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Maynooth University
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

The spatial distribution of municipal housing in Dublin City

Eoin O'Mahony

Iontas Building, Maynooth University,
Maynooth, Co Kildare, Ireland.
Áras Iontas, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Má Nuad,
Má Nuad, Co Chill Dara, Éire.
Tel: + 353 (0) 1 7083350 Fax: + 353 (0) 1 7086456
Email: nirsa@nuim.ie
Web: <http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/nirsa>



An Roinn Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

HEA
Higher Education Authority
An tUdarás um Ard-Oideachas

Abstract

In Ireland presently there is a housing and homeless crisis. A number of factors have led to this but among them is the retrenchment in local authority housing budgets and a concentration of private capital in commercial property. Since 2008, the housing budgets allocated to local authorities have been cut dramatically. This continues the decline in local government interest in housing management but is also an extension of an existing housing policy. The historic role of the state in house building is diminished. To further understand the extent of the current housing crisis, the spatial distribution of public housing is in need of examination.

This paper, arising from doctoral work on religious landscapes, describes the spatial distribution of public- and municipally-funded housing in Dublin city. The distribution of urban public housing schemes remains a relatively underdeveloped aspect of geography in Ireland. Working with secondary data from the City Council and a number of other sources, it locates public and municipal housing in the city area during the period from the 1850s to 1980. The available data show a pattern of public housing provision which mirrors the development of Dublin as a city. The paper shows how the geographies of public housing have been marginalised in the city's development. The paper closes with a number of ideas for further research.

Introduction

The economic and social crises that began in 2008 have had a direct effect on housing policy in Ireland. Some of these effects are consistent with previous measures while others have seen a divergence from longer established policies. The causes of the linked crises in the economy are many and complex but among the outcomes, housing remains a central concern. In 2015, the numbers of houses and apartments being built directly by local authorities was under 100 (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2016). There are thousands of people in emergency accommodation because of rent rises and repossessions. Banking resolution means that thousands more await eviction. Geographers and others have produced a variety of analyses over the last number of years to provide necessary explanation for these outcomes (Lawton, 2015; Norris, 2016). In particular, geographers have sought to describe and explain the spatial and areal differentiation evident in the outcomes of these inter-related crises.

In Ireland, in the period before the crises were manifested, with capital concentrated in the construction and residential development sectors of the economy, there was an excess of private housing built. This was an intensification of the marketisation policy (Norris, 2016) developed by successive governments since the late 1990s. Employment in the construction and related sectors increased dramatically over this period. The number of private houses completed and the number of new mortgage loans extended reached record levels by 2006 (Central Statistics Office, 2008). New geographies of residential development, including within the dense urban areas of Dublin and other cities, have emerged. These in turn have given rise to new social and cultural geographies in the suburbs of towns and cities, most notably the extensification of suburban spaces (Corcoran et al., 2010). It is also documented that the excess of private housing built during the Celtic Tiger years has led to specific geographies of dereliction and development (O'Mahony and Rigney, 2015; O'Callaghan and Lawton, 2015).

Alongside the over production of private housing which marked the Celtic Tiger years, local authority housing continued to be built but ground to a halt by 2011.

Government funding for housing was cut in the period 2008 to 2012. Politically, it is now difficult for local authorities to directly build, manage and maintain housing. Until the late 1970s however, Dublin Corporation, now reorganised as Dublin City Council, was a landlord of considerable significance. Home ownership through mortgage loans was a government policy goal from the 1940s. Housing owned and maintained by local authorities accommodated a considerable portion of the city's residential population. These older housing developments, outside of regeneration programmes involving public-private partnerships, remain on the landscape of Dublin city as remnants of this more productive past.

This paper examines the spatial distribution of local authority housing schemes from available data in Dublin city. In the current context, where local authority housing budgets have been cut, outlining these schemes' distribution and scale is important in framing how the current housing crisis might be resolved. The mapping arises out of work conducted as part of my doctoral research. In the second part of this paper, I outline the policy context within which the data was gathered. As government at all scales withdraws from large public housing projects, noting the historical trends can provide a context for the examination of the current crisis. In the third section of the paper I outline the ways in which the data was gathered and the limitations to the exploration of these data. Geography in Ireland has not devoted much time to mapping the landscapes of public housing in Ireland, often ceding that ground to social policy and planning. The fourth section of this paper describes the data gathered. The final section examines some relationships between the data gathered to discern possible patterns over time. This concluding section asks a number of other research questions related to the data and prompts some potential areas of interest for geographers.

The context of the work

My doctoral research was partially concerned with the distribution of Marian statues in Dublin city. I was interested in the ways in which these points in the city's landscape helped maintain religious practices. I conducted fieldwork in 2011 and 2012, gathering location and other information about the 25 statues within the study.

During the fieldwork, I began to speculate if there was some relationship between the location of the statues and the location of local authority housing in the city. This paper does not deal with the question substantively but instead uses it as a way into an examination of the location of local authority housing development and its distribution across time. In this context, I began to ask other questions about public housing more generally.

On a wider canvass, local authority housing has undergone broad changes in the last thirty years. One of these changes is that housing provided by local authorities has been marginalised within a context of the ongoing marketisation of housing more generally. This means that public provision of housing makes up a smaller percentage of total housing provision than at any time since the 1960s. Private housing and its provision dominated housing construction in the period 1969 to the present time. This is a change of policy with many complex factors involved and a defined path dependency, given the difficulties in changing the outcomes of those policies over short periods of time. A policy of marketisation represents the interests of those with power, shifting over time to reflect changes in the location of this political power. Helpfully, Norris (2016) has provided a useful framework for examining these changes to housing policy in Ireland. For Norris, housing in Ireland has been socialised in one form or another since the 1930s. (The period from 1922 until 1932 is largely one of political conservatism when it comes to housing.) In this section, I examine the context within which large public housing developments were built in Dublin city.

When *Fianna Fáil* came to power in 1932, with a power base in both rural and urban working class populations, the state became more directly involved in housing provision. Some measures had been taken before this time at clearing the Victorian and Georgian slums of Dublin and other cities. Rural public housing was provided earlier as a means of offsetting political discontent in the pre-independence period and a series of land acts helped to create a tenant buyout scheme from large landlords (Norris, 2016: 86). The early post-independence government created Public Utility Societies to provide and service land for house building projects. However, the new government prioritised housing provision and did so through local authorities. County

councils were given the budgets to build housing but much of the provision was through government loan schemes, allowing the local authorities in turn to provide housing at cheap rents to tenants. Local government was the main source of home loans in the 1940s and 1950s (Norris, 2016: 87). In terms of subsidies and spending, Ireland's housing provision was one Europe's most socialised until the 1950s. Home ownership remained a policy goal in keeping with the tenets of Catholic social teaching and a familist social model (88). However, one crucial geographical factor remains underdeveloped in Norris's account. She states that "the municipalities responsible for Ireland's two largest cities were excluded from the local loans fund until the mid-1950s" (89). When this changed and the right to buy a public housing unit was extended in the 1960s, Ireland had one of the highest urban home ownership rates in Europe. As Norris (90) states:

Between 1961 and 1971, home ownership in Dublin grew from 48 to 57 per cent of households, while expanding from 77 to 79 per cent of households in the rest of Ireland concurrently.

In the period from 1932 to the mid-1950s, local authorities built thousands of homes in rural and urban settings so that by the late 1960s, about 20% of the housing stock was social rented. Home ownership through loans of various forms continued to expand until the late 1980s to the point when about 70% of the stock was owner occupied. By the late 1970s, the ways in which local authorities were funding their house building was coming under greater scrutiny and there was greater control over public subsidies on home ownership (90-93). Banking deregulation and tax changes made it more attractive for large numbers of people in the 1970s to buy a home and get out of social housing. In the 1980s, with changes to the global economy, there were considerable changes to the public finances and a further retrenchment of public housing programmes (Norris and Fahey, 2009). The crucial period of change here is the decade from the mid-1960s, i.e. the end of the period of the data gathered here.

This limited sketch of housing provision in Ireland shows how local and central government was involved in social housing provision at a fundamental level for about four decades after 1932. While the means by which housing was provided changed, the Irish state remained a significant actor in the provision of housing for people

outside of a private market. As the twentieth century went on, the marketisation of private housing became more dominant and the state slowly changed its relationship with social and public housing. Local authority housing construction peaked in 2007 at about 5,000 units but in 2015, only 65 units were completed (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2016). At the present time, the government is planning increased tenant purchase discounts for public housing tenants, among other measures, and have proposed an initiative called *Rebuilding Ireland*. In a context of further public finance retrenchment, private purchase is now deeply embedded as a dominant form of tenancy. This paper is not concerned with these later changes. However, it is enough to remark at this point that private mortgages had become the principal means of house purchase by the late 1980s. This individualised the house buying process and made social housing an option of last resort (Norris and Fahey, 2009). The present day location of this public and social housing remains a legacy of this former time and points to significant state investment. It reflects the political concerns of the time and it tells a part of the story of the development of Dublin city in particular. As Forrest (2011) has pointed out with regard to the development of garden allotments, there has been a series of waves of development radiating outwards from the centre of the city over the last century. There is some evidence that public housing proceeded in one of these waves. In the next section, I outline the way in which this might be understood and how the data was sourced.

Data sources and methodology

There is no definitive record of the location and completion year for Dublin city's public housing schemes. From independence onwards, and particularly from the early 1930s, Dublin Corporation built thousands of individual units and so there are Council minutes and architects' plans kept in the Dublin City Archive for these schemes. Earlier work on this project had sought to compile a list of sample addresses in areas of known public housing schemes across the city and to later request their completion date from the City Council. A request to the Housing Department of the Council confirmed later that this might be possible from their records. This was later

superseded by a different methodology. Following some initial online contact with the City's Heritage Office, one of the archivists at the Dublin City Archive suggested that I examine the minutes of historic Council meetings. After a preliminary review of these minutes, nothing could be determined about the location and size of housing schemes. I was seeking a source or sources of data for public housing schemes that would provide basic location data.

Later, the City Archivist was able to produce a list of public housing schemes containing about one hundred and twenty five records. This is a list comprised of three columns: street names, a year and the number of units in each scheme. The location for each record was, in most cases, a street name or approximate location. It was not clear if the year for each record referred to the year of construction or of completion. For example, larger schemes in Ballymun and Cabra would have been built over several years. The number of units may indicate the number finally completed or those initially planned to be built. The list contained records from the middle of the 19th century to the late 1970s and so spanned the pre- and post-independence periods. There was no indication on the list at this stage if all of these schemes still exist in present day Dublin. It is also unclear if this list is merely those funded wholly or partly by the city local government and excludes others. To this database I added twenty five additional records from McManus (2002) who studied housing schemes in Dublin up to 1940. In compiling this expanded database of one hundred and fifty records, it was evident that some of the housing schemes named these lists were later replaced by others on the same lists.

Using the approximate location, I created a Spatialite database of these records and geo-referenced each one. For this I used the QGIS application (2.14.2-Essen) for OS X, adding additional data to the file using a plugin called Coordinate Capture which allows for the capture of XY coordinates using Open Street Map (EPSG 3857). At this stage each record was point data, although the Open Street Map already contains polygon data for some of the city's larger housing schemes. Because the database I had compiled was point data, each record contains only the location and not the spatial extent of each housing scheme. Early housing schemes consist of a few units,

within existing urban space. Later schemes were built on former agricultural land and on allotments and so are often much larger (Forrest, 2011).

Using the QGIS application, I created a number of visualisations for these data. I banded the data by decadal intervals, graduated by size and produced a heatmap based on the age of each record. Using this heatmap, a further visualisation was also created producing age related isolines across the city's extent. The usefulness of these two later visualisations is limited because they imply a relationship between data points that do not take into account the age of surrounding buildings. Nevertheless, some sense of a series of waves of public housing from the centre to the suburbs can be detected. MacLaran (1993) has produced a map of Dublin's growth phases since the late eighteenth century but this is for the city as a whole, not merely for public housing. Some of the visualisations derived from the 150 record database I have compiled are presented in the next section.

The spatial distribution of public housing in Dublin

In 2011, about 10% of Dublin city's residents rented from the City Council, Dublin Corporation's inheritor (Central Statistics Office, 2012). This represents approximately 53,000 people. Many of the housing schemes mapped here are no longer in their entirety rented from Dublin City Council. They have been the subject of various tenant purchase schemes over the decades and currently the Council is in the process of selling three large plots of real estate containing former public housing under a Housing Land Initiative. It is clear then that the provision and extent of public housing is dependent on political and economic factors over time. What follows here is a series of visualisations of the non-exhaustive and historical social housing data in Dublin city.

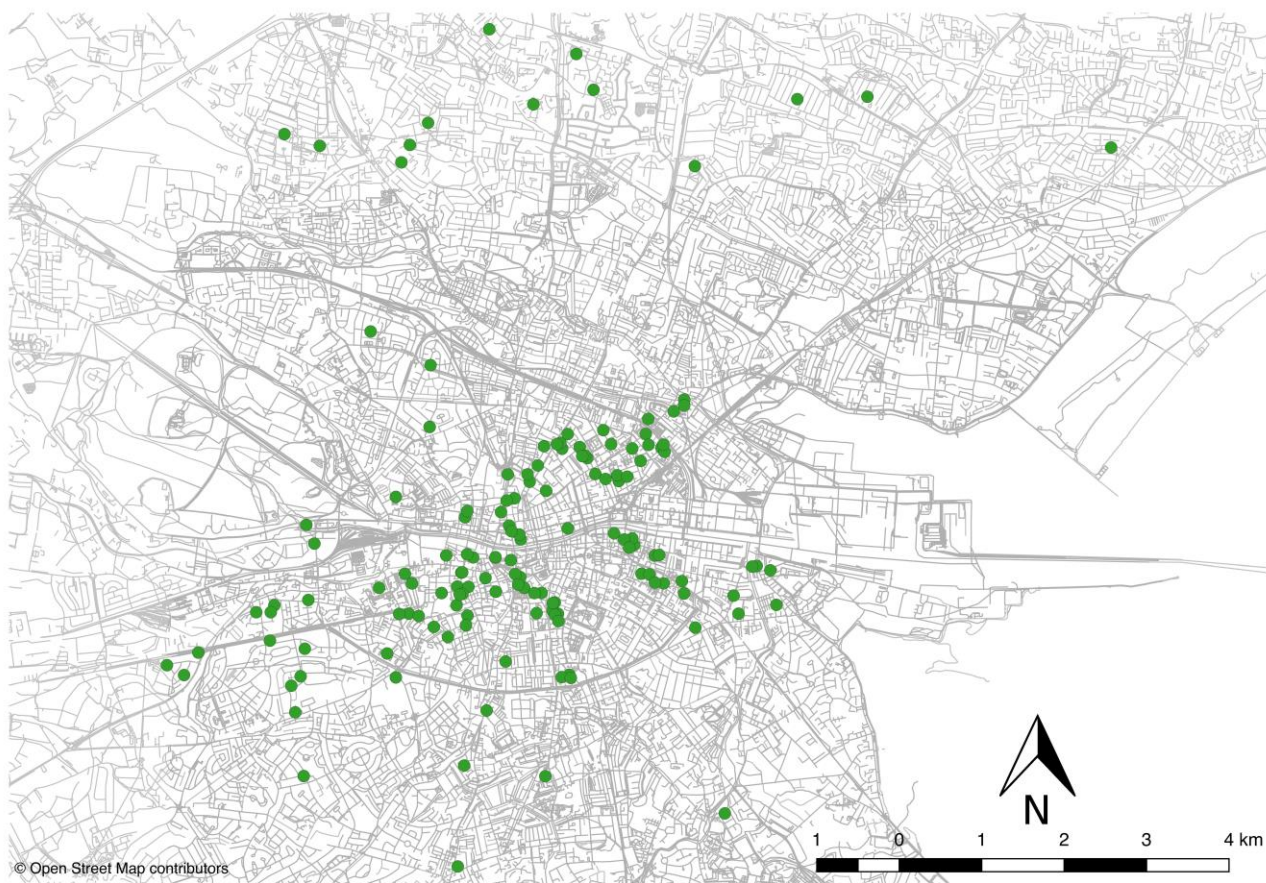


Figure 1: the distribution of public and municipal housing in Dublin city, 1850 to 1980, some overlap of points. Source: DCC and McManus.

As can be seen in the map of Dublin above, the vast majority of the records in this database are located in the city centre area. There is a broad arc of schemes going from west of St Stephen's Green across the river Liffey and circling the O'Connell St and Markets areas extending north east to Ballybough. A number of other schemes are located to the south west, in the Dublin 8 postcode area, extending as far as the Grand Canal in the south. A further cluster extends from the south docks, behind Trinity College's main campus and extending to the Ringsend area. Finally, a fourth zone is clear across the north side of the city ranging from west to east in Cabra, Ballymun and Coolock. This area of housing is located away from the main part of the city and represents a larger wave of housing developments built after 1950.

During the process of geo-referencing the data, it became clear that many of the city centre data points have polygons available for them on OpenStreetMap. This is evident from the sample below in the city's north inner district around Hardwicke Street. More work on these schemes will be done in the coming time but it is easier to do this for discrete blocks of apartments than for later and larger schemes in the inner suburbs.

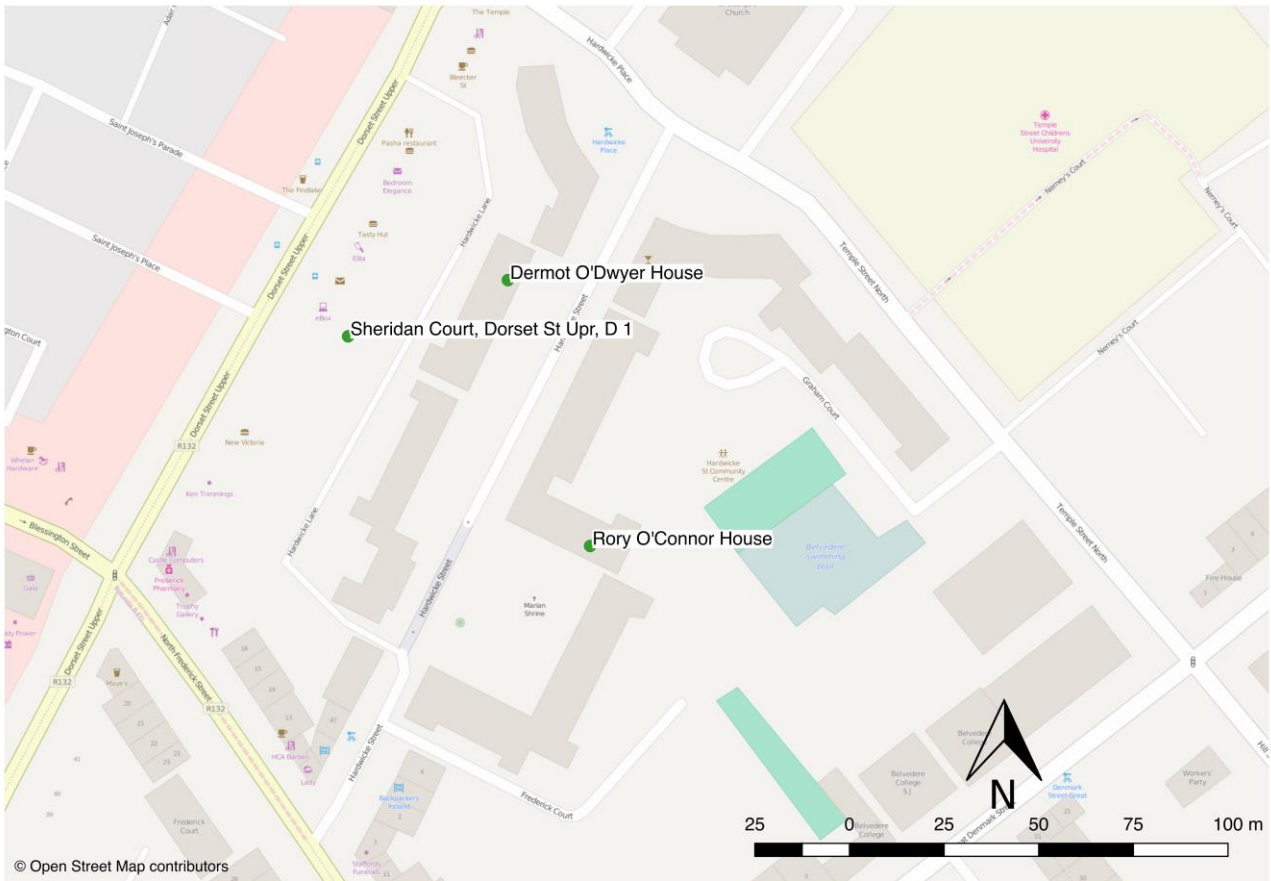


Figure 2: a selection of records showing how current point data could be represented as polygons. Source: DCC and Open Street Map contributors.

Each record had a year alongside the address and name. Because of this, each scheme can be placed within a decade in order to give a generalised overview of the age of the schemes across the city. The map below shows the age of each of the schemes with a majority clearly being recorded as built after 1929. These are natural breaks in the data when classified into five groups. The earliest schemes according to the records

were completed around 1850 (before the establishment of Dublin Corporation) in Aungier Street and York Street on the southside and Blessington Street and Gardiner Place on the northside of the river. Later nineteenth century schemes (those between 1850 and 1909) are concentrated just to the west of Dublin Castle. Further east on the river, on reclaimed land, are the schemes of Luke Street and Townsend Street, most of which are now replaced by other buildings. There are 18 records in this earlier tranche of the data.



Figure 3: time-based classification of the records, 1850 to 1980. Source: DCC, McManus, Open Street Map contributors.

The period 1910 to 1939 shows the development of public housing spreading further west again on both sides of the river, matching many of the major employment zones of the old city: the Guinness brewery and tanning on the south side, the markets, canal/railway terminus and port on the north side. Schemes at Watling Street,

Spitalfields and Marrowbone Lane (this last one still in use today) were developed at this time while the area around Church Street formed the main concentration north of the river.

It is in this time period that we see expansion in the north east of the city around Railway Street and Gardiner Street. These two areas in particular were known for significant numbers of privately rented slums until well after independence (Daly, 1985). Significantly, we can identify two schemes which define more suburban locations at distances of about 5km from the city centre at Ellenfield in the Beaumont neighbourhood and the first schemes in Crumlin south. Three further schemes in the Ringsend area confirm this part of the city's connection with the rest of the city to the west: Malone Gardens, South Lotts Road and Whelan House are all built before 1930. The form that these schemes take is low density and in the Victorian and Edwardian terrace styles. After independence, in the period 1930 to 1949 there is a significant number of housing schemes built with a refocus on blocks of higher density public housing. This period coincides with the employment of Herbert Simms and others by Dublin Corporation. Simms was London born but influenced by mainland European designers of the early twentieth century. He was appointed an architect of the newly established housing section of the Corporation in 1925. His approach was to think holistically about neighbourhoods and not just provide adequate public housing (Rowley, 2016). Schemes in Inchicore, Kilmainhaim and the replacement of older schemes in the Liberties all took place in this period. Across the river at the entrance to the Phoenix Park, the O'Devaney Gardens complex was built. At this time too we see significant expansion in schemes on the north suburb of Finglas. It is in the 1940s that that the major schemes are built in the south inner city district: Dolphin House, Fatima Mansions and St Teresa's Gardens. All of these schemes were located near to the Guinness brewery complex, the Liberties and its associated employment sites.

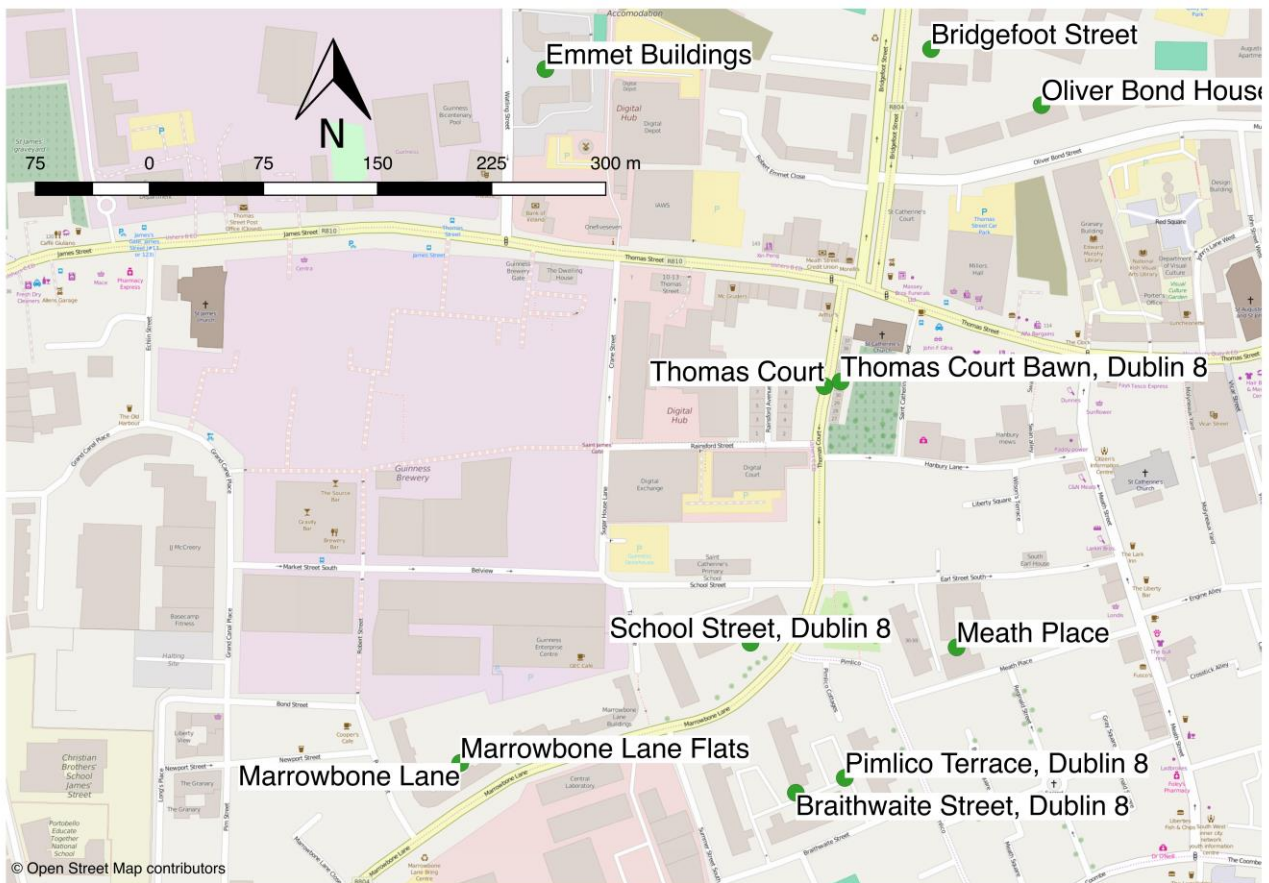


Figure 4: a selection of data located in the south inner city area, in close proximity to Guinness brewery. Source: McManus, DCC and Open Street Map contributors.

The scale of these 1940s schemes is larger than anything seen before with up to ten parallel blocks per scheme. These schemes, mostly completed by 1955, lasted for about 40 years and are only now being replaced with more mixed-tenure developments as part of the city's turn to private-public partnerships. As can be seen from the map above, many of these schemes are close to each other and as the city changed, so too did the fortunes of the residents of these schemes. Heroin use and sale was a significant social problem for some residents of these schemes with the stair wells providing shelter for addicts and a relative isolation in the city that was expanding rapidly in the late twentieth century (Lyder, 2005). When the city's employment profile changed in the 1970s, with containerisation replacing manual labour in the docks and the decline of the markets, it was these public housing schemes' residents that were affected most. At this time also, the neighbourhoods of

Cabra and Crumlin saw significant expansion, albeit in a form that differed from the parallel blocks of the south inner city. These less centrally located developments were semi-detached houses located around small green spaces with front and rear gardens (McManus, 2002).

The last major schemes of public housing in the city were developed in the period 1950-1979, particularly with the construction of 12 towers of high-rise dwellings in Ballymun on the northside. Across the northern fringe of the city, there were five new schemes of public housing between Ballymun and Coolock. The Ballymun towers were to represent the outward facing turn of the political and administrative class, in advance of EEC membership (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2002). By the late 1960s, most of the pre-cast concrete and European-inspired tower blocks in Ballymun were occupied by people from the north inner city where older public schemes and the private slum blocks were being replaced. As can be seen from the map below, there is significant variation in the size of the schemes across time with Ballymun, Crumlin and Cabra representing the largest across the 130 years of the data. Again, these are natural breaks (Jenks) in the data, grouping the records into five categories.

What is evident here is that, with the exception of the North Lotts scheme on the north quays in 1935, there is a relationship between the size of the scheme and the distance from the city centre. A pattern emerges where the number of units being built per scheme becomes larger as time goes on. McManus (2002) accounts well for this in her analysis of the development of housing in the city until 1940. There are four major clusters of large schemes in these data. In Ballymun and Cabra in the north and in Crumlin and Ringsend in the south we see four clusters of large public housing developments. Earlier work by Daly (1985) lays out how the north and south suburbs developed very different characters in the first major expansion of the city in the mid-nineteenth century.



Figure 5: number of units per housing scheme in Dublin, 1850-1980. Source: DCC, McManus and Open Street Map contributors.

What is clear is that the earlier spread of the city in the south is related to the provision of piped water and roads infrastructure by town councils who were wealthier than their northern counterparts (O Maitiu, 2003). The location of the Ballymun developments in the 1960s in particular shows how the government of the time was keen to remain current with broader European trends in the provision of public housing. The principal error in this scheme however was the failure to provide anything more beyond housing for the residents, many of whom had lived in the north inner city close to their places of employment (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2002). This was an error reproduced in the lower-density suburbs of Clondalkin and Tallaght not even ten years later (MacLaran and Punch, 2004).

In the map above, the smaller locations in the city centre (around Connolly station and Dublin Castle) are older developments of public housing. Some of these are no longer existing and were replaced by the mid twentieth century. In the map below, I show the pre-1910 records and their location. With the exception of the Ceannt Fort and York Street schemes, these are all under 80 units of housing. What is worth noting at this stage is that many of these older schemes are located in and around the centres of colonial military administration and incarceration, e.g. Lurgan Street and the scheme near army barracks

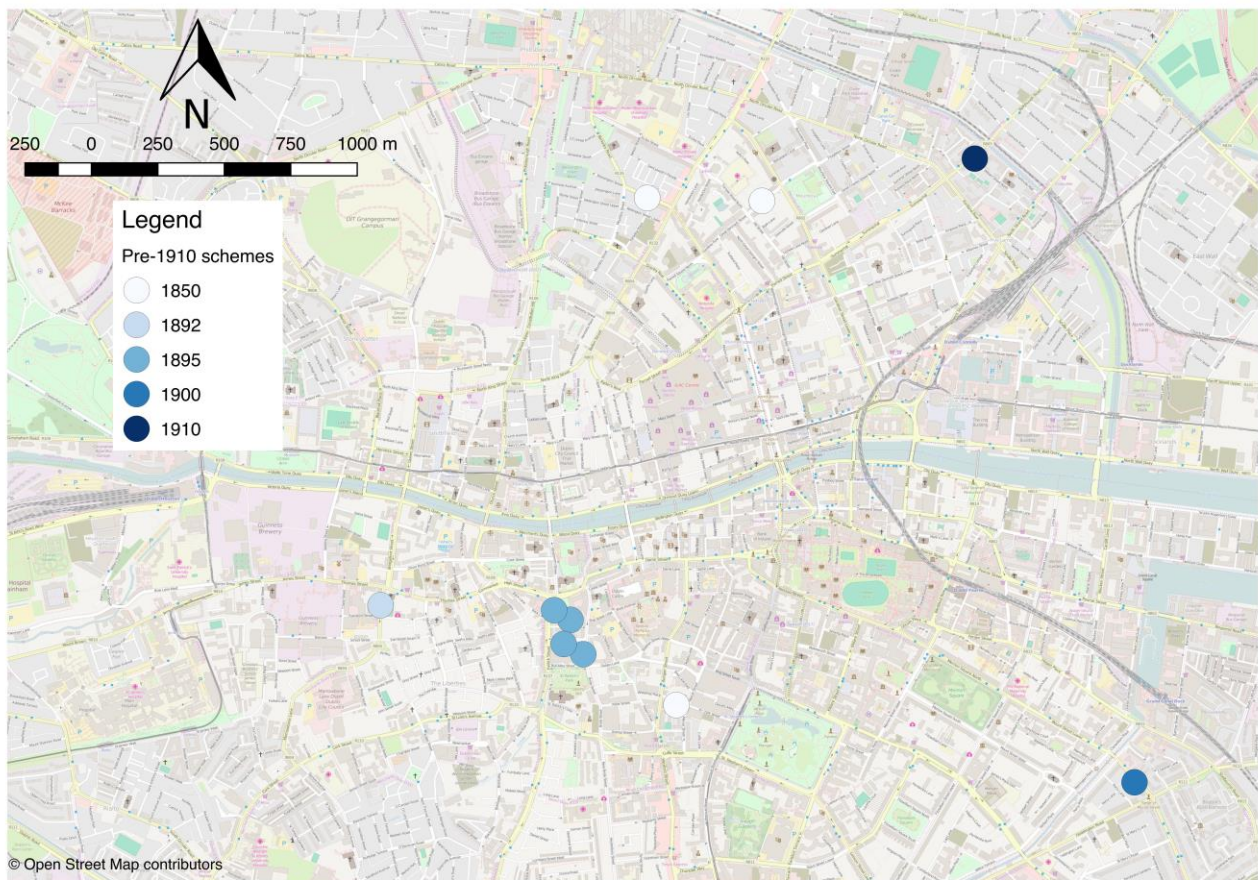


Figure 6: locations of pre-1910 records of public housing in Dublin. Source: DCC, McManus and Open Street Map contributors.

Before independence, Dublin was a relatively prosperous city with concentrations of industry on both sides of the river and a busy port. However, many rented from private landlords and overcrowded slums were prevalent. The older schemes of public

housing were concentrated in particular parts of the city, often relying on philanthropic efforts to construct them e.g. the Iveagh Trust at Bride Street. These units of housing are still used for sheltered and public housing schemes. It might be noted at this stage that the locations of the records are approximate. Further work needs to be done to locate the schemes more precisely in space.

In the period 1940-1979, almost 60 schemes of public housing were built across the city. The locations of many of these, at least in the city centre, mirrored the locations of the earlier schemes. In the area between Donore Avenue to the east and Stephen's Green, 13 schemes were built in this period. In the area between Ringsend and Merrion Square, constrained by the loop railway line over the river, three more schemes were built in this period. Northeast of the north city centre core provided the location for ten more schemes in the period, perhaps using land that had formerly been used for light industry and warehousing. Further out in the north east suburbs, the Kilmore and Coolock schemes were completed before 1980.

The mass of the people: urban development and the changing politics of housing in Dublin city

Public housing, across the period 1850 to 1980 at least, has been located further and further from the city core as the twentieth century progressed. This is evident from the data presented above. Furthermore, successive waves of housing provision have become larger and the form has changed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, schemes were limited in size and fitted into the fabric of the growing city. The later schemes of the twentieth century took the forms common to other schemes across Europe. As the city grew, first as part of a city in the British empire and later as the capital of an independent nation, the size of the public housing provision in the city has grown with it. In the 1940s and 1950s, larger schemes were laid out in the Liberties, Cabra, Crumlin and Finglas. The data presented above are evidence of a specific geography of the urban development of Dublin. They suggest ways in which the city's growth, dynamics and topography can be examined at a certain scale. In this last section I would like to draw out some of these dynamics, in particular how the

city's politics are reflected in the diminution of social housing over time. These dynamics are themselves suggestive of research yet to be done.

Geography in Ireland has been slow to chart the development of these neighbourhoods and the communities of interest that emerged over time in these locations. This lack of attention to the communities that emerged over this time span is evident in other social sciences also (McCabe, 2011; McCord, 2016). Relatively little is known about the people and communities that moved there in this time frame as well as the influence they had on changing political landscapes and formations. If represented at all, they have been represented as socially problematic. The form and function of public housing has of course changed over these years too. In the mid-nineteenth century, when workhouses were still common on the Irish landscape, public housing in urban areas was not seen as a social good but a necessity. The city's largest employers were also philanthropic housing landlords, providing housing for some of their workers in a burgeoning interest in the hygiene of city-dwellers. At the same time, as Daly (1985) is keen to point out, the slums of Dublin were indicative of a "builder's mistake". Interest in the housing of Dublin's poor only began to take hold after 1880, long after the houses of the declining gentry passed into the hands of slum landlords. The legal classes of the city were a powerful lobby and many of them were also landlords (Daly). In late nineteenth century Dublin, it was through the efforts of the small number of social reformers that public housing gained a foothold. As the century turned, the bulk of the housing in Dublin city as a whole were owned by a large number of upper middle class merchants and shop-keepers, not large-holding landlords. There was little social stigma attached to the reality of tenement keeping (Daly).

Following 1932, with independence and a changing set of priorities, social housing in Dublin and other cities became part of a social compact. It was often in support of wider policy goals about family life and community formation. Housing (publicly subsidised and otherwise) became a social policy goal of a series of governments concerned with fostering discrete family units and seeking to materialise defined gender roles for both men and for women. The construction of larger developments in the new suburbs north and south of the river realised that policy goal. The data

presented above show how a structured programme of house building continued well into the 1970s, often conforming to this particularly Catholic social policy goal (Norris, 2016). Two decades earlier, people in many of these housing estates, as well as those in older ones, began fundraising for the erection of Marian statues. These statues would be placed on green space and mark the Marian Year of 1954 (O'Mahony, 2015). Most of these statues persist to the present day. The public housing complexes at O'Devaney Gardens, Fatima Mansions and Dolphin House were all decorated with small tended areas and religious statuary at this time. The Marian statues are one manifestation of a material landscape of religiosity that has yet to be adequately accounted for.

The form of these housing schemes also changed over time. Before independence, the emphasis in Dublin's public housing was on the provision of garden suburbs. Influenced by the town planning movements of the 1910s and earlier, Marino in Dublin's north east provides the exemplar where lower density housing estates were laid out in formation around common green space (McManus, 2002). After independence and following the consolidation of the Corporation, city authorities took to designing larger scale developments modelled in continental European styles. From the 1930s until the 1950s, in addition to the lower density of semi-detached housing units provided on the outskirts, the Corporation designed and built developments influenced by the art deco and the de Stijl movements (Mitchel, 2015). Many of the earlier schemes are still in existence with periodic maintenance. As suggested by the scheme size data presented above, they have housed many thousands of people in Dublin over the decades. However, analyses of the form of their construction has often over-shadowed the way in which they can be examined in other ways. Housing is for people, individually and in families but yet the contribution by these residents to the development of the city is often neglected. In this way it is a part of the urban fabric of Dublin that is social in intent and outcome. With changing employment and educational opportunities between generations, little is known about the people who grew up and raised families in these housing schemes.

By the early 1980s, with the newer suburbs of Tallaght, Lucan and Clondalkin vastly expanded, the way that Dublin can be understood was changing. Three new local

authorities were proposed to replace the old County Council and the city area was to be overseen by a City Council. This meant three new housing agencies to reflect the new administrative areas and potentially a devolved local government. The Dublin city area's population was in decline from the mid 1960s but from 1961, the population of the Dublin region as a whole went from 700,000 to just short of one million two decades later (Aalen, 1991). Dublin's population profile was changing with more younger people than in previous decades and an entrenched unemployment problem that would last most of the next decade. Little is known about the family dynamics of these working class communities, their linkages between neighbourhoods across time and the decline of the city's industrial base. For example, there is no analysis of the generational mobilities that may exist between family members and wider networks. Given the size of some of the housing schemes in the city from the 1950s, many children grew up in these schemes. Where were they educated and where did they later find work? Did the employment profile of these schemes change over time, given the demographic changes noted above. How were social networks established and maintained across time and space?

By the early 1980s, a disproportionate number of the residents of Dublin city's public housing schemes were benighted by an increasing use of opiates, particularly heroin (Lyder, 2005). Combined with a rapidly transforming post-Fordist economy, where employment related to Dublin port was diminished by containerisation, public housing was fast becoming associated (at least in the public imagination) with poverty and disadvantage. As Drudy (1991) has shown the geographic variation in city population decline is related to port activity employment decline and the relocation of industries elsewhere in the period 1966 to 1974. What effect did this have on tenancy and occupation rates in social housing schemes? Are there any social class mobilities evident among the people who raised families in these schemes? By the middle of the 1980s, another tenant buy-out scheme would ensure that fewer and fewer people would be a local authority tenant. This left those living in the schemes struggling to maintain community coherence that had been forged over three or more decades. Those that could afford to go private and take the advantage of the buy out grant did so, leaving empty units to be allocated to those with significant health and personal needs. Home ownership through mortgage debt was becoming normalised and a series

of local government decisions in the 1970s facilitated this (McCabe, 2011). By the late 1980s, state and local government involvement in communities in public housing was often seen as a matter of fixing social problems, not a resource from which the city drew its energy. A changing political landscape from 1989, setting a process of greater neoliberalisation of the economy in train, made public housing the least attractive option for a newly aspirant upper working class. Are these changes more evident in the later schemes than the older schemes of the 1930s and 1940s?

In the final section, I examine some of these issues in the light of the current housing crisis. I pose a number of further research questions which serve as more than mere topics of interest to historical geographers. They act as prompts to researching a vital part of the capital city's development which focuses on the ways in which communities and neighbourhoods maintain themselves across time. The housing of the city's population from the middle of the nineteenth century is not some series of incidental events but a vital part of the way that the city developed over the course of the next century. It reflects many of the ways in which political choices changed over time and the ways in which that was materialised in the fabric of the city, through its people.

Further questions for research

Before I was able to find out most of these data in the Dublin City Archive, I was made aware of the Council's planning documents and drawings for housing schemes of the 1940s and 1950s. I called some of these plans from the Archive to see if they could yield the dates of their production, thereby providing me with some way of organising the data. Housing schemes' drawings are kept in individual folios in the Archive and contain very detailed drawings of the schemes and the facilities that were installed on development. What is clear from these architects' plans are the designs of the washing facilities and the play areas for children. The plans show the vitality of what public housing is: the provision of something necessary for social activity. These everyday activities prompt a set of questions about municipal housing in the city. The provision of housing is more than just the accommodation of people or even solving a

social problem. Municipal housing forms the centre of new neighbourhoods and allows for the persistence of pre-existing networks. In this understanding, place-making is central. Places in and around the housing schemes become the play areas for children and the social space for women, often excluded from paid labour. The street is not merely a thoroughfare for people moving from A to B; it is a series of places actively involved in the formation and maintenance of communities. Some of the regeneration schemes of the early 21st century have attempted to capture the rich diversity of these communities (Ballymun Regeneration Limited, 2002; Fatima Groups United, 2000). There is a politics to the practices of these communities, one that is often sidelined in geographical analyses in and of Ireland.

For example, little is known about the inter-generational mobilities within the city's neighbourhoods. Did the children and grandchildren of the people who were housed by the Corporation in the 1940s stay in these areas or did they move elsewhere? If so, where did they move to and are there any patterns between neighbourhoods? How was a sense of place maintained over time and across generations? Public and municipal housing provides an ideal context within which to trace these kinds of dynamics. A select number of neighbourhoods could be examined to see if there is relative stability or mobility between neighbourhoods. If there are inter-generational mobilities, how can we understand these as relational geographies? How do they impact on other aspects of city life? Were particular housing schemes dominated by particular places of work? Further research on Dublin's housing might work with some of these data to try and understand the ways in which specific neighbourhoods may be populated by particular trades or employment sources. Is there a relationship between the decline of the port and other employment intensive industries and the location of specific new suburban locations?

As indicated above, the form that public housing has taken has an iconic significance in research about Dublin. There are many accounts of Simms and the work of his team in designing housing in the 1930s and 1940s. However, there are few academic accounts of those living within them. To this extent, geography has ceded much of the available material to architectural historians. There is a limited amount of data about the composition of the locations of municipal housing going back several decades.

This includes periodic census data for electoral divisions among some variables. It would be interesting to note the longer term composition of these spatial units as populations declined and the city changed over the period 1971 to 1991. Some work has been carried out on this (e.g. Aalen, 1991; Drudy, 1991) but there has no attempt to see how municipal housing developments changed over this time. The Corporation and later the City Council effectively ceased being a landlord of significance in the city after 1991. The roots of this policy change might be traced in further research on housing in the city over this period.

A third set of questions arises from the ways in which the city of Dublin has been produced over time through these municipal housing developments. As the twentieth century went on, the denser inner city developments were more and more isolated from the surrounding neighbourhoods as policing these areas became difficult. The boundaries created and barriers erected between these housing developments and the private housing and light industry around them have created specific geographies of exclusion. For example, as documented by Moore (2008) indicated in her work in Dublin's docklands, the residents of Sean McDermott street were shut off from the first phase of the office blocks by an older wall which was retained after redevelopment. Or, for example, what was the effect on the people living in the old Fatima Mansions development being cut off from the Grand Canal as an amenity? The Ballymun tower blocks were built in the 1960s on the premise that employment opportunities would follow from the city centre. What were the processes that prevented that next level of town planning that went beyond the mere housing of large numbers of people?

More than speculative questions, these are prompts to help re-evaluate what we can learn about the development of Dublin city as a whole. In the current context where the City Council is about to re-develop three large tracts of public land for a mix of private and public housing, we know so little about the geographies of the older schemes that it can be difficult to understand what we mean by the urban in an Irish context. It is harder still to locate such understandings within a discussion about housing policy, beyond the provision of housing for those seen as ill-equipped to manage the cut and thrust of the housing market. Local authorities in Ireland have

effectively ceased building housing within cities. The remaining municipal housing developments in locations like Hardwicke Street and those near Pearse Street are remnants of a time when housing like this shaped the way the city was produced and reproduced. For some of the larger developments, being redesigned and reconstructed, what kinds of spaces were produced by their redevelopment? What are the newer geographies created by large scale reconstruction of public housing?

Conclusion

In this paper, I have traced the origins of a project to map the distribution, age and scale of municipal housing in Dublin city. This project arose from doctoral work on the distribution of Marian statues across Dublin and their relationship to public housing projects of various sizes. Following some initial investigation, the Dublin City Archive yielded a small dataset from which a larger dataset could be compiled to include data from McManus (2002). These data were then geolocated using standard GIS tools. A number of patterns emerge from the data when trying to make sense of the dataset. Firstly, many of the municipal housing schemes built before the turn of the 20th century have been replaced by more recent schemes. These are largely concentrated in a small area to the north east of the Trinity College campus and near the Guinness brewery to the west. Secondly, there is some relationship between the size of the public housing scheme and the distance from the city centre. Although the dataset did not allow me to graphically represent the extent of each of the schemes, the further from the city centre the scheme is, the larger it tends to be. A further stage in the research might be to represent the footprint of each housing scheme as a polygon and from there calculate areas. In the larger schemes in Crumlin and Cabra this may prove difficult as many of the houses have been sold into the private market many years ago. Architects' plans may yield further detail.

Thirdly, most of the residential units in these municipal housing schemes were built since the 1930s and most of the largest schemes are dating from this time. As outlined above, it was the coming to power of *Fianna Fáil* in the 1932 election that prompted a more systematic approach to the provision of public housing, characterised by Norris

(2016) as one of the most socialised in Europe. From this decade until the late 1970s, the local authorities built many thousands of apartments and houses to meet non-market demand. As these data show, there was a need to house people in the city in spite of the changing local and global economy. How this might inform an understanding of current housing and homeless crises is unclear. However, non-market or heavily-subsidised housing schemes contributed greatly to the development of the city as it is now.

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