

COMMENTARY

A total population of 2,978,248 persons were enumerated in the 1971 Census. Of these, 104,880 were not in private households (Table 1). A further 14,765 persons, covering 4,180 households were living in caravans or other temporary dwellings (Tables 1 and 11A). The remaining 2,858,603 persons, comprising 726,363 households, were living in 705,180 permanent housing units.

The average size of household was 3.94 persons and the average size of dwelling was 4.56 rooms giving an average density of occupation of 0.86 persons per room.

HOUSEHOLD DENSITY

Average size of household has continued to decline. Table A shows, for the Census years of 1926, 1936, 1946, 1961, 1966 and 1971, the average number of persons per private household in the State and in the Aggregate Town Area and Aggregate Rural Area.

TABLE A:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD.

Area	1926	1936	1946	1961	1966	1971
Aggregate Town Area	4.32	4.28	4.15	3.99	4.07	3.98
Aggregate Rural Area	4.55	4.33	4.16	3.96	3.95	3.89
Total	4.48	4.31	4.16	3.97	4.01	3.94

There has been a consistent decline in this average in the Aggregate Rural Area from 4.55 in 1926 to 3.89 in 1971. The trend for the Aggregate Town Area is similar except for the rise which occurred between 1961 and 1966 and which was not continued in the next five-year period. Table B shows, for the same years, the average number of persons per room in private households. This is an overall indication of the improvement in housing conditions.

TABLE B:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM IN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD.

Area	1926	1936	1946	1961	1966	1971
Aggregate Town Area	1.17	1.11	1.03	0.88	0.89	0.85
Aggregate Rural Area	1.19	1.08	1.00	0.91	0.90	0.87
Total	1.19	1.09	1.01	0.90	0.89	0.86

Here again the same trends as in Table A are apparent. The slight upward movement in the average number of persons per room which occurred between 1961 and 1966 in the Aggregate Town Area has been reversed while the average in the Aggregate Rural Area and for the State as a whole continued to fall. While the difference between the Town and Rural Areas was quite small in 1971, 0.85 persons per room as compared with 0.87 persons per room, there were sizeable differences between the County averages. In Table 4 of the main tables it will be seen that in the Aggregate Town Areas of Counties the lowest density was 0.70 for Dun Laoghaire Borough and the highest was 0.94 for Laoighis. In the Aggregate Rural Areas of Counties the range was from 0.81 in Wexford, Leitrim and Cavan to 0.98 in Kildare.

The improvement in housing conditions over the period 1936 to 1971, as measured by the proportion of the population living under various housing density conditions, is also clear from the data given in Table C which shows the distribution of the population living in private households according to housing density for the Census years from 1936 to 1971.

TABLE C:- PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION LIVING IN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO HOUSING DENSITY.

Number of persons per room	1936	1946	1961	1966	1971
Up to and including 0.5	} 24.7	} 28.2	13.2	13.2	14.1
Over 0.5 but under 1			21.1	22.0	23.2
1	13.1	14.1	14.7	15.0	15.3
Over 1 but under 1.5	14.1	15.1	16.1	17.0	17.7
1.5-but under 2	15.3	16.1	15.6	15.6	14.8
2	8.8	8.1	6.4	5.9	5.5
Over 2 but under 3	10.8	9.5	7.8	7.5	6.5
3 or more	12.2	8.1	3.6	3.4	2.8
Not known	0.9	0.7	1.6	0.3	0.2
Total	100.-	100.-	100.-	100.-	100.-

The proportion of the population living in households with a density of more than two persons per room fell from 23.0 percent in 1936 to 11.4 percent in 1961, to 10.9 percent in 1966 and to 9.3 percent in 1971. On the other hand, the proportion of the population living in less dense housing conditions – less than one person per room – rose from 24.7 percent in 1936 to 35.2 percent in 1966 and 37.3 percent in 1971.

Table 5 of the main tables gives corresponding 1971 densities for each County. For the Aggregate Town Areas the proportion of the population living in households with a density of more than two persons per room varies from 3.3 percent for Dublin County (excl. Dublin County Borough and Dun Laoghaire Borough) to 13.3 percent for Offaly. The range for the Aggregate Rural Areas was from 6.3 percent for Cork County to 15.6 percent for Donegal County.

AMENITIES

As already explained, the detailed results for 1971 concerning water supply, sanitary facilities, etc. are presented in the detailed tables in terms of housing units (i.e. conventional houses or structurally separate flats) rather than private dwellings (the room or set of rooms occupied by a private household) as in previous censuses. Generally one private household occupies a housing unit but in some cases a housing unit may contain more than one household (e.g. bed-sitters). Thus the 726,363 private households in 1971 comprise 695,347 households each occupying a separate housing unit and 31,016 households occupying 9,833 housing units, giving a total of 705,180 housing units in all. In order to provide a comparison with the results for previous censuses, the data are also presented on a household basis in this commentary although the change makes little difference except when dealing with privately rented accommodation.

In 1971 some 78.8 percent of private dwellings had a piped water supply as compared with 38.7 percent in 1946. Some 70.8 percent had a flush toilet by comparison with 38.5 percent in 1946. Of the 551,136 housing units with a piped water supply, 345,409 were in the Aggregate Town Area and 205,727 in the Aggregate Rural Area. Of the 493,539 housing units with a flush toilet, 342,351 were in the Aggregate Town Area and 151,188 in the Aggregate Rural Area. Table D sets out the pattern of change over the twenty-five year interval showing the Aggregate Town Area and the Aggregate Rural Area.

TABLE D:- PERCENTAGE OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS – 1946, 1961 AND 1971 AND PERMANENT HOUSING UNITS – 1971 WITH PIPED WATER SUPPLY AND FLUSH TOILET.

Area	Percentage with piped water supply				Percentage with flush toilet			
	Private dwellings			Permanent housing units 1971	Private dwellings			Permanent housing units 1971
	1946	1961	1971		1946	1961	1971	
Aggregate Town Area	91.8	97.2	99.3	99.2	90.6	96.0	98.4	98.4
Aggregate Rural Area	8.6	25.0	57.7	57.6	9.1	19.4	42.4	42.3
Total	38.7	57.2	78.8	78.2	38.5	53.5	70.8	70.0

Whereas only 8.6 percent of private dwellings in the Aggregate Rural Area had a piped water supply in 1946 as compared with 91.8 percent of those in the Aggregate Town Area, the corresponding proportions in 1971 were 57.7 and 99.3 percent, respectively. Thus, while almost all private dwellings in the Aggregate Town Area now have this amenity and even though there has been a very substantial improvement in the situation in the Aggregate Rural Area, there is still a large difference in the proportion having a piped water supply in these two areas. A similar trend is shown in the case of private dwellings having a flush toilet although the growth in the provision of this amenity, in the Aggregate Rural Area particularly, has not been as rapid. Thus, 42.4 percent of private dwellings in the Aggregate Rural Area had a flush toilet in 1971 as compared with 9.1 percent in 1946 with the corresponding proportion for the Aggregate Town Area being 98.4 percent and 90.6 percent, respectively.

There are substantial differences between the various Counties in the percentage of housing units having these amenities. Over 99 percent in Dublin County (incl. the County Borough) had piped water and over 98 percent had a flush toilet. In County Leitrim, on the other hand, the corresponding figures were 45 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Table E gives the percentage figures separately for the Aggregate Town and Aggregate Rural Areas in each County.

TABLE E:- PERCENTAGE OF PERMANENT HOUSING UNITS WITH PIPED WATER SUPPLY AND FLUSH TOILET IN THE AGGREGATE TOWN AREAS AND AGGREGATE RURAL AREAS OF EACH PROVINCE AND COUNTY.

Province or County	Permanent housing units with piped water supply			Permanent housing units with flush toilet		
	Total	Aggregate Town Areas	Aggregate Rural Areas	Total	Aggregate Town Areas	Aggregate Rural Areas
Leinster	87.6	99.5	61.8	81.5	98.8	43.8
Carlow	74.2	97.6	59.0	60.1	95.5	37.1
Dublin*	99.1	99.9	76.8	98.2	99.6	54.8
Kildare	76.2	96.2	66.1	64.4	92.0	50.4
Kilkenny	72.4	99.7	65.2	53.2	98.8	41.3
Laoighis	68.7	97.1	60.4	53.3	93.8	41.3
Longford	56.8	98.8	49.7	44.5	97.4	35.6
Louth	85.2	99.2	63.6	77.6	97.7	46.5
Meath	65.1	95.2	58.6	56.2	92.7	48.3
Offaly	67.0	96.4	53.4	53.5	91.0	36.1
Westmeath	67.6	98.6	52.4	59.6	97.2	41.1
Wexford	75.0	97.7	64.4	57.4	95.9	39.4
Wicklow	83.5	99.7	69.9	72.7	97.6	51.8
Munster	77.6	98.8	62.4	65.8	97.6	43.0
Clare	57.9	97.5	47.3	50.4	96.5	38.0
Cork*	84.8	98.9	69.6	73.4	97.6	47.2
Kerry	69.0	98.6	60.6	55.4	97.3	43.4
Limerick*	77.9	99.0	61.1	67.6	98.0	43.3
Tipperary, N.R.	67.9	97.1	54.4	52.8	94.9	33.4
Tipperary, S.R.	76.6	98.6	64.6	59.0	96.5	38.4
Waterford*	84.8	99.6	67.9	74.5	98.9	46.9
Connacht	56.1	98.6	47.0	50.1	97.2	40.0
Galway	61.0	99.0	48.2	55.7	97.7	41.6
Leitrim	44.8	100.0	42.7	34.1	100.0	31.6
Mayo	54.9	97.3	48.2	49.7	95.9	42.4
Roscommon	51.0	96.7	45.0	45.3	93.4	38.9
Sligo	58.9	99.8	47.0	52.2	99.1	38.5
Ulster (part of)	59.3	98.4	53.3	48.4	97.0	40.9
Cavan	53.6	97.5	49.4	43.4	96.7	38.3
Donegal	62.2	98.3	57.5	51.3	96.2	45.4
Monaghan	59.4	99.0	47.7	47.8	98.0	32.9
Total	78.2	99.2	57.6	70.0	98.4	42.3

*Including County Borough.

The percentage of housing units having these amenities in the Aggregate Town Areas exceeded 95 percent in all Counties in the case of piped water supply and 91 percent in the case of a flush toilet. However, the position in the Aggregate Rural Areas showed far greater variation. The proportion of housing units with a piped water supply in these areas varied from 42.7 percent in Leitrim to 76.8 percent in Dublin. In the case of a flush toilet, 31.6 percent of housing units in the Aggregate Rural Area of Leitrim had this amenity as compared with 54.8 percent in the corresponding area in Dublin.

NATURE OF OCCUPANCY

The change from the concept of private dwelling to that of permanent housing unit has caused more obvious differences in the case of this topic because of the fact that most of the cases where a housing unit contains more than one private dwelling are in dwellings rented other than from Local Authorities. Table F compares the numbers of permanent housing units and private households therein, distinguishing the two categories where the distinction is particularly important – “rented unfurnished other than from Local Authority” and “rented furnished or part furnished”. Three areas are distinguished – Dublin County Borough together with Dun Laoghaire Borough, the three other County Boroughs combined and the remainder of the State.

TABLE F:- PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS AND PERMANENT HOUSING UNITS CLASSIFIED BY NATURE OF OCCUPANCY.

Area	Total		Nature of occupancy					
			Rented unfurnished other than from Local Authority		Rented furnished or part furnished		Other (i.e. owner occupied, rented from Local Authority, etc.)	
	Housing units	Private households	Housing units	Private households	Housing units	Private households	Housing units	Private households
Dublin Co. Borough and Dun Laoghaire Borough	140,327	154,998	17,806	21,629	7,359	17,805	115,162	115,564
Other County Boroughs	48,861	50,930	7,855	8,534	1,307	2,623	39,699	39,773
Remainder of State	515,992	520,435	33,603	34,885	8,694	11,408	473,695	474,142
Total	705,180	726,363	59,264	65,048	17,360	31,836	628,556	629,479

This table shows that the change in concept has very little effect in respect of occupancy categories other than the two which have been shown separately. The total number of housing units involved in the other categories was 628,556 as compared with 629,479 households. In the two specified categories, the main effect was in the County Boroughs and Dun Laoghaire. In the remainder of the State, there were 33,603 housing units rented unfurnished other than from Local Authorities as compared with 34,885 private households with 8,694 housing units and 11,408 households, respectively, in the rented furnished category.

In the rented furnished category, there were 7,359 housing units in Dublin County Borough and Dun Laoghaire Borough as compared with 17,805 households, the corresponding figures for the other County Boroughs being 1,307 housing units and 2,623 households.

The distribution over three main categories of occupancy in 1946, 1961 and 1971 in the State and in the Aggregate Town and Aggregate Rural Areas is shown in Table G.

TABLE G:- PERCENTAGE OF RENTED OR OWNER OCCUPIED PRIVATE DWELLINGS AND HOUSING UNITS.

Nature of occupancy	Private dwellings			Housing units
	1946	1961	1971	1971
Aggregate Town Area				
Percentage of private dwellings:-				
rented from Local Authority	73.8	28.8	25.4	26.8
rented other than from Local Authority		30.0	20.5	16.0
owner occupied*		38.0	52.5	55.6
Aggregate Rural Area				
Percentage of private dwellings:-				
rented from Local Authority	25.0	10.1	5.3	5.3
rented other than from Local Authority		6.9	6.0	5.8
owner occupied*		77.4	85.5	85.6
Total				
Percentage of private dwellings:-				
rented from Local Authority	42.7	18.4	15.5	15.9
rented other than from Local Authority		17.2	13.3	10.9
owner occupied*		59.8	68.8	70.8

* Including tenant purchase or vested cottage scheme.

The categories used here are not the same as in the previous table, which was designed to illustrate the effect of the use of the housing unit concept. There has been a consistent increase in the proportion of owner occupied dwellings in both the Aggregate Town Area and the Aggregate Rural Area over the period 1946 to 1971, the increase in the decade 1961/71 being particularly rapid. Nearly 70 percent of all dwellings were owner occupied in 1971. There was a greater decline between 1961 and 1971 in the percentage of private dwellings rented other than from Local Authorities, particularly in the Aggregate Town Area, than in the case of dwellings rented from Local Authorities.