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Spatial Strategies: a place for rural regions?

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WESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

- 7-county Western Region
- State body under the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government
- WDC Act 1998

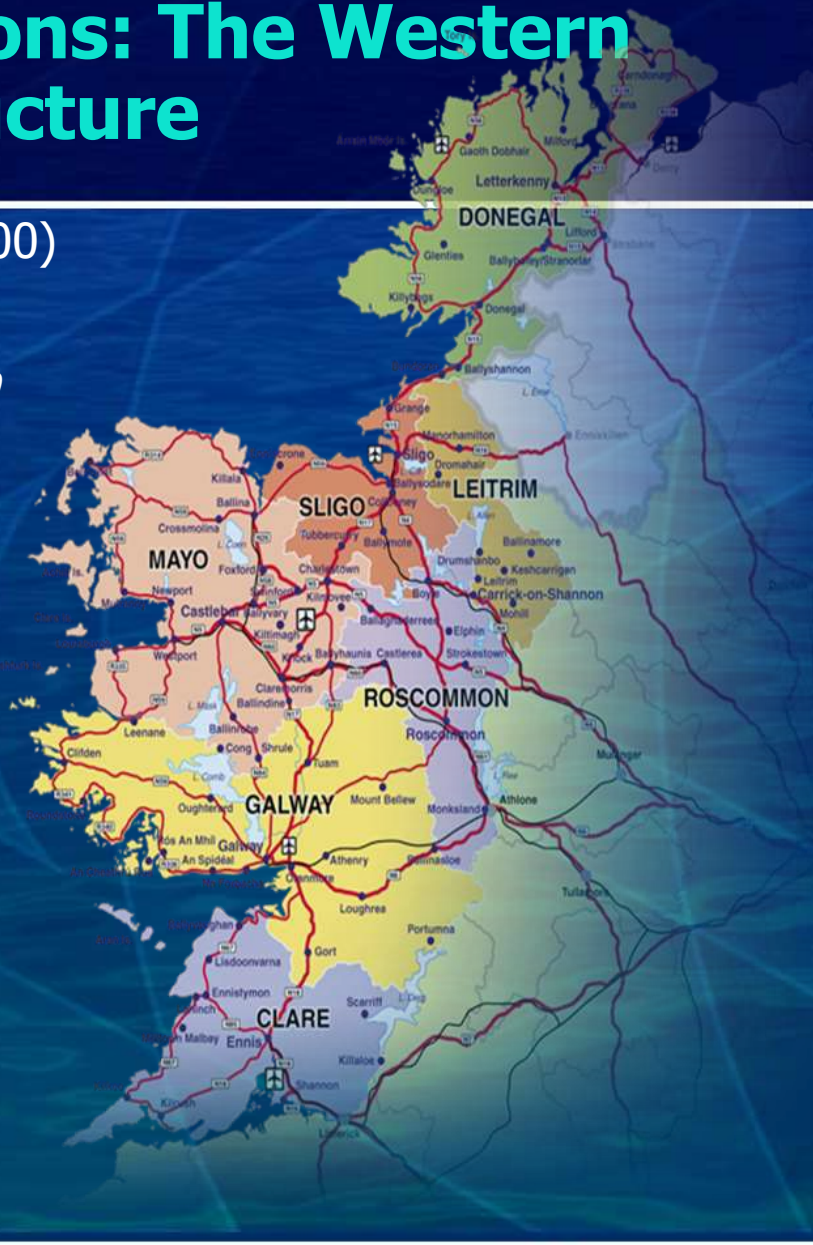
'... foster and promote the economic and social development of the Western Region'

Why consider Rural Regions: The Western Region – Settlement Structure

- 66% population rural (outside towns >1,500) *(State 36%)*
- 75% WR population outside towns *>5,000 (State 44%)*

- Western Region population: 820,880
- 2 towns > 20,000
- 6 towns >10,000
- 12 towns >5,000 (total)

Galway City	**76,778**
Ennis	25,360
Letterkenny	19,588
Sligo	19,452
Castlebar	12,318
Ballina	11,086



Spatial Strategies: a place for rural regions? -presentation outline

- NFP and RSES- some thoughts
  - What do we mean by rural regions?
  - Urban rural linkages?
  - Where is Rural in the process?

- Implementation- Idealism and Pragmatism

National Planning Framework and the RSES- Where is Rural?

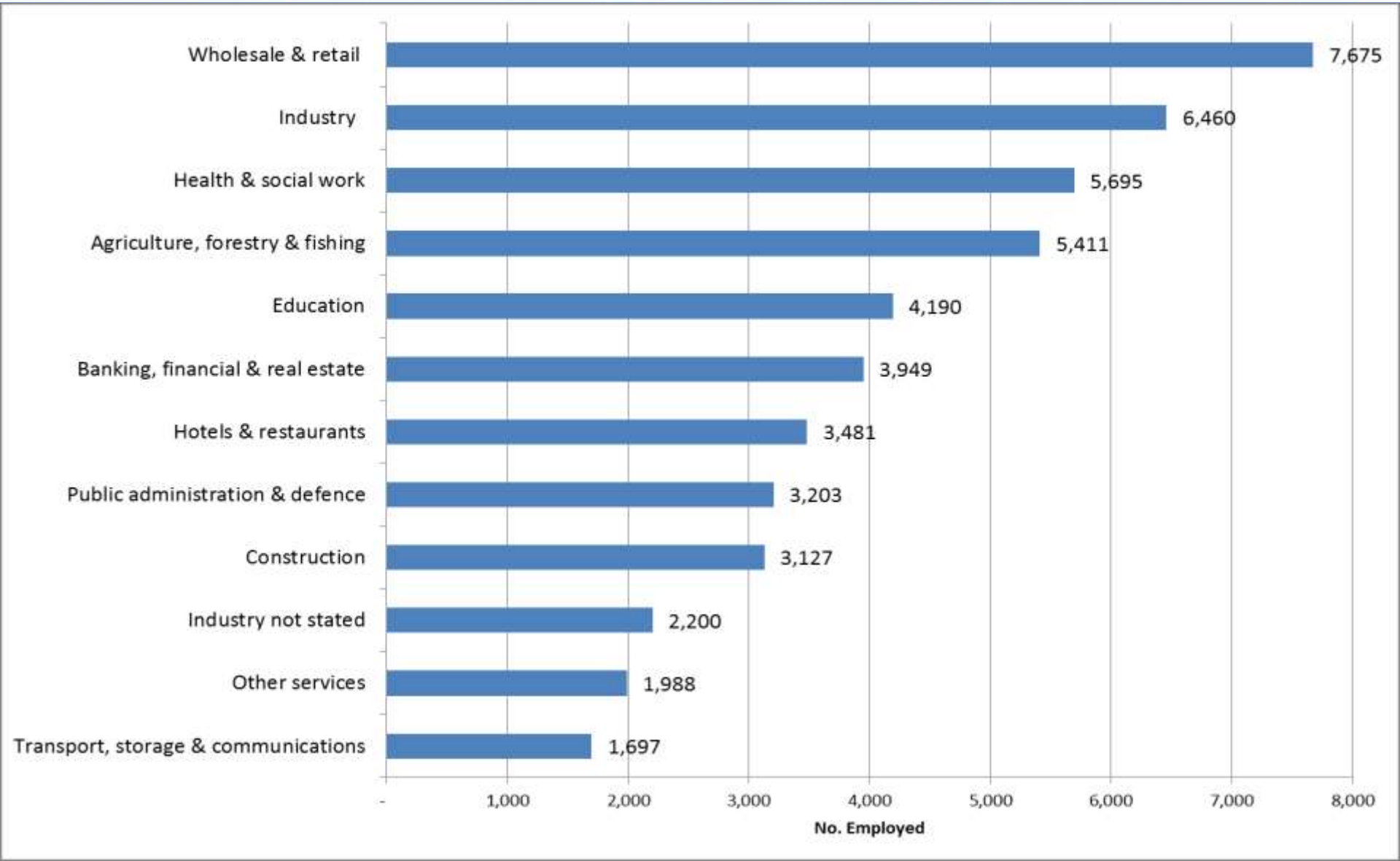
- Rural in the NSS 2002-2020?
  - The role of the gateways acting at the national level, together with the hubs acting at the regional and county levels, needs to be partnered by the county towns and other larger towns as a focus for business, residential, service and amenity functions. The NSS also identifies an important need to support the role of smaller towns, villages and rural areas at the local level- NSS 2002-2020
- How will rural be accommodated in the NFP?
  - functional and city regions?
  - understanding rural urban linkages?
  - The integration of Rural in the RESEs
  - Meaningful planning of rural services, rural enterprises

A few thoughts about rural regions…

- Higher dependence natural resource, food, public services employment
- Higher Self Employment
- Higher proportion in younger and older categories
  - **BUT there can be too much focus on distinctive characteristics of rural areas**
- They are more similarities than differences
- Similar types of businesses (for the most part) and employment, similar people…
- Different scales, Different challenges

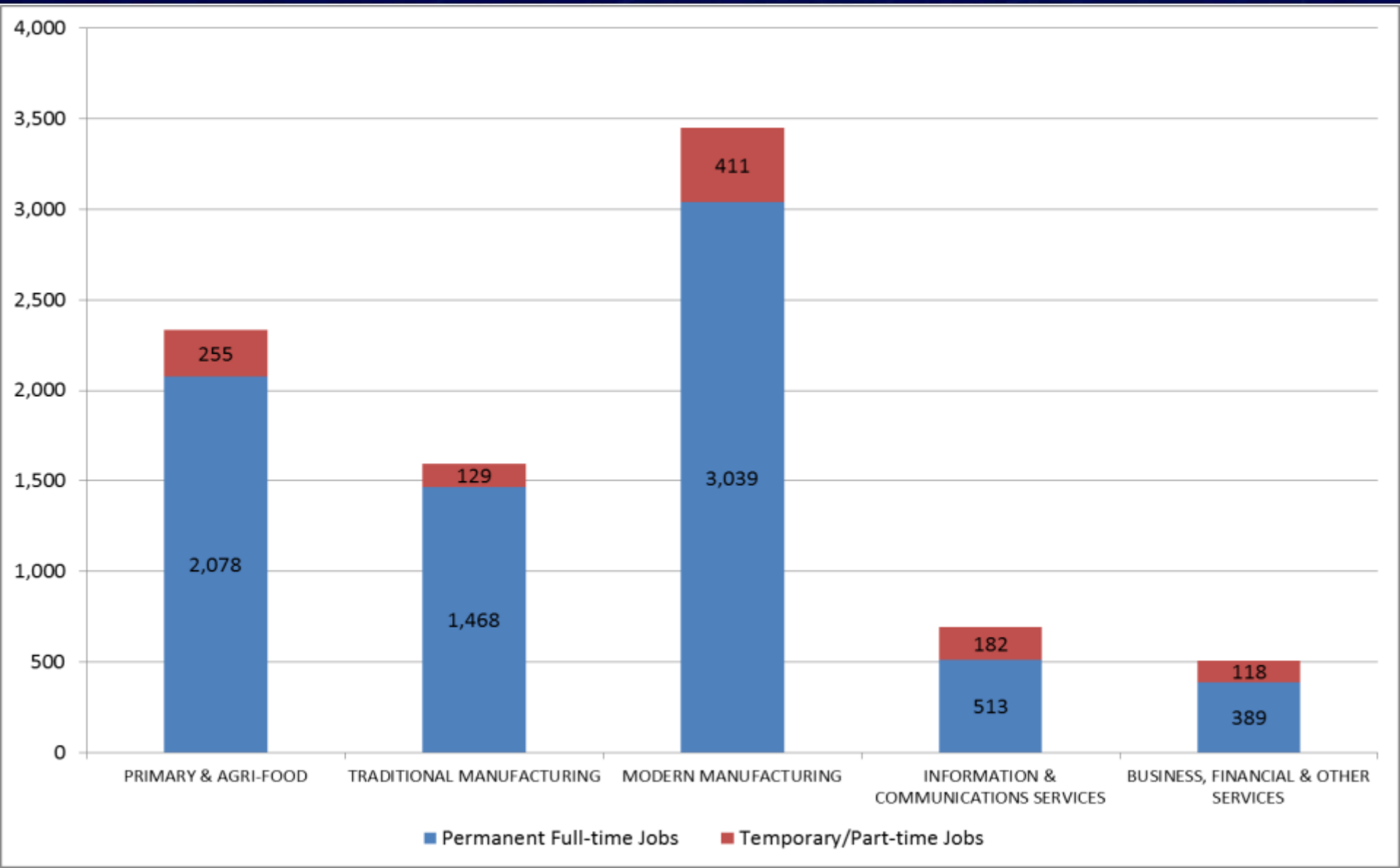
Example from a 'rural' county: Jobs by sector in Co Mayo, 2011

(CSO, Census 2011)



Example from a 'rural' county: Jobs in agency assisted (EI or IDA supported) companies in Co Mayo, 2014

(DJEI Annual Employment Survey, 2014)



Rural Urban interactions?- different perspectives

- Dependence vs Interdependence?

1. Rural areas as passive beneficiaries – the trickle out effect?
2. Rural areas as active contributors to the region, sites of both production and consumption

Mechanisms of Rural Urban linkages not well understood.

How much do they depend on each other?

Ideas of Rural Roles in Regions

- Rural areas and Rurality in regional planning
  - Rural as Residuum
  - Rural as Resource
  - Rural as Restraint
  - Rural as Refuge
  - Rural as Re-creator
  - Rural as reserve

J. Painter, 2007, City Regions and the spatialities of urban rural relations (conference paper).

Rural Urban interactions- overview

- Demographic linkages
  - Commuting and migration (temporary or permanent)
- Economic transactions and innovation activity
  - Production and consumption, diffusion of knowledge and innovation
- Delivery of Public services
  - Transport, ICT, Health, Education etc
- Exchanges in Amenities and Environmental Goods
  - Leisure and recreation, water, waste, renewable energy

Copus, 2011, OECD 2010

Rural Urban Linkage in the strategies

- NFP and RSES: A vision for all areas?
- Positive outcomes (goals) for all areas?
- Strategies likely to vary according to the regional settlement pattern and regional characteristics- equality vs hierarchy, social vs economic

- Rural areas: Lip service or practical integrated plans?
- Functional regions? What kind?

Functional Regions?

- What are functional regions- in practice?
  - Administrative regions
  - Travel to work regions?
  - Retail regions?
  - Resources regions?
  - City regions?
- Which of these will drive the strategies?
- How do they work for the people in them?
- Does each region need a 'city'?

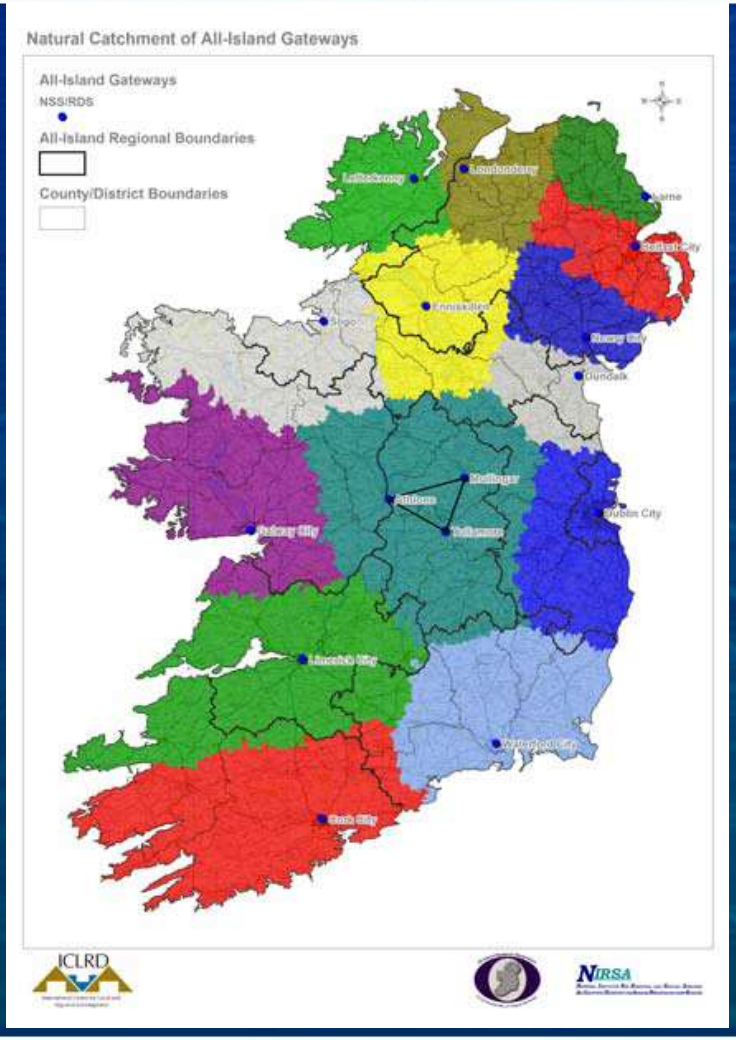
Functional Regions

Administrative?

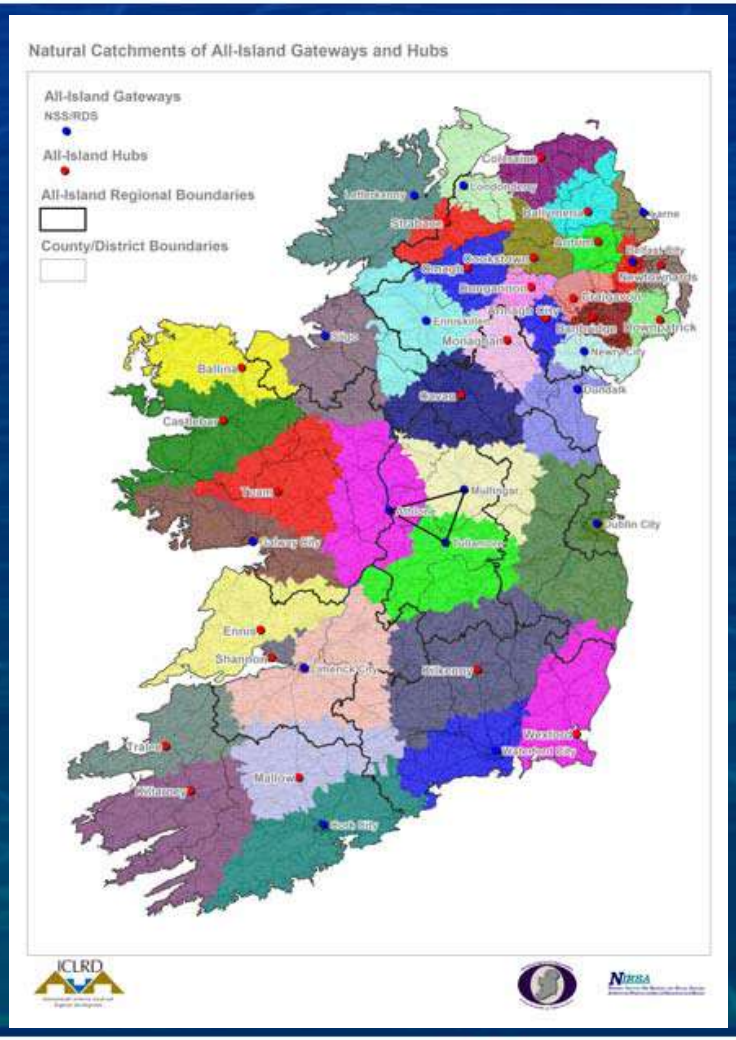
NUTS3 (Regional Authority Areas)

With the Abolition of Regional Authorities how will these be used?

Natural Catchments of All-Island Gateways

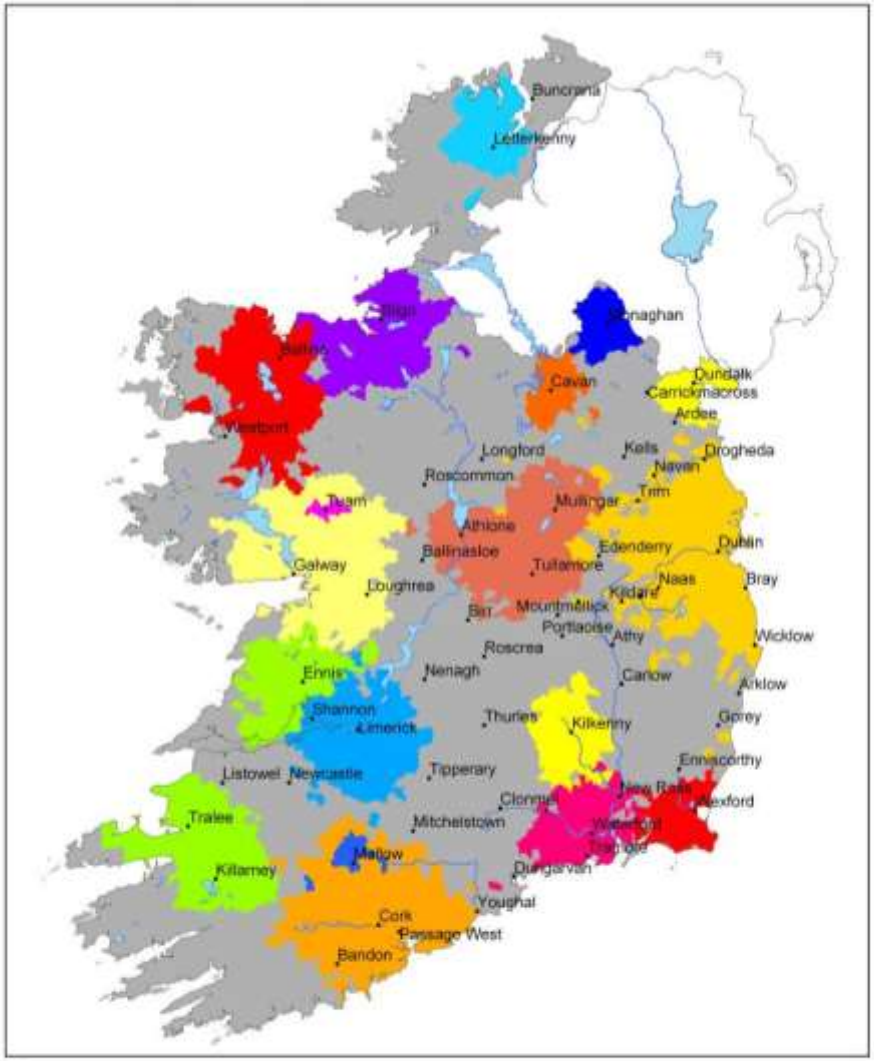


Natural Catchments of All-Island Gateways and Hubs



Functional Regions: Beyond the influence of Gateways and Hubs?

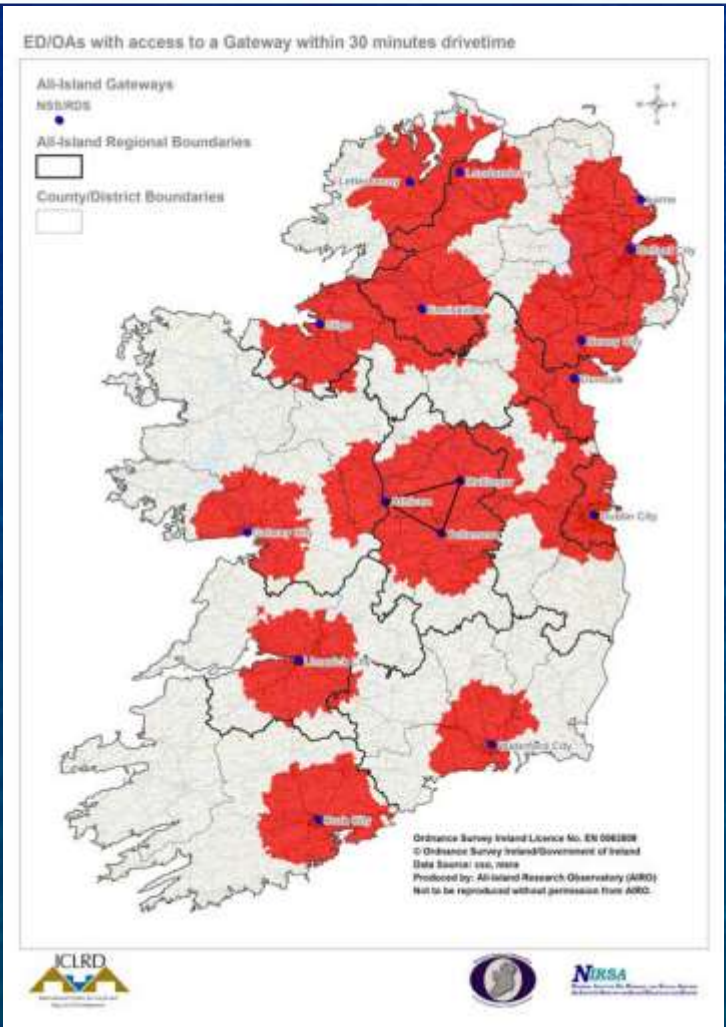
Planning for the grey areas?

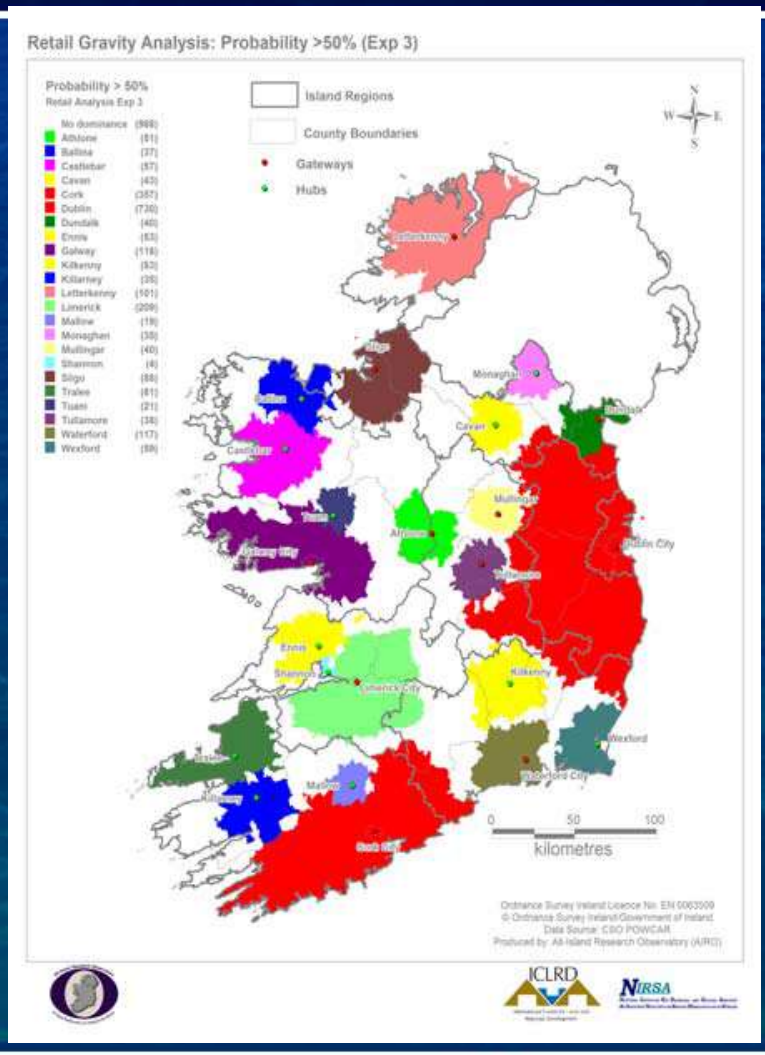


Functional Regions: 30 mins drive time to Gateways

Functional Regions: ROI retail gravity model

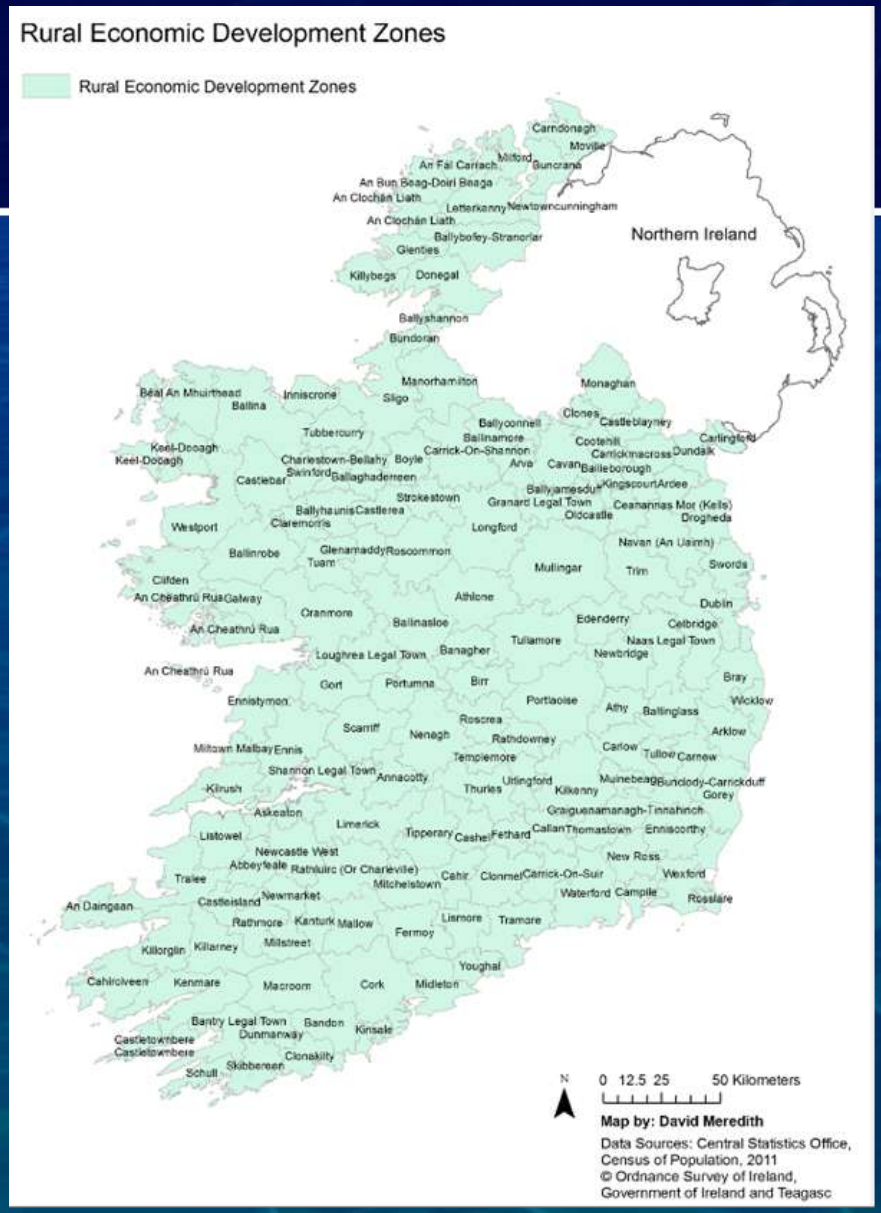
Source both maps: Delineating Functional Territories across the Island of Ireland, 2010 McCafferty etc al





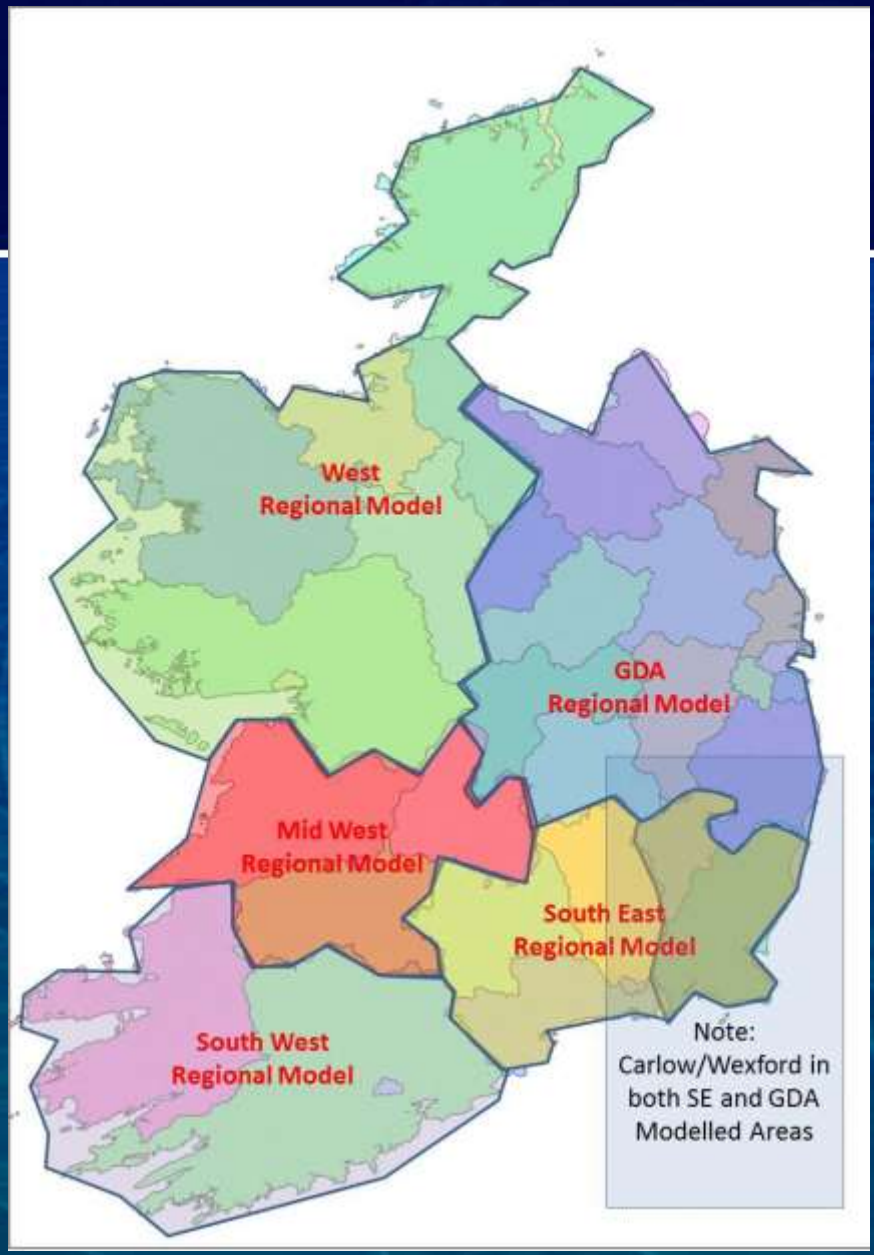
Functional Regions

- Rural Economic Development Zones- REDZ- based on Travel to Work and location of employment



Functional Regions?

- National Transport Authority Regional Model to fit in with their National Demand Model



Functional Regions- more questions than answers?

- Are the functional areas in essence to be the NUTS3 Regions?
- What will the NPF decide about functional regions?
- Will this fit with the RSES regions?
- Functional Regions for sectoral planning?

- How will the answers influence implementation?

Implementation- pragmatism and idealism

- Change is slow- in demographics and in physical assets (infrastructure and housing etc.)
  - Housing Stock=1,994,845 housing units in the state in 2011 (up 12.72% from 2006).
  - New vs old infrastructure
- Most focus should be on developing what we have
- Meeting people's current needs as well as future needs

Implementation- idealism vs pragmatism

- Functional areas vs administrative areas
  - Planning system aligned with these
  - Administrative areas- for many departments and agencies
  - Power and money streams

- Making it happen- integrating implementation
  - NFP powers?
  - RSES and Regional Assembly Powers
  - Role of Local Authorities
  - Work within the flow?

Implementation of NFP and RSES

NUTS3 (Regional Authority Areas)

- Areas to be used for Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

Implementation: Hierarchies of plans?

- National Planning Framework
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- Regional Planning Guidelines
- Local Economic and Community Plans
- County Development Plans
- Regional Action Plans for Jobs
- Sectoral Plans (e.g. Health and Education)
- REDZ -Regional Economic Development Zones

- Integrated Planning or Over Planning?

Implementing the Strategies: Hierarchies of settlements or equal participants?

- Cities
- Larger Towns > 10,000
- County towns and mid size towns
- Small towns
- Rural areas?

- Will the role of each of these be made explicit?
- A plan for each level?
- Dependence or interdependence?

Implementing the Strategies: Realpolitik 1

- Resources
  - Will there be Money available to implement strategies?
  - How will it be provided? Sectoral or spatial?
  - Who will allocate it? Who will control it?
- Power
  - Who has the money?
  - Who has the decision making power?
  - Who has the resources (other moneys and expertise etc)?
- Control
  - Who decides what is acceptable in the strategies and implementation?
  - Who decides the priorities for investment and action

Implementing the Strategies: Realpolitik 2

- Sites of Control
  - National?
  - Regional?
  - Local?
  - Sectoral
- Strategies unlikely to involve shift in sites of power
- How will this affect implementation?
- There will be contestation, resistance and competition
- Spatial planning may be the ideal but sectoral planning is the driver of regional development

Implementing the Strategies: Realpolitik 3 - possible actors in implementation

- National government- political level
- Government departments:(led by DoECLG?)
- Regional Assemblies
- Local Authorities
- IDA, Enterprise Ireland, LEOs
- Fáilte Ireland,
- HSE (Tertiary and Community Care decision making)
- Education- 2nd level, 3rd level- IoTs and Universities, Further education, training-ETBs
- Transport providers- national and regional, public and private

Implementing the Strategies: Ideals?

- Well thought our plan based on robust analysis of the current situation and the potential future
- Clear rationale for policy
- Addressing issues for each part of the region
- Focusing on creating opportunities for the people who live in the here= in Ireland and in the region(s)
- Appropriately resourced- money, expertise, involvement, time
- The implementation plan should at least as long as the strategy!

THANK YOU!

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