

Is Rural Ireland in Decline?

Colm McCarthy

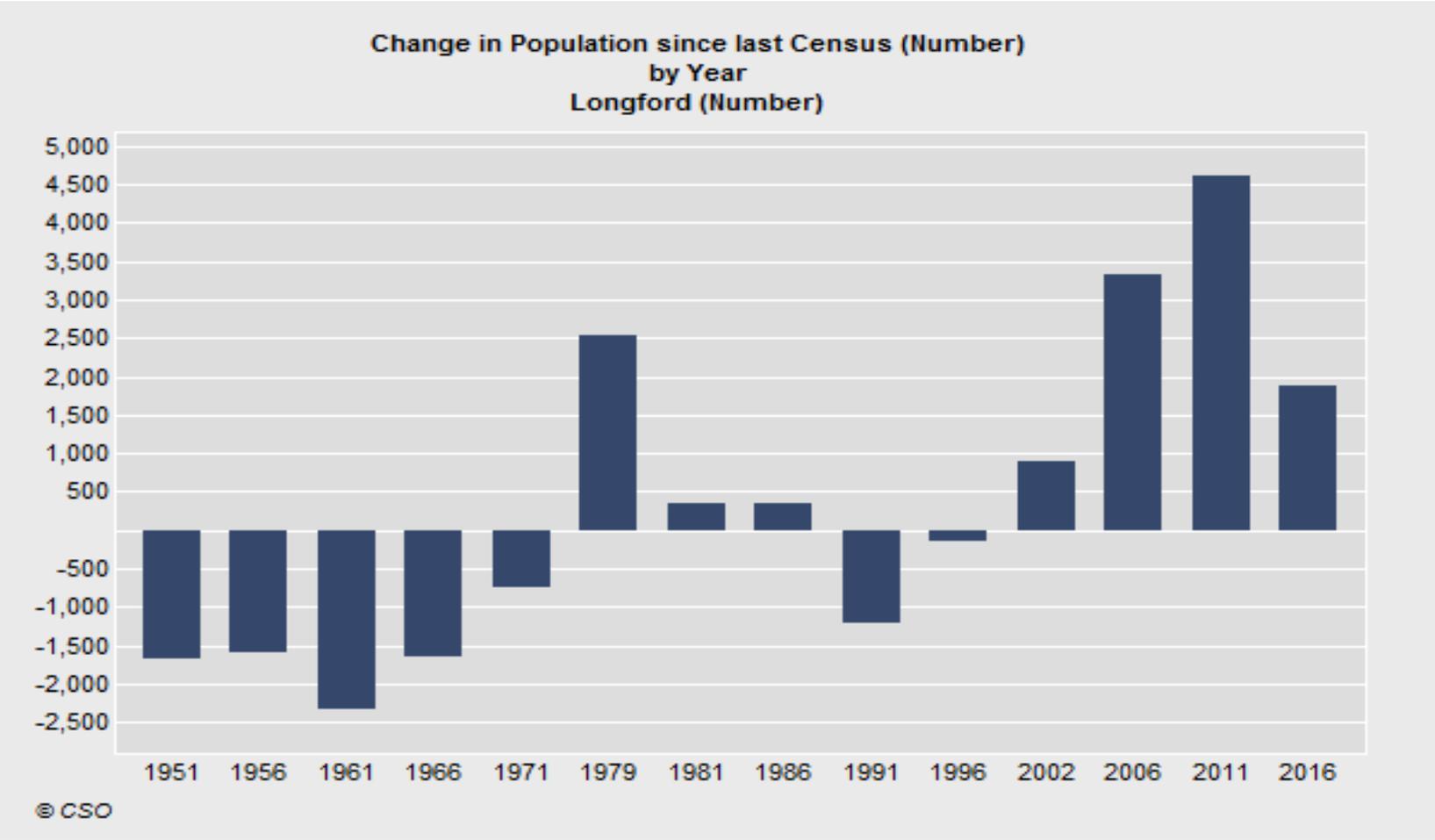
ITLUS Conference, December 4th 2019.

Population Growth since 1966

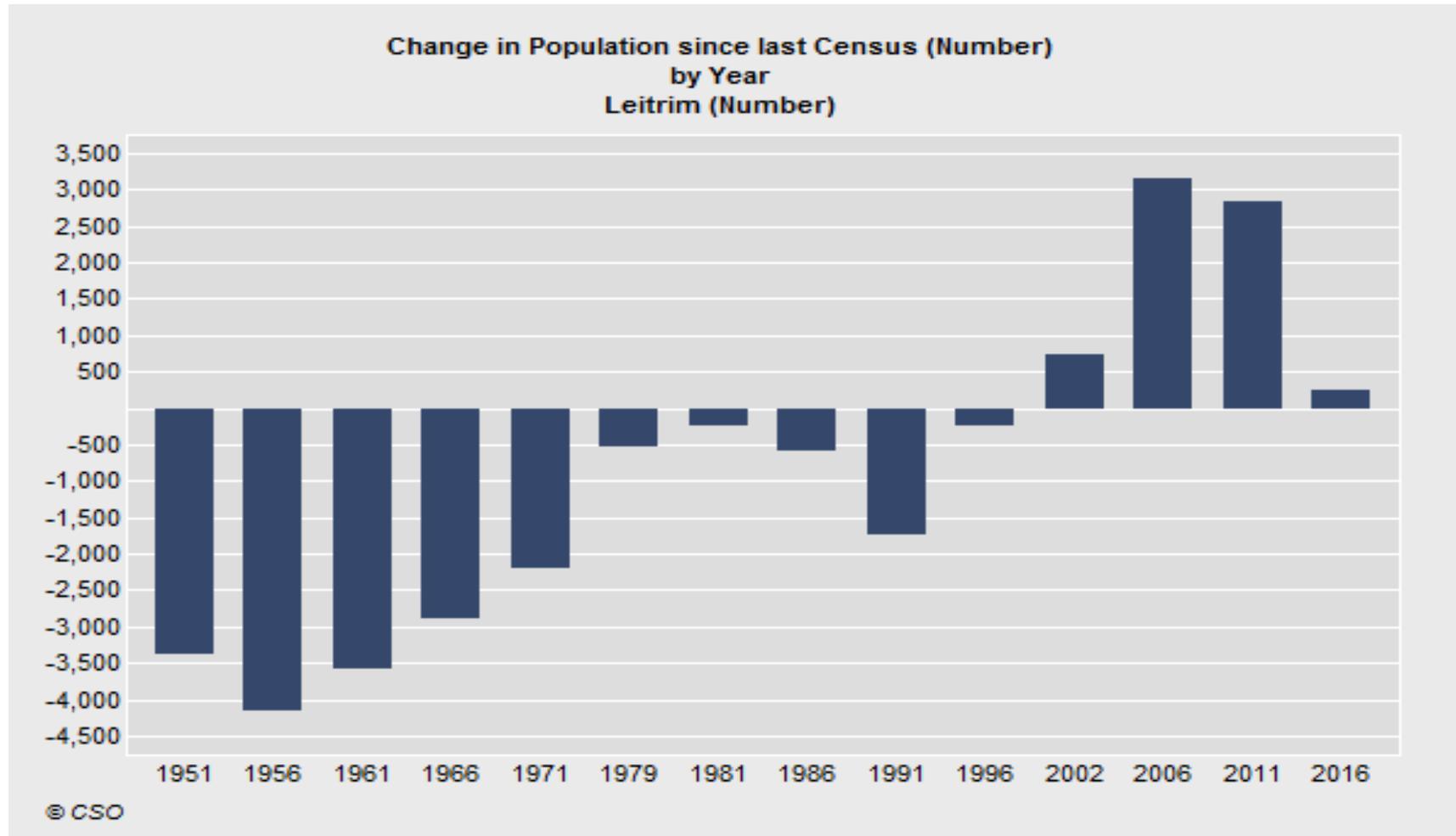
Population at the Census, 1966 and 2016, in '000s

	1966	2016	% Change
Dublin City	568	555	-2.3
Rest of Dublin County	227	793	+248
Kildare	66	223	+235
Meath	67	195	+190
Wicklow	60	142	+136
Rest of Ireland	1895	2854	+51
National Total	2884	4762	+65

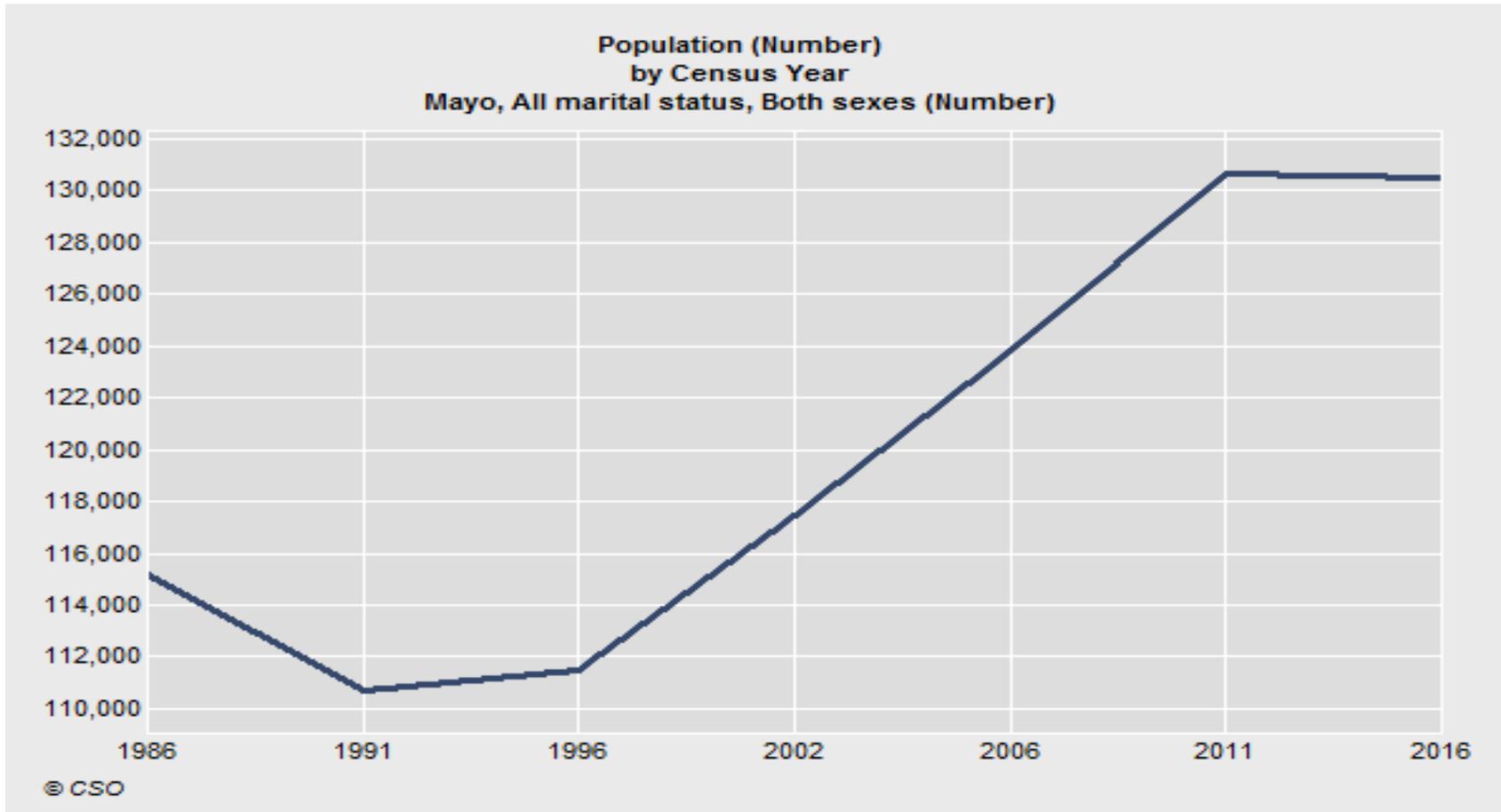
Inter-Censal Population Change, Longford



Inter-Censal Population Change, Leitrim



Population of Mayo

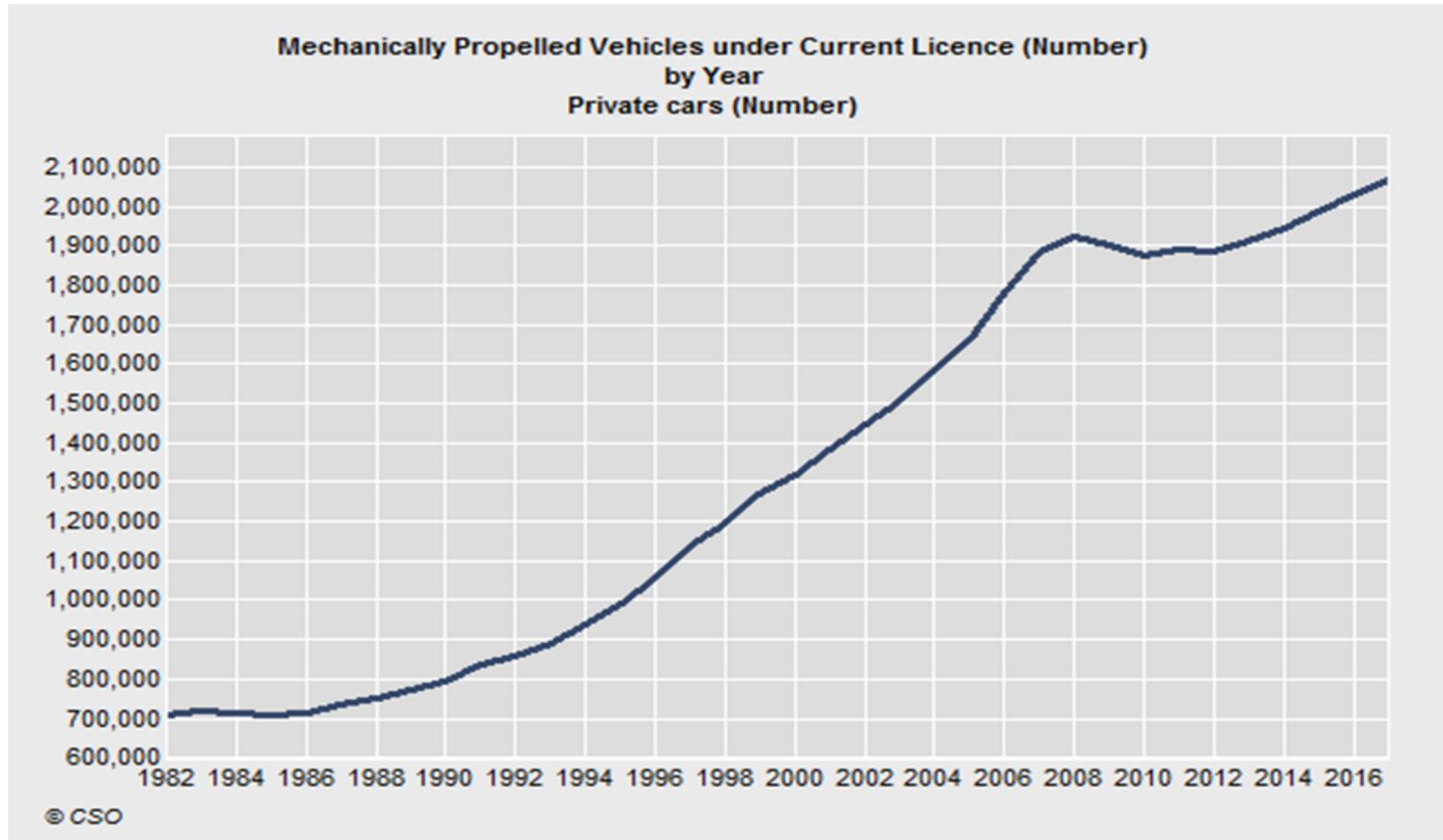


Where is the 'Rural Depopulation'?

Within counties, there are districts where population has fallen. But there are adjoining districts where it has risen, and there are more of them.

The dominant processes have been urbanisation throughout the country, and a suburban pattern emerging in provincial Ireland, with more commuting.

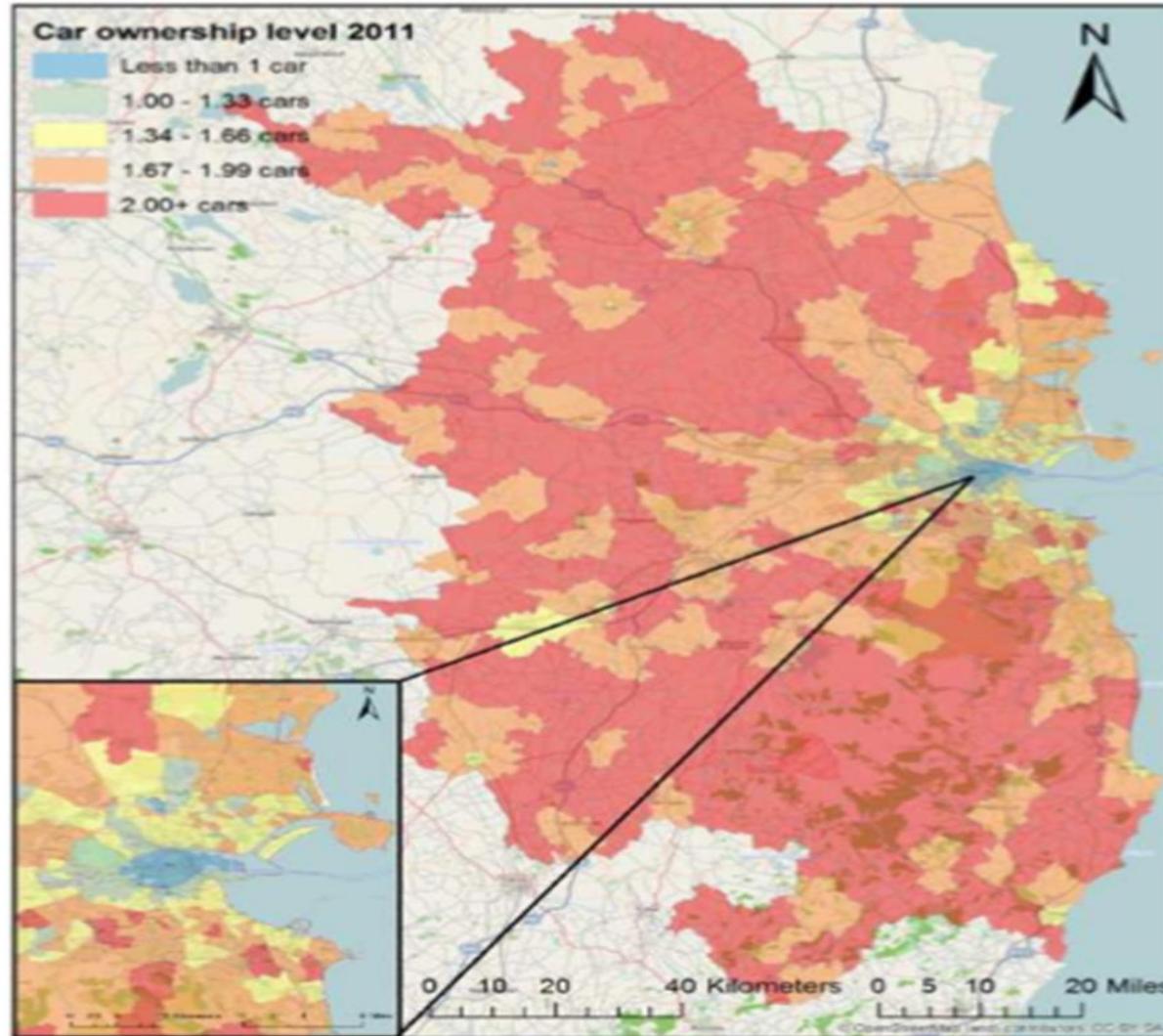
Car Numbers since 1982



Car Ownership has become almost Universal

- In all rural counties, car ownership is now higher than in the inner suburbs of Dublin.
- In many rural counties more than 50% of households have 2 or more cars.
- This has been reflected in journey-to-work patterns.

Low Car Ownership in Cities



Average Journey to Work by Region

Area	2013			2014			2016		
	Distance Km	Duration Minutes	Speed ¹ Km/hour	Distance Km	Duration Minutes	Speed ¹ Km/hour	Distance Km	Duration Minutes	Speed ¹ Km/hour
Border	15.2	20.7	44.2	12.9	18.8	41.3	15.1	19.9	39.1
Midland	18.7	21.6	51.8	18.6	22.1	50.4	20.8	24.5	41.3
West	16.8	22.3	45.3	18.5	22.9	48.5	18.0	23.4	43.5
Dublin	10.8	23.4	27.6	10.3	23.7	26.1	9.8	24.8	22.3
Mid-East	16.5	23.7	41.9	18.6	27.1	41.1	15.8	24.9	35.8
Mid-West	15.9	21.5	44.5	15.9	20.5	46.6	16.7	23.0	39.7
South-East	14.9	19.8	45.2	16.4	21.3	46.1	17.6	22.2	42.6
South-West	14.0	21.3	39.5	15.2	22.3	41.0	16.2	23.1	46.1
All regions	14.3	22.1	38.8	14.6	22.7	38.0	14.7	23.6	36.7

Derelict Shops 1



Derelict Shops 2



Retail Networks are Contracting

Post offices and Garda stations make for protests, but all retail networks are contracting, including shops, banks, bookmakers, travel agents and pubs, even churches.

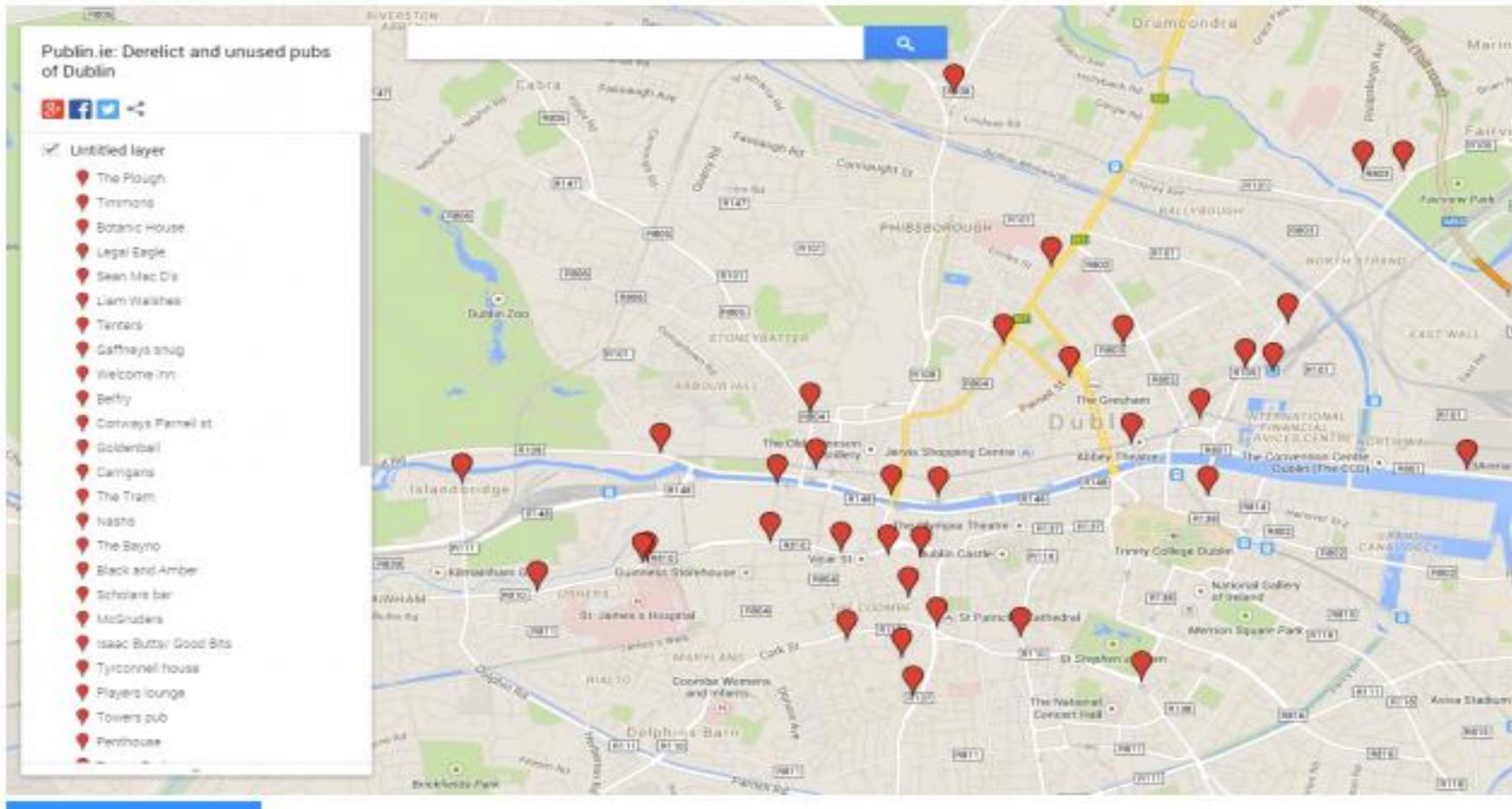
This is not confined to rural Ireland but is also happening in Dublin, Cork and other cities. It is also happening throughout Europe.

The long-term driver has been personal mobility, more recently online retailing.

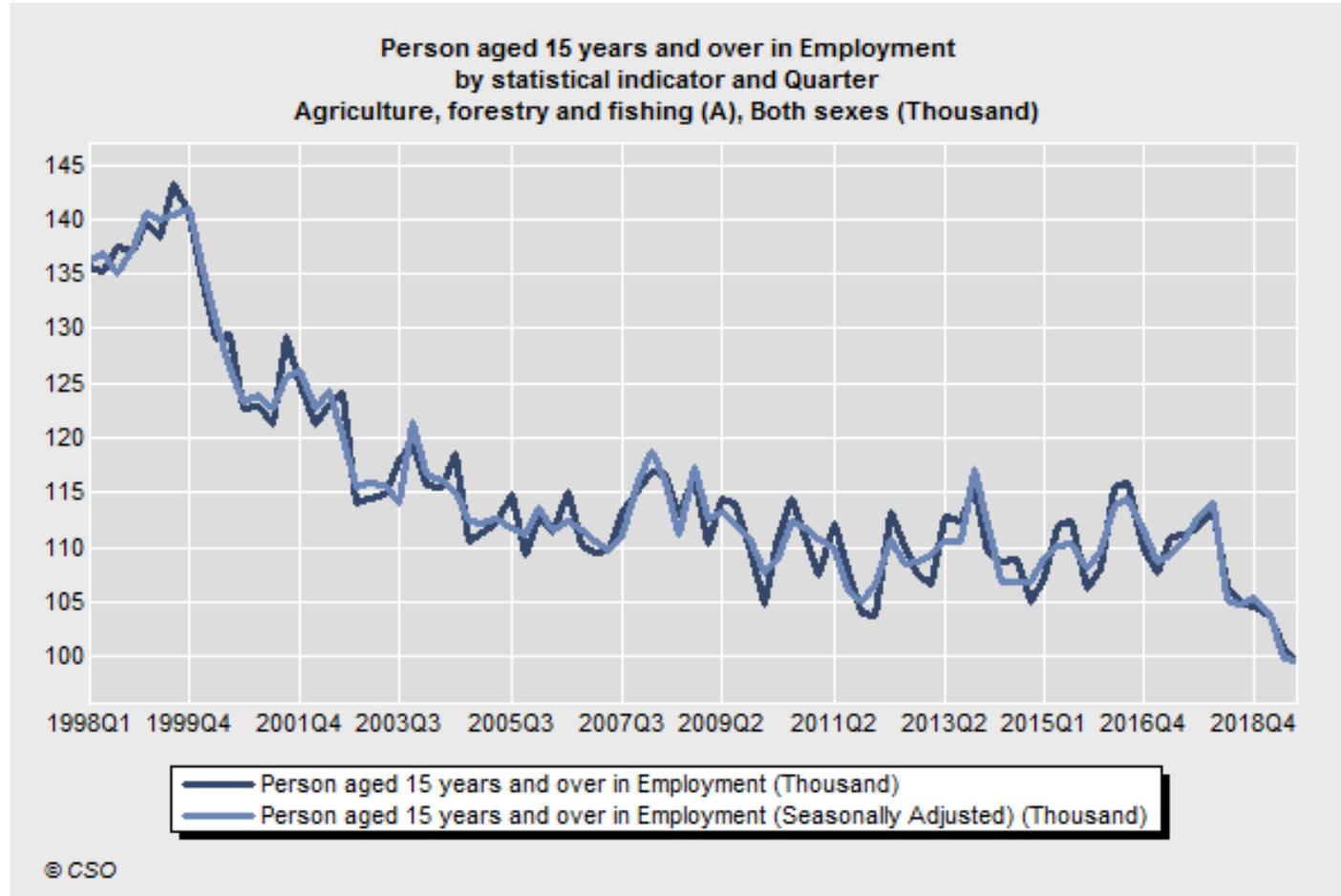
Pubs are Closing

- Roughly 1000 pubs have closed around Ireland over the last decade.
- But where?
- Alcohol consumption per capita has dropped, people are buying in supermarkets and drinking at home. The drink driving laws apply everywhere!
- There have been extensive pub closures in both Dublin and Cork.

Derelict Pubs in Central Dublin



Employment in Agriculture



Prospects for Agriculture

Brexit is potentially a further threat to the suckler farmers – at most one-third are covering production costs.

Viability of beef is not a new problem.

The UK market could also become permanently more difficult for dairy.

EU Policy for Climate Change and Agriculture

- Ireland exports 90% of farm output, according to the Taoiseach.
- There is an emissions measurement issue.
- National ceilings could be modified or abandoned in favour of demand-side taxes.
- Current structure of EU policy is unfavourable, and unfair, to Ireland