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NDP
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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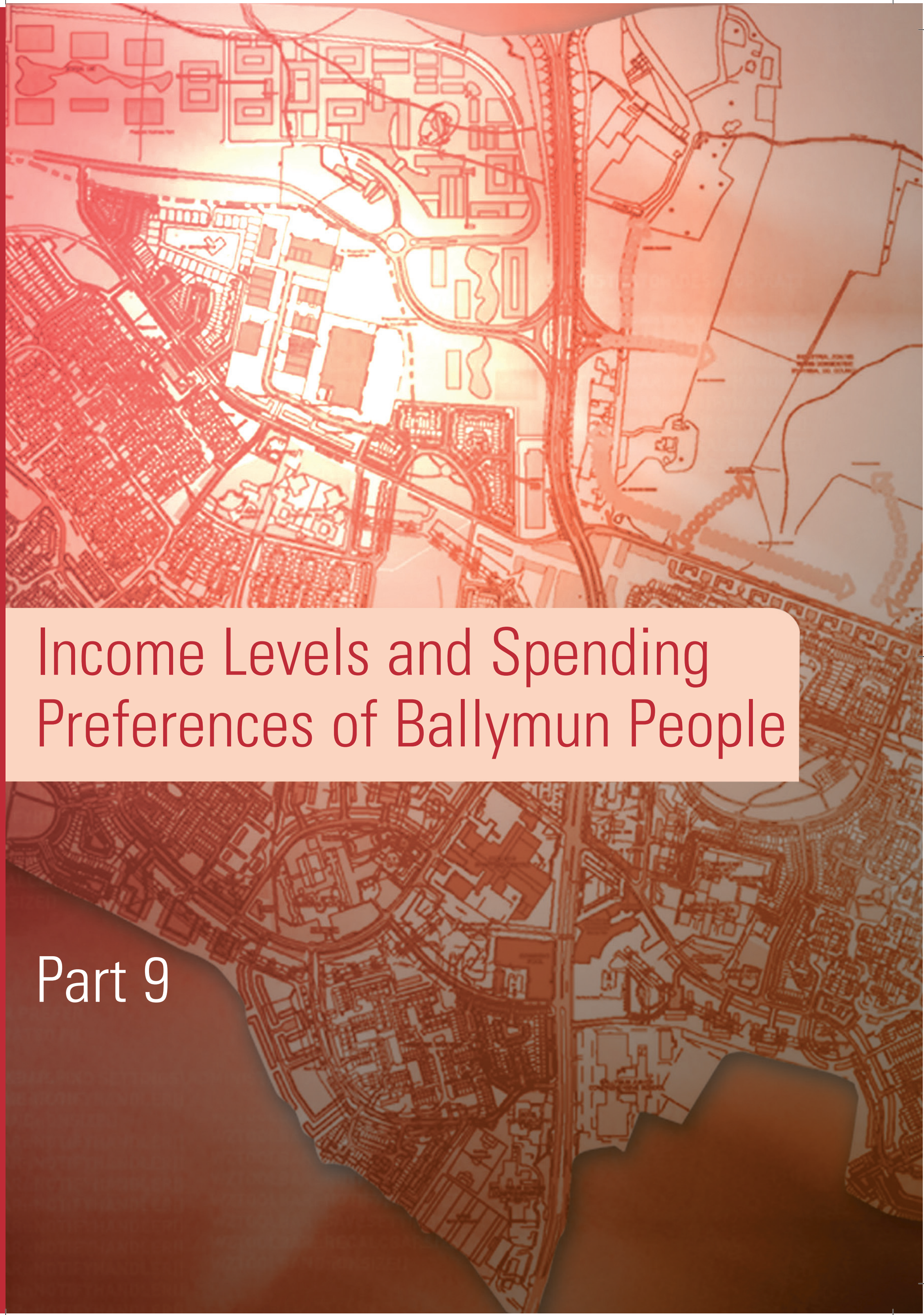


Income Levels and Spending Preferences of Ballymun People

Part 9

Comment

The income and expenditure profile for Ballymun provides interesting insights into the lifestyles of the people of the area, the obstacles many people face relative to the population as a whole and the challenges that remain for both local and national government as well as private businesses.

Reflecting the high level of unemployment in the area (nearly four times the national average) and the fact that 75% of those employed described their position as being General or Clerical Operatives (i.e. not at supervisory or management levels), household income is significantly lower than the national average. 80% of households in Ballymun have weekly household incomes below the state average of €666.72 and in fact the majority of households (over 60%) have weekly incomes below €350.

It would be interesting to track this figure over time because the likelihood is that as more people engage in training and take up employment, incomes will increase. The fact remains that average incomes in the area are significantly below the national average and this does raise challenges in terms of ensuring that people do not fall into consistent poverty. The restricted spending power also raises challenges in the short term to businesses in the area.

The retail infrastructure in Ballymun has been limited up to now and the latent demand that exists for shops based in the various neighbourhoods in Ballymun is really brought home by the important role that the local van shops play. Nearly 80% of the people of the area shop in these vans at least once a week, more than in Ballymun Shopping Centre. While over two thirds of those surveyed shop in Ballymun Shopping Centre at least once a week, other local supermarkets (Omni and Finglas) also attract significant numbers from Ballymun. In fact, 15% of respondents claim never to shop in Ballymun Shopping Centre. Reasons given for not using the local shopping centre included the fact that it is perceived as being more expensive, is run down, offers a poor range of shops, includes shops that are poorly stocked and offers the potential for intimidation by drug dealers, drug users and drunks. These are all issues that will need to be addressed in the development of the new Centre if it is to be a place where the people of Ballymun will happily go to for their weekly shop.

While full car parking spaces at the end of the residential blocks of flats may lead one to assume a high level of car ownership in Ballymun, a striking statistic is in fact the low level of car ownership: Nearly 50% of all households don't have any car, compared to an average of 21.7% in the country as a whole and 27.7% in Dublin City, (according to the 2002 Census).

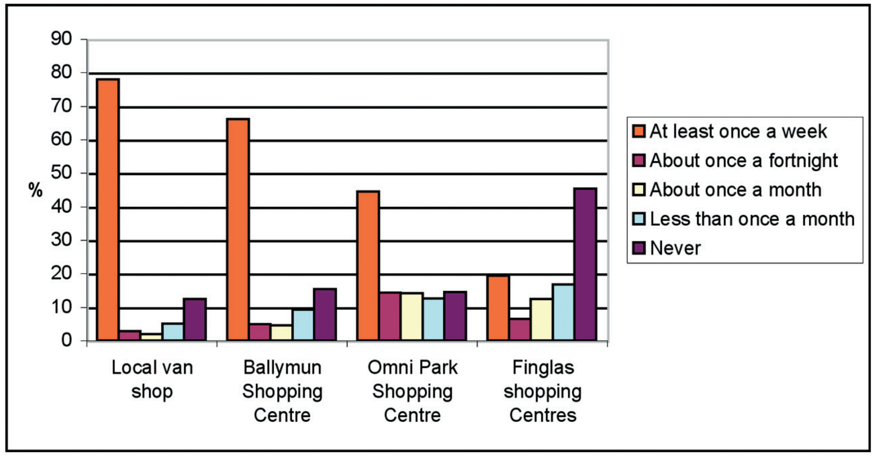
Again, the level of car ownership is likely to be already on the increase and it would be interesting to track this as incomes increase. The current low rate of access to a private car means a higher dependence on public transport for travelling for various purposes such as employment, training, education, shopping or leisure activities so the need for public transport that actually connects the points that people need to reach is particularly acute. However, in the housing and environment booklet of the fact file, we can see that while buses are the usual mode of transport for two out of five people in Ballymun (42.5%) nearly half (49.2%) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with public transport in Ballymun. The improvement of transport links must be highlighted as a key priority if the lives of the people of the area are to be improved.

The current lower than average level of car ownership could offer opportunities as well as challenges. Much of Dublin is becoming ever more reliant on the car to reach many amenities, including out of town shopping centres. There may be the potential to create in Ballymun a self contained area where people can easily reach key amenities by foot or using public transport, thus contributing to a reduction in traffic congestion. This offers benefits to local businesses in that if local shops reach the expected standard, shoppers are likely to be enticed to shop locally. The planned investment in the Shopping Centre and the recent development of the Civic Centre in which City Council and Health Board services will be based, will all combine to create a pleasant environment that could provide an example to other parts of Dublin.

Pauline Logan, North Dublin City Chamber of Commerce.

"There is a considerable difference between the spending power of Ballymun residents and the state average"

Chart 1 Usage of shopping centres/facilities



Respondents who reported using Ballymun shopping centre less than once a month or never using the centre were asked why this was so. Various responses were given and are summarised below:

- Too expensive.
- Run down/dirty.
- Poor range of shops.
- Shops poorly stocked.
- Intimidated by drug dealers/drug users/drunks.

Introduction to the facts and figures

To gather the key data for this Fact File, Ballymun Partnership commissioned a company called Vision 21 to conduct a survey with ten percent of Ballymun residents, over the Christmas period 2002.

Addresses were randomly selected from a database which we constructed using information from Dublin City Council Regional Office, from Ballymun Post Office and Ballymun Regeneration Limited. The target sample size was 485 households, which was 10% of the total number of households, 4,850, in Ballymun at the time of the survey. The survey results tell us that out of these 485 households, there were 1,516 members. If we multiply this figure by 10 we can estimate that the total population for Ballymun is 15,160 people. On average there are 3.14 persons per household.

When reading the facts that follow you can refer to the total household number 4,850, and the total population number, 15,160, where relevant, in order to get a real understanding of the actual numbers of people from the percentages given.

The facts and figures

Car Ownership

Table 1 shows that over half of Ballymun households (51.6%) either own or have access to at least one car or van.

Table 1 Percentage of households that have access to cars

Number of cars	*%*
None	48.4
One	39.3
Two	9.8
Three	0.8
Four	0.6
Five or more	1.0

Income Levels

Respondents were also asked to indicate their gross household weekly income. As Table 2, nearly one in seven (13.9%) have a gross household income of less than €150. However, nearly two in five (39.8%) have an income of more than €350. The average gross weekly household income for the State in 1999/2000 at €666.72 (Central Statistics Office: Household Budget Survey). As the table below shows more then eight out of ten households have a weekly income less than the State average.

Table 2 Gross household weekly income

Income groups	*%*
Less than €150	13.9
150 – 349	46.4
350 – 549	22.3
550 – 749	11.1
750 – 949	4.1
More than €950	2.3

Spending Power

After bills the mean weekly disposable household income is €135.99. This is only a quarter of the average State disposable income which was €551.60 in 1999/2000 (Central Statistics Office: Household Budget Survey). Although the State figure represents disposable income before bills (but after income tax and social insurance), this still illustrates that there is a considerable difference between the spending power of Ballymun residents and the State average.

Preferred Shopping Facilities

As well as being interested in disposable income we were also interested in where people spent it. The respondents were asked to indicate how often they used various shopping facilitates. The results are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Usage of shopping centres/facilities

Use	*At least once a week*	*About once a fortnight*	*About once a month*	*Less than once a month*	*Never*
Local van shop	77.9	2.8	1.9	5.1	12.3
Ballymun Shop. Centre	66.1	4.8	4.6	9.2	15.3
Omni Park Shop. Centre	44.4	14.3	14.1	12.6	14.5
Finglas shop. Centres	19.3	6.4	12.3	16.7	45.3

As Chart 1 illustrates, the local shop vans are the shopping facilities most frequently used. This shows that people require local shops closer to their homes than Ballymun Town Centre. This suggests that Ballymun needs shopping facilities in each of the neighbourhood areas, as is planned in the regeneration project.