THE LABOUR FORCE
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The labour force consists of the total at work, the number of unemployed persons and the number of first time job seekers. Changes in the size of the labour force are influenced by demographic trends and participation rates. In a county such as Kildare where there is a high level of in-migration of adults in the working age groups most of the growth in the labour force is related to demographic trends. In addition, there has been an upward trend in female participation rates over the period since the early 1980s. This is as a result of a combination of factors such as improved educational levels, removal of barriers preventing married women from working, and a decline in average family size. Moreover, for many younger couples there is an economic necessity for both partners to be at work in order to pay the costs of increasing house prices. In 2002 the total number at work in Kildare was 74,347, compared with 51,299 in 1996. The overall participation rate is 63.4% compared with 58.3% for the State reflecting the age profile of the county (a larger proportion of those aged over 15 are in the working age groups) and the greater opportunities for employment in Kildare and neighbouring counties (Table 7).

Table 7: Labour Force Participation: Kildare compared with the State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Work</td>
<td>74,347</td>
<td>+44.9</td>
<td>1,641,587</td>
<td>+25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time Job Seekers</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>-23.2</td>
<td>21,147</td>
<td>-23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4,184</td>
<td>-24.7</td>
<td>138,199</td>
<td>-30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force Participation Rate</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>+5.2</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>+2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of employed people increased dramatically in the State and also within Kildare over the 1996-2002 period largely arising from the economic boom associated with the emergence of the "Celtic Tiger". In Kildare alone the number of people at work increased by 23,048 people, or 44.9%, over this six year period, a much higher proportion than the average rate of increase for the State (25.6%). The increase in the numbers employed in Kildare and the State stem only partially from a reduction in unemployment levels, as the reduction in the numbers unemployed (including the reduction in the number of first time job seekers) accounts for only a small percentage of the employment increase. The unemployment rate for the State fell by 5.9% and for Kildare fell by 3.5% in the 1996-2002 period. In Kildare, the number of unemployed people (excluding first-time job seekers) fell by 1,376 over the 1996-2002 period, amounting to a 24.7% reduction. This number, however, approximated to just 6% of the increase in the number employed. So in 2002, there were 4,184 persons unemployed in Co. Kildare and this had increased to 4,440 by October 2005 according to the latest Live Register analysis from the CSO.

Note: this figure refers to the number of persons residing in Kildare who are classified ‘at work’. Many of these are commuting to workplaces outside the county.

October 2005
THE LABOUR FORCE

3.2 PARTICIPATION RATES

The participation rate in the labour force of all persons aged 15 years and over in 2002 was 63.4% in Kildare compared with 58.3% for the State (Table 7). A gender based breakdown of participation rates shows that the male labour force participation rate in Kildare was 71.1%, compared to 69.9% for the State while the rate for females at 51.2% was significantly higher than the rate for the State (47.0%).

There are some significant differences in the distributions of male and female participation rates. While generally the highest male participation rates are concentrated in a number of the urban centres in the north east, some of the highest male participation rates are in several of the less accessible rural areas. There are also, however, extensive rural areas with low ratios (Map 29). The highest female participation rates are generally within the commuter-belt areas of the north east of the county, such as Naas and Celbridge. The lowest rates are generally in the south of the county with districts to the north east of Newbridge and Naas as well as a couple of districts in the west also exhibiting low female participation rates (Map 30).

While the male labour force participation rate for Kildare increased by only about six percent for County Kildare as a whole, between 1996 and 2002, there were some significant adjustments between districts (Map 31). Major increases occurred in a number of districts in the north east of the county, particularly north of Naas and west of Maynooth. By contrast, participation rates declined in a few of the more rural districts of the county in the far south, east of Johnstown and around Straffan. This can be related to some extent to the age profile of the population. The female participation rates increased in all but one ED at the very southern tip of the county. The most significant increases were in the hinterlands of Naas and in a number of more rural districts in the west of the county as well as a district south of Ballitore (Map 32).
MAP 30: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE, 2002

Transport
- Railway
- Motorway
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads

Towns By Pop.
- > 10,000
- 3,000 - 9,999
- < 3,000

Percentage
- < 39
- 39 - 44
- 44 - 48
- 48 - 53
- > 53
Average = 46.89
Std. Dev = 5.92

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Data Source: Central Statistics Office Population Census SAPS File 2002
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MAP 32: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE 1996-2002
3.3 SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The distribution of persons at work according to industrial groups is summarised in Table 8 and Figure 6. By 2002 there were only 3,096 persons at work in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in Kildare representing 4.2% of the workforce. Between 1996 and 2002 the total at work in the sector declined by 14.8% which was not as great as the 30.4% decline throughout the State but is likely reflective of the fact that the decline in employment in agriculture in Kildare has been ongoing for a long period. By contrast employment increased in all other sectors and particularly in the building and construction (+7,665), commerce (+9,366) and ‘other’ sectors (+4792), which includes persons working in hotels as well as those in community, social and personal services activities. The level of increase in manufacturing (including electricity, gas and water supply sectors) was modest at 1,841 (16.5%) while the gain in the number of those working in public administration was only 672.

Table 8: Persons at work classified by Industrial Groups, Kildare and the State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional (Education &amp; Health)</td>
<td>10,599</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>252,469</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>5,696</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>94,569</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>3,941</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>96,783</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>20,287</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>440,656</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing, Mining &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>12,965</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>261,952</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building &amp; Construction</td>
<td>7,665</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>149,271</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>3,096</td>
<td>-14.8</td>
<td>97,137</td>
<td>-30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10,098</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>247,053</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Number employed in different sectors in Kildare

Data Source: Census of Population, 1996, 2002 CSO
3.4 SPATIAL PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Employment in agriculture was greatest in the south and west parts of the county, while as expected the lowest levels were found around the major urban centres and in the commuter zones in the north east of the county. Agriculture accounted for more than one fifth of the total employment in most of the south east of the county (Map 33). There was another pocket of relatively high agricultural employment directly to the east of Monasterevin and north of Athy. Kildangan was the district with the highest level of agriculturally based employment (27.7%), with high levels also associated with Johnstown (26.8%), Carrigeen (25.3%), Burtown (25.2%), Harristown (21.5%), Moone (20.6%) and Graney (20.6%).

Farming is the sole occupation of most farmers in the less accessible areas in the west of the county, in a number of districts on the outskirts of Athy and to the south west of Ballymore Eustace and Kilcullen (Map 34). By contrast, farming has become a subsidiary occupation on more than one third of all farms and this is especially the case around Newbridge and in the more urban north-east of the county (Map 35).

Manufacturing industries account for 17.4% of the total at work, which is just slightly above than the share of 16% of the workforce for the State. The total number of manufacturing employees in Kildare increased by 1,841 (16.6%) between 1996 and 2002 following an increase by 2,293 (26.0%) between 1991 and 1996. A notable feature of Map 36 is the high share of the workforce employed in manufacturing in many rural districts in the west of the county and also in the south of the county around Athy. The most prominent message from this map, however, is the low dependence on manufacturing throughout most of the county. The districts with the highest levels of manufacturing employment were Kilberry (36.1%), Kilpatrick (31.0%), Bert (29.6%), Athy West Urban (28.9%), Robertstown (25.9%) and Lullymore (25.3%) while the lowest levels were in Ballysax East (9.2%), Kildangan (9.7%), Belan (10.9%), Dunmurry (11.1%), Cloncurry (11.2%), Pollardstown (11.5%), Killashee (11.6%) and Balraheen (11.9%).

The highest levels of employment in building and construction in Kildare are mainly associated with districts in rural parts of the north and south east, where this sector accounts for more than 15% of total employment in many districts (Map 37). EDs with particularly high percentages of their workforce employed in the building and construction sector include Inchaquire (25.9%), Kilmeage South (18.2%), Castledermot (17.7%), Robertstown (17.7%), Balraheen (16.5%), Ballitore (16.3%) and Ballynadrummy (16.3%). The lowest levels of employment in this sector are associated with the north east of the county and areas in the west and south west. Low levels are associated with the hinterlands of Athy, Kildare and Naas and the commuting zone in the north east. The EDs with the lowest levels of employment in building and construction included Quinsborough (2.1%), Bert (4.2%), Burtown (6.1%), Ballaghmoon (6.7%), Ballysax East (6.8%) and Dunmurry (6.9%).

Employment in the transport sector which accounted for 5.3% of the workforce is focussed in three main areas: in the north of the county, particularly around Naas and in the commuter zone, in the south west around Athy and in the south east in a strip between Ballitore and Kilcullen (Map 38). Usk ED had the highest percentage of its workforce employed in the transport sector (10.3%), with high levels also associated with the EDs of Ballitore (9.3%), Naas Rural (8.8%), Cloncurry (7.9%), Oughterard (7.6%) and Kilteel...
(7.6%). Low levels of employment in the transport were widespread throughout most of the west of the county, particularly the mid west.

The commerce sector which includes wholesale and retail activities (10,386 workers), banking and financial services (3,337) and real estate and business services (6,564) increased its share of total employment from 21.3% to 27.3% between 1996 and 2002. The sector is very strongly concentrated in the north-east of the county (Map 39), and especially in the area that stretches from Newbridge to Leixlip where it accounts for more than one-third of the workforce in some districts including Kill (33.0%), Oughterard (32.3%), Donaghcumper (32.0%), Naas Urban (31.9%), Rathmore (31.0%) and Celbridge (30.8%). By contrast this sector is much less significant throughout most of the west and south of the county.

The professional sector total of 10,599 is made up of 4,898 workers in education and 5,701 in health and social work. High levels of employment in the professional sectors (not all of which is located in Kildare) are associated with more urbanised areas, including the commuter districts in the north-east of the county (Map 40). The highest proportions of professional employment were found in Maynooth (21.4%), Cloncurry (18.8%), Monasterevin (18.4%), Donaghcumper (18.3%) and Athy Rural (18.3%). The lowest levels were found mainly in the middle and west of the county with particularly low levels in the EDs of Inchaquire (2.4%), Belan (5.0%), Johnstown (7.0%), Kilpatrick (7.7%), Nurney (7.7%) and Kilteel (8.1%).

There is a quite clear spatial pattern in employment in public administration in Kildare with the highest shares of employment in this sector concentrated in the Kildare, Newbridge, Naas area and in the north-east of the county (Map 41). The public administration sector accounted for the highest percentage of employment in the Ballysax East ED (32.4%), with high levels also in Ballysax West (14.9%), Morristownbiller (10.1%), Leixlip (9.8%), Kildare (9.5%), Newbridge Rural (9.3%), Carragh (9.0%) and Usk (8.7%). The lowest levels were found mainly in the north-west, with particularly low levels in the EDs of Inchaquire and Carrick where no-one was employed in public administration. Further low levels of employment in this sector were found in the EDs of Timahoe South (1.5%), Ballynadrummy (1.7%), Quinsborough (2.1%), Windmill Cross (2.2%), Kilberry (2.4%) and Kilmeage South (2.6%).

The final category of workers (‘Persons in Other Employment’ in Map 42) are those employed in hotels and restaurants (2,922), other community, social and personal service activities (2,957) and those whose industry was not stated. These workers are most strongly represented in some central and western EDs (Map 42) with lower proportions in the south, east and some districts in the north.
MAP 33: PERSONS IN AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

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MAP 34: SOLE OCCUPATION FARMERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FARMERS, 2000

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MAP 36: PERSONS IN MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

Transp: Railway, Motorway, Primary Roads, Secondary Roads
Towns By Pop.: > 10,000, 3,000 - 9,999, < 3,000

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Data Source: Central Statistics Office Population Census SAPS file 2002
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MAP 37: PERSONS IN BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT
AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

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MAP 38: PERSONS IN TRANSPORT EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

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MAP 39: PERSONS IN COMMERCE EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002
MAP 40: PERSONS IN PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

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MAP 41: PERSONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002
MAP 42: PERSONS IN OTHER EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 15+ AT WORK, 2002

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Rural-Urban Dynamics in Kildare: Socio-economic Patterns and Trends
3.5 PART-TIME WORK

The analysis in the preceding sections is based on each person identifying in the census whether or not they are at work. Some individuals who may not be working full-time may not record themselves as at work. An alternative approach, promoted by the International Labour Organisation, to estimating the number at work is based on recording the number of hours worked in the week prior to the census date. By these criteria, 79,329 persons resident in Kildare were recorded as at work. Of this number 7,225 had worked less than 20 hours during the week prior to the census data. This subset, which is 71.4% female, accounts for 9.1% of the total at work. The distribution of these workers forms a number of clusters in the county with concentrations in the north-east, south of Naas, west of Newbridge, around Ballitore and west of Castledermot (Map 43). Unusually, the share of part-time workers in urban centres like Kildare, Newbridge and Naas is less than the average.

3.6 UNEMPLOYMENT

In 2002 there were 4,184 unemployed persons or 6.2% of the labour force, and 689 first time job seekers in Kildare. The highest unemployment levels were associated with the west and south west of the county and particularly with Athy and the hinterlands of Kildare town (Map 44). The EDs with the highest unemployment rates, based on the 2002 Census, were Athy Rural (16.8%), Athy West Urban (14.7%), Kilberry (11.6%), Athy East Urban (11.4%), Rathangan (10.5%), Timahoe South (10.2%) and Carbury (10.1%). The lowest unemployment rates were recorded in Pollardstown (1.3%), Johnstown (1.4%), Ladytown (2.0%), Ballaghmoon (2.2%), Gilltown (2.3%), Kildangan (2.5%), Rathmore (2.8%).

The total number of unemployed persons and first time job seekers declined by 24.0% (4,873), between 1996 and 2002. There were reductions throughout most of the county except for a district in the west just north of Rathangan a district east of Johnstown and another north of Ballymore Eustace (Map 45). In many of the very rural districts the decline in numbers exceeded 60%. The reduction in unemployment rates was generally lower in the north east of the county as rates were already relatively low there in 1996. By contrast the rates increased in two districts in the east of the county north of Ballymore Eustace and north east of Naas, however, caution is needed in terms of interpreting this pattern as the numbers involved in these EDs are small. The greatest improvements in the unemployment rate were in the south of the county, around Kilberry and two districts in the middle of the county (Map 46). The most recent unemployment figure for Kildare according to the Live Register figures of October 2005 indicates that there were 4,440 persons unemployed in Kildare: 850 registered in Athy district office, 1,311 in Maynooth and 2,279 in the Newbridge office (CSO 2005).

3.7 ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY RATIO

The economic dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of persons not at work to those at work. While the ratio for Kildare at 1.47 is less than the 2.39 for the State, there are considerable differences between EDs (Map 47). The lowest rates are mainly towards the north-east of the county where labour force participation rates are high and unemployment rates are less than the average for the county. Conversely, in the more rural areas of the west and south west of the county, particularly around Athy, the dependency ratios are higher.
MAP 43: PART-TIME WORKERS PERSONS WORKING <20 HOURS PER WEEK AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AT WORK, 2002
MAP 44: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2002

Transport
- Railway
- Motorway
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads

Towns By Pop.
- > 10,000
- 3,000 - 9,999
- < 3,000

Percentage
- < 3
- 3 - 5
- 5 - 8
- 8 - 12
- > 12
Average = 5.67
Std. Dev = 2.84

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Data Source: Central Statistics Office Population Census SAPS file 2002
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MAP 47: ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY RATIO, 2002