Suburbia: social and spatial trends that emerged in Celtic Tiger Ireland.

Matthew Williams

Department of Geography, University College Cork, Ireland.

Long after the roar of the "Celtic Tiger" has become inaudible; its effects remain in the form of ghost estates, incomplete rural development and inadequate service provision across the Irish landscape. This paper will give a brief account of suburban housing development in Ireland as a whole, followed by a detailed discussion of development in a specific Irish case study, Clerihan, Co. Tipperary. Through the analysis of data produced from resident questionnaires, an evaluation and discussion of the key motivations of Clerihan's "Celtic Tiger" in-migrants shall emerge for the purpose of comparison with international suburban migration incentives. These incentives shall be addressed under four overarching themes; suburbia as an idyllic space and place, suburbia as an exclusive community while maintaining previous social networks, suburbia as a product of social and economic competition, and suburbia as an interdependent product of transport availability.

Keywords: suburbanisation; Celtic Tiger; Tipperary; rural-urban interface; community; rural development.

1   Introduction

Over the last two decades many *rural* settlements throughout Ireland have experienced the effects of "Celtic Tiger" property led development, followed directly by an economic downturn which crippled the construction industry. This can clearly be seen from the CSO granted planning permission statistics, which steadily rose from 9,156 in 1992 to 27,512 in 2005, and rapidly tapered off to 4,767 by 2011 (Figure 1.0.). However, this short period of development led to the emergence of new social and spatial patterns of settlement in the form of thriving suburbs. In light of this, this paper aims to discuss clearly the most prevalent pull factors associated with suburbanisation internationally, provide a detailed account of suburban growth in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger period and following this, with a focus on a particular Irish case study draw comparisons between resident's social, physical and demographic motives in Ireland and internationally.
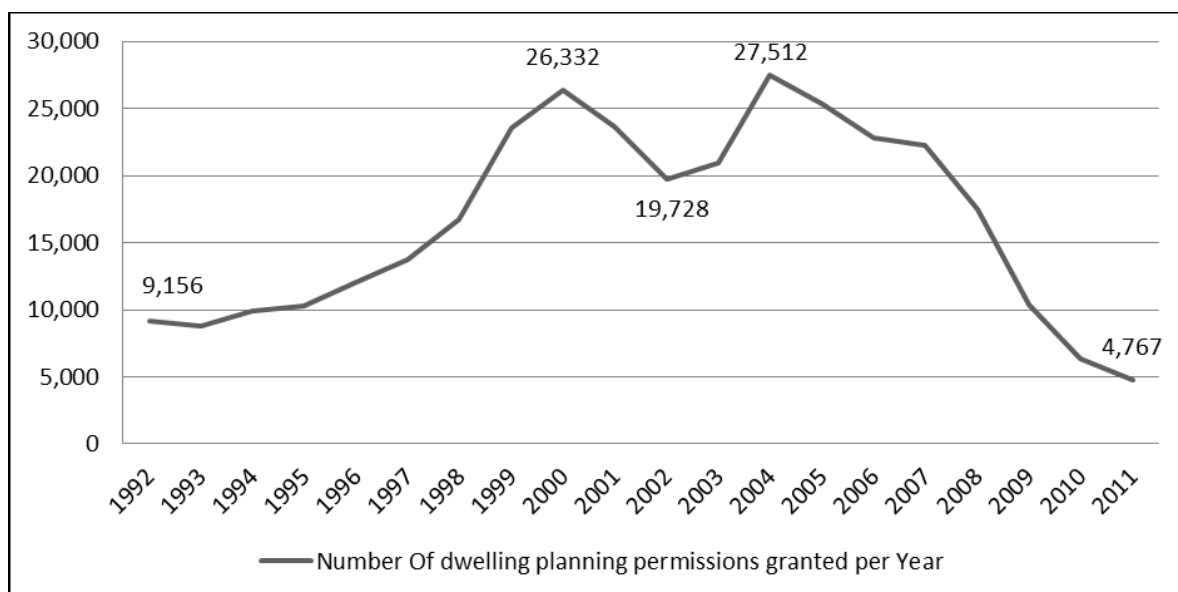

Figure 1: Number of dwelling planning permissions granted in Ireland from 1992 – 2011 (C.S.O., 2013)

2   Suburbia and its allure

Suburbanisation is "profoundly influenced by the 'garden city' movement, which was an advocate of population dispersal from overcrowded industrial cities" (Mace, 2009, p 77). Jackson (1987) suggests that in the United States, suburbia is both a planning type and a state of mind based on imagery and symbolism, because after all,

> Suburbia symbolizes the fullest, most unadulterated embodiment of contemporary culture; it is a manifestation of such fundamental characteristics as conspicuous consumption, a reliance upon the private automobile, upward mobility, the separation of the family into nuclear units, the widening dicision between work and leisure, and a tendancy toward racial and economic exclusiveness.

> (Jackson, 1987, pg 4).

Essentially, Suburbia is a concieved and constructed idyllic way of life that is centred on exclusivity and wealth, similar to the privatopias and gated communities seen internationally. For this reason some scholars see Suburban dwellings and lifestyles as commodification and an expression of economic prosperity rather than necessity. Suburban dwellings are renowned for their uniformity in design and frequently take the form of master-planned housing developments rather than one-off housing. Despite all of these common social patterns and bahaviour within suburbia, they are by no means concrete definitons of suburban development. A settlement or development is generally assigned suburban status on the basis of a functional relationship with an urban core, radial commuting patterns and residential density on the periphery of urban centres. In international case studies, there have been four primary physical, social and psychological externalities which influence residents in their migration to suburbia, and in turn, mass housing development.

2.1   Idyllic space and place

The first of these influences is the desire of residents for security. It may be argued that increased urbanisation of towns and cities eventually results in overcrowding, which in turn leads to the acceleration of crime, unemployment, and juvenile delinquency (Biobaku, 1967). Because of this, many heavily urbanised areas have been construed as "morally corrupting and inappropriate residential locations" in which to start a family or raise children (Mace, 2009, p 77). In order to avoid these negative externalities of urbanisation, residents are attracted to suburbs which enable them to maintain a connection with the facilities and services of the urban centre but also enables them to establish a family life with "3-4 children, the detached house, play area and garden," (Waitt, et al, 2000) and is generally considered more conducive to family life. Moreover, it has been argued that "in the US and Australia the detached house on its own plot more fully realizes the rural/urban dream" (Mace, 2009, p 78), while in some European case studies, "consistently 50% of respondents chose the suburban detached house in a green suburb as their favourite form of living" (Brade, Herfert, & Wiest, 2009, p 235).

2.1.1   Social Ties

An element furthering the allure of suburbia is the common belief that lifestyle in the suburbs is more conducive to neighbourhood and community interaction. This belief is fuelled by the perception that rural or peripheral areas are "both high in physical and high in social quality, such as scenic beauty and community spirit, respectively" (Halfacree, 2009, p. 442).This would be of benefit to families attempting to raise children as neighbourhoods are highly socialised, including family and friendship networks, and also provide sites of social solidarity and protection. Young (1990) suggests community is an understandable dream, expressing the desire for selves that are transparent to one another, relationships of mutual identification, social closeness and comfort, while living in urban areas is associated with the loss of social cohesion, sense of place and identity (Bontje & Burdack, 2005; Anderson, Kanaroglou, & Miller, 1996; Sudjic, 1993). Suburbs often enable young couples parents of young children to position themselves in a location which is of a sufficient distance from their place of origin to ensure they are somewhat detached and independent from their prior social network, but also in close enough proximity to have continued "access to family circles in a locality nearby" so they can "rely more on kin for everyday social support when their children are very young." (Gray, Corcoran, & Peillon, 2009, p 19). This provides the new suburbanites with the security of the support network they have grown used to, but also enables them to immerse themselves in a new community.

2.2 Social and Economic Competition

Social and economic competition is something that is prevalent in times of prosperity and is another suggestion for new residents' interest in the suburban lifestyle.

> The Chicago school sought to develop an analogy between the Darwinian competition in nature and the way in which communities vie for space and favoured locations in cities. In their description... migrants move into declining inner city areas which are vacated by upwardly mobile residents moving out to suburban areas. These new suburbanites were seeking competitive advantage; they were responding to the perceived socioeconomic advantages that suburban home ownership could bestow upon them.

(Mace, 2009, p 78)

Similarly, an economic analysis of suburban migration is offered by David Harvey who provides a description of suburbanisation as being the spatial expression of capital seeking out new investment opportunities (cited in Mace, 2009, p 78). Essentially what is being suggested here is that when young urban families find that property investment in urban areas becomes less attractive, either for aesthetic, environmental or financial reasons they are forced to seek out new locations for investment. Litcher and Brown (2011) discuss the promotion of development in such locations and argue that its associated activities may have broad economic benefits throughout the community, meaning there is substantial financial profit for both the developers, local officials and the current residents who see the value of their property increase. Mace (2009, 79) posits, "Suburbanites have been criticized for their conformity to the prevailing demands of capital and its associated social norms; for blithely accepting the mass consumer society".

2.2.1 Transport Availability

The final externality which has influenced suburban growth is the availability of cars and regular transport. Transport is inextricably linked to the success of Suburbanisation; in fact, one may suggest the very concept of suburban life is devalued by the segregation of transport from suburbia. As Fishman (1987) agrees, suburbs need good transport links to ensure that residents could commute from their exclusive home location to their work and social ties in the urban centre. Therefore, Transport is not an influencing factor for the emergence of suburbia, rather a crucial building block. Hayashi, et al (2004) describe the link between transport and suburbanisation in Asia as "a vicious circle" through the assertion that "rapid motorisation, together with poor land-use planning condenses urban space and accelerates suburbanization".

3 Housing development in Ireland

Celtic Tiger housing development in Ireland was a product of both the Rural Renewal Scheme (RRS) and Urban Renewal Schemes (URS). These schemes "provided incentives to subsidise the construction and renovation of housing" (Gkartzios & Norris, 2010, 486) in declining rural regions. Their aim was to improve "the quality of life in rural areas and village renewal" (Dwyer, Ward, Lowe, & Baldock, 2007, 873) by "stemming population decline and increasing housing output" (Gkartzios & Norris, 2010, 486). This acted as a catalyst to property led regeneration which began in 1986 and was extended to include 100 villages across Ireland in the late 1990's. The schemes were incessant until as late as 2006. The urban and village renewal schemes under the National Development Plan (NDP) included 16 towns and villages across South Tipperary and over €1.3M was received from the European Union over the 6 year period to subsidise the development. The Rural Renewal Scheme was successful in its aim of stemming population decline and providing property led population growth, but in many cases it brought with it undesirable effects. In fact, some scholars suggest "the government's decision to discontinue the RRS in 2006 was driven primarily by concerns about its unintended impacts" (Gkartzios & Norris, 2010, 486). Short-lived development brought with it an influx of urban origin migration which led to the blurring of rural/urban social and spatial boundaries. This has led to the adaptation of many rural communities to a "new" suburban way of life and resident demographic, despite their being entirely self-sufficient bucolic settlements prior to development. In other words, villages that were quite able to support themselves pre-1996, now depend heavily on services in nearby urban centres to support the newly exploded residential property development.

4   Research approach:

4.1   Case Study: Clerihan, South Tipperary, Ireland.

One such settlement is Clerihan, Co. Tipperary (incorrectly posted in the village itself and on maps as Ballyclerihan or Ballyclerahan) is situated in South Tipperary at the meeting point of four major roads. Pre- 1975, Clerihan village consisted of only 12 houses. Between 1975 and 1996 only a further 20 houses were built to form Knockeevan Terrace. Before 1996 Clerihan was not even considered to be a village by the Central Statistics Office or the 1996 South Tipperary County Development Act. However, since 1996 the appearance of the village has changed dramatically as can be seen in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. During the Celtic Tiger period from 1996 to 2007 construction was at a tremendous high in the village.

Figure 2.1 View from Knockeevan (Williams S. , 1995); figure 2.2 View from Knockeevan 2011 (Williams M. , 2011)

The gradual increase and rapid decline in the rate of housing development can be seen upon examination of Table 1.1. The total number of houses in Clerihan amounts to 286, with a further 35 unfinished. Before 1996 the village consisted of 12 houses scattered around the village church and a terraced housing estate consisting of 20 houses, since then independent property developers have constructed 9 other housing estates of uniform design.

Table 1 Number of Houses built in Clerihan between 1820 and 2010 (constructed from original data, 2011).

	Number of Houses built	Year of development:
Clerihan Village	12 Houses	Pre- 1975
Knockeevan Terrace	20 Houses	1975
Village	3 Houses	1996
Ashcourt	18 Houses	1996
Cahir Road	7 Houses	1996 – 1999
Oakpark	10 Houses	1999
Ashlawn	41 Houses	1999
Fernville & Fernville Court	45 Houses	2000
Churchview	51 Houses	2003

Hillview	32 Houses	2004 – 2005
Cnoc Aoibheann	35 Houses of the70 planned	2010 (left unfinished)
Ballyclerihan Crescent	12 Houses	2010

4.2 Resident Questionnaire

150 questionnaire surveys were administered by hand across a random selection of households in Clerihan Village at the beginning of January 2011. The primary information sought in these questionnaires was concerned with the motives, origin and life-stage of Clerihan's new residents. A 66% response rate was received which gave 100 questionnaires to analyse. These questionnaires contained a mix of open and closed response questions to enable the collection of basic quantitative details such the amount of time living in the area, but also to afford the respondents the opportunity to provide their own experiences, attitudes and beliefs in relation to Clerihan's suburban growth.

5   Research Findings:

Upon first examination of the resident questionnaires, the reasons for new resident in-migration display distinct correlations with the four primary motives of suburban in-migration seen internationally. When residents were asked to describe their motives for moving to the village the aforementioned primary incentives are strongly represented as can be seen in figure 1.6 below. The strongest of these incentives was the area's image as an idyllic space and place, represented here by its "suitability for raising children" (17.7%) followed closely by other indications of suburban nature, such as "The pleasant atmosphere of the Village" (9.4%) and "Open Space" (8.3%).
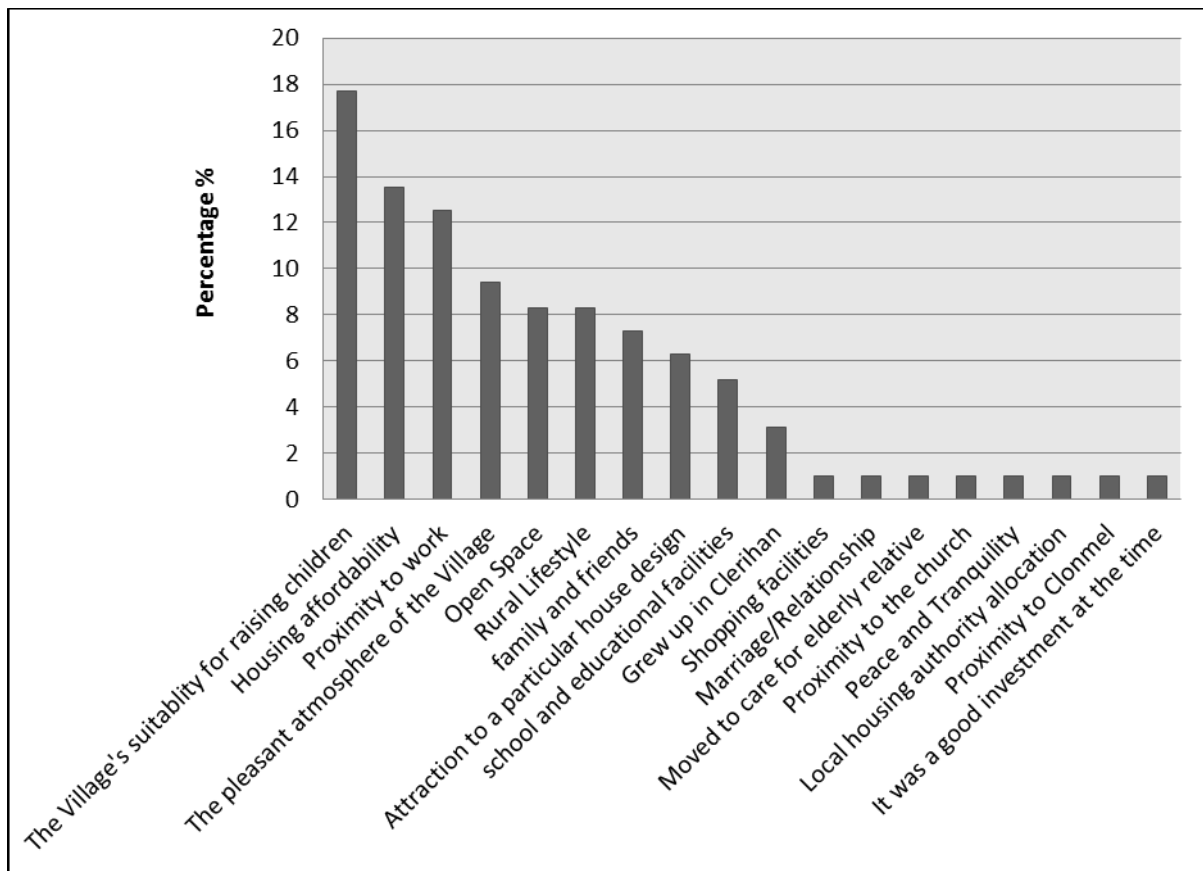

Figure 3 Incentives for moving to Clerihan

The belief that the village is suitable for raising children is reinforced by figure 1.7 which provides vivid illustration that 39% of the population consists of families with children less than 12 years of age and 26% is made up of families with teenage children. These percentages combined, amount to 65% which gives a clear indication of the village's

life-stage and insists that the new residents are at a foundational life-stage in which they are branching away from their own friends and family to begin their own home and have children. This ties neatly with the suburban ideal mentioned above, of establishing a family life away from the "morally corrupting" externalities (Mace, 2009, p 77) of the urban lifestyle in order to raise their children in a more safe and family conducive environment.
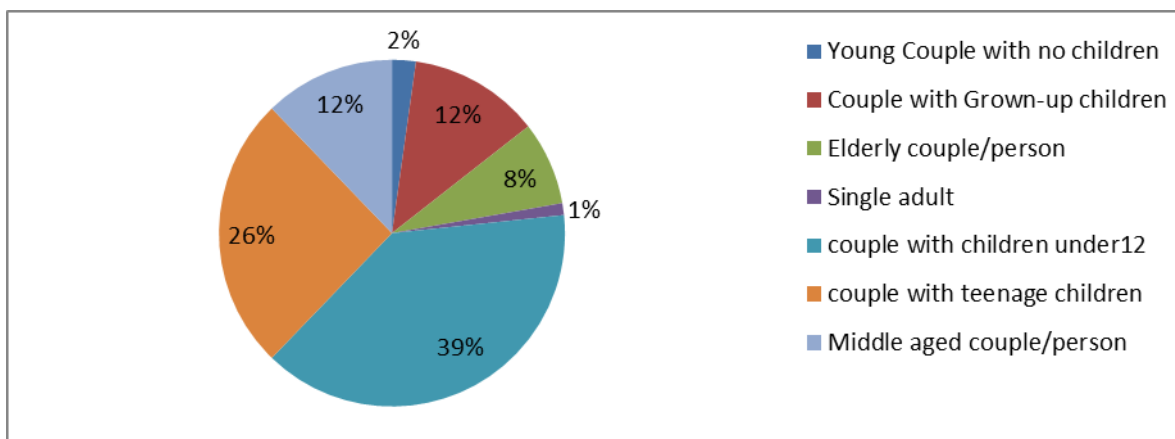

Figure 4: Life-Stage of Clerihan's Residents

The origin of Clerihan's new residents is represented in Figure 1.8. This shows that the new residents originated predominantly from Clonmel, a town located 8.6km from Clerihan. Such a finding was to be expected as the very process of suburbanisation is described at the dispersal of population from an urban centre. However, this result substantiates the suggestion that it is indeed suburbanisation that has occurred in Clerihan. Those who originated in Clonmel account for 54% of responses, therefore allowing the new residents to establish themselves within a new community while still remaining close enough to their prior facility base and social networks as discussed above. After all, as research has shown families that are in their formative stages tend to depend on nearby social support when their children are very young (see Gray, Corcoran, & Peillon, 2009). This would be expected of the new young resident population of Clerihan.
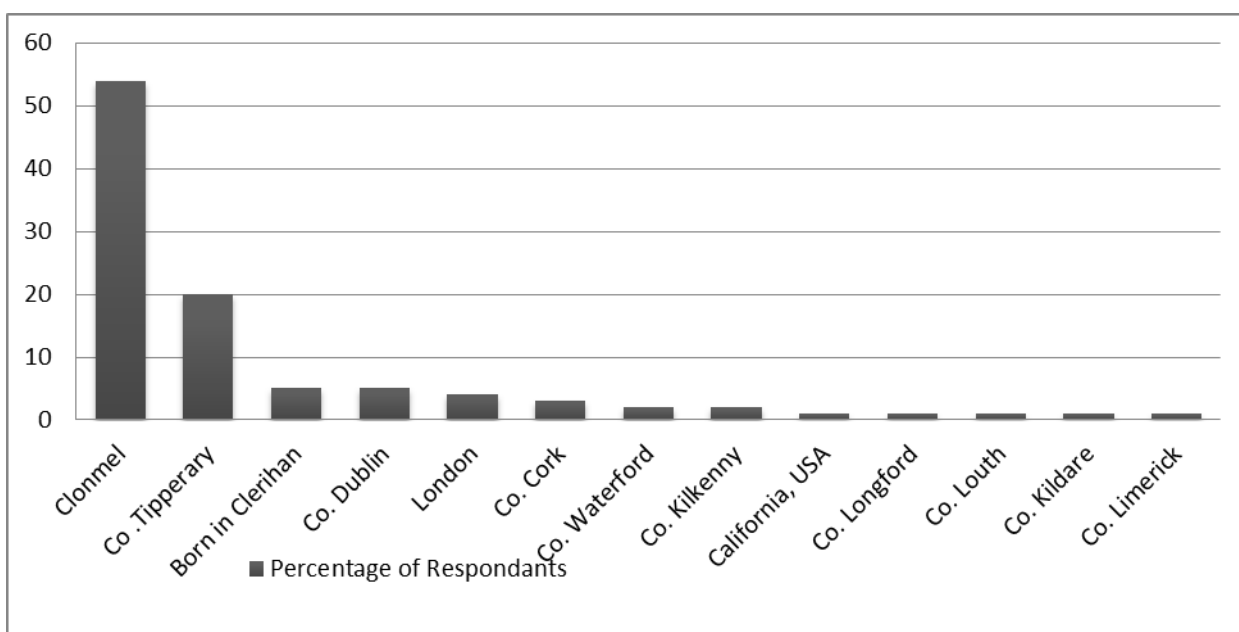

Figure 5: Origin of new residents

Contrary to the suggestion above that economic and social competition plays a large role in the a populations decision to migrate to suburban areas, only one percent of Clerihan's population identified that their moving it "was a good investment at the time," however a substantial proportion (13.5%) suggested they moved for housing affordability and attraction to a particular house design was admitted by 6.3% of respondents (figure 1.6). This means that while economic and social competition is not evident among the motives, a clear sense of financial

awareness and economic logic was present. Clerihan's residents may not have counted economic investment among their incentives for moving, however, when asked how long they envisage staying in the area and what their residential status is, their level of investment in the area itself becomes apparent (see Figures 1.9 and 2.0). 72% on Clerihan's residents envisage staying in the area permanently and 81.8% of residents either own their home already or are paying their mortgage.
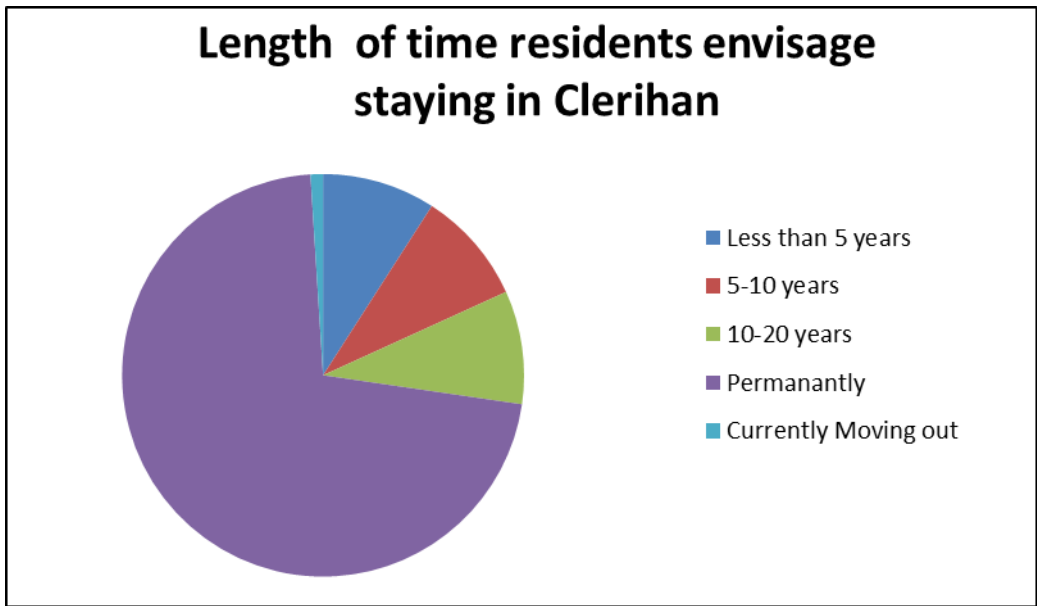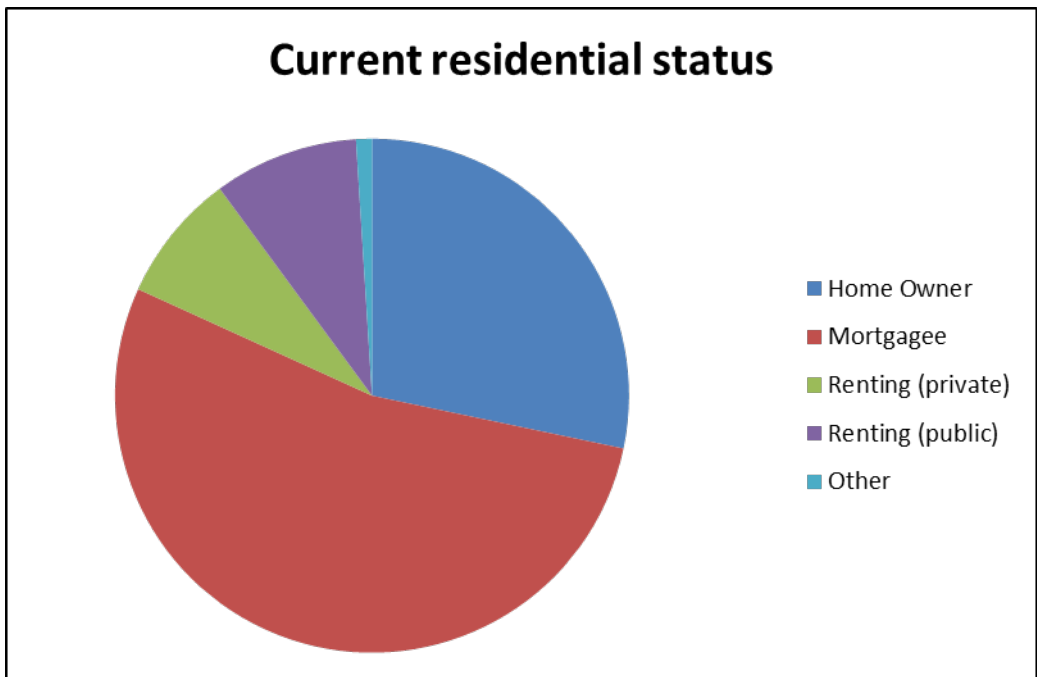

Figure 6: Resident permanencies

Figure 7: Residential Status

Perhaps one reason for the assured permanency of Clerihan's new residents is employment in the area. As can be seen in figure 1.6 "proximity to work" was an important factor for 12.5%. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 indicate that 62% of the population are living in households where both adults are employed, while only 9% of these work in Clerihan itself. While Clerihan's profile as a suburban commuter village is reinforced by the knowledge that 64% of the population commute to work in Clonmel while another 27% commute elsewhere. This means that transport links to and from the Clerihan are extremely important in order to provide means for residents to commute regularly.
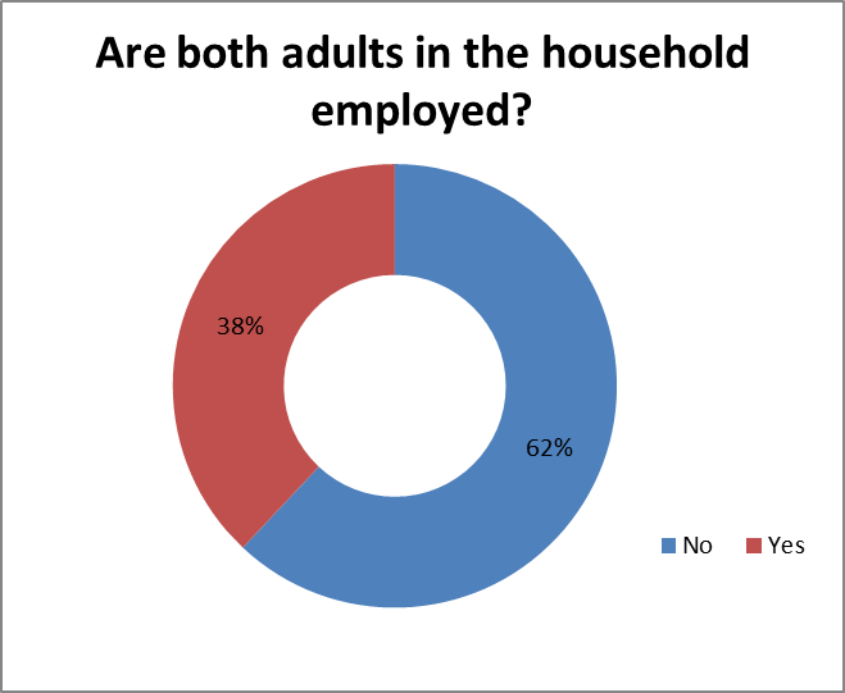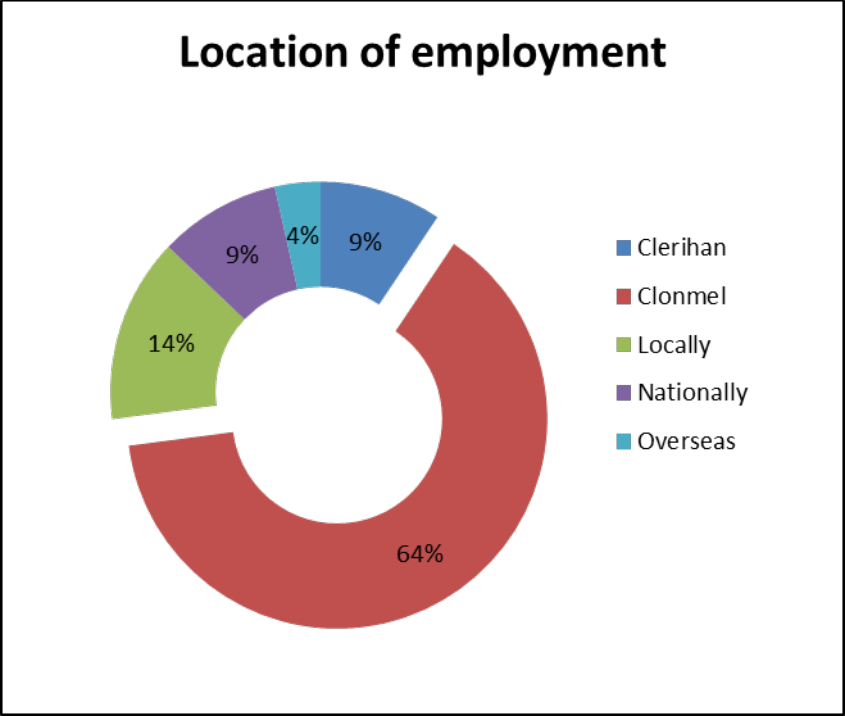
Figure 8: Level of Employment

Figure 9: Location of Employment

6   Discussion and Conclusions

It is evident that suburban growth in villages such as Clerihan was as a result of the "property boom" brought on by the Celtic Tiger due to the particular period of time in which property development emerged, the similarities between Clerihan's growth pattern and the national planning permission statistics, and finally, the way in which developments are left incomplete due to the economic downturn. However, while the economic prosperity lasted, newfound affluence enabled many young families to go in search of the "suburban dream". The questionnaire results illustrate Clerihan has been identified as a suitable place for raising children due to the large proportion residents have that teenagers or young children. This result ties directly to the perceptions of idyllic suburban space and place discussed above. It is clear to see that Clerihan is spatial proof that parents consider suburban areas as

perfect locations for rearing "3-4 children, the detached house, play area and garden" (Waitt, et al, 2000, p. 299) and firmly in keeping with suburban migration motives internationally. Clerihan's localised in-migration was to be expected. The very concept of Suburbanisation is driven by the dispersal of people from densely populated areas to more spacious locations at the periphery. With the majority of Clerihan's new residents maintaining employment in the Clonmel and its environs, their movement to Clerihan is a combined result of their desire to maintain their previous social connections with "access to family circles in a locality nearby," (Gray, Corcoran, & Peillon, 2009) and easy access to their place of work, while also creating an adequate distinction between work/origin/home spatialisation where they can become transparent and involved in the mutual identification and social closeness of community (Young, 1990). While evidence of social and economic competition was not evident from the suggested incentives of the residents, it is clear that elements of economic initiative and logic were present and that the new residents are heavily invested in the area for the most part due to their profession of permanency. Despite suburbanisation being a relatively new trend in Ireland, it would appear that it its processes, elements and migrant incentives are extremely similar to the processes of suburbanisation which have been observed in Australia, Central and Eastern Europe, he United Kingdom and the United States.

Anderson, W., Kanaroglou, P., & Miller, E. (1996). Urban Form, Energy and the Environment; a review of issues, evidence and policy. Urban Studies, 33(1), 7 - 35.

Banister, D. (2009). Transport, Rural. The International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, 460-464.

Biobaku, S. (1967). The effect of Urbanisation on Education in Africa: The Nigerian Experience. The National Review of Education, 13(4), 451 - 460.

Bontje, M., & Burdack, J. (2005). Edge Cities, European Style: Example from Paris and the Randstad. Cities, 22(4), 317-330.

Brade, I., Herfert, G., & Wiest, K. (2009). Recent trends and future prospects of socio-spatial differentiantion in urban regions of Central and Eastern Europe. Cities, 233 - 244.

Clarke. (2008). Clerihan Community Council Development Plan. Kilkenny: Barnville Print & Graphics Ltd.

Clarke, D., & Woollett, L. (1990). English Village Services in the eighties. London: Rural Development Commission.

Dwyer, J., Ward, N., Lowe, P., & Baldock, D. (2007). European Rural Development under the Common Agricultural Policy's 'Second Pillar': Institutional Conservatism and Innovation. Regional Studies, 41, 873-888.

Fishman, R. (1987). Bourgeois Utopias: the rise and fall of suburbia. New York: Basic Books.

Flaherty, J., & Brown, R. (2010). A Multilevel system model of community attachment: assessing the relative importance of the community and individual levels. American Journal of Sociology, 116, 503-542.

Forster, C. (1999). Australian Cities: Continuity and Change. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Gkartzios, M., & Norris, M. (2010). "If you bild it, they will come": Governing property-led rural regeneration in Ireland. Land Use Policy, 28, 486-494.

Gray, J., Corcoran, M. P., & Peillon, M. (2009). Local Family Circles and Suburban Social Life in Ireland. Maynooth, Ireland: National Institute For Regional Development and Spatial Analysis.

Halfacree, K. H. (2009). Rural Populations. The International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, 442.

Hayashi, Y., Doi, K., Yagishita, M., & Kuwata, a. M. (2004). Urban Transport Sustainability: Asian Trends, Problems. EJTIR, 4(1), 27-45.

Hodge, I. (1986). Rural Development and the Environment. Town Planning Review, 57, 175 - 186.

Hudson, R., & Williams, A. (1986). Western Europe, economic and social studies: The United Kingdom. London: Harper and Row Publishers.

Jackson, K. T. (1987). Crabgrass Frontier: The suburbanisation of the united states. New York: Ocford University Press.

Kenna. (2004). Desperately Seeking Exclusion: Intentions, Imagery and Socio-Spatial Outcomes of a Master Planned Estate (Glenmore Park). Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Kitchen, R., Gleeson, J., Keaveney, K., & O'Callaghan, C. (2010). A Haunted Landscape: Housing and Ghost Estates in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Maynooth: National University of Ireland.

Kitchen, R., O'Callaghan, C., & Gleeson, J. (2012). Unfinished estates in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. National University of Ireland Maynooth: National Intitute for Regional and Spatial Analysis.

Knox, P. (2009). Urbanization. The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 112 - 118.

Litcher, D. T., & Brown, D. L. (2011). Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries. The annual Review of Sociology, 37, 565-592.

Mace, A. (2009). Suburbanisation. The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 77 - 81.

Moloughney. (2011, february 16th). Clerihan Community Stunned by Shop Closure. The Clonmel Nationalist.

Neuman, W. L. (2000). Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

O'Callaghan, C. (2013 (in prep)). Ghost Estates: Urban Geography after NAMA. In C. Crowley, & D. Linehan, Spacing Ireland. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Perry, R., Dean, K., & Brown, B. (1986). Counterurbanisation. Norwich: Geobooks.

Quirke, P. (2010). P.F. Quirke Ltd. Retrieved Feb 7th, 2013, from http://pfq.ie/modules/property/clonmel/unit-5-cnoc-aoibheann-clerihan-clonmel/

Salamon, S. (2003). Newcomers to old towns: Suburbanisation of the Heartland. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Smith, M., & Krannich, R. (2000). "Culture Clash" revisited: newcomer and long-term residents' attitudes toward land use, development, and environmental issues in rural communities in the rocky mountain west. Rural Sociology, 65, 396-421.

Stockdale, A. (1993, Dec). Rural Service Provisions and the Impact of a Population Revival: A Study of Public Opinion in Northern Ireland. 25(4), 365 - 378.

Sudjic, D. (1993). The 100 mile city. San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Co.

Waitt, G., Mcguirk, P., Dunn, K., Hartig, K., & Burnley, I. (2000). Introducing Human Geography: Globalisation, Difference and Inequality. Sydney: Pearsons.

Williams, B., Hughes, B., & Redmond, D. (2012). Managing an unsustainable housing market. Urban Institute Ireland, University College Dublin (UCD UII 10/02).

Williams, M. (2011). View From Knockeevan.

Williams, S. (1995). View from Knockeevan.

Young, I. (1990). The Ideal of Community and Polotics of Difference. In L. Nicholson, Feminism/Post Modernism (pp. 300 - 323). New York: Routlegde.

Acknowledgments

Biographical statement

Matthew K. Williams is an assistant researcher in the Geography Department at University College Cork where he is in the second year of his Ph.D. in social and urban Geography. Current research interests include, sex work in Irish cities, social and spatial inclusion/exclusion, and urban planning.

Contact details

Matthew Williams, Department of Geography, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland.

108034605@umail.ucc.ie

7

Subtitle [optional]

First Author
First author affiliation

Second Author
Second author affiliation

Abstract goes here. Do not provide a heading ("Abstract") as this will be added automatically.

Abstracts can be several paragraphs long.

8   Top-level heading

Start of the first paragraph

- Bulleted list item (use style List Bullet)
- Another bullet (do NOT use style List Paragraph)

Back to normal text

8.1   Second-level heading
Normal text

1. Numbered list item (use style List Number)
2. Another numbered item (do NOT use style List Paragraph)

Back to normal text

8.1.1 Third-level heading (rare)

Normal text

Figure 1: A fish

Normal text again. Note that figure captions go immediately *below* the figure; table captions go immediately *above* the table.

Table 1: an example

Column 1 heading	Column 2 heading	Column 3 heading
Row 1 heading	Data	Data
Row 2 heading	Data	Data

Reference. Do not provide a heading ("References") as this will be added automatically.

Reference

Reference

Reference