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Census 2006

A Profile of the Working Population of Large Towns

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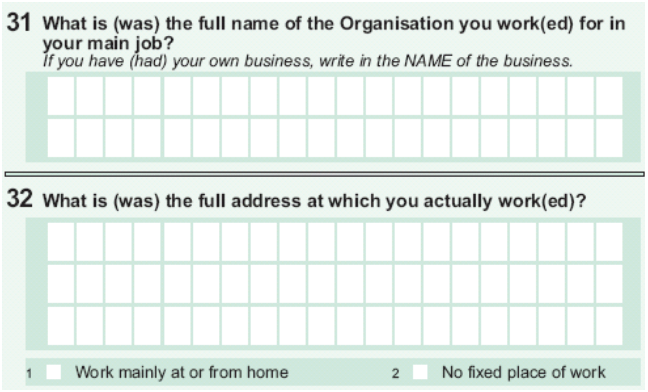
Introduction

This report examines the towns in Ireland with a working population in excess of 5,000 persons in April 2006 and provides profiles for each of the 27 towns involved. These profiles focus on the principal characteristics of the relevant workers including their commuting patterns, the industries in which they were employed and their educational and socio-economic characteristics.

The analysis draws on the Place of Work Census of Anonymised Records (POWCAR[1]) data set. As part of the census processing operation the responses to questions 31 and 32 on the 2006 census form were geo-coded. All journeys to work were coded and the detailed geographic data which resulted from this coding exercise was combined with the associated demographic and socio-economic information from the census.



Analyses of towns provided in previous Census 2006 reports were based on the resident populations of these towns. Utilising the POWCAR data, the present report provides a more refined analysis of the working population of the main centres of employment in April 2006. The following three components of the working population are distinguished separately: workers commuting into the town; persons leaving to work elsewhere and those who both live and work in the town. Also included are data relating to journey times and means of travel to work.

The present report has been written in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)[2] which produced the town maps illustrated. These maps which were based on the POWCAR data illustrate the commuting catchment areas of each town specified in terms of Electoral Divisions (EDs).

In the case of Dublin City, whose working population is many times larger than that of any of the other urban centres, further analysis is provided, showing the geographic distribution of the main industries.

Qualifications attaching to POWCAR data

A number of qualifications should be borne in mind with regard to the POWCAR data. Workers with no fixed place of work cannot have their journey coded to a particular destination. This is particularly pronounced for the construction industry which has a high proportion of mobile workers. The construction industry therefore is under-represented in the working populations of the towns in the present report.

The boundaries of towns are redefined after each census in conformity with United Nations recommendations, as described in Appendix 2. It is possible that certain centres of employment, such as shopping centres, industrial estates and business parks, may lie just outside town boundaries. In these cases, residents who work in these locations outside the town boundary will be recorded as travelling outside the town to work elsewhere.

Towns in border areas may have significant numbers commuting from Northern Ireland. However as residents of Northern Ireland are not covered by the Census, they are not included in the

[1] For a full description of this data set see http://www.cso.ie/census/POWCAR_2006.htm.
[2] The CSO wishes to place on record its appreciation for the input provided by Edgar Morgenroth of the ESRI.

profiles in this report. The tables only include those workers who are resident in the State and no small area geographical breakdown is provided for workers travelling from Northern Ireland.

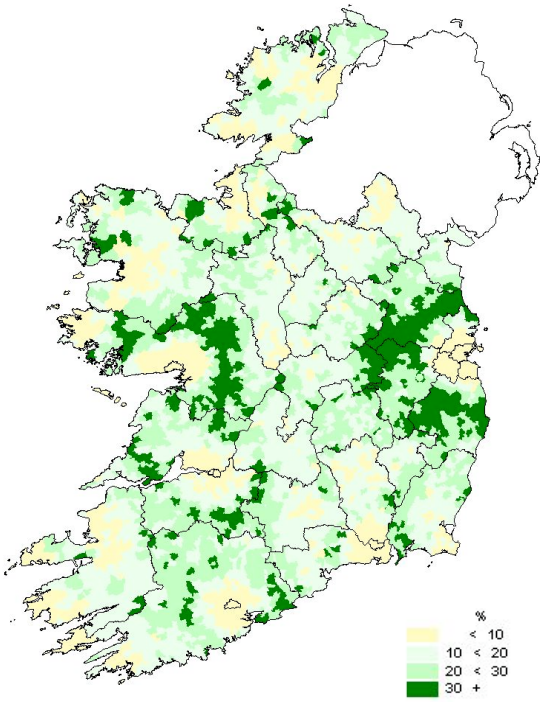
Broad information on commuting from Census 2006

Even before the POWCAR became available, the Census 2006 published data already contains a wealth of information on travel to work.

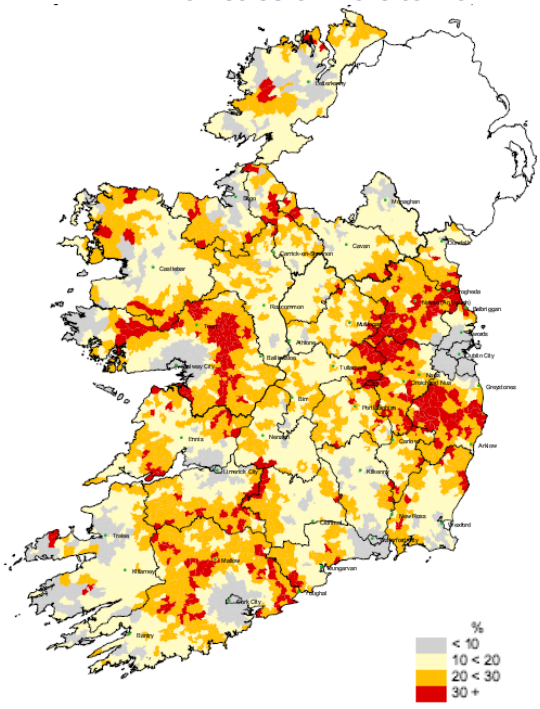
The increased reliance on car transport was noted, with over 57 per cent of workers driving to work. By contrast, bus transport saw its share drop from 6.7 per cent in 2002 to 6.1 per cent by 2006. Over the same period, the numbers travelling by train increased by over two thirds, a direct result of the introduction of the LUAS in Dublin. This general pattern of increasing numbers of workers commuting by car at the expense of public transport is further illustrated in this report with the number of car drivers far surpassing any other form of transport, even in the towns located on major railway lines.

In terms of the distances travelled, no major changes were in evidence between 2002 and 2006. However the 2006 census was the first in which the question relating to journey distances was asked in kilometres. As a result the number of respondents who left the question blank increased from 12.2 per cent to 20.4 per cent. It is not clear to what extent this 'questionnaire effect' has impacted on comparisons between the two census years. In spite of this discontinuity, it is still possible to examine the trends in commuting distances over this period. The maps below show the percentages of workers who travelled more than 20 miles (2002) or 30 kilometres (2006) to work. It is evident from both maps that the main urban centres drew their workforces from a wide hinterland, a pattern borne out repeatedly in the town profiles in this report.

2002: Percentage of workers in each Electoral Division who travel 20 miles or more to work



2006: Percentage of workers in each Electoral Division who travel 30 kilometres or more to work



The average journey time to work increased slightly between 2002 and 2006, but remained under half an hour. The numbers taking more than an hour to get to work increased from 142,500 to 187,000, with urban dwellers having a longer commuting time than their rural counterparts despite their shorter average travelling distances.

Note on Town Profiles

The maps in the town profiles shown in the remainder of this report are based on the working populations of each town as of April 2006. They illustrate the catchment area of each town by depicting the total number of workers in each Electoral Division who work in the relevant town. The major road and rail lines are also included.

Each town profile also contains detailed tables on the Industrial Groups, Education and Socio-economic Group (SEG) of the workers. These tables distinguish between the town's resident workers, those who travel outside the town to work and those who travel from outside to work within the town. Additional tables classify means of travel and journey times to work.