

The implications of the 1968 Buchanan Report for city-led regional development in Ireland

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Annual Conference of the Regional Studies Association Irish Branch

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September 7, 2018



European Regional Development Perspective (ESDP) 1999

- Regional cities to act as drivers of development in their regions
- Move from being subordinate regional service centres to independent participants in international economy
- Need to develop specialised export bases
- Need to complementary relationship between regional cities and rural hinterlands
- Regional cities to become gateways through which the regions' links with the outside world are channelled
- Ultimate objective: Achieve balanced regional development through maximising each region's potential

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS)

Key weaknesses

- **Absence of blueprint for the creation of gateway-focused specialised regional enterprise structures**
- **Absence of necessary governance structures**
 - **Decentralisation of functions/powers**
 - **Creation of strong regional governance structures**
- **Failure to address opposition from national state apparatus (central bureaucracy and political system)**

Buchanan Report Background

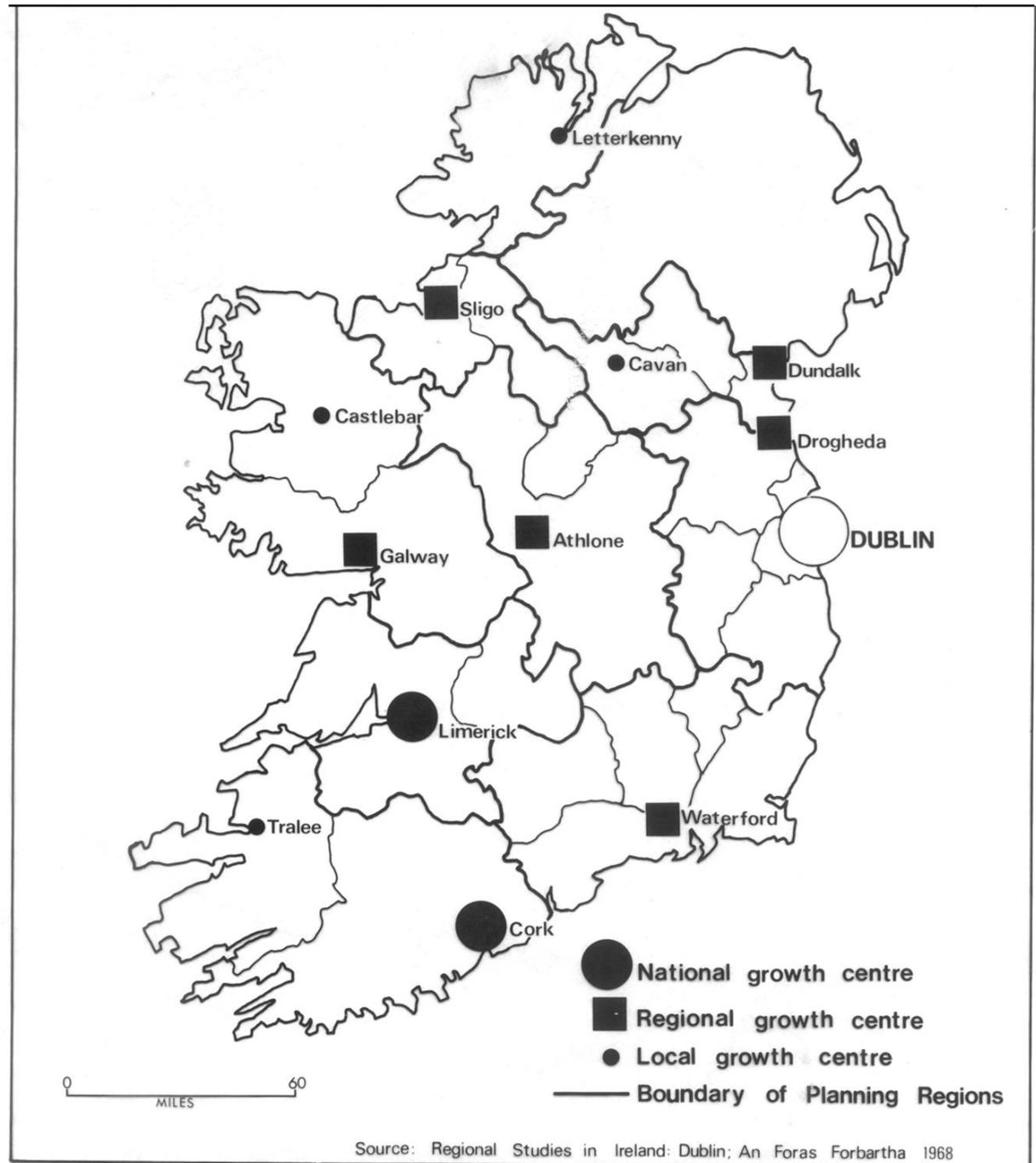
Disquiet with dispersal policy for incoming foreign plants:

- Strong preference for urban locations in industrialised countries
- Superior service and infrastructural base of urban centres a major attraction for investors
- Concentrated investment in public services and infrastructure a more efficient use of scarce public resources
- Fewer incentives required to attract firms to urban locations
- Stimulatory impacts on rural hinterlands of strong urban growth

Buchanan Report Remit

- Undertake an analysis of the resource base and economic development potential of each of the nine planning regions;
- Propose a spatial development policy to guide future growth in the regions;
- Set out the infrastructural requirements arising from the proposed regional policy.

Buchanan Report Growth Centre Proposals



Buchanan Report: Key elements

- Dublin to grow “naturally”: no incentives or restrictions
- Main development effort to focus on raising Cork and Limerick/Shannon to a scale capable of competing with Dublin
- Six regional growth centres
 - Waterford, Dundalk, Drogheda established industrial centres
 - Galway, Sligo, Athlone to be developed as regional service and industrial centres
- Four local growth centres in peripheral regions to be developed as service centres
 - Letterkenny, Cavan, Castlebar, Tralee

Proposed distribution of additional industrial employment

	New industrial jobs	%
Total	160,000	100.0
Dublin	65,000	40.5
Cork	25,000	15.5
Limerick/Shannon	20,000	12.5
Regional Centres	c.15,000	9.5
Rest of country	35,000	22.0

Proposed distribution of population

	1966 Pop.	1986 Pop. (Projected)	Ch %
Dublin	795,000	1,125,000	+ 42%
Cork	122,000	250,000	+105%
Limerick/Shannon	58,000	175,000	+204%
Waterford	30,000	55,000	+ 84%
Galway	26,000	47,000	+ 79%
Dundalk	22,000	44,000	+100%
Drogheda	18,000	35,000	+ 95%
Sligo	13,000	27,500	+105%
Athlone	11,000	18,000	+ 64%
Rest of Ireland	1,807,000	1,722,000	- 5%

The Buchanan Report: Key implementation mechanisms

- **Establishment in each planning region of a Regional Planning Authority which would have full statutory responsibility for all significant planning decisions within the region.**
- **Alignment of the regional structures of central government departments and agencies with the territories of the planning regions, in order to facilitate coordination of the activities of these departments/agencies with the regional development plan.**
- **The establishment of Special Development Corporations with responsibility for the development of Cork and Limerick/Shannon.**

From the government policy statement accompanying
the publication of the Buchanan Report (May 1969)

“While the government accepts, in principle, that growth centres can be a valuable element in a regional programme...”

“A growth centre programme on the lines recommended by the consultants would have far-reaching implications...for development prospects in other areas...”

“It has been decided, therefore, that the consultant’s growth-centre recommendations should be further considered in the context for regional development generally.”

Government statement on regional policy (May 1972)

Favoured a regional policy which would “provide for the maximum spread of development through all regions”.

The growth of Dublin to be restricted to the level required to accommodate natural population increase.

Expansion of the eight regional centres identified in the Buchanan Report.

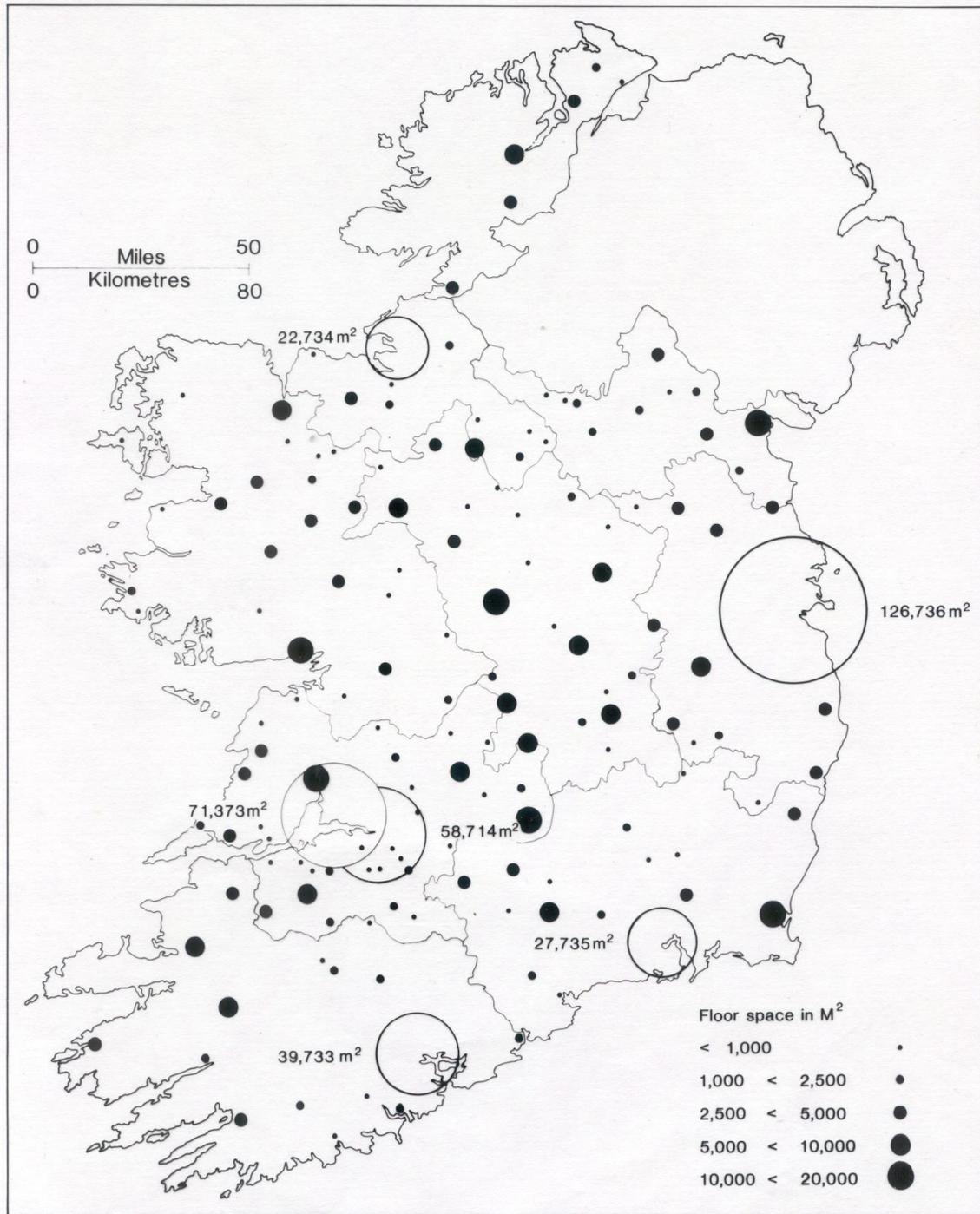
“...development of county or other large towns of strategic importance in each region, including relatively large expansion of towns in areas remote from existing towns”.

“smaller urban areas will also share in this expansion process”.

IDA Regional Industrial Plans

- No evidence that dispersal policy was deterring inward investment
 - In 1960s, new industrial plants located in 271 locations, one half in towns <3,000 population
 - Marked acceleration in inward investment in late 1960s
- Country divided into 48 groups of neighbouring towns, each with a job creation target over plan period
- Key role of advance factories in achieving job targets
- Between 1973-82, 432 advance factories built in 156 locations

Advance factory floor space 1973-82



Allocation of advance factory floor space by town size 1973-82

Town Size Category	No. Locations	Floorspace per 1,000 pop. (sq m)
Dublin	1	137
Cork	1	248
Limerick	1	863
25<50,000	3 ex 3	652
10<25,000	10 ex 10	607
5<10,000	21 ex 22	668
1,500<5,000	38 ex 52	1,077
<1,500	75	1,342

Six locations with non-town status allocated an average of 497 sq m each

Note: Dormitory towns excluded

Spatial impact of regional industrial plans

- Surge of inward investment following EEC entry in 1973
- By 1981, over half of manufacturing employment in the West, Mid West and North West regions in foreign firms
- 40% of jobs created by the IDA 1973-82 located in advance factories
- Simultaneous decline in old urban-based industries leads to major regional redistribution of manufacturing employment to rural areas