unemployment rate, with the highest values evident in the O’Mally Park area, the Castletroy area, and Weston / Ballynanty (Map 46). The most favourable values of the EDR are found in the city centre and the outer southern suburbs.

The rate of occurrence of lone parent families in Limerick is significantly above the national average. These families constitute 26 per cent of all families in the city, as compared to the national average of 16 per cent. Amongst lone parent families, it is those with young children who have the highest relative risk of poverty. These families face significant challenges in accessing employment opportunities. It also provides evidence of the existence of multiple deprivation in several of the local authority estates.

The level of elderly people (i.e., aged 65 years and over) living alone in Limerick is relatively low at 25 per thousand per thousand population, as compared to the national rate of 30 per thousand. However, this is a phenomenon that is likely to increase in the future. Moreover, the rate in certain areas is close to three times the average for the urban area, reflecting the distribution of the elderly population. The highest rates are found in St. Mary’s Park, the O’Mally Park area, Weston, and Castletroy (Map 48). The city centre and the outer southern suburbs, as well as the Ennis Road area, are notable for the lowest values of the EDR. This map too shows a close correspondence with that of unemployment, which may reflect in part the difficulties that lone parents with young families face in accessing employment opportunities. It also provides evidence of the existence of multiple deprivation in several of the local authority estates.
Map 45:

Unemployment Rate 2002
Percentage of Labour Force
- 25.4 to 37.8 (6)
- 20.6 to 25.4 (6)
- 14.4 to 20.6 (9)
- 7.3 to 14.4 (11)
- 4.2 to 7.3 (11)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 46:

Economic Dependency Rate 2002

- 2.84 to 3.36 (4)
- 1.96 to 2.84 (11)
- 1.51 to 1.96 (9)
- 1.18 to 1.51 (13)
- 0.57 to 1.18 (6)
Map 47:

Lone Parent Young Families
Percentage of Total Number of Young Families
- 81 to 75.5 (6)
- 45.5 to 61 (10)
- 31.8 to 45.5 (5)
- 16.6 to 31.8 (10)
- 5.5 to 16.6 (12)
Map 48:

Persons Aged 65 Years and Over Living Alone
Per 1,000 Population in Private Households

- 70.9 to 78.2 (4)
- 41.3 to 70.9 (13)
- 29.9 to 41.3 (8)
- 18.7 to 29.9 (9)
- 10.8 to 18.7 (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the rural Electoral Divisions.
Information on disability levels (both physical and mental) was collected for the first time in the 2002 census. Levels of this variable, again expressed per thousand population, are considerably higher than those for the elderly people living alone. The urban area as a whole has 13% people with a disability per thousand population, while the highest rates of disability were recorded in the ED of Barrabool, which contains the major South Side Shopping area of Limerick. However, these data are not directly comparable with the national statistics, as the latter are estimated on the basis of the national statistics, which are not directly comparable with the national statistics.

As the maps discussed in this section show, social exclusion is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon, and different indicators show varying levels of severity and extent. In general, the urban area of Limerick has experienced relatively stable levels of social exclusion in recent years, despite the high level of growth in the national and regional economies. EDs in the city centre, including the areas near the rail lines and the city gates, have experienced a high degree of social exclusion, with relatively high rates of deprivation. On the other hand, some areas in the city have experienced a decrease in social exclusion, with relatively low rates of deprivation.

The depth and extent of the problem of deprivation in Limerick is revealed by the fact that, since 1991, Limerick City has consistently ranked as the third most disadvantaged of the 34 local authority areas in Ireland, with the lowest affluence scale score. However, in terms of the national average, with the result that these areas showed a decrease in relative deprivation. In the city as a whole, the areas around the city gates and the city centre, including the areas near the rail lines and the city gates, have experienced a high degree of social exclusion, with relatively high rates of deprivation. On the other hand, some areas in the city have experienced a decrease in social exclusion, with relatively low rates of deprivation.
Map 49:

Persons with Disabilities Per 1,000 Population
- 192 to 265 (4)
- 145 to 192 (10)
- 99 to 145 (13)
- 75 to 99 (5)
- 44 to 75 (11)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 8 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 50:

Relative Deprivation 2002

- Extremely Disadvantaged (5)
- Very Disadvantaged (6)
- Disadvantaged (7)
- Slightly Below Average (4)
- Slightly Above Average (10)
- Affluent (9)
- Very Affluent (2)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Boundaries
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2012
Map 51:

Change in Relative Deprivation
1991-2002
- Marginally Improved (7)
- Marginally Disimproved (16)
- Disimproved (17)
- Strongly Disimproved (3)
6. The city’s other major third-level institution, Limerick Institute of Technology, does not generate a similar local effect, due in part to a proportionately larger non-student population in the ED which contains the main UT campus at Moylish (Ballynanty ED).

7. The highest concentration is in the Upper Shelbourne Road area but this is mainly due to the presence of St. Camillus’s Hospital (formerly the City Home) in this area.

8. Operationally, an adult family is defined as one where the oldest child is aged 20 years and over.

9. The area includes a large part of the Holy Rosary Parish.

10. The respective (unweighted) coefficients of variation are 8.48 (males) and 15.06 (females).

11. The four are Ballysimon, which contains the university; St. Laurence ED, which includes Limerick Prison and St. Joseph’s Hospital; John’s C and Abbey C, both of which contain accommodation for asylum seekers.

12. The coefficient of variation declined from 15.9 to 10.2.

13. In order to exclude temporary visitors, this section focuses throughout on enumerated persons who are usually resident in the city.

14. ‘Non-Irish born’ is defined in the census as those born outside the State.

15. Owner-occupiers, as defined here, do not include those on tenant purchase schemes.

16. There is some evidence of bi-modality in the distribution of travel distances in the suburbs, with a smaller secondary peak for travel distances in the range of 3 to 5 miles.

17. Lone parent young families are operationally defined as families headed by a lone parent where all children are aged less than 15 years of age.


19. The allocation of EDs to nominal categories (“extremely disadvantaged” etc.) is based on the categorisation of relative deprivation scores given in Haase and Pratschke, p. 31.

20. Change is measured by the 2002 relative deprivation score minus the 1991 score. Again, the categorisation of values is taken from Haase and Pratschke (2004).

21. A modest degree of convergence or progressivity in the pattern of change is indicated by a negative correlation ($r = -0.38$) between 1991 deprivation score and the change in deprivation score 1991–2002.
4. an analysis of social areas in Limerick

The patterns described above point to a number of important demographic and socio-economic contrasts within the urban area. While each of the maps is unique, it is clear that several of the variables on which they are based bear close similarity to each other, and appear to measure different aspects of the same phenomenon. By examining these similarities further, it is possible to group variables together, on the basis of their inter-relationships, into a small number of composite variables or ‘factors’. Once factors have been extracted in this way, the census tracts in turn can be grouped together (or clustered) into areas of similar social character, thereby summarising the complex social geography of the urban area.
4.1 The Dimensions of Social Variation in Limerick

For the factor analysis, 34 variables were chosen from among those already mapped. The variables omitted included those that are essentially synthetic summaries of the others (e.g., the young and old dependency ratios), as well as some of the more purely economic variables (such as those relating to sector of employment and travel to work patterns). In addition, the variable relating to the Traveling Community (Map 33) was omitted because it describes a social dimension that is quite different from those to which the other variables relate. The areas at the opposite pole to this factor have higher than average proportions of the traditionally family-based households, and higher proportions of the population are children aged 0-14 years. However, families at later stages of the family cycle are also more common. Being behind these is the family structure often associated with urban life. Urban social geographers use the term ‘urbanism’ to refer to this dimension of social differentiation.

The factor analysis reveals that the 34 variables can be reduced to just four factors. Table 2 in the Appendix gives the associations, or ‘factor loadings’, that are used to interpret the factors. As well as indicating the relationships between the underlying variables and the spatial patterns, the factor scores are also used to interpret the factors. Factor scores are derived from the factor analysis and represent the contribution of each variable to the factor.

Factor 1: Urbanism

The first factor accounts for almost one-third of the total variance present in the 34 variables input to the analysis. This factor is positively correlated with the proportion of social classes 1 and 2 (professional, managerial and technical workers), and negatively correlated with proportions of social classes 5 and 6 (lower order manual workers, persons with low secondary education and semi-skilled manual workers, persons with higher secondary education and some higher education). The high factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with low levels of car ownership and low levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. Conversely, it is negatively correlated with high proportions of unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers, persons with lower secondary education and lower qualification, car ownership, and Internet access. This factor also shows a strong negative correlation with local authority renting and, to a lesser extent, with measures of social exclusion such as unemployment and long-term unemployment. The low factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with high levels of car ownership and high levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access.

The geographical distribution of scores on Factor 1 shows a strong contrast between the city centre (high factor scores) and some, but not all, of the suburban areas (low factor scores) (Map 52). The city centre is the domain of a younger, more mobile, ‘footloose’ and now also more culturally diverse population. By contrast, suburban areas such as Westbury, Ballinaferrig, Kelson, St. Mary’s Park, Prospect and Southville are more closely associated with the area’s more traditional social structure. The city centre is more like the suburban areas in terms of household type and tenure, with more owner-occupiers in the city centre and more private rented accommodation in the suburban areas. The city centre also has a higher proportion of households with young children, which is indicative of the area’s more traditional social structure.

Factor 2: Socio-Economic Status

The second factor extracted by the analysis can be interpreted as a measure of socio-economic status, having strong associations with variables such as social class, standards of educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The high factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with low levels of car ownership and low levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The low factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with high levels of car ownership and high levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access.

The spatial pattern of socio-economic status (Map 53) reveals that the areas of highest status are the suburban EDs, and, within the city, the Connolly area and the western inner suburbs stretching from the Ennis Road / North Circular Road across the river to the South Circular Road. The city centre emerges as a mixed or intermediate zone, except for Custom House ED, which is also an area of relatively low socio-economic status.

Factor 3: Education

The third factor extracted by the analysis can be interpreted as a measure of the level of education of the population, having strong associations with variables such as educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The high factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with low levels of car ownership and low levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The low factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with high levels of car ownership and high levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access.

Factor 4: Demography

The fourth factor extracted by the analysis can be interpreted as a measure of the demographic characteristics of the population, having strong associations with variables such as social class, standards of educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The high factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with low levels of car ownership and low levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access. The low factor scores are associated with EDs that contain large numbers of householders living in private rented accommodation, usually in the form of flats or apartments, and on the other hand, with high levels of car ownership and high levels of post-graduate educational qualifications, car ownership, and Internet access.

Interpretations of the factors, and the geographical patterns of factor scores, are set out below.
Map 52:

Factor 1
Urbanism
- Highest Scores (8)
- Medium Scores (10)
- Lowest Scores (8)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 8 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 53:

Factor 2
Socio-Economic Status
- Highest Scores (10)
- (8)
- Medium Scores (8)
- (8)
- Lowest Scores (9)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Locations
Electoral Division Bounds

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Factor 3: Labour Market Status

Factor 3, which accounts for just 12 per cent of the overall variance, is associated with a relatively narrow range of attributes. It has highest scores in areas with a high rate of labour force participation, and of female participation. High activity rates in these areas are in turn related to high proportions of population aged 25-44 years. Conversely, this factor is negatively associated with large numbers of part-time workers. As the latter group often operates outside the formal labour market, this negative association is consistent with an interpretation of Factor 3 as essentially a measure of labour market engagement or status.

Areas with high scores on this factor include the city centre, specifically the EDs of Shannon A and B that correspond to the city’s central business district (Map 54). Also included are the Rhebogue and Singland areas on either side of the Dublin Road, and the southern ED of Ballycummin, which, as noted earlier, contains a concentration of employment opportunities, including those geared towards female workers. These areas contrast with the Dock D and Ballysimon EDs, where there are particularly low levels of labour force participation. This has already been attributed to the large student populations resident in both of these areas.

Factor 4: Elderly Populations

The final factor extracted in the analysis accounts for 11 per cent of the variance, and, like Factor 3, relates to a relatively narrow range of variables. This factor distinguishes areas that have high proportions of elderly persons, and, specifically, elderly persons living alone. As might be expected, there is also a strong association with one-person households. In addition, areas with high scores on this factor tend to have larger proportions of population with a disability. There are relatively few children (population aged 0-14 years) and comparatively little of the housing stock in these areas has been constructed in recent years. There are also negative associations with family-based households and with population growth.
Map 54:

Factor 3
Labour Market Status
- Highest Scores (5)
- Medium Scores (10)
- Lowest Scores (3)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.
Map 55:

Factor 4
Elderly Populations
- Highest Scores (5)
- Medium Scores (6)
- Lowest Scores (11)
4.2 A Typology of Social Areas

The factor analysis suggests that, varied and complex though the social geography of Limerick urban area is, it can nevertheless be substantially understood in terms of four fundamental ways in which areas differ from each other. Taking account of their socioeconomic and population characteristics, the four resulting clusters can be described as follows:

Cluster 1: The Suburbs
This is the largest cluster in terms of both area and population containing 41 per cent of the total population of the urban area in 2002. It includes all of the EDs outside the City from the southern tip of King’s Island through the central business district to St. Alphonsus Street / Wolfe Tone Street. The population is diverse and has received significant new investment in recent years, dating back to the introduction of the original urban renewal scheme in 1986, and this has been expressed in a radical transformation of the built form. The defining characteristic of the area is the predominance of private renters accommodated by young adult population. Having experienced a very high level of recent inward migration, areas in this cluster now have relatively high proportions of non-Irish born population and non-Irish nationals. There is a high rate of lone parent young families, and low levels of car ownership, however, rather than being indicative of social deprivation, the latter are most likely due to the high levels of car ownership in the area which results in lower birth rates and out-migration when children reach adulthood and move elsewhere to establish their own households.

Cluster 2: Urban Renewal Areas in the City Centre
This cluster contains eight EDs in the city centre, stretching from the southern tip of King’s Island through the central business district to St. Alphonsus Street / Wolfe Tone Street. The population is diverse and has received significant new investment in recent years, dating back to the introduction of the original urban renewal scheme in 1986, and this has been expressed in a radical transformation of the built form. The defining characteristic of the area is the predominance of private renters accommodated by young adult population. Having experienced a very high level of recent inward migration, areas in this cluster now have relatively high proportions of non-Irish born population and non-Irish nationals. There is a high rate of lone parent young families, and low levels of car ownership, however, rather than being indicative of social deprivation, the latter are most likely due to the high levels of car ownership in the area which results in lower birth rates and out-migration when children reach adulthood and move elsewhere to establish their own households.

Cluster 3: Mature Working Class Areas
This is the second most populous group (just ahead of Cluster 5), consisting of 10 EDs that together contain 14 per cent of the urban area population. The areas belonging to this group all contain large households, and many of which have been built relatively recently. A large proportion of the houses have undergone recent renovation. While the demographic dynamism that has returned to the urban core is to be welcomed, it is possible that many of these households will join the suburbanisation trend at a later stage, moving to areas such as those in Cluster 1.

Cluster 4: The Countryside
This is the second most populous group (just ahead of Cluster 5), consisting of 10 EDs that together contain 14 per cent of the urban area population. The areas belonging to this group all contain large households, and many of which have been built relatively recently. A large proportion of the houses have undergone recent renovation. While the demographic dynamism that has returned to the urban core is to be welcomed, it is possible that many of these households will join the suburbanisation trend at a later stage, moving to areas such as those in Cluster 1.
Map 56:

Social Area Types
- Cluster 1 (8)
- Cluster 2 (8)
- Cluster 3 (10)
- Cluster 4 (6)
- Cluster 5 (7)
- Cluster 6 (2)

The shaded areas outside the city boundary represent the urbanised sections of the 6 rural Electoral Divisions.

SCALE 1:60,000

City Bounds
Electoral Division Bounds
City Locations

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Limerick City Council
Source: CSO 2002
Cluster 4: Prosperous Older Areas

Like Cluster 3, this group of EDs is located within the City. It includes the EDs adjoining the Ennis Road on the north side, as well as the EDs of Dock C and Ballinacurra. It is noteworthy that the average affluence deprivation score for EDs in the cluster is the lowest of all six clusters. While broadly similar in respect of social class composition and educational levels, this group of EDs is distinguished from the latter by considerably higher levels of owner occupation and, on the average percentage of elderly persons living in their own homes, the highest of all clusters. Moreover, unlike the majority of the other social area types, the average rate of population decline between 1996 and 2002 was not lower. However, the rates of decline were considerably higher. The most characteristic feature of this group is the high level of educational attainment and by high percentages of the unskilled and semi-skilled social classes. Average unemployment rates and levels of lone parent young families are the highest among the six social area types. Car ownership is relatively low, as is household Internet access. Given these aspects of the cluster, it is not surprising that the average affluence deprivation score for EDs in the cluster is the lowest of all six clusters.

Cluster 5: The Local Authority Estates

This cluster consists of 7 EDs located to the north and south of the city centre. The most important feature of this cluster is the high average level of educational attainment and by high percentages of the unskilled and semi-skilled social classes. Average unemployment rates and levels of lone parent young families are the highest among the six social area types. Car ownership is relatively low, as is household Internet access. Given these aspects of the cluster, it is not surprising that the average affluence deprivation score for EDs in the cluster is the lowest of all six clusters.

Cluster 6: Student Limerick

Though it contains 12 per cent of the urban population, this cluster consists of just two EDs, Ballysimon and Dock D, which are also exceptional with respect to their low rate of labour force participation. Though levels of educational attainment are very high, there is a high level of educational attainment and by high percentages of the unskilled and semi-skilled social classes. Average unemployment rates and levels of lone parent young families are the highest among the six social area types. Car ownership is relatively low, as is household Internet access. Given these aspects of the cluster, it is not surprising that the average affluence deprivation score for EDs in the cluster is the highest of all.

This analysis has demonstrated that, within the confines of a small city, it is possible to observe a wide range of social conditions. While some of this variation is simply a reflection of the increasing diversity to be expected, others may reflect the pressure of policy makers and public service providers both of which are needed to address the sustainability of urban growth.
22. Together the four factors account for 84 per cent of the total variance of areas across the original 50 mapped variables.

23. The associations are, in effect, correlation coefficients.
a city for the twenty-first century?

Limerick has undergone profound transformation in the last decade, economically, socially, and in terms of the physical fabric of the city. It has consolidated its position as the capital of the Mid-West Region, through its success in attracting modern manufacturing and internationally traded services, and through the on-going development of its retail base. The city centre has been extensively redeveloped and after a prolonged period of decline in the core, population growth has now returned. The small but growing presence of a non-national community in the city has added an international dimension that was previously absent, and has given the city a more cosmopolitan ambience. Together, with a renewal of the major infrastructural and environmental projects, the renewal of the built fabric has greatly improved amenity levels in the city. The multi-million euro riverside City project, which aims to upgrade the river and canal side area from the docks to the university at Plassey, represents an exciting prospect for the future.

At the same time, there are grounds for concern about the sustainability of recent developments. With regard to the economy, concerns include comparatively low levels of productivity in manufacturing, and the heavy reliance for industrial employment on a small number of large, foreign-owned companies. On the social side, while recent economic growth has alleviated the chronic unemployment problem that prevailed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there remain major disparities between social groups in their ability to access worthwhile employment opportunities. Moreover, these disparities are deeply entrenched in the geography of the city.

Arising from the analysis of the city’s external and internal relationships in the preceding sections, a number of significant issues that will require attention over the medium term can be identified. Some of these issues affect all six types of social area equally, others are of greater importance for certain types. However, all of these links must be explicitly taken into account. This in turn demands a strategic and integrated approach to development.
The Future Regional and National Role of the City

The current thrust of spatial development policy, as set out in the National Spatial Strategy, confers a key role on the medium sized urban centres of Ireland, including Limerick. For the city to fulfil this role, it must develop and diversify its industrial base considerably. The current dependence on foreign owned firms in the manufacturing sector needs to be reduced by the development of more indigenous manufacturing and internationally traded services, for which the city is well placed. This can be achieved through the provision of high quality business zones and an excellent transport system that links the city to the airport and the rest of the country. The city also needs to attract more high technology firms to the area and to improve its capacity to attract skilled workers. This will require the development of a better education system and a more attractive quality of life for the city's residents.

Maintaining Demographic Vitality and Balanced Residential Communities

Urban renewal has transformed the city centre over the last decade, and though there has been considerable success in terms of property development and the elimination of dereliction, there are still many areas of the city that need further investment. The city needs to ensure that the new residential developments are well planned and that they contribute to the overall vitality of the city. This will require a more balanced approach to planning that takes into account the needs of both residential and commercial development.

Combating Social Exclusion

Economic growth has reduced the aggregate level of unemployment in Limerick, but localised concentrations of unemployment remain, especially in the older parts of the city. The city needs to ensure that these areas are not left behind as the city grows. This will require the development of a more comprehensive strategy for the provision of public services and the promotion of economic development in these areas.

City Governance

One of the major problems facing comprehensive land use and transport planning in the city is the lack of coordination between the various government agencies that have responsibility for planning. The city needs to ensure that there is a more integrated approach to planning that involves all stakeholders and that takes into account the needs of both residents and businesses.

Limerick: Profile of a Changing City

The rapid economic growth of recent years, notwithstanding the level of socio-economic polarisation in the city, remains high. Such polarisation is by no means unique to Limerick; rather, it has been widely identified in cities throughout the world. What is unusual about Limerick is the extent to which social polarisation is delineated in geographical terms. Limerick is a highly segregated city, with pre-schools, or city school families, and high proportions of post-school families in the city. The potential for conflict between the objectives of these different authorities responsible for public services and planning is evident in the form of low vitality rates, few school-based social programmes, and the need for more balanced social and demographic profile. There are also grounds for concern with regard to demographic trends in areas of the city that lie outside the core. There is clear evidence of population ageing in some of the older inner city areas, as well as new responses to deal with those groups that may be more dispersed throughout the city.
city, in which communities living in different areas enjoy very
different lifestyles and standards of living. The reduction of socio-spatial polarisation is not just desirable on grounds of social equity; the problem represents a major constraint on the city’s ability to fully realise its potential, and as such it must be of concern to all involved in the city’s development. Many of the exciting new developments of the last decade or so will ultimately amount to very little if Limerick cannot progress towards being a city of greater equality of opportunity.
6. appendix: details of the social area analysis
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Percentage of usually resident population at a different address one year ago</td>
<td>One Year Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Non-Irish born as percentage of usually resident population</td>
<td>Non-Irish Born</td>
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### Table 1: Variables Used in the Factor Analysis

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<td>21</td>
<td>Non-Irish nationals as percentage of usually resident population</td>
<td>Non-Irish Nationals</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Households in housing built since 1995 as percentage of permanent private households</td>
<td>Post 1995 Housing</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Households in flats and apartments as percentage of permanent private households</td>
<td>Flats &amp; Apartments</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Percentage of permanent private households who are owner occupiers</td>
<td>Owner-Occupiers</td>
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<td>Percentage of permanent private households renting from the local authority</td>
<td>Local Authority Rentals</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Percentage of permanent private households renting privately</td>
<td>Private Renting</td>
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<td>Households with no car as percentage of permanent private households</td>
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<td>Households with 2 or more cars as percentage of permanent private households</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Households with internet access as percentage of permanent private households</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Lone parent young families as percentage of all young families</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Persons aged 65 years and over living alone per 1,000 population in private households</td>
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<td>Persons with disabilities per 1,000 population</td>
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<td>Factor 3</td>
<td>Factor 4</td>
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### Table 3: Cluster Profiles

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</table>

24 In all cases the average is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the values for all EDs in the group. This is not the same as the value for the area as a whole, which is equivalent to the population-weighted mean.
Des McCafferty is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Geography in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. His research interests are in local and regional development, with current work in this area focusing on the links between territorial development and urbanisation in Ireland, as mediated by the evolving Irish urban system. He has undertaken research work for a wide range of community and statutory bodies in Limerick and nationally. His publications include the books *Competitiveness, Innovation and Regional Development in Ireland* and *Local Partnerships for Social Inclusion?* He has served as the President of the Geographical Society of Ireland and also as Chairman of the Irish Branch, Regional Studies Association. Des lives in Limerick and is married with two children.
JASON MURPHY

Jason Murphy manages the Geographical Information Systems in Limerick City Council. His role involves developing, implementing, and promoting the corporate GIS strategy. Jason graduated from the University of Glasgow in Cartography and Geo-Information Technology. He is also a member of the Strategy Sub-Group of the Local Authority GIS User Group and is currently working on an MSc. in GIS.