

**Rural Housing and Sustainable Community
Development In The West Of Ireland:
A Case Study Of County Mayo**

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B.A. (Hons) Heritage Studies

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MASTER OF ARTS

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of Master of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Abstract

Ireland's economy has been transformed in the past decade; it has become one of the fastest growing economies within the European Union. Growth has been unprecedented and unbalanced, primarily located in the east and within larger urban centres. The impacts of economic growth have been far reaching, both direct and indirect. One impact has been upon housing. Increased demand for property; to house the population combined with increased investment and tourism demands upon housing stock are impacting upon the sustainability of many rural areas.

The West of Ireland is currently in a unique position as it faces the challenges of renegotiated EU regional/spatial and agricultural policies, demographic shifts, a dynamic housing sector, tourism changes and increased environmental restrictions on land use in the countryside. Three case studies have been chosen in Co. Mayo, predominantly a rural county in order to examine impacts of housing on sustainable community development. The county provides an ideal location for a study of rural housing issues as it now must grapple with a complexity of issues concerning land, people, services, employment, and housing incorporating new spatial development plans. A complex history of Irish emigration, coupled with recent rises in return /in-migration and variable spatial patterns makes for an interesting research topic.

Housing policies and developments have responded to population shifts, but the pace of change has been rapid in some locations. Economic issues, social change and environmental impacts will need to be examined across different rural spaces. This research is deliberately broad, and therefore seeks to examine various, inter-related issues within the context of changing housing processes. This research does not seek to generalize about its findings but rather, to find a baseline of resident and agency meanings, terms and discussions to base future research on.

Because little holistic research has been done in this particular geographical area an inductive approach will be taken, in order to provide a baseline theory that might give an insight into the social constructions and subjective reality of the research participants: residents and agencies involved in housing and community

development in the three chosen study areas. No single theory will be tested but a theory may be built from the data collected.

Chapter 1: Introduction And Research Aims

1.1 Introduction

A closer examination of the regional and sub-regional spatial characteristics of rural areas, along with an accurate identification of the dynamics that stimulate a sustainable rural economy, is the next necessary step for informed research that will contribute to practical rural development policy in Ireland over the coming years (Scollan, Western Development Commission, 1999). A core element in any positive future rural development scenario involves healthy demographics and with that, the housing necessary to accommodate current/potential populations effectively. Much has been written about rural community development by geographers, sociologists and other academics (Keane, 1990; Cloke, 1995; Mc Donagh 2001; Cawley, et al. 2001). However, the West of Ireland is currently in a unique position as it faces the challenges of renegotiated EU regional /spatial and agricultural policies, demographic shifts, a dynamic housing sector, tourism changes and increased environmental restrictions on land use in the countryside. As communities and local governments grapple with these jigsaw pieces of land, people, services, employment and housing, much research remains to be done on how regional areas will approach sustainable rural development.

Mayo, one of the largest and most peripheral counties in Ireland provides a case study here for an examination of the above processes. This research will examine housing as a key element within sustainable development in the county that is largely rural and has a varied demographic profile. The demographic processes affecting the county have changed; emigration levels have decreased; yet many rural areas are still experiencing population decline. Some of the reasons for this will be explored. Processes of demographic change within rural areas have received limited attention in Ireland. Studies have focused primarily on emigration and its effects. The impacts of in-migration in relation to housing have been studied to a great extent within the UK (Schucksmith, 1981, 1991; Phillips, 1992) but as yet little work exists in an Irish context, especially within the context of housing studies. While direct comparison must be avoided due to the differing nature of land ownership systems, UK research

provides some useful insight into population change, government responses and subsequent impacts.

A complex history of Irish emigration, coupled with recent rises in return /in-migration and variable spatial patterns makes for an interesting research topic. Housing policies and developments have responded to population shifts, but the pace of change has been rapid in some locations. Economic issues, social change and environmental impacts will need to be examined across different rural spaces. This research is deliberately broad, and therefore seeks to examine various, inter-related issues within the context of changing housing processes.

1.2 Research Aims

General Research Questions

- What characterises the rural housing sector in Ireland and in Mayo currently?
- What policies and factors are influential in the development and non-development of rural housing?
- What role does housing play in the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities?
- What other factors are important?

Specific Research Questions

- What balance exists in Mayo between private, public and other forms of housing?
- What factors contribute (d) to this balance?
- What government (national and local) policies have been important and why?
- What have the impacts of these policies been?
- What are the variable housing needs of three different types of rural area in Mayo?
- How are these needs being met currently and what strategies exist for future needs provision?
- How has housing development affected 'community' structures? Who has been affected?

- What role does housing play in rural regeneration and resettlement at local level?
- How do tourism, planning and environmental concerns influence rural housing?
- What are the main social, economic and environmental challenges for housing's contribution to sustainable rural community development in Mayo?

It is important here to acknowledge that the above questions will be assessed in varying degrees of depth. The limits of a relatively short M.A. thesis are such that the parity of treatment for all issues is not always possible. The author wishes to appreciate however all of the contributory factors involved in the complex process of rural housing change.

1.3 Structure Of Thesis

Due to the broad nature of rural housing issues the study is divided up into various chapters, which deal with specific issues related to the research topic. Chapter 2 examines contemporary literature relating to rural studies, housing and sustainability. A breadth of material was examined to provide a wide contextualisation of the subject. Chapter 3 explores relevant policy, policy not only which deals with housing but wider rural policies such as rural development, poverty, sustainability and The National Spatial Strategy. Chapter 4 provides a study area review of Co. Mayo, the location of the study areas and identifies broad processes that are occurring with regard to housing within the County. Chapter 5 deals with the methodological aspects of the research, a rationale for the case studies, execution of fieldwork etc. Chapter 5 also includes a conceptual approach for the research.

Results have been analysed in relation to demographic change, housing and settlement and sustainability and community development. These three core areas are discussed in both Chapter 6 Results I and Chapter 7 Results II. Due to the broad scope of the research the results chapter has been divided into two sections. Results I presents core findings from secondary data analysis, stakeholders, and community groups and presents an introduction to the housing types and settlement pattern survey. Results II presents findings from the household questionnaires compiled in

each case study. While there are overlaps in some data this adds to rather than detracts from the findings.

The research findings and analysis and the thesis end with a final conclusion in Chapter 8 which draws together and discusses key findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together a wide range of literature in order to highlight the multi-dimensional aspects that must be considered within this research. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The 'rural' is explored as a concept and processes associated with rural change are assessed. Definitions of the rural are necessary from Ireland and elsewhere in order to highlight current geographic thought on the concept. Demographic change and its impacts are also assessed; this is drawn from Irish and UK sources. Traditionally literature on rural areas in Ireland associates the 'rural' with emigration. This link however needs to be re-examined in relation to wider socio-economic transformations that have been occurring in Ireland in recent years. Literature from the UK on the impacts of in-migration processes associated with the phenomenon and wider community impacts has been extensive. While direct comparisons with Ireland must be avoided due the differing nature of land ownership, the extent and nature of this UK based research cannot be ignored.

The second part of the literature specifically examines housing in rural areas. An exploration of the functions associated with rural housing is complimented by an examination of the traditional/changing nature of housing styles and settlement patterns. Such an exploration is necessary in order to assess traditional types of settlement and housing. Such an exploration is also necessary in relation to environmental impacts that have been associated with rural settlements that are linear, non-nucleated and un-serviced. It has been argued that such types of settlement are not sustainable models for future development. The final part of the literature deals with 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability'. The concepts are relatively new and so an extensive assessment of their meanings needs to be fully explored. In relation to housing and sustainable development in rural areas this must not only include environmental considerations but also wider socio-economic ones associated with sustainability.

2.2. Definitions of Rurality

Definitions of 'rural' are continually changing. Up to the 1980s, the term 'rurality' was most commonly specifically affiliated with agricultural land use and often defined in functional, predominantly statistical terms. The meaning of 'rural' has proved elusive for many commentators (Cloke, 1985; Cloke, 1987; Cloke, 1989; Hoggart, 1990; Cloke and Goodwin, 1993; Halfacree, 1993). Each has attempted to define, categorise, propose alternative definitions as to its use, or to 'do away with the term altogether' (Hoggart, 1990).

The socio-cultural definitions for rural areas assume that population density affects behaviour and attitudes; an assumed correlation between social and spatial attributes. This new discourse was a concentration on the people living in rural areas rather than on the rural areas themselves. No longer could it be said that a simple dichotomy between the rural and urban existed. It is now acknowledged that there are a variety of communities conforming to various levels of urbanism and ruralism. Therefore the idea of a rural-urban continuum was devised which positioned settlements along a spectrum ranging from very remote rural areas to transitional areas to modern city (Halfacree, 1993, p.25).

Protagonists such as Hoggart (1990) contributed to calls for doing away with the term rural altogether. Hoggart believes that the undifferentiated use of 'rural' in a research context is detrimental to the advancement of social theory and as such Hoggart believes it is critical that notions of rurality do not guide the selection of sites for empirical investigation. The broad category 'rural' is obfuscatory, whether the aim is description or theoretical evaluation, since intra-rural differences can be enormous and rural-urban similarities sharp (Hoggart, 1990, p.245). Murdoch and Pratt (1993, p.423) suggested that rather than trying to render one single definition, it would be more beneficial to explore "the ways in which rurality is constructed and deployed in a variety of contexts". Lowe, et al (1990, p.40), describe rural as having been used in a predominantly pragmatic manner, adjusting to different social, political and economic circumstances as the need arises and, although it is quite difficult to define what a rural area is, those that do not look like an overwhelmingly urban environment must, by default, be a rural environment.

According to McInerney (1995, in Traill 1995), "Rurality is not a simple, unified concept but rather is characterised by the interaction of three distinct systems; economic, social and environmental" (p.23). The 'economic system' is concerned with all the economic activity that takes place in rural areas and it represents the rural economy. The 'social system' involves the people who live in the countryside and represents the rural community and its institutions, while the 'environment system' is made up of the physical and biological environment, its landforms, topography, fauna, flora and climate. Land is the common resource for all three systems, giving dominance to the 'rural economy' (Trail, 1995).

Halfacree (1993) suggests that the use of either descriptive or socio-cultural terms have been rather misguided and conventional in their approaches to a definition of the rural, describing such definitions as "better seen as research tools for the articulation of specific aspects of the rural rather than ways of describing the rural" (p.24).

One concept of rurality, which has been extensively researched in a number of countries, is the concept of the 'rural idyll'. (See, for example, Cloke and Goodwin, 1993; Van Dam and Huigen, 1994; Van Dam, et al, 2002; Hoggart et al, 1995; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Urry, 1995). It has been argued however by Mc Donagh, 2002, (p.63) that "the 'rural idyll' is largely an English construct and its Irish counterpart, with its unique cultural background, shares only superficial traits". Mc Donagh (2002) argues that there is a need to incorporate heritage into any exploration of the Irish 'rural idyll'. Incorporating heritage into definitions of the rural is important (particularly in relation to conflicting forces affecting rural housing provision) but again raises some deeper questions about its construction. Debates upon the meanings, motivations and constructions of heritage are now occurring (See Ashworth, 2002).

The term rural is quite broad in its definition and has to encompass the various meanings it may have to different people. It is difficult to derive a category which describes an area that is constantly changing and which is perceived differently by different people, while at the same time, being very clear and definitive in its definition –an almost impossible task, and it has, as conceded by Cloke, "proved very difficult to define in an all embracing manner" (1985, p.1).

2.2.1 The Changing use of Rural Space

“Europe 2000 (published in 1991) emphasised that the future economic development of rural areas is becoming increasingly dependent on non-agricultural sectors” (Cloke and Goodwin, 1993, p.33). It is now increasingly acknowledged that rural areas can supply more than agricultural products. They also offer recreational opportunities; they contain wildlife and wildlife habitats and provide primary products such as water and timber. In more recent times rural areas are becoming increasingly popular and consumed, both on a permanent and temporary basis, because of their perceived advantage as living space. This has obvious implications for housing and accommodation provision.

The countryside is increasingly becoming an area of consumption and the switch away from a productivity philosophy means that farmers and other primary producers are looking for new ways of generating income. Alternative uses of rural space are developing, and as Cloke and Milbourne (1992, p.360) comment, “there is no longer one single rural space, but rather a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area”. Agriculture is being restructured and farmers have to adjust to national and international processes of change, which are reducing the importance of the previously dominant agricultural productivist ethos. This adjustment often takes the form of generating new sources of income from non-agricultural activities, on or off the farm (Bateman and Ray, 1994; Kelly, 1994). In Ireland this may now be occurring with the sale of sites for housing.

It is argued by North and Smallbourne (1993 and 1996) that employment has been growing faster in rural areas than in urban areas, especially in manufacturing, hi-tech and service sectors and in terms of small and medium enterprises. Whether this statement is strictly true in Ireland is highly debatable and geographically variable. Certainly an argument can be made that in many rural areas there is an increased number of non-agricultural employment opportunities compared to previous generations due to increased mechanisation, economic diversity and centralisation. These new activities together with such new uses of rural space such as recreation, tourism, and environmental conservation are creating changed power relationships and a range of development trajectories in the countryside (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). The increasing mobility of people, goods and information has helped to erode traditional community structures and open up the countryside to new uses. This in

turn has led to the creation of new power relationships and actor networks, which are likely to be dominated by external rather than internal linkages (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995).

Regulation has become an important element in some areas, notably in relation to sustainability and environmental conservation (Lowe, et al. 1993). National and increasingly, international initiatives, have been introduced to protect rural landscapes and wildlife and to prevent water pollution and soil erosion. Certain areas have been designated as

- NHA; Natural Heritage Areas,
- ASIs; Areas Of Scientific Interest,
- SPAs; Special Protection Areas and
- SACs; Special Areas Of Conservation.

Examples of the above exist in Mayo and affect two of the case study areas chosen (See Chapter 4). These designations have raised the landscape conservation agenda in Ireland over the past decade. While this has led to a greater appreciation of the natural environment and heightened awareness of conservation issues, there is an impending conflict of interest with regard to housing.

2.2.2 Demographical Change in Rural Areas

“But didn’t anyone shout; stop; why did you let your people go? Did nobody try and stop them? The answer as I see it, we were ignorant. In our ignorance we valued bank balances more than people” (Healy, J., 1968, p.55).

Since the 1960’s the importance of agriculture to the Irish economy has been in decline with the result that some rural areas have experienced a haemorrhaging of their population numbers. Emigration has for over a century played a significant role in the psyche of many rural communities in Ireland. With the exception of a brief respite during the late 60’s and early 70’s (allied to economic growth during the period), the steady stream of emigration continued. Between 1981 and 1991 it is estimated that total net national emigration amounted to approximately 208,000 persons (Walsh, 1992). It was estimated that the decline would continue until 1996, by which time a projected 242,000 people would have emigrated (see NESAC, 1986). This prediction was reiterated in a report commissioned by the Developing The West

Together Group (Euradvice, 1994), which suggested that the West of Ireland stood to lose almost 110,000 in population by 2011.

These predictions are now seen as an exaggeration particularly considering the turn-around in migration. There has been agreement however that continued population decline did adversely affect the economic situation of rural Ireland (see Brunt, 1988; Walsh, 1992; Walsh, 1993). Coward (1989) argued that the economic implications of continued population decline in rural areas limited the domestic market and acted as a deterrent to economic growth. He suggested another significant factor in relation to population decline, that emigration (largely responsible for declines) had been a selective process. It has therefore been implied (but not demonstrated) that emigration removes those individuals who are more innovative (Kennedy, 1973; O'Conneide, 1995), leaving a residual population that is more conservative, less likely to question established authority and less receptive to social change in general.

Coward (1989) also suggested that, in some cases, emigration had beneficial effects; by reducing the size of the labour force, and the number of people unemployed, emigration was in effect a safety valve for poorly performing areas in the Irish economy. Coward's suggestion while harsh may have some truth to it but overall the economic, psychological and social consequences of emigration have been adverse.

The decline in emigration in Ireland over the past decade has been stark. It may be deduced from this that less people are emigrating from rural areas and therefore may wish to now settle in their homelands. This however has not yet been fully charted or explored and indeed it could be said that socially mobile out-migration has replaced emigration in many rural areas. It can however be safely stated that increasing numbers of emigrants are returning home. This phenomenon was not merely a natural result of economic prosperity but one that was actively sought by government and semi-state bodies such as FAS and Údaras na Gaeltachta who specifically designed campaigns to entice people to come back to Ireland, to try and fill labour shortages. This statement is supported by Watts (1997), and does suggest that a brighter future could be in store for rural areas, free from emigration.

2.2.3 Impacts Of In-Migration

Changes associated with impacts of in-migration have been quite well documented in the UK, but research in Ireland is still rather scarce. The British countryside has been repopulated, especially by middle class groups, resulting in a social make up now disproportionately biased towards those who, in terms of their wealth, power and influence are influential in national policy and public opinion (Rogers, 1993). The reasons why people move to rural areas are varied and there is a lack of a definitive explanation. Some are undoubtedly attracted by the perceived 'idyll of rural living', one which is bound up with notions of community, kinship, family, safeness, values and morals, a particular way of life, culture and closeness to nature (Mingay et al., 1989; Short, 1991; Cloke and Milbourne, 1992; Cloke, 1995). This is despite the fact that many are deterred by factors such as the limited range and quality of services and amenities readily accessible in dispersed rural communities, limited employment opportunities for one's spouse, restricted opportunities for career advancement, isolation from professional peers and the associated difficulties of making suitable substitution arrangements during periods of absence (such as holidays and illness). Cloke and Milbourne (1992, p.359) recognised that the ideas of the deprivation or disadvantage can become a contradiction in terms,

"Both for those who do experience hardship (but will perhaps see this as an acceptable trade-off for the benefit of rural living, or will seek some reason to conceal or underplay the stigmatic acknowledgement of hardship) and for those who do not (and perhaps are anxious to reproduce the culture of an idyll by playing down any hardship that comes to their attention)."

Mc Donagh (2002) has also indicated how deprivation in the countryside can in some ways (and by some people) be seen as 'not all that bad' in comparison to deprivation in the city or urban environs. Halfacree (1993) argues that that middle classes often seek to consolidate their position in society through the acquisition of 'symbolic capital' bound up with 'a place in the countryside'. Recent studies have explored how the new middle classes achieve and maintain positions of relative power in the countryside (Cloke, 1995), how they can influence and shape socio-cultural constructions of rurality (Fielding, 1998), and how the local population may contest the newcomer's representations of rurality (Allen and Mooney, 1998).

Murdoch and Marsden (1994) rightly acknowledge that the processes of rural change and class formation are inextricably bound together. Economic transformations in rural areas are related to social changes associated with the immigration of particular groups of people (Ilbery, 1998). In the U.K. during the 1960's and 1970s, the service classes took advantage of relatively cheap housing in the countryside, and the process of rural gentrification that was occurring has been extensively studied (Philips, 1993). A speculative comparison for Ireland would indicate that the process did not occur here to any great extent, except for the Dublin Metropolitan region. The West of Ireland may have experienced some pockets of such a process but not to an extent that has left a lasting impact on the political, social or demographic make up of the region. Second-home ownership could be considered to be 'gentrification', but it is often only 'part-time' in its impacts. However, since the 1990s, rural demographic change has been occurring at a more accelerated rate. It cannot be simply apportioned to cheap housing in the countryside, as there is also an unprecedented desire among many to live in the countryside.

While the influx of urban dwellers into some rural areas in Ireland has undoubtedly risen in recent years, due to a combination of factors (spiralling urban housing costs, the pursuit of the 'rural idyll', seeking place-identity, poor urban planning, returning to ones roots, etc), the extent and impacts have as yet been poorly charted. Between 1991 and 1996 there were an estimated 177,000 in-migrants compared with 174,000 out-migrants nationally. Fifty percent of those in-migrants originated in the UK, and 42% of the total were aged between 25 and 44 (CSO, Annual Population and Migration Estimates, 1991-96). These figures contrast sharply with those for the 1987-91 period when the excess of emigrants over immigrants exceeded 100,000. In 1988, almost 20% of graduates had emigrated; by 1995 this had fallen to 9.9% (HEA, 1996).

The 1996 census showed that almost 80% of those born in 1970 (26 yrs old) were alive and living in Ireland. This figure compares with only 57% in 1956 for the same group. Half of that difference may be attributed to the fall in death rate rates among infants and young people, and half by reduced emigration (Fitzgerald, 1997). The situation in Ireland currently is that less people are leaving and more are arriving (returned migrants, refugees, non EU migrant workers, or EU citizens wishing to live in Ireland). Not only has Ireland's migratory pattern changed, but the entire context

which has traditionally provided a framework for understanding population flows has been transformed (Corcoran, 2002).

2.2.4 Return Migration

The phenomenon of return migration is not new, although it certainly has increased dramatically since the birth of the 'Celtic Tiger' and its subsequent impacts.

"Some come back. Men and women who came back today run the more successful businesses in Charlestown. It may be a coincidence that before they went they had got something better than a primary school education which made them wiser, more critical and less susceptible to the lure of Britain, more appreciative of the assets of life in Ireland. They certainly learned the virtue of hard work and its rewards" (Healy, J., 1968, p.58).

The phenomenon of return migration has increased in recent years. Through a combination of modernity, identity and the migrant experience, Corcoran (2002) examined the impact of exposure to the industrialised capitalised societies on the individual. In particular, she referred to social transformations in which there is a collapsing of the constraints of time and space, and a concomitant interpretation of the global and local. There is increased concentration and centralisation, particularly at the institutional level, and an increased fragmentation, and detraditionalisation occurring at individual level. Corcoran found that these people had changed, and they were returning to a changed country. Christopher T. Whelan (1994) hypothesised that as a country advances economically, its population increasingly becomes individualistic. Collective individual changes can have important bearings on the structure and conduct of new rural societies and expectations.

The possibility offered by emigration to re-invent oneself is a clear theme, which came through in Corcoran's findings. This is also supported elsewhere: "Once embarked on the migration trail, emigrants attempted to sustain coherent yet continuously revised, biographical narratives...in the context of multiple choices as filtered through abstract systems" (Giddens, 1991, p.13). The absence of structural constraints as mediated through family expectations and obligations, freed them from the tyranny of a linear career structure. Goals were developed over the course of the period spent abroad, but crucially these goals were formed in the context of a perception of multiple choices, and the availability of alternative opportunity

structures. The capacity to generate a personal biographical narrative free of structural constraint was perceived as a form of empowerment (Corcoran, 2002). While this freedom from constraint was achieved, a strong desire remained to return home.

The question must be asked, whether return migrants have given up this empowerment or whether energies were channelled to now empower the localities that they had emigrated from? This research will attempt to evaluate the participation of return migrants within community development organisations and their contribution to sustainable rural communities. Returning emigrants may wish to feel organically part of something, wish to be part of a community. Corcoran (2002) refers to the returning emigrants possible dissatisfaction with what they have become which translates as a need to commune with their own, to anchor themselves to their origins. Their impact upon local community structures remains to be seen.

This research will contribute to existing literature adding an Irish context, using a unique study area where these groups can be studied. It must however be recognised that not all areas undergo the same changes and in many parts of rural Ireland there is still population decline and withdrawal or curtailment of services. What are particularly concerning in these areas are the human resource deficit and the barrier this creates for the survival of many rural communities (Mc Donagh, 2000).

“And, too late, we made a head count and found the truth. We were left with empty houses, empty holdings or with the infirm old who refused to go. (Many did; whole families moved out)” (Healy, J., 1968. p.58).

2.2.5 Impacts on ‘Community’

One of the most significant impacts of change in rural areas is upon local communities. The term itself is highly contested (See Stein, 1964; Hall, 1995).

“To some extent, the concept of community has been defined so often that the result ceases to be a definition. However, some common understanding of the term is required in order to establish how it may link to sustainable development; particularly the essential link between community and place” (Warburton, 1998, p.14).

There are several possible negative and positive impacts, which have been associated with in-migration trends in relation to impacts upon communities (Stockdale, 2002).

Warburton (p.14), 1998, argues, "Unlike sustainable development, everyone thinks they know what community means". She adds that the concept of community seems to almost always come with a warm glow, which can be useful for policy makers when they attempt to associate 'community' with a new initiative. Community is often understood as being to do with 'locality', with 'actual social groups', with 'a particular quality of relationship' which is 'felt to be more immediate than society' and when used in conjunction with other activities, such as 'community politics' is distinct not only from national politics but from formal local politics and normally involves various kinds of direct action and direct local organisations, "working directly with people" (Williams, 1980, p.75-76).

Mc Donagh (2002) highlights the need to explore aspects of heritage associated with rural areas in Ireland, in relation to the impacts caused by contemporary change upon rural communities. One aspect in relation to housing has been the link to locality and identity, which have been formed through intricate webs of housing and land distribution that have occurred in several rural areas over a sustained period of time. Day (1998) has argued, "conceptions of culture and community have a particular relevance for processes of sustainable rural development" (p.89).

Smyth (1975) argues that it is the strength of the extended farmer kin group, which gives many a rural society its resilient cellular character, and makes for a society of remarkable staying power and that the autonomy of rural societies should not be under estimated. Smyth believes that in conjunction with parishes and chapel communities, these elaborate and now geographically extensive kinship and neighbourhood networks can be mobilised in defence of a whole range of values. This mobilisation has seen the emergence of such lobby groups as the Rural Dwellers Association (R.D.A.) It is argued by Tovey & Share, 2003, (p103) that "people continue to see their own locality as a basis for collective identification, even collective action".

Local Agenda 21 seeks to engage the wider 'community' in future sustainable development. The engagement of community is being attempted through several means. In relation to housing in Mayo, the Housing Strategy actively seeks the participation of communities in future planning. It is therefore important for this research to attempt an evaluation of the impacts of diverse housing issues upon the make up of existing communities and groups that represent them.

In relation to current and future housing issues in which local communities 'play' an active role, concepts here must focus upon the impacts local community groups will have in relation to housing issues. Will community groups such as the R.D.A. dominate local agendas? Is there a possibility that the changing nature of some communities could lead to local groups objecting to future housing provision? Both answers remain to be seen, "Community development initiatives, have rarely taken housing issue as a *primary* objective" (Finnerty, et al, 2002). The future participation of 'communities' in relation to housing poses some interesting questions, which may differ depending upon the nature of a particular rural area. The issue, of whether increased housing be welcomed by *all* is open to debate, and could possibly cause conflict in some rural areas, particularly in relation to issues of community participation in sustainable development.

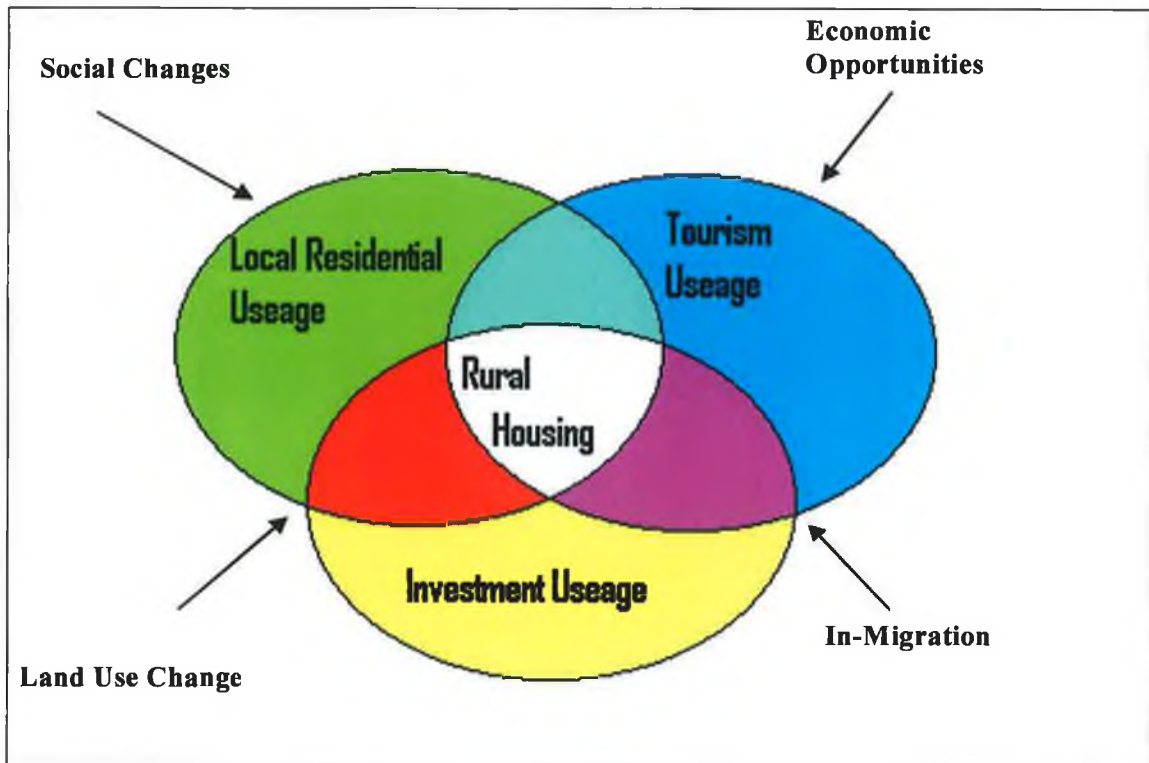
2.3 Housing in Rural Ireland

Rural housing is a broad area of study due to its constituent physical (bricks and mortar), social and economic functions in rural space. This section of the literature attempts to provide an overview of these constituent elements. Elements drawn together here range from the uses of rural housing to discussions upon the changing nature of styles, settlement in rural areas and a discussion presented on the 'one-off housing' debate.

2.3.1 Multiple Functions Of Rural Housing

The rural housing function serves multiple user groups with variable spatial and temporal requirements. Where these compete in limited geographical contexts, conflicts often result. See diagram below for description of housing pressures and areas of overlap.

Fig. 2.1: Housing Pressures



Residential Usage

The basic function of housing is to provide shelter for its inhabitants. While the quality of housing in rural areas has been variable, often of a poor quality (Storey, 1988,1995; Jackson and Hasse 1996), demand was usually met. Indeed, overcapacity and vacant properties were common in certain areas. Existing stock in many cases passed through inheritance and complex webs of kinship and marriage over several generations. There has been an increase in housing residential units in rural areas in recent years due to a combination of factors.

- The need to modernise existing stock.
- Decreased levels of emigration.
- Increased in-and return-migration.
- Changes in family settlement- newly married couples building their own home rather than simply moving into the traditional family abode, which would previously have been the case.
- Relatively cheap sites allowed for housing to be built at a lower short-term rate than in towns etc.

- Decline in agriculture has meant that selling sites is seen as a viable source of farmer income. This sale of sites is not a traditional way of land distribution, but has become increasingly acceptable and emulated.
- Changes in inheritance practices: due to the lack of viability in agriculture many farms have had pockets of land (sites) distributed among family members, either for sale or to ensure that a family member will have land to build their home on.

The issue of rural housing quality is often over looked; it has been argued by Jackson and Hasse (1996) that there have been a number of factors which have contributed to the invisibility of housing disadvantage in rural areas. These include a low population density which can hide the presence of poor quality housing and romanticism which has been attached to the countryside can also obscure issues such as the quality of dwellings and housing affordability for locals (Jackson and Hasse, 1996, p.61-62).

Investment Usage

“Rural areas, which have been characterised for many years with population decline, are unprepared for the general housing pressures sparked off by recent economic growth” (Finnerty et al, 2002, p.129).

Ireland has undergone an unprecedented economic expansion in the last decade. The phenomenon of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ has resulted in numerous changes. One feature of this phenomenon has been “the emergence of a class of people with access to substantial sums of cheap capital to invest in residential property” (Ibid, p.130).

Due to the centralisation of economic activity that has been occurring over the last decade, house prices have rocketed in and around the fringes of Irish urban areas. The increase in property prices in urban areas has had a knock-on effect on prices in rural areas. With continued increases in house values, property is becoming a most lucrative investment opportunity, which can yield high returns in comparison to investing in a financial institution. The investment in housing is not only coming from private developers but also from individual entrepreneurs who are using housing as a means of gaining profit and climbing the property ladder. This trend has become quite popular as a legitimate means of making money with a high return yield. The down

side is that price increases affect the ability of many people in rural areas to purchase housing.

Large investments within the housing sector have come from property developers and speculators, with the market generally being controlled by them. Zoning of land for various development purposes including housing has increased speculation in many areas. Vast quantities of money can be made from having ownership of land or development rights in the 'right zone'. While there are many positive aspects associated with zoning, some negative outcomes have occurred. Delay in the re-zoning of land was criticised in the Bacon Report (Bacon, 1999). Bacon also highlighted the activity of speculative landlords and super profits made by some developers and builders as contributing factors to failure of meeting the spectrum of housing need. Finnerty, et al (2002, p.131), argues that such behaviour manifests most clearly in impacts upon mortgage affordability.

Bacon (1999) also suggested that there was evidence of land hoarding by developers to maximise profits. Control of information for investment purposes has led to increasing corruption among elected representatives and developers. Though the extent is as yet unknown (as can be seen from Flood tribunal), it can be argued that some forms of corruption have occurred. The full impacts of this corruption remain to be seen, not only from a physical but also a psychological perspective and the damage it has caused to respect for and trust in state institutions and planning. As a result, housing has also become a central political issue, as well as holding basic shelter functions. Power relations in rural areas concerning land ownership, development rights and zoning decisions have become increasingly loaded in recent years.

Tourism Usage

One of the prime strategies to attract investment to rural areas has been tourism, one of the fastest growing industries in recent decades. Tourism has attempted to sell the uniqueness of the Irish countryside by creating and selling a product, a product based around an often, rural image (See Breathnach, 1994; Gilbert, 1992).

The decline of agriculture in rural areas is in sharp contrast to the growth of tourism. Tourism is now the world's largest industry, which is not only increasing in size but also in diversity. Market forces and private enterprise combined with

increased leisure time and economic affluence have driven the rate of tourism development. Tourism is increasingly being seen as a tool that has considerable potential for economic regeneration and one of the main reasons why an interest in tourism in rural areas has developed (Lane, 1994). Demand for the rural tourism product is extremely high especially in core tourism areas in Ireland. This demand has provided the government with an avenue to pursue rural economic development, resulting in high investment levels from state and E.U. funded agencies and projects such as Leader. "Rural tourism has been actively pursued in Ireland due to increased interest from the E.U. in supporting rural initiatives with specific funding" (Gilbert, 1992, p.568).

The development of holiday villages has proved quite popular particularly with the granting of tax breaks by the government. Government agencies and E.U. funding have allowed the Irish tourism product to grow, diversify and broaden its horizons, while also providing tax breaks for those wishing to invest in some areas (eg. The Pilot Resort Scheme, 1995). While in some cases such development must be welcomed, it is having several impacts upon local housing. Problems are beginning to arise as areas become more popular as tourist destinations, problems not just relating to issues about specific holiday resort schemes. Issues of accessibility and affordability are beginning to surface in relation to the wider impacts of holiday homes and property speculation and investment (See Finnerty et al, 2003, p.136-137).

Spheres of Overlap (See Fig. 2.1)

Swyngedouw (1989) argues that as spatial barriers diminish in importance we become more aware of the importance of place. As these spatial barriers diminish, demand is growing to experience the uniqueness of places and the distinctive attributes which they may offer. These attributes however may differ depending on internal perspectives versus external experiences.

The economic benefits to rural areas provided by tourism have helped to sustain rural livelihoods but some commentators question the long-term benefits (Lane, 1994). In relative terms the benefits of tourism are mostly for a select few directly employed in the sector that have businesses which will benefit from visitor

numbers, or those who actively invest in tourism development. Seasonality and casual employment remain problematic factors.

Direct competition for housing is one result of residential and tourism land use competition. In recent years the level of second homeownership in Ireland has increased significantly, due mainly to increased affluence and investment opportunities or as a means to avoid taxation. For example, Kilkee, Co. Clare, a coastal town, increased its housing stock by 132.77% from 1992-1998. Of the total 643 houses built, only 38 were built for permanent residents. In the town only 34.25% of the housing is occupied all year round (Mc Donagh, S., 2001, p.30).

Some local authorities such as Co.Clare have halted the development of new homes by individuals who are not from the county. This has also occurred in Galway where 'protective' policies have been put in place in areas such as Connemara. This has been carried out through various policies that are designed to serve a multi purpose. These include attempts to halt the development of individual holiday homes, to protect local interests with regard to building a house and to protect cultural aspects such as language. No policy exists to preserve existing housing stock, allowing for competition between local residential and tourism interests. As yet there is no specific policy in relation to the impacts that holiday homes and second home ownership are having in County Mayo (See Chapter 3: Policy Review). The scenic impact of housing is now coming to the fore in policy and legislation. Legislative policy seeks to protect natural landscapes, and does not focus upon other impacts of such developments such as impacts upon local prices, access and competition. This is supported by Finnerty, et al, 2000:

“the benefits of seaside renewal schemes and the phenomenon of second holiday homes in general could at best be described as cosmetic, resulting in short term buoyancy in local building activity, speculative gains for investors and developers and related service providers. At worst they run the risk of inflating local housing markets out of reach of communities, overloading infrastructure, and bifurcating such areas into self-contained communities of affluent peak season visitors and increasingly marginalized permanent residents” (p.137).

Housing provides new investment opportunities for individual and private developers. Second home ownership also provides an opportunity for many individuals to rent out property. One of the findings of this research showed

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increasing levels of individuals renting out houses in larger towns while settling themselves in rural areas (13 % in one case study area, Breaghwy).

The style and type of housing in the rural typologies studied showed that there is an increase in high impact housing in some rural areas (high impact housing refers to houses which have a relatively high aesthetic impact). Due to increasing availability of rural space and the relative low cost of sites many large houses have been built.

“A side effect of our recent economic development has been the proliferation of novel architectural styles. Without respect for heritage or regional character, most of these are out of place in their surroundings, particularly in the countryside and their ever increasing presence is detracting from the quality of our rural environment” (Mayo Rural Housing Guidelines, 2003).

These larger houses in the countryside can command a relatively high price and push up the price for adjacent sites and housing. Exactly why the number of larger houses in the countryside is increasing, while generally family sizes are decreasing is unknown. It could be interpreted that the role and nature of housing has changed. Housing may now be used as a means to reflect individual tastes and affluence. Building larger houses in the countryside may also ensure a high sell-on value. The nature of housing types may affect the type of settlement, and exactly who can afford to live in a relatively affluent rural area. The nature and impact of this relatively new phenomenon of building large houses in the countryside is complex and in need of further research.

While there has been concern expressed over the possible aesthetic and environmental damage associated with increased levels of housing upon the natural landscape, the preservation of natural landscapes has been equated by some as an attempt to preserve the landscape for tourists. While this view may not be entirely accurate it none the less is having an impact upon local attitudes.

“It’s not that people like myself are anti-tourist; far from it, but what we do not want to see happening is the interests of tourists being put before ourselves” (quote (A) Mayo News, 2002).

2.3.2 The Changing Nature Of Housing In Rural Areas

Housing types within rural areas in Ireland have changed dramatically in the past century (Whelan, 1997). Not only has the style changed but so has the method of building. The building of houses is no longer a social and community activity; instead external forces and agencies control it. Settlement patterns have also changed, as have the location of buildings; conspicuous consumption is growing and criticisms have been made of the aesthetic appearance of numerous modern buildings.

Many modern buildings are in stark contrast to traditional styles. Traditionally the vernacular style was the most prevalent form of housing within rural areas and schemes such as the rural re-housing scheme of the nineteen-thirties took advantage of vernacular styles and built along the same design.

The late sixties saw the introduction of the bungalow as a popular style of building; “this ‘bungalowisation’ is the single biggest change in the Irish landscape in the recent past” (Whelan, 1997, p.102). The bungalow is one of the most controversial elements of the built rural environment. It has been criticized in several quarters and its spread as a form of housing has been compared to a blight upon the landscape. “Bungalow Blitz, as the sub urbanisation of the countryside has been termed...continues to consume and transform the landscape” (Mc Donald, 2002, p.3) Bungalows however provided a cheap alternative as a housing type and so were easily accepted by many building within rural areas. Bungalows could be seen as the result of “...the absence of effective long-term planning control in a situation where short term economic targets assumed overwhelming precedence” (Whelan, 1997, p.102). Whelan also cites a number of related reasons why the Bungalow became so popular in rural areas:

“the fact that the Irish housing stock had been largely stagnant since the 1840’s and was completely modernised in the decades from 1960, when architectural respect for traditional buildings was at a low ebb, the assertion of new city led usages for the countryside, the ability of the car to divorce workplace and living place and the consequent fundamental change in the occupational profile of rural dwellers, the permeability of the planning process to political manipulation all these fed the bungalow phenomenon ” (Ibid, p.102).

Relative affluence in the 1960's and the availability of design books, led to the emulation of international styles and individual preferences that were incorporated into rural housing; "many (bungalows) have been designed and built by the occupants but repetition of basic forms reflects the influence of widely used design manuals" (Aalen, 1997, p.164). The wide variety of designs available and the nature of several designs are not in harmony with traditional building. The bungalow has had a direct impact upon rural housing styles and it is also responsible for the evolution of later designs. The broad nature of bungalow styles has led to a much broader interpretation being taken by planners /designers with regard to the incorporation of new houses into the 'style' of a particular area. "There have been many changes in their (bungalows) dominant style; some bungalows are unassuming and do not contrast sharply with traditional house types, but in most the style, building materials and techniques, siting, landscaping and orientation show little regard for local traditions or sensitive integration into the rural setting" (Aalen, 1997, p.164). As a result of this the style and nature of housing within rural Ireland has changed and evolved dramatically over the past twenty years. In the more recent past house styles have again changed and many have become much larger and have drawn influence from different styles. "Two storied houses became increasingly popular in the 1980s, initially mock-Georgian in style but followed by eclectic post modernism. These latest forms may challenge and replace the bungalow but future fashion is unpredictable" (Aalen, 1997, p.164).

(There has been a continued emulation of styles from abroad 'this is highlighted within the housing type field study, see Appendix A).

"It is not the intention of these guidelines to set down detailed lists of do's and don'ts applicable to every situation; each project is unique, and the design should therefore be developed as a particular response to the special characteristics of each site brief" (Mayo Draft Housing Design Guidelines, 2003).

The volume of building in the countryside is having an impact on some areas. It could be argued that the nature of housing now not only serves its basic function, but also reflects the affluence, taste and style of the inhabitants or developers; "money has undoubtedly been a factor in the changing housing styles in many areas, people have money and they often want to show that by building a large house in a prominent position" (Planner, Mayo Co. Co., 2004).

A central debate now exists between environmental concerns of building in the countryside and social concerns over restrictive planning processes, yet many large ecologically and aesthetically damaging houses have been built. The notion of ecological sound designs is in its infancy in Ireland and it is not of central concern to developers whose primary concern is the maximisation of profits. There are many forms of design which have been used across Europe but which have not been incorporated here. "We must make, and remake our built environment so that to shelter, light, heat and cool ourselves does not destroy our planet" (Architects Council of Europe, 1995, p.1). There is no specific government policy with regard to sustainable building in the state. All that are provided are guidelines and house design is left to the individual.

The supply of housing in Ireland has reached a critical state; it is the pressure of meeting supply that has fuelled many of the problems associated with housing. The long-term effects of mixed housing supply remains to be charted in Ireland; there are a number of possible negative effects as well as positive. It is important to acknowledge that the need for social housing is at its highest level since the foundation of the state, not only in urban areas but also in many rural ones. The provision of social and affordable housing in remote rural areas remains poor and there are also many privately owned, poor quality houses in the hands of people living below the poverty line. The emergence of Part V of The Planning and Development Act 2000 (See chapter 3 on policy review) as an instrument of housing policy has clear implications for the existing arrangements and supports for the provision of social housing. In essence, intervention through the local authority housing programme will remain the primary vehicle for the delivery of social housing. Such a vehicle and the mixed-manner targeting of social and affordable housing raises some interesting questions in relation to the long-term sustainability of several rural communities.

2.3.2 'One-Off' Housing

“Over the past several decades development in the countryside -largely in the form of new single houses –has accelerated, while rural towns and villages have experienced population decline” (Mayo Housing Design Guidelines, 2003, p.2).

This issue is now central to future planning in rural areas while nationally organisations such as An Taisce have raised objections and concerns over the environmental effects of one-off housing. Groups such as The Rural Dwellers Association have contested that one-off housing is needed in order for communities to survive, and that it is a traditional form of settlement. Prominent archaeologist Dr. Seamus Caulfield (2003) supports this argument. It has been concluded (McGrath, 1998) that, in respect of travel related impacts, the pattern of dispersed rural growth in Ireland is relatively unsustainable and that the Irish planning system is unable to respond to this consideration. The planning process is coming under increasing pressure from environmental and local concerns, whose views are seen by some to be conflicting.

Despite increased building and in-migration to some areas many rural areas are however still in population decline. For example, in Mayo, of the fifteen electoral districts in the Belmullet region, only one showed a population increase (of 1.7%); some areas experienced a decline of up to 17% (CSO 2002).

There is undoubtedly a conflict here between the social and environmental impacts of housing policy. As mentioned already, this conflict is highlighted in the ongoing debate between An Taisce, Dúchas, environmentalists, views expressed by the Minister for Agriculture, Gaeltacht and Rural Affairs, Mr. Eamon O’Cuiv (2002), Dr. Seamus Caulfield and newly formed groups such as the Mayo RDA (Rural Dwellers Association). The environmentalist argument focuses on the physical, ecological and aesthetic damage that one-off housing can have. The counter argument against strict regulations is that it will damage the social fabric of rural areas and threaten traditional settlement within the Irish countryside.

“The term village has a wider meaning in Ireland than it does in Britain and in this country it includes the straidbhaile (street village), the clachan or nucleated village and the baile fearann (dispersed village)” (Caulfield, *The Western People*, April 2002).

(The debate on one-off housing, has led to some strong and colourful viewpoints being expressed, some more colourful than others, see Appendix G).

While undoubtedly a housing crisis exists in Ireland, the provision of single house developments is seen by some commentators as detrimental (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002). It is seen as unsustainable, and costly to the state because extra infrastructure costs are not included in the cost to the purchaser/developer. Relative to cluster development, the costs per unit of accommodation provided to improve the roads, supply and maintain water, sewage disposal and electricity, are high. There are no rates payable on domestic dwellings, so these extra costs are passed on to the general taxpayer, damaging the overall economy. (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002). As can be seen in Co. Mayo (and elsewhere) extra pressure can be put on ground water supplies. Most one-off houses use septic tanks to dispose of waste. These require good location, design, construction and regular maintenance and if any of these are not provided, there is a serious risk of contamination. This in turn, undermines national environmental policy, which in turn can lead to EU action in the courts (Clinch, Convery and Walsh 2002). Mayo's fishing waters in particular have been threatened by increased housing development. However a lack of transparency is also evident, as many feel that they are refused planning permission despite their best attempts to rectify the problem: "I told them I would do whatever they wanted. If there was a problem with percolation I would get a system from Puraflo or Bord Na Mona (6000 euros) and that would sort it out. Bord Na Mona guarantees that the water that comes at the end of their system will not pollute anything. But the council just wasn't interested, they said it wasn't good enough and that's something I couldn't understand. If it's good enough for Bord Na Mona then why isn't it good enough for Mayo Co. Co?" (Quote (B), Mayo News 2002)

The social benefits which new housing may bring are not transparent, and can be called into question under the planning process. Resentment has grown at local level and will prove increasingly difficult to break down and this could well impact on community structures. The ability of the community to achieve local community development could be adversely affected:

“Let no one tell me that a few ordinary domestic houses are going to cause more pollution than a gas terminal.” (Resident from Bellmullet where the building of a gas terminal is proposed. Quote (C), Mayo News 2002)

There are however, also landscape and tourism implications. Much one-off housing is of a scale and style that is judged by many not to be in harmony with the landscape in which it sits. This damage to the quality and character of landscape is difficult, but not impossible to quantify. The costs of such damage are not borne by the householder. Rather, they are borne by those residents in the community and visitors from elsewhere in Ireland and overseas for whom the development represents a visual loss. There is growing concern in local areas about the obtrusive nature of buildings. If compromise can be made between good design and site location the visual impact will be lessened. However a consensus (whether true or not) exists that locals seem not to have the same appreciation of the local natural environment as those who are from an educated (usually outside /external) background:

“People down here appreciate the environment and the scenic views more than anyone. The people of Erris looked after the land long before there were any environmental groups to tell us what we should or shouldn’t be doing. I don’t want to pollute my land, I want to be able to hand on this farm to my son when his time comes” (Quote (D), Mayo News, 2002).

‘Those whose families have lived here for centuries –and have always protected the environment –are being penalised. It seems that scenic views are more important than people” (Quote (E), Mayo News, 2002).

Besides environmental impacts, the economic and social cost of one-off housing needs to be called into question. According to Mulvihill (1984), capital and ongoing costs of dispersed rural housing to householders, local authorities and other statutory undertakers are about four times more expensive to build and service (excludes site cost), than a comparable home in a compact rural settlement. These comparisons have been criticised (Jennings and Bisset, 1989) because they do not take account of significant social and economic benefits, which can be associated with contemporary rural housing trends in Ireland. Within this research the existing Irish conclusions must be examined and contrasted with the case study and with national rural trends. Numerous rural areas with dispersed settlement patterns and ageing populations are facing some possibly significant social impacts:

“Within rural areas there is increasingly extra pressure on social services. It is at the heart of policy towards older people that they are encouraged and facilitated to stay at home as long as possible, to avoid institutionalisation in nursing homes and hospitals, until this is necessitated by their medical condition. Ideally this is facilitated by ready access to shops, social interaction, visits by home help and other services. All of this becomes much more difficult and expensive if such people are living alone in isolated houses, where even ‘meals on wheels’ becomes a logistical challenge. There is an embryonic move to link older people living alone electronically so that they can avail of the Internet and e-mail. One off living also makes servicing this digitalisation more expensive and logistically complex. At the other end of the demographic spectrum, the needs of children for schooling and social interaction can be made more difficult”. (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002, p.107)

Increasing rural employment opportunities is one option for maintaining rural community networks, thus reducing the isolation of the elderly. One-off housing further exacerbates transport and mobility issues, already problematic in the countryside. Mayo is a large county geographically; therefore transport problems may well worsen in the future if rural housing trends continue.

2.3 Sustainable Development

The literature presented here is broad and far-reaching. Its key premises relate to future resource availability. In this work, sustainability literature helps to inform about housing, not only as a physical resource with associated environmental impacts, but also as community, since full time populations are needed to reside in a vibrant, viable countryside.

Sustainable development and sustainability are concepts that are becoming increasingly popular in policy frameworks. Exact definitions remain elusive and are difficult to fully conceptualise. This research will attempt to draw deductions about the implications for sustainable development, based on rural housing issues in one area.

2.3.1 Definitions of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a phrase first coined by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. Fifteen years later the Bruntland Commission defined it as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Woodhouse (1992) states that interpretations of sustainable development diverge greatly but three main perspectives can be put forward.

- *Neo Liberal view:* Within this vista, the environment is seen as ‘natural capital’. Services derived from air, water, soil, biological diversity and recreation (the countryside etc.) depend on maintaining those environmental assets intact, or renewing them. If this is not done those services will sooner or later decline. In these terms, if a forest can be used for various purposes without reducing its long-term value with regard to those uses, this can be regarded as sustainable development. Similarly, discharges of waste are considered sustainable if they are within the capacity of natural systems to transform them into harmless forms. Woodhouse also advises that if values can be assigned to natural capital then sustainable development can be secured by classical economics criteria, valuing the income from a particular course of development against any depletion of environmental capital.
- *Populist view:* the populist definition of sustainable development may be identified in this declaration made at the ‘Inter-Regional Consultation on People’s participation in Environmentally Sustainable Development’ held in Manila in 1989. “The concept of sustainability is best understood in terms of the sustainability or non sustainability of a community. Authentic development enhances the sustainability of the community. It must be understood as a process of economic, political and social change that need not necessarily involve growth. Sustainable human communities can be achieved only through a people centred development” (Cited in Woodhouse, 1992, p.113). This view of sustainable livelihoods for the poorest groups within communities is supported by Chambers (1988). This view which may seem

simplistic at first is indeed a much more complex scenario. A step back from modern commercialism is advocated, local goods for local people. This view does not rest well with urban and industrial development and the national governments with which these are associated (Woodhouse, 1992).

- *Interventionist View*: This view emphasises international co-operation. Growing global concern in 1992 prompted the Earth Summit in Rio. The Brundtland Commission (1987), which envisaged global environmental treaties being enforced by international agencies, had earlier sought this. The Earth Summit in Rio brought together over one hundred and fifty heads of state to try and formulate a global policy, an almost impossible task considering the diverseness of nations and their individual problems. Local Agenda 21 spawned from this, which went on to be adopted by 108 heads of state including Ireland and the rest of the E.U. Agenda 21 (discussed in more detail in the policy review chapter) is in its most simple form, a global interventionist initiative administered by governments to bring about sustainable development. Subsequent global forums for sustainable development (Kyoto, Johannesburg) have met with varied degrees of success.

2.3.2 Evaluating Sustainable Development

Debates about implementing sustainable development, sustainability or even sustainable futures and resource use are now engaging most intergovernmental and national bureaucracies. The notion itself appears to have replaced or become confused with efforts specifically directed at environmental protection.

Boehemer-Christiansen (2002) suggests that somebody needs to translate sustainability into actions that are justified by legitimate instruments. Christiansen argues that through sustainability governments have found a new tool for governing, one that strengthens bureaucracy. Her notion is that the vagueness of the term has empowered bureaucracies to enlarge or reaffirm old roles, as in planning and economic regulation, and encouraged them to invite broader participation in the process of governing. It has been argued that as long as the political purpose of sustainability remains poorly defined by academics, actual policy makers may use the

notion to expand turfs and influence (Boehemer-Christiansen, 2002). There is a continuing struggle among academics and politicians as to how best define and implement sustainable development: "Debates about the meaning of sustainability and its relationship to other ideas and agendas, such as globalisation, ecological modernisation and industrial transformations continue" (Gibbs, 2000, p.11).

The lack of consensus in definition and the absence of a common conceptual framework have arisen because so many diverse interests have adopted the term in the belief, or hope that, it legitimises their own values and causes (Cocklin, 1995). Despite widespread progress in the notion of sustainability, little progress has been made towards an understanding of its social dimensions. The concept of sustainable rural communities is now part of popular policy and academic discourses, where the needs of rural communities are usually equated with those of farm families (Scott, Park and Cocklin, 2000). What sustainability really means for rural communities is not at all clear. On the one hand it might imply status, it might also suggest an ability to respond positively to change. Recent commentators have pointed to a tendency in academic discourse and policy prescriptions to treat rural communities as homogenous in nature, ignoring the diversity in ethnicity, class, and occupational status, which are evident in many rural areas (Cloke and Little, 1997). This makes an evaluation of sustainable development difficult.

Little or no attention has been paid to ideas of social and cultural sustainability and groups that have been in a locality for generations may be under threat, as too may language as it is in some Irish speaking areas. Immigration, changing settlement patterns and urban-rural shifts all challenge the sustainability of traditional rural social and cultural norms.

It has been suggested by Scott, et al (2001), that the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' are not synonymous. They argue that references to sustainable development are often underpinned by presumptions about the need to maintain economic growth trajectories of a kind prescribed by conventional capitalist's economics. The Bruntland Commission (1987) explicitly assumed that intergenerational equity and the alleviation of the dire circumstances of the world's poor can only be achieved through the spread of industrialisation and the wider adaptation of the Western economic growth model. Thus the path to sustainable development that is laid in that report is predicted on an expressed faith in capitalist. As rural change increases, the legacy and tradition of particular family names

economics. This view compared to that of the World Health Organisations (1997) where ideally economic growth and development help create a better physical environment especially by improving physical community infrastructure. Frequently this is not the case because entrenched social and political inequalities prevent the redistribution of wealth to those who need it the most.

Sustainable Development is a relatively modern notion; it has been advocated due to the increased 'footprints' of mankind upon the earth. The idea of sustainable development has now begun to filter downward and it is considered that in order to achieve global sustainable development it must first be achieved locally (think global act local). With regard to rural change in Ireland, sustainable development is now popular in policy discourse and agricultural practices are encouraged to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly. While the notion is difficult to fully encapsulate we are all encouraged to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

From economical sustainability, social sustainability should emerge and occur; this is one of the goals of the National Spatial Strategy. How this is to be achieved is questionable (See chapter 3 Policy Review). Sustainable behaviour and attitudes towards environmental issues and regulations need to be charted and this study examines some of these issues. Already the economic costs of one-off housing in the countryside have been argued to be negative (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002), but the costs resulting from the behaviour of individual rural inhabitants with regard to their impacts on the environment also need to be calculated. Woodhouse (1992) states that "...discharges of waste are considered sustainable if they are within the capacity of natural systems to transform them into harmless forms" (p.112). The extent to and ways in which this is being achieved and its effectiveness with regard to rural housing needs to be explored from a strictly scientific and ecological perspective in order evaluate fully the impact of rural housing on sustainability. Levels of recycling and environmentally responsible behaviour also need to be charted. A specific study is needed in relation to these matters in rural Ireland. Without such information a full understanding of the impact of rural housing and rural inhabitants on their local and global worlds will not be complete.

2.4 Rural Housing and Sustainable Community Development: Linking the Literature

Each of the discourses surrounding 'rurality', 'housing', 'demographic change', 'sustainability' and 'community development' is full and well developed. This research ambitiously attempts to draw some general relationships between these factors in a practical case study. An understanding of the literature on rurality is necessary to acknowledge differential geographic experiences of the countryside. The notion of the rural 'idyll' and whether such a phenomenon exists within an Irish context is open to debate (Mc Donagh 2002). However while aspects of culture and 'local' links to certain areas cannot be dismissed, the notion that in some cases the Irish countryside is becoming increasingly popular as an area to pursue the 'idyll' also has merit, particularly in rapidly changing trans-national socio-economic circumstances. Both elements of this topic must be explored in relation to future rural housing policy in order to fully inform the debate. The question must be asked whether notions of culture and particular links to some areas are being exploited for the benefit of a small few. When examined in the context of the changing countryside where land use issues and environmental protection are coming to the fore, the long term impacts of some individuals using the current situation to their advantage may be significant in some areas. The history and culture in many rural areas have created a situation where a great many feel they have a stake in the countryside, be they local or wishing to return to the countryside to live.

While there is a need to debate the above there is also an urgent need to discuss the housing question in relation to local access and the impending effects of wider economic, social and environmental processes. The countryside is being transformed from an area of production to one that is increasingly being consumed (particularly in relation to tourism and housing). The literature has outlined the processes of change and the possible impacts upon the countryside. While the countryside is being increasingly consumed new environmental protectionist rhetoric is now coming to the fore and impacting upon more traditional forms of settlement.

Sustainability literature informs about resource usage at many different global levels and in many sectors. Here, environmental well-being is crucial for local citizens and for the economic viability of tourism revenue. Furthermore, the sustainability

literature refers to social and cultural sustainability: usual ways of life, usual housing styles and settlement patterns, as well as basic demographic viability are all interlinked in this research. The literature however is rather more disparate.

Chapter 3: Policy Review

3.1 Introduction

Given the broad nature of this research topic, an overview of a variety of relevant policies will be provided. An agricultural context is necessary to correctly 'position' rural policies, but issues concerning spatial strategies, social inclusion and sustainable development all contribute to a valid debate on rural housing. This section examines a wide range of policy: policies in relation to rural development (White Paper) are included as is an evaluation of the National Spatial Strategy. Both have central components in relation to housing and the preservation of rural communities. Due to the extent of poverty and deprivation in many rural areas strategies in relation to poverty and social inclusion must be evaluated, particularly in relation to current and future housing provision for low-income households. Current and future housing provision strategies are evaluated here as is the new consultation draft for rural housing launched in 2004.

The review concludes with an assessment of policies and strategies in relation to sustainability and sustainable development in the rural environment.

3.2 The Rural White Paper

In 1999 the government published 'Ensuring The Future -A Strategy For Rural Development in Ireland' -also known as The White Paper. This paper through its policy formulates a so-called, "coherent strategy for rural development (that) identifies the policy responses at national, regional and local levels which will most effectively address the issues of economic and social underdevelopment in rural areas" (Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999, p.1)

The White Paper is committed to “ensuring the economic and social well being of rural communities” (Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999, p.1). The agenda for rural development policy is defined within the White paper as,

“all policies, which are directed towards improving the physical, economic and social conditions of people living in the open countryside, in coastal towns, towns and villages and in smaller urban centres outside of the five major urban areas”. (Ibid. p.vi)

The White Paper contains broad, wide-ranging policies, which seek to facilitate balanced and sustainable regional development and also to engage in the eradication of rural poverty and social exclusion. The implementation of the White Paper is supported by money from the National Development Plan, 2000-2006. The government has proposed ‘rural proofing’ of proposed national policies to evaluate their possible influence on rural communities; this represents a central element of the current approach of the Irish Government to bringing about rural development. The Department of Agriculture and Food (2000) now has ‘Rural Development’ in its title and therefore must implement rural development policy. This for some, highlights the inextricable link government policy has with regard to agriculture and rural development (Mc Donagh, 2000, p.93).

The White Paper clearly spells out its priorities in attempting to identify and implement strategies, which will enhance employment opportunities in rural areas and compensate for agricultural decline and related employment decline. It also seeks to counter migration and depopulation and meet the needs for public service delivery in terms of access to the range of services that are required to sustain rural communities.

Main Themes Arising From Rural Policy:

- Maintenance of rural community
- Protection of the environment
- Balancing competing needs
- Diversification of economic and social activity
- Sustaining quality and amenity of rural landscape

“Despite the paper’s noteworthy strategies, it lacks concerted proposals, which make it lightweight in terms of likely impact on rural areas” (Mc Donagh, 2000).

Through the White Paper the government says it is determined to put into action “a

comprehensive, coherent and sustainable strategy to provide the conditions and environment in which rural communities can prosper” (Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999, p.19). They must however be criticised for being unspecific and promoting rhetoric rather than precise courses of actions or plans. The usage of language and objectives of the White Paper are to be applauded but exactly how the government envisage true working models remains vague. The White Paper seeks to “ensure the economic and social well being of rural communities, (and) provide the conditions for a ‘meaningful’ and ‘fulfilling’ life for all people in rural areas” (p.19). The words ‘meaningful’ and ‘fulfilling’ are extremely difficult to quantify and as such provide little in the way of action or response. The White Paper is striving to achieve a rural Ireland, in which there will be, “vibrant and sustainable communities, sufficient employment and income to allow individuals and families to live with dignity, a respect for the rural environment and the cultural identity of rural communities will be valued and retained” (p.19).

The fundamental question for the White Paper is how will it work? It was founded on some basic principles that include an inclusive approach to sustainable development, an integrated multi-dimensional approach to policies for economic and social development and co-ordination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to rural development. The principles also advocate a perception of rural development, which takes account of regional and local variations and the establishment of participative institutional arrangements at local, regional and national levels to guide policy formation and implementation.

Mc Donagh (2000) describes the White paper as an aspirational strategy but one with several obvious conflicts. He cites as an example, the friction between the differing government policies of ‘rural proofing’ and ‘eco-auditing’. The White Paper hopes to promote industry in rural areas, which will automatically be at loggerheads with environmental protection. Friction already exists around policies of agricultural intensification and its impacts on the environment. A possible conflict central to this thesis relates to housing. The White Paper aims to achieve a balanced rural population stating that planning policy should, as far as possible, facilitate people willing to settle in rural areas, especially those wishing to remain in their areas of origin. The White Paper wishes to respect the aspirations of rural communities but makes the point that planning policy must be sensitive to the conservation of the rural environment, including the preservation of natural beauty spots and natural habitats.

With some rural areas facing increasing pressure on land resource uses, the question of environmental regulations and the impacts of those policies upon housing need to be examined. Housing is one of the key areas in the future of rural areas, yet is not given enough consideration within the document. It is left to local authorities to provide physical planning frameworks for their areas through the assistance of County Development Boards. It is hoped that by zoning land, they will be able to facilitate integrated land use objectives. This may cause some impending problems in relation to access and affordability of housing in areas that are not zoned. This may be particularly acute in areas of high urban-based pressure, peripheral areas, areas of high amenity consumption and areas that have been designated for environmental protection such as NHAS, etc.

Another conflict is in relation to rural transport. Transport is central to future strategies in relation to balanced economic and regional development. Whilst infrastructure developments (particularly roads) receive ample attention in The White Paper, there is little specific policy for rural public transport. This has serious implications for future housing strategies in the countryside. The vague aspects of many of the policies are again highlighted here with the suggestion that 'innovative approaches to transport provision in rural areas are required' (p.32). No specific solutions are offered however. Questions must be raised over the 'fuzziness' of such a strategy. Does it sit well with the fundamental principles of the National Spatial Strategy (2002)? This Paper's recommendation that "the distribution of a network of urban centres as an essential component of an effective rural development strategy" (p.27) must be questioned if there is no long term public transport provision to these 'hubs', particularly from the areas zoned for future growth. Current public transport provision has proved problematic in several rural areas (Cawley, 1999). Future provision in zoned areas may prove more cost effective, yet it is not included as part of the equation.

There are also some impending problems as populations begin to age. It is even recognised by The White Paper that "difficulties experienced by vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled are compounded by physical isolation"(p.51). The strategy states that the provision of transport is a major priority for those living in rural areas especially in the context of a tendency towards service concentration in larger areas (p.7).

Despite the paper's noteworthy strategies, it lacks concerted proposals that make it lightweight in terms of likely impact on rural areas (Mc Donagh, 2000). It has also been criticised within the Oireachteas, with deputy Connaughton describing it as "like most documents on the future of rural Ireland published down through the years, in that it is detailed but it contains many woolly conclusions" (Cited in Mc Donagh, 2002, p.99).

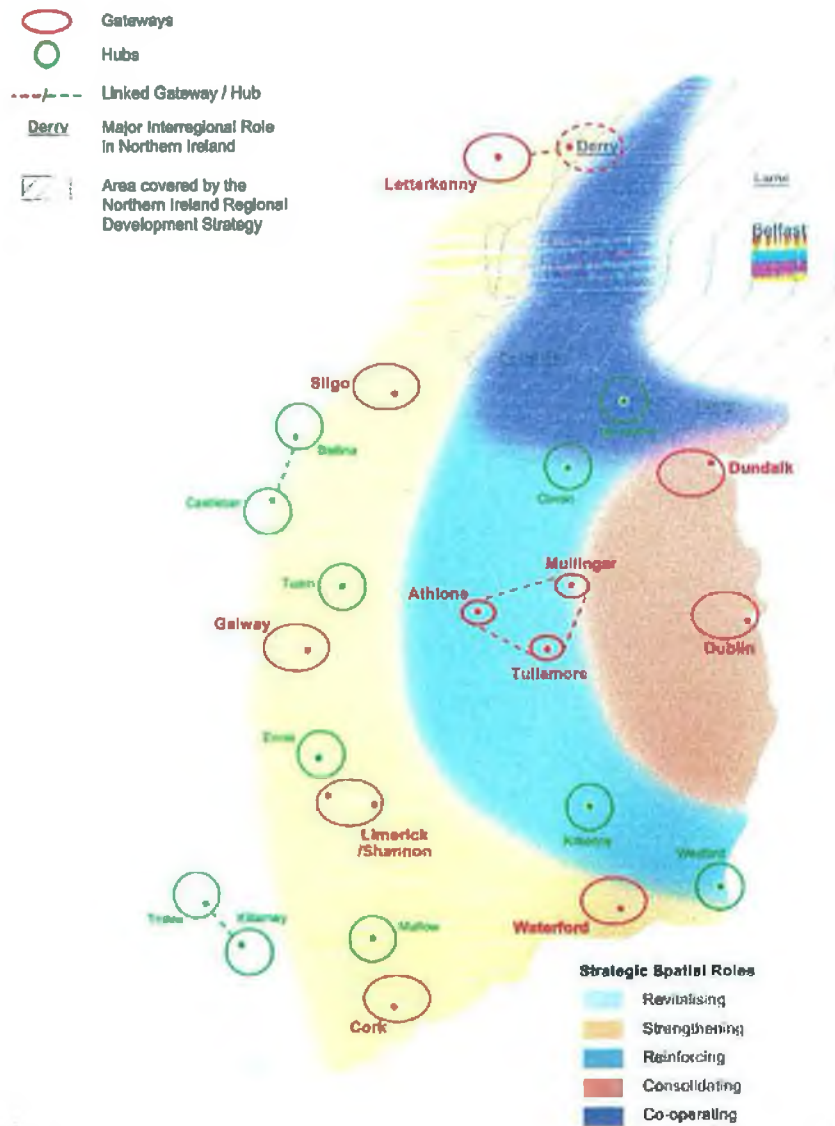
3.3 The National Spatial Strategy (NSS)

The NSS is a new and visionary framework designed to co-ordinate future development and planning in Ireland over the next 20 years, in a sustainable way. By bringing people, services and jobs closer together, it will open new opportunities for everyone (NSS, 2000).

Within the NSS there are a number of key strategies:

- A better spread of job opportunities
- Sustain Dublin's role as an engine of the economy
- Strengthen the drawing power of other areas
- Bring people, employment and services closer together
- Better quality of life
- Less congestion
- Less long distance commuting
- Increased access to health, education, leisure and other services.
- Better places to live
- Coherent national planning framework
- Taking care of our environment
- Making the most of cities, towns and rural areas.

(Map 1: National Spatial Strategy)



(Source NSS -People, Places & Potential, 2002)

The strategy outlines how a strengthened network of cities and towns together with rural communities and their resources will be mobilised and complemented by appropriate social and physical infrastructure, to create more balanced development across the country in a polycentric manner. Under the NSS, 'gateways' and 'hubs' of development are identified. Their role is to serve as economic centres in which to attract investment and stimulate the surrounding hinterlands. Within Mayo, Castlebar and Ballina (the two largest towns) have been identified as development hubs. Outside investment will be targeted within these areas and the local infrastructure

improved. It is hoped that this corridor can stimulate smaller towns, villages and rural areas within the county.

Map 2: National Spatial Strategy: Impacts on County Mayo



(Source NSS -People, Places & Potential, 2002)

With regard to settlement patterns the NSS identifies Ireland's growing population as a platform from which continued growth and economic activity can continue. It believes the population increase can be accommodated within existing

settlements, including cities, towns and villages. The NSS sets out to consolidate and develop existing cities towns and villages -keeping them as physically compact and public transport friendly as possible and minimising urban sprawl. It believes that urban land needs to be used more carefully, sensitively and efficiently.

Housing and the NSS

With regard to housing the NSS (2000) estimates that it will be necessary to provide some 500,000 additional dwellings to meet likely demand in the period up to 2010. Ireland's housing stock per thousand of population is the lowest in the EU at 327 units per thousand population (as compared to 435 in the UK and a European average of 450 per thousand) (NSS, 2000, p.102).

The NSS identifies the complexity of rural settlement and that different forms of rural settlement have evolved over time through the interaction of economic, social and environmental forces. Within the NSS rural settlement and housing framework four broad objectives have been laid out:

- 1) To sustain and renew rural communities and the existing stock of investment in a way that responds to the various spatial, structural and economic changes taking place, while protecting the important assets rural areas possess.
- 2) To strengthen the established structure of villages and smaller settlements both to assist local economies and to accommodate additional population in a way that supports the viability of public transport and local infrastructure and services such as schools and water services.
- 3) To ensure that key assets in rural areas such as water quality, the natural and cultural heritage and the quality of the landscape are protected to support quality of life and economic vitality.
- 4) To ensure that rural settlement policies take account of and are appropriate to local circumstances. (p.105)

The NSS recognises that different circumstances arise in the demand for rural housing, and that there is now demand for rural and urban generated housing in rural areas. The NSS also recognises that some people may have roots in these areas and that others may have no connection with the land but seek a rural lifestyle. The NSS

states that this increased demand for rural housing is due to increasing affluence, car ownership, improved building technology, personal mobility and urban house prices.

The NSS does not deal with any specific decision on rural housing provision; this responsibility is placed on local authorities and county development boards. Local authorities must put in place policies which deal with specific characteristics of rural housing in each area concerned, policies with regard to housing, economy and the environment must take into account the specific characteristics of different rural areas.

These areas are identified as

- Areas which are under strong urban influences
- Areas with a traditionally strong agricultural base
- Structurally weak areas
- Areas where there are distinctive settlement patterns

(p.106)

The NSS lays out a strategic framework for local and county development plans and seeks the strengthening of settlement patterns in a way which better distributes economic growth and its benefits between and within regions and which creates resurgences in rural areas and smaller urban centres (NSS, 2002). With regard to housing in rural areas under strong urban influence, the strategy advocates that county development plans must include measures to improve the attractiveness of towns and villages, with a view to promoting improved housing supply, affordability and design quality in those towns and villages. The strategy advocates the zoning of land in which development should take place (NSS, p.107). Within structurally weak areas the strategy states that, “any demand for permanent residential development in these areas should be accommodated as it arises, subject to good practice in matters such as design, location and protection of landscape and environmentally sensitive areas” (NSS, p.108).

The strategy believes that that strengthening structurally weak areas requires the strengthening of the structure of villages and towns within these areas and that this will provide a long-term solution. The distinctiveness of certain settlement patterns such as clusters is recognised by the strategy, particularly with regard to coastal areas. It believes that existing clusters can be strengthened through appropriately scaled ‘in fill’ development while avoiding linear or ribbon development.

The strategy further believes that processes of rural development and regeneration can be supported through the provision of services and encouraging investment in tourism supports, such as “restaurant facilities and visitor accommodation, that harness in a sustainable way the potential of important local resources, such as the natural and cultural heritage, attractive landscapes and inland waterways”(p.108).

With regard to second homes and holiday home development, the strategy believes that “well located and appropriately scaled second home and holiday home development can act as a revitalising force in economic terms, particularly in those areas that are structurally weak”(p.109).

In addressing concerns over the long-term sustainability and the effects on affordability for long-term residents the strategy believes that “development plans need to seek a balance between supporting a well-diversified rural economy and the protection of environmental assets that attract visitors to that area” (NSS, p.109). Measures that also need to be considered include,

- Integrated framework plans for rural development which identify locations for appropriate and sustainable development opportunities
- Supporting affordability for rural dwellers in the context of housing strategies under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000
- Integrated village and town plans that identify reasonable development needs for permanent as well as second homes or holiday homes, in balance with each other
- Careful consideration of development proposals in environmentally or visually vulnerable areas, including areas of cultural heritage, landscape and local amenity value

The NSS advocates second and holiday homes in order to stimulate economic activity. While it acknowledges some of the problems associated with them, it does not deal with these problems. The issues of local affordability are fudged; the primary concern is over possible environmental or aesthetic impact. Little consideration is given to the wider impacts that such development may have on existing property value.

The Irish spatial strategy is guided by the notion that the higher the input into infrastructure, the higher the economic growth and the greater the reduction of isolation and peripherality. The 'benefits' of this reduction in peripherality remain to be seen, in this changing Irish context.

Mc Donagh (2000) argues that the tardy arrival of the NSS, after the NDP, combined with the nature of its programme of spending, smacks once again of the 'spectacle' of development, "the NSS can be viewed as purely optical development complying with directives without necessarily believing in their need" (Mc Donagh, 2000, p.106-107).

Within Mayo the two chosen 'hubs' of Castlebar and Ballina are towns that have grown at an accelerated rate independently and prior to the NSS. They were chosen because, "...they are strategically located in the West. They contain complementary functions and capabilities that point towards a capacity to develop and energise wider areas through integrated and co-ordinated development. Castlebar has important healthcare, education, retailing and administrative functions, while Ballina has important employment and tourism functions and a substantial capacity for development" (NSS, p.150).

It is interesting to note however that since its inception there has been no significant new employment created (Castlebar has actually lost jobs). Questions must be raised on the success to date of the strategy. While the rationale for the chosen 'hubs' in Mayo has valid points some questions still remain. Were they chosen to fit the NSS (as they were growing independently)? What role did politics play? Why were other towns that have not developed to any great extent over the past decade not chosen? Would this not be more balanced and stimulate a greater overall hinterland within the county? These questions may never be answered. Perhaps it could be suggested that the NSS suggests a predestined path or a lack of real dedication by the government toward their apparent aspiration for balanced regional development.

There is a need for a much deeper understanding of the dynamics between the rural and urban if the NSS is to succeed. While it is hoped gateways will stimulate the surrounding hinterlands the question must be asked exactly how they will be stimulated. Will the stimuli of the larger town attract younger people from the countryside to work and live there? What length will this migration be, will people wish to return home to rural surroundings when they have a family, or retire? The different types of rural areas will be affected in various ways; within more marginal

and remote areas it is very possible that migration to larger towns may replace emigration as the main cause of population decline. Could a more affluent, mobile urban settler in rural areas fill the vacuum? This is a trend that has occurred in Britain and elsewhere and has proved to have far reaching consequences (Cloke, 1995; Fielding, 1998; Allen and Mooney, 1998; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Ilbery, 1998; Phillips, 1993).

The provision of social and affordable housing in rural areas has been slow at best. With increases in property value there may be increases in those wishing to avail of social and affordable housing in some areas. Part V of the Planning and Development Act favours zoning of land in specific areas that may have wider implications for remote rural areas. If areas are located outside development zones, access to the housing market may become more exclusive and socially selective. The NSS has not provided any strategy to deal with such a situation. There are many possible implications here for sustainability and this work will focus on some of those aspects.

In order to assess the impacts of the NSS it must be examined in relation to the levels and extent of poverty and existing policies that are attempting to combat poverty and social exclusion in many areas of rural Ireland.

3.4 Policies On Poverty and Social Exclusion

Poverty has been an ever-present aspect of life for many living in rural Ireland. It is important to examine strategies that exist to lessen its impacts upon rural society. One significant issue, which has been raised in recent years, is access and affordability to housing, particularly in an increasingly consumed rural landscape.

Issues Of Affordability

The National Anti Poverty Strategy (1997) '*Sharing in Progress*' was established in order to deal with growing levels of poverty among certain sectors in society; groups such as the elderly, small farm holders and the long term unemployed were considered to be among the least affluent in contemporary Irish society with many living well below the poverty line. The National Anti Poverty Strategy (1997) defines

poverty thus: “people are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society”

An adequate account of the extent and distribution of deprivation and disadvantage in Ireland and particularly in rural Ireland is frustrated by two main problems of defining poverty and locating the poor (Jackson and Hasse, 1996). There are also some impending issues in relation to curtailment and access to services in rural areas and the contribution which this has had in compounding impacts of poverty; particularly in relation to the elderly, low income households, and women with young children (Cawley, 1999).

The majority of the literature produced on the subject in the past 30 years has taken a number of factors associated with poverty as the key indicators of disadvantage, and used them to try and solve the distribution problem. Examples of such indicators include; the unemployment rate, social class, educational achievement, and the availability of certain household items and lack thereof. It is generally conceded that, depending on the choice of relative poverty line, some 29 % to 39 % of the Irish population are in some sense economically poor. It has also been shown that the majority of these –almost two thirds -live in rural rather than urban areas (Jackson and Hasse, 1996). The proportion of households below the poverty line is largest in small towns and villages and smallest in Dublin (Nolan, Whelan and Williams, 1994). Figures from the CSO (2001) show that Mayo has an average disposable income of 13,486 euros, which is 84.5% of the national average. The difference between Mayo and Dublin is stark with an average disposable income in Dublin of 18,620 euros (CSO, 2001). While these figures do not represent accurately those at the very bottom of the scale it does show us that even at the top end of the scale, those outside Dublin are less well off. The most vulnerable are

- Low income farm households
- Households where the head is long term unemployed
- Households composed of elderly persons

In the Government Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (Department of the Taoiseach, 2000) there is an acknowledgement that poverty and social exclusion are still a stark reality for many living in Ireland. A specific commitment and objective of the programme is to reduce poverty and social exclusion, to build an inclusive society and to reduce marginalisation and strengthen recognition of citizenship obligations (Dept. of the Taoiseach, 2000, p.78). This commitment extends also to rural poverty, which is to be tackled in a comprehensive and sustained manner: “Tendencies in the past associated poverty with urban areas where disadvantage and associated social problems were concentrated in specific areas. In contrast rural poverty was more dispersed and less visible, often regarded as less harsh as if the ‘rural idyll’ in some way compensated or softened the problem” (Frawley and Hickey, 2000 p.165).

Attitudes towards rural poverty are now changing and indeed it can be argued that being poor in a relatively affluent society is even more difficult and demoralising as the gap between have and have not is even starker. Partnership 2000 defines social inclusion as, “seeking to address the marginalisation that results from a combination of unemployment, income poverty, and lack of interaction in social networks of community, neighbours and family and exclusion from decision making”.

With regard to housing, issues of affordability and social inclusion must be brought to the fore. Currently it is cheaper in the short term to build a one-off house in the countryside than to purchase a house located in a town. For those who cannot afford to own a house the level of local authority housing within rural areas has been inadequate. While the social and affordable housing scheme appears to offer a partial solution, the rate at which such developments are occurring in more remote and high amenity consumption rural areas is extremely low and therefore problematic.

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (section 82, part V), it is now required of developers that 20% of lands undergoing development be made available for social and affordable housing. It is indicated in the Mayo Housing Strategy that a percentage higher than 20% of new household formations in Mayo during the period 2001-2006, are likely to present themselves as eligible persons as defined in Section 93 (1) of the Act (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.31). Of the 915 new household formations in Mayo in 2001, almost 289 can be expected to experience affordability problems (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.19). Section 93 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, defines someone who is eligible for affordable housing as someone “who is in need of accommodation and whose income would not be adequate to meet the repayments on a mortgage for the purchase of a house to meet his/her accommodation needs”.

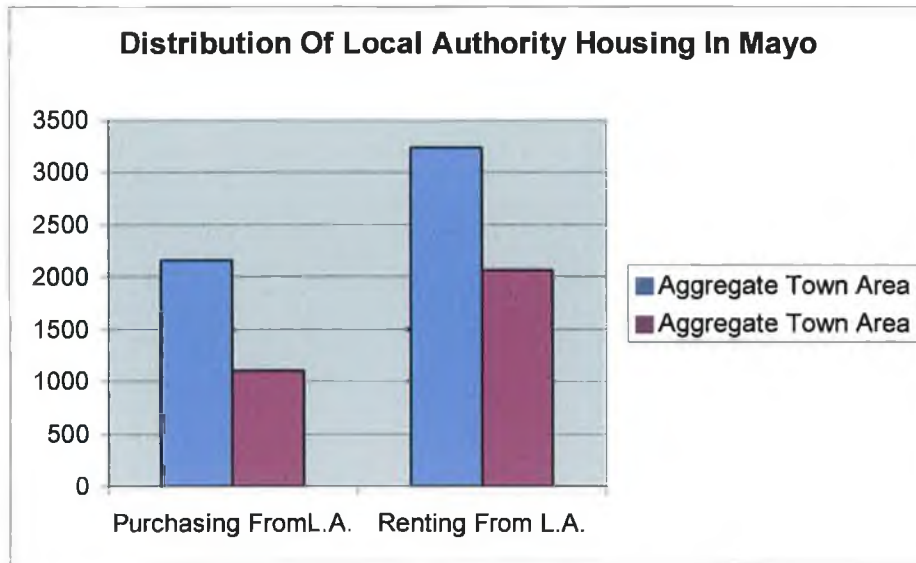
The housing waiting list currently stands at 1,938 in Co. Mayo (See Appendix B). According to Mayo figures lone parents account for 31.5%, couples account for 36.25% (of the couples 41.38% have no child) and single person household's account for 32.25% (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.43). At present the local authorities in Mayo are planning for the development of 620 housing units over the period 2000-2003, through their local authority housing programmes. The emergence of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as an instrument of housing policy has clear implications for the existing arrangements and supports for the provision of social housing. In essence, intervention through the local authority-housing programme will remain the primary vehicle for the delivery of social housing in the early years of the strategy. It is likely even with the provision of social housing under Part V, that there will still be a need for a direct local authority-housing programme in the county (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.34). The Mayo Housing Strategy states that there may be an outcome where the planning authorities are planning for the building of more houses than there will be households formed over the life of the development plan. The belief here is that the effect of this will lessen housing waiting lists within the county. Such a strategy may however be difficult to sell to the housing providers /developers. Criticisms, particularly from the private sector, have surfaced over the methods by which the Government is

attempting to deal with growing housing lists and increasing lists of applicants for social and affordable housing schemes.

The Irish Home Builders Association is the representative body for private house builders in the Republic of Ireland and its members account for 85% of private house building in the state. The IHBA is now concerned that the private sector is being asked in part to supply social and affordable housing. The IHBA are anxious and feel that the plans to supply social and affordable housing may in fact actually slow down and interrupt housing supply and have a disruptive influence on the market. They argue that it is the function of the government, not the private sector, to supply affordable housing for those citizens of the state who require it. The IHBA are concerned that these housing strategies will cause further problems in delivering supply and in turn, impact on house prices. It is however stated within Section V of the Planning and Development Act (2000) that, “policies for achieving social and affordable housing are included in housing strategies in a way that ensures the views of all those involved in delivering such housing are taken into account”, the act encourages “a co-operative approach by planning authorities to developers and house builders in implementing strategies”

Housing strategies should operate to assist in the delivery of housing in a sustainable manner. They should ensure the effective and efficient use of land and the orderly development of that land. They should encourage a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of different households and they should seek to avoid undue social segregation (Ryan, 2000). Demand for new housing is expected to reach 500,000 units over the next ten years (Bacon, 2000). With such projected increases the question must be raised as to whether developers will actually be attracted to invest in schemes where profits could be curtailed significantly. In order to supply demand, it is therefore essential that the planning system is properly resourced to cope with the increased activity (Ryan, 2000). While Ryan rightly acknowledges that the planning system should be properly resourced, motivations as to why are curious and pose some interesting questions. Certainly in order to properly implement spatial development in relation to housing, more resources and forward planning are needed. Whether it is this fact that has motivated Ryan is open to debate. It could be argued that motivations may be in relation to an easier and quicker process with regard to planning and development of future housing.

Fig: 3.1 Distribution of Local Authority Housing Mayo



(Source SAPS CSO 2002)

It is highlighted here that there is more local authority housing located within aggregate rural areas within County Mayo. However when it is considered that the majority (in excess of 80%) of the population is living in aggregate rural areas this is hardly surprising. While housing programmes may have increased under some authorities, the level of allocation has generally failed to keep pace with the growing demands on waiting lists (Ryan, 2000). The waiting lists within the county number in total 1,938, 1,192 of which are located in aggregate rural areas (See Appendix B). The Mayo Housing Strategy is discussed in more detail in the Chapter on Mayo.

3.5 Recent Rural Housing Policy In Ireland: *A Consultation Draft Of Guidelines For Planning Authorities 2004*

In 2004 the Department of Environment launched a consultation draft for rural housing. This is as yet a consultation draft and so has yet to be fully implemented. The draft however sets out some clear agendas, which must be explored. This section examines the draft and explores possible implications and difficulties it may encounter. The draft provides some clear guidelines in relation to rural housing provision. Some of the guidelines are however contradictory to earlier strategies and may conflict with environmental obligations which the government have signed up to (such as the Habitats Directive, Ground Water Protection Scheme).

Based upon the NSS the government has launched 'Sustainable Rural Housing: A Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004). Prior to this it was the responsibility of each local authority to decide upon rural housing policy and the planning of housing development. Policies varied between each local authority. Some local authorities favour restrictive policies i.e. Clare, Galway, in which protection is given to local long-term inhabitants with regard to new dwellings. While some local authorities have policies in place which only grant planning permission for new houses if the inhabitant is local or in some cases a return migrant. New guidelines across the country emphasis this and state that, "people who are part of and contribute to the rural community will get planning permission in all rural areas, including those in under strong urban based pressures, subject to the normal rules in relation to good planning" (Department Of Environment, Consultation Draft on Sustainable Rural Housing, 2004, p.1).

It also states that "anyone wishing to build a house in rural areas suffering persistent and substantial population decline will be accommodated, subject to good planning practice in siting and design" (Ibid, 2004, p.2). The guidelines make it clear, however, that statutory designation of certain rural areas (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Natural Heritage Areas) is not intended to operate as an inflexible constraint on housing development. The government has suggested this policy due to a combination of factors. Firstly, according to the 2002 census, around 30% of the Irish population lives in rural areas outside towns and villages (Ibid, p.1). In some counties such as Mayo a much higher percentage, around

70%, live in detached houses in the countryside. This policy is therefore in place to cater for those people applying for planning permission in those areas.

It has also been argued by the government that planning regulations under the Sustainable Development Strategy (Department of Environment 1997) were being operated over rigidly (Ibid p.1). An Taisce however argue that over 70% and indeed over 80% of planning applications lodged in some counties (Mayo included) have been granted to 'one-off' houses in the countryside and they argue that this new policy will lead to a free for all in the countryside. "It must be noted that 92% of all applications in this county are granted, which means that just 8% are not" (Mayo County Manager -Mayo News, March, 2002). It is argued by the government that a free for all will not ensue and that these guidelines are necessary for the survival of rural communities. In order that there will not be unregulated development there are stipulations attached which will protect local interests.

" The NSS emphasises that to secure the co-ordinated and sustainable development of the country's main cities and towns, provision of new housing in the rural areas adjacent to them that are under considerable pressure for development will need to be confined to persons with roots or links in those areas. It is reasonable, in such circumstances, to expect that where an applicant is given planning permission for a rural housing proposal on the basis of having such links, that the grant of planning permission makes it clear that, save for exceptional circumstances, the dwelling shall be occupied by the applicant, members of the applicants immediate family or any other person who has similar links" (Ibid, p.33).

Exactly how this will be monitored is unclear and the policy of the resident being there for seven years before they can sell on may be open to abuse. While it may be a sceptical view to take that the system will be abused, the government have failed to address the fact that the selling of sites may be considered a legitimate livelihood strategy by some rural dwellers. An example from Co. Clare (a similar county to Mayo in several regards) shows that "There is an urgent need for the planning department of Clare Co. Co. to begin to understand the reality of livelihood strategies of rural dwellers in West Clare –one of which includes the need to sell 'one off' sites which is a legitimate livelihood strategy for rural dwellers" (Co. Clare Community Development Forum, 2002).

Whether sites and house will be sold in a manner that is against policy guidelines needs to be examined. The implications may be that sites will be sold in a round about manner (i.e. planning may be granted for a family member and the property subsequently sold on).

While this policy is designed to protect local interests it has been shown by Schucksmith (1991) that such policies may in fact not benefit local interests. No policies or guidelines exist to preserve existing stock. Competition is possible here as is out pricing of locals from external interests -be they for residential, investment or as second holiday homes.

The government has stated that different policies are needed for particular rural area types. In some rural areas continued population decline has been occurring and there is undoubtedly a need to encourage growth and help sustain current populations. If the guidelines are to be taken literally residency stipulations do not apply here. Nor is it clear from the guidelines what the situation is in regard to areas, which are under high pressure, but not adjoining urban areas (such as areas of high amenity consumption). It could be argued that more remote areas and particularly areas of high tourism demand are in greater need of residency clauses than those located in proximity to urban centres. The strategy states that residency clauses should be 'considered' (Ibid, p.20) by each local authority yet it does not suggest that there may be an urgent need to enforce such regulations in some areas.

With regard to holiday homes the guidelines state that development plans must include them provided they are developed in a positive and sustainable manner. "Well located and appropriately scaled second home and holiday home development can act as a revitalising force, in economic terms, particularly in remoter or structurally weak areas" (Ibid, 2004, p.20). This has been directly taken from the National Spatial Strategy. In relation to housing provision in rural areas, it is interesting to note that holiday home developments are advocated and only token gestures are made in relation to protecting local interests in relation to affordability. The guidelines acknowledge the fact that holiday home development may have adverse effects on affordability for permanent rural dwellers, yet no real regulations are put in to prevent this. While the guidelines state that holiday homes should be clustered it does not halt any single holiday home developments. Nor does it put in place any restrictions on the preservation of housing stock for permanent residents.

Added to this is a responsibility on local authorities to identify areas of high tourism demand and try and attract holiday homes to areas of lower demand. No strict guidelines exist to preserve areas facing high levels of demand, nor are there any protection for areas in which this development will be encouraged. It could be argued that in some areas of high holiday home usage more draconian measures are needed; yet this is not the case as set down by the guidelines. The guidelines encourage developments in less affluent peripheral areas while not altogether halting development in areas of high amenity consumption. There may well be some impending impacts upon housing in more peripheral areas due to this. The carrying capacity of high consumption areas must be taken into account. "Holiday homes in sensitive and scenic areas such as coastal, lakeside and uplands must be managed carefully" (Ibid, p.21) –yet not halted. Holiday homes are not discouraged and "should be placed within established villages and small towns" (p.21).

There are a number of positive and negative aspects to the new housing guidelines. Within the guidelines the government realises that spatial analysis is needed to tailor policies to suit individual areas. There are several different processes affecting a number of different area types and by tailoring and planning to suit individual areas planning authorities will be best able to make a decision based upon the needs of an area. In doing this the policy will allow for necessary distinctions to be made between area types and the people attempting to build in the area. It is highlighted that people with links to an area will be given priority, yet planning regulations must be able to respond to areas which are experiencing serious decline or areas experiencing substantial pressure. This rational attitude may work, provided good guidelines and designs are put in place. Yet when Mayo County Council attempted to bring in its own housing design guidelines for the countryside as part of the county development plans, they were rejected. Current guidelines are based upon Co. Cork guidelines, "the Cork guidelines are less strict and open to a wider interpretation than those which were proposed for Co. Mayo" (Architect, Mayo Co. Co., 2004).

Issues have been raised about exactly how the housing guidelines will be implemented and, most importantly, how exactly they will be monitored. The guidelines state that anyone from an area, with links to the area, or who can contribute to the community should be accommodated with regard to housing provision. This is put in place in order to benefit local families, return migrants and newcomers who

may contribute. Further study is needed on how people can 'contribute' to a community and how their contribution can be evaluated. With regard to return migration it needs to be established what types of migrants are returning and for what purpose (to raise a family or to retire?). If the general trend is the latter, serious questions must be asked about the long-term sustainability of such a process (Gustafson, 2002). The guidelines are open to a wide interpretation and it may be difficult to ascertain an individual's contribution to a community.

The "relationship between population change and household change has implications for the supply of housing and is fundamental to a proper understanding of the processes of demographic change. It can be suggested that in situations of overall decline the rate of population decrease will be greater than the rate of household decrease; whereas in situations of overall growth, the rate of household increase will be greater than the rate of population increase. Furthermore it is quite possible for a settlement to experience population losses at the same time as increases in the number of households and housing stock; the reverse situation is unlikely since this will imply an increase in household size"(Lewis, 1998, p.143).

The housing guidelines have not explored limits on housing units in spatially different areas. The guidelines do not make any tough decisions; decisions which undoubtedly will have to be made at some point, in some areas. One of the most concerning aspects with regard to rural housing issues is the fact that the issue has become a political football. Due to the representative electoral system in Ireland it could be considered political suicide to make a tough decision with regard to housing provision in areas where there are land use and environmental concerns. Combined with this is a concern at local level over the motivations of some councillors. Of the 33 councillors in Mayo, 12 have vested interests in property development, estate agencies and auctioneers (prior to 2004 elections). The motivations of such councillors must be called into question.

3.6 Policies And Partnerships For Sustainability

The notion of sustainability is littered throughout a multitude of policies nationally and international agreements. In relation to rural housing and settlement in rural areas policies in relation to sustainability can appear to be contradictory. It is therefore important to outline and examine policies in relation to sustainable development in Ireland.

In 1997 the Government, through the Department of the Environment, launched a Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland. While only brief objectives are given here, it is important for our overall evaluation of sustainability in Ireland to understand as much of the strategy goals as possible. Under the Mayo County Development Board 10 year integrated strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development (2002), it highlights goals and objectives with regard to a Mayo model of Sustainable Development. Its prime goal is that the strengths of all parts of Mayo should bring maximum benefit to everybody in the county and that the potential of the whole county is unlocked for the good of all. It is hoped that this can be achieved through a number of key objectives, from a spatial perspective. The objectives are

- To develop a spatial strategy
- To support the development of sustainable and rural communities
- To create a framework for development that recognises the competing demands that people place on the environment, and that promotes in a structured way the sustainable development of the county
- To value, manage, protect and enhance the natural environment and landscape, and to promote sound environmental practice

The model of sustainable development also includes a second strategic theme, which is to bring about co-ordinated service delivery. The goal here is that agencies with a service delivery role operate in a manner that ensures that decisions are made in a consistent, open and accountable way and that service delivery is integrated to ensure that maximum benefit is derived from all resources available.

Priorities for Sustainability in Ireland

The Department of the Environment published a sustainable strategy for Ireland in 1997. Its priorities are given below,

- Agriculture.
- Forestry
- Marine Resources
- Energy
- Industrial Development
- Transport
- Tourism
- Trade
- Governance

Many of these affect rural areas, although interestingly, housing is not included. Some commentators have argued that our political system does not augur well for the fundamental aims of sustainable development. As we exist in a primarily consumer driven society where more value is placed on economic gain rather than on social interaction and the value of community, Whelan (1994) comments on the fact that we are becoming more “individualised”.

“The primary focus of national and international environmental policy seeks to achieve environmental protection without confronting tough choices or even requiring fundamental change in political economic systems. “ (Fischer and Black, 1995; citations from back cover page).

To achieve sustainability, good government is a pre-requisite. The first, widely accepted hallmark of good efficient government, is that it should be accountable and that those it serves should be able to question what it is doing and change what it is doing. Accountable government gains legitimate public authority, a vital quality when unpopular decisions have to be taken or good policies have to be enforced. The achievement of sustainability is a daunting task and one that cannot be taken lightly: “You don’t have to be an expert to realise that sustainable development is going to become the greatest challenge we face this century” (Tony Blair, 2001).

Local Governance and Sustainable Development

No specific body is charged with these issues at local or regional level. However, insofar as their responsibilities include issues of sustainable development both the local and regional authorities might be considered the relevant administrative authorities in this regard. Local Agenda 21 emphasises the role in which communities must play in sustainability: "Governments, in co-operation with appropriate international and non-governmental organisations, should support a community driven-approach to sustainability" (Agenda 21, 3.7).

While the notion of community is a contested one (See conceptual approach) "one of the difficulties in expanding the community approach to sustainable development has undoubtedly been confusion and misunderstandings about the notion of community" (Warburton, 1988, p.14). She argues that the concept of community has been hard to define and that concepts attached a warm glow to it, which may be useful for policy makers wishing to tie in questionable new initiatives.

Primary responsibility for the implementation of Local Agenda 21 in Ireland lies with each of the 34 local authorities within the State, with the eight regional authorities having a co-ordinating role. Local involvement has long been advocated by the E.U. with regard to numerous aspects of regional and local development. Local involvement in sustainability is sought through a combination of national policy, supported by public and private partnerships.

Critics of the involvement of public private partnerships in sustainable development could argue that the bringing together of pro-growth business groups and anti-growth environmental groups may be extremely difficult. In February 1999, the minister for the Environment and Local Government officially launched 'Comhar', the National Sustainable Development Partnership. This includes over 20 different groups, which cover a wide range. The three main objectives of the group were:

1. How to best influence behaviour across the economy and society to support Ireland's international commitments on climate change, including limiting growth in greenhouse gas emissions
2. To inform Ireland's input to the 1999 community wide assessment of EU environment and sustainable development policy

3. To identify and develop good practice models and instruments which will promote environmentally sustainable behaviour, these might include eco-labelling, green procurement, environmental management and communication strategies

Table 3.1 Partners involved in Comhar

Environmental Protection Agency	Irish Envir. Conservation for Youth	Small Firms Association
Central Fisheries Board	Irish Coalition For Sustainable Development	Business & Employers Confederation
Dept. Of Environment	Irish Assembly of Regional Authorities	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
An Taisce	County and City Managers Assoc.	Irish Farmers Association
Irish Up Lands Forum	Royal Town Planning Institute	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
Green Network of Govt. Departments	Institute of Engineers in Ireland	Irish Tourist Industry Co Federation
Environmental Sciences Assoc. Of Ireland	National Women's Council of Ireland	National Youth council

(Department of Environment, 1997)

The Government has brought these partners around a single table to talk and issue reports to try and ensure a win-win situation. There are several obvious divergences of opinion among several of these groups. It could be argued that this is a means by which national governments try to pass the buck. The bringing together of so many various bodies highlights the confusion over sustainable development. Each may have their own interpretation of what it is to achieve. For many the concept of sustainable development is a contradiction in terms while for others it is a way to maximise resource usage. Bohemer Christansen (2002, p1.) argues that the, "...idea behind the consultative practice of using forums, round tables and focus groups to assist policy-making was probably less the practice of participatory democracy than the hope of confused officials that the objectives of development, environmental protection and social progress could be integrated or joined-up into a logic that would allow for enhanced business opportunities as well as electoral success. The task of making hard choices might become lighter as others were invited to co-decide and then asked to pay the price."

3.7 Summary

Rural living in Ireland is affected by a plethora of policies: those broader spatial and economic strategies that affect its general context, and more micro-level policies that impact on environment, people and place. Because of the complexity of contributing policy frameworks, which can regard housing as buildings, homes, investments or political tools, housing occupies a difficult strategic position both locally and nationally. The performance of EU and governmental policies is an integral part of many changes in rural areas in recent years.

“Policy measures launched by the European Community have been major catalysts for change in landscapes and life throughout all its member states, particularly and perhaps most extensively in peripheral regions” (Aalen, 1986; Sheey, 1992; Quigley, 1994; Buttimer and McGauran, 1994) (cited in Buttimer, 2001, p.11). Changes in land use policies have in this country had a significant impact on the landscape and lives of rural people. In some areas policy has gone full circle from promoting intensification of agriculture and improvement of land quality (eg. drainage), to subsidies, headage payments and quotas being implemented on production, to new concerns of a protectionist nature with regard to the natural environment. While new protectionist policies are to be welcomed, the impacts that they are having on local rural inhabitants raise some interesting questions, particularly in relation to traditional settlement patterns.

For far too long agricultural policy and rural policy have gone hand in hand: it has been suggested that solving the problems of agriculture would from an EU perspective solve the problems of rural areas. The ‘White Paper’ lays down broad strategies, which attempt to ensure the survival and viability of rural areas. It has however been criticised as lightweight, still focusing on the ‘link’ between agriculture and rural development.

The NSS lays out a clear framework for targeted future development in Ireland. Questions must be raised however on the effectiveness of a European- based polycentric model of development and its impacts upon more traditional forms of settlement in rural Ireland. The NSS is to be welcomed and has made some provision for housing in rural areas by identifying broad settlement categories. The NSS has carefully tiptoed around making controversial decisions in relation to rural housing

provision. The Strategy promotes the development of holiday homes within several rural areas; while it recognises the impacts holiday home developments have upon an area, little provision is given to provide protective policies. The Strategy also advocates the prioritisation of 'local' needs in relation to housing, particularly in areas of high pressure. Whether this will be adhered to and welcomed by landowners wishing to sell is open to debate, and exactly how proposals would be implemented and monitored remains unclear.

Future housing policy in which anyone who contributes to an area should attain planning permission is quite wide and open to interpretation. Exactly how this will be interpreted remains vague. Policy measures implemented here seem to be forms of appeasement and have not confronted tough decisions that will have to be made. Indeed it could be argued that the more recent guidelines were motivated more by political factors than by needs to address problems associated with housing in rural areas. For example the new housing guidelines claim that planning regulations are being applied too rigidly, this is despite the fact that in 2002, 92% of planning applications for housing were granted. Fishler and Black (1995) have argued that environmental protection policies seek environmental protection without confronting any tough choices.

It has also been argued in relation to sustainability, that the active involvement of partners and local organisations is less the practice of participatory democracy than the hope of confused officials. (Boehemer-Christiansen 2002). As in housing policy, many woolly conclusions have been drawn from groups whose opinions and goals can often be at variance with each other.

The policy review has also shown that provision is being made for those affected by poverty and may have difficulty entering the housing market. While some provisions have been made, demand is likely to continue, particularly as the cost of property continues to rise. Consideration of the rural poor must be paramount in any future housing policies, which must be inclusive, practical and affordable by nature.

Chapter 4: Mayo: A Case Study Profile

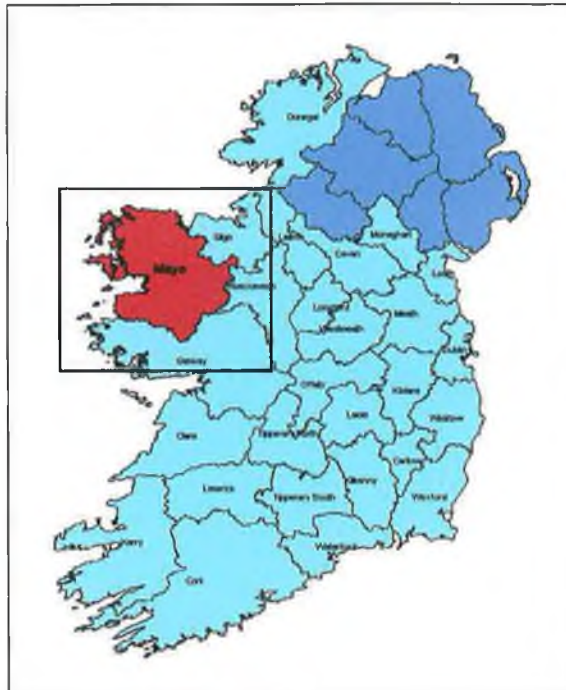
4.1 Introduction

Mayo, located in the west of Ireland, is predominantly a coastal county, with a rich and varied landscape. It is the third largest county within the state covering 2,159 square kilometres, which represents roughly 10% of the state's landmass. It is an ideal county in which to base this study, as it is predominantly rural, yet it has three significant urban centres. These are Castlebar, Ballina and Westport.

Mayo has a total population of 111,524 (CSO, 1996), representing 3% of the national population. There has been a 3.2% decline in population since 1986 (The national population rose by 2.4% during the same period). The county is one of the least populated in Ireland with a population density of 22 persons per square kilometre. The county has experienced increasing urbanisation, although levels are low by national comparisons. 88% of the county's population live in aggregate rural areas.

The population of Mayo is unevenly distributed throughout the county, reflecting both the influence of its varied landscape and the existence of traditional service centres. The three largest towns are Castlebar, Ballina and Westport. Castlebar and Ballina have both been identified as development hubs within the NSS, while Westport remains as a centre of tourism within the county. Besides the above, Claremorris is the only other town with a population of over 1,500.

Map 3 Location of Mayo

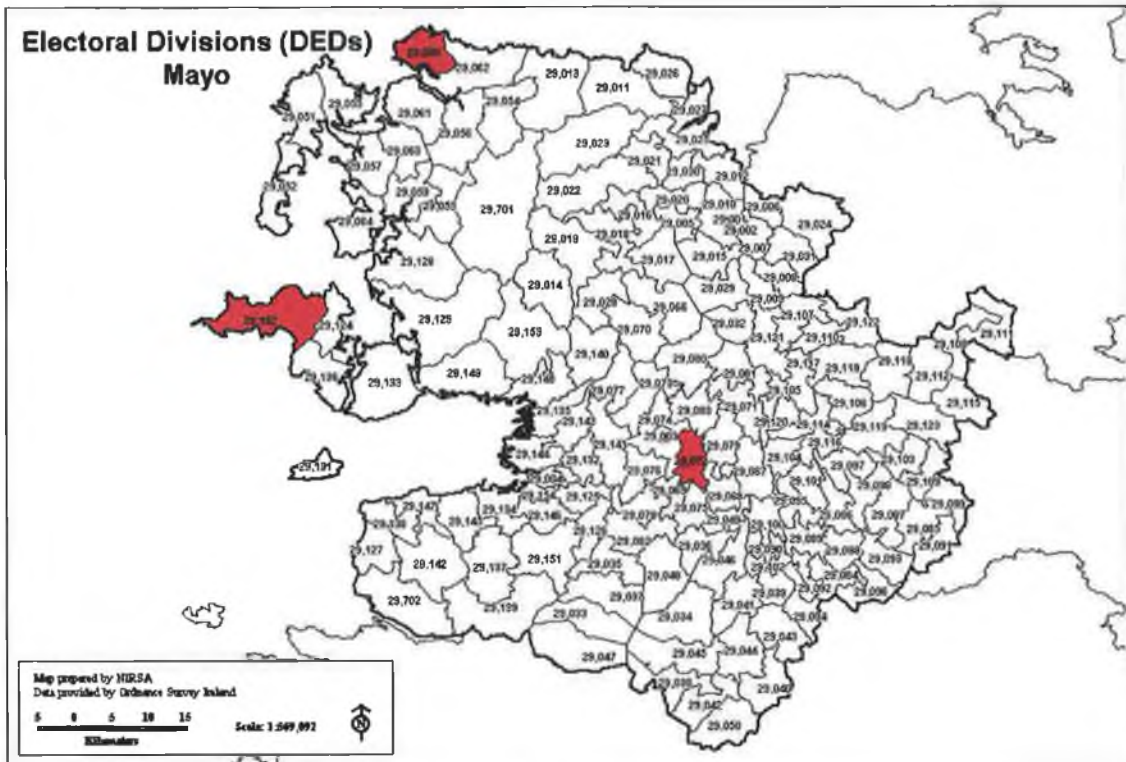


(Mayo County Development Board 2002)

Map 4 Typography Of Mayo



Map 5: Geographical Location of Case Study Areas



(NIRSA: 2002)

The locations of the three case study areas have been chosen for a number of reasons (see Chapter 4: Methodology). Geographically they are located thus; Breaghwy (Peri-Urban) is located in close proximity to Castlebar. Slievemore (High Amenity Consumption) is the most westerly of the areas, while Knockadaff (Marginal) located in the North West is the most peripheral.

4.2 Socio-Economic Profile

Mayo has a relatively high dependency ratio, with the majority of the dependent population are in the 65 plus category (see Table 4.1). That is more than 4 per cent above the national average. There is almost 1 in every 6 people in this age bracket in County Mayo compared to 1 in 9 in the state.

Table 4.1 Mayo's Population Ratio

AREA	AGE COHORT	AGE COHORT	AGE COHORT	AGE COHORT	AGE COHORT	DEPENDENCY RATIO (%)
	% 0-14	% 15-24	% 25-44	%45-64	65 +%	%
MAYO	24.6	15.1	24.6	20	15.7	40.3
REGION	23.9	16.8	25.7	19.5	14	37.9
NATIONAL	23.7	17.5	28	19.4	11.4	35.1

(Source: Mayo County Development Board, 2002)

The Haase Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation (1996), measures the deprivation of an area by considering the social class composition, the level of education, the level of unemployment including long term unemployment, the proportion of lone parents, the extent of small farming and the age dependency rate. In 1996, Mayo was given a mean Deprivation Score of 7 (89 DEDs had a score of 9 or 10) (See Appendix I Map (i)). This contrasts remarkably with the national score of 4.65. The areas of greatest disadvantage are located in the Northwest of the county, to the south of the County and close to the Sligo border north and west of Swinford.

Table 4.2 Social Class Structure

	Social class 1 (%)	Social class 2 (%)	Social class 3 (%)	Social class 4 (%)	Social class 5 (%)	Social class 6 (%)	Social class 7 (%)
MAYO	3	18	17	23	16	9	14
NATIONAL	5	22	18	20.5	13	8.5	12

(Mayo County Development Board, 2002-2012)

Table 4.3 Employment by Broad Industrial Sector 1996

	MAYO (%)	REGION (%)	NATIONAL (%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	21.8	17.2	10.2
Mining, Quarrying and Turf Production	0.7	0.5	0.4
Manufacturing Industries	17.9	19.5	19.1
Electricity, Gas and Water	0.8	0.9	0.9
Building and Construction	7.5	7.4	6.7
Commerce and Insurance	16.7	16.4	20.8
Transport, Communications and Storage	4.3	4.7	6.0
Public Administration and Defence	4.6	5.3	6.0
Professional Services	17.1	17.8	18.5
Other Industries	8.6	10.2	11.4
All industries	100	100	100

(Mayo County Development Board, 2002)

In 1996 44% of Mayo's labour force (aged 15 years and over) were at work compared with a national figure of 47% (Mayo County Development Board, 2002, p.18). The number of people on the live register in Mayo dropped from 9,810 in 1996 to 6,344 in 2002. While employment has diversified and increased within the county, Mayo has a particular problem in that many of those unemployed are of the long-term variety. In fact, according to the County Development 10 year strategy report (p.19), figures from 1996 show that 49% of Mayo's unemployed were out of work for more than 3 years.

Much of the latest employment in the county tends to be within the high tech industry and located within particular centres such as Castlebar and Ballina. This has often proved not to solve the problems of the long-term unemployed, particularly those in more peripheral areas where distance from centres proves problematic. While employment has increased, the average industrial wage within the county is the second lowest in Connaught. There are also a relatively high percentage of long term unemployed located in more peripheral rural areas (See Appendix I Map (ii)).

Table 4.4 Average Gross income for Counties in Connaught 1998 /1999

	Average Gross Income (£IR)
GALWAY	15,659
LEITRIM	15,069
SLIGO	14,735
MAYO	13,889
ROSCOMMON	13,594
NATIONAL AVERAGE	17,016

(Mayo County Development Board, 2002-2012)

The average gross income in Co. Mayo is over 3000 euros lower than the national average; this may have current and future impacts with regard to housing. With the average wage so low, affordability of housing is becoming a major factor within the county. There is also a possible threat that out-pricing may occur, from immigrants with greater purchasing power.

Tourism is a significant employer in Mayo. In 1999, 288,000 overseas visitors came to Mayo contributing 166m euro to the local economy (Mayo C.D.B., 2002, p.22). Many of the threats associated with tourism have as yet, only begun to surface; it is still seen by and large as solely an economic activity.

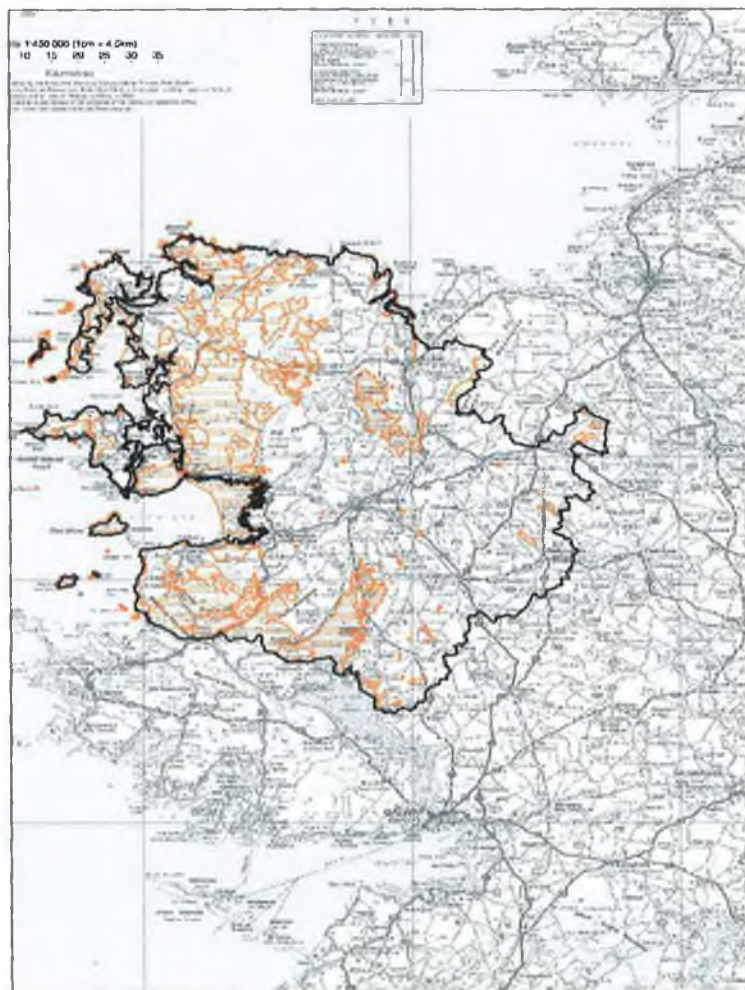
There are many tourist attractions within the county such as the Ceide Fields, Knock Shrine, Westport House, Foxford Woollen Mills and the recently opened Museum of Country Life. Outdoor activities such as angling, golfing, walking, festivals and leisure also abound. The landscape and rurality of the county have made it popular as a second home destination and as an area to retire to. This has meant that there is increasing competition for existing housing stock in many rural areas. Providing tourism accommodation within the county often ensures longer stays within the region and increased spending by the visitor. The government have assisted the development of tourist accommodation by granting tax incentives such as the Pilot Resort Scheme (1995). This scheme has stimulated the development of several holiday villages in Mayo, primarily located on Achill Island and in Westport.

4.3 Environment

Mayo has a treasured landscape; one that has had many areas placed under special environment protection with the designation of Natural Heritage Area's (NHA) and Special Areas of Conservation (Other areas include Areas of Scientific Interest and Special protection areas). Maps here highlight NHAs, and SACs.

The importance of Mayo's landscape and environment in relation to tourism are emphasised by several agencies such as Board Failte, Mayo County Development Board etc. Tourism generates significant income and has created employment within the county directly and indirectly.

Map 6 Locations of Natural Heritage Areas in Co. Mayo

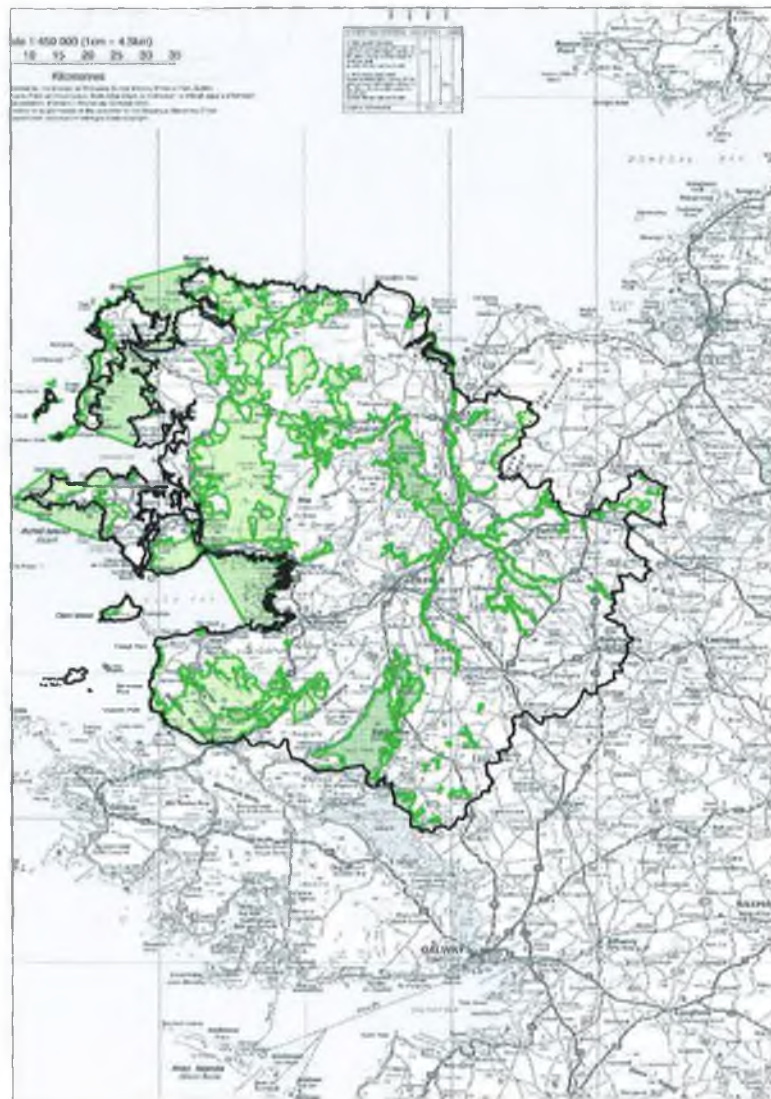


(Mayo County Council, 2002: GIS Dept.)

Areas have been designated as environmentally sensitive and unique under EU legislation. It is now the responsibility of the state to ensure that these areas are preserved. The areas covered include coastal areas and natural peat lands: areas of

unique habitat with distinct or rare systems of bio-diversity. If degradation is deemed to occur within those environs that have been designated then the state will be held responsible under EU law and liable to action from the European courts.

Map 7 Designations of Special Areas of Conservation Co. Mayo



(Mayo County Council 2002: GIS Dept)

Housing issues in areas of designation has become much more contentious and loaded in recent years (See Literature and Policy).

4.4 Mayo Housing Strategy

Part V of the Local Government Planning and Development Act 2000, requires all planning authorities to prepare housing strategies and incorporate these into their development plans. The act specifies that the housing strategy will estimate the present and likely future demand for housing in the area and thus ensure that sufficient zoned and serviced land is available within the authorities' development plan in order to meet existing and forecast needs.

The Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, was compiled as a result and has had to take into consideration a broad spectrum of policy issues. These relate mainly to the provision of affordable housing, balancing housing types and avoiding undue social segregation, the sustainability of settlement patterns within the county, estimating future demand, spatial development and the recognition of distinctive settlement patterns in particular areas. One of the central concerns of the strategy is the provision of affordable housing within the county. The housing strategy as a general policy must make available no more than 20% of zoned residential land for social /affordable housing. The strategy must ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes are provided to satisfy the requirements of various categories of households, including the special requirements of elderly persons /persons with disabilities. Mixing house types through affordability and ensuring a good mix of age groups will be an important tool in combating segregation among people from different social backgrounds (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006). Zoning of land, based upon the National Spatial Strategy, is advocated in order to provide sustainable development patterns. Currently in Mayo there are no residential zoning provisions outside of the towns of,

Table 4.5 Designated Zones for Development

1. Ballina 109.19 acres
2. Castlebar 14.5 acres
3. Westport 155.52 acres
4. Claremorris 132.46 acres
5. Ballinrobe 78.57 acres
6. Ballyhaunis 64.64 acres
7. Swinford 42.34 acres
8. Charlestown 39.07 acres

(Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006)

The local authority have now begun to examine the zoning of residential land in more rural areas which have a basic nucleus of functional services such as shop, church, school, post office, pub (Ibid, p.27) (interesting to note pub is included, yet facilities such as doctor, community centre, recreational facilities are not). While the strategy to zone potential residential development around a nucleus is in line with government policy, public reaction may be negative. The NSS experienced similar fallout in terms of those included or excluded from the designated hub /gateway concept.

The housing policy is in favour of cluster developments and aims to promote higher residential densities especially in proximity to towns and villages. The regeneration of many towns and villages is welcomed by some and will be a way to ensure that community structures in certain areas can still exist and expand. The provision of housing is targeted at existing towns and villages in which a structure exists –church, post office etc. This is in line with sustainable settlement strategies laid out in the National Spatial Strategy (However there are a number of key considerations, which may hinder the implementation of the strategy and have wider impacts upon housing and settlement in some areas).

There is potential for cluster developments to become more desirable and exclusive in some areas. This policy could also impact at a much deeper cultural and local level. If affordable housing is to be targeted only in existing clusters and not supplied to those who are from more remote areas in the countryside, there could be impacts upon the ability of the local population to sustain itself. The policy proposes that it will promote more sustainable patterns of development in rural areas, reduce the need for the development of ‘Greenfield sites’, limit urban sprawl and ribbon development, ensure more economic use of existing infrastructure and enhance access to existing services and facilities (Mayo Housing Strategy, 2002).

Any future sustainable development targeted at existing village and town structures may lead to conflicts with local landowners. These conflicts may arise from sons and daughters of landowners being unable to build upon their land. Also, if land is zoned in particular areas, compulsory purchase orders may be necessary and these could possibly create further conflict and resentment. Further misgivings have also been identified:

“ they have moved lots of people from the surrounding areas into Bellmullet town over the past number of years, but due to lack of planning or foresight, there are now many problems associated with those estates, crime, drug use, I know it sounds crazy but the way they have done it (housing estate design and house distribution) they have actually created a Ghetto in Bellmullet” (Member of Udaras, 2003).

In conjunction with Local Agenda 21 (2000) this housing strategy must be completed in consultation with the wider community. In deciding on the range and type of social and affordable housing in Mayo, the planning authorities will pay particular attention to

- Local Policy and local social /community issues
- Profile of existing social housing stock and patterns of best utilisation
- Special needs housing requirements
- Existing social and private housing mix
- Access to essential infrastructure
- Visual and amenity value of developments
- Promotion of social integration

(Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.38)

The final determination of the detail of social and affordable housing policies (site selection housing design, housing mix, resident mix, special needs etc.) will be made through a series of consultations between representatives of the planning authority (both elected and at official level) and key stakeholders with a direct and legitimate interest in policy formation. It is expected that these will include

- Social Housing Applicants
- Private Developers
- Voluntary /co-operative /community housing organisations
- Community groups, and representatives of other social groups such as travellers, the disabled and the elderly
- Existing communities and resident /tenant associations
- Real Estate Agents

(Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p. 35)

It is hoped that these consultations will address a wide range of issues concerning social mix, social integration, design of units, ownership objectives, range of house types and sizes and the management of common space and amenity areas. Involving such a wide range of groups could lead to difficulties. This could occur in areas that have experienced high levels of in-migration (issues involved are highlighted in literature review; see 'In-Migration').

While the Mayo Housing Strategy has dealt with a number of issues such as affordability in a comprehensive manner, providing an assessment of future needs, affordability issues and the spatial allocation of affordable housing, and projected spatial distribution of future populations (see Appendix E for all), there are some central issues which have not been addressed. The strategy itself acknowledges that in its analysis it has made several assumptions (Ibid, p.21) based upon the data presented to it. If circumstances were to change such as house prices, development costs, inflation and income levels, there could be some significant impacts upon the ability of the strategy to succeed.

Existing pressure for residential development in County Mayo is currently running at approximately 40% urban and 60% rural (Mayo Co. Co. Housing Strategy, 2001-2006). Although the vast majority of rural housing is 'one-off', the housing strategy does not adequately deal with this phenomenon.

Table 4.6 One-Off Houses 2002 Co. Mayo

	Granted	%Granted	Refused	% Refused	Total Applications
Total	1,009	80.20%	249	19.79%	2,548

(Planning Office Mayo County Council, 2002)

In some ways the strategy can be seen as a reactive measure to halt or lessen slightly some of the pressures caused by one off housing in the countryside. The overall extent of housing needs, both current and future and the nature of future housing provision in many rural areas have been greatly underestimated. The full extent and possible implications of this strategy have not been fully explored.

Within the strategy, the only real considerations given to the buildings themselves focus on aesthetic impacts. Little is provided with regard to ecological designs and the potential that they may have. While the policy sets down guidelines

on house design, it is not set in stone and private developers are not adequately dealt with nor does it place any onus on developers to promote ecologically sound housing. The strategy does have positive aspects but is generally full of rhetoric and short on innovation and fresh ideas. It hopes to protect and enhance the natural environment and create new sustainable development patterns, yet it has underestimated the size and depth of the rural housing issue from several angles. It does not go far enough down the line of preservation, nor does it adequately protect rural communities, which may be under threat due to increased environmental legislation (See Literature Review, 'One-Off' Housing).

4.5 Land The New Cash Crop?

A recent rural phenomenon is the sale of pockets of land for the housing market. With so many managers of the land, it is currently difficult to legislate for change. Consumer demand for housing has partly fuelled the change in numbers of sites being sold. The average site costs around 50,000 euros or more, with construction costs of approx 75,000 euros per site. This results in the average price for a three bed roomed new house of 125,000 euros (in the countryside). This compares with the average price of 180,000 euros upwards for a new house purchased in a cluster development (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002, p.105). One-off housing is substantially cheaper for those wishing to develop it. "I would be very upset if I am not allowed to build a family home, I reckon it would cost me 60,000 euros to build on my own site. I don't think I could raise a mortgage to buy the kind of house on sale in Foxford" (Local resident, Connaught Telegraph, 6/03/02).

On the supply side, landowners are selling sites which had agricultural value of around 5,000 euros as sites for development and gaining on average 50,000 euros (sometimes it is transferred free to a family member, but the value of the capital asset so transferred does not diminish), and so there is an annual capital gain (with 18,000 one-off houses developed) of 810 million euros (Clinch, Convery and Walsh, 2002, p.105). This figure may be misleading and more specific study on local areas may help to interpret these figures in different ways. The author hopes during the course of this M.A to examine rates of sites that are being sold in particular rural areas. While fully charting the extent of this phenomenon is a difficult task, interviews with estate agents may provide some indication on the extent of sites being sold and the prices, which they are commanding.

There are far more sites being granted planning permission than refused (Planning Officer Interview, Mayo Co. Co, 2001). This may lead to a knock-on, new phenomenon of landowners attempting to sell pockets of land for financial gain. This is a source of revenue that many may feel they are entitled to. An emotive and strong argument is made by many landowners in rural areas that they wish to acquire planning permission for their kin to build on their own land and there is no doubt that there are many genuine cases of this (as can be seen from local media interest). However, it must be realised that in some cases planning permission can be sought and granted under an offspring's name and once granted the site may be sold. Compulsory purchase orders may be necessary in the future if housing strategies are to be successful in rural areas. Many people in rural areas may feel that such a situation would further intrude on their rights as citizens and land owners within the state.

4.6 Summary

Mayo One of the largest counties within the state, is largely rural in character. It provides an ideal case study in relation to wider processes of change and their impacts upon rural housing. Examining this in a county where ownership of land and housing is predominantly private and agricultural practices in decline, offers an intriguing case study on where the changing use and nature of land resources can be assessed.

Although Mayo has been affected by economic prosperity in the recent past, many have not benefited, particularly many in rural areas. Mayo has been targeted through the NSS and so offers the perfect opportunity to assess the impacts such a strategy will have upon housing and sustainable community development in a traditional rural economy.

Chapter 5: Conceptual Approach And Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter has been divided into two sections. Firstly concepts adopted are explored in relation to rural housing and wider geographic thought. A conceptual approach is attempted which is based within a political economy framework but has also considers some more modern geographic thought in relation to phenomenology and concepts of community.

The latter part of the chapter provides a rationale for chosen case study areas and explores the various methodologies used in this multi-disciplinary examination of rural housing and sustainable community development.

5.2 Conceptual Approach

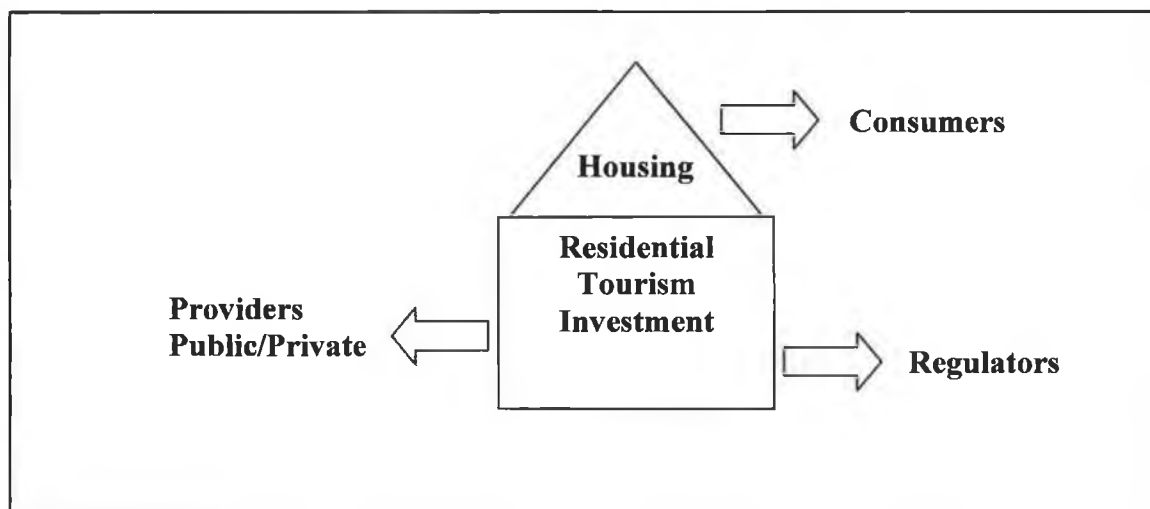
An analysis of political and economic changes should provide the starting point for interpreting changes in the countryside (Phillips and Williams, 1984). In relation to rural housing and the multitude of factors that are influential in its development (or lack of), an analysis of the changes, which have occurred in the political economy of Ireland in the recent past, is paramount. Changes have occurred due to a growing technological sector, a sector that is largely centralised in urban areas. The rapid rate of change has allowed for numerous changes within the rural environment, changes that have impacted upon rural housing in a number of ways.

A modified political economy framework or realist approach acknowledges the role of choice within a constrained economic environment. This approach acknowledges that individuals are active in shaping their own identity while responding to the structural constraints within society. It relates to the degree of personal choice available at an individual level and also the external workings of the state's sphere of influence over the individual (Evans and Ilbery, 1993; Kelly, 1994).

Conceptually, this research attempts to apply an approach to field studies that examines variable individuals and collective (community) housing needs within the context of highly regulated and contested policy frameworks. Individual choice and preference for the basic human right of 'shelter' is fraught with difficulties concerning power, income, decision-making and land use policy. The perspectives of housing

consumers, housing providers and housing /land regulators will be assessed in this research along with the factors which influence the resultant behaviours, spatial patterns and socio-economic /cultural issues.

Fig 5.1 Housing Context



(Author)

Healy (1986) suggests that political economy concepts will aid the understanding of,

- The way the organisation of the economy produces particular forms of investment (and disinvestments) in rural areas; (this is important for housing),
- The variety of social groups; their interests in land, property, and the environment; and the interaction between social groups and economic processes (this concerns different user group concerns referred to earlier; residential, investment and tourism) and,
- The way in which and the reasons why the state operates as it does in response to or as an indicator of economic reorganisation.

With regard to rural housing, changing economic circumstances are allowing for a re-population of some rural areas in Ireland. Individual choices of where they choose to live are dictated by some complex factors. These factors include economic circumstances, national and local planning policies, housing provision and EU legislation and directives. Combined with these factors, links to particular areas or types of areas are also influential in some personal choices on where to live. Some of

these links are more tangible than others (for example direct links of immediate family), links of extended family, direct links forged through lived experience, cultural links, links associated with a desire to “escape urbanism”, and the pursuit of the rural idyll.

Cloke (1989) provides us with four interlaced themes, which are fundamental to any incorporation of rural research into the broader political–economy model,

- The specificity (or otherwise) of rurality and rural space (see literature review),
- The centrality of capital accumulation as the driving force of rural change (see literature review),
- Power relations in the structuration of the extensive land market (with particular reference to agricultural land) (see literature review) and,
- The limits of state planning in rural areas (see policy review).

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a philosophy based on the notion that we bring our own attitudes with us wherever we perceive a thing (Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley and Fuller, 2002). Groups that perceive the issue in their own way, a way that has most meaning and relevance to their viewpoint, are dominating the rural housing issue in Ireland. An Taisce and local groups such as the Rural Dwellers Association exemplify this. The essence of this debate is dealt with in the literature. An important element within this study is the recognition of the validity of both arguments and the perceptions held in relation to rural housing issues.

Seamon (1979, p.16) defined the methodology of phenomenology as “a form of study which works to uncover and describe things and experiences as they are in their own terms”. Seamon rejects abstract theorisation and categorisation, in favour of developing an experiential framework for understanding the relationship between people and place. He notes three related foci:

- Movement -a focus on how individual bodies move through space on a day-to-day or routine basis.
- Rest -a focus on how individual bodies find a place of dwelling or rest.
- Encounter -a focus on the ways in which bodies interact with other bodies and things in their everyday worlds.

This is a valid conceptualisation for the assessment of housing processes.

Phenomenology seeks to appreciate the world in terms of the phenomena that are brought into existence through human experience of them. This is associated with the human subject's life-world (Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley and Fuller, 2002, p.40). Peet (1998, p.13) describes this as "the moving historical field of lived experience". The phenomenon of continued out-migration from rural areas, the legacy of emigration, is still continuing in some areas, and is still etched within the memory of most. Emigration has not only left a resource deficit in many rural areas but it has also had some deep psychological impacts. Sociologists and economists can assess the impacts of out-migration but the internal impacts are also valid, "you may imagine it, you may observe outward manifestations of the social phenomenon but unless you have been through the mill, you remain a recording outsider" (Healy, J., 1968, p.46).

Concepts of Community

Definitions of concepts of 'community' are important for this work. Definitions and concepts have been discussed in the literature review, but once more, the contested notion of the *meaning* of this term must be referred to. One of the major critiques of community approaches to policy in recent years has been the postmodern emphasis on fragmentation, globalisation and movement (Hall, 1995). It has been argued by Hall that there is no such thing as community because people no longer have longstanding personal local connections that continue over generations and that people now have much wider, transitory and impersonal connections. Hall's argument does not conform to the attitude that there will be a return to a 'golden' age of community. Instead Hall believes that new relationships are needed, based on the experiences of the fractured community who "do retain strong links to and identification with the cultures, traditions and places and histories of their origin or places of descent. But (who) are without an illusion of an actual return to the past" (Hall, 1995, p.55).

Warburton 1998 (p.16) argues that "it is possible to see Hall's critique of community more in terms of the impossibility of a return to the past rather than the end of located communities: attachments to locality do not have to be permanent or continuous to be meaningful".

The concept of community is not without its critics (Pahl, 1995, Hall, 1995), with some commentators declaring that the term has become eclipsed (Stein, 1964).

There are various debates occurring on community, many of which focus upon negative views.

Warburton, 1998 argues that “it is only (through) confronting these negative views that a new and positive vision of community can be created: communities which are inclusive, open and creative, and in which difference is welcomed and valued. This concept of community is as radical and challenging as sustainable development” (p.17).

This research does not seek to generalize about its findings but rather, to find a baseline of resident and agency meanings, terms and discussions to base future research on. This research proposal also takes a social constructionist perspective that people construct meanings and interpretations of their environment and their social reality (Saunders et al, 2003). These affect their interaction with phenomena such as housing, community structures and so. It is therefore necessary to find out about these meanings and constructions from the participants point of view in order to hypothesise about their actions. An interpretivist research philosophy is therefore undertaken.

Because little holistic research has been done in this particular geographical area an inductive approach will be taken, in order to provide a baseline theory that might give an insight into the social constructions and subjective reality of the research participants; residents and agencies involved in housing and community development in the three chosen study areas. No single theory will be tested but a theory may be built from the data collected.

An ethnographic strategy has been chosen in order to understand these insights and perceptions. It is not within the scope of this study to carry out a full ethnographic research project, however it will attempt to use qualitative questionnaire and interview techniques (along with personal observations of the physical housing) to try to understand the experience of housing from the participants point of view (Blaxter et al, 1996; Denscombe, 1998). Denscombe's (1998) description of an ethnographic standpoint that includes rich description and an element of theory will be taken here, as some conclusions may be possible relating to existing theory.

The specific method to gather data consists of questionnaires and interviews with open-ended questions and prompts in order to gather as much actual language use of concepts and descriptions of experiences from the participants as possible. This view was taken in three case study areas and with multiple agencies and the

interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured. Questionnaires and interviews were selected as the most appropriate way to ensure the information the researcher needed could be gathered during the period of data collection. It was also quite possible in this type of qualitative research that information might have been learnt that the researcher had not originally thought of. This may enhance the findings rather than jeopardise them. Interviews can give the chance to act immediately on new information thereby not limiting the research to initial questions (Drever, 1995). The flexibility of personally administered questionnaires and interviews, therefore, make them one of the best methods for approaching an inductive methodology. The research also looks at meanings and therefore the ability to check precise language, non-verbal signs and understandings from respondents is important; another advantage afforded by interviewing.

Observation of housing styles and locations was undertaken and mapped (See Appendix A) in an effort to gain further insight and as a triangulation method (Blaxter et al, 1996). Observation allows the researcher to get one step closer to 'the action' and to record not just what respondents say (in terms of housing /planning practices) but actually what actions they carry out. It can also act as a check on the validity of the interview findings. Further triangulation of methods is substantiated through the subsequent interviewing of housing and community related agencies, where issues raised in the questionnaire survey were discussed further. Conceptually, the interactions of residents, agencies and environment are important in the exploration of contested political housing processes.

5.3 Methodology

This research examines rural housing and its impacts on sustainable community development. Particular emphasis is placed upon the community. Many heated debates have occurred recently with regard to rural housing. This is an emotive topic largely based on anecdotal evidence, receiving much attention across the political arena (see literature review). This thesis focuses on the social impacts of demographic change in rural areas and how housing is a key element within this change. It will subsequently examine whether the changing nature of lifestyles and settlement

patterns is affecting community development in those areas and how government policy and local planning have contributed.

It is important that this research reflects the multi-factored influences on rural development; a project centred on housing that also incorporates spatial policy, sustainability and community functions, which will address real issues within the countryside and how they are affecting people in a real manner. A comparative analysis will be made between chosen case study areas; findings may be linked and contrasted to other related social research in Ireland and also with work carried out in rural areas of other 'developed' economies. To reiterate, the research sets out the following objectives:

General Research Questions

- What characterises the rural housing sector in Ireland and in Mayo currently?
- What policies and factors are influential in the development and non-development of rural housing?
- What role does housing play (if any) in the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities?
- What other factors are important?

Specific Research Questions

- What balance exists in Mayo between private, public and other forms of housing?
- What factors contribute (d) to this balance?
- What government (national and local) policies have been important and why?
- What have the impacts of these policies been?
- What are the housing needs of the different degrees of rural area in Mayo?
- How are these needs being met currently and what strategies exist for future needs provision?
- How has housing development affected "community" structures? Who has been affected?
- What role does housing play in rural regeneration and resettlement at local level?
- How do tourism, planning and environmental concerns influence rural housing?
- What are the main social, economic and environmental challenges for housing's contribution to sustainable rural community development in Mayo?

In an era of increasing welfare, mobility and leisure time, many rural areas in Ireland are transforming from agricultural productivist countryside to multi-functional consumption space and post-modern countryside. From a land use and a functional perspective, agricultural withdrawal and consumption activities like recreation and tourism, nature conservation, landscape protection and residence have been introduced and extended. This co modification process can be identified throughout many rural areas in Western societies and it is an immense, far-reaching and irreversible process (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992; Hoggart et al, 1995; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Urry, 1995).

Central to this investigation is how the changing dynamic of housing and settlement impact on community within the co modification process. In order to examine the pressures placed on planners, local government, development agencies and local residential interests, a number of key uses of rural housing and rural space must be explored. Having identified gaps in the Irish literature, key issues on rural housing and community change were addressed using the research questions referred to above.

Case Study Selection

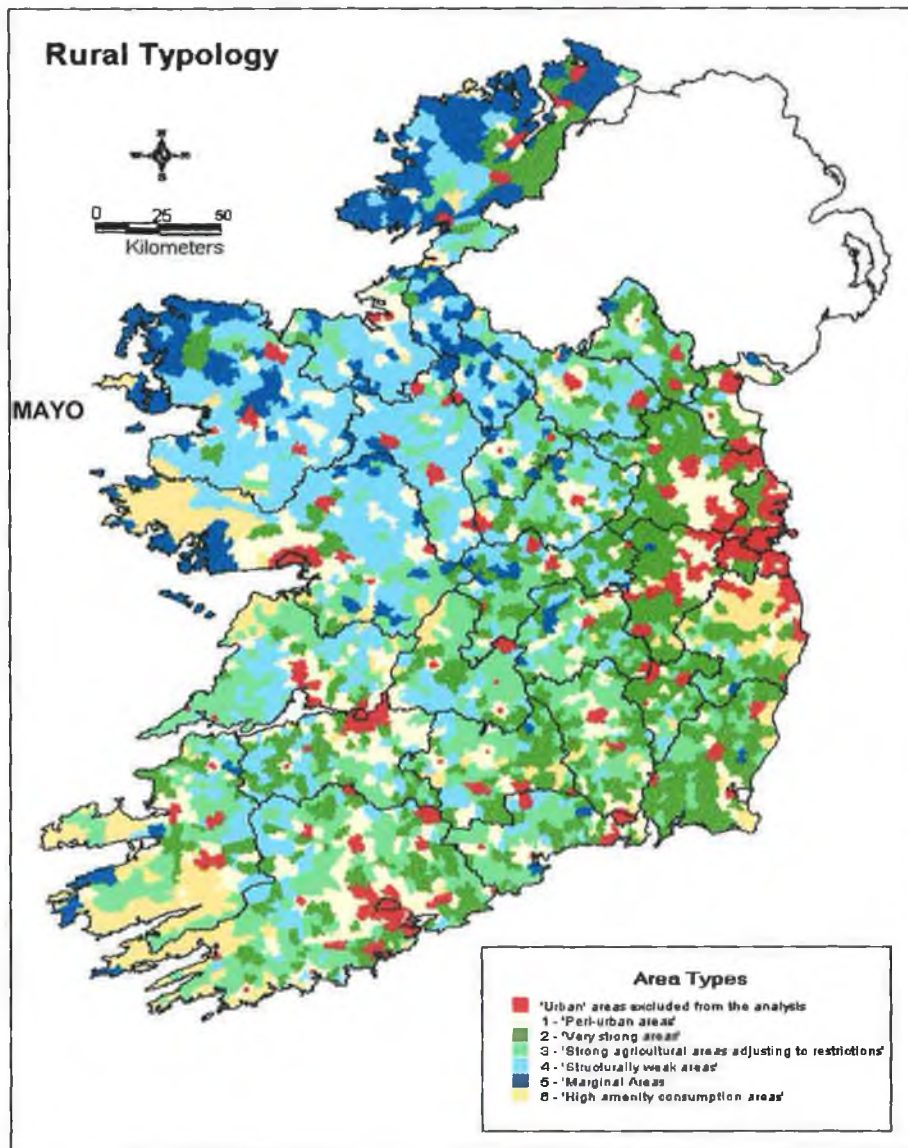
The classification of rural is difficult (see literature review), but a comprehensive analysis of rural Ireland has been formulated by McHugh and Walsh (2000). Their classification is based on socio-economic data. The emphasis on data analysis and quantification is a central distinguishing feature of the work and contrasts with previous attempts to develop such typologies in Ireland, which have generally involved strongly qualitative and judgemental elements. Their research is multidimensional and provides the most expansive evaluation of rural Ireland and identifies five distinct rural typologies (See below).

The typologies are based on various spatial characteristics such as dominance of non agricultural employment, labour force participation, demographic viability, strength of agricultural activity, socio-economic profile, population and employment dynamics, rural diversification and agricultural and employment change. The research is also sensitive to policy relevance and social sustainability that is multi-dimensional (McHugh and Walsh, 2000).

The areas are broken up into,

- Peri-urban,
- Very strong agricultural areas,
- Strong agricultural areas adjusting to restructuring,
- Structurally weak areas,
- Marginal areas and high amenity areas.

Map 8: Rural Typologies Ireland



Based on 1996 Census of Population
Prepared by Dr. Ceine McHugh, Prof. Jim Walsh, NUI Maynooth and NIRSA
Data provided by Ordnance Survey Ireland, Central Statistics Office Ireland.

(McHugh and Walsh, 2002:NIRSA)

For this research three types were chosen as case study areas –Peri-Urban, Marginal and High Amenity. It is intended that these types will be broadly reflective of Mayo and of regional or national patterns as they display many of the characteristics of change, decline and changing roles of rural space usage. Although the three types that have not been chosen represent the median scale of change, there is also a need for future analysis of these areas which may provide a more comprehensive evaluation overall. In this regard the study is not wholly reflective of the entire county and a much more extensive research project may provide a holistic frame in which national trends could be evaluated and policies formulated.

McHugh and Walsh's framework provides the basis for study area selection in this research. It is believed that concentrating on the typologies below will prove the most reflective given the aims of the research. They should provide a relevant framework for some form of evaluation with regard to rural housing and its role in sustainable community development.

Peri-Urban Areas: are characterised by high population densities, an advanced level of transition to a higher socio-economic profile (higher proportions with advanced levels of education, larger shares of the workforce in professional services and commerce functions) and low reliance on agricultural employment. This area type has an average population density of just over 40 persons per sq. km. It contains 11.3 % of the total national population. They are generally found in close proximity to urban areas and are particularly evident around the larger towns and cities.

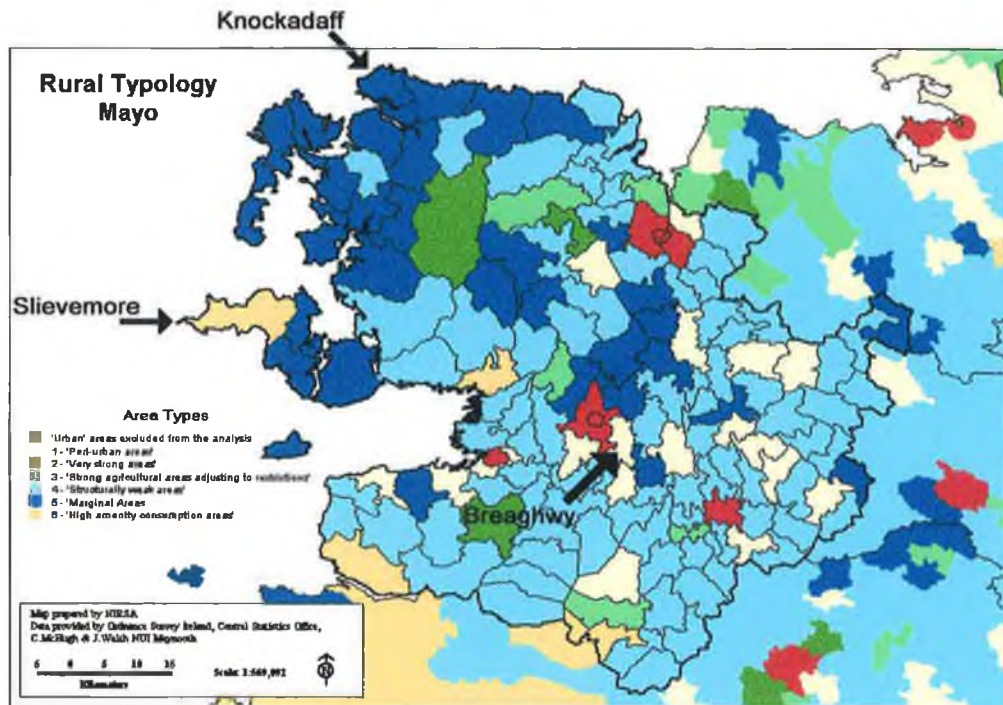
Marginal Areas: are located primarily in peripheral areas of the North West and West of Ireland, they are prominent in the North and West of Mayo. Agriculture structures are the weakest and labour force participation rates are among the lowest. This reflects the dependent age profile of these areas. Marginal areas have generally the lowest employment rates and hence the highest unemployment levels for all area types. McHugh and Walsh (2000) state that with regard to overall demographic viability, they are more favourable than structurally weak areas, arguing that this may in part be associated with a relatively high incidence of part-time occupations linked to fishing and rural diversification.

High Amenity Consumption Areas: this area type comprises only 9 % of the rural territory nationally and contains just over 91,000 persons (6.4 % of the rural population). Defined attributes make it markedly distinguishable from other rural area types. They are generally located in areas of high scenic value. These areas tend to have higher levels of self-employment outside agriculture (22.4% of the workforce) and higher levels of part-time work especially for women, though employment in manufacturing is very low. The demographic structure is typical of areas experiencing some net immigration of persons aged over 25. Generally this trend has resulted in this area type experiencing the highest rate of population growth of all the area types including urban areas.

Within County Mayo there are four DEDs which fit into this category, Owennadornaun in the south west, Cong in the south east (both of which are experiencing population increase), Newport East and Achill DEDs in the west of the county. The latter two are in the same typology group but are actually experiencing population decline despite relatively high levels of in-migration. Tourism would be expected to be important in high amenity areas.

Another distinctive attribute of high amenity areas is a disproportionate high number of postgraduate level qualifications –over twice the national average for all other rural areas (not including urban). Such characteristics, according to Walsh and McHugh, suggest a very high amenity area where there is a considerable amount of diversification underway. While it may be reasonable to assume that for the majority, the occupational profiles that have been identified refer to activities that take place within the area, there may be instances where the attributes arise from choice of residential location.

Map 9: Rural Typologies Mayo, Case Studies Shown



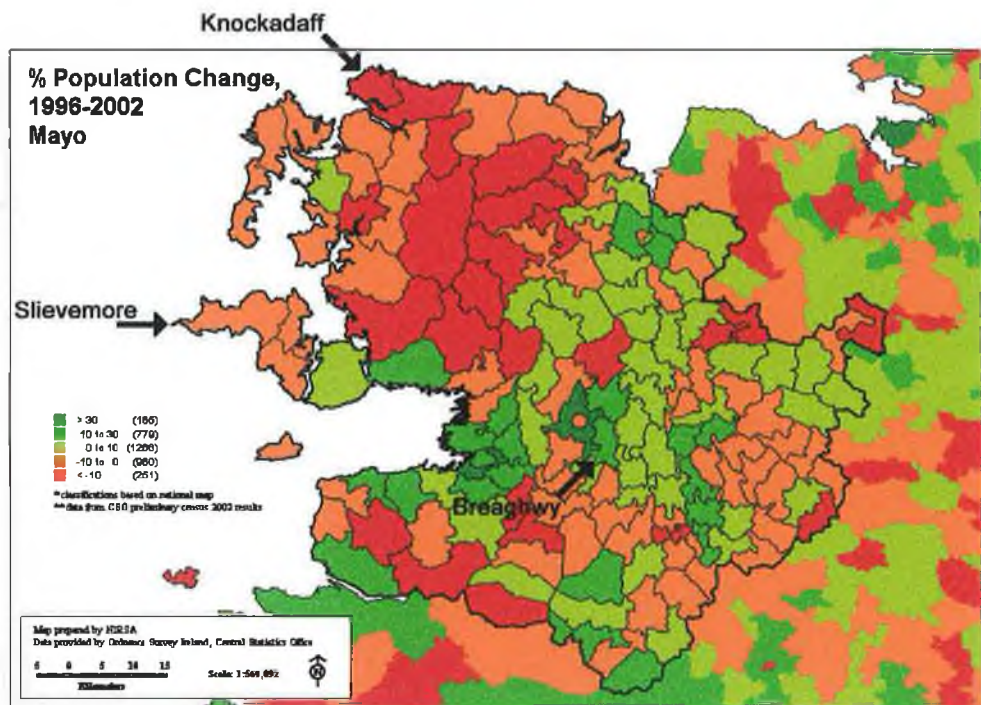
(McHugh and Walsh, 2002:NIRSA)

In formulating initial case study areas it is important to choose areas that reflect relatively the changes and pressures placed upon on rural housing. Three main case study areas have been chosen at DED level:

1. *Breaghwy* – (Peri-Urban) Located in close proximity to Castlebar, Breaghwy is a prime example of a rural village that has undergone significant change in the past decade due to the expansion of employment in Castlebar. Breaghwy has experienced a population increase of 12.8% since 1996, and prior to 1996 the population also increased (See Fig 6.4).
2. *Knockadaff* - (Marginal) This area is located in North Mayo; it has a population of 390 people, one that has been in constant decline. From 1996 to 2002 the population decreased by 17%. It has a relatively high dependent population ratio.
3. *Slievemore* - (High amenity) Located on the most westerly part of Achill Island, this area is a most scenic location and as such not only provides

residential usage but also tourism. There are a number of holiday villages within the area many of which were built under government tax incentive schemes. The area has experienced in-migration of both new and returned migrants and yet is still experiencing population decline (though not on a major scale). The population has decreased by 0.6% since 1996. Planning permission in such areas has become a contentious issue (not only objections from semi-state bodies but also from some local residents).

MAP 10: Population Change Mayo, 1996-2002



(NIRSA 2002)

Table 5.1: Population Change since 1996 in Each Case Study Area

	Breaghy (Peri-Urban)	Slievemore (High Amenity Consumption)	Knockadaff (Marginal)
Population 2002	1311	1012	383
Population Change 1996-2002 %	+ 12.02%	- 0.77%	-17.23%

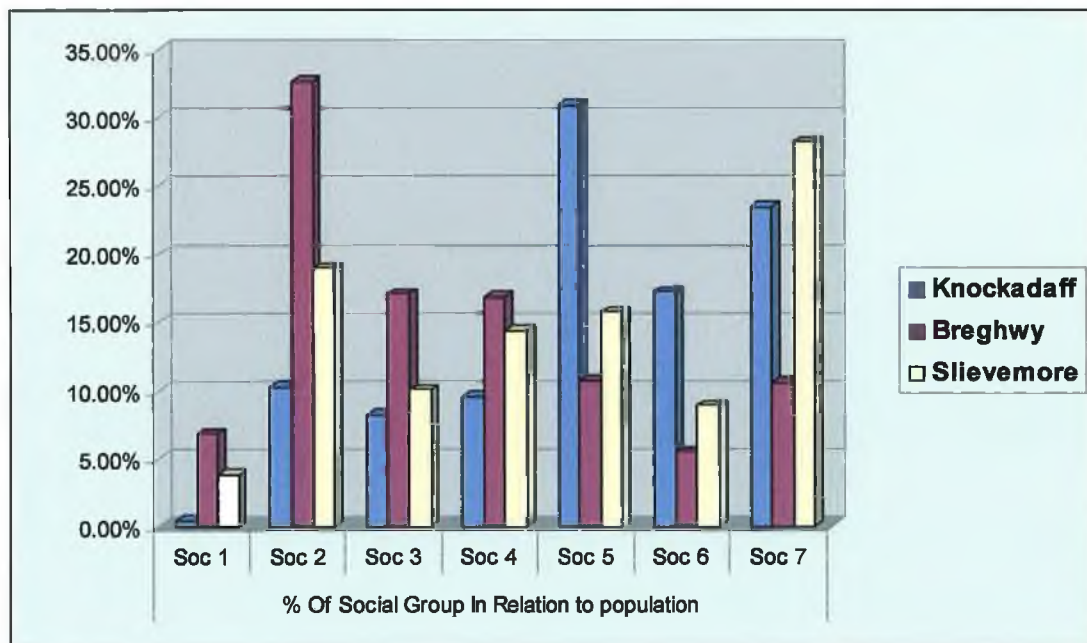
(CSO, 2002)

Table 5.2: Number of Households In Each Case Study Area, 2002

	Breaghy	Slievemore	Knockadaff
No of Households 2002	391	380	125

(CSO, 2002)

Fig 5.2: Breakdown of Social Class In Each Case Study Area



(Source CSO, 2002)

Each area corresponds to varying degrees of rurality as based on Walsh and McHugh's rural typology map, 2000 (see p.94). Census data from each DED

provided information on demographical analysis, socio-economic categorisation and population profiles for each district.

- Social Class 1. Professional Workers
- Social Class 2. Managerial and Technical
- Social Class 3. Non Manual
- Social Class 4. Skilled Manual
- Social Class 5. Semi Skilled
- Social Class 6. Unskilled
- Social Class 7. All others gainfully occupied and unknown.

The census also provided information directly on housing such as tenure and age, ownership levels, levels of people repaying mortgages, renting, age of housing, numbers with septic tanks and information in relation to water supply. Further information with regard to sustainability issues which can be analysed from the census are; types of heating systems within houses, car ownership levels and commuting distances too and from work as well as time spent commuting. Accessibility and transport are key elements in future spatial strategies.

All this information forms the basis of the study and allows for interpretations with regard to housing and sustainability, as well as establishing trends in the development of dwellings and formulating patterns of commuting time and distances. Such secondary analysis will frame subsequent primary research. Specific details are needed for this study. Specific information was gathered through household questionnaires and the assessment of targeted community groups within each area.

Execution

The methodology was broken into five main parts,

1. *Secondary Data Analysis: Small Area Population Analysis (SAPS)*, compiled by the C.S.O. provided specific detail on a number of issues within each area. These include the socio-economic breakdown within each area, housing tenure, household sizes, age of housing and a demographic profile of each area. Comparisons were made between each area and broken down into percentages in order to establish if any patterns could be discerned. Combined with this McHugh and Walsh's framework provided information for case study selection.

2. *House Type and Distribution Mapping.* In order to fully inform the debate it was necessary to establish the types, distribution and settlement patterns in relation to housing in each of the case study areas. In order to do this a housing analysis data sheet was compiled. The data sheet relates to observed type and age of housing, location, elevation and its general aesthetic impact on the surrounding hinterland. This was purely observational using a pre-designed template (see Appendix H) and carried out at the same time as the personally executed questionnaires. Photographic examples and a map, which identifies housing from different periods, supported this. Identifying housing from particular periods allows for distribution and type to be charted over time (See Appendix A).
3. *Interviews with stakeholders and decision-makers:* Facilitators and interested parties such as county councils, planners, developers, estate agents, housing organisations, local groups and semi state bodies were interviewed (See Appendix D). Semi structured interview methods were used here. General information and observations from key players provide some in-depth information on past and current trends in relation to rural housing.
4. *Community Organisation Profile:* Existing community organisations in the case study areas were surveyed with regard to membership and participation levels of various groups such as locals, new migrants and return migrants. Groups were targeted in each area and individuals were interviewed who are or were involved in local community development.
5. *Primary Research:* The household questionnaire gathered relevant information on social, economic, environmental awareness, sustainability issues and attitudes to local development within the microenvironment. The questionnaire was laid out in a thematic structure that dealt with issues such as impacts of demographic change, housing tenure distribution and sustainable community development.

In order to deal with the bulk of results generated the subsequent chapter has been divided along the lines of the format laid out here. While the results chapter has been divided in two central discussions and explorations focus on housing and settlement, demographic change and sustainable community development.

1. Secondary Data Analysis

The secondary data analysis was compiled from a number of sources. Included here is previous work such as McHugh and Walsh's typologies. This allowed for the selection of case studies for the research. Further information was gathered from the C.S.O. 2002, which allowed for some general interpretations to be made in relation to several aspects of the research.

2. House Type Distribution Mapping

Within each case study area maps were compiled which charted the distribution, type and age of housing. Two types of observational field data were compiled here. Firstly, information was gathered on the type and location of housing. This data was then placed on field maps, which show some general patterns and trends with regard to the location of housing. Due to the bulk of information with regard to house type and design it was decided that only age and settlement type of housing would be included on map (See Maps p.189-191).

Observational methods were used here and while some houses could easily be categorised as new or pre 1970s, others proved more difficult (see Appendix H). General styles and trends were observed. Design manuals allowed housing built in the 1970s, and 80's to be identified. The most difficult to identify were however houses which were pre 1970s, which had been renovated, a number of key criteria were identified here and sought within the field work.

While this part of the research had some pitfalls, it does provide a useful indicator of housing age, distribution and settlement patterns. When augmented with statistics gathered on design, the housing distribution maps provide useful information with regard to seeking to identify the tradition of settlement types within each case study area in the recent past and identify the areas that are under increasing pressure due to housing developments. It is an area in which more geographic research is needed and this work may provide the basis for a future study. The map is supported by a photographic analysis of housing in each area, and these identify clearly the broad types of housing in the county.

3. Examination of Stakeholders Survey

Informal interviews were conducted with stakeholder /gatekeeper personnel and organisations in the county. Planning and housing officers were interviewed about

their views on housing provision, social issues, design and development controls and so on. It was important to gain the opinions and information from the council in order to create an unbiased debate with regard to rural housing provision; the opinions of professional bodies may differ greatly from perceptions gathered within the household survey. It was also an opportunity to examine their role within the provision of rural housing (See Appendix D).

These stakeholders included:

Developers: Property developers were interviewed within each case study area and questions dealt with levels of change within their sector and challenges they face. Primarily driven by economic gain, their sector has begun to change due to Section V of the Planning and Development Act (2000). The extent to which this is being welcomed and implemented needs to be examined. Questions were asked about the onus being placed on developers to provide sustainable designs, affordable housing and their attitudes on spiralling housing costs.

Estate Agents: Semi structured interviews were carried out with a number of estate agents who have sold /are selling property in each of the case study areas. Interviews dealt with general trends and prices of new and existing stock, how property values have change and whether demand has increased within the case study areas and what their perception of future trends will be. Without specific detail on property prices in each case study area estate agents provided valuable information on trends occurring within each particular case study area.

County Council Officials: Officers from the planning department were interviewed in relation to current and future planning policies. As well as primary information, opinions and attitudes towards housing policy in rural areas was gauged. The implementation of future policy was also discussed, as were problems which current and future policy face. County Council architects were also interviewed in relation to the design process of housing in Ireland today. Opinions on housing design and where it is heading were also gauged. 'Proposed Mayo Housing Guidelines 2003' also supported information here. Also within the council representatives from social housing were interviewed in relation to the provision, location and design of council and social and affordable housing schemes in the county.

Miscellaneous: These interviews included a member of a semi-state body who has had experience of working with some community groups within a case study area. This was undertaken in order to network and then specifically target key members

within community groups, but also to evaluate their working dynamic as a group and what they had achieved from an external professional opinion.

4. Community Organisations

These have been broken up into specific classification of groups -there were about 10 variants ranging from women's groups to sports to community development.

Community groups were targeted with a questionnaire /semi structured interview - dealing with participation levels, goals and objectives of the group -their contribution to the community and problems which they encounter. It was important to identify the types of people involved and the key players. Questions were asked about perceptions within such groups of in-migrants and their level of contribution to the sustainability of such groups.

5. Household Questionnaire

The household questionnaire provides the most extensive part of the research. Results here are broad as several issues are explored within it. Primary research and useful statistics are gathered here, particularly in relation to acquirement of tenure. While primary data has been compiled from results here other relevant information in relation to attitudes and opinions on several related areas were gathered.

Sampling for questionnaire

Samples were based within each of the rural typologies discussed earlier. A sample size of (50) residents was targeted in each of the three areas. In order to ensure the sample is as broadly reflective as possible, different times, days and dates were used when conducting the questionnaire. If the study was executed entirely during the day the sample may have proved to be biased towards groups such as the retired, one member housewife /husband, the unemployed etc. and so not reflective of the entire populous.

Local knowledge (particularly of postman) was vital, in identifying people who have moved, returned to the area and also with regard to the seasonal uses of housing and the number of abandoned houses within the area. Interviews were carried out with postmen in each area in order to firstly establish some broad trends and the location of particular groups and individuals. The survey provided some useful

information although some of the information may be called into question (for example only holiday homes are identified, it does not identify private holiday or second homes). The interviews with local postmen, however, proved invaluable when targeting particular individuals or groups such as in-migrants within a particular area.

While charting the overall levels of in-migration may not be too difficult, breaking these groups down into new and returned migrants proved difficult. In cases where the postman's local knowledge was limited, or consent was not possible due to confidentiality issues, alternative solutions were made. Random sampling attempted to formulate numbers within particular group types, as opposed to a stratified. There may be a weakness that the sample (no matter how well chosen) may not reflect entirely the various groups. The results of the questionnaire provided information on the sustainability of these areas, current problems, and attitudes to community and to development.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was laid out in a manner that allowed a flow of conversation to develop. Due to the sensitive and emotive nature of the topic it was vital that the questions were laid out in a manner that 'drew in' the respondent. Some of the most important questions were not included in the beginning but interspersed through the questionnaire. It was hoped that a rapport would develop which would ease any suspicion that this information could be used by some party against the respondent. Housing and land use are sensitive local political topics that need to be approached carefully. "This island is a plethora of paranoid parishes, one man won't be happy till he has more than the man next door, but the man next door is too cute to let you know exactly what he has" (John B. Keane).

The questionnaire was broken down into categories, each of which deals with specific aspects of the study. Included in the questionnaire were socio-economic data, categorisation of local, newcomer and return migrant attitudes, participation within the community and attitudes toward housing and policy provision. While there are 70 questions in the questionnaire many are closed and so did not prove too time consuming for interviewer or interviewee. Open-ended questions were deliberately included in order to gather qualitative data. "By allowing subjects more freedom to talk as they wish, using the entire responses in analyses, and reporting representative samples as part of research findings, naturalistic researchers employ an alternative

approach that capitalises on the unique quality of human experience” (Hein, 1998: 72).

The methods employed in this research attempt to accurately reflect the study’s questions. A brief rationale for structure and content of each method is therefore relevant. (See Appendix C For Full Questionnaire) The household survey was formulated as follows:

Questions 1-5 deal with basic socio-economic information and include not only type but also location of employment. This is important in an evaluation of trends in work patterns now occurring in the post-productivist economy in rural areas. These questions were also important in evaluating the merits of the National Spatial strategy (is development penetrating rural areas as a result?). What is the extent of commuting to large towns in rural Mayo? Has the targeting of Castlebar and Ballina as “hubs” of activity within the NSS been beneficial to the surrounding hinterland or were they merely designated because they were already growing? Is the problem of commuting to larger urban areas merely being spread out into rural counties?

Questions 6-16 deal with individual house information. Included here are stress factors placed upon the house (number of individuals-number of rooms). Storey (1988) highlighted the high level of stress houses were under in rural Mayo. Is this still a factor; or are larger new houses being built for fewer inhabitants. House ownership status will provide information with regard to levels of renting occurring in rural areas and also occupancy levels of housing.

Questions 16-26 are concerned with housing in general in each area. What are local attitudes to housing development? Can any difference be identified between local and newcomer opinions? Can it be argued that people moving to an area for its quietness (in search of the rural idyll?) may have more of a tendency to halt housing development in the area, seeing it perhaps, as counter active to why they came to the area in the first place? What is the extent of local objections to local housing and to newcomer housing? Are community structures damaged as a result? What are residents opinions of the planning process? Another important factor here is the resaleability of housing and the extent to which this is occurring in order to climb up the property ladder.

Questions 26-34 seek to understand participation levels within the local community. While it must be acknowledged that many aspects of contribution to the wider community cannot be gauged, it is important to examine participation levels within various organisations, ranging from social to local development /political structures (eg. community and county council). Are longer working hours due to increased centralising of employment damaging participation levels? Local knowledge and awareness of existing organisations will provide information on possible newcomer-local divides. This will be complemented by an examination of some community organisations within the case study areas.

Questions 34-43 deal with community, sense of community and what community means to respondents. Will there be any difference between local and newcomer opinions of community? What is the level of return migration and how might this be used positively? Is the 'sense of community' what return migrants expected? The questions here also deal with why people have moved to the area and if they are satisfied generally.

Questions 44-60 are concerned with environmental awareness and environmentally sound practices. How much awareness is there around eco-facilities in Mayo? The environment is central to overall long term sustainability. Gauging levels of awareness and application of principles in household behaviours will provide valuable information. Do differences exist between various inhabitant groups with regard to environmental awareness?

Questions 60-68 deal with economic sustainability. How important is the local population to the local economy? With higher levels of in-migration, are local business benefiting? Are there new jobs created? While this aspect is difficult to gauge, trends may be established with regard to where groceries are purchased and information on the long term survival of local shops and services.

Execution of the Questionnaire

The pilot and full questionnaire were carried out using site visits. The pilot study entailed 5 questionnaires in each of the chosen case studies. The pilot study allowed for misunderstandings and problems with questions to be addressed prior to the execution of the main study. It also allowed for functional and strategic planning for future visits to case study areas. The questionnaires were conducted over a period of six months. A standardised personal interview technique was adopted, one that allowed probing questions to be asked, permitting the flow of conversation to evolve on certain issues. This type of approach allowed a prepared explanation of the study to be given, which is much more convincing than a covering letter. The subject matter is topical, political and emotive, it was therefore vital to explain the impartiality of the research and provide the respondents with an opportunity to voice opinions on matters of concern. Such an approach also allowed less well-educated respondents (particularly those with reading difficulties to be catered for); another advantage of conducting the questionnaire personally is that explanations could be given to problems that arose and thus misunderstandings were avoided.

It was important to maintain and control the order and sequence in which the questions were answered. The questionnaire included several open-ended questions; this was a deliberate factor, as it allowed interviewees to respond openly and articulate their own feelings on central questions. It was also vital to engage the respondent's interest and attention, this may occur because of the topical nature of the subject. Rapport must be created at just the right level, which will leave the respondents feeling that something pleasant, interesting and worthwhile has been achieved. It is vital that the interview does not become a one-sided conversation and that topics are dealt with and then moved on from. This had to be done in a discreet manner so as not to cause offence (a semi-structured questionnaire allows this with more ease than an unstructured one).

This type of standardized interview was used because of the volume of respondents, to ensure that every person had been asked the same questions in the same manner, wording, meaning, sequence and setting. The interview must be standardised to achieve a psychological sameness. This is almost impossible but an attempt to make the question 'mean' the same for everyone has to be achieved. This required a greater flexibility from the interviewer, "finding this balance between flexibility in reacting to

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the respondent's answers and standardisation in the question is the particular skill of the good interviewer" (Oppenheim, 1994).

Rights of confidentiality and refusal to answer questions had to be respected at all times, owing to the nature of the study. Questions about opinions of the community and whether respondents had ever objected to planning permission were very sensitive. One of the main disadvantages was the possibility of wanting to 'please the interviewer' by providing the 'right answer' (especially on eco-friendly behaviour).

5.4 Chapter Summary

Based on the research questions, a multi-faceted methodological approach was adopted. The main methods of data collection include:

- Secondary Data Analysis (SAPS)
- Observational Field Mapping of Housing Styles
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Organisation Surveys
- Household Questionnaires (150 in total)

Three variable levels of rurality were chosen in three contrasting DED case study areas (based on pre-existing index). These were to reflect variable housing contexts and pressures. Results from each area have been dealt with in three broad categories: demographic change, housing and settlement pattern change and impacts upon sustainable community development. As there is a wide range of results the subsequent chapter has been divided in two. Conceptually this research adopts a modified political economy framework, which acknowledges the role of choice within a constrained economic environment.

Chapter 6: Results and Analysis I

6.1 Introduction

The findings of this research will be dealt with following the structure outlined in the previous chapter. In some cases overlap took place between sets of data. This added to rather than detracted from the overall results. Due to the bulk of results they have been divided into two sections. This first section deals with results from secondary data analysis and includes an introduction to the housing field settlement analysis. Also included here are results from the stakeholders and gatekeeper interviews. These results have been placed together in order to identify some broad patterns that are affecting rural housing in relation to provision, access, supply, affordability and related demographic change and impacts. Results chapter two deals specifically with the household questionnaire and provides much more specific information in relation to the study.

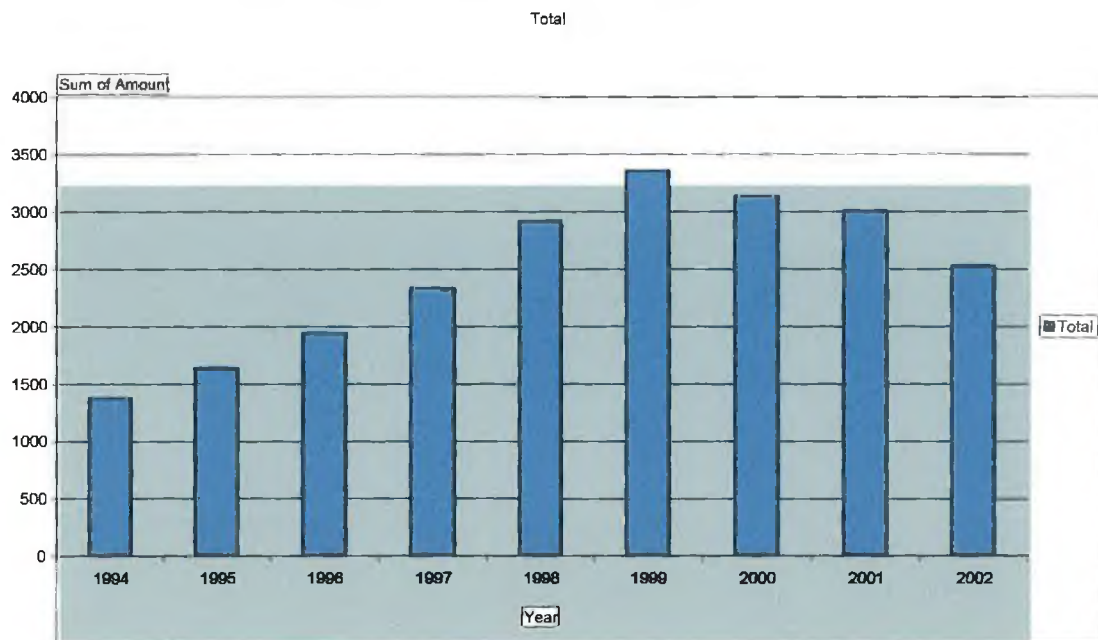
6.2 Secondary Data Analysis Findings

The Small Area Populations Statistics (SAPS), 2002, were analysed for data relevant to the demographic and housing characteristics of the three chosen DEDs, Interesting results were gathered which provided a basis for the subsequent household questionnaire. The SAPS data provides information with regard to population size, demographic profile, housing tenure, nature of occupancy, socio economic data, size and age of housing and associated levels of housing usage (stress). Further secondary data analysis includes information from the Department of the Environment and Local Authority.

In order to understand the rural housing situation in Mayo, an examination of recent trends must be analysed. There has been a significant increase in the number of applications for dwellings since 1991, with the majority of these being one-off houses in rural areas. The total number of planning applications since 1994 is 22,236 for Co. Mayo. Corresponding with levels of planning applications, the number of dwellings completed has increased dramatically (See Fig 6.1 & 6.2).

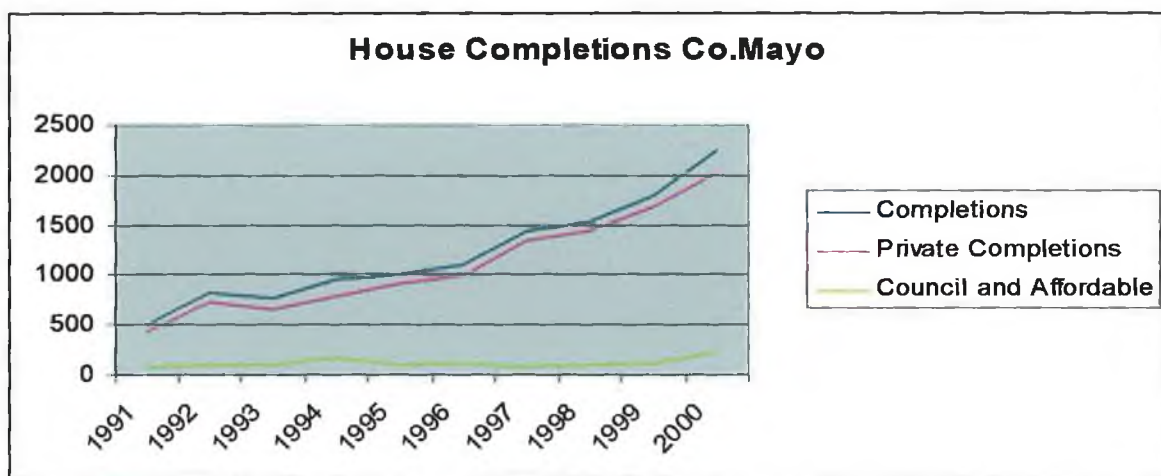
6.2.1 Housing and Settlement

Fig 6.1: Planning Applications Mayo, 1994-2002



(Mayo County Council Planning Dept.)

Fig 6.2: House Completions Co. Mayo, 1991-2000



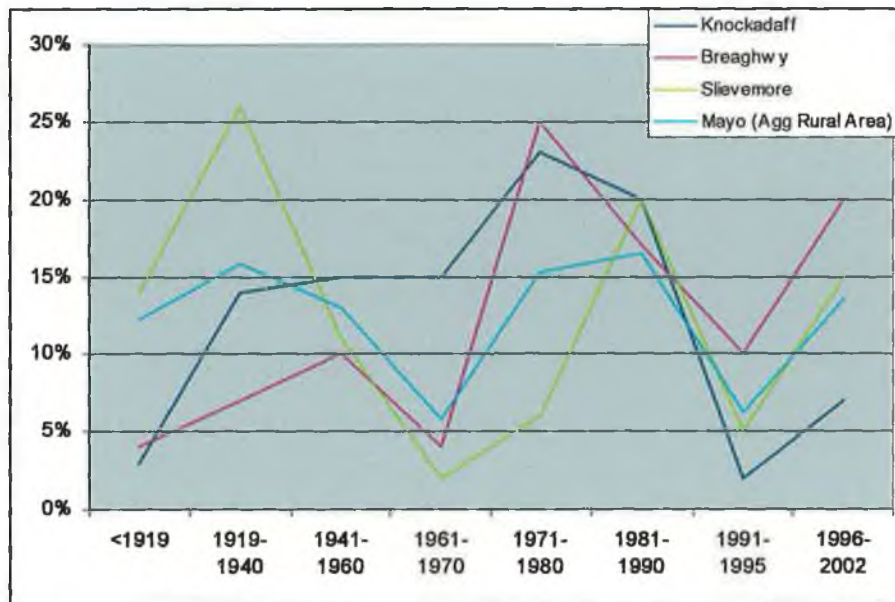
(Dept. of the Environment 1991-2000)

While these figures relate to the county as a whole, there is no distinction between urban or rural housing, urban generated housing in rural areas or local generated housing in rural areas. There is a lack of specific area-based figures within the county. However, the Mayo Housing Strategy states that existing housing pressure for

residential development within the county is approximately 40% Urban and 60% Rural (Mayo County Council, Mayo Housing Strategy, 2002, p.27).

Individual rural areas are not considered and so when overall statistics are looked at together, it appears that there have been phenomenal levels of housing development occurring throughout the county, yet this proved not to be the case in all the research study areas.

Fig 6.3: Age of Housing in Each Case Study Area



(Source SAPS, 2002)

Analysis of the SAPS does provide some indication in relation to the housing age yet it is not sufficient. It does not include several housing types such as holiday or second homes that were unoccupied at the time when the census was conducted. The housing settlement and distribution map compiled during the observational analysis provide a clearer indication on the rate, extent and locations of new developments (See Distribution Maps Appendix A).

The Maps have been compiled as part of the housing type and settlement analysis. They highlight the levels of building that has been occurring in each case study area and the location of all housing. Fig 6.3 shows that all areas have experienced an increase in housing built since 1991 and that rates of change differ within each area. The current breakdown of housing statistics within the council is

based upon the three main urban areas while statistics for rural areas are provided as the 'rest' of the county. Statistics in relation to planning permission granted and refused in each area since 1997 are only now being compiled by the county council. If future spatial planning is to be successful then much more in depth area specific information is needed.

Housing Tenure

Examining housing tenure within each area provides an indication of the method of housing and land distribution occurring within the county. The nature of housing within Mayo is that 75.32% of Mayo's housing stock is located in aggregate rural areas as defined by the Central Statistics Office (2002). Of the housing located in rural areas, 87.9% is in private ownership. Although the nature of ownership varied between each case study area, housing in each area is also dominated by private ownership. Private ownership dominates within Ireland and has done so since the foundation of the State. This however has begun to change in more recent years and this change has been fuelled by government policies and wider socio-economic processes. There is an increasing amount of renting occurring (see Table 6.1), the impacts and causes of this need to be explored in relation to accessibility to the local housing market for newly forming households.

Table 6.1: Housing Tenure Type In Each Case Study Area: Compared to the Aggregate Rural Area In Co. Mayo

	Knockadaff	Breaghwy	Slievemore	Mayo (Agg. Rural Area)
Mortgage	9%	52%	23%	38.83%
No Mortgage	69%	40%	60%	49.07%
Purchasing From L.A.	8%	0%	0%	2.48%
Renting From L.A.	6%	0%	3%	3.9%
Renting Privately	3%	4%	7%	4.16%
Free of Rent	4%	1%	4%	1.55%
Did Not State	1%	3%	3%	0.01%

(Source CSO- SAPS 2002)

In relation to the private rented sector there has been an increase in recent years. This increase is due in part to the prohibitive costs of entry into the housing market. A second factor in the revival of private renting is its use as a privatised alternative to social housing (Finnerty et al, 2003). Results from the primary research household questionnaire in Breaghwy showed that 13% of respondents owned another home, which they were renting out (the majority of which were in Castlebar).

Finnerty et al (2003, p.132.) argues, "that affordability and access difficulties resulting from an insufficient volume of public and private new builds have been exacerbated by new patterns of ownership. Fuelled by tax incentive schemes in conjunction with unprecedented rates of house inflation, a class of newly affluent private households and investors have been active in the purchasing of housing units in both urban and rural areas".

These investors are directly competing for housing units with local household groups and this could result in locals who have been outbid renting a house from someone who has outbid them to purchase the same property.

There are numerous problems within the private renting sector. Approximately one-third of private tenants are dependent on rent supplements (a form of housing benefit effectively available only to unemployed tenants) (Guerin, 1999). Private tenants are vulnerable to minimal notice to quit (four weeks) and arbitrary rent increases, while a lax inspection and regulatory regime in the context of high demand means that exploitative rents can be obtained for poor quality accommodation (Downey and Devilly, 1998). To add insult to injury rental payments are subject to far lower levels of tax relief than mortgage repayments (Finnerty et al, 2003, p.131).

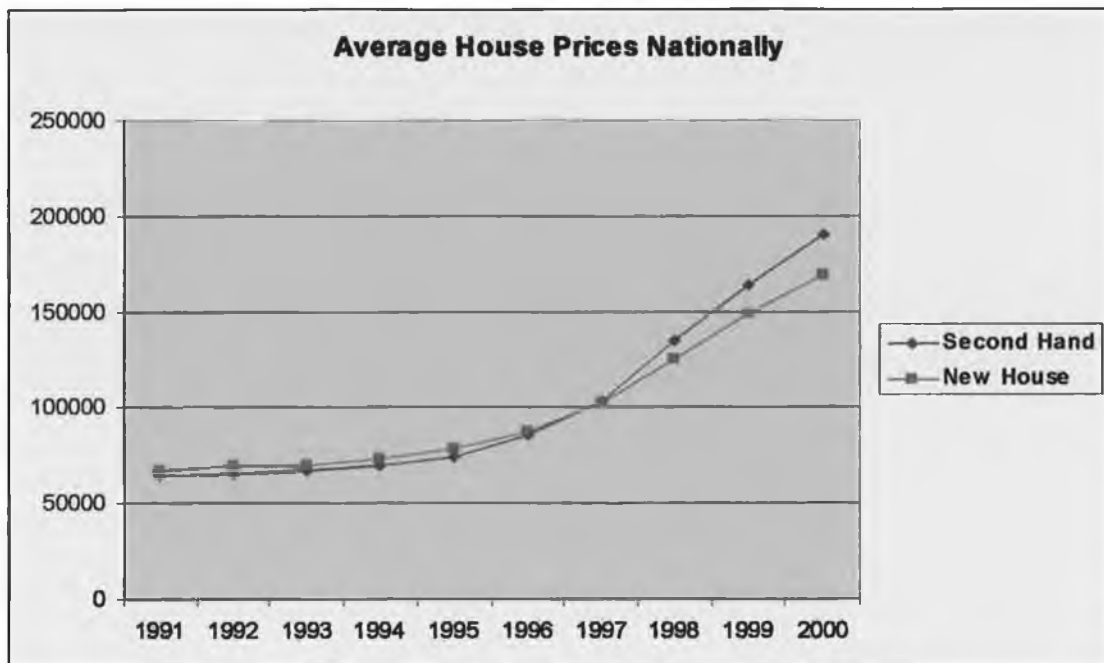
There is a relatively small social housing sector which is comprised of local authority and voluntary /co-operative providers. The levels within Slievemore (3% and Breaghwy 0%) are extremely low. Areas of increased demand and property price increase exacerbate local accessibility problems with regard to the housing market. Knockadaff has a relatively high amount in comparison to the other two areas and this figure must be explained by the obvious demand for such housing in the area.

The relatively high numbers of housing for which there are no mortgages is not necessarily a reflection of affluence within the area (Table 6.1). With over 60% of housing in two of the case study areas having no mortgages, it could be suggested that there is a high level of inter-family exchange possibly through inheritance. It could

also be suggested that a number of houses within the area have been purchased outright by more affluent in-migrants, particularly in popular areas such as Slievemore.

Recent hyperinflation in the housing market (see Fig 6.4 & Table 6.2) is giving rise to unease among commentators (see Finnerty et al, 2003, p.130); who are concerned that the emphasis on owning one's home is now leading to over mortgaged or excluded households.

Fig 6.4: Average House Prices Nationally



(Source Dept of Environment 2000)

House prices have increased dramatically across the country resulting in a situation in which those on relatively low incomes find it difficult to acquire a house. This situation may have significant implications for future settlement in rural Mayo. Increase in house prices has far outstripped the rise in real incomes, with the ratio of house prices to average earnings rising from 4.3 to 1 in 1994 to 6.4 to 1 in 1998 (Drudy, 1999: 6).

Table 6.2: Comparison of House Price Increase (Prices In Euros)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
% increased		+ .54%	+ 23.12%	+9.4%	+20.56%	+15.5%
Mayo	51,970	52,249	64,328	70,376	84,846	97,952
% increase		+8.64%	+26.12%	+15.24%	+24.72	+18%
State	60,912	66,174	83,461	96,181	119,953	141,660

(1995-2000, Overall percentage increase for Co. Mayo 88.5%) (1995-2000, Overall Percentage Increase for the State 132.5%) (Source Department of the Environment & Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006)

National and local increases in housing prices are impacting upon rural areas in a number of ways. The relatively reasonable prices which housing in Mayo offers in comparison to national prices may be quite an attractive investment for those with higher disposable incomes. The fact that land prices have increased has also led to an increase in the sale of sites. While statistics on the sale of sites have not been collected, it is fair to say that it has been on the increase in the past decade.

For those non-land owners within the area, there may be some impending future problems in relation to accessibility to the housing market (particularly for young first time buyers). As mentioned above, in-migration alone cannot be blamed for the increase in house prices; the rate and level of investment and the purchasing of second homes are having an ever-increasing impact.

Competition from investment and holiday homes must be combined with the fact that those moving to or back into an area may have a higher purchasing power due to the fact they are multiple movers and may have taken advantage of the relatively high price growth occurring in urban areas. It has been shown in chapter four that Mayo income levels are generally lower than the national average. Indeed, it could be argued that the average income of those in more peripheral areas is actually lower than the average for the county, as those located in the higher social earning brackets are located in areas such as Breaghwy which are less rural in nature (See Fig 6.6).

6.3 Housing Type and Settlement Pattern Analysis

“Mayo County Council recognises that vibrant rural communities in towns, villages, and dispersed rural settlements -are fundamental to rural regeneration. However it recognises that the natural beauty of Mayo is a major economic asset to the county. Good house design is responsive to its context and sustainable in its use of materials, energy and resources. Well designed housing makes the countryside and its towns and villages more attractive” (Mayo County Council, Draft Housing Guidelines, 2003). These draft guidelines were however rejected by Mayo County Council and as yet new draft guidelines have not been issued.

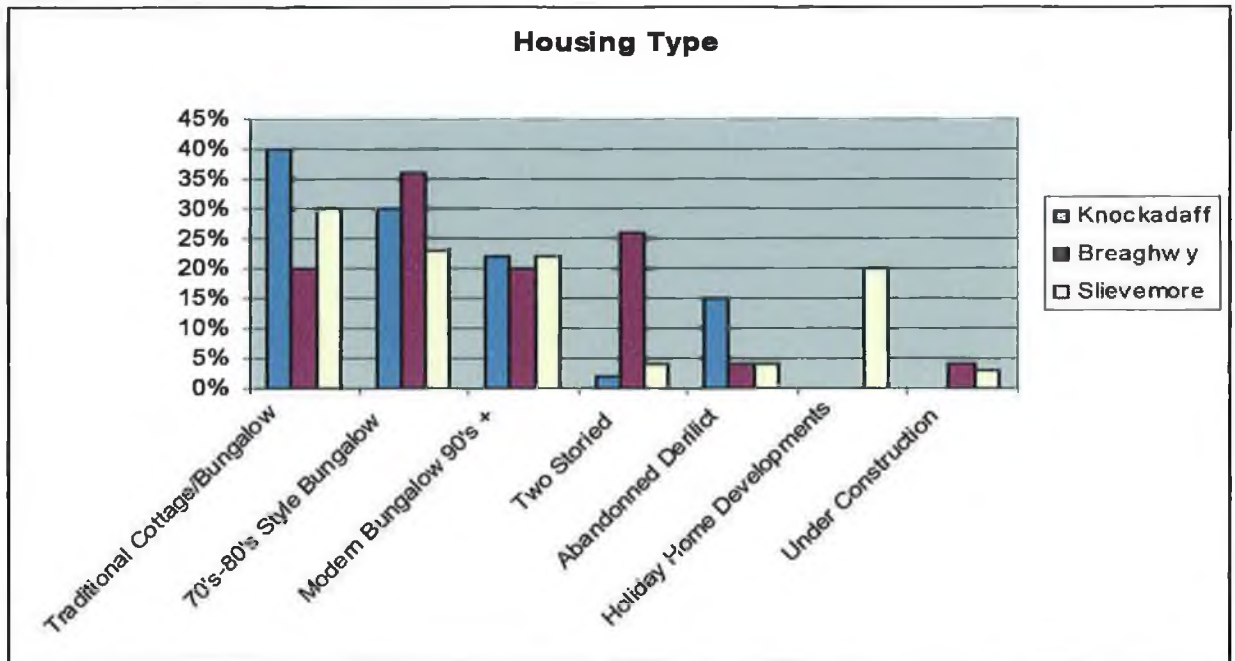
A housing unit survey was conducted in order to provide an indication of the type, style and condition of housing within each study area (see appendix A). During fieldwork, photographic and geographic locational analysis of housing quantity and quality was undertaken. These results were mapped (See Maps Appendix A) and a visual record of the housing stock of the three case study areas was collected. Due to the volume of material only a selection is presented here and the remainder can be found in Appendix A.

The styles include,

- Traditional Cottage/Bungalow; this includes traditional style dwellings and cottages which have been renovated and extended.
- Bungalows in Villa and Chalet styles, (1970s, and 80's) these bungalow types are predominant features of architecture from the seventies and eighties. Design and exterior types are varied.
- Modern Bungalows; (1990s, +) again there is a multitude of individual designs within this category. Styles range here from relatively simple unfussy designs to more ornate and functional designs. One of the most predominant types of bungalow from this period is the dormer bungalow. This type is actually two storied and maximises use of internal space.
- Two storied; these vary in style and age. While there are examples of older traditional styled farmhouses, the majority of two storied dwellings built are of a more recent age.

Also included within this observational analysis are abandoned /derelict dwellings, dwellings under construction and holiday developments. Examining the housing types allow for a more comprehensive picture of each area to be painted.

Fig 6.5 Broad Housing Type in Each Area



(These figures are based upon observational analysis within each area. They are broadly reflective of the housing styles within each area) (Total Number of Housing Units Knock daff 160, Breaghwy 500, Slievemore 450- total 1100 aprox)

The issue of improved living conditions in relation to improved quality of housing is also important and is discussed in more detail in the housing field study analysis (see Appendix A)

Slievemore –High Amenity Consumption



Plate 1. Example of settlement pattern; Slievemore.

The predominant form of settlement within this area is based upon clusters of housing and is considered to be distinctive along the western seaboard. It has been highlighted under the NSS and the 2004 National Draft Rural Housing Guidelines that this distinction needs to be recognised. This form of settlement has evolved through several generations and continuity of use within the area. The NSS believes that strengthening of such clusters of development can be accomplished through in-fill development.

Achill has become increasingly popular as a tourist destination over the last century particularly in the more recent past.. The area was designated under the Pilot Resort Scheme (1995), under which developers of holiday homes were entitled to tax incentives. The aims of this scheme were to attract investment and stimulate growth within the area.

Slievemore highlights the impacts holiday homes and tourism have had upon local housing needs and existing stock. The majority of the housing stock in the area is old and some of it is relatively poor quality (yet occupied on a full time basis). The disparity in quality of housing types between holiday homes and permanent stock is quite stark.



Plate 2. Holiday Village Development Slievemore.



Plate3. Example of Poor Quality Housing still in occupation Slievemore

Knockadaff (Marginal)

Some of the more traditional forms of settlement can be observed within this area. Housing is located within four main areas. The settlement here is similar to that of the Clachan system with small clusters of housing located together. While this is the predominant form of settlement there is some evidence to show that this may begin to change if the area becomes more popular (See Maps Appendix A).



Plate 4 Traditional Cluster Settlement

Clustered type settlement based on the Clachan system (Killgalligan). This is a larger example that has evolved over time but is still in line with traditional forms of settlement.



Plate 5 Example of a possible Clachan; Curranboy

The clachan is a number of houses clustered together. Traditionally links between kin would have been strong in such settlements. The Clachan is believed to be a distinctive settlement pattern in rural Ireland while some historians /archaeologists

(Dr. Seamus Caulfield being one) argue that this type of settlement dates back to at least the Late Bronze Age and can be observed in the distribution patterns of ring forts. Archaeological excavations have yet to prove or disprove this.

The issue of poor quality housing within the area should also be emphasised. There is a significant amount of poor quality housing within the area much of which is occupied by older inhabitants (See Appendix A).

Breaghwy (Peri-Urban)

Breaghwy has undergone the most dramatic change of all areas in its settlement pattern. There is an extremely wide variety of housing types located within the area (see appendix). Traditional forms of settlement in the area have been altered due to continued ribbon development from the nineteen seventies onwards.



Plate 6. Palladian style mansion built in the 1990s,



Plate 7. Traditional cottage (farmhouse)

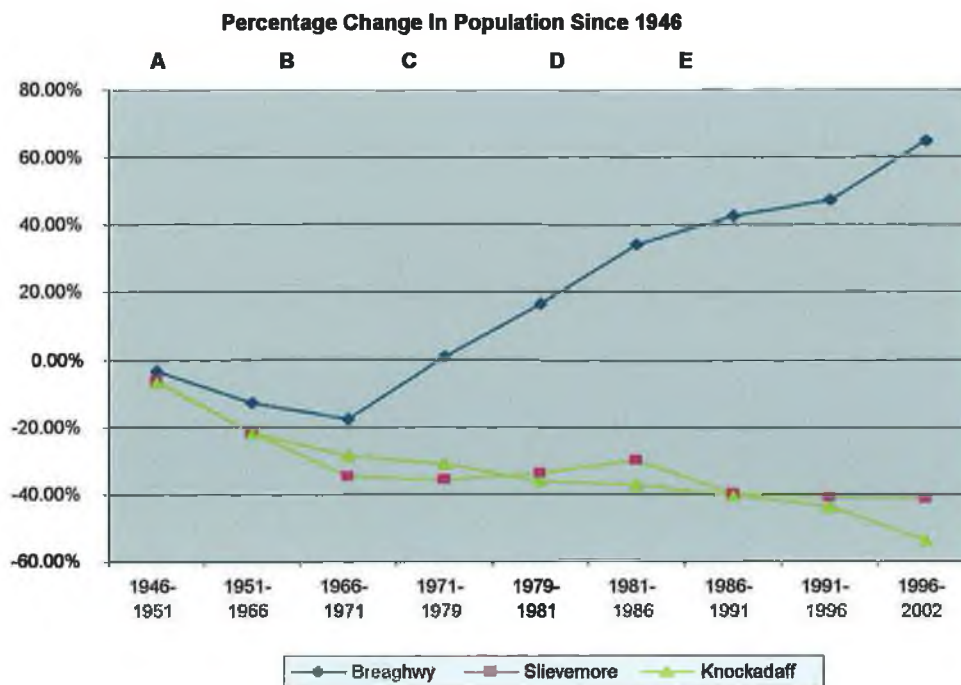
There is a distinct disparity in the style, quality of house types within this area. The disparity of house styles highlights the changing nature of the area in recent years. Under planning policy, new housing must be deemed to be in harmony with housing already located within the area. This policy will become increasingly difficult for planners because of the broad nature of housing types that have already been built. The execution of the policy only takes into consideration housing in the immediate area of the new dwelling and does not take into account housing in the wider area. The policy does not seem to have taken into account the historical tradition of house types within each area and so a mish /mash of styles have evolved in some areas.

“Without corrective policies, house styles are likely to increase in variety and discordance with the landscape” (Aalen, et al, 1997, p.164).

6.4 Demographic Change

Despite the fact that there have been increased overall levels of housing in the past 10 years in each area, Breaghwy is the only area that has experienced a population increase.

Fig 6.6 Percentage change in population in each case study area



(Source CSO, 1946-2002)

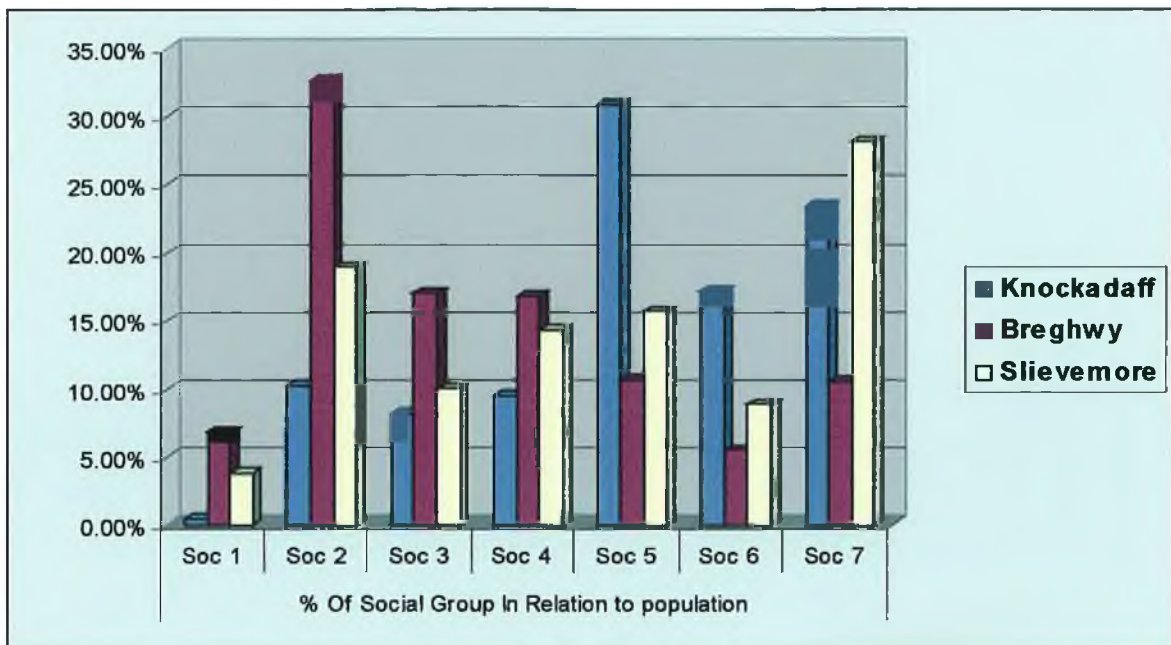
The rapid increase in population in Breaghwy cannot be apportioned to natural increase alone. An influx of in-migrants has been ongoing over a sustained period but it has been particularly accelerated in the past twenty years or so. This in-migration has had impacts upon the make up of the local community and community structures. While the other two case study areas have experienced overall population decline it cannot be said from these statistics that no in-migration has occurred.

Socio Economic Profile

Analysing social class profiles in each area is important in relation to identifying and exploring the nature of change within those areas.

- Social Class 1. Professional Workers
- Social Class 2. Managerial and Technical
- Social Class 3. Non Manual
- Social Class 4. Skilled Manual
- Social Class 5. Semi Skilled
- Social Class 6. Unskilled
- Social Class 7. All others gainfully occupied and unknown.

Fig 6.7 Breakdown of Social Class In Each Case Study Area

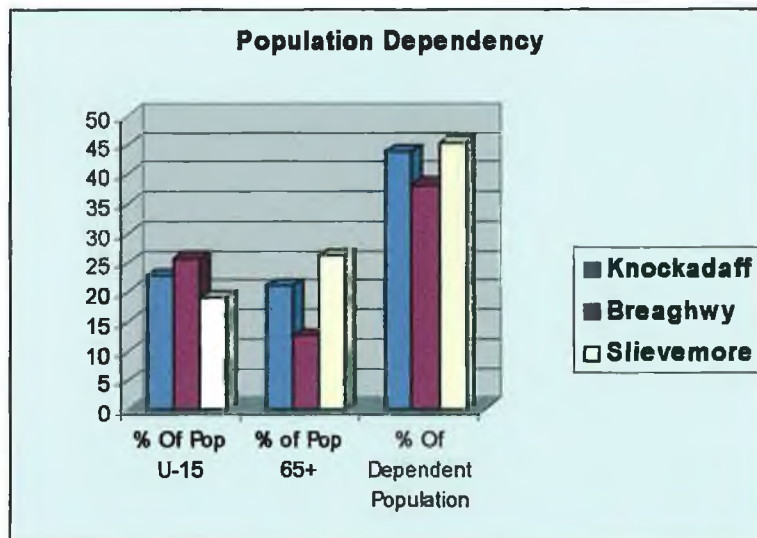


Source CSO –SAPS, 2002)

The first three social classes, which relate to more skilled and higher earning jobs, dominate in Breaghwy, yet levels in Slievemore are also significant. The enormous disparity which exists between each of the areas is also highlighted in the level of semi-skilled, unskilled and those gainfully employed. It could be argued that differences within each category have been compounded by in-migration trends. In particular, trends associated with those within higher earning brackets moving into rural areas. This is reflected in the choice of area that is currently favoured as destinations for in-migrants. Breaghwy, due to its proximity to Castlebar offers easy access to a centre with a relatively diverse economic base. The extent of in-migration to Slievemore is also significant (although a more extensive amount occurs on a seasonal basis).

The changing nature of Breaghwy is compounded with 25% of the population under the age of 15. This is an indication of increasing numbers of young families within the area. It is also interesting to note that Breaghwy has the lowest percentage of population over the age of 65.

Fig 6.8 Population Dependency Levels In Each Case Study Area



(Source CSO –SAPS, 2002)

The population dependency ratio is relatively high in each of the case study areas. However issues concerning dependency and its impacts may not be as apparent in Breaghwy due to the significant amounts of residents in the higher social classes.

In relation to housing, a closer examination of these statistics shows that there are significantly higher percentages of one and two person households with inhabitants over the age of 65 living in Knockadaff and Slievemore.

- Knockadaff 28%
- Breaghwy 13.8%
- Slievemore 33.16%

(The above are a percentage of the overall housing stock available in each area based upon CSO).

Older residents of one and two person households are at increased risk of suffering from poverty and social exclusion. The highest percentage of these households is in Slievemore. This may be apportioned to a number of factors; firstly, an ageing indigenous population and secondly, in-migrants and older return migrants choosing to retire to the area. This issue needs to be explored further and the phenomenon of retirement migration and its impacts debated. While acknowledging that some of the older inhabitants may be in- or return migrants there are undoubtedly a high percentage of these indigenous to the area. Knockadaff has relatively low levels of in-migration and the numbers of people moving to the area to retire are not high currently.

In Breaghwy 13.8% of the housing stock is comprised of households of one or two person's aged 65+. While this figure is not as high as the other areas, it is still significant. Breaghwy has experienced high levels of in-migration particularly from younger age groups. The aging population here is primarily made up of local inhabitants. So, while Breaghwy is a relatively affluent area, there may be a number of trends more in common with the other less affluent study areas occurring within it. These trends may not be obvious at first glance, particularly to new affluent in-migrating groups and therefore may not be considered to be an issue in the locality. Community representation in local organisations often tends to reflect the dominant majority, so this study area may face unique social challenges untypical of the other two sites.

6.5 Community Development and Sustainability

The National Spatial Strategy and related local housing strategies advocate the provision of housing for all in a sustainable manner (Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 where 20% of zoned land must be given to social and affordable housing). The Mayo Housing Strategy has stated that the demand for social and affordable housing in Mayo over the period 2001-2006 will exceed the anticipated supply (The Mayo Housing Strategy, 2001-2006, p.22). The strategy acknowledges that predicting future needs is difficult and can only be based upon data that is available and that the strategy must be flexible to allow for the introduction of new updated information that may become available during the course of its implementation. It is currently three years into this strategy and no new information has been added. The issue of providing social and affordable housing in remote rural areas and in areas where there is increasing pressure for housing may prove difficult in the future. Without a proper evaluation of the processes currently occurring within each specific area the extent and nature of the problem may not be assessed accurately.

Within the housing strategy the total provision for housing development has been estimated based on a multitude of criteria (See Mayo Housing Strategy, p.7). It has been estimated that there will be 4,575 new household formations in the period 2001-2006. It is unclear what the demand in each of the case study areas will be and what the nature of that housing will be. Although the estimations are based on household formations, it does not take into account further pressures, which may be caused due to second home ownership and property speculation. The pressures which second homes and holiday homes cause are acknowledged, but the Mayo Housing Strategy does not suggest any strategies to deal with this to ensure that local needs are met. With competing interests for housing in several rural areas, the projected needs may be insufficient. Overall, secondary data from SAPS and other sources provided an important context for the gathering of primary research information.

6.6 Stakeholders Gatekeepers Interviews

The rate and nature of change in rural housing in Ireland has been accelerated in recent years. In order to gain an insight into aspects of this change, possibly reasons for its occurrence and impacts which change is having, a number of key stakeholders and gatekeepers were interviewed in relation to various issues. They included representatives from Government bodies (2), semi-state bodies (2), local authority planning officials (3), representatives from social services (1), architects (3), estate agents (4), former manager of recycling plant (1) and developers (3). A total of 19 interviews were conducted. The stakeholders and gatekeepers provided a broader insight into the wide range of issues involved and allowed for some responses to results gathered from the household questionnaire. Results are broken down in line with general themes of interviews, these included, demographic change, housing and settlement, community and sustainability. Respondents were interviewed in relation to all of the themes, although range and depth of knowledge in each sub-heading evaluated varied between respondents. (See Appendix D)

6.6.1 Housing and Settlement

It was important to evaluate the roles of stakeholders here. The stakeholders provided a depth of information in relation to processes that they have noted to be occurring. The range of stakeholders is deliberately broad and includes discussions on a wide range of issues. Issues varied here from accessibility to the housing market, spiralling housing costs, role and attitudes of planning departments to groups involved in community development, and the subsequent impacts which demographic change is having upon their ability to foster sustainable community development.

One of the most significant impacts upon housing in the recent past has been the spiralling cost of housing and property. Reasons for increases in property prices are multifaceted and interviews here provided an indication of some of the reasons although these sometimes were contradictory.

“There has been a lot of change in the housing market; it has been overtaken by phenomenal greed. Greed from individuals speculating on property have pushed prices up but most significant is the greed of developers, they used to make about 12-15% profit on a property now they want 150% profit” (Estate Agent, Castlebar).

“I blame the estate agents for part of the problem in relation to increases in housing prices, after all it is their business and it suits them to have property prices at high levels they make more money then” (Developer 1, Castlebar).

“The exorbitant rates which are being paid for land is crazy, its no wonder housing is so expensive” (Developer 2, Castlebar).

The average house prices within the case study areas varied but only because of house type and not necessarily location.

”The average price for a 4 bed roomed house in Breaghwy in 2003 was 200-250,000 euros, however Breaghwy also had a relatively high percentage of housing in the high quality-high price bracket, in the most recent luxury estate the price for each house is 500,000 euros. In Achill (Slievemore) an average 4 bed roomed detached house would cost 200-220,000 euros but you also have your highly desirable properties there which range from 280-500,000 euros” (Estate Agent, Castlebar).

The average price for a 3-4 bed roomed house in Knockadaff would range from 160-200,000 euros. There are sites available in the area (without planning permission) for 30-40,000 euros.

“The value of property has gone up in the area in recent years and anything that comes on the market there is usually sold. It is relatively popular but the main problem is that there is not enough property on the market in the area, if it was I have no doubt it would be sold. We have sold a few properties and sites in the recent past and I’d say that they were purchased by around 50% locals and 50% in-comers” (Estate Agent, Ballina).

There has been increasing investment in housing in some rural areas particularly Breaghwy and Slievemore. The increased investment in housing has also led to impacts upon the style, type and nature of housing in rural areas. The style and type of housing being built are also having significant impact upon property prices.

“Money has been the main catalyst for the change in styles of housing since the late Sixties onwards; people want to show their wealth through their housing, they want everyone to see their house” (Planner, Mayo County Council, 2004).

“We don’t impose designs on people, we provide recommendations on sitting and design. I don’t think we should impose designs on people as this would take away

from the individuality of buildings in the countryside” (Planner, Mayo County Council, 2004).

Not only is the changing nature of housing and affluence impacting upon the housing stock but there is also an impact on who is purchasing and on who can afford to purchase. “I would say from the properties I have sold in Breaghwy, about 3-5% were purchased by locals, 30-40% by people returning from abroad, 40-50% from people moving out from Castlebar and about 10% by people retiring” (Estate Agent, Castlebar).

While some rural areas are undergoing some fundamental demographic changes, not all areas have experienced change and some are still in a state of decline. One of the main areas of concerns with regard to housing and in-migration in many rural areas is one of land use. Policy and planning regulations (see policy chapter) are changing and this is beginning to cause some conflict and will lead to some impeding decisions on land use, which may prove difficult and controversial. The housing issues that are affecting each case study area must be examined individually as must the style and nature of the buildings (see appendices).

“I’m not sure about this policy of zoning land; the government are playing into the hands of greedy developers and landowners”(Estate Agent 2, Castlebar).

“It is so difficult to say where housing policy is headed, I think residency clauses can be a good thing but they can also have negative effects such on the prices of other houses in the area and in the ability of ensuring a mortgage” (County Councillor, Mayo, 2003).

The interviews also revealed bad feeling about the distribution of wealth from housing growth.

“Developers don’t incur any of the extra costs associated with housing in rural areas, it is all passed on to the purchaser and the state while developers are making an absolute fortune” (Estate Agent 1, Castlebar).

The nature and method of planning was criticised by many respondents within the household questionnaire, and this criticism was also evident in the agency interview also.

“The planning department are a law unto themselves it really is farcical how bad they are” (Estate Agent Ballina) (These issues are discussed further in appendix A).

“Its no wonder people are moving out to the countryside, the lack of green spaces in housing estates in Castlebar is unbelievable there seems to be no urban planning in Mayo it is abysmal” (Community Councillor, Breaghwy, 2003).

“In relation to planning some decisions are just ridiculous, the Council are strict on us when it comes to putting in green spaces in new private housing estates, not that I am against this but it does impact on our profitability, yet when it comes to estates which have been designed by them as part of social and affordable housing the use of green open space is minimal. Why should those people not be entitled to the same amount of green space as those in private estates?” (Developer 2, Castlebar).

“It is easy to see why people criticise us, there have been some awful planning decisions made, people need to recognise the political motivations involved. I don’t think any government is going to grab the bull by the horns and make a tough decision in relation to proper restrictions on housing, it would be political suicide for them” (Architect, Mayo County Council, 2004).

6.6.2 Community Development and Sustainability

The complex nature of community participation was revealed in the questionnaire survey and similar problems of involvement became apparent during interviews.

“the vast majority of communities have within themselves and within their grasp a considerable capacity to develop. It is attitude that ultimately makes a difference” (Howell, 1983, cited in Everitt et al, 1991). “People need to enjoy becoming involved in community development; they shouldn’t feel that they are carrying a cross” (Community Development Officer, Togher Valley Group, Co. Mayo, 2003).

The changing dynamic of demographics in rural areas is undoubtedly impacting upon community make up and on local development forums. The impacts of change within the communities living in each area and attitudes towards change have been assessed in this work. An assessment of external agencies and professional

bodies involved with local community /development groups provides a platform from which to assess these groups from an external and professional viewpoint.

“A lot of the local community development is ad-hoc, some groups are so introverted they don’t see the wider picture” (Representative from Údaras na Gaeltachta).

“There are many problems associated with community groups we are involved with. There are often different focuses within the group and good leadership is often a problem” (Representative from Mayo County Development Board, 2003).

The question of whether in-migrants can contribute positively to local groups is an important yet a difficult one to assess. Are local groups being taken over and having their agendas dominated by the more mobile affluent middle class. There is undoubtedly some friction with regard to local newcomer divides within each area, but the overriding need for development particularly in the more peripheral areas undoubtedly requires greater participation levels. The issue of human resource deficit is highlighted by a number of respondents:

“Many of the groups we deal with are run by the elderly, there are very few new ideas coming through” (Representative Údaras na Gaeltachta, 2003).

“Participation levels in voluntary activities are generally poor and getting worse” (Community Development Officer, Togher Valley Group, Co. Mayo, 2003).

“The future of community development here is unclear, it could work with new blood and wider consensus but it could just as easily fade away and die in some areas” (Representative from Mayo County Development Board, 2003).

Local Stakeholders

Community Councils did not exist in all of the case study areas, only Breaghwy had a specific Community Council and while community based forums existed in the other case study areas; they differed in type and nature from the community council. Within Breaghwy a Community Council of 14 exists and is made up of around 50% locals and 50% who have moved into the area. The ‘Community Council’ provides a forum where local issues of concern, issues of development and other issues can be discussed identified and brought to the attention of the county council. It provides a mechanism where the community council can bring their concerns to the county council, although several respondents including ex members have called its effectiveness into question.

In Knockadaff, two community development groups exist, firstly the Community Development Co-Op. The co-op is comprised of 35 stakeholders. 22 of the group are living in the area and have done so all their lives, 7 are return /in-migrants and 6 members live in Dublin but have roots in the area. This group are involved in various activities locally. They have started two Irish pre-schools, been involved in the Glenamoy roads repair scheme. The group have also organised a number of adult education classes that have varied from cookery courses to courses run by The Fisheries Board. The group have also made representations to the council over a number of issues.

In the immediate area there also exists Rossport Development Company. It has 20 volunteers, two from each of the villages in the area. All the members could be considered locals. While there are 20 within the group “there is only about 5 really working at it” (Interview with Member). The group have been involved in various projects from cleaning up the graveyards to projects relating to coastal erosion. The group has also established Kilcommin services, which provide a day care centre for the elderly. The group also provides a support base for other groups such as the ‘Women’s Group’. The group have as yet been not allocated a part-time staff member to co-ordinate its activities. Knockadaff Community Development Co-op within the area are complemented by professional staff (one person) and receive assistance from Údaras na Gaeltachta, it is a possible bone of contention locally. Some friction also exists within the area between the two groups and a disagreement about where a new pier should be put in place has caused funding to be held back from the area. “Conflict has been a major issue in this area, the government won’t invest in areas where there is a lack of consensus internally. The three things holding back the development of the pier are; lack of agreement within the community as to where it should be built, environmental reasons and politics; no one strong voice can come forward from the area. Nothing has been done and nothing will be done as long as two groups keep shouting at each other” (Údaras na Gaeltachta Development Officer, Interview, 2003).

The main conflict, which has arisen, has not arisen as a local versus incomer divide; instead it has divided locals in the area and has ultimately led to funding being held back. Within the area there is also a certain disgruntlement over funding which the area receives as a Gaeltacht area and how funding is spent on the development of roads in the area.

“Grants are given to outsiders that come in; all they have to be able to do is speak the language (Irish). The whole thing is politically motivated and unfair” (Local, Knockadaff). Knockadaff provides an interesting case study on community development issues in peripheral areas where there is disagreement and conflict.

In Slievemore there are a number of community groups that are active in a number of various activities. The main community group within in the area is the Achill Local Development Group. This group is comprised of 20 members; around 70% would be considered local. The 20 members are volunteers and are complemented by two full time staff and a resource centre. Members within the group believe it to be well balanced between locals, newcomers and return migrants. In Slievemore, Community Development projects are now coming on line due to work, which has been done by the group. While there are community development groups on the island, they are primarily located on the eastern side and outside the zone of the case study.

“The current project came about as a need to develop the west side of the island” (Member of Community Development Project, 2003).

Members within the group acknowledge that there needs to be a coming together under one umbrella of all community development groups on the island, but feel that their area should be represented and facilities put in place as most of the facilities are located elsewhere on the island. There are currently eight members involved within this community development project, four are locals, one is a returned migrant and three are in-migrants. The group is only newly established so it is difficult to examine their success rate. The group is well balanced between in-migrants and locals and as yet no friction has arisen.

“Its great having people that have moved to the area becoming involved, they have no pre-conceived notions, they have no baggage or grudges against anyone, they seem to be very genuine in their concern for the area and in creating a better community for everyone” (Slievemore Member of Community Development Project, 2003).

Examining community development within each area shows some notable differences in the type and makeup of the groups. Groups within Knockadaff and Slievemore are more involved in bringing about social and economic development within each area. This is probably due to the need and demands to develop each area. While volunteerism is vital for these groups a professional support base complements

them. While it is not within the remit of this study to evaluate their relative success rates, it can be observed that they are functioning. While they may not be functioning to their full potential, the back up support which they receive from having full time staff and support from semi state bodies allow for funding to be more efficiently targeted. It has been shown that within these areas there is a need to “come together for the greater good”. This has occurred in Slievemore yet divisions among the groups in Knockadaff over funding and where it should be spent will make things increasingly difficult within that area.

Community development within Slievemore and Knockadaff has been fuelled by need and the availability of funding for remote areas or areas in decline. From the outset it would appear that there is no need for such development groups within Breaghwy. The ‘Community Council’ is the main community development forum within the area. It has been criticised by many within the study (including ex members) for lacking power and the ability to make decisions. Several respondents also have been critical of the function of the council and question the goals of the group. On the surface Breaghwy is a prosperous area, but there is a significant amount of disparity among many within the community. While it would be unfair to state that the community council could be ignoring issues concerning a less prosperous minority, it could simply be that many of these issues are not highlighted or seen to be within the remit of this group. Reasons for issues not being highlighted could be apportioned from those most marginal people not becoming involved due to a feeling of disempowerment. In Ireland there is evidence to suggest that those most in need in rural areas are unlikely to involve themselves in community activities (Storey, 1995, p.13).

“There is a bit of a clique, I’d feel out of place” (Local, Breaghwy).

While there are some problems which may be associated with some of the elderly becoming marginalised, there may also be increasing levels of problems growing in relation to some younger inhabitants.

Within groups that have achieved relative success in achieving community development and engaging with the wider community, individual personalities and characteristics were evidently important in successful outcomes:

“Some people are just negative towards life; unfortunately they are negative towards everything; that negativity can impact on local people becoming involved for fear of criticism. It’s difficult in that regard trying to get people involved but I think you have

from this conspicuous consumption. People are making more and more use of natural resources” (Planner, Mayo County Council, 2004).

“In the last 5 or 6 years there has been a massive increase in the numbers of one-off housing and new septic systems have allowed this. Because these systems are new it will not be for another ten years until we can tell how effective they are” (Planner Mayo County Council, 2004).

While a significant number of respondents in the household questionnaire said that they recycled, whether they actually did or not is difficult to prove. A former manager of the recycling plant in the county highlighted the difficulties that are faced in monitoring recycling activity. While acknowledging that levels of recycling had greatly improved within the county the respondent felt that much more could be done. “The whole area of waste management is difficult; the recent debacle in Dublin with the bin tax highlighted this. It should be up to individuals to pay for the waste they produce as well as companies producing the waste. One-way I think we could address the issues is to place responsibility upon local areas themselves. Charge each area for the waste that they produce, make community council’s responsible -educate the public -get them involved. The tidy towns initiative has been one of the most successful initiatives ever, why not take it one more step and get communities involved in recycling” (Former Manager of Mayo Recycling Plant, 2003).

This real step would prove to be controversial but is a much more worthwhile activity in the long run than the simple beautifying of areas already pursued by the tidy towns campaign. Another area of concern was highlighted here in relation to how serious the Local Authority is about recycling.

“They sent over a load of councillors for a trip over to Holland to see a recycling plant, examine how it works and how they are implementing their waste management strategy. I wasn’t in the group (it’s not sour grapes), the ones that went were all councillors and I’d say none of them has ever since set foot in the recycling plant. It is ridiculous why they have to send a load of councillors on another trip, why didn’t they send the people who are working here and ultimately responsible for recycling in Mayo, Its ridiculous” (Former Manager of Mayo Recycling Plant, 2003).

6.7 Chapter Summary

The stakeholders /gatekeeper interviews provided further insights into the key themes of the research (housing, community development and sustainability) and interestingly show that both residents and external agencies often hold similar views on these issues in Mayo.

Results here highlight the high levels of private ownership and low levels of renting within each case study area. Results here also highlight the need to understand and respond to local traditional forms of settlement; this type of traditional settlement may be under increased pressure as economic opportunities arise in relation to the sale of housing and property. The nature, style and location of rural settlements have been changing. These changes make it increasingly difficult for planners to 'plan' future development and housing styles in rural areas.

Housing numbers have increased in each case study area, yet only one (Breaghwy) experienced a population increase. Breaghwy is dominated by more mobile affluent migrants, of which a high percentage (13) are second-home owners.

This chapter has also highlighted that there are also several positive impacts of in-migration, which must be considered in future planning provision for rural areas. Results show that while friction exists in some quarters in relation to in-migration, it has been generally shown that many in-migrants are becoming increasingly active in local community development and are being welcomed by many already involved.

Government schemes and incentives in relation to holiday home provision have been criticised by some for the negative impact that they have had upon certain areas.

Chapter 7. Results and Analysis II

7.1 Introduction

The household questionnaire carried out in each case study area provides more in-depth information on the research questions. These issues include attitudes towards national housing policy, demographic change, community structures, housing issues, affordability and personal observations of the respondents. The questionnaire also gathers some useful information in relation to the nature of housing tenure distribution in each area. The methodology chapter outlines approaches to the research, sampling and so on. The findings follow the layout of the questionnaire and have been grouped under general themes of demographic change, housing and settlement, community development and sustainability to consolidate understanding.

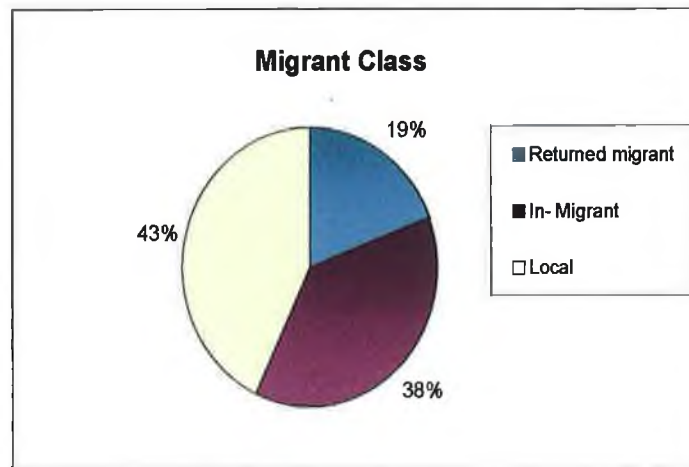
7.2 Demographic Change

Demographic change has been occurring in each area. More in-depth analysis of this change is needed in order to provide a context to explore issues in relation to rural housing. Issues such as land management are becoming increasingly loaded in several rural areas. Demographic change occurring in each area is complex and its nature must be understood if informed decisions in relation to land management and access to housing are to be made. It has been argued that forces such as investment and second-home ownership are impacting upon the ability of many to acquire a house in some rural areas. While it can be argued that this process is occurring (see results I), the possibility that in-migration to some rural areas may be impacting in a positive manner cannot be ignored. Stockdale (2000) argues that: "In-migration impacts need to be viewed within the context of rural restructuring. Under this approach it is concluded that rural in-migration is associated with many opportunities (employment creation and prospects for increased rural expenditure). However, these economic opportunities have yet to be realised fully" (Stockdale et al, 2000, p.243).

In order to understand the threats and opportunities which different types of rural areas in Mayo face there is a need to understand the changing demographics, motivations for such changing settlement patterns, attitudes and participation with the

wider community. The chart below shows the migrant status of the three DEDs, in this study.

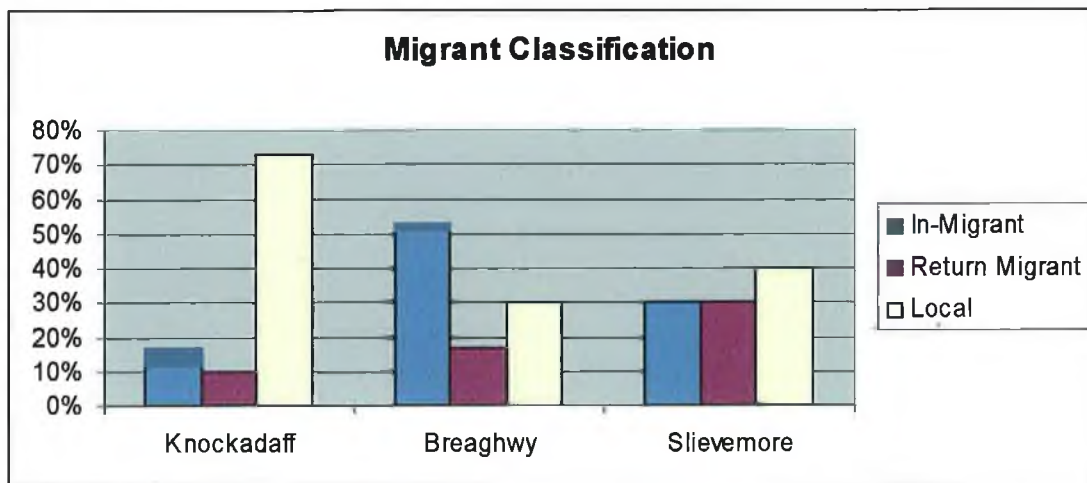
Fig 7.1 Migrant Status



(Household Questionnaire)

This information allows for an investigation of the impacts of in /return migrants upon sustainability and community development.

Fig 7.2 Migrant Status By Study Area



(Household questionnaire)

When migration levels were examined within each area, Breaghwy had the highest level of in-migration of all these samples. The reasons for this are due to Breaghwy's proximity to Castlebar and increased economic activity within Castlebar over a sustained period. While migration levels have increased within Breaghwy over the last ten years, migration into the area is not a new phenomenon. A rise in

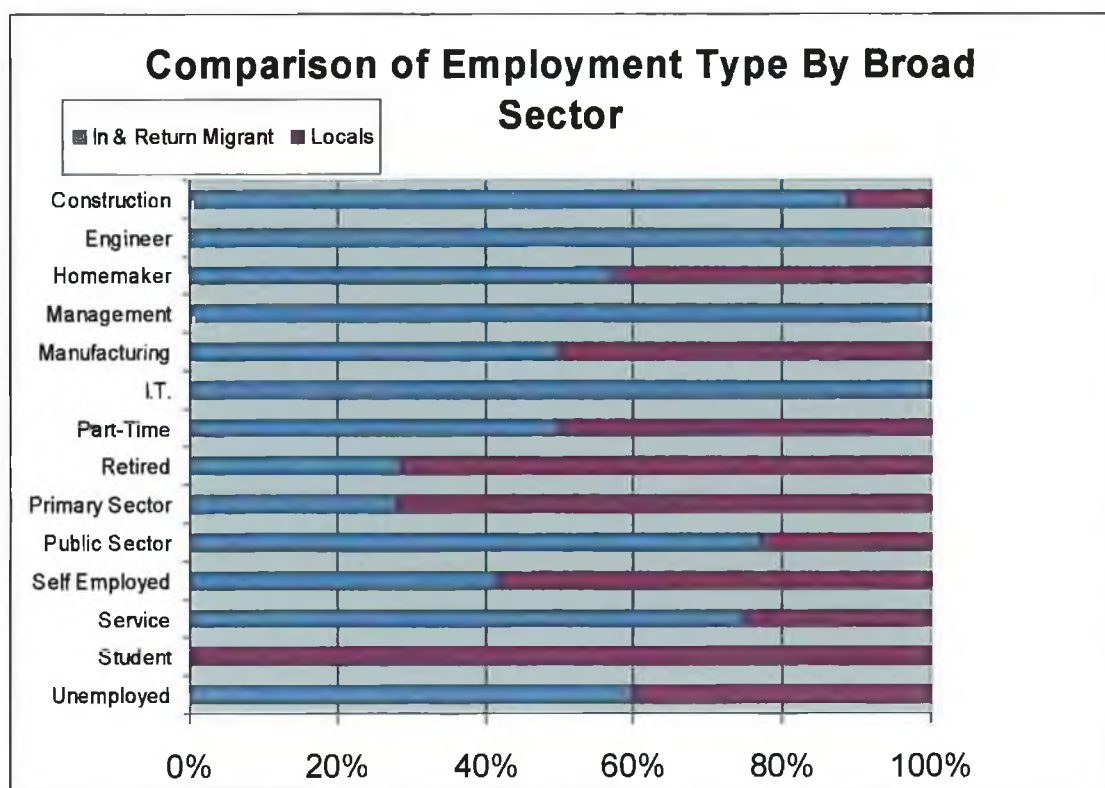
prosperity within Castlebar during the 1970s, and early 1980s, led to a sizeable amount of in-migration into nearby Breaghwy. The majority of new housing within the area has been urban generated. Breaghwy provides an ideal sample for the examination of recent migration trends, particularly how migrants who have settled there over a longer period of time have assimilated into the local community and their impact upon local housing stock and property prices.

The Slievemore sample consists entirely of permanent residents. This was a deliberate sampling strategy to examine participation levels and the housing issue concerns of year-round dwellers. The levels of in-migration increase dramatically during the summer; this is due to the large amount of holiday and second homes that are in the area. It was felt that for this study it was important to exclude seasonal migrants due to the difficulties they face in actively participating in community activities. It is a weakness within the study that seasonal migrants have not been targeted with regard to their attitudes on local housing issues and is an area that needs to be revisited in future research. In relation to affordability and accessibility, seasonal in-migration has had several impacts. The impacts of seasonal migrants upon local stock are examined here to some degree. The surveyed sample however, provides a clearer indication of the types of migrants that are settling here on a more permanent basis. Their motivations for settling in the area all year round are important, as are their opinions on Slievemore as an area to live in and in relation to future community development. Slievemore is experiencing overall population decline, yet also experiencing relatively high levels of in- and return migration.

Knockadaff is the most peripheral area of the sample and is an area which is experiencing population decline. Despite the fact that the overall population is declining, there is also evidence of in- and return migration. The levels of in-migration are significantly lower than the other case study areas. The area has experienced some in-migration and some people have been attracted to the area because it is a designated Gaeltacht. Examining a Gaeltacht study area allows for the exploration of some deeper cultural issues and the impacts that in-migrants are having on the Gaeltacht and local community structures. The impacts of in-migrants upon the language in the area are an important issue. The majority of in-migrants surveyed were motivated to move to the area because of the language and the area location and therefore their impacts upon the preservation of the language must be viewed as positive.

Fig 7.3 is a comparison of employment types between locals and in-migrants and supports other research that in-migrating groups have higher earning employment types. This may have implications for many locals in relation to being priced out of the housing market. If in-migrating groups are out pricing local interests, there could be an increased demand for social and affordable housing in those areas particularly among non-land owning families.

Fig 7.3 Comparison Of Employment Type By Broad Sector



(Household Questionnaire)

It can be argued that many of the migrating classes moving into the case study areas are middle class and that the employment types are of a much more varied nature than those of local respondents. With in-migration being dominated by urban generated housing in some rural areas it could be argued that a process of counter-urbanisation is occurring. Counter-urbanisation has been argued to have negative impacts upon the host community. Arguments focus upon rising property prices and as a consequence locals being out priced from the property market by incomers (Gilligan, 1987; Schucksmith 1981), incomers taking jobs from locals (Simmons, 1997), commuters

failing to use rural services leading to decline in profitability and ultimate closure (Glynn Jones, 1979) and incomers 'taking over' the running of many community activities (Murdoch and Day, 1998; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Savage et al ,1992).

While these negatives cannot be discounted, there are also some aspects that may be more positive and must be explored. The higher earning employment types associated with in-migrants also provide local areas with more educated, skilled people and improve 'capacity building' of community groups at a local level.

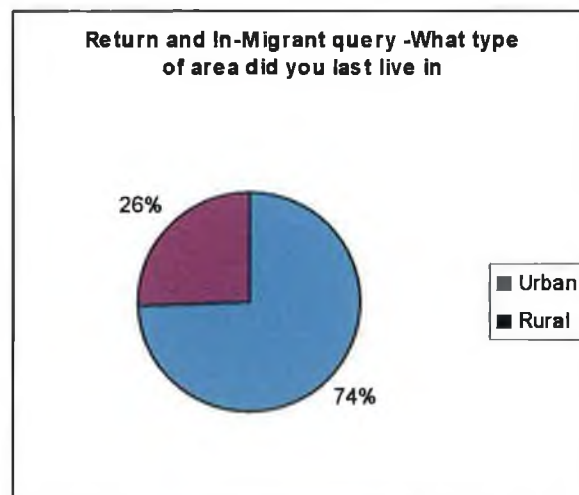
Motivations for Moving

The process of demographic change within the countryside is influenced by wider socio-economic processes. While changing economic factors have made changing demographics possible those moving into the countryside may have some deeper motivations that must be considered. Such factors include current and past perceptions of the countryside, lived experience of the countryside and a desire to explore the countryside. Residents in different study areas expressed two concurring responses;

"I don't like living in cities, there's something about living in the countryside which I like" (In-Migrant, Breaghwy)

"Good land, good people. I wanted to improve my quality of life and by moving back here I did" (Return Migrant, Knockadaff)

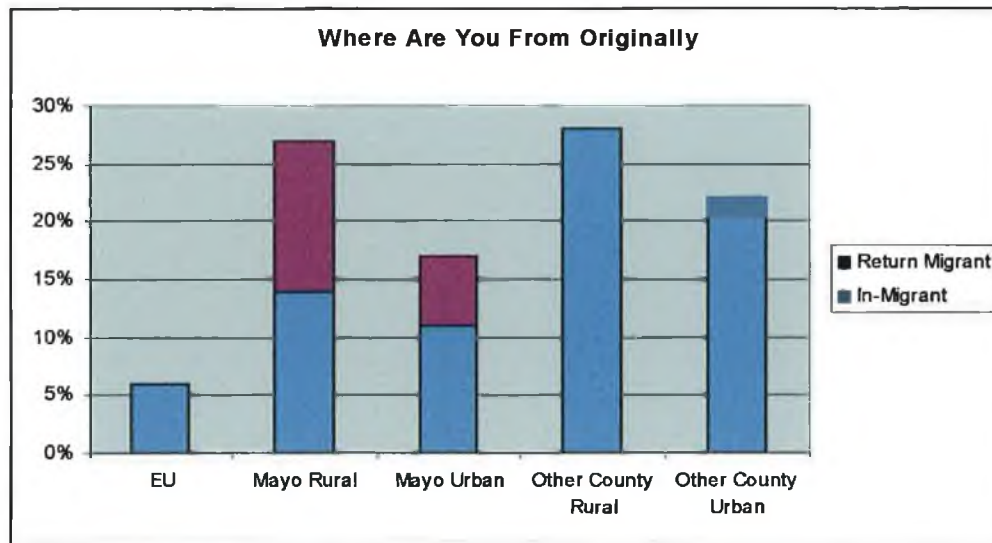
Fig 7.4 Type of Area Last Lived In



(Household Questionnaire)

While the fig overleaf (7.4) shows that migrations to rural areas are occurring more frequently from urban areas and complements the argument that in-migration is primarily occurring as a result of counter-urbanism, other factors must also be taken into account. The process of in-migration is much more complex in this particular study and a simple correlation of migration from urban areas to rural areas is insufficient. It is important to examine where the respondents have originally come from, as this may provide an indication for their motivations to settle in a rural area.

Fig 7.5 Where Respondents Are From



(Household Questionnaire)

The study provided some interesting results here, with the majority of in-migrants coming from rural areas originally. While there is significant in-migration from urban areas it cannot be said that migration is dominated by people who have lived within an urban environment all their lives. The two largest in-migrant types are from rural areas originally, and are now settling in another rural area. Many of those originally from rural areas have moved to an urban area and are now choosing to return to rural areas:

“I’m from a rural area so I can easily identify with the people here” (In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

“It’s the same as home, nice people, and it’s nice and quiet”(In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“It’s quite and private. It’s a good place to meet and get to know people. We lived in Manchester for a long time its great to be back in Ireland everything is so much more relaxed. It’s also great that there are lots of new people moving in at the same time,

you can mix with them and get to know them as they are in the same boat as us” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

There are some wider deeper psychological wants or needs, which many of those moving to rural areas are attempting to fill. Perceptions exist from both lived experience and in some cases an external idyllic view that enhances the desire for some to live in rural areas. If some of these needs or wants (highlighted here) can be satisfied in a sustainable planning model it may well enhance the long term sustainability of an area. Motivations for moving to particular areas varied. In general those respondents who had moved to Breaghwy (peri-urban) were moving there because of its location in proximity to Castlebar yet they valued its rural setting. The in-migrants here tended to be younger, more mobile classes with in many cases, young families. This in turn has led to a rejuvenation of some local services e.g. school. ”A lot of the facilities are excellent, the school and space for the kids to play. It’s a nice rural setting which is peaceful and a safe environment” (In- Migrant, Breaghwy).

In-migration to Slievemore (excluding seasonal migrants) is dominated by an older working age population and retirees. Those settling here on a permanent basis are motivated by the scenic value of the area and by family or local ties. “I’m quite happy, I come from the area and it’s great to retire back here and be close to family and old friends” (Return Migrant, Slievemore). “Great place to bring up kids, there’s no rat race here. The area is beautiful and the air is clean” (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

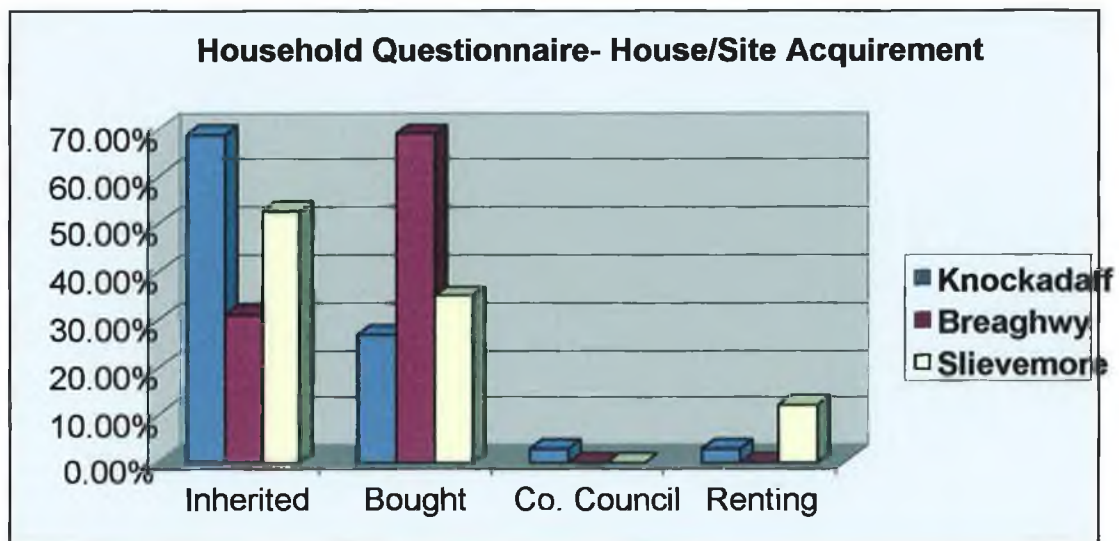
In-migration to Knockadaff has been quite low in comparison to the other case study areas. Motivations here varied between those of return and in-migrants. Return migrants sought out the community life, family and culture that they had left. Motivations of in-migrants were influenced by the ‘rural’ nature of the area, scenic value but also in this particular area, culture (language). “House was affordable, and it’s a great place to bring up kids” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy). “Wanted to live in the countryside and the move was relatively cheap. I find comfort in farming and it’s good to have family within travelling distance” (Return Migrant, Knockadaff).

Although no respondents expressed it, the opportunity of building a house in which individual tastes and designs can be chosen has to some extent been a motivational factor. It could be argued that the wide variety and size of some new housing which have been charted within this study in some way supports this assumption (see Appendix B).

7.3 Housing and Settlement

The secondary data analysis in this research has provided information in relation to housing tenure and the balance that exists between public, private and other forms of housing. The household questionnaire supports the assumption that Knockaduff and Slievemore are areas with high levels of no-mortgage payment that also display high levels of housing distribution through inheritance (See Table 6.1).

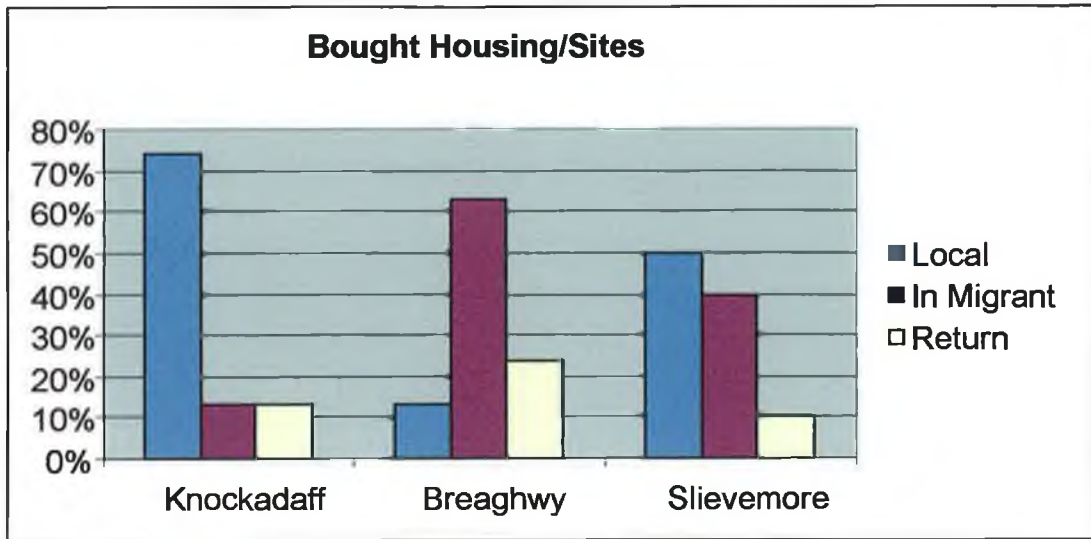
Fig 7.6 House/Site Acquisition



(Household Questionnaire)

Levels of housing, which have been purchased in Breaghwy, are significantly higher than the other case study areas. The majority of purchased housing in Knockaduff and Slievemore has been bought by locals, while locals purchase the least amount of housing in Breaghwy (figures do not include holiday/second homes).

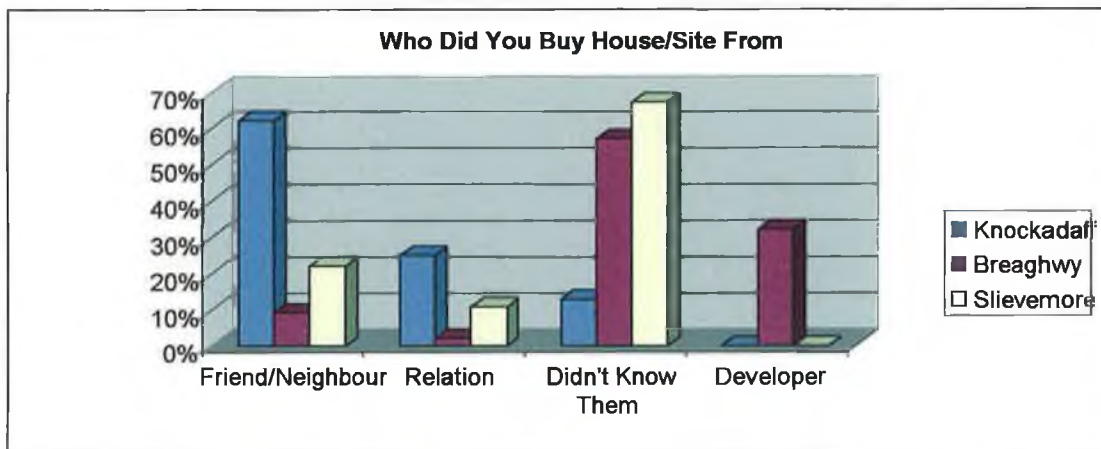
Fig 7.7 Profile of Purchased Housing Sites By Migrant Status



(Household Questionnaire)

The low level of house purchasing by locals in Breaghwy could be an indication that some form of out pricing may be occurring. There has however been a significant amount of housing purchased by locals within Slievemore and Knockadaff. This however has been an ongoing process over a sustained period of time, one that may come under increasing threat due to recent increased demand and rising property prices.

Fig 7.8 Who has house /site been purchased from?



(Household Questionnaire)

In identifying who the housing has been purchased from, we can observe some levels of internal distribution within the area. Also, levels of exchange can be

examined in the different rural typologies studied. Whether traditional forms of housing /site distribution are due to locals purchasing on the local market is open to debate, but there are indications that this has occurred over a sustained period within all the case study areas. With increasing demand for houses and higher purchase prices this form of housing /site distribution could well be under increasing pressure.

In Breaghwy there has been an extensive amount of new housing development. These houses are being purchased mainly by in-migrating groups. Only 13 % of purchased housing has been purchased by locals. 23% of house /site distribution has been through inheritance. From these findings it could be suggested that many locals cannot afford to build or buy in Breaghwy and the prime method for maintaining the local population habitation is through inheritance.

It could also be argued that this is also currently occurring in Slievemore. The majority of housing /site distribution from the surveyed sample in Slievemore has occurred through inheritance. The rate of private household developments has been relatively slow compared to tourist driven housing development. Results showed that 30% of housing that had been purchased was new (0-10 years) and of that, two thirds had been bought by in-migrants with the remainder being purchased by return migrants. "I'd say the majority of housing which is being purchased around here is new, it's not locals who are buying them though, there are an awful lot being bought as holiday homes" (Community Development Worker, Slievemore).

Accurate information in relation to the amount and location of private holiday homes and how they acquired the property, proved difficult to find and it is an area that requires further research.

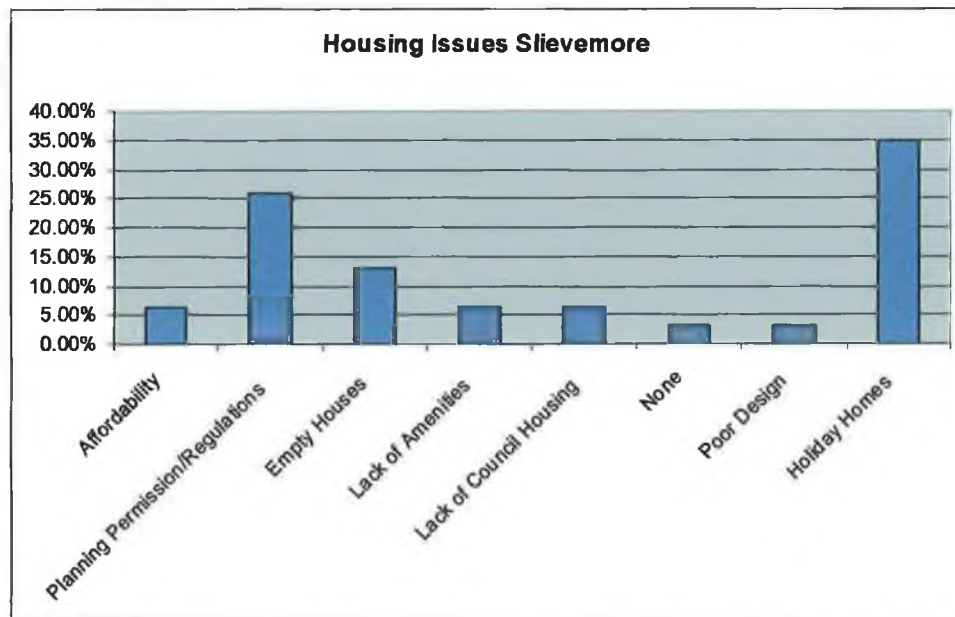
Knockadaff provides a stark contrast to Breaghwy with regard to its housing distribution pattern. Knockadaff is suffering from sustained population decline and is experiencing by far the lowest level of in-migration of all three case studies. Many of the families have been in the area for several generations. The main method of housing acquisition has been through inheritance. With regard to the distribution of bought housing it can be seen that there is a level of homogeneity with regard to who has purchased housing in the area.

If restrictions are applied in more popular areas in relation to second and holiday homes there may be increased pressure upon areas such as Knockadaff. This could have possible negative impacts upon local house distribution, affordability and accessibility.

Respondent Housing Concerns

While there are many issues of concern that are common within all the case study areas it was important to examine each area individually. Each respondent was asked what they felt was the most significant housing issue within their area. Some common threads were established in all, particularly in relation to planning regulations, affordability and lack of council housing.

Fig 7.9 Housing Issues Slievemore



Household Questionnaire:

“Only people with money can build here, it’s too expensive for anyone who doesn’t have land or money” (Return Migrant, Slievemore).

“There is a lack of council housing here, many can’t build on their own land, others can’t afford to build or buy and the council are very slow at putting houses in” (Local, Slievemore).

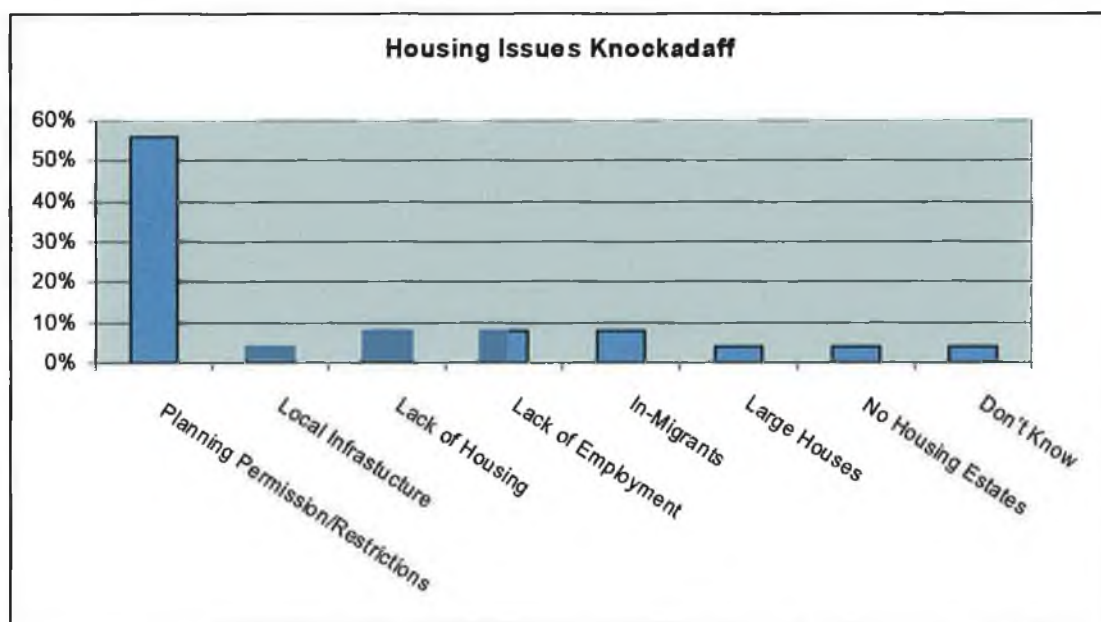
“A lot of development has happened in the past 30 years or so, the place is beginning to thrive and is not being deserted as many say” (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

The main housing issue within the area is one of provision. Provision is undoubtedly hindered here due to the impacts of competing forces. The vast majority of respondents would like to see more houses in the area, particularly houses that are occupied all year round, not holiday homes. The main areas of concern within the area

are lack of provision of housing stock and difficulty in getting planning permission. The holiday home question has raised the highest level of concern within the area and is likely to dominate concerns in the future.

“One of the main reasons house prices have increased here is due to the Pilot Resort Scheme. Now it can’t be blamed alone but what it has done is open up the area making it more attractive for second homeowners. There is a stipulation which exists within the scheme that anyone who owns a house designated in the scheme can only live in it at a certain period during the year, this has made the rest of the housing stock quite valuable to those who do not wish to rent out the house and have the freedom to come and go as they please” (Community Development Worker, Slievemore).

Fig 7.10 Housing Issues Knockadaff



(Household Questionnaire)

Due to Knockadaff’s peripheral scenic location there are some common areas of concern with Slievemore. The overriding concern here is in relation to the strict nature of planning regulations. With the adaptation of the housing guidelines in 2004, Knockadaff may well see an increase in the number of local housing stock. Whether or not persons will occupy this all year round remains to be seen; the possibility of locals being out priced remains a distinct possibility. While rising property prices may increase speculation in the area the rise in prices could also lead to an increased demand for social and affordable homes. Without nucleated, spatially planned

housing in the area, there may be an increase in demand for one-off developments. The issue of competition for existing stock can also be observed from attitudes within the area:

“There must be housing for locals, no ‘blow-ins” (Local, Knockadaff).

“Planning permission is difficult to get and there is not a big enough population to go into a group housing scheme”(In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

“Too many restrictions, family members can’t build; it’s killing the area” (Local, Knockadaff).

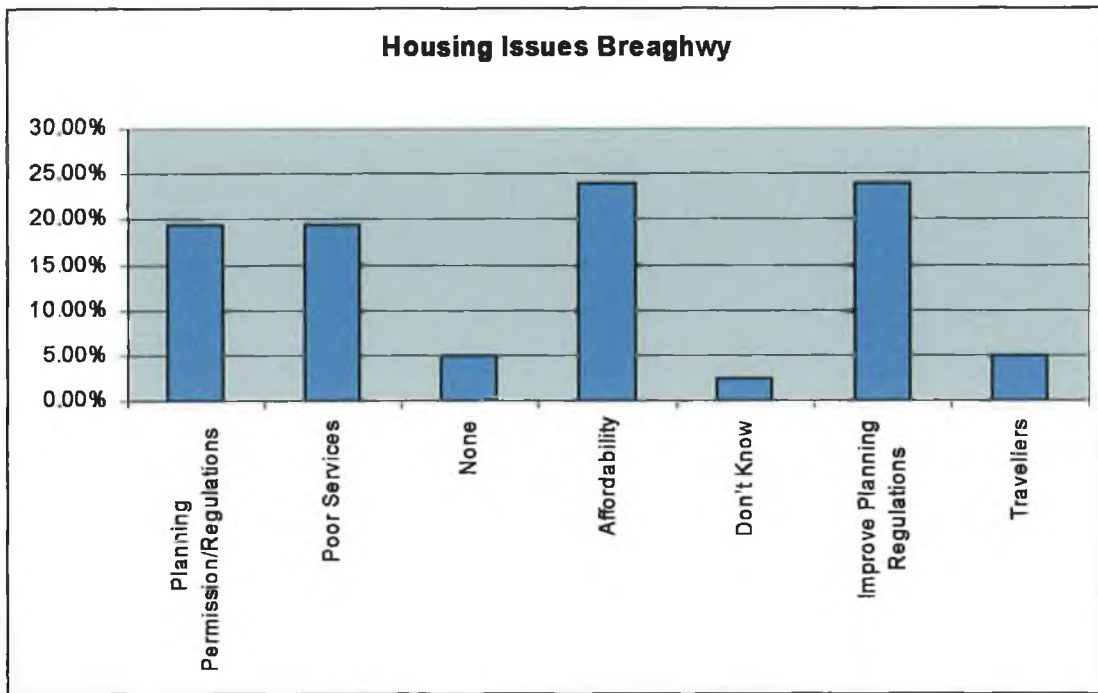
“It’s difficult to get planning; people who want to live here are being turned down for no genuine reason” (Local, Knockadaff).

“We have a site which we want to give to our son, but he couldn’t get planning, its unfair local people have to move away because many of them can’t get planning here” (Local, Knockadaff).

“Local people should be allowed to build, the regulations are too strict. Our son tried to get planning and was turned down over some silly reasons” (Local, Knockadaff).

While the concerns of local families must be highlighted, the activities of some landowners in selling sites must be called into question and the nature of housing provision strictly monitored. The area has designated areas of environmental protection –NHA, SAC and SPA means that strict monitoring is imperative. The nature of housing under construction must be monitored, particularly as the National Draft Housing Guidelines, 2004 state that the designation of areas as areas of environmental interest and protection does not necessarily mean housing cannot be constructed within them. These research findings for two rural study areas highlight the complexity of maintaining balance between residential, tourism and investment land-use conflicts. Both the literature and policy review sections consolidate these findings.

Fig 7.11 Housing Issues Breaghwy



(Household Questionnaire)

Housing issues in Breaghwy differ from the other case study areas. Breaghwy has experienced significant change in recent years due to the growth of Castlebar. The main areas of concern involve development, difficulty in getting planning permission, criticisms of planning regulations and affordability issues.

“No houses for local people, the only people who can build are the ones with plenty of money”(Local, Breaghwy).

“Unfair. Locals can’t get planning, many locals can’t afford houses and as a result there are many strangers moving in”(Local, Breaghwy).

“Negative, poor design. There is poor use of natural resources. Planning is very unfair and badly administered. Some people can get away with blatant disregard for the planning process, produce deficient houses, in particular private developers, as has occurred here” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Need to improve planning in the area, there doesn’t seem to be any real overall plan in place in Breaghwy”(In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Ribbon development coming from Castlebar is causing many problems and the council needs to come up with a proper plan and stick to it” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Planning is very difficult to get, particularly in the last five years, before that it was no problem” (Local, Breaghwy).

“Planning permission is too difficult to get, none the less some people seem to be able to miraculously get it, I just don’t understand” (Local, Breaghwy).

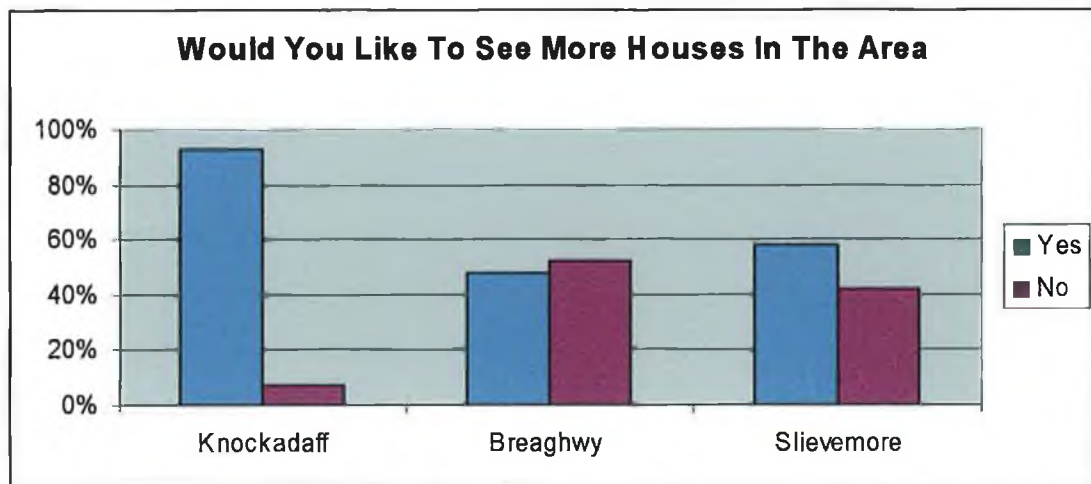
“There are several. All are not directly related to housing. Sewage is probably the biggest issue with regard to housing. The County Council is largely disconnected from the community; there is no experience of them supplying any service. The council has done nothing for Breaghwy, there is no sense of contact, no listening post to address problems”(Return Migrant, Breaghwy).

While the various migrant groups are concerned about common issues such as lack of services and affordability, some differences were also apparent. Concerns about planning were the main difference and could become a bone of contention in the near future. Locals were primarily concerned with difficulties in getting planning permission and many felt that the current system was unfair and did not favour those wishing to build on their own land. In-migrating groups were mainly concerned with the lack of planning regulations, lack of transparency in the process, lack of accountability and a general concern that the area would become over developed. There is a possibility that there may be conflict in the future which may be broadly along the lines of incomers versus local land owners who wish to develop housing on their property. There is an increasing demand for housing in Breaghwy and it will need development in order to cater for the growth of Castlebar -whether this development will be welcomed or not is open to debate.

Attitudes towards Future Housing Development

The Mayo Housing strategy has advocated the participation of the wider community within future housing provision, in line with Local Agenda 21 (see Mayo Housing Strategy, Chapter 4). It was therefore important to assess opinions on future development in each area.

Fig 7.12 Attitudes towards Future Housing Development



(Household Questionnaire)

Within Slievemore and Knockadaff future housing would be generally welcomed. However there are some impending issues of concern to the inhabitants of both localities. The majority of respondents would like to see more people in the area on an ongoing basis as opposed to seasonally. There is increasing levels of resentment in some sectors with regard to holiday home development and the purchase of second homes in the area.

“Too many holiday homes have been built and they’re turning around and denying locals and people moving back planning -it’s disgraceful” (Local, Slievemore).

“Too many holiday homes. Too many empty houses, it can be a bit depressing during the winter seeing all those houses with no light inside, it really adds to the sense of isolation” (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

While 93% of respondents in Knockadaff favoured more housing the vast majority felt that there should be restrictions put in place, restrictions which favoured local usage and all year round usage. Restrictions favoured by the sample also included restrictions on the type and siting of new housing for example;

“Two storied dwellings shouldn’t be allowed here; they stand out like a sore thumb” (Local, Knockadaff).

“Houses should be kept in line with houses that are here already and people shouldn’t be allowed big huge houses which don’t fit in with the area” (Local, Knockadaff).

However not all respondents would agree here; “Planning is too strict especially on visual impacts of housing” (Return Migrant, Knockadaff).

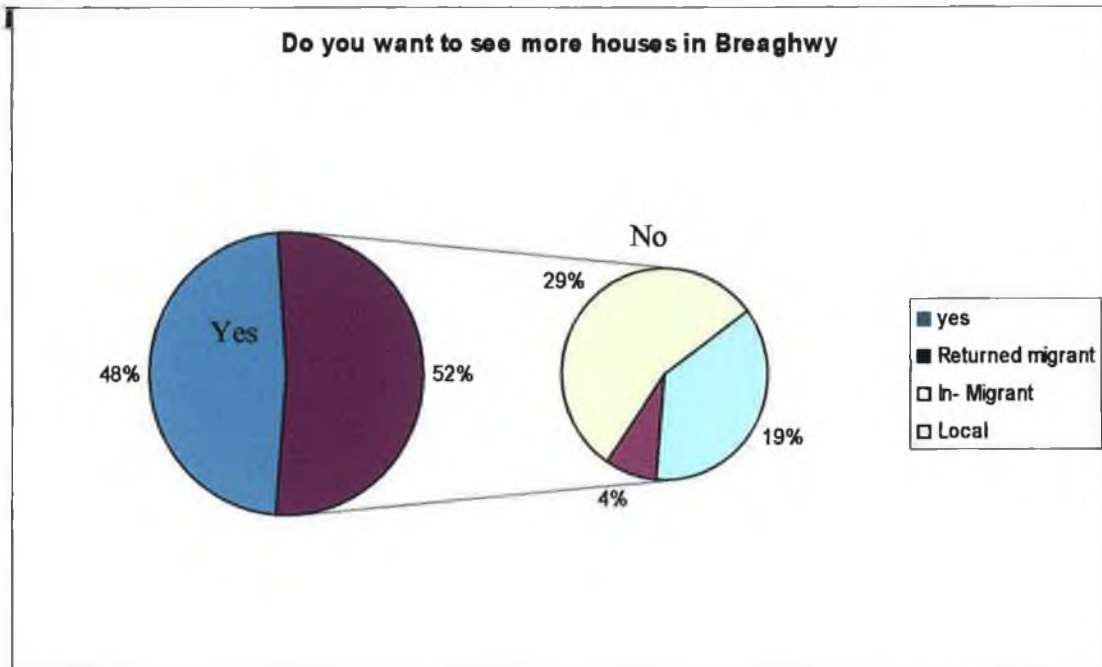
An underlying concern is one of affordability, although not all were as concerned in relation to this; “Foreigners can build here far easier than locals. It suits the guys with the big bucks” (Return Migrant, Knockadaff).

Within Breaghwy the type of housing which has been built has been of a high quality and price (see Appendix A). It has been welcomed by some due to the impacts which it has on the value of their own property.

“I have no problem at all with housing development in the area; I think it adds to the place, they are fine buildings. Since the development across the road has gone up the value of this place has increased” (Local, Breaghwy).

It could easily be argued that in Breaghwy future demand for housing will be high, particularly from the private sector and local landowners. The area has experienced significant in-migration and provides an interesting study into changing attitudes towards housing.

Fig 7.13 Responses to future housing development



(Household Questionnaire)

“Breaghwy has become a relatively affluent suburb of Castlebar” (Estate Agent 1, Interview).

Within the area, planning has been refused for one large housing development due to several objections in which several members of the ‘community’ came together to object. It is likely that future developments may have increasing amounts of objections. Whether these objections will come from locals or in-migrants is open to debate, but findings from this study show that in-migrants are less welcoming of future housing developments in the area and also tend to be more vociferous in making their opinions heard.

This may have some serious implications for the levels and types of housing that may be built in the area. How welcoming would some inhabitants be of council or social and affordable housing in the area? Breaghwy is an area, which is under high pressure due to the urban overspill from Castlebar. There is potential for further housing development in Breaghwy if services are put in place. With the population of Castlebar increasing, Breaghwy provides an area, which could potentially be

developed to cater for some of this populous. However, as the dynamics of the area change there may be an increasing propensity for people to object to future development. It could be argued that these objections will become a means of protecting the type of area they have moved to.

“When we moved here there wasn’t a lot of housing developments in the area, we liked it, there was plenty of space and greenery, it’s changed so much it’s no longer what we want, so we are moving on to a quieter location” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“There are too many big houses being built. Too difficult for locals to get planning permission, while it seems to be no problem for developers” (Local, Breaghwy).

“Too many one off houses allowed, should be more cluster developments”(In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Too many houses have been put up too quickly, the infrastructure isn’t here to deal with it. It’s only now that problems are arising that the council are taking notice. Have they ever heard of forward planning, this should have been addressed before they allowed so many houses to be built here” (Local, Breaghwy).

“There is too much housing development. We came here for peace and quiet but now the place is being built up all around us” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

There are some possible future conflicts, which may occur. The area is under high pressure due to overspill from Castlebar. Under the 2004 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, Breaghwy will come under increased development pressure and planning will possibly be allowed for more housing within the area. The designation of Castlebar as a ‘hub’ under the NSS, begs further questions about housing capacity in an already burgeoning town-hinterland.

Local Agenda 21 has advocated the involvement of communities in relation to future planning and sustainability. There is serious potential here that conflict will arise between those who do not wish future development to occur and stakeholders who do. There is a possibility that existing community forums could become used as a means to object to future housing in the area. If such a process occurs it will have wider impacts upon the community.

7.4 Community Development and Sustainability

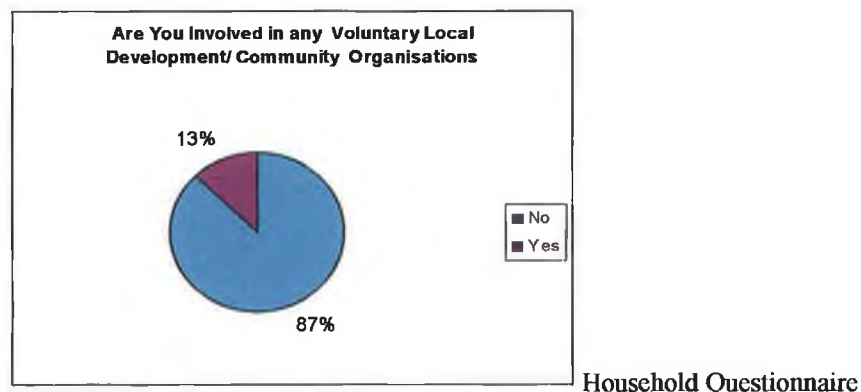
“There is a need in rural Ireland for people who will re-inhabit houses and build new ones, revive consolidated holdings and work them thus harvesting the fruits of public expenditure....people who will be truly educated and who will stay and give local leadership and the inspiration it can produce to a people demanded of that quality in the brain drain to the East of Ireland, Britain and America” (Healy, J., 1968, p.58).

Previous work in the UK with regard to the impact in-migrating groups have on local and community development has focused on the ‘taking over’ of the running of many community groups /activities by incomers (Murdoch and Day, 1998; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Savage et al, 1992). Little work exists from an Irish context with regard to the impacts in-migrants have on community development. The findings from this research have shown that there is increasing interest and involvement among in-migrating groups with regard to community development. This may be perceived as positive or negative depending upon one’s view point (See Stockdale et al, 2000).

Some of the main problems with regard to community development within rural Ireland have related to a decline in volunteerism and lack of skilled personnel. This is supported by Keane (1990). Results from the household questionnaire highlight the relatively low participation rates of the wider community in local voluntary development organisations.

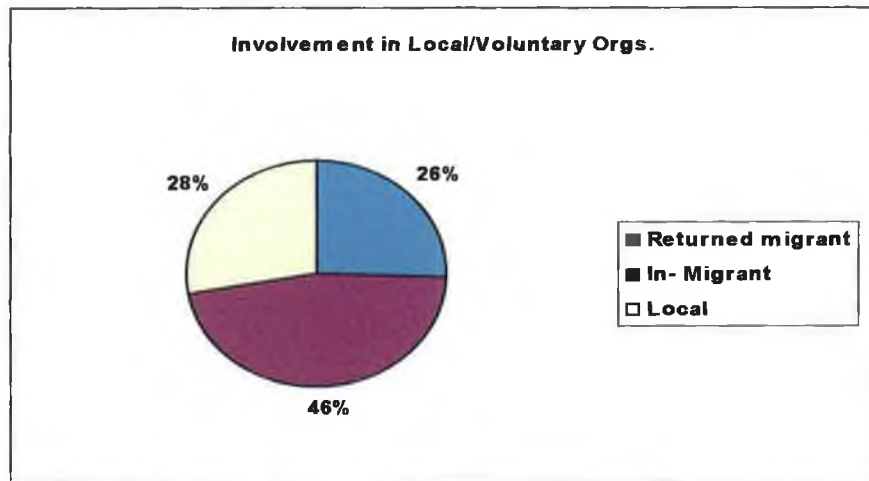
Within each case study area there are various forms of voluntary community development (See Stakeholders and Gatekeepers p.120-130). An examination of participation levels, awareness, and attitudes towards such voluntary based groups is provided here.

Fig 7.14 Involvement in Local Voluntary/ Community Development Organisations



An analysis of those involved in local voluntary development organisations from the questionnaire show that there are high levels of in-migrating groups becoming involved.

Fig 7.15 Involvement in Local/ Voluntary Organisations (Migrant Status)



Household Questionnaire Entire Sample

Results here show that there are significant amounts of in-migrant groups currently involved in voluntary and local development activities. Whether it can be said (or not) that these groups are being ‘taken over’ is open to debate.

“You need to be enthusiastic about it which I am not; they need to get young people involved if they are ever going to bring about change for the better. Its great there are so many young people moving here, they will be able to get things done, there are too many old people involved stuck in their own ways willing to lie down and accept whatever cock and bull the council dish out as to why they haven’t yet got anything done in the area” (Local, Breaghwy).

However not all are welcoming of in-migrants and possible changes which the community face: “There are too many houses being built, with so many people moving to the area it’s changing the community fabric, and changing it for the worst I feel” (Local, Breaghwy).

It must be added that some resentment towards in-migrants or ‘blow-ins’ was encountered in each area. The attitude towards ‘blow-ins’ is primarily negative and is often based on distant observations rather than in-depth knowledge.

The impacts of particular individuals or groups within community-based forums could be a factor in non-participation levels. 22% of respondents who said they would not become involved in community council /development said it was because of the people already involved. This may show some indication of resentment of incomers becoming involved; there may also be a reluctance among in-migrants to become involved, yet reasons were not specifically targeted at particular groups either in-migrants or locals.

“I wouldn’t get involved because I feel many of the people involved are involved for their own reasons. If you were involved I’d say it would be like banging your head against a brick wall trying to get something done” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Some people have too much power and I feel I wouldn’t get a look in”(Local Breaghwy).

“There is a bit of a clique; I’d feel out of place. The people involved are only pursuing their own goals” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“I wouldn’t get involved because there is no community spirit here; many of those involved are only in it for their own good, not for the benefit of the greater community” (Local, Slievemore).

“I wouldn’t get involved; there is too much internal conflict” (Return migrant, Slievemore).

“Its not easy to get things done around here, most of the people involved in any local development are in it for their own gain and not for the benefit of the entire community” (In Migrant, Knockadaff).

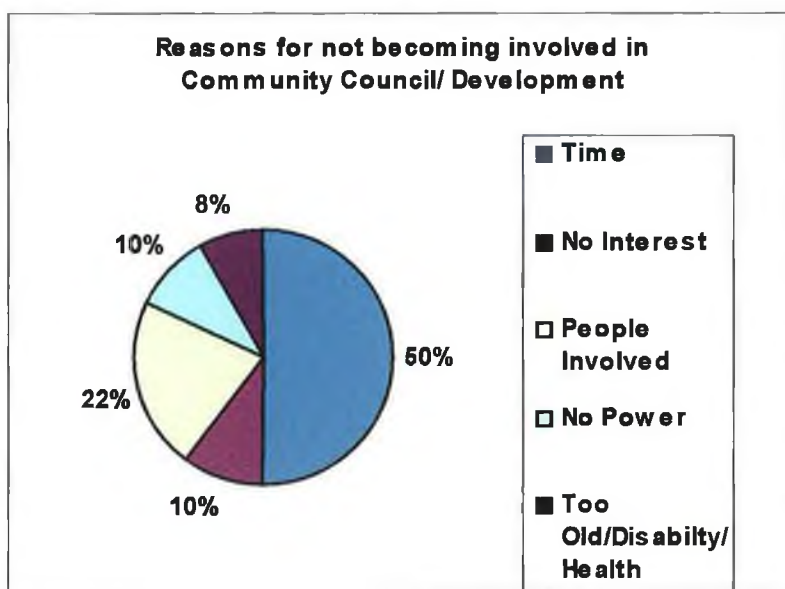
“I couldn’t, I wouldn’t get on with some of the crowd involved” (Local, Knockadaff).

“I had a disagreement with a local and left” (In Migrant, Knockadaff).

A common theme emerged in all areas concerning motivations for participation and individual ‘personalities’ involved. In Ireland there is also evidence to suggest that those most in need in rural areas are unlikely to involve themselves in community activities, in addition many of those who were members of an organisation were “inactive” (Storey, 1995, p.13). It could be argued that many areas are dogged by a combination of apathy and a lack of individual self-belief. It therefore could be perceived as somewhat positive that in-migrating groups are becoming involved in local development. Programmes such as LEADER, have also tried to overcome some of these problems through ‘animation’ practices and external

facilitators. As the comments above show however, community social relations is an area fraught with difficulty.

Fig 7.16 Reasons for not becoming Involved



Household Questionnaire

The issue of in-migrating groups and their impacts upon community development is one which needs further exploration. The findings from this study show that there are many impending problems for such groups. While it cannot be said that local /newcomer divides do not exist. The main problem here seems to be pre conceived notions of why people are becoming involved in community development, be they newcomer or local. Criticisms of community development groups and the people involved tend to come from respondents who have never become involved in such activities. Preconceived notions may be apportioned to some of the negative responses, rather than specific knowledge of the group (see fig 7.18)..

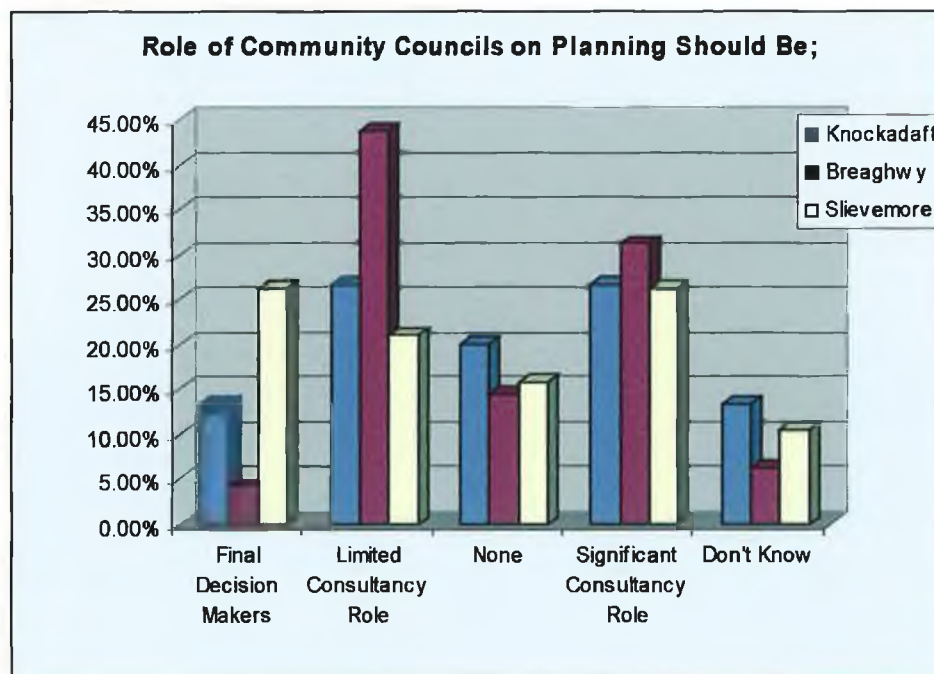
The main reason for non-involvement is time constraints, although part of this could also be apportioned to 'no interest'. Time however is a significant reason for non-involvement. This could be compounded due to two income households but also to longer time spent commuting to and from work. Lack of power within such groups is also cited as a major factor (some of the respondents here are people who have previously been involved in community development). If levels of power and decision making ability is increased there could be impacts upon involvement and possibly motivations for involvement in the future.

Informal participation and contributions to the community such as helping neighbours, doing favours and social interactions are difficult to quantify and social participation cannot be judged solely on the basis of membership of recognised organisations. This is documented by Curtin, (1989) and Foley, (1991) in Storey (1995, p.13). It is further argued by Storey (1995) that many 'non participant' households, particularly those in more peripheral areas, do not appear to have to have regular social contact with their neighbours or others in the locality. It is unlikely that such households would become involved in community development or in formulating strategies to solve problems in the area. The danger then occurs of community involvement on the basis of the participation of a small number of people not necessarily representative of wider local views. (Shorthall, 1994). This could lead to agendas being dominated by persons who are pursuing certain goals for the area, goals that may well be at variance with some of the real problems in the area.

“The Community Council is only useful to a certain extent, such as getting little things done and beautifying the area” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“I’ve had my fill of committees, they never can get anything done, and the community council has no real power and can’t get anything worthwhile achieved apart from planting a few flowers around the place” (Local, Breaghwy).

Fig 7.17 Attitudes towards role of Community Council on Planning



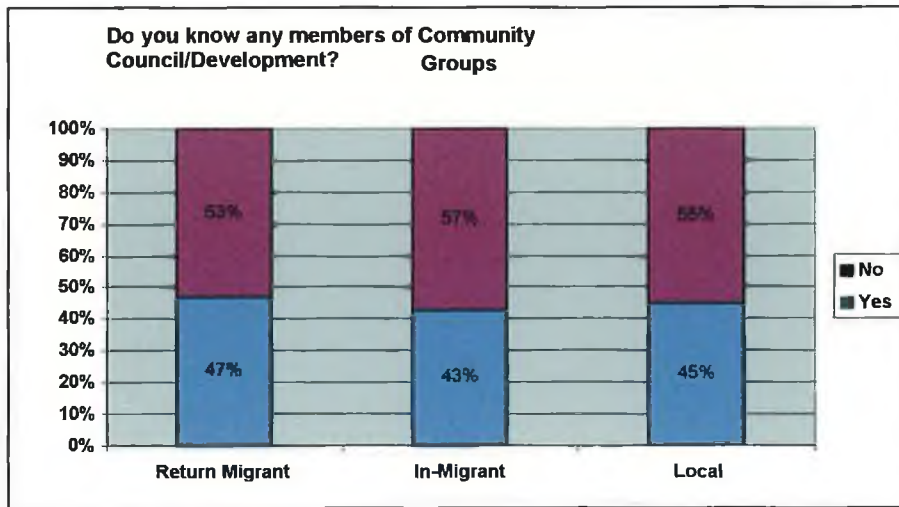
(Household Questionnaire)

Whether or not a community based forum is the right channel to address issues concerning future planning in the area, is open to debate. However, this must be explored since Local Agenda 21 advocates such an approach and this has been reciprocated in the Mayo Housing Strategy (2001-2006). Such an approach may be fraught with many difficulties and create conflict within the community. From these results there is a variance of opinion, the vast majority however feel that local community forums should have some role to play in the planning process. Allowing such groups to have an input on planning issues may have several advantages such as the accommodation of the indigenous population, highlighting issues of access and affordability which many are facing.

Community based forums could provide a platform where specific problems in relation to housing provision could be addressed locally. Actively involving the community in planning could bring individuals together allowing for cluster type developments to be planned accommodating several families /people at the one time rather than the ad-hoc individualistic approach currently pursued. The possibility of allowing such groups a role in planning is also fraught with danger. Questions could be raised over the motivations of some for becoming involved, whether they are pursuing hidden agendas (such as being able to develop their own land). There is also a possibility that friction could occur within groups between factions that favour development and those opposed to it.

One interesting point to note here is that in Knockaduff, the area with the most significant decline, there is the highest percentage of persons stating that the local community forums should have no role in the planning process (19%). This highlights the problems in relation to community development within the area. The problems with community development here show that there may be a lack of trust or support for the various community groups. Problems encountered by the groups have obviously filtered down and affected the opinions and attitudes of the wider community. Another possible reason is that there may be a lack of expertise or a perception that there is a lack of expertise within these groups. There may also be a lack of trust in particular individuals involved and their particular motivations.

**Fig 7.18 Knowledge of members involved in Community Council/Development
(By Migrant Status)**



(Household Questionnaire)

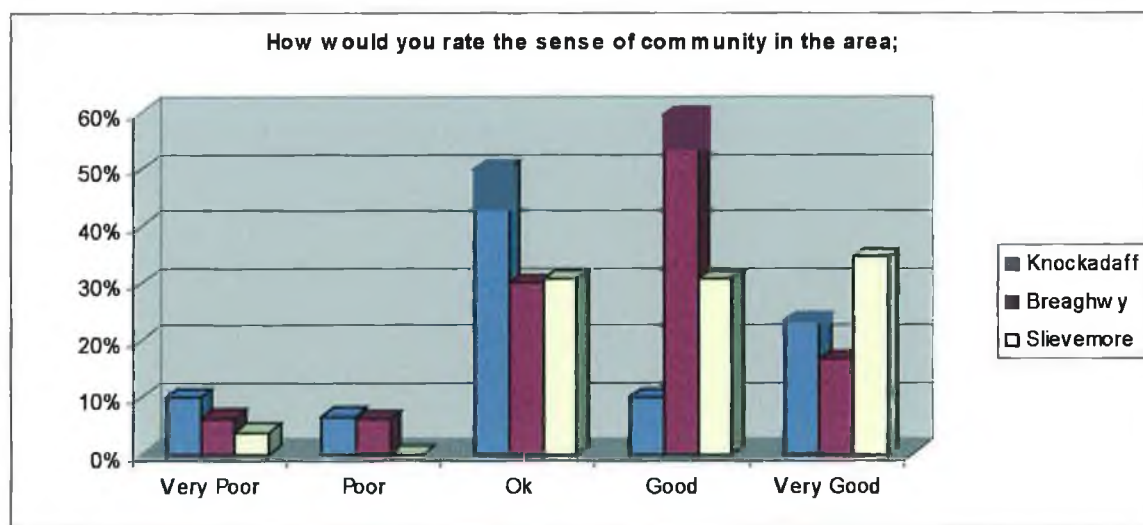
Examining the relative success of particular community groups is difficult. Charting the knowledge of their existence within the wider community provides some interesting results. Knowledge of members and the make up of the group cannot be said to be dominated by a particular demographic group. Overall it cannot be said that particular groups are being alienated because they have moved into or returned to an area. The relative size of each case study area is small and it is significant to note that the majority of all respondents could not name a member of the community council or voluntary development groups. This suggests that either there is apathy towards such organisations or that the organisations themselves are not doing enough to communicate with the wider community.

“Have we learned where we made our mistakes? Have we learned how we can talk about those mistakes without abrasive rancour, communicating with one another in the town and outwards to the seat of local government and to national government? Communication is vital and in our town it was not always easy to communicate, for tuppence ha’penny always felt better than tuppence” (Healy, J., 1968, p.60).

If the wider community cannot name even one member of these groups, it is highly unlikely they would be able to comment upon the achievements (or lack of) of

such groups. It could also be argued that individuals may be reluctant or unable to approach such groups due to a lack of knowledge or belief in what may be achievable. While the Community Council and voluntary development groups are ‘representing’ the wider community their lack of penetration is an area of serious concern. Perceptions of the communities themselves show that the vast majority of respondents are relatively content with the ‘sense of community’ in their areas.

Fig 7.19 Rating Community



Responses here however may mask a certain truth in that some people are happy with a community that is not based upon collective actions or activities. Several respondents (particularly in Breaghwy) valued aspects of peace, quiet and ‘non-interfering’ neighbours as being positive aspects of the community.

“I like the fact that people keep to themselves and mind their own business”(In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“I like the privacy and space. You can keep to yourself which is great” (Local, Breaghwy)

“Disadvantages of living here are nosey neighbours that tell you what to do. They expect too much from you, we like to stick to ourselves -we always have” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

Generally however, people seemed relatively satisfied with the sense of community within the area. Notions on the meaning of community are difficult to quantify (see conceptual approach) so this research asked respondents what ‘community’ meant to them (see Table 7.1). Despite the fact that the majority of respondents in Breaghwy

are relatively satisfied with the sense of community in the area a process of suburbanisation is occurring which is having negative impacts upon some.

“The community of Breaghwy does not exist; it is only a suburb of Castlebar” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

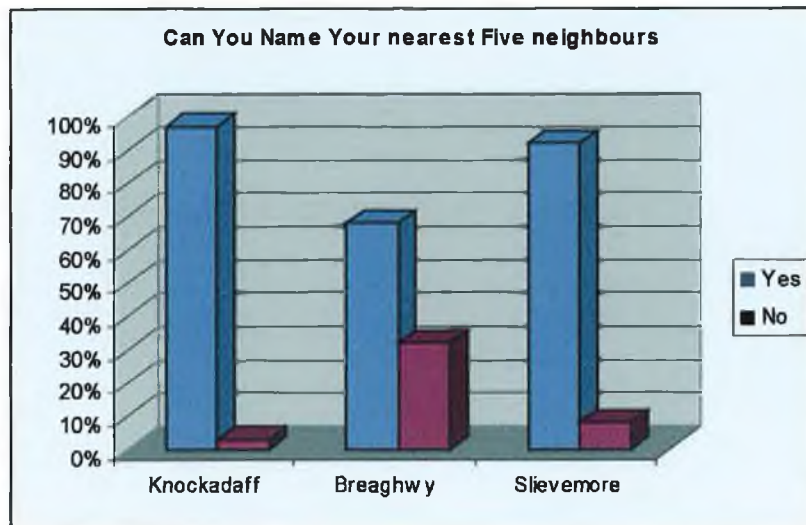
(Table 7.1) What’s Important to you in terms of being part of a community?

	Breaghwy	Slievemore	Knockadaff
Sense of Identity/Place	6.25%	2.5%	3%
Neighbours/Friends	35%	30%	41%
Good for Children	7.5%	2.5%	0%
Safety	7.5%	2.5%	0%
Support	11.25%	22.5%	32%
Participation/Involvement	12.5%	17.5%	12%
Family	1.25%	7.5%	3%
Clean/green	1.25%	0%	0%
Communication	2.5%	0%	6%
Clubs	3.75%	0%	0%
“Rural Lifestyle”	3.75%	7.5%	0%
Social Aspects	2.5%	0%	0%
Spirituality	1.25%	2.5%	0%
Schools	1.25%	2.5%	0%
Privacy	2.5%	2.5%	0%
Irish Language	0%	0%	3%

(Household Questionnaire)

While there were a wide range of responses here the vast majority of respondents in each area were similar. The most important aspects of community to them were getting on with neighbours, being there to support each other and becoming involved with the wider community. While there have been problems associated with the wider involvement of community groups within each locality it can be observed here that there is an inherent importance placed upon neighbours and friends in providing a platform of support for each other where possible.

Fig 7.20 Knowledge of Nearest Neighbours



(Household Questionnaire)

Examinations on the extent of how well people interact and know each other are difficult. Here, respondents were asked if they could name their nearest (location wise) neighbours. Unsurprisingly, Breaghwy with its higher levels of in-migration has the highest percentage of respondents who could not name their neighbours. Despite this fact however there were still some positive responses:

“You don’t see the people a lot, but they are always there if you need them for anything” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“The sense of community has definitely declined in the last few years. Nevertheless we still have many good neighbours who mix well and they are friendly” (Local, Breaghwy).

The reasons why the community has become more fragmented may be due to wider societal change such as people interacting less because of increased working time, lack of social outlet and mass home entertainment. However there is also a possibility that the types of housing people are moving into may create an automatic negative perception within the community:

“We do have good neighbours here. People are pretty good around here and help each other out when they need it. It is a pity however that new people in their big houses don’t get involved in anything” (Local, Breaghwy).

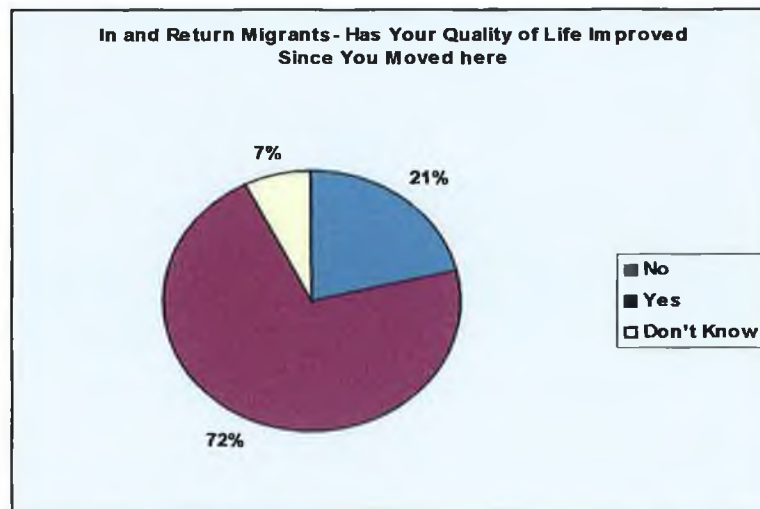
Quality of life issues

An assessment of quality of life issues was also important. Issues in relation to quality of life could also impact upon the needs of communities thereby animating the community to become involved in local development activities. Quality of life issues may also be impacting upon the non-ability of some people to become involved in local community activities.

In order to examine issues of quality of life, the results have been split into two. Perceptions of in- and return migrants have been gathered in order to evaluate their pre-conceived notions of moving to the countryside and whether or not it had improved their overall quality of life. Local respondents were asked about changes in their quality of life over the recent past.

In-Migrants;

Fig 7.21 Quality of Life Improvements: In-Migrants



Household Questionnaire

“Good land, good people. I wanted to improve my quality of life and by moving back here and I did” (Return Migrant, Knockadaff).

“It’s been good, I am close to my family and there are plenty of work opportunities now”(Return Migrant, Slievemore).

The vast majority of respondents felt that their quality of life had improved since they had moved to the area. Reasons varied but there was a general appreciation for the local community, neighbours, safety, clean and green areas as well as privacy. Even

some of the respondents who were initially reluctant to move to a rural area felt that their quality of life had now improved.

“Better than anticipated, we are very lucky, we have very good neighbours. We are close to town and all its amenities yet still in the countryside” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

“Pretty much, it was dreadful in the beginning, I felt very lonely, but now I could not imagine living in a city again” (In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

“When we moved here first it was in the middle of the countryside, it has changed rapidly in the last few years, now the population has increased the council have done nothing to improve local amenities” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

Despite the fact that some areas have been gaining in population there has been a lack of response from the county council to put in place some local facilities and amenities. This may result in people becoming involved in community based forums in order to tackle these problems; it could also however lead to people moving out from those areas.

While many respondents felt that the quality of their lives had improved not all were satisfied. In some cases the nature of the move proved to be relatively expensive and the location meant an increase in commuting time. These results support some of Corcoran’s findings (2002) on attitudes and perceptions of return migrants upon their return.

“Too busy, working all the time, the move was expensive” (Return Migrant Slievemore).

“It’s difficult to get used to the quietness coming from the city, it can be lonely during the winter” (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

“It was costly getting planning; work isn’t as plentiful as we thought when coming back” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

“There is a serious lack of amenities, which does hinder lifestyle” (In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

“Its much quieter than I imagined, the place has changed in a short space of time and is becoming rapidly developed, I thought the place would be buzzing with people all year round, its not” (Return Migrant, Slievemore).

The impacts of house price increases may be having some effects outside of the problems of affordability and accessibility. In order to buy a house many young couples are being forced to negotiate lifestyle choices (be that in rural or urban

environments). These lifestyle choices may affect their quality of life and impact upon their local community and family. The levels of two income households varied greatly with only 20% of the local group having two incomes, while 63% of the in-migrant sample and 32% of the return migrant sample were two income households. Two income households would undoubtedly have higher purchasing power and as a result would be in a position to pay higher prices for housing.

The two-income household has come about due to a combination of factors, increased participation by women in the workplace, increased diversity in employment, higher levels of mobility etc. While many couples choose to have two incomes, several respondents felt they had no choice due to high mortgage repayments;

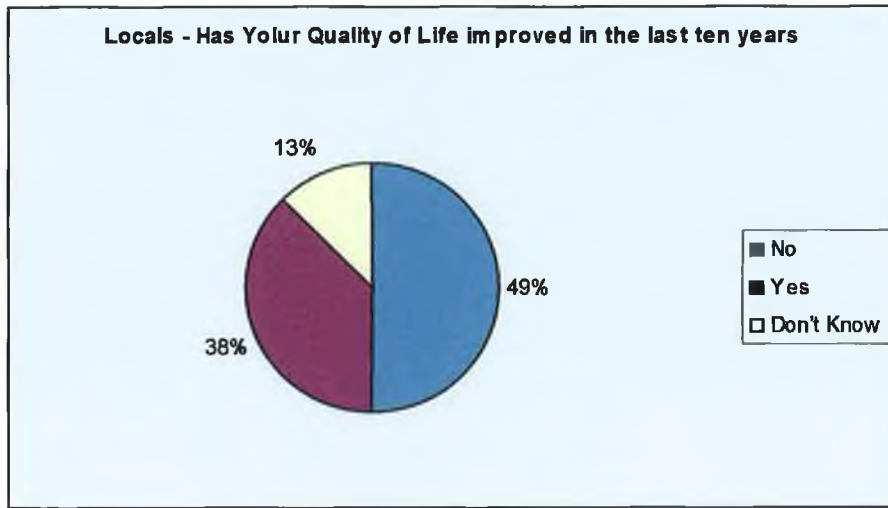
“I would love to be at home with the kids all day long, and really enjoy where we live, but I don't have a choice everything is so expensive now and that's on top of our mortgage, and I have to say things are becoming more difficult particularly stress wise, I'm not sorry we moved here it's a beautiful house but sometimes I do doubt if it's been worthwhile” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

The long-term impact of two income households remains to be charted, not only in terms of economics but also in social and family impacts. If the future of settlement in rural areas is one where both partners must work full time in order to be able to purchase a house, there may be several negative impacts upon the community, family structure and sustainability. Younger couples that have bought a house and are paying back mortgages dominate the two income households. The effects of this could be a contributing factor to difficulties some in-migrants may face in becoming part of the local community.

Local Residents;

The boom of the Celtic Tiger has had an enormous impact upon the ability of many to be able to move in to or return to rural areas and has increased levels of investment and second home developments. While it has been observed that 72% of in- and return migrants had improved their quality of life since moving. It was also important to examine the attitudes of locals in order to compare responses. Locals were queried as to whether their quality of life had improved and how it had improved in the last ten years (the period of greatest economic expansion within the state).

Fig 7.22 Quality Of Life Improvements -Local



Household Questionnaire

Almost half of the respondents here felt that their quality of life had not improved: "There has been absolutely no change here in 30 years; we were as well off then as we are now" (Local, Slievemore).

"There hasn't been much change, nothing happening, nothing being done for local people"(Local, Knockadaff).

"Things haven't really improved here" (Local, Knockadaff).

Exactly how individuals gauge their quality of life depends on individual preferences. Generally people spoke of lack of improvement in employment locally, financial state and the growing cost of living. "General quality of life has improved but financially we are worse off now" (Local, Slievemore). While individuals may have become more affluent within rural areas due to economic change, wider gauges on the quality of life within certain areas have not been improved. "While things have gotten better there is still an awful lot not right, no services, no amenities, distance from towns is a problem and the doctor is eight miles away" (Local, Knockadaff).

There is a disparity between some in rural areas on whether the qualities of their lives have improved. While some aspects have been seen to be improving for some, it cannot be said that all local inhabitants have noticed an improvement in their quality of life. Of those that have noticed an improvement it has generally been in relation to greater employment opportunities within the county, improved living

conditions, better quality housing, greater holidays and in some cases, improved local amenities and facilities.

“Living standard has improved dramatically” (Local, Slievemore).

“Its great there are so many opportunities in Ireland now. I get great holidays” (Local, Breaghwy).

“Better support now. More services, shops, bus, bingo hall”(Local, Slievemore).

The lifestyle is good. The only difficulty is the distance from everything, you have to have your own car when living here”(Local, Knockadaff).

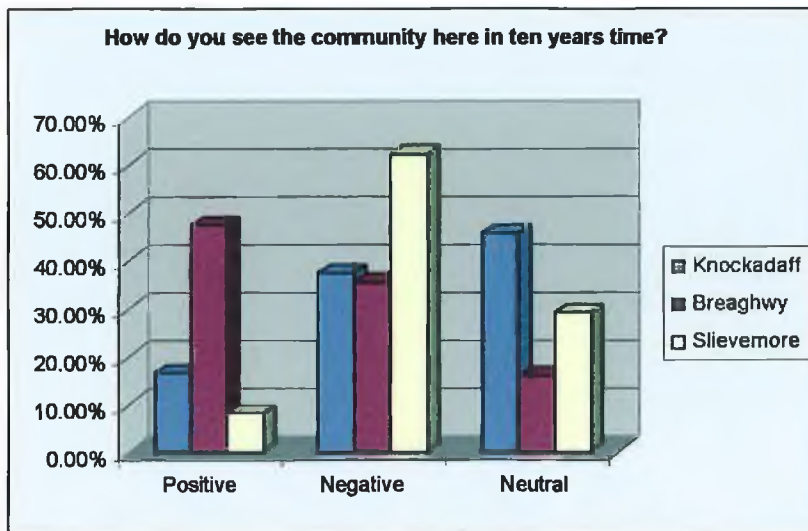
While some still value aspects mentioned above as indicators on the improvement of their quality of life others see the changing dynamic of their local area as positive.

“I can come and go as I please; certain amount of privacy. There used to be a very strong community spirit here but with many of the locals gone and lots of newcomers coming in it’s declined, that’s not necessarily a bad thing as I have much more privacy now” (Local, Breaghwy).

While the nature of lifestyles is changing in rural areas, it is difficult to gauge the full extent of the change. There will undoubtedly be change within all rural area types, all which have impacts upon formal and informal local community structures. Each area is experiencing change and so it is important to gauge what future perceptions those living in rural areas have and whether the changing nature of those areas may influence future decisions to live in the area.

Future Perceptions

Fig 7.23 Future Perceptions of the local 'community'.



Household Questionnaire

In order to deal with future perceptions each area is dealt with individually due to the varying nature of change within each area. Qualitative content analysis of responses are provided below and categorised according to their tone.

Knockadaff;

Neutral "There's good and bad being part of this community but sure you get that everywhere"(Local, Knockadaff).

Neutral "It will stay the same but there will be less young people, there is nothing for them to stay around for" (Local, Knockadaff).

Neutral "Hopefully there will be more people here but I am not sure, they need more jobs" (In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

Negative "Population decline if kids aren't allowed to build houses. More and more foreigners moving in, and you can bet your life that they will be allowed have a say on what happens to the place" (Return Migrant, Knockadaff).

Positive "More people here would be very positive for the area, we need employment but must be careful what type we get, I wouldn't like to see any large industries here such as the gas terminal" (Local, Knockadaff).

Positive “The place will improve, infrastructure will get better. However if planning problems persist local people will be forced to move out of the area” (In-Migrant, Knockadaff).

Breaghwy:

Neutral. “There are both opportunities and risks as the place grows in population, it’s very difficult to say” (Local, Breaghwy).

Neutral “There will be a decline and the old community ties will not be as strong, however this will change as the local kids grow up together and things will improve (Local, Breaghwy).

Negative “It is increasingly becoming a commuter community, people lay their heads down here at night and vanish into town during the day” (In Migrant, Breaghwy).

Negative “The place will get too built up and lose its charm which attracted people here, that’s why we are moving” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy)

Negative. “There could be a lot of potential problems in the future, if the area gets too built up, crime may increase. I don’t think that the council will put in the services needed, they will put in plenty of houses but their record on service and amenity provision is poor to say the least” (In-Migrant, Breaghwy).

Positive “Farming will decline but I feel the changes in the area will be positive on the local community, as more people come different types of people will become involved in the locality”(Local, Breaghwy).

Positive “Vibrant, more people will get involved, and there will be a good spirit around here” (In-migrant, Breaghwy).

Positive “Area will grow and become a major and affluent suburb of Castlebar, this will be positive as it will attract diverse people with diverse talents” (In-migrant, Breaghwy)

Slievemore:

Neutral “Changed, there are a lot of people from Dublin moving in” (Return Migrant, Slievemore)

Neutral. “It’s hard to say really, I am not sure which way it will go” (Local, Slievemore).

Negative “The place will be full of strangers during the summer, it will never lose that, but in the winter there will only be old people left to fend for themselves with only their families and neighbours to look after them. Things are still now as they have always been with people helping each other out, they know that they will need help one day. I have to say I worry about the future with so many strangers moving in, I can’t see them looking after the elderly, now that’s not saying anything bad about them, but I think they don’t really understand life here and how it survives from generation to generation” (Local, Slievemore).

Negative “The young people are being ignored, there’s no work so they have to move away and there are more and more strangers moving in”(Local, Slievemore).

Negative “Declining population. Not a lot of locals left. Lack of meaningful employment” (Local, Slievemore).

Negative “Population decline; there are a lot of young people leaving, there are no jobs, and the numbers in the schools are declining” (Return Migrant, Slievemore).

Negative “There will only be old people left living here” (Local, Slievemore).

Negative “Smaller, there will be less and less people living here all year round, it will become even more 'touristy'. (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

Positive “With decentralisation etc. There will be more employment here, the government will get more involved in creating employment in areas like this, the future is bright” (Return Migrant, Slievemore).

Positive “I think the area will continue to thrive” (In-Migrant, Slievemore).

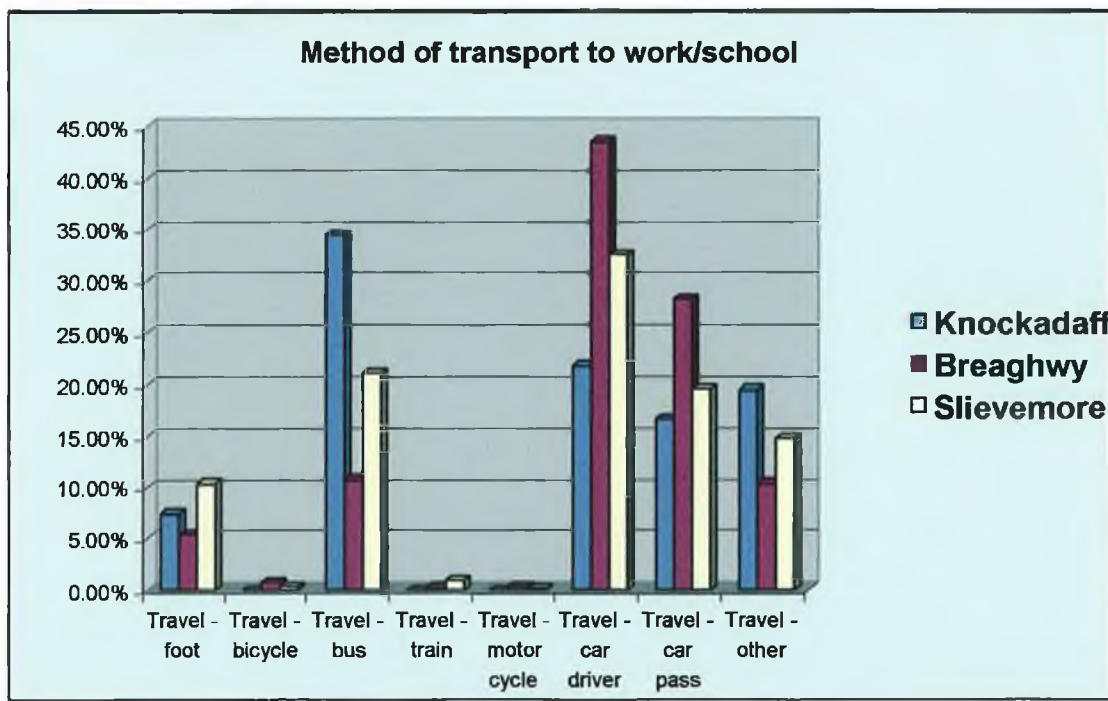
In general in all areas, return and in-migrants were more positive in relation to the future of each area. Positive attitudes were also expressed in relation to in-migrating groups who may move into an area. It is interesting to note that positive perceptions were more prevalent in Breaghwy. This could be linked to the affluent nature of the area. Indeed, in-migrants (in general) may be in a more economically sound position and therefore don’t realise the depth of problems some face in acquiring access to the property market. It could also however be a factor that in-migrants generally have a more positive outlook in relation to the future of the local community, because they have positive intentions /motivations in relation to future community development. They have moved into or back to a particular area because of qualities they see as intrinsic to the ‘rural idyll’, and want to not only value but also actively work for the notion of community they are seeking. Negative concerns centred upon population decline, impacts of strangers moving into an area and the

impact that holiday homes are having upon particular areas. The concern over holiday homes, second homes within each area are not unfounded when we consider earlier arguments.

Further Issues of Sustainability

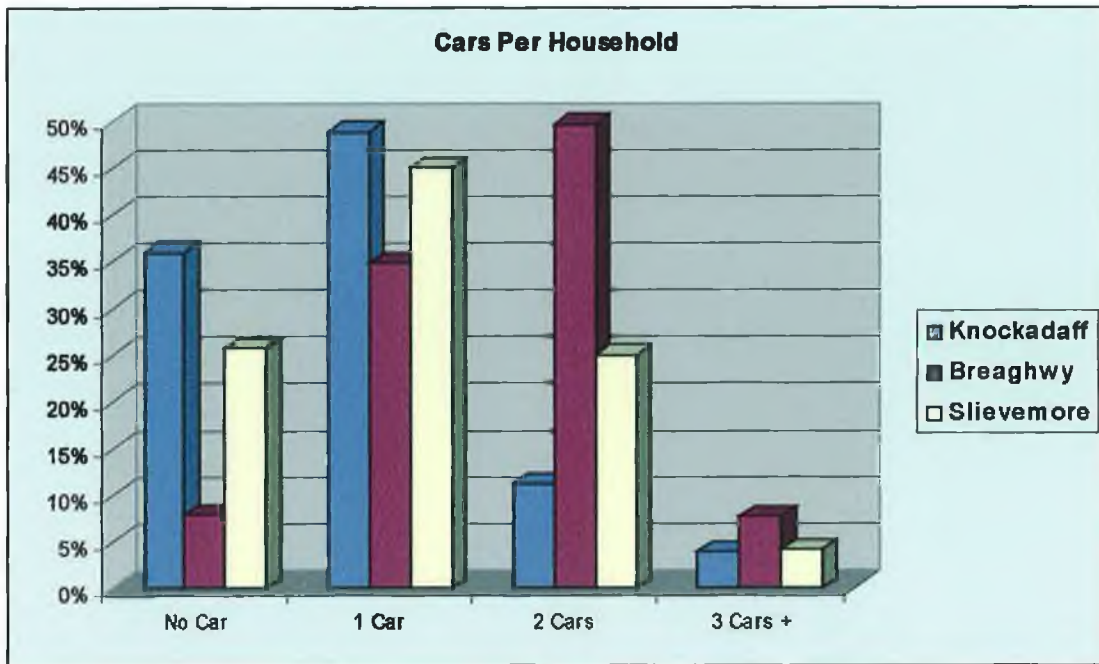
This research addressed some issues of relevance through the household questionnaire and community interviews. Aspects of both environmental and community (social) sustainability were of central concern. Transport is a major factor in rural accessibility and labour force participation. The type and nature of transport also has some wider environmental impacts.

Fig 7.24 Method of Transport to work/school



(Saps 2002 CSO)

Fig 7.25 Cars Per Household

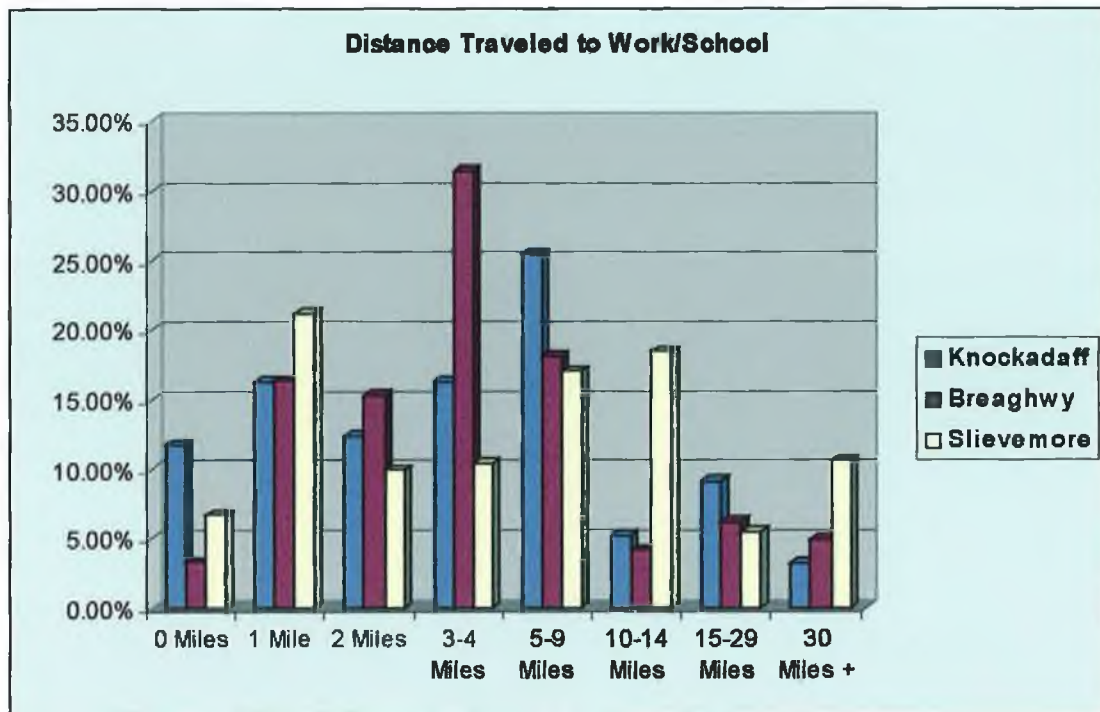


(Household Questionnaire)

Despite the fact that Breaghwy is in close proximity to Castlebar it actually has the highest level of car ownership. Almost 50% of households surveyed in the area have two cars. The necessity of two cars per household in an area in such close proximity to an urban centre raises some interesting sustainability issues. With such a growth in population within the area the possibility of providing a commuter bus service should be examined. This would impact upon sustainability but whether or not a bus service would be availed of is open to debate. A more practical solution would be to make optimum use of one car rather than using two; this however is unlikely to occur unless a significant change occurs in relation to responsible sustainable behaviour.

35% of respondents in Knockadaff and 25% in Slievemore belong to households where there is no car. This could possibly be an indication of the relative lack of affluence of many within these areas. It could also suggest that in these peripheral areas optimum use is made of the available car.

Fig 7.26 Distance Travelled to Work/School



(SAPS CSO, 2002)

The issue of waste management must also be to the fore in any debate on sustainability. There were some notable differences in the amount of waste produced in each area. The average amount (of black bin bags which are of an average size) varied between each area. The average number of bags thrown out (not recycled) per household per week in Breaghwy numbered 3.1; in Slievemore the figure was 2.07; while in Knockadaff this number was 1.8 (Household Questionnaire).

It proved difficult to calculate exactly the amount of materials recycled on an area basis; these figures did show that more waste is being produced per average household in Breaghwy. This could be apportioned to larger younger families in the area. Nevertheless it is an area, which must be improved and is worthy of further more in-depth investigation. If sustainability is to be addressed fully there are several issues such as waste management which must be dealt with in a more proactive manner than is currently occurring.

There is an urgent need to re-emphasise the issues of environmental protection and the impact upon long-term sustainability. While the notion of sustainability and environmental concern are relatively new within many rural areas in Ireland, it is difficult to criticise the uptake. Environmental awareness and responsibility of the

individual is increasing on the ground. The rate of increase will however need to be much greater if we are to become a truly sustainable society.

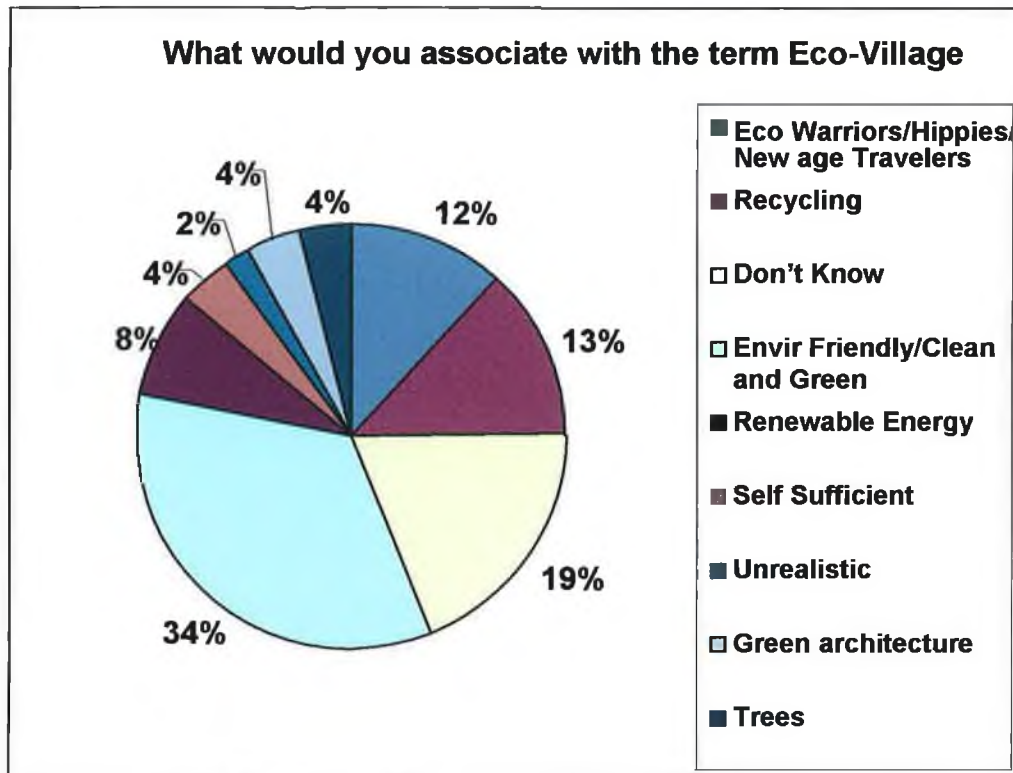
Fig 7.27 Participation in Recycling



(Household Questionnaire Entire Sample)

One of the main drivers behind recycling in the case study areas have been the children of school going age. In Breaghwy, the local national school has been awarded a green flag for its recycling initiatives. Several of the respondents said it was the 'kids' who had gotten them to become more environmentally conscious. It may perhaps only be when this generation of children are well educated on environmental issues and the importance of clean green living and taking over the running of households that the message will finally arrive on a wider scale.

Fig 7.28 Associations with the term Eco-Village



(Household Questionnaire Entire Sample)

One possible solution to rural housing problems could be the adaptation of more eco-friendly models. While there is no exact definition of what an eco-village is, there are a number of growing examples of eco-villages throughout Europe. It was important to test attitudes towards the concept in the possible event of similar initiatives here.

Respondents were asked what they associate with term 'eco village' (no prompts were given). Despite the fact that environmental awareness and behaviour has improved, there is still a need for a wider and more relevant explanation of environmental policies. The term 'eco' often does not augur well and there maybe a need of a new or re-definition. It is fair to say that there is disgruntlement in several quarters over environmental policies particularly at local level. This may impact in the future on the uptake and relative success of any eco or environmental initiatives which could offer a sustainable solution to some of the rural housing problems.

As personal and economic well being is perceived as being 'threatened' in favour of environmental protection in the context of planning, many have negative associations with eco-related matters.

Debates on sustainability in Ireland have focused upon broad issues such as housing which are difficult to tackle. If we are to truly have a sustainable society then there are numerous more simple practical and achievable goals that should receive greater focus. Further research is needed to develop the general findings made here.

Mayo County Council attempted to bring in housing design guidelines in 2003 but the council rejected these. The aims of these guidelines were to provide good information on siting and design of housing in rural areas. They are quite comprehensive and cover a wide range of issues. Reasons why they were not accepted were varied:

“ the plan was put together by a Dublin architect, the council didn't want it. In my opinion they didn't want to be dictated to by some one who wasn't from the “country”. They didn't want some one from Dublin coming down and telling them that this is the way it should be, they didn't want the advocating of vernacular styles they didn't accept it. In particular they didn't like references to indigenous cottages they felt in some way it was backward and degrading” (Planner, Mayo County Council 2004).

For a further visual review of the housing observational survey in this research see Appendix A.

7.5 Chapter Summary

Breaghwy (Peri-Urban)

Demographic Change

- The demographic change within Breaghwy has been significant. The population of the area has increased and is now dominated by a mobile, service sector middle class. This has had several impacts upon housing and is also responsible for changing dynamics within the community.
- It can be argued that the community has become more fragmented due to the process of demographic change, house prices have increased, and land use is now becoming an issue.

Not all of the impacts have been negative and there is resurgence within several local sectors such as education, sport, and community development. There is now a better-educated local population who may be able to contribute in a positive manner to local community development.

Housing and Settlement

- The nature of housing within the area has changed dramatically. There have been several periods of change but none more so than in the last ten years. The style and type of housing within Breaghwy are high price and high impact. This has affordability implications for locals wishing to purchase property. The increased pricing pressure placed upon families in the area is having some impacts on quality of life issues. The increasing rise in property prices in the area is also welcomed by some because the nature of the housing combined with its targeted market has actually helped increase local property value.
- Cluster development is seen as one of the prime methods to accommodate housing needs in Breaghwy, yet there are several flaws within it. The

housing that has currently been constructed is extremely highly priced and does not always cater for local needs. Due to loopholes within existing legislation (where 20% of new development has to be supplied at social and affordable rates) smaller type developments are exempt. The notion of cluster developments also attracts significant property speculation within the area. There have also been several breaches of planning regulations with regard to cluster type developments and several developers have not yet complied with outstanding issues (some of which are over ten years old and as yet are still unresolved).

Community Development and Sustainability

- The nature of community development within Breaghwy reflects its more affluent nature. There are no specific development forums. Concerns within the local population focus upon the changing nature of the area. The work of the community group is primarily about the aesthetics of the village and surrounding hinterland. There are several underlying problems within the area such as care for the elderly and housing affordability for locals, who are not receiving the attention they deserve.
- Demographic change within the area is reflected in the make up of the community council. Under the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2004) Breaghwy is considered an area under 'high pressure' due to overspill from Castlebar. The question must be asked whether the community will welcome or resent future housing development in the area. As the nature of the area changes (becomes more developed) or appears to be changing, will members of the community who value the rural 'idyll' become more active through community based forums in attempting to halt development? In Breaghwy this situation has occurred with some local resident groups formally objecting to a new housing estate development. Interestingly, housing, above most other issues, stirs up community action /reaction in this study area.

Slievemore (High Amenity Consumption)

Demographic Change

- Slievemore is experiencing overall population decline, though this is not as severe as in other areas. However it is also experiencing a significant amount of in and return migration (excluding seasonal migration). There is a strong tradition of return migration within the area. Concern must however be expressed about the age profile of some return migrants and the long-term implications of their return. While some have returned to retire, the majority of return migrants have not yet reached that age but will do so in the near future. This will have serious implications on service provision for the elderly. The amount of younger return migrants with young families is much lower than their older counterparts. The issue of whether or not return migrants should be accommodated is an extremely emotive one locally.

Housing and Settlement

- Land use is now a major issue within the area. Settlement has conformed to relatively traditional settlement patterns, but these are now becoming blurred as housing developments are encroaching into areas adjacent to traditional settlements and this has led in some cases to a 'joining up' of settlements. Some of the most recent developments (in particular holiday homes) are at variance to local settlement patterns and are located on prominent positions on the landscape.
- Seasonal migration has had a significant impact upon the housing stock within the area. The majority of new dwellings being constructed are being purchased as second /holiday homes. The competition for housing from seasonal migrants is one of the biggest threats to ensuring social sustainability within the area.
- Government policy (The Pilot Resort Scheme, 1995) has increased the desire for holiday homes in the area. There is a significant amount of local

concern over the proliferation of holiday homes within the area. Local house /property prices have increased as an indirect result of the scheme.

Community Development and Sustainability.

- There is a relatively active community within the area. Groups are comprised of locals, in-migrants and return migrants. The level of education within local community groups has increased due to change in migratory patterns. The processes of demographic change within the area means that there is a much more diverse and skilled local population within the area. Competition for housing however from seasonal migrants is impacting upon the ability of some to return on a more permanent basis.
- Community development within the area focuses upon employment creation, maximising local resources and creating an area in which people can exist all year round.

Knockadaff

Demographic Change

- Knockadaff has experienced severe population decline over a sustained period of time. This has led to a human resource deficit within the area. There have been some levels of in-migration to the area. The majority of in-migrants have been attracted because of its location but primarily because it is a Gaeltacht area (This has resulted in some local friction).
- The economic profile of the area is dominated by small-scale primary activities such as farming and fishing. The levels of long-term unemployment are higher than in the other case study areas. The area has not been subject to extensive development during ‘the Celtic tiger’. It is an area where the local population will come under significant threat within the next couple of generations.

Housing and Settlement

- There has not been a substantial amount of housing development within the area in the recent past. While some development *has* occurred, it can be attributed to natural processes; not dominated by external forces and in-migration.
- The quality of many of the houses in the area provides a relatively poor living standard. There are much higher levels of people without central heating systems and this is in an area with an aging population. There has been a need over several generations to renovate or replace existing housing stock and this accounts for many of the bungalows within the area.
- Demand for housing in the area is however, increasing and it is believed that the area will come under increasing pressure from holiday /second home developments. Due to the lack of employment and relative poverty within the area many feel that it should be their right to sell houses or sites in order to secure a source of income. So far, levels of site selling within the area have been quite low .

Community Development and Sustainability

- Due to the marginal nature of the area there have been several local and national responses to halt economic decline locally. The bottom-up approach is believed to hold the solution to some of the problems areas such as Knockaduff face. Friction however, between local groups within the area has led to funding being held back, ultimately to the detriment of the area.
- Because the area is a Gaeltacht, it has attracted in-migrants wishing to live there and speak the language. Quite a high percentage of the overall in-diversity to the area. There is some evidence of local resentment to this and in some quarters an attitude of not becoming involved with 'blow ins' prevails, regardless of what they are trying to achieve within the area ,migrants have become involved in community development forums. As in Slievemore this has contributed to higher levels of skilled and educated

people becoming involved. It is too early to evaluate the relative long term success but in the short term more people are involved and they are bringing much more

Overall the findings of this research have attempted to paint a broad picture of rural change in Mayo, anchored around the process of housing provision. It is evident that differential change is occurring in the three related study areas. The related factors of land use-conflict and the human element of community structures that accompany a study of housing, are an integral part of the 'big picture'. Attempts have been made to address demographics, housing (in all its facets- from the physical, the social and political!) and community to give a holistic overview of a period of significant change in Co. Mayo.

Chapter 8: Conclusions And Recommendations

8.1 Key Findings

Affordability and access to the housing market for low-income households is compounded by a number of contributory factors in each area. These include the use of housing as an investment tool, second home ownership and holiday homes. In-migration is also having an impact in relation to house prices; in more peripheral areas (Knockaduff and Slievemore) the impacts of in-migrants on a permanent basis are having some wider positive effects in relation to community development.

Section V of the Planning and Development Act seeks to ensure that 20% of land zoned for housing development is supplied at social and affordable rates. The Act is to be welcomed and has obviously been introduced because of increased need for affordable housing. The policy of zoning such developments in towns may have wider impacts upon some rural areas. Within county Mayo there have been a total of nine towns zoned for development. Social and affordable housing will only be supplied within these zones, as this will ensure housing is delivered in a sustainable manner (reducing the need for commuting). The policy of only supplying social and affordable housing in zoned towns may have wider rural impacts. Local ties of kinship, identity and community cannot be ignored in future planning policy. If land is not zoned in some rural areas and no social and affordable housing supplied, there may well be an increased demand for one-off housing to accommodate local needs. The increased demand for one-off housing in the countryside is complex. While the argument that one-off housing is in line with traditional forms of settlement such as the street village has merits, the glut of sites for development being sold by local landowners has wider and deeper implications.

While the selling of sites may provide some short-term solutions i.e. generating local revenue, it will have wider impacts upon rural areas. Possible impacts will include an increase in 'tough' legislation and planning which may impact upon the ability of future generations to build within the area.

There is a distinct possibility that in some areas 'zones of exclusivity' can be created. If the current approach continues (particularly in peri-urban and high amenity consumption areas) it may be increasingly difficult for many to live in those areas due

to affordability. The long-term effects of this could have significant negative social and housing provision impacts.

Changes within rural housing and rural populations cannot be treated in isolation. There are wider socio-economic transformations occurring nationally and internationally which are affecting the dynamics of rural areas. These wider socio-economic transformations are impacting on all rural area typologies within Mayo. Each area is being affected in a different manner and so spatial planning is needed which takes these impacts into consideration

Increased population in some areas is needed in order for the area to be able to sustain itself. This is an issue in more remote marginal areas. An increased population within these areas may attract investment or stimulate local development. There seems to be an assumption among policy makers and strategies led by EU legislation that centralisation of employment, population and services etc. is the way forward- this needs to be examined more closely.

There is a desire among many to seek out a lifestyle which anchors them within an area -they seek identity, to become involved, to provide a quality, safe living environment for themselves and their children. In- and return migrants may be able to offer part of a solution to rural development deficiencies. This research has shown that many have become involved -this can be perceived as both positive and negative.

The ongoing debate on rural housing in the countryside has focused upon the unsustainability of settlement patterns, aesthetic damage and possible pollution from septic tanks caused by one-off housing. Concerns over cost and service provision have been paramount in arguments against the sustainability of settlement patterns. While this is a legitimate concern, there are several complex issues involving local ties, kinship and traditional settlement patterns, which cannot be ignored. These issues needed to be studied before any drastic action is taken in relation to local housing needs. The argument against one-off housing septic tank damage has as yet little scientific evidence to back it up. Research is needed on how much pollution is being caused by septic tanks and the ability of natural systems to absorb discharge. The debate over aesthetic appearances of housing has been claimed by some to be 'aesthetic snobbery' and that people should be free to design and build whatever type of house they wish on their own land. This view is not widely held by many respondents, the vast majority of respondents in each case study area felt there should be restrictions on the types of houses being built in the countryside. From the

observational analysis, it can be seen that the type, style and nature of rural houses has changed dramatically in the past thirty years for various reasons. This has resulted in a mish-mash of styles in some rural areas and this in turn makes it increasingly difficult for planners to decide upon what style of buildings 'fit in' with the local stock.

Several policies and strategies focus upon supplying housing in a manner which is sustainable, advocating the locating of future housing (particularly social and affordable) in key centres. Results from this research however have showed that in relation to commuting, longer distances are not necessarily the most unsustainable. The study area in closest proximity to an urban centre actually had much higher levels of commuting and higher levels of car ownership. This has resulted in two cars being used daily in some households to commute much smaller distances (important to note here that in relation to carbon emissions shorter journeys cause as much damage as those of longer distances).

A great opportunity has been lost in the recent past to reinvent the vernacular tradition and an even greater opportunity has been lost in providing sustainable buildings and possibly a new rural housing model and ethos. Several parties are responsible nationally, politically, locally and individually. Not enough has been done to emphasise the sustainability factors associated with the houses themselves regardless of location or settlement patterns. If sustainability is truly a goal for this society, then there must be some practical steps that can be taken. Why not concentrate on some real tangible short-term goals? These goals should focus on sustainable housing and materials, and be strictly enforced while educating people on the long-term benefits to them and their children. Government subsidisation (with perhaps contribution from developers) for sustainable practices should be introduced into the housing process.

The rural housing debate has entrenched viewpoints and will make it increasingly difficult for planners, policy makers, politicians and local groups to attempt to consolidate differences in bringing about sustainable development in the rural environment. Respect for planning policy and environmental legislation is now in a vulnerable state and has created an opinion among many rural inhabitants that policy makers and planners place more value upon the area itself rather than upon the people within it. While the sustainability of rural areas is the concern of all involved, the development-versus-environment debate continues to drive communities into unnecessary, counterproductive splinter groups.

8.2 Implications for Rural Mayo

There is an urgent need for spatial planning to consider the impacts of planning regulations on all rural areas in Mayo. The National Spatial Strategy acknowledges this and attempts to formulate solutions for each rural typology, taking into consideration pressures upon the area for development and also the distinctive nature of settlement within the area. While spatial planning for individual areas is to be welcomed, the overall impact of the designation of 'hubs' in Mayo must be called into question. There are several areas in the county that are outside any reasonable commuting distance of the hubs. If the strategy continues along these lines, the hinterlands of Ballina and Castlebar will be under increasing housing pressure. If a spatial strategy is about bringing balanced development, other locations might have been better choices for 'hubs'. These could have fed into the Ballina -Castlebar corridor and created a wider balance within the county, ensuring that economic development would stimulate as wide a hinterland as possible.

In Breaghwy and other areas under high-urban based pressure, there has been no land specifically zoned for housing development. Housing development will still occur within this area and individuals from the locality will be catered for, provided they are in compliance with planning regulations. If housing development in such areas continues on this basis, then questions must be raised about the sustainability of land use in such a manner. Cluster type developments are encouraged in such areas to counter this. Yet, in Breaghwy the clustered housing that has been built is highly priced. The cluster developments are smaller and because of size and location are exempt from section V of the Planning Act (20% of social housing). If the only available housing in these smaller type clusters is highly priced it will undoubtedly increase pressure from local landowning families to build more one-off houses, as clustered housing may be far too expensive. Therefore, it is not enough to promote clustered settlement alone, the socio-cultural aspects of pricing and so on, must also be discussed.

With increased participation from the local authority in supplying housing stock and acquiring land there is a need to reevaluate the roles of county councillors, particularly those with vested interests in property development.

Currently twelve of the thirty-three councillors (prior to 2004 elections) representing Mayo are either estate agents or involved in property development. This needs to be examined because of possible conflicts of interest. It can hardly be said to be fair and in the best interests of spatial planning where representatives of the council who benefit directly or indirectly from property development!

8.3 Key Recommendations of the Research

- There is an urgent need to monitor housing provision in rural areas. Pressures which different area types is experiencing need to be clearly identified and corrective policies put in place. The wider impacts of property speculation and investment in housing need to be considered.
- Renting, as a form of tenure needs to be improved, there is no tradition of this form of tenure and there is little protection for people who are renting -there is very little provision or thought put into long term leasing.
- Pressures upon rural housing are multidimensional and often reciprocally self-reinforcing. The extent and nature of pressures emphasise the need for additional planning policies, development incentives, community and infrastructure development, and a wide-ranging strategy for dealing with structural weakness in peripheral rural economies. If future policy is to be successful it must deal with the multitude of issues affecting rural housing in an *integrated* way. Without a holistic approach, pressure upon rural housing will remain a predominant feature in these areas. Even with a holistic approach, there is a need to strictly monitor and enforce regulations, which not only protect the natural but also the social environment of rural areas.

8.4 Contribution of Study to Wider Knowledge

This research attempted to examine issues of topical and urgent concern in rural Ireland at the turn of the new millennium. Housing in the nation as a whole is a national priority as demographic make-up and economic well-being have generally improved. Rural areas have been affected by these trends but also bear the burden of rising desires for second homes to varying degrees. This research has explored the complex web of relationships between rurality, housing, community development and associated implications for the wider sustainability debate.

Previous work on rural housing in Ireland (Finnerty et al. 2002) suggests that rural areas are unprepared for the general housing pressures sparked off by economic growth. This research concurs with Finnerty's findings and suggests that this unprecedented economic growth has led to increased use of housing as second homes and investment opportunities, leading to increased difficulty for many in rural areas in relation to accessibility to existing housing stock.

This research has shown that prices for second-hand homes have been increasing at an even more accelerated rate than new housing prices. 'One-off' housing where people build upon their own land is often for many a more affordable method of attaining a home. With increased demand for housing nationally (Bacon 2000) and increased demand for social and affordable housing (Ryan 2000) this process may well be likely to increase.

However this process of sporadic development has led to an increasing divergence in housing styles and settlement patterns. This is supported by Aalan (1997). The costs of such developments to the taxpayer has also been questioned Mulvihill (1984). While there is a need to examine associated costs of housing in rural areas there are also traditional and cultural elements that must be considered.

Issues concerning 'one-off' housing are complex and there are historical and cultural dimensions that must be considered, Clinch, Convery and Walsh (2002) suggests that 'one-off' housing in the countryside is an unsustainable model of development. The research has shown that there is a valid concern in relation to sustainability, particularly in peri-urban and high amenity consumption areas.

In relation to high amenity consumption areas this research corresponds to Lewis' (1998) suggestion that population loss can occur while housing unit numbers

increase. In areas in which finite land resource usage is becoming an issue the usage of high numbers of housing stock as holiday homes combined with the impact of general property price increases (particularly in more popular areas) raises some long-term social sustainability questions.

In peri-urban areas this research has shown that the change in migratory patterns are broadly in line with processes of 'gentrification' and the in-migration of mobile commuter classes, charted in the UK and elsewhere (Cloke et al ,1995; Jones, 1985; Lewis, 1998; Pahl , 1966; Phillips, 1993; Van Dam, et al., 2002). The results from this research show that there are several negative impacts associated with this process of counter-urbanisation such as affordability, access to the housing market for several locals and increased car usage. These results correspond with Schucksmith's findings (1981 and 1991). In relation to Schucksmith's findings valuable lessons can be learned in Ireland from the possible impacts of protectionist policies in relation to local access to the housing market.

Not all aspects associated with in-migration are negative. Stockdale et al. (2000) argued that there are several positive aspects which must also be associated with in-migration. In all of the case study areas it must be argued that there were positive aspects that must be apportioned to in-migration. These included increased diversity and animation within community development groups. In one of the case study areas in-migration has led to an enhanced opportunity in the preservation of the Irish language. It was also shown however that elements of conflict were apparent in each area; it could be argued that 'intra-class conflict' as identified by Cloke and Thrift (1987), is inevitable if a dynamic working model of local development is to evolve.

Environmental degradation and water quality in rural areas are the concern of all. Environmental degradation cannot only be apportioned to housing in the countryside, however more research is needed on the contribution of septic tanks to ground water pollution. While the government must grapple with problems associated with environmental degradation, it has been argued (Fishler and Black 1995) that the primary focus of national and international environmental policy seeks to achieve environmental protection without confronting tough choices or even requiring fundamental changes in political economic systems. In relation to rural housing and tough environmental legislation it seems unlikely that the government would place environmental legislation ahead of 'votes'. The argument within the 2004 Rural

Housing Guidelines that environmental legislation was being over rigidly administered (while very high percentages of housing in rural areas were granted planning, 92% in Mayo 2002) and that environmental designation for special areas; does not necessarily mean housing cant be built must in some way support this.

It has been argued by Whelan (1997) and McDonald (2002), that the 'bungalowisation' of the countryside represents a visual loss to the landscape. While this study has shown that there are many examples of housing in each area that are at variance to traditional architecture, the changing nature and styles of housing cannot simply be apportioned to the expression of individual tastes in relation to architectural design. The poor quality of rural housing is often ignored (Jackson and Hasse, 1996; Storey 1988;1995); in several cases new housing which has been constructed has replaced older poorer quality housing stock. While there is a need to promote traditional forms of architecture in the countryside, it must be argued that many of those who may be asked to bear the burden and cost of preserving more traditional buildings in rural areas are among some of the most disadvantaged social groups in the country (Nolan, Whelan and Williams,1994).

A physical record of housing and settlement patterns in varied rural zones in Mayo has been undertaken for the first time. It shows that concerns in relation to the aesthetic impact of housing do have merit. This research has shown that in areas of increasing affluence the extent, nature and size of housing are causes of concern. Bacon (2000) has suggested that demand for housing is set to continue throughout the country, therefore there is an urgent need to improve sustainable housing designs and use of resources. This record also identified that in several cases it is common practice for family groups to build housing in close proximity to each other, on land owned by the family. This traditional method of settlement is under threat from future legislation and planning laws. The largest threat to this type of settlement is the sale of such sites. Issues in relation to who is purchasing property and for what reason need to be assessed. If housing/property is sold to residents who will occupy the house all year round and contribute to the sustainability of the community, then surely precedence should be given over those who are investing in a second or holiday home. As yet no such policies exist and the sale of property/housing is dictated by demand and economics. While policies that protect local community interests are to be welcomed, Schucksmith (1981 and 1991) has highlighted that such policies are fraught with difficulty and possible pit-falls.

Finnerty et al (2002) noted that renting as a form of tenure is relatively low within rural areas in Ireland; this was the case in all the case studies here. While there are low levels of renting within each area, rented housing is increasingly being used as a form of income generation. From this research and in conjunction with Finnerty, it must be argued that due to a combination of factors, a class of newly affluent private investors in housing has emerged, purchasing in urban and rural areas. This research showed that within Breaghwy (Peri-Urban) this is particularly true: 13% of respondents within the area were renting out accommodation within Castlebar. It could be argued that this type of investment is long term, a source of revenue which could possibly assist in 'paying the mortgage' on the house in Breaghwy. However there are numerous problems within the rented sector, including high levels of dependency on rent supplements (Guerin 1999) and lack of protection for private tenants (Downey and Divilly, 1998). I believe further that the problem is exacerbated by the proportion of housing that is primarily used as an investment to 'sell on' when property prices increase sufficiently, rather than being used as long-term leasing.

(Finnerty, 2003) expresses concern that in Ireland the emphasis on owning one's home is now leading to over-mortgaged and excluded households. These findings would concur.

The lack of a 'recent' tradition of long term leasing and the desire within rural Ireland to own property pose numerous interesting questions. It could be suggested that this 'phenomenon' is fuelled by modern affluence and the availability of 'investment opportunities' that in the recent past have offered extremely high returns. Issues concerning heritage must also be considered; could the possibility be offered that there is reluctance to renting from a 'landlord' in rural areas. McDonagh (2002) has stated that aspects of heritage must be considered in evaluations of rural Ireland. If so, the history and legacy of the property rights struggle of the late nineteenth century should figure in this analysis. The reluctance to rent and lack of recent tradition cause concern in relation to sustainable development. If long-term leasing were more prevalent in rural Ireland it could offer part of a solution to the current housing crisis.

The most recent housing policy guidelines (2004) advocate that priority must be given to those who can contribute to an area. In conjunction with Woodhouse (1992), I would argue that sustainability is best understood in terms of the sustainability of the community. The re-settlement of rural areas through in migration

and return migration may offer an enhanced opportunity for sustainable community development in many areas. Corcoran (2002) puts forward the notion that many return migrants to rural Ireland are seeking 'community', 'culture' and 'anchorage'; it could also be argued that many in-migrants to rural areas are also seeking the same. If this energy and human resource can be tapped into in a positive manner then sustainable rural community development may become a reality in some areas. This is supported by Day (1998), who states that concepts of culture and community have particular relevance for processes of sustainable rural development.

While this may be a utopian view, there will undoubtedly be 'issues' in relation to change in the dynamics of community-based forums. As housing and land use become increasingly a community-based concern the situation may become increasingly complicated and controversial, as 'community development forums have rarely taken housing as a primary objective' (Finnerty et al. 2002). The emotive issue of land, responsibility to the community and individual goals could possibly increase some local tensions. However if problems associated with the sale of property/housing to seasonal dwellers (often with higher purchasing power) are not addressed, the sustainability of many rural communities and their ability to become a vibrant sustainable community will be in serious jeopardy.

Limitations of the Research

The main limitations of the research proved to be the broad scope of the aims! The work represents a 'first call' to gauge the overall nature of housing change in Mayo. The objectives, in hindsight, were rather ambitious and resulted in some parts of the work being less detailed than would have been desirable. The inclusion of holiday-home owners in the household questionnaire would have added perspective on seasonal communities to housing and community. The mapping exercise was a useful recording survey, but if time had allowed, further correlation might have been made between recorded properties, the observational inventory and questionnaire interviews. It was extremely difficult to secure interviews with agency /gatekeepers and inevitably, those with 'questionable' interests /activities (e.g. some controversial developers and councillors) refused to participate.

Suggestions for Further Study

Further research is needed on the following areas:

- Levels of second home ownership, uses of second homes and the motivations and merits for second home ownership.
- The role of developers in the locality in relation to land use, political donations and allegiance.
- The development and implementation of sustainable housing models.
- Land transfer and the quantity of sites being sold (to whom and for what purpose).
- The implementation and monitoring of the 2004 housing guidelines. This must be extensive and impartial research.
- Further work on this research could be applied to other DEDs, in Mayo, or indeed in other counties.

Concluding Comment

This research has revealed a plethora of complex relationships between people, place, land and shelter. Set within a period of turbulent social and economic change, rural Mayo is struggling to adapt to its new housing challenges. As one of the largest and most beautiful counties of Ireland, it must finely balance all those who want [to be] part of it....

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Appendix A

Housing Field Study Analyses

The nature and style of housing differs between all the case study areas. It is firstly important to examine some notable differences in size of houses.

Table 8.1 Average House Size

	Knockadaff	Breaghwy	Slievemore
Average House Size (Number of Rooms)	5.00	6.4	5.3
Average Persons Per House	3.064	3.35	2.66

(Source CSO-SAPS 2002)

The average persons per house in the aggregate rural area in Mayo are 2.93. (CSO 2002). This figure has been in gradual decline from 4.17 in 1946 to 3.52 in 1986 to 3.22 in 1996. In more recent housing developments size has been increasing, yet occupancy levels are not. The recent trend of building larger housing stock is an area which needs to be debated and explored, particularly in relation to impacts upon sustainability. "There has been a huge increase in size in many of the houses now being built. The average size used to be around 1400 – 1500 square feet now it's around 3000 to 4000 square feet" (Estate Agent Interview 1).

The majority of the housing stock in Breaghwy is relatively new. The majority of new housing that has been built in Breaghwy is quite large in size in comparison to the other areas. The number of "high-impact" housing is significantly greater,

Table 8.2: Percentage of Larger and Smaller Sized Housing

	3 Rooms or Less	7 Rooms +
Knockadaff	24%	16%
Slievemore	19%	26%
Breaghwy	5%	53%

While the housing in Breaghwy is dominated by new houses and is of a reasonably high quality it is not entirely accurate of all the housing stock within Breaghwy. In the other two case study areas the size of housing is on average much smaller than in

Breaghwy. Housing within these areas housing occupied on a permanent basis is dominated by older stock, occupied by older residents. It has been shown that areas of older housing may also lack certain household amenities (Storey 1988). This again can be seen with 26% of housing in Knockadaff and 15% in Slievemore lacking central heating compared with 5% in Breaghwy. (Source CSO SAPS 2002).

It is important for future housing developments allow for a more comprehensive plan to be put in place clearly identifying some basic needs, to build new, and modernise or replace existing stock that may be inadequate.

The issue of improved living conditions in relation to improved quality of housing is also important and is discussed in more detail in the housing field study analysis "... a certain romanticism is attached to the countryside which may obscure issues such as the quality of dwellings and housing affordability for local people" (Jackson and Hasse, 1996; 61-62) The issue of poor quality housing in rural Mayo was also highlighted by Storey (1981). While there has been an improvement in housing stock in all areas this has not been comprehensive.

Breaghwy Peri- Urban

Breaghwy provides an ideal location to chart the emergence of changing styles and types of housing located in many rural areas in Ireland today.

Pre 1970;



Plate 8. (Traditional Style Cottage Breaghwy)

There are a few examples of older cottages in Breaghwy; the majority of cottage style housing is located in the more remote areas of, both in a linear and clustered fashion. (See distribution Map)



Plate 9. (Traditional cottage; which has been renovated and extended.)

In order to improve the quality of existing stock, there are several examples of older cottages that have been renovated and now appear more Bungalow like in appearance.



Plate 10. (Hipped Roof Cottage Breaghwy)

This cottage marks a change in style and quality of rural housing. This particular style with the hipped roof became popular during the nineteen thirties, and was the predominant style used in the rural re-housing scheme of the period.

The rural re-housing scheme came about as a need to tackle the problem of poor housing quality in rural areas. This style of building became the predominant type of single storied house in rural areas up until the late nineteen sixties.



Plate 11. (Derelict House Breaghwy)

In relation to the older housing in this area a high percentage of them are occupied by older inhabitants. Of all the uninhabited housing within the area cottage style houses are the most common and are much further down the property investment line.

While planning regulations have been about fitting housing into the local area the level of new housing which is built in a traditional cottage style is minimal. The rebuilding or occupying of older housing does not seem to be desirable.

Emergence of the Bungalow 1970s,-1980s,

Significant changes in style occurred during the nineteen seventies and eighties. The change in style of this period is of a most marked note in comparison to previous generations of rural house types. The reason for the adaptation of new styles and the popularity of the bungalow is due to a combination of factors. (See literature)



Plate 12. (Chalet Style Bungalow Breaghwy)

In relation to planning a number of particular bungalow or housing types will be located in proximity to each other (See Distribution Map). This keeps in line with the planning regulation that housing must fit in with its local surroundings. This chalet style bungalow is located adjacent to a number of others of similar style. While they fit in with each other they have little in common style wise with housing located further down the road or in the surrounding area.



Plate 13 (Villa Style Bungalow Breaghwy)

While both styles are common the villa style is the more prevalent from the period.



Plate 14. (Villa Style Bungalow)



Plate 15 (Chalet Style Bungalow Breaghwy)



Plate 16. (Villa Style Bungalow Breaghwy)

1990s, Bungalows



Plate 17. (Modern Bungalow Breaghwy)



Plate 18. (Modern Bungalow Breaghwy)

The bungalow has never really departed as a style. More recent types tend to be bulkier with a more compact use of space in their design. Some styles have been adapted here to maximise space and natural elements such as sunlight. However there is an overall increased diverseness in types of Bungalows now being built.



Plate 19. (Modern Dormer Bungalow Breaghwy)

The Dormer Bungalow is currently the most popular bungalow type development.



Plate 20. (Modern Dormer Bungalow Breaghwy)

There are several variations upon the dormer style. Whether or not this is aesthetically pleasing is open to individual tastes and preferences. But the earlier forms of Bungalow have led to an increased diverseness in style and design within the area.



Plate 21. (Modern Dormer 'Bungalow' Breaghwy)

In some cases it may be easier to acquire planning permission for a dormer rather than a two storied dwelling due to regulations over the style and skyline. This house (Plate 21) built in a dormer style but could hardly be considered a bungalow.



Plate 22. (Modern *Bungalow* Breaghwy)



Plate 23. (Modern *Bungalow* Breaghwy)

The above buildings (plates 22 & 23) are two storied yet have elements of a bungalow design. This feature is becoming increasingly popular in contemporary examples of Bungalows. Whether or not they can be strictly categorised, as a bungalow is open to debate.

While building on more traditional lines may be quite low within the area it cannot be said to be non-existent. Plate 24 is an example of a brand new cottage type development.



Plate 24 (Modern Cottage Breaghwy)

Two Storied Dwellings;

The Bungalow is not the only style of housing within Breaghwy. There is also a tradition of two storied dwellings within the area. The earliest examples of these are old farm houses built in the Georgian style.



Plates 25& 26 (Traditional two storied farmhouse in Georgian style, Breaghwy)



Plates 27& 28 (Mock Georgian Style 1980s,, Breaghwy)

More contemporary examples have tried to emulate this style. There are some differences; more contemporary Georgian styles of housing tend to be larger and incorporate elements from other styles such as the use of pillars. More contemporary examples in Breaghwy tended to be built in much more prominent positions on the landscape.



Plate 29 (Mock Georgian 1990s, Breaghwy)

The level of two storied houses within Breaghwy is significant in comparison to the other areas; over 80% of the two storied dwellings here have been built since 1990. The two storied houses that have been built are quite large and are a good example of relative affluence being displayed through housing.



Plate 30. (Modern Style Two Storied Dwelling Breaghwy)

These developments allow for new styles to import into the area. Once particular styles are imported they are often emulated. Due to the diverseness of house design within the area it is difficult for planners to argue that a particular style of house does not fit in within the area. As this process continues it becomes increasingly difficult to categorise the housing design in the area.



Plates 31 & 32 (Modern Two storied Houses-incorporating red brick Breaghwy)

While these houses are different there are a number of common features between both. The partial use of red brick and the general designs of the houses are elements that have been imported.



Plate 33. (Mock Tudor Style Breaghwy)

Another building style which is more in line with traditional architecture in the UK, which has been incorporated in the local architecture in Breaghwy, is that of the “mock” Tudor style. So far within this field study the changing styles and elements associated with housing in the area has been highlighted. Whether or not such change should be welcomed or incorporated through planning has not been explored. While guidelines laid out by the county council planning department recognise that when building one should, “Avoid copying the latest trends and decorative effects; shutters, porticos, balustrades, arches, half timbering, pilasters and other effects which are not indigenous, they will go out of fashion, and will date your house prematurely” ”(Mayo Co.Co. Rejected Housing guidelines 2003).



Plate 34 (Two Storied Dwelling With Native Black Limestone Facing Breaghwy)

This two storied dwelling (plate 34) is built in a style which reflects a traditional two storied farm house. It has incorporated local materials such as black limestone and natural slate. It could be argued that it is more in line with traditional architecture than the previous examples and represents future elements of house design.



Plate 35 (Modern Two Storied Dwelling Breaghwy)

“Mayo County Council will encourage the use of indigenous materials and construction techniques, and architectural designs and styles which are out of character, or without regard for traditional construction methods, materials and regional styles, will be discouraged, and may be refused permission” (Mayo Co.Co. Rejected Housing guidelines 2003)



Plate 36 (Modern Dwelling with synthetic exterior)

This building has the appearance of natural stone work but it is actually a synthetic material. Whether or not such materials should be used is open to debate, are there environmental impact needs to be explored.



Plate 37 (Modern Two Storied House Breaghwy)

There are numerous properties in Breaghwy which are on a large scale. The useage of large houses poses some interesting questions with regard to sustainability. What is clear in this area that a trend is occuring where larger and more grandiose houses are being accomodated within the local housing stock.



Plate 38. (Modern Palladian Style House Breaghwy)

This property is built in a Palladian style (a period noted for its love of extravagance) it is less than ten years old.

“Palladian neo-classicism was a common enlightenment style, well suited to the gentry’s view of their cardinal position in balanced hierarchical society. The great houses of this period all serve an exemplary function,based upon principles of rationality and control, manipulating landscape as a decororous adjunct to power” (Aalen et. Al. 1986. pg 69).

Could it be argued that a new gentry is emerging in some rural areas, holding a similar view on their own cardinal position in contemporary Ireland?

While it is not typical of the architecture in the area it is a prime example where affluence is expressed through housing. Several local people commented on the house and how planning permission was obtained for such a dwelling while they have been turned down. While it can be argued that the Palladian style has been in Ireland for almost two centuries the merits of building such a house must be called into question.



Plate 39. Modern Architectural Style Breaghwy

“A side effect of our recent economic development has been the proliferation of novel architectural styles. Without respect for heritage or regional character, most of these are out of place in their surroundings , particularly in the countryside, and their ever increasing presence is detracting from the quality of our rural environment”(Mayo Co.Co. Rejected Housing guidelines 2003)

Cluster Type Developments.

Due to increasing pressure upon land resources the building of cluster type developments has been encouraged in rural areas. Cluster type developments are seen in some quarters as part of the solution land use and environmental issues in relation to rural housing. Within Breaghwy there have been several types of this development. Within this area they tended to be high quality high priced housing. They are dominated by in-migrant commuters to Castlebar. There has been no social and affordable housing built in any of the cluster developments in this area.

The notion of the cluster is based upon the traditional form of settlement the Clachán. The Clachán however is traditionally associated with close ties of kin which is at variance to contemporary settlement within this area. While cluster type developments offer part of a more sustainable settlement pattern within this area, their development needs to be strictly monitored. Within Breaghwy they have encouraged property speculation, contributed to increased levels of in-migrant commuters, by their size design and nature affordability has become an issue for some.



Plate 40. Cluster Type Development Breaghwy



Plate 41.Cluster Type Development Breaghwy



Plate 42.Cluster Type Development Breaghwy

All of the above are examples of the types of housing being provided in clusters within Breaghwy. All are of a relatively high quality and price. The value of the house in Plate 41. is in excess of 400,000 euros. While clustered housing is seen by some as a possible solution to housing in rural areas, there is a distinct possibility that they may be socially selective- encouraging more affluent zones of exclusivity within some rural areas.

Several respondents within the area stated within the household questionnaire that it was difficult to secure planning permission. Planning permission can be more easily secured for a number of developments at once. The issue of whether sites are being developed for local usage or whether landowners are taking advantage of high property prices is open to debate.



Plate 43. (Housing for sale prior to construction Breaghwy- this is not a housing cluster development)

Slievemore

Housing issues in Slievemore are in some regards similar to Breaghwy (access & Affordability), there however some notable differences.

Pre 1970s,

While there are some new quality buildings within Slievemore 51% of the dwellings in the area have been built prior to 1960. There are several examples of housing of a poor quality in need of renovation. Older residents often occupy these houses.



Plate 44 (Example of Poor Quality Housing Slievemore)



Plate 45 (Example of Poor Quality Housing Slievemore)



Plate 46 (Renovated Holiday Home Slievemore)

Many, which are renovated, are often occupied as holiday homes. There are some examples of cottages that have been renovated from a state of dereliction. Many of the more traditional cottages that have been renovated are being occupied as holiday homes.

The fact that many older dwellings are occupied by the elderly means that these dwellings can become derelict when the occupants die. There seems to be reluctance among locals to rebuilding or renovating abandoned properties.



Plate 47. (Derelict cottage Slievemore- note fine stonework)

From this research it is estimated that around 3% of housing within the area is derelict.



Plate 48 Derelict House Slievemore

What is unclear here is whether this renovation and resettlement will occur as a result of local need or from the development of second homes. Some research findings indicate that there is reluctance among some sectors of the local community to the inhabiting of cottages. “Why should we have to live cottages, when that was the case people had to emigrate and the thatch caved in, leaving a derelict eyesore? We don’t

want that but that's the vision they have for us, we want to see prosperity and farmers able to keep their holdings" (Sean Clarke Mayo IFA 2002)

"There has been little regard for vernacular landscape features such as traditional rural buildings and field patterns, in a society anxious to distance itself as rapidly as possible from all associations with an impoverished rural past... (Aelan 1997 et al. p.29-30)

If government subsidisation was made it may perhaps encourage permanent dwellers to re-occupy these houses rather than seeking to build new ones.

1970s,-1980s,

The amount of new housing built during this period in Slievemore is the lowest in all the case study areas. That is not to say that no development occurred. Many of the houses within this area appear to more bungalow like in appearance, but in many cases they are in fact renovated and extended older housing stock. A sizeable amount of this occurred during the 1970s, and 80's. The fussy exterior observed in Breaghwy was not as common in Slievemore; this is perhaps to do with cost or stricter planning regulations in the area. However several renovated examples of older housing had some elements associated with this period 'added on' to the exterior.



Plate 49 (Modernised-Extended Cottage Slievemore)

At first glance this example may look like a Bungalow but on closer inspection it is in fact a traditional cottage which has been renovated /re-built. Note the size and location of the windows (small) the thickness of the windowsill and walls. The central location of the door is also another indication that this is more in line with a

traditional cottage than a bungalow. The chimneystack has been placed at the end gable moved from the centre (hearth), which alters the appearance of the dwelling making it appear more bungalow like. This is one of the most predominant types of housing within Slievemore.



Plate 50 (Bungalow from 1970s, -80's possibly older cottage with extension)



Plate 51 (Traditional Cottage with extension)



Plate 52 (Cottage with several extensions and stone facing added)

1990s,

There has been a significant amount of development that has occurred in the area since 1990. This has been the result of a number of factors. There has been an extensive amount of holiday home development as part of the Pilot Resort Scheme; there have also been a number of private holiday home developments. In relation to stock, which is being occupied on a permanent basis, there has been an increase in the past decade.



Plate 53 Modern Bungalow Slievemore



Plate 54 Modern Bungalow.

Planning has been relatively strict in the area, and many buildings are more in line with traditional cottage forms than contemporary bungalows observed elsewhere. Several commentators have been critical of the amount of housing that has occurred within the area in the recent past. Criticisms in relation to the effects which some holiday developments have merit, however some external criticisms have focused entirely on the holiday home issue? Locals have been blamed by some for securing planning permission for housing to be used on a permanent local basis, and then selling on the property. While there is need of further exploration of this issue it did prove to be the case in some examples.



Plate 55 (Modern Bungalow; with more traditional style Cottage/Bungalow in the foreground).

The location of a new Bungalow in close proximity to an older one (often cottage can often reflect changing behaviour in settlement. This was evident here in both cases. In previous generations the first of the offspring to marry, usually the male inheritor, would often live in the same dwelling as the parents. This has become less and less common and is almost non-existent in contemporary rural Ireland. The more recent

method of housing settlement resulting from inheritance has involved the building of a new dwelling on the family land in close proximity to the parental family dwelling.

Increased affluence within the area, increased demand for housing and impacts of tourism have led to more recent changes in house styles.



Plate 56.Modern Cottage Style Bungalow Slievemore.



Plate 57 Cottage with modern extension



Plate 58.Modern two-storey building.

Two storied dwellings are quite rare within Slievemore. This dwelling is “sunken” which gives it the appearance that it is only one storied from a distance.

Holiday Home Developments

In relation to design the planning authority has been relatively strict on the type of housing development that has been built as “one-offs”. While there are some variations in design the design of private stock remains relatively similar. Some holiday village developments have also been built in a style that fits in with the local stock. However not all holiday homes are in line with local designs.



Plate 59. (Example of Holiday Home in Village type settlement that fits in with vernacular style)



Plate 60 (Holiday Home Development Slievemore)

The designs of several of the holiday villages are quite good, but whether or not they fit in with local housing styles is debatable. The 2004 Rural Housing guidelines believe that holiday home development will have positive impacts upon the local economy. Several of the holiday home developments however contrast with local styles.



Plate 61. (Holiday Village Development Slievemore)

This particular development has been built on a hillside in a very prominent position in the landscape. This type of development is at variance with traditional settlement patterns, which tend to use the landscape as protection (shelter) as opposed to imposing themselves on the landscape. The fact that development is allowed in such

an area must call into question planning guidelines and exactly how they interpret local styles and settlement patterns.

Further Issues



Plate 62. (Isolated Bungalow at variance to traditional settlement pattern)

The location of some housing needs to be considered. This new bungalow is built at variance to the traditional settlement pattern. Will such developments be more common as land use issues become strained? Questions must be asked as to why this house was built in this position. Firstly, it is not in line with other traditional settlement within the area. Was it built because this is where the owner or developer had land? Access to this house is also an issue and the extremely long driveway which was put in place to facilitate this dwelling must be called into question.

Design and location issues will determine the future character of housing within Slievemore. The future of the community and its makeup will be affected by the sale of housing in the area. The sale of houses and popularity of the area as a tourism destination is having an impact.



Plate 63(Houses being sold before they are built)



Plate 64 (Note for sale sign)

While these styles fit in with existing stock within the area it is important to note the “For Sale” sign. Property prices have risen significantly in Slievemore since it has become a popular tourist destination. One local community development worker believes that the vast majority of housing which is being sold in Slievemore is being purchased by “second home owners”. The 2004 housing guidelines seek to increase levels of home building within the area. The objective of this is to ensure social sustainability within the area. However as no protection exists to protect existing stock, property prices may increase even more for existing housing stock.

Knockadaff

Some of the more traditional forms of settlement can be observed within this area. Housing is located within four main areas. The settlement here is similar to that of the Clachan system with small clusters of housing located together. While this is the predominant form of settlement there is some evidence to show that this may begin to change if the area becomes more popular.



Plate 65 Cluster of Housing Knockadaff

Clustered type settlement that is based on the Clachan system. This is a larger example that has evolved over time but is still in line with traditional forms of settlement.



Plate 66 Example of Possible Clachan

Example of a Clachan; a number of houses clustered together. Traditionally links between kin would have been strong in such settlements.



Plate 61 Nucleated Settlement Knockadaff

Pre 1970s,



Plate 68 Cottage, which has been modernised and extended

The predominant house type within the area is again the bungalow. As in Slievemore many of these Bungalows are renovated and extended versions of more traditional cottages.



Plate 69 Cottage, which has been extended Knockadaff



Plate 70 Poor Quality Housing Knockadaff



Plate 71 Poor Quality Housing Knockadaff

Older inhabitants occupy both of the above housing on a permanent basis. There is a need to ensure that quality housing within these areas is allowed.



Plate 72. Derelict House Knockadaff

There is also a significant amount of abandoned housing within the area.

Where possible existing structures should be renovated in a manner that makes them a viable alternative to new buildings. Not all stock can be renovated but future plans and policy must take this into consideration.

Many of the existing older stock may face the same fate as they are seen as undesirable properties to settle in, if they are not occupied by a year round population, there is an inherent danger that they may be purchased as holiday homes. Which in itself can lead to more long-term problems? The An Post Survey 2004 identifies that 9% of the existing housing stock in the area is being occupied as a holiday home.

1970s, -1980s,

As in all the case study areas Knockadaff has not been exempt from changing designs and tastes in rural architecture. In general the bungalows from this period within this area are less decorative and fussy than some of their more contemporary examples elsewhere. The high levels of building within these periods are higher than the average rural area in Mayo. Exactly why building from this period is so high in this area is unclear; it could be argued that many have replaced inadequate existing stock. While some in-migration has occurred it cannot be apportioned to account for such a large volume of dwellings from this period.



Plate 73 Villa Style Bungalow 70's-80's Knockadaff



Plate 74 Chalet Style Bungalow 70's-80's Knockadaff



Plate 75 Indication of Changing settlement Distribution
This type of settlement is repeated all over the case study area. Above is an example of a new bungalow that has been built (middle foreground). New housing tends to take advantage of roadways rather than the more intense clusters of the past. With

increased property prices family plots are often distributed to members, who often build in close proximity to the family home. Within this area such a method of land distribution and pattern of settlement is common, and is a recognised traditional form of settlement.

1990s, +



Plate 76 Modern Bungalow at variance to traditional settlement patterns

While a high number of new houses are located broadly within cluster type settlements some new examples are most definitely not. This new development is located in relative isolation along the main road into one of the settlements. Future policies must ensure that settlement within the area should not be allowed to occur in a linear based fashion and the native settlement system must be taken advantage of. This linear settlement has begun to occur here since the nineteen eighties but it is as yet minimal. (see map) Reasons why this is occurring could be that land in a more clustered location is unavailable and in order to build people are forced outwards from the village. This is an area which must be addressed by future planning policy in a comprehensive manner which does not allow the traditional method of settlement within the area become diluted beyond recognition (as is occurring in other areas).



Plate 77 Cluster of Council Housing Knockadaff

The council do however recognise the value of cluster developments and the above housing estate of six houses is modelled on the Clachan. This new housing fits in quite well with existing settlement patterns and designs. In relation to social housing Knockadaff has a relatively higher percentage than the other case study areas.



Plate 78 Cottage which has been renovated and extended since 1990

Above is an example which has been renovated and extended. The extension to this building does not alter its vernacular character or appearance; it maximises use of space while minimises visual impact (From the front this house appears quite small).



Plate 79 Modern Dormer Knockadaff

In more recent times the dormer has become a popular style. This has also been the case in Knockadaff, the extent is relatively low in comparison to the other case study areas. Housing in the area is dominated by more traditional styles.



Plate 80 Modern Cottage Style Bungalow- Residence or Future Holiday Home?

Some of the more recent houses built are in line with more traditional styles of housing. Only 9% of the total housing stock within the area has been built since 1991. Knockadaff has been suffering from continued population decline and when combined with strict planning regulations this could be a reason as to why such a small amount of development has occurred within the area since 1991 (NHAs SACs ETC). What is clear however from the new housing guidelines 2004 is that areas such as Knockadaff will be allowed to increase their housing stock?

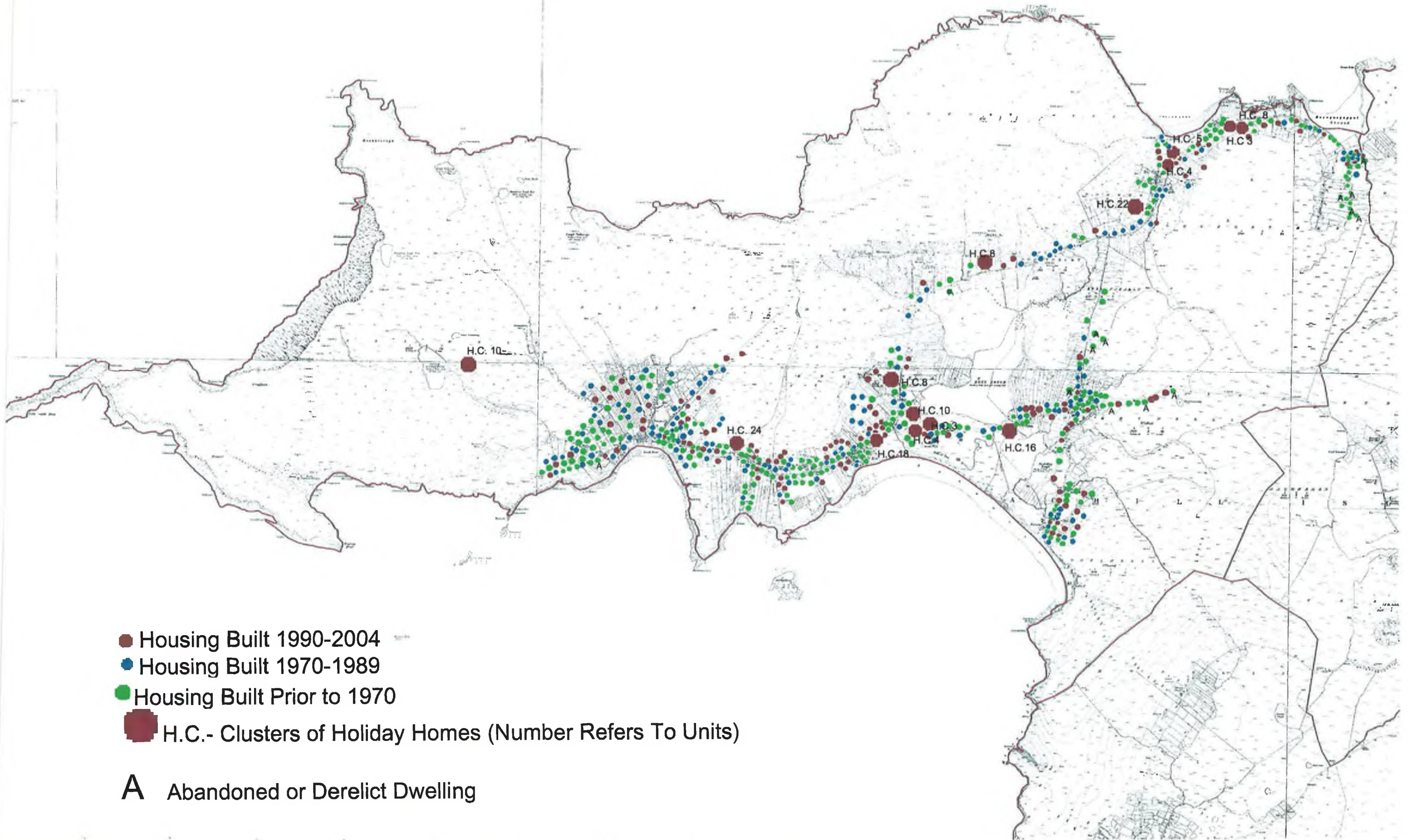
The aims of this policy are simple they seek to ensure a future for the area in allowing more development to occur. Whether this will work or not remains to be seen. It will however need to be examined carefully and if it is not part of a wider multi-dimensional approach possibly doomed to failure. The area is located a significant distance from both of the development hubs of Castlebar and Ballina making commuting difficult and time consuming. The impact of the NSS on areas such as Knockadaff remains to be seen.

With such an emphasis on centralisation of capital, knowledge, resources and skills it is difficult to see where Knockadaff fits into the equation. It has been broadly shown in the UK and elsewhere that the consequences of centralisation policy and an onus on centralising population will have impacts upon more remote scenic areas. The pull factor from more centralised areas of employment upon the local population, combined with the pull of their own area for those who have been living in the

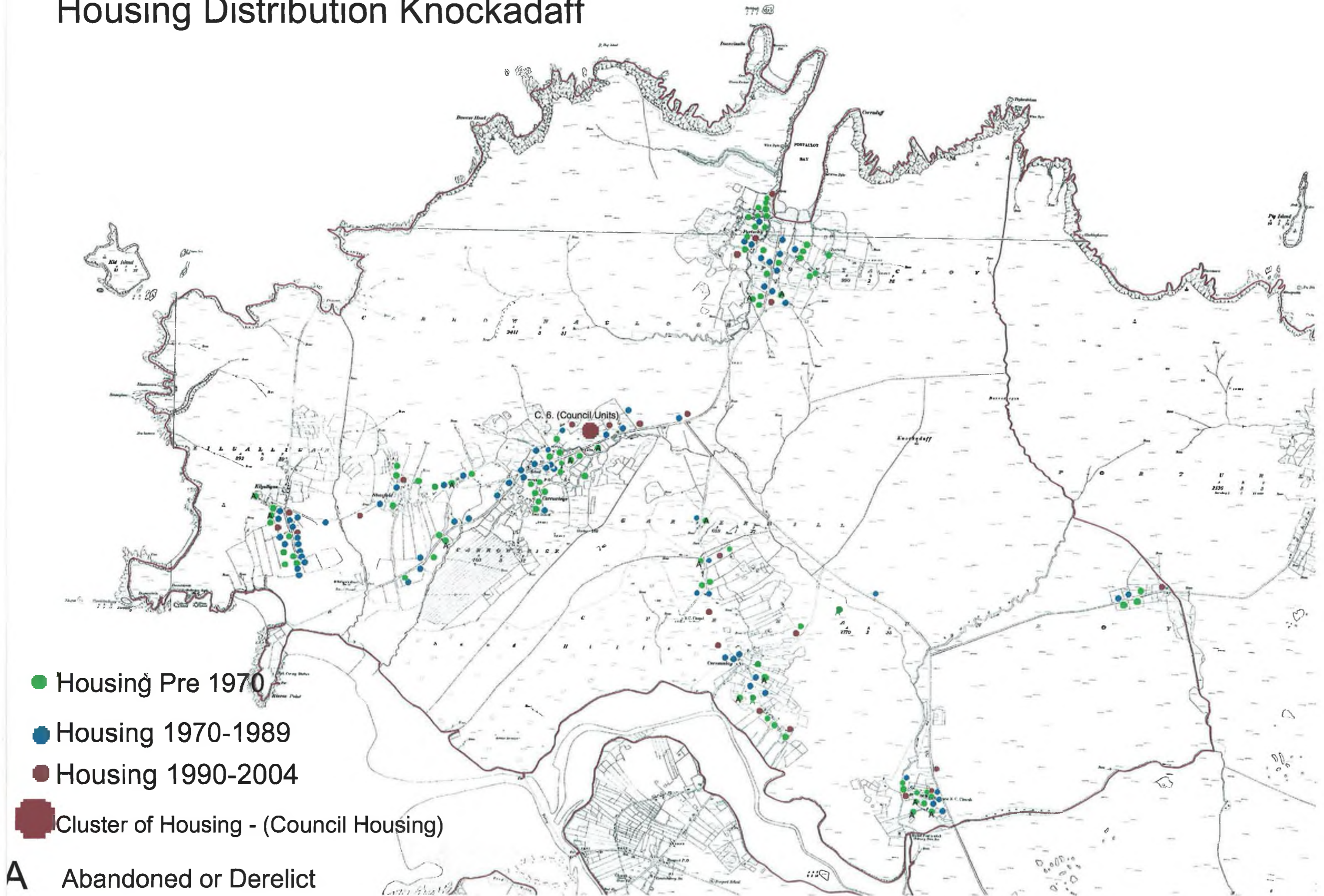
centralised system have accumulated wealth and are now seek to explore their rural idyll.

“It is hard to see death (depopulation) when it is disguised and tricked out in the surface trappings of life” (Healy, J.1968 p.56)

Slievemore; Housing Distribution Map



Housing Distribution Knockadaff



Appendix B

Housing Waiting Lists Co. Mayo by Household Type

Source Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 (p.43)

Category Of Household	Mayo CC	Castlebar	Ballina	Westport	Total	%
Couples without children	183	20	48	37	288	15
Couples with 1 child	95	9	23	32	159	8.25
Couples with 2 children	67	12	25	18	122	6.25
Couples with 3 or more children	83	15	18	13	129	6.75
Lone Parent with 1 child	201	14	80	75	370	19
Lone Parent with 2 children	65	21	33	20	139	7
Lone Parent with 3 or more children	52	23	13	18	106	5.5
Single Person Household	446	35	71	73	625	32.25
Total	1192	149	311	286	1938	100

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Household questionnaire

1. Gender?
2. Age Category 18-25, 25-35, 35-50, 50-65, 65+
3. Occupation? Spouses Occupation?
4. Location of occupations
5. Time spent commuting?.....
6. When was the house built?
7. Who chose the design for your house- 1. Yourself 2. Developer 3 Traditional style
(i.e. cottage) 4. Other
8. Was the house built prior to your occupation? (Are you the first occupants)
9. Did you buy/inherit the site?
10. If you bought the site- who did you buy it from (Please tick) 1.Relation (includes
relations through marriage) 2. Neighbour 3. Friend 4 Didn't know them
11. Did you use an estate agent?
12. How many rooms are in your house?
13. Any problems with planning permission?
14. House status – owned, rented, paying off mortgage?
b. If owned has it been inherited?
15. .Do you intend to keep or sell on this house?
16. How many people are living in the house?
17. Do you own another house/site?

18. Have you ever sold a site? (why)

b. Did you know the person you sold to?

19. Would you like to develop a site?.....

A To sell B To pass on to family

20. Are you in favour of section 4? (will explain)

21. What is your opinion of housing development in the area?

22. Have you ever objected to a house or development within the area in the area? (Why)

23. How do you rate Mayo's planning process?

24. What aspects do find fair?

b) What aspects are unfair?

25. Are you in favour of third party objections?(such as An Taisce)

26. Would you like to see more houses/people in the area?

27. Would you be in favour of any restrictions.....

Type;

28. .. Are you involved in any local organisations or voluntary groups?

29. Which? How many hours a week does it take?

30. Are you involved in any local development organisations?

31. .Is there a community council in the area?

b. Do you know any members?

32. .Are you involved in community council?

33. .Would you like to be involved?

Why_____?

Why Not _____?.....

34. .How would you rate the sense of community in the area?

Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor

35. .What is important to you in terms of being part of a community?

36. In your opinion what role should the community council have on planning (Please Tick) None, Limited consultancy role, Significant consultancy role, be the final decision makers.

Why;

37. Can you name your nearest five neighbours? (Do you Know them?).....

38. .Have you lived in the area all your life?

39. If not where are you from originally;

40. Or where did you live and for how long have you been away?

41. Why did you move (back) to the area?

42. .Is it the lifestyle you anticipated?

c. Why

Why not

43. Has your quality of life improved since moving here (if here all life has your quality of life improved in the last ten years?

Why

Why not

44. What do you see as the main advantages/disadvantages of living here?

45. .How do you see the community in ten years time?

Why;

.....

46. What words would you associate with an Eco-village?

47. Do you have a composter? Where did you get it?

48. How often do you use it?

49. .How many bags of rubbish would you throw out on average per week?

50. .What type of material is your house built with?

51. ..Is your roof insulated?

52. Do you have a lagging jacket on your tank?

53. .Have you received any of the county councils leaflets on environmental awareness?

54. .Have they been of any benefit to you?

55. .Do you follow any of the guidelines laid down?

56. Where is the nearest recycling depot?

57. How often do you use it?

58. Are there any other energy saving measures you have taken?

59. Do you have central heating which type?

60. .On average how much would you spend on fuel annually?

61. Do you have a septic tank/ Type

62. How often do you clean it

63. What percentage of your weekly house budget would you spend locally?

64. Where would you do the majority of you grocery shopping?

65. .Do you socialise locally?

66. What is your main social activity?

67. How many cars do you have within the household?

68. How much money do you spend on fuel for the car(s) weekly?

69. Are any of your children employed locally? FT Or PT

70. In your opinion what is the biggest housing issue in the area?

Appendix D

A number of key agents and stakeholders were interviewed during the course of this thesis. These interviews occurred at various times in 2002-2003. Stakeholders interviewed included agencies with various interests and opinions on the subject matter of the research. The interviews were semi-structured and covered a number of topics which were related to the research.

Housing and Settlement

Key agents interviewed here included councillors and planners from Mayo County Council, social housing officers, architects, developers, estate agents; local community development groups were also asked opinions on a range of issues covered here. A total of 19 formal interviews were carried out here.

Questions here were open ended and referred to the following

- The changing nature of rural housing
- Housing designs
- Extents of housing change
- Problems faced in future planning
- Opinions in relation to national policies such as 'clustering of development'
- Attitude and the up take of section V of the Planning and Development Act
- Future Provision of housing in rural areas
- Problems in relation to the supply of housing in rural areas
- Pressures faced by particular rural area types
- Opinions on why housing is increasing in some rural areas
- Opinions on the extent and nature of housing/site distribution in rural areas
- Threats faced by rural communities in relation to housing change
- Opinions on residency clauses.
- Responses to issues raised in the household questionnaire

Community Development

Local development agencies were interviewed here which were located in each case study area. Information gathered here was in relation to;

- Make up of particular community development groups within each area.
- Goals, motivations of the organisations and individuals involved
- Problems faced in relation to; government, local authority support,
- Participation of the wider community,
- Attitudes which exist towards the organisation.
- Future goals and possible potential of the group
- Role or lack of such groups in future housing provision
- Attitudes of the group to the wider community
- Strengths and weaknesses of local community development groups.

Information was also gathered from external agencies involved with particular community groups in each case study area. This attempted to evaluate the workings of the groups from an external professional view. These include members of Mayo County Development Board and Udaras.

Demographic Change

Several agents were interviewed in relation to demographic change which has been occurring. Included here were social housing officers, planners, local development groups and local postman in each case study area.

Questions here related to;

- The extent of demographic change within each area
- Levels of in-migration
- Types and nature of in-migration
- Participation of in-migrants in the wider community
- Possible conflict and friction which may be occurring

- Possible future trends
- How housing policy will negotiate demographic changes in rural areas

Miscellaneous

Not all agents interviewed were directly involved in each of the case study areas. A member of Togher Valley Community Development Group was interviewed. This respondent is working in community development on a full time basis for a number of years and so provides some interesting insights into community development in Co. Mayo- both positive and negative.

A member of Údaras na Gaeltachta was interviewed in relation to involvement with particular groups within the case study areas. This provided some insightful information in relation to a number of local issues of conflict in one particular case study area. It also allowed for some deeper cultural questions in relation to the preservation of the Irish language and the impacts which processes of rural change are having upon it.

Dr Seamus Caulfield was also interviewed. Questions here focused upon the historical patterns of settlement in rural areas. Also as he is a member of the RDA opinions were gauged in relation to current housing policies, motivation of the organisation, opinion towards the current housing situation .

Appendix E

Table (i) Spatial Distribution of Future Population in Mayo

Year	Population			Households		
	1996	2001	2006	1996	2001	2006
Ballina	8,762	9,479	10,145	2,713	3,078	3,510
Castlebar	8,532	9,219	9,856	2,641	2,993	3,410
Westport	4,520	4,932	5,322	1,399	1,601	1,842
Claremorris	1,914	2,040	2,151	593	662	1,842
Ballinrobe	1,309	1,391	1,462	593	662	744
Ballyhaunis	1,287	1,374	1,451	405	452	506
Swinford	1,386	1,491	1,587	398	446	502
Remaining Defined Urban Areas	8,760	9,323	9,826	2,712	3,027	3,400
Other Areas of Mayo	75,054	78,673	81,627	23,237	25,543	28,245
Total	111,524	117,922	123,427	34,528	38,286	42,708

Source: J.Blackwell & Associates supplied the population figures. The household figures were calculated using average households size of 3.23,3.08 and 2.89 for 1996,2001 and 2006 respectively.

Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 (p.32)

Table (ii) Spatial Allocation of Social and Affordable Housing Units under Part V in County Mayo between 2001-2006

Area	Total New Households	Total New Households Affected by Part V	Social/ Affordable Housing (20%)
Ballina	447	358	72
Castlebar	431	345	69
Westport	249	199	40
Claremorris	85	68	14
Ballinrobe	56	45	9
Ballyhaunis	58	46	9
Swinford	67	54	11
Remaining Defined Urban Areas (18 settlements)	386	Not Yet Zoned	0
Other Areas of Mayo	2,795	Not Yet Zoned	0
Total	4,575	1,115	224

Source Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 (p32)

Table (iii) Estimated: Total Housing Provision over the Development Plan 2001-2006

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	Total
Household Formations	915	915	915	915	915	4,574
Total demand: Private Sector	915	859	859	859	859	4,351
Social & Affordable (including Part V)	410	86	86	83	56	721
Total Supply	1,325	945	945	942	915	5,072

Note* The figure of 915 in the first row corresponds with the average number of household formations calculated in the Mayo Housing Strategy.

Source Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 (p41)

Table (iv) Numbers of additional/New Housing Units in Mayo within each price band.

Price Bands (Ire£)											
Year	Estimated Price Increase %										
2001	5%	Up to 60,638	60,638 to 84,893	84,893 to 109,148	109,148 to 133,403	133,403 to 157,658	157,658 to 181,913	181,913 to 206,168	206,168 to 230,423	230,423 to 254,678	Greater Than 254,678
2002	5%	Up to 63,670	63,670 to 89,137	89,137 to 114,605	114,605 to 140,073	140,073 to 165,540	165,540 to 191,008	191,008 to 216,476	216,476 to 241,944	241,944 to 267,411	Greater than 267,411
2003	5%	Up to 66,853	66,853 to 93,594	93,594 to 120,235	120,235 to 147,076	147,076 to 173,817	173,817 to 200,558	200,558 to 227,300	227,300 to 254,041	254,041 to 280,782	Greater than 280,782
2004	5%	Up to 70,196	70,196 to 98,594	98,594 to 126,352	126,352 to 154,430	154,430 to 182,508	182,508 to 210,586	210,586 to 238,665	238,665 to 266,743	266,743 to 294,821	Greater than 294,821
2005	5%	Up to 73,705	73,705 to 103,187	103,187 to 132,669	132,669 to 162,152	162,152 to 191,634	191,634 to 221,116	221,116 to 250,598	250,598 to 280,080	280,080 to 309,562	Greater than 309,562
2006	5%	Up to 77,390	77,390 to 108,347	108,347 to 139,303	139,303 to 170,259	170,259 to 201,215	201,215 to 232,171	232,171 to 263,128	263,128 to 294,084	294,084 to 325,040	Greater than 325,040
% of Mayo Units within each band	N/A	6.64	19.62	32.6	21.58	9.5	4.44	2.56	1.1	.86	1.04
No. Of Additional Units	N/A	61	180	298	197	87	41	23	10	8	10

Source Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 (p20)

Table (v) House Price Projections for Co. Mayo

Note* Based on the assumption that house prices are increasing at a rate of 65.26% of the National Average (Mayo Housing Strategy 2001-2006 p.52)

Annual % increase for New House Prices Mayo

Year	The State	Mayo
2001	15	9.79
2002	12	7.83
2003	9	5.87
2004	8	5.22
2005	7	4.57

The national figures are taken from: New house price increase projections in “The Housing market in Ireland: An Economic evaluation of Trends and Prospects” (Bacon June 2000)

Appendix F

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

(Source: Mayo County Development Board, 2002)

Strengths

- Location of international airport in the County
- High quality of life
- Good tourism product
- Well developed community development structure
- Existence of Gaeltacht areas in the County
- Strong Mayo identity
- Availability of Third-level education at GMIT
- High levels of educational attainment
- Good range of existing urban centres in the County
- Level of retail functions and services are high relative to population

Weaknesses

- There is a lack of good cultural education
- Limited number of quality employment opportunities
- Mayo suffers from being removed from high quality infrastructure –transport, roads (in particular the N5 access route), power (electricity and gas), telecommunications and broadband
- Population density is low and there is a high age profile
- Relatively low levels of Foreign Direct Investment
- Weak Internationally Traded Services sector
- Lack of entrepreneurial education
- There is a high deprivation index
- There is unequal geographic access to services
- There is a low level of participation of young people in community development activities

- Lack of linkage and co-operation between areas within the County

Opportunities

- The creation of a Mayo Job Creation Forum
- Increased Foreign Direct Investment
- Increased indigenous enterprise as a result of improved entrepreneurial education and training
- The opportunity of maximising opportunities that may be presented by the National Spatial Strategy
- Further development of road and rail infrastructure could lead to additional inward investment and linkages
- The further development of Knock Airport, including the development of land for industrial purposes
- The improvement of broadband access and associated ICT development
- Availability of land for industrial development in the urban centres of Castlebar, Westport and Ballina
- The Corrib gas field and pipeline –access to gas
- The promotion of creativity and innovation in job creation and economic development
- The development of a Local Anti-Poverty Strategy
- The further development of the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group
- To further develop and support various consultation and participation mechanisms
- County Childcare Strategy will have attendant social opportunities
- The development of a Sports Partnership
- The Local Authority Arts Plan
- A languages programme could lead to additional enterprise

Threats

- Global recession and associated job losses

- Possible threat of reduced Direct Payments to farmers
- Loss of well-educated Mayo people to Dublin and other cities in Ireland and abroad
- Lack of appreciation of the value of heritage
- The Irish language is threatened by a lack of appreciation of the language as a cultural resource
- There is a decline in the culture of volunteerism
- Crime, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour
- Poverty and social exclusion

Delays in delivering quality infrastructure

Appendix G

Introduction: An Taisce's involvement in planning in Mayo has prompted a local bard to put to paper and parody the National Trust in the image of their critics in the county. It is hoped that the song, by a 'concerned preservationist' will be recorded and used to highlight an issue that has become part of the general election campaign in the county (The Editor, 'Western People' 2002)

An Taisce

(To the air of Slattery's Mounted Flute- with apologies to Percy French)

I

You've heard about An Taisce
Up there in Bail' Ath Clea
An' how they want to save the whest
From the likes of you and me
Tho' they like deserted village
They dread new bungalows
On the lands of our forefathers
'Round the coastline of Mayo.

(Chorus)

So Knock down all your fences
And set An Taisce free
To ramble through the countryside
Protecting precious weeds
Bíodh deireadh leis an Ghaeilge
Ar sean-nós is ár gceol
Ar ndúchas is ár n-oidhreacht bheo
I nGaeltachtaí Mhaigh Eo

II

'No single housing building here!'
Those parasites proclaim
They want a large back garden
Full of wildlife and wild game
A people free environment
All obstacles must go
They want to see the sea and shores
From the roads around Mayo

III

We've pegged two sites on our small farm
For Máirín and for Jack
They're over in America and planning to come back
To settle down and build upon
An acre each or so

But they are not allowed build new homes
On their land here in Mayo

IV

Our land was handed down to us
As our inheritance
In our villages and townlands
Inside each "mare-in" fence
And now we cannot build new homes
Our families must go
And settle in apartments
In towns far from Mayo

V

Lets pump our gas to Dublin
And they'll give us their waste
They'll fill up our valleys
And our rivers and our lakes
And they'll give us new superdumps
They'll send their sludge also
Recycling plants will soon replace
The homes of sweet Mayo

VI

They'll drive down here from Dublin
From their mansions up above
Those self appointed saviours
Of the countryside we love
Lets teach those well-heeled meddlers
And show them where to go
Lets follow Davitts footsteps
In each village in Mayo

(Final Chorus)

So build up all your fences
Protect your property
Our homesteads and our families
Are our priority
Bí bródúil as ár dteanga
Ar sean-nós is ár gceol
Ar ndùchas is ár n-oidhreacht bheo
I nGaeltachtaí Mhaigh Eo

Published In Western People April 17th 2002

Appendix H

Notes From Observational Analysis

In order to create a profile of housing age and types an observational analysis of housing in each area was attempted within this research. While certain house types could easily be identified from particular periods, not all proved easy to decipher. These included styles which were dominant or fashionable during particular periods.

Of all the housing styles the most difficult to decipher were older housing units, which had been renovated. A number of criteria were closely examined in order to establish if houses had been renovated, these included

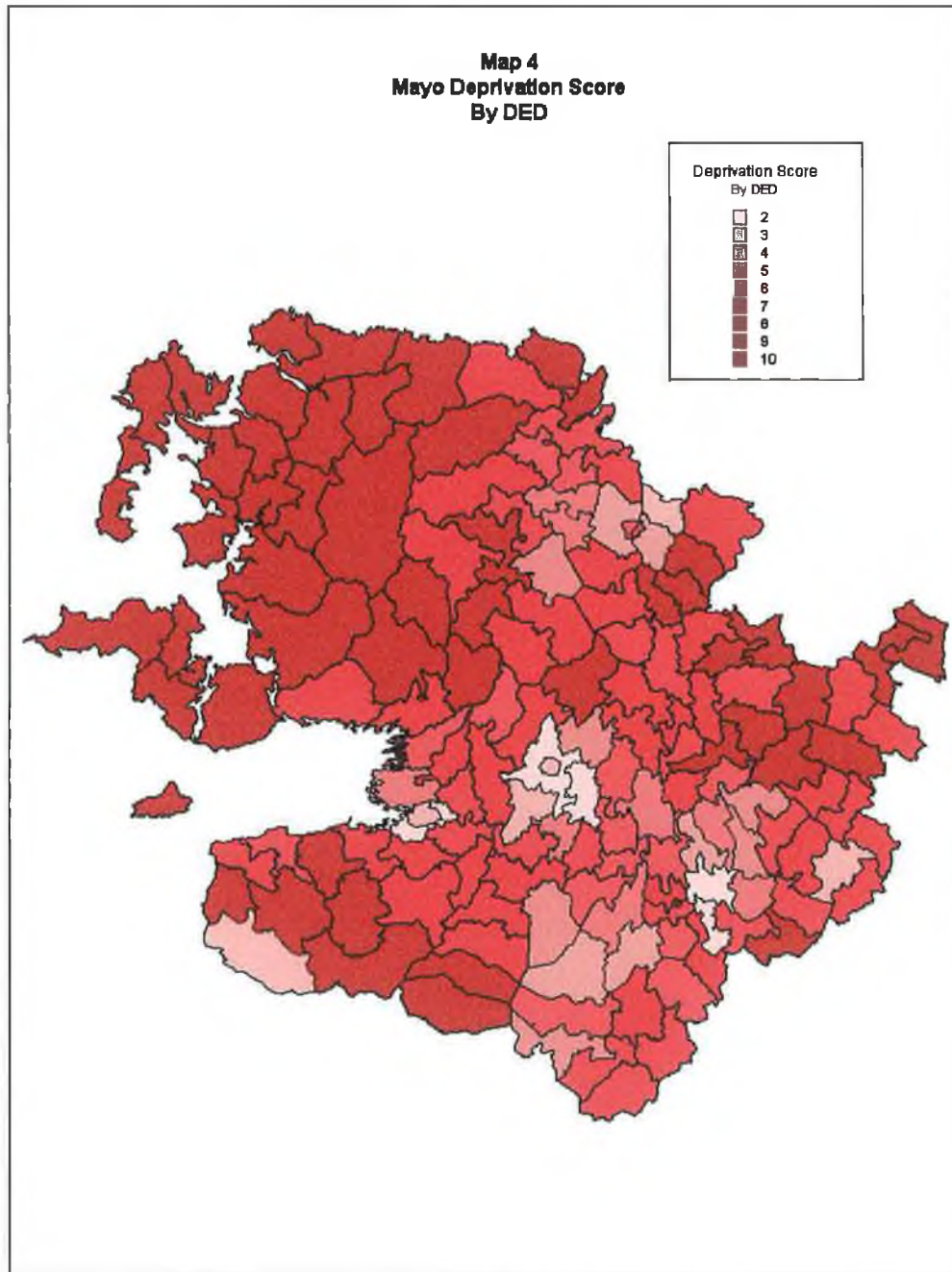
- Thickness of walls
- Size, depth and type of windows
- Location of chimney stack
- Location of door
- Size and shape of building
- Type of roof
- Material used to cover roof

Older houses often tend to have thicker walls, often made of stone. As a result of this window sills are often much deeper than contemporary counterparts. Windows of older housing are often smaller, as is the door. On older buildings which were renovated cottages the door will often appear central in the building (unlike contemporary counterparts). The size and shape of the building is often long and narrow often rectangle although sometimes L- shaped due to more modern additions. One of the most distinctive features is the roof, older housing are often covered with natural slate. The location of the chimneystack is often more central in older housing, located around the central dwelling area of the house.

While none of these in isolation could determine the approximate age of a particular house, when they are examined together in housing which may appear to be more bungalow like they can provide an indication that the house is actually older than its 'bungalow' style would suggest.

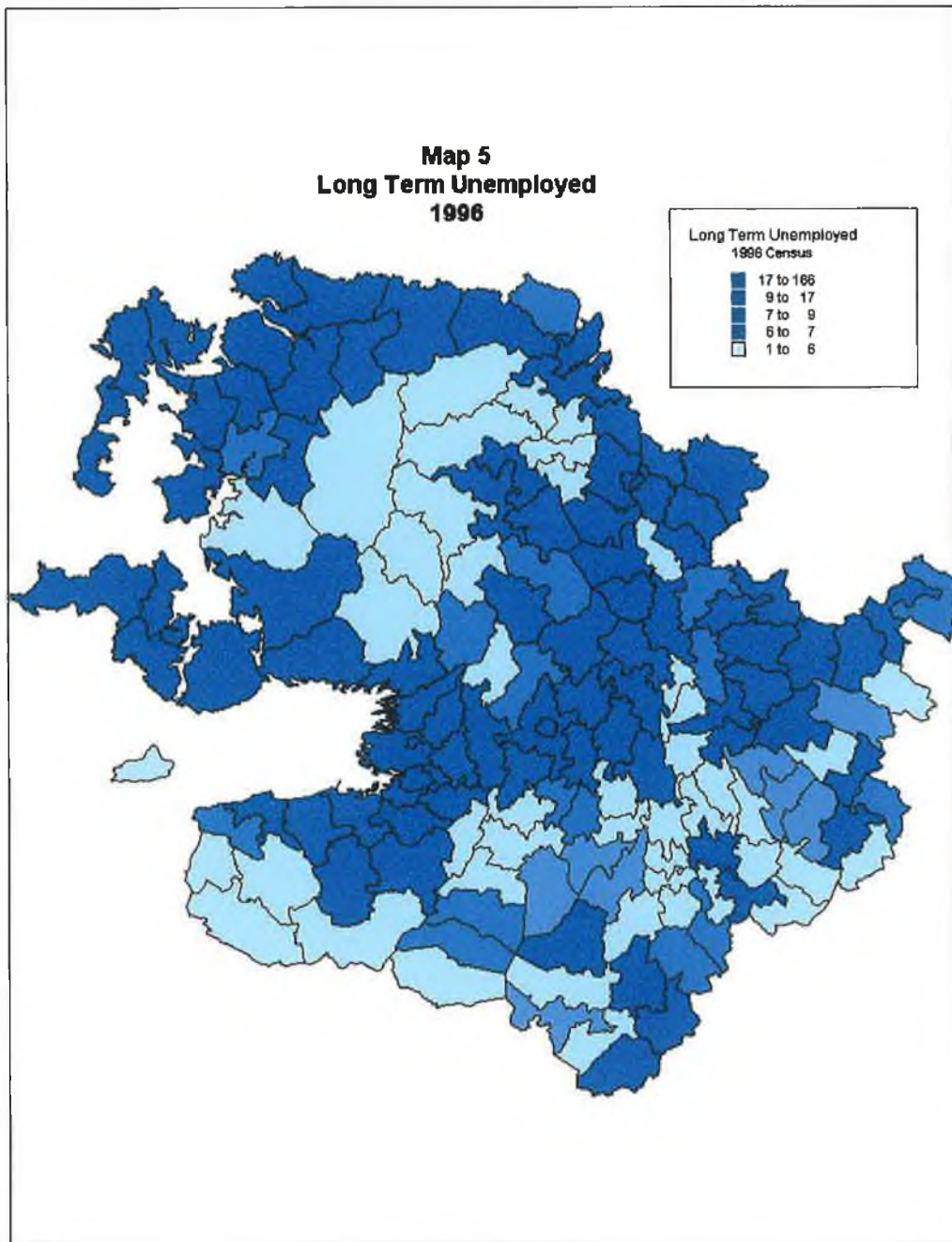
The observational analysis was conducted in order to provide a 'rough guide' in the history of settlement and evolution of particular housing styles. It was not possible to show all areas of concern such as location, siting of house, design type sufficiently on the distribution maps. A much more in depth specific evaluation is needed, as results presented here were placed into broad categories. Due to the fact that this is a relatively short MA thesis, and the author has only a limited understanding of the architecture of the built rural environment not all avenues could be explored sufficiently.

**Appendix I
Map (i)**



(Mayo County Development Board 2002)

Map (ii)



(Mayo County Development Board)