

# UNEQUAL IRE - LAND IT'S A NUMBERS GAME

So after ten years of boom, growth and prosperity what do we end up with?

Maybe it's because of the golden rule?... "he who has the gold makes the rules"

So how is it that the few do well and most of us not so well?

And despite the pressure on our services, the well off get subsidised private schools, and hospital care and the same child benefit as everyone else

And what about the primary schools with 25% of all kids taught in overcrowded classrooms

And then there are the hospitals with over 41,000 waiting for treatment... And the hundreds on trolleys... and the waiting lists for speech and language... and psychiatric assessment... and... and... and

And with over 200,000 vacant houses/apartments, how is it we have over 40,000 people on housing waiting lists?

And the last time we counted, we had over 2,000 homeless in Dublin

And how is it that 1.5 million people earn less than 38k per year?

Our Celtic Tiger has been the envy of the world. Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, said that "over the past decade Ireland has recorded one of the best economic performances in the world... the fruits of this economic success have been put to good use and have benefited people the length and breadth of the country"

But after a decade of boom, do we have an equal society?

We know we have at least 10 billionaires... and about another 100 worth over 100 million each

And, in total, we have more than 30,000 millionaires - property millionaires, tribunal millionaires, business millionaires

And we know that we have more helicopters per head than the UK and more Mercedes per head than Germany

And the top 1% of the population has about 100 billion worth of assets and owns 20% of the nation's wealth

But how is that we still have 17% of the population at risk of poverty?

THE HAVES...		AND THE REAL WORLD	
THE CEO	THE PROPERTY DEVELOPER	THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER	THE LONE PARENT
<b>THE PICTURE</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A booming economy = big bucks for the top bosses</li> <li>... and wage moderation for everyone else</li> <li>Annual salary package is €1 million plus for most of the top CEOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefited more than anyone from our Celtic Tiger boom</li> <li>Over 680,000 new dwellings built '97-'07 with prices up about 15% nearly every year</li> <li>Not only houses, but 80% increase in retail building '02-'06</li> <li>A Total spend of €35 billion on property in '06, 24% of GNP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In '07 industrial and building workers made up 20% of the workforce</li> <li>Now it's job losses every week with unemployment at the 200,000 mark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 190,000 lone parent families in the country, 18% of all families</li> <li>21% of all children live in a lone parent family</li> </ul>
<b>INCOME</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where to start on millionaires row? How about packages such as</li> <li>- Kingspan boss €9 million</li> <li>- Irish Continental head €7 million</li> <li>- Bank of Ireland man €3 million</li> <li>- Poor old AIB man only got €2.1 million in '07 (call in the union?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top developers are among our 33,000 millionaires</li> <li>So we have:</li> <li>- Ballymore homes owner worth c. €350 million</li> <li>- Zoe Developments owner worth c. €1 billion</li> <li>- McNamara's owner worth c. €150 million</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After 10 years of boom, average income for men was approx. €625 per week in '07</li> <li>That's a daily rate of €125 - top barristers earn €2,500 per day and the B of I CEO about €11,500</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 80,000 get one parent welfare payment - €220 per week with one child</li> <li>About 60% work but most are on low pay</li> <li>32% of one parent families live in consistent poverty</li> </ul>
<b>HOUSING</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well able to afford the leafy suburbs of Dublin or a mansion in Wicklow</li> <li>Will no doubt own one of our 50,000 holiday homes and head for 'Roundstone 4' in the summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An estate in Kildare, Ailesbury Road, London, Ibiza... you get the picture</li> <li>Holiday homes in Ireland and Portugal (Quinta do Lago resort €2 million each a few years ago) and France, and Italy, and....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family income of €50k will get a c. €330k mortgage. Repayments c. €1400.00 per month... crippling</li> <li>Average house price in Dublin, €385k in early '08</li> <li>Affordable housing? Little chance. Only 3500 nationwide in '07</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65% live in private rented, 23% with parents /family</li> <li>About 13,000 families get Rent Supplement, which in total, costs the state over €300 million a year and leads to higher rents</li> <li>900 non resident landlords got over €4 million in Rent Supplement in '07</li> <li>In Dublin over 75% of private rented doesn't meet basic legal standards</li> <li>Nearly 17,000 on the waiting list for social housing, most for over 1 year</li> </ul>
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'package' usually has plenty of shares/share options, which means millionaires on the double</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invested €12 billion in commercial property in '07</li> <li>Stamp duty/tax loophole saved investors/developers about €250 million alone in '06. Thanks, Taoiseach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The family home is likely to be it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A paddling pool for the children?</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied... up through the ranks?... the MBA route?</li> <li>Kids likely to attend one of our 50 private schools, fees €3-12k per year</li> <li>Private schools kindly subbed by government at €90 million per year</li> </ul> <p>P.S. Get the same child benefit (€166-200 per month) and early childhood supplement (€1100 per year) as everyone else... only fair?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private boarding schools are an option for the kids and small change at about €20k per year</li> <li>And they can always sponsor a university building, build a school hall etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School places for the kids? Don't live in Dublin 15 or Balbriggan</li> <li>Free Education? What about books, uniforms, trips</li> <li>Primary schools in debt over €20k per school</li> <li>Third Level? In '06 only 25% of the 15-64 age group had a 3rd level qualification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47% under 35 educated to Junior Cert</li> <li>Free education for the kids? See industrial worker</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH /PENSIONS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top VHI plan takes 'Kingspan Man' about 30 minutes to earn and 'AIB Man' about 2 hours... should be manageable</li> <li>Salary packages usually come with large pension contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can well afford their own doctor, nurse... maybe even own a hospital?</li> <li>Pensions - aren't they for little people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical Card? Unlikely, only covers 30% of population</li> <li>GP card? Possibly, but poor take up with only 75,000 issued</li> <li>Pension? Maybe/maybe not... only 50% of all workers have a pension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should qualify for medical or GP only card</li> <li>What about waiting lists? 60% of children wait over 3 months for hospital treatment</li> <li>Company/private pension? Unlikely, especially in low paid work</li> </ul>
<b>LIFESTYLE</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take your pick... horse racing at the Curragh... a corporate box for the clients at Croke Park</li> <li>Golf at the K Club</li> <li>(€80k to join and about €7k per year after that)</li> <li>Maybe one of our 25,000 leisure boat owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to own one of our 140 helicopters, up from 56 in 2000</li> <li>A private jet? More bought here '03-'07 than anywhere in Europe</li> <li>Cars are Mercs, BMWs etc. We have even had a 3 year waiting list for Ferraris... beats waiting 3 years for an operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shifts, unsocial hours. Little money for play</li> <li>Exploitation? Yes. Only 31% of workers in trade unions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A constant struggle to survive - low income, poor housing, tough work</li> <li>Many can experience depression and isolation</li> <li>Very limited access to childcare</li> </ul>

