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The defining characteristics of alternative food initiatives in Ireland

A social movement battling for an alternative food future?

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Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of PhD

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May, 2015

Table of Contents

Author's declaration *ix*

Acknowledgements *x*

List of abbreviations *xi*

List of appendices *xii*

List of tables and figures *xiii*

Abstract *xiv*

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1.1 Big questions, no easy answers - issues with the modern food system 1

1.2 Background to the research 4

1.3 Aim and objectives of the research 7

1.4 Thesis structure 8

Chapter 2: Moving beyond rose tinted conceptualisations of alternative food initiatives to understand their role in an improved food system – a research review 10

2.1 Introduction 10

2.2 What are alternative food initiatives? 10

2.3 The general characteristics of alternative food initiatives 12

2.3.1 Characterising alternative food initiatives by what they are not - the conventional, dominant food system 13

2.3.2 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on spatial structures 14

2.3.3 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on social and economic structures 16

2.3.4 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on their underpinning values 18

2.4 The role of alternative food initiatives in practice 21

2.4.1 Rose tinted conceptualisations 22

2.4.2 Contradictions in practice 23

2.4.2.1 Reproduction of inequalities in the food system 24

2.4.2.2 Reproduces the disconnected, individualised consumer 26

2.4.2.3 Contradictions in the case of local food 27

2.4.2.4 Becoming part of the system alternative food initiatives set out to oppose: the capitalist absorption of alternatives 29

2.5 Do alternative food initiatives have a role to play in changing and improving the food system? 32

2.5.1 Role is not as a complete alternative to the dominant food system 32

2.5.2 Role as oppositional, reactionary spaces or a niche market 35

2.5.3 Role as the seeds of a wider movement 36

2.5.4 Supporting AFIs to play a greater role in food system transformation 38

2.6 Moving alternative food studies forward 39

2.6.1 A need for new conceptual approaches 40

2.6.2 Ways forward 41

2.7 Conclusion 43

Chapter 3: A social movement conceptual framework to understand the role of alternative food initiatives in the food system 45

3.1 Introduction 45

3.1.1 The social movement perspective 47

3.2 Theories of social movements 48

3.2.2 'Old' social movement theory: collective behaviour, resource mobilisation theory and political process 49

3.2.3 'New' social movement theory 51

3.2.4 Bridging the theoretical divide 53

3.3 The concept of a social movement 54

3.3.1 Defining traits of a social movement 55

3.3.1.1 Movement members 55

3.3.1.2 Networks of informal interaction 58

3.3.1.3 Solidarity and collective identity 59

3.3.1.4 Promote or oppose social change through conflict and struggle 61

3.3.2 Broad characteristics of social movements 62
3.3.2.1 The place of public and private spheres of action 62
3.3.2.2 Movement goals, outcomes and impacts 65
3.3.2.3 How social movements emerge and develop 66
3.3.2.4 The activities of social movements 68
3.3.3 The affinity between AFIs and a social movement framework 69
3.3.3.1 Food, agriculture and rural 'movements' 70
3.3.3.2 Tensions and unclear goals 72
3.3.3.3 Individual or collective action 74
3.3.3.4 Issues with regulation and certification 75
3.3.3.5 Advantages of the social movement approach 76
3.4. What theorist? 78
3.5 Conclusion 81

Chapter 4: The Theories of Pierre Bourdieu 82
4.1 Introduction 82
4.2 Bourdieu and social theory 83
4.2.1 A theory of practice 87
4.3 Capital 88
4.3.1 Economic capital 92
4.3.2 Social capital 93
4.3.3 Cultural capital 95
4.3.4 Symbolic capital 97
4.4 Social space and fields 98
4.4.1The characteristics of fields 100
4.4.2 Fields and capital 102
4.5 Habitus 105
4.6 Bourdieu, social change and social movements 107
4.7 Bourdieu, rural development, food and farming 111

4.8 Conclusion 114

Chapter 5: Methodology 116

5.1 Introduction 116

5.1.1 Ontological and epistemological orientation 116

5.2 Methodological issues, database development and data collection areas 118

5.2.1 Issues with conducting alternative food initiative research 118

5.2.2 Parameters to help build a picture of alternative food initiatives in Ireland 123

5.2.3 Finding Ireland's alternative food initiatives 127

5.2.4 Selection of areas and types of initiatives to focus qualitative data collection 129

5.3 Qualitative data collection methods and analysis 137

5.3.1 Rationale for the type of data collected 137

5.3.2 Participant observation 139

5.3.3 Qualitative research interviews 140

5.3.3.1 The semi-structured research interview 143

5.3.4 Analysing qualitative data 144

5.4 Conclusion 149

Chapter 6: Food, agriculture and alternative food initiatives in Ireland 151

6.1 Introduction 151

6.2 Agriculture and food in Ireland 151

6.2.1 The changing structure of farming in Ireland 151

6.2.2 Ireland's agri-food industry 153

6.2.3 Food policy and food security 154

6.2.4 Food retailing in Ireland 156

6.2.5 Food consumption issues and the consumer 158

6.3 A general context for alternative food initiatives in Ireland 160

6.3.1 Size and composition 160

6.3.2 Producer movements and food culture in Ireland 162
6.3.2.1 The cooperative movement 162
6.3.2.2 The organic food movement 163
6.3.2.3 Irish food culture and artisan food 165
6.3.3 The development of farmers' markets 168
6.3.3.1 The farmers' market model in Ireland 169
6.3.3.2 Certifying farmers' markets 171
6.3.3.3 Inside Ireland's farmers' markets 172
6.3.4 Community supported agriculture and urban farms 175
6.3.5 Producing our own food 176
6.3.5.1 Allotments 178
6.3.5.2 Community gardening 180
6.3.6 Groups, centres, schools, networks and organisations 182
6.3.7 Campaigns, alliances and state representation 186
6.4 The general structure and dynamics of the alternative food field 189
6.4.1 Positions and roles in the alternative food field 191
6.4.2 Field intersections and the alternative food field 196
6.5 Conclusion 201

Chapter 7: The dynamics of alternative food initiatives in the economic field 203
7.1 Introduction 203
7.2 Economic capital in alternative food initiatives in the alternative food field 204
7.3 The struggle for greater control in the food system from the alternative food business position 206
7.3.1 Issues of economic capital control with long supply chains 208
7.3.2 Economic capital control, scale and business structure 214
7.3.3 Managing economic uncertainty and scarcity of economic capital 220
7.3.4 The battle to change the value of economic capital in the economic field 224
7.3.5 Substitutes for economic capital and substitute because of its scarcity 229

7.3.6 The power of economic capital in structuring the economic field.....232

7.4 Battle for greater control in the food system in the position of produce your own 236

7.4.1 Low reliance on the economic field and low economic capital needs..238

7.4.2 The limitations of low economic capital resources.....241

7.5 Conclusions on economic characteristics and role 246

Chapter 8: The social and cultural dynamics of AFIs in the alternative food field.....251

8.1 Introduction.....251

8.2 Social capital structure, volume and impacts in the alternative food field 252

8.2.1 Social capital structure and volume in the position of alternative food business 252

8.2.1.1 How trust is built and structures social capital 255

8.2.1.2 Quickly forgotten – time, weak social ties and social capital 258

8.2.2 Social capital structure and volume in the position of produce your own 261

8.2.2.1 How trust is built and structures social capital 264

8.2.2.2 Individual and collective interests.....266

8.2.3 Conclusions on social characteristics and role 269

8.3 Cultural capital structure, volume and impacts in alternative food field.....270

8.3.1 Food cultural capital dynamics from the alternative food field perspective 271

8.3.1.1 Quality food cultural capital 271

8.3.1.2 Ethical food cultural capital 274

8.3.1.3 Sustainable food cultural capital.....277

8.3.1.4 Food knowledge cultural capital.....281

8.3.1.5 Limitations of foodie cultural capital volume and structure in the alternative food field 283

8.3.2 Cultural capital in the position of alternative food business 291

8.3.2.1 Embodied cultural capital – cultural capital expressed as livelihood 291

8.3.2.2 Non-institutionalised cultural capital.....294

8.3.2.3 The role and ambiguity of institutionalised cultural capital ..296

8.3.3 Cultural capital in the position of produce your own 298

8.3.3.1 Embodied cultural capital – cultural capital expressed as lifestyle.....298

8.3.3.2 Non-institutionalised cultural capital.....300

8.3.4 Cultural capital circulation 302

8.3.5 Conclusions on cultural characteristics and role 309

8.4 Some final observations on capital's impact on the dynamics and impacts created by the alternative food field 310

8.4.1 The dominant power of economic capital 310

8.4.2 Capital circulation by central players in fields.....317

8.4.3 Capital circulation in time and space 320

8.5 Conclusion 323

Chapter 9: Alternative food initiatives: evaluating their role and the social movement question.....324

9.1 Introduction.....324

9.2 Background and core characteristics.....327

9.2.1 Background characteristics 328

9.2.2 Core characteristics 330

9.3 Outcome characteristics 331

9.4 AFIs correspondence with the definition of a social movement 334

9.5 The role of AFIs in changing the food system and how to strengthen it – recommendations for policy and practitioners.....343

9.6 Areas of future research 346

9.7 Conclusion 349

References 350

Appendices 387

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the National University of Ireland, Cork and is my own except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award at National University of Ireland, Cork or elsewhere.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of University College Cork.

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List of Abbreviations

AFI	Alternative Food Initiative
AFN	Alternative Food Network
BMW	Border Midlands and West
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CFN	Civic Food Network
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
EU	European Union
FARMA	National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (UK)
FSAI	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
GIY	Grow it Yourself
GYO	Grow Your Own
LFS	Local Food Systems
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
IFMTA	Irish Food Market Traders Association
IOFGA	Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association
IOMST	Irish Organisation for Market and Street Traders
ISSA	Irish Seed Savers Association
KEEP	Kerry Earth Education Project
NDP	National Development Plan
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin
PGI	Protected Geographic Indication
RAT	Rational Action Theory
REPS	Rural Environmental Protection Scheme
RMT	Resource Mobilisation Theory
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
S&E	Southern and Eastern
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
WWOOF	Willing Workers on Organic Farms

List of Appendices

		Page No.
Appendix A	Publications and conference papers emerging from this research	387
Appendix B	Events, conference and seminars attended	388
Appendix C	Interview guide	389

List of Tables and Figures

Table		Page No.
2.1	General characteristics of the dominant global food system and the concept of alternative food initiatives	20
5.1	Kneafsey et al.'s (2008) selection framework parameters	123
5.2	Venn et al.'s (2006) categories of alternative food network	124
5.3	Categories of alternative food activity – collective	126
5.4	Categories of alternative food activity – individual	126
5.5	National Development Plan regions	131
5.6	Areas where data collection focused	132
5.7	Database totals per region, category and breakdown of interviews/site visits conducted	136
5.8	Parent code categories and the extent of data coding in NVivo	148
6.1	Broad chronology of farmers' markets, community food growing, artisan and organic food in Ireland	189
6.2	The alternative food field	196
7.1	Economic characteristics of alternative food initiatives	248
8.1	Social characteristics of alternative food initiatives	269
8.2	Cultural characteristics of alternative food initiatives	309
9.1	Characteristics of alternative food initiatives	326

Figure

1.1	Addressing the research objectives: a two tier process	6
3.1	Place of theory in addressing the research objectives	46
5.1	Map of study areas	133
6.1	Intersections between fields	197
6.2	The economic and alternative food field intersection	197
6.3	The social and alternative food field intersection	198
6.4	The cultural and alternative food field intersection	198

Abstract

Alternative food initiatives (AFIs) have been described as an attempt to change and improve aspects of how the food system operates. They are focused around more traditional, local and sustainable food production and circulation. AFIs such as farmers' markets, allotments and community gardens, share a desire to reduce the number of steps food goes through from production to plate. They allow more control to be retained by food producers and consumers who have become increasingly less powerful players in this system. The role of these initiatives in the food system, and their potential to impact real change, has however been questioned. Working to better understand this issue is a central concern of this research. To do this a two tier analysis has been deployed. The first tier, which takes up the bulk of the analysis, involves identifying the characteristics and general dynamics of AFIs. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, focusing on theories of field and capital, are the concepts applied. The capital concept can be likened to a resource. Its volume and structure affects agent's power in the different social fields they act. Capital comes in many guises. Social, cultural and economic capital are used in this analysis. The use of Bourdieu's notion of fields allows for exploration of power struggles, influenced by the volume and structure of capital. The research then uses the findings from the application of the field and capital concepts in the second tier of analysis. This tier is concerned with relating AFI characteristics and dynamics back to their key traits, positive and negative, as well as arguments made about AFI's role identified from previous research. Another important part of this second tier of analysis is exploring if AFIs, the producers, consumers, organisations and groups that make up this phenomenon, can be considered a social movement working towards an alternative food future. The social movement question is focused on because social movements are a key agent of social change and AFIs can be referred to collectively as a social movement, but are not often explored theoretically from this perspective. AFIs in Ireland provide the empirical context for this research. Evidence from primary (interviews, participation in initiatives, attendance at markets and festivals) and secondary (policy documents, media reports, newsletters and special interest books) sources are analysed. A series of qualitative interviews in four areas of Ireland, the south, midlands, east and north-west, provide the primary data on which the research findings are based. Overall this research develops a new perspective towards understanding AFI characteristics, role and future potential. The research finds that AFIs can be understood as the potential beginnings of a lifestyle social movement. Leaders, or political and cultural entrepreneurs, are vital to the development of this potential movement. The research also finds that a central role of AFIs is revitalising, supporting and contributing to food culture, a function not previously widely identified as central to AFIs. A number of issues and areas of further research are also proposed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"…so much depends on dinner" (Interview 50).

1.1 Big questions, no easy answers - issues with the modern food system

Big questions are being asked about how our food system has evolved. These questions are entwined with complex debates related to the production, distribution and consumption of food. Debates exist over for example: organic farming's productivity; the preservation of family farming; the environmental impact of intensive food production and its animal welfare standards; levels of meat consumption; food's nutritional quality; the availability of cheap food alongside the persistence of food poverty; and the impact of export led agriculture on national food security. The list could go on. An overarching concern linked with these broader issues of debate is our food supply's future sustainability. Some argue science and technology will provide food sustainability solutions (Dooley, 2014). The prescriptive planting method for example uses remote sensing and cartographic techniques to decipher what should be planted where, and how to harvest it. Using the method can boost yields and reduce crop failure. The system was developed by two former Google employees and Monsanto bought their company last year. Concerns exist over the ownership of information (The Economist, 2014). Genetic modification is a more well known scientific technology where opinions are often divided. Leyser (2014) argues too much focus has been placed on the pros and cons of this technology, which does not assist progress towards finding answers to one of the defining questions of the 21st century, that is: "How can we achieve a reliable, sustainable, equitable supply of nutritious food for a growing and increasingly urbanised world population in the face of climate change?" Finding a middle ground is important. Davies (2014:12) for example argues that science and technology must play a role, but technological advances in production are not the entire solution and identifies a need for: "more nuanced approaches…sensitive to people, power and politics."

Concentration of power is growing in the modern food system. From field to fork, suppliers and retailers are growing in size, and intensification is also increasing in farming. According to Lowry (2014) six companies control 70% of the seed and 91% of the chemical market. Four control up to 90% of the global grain trade and 10 control almost all fertilizer supply. Actors between the farmer and the consumer are growing increasingly powerful (Tansey, 1994). There is little local control over food supply. Policy is not just devised at national levels, but international and regional policy impacts on the food system's future direction (Lang, 1999a). Some argue 'food democracy' is needed where citizens have "the power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally" (Hassanein, 2003: 79). To alleviate world hunger the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food called for governments to devise future agricultural policy that shifts subsidies and research funding away from agro-industrial monoculture and towards small farming based on agro-ecological[1] methods to support 'agricultural democracy' (Ahmed, 2014).

Food is a special commodity, but treated the same as all others in the economy (Tansey, 1994; Morgan et al., 2006). Certain groups, such as environmental, organic farming and food ethics organisations, more keenly push the message that measures must be taken to safeguard our future food system. For example, a range of organisations including Compassion in World Farming, Friends of the Earth and the Soil Association recently came together to promote the need for major changes in food and farming policy to: improve our health; produce better food; contribute to more sustainable farming; and enhance nature (Square Meal, 2014). Alternative food initiatives (AFIs) are grassroots efforts that have emerged attempting to shift power back to producers and consumers, the players in the food system that power has moved away from. AFIs can be described as an attempt to change how the food system operates, re-introducing practices that centre around food production and circulation in more traditional, local and sustainable ways. These initiatives can be described as part of short food supply chains, aiming to bring producers and

[1] Agroecology is farming that incorporates ecology, where agricultural methods are developed to complement ecological processes.

consumers of food closer together. Direct selling through farmers' markets, farm shops and box schemes are producer driven examples. Producers and consumers can also work together directly through community supported agriculture (CSA) and food cooperatives. Consumer driven initiatives where consumers are the producers of their own food include community gardens and allotments. Their existence and number would appear to hold promise: "from some vantage points the contemporary foodscape appears littered with ethical alternatives" (Friedberg, 2010: 1868). But appearances do not provide enough perspective. A central question for AFIs is what role they play in steering food system change in a different direction?

AFIs are the phenomena examined in this research. The study examines AFIs in a particular national context, that of Ireland, working to understand their role in changing the food system. Why do this? AFIs can be developed in specific contexts to help address specific food, farming and environmental issues. For example in the urban context food growing, such as in allotments, community gardens and public spaces, can be used as a tool in developing more sustainable urban communities and increasing community food security (see for example: Tanaka-Saldivar and Krasny, 2004; Corrigan, 2011; Warhurst and Dobson, 2014). In the rural context, producer participation in short food supply chains, such as food box schemes or farmers' markets, can form part of agricultural measures within rural development strategies (for example see: National Rural Network, 2013). The existence of AFIs in specific local contexts has localised effects. This research is concerned to investigate if there is wider potential in AFIs as a whole. Can they be understood as a social movement attempting to change the food system? Social movements have particular functions in society. They primarily drive change, but also express a conflict, raise the profile of contentious issues and engage with political channels to steer change. Examining the affinity between AFIs and social movements can help illuminate new insights on AFI's role. To do this, AFIs current manifestation and dynamics in the Irish case is examined. Another key concern of this research is examining the true value of AFIs. In public discourse and academic research, they have been both idealised and criticised. They offer producers ways to capture more of the economic value of their produce and give consumers better access to fresh, local food. However they provide food to those who can afford to buy into this system, and don't strategically work

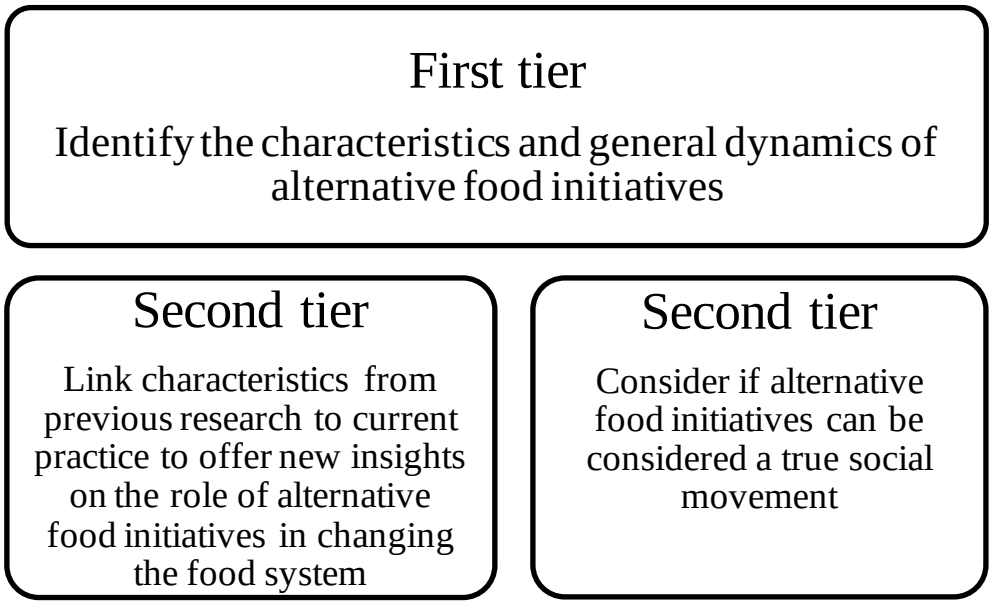
towards alleviating food poverty. Specific AFI goals in their ideal form may not translate perfectly into practice. For example, traders at farmers' markets in Ireland are not predominantly farmers. A range of producers populate markets, such as specialist food sellers (e.g. cheesemongers), secondary food producers (e.g. bakers), as well as farmers. The strength of 'community' in CSA initiatives has not always matched how these initiatives were initially conceptualised (for example see: Feagan and Henderson, 2009; Pole and Gray, 2012). But does this mean AFIs have achieved nothing because they don't achieve or represent what a constructed ideal sets out for them? AFIs should be defined by what they do, and not an idealised definition of them. This research is thus also important in re-defining AFIs by their existence in practice. Focused on AFIs in Ireland, this study examines their dynamics and actual role.

1.2 Background to the research

Research has highlighted the potentially positive impacts of AFIs. Other research is critical of the potential of such initiatives to impact real change in their current form. However a new phase of research assessing AFIs calls for a look again at these initiatives, assessing them in new ways to find more comprehensive answers about their role in food system change. Chapter two details how the study of AFIs is at a turning point. Initiatives work towards a range of diverse goals. Research needs to look at how AFIs are progressing towards these goals and also importantly attempt to offer insights on how they might better progress towards their diverse goals. This research seeks to position itself within this new phase of AFI research. It seeks to make some contribution to the challenging task of understanding what limits AFIs from better achieving their goals and offer insights for how future research might better do this. Research needs to re-focus, however this does not mean starting from first principles, it just means re-adjusting the lens. Goodman et al. (2011: 247) advise "the baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater." Research focusing on AFIs in Ireland is important also because this context is not extensively researched. For example, from 2007 to 2011, Kneafsey et al. (2013) identified 13 pieces of case study research assessing short food supply chain initiatives based in the UK, six based in Italy and one in Ireland.

In the early part of the 2000 to 2010 decade, the number of farmers' markets grew in Ireland. Interest in food growing in allotments and community gardens also increased in this decade. The primary research for this study was conducted after the economic boom in Ireland and during the early part of the recessionary period. It was also after farmers' markets had peaked and during a time when allotments and community gardens had more recently burgeoned. Also at this time, farmers' markets were the subject of both positive and negative media coverage, and the limited availability of allotments was also often highlighted by the media. In academia, a new criticism of AFIs was also gaining ground. In an editorial to a themed issue of *Environment and Planning A* on alternative food networks, Whatmore et al. (2003) asked: What is alternative about alternative food networks? In this context, the need to develop an understanding of the defining characteristics of AFIs in the Irish context was identified. This broad research question however needed more focus. The more specific issue of understanding what role AFIs can play as agents of power and change in the food system became a central concern of this research. The examination of AFIs was initially based around understanding their broad social dynamics, in an attempt to explain what power these initiatives possess, and what challenges they face in impacting change in the food system. This can be understood as the first tier of this research, and is where the majority of analysis is focused (see Figure 1.1). By understanding the basic nature of AFIs in Ireland, and explaining their defining characteristics, the sector's aspirations, challenges and traits are explained based on detailed empirical investigation. The result is the development of an empirically grounded picture of AFIs in Ireland. Conceptually this approach is broadly informed by a social movement perspective, while also using wider social theory that helps to explain social dynamics and power circulation in society. Social movements are forces that attempt to direct social change. However whether the group of initiatives analysed for this study can be considered a social movement is unclear. This is also a question this research seeks to address, in the second tier of analysis. It follows then that the research should not be too firmly placed in social movement theory. A broader social theory, with relevance to social movement analysis, was chosen to interpret the empirical data gathered.

Figure 1.1 Addressing the research objectives: a two tier process



AFIs are understood here as dynamic, relational social spaces constructed by social agent's interaction. Deeper understanding of AFI's character requires contemporary social theory to provide a conceptual bridge (Goodman et al., 2011). In this research it is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice that bridges the gap between AFI empirical practice and theorisation of practice. Two concepts from the theory of practice provide the specific viewing lens, that of field and capital (social, economic and cultural). These concepts provide an appropriate framework with which to piece together the social dynamics of Ireland's AFIs. The concepts fundamentally deal with how power circulates in social, economic and cultural spaces and also the interactions between, and consequences of, these forces in society. Having explained the social dynamics within and between Ireland's AFIs, the research then returns to the question of their role, as well as the social movement question, exploring if these initiatives might represent the beginnings of a new social movement that can impact positive change in the food system.

This research focuses on the perspective of those embedded within AFIs. These are the farmers and small food business owners who set up and sell their produce at farmers' markets. Also represented are the citizens who instigate allotment,

community and school garden projects. The research also takes a qualitative approach, with the main data source semi-structured interviews with AFI participants in four areas of Ireland: the south, the east, the midlands and the north-west. These areas were chosen in an attempt to select an accurate representation of AFIs as a whole in Ireland. The bulk of the empirical data gathered relates to the farmers' market scene, meaning that the picture of alternative food painted is focused most on this area of AFIs. Farmers' markets are a dominant and very important part of the sector in Ireland, which also represents a diverse range of actors, such as small artisan food business operators (e.g. bakers, chocolatiers), specialist food traders (e.g. cheesemongers), food craftsmen (butchers, charcutiers), organic farmers and traditional farmers.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the research

The primary concern of this research is to better understand the potential of AFIs to change the food system and consider can they truly be considered a social movement, explored in the context of Ireland. AFIs in different combinations and places can be referred to as a social movement, but they have not been extensively examined against how social movements are defined. If AFIs can be considered a true social movement, then this can position them in an established field that is focused on understanding and developing social phenomena that attempt to strategically create social change. There is also potential to learn from similar movements and past movements. In conclusion, the research will also assess the relevance of a social movement theoretical framework, in terms of the key future issues for research on AFIs and how a social movement theoretical framework can address these.

This research documents the existence and nature of AFIs in Ireland. It aims to examine the role AFIs have in impacting social change illustrated by, and based on, the Irish case. The research does not begin its analysis by exploring the achievements and potential of AFIs. While important issues, such debates should not be the starting point of analysis. They are the final focus of this research in the second tier of analysis (see Figure 1.1). Evaluating the potential of these initiatives based on the views of those embedded within AFIs can only serve to rehash ideological

arguments. A level of analysis must be introduced before this discussion happens. AFI's role can only be evaluated after the nature of the social dynamics at work in AFIs has been explored and explained. Therefore, this research addresses a number of primary objectives, which are:

1. Develop an empirically grounded picture of AFIs in Ireland.

2. Explore the social, cultural and economic dynamics of AFIs in Ireland.

3. Outline and explain the general dynamics and central defining characteristics of AFIs in the Irish context.

4. Evaluate what these dynamics and characteristics say about the role of AFIs and their ability to change the food system. Explore if AFIs and the broader organisations and activities associated with them can be classed as a social movement and what kind of social movement activity they might represent.

1.4 Thesis structure

Seven central chapters form the main body of this thesis. They work to address the key objective of the research, to understand the role AFIs play in changing the food system, how AFIs do this and what impacts they might have. The research review (chapter two) and two conceptual chapters (chapter three and four) detail the research problem and the conceptual framework underpinning how this research examines this problem. The research review assesses studies that are critical of the dominant food system's side effects and highlights what its faults are. Research has logically looked to initiatives that look like the antithesis of these impacts as offering part of a solution, which work on connecting producers and consumers, reducing the scale and number of players involved in food chains in the food system. But these initiatives embody their own set of contradictions that seem to reproduce some of the same side effects. However research has also called for assessment of these initiatives in different ways, because while not perfect, they do embody and try to enact food circulation methods that correct certain issues with the dominant food system. But to understand the real role of AFIs, we need to understand them at a

deeper rather than superficial level. And clearly what the literature does tell us is that they are attempting to oppose certain impacts created in the dominant food system. A section of literature is more hopeful for AFIs and classes them as the first steps towards a movement. This is where this research situates itself.

This literature also leads towards a specific conceptual framework, and that is social movement theory. In chapter three this conceptual structure is presented. Social movement theory is a well developed area of social theory, but also an area of much debate. In addition, social movements have changed through time and this has also made some earlier theories less relevant to the present day. The need for new ways to assess and understand social movements is highlighted in this chapter. This research has looked to more general social theory and applies it in relation to the social movement context. It is the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourideu that provide this broader social theory within which to explain the dynamics of AFIs in Ireland. Chapter four focuses on Bourdieu, explains the broad context for his theories within sociology and discusses one of his most renowned theoretical models – the theory of practice. Two of the key concepts that make up the theory of practice, fields and capital are applied in this research. The nature of these theories is also explored and explained in chapter four.

The methodology (chapter five) then builds on these chapters, developing an appropriate methodological framework within which to carry out the primary empirical research. Three chapters then present the research findings. The first presents an overview and context for AFIs in Ireland (chapter six). The second and third present an analysis of a series of qualitative research interviews with AFI practitioners, providing a detailed picture of the power dynamics and defining characteristics of AFIs in Ireland (chapter seven and eight). Up to this point the research has focused on objective one, two and three. Chapter nine directly addresses objective four by drawing further insights from the three chapters of research findings, linking these with the concept of a social movement. The final concluding chapter also discusses areas of future research and makes conclusions the role of AFIs in changing the food system.

Chapter 2

Moving beyond rose tinted conceptualisations of alternative food initiatives to understand their role in an improved food system – a research review

2.1 Introduction

Research examining AFIs has produced positive, negative and uncertain results about their role and potential effects. In this chapter a distillation of such research is presented. Firstly an overview of the general characteristics attributed to AFIs is outlined to understand their overall nature. Discussion then moves on to assess what the literature says about the actual role of AFIs in the food system. AFIs are criticised and a number of contradictions are highlighted between the general characteristics of AFIs and their actual real lived practice. These criticisms and contradictions draw somewhat into question the role of AFIs in impacting change in the food system. Also emerging from the literature are calls for examination of AFIs using new theoretical perspectives. This is with the view that a more enlightened reading of the potential power of these initiatives to change the food system can emerge. It is this aspect of the literature that has most influenced the approach taken in this research. Before moving to the main work of this chapter, the diverse types of initiatives that can be classed as AFIs are outlined.

2.2 What are alternative food initiatives?

The first thing to note about AFIs is their heterogeneous nature; they include a diverse range of initiatives (Allen et al., 2003; Winter, 2004; Venn et al., 2006). Even within the same type of initiative, such as community garden or CSA projects, there is diversity among them (White and Stirling, 2013). AFIs are described as working towards different goals, such as localising food supply or creating a more sustainable agriculture. Douthwaite (2006) cites examples such as CSAs, food cooperatives and locally owned shops to show how internalising food supply in the community reduces risk and dependence on outside forces, regaining control and power for the community. In the late 1990s, Hamilton (1996) observed the seeds of a 'new' agriculture in the US and lists examples that overlap with Douthwaite's, but

also includes others such as farmers' markets and community food initiatives based around urban and community gardens. Hamilton (1996) specifies the agricultural methods that should be employed, with organic and more broadly sustainable production being central.

AFIs can also be described as part of short food supply chains (SFSCs), where the supply chain is less complex than industrial food supply chains and there are fewer links between production and consumption (Marsden et al., 2000; Kneafsey et al., 2013). An overview of EU Local Food Systems (LFS)/SFSCs is presented by Kneafsey et al. (2013) and two primary distinctions are identified: sales in proximity or sales at a distance. Initiatives that involve 'sales in proximity' are where produce is traceable back to an individual farmer, for example: CSAs, on farm sales (e.g. farm shops, pick-your-own), commercial off-farm sales (e.g. farmers' markets, cooperatives, food festivals), catering off-farm sales (e.g. to hospitals or schools) and farm direct deliveries (e.g. box schemes). 'Sales at a distance' is where produce is traceable back to an individual farmer, for example: farm direct deliveries (e.g. internet sales and speciality retailers).

AFIs have been aligned with alternative economic spaces and their alternative forms of economic exchange and circulation (Leyshon et al., 2003; Hughes, 2005). Community gardens, CSAs, cooperatives, Fair Trade, farmers' markets and Slow Food are all listed by Parker et al. (2007) in the *Dictionary of Alternatives*. Collated from a review of literature, Allen et al. (2003) list the core forms of what are termed 'alternative agri-food initiatives', which in summary are: CSAs, producer cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, farmers' markets, urban farms, community gardens, school gardens, food policy councils, community food security coalitions, community land trusts, college level educational farms, direct marketing, alternative knowledge networks and sustainable agriculture organisations.

A term also often used to describe AFIs is alternative food network (AFN) (Maxey, 2007).[2] The term AFN has developed into a broad term taking in a diverse range of AFIs (Venn et al., 2006; Renting et al., 2003). What is identified as the key

[2] This research uses the term AFI, rather than AFN, because its focus is not on networks, but a range of individual initiatives.

overlapping factors in AFNs is that they seek to "reconfigure producer-consumer relationships" that attempt at "forging 'closer' and more 'authentic' links between the supply and demand ends of the food supply chain" (Venn et al., 2006: 256). Intended to work complimentary to concepts such as AFNs, Renting et al. (2012) propose the concept of civic food networks (CFN) to characterise more contemporary AFIs. CFN are based around new relationships and networks between producers and consumers engaged in new forms of food citizenship, most often based in cities and often linked with social movements such as Transition Towns. Initiatives that can be classed as part of CFNs include consumer cooperatives, food buying clubs, community based urban gardening and grow it yourself initiatives. Two broad areas of action are identified in CFNs; the first where there is the reconstruction of alternative methods of food provisioning by producers and consumers; the second has greater focus on civic engagement, shaping opinions, culture and policy by communication and activism. Other groupings that AFIs have also been categorised into include four categories of alternative food activity identified by Venn et al. (2006). These are: producers as consumers (e.g. community gardens), producer-consumer partnerships (e.g. CSAs), direct sell initiatives (e.g. farmers' markets) and specialist retailers (e.g. speciality food stores). They also identify two key groups of 'allies' that play a key structural role: non-governmental/campaigning organisations and public sector agencies.

What this section demonstrates is that AFIs have a "multifaceted empirical manifestation" (Winter, 2004: 667). Different combinations of AFIs can be described collectively as for example SFSCs, which include for example farmers' markets and direct selling, or CFNs such as urban gardens and food coops (Marsden et al., 2000; Renting et al., 2012; Kneafsey et al., 2013). While AFIs are diverse, common traits and characteristics can be identified between initiatives. The next section focuses on literature that discusses the characteristics which AFIs are said to aim to reflect, rather than what they definitively do reflect.

2.3 The general characteristics of alternative food initiatives

Why should research efforts concentrate on determining the characteristics of AFIs? Kneafsey et al. (2013) outline that LFS/SFSCs are believed to have positive social,

economic and environmental impacts and work to understand their characteristics to help evaluate their state of play in the EU. Taylor and Taylor-Lovell (2014) also do so to understand their potential contribution to sustainability. This research is interested in AFI characteristics to work towards evaluating their impact on changing the food system in positive social, economic, cultural and environmental directions.

2.3.1 Characterising alternative food initiatives by what they aim not to be - the conventional, dominant food system

AFIs have been characterised by their differences relative to what can be termed the conventional, mainstream, dominant or industrial food system (Kloppenburg et al., 2000; Kirwan, 2004). Grey (2000: 147) describes two food streams, industrial and alternative and suggests the alternative stream is a "value based reaction to industrialised food." The industrial food stream is characterised by global activities, rationality, central planning, efficiency and concentration, whereas the alternative stream is characterised by attempts to reconnect producers and consumers through direct marketing mechanisms. Beus and Dunlap (1990) describe the differences between conventional and alternative agriculture paradigms and suggest the two occupy polar positions. The conventional is based around centralisation, dependence, competition, domination of nature, specialisation and exploitation. The alternative occupies an opposing framework around decentralisation, independence, community, harmony with nature, diversity and restraint. It is concluded that there is a rift between the two approaches, with both the alternative and the conventional seeing their approach as 'good' agriculture. Feenstra (2002) outlines how a community food system should be defined, and should aim to build a more self-reliant, locally-based, sustainable system that integrates the economic, social and environmental health of a place. Tovey (2006: 174) argues that alternative food activities can be understood as a social movement underpinned by "a range of efforts to resist or bypass the dominant, capitalist, globalised and industrialised system through which food today is produced, processed and circulated." AFIs are described as representing a more holistic approach to food supply. Hamilton (1996: 9) describes the dynamics of what an alternative food system might be and observes the patterns of a 'new agriculture' emerging in America, based around: "a food system that works to re-establish the linkages and increase the understanding between the parts of the system, which sees

farming as only one part of the whole." Stevenson (1998) outlines a range preferences that the food system should ideally be based on including: ecologically responsible food production systems where animals are treated humanely; equitable market, trade and labour relations; equitable access to fresh, safe and nutritious food; structures that build and reinforce community; and the ability to struggle with or against other actors in the food system for change if necessary. Lyson's (2000; 2004) 'civic agriculture' concept is based on farming built serving local markets directly with agriculture based on small, labour intensive farms that are a centrally important part of rural communities. This kind of farming system is most likely labour intensive and based on local, traditional and indigenous knowledge. According to Lang (1999a: 169-170) alternative food trends, be it at the level of production or consumption, celebrate: "the local over the global, fresh over processed foods, diversity over homogeneity, skills rather than deskilling, rights rather than acceptance." Kneafsey et al. (2008) argue that 'care ethics' are central to creating identity and motivating participation in AFIs. What is cared for varies, from people to environments, and subjects of concern are both close and distant, such as local farmers or those in developing countries.

The differences highlighted between AFIs and the dominant food system are vast and varied. Highlighting these descriptions helps to generalise what AFIs aim to represent, but when subject to scrutiny at the level of practice the descriptions are shown to be idealistic and visionary, rather than completely reflective of AFI's real lived practice. Kneafsey et al. (2004: 8) argue that AFNs "position themselves in opposition to the 'conventional' food system and the way in which it is spatially and ethically structured." These two categories are useful to help direct a more specific exploration and categorisation of AFI characteristics.

2.3.2 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on spatial structures

In terms of spatial structures, AFIs have been described as a response to dominant food system and its globalising trends that result in distancing and detaching food production from food consumption. AFIs aim to bring production and consumption back closer together (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999; Kloppenburg et al., 2000; Sage, 2003; Venn et al., 2006). They operate based on different "'modes of connectivity'

between the production and consumption of food, generally through reconnecting food to the social, cultural and environmental context of its production" (Kirwan, 2004: 196). These 'modes of connectivity' can be spatially connected through local and regional food production and consumption. They can also be spatially disconnected, and food production and consumption is reconnected through the provision of information. For example, Marsden et al. (2000) describe SFSCs, where food arrives to the consumer embedded with information. They do not necessarily have to be short in terms of distance between producers and consumers, but there should be fewer actors in the supply chain. SFSCs are seen as a potential shift from the industrialisation of food systems and aim to "short circuit the long complex and rationally organised industrial chains" (Marsden et al., 2000: 425).

AFIs that focus on confining their spatial structures to the local level do this because of the international and global nature of the dominant food system and the perceived benefits of local food. The increased interest in local food has provided opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector to develop which now play an important role in the European speciality and local food sector (Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Hingley et al. 2010). Local food is not a new phenomenon, and the trend of moving back to local food production and consumption has been termed a 'relocalisation' of food supply because historically food consumption and production were often close geographically (Ricketts Hein et al., 2006: 290). Food relocalisation is also said to support a renewal "of skills, of cultures, of environments, and it is about using resources, technology and economic systems accountably, locally and on a human-scale" (Norberg-Hodge, 1999: 215). Local food production and consumption is said to have social and economic benefits because it reduces the distance food travels, reducing food miles. Economic benefits include making farming on the small scale more viable, supporting local businesses and services, while also contributing to employment creation locally. Social benefits include sustaining local community, where people work locally and have more social interaction with community members. This greater connectedness also should create a greater level of trust between local consumers and producers (Jones et al., 2004; Pretty, 2002). Douthwaite (2006) argues that communities should produce their own food and rely more on food systems that have shortened circuits to increase

community resilience because community dependence on outside food sources is embedded with risk. Fonte (2008: 203) describes two models of food re-localisation, the 'reconnection' and the 'origin of food' perspectives. The reconnection perspective supports production, retailing and consumption of food based on social and environmental justifications, such as supporting rural communities, farmers, consumer health and environmental protection. From the origin of food perspective, the meaning of local is both spatial and temporal, linked with specific geographic territories as well as food traditions and histories.

Reducing the number of players in food supply chains also changes its social and economic structures, creating another set of AFI characteristics.

2.3.3 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on social and economic structures

Concentration of control with a decreasing number of companies that operate on a global scale is a trend in modern markets, which is also identified in food markets (Otte Hansen, 2013). This concentration and centralisation of control in the dominant food system is argued to also have the effect that citizens lack true control over their food choices (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). This lack of control also means that when citizens attempt to take back some control, it is harder to obtain. Henrickson and Heffernan (2002: 349) argue that: "power and where it is situated in the food system is as important for thinking and acting strategically in trying to bring about food systems that actually enhance the life chances of more and more people." AFIs can aim to create a different relationship between consumer, producer and market so that control is more decentralised and less concentrated.

AFIs allow rural actors to take more control themselves over the issues that affect them. AFIs can be a grassroots development, emerging in society from the bottom-up (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999). Marsden et al. (2000: 429) suggest AFIs that work on the basis of shortening the supply chain operate outside of policy and have a "differing relationships with the state in that they are either developing new innovations that go beyond state support, or they are resisting the negative effects of state policy." In relation to one type of AFI, the farmers' market, Sage (2006: 16)

argues they can be understood a way primary and secondary food producers can "market their produce direct to the public without high transaction costs or minimum quality requirements." In the European rural development context, SFSCs and AFNs are seen to play a role in endogenous rural development (Ilbery et al., 2004; Goodman, 2003).

For AFIs to be most effective, some argue part of the solution is found through active participation of citizens in the food system, thereby attempting to begin to break down the power held by dominant food corporations. For example, Wilkins (2005: 271) highlights the importance of 'food citizenship', defined as: "the practice of engaging in food related behaviours (defined narrowly and broadly) that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system." Hassanein (2003) contends 'food democracy' must play a central part of effective transformation of the agri-food system. This means to: "actively participate in the food system, rather than remaining passive spectators on the sidelines…food democracy is about citizens having the power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally" (Hassanein, 2003: 79). Part of Hamilton's (1996: 9) 'new agriculture' concept is that all food system participants should be responsible for their part in preserving the quality of food and resources on which its production depends.

AFI social and economic structures are also different because the economic exchange that occurs in AFIs is often 'embedded' in social relations. The notion of 'embeddedness' developed by Granovetter (1985) proposes that when economic transactions are embedded in social relations their nature is changed, generating greater levels of trust and honesty. Sage (2003) argues that the social embeddedness of alternative 'good food' networks in the south-west of Ireland supports their existence, highlighting the importance of personal relationships, non-economic rewards and trust between actors. Sage (2007b) argues that one type of AFI, the farmers' market, provides an opportunity to create food markets that are more embedded, and this embedded nature is a reward for those involved, producers and consumers, giving them advantage over non-embedded food retailing. Farmers'

markets and direct sales are also argued to create: "ethical, emotional and reflexive spaces of 'reconnection' which are constructed through the inter-relationships of producers and consumers" (Kneafsey et al., 2008: 171).

However, social embeddedness does not remove economic factors; they are still part of the transaction. Hinrichs (2000: 297) makes the point that in socially embedded markets, price is still important: "embeddedness does not entail the complete absence of market sensibilities." Socially embedded commercial transactions combine social and economic factors. Kirwan (2004) identifies different versions of embeddedness, used in relation to "creating alterity; valorising 'local' assets; and its commercial appropriation" (Kirwan, 2004: 398). Embeddedness in relation to creating alterity attempts to change how commodities are exchanged so they are not only based on generating profit, but other issues are also valued such as social, environment and health matters. In terms of valorising local assets, this creates a commercial benefit from the embeddedness of production locally, both socially and in the natural environment. The appropriation of economic benefits associated with embeddedness sees more mainstream actors extracting value from the embedded nature of food production and consumption (Kirwan, 2004).

Re-localising food can be a characteristic of AFIs, but more spatially extended food supply chains are not absent. International and global scale is not viewed to be inherently problematic, but the issue is the nature of exchanges. Changing features in global food supply chains, such as concentration of ownership, intensification of production on land and inequalities in consumer markets are observed (Lang, 1999a; Lowry, 2014). These new features are viewed to negatively affect society, economy and environments, and are reflected in the characteristics of AFIs, which attempt to oppose these features of the dominant food system. With social and economic exchanges changed, so too are the values underpinnings of the food system, which are also part of the characteristics of AFIs.

2.3.4 Characterising alternative food initiatives based on underpinning values

At any spatial scale, whether short or long food supply chains, the nature of action and the values that underpin the supply chain are important. Riches (1999) suggests

an inappropriate value set is informing how the food system operates and this value set needs to be re-assessed based on the fact that food is a fundamental human need. A value underpinning AFIs is that they re-value food as more than a commodity to be profited from. AFIs can also be explained in terms of their positive relationship with rural space, where they aim to return and preserve resources for rural places. Marsden and Smith (2005: 449) argue: "retail-led chains hold a different economic and social relationship with the local and regional landscape…They are concerned with abstracting value from it, rather than capturing value for it."

The values described to underpin AFIs are varied, but creating a more sustainable food system from farm to fork is a central characteristic. Discussions on sustainable agriculture share similarities with discussions on AFIs (Pretty, 1998; 2002; Tilman et al., 2002; Buttel, 1997). Kloppenburg et al. (2000) outline the attributes of what a sustainable food system should look like, and its characteristics include being ethical, participatory and proximate, based on agriculture that preserves heritage and a future for participants. While debates exist around sustainable agriculture's definition, such as scientific understandings of soil health, an outline of the basic principles of sustainable agriculture include: minimising purchased inputs, being environmentally sustainable, profitable and producing high quality food (Reganold et al., 1992; Cobb et al., 1999; Dahama, 1999). Sustainable agriculture has been described to have significant potential benefits and an important role in making agricultural production both productive and ecological. Douthwaite (2006) emphasises the importance of maintaining genetic diversity in plant and animal breeds for food system sustainability in the long term, which the dominant industrial food system is said to erode.

However, for true food sustainability it is argued alternative agriculture should link with AFIs bringing sustainable food beyond the farm gate and to include the broader social and economic context in which production takes place (Cobb et al., 1999; Marsden et al., 1999; Hinrichs, 2000). For example, the workings of Hamilton's (1996: 9) new agriculture include that the system should be sustainable, but to do this it should be integrated beyond the farm level, with the actors involved, farmers, marketers, consumers and processors benefiting from this sustainability. Marsden et

al. (1999: 299) comment that sustainable agriculture is not simply an anti-globalisation project, but "the beginning of a process of re-building more agro-ecological systems which begin to integrate space and nature into production processes." Consumers are also a part of this system and should also understand how the food they eat impacts on their health, but also the effects of the system that produces their food. Criteria to help measure the sustainability of alternative food systems have been proposed. Sustain (2002) have developed nine criteria for sustainable food, which in summary dictate that the food must be proximate, healthy and fairly or cooperatively traded. The system must be: non-exploiting of employees; environmentally beneficial; accessible to all; have high animal welfare standards; be socially inclusive; and encourage understanding of food culture.

This section has described the general and ideal characteristics of AFIs. They are summarised by comparison with the dominant food system in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 General characteristics of the dominant global food system and the concept of alternative food initiatives

The dominant global food system	The concept of alternative food initiatives
Global, processed, homogenous, deskilling, acceptance, centralisation, efficiency, concentration, long food supply chains, dominant, capitalist, industrialised, specialised, domination of nature.	Local, fresh, diversity, skills, rights, sustainable, ethical, participatory, proximate, reconnect producers and consumers, short food supply chains, decentralised, independence, self-reliance, community, culture, harmony with nature.

Source: Summary of characteristics emerging from this literature review

Overall what has been described is a desire to establish methods of food production and procurement that are different to the dominant food system, overcoming its negative traits. AFIs in theory aim to attempt to work at the local scale and reduce the number of players in between producer and consumer. AFIs aim to change the underpinning principles informing food production and consumption in an attempt to create a different kind of food system that is tied up with social, cultural and

environmental principles, and not just economics. The characteristics described should feed into determining the role AFIs play in the food system. However, when the actual role of AFIs is examined, a number of contradictions emerge, and the translation of these general characteristics into practice comes into question.

2.4 The role of alternative food initiatives in practice

AFIs have been described as the tools of the establishment of a more sustainable, fairer food system. However, questions exist if AFIs actually operate as they are ideally described (Grey, 2000; Holloway et al., 2007b). There has been a tendency to romanticise alternatives, meaning they are not "subject to the same degree of critical reflection which is currently being applied to 'mainstream' food supply systems" (Holloway et al., 2007a: 4). Kneafsey et al. (2013) review the reported social, economic and environmental impacts of LFS/SFSCs through an extensive research review. Social impacts discussed include the connections and interaction between producer and consumer where there is trust, regard and social capital; they build a sense of community around food and increase food knowledge and behavioural change. They also observe however that while positive social impacts have been identified, there is little consistency in the indicators that measure their impact. Economic impacts claimed include rural development and economic regeneration, stimulating employment and multiplier effects such as tourism. It has also been claimed LFS/SFSCs have economic benefits at the farm level, however Kneafsey et al. (2013) observe that evidence of farm level economic benefits is developed from qualitative research evaluating perceived benefit which is not supported by extensive empirical research on AFI outcomes. Economic importance is also difficult to quantify because involvement in 'conventional' systems may occur alongside LFS/SFSCs. Separating turnover and sales is difficult and employment can be seasonal, or may rely on family, seasonal and voluntary labour. Environmental impacts suggested are that LFS/SFSCs are positive in terms of energy use and carbon footprint, as well as representing a more sustainable system where food is local, seasonal and produced using ecologically sound production methods. Again such impacts have no standard methods of measurement and are difficult to measure. This makes evaluating the true environmental impacts of LFS/SFSCs difficult. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) explore the contribution AFNs can potentially make to

sustainability through determining the characteristics of AFNs established from a research review. AFNs are viewed to potentially directly and indirectly contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability, but do not address all food sustainability issues such as meat consumption and labour rights. However this is the promise of sustainability, not actual delivery. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) also ask are these promised impacts likely to be realised in practice by real AFNs. They note empirical studies where findings support these characteristics in practice, but also other research that asserts a less clear picture as AFNs do not always emerge in reality as intended. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) also argue some of the issues addressed by AFNs are not very significant, such as reducing food miles. Research assessing the contribution of AFNs to sustainability can also focus on a particular AFN or an aspect of sustainability, therefore reaching a judgement on the sustainability promise of AFNs is difficult.

Rather than assume AFIs will have positive effects, more critical reflection is central to uncovering their current role and future potential within the food system. Research often points out their criticisms, but it is important to not just do this, but also work towards finding ways to overcome AFI limitations. However evaluating their role and limitations is difficult and ambitious. That said, an aim also underpinning this research is to make some contribution to understanding of how AFI limitations can be overcome, or at least to offer direction for how future research can better do this. This chapter now moves to detail key criticisms of AFIs, before moving to look at research that calls for a more nuanced approach to AFI research.

2.4.1 Rose tinted conceptualisations

Commentary on the concept of community food security, where AFIs are a tool in its achievement, provides an illustrative example of how the capacity of AFIs can be idealised. Community food security has been defined as: “all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Allen, 1999: 204). This approach aims that health, social, economic and environmental aspects of food supply are accounted for, while also aiming to provide access to a culturally acceptable diet, to meet the food needs of those on low incomes, while also

developing local food systems (Allen, 1999: 117). But achieving these goals is questioned. Allen (1999: 117) suggests that community food security objectives are not "necessarily compatible and may even be contradictory" and that community food security can only form part of the solution to food access and food security. It has also been argued that the concept is under-theorised: "it is primarily an articulation of principles that reflect activities and policies of community-oriented food and agriculture groups" (Joseph, 1999: 1).

Popular representations of AFIs can also contribute to their romanticised construction. Guthman (2004) terms the more popular writings on contemporary food politics and AFIs as producing an 'agri-food polemic' or 'agri-food rhetoric'. Writing from the Australian context, Lockie (2006) argues that media engagement with food issues, such as the genetic modification debate and the benefits of sustainable or organic food is characterised by a great degree of polarisation, where issues are pitted against one another, such as genetic engineering being presented negatively versus organic positively, with little attempt made to improve public understanding of the issues. This has created a situation where competing claims create confusion, ambivalence or a sense of powerless for consumers, while for others this can reinforce their tendencies to have more faith in one system or the other. For example, Lockie (2006: 322) suggests the media has: "provided fertile ground for organic food as a straightforward and holistic signifier of safety, quality and responsibility."

Lockie (2006) also suggests some academic debate has just followed media controversy, also not engaging deeply with issues. Research must engage with the contradictions between AFI rhetoric and practice, if it is to truly understand AFIs potential to correct the ills of the dominant food system. As Guthman (2003: 56) comments: "To posit one assemblage as unwaveringly good and the other altogether bad de-politicises a potentially powerful politics of consumption."

2.4.2 Contradictions in practice

AFIs in principle and practice can differ. Myers (2013) assesses the limitations and strengths of the Slow Food movement achieving its aspirations, as articulated by its

founder Carlo Petrini. The 'gift economy' is a central part of Slow Food's philosophy, where economic relationships are embedded with respect and responsibility towards others. However the capitalist economy is antagonistic to the gift economy and seeks to subsume it, which it is argued needs to be acknowledged in Slow Food aspirations. Also the Slow Food movement is practiced through market-based exchanges between consumers, producers, retailers and restaurants, of artisan and ecologically friendly food and it is argued this does not represent a gift economy.

AFIs can also reproduce some of the dominant food system impacts they are characterised to oppose. For example, La Trobe (2001: 190) assesses farmers' markets and finds traders selling produce that they have not produced, but bought wholesale, which is said to undermine "the whole philosophy of the farmers' market", that is farmers bring their own produce direct to consumers. And while social relationships where trust and regard exist are important in AFIs, research has also shown that tensions can exist and trust can also be absent (Anderson et al., 2014b; Glowacki-Dudka et al., 2013).

A number of general characteristics were identified in section 2.3 and summarised in Table 2.1. Many of these characteristics discussed in the literature as underpinning AFIs are not replicated perfectly in practice. AFIs can often reproduce the negative traits that exist in the dominant food system, such as issues of inequality of access, disconnected producers and consumers, non-participatory food initiatives and the specialisation and industrialisation of food.

2.4.2.1 Reproduction of inequalities in the food system

Within the current food system, "health is assumed to follow sufficiency of supply" (Lang and Heisman, 2004: 4). However, food poverty is an increasing concern in the developed world; we are now experiencing the phenomenon of first world hunger (Riches, 1999). The food poor are nutrition insecure, which is a deficit of nutrients rather than food, and total energy intake may be too high (Hitchman et al., 2002). Assuming health will prevail has not proven adequate as problems such as food poverty and nutrition insecurity illustrate. The current food system is not equitable in

terms of what food is provided, and who can access it (Barrington, 2004). The provision of cheap food does not solve food poverty (Caraher and Coveney, 2004). Unhealthy food choices must be understood in social context of the difficulties of living on a low income: "cigarettes and fatty foods provide comfort and temporary release" (Hitchman et al., 2002: 46). Energy density and cost of food is also important in food poverty. A chocolate bar keeps you full for longer than an apple and can cost roughly the same amount. Cheap calories often come from unhealthy foods, and their consumption is exacerbated in a time of economic recession, as documented by changing eating patterns (National Food Alliance, 1997; Beckett, 2009). While patterns within the global food system, such as centralisation and concentration of power are said to reduce citizen's control over food choices, these patterns are also implicated in exacerbating inequalities, such as food poverty (Lang, 1999a; Riches, 1999; Henrickson and Heffernan, 2002).

Rather than addressing these food system issues, it has also been argued that AFIs can reproduce similar inequalities that exist in the dominant food system (Kloppenburg et al., 2000; Hassanein, 2003). For example, shoppers at farmers' markets are often those with higher incomes (La Trobe, 2001). Farmers' markets have been termed a "creature of the modern consumer elite" (Brown, 2001: 657). CSA participants have to make a contribution and commitment to the producer before they receive produce, which Hindrichs (2000) suggests can exclude the consumer on a tight budget. Hendrickson and Heffernan (2002: 365) look at the case of a multi-stakeholder food coop of producers and consumers in America and note that those who participate are those of privilege and question if: "the dominant logic of the system can only be rejected by those in a position to do it." Also inequalities in the workplace can also be reproduced by AFIs. For example, Guthman's (2003: 56) research on organic food supply chains in California highlight such contradictions: "Little is it considered that organic production depends on the same systems of marginalised labour as does fast food…Restaurants serve up their own contradictions…how else to explain…the well paid artisan cook and the illegal immigrant bus boy?"

2.4.2.2 Reproduces the disconnected, individualised consumer

Reconnection between producers and consumers is another primary ideal characteristic of many AFIs. However, the way this reconnection mostly occurs is based on producer-consumer economic relationship, and not a producer-citizen interaction. This produces a more informed consumer, but not an active citizen participating in the food system. For example how consumers participate in CSAs can take two forms, they pay a subscription to the farm and volunteer, or they just pay an annual subscription. Consumer-members of CSA initiatives should ideally participate directly in how their food is produced by volunteering on the farm. However, research has shown members have little interest in this and rarely volunteer (DeLind, 1999; Cone and Myhre, 2000). This fault isn't attributed to the CSA structure, but a wider social phenomenon, as DeLind (1999: 7-8) observes: "we are dealing with individualised communities and not dealing with communitised individuals" and those who participate are doing so for themselves, as a "highly individual or personalised resistance – a resistance primarily of consumers – not of citizens." It has been argued collective action of citizens is more effective in impacting food system change, rather than the sum of actions of individualised consumers. Anderson et al. (2014a) argue that cooperative AFIs have potential to overcome practical and political limitations of more individualised AFIs. Seyfang (2006) is critical of the mainstream model of sustainable consumption where the individual consumer is pitted against the global corporation, and through their consumption choices are thought to drive change in markets. Seyfang (2006) sees collective action as important in overcoming the powerlessness of individualisation. Illustrated by a case study of a local organic food network, Seyfang (2006) argues this network creates an alternative model of sustainable consumption and engages ecological citizens, whose actions are motivated by a concern for the wider world rather than individual desires. It also argued the network strengthens people's engagement with sustainability issues, engaging and creating new ecological citizens. More recent literature however notes a change in AFI governance. Focusing on the European context, Renting et al. (2012) argue that civil society is playing an increasing role in AFI governance, compared to market and state actors. This is documented by the rise of citizen initiated AFIs such as consumer coops and food buying groups in Italy, Spain and France and community based urban

gardening and grow it yourself initiatives. This pattern of change is seen as positive and important, representing a shift towards increasing levels of active citizen-consumers, rather than a more passive, traditional consumer role in AFIs. However, Renting et al. (2012: 291) note that it is too early to judge if these new patterns in AFIs "are signs of a more fundamental and long-lasting transition in the governance and organisation of agri-food systems."

2.4.2.3 Contradictions in the case of local food

The dominant food system does not focus on food sourcing at any particular scale, but operates at many scales: regional, national, international and global. The logical alternative to this is to focus on more localised food chains, which are generally viewed as desirable (Ricketts Hein et al., 2006). However the extent to which simply consuming local, quality foods can challenge the global food system and result in a more ecologically sound agriculture is questioned (Winter, 2003).

Truly localising food, in the context of a dominant food system that sources at many different scales, is challenging to operationalise and can bring negative impacts. Ilbery and Maye (2005: 341) question how 'local' local food is when inputs come far from their place of production: "the starting point of a short food supply chain is not the point of production." Local food may not be locally grown, but merely undergo some processing in the local area. Morris and Buller (2003: 561) question if local food can be distinguished as a distinct sector as such sectors are never "closed systems." In addition, local food has to compete with products from the dominant food system. Producing food on the small scale cannot achieve the same economies of scale as large multinational food corporations. This can mean that the cost of production on the small scale is passed on to the consumer. The consumer is also accustomed to a consistent and reliable food supply from conventional sources, and some irregularity is to be expected from a more localised food supply (Jones et al. 2004). Jones et al. (2004) highlight that truly localised food systems can also localise environmental problems such as the problem of waste disposal, which then in turn may result in community resistance to such activities on the local scale. The employment that local food creates may not match career expectations of many local people, which may amount to employment in farm labour or food processing. There

also may be labour shortages in local and rural economies as people are attracted to better jobs elsewhere (Jones et al., 2004).

The concept of local food and its positive effects have also been called into question. Some argue the scale of action, whether global or local, is not the issue. Sonnino and Marsden (2006) suggest we need to critique the local concept and must not assume that action at any particular spatial scale is positive. The global aspects of the food system are not an inherent problem, but rather the issues are of relationships and structures, or how the global is constituted. Localisation of food supply can have positive impacts for society, but this is not guaranteed (Hinrichs, 2003). DuPuis and Goodman (2005: 386) argue that local food reflects the interests of an elite, based on 'unreflexive politics' and suggest that "it is arguable that localisation most recently has been deployed to further a neoliberal form of global logic, a refashioning of agricultural governance that plays on both left ideals of political participation and right ideals of non-interference in markets." Allen (1999) discusses localism and suggests this category of 'otherness' reduces the lens of who we care about. The concept of defensive localism "makes localities responsible for the problems that occur within them in a world that is already fragmented by income and race" and that "localism is anything but liberatory for those traditionally marginalised" (Allen, 1999: 121-122). A similar point is also made by DuPuis and Goodman (2005: 366) who note that: "localism is as much a protection of particular places against other places as it is a form of resistance to some abstract conception of the "global"." This point can be further illustrated by Ricketts Hein et al.'s (2006) measurement of the distribution of local food activity in England and Wales, to find a complex geography exists, but is generally stronger in more prosperous regions, and those with higher levels of organic farming and uptake of agri-environment schemes, than the less prosperous or lagging rural areas. Marsden and Smith (2005: 443) also question the value of local food in contributing to more sustainable rural economies questioning if AFIs based around local food practices are "destined to remain socio-technical niches amongst a wider economy which continues to devalue the local and rural natures." But all local food activity is not the same, according to Morris and Buller (2003). They suggest there are different types of local, the first being 'parochial localism', which has a support for local farmers and the local area at its

core. ‘Flexible localism’ is where local is used more loosely, where local could mean locally sourced, but also even just nationally sourced such as British. The third type is ‘competitive localism’ where new forms of localism like farmers’ markets or producer groups compete with other more traditional local food outlets, such as established local retailers.

2.4.2.4 Becoming part of the system alternative food initiatives set out to oppose: the capitalist absorption of alternatives

AFIs do not operate in a utopian social space that supports their principles and values. AFIs must exist in society and the economy as it currently exists. For example, Ilbery and Maye (2005) highlight how economic success is as important to AFIs, such as small food businesses attempting to operate in SFSCs, as it is to other businesses. Their research based on case studies of AFIs in the UK finds food businesses have reduced the amount of their product they sell at farmers’ markets in favour of more stable outlets such as conventional retailers.

Another issue for AFIs as they develop and grow is being drawn into more purely capitalist modes of operation, where values become compromised at the expense of profit. The case of organic food provides an illustrative example of the contradictions that can emerge as AFIs develop and change. The literature on the organic movement describes a ‘conventionalisation’ process at work, which is a process whereby “organic agriculture comes increasingly, as it grows, to resemble in structure and ideology the mainstream food sector it was established in opposition to” (Lockie and Halpin, 2005: 284-285). A similar process has been observed in the broader sphere of alternative economic spaces. Crewe et al. (2003: 102) see alternative retail spaces, such as independent clothing and interiors shops, as constantly being “under attack from the nimble emulation of the mainstream” because when alternatives become successful and profitable, it is suggested their assimilation into the mainstream is almost inevitable. Crewe et al. (2003) also suggest alternative economic spaces are temporary and imaginary. They are imaginary in the sense that their principles can only be imagined, and in practice can only be temporary, because if successful they will be absorbed into the mainstream. This has resonance with Holloway and Kneafsey’s (2000) study of UK farmers’

markets, where they suggest farmers' markets do hold the potential to challenge conventional production, retailing and consumption patterns; however they are a dynamic, evolving space. They uncover a pattern similar to 'conventionalisation' identifying "tendencies towards bureaucratic and capitalist appropriation of what might become alternative economic spaces" (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000: 298). In the UK context, Kirwan (2004) identifies a link between the conventionalisation process and farmers' markets, suggesting the process can also generally be observed in farmers' markets, albeit not to such a great extent as is observed in the organic movement. While acknowledging that few generalisations can be made and each market has a different degree of 'alterity', which can depend on, for example, whether the market is struggling to survive financially, which may result in slackening of rules, Kirwan (2004: 399) argues: "although an alternative strategy may emerge as a response to the disembedded 'conventional' agro-food system, once it becomes economically significant enough it is incorporated into the latter's structures, thereby losing its alterity." This assertion links with Crewe et al.'s (2003) contention that if alterity sells, the conventional system will absorb it.

At the retail end of the food system, issues can also be observed at the broader level that threaten AFIs role in an improved food system. Organic and speciality foods are retailed by AFIs and dominant retailers, which are almost identical products, but have gone through different supply chains (Marsden et al., 2000). Dominant retailers have also begun to display interest in AFI characteristics, such as ethical, sustainable food, promoting quality produce and more environmental farming methods (Gilg and Battershill, 1998). This can be viewed as a threat to the development and expansion of AFIs. Jones et al. (2004: 334) suggest that some retailers have "cynically looked to hijack the momentum behind local food and to exploit it as a niche retail marketing opportunity without having any genuine underlying sustained commitment to a local food philosophy or to local small scale producers." This raises a pertinent question for AFIs, and their role: "Is the delinking of food production from agri-business control with the expansion of organic farming likely to reshape the food economy of the future, or will such endeavours be vulnerable to absorption by corporate capital down the line?" (Winson, 1997: 329). Allen et al. (2003: 71) go so far to suggest 'insulated spaces' are needed in which alternative food can exist,

given the power and control of the dominant food system. In this context, Allen et al. (2003: 62) highlight the relevance of David Harvey's concept of 'militant particularism' which suggests: "people seek to change the structures of their everyday lives – but they must do so from within the circumstances in which they find themselves. This carries the particularities of those circumstances forward, potentially as unresolved (and even unexamined) problems."

There is therefore a question over the compatibility of AFIs, the characteristics they aim to display, the values they aim to practice, and whether they can be achieved when AFIs must compete and operate among the dominant market logic. However others argue the conventionalisation process is not a given. Lockie and Halpin (2005: 285) have suggested conventionalisation needs to be re-theorised, that the "package of economic and ideological changes associated with 'conventionalisation' are not structural inevitabilities, but may, in fact take a variety of forms." Conventionalisation also feeds into a dualistic framework understanding alternative and conventional as two separate systems and may reproduce this to some degree. For example Lockie and Halpin (2005: 304) argue the "uncritical aggregation of multiple dualisms between small and large, artisanal and industrial, radical and regulatory, local and international" is highly problematic.

The contradictions that AFIs display highlight a more complex picture showing that AFIs also reproduce some of the faults of the dominant food system. AFIs have been idealised, but does not mean AFIs should be discounted completely from the potential to change the food system in positive ways. For example, Hendrickson and Hefffernan (2002) suggest that local food initiatives are not a large scale transformative revolution, but still should not be overlooked. AFIs are clearly well intentioned, but the food system in which they work can affect them in unexpected ways that also impact AFIs ability to live up to their aims. There is therefore another important strand of debate in the literature that needs assessment. The need to re-examine AFIs, using appropriate concepts, to truly understand their role and significance is also called for in AFI research.

2.5 Do alternative food initiatives have a role to play in changing and improving the food system?

The literature discussed so far represents a quite polarised picture, with AFIs idealised on one side, and on the other the literature presented is critical of AFI's role in food system change. The real significance of AFIs is difficult to pinpoint and their multi-faceted nature makes them a complex phenomenon to critically examine. Sage (2010) for example notes the complexity in attempting to understand the multi-dimensional and multi-scalar consequences of food system transformation. There is more than one way to explain the dynamics of AFIs. For example, in relation to farmers' markets, Kirwan (2004) suggests that while they can be conceptualised as 'alternative', they can also be as reactionary, transitional and ephemeral spaces. The discussion next turns to patterns in the literature questioning AFI's role in a more open, less polarised manner, that looks to realistically assess their role in food system change.

2.5.1 Role is not as a complete alternative to the dominant food system

It has been argued that the overall role of AFIs in the food system is not as a complete alternative to the dominant food system. They are not replacing conventional systems, but existing alongside them (Allen, 1999). Kneafsey et al. (2013) find that in LFS/SFSCs farms involved are generally small (less than 10 hectares) and while some are well established (more than 5 years) and the majority trade in fruit and vegetables. DeLind (1999) suggests consumers involved in CSA initiatives don't rely solely on them for their food. In relation to farmers' markets and community gardens, the supermarket is also still needed (La Trobe, 2001; Kirwan, 2004; Tanaka and Krasny, 2004). Producers selling within alternative food chains often have to sell some produce and rely on intermediaries, such as wholesalers, abattoirs and transport within the conventional system (Gilg and Battershill, 1998; Marsden et al., 2000; Starr et al., 2003; Ilbery et al., 2004; Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Marsden and Smith, 2005). They do not offer a secure alternative to the dominant food system. Allen (1999: 126) for example argues caution is needed around the idea that food security problems can be solved with community based efforts focusing on local food production and consumption, which "can be at best supplements, not substitutes, for state-guaranteed food security." This is not

however a reflection of AFI failure, but echoes the broad social context in which they operate. For example, in the Canadian context, Blay-Palmer et al. (2013) highlight that community food initiatives often operate under pressures of inadequate funding, over- reliance on volunteer labour and conflicting objectives.

To describe the dominant food system and AFIs as its opposite and alternative has been likened to not much more than a caricature, because "the border between these systems is becoming more and more porous" (Morgan et al., 2006: 2). A binary approach does not allow for a thorough examination of AFIs. Categorising AFIs as an alternative, opposite food system to the dominant food system is described as restricting analysis, distorting the "ability to assess what makes it function and the complexities of the power relations running through and being reproduced by it" (Holloway et al., 2007a: 7). Conventional and alternative binaries have also been described as too simplistic and lacking explanatory power when analysing the organic food sector, as well as the broader sphere of alternative economic spaces (Cluines-Ross, 1990; Crewe et al., 2003; Caton Campbell, 2004; Hughes, 2005). The relationship between the two systems is not static. Hughes (2005: 501) for example suggests there is a "constantly shifting definition of, and boundaries between, the alternative and the conventional."

Rather than conventional and alternative being seen as two separate opposing sectors, they can be understood as "a number of hybrid food systems and spaces have emerged rather than two separate oppositions – 'conventional' and 'alternative'" (Ilbery and Maye, 2005: 341). Another way to understand the relationship is to suggest that rather than strict divisions existing between conventional and alternative food systems, some alternative food practices are more alternative than others and degrees of 'alternativeness' exists, or stronger and weaker alternative food practices, based on their "degree of engagement with, and potential subordination by, conventional food supply chains in a globalising, neoliberal polity" (Watts et al., 2005: 34). However it can also be argued that categorisation of alternative and dominant, conventional food systems as a continuum is also problematic. Holloway et al. (2007a: 7) argue that analysis should be more multi-dimensional looking at the "specific arrangements of projects across a diverse range

of analytical fields" which would open up "analytical opportunities for assessing the plurality of relationships between schemes of power relations in an overall food supply system."

If AFIs are to become a more serious part of the food system, scaling them up is important so they can supply food in greater volumes and become a more realistic part of, or alternative to, the mainstream food system. Nelson et al.'s (2013) research on community food initiatives in south-western Ontario finds that these initiatives can have an impact in their local areas, but don't have a major impact in the wider food system. An area of future research identified is how to successfully scale up AFIs (Blay-Palmer et al., 2013). Growing and increasing the scale of AFI activities could potentially increase the risk of also moving away from the original aims and vision of AFIs. However, Nost (2014) finds that in the case of three CSA initiatives in the US mid-west, scaling up does not mean loss of affinity with the aims of the local food movement. Scaling up AFIs is also limited by their disconnected nature, but research suggests this can be overcome. In the US context Ashe and Sonnino (2013) argue that scaling up could be supported by AFIs coming together to be part of the school food reform in New York City, where there appears to be a shared agenda and opportunities to increase the scale of supply for AFIs. Cleveland et al. (2014) discuss how local food hubs can help overcome the lack of organisational and physical structures in place to distribute local food from multiple producers, helping to scale up local food. Key considerations are also identified as important to keeping local food systems in tandem with their original goals, which include that scaling up should be done incrementally and in ways that actively promote alternative goals, such as defining the limit of local food sourced. Beckie et al. (2012) examines the role of clustering in scaling up farmers' markets in western Canada. Clustering of farmers' markets is identified, such as through producer cooperatives or collective efforts in public procurement, to create collective competitive advantage for farmers' markets and facilitates up-scaling. However the need for greater efforts to support this further are also identified, such as social and physical infrastructure development, and government support.

AFIs cannot be currently classed as an alternative to the dominant, conventional food system. They do not offer food security at their current scale. This brings us to literature that asks different questions about their role – are they oppositional spaces existing as a reaction to the dominant food system, simply a niche market that forms a part of the dominant food system, or the early, emergent signs of a food movement?

2.5.2 Role as oppositional, reactionary spaces or a niche market

Illustrated by a plate tectonic analogy, Allen et al. (2003: 61) question the dynamics of AFIs, asking: "To what degree do they seek to create a new structural configuration—a shifting of plates in the agri-food landscape—and to what degree are their efforts limited to incremental erosion at the edges of the political-economic structures that currently constitute those plates?" Allen et al. (2003) identify important patterns to observe in assessing if AFIs can create change within the food system: are they oppositional spaces that aim to create new structures for food systems; or are they to be an alternative within the food system? In their assessment of initiatives in California, Allen et al. (2003:71) find that AFIs "accept the structures and parameters of the current food system…develop alternatives within the overall structure of the current agri-food system rather than working to reshape its architecture."

AFIs are also described as part of the dominant food system. For example, Caton Campbell (2004: 346) suggests AFIs are embedded within the dominant food system: "a fundamental feature of the alternative food system is that it does not exist independently of the global industrialised food system but operates within it." However as part of the dominant food system, they may change it from within. Goodman et al. (2011: 9) recognise AFIs as an important change agent in the food system, representing "the development of new ways of doing things that co-exist with this powerful system and attempt to change it from within." When AFIs are embedded in the capitalist market system this does however: "limit their strategic options and room for manoeuvre" (Goodman et al., 2011: 9).

Allen et al. (2003) suggest that analysis needs not just to look at the differences between the alternative and the conventional, but also the differences between AFIs themselves and the role they play, rather than grouping them all as one and the same. For example, AFIs can operate as part of the dominant food system, where food is bought and sold. McCarthy (2006: 809) highlights: "most alternative economic projects still centre on the production, exchange, and circulation of commodities. Few are so alternative that they eschew the circulation of capital in commodity form altogether; rather, they attempt to harness intrinsic dynamics of capitalism to progressive political projects." That said, others are based on more alternative exchange mechanisms, such as CSAs and community gardens where consumers are also ideally the producers of their food.

2.5.3 Role as the seeds of a wider movement

The role that AFIs play now, and in the future, could change. Some argue their role at present could be that they highlight the inadequacies in the dominant food system and react to them and attempt to design an alternative. The alternative's potential may not just be its direct effects, but also its indirect effect on, for example, people's attitudes and understanding of how food gets to consumers.

AFIs do not offer an alternative food system in themselves, but embody 'important discourses surrounding being different and doing things differently' (Holloway et al., 2007b: 90). Kirwan (2004: 412) suggests a possible value for AFIs is in "challenging the established relationships within the 'conventional' agro-food system, and sending a signal to other actors within the food system that may in turn influence their actions." There may be unexpected benefits, that these initiatives may be important to help consumers develop a 'critical consciousness' in which people view food as more than a commodity and fuel for the body (Allen et al., 2003: 62). AFIs could provide motivation to others, inspiring a wider movement of such practices and have the potential to create change through their supporting ideology (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Slocum, 2006). AFIs have been described as a 'movement' but not thoroughly theorised as one and have been labelled as alternative food activism or also as an alternative food movement (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Tovey, 2007; Guthman, 2008; Goodman et al., 2011).

Another important effect of AFIs could be to provide a space for like minded people to interact, debate, develop ideas and opinions. Cox et al. (2008) describe AFIs as having a 'gradation' effect, bringing about wider change because initiatives provide the space for views and discussions to be aired. Feenstra (2002) outlines the importance of creating different AFI spaces that allow a community food vision to germinate, such as the actual physical social spaces that allow people to interact, connect and engage, which can also morph into institutionalising their work through developing community food policies. Smithers et al. (2008) suggest farmers' markets are a 'hybrid space' where various issues are negotiated, such as the issue of re-selling produce that has been bought wholesale. Linked to the idea that issues are being negotiated in the spaces of AFIs, they are also observed to be dynamic, changing spaces. Allen (2008) notes a change in goals of the alternative agri-food movement, when in its early development social justice was not commonly a goal, but more recently found a large proportion to have a position on social justice and were engaged in work on improving social justice and the food system.

AFIs can also represent something different to the different people who engage with them. Smithers et al. (2008: 348-349) note that the hybridity of farmers' markets is also seen in the fact that not all consumers who engage with this AFI space are part of its transformative effect, arguing it is: "not so much as a single identity –seeking space but as several i.e. existing spaces in which diverse groups of consumers and producers express a wide range of beliefs and behaviours." These 'identities' include oppositional consumptions strategies, support for farmers and people's desire for community. Therefore the values negotiated in AFIs are not homogenous, but varied. In the context of local food consumption, Dilley (2009) finds consumer discourse can be conflicting and shifting. Tovey (2006) describes two discourses at work AFIs in Ireland, an agro-ecological discourse and a food aesthetics discourse. AFIs are dynamic, evolving spaces, where competing discourses exist on the best path forward and goals can change.

One line of thought in the literature that is more hopeful for AFIs is that we may be expecting too much, and too soon, from them. It may be too soon to cast full

judgement on AFIs, as their effects may not have yet have fully emerged (Sage, 2006). Anderson et al. (2014b: 94-95) highlight while initiatives may appear to fail, measuring their cumulative impacts could be important because their successes could be wider and "constitute a broader process of socio-economic change" and they should be considered "imperfect works in progress." Lang (1999a: 170) suggests that even though the opposition is small it could signify "the opening of a battle for the future of the food system." But these are hypothetical questions, and there are many questions that need exploration in relation to AFIs. For example, Sage (2003) highlights some unexplored questions relating to AFIs, such as the degree to which farmers' markets are an oppositional space and the durability and resilience of AFNs when faced with pressures to become incorporated with the dominant food industry. More recent research suggests that newer AFIs are developing structures that explicitly try to protect them from corporate cooption because of lessons learned. For example Ballamingie and Walker (2013) present a case study of Just Food Ottawa, which aims to facilitate access to nutritious, ecologically sound food, supporting sustainable livelihoods for producers and actively engaging the local population in decision making, but which has an organisational structure that builds on best practices involving community, public and private sector partners, and is seen as a space of hope in delivering a more sustainable locally focused food system.

We might need to begin to ask if some aspects of alternative food production have been overlooked in terms of their contribution to what AFIs represent. For example, Taylor and Taylor-Lovell (2014) argue that home gardens make a greater contribution to urban agriculture in the global North than other forms such as urban farming and community gardens and this has not been accounted for in current research and government policy.

2.5.4 Supporting AFIs to play a greater role in food system transformation

Policy measures that can facilitate AFIs develop to their potential is also an important area where insights are needed to develop the role of AFIs in the food system. In the context of developing sustainable local food systems in Ontario, Blay-Palmer et al. (2013) highlight the need for joined up policy across local to national levels to support sustainable food hubs in a more sustainable food system. They need

adequate funding and resources to flourish in the longer term and the role of the state in assisting this process is highlighted. However there are no easy ways forward in this regard and more research is needed. For example, Kneafsey et al. (2013) evaluate the potential of a labelling scheme as a policy tool to support SFSCs, finding positive and negative implications. It can provide information, but there are many labelling schemes and it does not address issues of access. They find that it could be more useful in countries where SFSC are less numerous. Other policy areas meriting exploration outlined include that because of their social impacts there could be other policies besides CAP to support SFSCs; greater links could be developed with policy initiatives that support the organic sector and the need for an increase in training in marketing and communications, including smart communications, to support growth. White and Stirling (2013) find that intermediaries that support communal growing projects, such as Local Food Works in the UK, are in a better position to recognise the long term needs of the initiative than those more embedded in the initiative and that work on the ground, where responses can be more short-term in nature and in response to immediate challenges. Both are important and should be part of governance and operation of these growing projects, but the research finds that projects would benefit from better synergies between intermediaries and members in long term planning for sustainable projects. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) identify the need for more empirical work to understand the actual sustainability impacts of AFNs and the best ways of protecting against weakening of AFN practice, for example such as through certification schemes or consumer awareness campaigns.

2.6 Moving alternative food studies forward

AFI research has moved from a scenario where Whatmore and Thorne (1997) observed in the late 1990s that little work had been conducted exploring alternative geographies of food, to now a wealth of research existing on the vast themes that AFIs can touch on, such as food ethics, politics and sustainability (Winter, 2004; Maye et al., 2007). According to Goodman et al. (2011) research on alternative food politics and movements now spans four decades and critical analysis has shifted focus, from AFIs being presented as movements with potential to have transformative effects on society, to a now more critical perspective that interrogates

the mismatch between foundational values, movement discourse and practice. AFIs have been both celebrated and criticised. The literature that has questioned the transformative potential of AFIs has been classified into two broad areas, the first criticises AFIs and highlights their mainstreaming, and the second follows on from this stance, but also recognises that there is promise in a "new "pre-figurative" politics created by the alternative food movement as a framework in which these limitations can be addressed and resolved" (Goodman et al., 2011: 3). This research situates itself as part of this new focus in AFI research, which is constructively critical of AFIs, attempting to understand the weaknesses in AFI practice that impact on its potential to contribute to changing the food system. Underpinning the aims and objectives of this research is an attempt to also more broadly contribute to this new focus in AFI research.

2.6.1 A need for new conceptual approaches

Key academics have called for examination of AFIs through a renewed theoretical gaze (for example: Marsden et al., 2000; Marsden and Smith, 2005; Sonnino and Marsden, 2006; Venn et al., 2006; Goodman et al., 2011; Renting et al., 2012; Marsden and Franklin, 2013). Marsden et al. (2000: 426) comment that the literature is vast but is "highly fragmented and untheorised." Goodman (2003: 6) argues that because AFIs are broadly defined and findings are often based on isolated case studies, this type of analysis "can do little more than illustrate the potential socio-economic impacts of the quality 'turn' and paradigmatic rural development practices since comprehensive data are lacking." Marsden and Smith (2005: 450) highlight how the literature has expanded, but more attention is needed: "concerning the distinctive geographical and social components of these trends." Research can focus on individual initiatives. For example, Kneafsey et al. (2013) observe in relation to LFS/SFSCs research assessing their environmental impact can focus on individual types of initiatives, such as CSAs or box schemes, and not on LFS/SFSCs as a whole, which would produce more comprehensive analysis. Marsden and Franklin (2013: 637) argue that research must resist too quickly taking on "a sort of conceptual constructed marginalisation of alternative food movements, partly because of their embeddedness and variety in place" and to progress understanding what is needed is: "much more theoretical building and re-rigging, in ways which

scholars can articulate the significance of such alterity to wider debates about the security and sustainability of the planet."

Renting et al. (2012) argue the issues and questions raised by AFIs cannot be addressed by existing theoretical perspectives and concepts such as AFNs. It is argued the AFN concept is based on drawing a distinction between AFN and mainstream food networks. This approach was used to delimit the terms of earlier, exploratory studies of AFIs, and has become less appropriate as understanding develops. Renting et al. (2012: 292) flag the need to use different theoretical perspectives to explore contemporary food system dynamics, also highlighting the need to account for a wider range of actors, arguing: "what is needed especially are conceptual approaches that address more clearly the renewed role in such dynamics of citizens, consumers, producers and civil society, the distinctive nature and characteristics of social and economic relations embodied in newly emerging food networks, and their potential to generate genuine food system transformations." Sonnino and Marsden (2006: 197) suggest that the many empirically based studies reflect the *first phase* of critical scholarly engagement and identify a need to move towards a *second phase* which should "not only focus on specific cases of alternative food networks, but also to study the regional and local, economic, and spatial governance of particular spaces in which these evolve, mutate and compete." Holloway et al. (2007b: 90) acknowledge it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of AFIs because there is intentional and unintentional resistance, but suggest one way forward could be "to focus on the effects of combinations of different projects with their different ways, wheres and whys of arranging food production –consumption in the struggle for what might be seen as more 'progressive' food systems."

2.6.2 Ways forward

The term 'alternative' is not used by the activists and actors involved in AFIs (Seyfang, 2006; Tovey, 2007; Kneafsey et al, 2008). Maxey (2007) asks if the notion of 'sustainability', rather than 'alterity', is a better framework for categorising and analysing such food initiatives and other associations made with them, such as 'local', 'quality' and 'community' food. It has been argued that classifying alternative food as 'alternative' "hampers our analytical ability to assess what makes

it function and the complexities of the power relations running through and being reproduced by it" (Holloway et al., 2007a: 7). A different approach is proposed by Goodman et al. (2011: 6) who argue that rather than getting caught up in competing definitions of concepts such as local and authentic, the politics of alternative food should be understood as a process, which seeks to improve the food system, but not based on a perfectionist vision. It does not seek "to change the world by embracing a perfect vision of an alternative world based on a fixed, static set of values" but instead is based on a relational worldview that is "informed by an open, reflexive, and contested view of "improvement" as an idea and a process." Currently AFIs may be the "seeds of social change" and must be "understood as works in progress" (Allen et al., 2003: 62). Busch (2010) observes that fairytales can come true, but they often have surprise endings. The story of world agriculture in 50 years is yet to be written, but we are approaching major challenges that will shape the future, such as climate change, rising energy costs and environmental degradation and a major crisis is likely before any major shift. Levkoe and Wakefield (2014) argue it is too early in the development of AFIs to measure their contribution to significant social change, but do argue there is evidence they are growing and strengthening.

AFIs as discussed in the literature, certainly have broad aims, such as creating a sustainable, local and secure food system. There is also however a lack of clarity on what terms, such as these, actually mean. Kneafsey et al. (2008: 27) suggest terms such as local, organic, speciality and community are "highly contestable and potentially non-definable". Holloway et al. (2007a: 7) describe 'alternative' as a "slippery concept". Holloway et al. (2007a: 4-5) argue: "there should be other ways of thinking about food networks which retain a sense of the diversity and particularity of different food networks, but which also allow us to say something useful about them in terms of relations of power and struggles over how production and consumption should be arranged in a society." In the community food security context, Anderson and Cook (1998) call for the theorisation of practice, because loose themes such as equitable food access, democratic and collective action are articulated, it is important is that the determinants of community food security are clarified and how to move towards it in practice.

Marsden and Franklin (2013) argue that theoretical approaches to understanding AFIs and food movements needs to progress on three levels, macro, micro and meso level theorisation, which can offer understanding with different degrees of closeness and perspective, and also importantly offering reflections to guide practice. Micro level theorisation can examine initiatives internal workings and challenges and how to improve these. Meso level theorisation can assess initiatives evolutionary dynamics and macro level can explore AFIs in the context of broader development questions and reactions to advanced capitalism. The theories applied in this research are between micro and meso level, and are detailed in chapter four.

2.7 Conclusion

What has emerged from this literature review is a multifaceted and sometimes contradictory picture, with many ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding what AFIs aim to stand for and what they actually achieve. Their role in the food system is unclear and contested. The task for this research is to find more appropriate concepts that address a question of pivotal importance, not just to AFIs, but also to creating a food system that reflects the characteristics of AFIs, which is assessing their role as an agent of change in the food system. Research has raised many questions relating to the role of AFIs in the food system. AFIs can be held up as a response and a resistant force to the dominant food system that distances and detaches consumers from how their food is produced and supplied. AFIs may represent a response, but can they really resist or are they an ephemeral, reactionary and temporary opposition? Research now needs to focus on providing answers that can enhance our understanding of AFIs in practice in different contexts, explaining how AFIs are developing, the role they currently play and how this role might be strengthened to assist their contribution to an improved food system. Is this one role, or a combination of many? Research needs to utilise new and more clearly defined frameworks of analysis assessing the effects of combinations of AFIs in different contexts. What is important about this research is that it focuses on the range of AFIs that exist in the Irish national context, asking what kind of role they play as a food system agent of change. A number of key roles have been identified in this chapter and this research will work towards understanding which is most relevant. Given the issues of concern, this clearly points towards the potential of a social movement

approach to understanding the role of AFIs. This is a well developed and rich area of social theory. The rationale and basis for this approach are detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

A social movement conceptual framework to understand the role of alternative food initiatives in the food system

3.1 Introduction

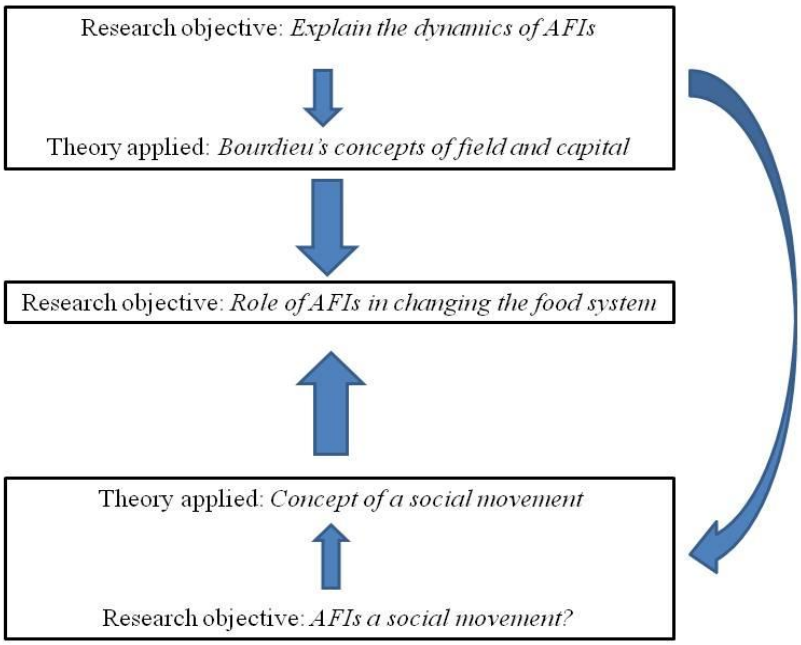
In this chapter it is shown that a social movement conceptual framework is an appropriate way to illuminate new perspectives on the role AFIs play in changing the food system. This approach is useful and appropriate because of the questions social movement theorisation asks about society and emerging research agendas in the study of AFIs. Social movement theory will be used in this study not to simply understand whether AFIs are, or seem likely to become, a social movement, but also to help understand AFIs social, cultural and economic dynamics and to provide new insights on the broad role of AFIs.

Debate exists around the role of AFIs in the food system. They may represent a reaction to inadequacies and dissatisfactions with the food system. They may represent an attempt to oppose and resist the dominant food system and could be attempts to opt out of being part of it. They may be temporary, ephemeral, oppositional spaces that represent trends that may come and go. These musings on AFIs all converge around a theme – attempts to create change in the food system, and the patterns this change takes. Social movement theory is concerned with the role of citizens in processes of social development and change. Taking a social movement approach can advance the study of AFIs and focus it around an established area of social theory, offering the potential to address poignant questions in the study of AFIs.

This chapter first explores the kinds of questions a social movement perspective can address and provides an overview of how social movement theory has developed through time and in different geographic contexts. It then moves on to focus on how to define social movements. While a well developed area of social theory, the social movement literature is vast, debate still exists on how to define and approach the

study of social movements (Flesher-Fominaya, 2014). The concept of a social movement is explored and defining traits and general characteristics of social movements are presented. This research seeks to directly examine how the dynamics of AFIs fit within the concept of a social movement. This is also necessary in the context of this study because it is unclear if AFIs can be truly considered a social movement. The affinity between the study of AFIs and social movements is also re-visited and re-affirmed in this chapter. However before the characteristics of AFIs can be evaluated against the concept of a social movement, this research also needs to examine these dynamics and explain their nature. In the final section of this chapter the rationale for choosing Bourdieu's theory of practice to do this, focusing on the concepts of field and capital is provided. Figure 3.1 shows the relationship between the research objectives and the conceptual framework. Bourdieu's concepts of capital and fields help to explain the dynamics of AFIs. These dynamics are explored in relation to the concept of a social movement. This can illuminate if AFIs play a role as a social movement for change in the food system, but the general dynamics explained can also offer insights on the wider role of AFIs in the food system.

Figure 3.1 Place of theory in addressing the research objectives



3.1.1 The social movement perspective

Social movements have been described as primary agents of social change (Connolly and Hourigan, 2006; Tovey, 2001; Crossley, 2002a). Movements are not uncommon in society; they are a normal part of our ever changing society: "Societies are not static or stable. They flow. And social movements are key currents within this flow" (Crossley, 2002a: 9). There are many different conflicts in and dissatisfactions with modern society, and this is reflected in the diversity of social movements that exist (Foweraker, 1995). The social movement perspective is chosen for this research because of the themes and issues this perspective can address. A social movement approach can illuminate processes of social development and change (Connolly and Hourigan, 2006; Tovey, 2001; Crossley, 2002a). They are an important part of society, and are a means by which people react to and resist change (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). They can tell us about "the roots of contemporary social activism" (Buechler, 1995: 460). Tovey (2007: 6) suggests social movements are:

> "Vehicles for particular understandings of citizenship, civil society and the potentialities of, and boundaries to, democratic participation in shaping the world in which we live. They renew a vision of the citizen as active, engaged in the events and concerns that affect their generation or society, and able to question and reflect on what others see as a taken-for-granted world."

Crossley (2002a) argues the study of social movements alerts us to the opportunities available to citizens who become active in participatory democracies, highlighting the adequacy and limits of democratic systems. A social movement approach can illuminate questions tied with power, offering insights on how power is distributed in society and what form it takes. For example, Powell and Geoghegan (2006) explore the potential of the citizen led community development sector in Ireland, which aims to affect social change, but how this progresses is impacted by the size of the task and the nature of the political structures opposed. Understanding social movements can act as a 'gauge' measuring the nature of political structures: "Their existence, successes, failures and more generally their dynamics…allow us to gauge the workings of the broader political structures of our society" (Crossley, 2002a: 9). If they were not to exist it would signal according to Tilly (2004: 3) the decline of democratic opportunities and "tell us that a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics is waning." Understanding AFIs in this manner is

important, given the questions raised in the previous chapter around the potential role of AFIs as an agent of change in the food system. The rest of this section focuses on the social movement theoretical framework, providing an introduction to the social movement concept and an overview of key theoretical trends.

3.2 Theories of social movements

Protests, demonstrations, rallies, activism, petitions and campaigns. We might commonly associate these activities with social movements. While central to certain types of social movement activity, they do not represent wider phenomena theorised as social movements. They are closer to how the social movement has been popularised. 'Movement' and 'social movement' can be used as a general descriptive category that is in popular usage, referring to a wide range of phenomena, on a variety of scales (Tilly, 2004; Byrne, 1997; Johnston et al., 1994). For example social movement can be used in media discourse as a descriptive category, in both positive and negative ways, and without interrogation of the phenomenon described using social movement theory. For example, Lockie (2004: 42) observes in relation to the environmental movement that the term is used in very different ways, and suggests that: "the environment movement is used just as frequently to stereotype and dismiss environmental activists as extremists and outsiders as it is to rally would-be activists around a sense of common purpose and identity." Diani (1992) argues the term has been used as an evocative, rather than analytical concept, attached for example to isolated public protest events, where there is no evidence of informal networks of interaction, which is one of the basic elements used to define a social movement. The label can still be used too quickly and without any significant analysis: "In some accounts it appears that folk dancers, basket weavers and virtually any form of social or economic life may qualify. But not everything that moves is a social movement" (Foweraker, 1995: 4). The general and popular use of term movement can result in confusion between phenomena generally described as movements and the empirical activities analysed using social movement theory. However a theoretical social movement can't just be observed, it must be created through analysis. The study of social movements involves their construction using theory and empirical analysis, and is different to their empirical manifestation (Melucci, 1981; Melucci, 1996a). A social movement is an "invented political form"

(Tilly, 2004: 3). The study of social movements is a well established field. There are a series of ways this political form can be constructed in its invented form. Next attention moves to explore the development of and changes in social movement theory.

Social movement theory is moulded by the context from which it emerges, and the empirical phenomenon analysed from which the theory is based (Foweraker, 1995; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). As social movements changed so did the theories that were used to interpret them (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Earlier social movement analysis conceptualised politics with a traditional, narrow view, politics with a big 'P', which can fail to take account of the impact of social and cultural worlds (Crossley, 2003: 62). Culture is recognised with increasing importance in newer theories social movements. Della Porta and Diani (2006: 66-67) discuss how preserving, modifying or creating new cultural structures can be a key concern of social movements and structural constraints in social movements can be material, but also cultural: "Actors interpretation of their situation, their preconceptions, their implicit assumptions about social life and its guiding principles, about what is worthy and unworthy, all drastically constrain their capacity to act and their range of options."

Trends, phases or 'turns' in social movement theory have been identified. Key trends include collective behaviour, resource mobilisation, the political process approach and new social movement (NSM) theories. Goodwin and Jasper (2009) describe a number of conceptual phases in social movement theory, the first being the economic turn, where rational actors weigh up the costs and benefits of participation in social movements. After this a political turn is identified, where the state is a target for social movement activity. The cultural turn is concerned with the cultural side of movements, how they frame issues and generate supporters and solidarity.

3.2.2 'Old' social movement theory: collective behaviour, resource mobilisation theory and political process

Collective behaviour can be understood as part of the economic phase of social movement theory described by Goodwin and Jasper (2009). The existence of

collective behaviour was viewed as a symptom of societal breakdown. Social movements are just one form of collective behaviour categorised as part of this approach and also included diverse social phenomena such as crazes, panics, manias and fashions (Crossley, 2002a; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Social movements were seen as a social crisis, or response to specific issues of grievance or hardship (Crossley, 2002a; Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Connolly, 2006). However collective behaviour has also been criticised. For example social movements don't always emerge from grievance and hardship, but can emerge out of political reform and economic prosperity (Crossley, 2002a). Della Porta and Diani (2006) point out critics have highlighted how social movements don't just represent society in crisis, but also work to change society and introduce new values and norms. Crossley (2002a) places collective behaviour within the pre-1970s American social movement tradition and from the 1970s onwards resource mobilisation theory (RMT) and political process models were considered to be dominant.

RMT is also classified by Goodwin and Jasper (2009) as part of the economic phase of social movement theory. RMT sees social movement organisations as the core of social movements. RMT seeks to understand the conditions that facilitate social movements to mobilise resources to forward the movement's aims and goals (Connolly, 2006; Share et al., 2007). This approach can construct social movement organisations (SMOs) as acting like firms: "they try to accumulate resources, hire staff whose interests might diverge from constituents', and "sell" their point of view to potential contributors…SMOs even compete against one another for contributions; together they add up to a "social movement industry"" (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009: 6). RMT begins with the premise that "social discontent is universal, but collective action is not" (Foweraker, 1995: 15). The socially discontented can be seen at protests, but to sustain a protest movement more than social discontent is needed, networks and social ties between the discontented are essential (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). RMT sees social movements as difficult to organise as their maintenance and expansion is dependent on mobilising adequate resources, and for successful movements, the development of organisations and leadership is crucial (Foweraker, 1995). Critics argue RMT overlooks micro factors such as values, ideology and collective identity and focuses too much on macro factors, such as

organisations (Connolly, 2006). It is argued RMT limits social movements to only "formal, hierarchical, organisational structures" which overlooks "the fluid, unorganised, localised occasions in everyday life where the values and goals of the movement are put into practice" (Share et al., 2007: 498). RMT is also criticised for viewing social actors as too rational who assess costs and benefits, means and ends, within economic models of human agency, and without acknowledgement of the effects of social context (Foweraker, 1995). It is also argued RMT's emphasis is on structure and needs to take more account of the role of human agency in social movements (Connolly, 2006).

RMT and the political process approach share similarity, however political process places more emphasis on movement's political and institutional context which creates obstacles and opportunities for social movement activity (Diani, 1992; Foweraker, 1995; Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Husu, 2013). The form that social movements take is also seen to have an affinity with the political authority they challenge (Foweraker, 1995). Under the political process model, interaction with the state is part of how these movements are fought, and the state is targeted in efforts to achieve the goals and demands of movements. Goodwin and Jasper (2009:6) cite the labour and civil rights movements as examples, pointing out these movements were seen as "little more than normal politics that used extra-institutional means." Della Porta and Diani (2006) note that the approach shows that social movements can also be fought as part of institutional and political systems and are not just less conventional, marginal and anti-institutional forms of action. However they also point to growth in variables that are considered part of the 'political process' and that the concept lacks precision and risks "becoming a "dustbin" for any and every variable relevant to the development of social movements" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 17).

3.2.3 'New' social movement theory

NSM theories can be considered part of the cultural turn. Social movements that have developed since the 1960s, such as the women's, environmental and peace movements, are classified as new social movements (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Foweraker, 1995). Their emergence is said to be related to: "the credibility crisis of

the conventional channels for participation in Western democracies" (Johnston et al., 1994: 8). NSMs are not considered to be an unconventional part of society, but a normal part of it, with suggestions made we now live in a 'movement society' (Eder, 1993; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). They are differentiated from old by their focus on group values and lifestyles (Connolly and Hourigan, 2006). For example, they include: "personal and intimate aspects of human life" such as "what we eat, wear and enjoy" (Johnston et al., 1994: 8). They are concerned with how we live our lives and "call for changes in our habits of thought, action and interpretation" (Crossley, 2002a: 8). Their concerns are not aligned with issues dealt with by conventional politics, nor do they wish to change political structures, but they contribute to cultural change, shape individual awareness and highlight issues to the state (Share et al., 2007). They have also been associated with middle rather than working classes, with participants not often the disadvantaged, but the well- educated and employed (Byrne, 1997; Connolly and Hourigan, 2006). The concerns of NSMs are however not class based. Johnston et al. (1994) describe new social movements as transcending class structure and social roles. Share et al. (2007) suggest demands are not confined to the interests of a particular class group, but are related to social identities concerning gender, age, cultural identity, or a vision of a good life. NSMs do not want to achieve power or act on the interests of a particular group (e.g. workers and the trade union movement) but are "more concerned with universal values and ideals" (Share et al., 2007: 493). The action of NSMs focuses in civil society rather than politics or the political process. Melucci (1981: 179) characterises new 'class' movements as concerned not just with the production of economic resources, but also social and cultural resources. Their concerns are heterogeneous such as ecology, minority groups and feminist issues. They are not concerned with gaining political power, and this is replaced by "the desire to control living conditions directly, to demand an autonomous space independent from the system" (Melucci, 1981: 179).

NSM theory itself is not uniform and has been divided into two broad approaches, European and North American. The European approach is described as being concerned with the why of social movements, their role in society overall, concerned with questions around goals, values and identity, and action is focused on civil

society. The North American approach is centred on 'how' questions, such as focusing on organisations and how actors mobilise resources (Foweraker, 1995; Share et al., 2007). However an integration of both perspectives has also occurred, with the merits of combining approaches becoming recognised by theorists on both sides (Share et al., 2007).

Eder (1985) asks if NSMs are actual social movements or a new social formation and argues they revolve between moral crusade, political pressure group and social movement. The moral crusade is compared to a counterculture that is not centralised and is informal, a moral battle where action is not strategic, but expressive of moral values. The political pressure group brings issues to the fore that are not currently dealt with by the dominant political culture and can have extreme and less extreme versions of their ideals. Eder (1985: 880-1) uses the example of green politics "which oscillates between rustic romanticism, the politics of alternative energy, and a new policy of growth." The NSM differs from these forms by concerning itself with changing the means of production; it may be concerned with particular issues not on the political or moral agenda, but offers models and ideas for how to change the system to produce a society that reflects the movement's ideals, that are produced through argumentative debate. Conditions that provide social actors with the ability to become involved in debate are also essential (Eder, 1985).

3.2.4 Bridging the theoretical divide

Social movement theory has begun to move beyond these particular trends in theorisation. Questions have been raised about what is distinctly new about NSMs. Buechler (1995: 448) highlights questions raised by social movement theorists, that the newness of new social movements has been over-stated and rather than being new that they grew out of existing movements and are "the latest manifestation of a cycle or a long wave of social protest movements." Johnston et al. (1994) also suggest that new social movements are not independent of the past and can represent old movements in new forms. Taylor and Whittier (1992: 122) suggest that social movement scholars are beginning to recognise that "the theoretical pendulum between classical and contemporary approaches to social movements has swung too far." Arguments and attempts have been made to move towards integrating both

'old' and 'new' perspectives (Share et al., 2007; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Looking to theorists not traditionally used in the social movement arena, along with taking aspects of old and/or new social movement theory together can be an illuminating approach. A key issue for social movement theory is the divide between analysing either micro concerns at the individual level and macro processes of wider social change (Foweraker, 1995). Introducing broader social theory into social movement conceptualisations can help bridge the divide between structure and agency, macro and micro approaches to the study of social movements (Crossley, 2002a).

But outside of the variety of approaches to the study of social movements, they do have key features that define them. They can't be definitely defined in a few words. Regularities can be found between social movements across history, but identifying laws of social movements is a task with inherent contraction (Tilly, 2004). For the purposes of this research, strict laws are not proposed, but broad defining traits and characteristics of the social movement concept are identified to assist addressing the question of whether AFIs might be part of the social movement framework, where and how it might fit.

3.3 The concept of a social movement

Despite the different theoretical approaches, and maybe because of them, social movement is a concept that defies definition (Byrne, 1997; Foweraker, 1995). A diversity of social movements exist, and social movement theorisation has emerged from their empirical existence (Foweraker, 1995). They are, according to Byrne (1997: 11) "amorphous entities which resist neat classification." They can be defined and studied in different ways, depending on which theoretical approach is taken (Byrne, 1997; Connolly, 2006; Saunders, 2007). Social movements differ from each other and have been mobilised around a great diversity of issues (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009; Foweraker, 1995). Outside of these different conceptualisations, all social movements have specific defining traits, which is the focus of the next section. Broader characteristics, which may not be aligned with all social movements, but are a strong feature of them, are also focused on in the next section.

3.3.1 Defining traits of a social movement

For Melucci (1996a: 28) certain conditions must be met to determine if collective action is a social movement. The basic elements of this type of collective action are that it: "(i) invokes solidarity, (ii) makes manifest a conflict, and (iii) entails a breach of the limits of compatibility of the system within which the action takes place." Diani (1992:11) argues that conflicts can be either political or cultural, or both, and they "promote or oppose social change either at the systemic or non-systemic level." Drawing on the main theoretical approaches to understanding social movements, new and old, Diani (1992: 13) defines social movements as: "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity." Goodwin and Jasper (2009: 4) define a social movement as: "a collective, organised, sustained and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power-holders, or cultural beliefs and practices". A number of central defining traits of social movements can be identified, which are dealt with in turn in the next sections:

- Members consist of individuals, groups and/or organisations
- Members can informally interact, which eventually can form stronger networks
- There is solidarity between members, they share 'collective identity'
- Members challenge established practices and are engaged in political or cultural conflict to promote or oppose social change

3.3.1.1 Movement members

A plurality of groups, individuals and organisations structure social movements. Political parties are generally not considered part of social movements, but can perform certain functions for social movements, such as to represent social movement interests (Diani, 1992). Social movements do need however to engage with the political system. Melucci (1981) argues this is particularly important because of their fragmented unorganised nature in modern societies; movements need political representation so their demands can be translated to politics.

Movements "can only survive if the demands they carry are interpreted and mediated by the political system…The movement continues to exist beyond its political mediation" (Melucci, 1981: 190). The target for social movement action is however wider than the institutional channels of politics, and also seeks to influence the general population (Byrne, 1997).

Organisations can be a part of social movements, but they are not movements themselves (Tilly, 2004; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Social movements can indeed be disorganised because it is shared values and solidarity that holds movements together, and not membership of formal organisations. Della Porta and Diani (2006) observe that if organisational identities dominate over collective identities, this can cause a movement to burn out. Organisations have been described as a symptom of movement institutionalisation and a move towards the end of a movement and towards "bureaucratisation, centralisation and oligarchisation" (Connolly, 2006: 12). Formal organisations with hierarchies and official positions are not a strong feature of NSMs; they most often take a loose organisational form (Share et al., 2007). NSMs move away from "hierarchical, centralised organisations" to those which "tend to be segmented, diffuse, and decentralised" with "considerable autonomy of local sections" (Johnston et al., 1994: 8-9). Melucci (1981) characterises NSMs as anti-authoritarian, fragmented and organisationally weak.

To be a movement, its members must act as part of it. Supporters of movement goals are vital to successful social movements. This is also a problem facing movements. Committed activists who share a vision are central to social movement formation and their message must reach beyond this core for wider mobilisation: "most people who share affinities with social movements never participate in them" (Miller, 2004: 225). The less organised nature of NSMs means that participation is less defined, the level and type of participation by social movement members is unpredictable and unclear and members define how they will participate (Share et al., 2007). It has been suggested that NSMs are less successful in mobilising member participation than old. Hamel (1995) argues this is not necessarily a weakening of movements, but reflects their changed approach in the modern context of how social change must be approached.

Some social movement members can be more engaged than others and members have different motivations. Della Porta and Diani (2006) observe that leaders play important roles in social movements, but the types of roles leaders play are many. Melucci (1996a) argues leaders play a number of key roles in movements. Leaders must work to define the objectives of the movement and direct movement activities towards achieving these objectives. Leaders must work to maintain the structure of the movement motivating and maintaining cohesion among members, and mobilising members that support the movement to pursue its goals. The final role of leaders described by Melucci (1996a) is to maintain and reinforce the movement's identity and solidarity. However Melucci (1996a: 345) also highlights that formal leadership is difficult to identify in contemporary movements and that they have a "concealed leadership" such as for example through organisations that coordinate movements, committees, cultural agencies, and the media. These are described as semi-professionalised structures which help to mobilise, coordinate and transmit movement messages. One aspect contributing to this change in leadership dynamics are the tensions created by unequal power relationships between movement members, and as a result leadership has been de-personalised. The relationship between movement leaders and grassroots participants should be one that reflects the democratic nature of social movements. Della Porta and Diani (2006) highlight that this poses a dilemma for social movements, and some do not introduce hierarchical structures because of this. Leadership can also be temporary where short-term mobilisation calls for less formalised, temporary representatives to fulfil certain objectives or roles such as organiser or spokesperson (Melucci, 1996a; Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

Another type of member discussed that is distinguished from general movement members is the political entrepreneur. They are individuals that initiate collective political action and believe that their efforts will mobilise others (Opp, 2009). They play an important part in the emergence, growth, durability and effectiveness of social movements (Tilly, 2004; Opp, 2009). They can be involved in framing and re-framing issues of grievance, they can act as a broker by opening up connections

between groups where connections did not exist or to bring the movement's message to a new audience (Opp, 2009).

3.3.1.2 Networks of informal interaction

Social movements are networks, and often begin as informal networks between individuals (Johnston et al., 1994; Crossley, 2002a). Political action through marches and public meetings can exist before a social movement is formed, but Tilly (2004: 5) argues it is when these forms of action are extended, connected and adapted that a social movement exists. Networks are vital to social movements, and distinguish them from collective action in organisations. They involve both individual and organised actors, such as groups and organisations, sustained in engagement to coordinate initiatives, define strategies of action and regulate conduct in order to work toward common movement goals (Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

Networks have a variety of functions in social movements. They assist with the circulation of information, material and human resources (Diani, 1997). Melucci (1996a) describes social movements as a series of units, and a communication and exchange network keeps these units in contact with one another. Networks also play a role in movement members forming social bonds. They help to reinforce solidarity between agents (Byrne, 1997). Networks help to recruit movement participants and also help to maintain participation. But the effectiveness of networks in recruiting and maintaining participation also depends on the strength of the network and the costs and benefits of participation. Della Porta and Diani (2006) note that more risky and demanding that participation is on personal resources, such as time and energy, the more it needs to be supported by more specific and stronger networks. The type of network therefore matters to the type of collective action of the social movement. If a movement is concerned with goals that are more widely accepted in mainstream society, networks based on personal connections can be effective to mobilise support, while if a movement has more radical ideals it may recruit participants from sub-cultural networks and organisations[3].

[3] For example, Della Porta and Diani (2006: 125) refer to specific movements as examples of this such as environmental activism in 1980s Milan and radical civil rights in the 1960s in Berkeley.

Diani (2003) describes networks in social movements as composed of different kinds of actors, of individuals, organisations and events. Networks can be composed of individuals that are directly connected by personal connections such as family or friends, or indirectly connected for example by being members of an organisation or involved in events or subcultures. Networks composed of individuals are described as important because they can link individuals involved in initiating movements, become formal organisations, or are a broad social movement community which shares a particular lifestyle. Networks of organisations can build alliances and work on social movement objectives on an ongoing or temporary basis based on individual issues. Events that occur at different times can be connected by individuals and organisations and social movements have been understood as networks of events.

Social movements themselves are in one sense a large network, however different types of networks have been described as part of social movements. They can be dispersed loosely or closely connected (Diani, 1992). Submerged networks can exist and because of their presence when issues arise mobilisation is possible quickly (Buechler, 1995; Share et al., 2007). Melucci (1996a: 115) argues this 'latent structure' of social movements is central to how movements are structured in modern, complex societies: "individual cells operate on their own, entirely independent of the rest of the movement…These links become explicit only during the transient periods of collective mobilisation over issues which bring the latent network to the surface and then allow it submerge again into the fabric of daily life." Melucci (1996a) also however distinguishes two key forms of network that are part of social movements, permanent, latent networks that form part of the daily life of movement members, and temporary networks that support periods of mobilisation when a movement's action becomes visible. It is argued these latent networks make this temporary mobilisation possible that focus on achieving a specific goal.

3.3.1.3 Solidarity and collective identity

Social movements must mobilise supporters of movement goals (Foweraker, 1995). But they must do more than bring people together, their networks must become networks of political actors that are held together by strong bonds or 'collective identity' (Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Johnston et al., 1994; Crossley, 2002a). Actors

within a movement are linked by sharing a sense of common purpose towards a cause (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). There is mutual identification between actors, a collective 'we' that share characteristics, vision and beliefs and an 'other', which action is mobilised against (Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Melucci's (1996a; 1996b) concept of collective identity involves members of a movement defining themselves as a group, defining their view of the social environment, participants shared goals and opinions. Establishing collective identity is a central task of a social movement and an end in itself. Collective identity allows a common meaning to be assigned to collective events, without which would not be identified as part of a common process (Diani, 1992). Collective identity can help mobilise and maintain collective action and help provide an explanation for how "the injustices that are at the heart of most movements are translated into the everyday lives of collective actors" (Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 123). The values and principles that make up a movement's collective identity must be given a high priority by agents (Byrne, 1997). Collective identity is not static, it is unstable, establishing collective identity is also part of the process of boundary definition (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Actors that share collective identity are not necessarily a homogenous social group; this depends on the empirical nature of that social movement (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Collective identity is the essence of the movement that members all share but they can still differ in their beliefs. Byrne (1997) for example highlights how the women's movement and feminism is about equal rights for women, but for some feminists, lesbianism is part of true feminism. Narrative also plays a role in the construction of collective identity, articulating collective identity, bringing accounts of events to life. Narrative can also represent a different version of events, such through media re-telling. Narrative helps construct collective identity over time as events past and present form part of collective identity (Somers, 1994; Poletta, 1998).

Framing processes are also important in constructing and maintaining collective identity. Framing is described as a relational process related to the position of actors in social fields (Melucci, 1996a). Framing creates identities that are related to situations by "placing relevant sets of actors in time and space and by attributing characteristics to them that suggest specifiable relationships and lines of action"

(Hunt et al., 1994: 185). Movement frames provide a broad schemata of interpretation of the social world for movement actors affecting their perception and interpretation of reality. Frames can be likened to ideology, but are more flexible than ideology (Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

3.3.1.4 Promote or oppose social change through conflict and struggle

Movements can promote a particular vision or worldview, and can promote or oppose how social change is taking shape. They aim to change society as a whole, and are not focused on localised change. Social movements express particular views and wish to persuade others of their values. Social movements can contribute to cultural change, affecting the values people hold. A social movement must also aim to create political change with the movement's values eventually reflected in public policy (Byrne, 1997).

The presence of conflict is also a defining trait of social movements. The meaning of conflict in social movements is essentially the struggle of actors in opposition and work against each other to "seek control of the same stake – be it political, economic, or cultural power – and in the process make negative claims on each other" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 21). Conflict can be more difficult to identify in some movements than others, such as alternative lifestyle movements (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Melucci (1981; 1996a) argues social movements are fundamentally the expression of a conflict, based on a struggle by different actors for control over resources they value. Conflict is distinguished from crisis by the fact that it is a struggle over resources, rather than a reaction to some kind of societal breakdown and dysfunction. A key part of the structure of this conflict is that it goes beyond "the limits of compatibility with the system in question, i.e. it breaks the rules of the game, puts forward non-negotiable objectives, questions the legitimacy of power" (Melucci, 1981: 176). According to Melucci (1981), other forms of collective action based on conflict can occur in tandem with social movements, such as conflict within institutional rules, such as trade union activity, or conflict that breaks the rules of the game without a defined adversary, which can be understood as deviance.

3.3.2 Broad characteristics of social movements

Along with these defining traits, social movements also display a variety of characteristics that also help identify them. These characteristics are discussed in this section and include where social movement action takes place in society, what social movements aim to do, what they achieve and their activities in reaching their goals.

3.3.2.1 The place of public and private spheres of action

Social movement action occurs in many spaces of social life. The nature of that action can be different, depending on the sphere of social life. Buechler (1995) highlights how NSM theorists acknowledge the political and cultural spheres as important for social movements, the cultural sphere a place for symbolic action and the political sphere a place for instrumental action. Civil society's importance for social movement formation and functioning is recognised (Foweraker, 1995; Purdue, 2007).

Civil society is a social space separate to the state and the market, a public space that is occupied by non-governmental groups and organisations (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). Keane (1988: 14) describes civil society as having a changing form and defines it as: "a complex of non-state activities – economic and cultural production, household life and voluntary associations – and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions." The public sphere is an important space in supporting and allowing civil society to develop where issues that concern people can be acted out and debated. For example in Tovey's (2001: 335) analysis of the cooperative movement and Irish civil society, it argued movement leader action in the public sphere "opens up a space outside of politics for debate and deliberation." Civil society is composed of many different layers of the public sphere including economic, legal, political and social components (Keane, 1988; Foweraker, 1995).

While not suggesting a straightforward cause and effect relationship, in his historical assessment of social movements, Tilly (2004) identifies a broad correspondence between social movements and democracy, as democracy rose, so

did social movements. Feeling empowered and as if change is possible is also important to successful social movements (Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Powell and Geoghegan (2004) highlight the central importance of a strong civil society to strong democracy, and its role in providing a voice for those who are not heard who can unite around a common cause. The existence of social movements in society are therefore an important part of increased civic political engagement and provide opportunities for skilled, committed individuals to have an independent role as part of the political process (Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

Social movements can strengthen civic life by representing the expansion of an active civil society, moving away from traditional political forms, democratising everyday life (Diani, 1992; Johnston et al., 1994; Tovey, 2006). Social movements and civil society are described as having a dialectical relationship, where social movements build civil society and social movements emerge from civil society networks (Foweraker, 1995). Civil society is an important part of society, with potential for and challenges in creating civic engagement in contemporary civil society (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Daly, 2008; Purdue, 2007). However, the strength and structure of civil society in modern democratic society varies. Vázquez-Garcia (2007) finds a weak civil society in Spain, growing individualism and low civic engagement. In the Irish context, Daly (2008) highlights the importance of community and voluntary sector organisations in Irish civil society and the closer connection between the state and civil society through the social partnership model.
Action in the public sphere is an important part of social movement activities; however action in the private sphere, individual lifestyles and behaviour underpins newer, western social movements, such as Fair Trade (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Debate exists around the role of individual action in the private sphere in social movements. Della Porta and Diani (2006) point out that while no single organised actor can represent a social movement, but the actions of individuals are very important in social movements. Individuals can participate in one movement event or support a movement by promoting its ideas. Della Porta and Diani (2006) distinguish however between movement participants and movement members. Acting as a voice for a movement on a single occasion or attending one protest event does not make the individual a movement member, but a participant.

A central part of social movements in the private sphere relates to lifestyle and politicised consumerism. While lifestyle can be driven by consumer led fashions and fads, it can also be oppositional and countercultural. Consumerism can be more than an economic act and has become politicised, such as alternative production and distribution in the food sector, for example Fair Trade and organic food. However dissatisfactions expressed through lifestyle changes don't necessarily result in social movement formation, but can under the right conditions (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). More broadly, the need for better coordination is also found between sections of contemporary lifestyle related movements. Relating to contemporary initiatives that work towards a more socially embedded, reciprocal economy, such as 'freeganism' and 'freecycle', Myers (2013: 414) highlights the need not just for these practices to expand to increase their potential, but also to "frame, connect, and politicise these acts and actors together into a coherent alternative to the current social and economic system; the Solidarity Economy Network (SEN) attempts to do this domestically and internationally."

Haenfler et al. (2012) distinguish lifestyle movements as a distinct category of social movement as distinct from NSMs and argue that lifestyle movements can represent life politics, where social agents approach to impacting change is to be the change they wish to see in the world. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) individualisation thesis explains lifestyle social movements as seeking social change primarily through individualised lifestyle change, rather than more coordinated collective action. The existence of a cross-over between acting as a citizen and consumer has been proposed. Soper (2004:112) does not see consumer action as futile and questions the division between consumer and citizen: "consumer practices and conceptualisations of the "good life" are inextricably linked to their "citizen" concerns for environmental preservation and sustainability." The concept of citizen-consumer rejects the fact that "private acts are considered futile in the face of general trends…and to acknowledge how minimal one's power is as an individual consumer – and then to use it nonetheless" (Soper, 2004: 115).

3.3.2.2 Movement goals, outcomes and impacts

According to Castells (1997: 69-70) social movements are defined, first and foremost, by what they say, and then by what they do: "social movements must be understood in their own terms: namely, they are what they say they are. Their practices (and foremost their discursive practices) are their self-definition." But movements are not always harmonious, they can be fraught and fractured (Foweraker, 1995). The goals of a movement can be unclear and fragmented, especially in the case of NSMs. Leyshon et al. (2003: 16) make the point that alternative activists, such as anti-globalisation protesters, are: "more united in what they are against – than what they are for." Unclear goals can impact the movement's power to realise effective change and critique of NSMs questions their coherence and power compared to established, well organised groups and organisations (Share et al., 2007).

Unclear goals can also be understood as a feature of these movements. Melucci (1981) argues one part of a movement can emerge to characterise it, but in reality movements encompass a plurality of problems and objectives. Melucci (1985; 1996a) also refers to the 'symbolic challenge' provided by social movements, where evaluation of success or failure is not relevant: "challenge the dominant cultural codes, their mere existence is a reversal of symbolic systems embodied in power relationships. Success and failure are thus meaningless if referred to the symbolic challenge" (Melucci, 1985: 813). Even though goals are unclear, it is argued these movements still have influence. Social movements can play a role in raising the public profile of particular issues. For example, Tovey (2007) argues that the environmental movement in Ireland has been important in raising awareness of environmental issues in Irish society. Social movements are knowledge producers, they embody prefigurative politics, which is: "the practice of instituting modes of organisation, tactics and practices that reflect the vision of society to which social movements aspire" and practices that attempt to transform society as well as the movement itself (Flesher-Fominaya, 2014: 10; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). They highlight knowledge which others, such as corporations and states, would prefer was

not public and bring new ways of seeing the world to the fore (Cox and Flesher-Fominaya, 2009).

Movements express a conflict, but don't necessarily provide the solutions to it (Melucci, 1985; 1996a). Therefore the outcomes of social movements can't be predicted and the changes they create may not be what they intended (Foweraker, 1995; Crossley, 2002a). They can "trigger chains of events which cannot be foreseen or controlled and they sometimes provoke backlashes and other unintended responses" (Crossley, 2002a: 9). This all makes examining the goals, impacts and outcomes of social movements difficult. More nuanced understandings of social movement impacts include Diani's (1997) argument that social capital reproduced and created by social movements can be understood as a movement outcome and impact because it facilitates movements to engage with established political channels and to mobilise a wider support base.

3.3.2.3 How social movements emerge and develop

The development of social movements is affected by the social context. Social movements reflect the time and place they emerge from. For example Foweraker (1995: 6) writes: "the liberal regime nor the civil society can be taken for granted in the Latin American context, where social movements have had to press for universal rights, and where common civil liberties remain a central concern." Social movements are reflective of the state of development and the issues that are prevalent in the society they emerge from. As society changes, so do social movements. In the post-industrial age, agents have more time for reflection, expectations are higher and conflicts between industrial classes decrease (Foweraker, 1995; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Also, movements don't necessarily emerge where there is the greatest need for the change they promote: "historical experience tells us that it was often those objectively affected who did not revolt" (Eder, 1985: 871). Byrne (1997) points out for example that women's movements don't always emerge where women are most disadvantaged.

Reflecting on Melucci's (1996a) definition of social movements; that they must breach the limits of the system where their action takes place, Geoghegan (2008:124)

argues: “only those forms of collective action that breach system limits are to be regarded as social movements. This view implies that social movements may be over-looked by dint of their current state of development…movements in the process of becoming are often over-looked.” Formative movement phases, when groups don’t yet have a conscious master plan but aim to challenge dominant systems nonetheless are not often studied (Polletta, 1998; Geoghegan, 2008). More formally organised phases of social movements have received more attention, however studying the life of social movements at an earlier stage can reveal movements beginning to form, which are operating in an unplanned manner and are not fully conscious of their goals (Polletta, 1998). Also some social movements will transition from their formative phase to a well developed social movement, however some may not make this transition and while a social movement may have potentially formed, it may not reach fruition. It is important then to develop understanding of this aspect of social movements, to understand why some social movements successfully mobilise, why others do not, or why a potential social movement may turn into something else. While social movements may appear to form quickly and randomly, they don’t (Crossley 2002a). For example movements can emerge as the outcome of a crisis, but before the crisis occurred, networks must have existed. Seeing movements as the outcome of a crisis misses their process of formation before the crisis period (Melucci, 1996a).

People who come together in associations, providing the social networks for social movement development can be a pre-movement (Foweraker, 1995). The formation of collective identity is key to the formation of a social movement where agents are part of an identifiable group (Byrne, 1997). Schiller and Levin (1983) investigate if self care can be considered a social movement. Self care encompasses self-help groups and consumers that take more control over treating their own health conditions, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Schiller and Levin (1983) find self care has no clear unifying ideology and is based around dispersed groups. It is argued it cannot be considered a social movement, but that the dynamics displayed by self care can be understood as the preconditions of a movement. McInerney (2000) asks if requested death can be considered a social movement, arguing it can, and outlines how the movement first framed its issues of concern by holding events engaging

members, to then evolving to become a more solidly formed movement, with its issues now more visible in society and politics because of the social movement.

When social movements do form, they are continuously evolving and changing. Crossley (2002a) notes that social movements are called movements, because they move. Social movements can be described as a process and are constantly being made and re-made (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Foweraker, 1995; Melucci, 1996a). The way they 'move' and change can be cyclical. They can have periods where they are visible by their activities in the public sphere, and periods where movements appear dormant and activity is concentrated in the private sphere (Melucci, 1996a; Byrne, 1997). Various stages in social movement activity have been described. Stages include institutionalisation, when a social movement becomes formalised and the latency phase when social movements still exist but are not active publically (Diani, 1992). Movements have been described as having 'cycles of contention' which are revolving periods of low and high movement activity (Crossley, 2002a). A central aspect of social movements is that they persist through time; an isolated protest event is not a social movement (Byrne, 1997). It can however be an important part of their activities, which attention now turns to.

3.3.2.4 The activities of social movements

In an increasingly globalised world, social movements don't just operate on national levels; they can also have international organisations and networks on wider geographic scales (Tilly, 2004; Goodwin and Jasper, 2009). Activity occurs on different scales, such as local, national and international action. Social movement events, such as campaigns, initiatives or protests, occurring at different times and in different places, can be part of one social movement. There can be times when public social movement events do not occur, but the cultural work of the social movement continues and collective identity persists (Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

The fact that what social movements aim to achieve cannot be realised through conventional political means shapes social movements. What they aim to introduce are new ideas to change "some of the basic ideas which underpin the whole functioning of that system" (Byrne, 1997: 17). Action outside of conventional

political channels is a defining characteristic of social movements, but this does not mean they never act in these channels (Byrne, 1997). The activities of social movements takes various forms, such as lobbying, protesting, living a particular lifestyle and events to raise the profile of the movement and its goals.

Social movement activities include both struggles over resources and struggle over meaning (Foweraker, 1995). Struggling for each requires different types of action. The type of action taken by a social movement can depend on what the movement's goals are. Public protest or law breaking does not necessarily have to be a part of social movements. In movements concerned with personal or cultural change actions take the form of individual every-day practices, such as living a certain kind of lifestyle in the case of lifestyle movements (Byrne, 1997; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). The tactics deployed by NSMs often differ from earlier movements, including non-violent protest and civil disobedience. In NSMs organisations can be "goals in themselves" rather than a "means to realising external goals" (Share et al., 2007: 22). Direct action and demonstration has been a common part of the environmental movement because practices in particular places can be what the movement is trying to halt (Byrne, 1997). Dissent in movements can emerge from disagreement over appropriate tactics between movement members (Byrne, 1997).

So far theories of social movements and the concept of a social movement have been the focus of this chapter. Attention next turns to relate AFIs to the social movement conceptual framework. This includes reviewing research that has focused on them from the AFN perspective and research that has discussed particular food movements.

3.3.3 The affinity between AFIs and a social movement framework

AFIs have a strong affinity with the defining traits and characteristics of social movements described in the preceding part of this section. AFIs have been celebrated as agents of social change (Allen et al., 2003). Marsden and Franklin (2013:637) observe how the study of AFIs can also reveal understanding of more general societal change, and "adjustments needed to the current capitalist and resource crisis." Debate is however growing on whether this is a bone fide social

movement and what is its real significance and potential (Holt Giménez and Shattuck, 2011; Ashe and Sonnino; 2013; Marsden and Franklin, 2013).

3.3.3.1 Food, agriculture and rural 'movements'

AFIs have been described collectively as part of alternative food and sustainable agriculture movements along with the actors and organisations that make up these movements (Buttel, 1997; Hassanein, 2003). However, food movement is an elusive concept (Levkoe and Wakefield, 2014). Diverse and dispersed initiatives promoting more sustainable and secure food systems are "often referred to, in their collectivity and with varying degrees of intention and rigour, as a food *movement* – that aim to 'remake' food systems worldwide" (Ashe and Sonnino, 2013:61 italics author's own). The members of what Hassanein (2003: 80) describes as alternative agro-food movement include: "the social activity of sustainable agriculturalists, local food advocates, environmentalists, food security activists, and others who are working to bring about changes at a variety of different levels of the agro-food system." Buttel (1997: 352) identifies many types of social movement that could be classified under the broader term 'agricultural sustainability movement', which are "directly involved in the pursuit of an alternative or counter-veiling agro-food political movement: farmer-support movements…sustainable agriculture technology movements…agro-localist movements…organic and healthy food movements…and the environmental movement." Raynolds (2000: 297) argues the organic and Fair Trade movements "represent important challenges to the ecologically and socially destructive relations that characterize the global agro-food system. Both movements critique conventional agricultural production and consumption patterns and seek to create a more sustainable world agro-food system." Context is also important when looking to describe the significance and place of food and agriculture movements. Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011: 135) depict the strength of the opponent the food movement seeks to oppose "developments seem trivial when compared to the binge of unregulated speculation on the world's food commodities, the explosion of land grabs, the steady spread of GMOs and agro-fuels and the growing monopoly control over all aspects of the food system." They do not however deem their impacts trivial and identify a key potential impact is to slow the rate of liberalisation in the corporate food regime.

Alternative food movements can also be linked with the broader area of rural social movements, which often have a food element. Woods (2008) describes a number of rural movements, such as attempts to re-establish a rural identity because of the marginalisation of rural interests, a back to the land movement centred around alternative agricultures and eco-living, and a new wave of farmer interest groups. The strategies of these movements are diverse and include activities such as setting up producer cooperatives and marketing initiatives. In relation to AFIs, both rural and urban are sites of action, driven by the changing consumer demand in urban areas and changing farm structures making alternatives a survival strategy (Jarosz, 2008). They can also be seen as a tool to increase civic engagement. Obach and Tobin (2014) find that agents involved in AFIs, understood in this research as civic agriculture[4], are more likely to be engaged with local politics and volunteerism than the general population. Because of the fundamental importance of food in our lives, AFIs could be an important mechanism to improve community and civic engagement.

The organic movement however is one food movement that has undergone a significant degree of analysis in the social movement framework. For example, in the Irish context, a social movement approach has been used to develop understanding (for example: Tovey, 1999; 2002; Moore, 2006a; 2006c). The organic movement is a global movement in existence since the 1930s, and four phases have been identified. It is not until phase three, around 30 years after the movement began that formal organisations were formed (Reed, 2010). Movements change through time and a process of 'conventionalisation' has been observed in the organic movement, where it has taken on some of the characteristics is aimed to oppose[5]. Movements can become institutionalised and the organic movement is critiqued for becoming industrialised and bureaucratised (Tovey, 1999; Guthman, 2004). However this process has not taken over the whole movement it has been argued that a 'post-organic' sector exists. The organic movement, and other food and agriculture

[4] Lyson (2004: 1) terms the "rebirth of locally based agriculture and food production" as civic agriculture and organisational manifestations of this are AFIs such as "farmers' markets, community gardens and community supported agriculture."
[5] This process is discussed in more detail in chapter two, section 2.4.2.4.

movements are market based movements. As they have become more successful economically, internal shifts away from original goals of the movement have been observed. Goodman et al. (2011: 247) question if: "the mainstream "corporatization" of their values describe the limits of the attainable for market-based social movements?" However movements can also rebel against this process in effort to preserve what they set out to create. Moore (2006a; 2006b) argues amongst Irish organic farmers a 'post-organic' element exists, where organic principles are adhered to, but avoid the bureaucracy of regulation and they sell produce as 'chemical free'. Tovey (1999: 57) suggests: "those who want a 'real alternative' may have to withdraw, regroup and start all over again." Again, this has a correspondence with the characteristics of social movements described, that they are continually changing, which can go through cycles, and outcomes are not always aligned with movement goals. Also some movement members act differently to others. Assessing the lives and practices of biodynamic farmers in Ireland, McMahon (2005) observes that they limit their relationships with the outside world in an attempt to preserve their values and ideals. It is argued "movements would seem to need contradictory strategies; to protect the more radical knowledge within the movement by rejecting compromise, but also, to compromise so that their ideals can be made acceptable…Otherwise, today's alternative farming culture may dissolve back into the mainstream" (McMahon, 2005: 110-111). These practices limit their potential to create widespread social change; however they can also be understood as "a change in their own right…Their values and beliefs are outside the Western mainstream…They are constructing an alternative way of being (McMahon, 2005: 109).

3.3.3.2 Tensions and unclear goals

Movements are not necessarily harmonious, tensions can exist within movements. This can be the case in AFIs, because of the close nature of the social relationships that compose them. Anderson et al. (2014b) argue in relation to CFNs[6] that the success of such modes of operation is not easy. The operation of CFNs does foster trust and social relationships, but also generate distrust, conflict and tensions. Anderson et al. (2014b) argue that research can over emphasise the former and the

[6] CFNs are AFIs that have local participatory governance and cooperative operation rather than hierarchy and independence. This concept was discussed further in chapter two.

latter needs greater recognition because these issues limit the potential of more collective CFNs and breed more individualised CFNs. Following Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2013) it is argued that building social capital through collaboration on less challenging initiatives could better sustain larger projects. In addition to internal tensions, having unclear goals is not uncommon in social movements and the same has been said about agriculture and food movements. They do not have clearly articulated goals and a shared vision. Some argue while there is an overlap in values and a sense of being on the one side, there isn't a strong unifying macro structure or ethos between actors or a clear agenda (Buttel, 1997; Hassanein, 2003; Caton Campbell, 2004). AFIs are diverse projects and none are exactly alike. White and Stirling (2013) question how this diversity links to their capacity to challenge the dominant food system. Despite this lack of clarity around goals and identity, arguments are made for AFIs providing motivation to others, inspiring a wider movement of such practices, driven by their ideology (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Kirwan, 2004; Slocum, 2006). Levkoe and Wakefield (2014) argue you possibly don't need a clear value system to make a movement and networks could be understood as 'complex assemblages' of diverse actors, which are heterogeneous, self-organising autonomous and connected in myriad of ways, such as what AFIs and their networks represent. This does however present new challenges for movements, connections are harder maintained and information is difficult to circulate.

More recent scholarship recognises that AFIs have diverse and unclear goals. In the face of such unclear agendas can research provide evidence that assists AFIs achieve more? Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2013) find disparate and sometimes oppositional goals exist among actors in the local food movement and suggest that coalitions around common goals could be a way forward, firstly working towards achieving smaller goals, and when successfully achieved, then move on to larger goals. The potential for the movement forming a more coherent whole is explored by Ashe and Sonnino (2013) who argue that the reform of the New York City school food system provides one potential platform for greater convergence between actors in the food movement, and outside of it. For example the city's school garden initiative connects groups interested in urban food production (Grow NYC, Edible Schoolyard), food

culture (Slow Food), government partners and private funders (Departments of Education, Health and Agriculture, the Bank of America). It is argued that other 'convergence platforms' could exist and research is needed into this. Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) argue that a strong, global food movement with strategic relationships is needed to impact change in the corporate food regime[7]. They identify 'progressive' and 'radical' strands in the food movement, progressive based around farmer-consumer networks based in northern countries, and radical around food justice and sovereignty for marginalised groups concentrated in poorer, less developed nations. It is suggested the movement would have greater future potential if the progressive side of the movement moves closer to the radical strand because it has a "clear political platform and strategic global positioning", for example through strong organisations like Via Campesina[8] and requires "a major shift from societies embedded in the market economy to economies and markets that are embedded in society" (Holt Giménez and Shattuck, 2011:136-7).

3.3.3.3 Individual or collective action

Individual pioneers or leaders are also identified to be important to lead the development of AFIs. Marsden and Smith (2005) suggest that key actors, or 'ecological entrepreneurs' are central to mobilising other actors, to create and sustain the networks and innovative methods to connect producers and consumers in AFNs. Tovey (2006: 178) identifies features of Ireland's alternative food movement, suggesting actors are "active civic participators: they take leading roles in many different sorts of formal organisations and institutions." Alongside leaders who take a more central driving role, action has also been described as individualised, consumer rather than citizen driven, where the burden and benefit is with the individual (DeLind, 1999; Seyfang, 2006). However globally, food and agriculture movements are diverse and evidence of both individualised and collective efforts exists. For example the vegetarian movement can be understood as an individual level response, while other activities are a collective response, such as the agrarian movement, Via Campesina (Maurer, 2002; Desmarais, 2007). AFIs can be understood as part of more individualised approaches. This individualised consumer

[7] The corporate food regime is characterised by for example globalised supply chains, liberalised trade, monopoly agri-food corporations and concentration in land ownership.
[8] Via Campesina is connected with 148 farmers organisations in 69 countries.

approach can be aligned with the growing importance of individual action in the private sphere as part of social movements. Tovey (2006: 183) describes organic and artisan producers that focus on local markets as an alternative food movement in rural Ireland based around a "loose, informal network of individual entrepreneurs and households organised around a series of movement practices, sites, hubs and local spaces." But according to Hassanein (2003) individual and organisational actors making practical, gradual steps to changing the food system is inadequate for achieving food system transformation towards sustainability. Rather what is needed is 'food democracy', that is the active participation of citizens and political engagement to enable a move towards a sustainable food system. Similarly, DeLind (2011) argues the local food movement needs to look at its ownership and practices, and needs ideally to be structured around participatory democracy and local citizen empowerment and not simply buying more local food and having celebrity figureheads. It is argued the movement needs to move back to its roots, focusing on ecology, ethics and equity and not let market economics take over.

3.3.3.4 Issues with regulation and certification

Agricultural food movements are embedded in the market. Slow Food for example is described by Sassatelli and Davolio (2010: 209) as intersecting "the conventional principles of the market and anchors them to its own values." When food movements engage with the market to a significant degree, guarantees that values have been practiced become useful. The organic and Fair Trade movements have become more formalised, with certification schemes regulating their standards of production. Market regulation creates standards that aim to represent the values food movements work towards. The effect of regulation is a debated issue in research, particularly in relation to the Fair Trade movement. Third party certification schemes help to regulate Fair Trade production standards, but their capacity to affect significant environmental and social change has been questioned (Hatanaka and Busch, 2008; Brown and Getz, 2008). While certification is viewed as important in improving and guaranteeing standards, altering power relations between labour, the market and the state, rather than giving the market control is viewed as more important in contributing to substantive change. Brown and Getz (2008: 1184) argue: "the very notion that production conditions can be regulated through voluntary third-party

monitoring and labelling embraces several key neoliberal principles: the primacy of the market as a mechanism for addressing environmental and social ills, the privatisation of regulatory functions previously reserved for the public sphere, and the assertion of the individual rights and responsibilities of citizen–consumers." The nature of the relationship between food movements and the market is therefore seen as important in what movements can achieve.

3.3.3.5 Advantages of the social movement approach

While AFIs have been described as part of food and agriculture movements, and their patterns have an affinity with the defining traits and characteristics of social movements, use of social movement theory to develop understanding of AFIs is not an approach widely taken to date. This is an area scholars have highlighted is of potential in the context of AFIs and broader rural studies. A social movement approach to rural studies is important to help overcome some of the dualisms between rural and urban in examining rural politics (Reed, 2008). Rural spaces are argued to have resurfaced as a place of struggle and resistance, and the new social and political relations they present can be explained with a social movement approach (Woods, 2008; Tovey, 2006). Tovey (2006) argues social movements are described in rural studies, but without their theorisation. In addition, investigation focusing on power relationships has been called for. In relation to AFNs, Sonnino and Marsden (2006) highlight the importance of assessing relationships between AFNs and the conventional food sector to understand the balance of power and how this affects AFNs potential to contribute to rural development. More recent work however does explicitly apply social movement theory and also highlights the importance of doing so. Ashe and Sonnino (2013) directly use social movement theory (frame alliance and alliance-building) to explore the potential for convergence and consolidation among the movement's diverse initiatives. Levkoe and Wakefield (2014) use the case study of AFIs to explore recent environmental and social mobilisation for change in Canada. AFIs are found to not have a clear identity and goals, in a similar way to other recent movements, such as the global justice movement. Structures and relations that make up AFI networks are dynamic relations crossing geographic scales and cross the public, private and non-profit sectors. They are found to be de-centralised, as well as being based around informal

relationships, which has implications for social movements. Levkoe and Wakefield (2014:303) point out that research on AFIs can refer to them collectively as a food movement but "rarely explain what it is, what unites it…There has been little consideration of broad collaborations among AFIs, or of the networks being built across sectors and scales by AFI actors, and what these might mean for the food movement."

AFIs have been described as forming a part of food and agriculture movements. But more focused analysis of AFIs in specific contexts is necessary to truly evaluate their potential to contribute to food system change and as a social movement. As has been seen from the discussion of the social movement concept, outcomes of social movements are unpredictable and are not necessarily aligned with their goals. The approach this research takes is to assess AFIs in one national context from the social movement perspective. AFIs have not been studied as a whole in the Irish context. Particular AFIs have been researched, particularly farmers' markets (for example Moore 2006a; 2006b, 2006c; Moroney et al. 2009). The national context is also useful because it does not focus on exemplary examples or areas. It also cannot be assumed how AFIs manifest themselves in Ireland is with the same goals or at the same stage of development as in other geographies. Therefore there is a need to examine the basic nature and dynamics of AFIs and then to examine where this fits within the social movement framework. The defining traits and characteristics of social movements outlined in this chapter provide the analytical tools to understand how AFIs fit into the social movement context. But the focus so far has been on the concept of a social movement, and not on social movement theories that enable the in depth examination of social movements and potential social movement dynamics. Another level of analysis must be introduced. AFIs as a phenomenon must be explained in terms that allow their defining features to be measured against the defining traits and characteristics of a social movement[9]. Pierre Bourdieu's theories of capital and fields provide the theory to develop such an explanation, illuminating the social, cultural and economic dynamics of AFIs. The detailed rationale for this

[9] New social movements can be operationalised for research more directly when they are definitively accepted to be new social movements. A degree of separation was taken in this research as it sought to explore if AFIs can be considered a social movement by examining their defining traits and then evaluating these against the general concept of a social movement.

approach is the focus of the next section. It also must be added that using this approach does not assume AFIs are a movement. It can for example tell us if AFIs may become a movement and what challenges they face in progressing towards this, or if AFIs already are, what kind of movement this is. This approach will illuminate insights on AFIs and their contribution towards food system change.

3.4. What theorist?

A social theory that can address certain types of questions is needed to move towards addressing the objectives of this research. Pierre Bourdieu's social theories can help develop new ways to understand social movements and develop a particular kind of analysis of them. For example according to Swartz (1997) a fundamental question Bourdieu asks is "how stratified social systems of hierarchy and domination persist and reproduce inter-generationally without powerful resistance and without the conscious recognition of their members" (Swartz, 1997: 6). The answer to this question can be found then by "exploring how cultural resources, processes, and institutions hold individuals and groups in competitive and self-perpetuating hierarchies" (Swartz, 1997: 6).

While Bourdieu says little about movements explicitly in his work, this does not take away from the important contribution Bourdieu's theories can make to understanding social movements (Husu, 2013). Observations that social movements are a normal part of society were highlighted earlier in this chapter. Bourdieu's understanding of society is based on the idea that conflict and struggles for power are a fundamental part of how society functions (Swartz, 1997). Therefore his theorisation of society has particular affinity with contemporary social movement manifestations that are a normal part of society; and can help us to understand their dynamics, the conflicts they raise and their struggle for power.

Della Porta and Diani (2006) observe how Bourdieu's theories have been used to explain specific conflict events in social movements, however with focus on developing a cultural understanding of them. They acknowledge that more broadly, applying Bourdieu to the analysis of social movements can be used to understand social movement conflicts stressing their cultural meaning, providing for a structural

analysis that links cultural habits and predispositions and their structural determinants to explain social movement activism. Nick Crossley is an advocate of applying Bourdieu's theories to the study of social movements. Della Porta and Diani (2006) also refer to Crossley's (2002a) proposal of a new theoretical model for social movement analysis that combines elements of American and European approaches to the study of social movements. Crossley (2003) also argues that Bourdieu's theory of practice provides for a multi-dimensional analysis of what shapes social movements, arguing that some approaches have focused too narrowly on the economic, which can mean that much social movement activity seems irrational if judged in this way. Social movement theories can explain different aspects of movements, at different stages of development. Bourdieu's theory of practice offers: "the tools to make sense of the basic preconditions of movement emergence and development" allowing exploration of the diverse areas where social movements are played out and the strains, opportunities and resource flows that result in their formation (Crossley, 2002a: 182). Using Bourdieu can help bridge the divide between old and new social movement theories, where traditional social movement theories do not allow for adequate dealing with both agency and structure, helping to combine micro and macro analysis (Crossley, 2002a). For example Connolly (2006) highlights how Bourdieu's theories help to reconcile the focus on structure in some social movement theories, such as RMT. Husu (2013) argues Bourdieu's theories are compatible with political process theory and help to overcome the focus on structural interpretations offered by political process theory, helping to introduce concepts that allow interpretations to account for agency. Bourdieu's concept of fields has an affinity with political process theory both seeing that broad societal process can affect how social space (fields) is structured and the balance of power over resources. Diani (1997) proposes using Bourdieu's capital concept to evaluate movement outcomes, which are not well understood, by measuring their capacity to produce social capital, and proposes that social capital can enhance a social movement's ability to contribute to change.

Crossley (1999; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2003) proposes a new theoretical model for the analysis of social movements based on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, focusing on his theory of practice, and the concepts capital, habitus and field. He also

advocates for integrating aspects of social movement theory to make up for deficiencies in Bourdieu's theories, such as Smelser's value added model that sees social movements as a response to strains in social systems (Crossley, 2002a). Crossley (2002c) has applied Bourdieu, for example to understand the mental health movement and argues participants choose specific forms of protest because of the 'habitus' they possess. Della Porta and Diani (2006) observe that Crossley's work has parallels with the structuration theory framework. For structuralists, social structure is a determinant of social life, which human agency has little impact on, however structuration theory attempts to overcome the dualism between agency and structure recognising human agency and structure as dynamic and changing (Sewell, 1992). Crossley (2002a) is also clear about the advantage of using Bourdieu compared to more specific social movement theories. It offers a coherent framework for social movement analysis. Social movement theories offer avenues towards particular insights, such as identity and framing processes, but Bourdieus's theory of practice offers a broad theory for analysis of social movements as a whole. Crossley (2002a: 182) tentatively proposes that the theory of practice 'formula' [(habitus) + (capital)] + field = practice could be re-written in the social movement context as [(habitus) + (capital)] + field = movement.

This research applies two of Bourdieu's key concepts that are part of a theory of practice: field and capital. These concepts are focused on structure, rather than agency, which is the focus of the habitus concept. This research does not explore habitus in relation to AFIs. The habitus is an internalised, unconscious set of dispositions that affects action. Exploring this concept would require a methodology not immediately compatible with exploring the field and capital concepts, as understanding it focuses on individual's internal thoughts and actions. Attempting to analyse habitus in this research would have been overly ambitious for this study, but focusing on habitus in future research would compliment this study, helping to merge analysis of both structure and agency in social movement theorisation. Bagguley (1992) observes that in analysing social movements conducting structural analysis is a first step, but to understand them in greater detail other elements must also be examined, such as the beliefs or cultural resources the movement generates and how collective action is achieved. This study is therefore a first step in

understanding AFIs as part of a social movement theorisation and also raises key research questions for the future study of AFIs from a social movement perspective.

This research develops a structural understanding of the dynamics of AFIs taken as a whole. Bourdieu is fitting because his theories are not too focused on one aspect of social structure, but are a broad theory of social structure and action, making it suitable to explain a social phenomenon as a whole. The practice of alternative food and how AFIs operate in fields, the interactions and power relations that are acted out because of capital possessed is central to developing understanding of the basic characteristics of AFIs. These dynamics are then also used to illuminate how AFIs fit within the general concept of a social movement.

3.5 Conclusion

The previous chapter reviewing AFI literature highlighted a need for new approaches to research that can address pivotal questions for AFIs, such as their impacts in contributing to an improved food system. The conceptual framework as outlined in this chapter facilitates advancement in understanding of the role of AFIs in the food system. In addition, applying Bourdieu's theories does not embed this research too deeply in social movement theory. This is a deliberate approach because it is uncertain if AFIs can be considered a social movement. If not a true social movement applying social movement theories to the study of AFIs would not be appropriate. Rather a broader social theory with relevance to social movement analysis, the theories of Pierre Bourdieu in this case, is deemed more appropriate. This research offers an explanation of the social, cultural and economic dynamics AFIs, which are then evaluated against the concept and characteristics of a social movement. The next chapter explores Bourdieu as a social theorist and his social theories, focusing on those aspects of relevance for this research, i.e. field and capital.

Chapter 4

The Theories of Pierre Bourdieu

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined how social movement theory provides an appropriate overarching theoretical framework for addressing the objectives of this research. It was also outlined how Bourdieu's theories of capital and fields are appropriate theories to underpin the analysis of AFIs, so they can then be evaluated against the concept of a social movement. Detailed in this chapter is Bourdieu's position within wider social theory. His theory of practice is explained, focusing on the two key concepts applied in this research, fields and capital. Finally some research in agri-food studies that has applied Bourdieu's theories is reviewed to provide some contextual focus and examples of how these theories can be applied in agri-food studies. The chapter is informed by three strands of writing: Bourdieu's own theoretical works; writings that explain, evaluate and critique Bourdieu's theories; and research that applies Bourdieu's theory of practice.

Bourdieu was a prolific writer and this chapter draws on a number of his essays and broader writings. When trying to distil the essence of Bourdieu's concepts, because his own works are empirically based, the prime aspects of his theories are difficult to extract. The work presenting a dialogue between Bourdieu and an analyst of Bourdieu's, Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* was of particular use because of its accessibility and focus on key concepts. In addition, Bourdieu's essays are very useful as they are more theoretically focused than his complete works. Those informing this chapter are: *The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups* (1985), *The Forms of Capital* (1986), *Social Space and Symbolic Power* (1989) and *Social Space and Symbolic Space* (1994).

4.2 Bourdieu and social theory

Society can be studied from different viewpoints, for example taking a macro or micro approach. Macrosociology is concerned with the wider structures of society and processes of social life, whereas microsociology is more focused on action, interaction and how meaning is constructed in society. That said, this distinction is not absolute: "much sociological research is neither clearly in one camp nor in the other, and can be seen as part of a continuing debate over the relationship between social system and social actor" (Scott and Marshall, 2009: 429). Bourdieu's approach occupies this 'in between' position. For example, Raedeke et al. (2003) describes Bourdieu as moving beyond macro theories that focus on social structure and micro theories that focus at the level of the individual. Warde (2004) suggests Bourdieu's concepts are neither macro nor micro, but look at social structures somewhere in between, which can be understood as 'meso' level.

Another common categorisation of social theory is that concepts have a focus on either agency or structure (Scott and Marshall, 2009). Agency, or action based theories, are characterised by the undetermined nature of human action and the social psychological nature of the actor (Scott and Marshall, 2009). Society is then produced by these collective agents. Structure on the other hand sees society as being produced by "ordered interrelationships between different elements" or "an institutional arrangement of individuals" which are "clusters of norms and meanings drawn from the culture" (Scott and Marshall, 2009: 741). While theorists have divided agency and structure, this is also seen as problematic. Society is composed of collective agents, but this is not without structure. Bourdieu aims to transcend the agency/structure dualism (Mahar et al., 1990; Scott and Marshall, 2009). His theories aim to bridge the dualism of individual and society, where they are not taken separately, but seen relationally (Swartz, 1997). The relational perspective is at the core of Bourdieu's key theories of field and habitus. They can be described as "bundles of relations" (Wacquant, 1992: 16). Bourdieu's theories do not prioritise "structure or agent, system or actor, the collective or the individual" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 15). Bourdieu's habitus concept for example has been described as occupying a space that is "a hinge between structure and agency" (Crossley, 2002a: 177).

Social theories can treat social laws, structure, or objective conditions as separate to individual minds, agency, and subjective conditions. For Bourdieu, dispositions are created by social structure, as well as being embodied and shaped in the minds of agents. This view does not fit with the epistemological traditions of phenomenology and structuralism. Bourdieu doesn't fit easily into specific theoretical traditions and is said to transcend the theories of for example Durkheimian, Weberian or Marxist thinking (Fowler, 2000; Lane, 2000). Bourdieu has been influenced by social theorists and he has also influenced others. Capital is pivotal to Marx's theories. It is material or economic capital that Marx is concerned with. Bourdieu's theory of practice builds on Marx. Bourdieu focuses on economic capital, but also other forms of capital, particularly cultural capital in shaping social life (Fowler, 2000). Bennett and Silva (2011) point out how field and habitus are re-workings of earlier theoretical traditions; however Bourdieu's cultural capital concept was a new theoretical construct. The concept of social capital has also been further developed by theorists who were influenced by Bourdieu, such as Robert Putnam and James Coleman. Bourdieu shares similarities with other theorists, such as Charles Tilly, who would also replace the notion of society with field and social space (Wacquant, 1992).

Debate exists on where Bourdieu should be correctly classified in theoretical traditions. Swartz (1997: 5) comments that Bourdieu's work can be read as: "an ongoing polemic against positivism, empiricism, structuralism, existentialism, phenomenology, economism, Marxism, methodological individualism, and grand theory." Bourdieu's theories cross classical divisions, combining subject and agent, the objective and the subjective. The relational perspective is inherent in his theories, which is also seen in the work of theorists of the structuralist tradition, such as Marx and Durkheim. However, taking his theory of fields as an example, for Bourdieu the shape and structure of fields can change, which differs from the thinking of classic structuralists. Bourdieu himself classified his work as constructivist structuralism (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Lane (2000) argues that focusing on what theoretical tradition Bourdieu's theories can be positioned within is not productive. His theories are useful, they offer a lens to view society through, expanding our

understanding of it, and when applied can dissect "the social world in ways to reveal mechanisms that we would otherwise not be able to see" (Carolan, 2005: 409).

Bourdieu has not written extensively on social movements. However his theories offer ways to understand struggles for power and domination in society, an important issue in this study. Discussing Bourdieu, Fowler (2000:1) writes his approach is: "aimed at an anti-essentialism which would reveal all the sources of domination, including the symbolic or gentle violence used by the dominants to legitimate their power." However, in his later writings he does refer more specifically to social movements. For example, in *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*, Bourdieu highlights the need for a European-wide social movement, with uniting movements across nation states, and across other boundaries such as culture, developing organisations as tools to aid coordination. He also highlights the increasing power of economic capital, and describes how in corporate Europe profit can rule. He also observed a rising culture of 'the throwaway job', where jobs lack permanence and many workers are employed in insecure employment (Bourdieu, 2003).

Bourdieu's theories have an empirical basis, he states: "the theoretical and the empirical are inseparable" (Bourdieu, 1994: 267). His development of social theory is firmly linked to empirical study, which is not an approach taken by many social theorists (Swartz, 1997). For Bourdieu, "concepts have no definition other than systematic ones, and are designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96). Commenting in 1994 on one of his central works *Distinction* Bourdieu explains its difference to other works that are recognised as grand theory, in that the concepts presented are tested through empirical research. He goes on to state: "My entire scientific enterprise is indeed based on the belief that the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality" (Bourdieu, 1994: 268). The French intellectual field is the empirical context that Bourdieu's theories emerged from. Commentators have argued that this does not limit his theories and that they have a general historical validity (Lane, 2000).

Bourdieu's writings are dense, he writes in long, non-linear sentences (Calhoun et al., 2007). Some argue his theories lack clarity and some of his concepts are not well developed. Fully understanding his concepts requires engagement with a number of Bourdieu's works. For example, Warde (2004) points out aspects of the field concept are unclear in *Distinction*, but clarified in later works. Bourdieu's concepts developed throughout his career, perhaps because of his firmly empirical approach to theory building. Mahar et al.'s (1990: 3) explanation of how Bourdieu's theories are developed is that "he works in a spiral between theory, empirical work and back to reformulating theory again."

The density of Bourdeu's writing, and the need for engagement with a number of his works to fully understand them, creates difficulties for research using his concepts in empirical analysis (Warde, 2004). Understanding Bourdieu's theories could be the subject of intensive research, and because of this fact, primary as well as secondary writings are important when applying Bourdieu's theories in this research, to ensure accurate understanding and application of his concepts. Wacquant (1992: 5) observes that while secondary literature is growing and translations of his major works have facilitated broader engagement with his theories, "Bourdieu remains something of an intellectual enigma." Swartz (1997) notes it was not until 1994 that all of his major works were translated into English. Before this, secondary criticism was based on available readings. A criticism held against Bourdieu's work is that social order is presented as being too consensual and overly determined by habits, rather than agents being critical and reflexive. But it has also been argued that it is because of partial understanding of his theories that led him to be incorrectly classified as a social reproduction theorist. Critics of Bourdieu tend to be very critical. Swartz (1997: 3) observes that critics are often polarised with either "disciples" or those who have "disdainful dismissal". A more balanced criticism is observed as emerging in more recent years.

The complexity and density of Bourdeu's concepts are also one of their strengths. Warde (2004: 2-3) writes "His general reluctance to formalise his concepts makes it difficult for others to produce equally cogent analyses of other empirical phenomena. Yet sociology needs as much as ever complex and coherent meso-level concepts

which can account for the mechanics of structural and institutional change." It is Bourdieu's meso-level concepts which makes them particularly useful in the context of this research, which looks at a phenomenon that is in-between the individual and the institutional, the private and the public sphere.

4.2.1 A theory of practice

Bourdieu's most significant contribution to the social sciences has been described as his attempt to formulate a general theory of social practice (Mahar et al., 1990). The relational nature of Bourdieu's theories is clear in the theory of practice. Social worlds are constructed by relations between different basic elements: field, habitus and different forms of capital. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984: 95) presents the elements of practice as an equation: "[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice[10]" (Crossley, 2002a). Fields are relatively autonomous and composed of a network of relations between different positions, such as domination, subordination and homology. Capital is a resource, an object of value with which the game is played. Different types of capital are valued to varying degrees in different fields. This affects how the game is played and how power is distributed between players of the game (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 1992). The concepts that make up Bourdieu's theory of practice are interconnected in many ways. Field and capital are tightly linked. There is no field without capital that circulates within it. The game (or field) is structured by the strategies of the player, which is affected by the volume and structure of capital, which can be specific to a point in time, but also evolves through time. Players can also have their own specific strategies in the game, such as trying to alter how specific forms of capital are distributed in the field; they may try to increase or conserve the capital they possess (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Habitus is structured by capital and fields, and is described by Bourdieu (1986) as the product of the internalisation of the structures of the social world. Habitus is the collection of internal dispositions that unconsciously affect how agents act, but also means their actions are strategically geared towards achieving specific outcomes in line with their dispositions (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997). Overall, practice can be understood as the effect of agents that interact in fields, who possess capital and habitus, which makes them "differently disposed and unequally resourced" (Crossley

[10] Commentators note the equation gives a straightforward, but also possibly too formulaic, view of the theory of practice.

2002a: 171). The capital and field concepts are the main focus of the next sections, with brief attention to other aspects of a theory of practice.

4.3 Capital

Capital is a central concept when using the theory of practice to understand society. Bourdieu (1987: 3) writes: "the social world can be conceived as a multi-dimensional space that can be constructed empirically by discovering the main factors of differentiation which account for the differences observed in a given social universe, or, in other words, by discovering the powers, or forms of capital."

Capital is likened to power and the function and structure of the social world is governed by it. It structures the social world, and can be a constraint that impacts on opportunities for success: "capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices" (Bourdieu, 1986: 47).

Capital also takes various forms, or guises, of which there are endless forms (Bourdieu, 1986). Commentators, such as Waldstrøm and Lind Haase-Svendsen (2008) point out that contemporary literature assessing capital highlights a growing range of capital types, such as organisational, religious and digital capital. However there are also key fundamental types of capital outlined by Bourdieu (1986: 47):

> "Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital,* which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital,* which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital,* made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of a title of nobility."

Symbolic capital is also another fundamental form. It is a more abstract concept than other capitals. Other capital forms can become symbolic capital. It is described as: "the form that one or other of these species takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that recognise its specific logic or, if you prefer, misrecognise the arbitrariness of its possession and accumulation" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119).

Capital also has general traits. In social space capital has a volume. Capital is accumulated over time and at one point in time it can have greater significance than others. Capital orders social space by its volume, or the volume in which actors possess it. An increase in one type of capital can result in the decrease of another: "profits in one area are necessarily paid for by costs in another" (Bourdieu, 1986: 54). One form of capital can be used to gain another, while economic capital can be directly, and immediately converted into money, social and cultural capital are converted indirectly, such as through employment or marriage, and cannot be converted immediately (Bourdieu, 1986; Calhoun, 2006). Agents that accumulate one form of capital can also often accumulate others. Capital also tends to reproduce itself between generations (Carolan, 2005; Bennett and Silva, 2011). Bourdieu (1994) argues that the more economic and cultural capital agents have in common, the closer they are in social space. Those with less of these capitals in common are more distant in social space. Groups of agents that are closer in social space are more disposed to developing closer relations or coming together to mobilise. This conceptualisation of social space allows for the construction of "theoretical classes" which are explanatory categories and not real classes or groups (Bourdieu, 1994: 273).

Capital is a resource that gives advantage to those who hold it (Bennett and Silva, 2011). It can become: "like aces in a game of cards, in this particular universe, that is, in the struggle (or competition) for the appropriation of scarce goods of which this universe is the site" (Bourdieu, 1987: 3). Those who possess higher amounts of capital can have advantages over others. Agents possess different forms of capital and in different amounts, which then infers different life chances and opportunities (Crossley, 2002a). Groups can possess different amounts of different kinds of capital

(Lane, 2000). While it can be an empowering force and advantageous to those who hold it, it can also be a constraint.

Each form of capital also has a distinct structure, which also has a role in ordering social space. The structure of social space "is given by the distribution of the various forms of capital, that is, by the distribution of the properties which are active within the universe under study- those properties capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder" (Bourdieu, 1987: 4). This can also change over time and the lines between different capitals can be blurred (Bourdieu, 1986; Lane, 2000; Calhoun, 2006). While each form of capital is distinct, they are also connected to each other and interact. Some are more closely related than others. For example, social and cultural capital are more closely related to each other than to economic capital.

As one form of capital can be used to gain other kinds, agent's acquire social power through their interplay (Bourdieu 1986; Swartz, 1997; Crowley, 2006). Bourdieu (1986) uses the example of educational achievement to illustrate how capitals are converted. He sees the explanation that academic achievement is linked to capabilities as inadequate, but that this is affected also by cultural, social and economic capital. If cultural capital is held by the family on the importance of education, this will support education. Also the education achieved and what use is made of it, in terms of economic and social yields is also dependent on inherited social capital. Empirical research has also highlighted how different forms of capital are exchanged and transformed. Crossley (2003) for example observes that at social movement events and seminars that many forms of capital are circulated and exchanged, such as cultural, symbolic and social. Svendsen et al. (2010) explores how entrepreneurs turn social capital into economic capital. Converting capital into another form is not always straightforward. For example, Scott (2012) argues that musicians, who are not paid for their music, but produce and perform music in their spare time, can be classed as 'cultural entrepreneurs' who lack economic capital, but use social, cultural and symbolic capital to make up for this, with the ultimate aim that career aspirations can be sustained, by converting these forms of capital into economic capital.

Understanding practice must work to explain how capital is transformed into other types and the laws that underpin their transformation (Bourdieu, 1986). The transformation of capitals into other forms is a complex process. Swartz (1997) highlights how some forms convert more easily to others. Certain resources can be more easily gained from exchange of specific types of capital: "some goods and services can be obtained directly and immediately through economic capital. But other goods and services are accessible only through social capital and cultural capital" (Swartz, 1997: 80).

Agents seek to convert capital with the least degree of loss of that capital, hence maintaining their position in social space. According to Bourdieu (1986: 55) agents that hold most capital want to disguise its link to economic capital, however: "everything that helps to disguise the economic aspect also tends to increase the risk of loss." This also then "introduces a high degree of uncertainty into all transactions between holders of different types" (Bourdieu, 1986: 55). For example Bourdieu cites social capital, and the obligations attached to it are usable in the long term, but the length of this term varies, within this there is therefore: "the risk of ingratitude, the refusal of that recognition of unguaranteed debts which such exchanges aim to produce" (Bourdieu, 1986: 55).

Acquiring capital occurs at different rates depending on the type of capital. Economic capital transmission is more obvious than cultural capital. This is a more complex process. Cultural capital must be cultivated and requires effort and personal investment by the investor, while economic capital, can be transmitted almost instantly, such as by receiving a gift or conducting a financial transaction (Bourdieu, 1986). There can also be cyclical patterns in capital conversion. For example "economic capital is translated first into varied forms of social, cultural and symbolic capital whose possession provides the key to occupational preferment and thus for conversion back into economic capital" (Bennett and Silva, 2011: 429). The transformation of capital into other forms also requires a time investment, and investing this time means the agent sees the capital as valuable, for example viewed from a narrowly economic perspective investing in the generation of social capital is: "bound to be seen as pure wastage, but in the terms of the logic of social exchanges,

it is a solid investment, the profits of which will appear, in the long run, in monetary or other form" (Bourdieu, 1986: 54).

Each form of capital also has its own subtypes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Also within the different sub types can be a hierarchy in the value and power of capital. For example, Allen et al. (2000) explore dominant and dominated forms of cultural capital. The cultural capital associated with classical music makes it valued more highly and has received greater recognition than that associated with the history of boxing, which is a dominated form of cultural capital. Some forms of capital can be valued more highly than others, and hence are more powerful, most notably economic capital (Carolan, 2005; Swartz, 1997). Players can work to discredit different forms of capital with the aim of increasing the value of the capital they wish to become more powerful (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In the next section sections, the particularities of each of the main forms of capital - cultural, social, economic and symbolic - are explored.

4.3.1 Economic capital

Economic capital is made up of material resources and can be described as any resource directly convertible into wealth or financial benefits. It can be tangible, such as money and property. Economic capital is described as the most powerful form of capital. It tends to dominate other capital forms, which are generally subordinate to it (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997). Swartz (1997) for example argues that cultural capital in western society is dominated by economic capital.

Other forms of capital are linked to economic capital, it can shape them and they can depend on it. Allen et al. (2000) argue how those with economic capital can gain cultural and symbolic capital from for example paying fees that allows them to access a university education or be a member of an exclusive club. A central point in the logic of how capital functions is that economic capital can be used to gain other forms of capital and the effects this can have, because "economic capital is at the root of all other types of capital" (Bourdieu, 1986: 54). Other capitals are described as "disguised forms of economic capital" and they "produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal…the fact that economic capital is at their

root" (Bourdieu, 1986: 54). While economic capital is at the base of other capital forms, according to Bourdieu (1986) economic capital gives access to certain kinds of resources, such as goods and services, but some resources it cannot access, such as the social capital gained from long established relationships. Transmitting economic capital can be done quickly if necessary, but generating it is more complex. This can also be tied up with social and cultural capital. Social and cultural capital are used to generate economic capital, but having the relationship between capitals work this way is said to be more challenging, than using economic capital to gain social or cultural capital (Swartz, 1997).

4.3.2 Social capital

Social capital is a much used concept in social research, also crossing into other disciplines (Waldstrøm and Lind Haase Svendsen, 2008). It can be a useful concept in highlighting the value of social relationships to individuals and society, and how social inequalities and advantages are reproduced. Bourdieu's conceptualisation of social capital does not construct social capital as having only positive effects in society. Social capital's distribution can result in the reproduction of social structures, maintaining status for some and inequality for others (Holt, 2008). The concept can likened to others such as Granoveter's (1985) notion of embeddedness which sees economic action as embedded in social relations and networks. Embeddedness has been applied by Sage (2003) to examine AFNs in the south west of Ireland and Hinrichs (2000) and Winter (2003) in exploring local food systems. Theorists have also extended the social capital concept and broken it down into different forms, such as bridging and bonding social capital, actual and potential social capital (Waldstrøm and Lind Haase Svendsen, 2008). This research stays close to Bourdieu's own conceptualisation of social capital because it uses other forms of capital in its analysis and is more interested in how capitals interact than social capital itself. Analysis of the different types of social capital in AFIs would however be a potential area of further analysis of this research's qualitative dataset.

According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is produced from social relationships, and is based fundamentally on social exchanges. It is made up of resources generated from social connections and group membership (Bourdieu, 1987). Social capital can

be defined as: “the aggregate of actual or potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network…or…to membership in a group” (Bourdieu, 1986: 51). Group membership means that agents have access to the collective capital that is owned by the group. The volume of social capital an agent can mobilise depends on the size of the network the agent is connected with, and also the volume of other types of capital possessed by agents in this network. Therefore social capital is never independent of other capitals, such as cultural and economic capital. The resources or profits gained from social capital may not be consciously pursued. Profits are however based on solidarity and stem from group membership (Bourdieu, 1986).

Generating social capital must continuously be re-affirmed. This takes time and energy, and is also dependent on competence, that is knowledge of these relationships and skill at using them to generate social capital. Social capital and the social relationships it is based on are therefore also not a natural given, but are: “the product of investment in strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term” (Bourdieu, 1986: 52). The use of these relationships can be in “transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighbourhood, the workplace or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)” (Bourdieu, 1986: 52). When social capital is exchanged within the group this happens through social exchange and there is a mutual recognition of group membership. This mutual recognition is said reproduce the group and defines its limits; however these limits can also change. Each group member is “a custodian of the limits of the group: because the definition of the criteria of entry is at stake in each new entry, he can modify the group by modifying the limits of legitimate exchange” (Bourdieu, 1986: 52). To attempt to preserve the group’s existence, the occasions, places and practices deemed legitimate to the group will be favoured over those deemed illegitimate and individuals admitted to it will be as homogenous as possible, according to Bourdieu (1986).

According to Bourdieu (1986: 53) groups can concentrate the collective power of their social capital with a small group of agents who represent the group and speak on its behalf. These agents protect its weakest members and regulate access to the group. They can exert power and authority over the group, or symbolic power. This is likened to nobility, or the leader of a movement, and is termed the group's "institutionalized forms of delegation." This does not necessarily occur in all groups, but can "when the group is large and its members weak" and can also contain "the seeds of an embezzlement or misappropriation of the capital which they assemble" (Bourdieu, 1986: 53). Individuals can also accumulate social capital, and because of this: "they are well known, are worthy of being known…they are known to more people that they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive" (Bourdieu, 1986: 52-3).

While economic capital can be transferred quickly, social capital has a more complex economy of time. Social capital can be used quickly, if established for a long time, but is the result of a long term investment in social relationships. There is likely a time lag between capital investment and capital exchange (Bourdieu, 1986). Generating social capital requires "a solid investment, the profits of which will appear in the long run" (Bourdieu, 1986: 54).

4.3.3 Cultural capital

Bourdieu describes cultural capital broadly as "informational capital" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119). It can be understood as knowledge in society that is deemed worthy of pursuit (Allen et al., 2000). Sub types of cultural capital take three forms - the embodied, objectified and institutionalised states. Cultural capital can also then be used as symbolic capital, which is discussed in the next section.

Embodied cultural capital is termed "culture cultivation" and takes the form of "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). The transmission of embodied cultural capital happens in a manner that is not obvious or immediately visible. Similar to social capital, creating embodied cultural capital also requires investment of time. According to Bourdieu (1986), possessing this time is tied with possession of economic capital. Bourdieu (1986) uses the example of the

family and how cultural capital is transmitted over time. Having time to invest in the transmission of cultural capital depends on the possession of economic capital. The family's time is not taken up with generating economic capital, so they can invest in generating embodied cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital is acquired at different rates depending on the period in time, the particular society and the social class of the agents. The less time spent on activities that work on acquiring economic capital, the more prolonged the process of acquisition of cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital can also be acquired unconsciously, and inherited in ways that are not visible to observe. Bourdieu (1986:49) argues "the transmission of cultural capital is no doubt the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital." This nature of cultural capital means for Bourdieu (1986:49) that "its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence…the specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits." Possessing embodied cultural capital does not however easily transfer into more powerful forms of capital, such as economic capital. For example, Bennett and Silva (2011) highlight how Bourdieu was critical of the effectiveness of government policies in advanced capitalist societies aiming to generate cultural capital to reduce social inequality. Such policies aimed to help agents gain more cultural capital with the intention that this can be converted into other capitals to reduce social inequality. Effectiveness is questioned because cultural capital is subordinate to political and economic capital, making its conversion into these capital forms difficult.

The second form of cultural capital, objectified cultural capital has a dialectical relationship with embodied cultural capital. Put simply, embodied cultural capital is: "objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments etc." (Bourdieu, 1986: 50). Objectified cultural capital can however be acquired with economic capital, but this does not mean the agent also possesses embodied cultural capital. Objectified cultural capital is an important part of struggles in the fields of cultural production and social classes where "agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital" (Bourdieu, 1986: 50).

Cultural capital in the institutionalised state "confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee" (Bourdieu, 1986: 47). Institutionalised cultural capital is also linked with economic capital because when institutional recognition is conferred on a form of cultural capital, through academic qualification where holders of similar qualifications compete in the labour market for example, cultural capital can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural capital has also been classed as highbrow or lowbrow (Holt, 2008; Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). This aspect of cultural capital is reflective of the empirical context in which Bourdieu developed the concept and its depiction in his work *Distinction*[11]. From this respect the concept can be critiqued, however it has also been argued this does not mean it is not relevant to modern analysis (Prieur and Savage, 2011). The circulation of cultural capital outlined by Bourdieu is also much more complex than highbrow and lowbrow (Bennett and Silva, 2011). For example, in relation to the profits available to agents who possess cultural capital, this is determined by competition between the agent and other agents for cultural goods, it is not pre-determined, which highbrow and lowbrow forms would suggest. A scarcity of cultural capital can generate social value for cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Those who possess large amounts of cultural capital can gain symbolic profits, such as the example given by Bourdieu (1986), being able to read in a world where most others are illiterate.

4.3.4 Symbolic capital

Not necessarily a new form of capital, symbolic capital is more correctly described as a specific function of existing capitals. This is noted to be one of Bourdieu's most complex concepts (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119). Symbolic capital can be defined as: "The form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1987: 4). When capitals gain symbolic capital

[11] Some of Bourdieu's logic in *Distinction* does seem out of place in modern society. For example, very simply put his construction of the working class aesthetic is based around immediate satisfaction of present need. This is attributed to a lack of leisure time and having little time for engagement with the arts and intellectual activities. Focus on present needs because of financial limitations is said to create predispositions for substantial rather than fine cuisine (Lane, 2000).

they are more powerful and "tend to reproduce and to reinforce the power relations that constitute the structure of the social space" (Bourdieu, 1989: 21).

Symbolic capital is powerful: "In the struggle to make a vision of the world universally known and recognized, the balance of power depends on the symbolic capital accumulated by those who aim at imposing the various visions in contention, and on the extent to which these visions are themselves grounded in reality" (Bourdieu, 1987: 15). The power that symbolic capital can confer on agents can also be the object of conflict and struggle. Symbolic power is described by Bourdieu (1989: 23) as the power of world making and to change the world involves altering symbolic power: "that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced." Altering symbolic power requires however "the power to impose upon other minds a vision" which "depends on the social authority acquired in previous struggles" and is dependent on "the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality" (Bourdieu, 1989: 23). Therefore what is very important in gaining symbolic power is the ability to distinguish, to classify and make the group visible.

Each of the main forms of capital have been detailed. The balance and structure of capital in social space is a key part of what determines social practice: "Agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets" (Bourdieu, 1989: 17). Another key part of the structure of social space are fields, which are structured by capital and this aspect is discussed in the next section.

4.4 Social space and fields

For Bourdieu, social space is divided into what can be described as spheres of 'play' or fields where social action is played out. Social space is constructed by: "a field of forces, i.e. as a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field" (Bourdieu, 1985: 724). Agents occupy fields based on "the overall volume of the capital they possess and…the composition of their capital – i.e.

according to the relative weight of the different kinds of assets within their total assets" (Bourdieu, 1985: 724).

Fields are based on a view of society as consisting of relatively autonomous sectors, such as the economy, arts, media, politics, science, law, education, and within these sectors is a web of social relations that individual agents are part of. Social space is thus made up of numerous different types of fields. Friedland (2009) writes of the endless fields of Pierre Bourdieu and according to Swartz (1997: 123) there are "as many fields as there are forms of capital." Examples of fields include: the economic field, the social field, the cultural field, the artistic field, the scientific field, the media field, the legal field, the environment field and the parliamentary field.

The field of power is however the primary field of social practice. Its rules impact on all other fields. Swartz (1997) describes how there is a fundamental opposition between economic and cultural capital, they have a 'chiasmatic structure' and this structures the field of power. It is outlined that agents draw either predominantly on economic capital or cultural capital and this underpins most conflicts in society: "As a general rule, Bourdieu finds that the greater the difference in asset structure of these two types of capital, the more likely it is that individuals and groups will be opposed in their power struggle for domination" (Swartz, 1997: 137). The economic field is also a very powerful field in advanced capitalist societies (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu uses a sport's game analogy to illuminate the field concept. A field can be compared, with caution, to a sport's game (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Those who act in social space are likened to players of a sport's game. Bourdieu generally terms these players 'agents'. Each type of field is like a distinct game that is played by its own rules and has its own objects of value and objectives (Crossley, 2002a). In a similar way that a sport's game is competitive, some players in fields can be in competition. Some agents will seek to preserve their place in the game, while some will work to change and occupy a different position. Others will struggle to gain the resources or skills to play the game. The resources that give some players more power, that allow some to change their position and others to join in and play the game, are particular types of capital. When discussing fields, capital will inevitably

enter the discussion because they are strongly intertwined and closely connected concepts. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 98-9) go so far as to argue that in empirically based constructions of fields and capital that: "it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, etc., and to determine what species of capital are active in it, within what limits, and so on."

4.4.1 The characteristics of fields

The sets of relations at work in fields are objective and historical. The foundation of these sets of relations between different positions in a field is determined by certain forms of power, or capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Struggles over capital are central to how fields function, which is focused on in the next section. The other main characteristics of fields are the focus of this section.

Each field has its own logic of action (Bourdieu, 1985). For example, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 97-98) describe the artistic field as "rejecting or reversing the law of material profit" and the economic field as a space "where the enchanted relations of friendship and love are in principle excluded." Players of the game or social agents in fields take up different positions. Bourdieu explains that while agents can have the same amount of capital overall, they can differ in their position in a game because of the balance of capitals that makes up their overall capital. Agents may have more economic capital than cultural capital, or vice versa, which affects agents "position takings" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99). Two basic positions in fields are the dominant and subordinate positions, which are determined by capital possessed by agents (Swartz, 1997). Positions are not however static. Different types of capital can also move between these positions (Crossley, 2003). This then affects other positions in that field, because they are relational. However this does not occur easily. Three strategies in fields can maintain or change positions, which are conversion, succession and subversion:

> "Conversion strategies tend to be pursued by those who hold dominant positions and enjoy seniority in the field. Strategies of succession are attempts to gain access to dominant positions in a field and are generally pursued by the new entrants…strategies of subversion are pursued by those who expect to gain little from the dominant groups. These strategies take the form of a more or less radical rupture with the dominant group by challenging its legitimacy to define the standards of the field" (Swartz, 1997: 125).

The general dynamic at work in fields is one of power and domination. If relations between agents are stable, this is not because there is equilibrium, but agents are effectively dominated (Crossley, 2002a). So if there is no conflict in fields, then this means that agents are dominated by those who hold the type of capital that is valued most in that field.

Agents that act in fields also hold what is termed 'illusio', which is an investment in being part of action in that field or they see worth in playing the game. Illusio can also vary depending on the player's position in the game. The opposite of illusio is not disinterestedness, but indifference, to be unmoved by a game. 'Doxa' is another concept affecting how fields function and is a belief in the game and the stakes on offer (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Doxa supports those who may be in a subordinate position in a field to pursue their struggle because they believe the stakes on offer are worthwhile (Swartz, 1997). Doxa is not something agents are conscious of, it provides a sense of the game, allows the game to be played without agents having to consciously think out every action before putting it into practice (Crossley, 2003).

Fields are described by Bourdieu (1985: 736) as being "relatively autonomous". They are simultaneously tied with and also have a degree of independence from external factors (Swartz, 1997). This characteristic is also attributed to the fact that each field is shaped by how it has developed. The boundaries of fields can change, which can also affect their degree of autonomy from other fields. Fields can impose on each other, and in Bourdieu's more recent work he explores how the economic

field has impinged on artistic and media fields. This also means that gaining resources in some fields can be more difficult than others. Agents in acting in fields can work to change or to preserve the boundaries of the field, depending on their position in the field (Wacquant, 1992). Fields are places of struggle and changing field boundaries can be part of these struggles. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 104) explain: "Every field constitutes a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are a dynamic border which are the stake of struggles within the field itself."

Between fields themselves there are also relations that are termed "structural and functional homologies" which can mean that certain fields can be linked, resemble each other, and yet are still different fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 105-6). Bourdieu identified a structural homology between the field of power and elite higher education institutions in France (Swartz, 1997).

4.4.2 Fields and capital

Fields are structured by the volume and distribution of capital, but also by the types of capital possessed by agents (Bourdieu, 1985; 1986; Calhoun et al., 2007). The predominant capital in the economic field is economic capital, and in the artistic field it is cultural capital (Swartz, 1997). Bourdieu (1985: 724) writes: "the active properties that are selected as the principles of construction of the social space are the different kinds of power or capital that are current in the different fields." Certain groups and individuals hold more of one kind of capital, and also value certain forms of capital more than others. For example those in the business sector would typically possess more economic capital and value it more highly than those in the cultural or artistic fields who would, potentially and typically, value and possess more cultural than economic capital (Allen et al., 2000). Bourdieu uses the analogy of a poker game to show how capital can circulate in fields: "picture each player as having in front of her a pile of tokens of different colours, each colour corresponding to a different species of capital…the moves that she makes, more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative, depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens that she retains" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99).

For capital to be of value it must be acknowledged and recognised as valuable in a field. Capital that is valued highly in one field can be of lesser value in another (Carolan, 2005). Capital acts as a resource in fields, giving agents different opportunities, depending on the capital they possess and its value in the field (Crossley, 2002a). There are also 'trump cards' or 'master cards', which are the forces, or types of capital, most dominant and most valued in the field relative to other forms of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Fields can also be likened to battlefields, because they are: "simultaneously a space of conflict and competition…in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it" (Wacquant, 1992: 17). The volume and distribution of different capital types determines power relations between agents in fields and the potential of agents to gain access to the field's profits (Bourdieu, 1985). Agents in fields will not always share the same goals. This means conflict, competition and struggle in fields is usually part of how fields function (Wacquant, 1992; Carolan, 2005). Fields are sites of struggle over capital as different forms of capital can be unequally distributed in them (Crossley, 2003; Swartz, 1997). For example there may be struggles over capital, as one form of capital becomes more dominant than another. Fields can overlap, and conflicts over capital can be found in these overlapping spaces between different fields (Crossley, 2002a). The infringement of one field into another, for example the economic field on the artistic field, can cause conflict. Crossley (2003: 62) argues: "participants seek to achieve change in other fields (e.g. the political field) and because other fields, such as the economic and media fields, intrude upon it in a variety of ways (sometimes beneficial, sometimes not)." This can also cause field boundaries to change; fields can become more or less autonomous, as different fields interact to a greater or lesser degree with each other. For example, Couldry (2004) outlines how Bourdieu assesses the internal workings of the media field in his lectures *On Television and Journalism*. It is argued that the media is a key force in cultural reproduction, which has evolved to lack autonomy as it is increasingly influenced by pressures from economic and cultural forces. Crossley (2002a) points to how much of Bourdieu's later work focused on the infringement of the economic field on other social fields

such as cultural fields in the arts and media. These dynamics of conflict and struggle contribute to change in social spaces.

The value of capital in fields can also be the focus of struggle, where agents work to change the capital most valued (Swartz, 1997). Agents who possess the most capital can work to preserve how capital is distributed in a field. Other agents can seek to change which capitals are most valued in the field and work to change how capital is distributed. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) discuss how players who play the game to change its rules through altering the value of capital, partly or completely. Depending on which struggle wins out, the value of certain capitals in the specific field or game can be changed. This can involve: "strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital upon which the force of their opponent rests (e.g. economic capital) and to valorise the species of capital they preferentially possess (e.g. juridical capital)" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99).

If agents enter into struggle in a particular field, they must also play by the rules of that game in how their struggle is played out (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). There are legitimate and illegitimate forms of struggle in different fields, such as for example in professional fields agents must play by accepted, legitimate professional behaviour (Swartz, 1997). Struggles between agents over capital can be an ongoing part of fields through time (Allen et al., 2000). This helps to explain why fields are described as historical relations. Lane (2000) observes that Bourdieu began to trace major changes in fields in his 1984 work *Distinction*, the strengthening of the economic pole in the social field, and then consequently weakening of cultural and intellectual poles.

Habitus is the final element that makes up Bourdieu's theory of social practice. It is not used to interpret the qualitative data in this research, but it is still important to provide a general outline of the concept, for example because of its potential application in future research. Focusing on fields and capital is more appropriate to this research's objectives, because of its emphasis on explaining the characteristics of AFIs to understand more about their broader role in society. Habitus is briefly explained in the next section.

4.5 Habitus

Habitus consists of an internal, unconscious set of dispositions that shape action. Bourdieu (1989:18) describes habitus as "the mental structures" through which agents "apprehend the social world". Habitus is shaped by life experiences, such as childhood or big life events and it steers agents towards certain kinds of action. Habitus has been likened to a "second nature" created by human nature affected by historical social experiences (Crossley, 2002a: 171). Capital is also involved in the generation of habitus and what agents feel is possible (Crossley, 2002c; Calhoun 2006; Bennett and Silva, 2011). The set of dispositions that compose habitus are lasting, acquired schemes of perception, thought and action. Each agent will have a specific habitus, but it is also a collective phenomenon, where specific groups or classes can share habitus (Crossley, 2002a; Raedeke et al., 2003).

Generation of a habitus involves the internalisation of our life history and the aspects of the social world affecting us, such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education and social class. While habitus is subjective and part of the mental experience of the agent, the conditions that create it are objective social structures. These objective structures of the field are learned by the agent and become the subjective dispositions that shape their actions, perceptions and thoughts. As agents operate in a field they learn its rules and can more easily act in the field as they understand its parameters. Crossley (2003: 61) for example highlights: "The disposition towards critique and protest, the evidence suggests, is generated through involvement in critique and protest." Some agents are more likely to develop particular dispositions. Again Crossley (2003: 61) for example highlights in relation to a disposition towards critique of the social world: "as exposure to contexts of critique has a social and class distribution, so too does the likelihood of acquiring this disposition. In particular, family and higher educational experiences appear to be important sites for facilitating (or not) exposure."

Habitus has been critiqued from many respects. It has been described as too versatile and an ambiguous concept. However in response to this it is argued habitus should only be applied to answer certain kinds of questions: "Bourdieu resists distinguishing

between cognitive, moral and corporal dimensions of action. His idea is to identify underlying master patterns that represent deep structural patterns that cross-cut and find characteristic forms of expression in all of these dimensions" (Swartz, 1997: 109). Another criticism of the habitus concept is that social experiences are internalised to form the habitus, and that this occurs without flaw, however agents perceive things differently, meaning the same social experiences may not lead to the same habitus formation. According to Swartz (1997: 111) "the reproduction dimension of habitus fails to give analogous insight into the complexity and ambiguity of individual perceptions of external realities." Habitus has been criticised for being too deterministic. While habitus is not part of consciousness, it does not mean we act unconsciously led only by the habitus. It is made by social experiences in the social world, it can also be re-made by them (Crossley, 2002a). Carolan (2005: 390) highlights how habitus must be positioned against cultural constraints, meaning people are not acting as "cultural dopes". Agents can transform their habitus to maintain or change their position within the field. Crossley (2002a) argues that agents can have a well developed 'feel for the game' and are not blind followers but strategic actors. Agents can also gain more than a feel for the game, but become 'practical masters' of it. Lane (2000: 154) argues that: "the ability to select the correct trajectory to follow or the most profitable field in which to invest was less a matter of free choice than of strategy, that almost intuitive 'practical mastery' of the social field, which formed part of the bourgeois habitus."

Another critique of habitus of particular relevance in the social movement context is made by Crossley (2003). For Bourdieu a break between field and habitus only occurs during periods of crisis. Habitus is suspended in periods of crisis and replaced by different forms of praxis that are critical, rational and conscious. Crossley (2002a; 2003) disagrees with this aspect of Bourdieu's thinking, and argues that it is not just in periods of crisis that these aspects of practice co-exist, but also in periods of social stability. He argues that if theorising social movement development, this crisis theory is too simplistic a theorisation of movement development. Crossley (2002a) suggests other aspects of social movement theory can make up for this and does not take away from the wider value of using Bourdieu when analysing social movements.

This research focuses on the theories of capital and field to analyse and understand AFIs. The above discussion on habitus highlights a possibility for further understanding of AFIs using Bourdieu's theories. Groups can share habitus and understanding if agents in AFIs share habitus could help understand their degree of unity as a social group. Also in relation to using Bourdieu to understand social movements, Crossley (1999; 2003) proposes the additional forms of habitus, the radical habitus and the resistance habitus. The more traditional conceptualisation of habitus is as a structuring structure that allows existing opportunity structures to be perpetuated (Swartz, 1997). Examining which form of habitus agents acting in AFIs possess would add to our understanding of the AFIs as a social movement.

In the last chapter, some general arguments were made for the relevance of applying Bourdieu's theories to understand social movements and social change. This section now focuses on the relevance of the particular theories applied in this research.

4.6 Bourdieu, social change and social movements

Critics of Bourdieu argue his theory of practice is one of social reproduction, rather than social transformation (Raedeke et al., 2003). This would mean his theories would not be useful to understand social change. However others also add that for Bourdieu, while social structures can be reproduced, they are also at the same time in a state of permanent flux, meaning they can also change and be transformed (Crossley, 2003; Raedeke et al., 2003). Social reproduction however occurs more often than social change and Bourdieu is also concerned with why systems of domination persist and social change is difficult (Crowley, 2006). Capital and fields are important concepts in understanding why this is so.

Bourdieu's theory of practice, and the concepts of fields and capital offer: "the elements of a basic theory of social practice which can be turned to the service of movement analysis and which allows us to ground that analysis in a more satisfactory way" (Crossley, 2002a: 171). For example, Crossley (1999) examines the emergence of the mental health user movement in Britain using a theory of practice. It is argued the struggles of the movement straddled a number of discrete

social fields, in addition to the mental health field, such as the political, media and legal fields. The media field was important to the strengthening the movement. Aspects of the movement were highlighted because of their newsworthiness, which then resulted in the movement gaining a higher public profile, increasing its membership and mobilising social capital. Its new members came with various forms of capital, which the movement could utilise in various ways. For example the presence of a solicitor helped to strengthen its position in the legal field. The increase in size of the movement also led to a change in its dynamics with a move away from the purity of its original vision for change.

Capital is sometimes compared to resources, but is also likened to power (Calhoun, 2006). The concepts of economic and social capital can be used to explore how economic and social resources and power are distributed in society and offer insights on the formation of social movements and how resources and power circulate in movements. Using Bourdieu also allows for the introduction of a broader range of resource types to analysis, such as cultural and symbolic capital and their role in shaping how resources and power flow can be explored (Crossley, 2003). It is also important that this research explores the structure and volume of not just social capital, or economic capital, or cultural capital, but all three because it is in the balance and interaction of these capitals that power dynamics are illuminated. The dynamics of capital relations in fields can help to explain why social change is difficult. Crossley (2002a) compares the capital concept, which is often likened to a resource, to social movement theories, such as RMT where the shape of social movement mobilisation is explained by resource flows.

The formation of collective identity is central to collective action becoming a social movement. However, Diani (1997) proposes that social capital, as distinct from collective identity however linked with it, is also important in establishing connections between potential supporters and allies of movements and the movement itself. It is proposed these participants do not hold collective identity, but they do share a mutual recognition and trust in the movement. Diani (1997) also considers if social capital can be considered an important movement outcome. While movements use social capital, they also replicate and create new forms of it. Social capital can

impact a social movement's potential to contribute to cultural and political change, affecting their position in policy making and potential impact on cultural norms. It is argued that social capital can affect a movement's capacity to mobilise participation and shape cultural change, in addition to its ability to create subcultures emerging out of movements and links to politicians and policymakers (Diani, 1997).

Some actors in fields want to reproduce social conditions as they are. Agents with most capital pursue strategies to achieve their interests and the existing social order is then reproduced. However there can be others who struggle in the field and aim to gain capital and power. Theirs is a struggle for social change. Crossley (2002a: 179) argues the field concept allows for: "a consideration of the internal tensions which generate strains and grievances in specific areas of social life." While tensions and struggles can arise, existing social conditions may still be reproduced. But when social reproduction does not occur, this lays the ground for social change. For example, in relation to habitus, fields and social change, Swartz (1997: 113) argues: "conditions for change rather than reproduction are set up when the habitus encounters objective structures radically different from those under which it was originally formed. Yet, the weight of history decisively shapes our response in those situations."

Social movements are played out in diverse social spaces where different opportunities and constraints are encountered by social movement actors in their struggles. Social movement theories have also been concerned with how the social environment shapes movements, which can be aligned with the concept of field. The field concept can be used to explore how strains and grievances arise from specific social contexts. Fields also provide a way to understand why movements emerge and develop how they do. Crossley (2002a: 180) argues "specific fields will often have their own forms of social control, their own structures of opportunity and their specific types of resource, and thus the possibility of movement formation, development and success within them may be quite specific to them." Understanding the forms of social control, the structures of opportunity and types of resources in fields can help explain a movement's struggle to develop.

Movements themselves can also be compared to fields where internally they may also assume their own field structure, for example "the environmental movement involves its own basic internal struggles and games, and it is located in a wider movement and political game, along with pacifism, feminism, animal rights etc" (Crossley, 2002a: 183). Crossley (2003) argues movements can be thought of as fields of struggle and contention, where the social movement field engages with other fields to achieve change, such as the legal, parliamentary and media fields, which can generate opportunities or constraints for movements. Struggles that begin in a single field can spread to a variety of different fields, which opens up a range of possibilities for contention (Crossley, 2002c). The ability of movements to 'play the game' when they spread into different fields where they do not normally operate depends on capital, or resources, that agent's possess.

Social movement theory could also potentially strengthen Bourdieu's theory of practice. Struggles over capital are an expected and normal part of how capital is distributed, but Bourdieu does not expand his theory to include when struggles are more than what is normally experienced in fields, that is when normal struggles become social movements (Crossley, 2003). Bourdieu does discuss a theory of crisis "in which habitus fall out of alignment with the fields in which they operate, creating a situation in which 'belief in the game' (illusio) is temporarily suspended and doxic assumptions are raised to the level of discourse, where they can be contested" (Crossley, 2003: 44). However this for Bourdieu is a temporary event. Crossley (2003) argues that how these episodes connect with more lasting social movement activity is not explored. A further example highlighted is that Bourdieu doesn't recognise the linkages between disparate times of unrest and social movement. This may be explained by the empirical context in which his theory is based, that is literary and artistic movements. But Crossley (2003) argues for example, Melucci's (1986) idea of submerged networks, where there are links between temporally distant events, can help to make up for this inadequacy.

Bourdieu's theories are well suited to this research. They provide a framework within which to analyse the empirical data and to understand the dynamics and characteristics of AFIs. The concept of fields offers the ability to develop an

understanding of the basic structure of a phenomenon in social space, and capital the adequacy of the resources it is endowed with. These concepts, when also combined with the social movement concept, enable the main research objectives to be addressed. The final section of this chapter reviews some research that applies Bourdieu in the context of rural development, food and farming. This helps to show how Bourdieu's theories have been applied in empirical research in fields related to this study.

4.7 Bourdieu, rural development, food and farming

Bourdieu's theories have been applied in rural sociology and agri-food studies. Capital has been used in particular to assist in developing a deeper understanding of how social processes impact on opportunities and constraints affecting action, as well as processes of change in rural, food production and consumption contexts. More recently, his theories have also been used in analysing AFIs, which shows this research is in line with more nuanced approaches to the study of AFIs.

For example, the circulation of capital in farming can help to explain opportunities and constraints in the sector. For instance, Glover (2010) explores how different forms of capital are used by farming families when faced with adversity. It is found that adversity negatively affects their economic capital, while social capital is very important in coping with adversity. In the Irish context, Crowley (2006) examines how capital circulates in modern farming in the context of a decline in farm numbers in Ireland. It is argued that economic, cultural and symbolic capital is concentrated among a minority of large farmers who have become the farming elite, who are intensive and capitalist oriented. Small farmers possess lower economic, cultural and symbolic capital, are survival oriented and slow to take risks that would integrate them into commercial markets. However Crowley (2006) also notes the conversion of capitals in small farming families, where children can be encouraged to gain education unrelated to farming so they do not depend economically on the family farm, showing the conversion of cultural capital into economic capital. Others have used capital to explain why top down approaches trying to change farmer attitudes, for example towards environmental protection, don't produce long term attitude change. Burton and Paragahawewa (2011) examine how better environmental

practices in farming are fostered through agri-environmental schemes. They find however that these schemes don't create cultural capital that is supportive of environmental sustainability in the long term because the removal of financial rewards results in a return to pre-existing behaviour.

Capital has also been used to examine if ethical food consumption trends can contribute towards achieving social change. Johnston (2008) for example is critical of the potential of ethical consumption's goals and argues it reproduces inequalities. These criticisms are made using the concepts of capital and habitus to interpret a case study of a whole foods market. Ethical foods are viewed as a form of cultural capital and represent the disposition of a social elite towards high quality, healthy and ethical foods. It is argued those who possess the economic and cultural capital to be ethical consumers represent the inequality inherent in capitalist markets and the ethical consumer discourse legitimises this inequality. It is argued the consumer is: "encouraged to feel good about where they shop, but are not prompted to ask tough questions about those lacking the economic and cultural capital to access…ethical foods" (Johnston, 2008: 257).

Factors affecting transition towards newer and alternative farming practices, such as sustainable farming, have also been examined using Bourdieu's theories of capital and fields. For example Raedeke et al. (2003) use field and habitus as a framework for understanding the practice of farming and agro-forestry as an alternative to conventional farming practices. Raedeke et al. (2003) argue that a number of key relations exist in the field of farming, including economic and family relations, where various forms of capital circulate. A wider range of players, such as farmers, consumers, government and agri-business, also shape this field. The practice of farming is presented to have a distinct habitus and agro-forestry was not found to be part of this, which could impact adoption of alternative farming practices such as this. Carolan (2005) also uses Bourdieu to better understand the social dynamics causing barriers to the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods on rented land. Objective, structural constraints operate in fields and they partly determine the practice of farming, such as government subsidies, leasing arrangements as well as biophysical elements such as soil fertility and soil structure. For example in relation

to leasing arrangements it is difficult to practice organic farming if only in a year-long lease. It argued the state shapes the social field and farming habitus, such as through subsidies. Also a dialectical relationship exists between the state habitus and farmers' habitus. The example of subsidies for maintaining wetlands is explored where state subsidies shape farmer attitudes to wetlands, also farmer attitudes to wetlands shapes the attitude of the state as well.

The position of farming in different social fields, or as a distinct social field is also explored in research. While Raedeke et al. (2003) discuss farming itself as a distinct field, Carolan (2005) argues farming operates in more than one field, suggesting overlapping social fields shape production agriculture, meaning it is located at the boundaries of a number of fields. There are many ways to play the game of farming; there is more than one set of rules or logic that is considered valuable in this field. It is argued that cultural capital shapes what is considered within the realm of the conventional or sustainable agriculture field. However it is argued these fields are neither dichotomous nor static. Changes in the sustainable agriculture field are observed, with it becoming penetrated to a greater degree by the conventional field, as sustainable farms upscale and focus more on profitability, rather than sustainability for sustainability sake (Carolan, 2005). These observations relate to analysis of organic farming, and how it has become more like what it set out to oppose (for example see Guthman (2004) and Lockie and Halpin, (2005)), which could also possibly be further explained in terms of changing field boundaries and imposition of one field on another less powerful one.

Capital has also been applied directly in relation to AFIs and food movements, with its importance highlighted in their effective functioning. Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2013) find that different types of social capital can assist the local food movement to thrive. It is found that social capital supporting local food initiatives was too much tied with personal relationships (friends and family) rather than with the wider community who share similar values and other actors in society who hold power over resources. Megyesi et al. (2011) argue social capital is very important in the economic success of collective farmers' marketing initiatives and plays a special role in enabling the mobilisation of other types of capital, such as financial, physical and human. For examples as initiatives establish themselves social capital helps to

mobilise much needed financial capital. However, the structural distribution of social capital also creates vulnerability as social capital is concentrated with leaders, rather than members, making leaders vital for the success of the initiative. Firth et al. (2011) explore the structure of social capital in community gardens, finding they are both a consequence of it and generate it in different structures. Also depending on how the garden is managed, the social capital generated in the garden can have different benefits. It was found to benefit the wider community when gardens are managed by the local community, but social capital benefits stay within the garden community when the garden is led by groups from outside the community the garden is situated. Nelson et al. (2013) argue that if social capital exists around an alternative food system vision it can assist the initiative's economic development. Building social capital with bridging links in communities is also particularly valuable as it can assist initiatives to more effectively adapt and innovate.

The research discussed above shows how Bourdieu's theories have helped explain patterns of development and change in food and farming. The research illustrates how capital and field can help understand why certain limitations exist and opportunities are available. It also illustrates how wider social forces impact on action through application of the field concept. This research will use field and capital in a similar manner, to explore the opportunities and limitations impacting on the role played by AFIs in Ireland.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a context for, and detailed overview of, the concepts used to interpret AFIs in Ireland. It has been shown that using Bourdieu in this study is appropriate. Field and capital are concepts capable of explaining the dynamics and characteristics of AFIs. Bourdieu's theories are also appropriate to shed light on questions of power and social change, which are also central issues this research seeks to address. The research aims not just to understand the social dynamics of AFIs, but to do so in a way that helps us to understand what role these activities can play in changing the food system. Field and capital offer a way to understand struggles over resources, which makes them appropriate to this research. In the next chapters, these concepts are applied and used to construct a picture of the economic,

social and cultural dynamics of Ireland's AFIs. But before moving into the detailed analysis of the primary data, the next chapter explores the methodological approach taken in this research.

Chapter 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The methodology employed to carry out this research is the focus of this chapter. AFIs are a diverse range of initiatives, often emerging from the grassroots level, and information is not collected on them in a coordinated way. Therefore, the first issue to overcome in conducting data collection for this research was the issue of not having a population frame to sample from. The research began by constructing a database and analysing it to define regions where qualitative data collection would focus. The steps in this process are detailed in this chapter. The semi-structured qualitative research interview was the central method used to collect the primary data for this research. Participant observation and documentary analysis were also important as secondary data collection methods. The rationale for this approach is provided in the next pages, as well as detailing how this data was then analysed to determine the findings of the research.

5.1.1 Ontological and epistemological orientation

This research is an exploratory, qualitative study. It is concerned with subjective experiences, rather than objective social facts, which distinguishes a quantitative approach (Maynard, 1994). It seeks new insights and aims to assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, 1993). Qualitative enquiry is generally more exploratory and "hypothesis generating rather than testing" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 25). Qualitative research should seek to interpret the views and actions of informants as they naturally exist to extract the meanings people attach to their own actions (Payne and Payne, 2004).

Guthman (2008) argues it is important for social scientists to participate in what they study so they can better understand it, this also creates what is termed a 'messy' relationship with the subject. It is important for researchers however to be aware of this close relationship between the researcher and the researched. However in studying social movements, this is hard to overcome, and a somewhat inevitable

dynamic exists between the researcher and the researched, because to study social movements is to study "real life" (Guthman, 2008: 1243). However the constructionist ontological orientation acknowledges that the knowledge produced by research is a construction of reality reflective of its time and social context.

The research situates itself as part of the constructionism paradigm of qualitative research. This paradigm of inquiry aims to understand and reconstruct the constructions people hold and to offer new interpretations of them. In the constructivist paradigm, knowledge is constructed, it is not static, but continually re-made and many forms of knowledge can co-exist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). According to Bryman (2008: 20): "Constructionism essentially invites the researcher to consider the ways in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them." This approach has an affinity with the ontological orientation of new social movement theorists, such as Melucci (1996a: 21) who argues those who study social movements need to develop an awareness that: "the constructive operation of our conceptual tools is today an epistemological requirement if we are to abandon for good the naive assumption that social phenomena are 'out there' existing in full independence of our point of view."

Constructionism's understanding of the nature of knowledge, that there is no definitive social knowledge, also has implications for the researcher. Research produced by researchers is one version of social reality (Bryman, 2008). The researcher also carries their own history, and research is guided by beliefs and feelings of the researcher, which can be visible and acknowledged or invisible and taken for granted (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). In this context, it is also important some background is provided on the researcher who conducted this project. It is also doubly important because food, as a subject of study "virtually demands self disclosure. Knowing that eating is intensely personal and memorable, writers have long used food as a medium for self reflection" (Bellasco, 2007: 5).

The researcher is from a rural background, raised on a small mixed farm in the midlands of Ireland. Producing vegetables for consumption was a taken for granted

part of domestic life, as was the family's cow that provided daily milk needs. Combined with this, it must also be noted that the researcher was vegetarian for most of her life, and is now a pescatarian. However, having been so embedded in the politics of food, both personally and academically, now questions this ethos of eating. The researcher could be described as a 'foodie', interested in food and health issues. The researcher worked for a number of years in one of Ireland's longest established independent health food stores, The Hopsack in Dublin, which was established in 1979. The researcher worked as a Willing Worker on Organic Farms (WWOOF) in Australia for a number of months in 2003, which solidified the researcher's interest in food and farming issues. She has also worked in food and health journalism, writing for Consumer Choice magazine published by the Consumers' Association of Ireland.

It must be acknowledged that the researcher's perspective is shaped by a personal interest in AFIs. The researcher was not however deeply embedded in AFIs, such as being the instigator of initiatives, but was a consumer at farmers' markets and a participant in a local growers' group. On commencing this study, the researcher was interested in the contribution AFIs can make to society, and from her engagement with these initiatives viewed them positively. On entering into this research project, a broad desire to understand what was limiting AFI growth and development in Ireland underpinned the researcher's perspective.

5.2 Methodological issues, database development and data collection areas

5.2.1 Issues with conducting alternative food initiative research

It has been highlighted that research on AFIs can take a one sided approach. Goodman (2003) suggests research on AFNs often focuses on the supply side. This approach neglects to look at how AFNs attempt to reconfigure producer-consumer relations, and overlooks that consumers are active in this food practice. Venn et al. (2006) note a similar trend where specific disciplines focus on certain aspects of AFNs, with geographers often looking at the production side and sociologists at poverty and access issues. But it can also be argued that consumption focused studies neglect the production side of alternative food (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005).

Designing a project focusing on consumer and producer perspectives simultaneously is challenging. For example at each farmers' market there are numerous traders and even more numerous consumers. They are a multi-faceted and dense empirical phenomenon. Community gardens and allotments are also similarly complex, and can be coordinated by one or two key people, and have numerous others who participate in these projects.

This research can be described as assessing the producer and consumer sides of AFIs in Ireland, but from the perspectives of those closely embedded in AFIs. The general consumer perspective, who is not so deeply embedded in these initiatives, is not presented here. This research presents the perspective of those most deeply embedded in AFIs, that of the food producers who sell direct to consumers at farmers' markets and the citizens who are involved in initiating and organising projects such as community gardens and allotments. The empirical data collected does however lean more heavily towards the producer side. This is primarily because of the patterns found in the database, because producer driven initiatives were found to be more numerous in the scoping exercise that was carried out in the early stages of this research. The more consumer driven initiatives were at the time the research was conducted a relatively new development in Ireland's AFIs, while farmers' markets had grown and begun to stabilise in numbers. So, if such as study was carried out again in 2015, the balance of data collected may be different than what is reflective of the picture found in 2009. Overall however, this research is based on a good volume of data, primarily sixty one qualitative research interviews, three site visits, and attendance at over forty events, meetings and conferences, which means that both the consumer and producer sides of AFIs in Ireland is well represented in the overall volume of data collected. The breakdown of data collected is discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

While this research can be described as assessing both the producer and consumer perspectives of AFIs, this is as producers and consumers are traditionally conceptualised. AFIs change what it means to be both a producer and a consumer. The consumer is not just a passive consumer, but for example their participation may be as a local food activist involved in setting up a community garden. Or, for

example, by growing their own food in an allotment, making them both a producer and a consumer. Producers are also consumers too and often consumption issues motivate their participation in AFIs. This is also an important observation to keep in mind when designing research on AFIs, that roles can cross-over, and while research participants may be primarily seen as producer or consumer, they may play more than one of these roles at once. Renting et al. (2012: 304) argue that new approaches to conceptualising these initiatives are needed, and those which take a more civic approach, rather than a more traditional economic rationale are needed to: "go beyond the terminology of 'consumer' and 'producer', which intrinsically defines and limits citizen's agency with respect to food by assuming that it forms part of a material and economic transaction." In moving beyond the issue of either taking the producer or the consumers' perspective, the challenge is: "not just to conduct research from the perspective of consumers, but to theorise production-consumption as a relational set of practices" (Holloway et al., 2007a: 2). This reinforces the suitability of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories, and his theory of practice, which fundamentally sees social spaces and social action as relational.

Another issue identified in the study of AFIs is that research needs to be more grounded in their lived reality. Kloppenburg et al. (2000: 177) argue that research attempting to frame alternative food conceptually is "principally based on the reflections of academics and policy specialists rather than on the views of sustainable producers and sustainable eaters." This highlights the need for more empirically based studies, but it is also important they are of a particular research design. Research on AFIs has begun to become dominated by empirically grounded studies, but it is also argued that the focus of empirical study is too narrow. Goodman (2003: 5-6) suggests that "cautionary theoretical observations need to be borne in mind since alternative agro food network literature is characterised mainly by empirically grounded analysis of alternative food practices." Venn et al. (2006) comment that case studies are often used in alternative food studies, but little consideration is given to why the case is being selected, and are often selected because of previous familiarity with the case or for convenience. Referring to farmers' markets, Kirwan (2004) suggests there are numerous studies, however data is often informally collected or research is piloted at individual markets. Venn et al. (2006) point to the

issue of drawing conclusions about the merits of AFIs, when these conclusions are based on examination of individual cases such as farmers' markets and box schemes, again with little attention to the selection process. This research is designed with these issues in mind. These issues also point to the suitability of a broad level study, and not a study that examines a limited number of case studies.

There is a need for new conceptual approaches to understanding AFIs, that are constructively critical based on AFI's empirical reality on a wider scale, rather than idealisation of AFIs and inferring too much from case studies. This is also part of the rationale for this research focusing on different regions on the national scale. Generalisation of characteristics based on local contexts would not be appropriate. This empirical basis also provides a more well-grounded understanding of AFIs role and potential. Research on AFIs emerges from a number of geographical contexts, such as Europe, North America and the developing world, and a number of disciplinary contexts, such as geography, sociology and rural studies. Abrahams (2007) argues that while AFIs should be understood contextually, each context has importance in the development of an alternative agri-food theory and a co-relation of research from different contexts is needed. Focusing on regions at the national level also provides evidence that can be compared with other nations' experience.

While research can focus on case studies, this is also because of another difficultly that exists when researching AFIs. Venn et al. (2006: 249) argue that apart from general trend reports that show growth in sectors such as organic or local food, there is "a paucity of information concerning what actually constitutes AFNs and subsequently the breath and size of the AFN population. Therefore, operationalising research can be problematic as researchers must first attempt to determine the characteristics of the target population from academic conceptualisation and through examples of individual cases presented in previous research." Venn et al. (2006: 250) also devise a potential solution to assist data collection and draw up an "eligibility framework for identifying and selecting cases." These parameters are applied by the same authors in a three year study *Reconnecting Consumers, Producers and Food* (Kneafsey et al., 2008). An absence of records on the population to select a representative sample from can also be observed in other research. This is often an

issue when sampling social movement participants as lists of participants are not frequently maintained (Klandermans and Smith, 2002). In the Californian context, Guthman (2004: 191) notes that statistics on organics can be unreliable, because "statistics often do not exist until there are reasons and mechanisms to do the counting" and statistics can under-represent the number of growers: "this inconsistency is indicative of a much deeper politics about who is called organic." Crowley (2000) investigates the experiences of farmers participating in the agri-environmental scheme, REPS. It is noted that no records were available so probability sampling could not be employed. To overcome this, a reputational snowball quota sample was employed based on the attributes of the overall population being studied. Geoghegan (2008) in a study of community development did not have a national sample of community development groups to select from, so used a sample on record from a community development co-operative.

What is then important in selecting a valid sample population to study when there are no records of a primary population to determine this from, such as when studying AFIs, is to base the sample population studied on some kind of selection framework, which this research does. This approach is also driven by one of the main objectives of this research, which is to develop an empirically grounded picture of AFIs in Ireland. Another approach that could have been taken would be to use a snowball sample, where research starts with a few identified participants, who recommend who next to interview (Payne and Payne, 2004). However this was not deemed a sufficient sampling strategy, because it would likely be too concentrated geographically and most likely centre around a specific network of alternative food actors and activities.

As with any other approach to research, qualitative studies must be rigorous, and ensure the chosen methods are suited to the research goals (Silverman, 2005). In the early stages of this project a number of data collection methods were considered, including case study and survey based research. The final approach adopted was a two stage data collection process. Firstly, a picture of AFIs on the national level was built through collection of information on the number and types of initiatives in Ireland. This was informed by classifications and typologies used to categorise AFIs

in other research (Venn et al., 2006; Holloway et al., 2007a; Kneafsey et al., 2008). These were adapted for the purposes of this research, with a selection framework developed made up of a series of defined categories. This framework structured the database where information on AFIs on the national level was logged. Based on analysis of the database, sub-national areas were selected where the main empirical data was gathered. The remaining parts of this section detail how the database was constructed and analysed to determine the areas where data collection would focus.

5.2.2 Parameters to help build a picture of alternative food initiatives in Ireland

As part of the process of developing a categorisation system for AFNs, Venn et al. (2006) carried out an initial scoping exercise identifying alternative food schemes, initiatives and projects. To merit inclusion in the initial scoping database, the initiative, scheme or project had to satisfy at least one of the initial criteria or 'selection framework parameters', which were distilled from empirical research on AFNs. Following their initial scoping exercise, the UK research group developed a categorisation scheme under which initiatives could be classified. This approach was outlined in Venn et al.'s (2006) paper and was adapted and applied by Kneafsey et al. (2008) in the three year study *Reconnecting Consumers, Producers and Food*. The criteria as applied by Kneafsey et al. (2008) are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Kneafsey et al.'s (2008) selection framework parameters

1. An attempt to connect consumers, producers and food;
2. Use of non-conventional supply/distribution channels – detached from industrial supply chains and demand distribution and corporately controlled food chains;
3. Adoption of principles of social emdeddedness – in other words, founded on the principles of trust, community, and local ownership of resources;
4. Be based around a notion of 'quality' – defined in relation to specific traditions, heritage and environmental features.

(Source: Kneafsey et al. 2008: 179-80)

A typology of producer-consumer reconnection was also developed in which the database entries could be classified. The categories are based on the type of producer-consumer relationship and the levels of connectedness between food consumers and producers. The categories identified were: producers as consumers, producer-consumer partnerships and direct sell initiatives (Kneafsey el al., 2008: 17).

Venn et al.'s (2006) earlier categorisation includes another category, specialist retailers (Table 5.2). These categories are adapted and used in this study.

Table 5.2 Venn et al.'s (2006) categories of AFN

CATEGORY	*EXPLANATION*	*EXAMPLES*
Producers as consumers	Schemes where food is grown or produced by those who consume it. Often promote healthy lifestyles. Extent of commercial orientation varies. Produce is usually sold on a local level but may be targeted at specific groups, e.g. low incomes, ethnic minorities.	Community gardens Community centres with specific food projects Community food cooperatives Allotment groups
Producer-consumer partnerships	Partnerships between farmers and consumers, where the risks and rewards of farming are shared -to varying degrees -due to subscription or share arrangements	Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
Direct sell	Farmers or producers cut out middlemen and sell direct to consumers. Can be direct face to face or over the internet	Farmers' markets Farm gate sales Adoption/rental schemes Mobile food shops Box schemes Producer cooperatives
Specialist retailers	Enable producers to sell to consumers more directly than through conventional supermarkets. Often sell high value-added, quality or speciality foods and may be targeted at tourists	Online grocers Specialist wholesalers Tourist attractions

(Source: Venn et al., 2006: 256)

In developing the sampling frame for this study, Kneafsey et al.'s (2008) selection framework parameters and Venn et al.'s (2006) categories of AFN were employed. Some adaptations were made to Venn et al.'s (2006) categories, in view of the fact that this research aimed to understand AFIs underpinned by social movement theory. Also as the scoping exercise got underway for this research, and a picture of Ireland's AFIs began to emerge, it became clear that the categories needed some adaptation for the Irish context. Five additional categories (producer-producer partnerships, organisations, educators, primary producers and secondary producers) were added and used in addition to Venn et al.'s (2006) categories. Specialist retailers was broadened to the category 'specialist sellers', to allow it to include specialist traders at farmers' markets as well as specialist retailers. Also two

overarching classifications of AFIs were added. Activities were firstly classified as collective or individual level activities (Tables 5.3 and 5.4, page 126). Organising AFIs in this way was informed by Tovey's (2007) study of the environmental movement in Ireland, which was categorised on the collective level, which includes organisations and groups that make up the movement, and the individual level, which includes environmental activists themselves. In comparative terms, for this study, the collective level represents the initiatives and projects, such as farmers' markets, community gardens and farm shops, and the actors involved. Dividing the categories into individual and collective level activities allows for a more insight into different levels of engagement with AFIs. For example, participants in farmers' markets can be market organisers and market traders such as specialist sellers, primary or secondary food producers. Distinguishing individual level activity gives a deeper insight and more clarity into the role of the actor in AFIs. Central to AFIs are food producers, and two categories, primary and secondary producer were also added, and these were classified as individual level. When placed in either the collective or individual level, activities were then grouped into their descriptive category. The three additional descriptive categories added were producer-producer partnerships, educators and organisations. AFIs amount to more than initiatives themselves, such as farmers' markets and allotment projects. They are also supported by groups and organisations locally and nationally. A category was added to allow these diverse organisations and groups to be included. There is also a strong element of resurgence of lost skills, from cheese-making to growing your own food, at work in Ireland's AFIs. This merited the inclusion of an educators group, where both consumer and producer education is focused on. The producer-producer partnership category was added to distinguish groups where similar producers come together to help market their produce, such as grower cooperatives.

Table 5.3 Categories of alternative food initiative – collective level

CATEGORY	*DEFINTION*	*EXAMPLES*
Producers as consumers	Food is grown or produced by those who consume it.	Community gardens, allotments (civic, community, rented)
Producer-consumer partnerships	Partnerships between farmers and consumers sharing the risks and rewards of farming.	Community supported agriculture, producer and consumer co-operative
Producer to consumer direct	Initiatives that cut out the middlemen selling direct to consumers.	Farmers' markets, country markets
Producer – producer partnerships	Alliances between producers which assist marketing their produce	Grower cooperatives
Organisations	A diverse range of organisations, from local informal groups to national formal organisations	Interest groups, representative organisations, food networks
Educators	Primarily aim to create knowledge and skills to change people's relationship with food	College, educational farm, cookery school

Table 5.4 Categories of alternative food initiative – individual level

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	
CATEGORY	*DEFINITION*
Primary producer	Primary (farmers or fishers) food producers who add value to their own produce and primarily distribute in non dominant supply chains.
Secondary producer	Add value to primary produce of various origins. Key product attributes: local, artisan, traditional, organic, healthy, wholesome, unprocessed.
Specialist sellers	Retailers or market traders who sell local, national and regional produce, with key product attributes: local, artisan, traditional, organic, healthy, wholesome, unprocessed.

Categorising AFIs helps to define the population to be studied. However, those who are involved in AFIs are often not just involved in one way, such as primary producers who sell their produce at farmers' markets may also be involved with a local organisation or rent allotments to the public. For the purposes of this research, initiatives and actors were classified according to what was determined their primary involvement, but they may have been involved in more than one way. In reality, the lines between the different categories can be blurred.

5.2.3 Finding Ireland's alternative food initiatives

Tovey (2006) argues the size of contemporary alternative food activity in Ireland is difficult to estimate, and states if based on membership of organic certification organisations this would be an under-representation. A wide range of sources were used to gather data to build a picture of the population to be studied, and previous studies also provided ideas of where to source this information. In the UK context, Holloway and Kneafsey (2000: 290) suggest that farmers' markets can be seen as "the expression of intersections of networks and actors." Farmers' markets represent concentrated sites of activity and are an important site of information. Sources for Kneafsey et al.'s (2008) initial scoping exercise included the internet, industry-specific journals, the media, academic journals and previous research. Ricketts-Hein et al., (2006) in their index of local food activity in England and Wales, used six indicators of food 'relocalization': the number of local food directories, the number of local food producers advertising in local food directories, the number of organic farmers and growers registered with the Soil Association, the number of farm shops registered with the Farm Retail Association, the number of women's institute cooperative markets and the number of farmers' markets. Ricketts Hein et al. (2006) also suggest that Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) designations could also be used as an indicator. In developing an index of food re-localisation to measure local food activity in Ireland and calculate where local food activity takes place at the local scale, Ricketts Hein and Watts (2010) used data from the Bridgestone Irish Food Guide, Good Food Ireland, members of organic certification bodies and lists of farmers' markets and country markets. No data was found available from paper or internet based local food directories in Ireland.

To merit inclusion in the database logging the primary population for this study, initiatives had to be identified with at least one of the parameters listed in Table 5.1. Basic information on initiatives was collected, such as its name and county location. The initiative was then categorised under one of the main categories (column 1) in either Table 5.3[12] or 5.4 (see page 126). These categories are also defined in Table 5.3 and 5.4 and these definitions guided how the initiatives were categorised. For example, initiatives were categorised as 'producers as consumers' when food was grown by those who consumed it and these AFIs included community gardens and allotments. Information was collected and the database was constructed between late 2008 and until early 2010. Most of the work was carried out on the database in mid 2009.

Information was collected for the Republic of Ireland only. Sources of information were the general media (print and broadcast), specific industry media (such as Organic Matters magazine and the Irish Farmers Journal) and internet sources (such as blogs and websites). Food guides were a central source of data, such as: the Bridgestone Irish Food Guide (2007) and the Organic Guide to Ireland (2008). Local food guides were also useful, such as: Good Food in Cork (2006), Galway Good Food (2007), Savour Kilkenny/Carlow (2005) and Good Food: the Wicklow Way (2007). Key organisations, such as Slow Food Ireland and Good Food Ireland maintain lists of members on their websites and they were also a source of information. A number of web-based food networking sites exist, such as the Cork Food Web, the Dublin Food Web, Galway Grows, Irish Allotments and Irish Community Gardens, which also uncovered information on initiatives. A number of food networks have been developed by LEADER local action groups, such as Local Food South Roscommon, Offaly Delicious, Louth Local Foods and the Artisan Producers of Meath and lists of members of such networks were also a source. Bord Bia maintain a list of farmers' and country markets, which was very useful. Events around food and agriculture were also a resource for information, such as organic, farmers' market, local and artisan food conferences. Food and gardening festivals, such as Bloom in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, the Waterford Harvest Festival and

[12] Table 5.3 expands, but also relies heavily on, Venn et al.'s categories of AFN outlined in Table 5.2.

National Organic Week events were also useful. Attendance at farmers' markets was also important to locate primary, secondary and specialist sellers.

It was difficult to know when to stop collecting information on initiatives, and decide when a relatively accurate picture of the sample population was constructed. Kneafsey et al. (2008) ceased data collection when they stopped uncovering the same types of initiatives, which numbered in excess of 140 entries. They did not aim to produce an exhaustive list, but to include a representative balance of initiatives in operation. However this study had to go further than this, because it aimed to understand the dynamics of AFIs in Ireland as a whole. Online publically accessible listings of certain initiatives are kept. For example, Bord Bia maintains a list of farmers' markets and country markets in Ireland[13]. Knowing when to stop data collection for these AFIs was straightforward because of this. Other projects, such as community gardens, emerge at the community level and their numbers are not recorded in a systematic way. Recording new entries in the database ceased when the number of new initiatives uncovered decreased significantly and the majority of AFIs being found were already recorded in the database. This left the database containing just in excess of 1000 entries.

Constructing the database listing and categorising AFIs in Ireland was primarily of use to establish the areas that data collection would focus. Its list provided the sampling frame from which the research participants were selected. It was also used as a guide to the number of each type of initiative that would be represented in the qualitative data. The database also potentially could provide a resource that can be built on. It has been consulted by researchers working on the Consensus project and also by a staff member from An Taisce working on its Green Communities programme. In the next section, the selection of research participants and why data collection focused on specific areas of Ireland is discussed.

5.2.4 Selection of areas and types of initiatives to focus qualitative data collection

Regional differences in AFI activity have been identified in previous research, with concentrations of AFIs stronger in some areas of Ireland than others. Tovey (2006:

[13] Bord Bia's list of farmers' and country markets in Ireland is available at: http://www.bordbia.ie/consumer/aboutfood/farmersmarkets/pages/farmersmarkets.aspx

176) suggests "for a variety of conjunctural reasons (a long history of tourism and food, a tradition of incomers settling in the area, the availability of small plots of land at relatively cheap prices, proximity to dynamic and educationally well-serviced urban centres), alternative food networks have developed particularly strong in West Cork." Ricketts Hein and Watts (2010) assessed geographic patterns of local food activity in Ireland and found that counties Cork, Kerry, Galway, Dublin and Tipperary were ranked the five highest for local food activity, and Monaghan, Laois, Longford, Louth and Roscommon the five lowest. In addition to these differing spatial patterns, the structure and organisation of initiatives can differ regionally. For example, research has found that the farmers' market form differs regionally, such as between southern and eastern parts of Ireland, where a higher concentration of privately run markets have been identified on the east coast of Ireland and markets where there is more stallholder participation in establishing and running markets are more common in southern Ireland (Moore 2006b). The spatial distribution of farmers' markets is concentrated in urban areas, and the majority are in counties Dublin and Cork (Murtagh, 2009).

For this research, the AFI database was stratified on a county by county basis to begin to reveal patterns of activity. Activity was highest in counties where three of Ireland's main cities are located. On a county by county basis, the three counties with the highest number of initiatives were Cork, Dublin and Galway, respectively. Ricketts-Hein and Watt's (2010) ranking of local food activity lists these counties among the five highest ranked counties in Ireland for food relocalisation. Those with the lowest number of initiatives in the AFI database were Longford, Cavan and Monaghan respectively. Ricketts-Hein and Watt's (2010) ranking of local food activity lists these counties among the eleven lowest ranked counties in Ireland for food relocalisation.

In the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000 to 2006, and the subsequent NDP 2007 - 2013, Ireland is divided into two main regions, the Border, Midlands and West (BMW) region and the Southern and Eastern region (S&E) (see Table 5.5). In the broad national context, a continuing difference exists between the economic performances of the two main regions, with the more

rural and less urbanised BMW lagging behind the more urbanised and less rural S&E in terms of economic performance (Department of Finance, 1999; Department of Finance, 2006). The initiatives in the database were organised into these regions to observe what patterns emerged. In the S&E region there was a total of 737 initiatives and in the BMW region 277, signalling that the BMW region also lags behind the S&E region in the development of AFIs. There were also 23 organisations classed as national level, which brings the total number of initiatives listed in the database to 1037. Because of these differences, the qualitative data collection focused on areas in both the S&E and BMW regions. Using this regional structure for data collection also means there is potential for further analysis of this dataset on a regional basis, examining perhaps differences in social and economic capital in the regions to understand the effect of the broader economic context on these capitals.

Table 5.5 NDP Regions

REGION	SUB REGION	COUNTIES
Border, Midlands and West (BMW)	Border	Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, Sligo
	Midland	Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath
	West	Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
Southern and Eastern (S&E)	Dublin	City and county
	Mid-East	Kildare, Meath , Wicklow
	Mid-West	Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary
	South East	Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, South Tipperary
	South West	Cork, Kerry

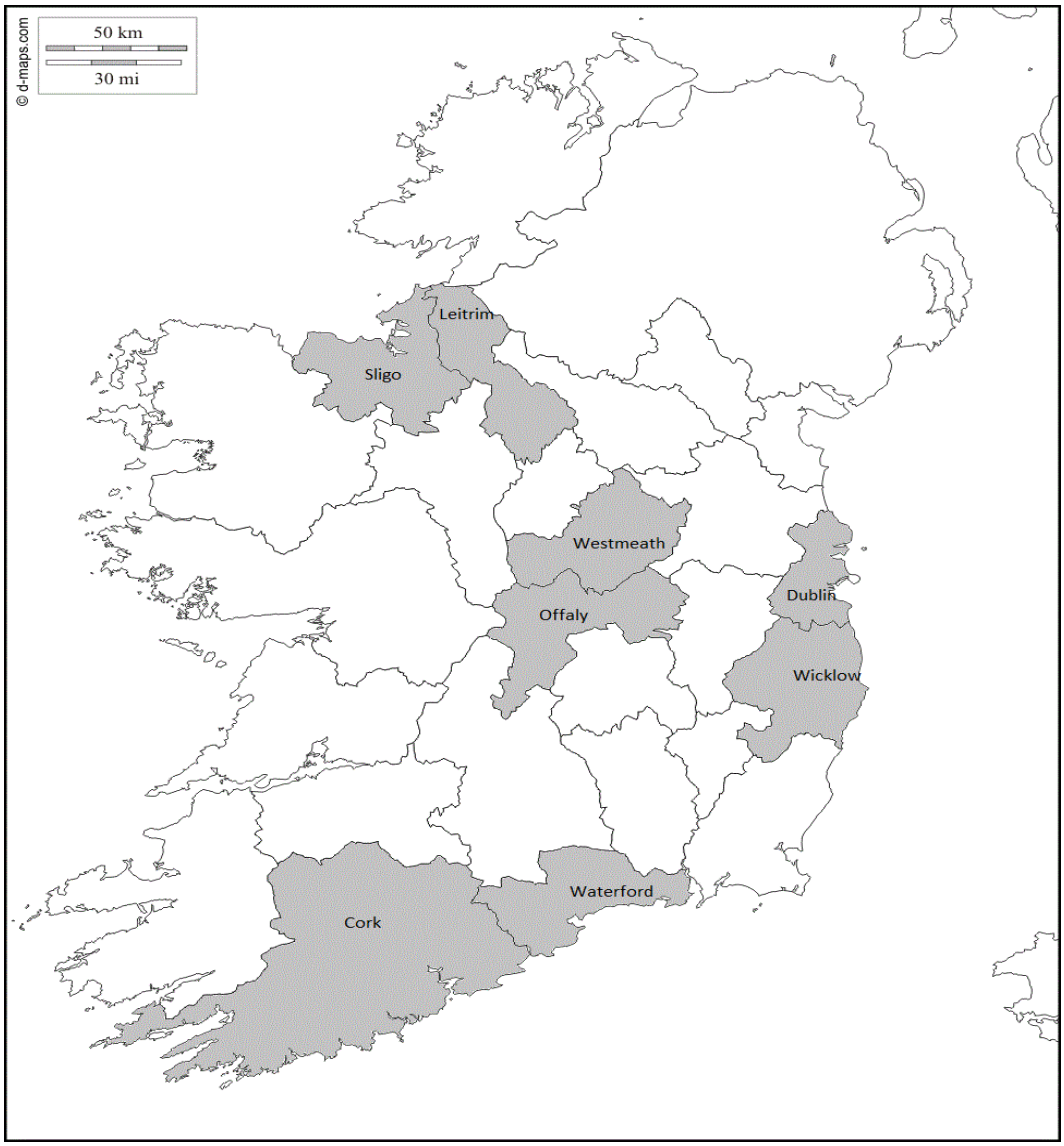
The qualitative data was gathered in four counties in the S&E region (Cork, Waterford, Dublin and Wicklow), and four counties in the BMW region (Sligo, Leitrim, Offaly and Westmeath) (see Table 5.6, page 132 and Figure 5.1, page 133). These counties were selected to generally achieve a mix of urban and rural areas, and places of higher population density and more dispersed population patterns. Within each region, the areas were selected to be broadly comparable, that is Cork and Waterford, an area of above average activity and containing two cities as well as rural areas, is comparable with Dublin and Wicklow, an area also with above average activity and containing Ireland's capital city. Counties Sligo and Leitrim, and Westmeath and Offaly contain a mix of both towns and rural areas.

Table 5.6 Areas where data collection focused

NDP region	Study region	Counties	Activity levels	Settlement patterns
S&E (A)	Southern region	Cork and Waterford	Above average	Urban and rural
S&E (B)	Eastern region	Dublin and Wicklow	Above average	Urban and rural
BMW (A)	Midlands region	Westmeath and Offaly	Below average	Predominantly rural
BMW (B)	Northwest region	Sligo and Leitrim	Below average	Predominantly rural

The counties were also selected to attempt to represent the diversity of AFIs in Ireland. County Cork is an area of special interest, having a strong history of artisan and organic food producers, and contains high concentrations of cheese-makers and organic producers (Sage, 2003; Anderson and McLaughlin, 2011; Lapple and Cullinan, 2012). The neighbouring county Waterford was selected as a more average representation of AFIs. County Dublin was selected because it contains Ireland's capital city. The neighbouring county Wicklow was also included to expand the rural area included and it was also found to have above average levels of activity. Leitrim was selected as an area of special interest, with many of Ireland's first organic farmers settling here, and is also an area where a higher concentration of organic farmers currently exists (Lapple and Cullinan, 2012). Leitrim and Sligo were found to have below average levels of activity, according to the database, but these are both small counties in terms of their land mass, making the level of activity seem more significant. Westmeath and Offaly were selected because of their lower activity levels and as more typical rural areas.

Figure 5.1 Map of study areas



(Source: http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=14645&lang=en)

Qualitative data was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews. The primary population was stratified according to the nine categories listed in Table 5.3 and 5.4. The sample interviewed was selected from this stratified sample of the primary population. It was aimed that roughly a 5% non probability sample of this stratified sample was interviewed, broadly determining the total number of interviews carried out in each category, and in each region of study. Therefore, in areas where greater numbers of AFIs were found, a larger number of interviews were carried out. This approach was taken because if more activity was present it was viewed that more depth of research was required to get an adequate insight into that activity. Those

interviewed were selected from the database listings for the counties where data collection was to focus. Within the categories, the number of interviews was spread as proportionately as possible. The interviews conducted generally aim to reflect the diversity of AFIs in Ireland. For example, the producer to consumer direct category includes farmers' markets and country markets, however the former are more numerous than the latter, so a greater number of farmers' markets were included. Also a range of different primary producers and secondary producers were interviewed, such as vegetable growers, dairy farmers, poultry farmers, livestock farmers, bakers, cheese-makers and those making prepared foods. The primary producers interviewed were also sometimes involved in adding value to their primary produce, hence having an insight into both primary and secondary food production.

When conducting semi-structured interviews in social movement research, Blee and Taylor (2002) distinguish between respondent and key informant interviews. While key informants can also act as respondents, key informant interviews serve "to inform the researcher about various aspects of the movement", while informant interviews are more focused on "the interviewee's experiences and motivations" (Blee and Taylor, 2002: 106). It was important a combination of both respondent and key informant interviews informed this research. The reasons for this were because of the relatively recent emergence of AFIs in Ireland, AFI research in the Irish context is not well developed, and one of the research objectives was to build an empirically grounded picture of AFIs in Ireland. Sampling to recruit interview participants was therefore both of a random and purposive nature. The more random approach was important to build a base of respondent interviews to gain the insights of AFI participants. Purposive sampling was essential to gain the insights of key informants who appeared central to the development of certain AFIs in the different regions, such as CSAs, farmers' markets, allotments and community gardens. Key informants were chosen for their knowledge and insights. These interviews often diverted from the interview guide and were of a more un-structured nature. Individuals were identified from background desk based research (e.g. assessment of media articles, blogs, websites) and attendance at events or conferences. Interviewees also often mentioned key individuals they admired or who had made

significant efforts to support AFIs. These individuals were considered key informants and were purposely included in the sample interviewed. This involved over-sampling in some cases to ensure less common initiatives were represented and key informants were interviewed. Most of those interviewed were considered respondent interviews and chosen as more standard participants in AFIs. Key informants were also chosen from the areas focused on for this study. The 'educators' and 'organisations' categories were over-sampled because of their lower numbers, and at least one of each was interviewed in each region. The 'producers as consumers' category was also over-sampled. This category is thought to possibly be under-represented in the database, given that these activities are newer than others and more difficult to locate. In total 61 interviews were carried out. Three site visits where formal interviews were not carried out, but informal discussions with a number of initiative members and detailed notes were taken, also form part of the qualitative data (Table 5.7, see page 136). The notes taken at site visits were also uploaded to NVivo and coded along with the interview transcripts. Data collection took place between November 2009 and July 2010.

Table 5.7 Database totals per region, category and breakdown of interviews/site visits conducted

	S&E totals from database	*S&E interviews/ site visits*	BMW totals from database	*BMW interviews/ site visits*	**All interviews/ site visits**
Category					
Collective level					
Producers as consumers	104	*7*	33	*2*	**9**
Producer consumer partnerships	2	*2*	0	*0*	**2**
Producer to consumer direct	155	*8*	62	*2*	**10**
Producer producer partnerships	4	*1*	8	*2*	**3**
Organisations	40	*2*	8	*1*	**3**
Educators	12	*2*	8	*1*	**3**
Individual level					**0**
Primary producer	212	*12*	84	*5*	**17**
Secondary producer	144	*9*	52	*2*	**11**
Specialist sellers	64	*5*	22	*1*	**6**
Total	**737**	***48***	**277**	***16***	**64**

In terms of the types of initiatives the main qualitative data represent (61 interviews and three site visits), overall there were two allotment projects, one school garden, six community gardens, four cooperatives, one CSA, three country markets, seven farmers' markets, three organisations, one cookery school, two educational centres, three market traders, three specialist retailers, 17 primary producers and 11 secondary producers. Of the 17 primary producers, 11 were certified organic. Of the 11 secondary producers four were fully certified organic and in one case part of their business was certified organic. Of the 28 primary and secondary producers combined, 25 either had in the past, or continued to trade at farmers' markets. Overall 17 were considered to be key informants, having been a pioneer of AFIs, or involved in AFIs in a number of ways. Also in later chapters of this research AFIs are classified as occupying two distinct positions in an alternative food field, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. In terms of the initiatives that make up the main qualitative data, 52 can be classed as from the *alternative food business* position and 12 can be classed as from *produce your own*. However a degree of crossover also exists. Of the 52 from the *alternative food business* position, the

activities of eight also cross over into *produce your own*. Of the 12 from the *produce your own* position, the activities of three also cross over into the *alternative food business* position.

5.3 Qualitative data collection methods and analysis

5.3.1 Rationale for the type of data collected

The main empirical data was collected through conducting semi-structured qualitative research interviews. Before deciding to collect this type of data, other methods were considered. A mixed methods approach was also considered, gathering qualitative and quantitative data. Developing a number of case studies was also explored[14]. However, as understanding of the research field deepened and a picture of AFIs in Ireland began to emerge as the database was constructed, conducting a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews was considered the most appropriate data collection method.

Kneafsey et al.'s (2008) research used case studies, but overall adopted a many-tiered mixed methods approach, developed in stages, incrementally, which involved consumer workshops, a consultation panel with representatives from institutions, interviews with producers, a consumer survey and consumer telephone interviews. Replicating a similar mixed methodology was not within the capabilities of the resources available for this research project. Two pilot case studies were explored, which resulted in the publication of two research papers (Murtagh and Ward 2009; Murtagh, 2010). However as understanding of the field further developed, it became clear using case studies to gather the qualitative data would not be the best way to address the research objectives. The two case studies were exploratory. This can be useful to gain some understanding of an empirical phenomenon when there is little to guide the structure of the investigation (Robson, 1993). Case studies illuminate issues relevant to those particular cases and is too a narrow perspective for the purposes of this research. Case studies can however be of use if their role is acknowledged and with an awareness of their contribution towards theory. For

[14] A number of papers and publications were developed during the course of this research, emerging from consideration of different methods and preliminary data analysis, which are listed in Appendix A.

example, Cox et al. (2008) use a community supported agriculture initiative as an instrumental case study, to open debate, rather than make generalisations. Lockie & Kitto (2000: 13) however suggest that agri-food research needs to "move us beyond illustrative case studies…and avoid degenerating into descriptive narratives that at best follow controversy." Marsden and Franklin (2013) observe that this transition has begun and research is progressing. In addition the distribution of research that has focused on case studies is skewed. From 2007 to 2011 Kneafsey et al. (2013) identify 13 pieces of case study research literature based in the UK, six based in Italy and one in Ireland. Aiming to understand alternative food practice in Ireland as a whole would not be best served with a case study approach. Previous research on farmers' markets has also revealed they are a heterogeneous entity and different typologies to classify them have been proposed (Moore, 2006b; 2006c; Moroney, 2011). A broader approach was needed at this stage of understanding of AFIs and also because of their diversity.

Conducting a quantitative survey based on a constructed sampling frame was also deemed an unsuitable approach. The representativeness of this sampling frame could not be measured definitively. Generalisations can only be made if surveys are based on probability samples of populations (Klandermans and Smith, 2002). Surveys are best suited to research that knows the kind of information the researchers wish to collect and is therefore less suited to exploratory research (Robson, 1993). A quantitative survey would count the frequency of certain variables, and look for regularities in social behaviour, whereas qualitative methods seek to interpret people's actions to explain social behaviour (Payne and Payne, 2004). The survey is too rigid a data gathering method in the context of this research. Klandermans and Smith (2002) argue emotions, belief systems and social interactions are difficult to measure using surveys, and qualitative techniques such as in depth interviews may be more useful to do so. Macken-Walsh (2009: 45) highlights the limitations of survey research, suggesting "normative methodological approaches, using, for example, surveys where interviewees select predefined responses, can incompletely portray the range of contextual issues which, as a whole, ultimately guide behaviour and decision making." Maynard (1994: 11) argues that questionnaires can "distort rather than reflect actors meanings", especially when research is in its infancy. As

understanding of a field of research develops, surveys may then be more appropriate. A qualitative study was deemed to be more worthwhile, given that this field of research in the Irish context is still underexplored and in its infancy. Surveys are also limited by their typically low response rate and respondents may not necessarily report their beliefs or misunderstand questions (Robson, 1993).

The survey could however have been useful to construct a more descriptive perspective of AFIs in Ireland. The survey however would not have been based on a representative sample and this perspective could be built in other ways. Participant observation, data collected in the qualitative interviews with key informants, secondary documentary sources, such as from previous research, the print and broadcast media, brochures and websites were all used to construct a picture of AFI activities in Ireland. Combining semi-structured interviews with participant observation and documentary methods is a common method of social movement research aiming to explore complex social events and processes (Blee and Taylor, 2002).

5.3.2 Participant observation

Participant observation was also an important secondary research method. This occurred in a variety of settings, from observation at AFIs, to attendance at events. For example, interviews were often conducted on site at initiatives, such as on farms or at farmers' markets. Visits to farmers' markets, country markets, farms, small food businesses, speciality food retailers, allotments and community gardens were also made during the course of this research. These visits normally did not last more than one or two hours, but two more extended visits were made, working on an organic farm and gardening in a community garden for a day. During the course of this research the researcher was also part of the broad alternative food socio-economy in Ireland. The researcher worked part-time in the Cork English market in 2007 and Cork's Christmas market during December 2009 and had an involvement with a GIY and local growers group, as well as efforts to establish a community garden in the Turner's Cross area of Cork city in 2010. A number of events, meetings and conferences were also attended between 2007 and 2010. Events included the Waterford Harvest Festival, GIY Gathering and Convergence Festival

(See Appendix B). Meetings included a Slow Food Convivium meeting and local GIY meetings. Conferences included GIY Ireland Gatherings and the National Farmers' Markets conference. Participant observation was therefore an important part of the research process, with notes taken of observations made during the course of this research. A close eye was also kept on the media, and the discourse emerging from this arena throughout the period that this research was conducted. This was with the aim of having an understanding of the debates and conversations at work within wider society and also to keep in touch with broad patterns of AFI development in Ireland.

Participant observation can be a difficult method to operationalise in some research settings (Flick, 2006). However, it was conducted with ease for this study. Initiatives are often public or community spaces making them easily accessible. Interviewees were often interviewed at their place of work, such as on their farm, at their business or farmers' market stall. There were many opportunities to conduct participant observation alongside interviews, as interviewees would often give the researcher a tour of their business, farm, allotment etc.

5.3.3 Qualitative research interviews

Interviews are a common method employed to gather qualitative data, but also an excellent way to understand our social world (Fontana and Frey, 2000). Robson (2011: 281) argues interviewing it not "a soft option as a data gathering technique…it has the potential of providing rich and highly illuminating material." Interviews are useful in research that wishes to understand the perspective of those directly involved in, or effected by, the phenomenon under investigation. For example, Blee and Taylor (2002) argue that in the context of social movement studies interviews can develop insights from the actors' perspective. The method is also suited to the constructionist approach, where knowledge is constructed from the viewpoint of social actors.

In qualitative research, structured and semi-structured interviews have a role to play, depending on the goals of the research. Structured interviews, that follow a set of predefined questions, are the more rigid format by which to conduct research

interviews. Semi-structured interviews are guided by a set of topics or questions, but the researcher can divert from this. While semi-structured interviews can gain a greater depth of understanding of the respondent's experience and ideas, this type of interview does not allow for systematic comparison between interview responses, which the structured interview does. Semi-structured interviews are more useful when the research goal is exploration, discovery and interpretation (Blee and Taylor, 2002). Structured interviews should be more easily coded as data is collected using pre-established categories, however applied in the wrong context, this can impose categorisation rather than opening up the field of inquiry (Fontana and Frey, 2000). A semi-structured interview format was used in this research, using an interview guide to give the interviews some structure (see Appendix C).

The interview guide was developed to have an alignment with the social movement conceptual framework and central aspects of the social movement concept. The guide was constructed with view to exploring the initiative's general nature and its place in wider society, to broadly explore if initiatives aim to challenge established practices in effort to contribute to social change. This resulted in topics being included exploring a general background to the initiative, the interviewee's own background, engagement with government agencies, organisations and local community. Challenges affecting success and survival were also important to probe discussion around efforts to impact change and the challenges encountered. Networks are vital to social movements making links to other initiatives and organisations an important topic to include in the interview guide. If the initiative was managed by a group or individual was an important topic to explore to understand questions around membership. The interview topics focusing on funding and challenges affecting survival were important to open discussion on limitations and challenges to movement formation. It was aimed to explore values and goals of participants with topics related to the background to the initiative, motivations for involvement and how these fit with wider society by exploring the attitudes of regulatory authorities/government agencies. The interview topics also helped to extract data that could be analysed in terms of fields and capital (social, cultural and economic). For example, discussion of funding and wider challenges illuminated issues around economic capital and fields. Exploring links to other initiatives and

how initiatives were managed helped draw out information related to social capital and fields. Discussing interviewees own background, the general background to the initiative and attitudes of authorities helped to explore cultural capital and fields. Minor adaptations were also made to the guide as the research progressed. For example as the researcher progressed with interviews it became clear it was more useful to be specific rather than vague in the interview guide topic prompts to trigger discussion. For example the topic of 'engagement with regulatory authorities/government support agencies' opened discussion related to the broader social and cultural context that AFIs operate within, helping to explore if AFIs were in conflict or harmony with their broader socio-cultural context. When conducting interviews for this research, the interview guide gave the researcher prompts to rely on while interviewing research participants, however the interviewer would often divert from the guide. The researcher felt the guide should be diverted from if a more un-structured interview format emerged as appropriate. This approach is in line with the constructionist paradigm of qualitative research, which is where this research positions itself. Constructionist research seeks not to impose an outside perspective, but to allow research participants to steer data gathering. The data collected is then constructed by participant views and interpretations of reality.

Certain factors are important to conducting semi-structured interviews well. An interview guide that reflects the aims of the research helps extract the type of qualitative information needed. For example, in conducting narrative analysis, it requires gathering qualitative data based on the content of stories told by informants, to encourage research participants to tell a story, questions asked can be more open, as well as using a broad interview guide, which gives greater control to the research participants to direct the content of the interview (Kohler-Riessman, 1993). Generally, in conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer does not have to be too constrained by the guide and can add to it to allow for clarification or a more detailed exploration of a particular point. Also as the interviews progress, the researcher may make changes to this interview guide, based on interpretations gained from interviews already conducted (Blee and Taylor, 2002).

Another decision when collecting data using interviews is the place of key informants, which can be defined as "those whose social positions in a research setting give them specialist knowledge about other people, processes or happenings that is more extensive, detailed or privileged than ordinary people" (Payne and Payne, 2004: 134). If over-relied on this can produce a biased perspective, but can also give access to knowledge not widely accessible (Payne and Payne, 2004). Roughly one quarter of interviewees were considered key informants, which gave a balance between general perspectives on AFI involvement, and those more deeply embedded in AFI activities.

5.3.3.1 The semi-structured research interview

A semi-structured interview was carried out with at least one person involved in the AFI. Sometimes more than one person was interviewed. This occurred when the researcher arranged to meet the interviewee in their homes. Other members of the family involved with the initiative would sometimes join in on the interview for a short period. This added another dimension to the interview on that specific initiative and the researcher allowed the interview environment to evolve as interviewee wanted. Those interviewed were selected from the database and interviews were sought with participants by introductory emails and/or phone-calls. Interviews were conducted in a number of settings, in interviewees' homes or businesses, at farmers' markets, allotments or community gardens. Research participants sometimes requested meeting at a specified location, such as a café, restaurant or hotel, for their convenience. Often if interviews were conducted at homes or businesses, which were sometimes the same place, the semi- structured interview would be carried out and then the participant would offer to show the researcher around their farm or business premises. Interviewing in this context also provided opportunities for observation and stimulated discussion that may not have otherwise arisen if not prompted by this context. Smithers et al. (2008) make a similar point, and comment on the benefit of conducting interviews on sites such as farmers' markets, which also provides opportunities for observation. Interviews were face to face, except for one telephone interview. Conducting interviews face to face gives the interviewer the advantage of responding to non verbal cues and contextual information (Robson, 2011). Before beginning the interview the researcher briefly outlined the purpose of the research

and asked permission to take an audio recording of the interview. Participants were assured that the recording would remain confidential, that interviews would be assigned a number and any quotations taken from the interview would be identified with this number. Most participants agreed to the interview recording and fifty seven interview transcripts were transcribed word for word by the researcher. Three declined, and in another case the dictaphone was out of order. In these cases detailed notes were taken which were then written up as soon as possible after the interview. Notes were taken during all interviews, as a back-up in case the audio recording failed, but also to aid the interview process, such as providing the interviewer with points to return to as the conversation progressed. Interviews lasted between one and two and a half hours in duration. Most were just over one hour in length. The duration of interviews depended on the personality of the individual, how open they were, their comfort and trust in the interviewer, if they were of a talkative nature, but also the amount of time the interviewee had to devote to the interview. Interviewing skills were important to manage these factors, when time was short to ensure the themes in the interview guide were broadly covered, and if the interviewee was talkative, to keep the interview roughly in line with the interview guide. Interviewing skills developed as the research progressed. General good practice in interviewing was followed such as asking open ended questions, listening and following up on responses for more in depth answers, leaving short silences to allow the interviewee to continue to expand answers and asking participants if they can tell you a story or remember an incident related to the question to encourage the flow of narrative (Seidman, 1991; Robson, 2011).

5.3.4 Analysing qualitative data

As qualitative data is gathered, analysis and interpretation also occurs. Analysis occurs not just when data collection is completed, as with quantitative data collection (Blee and Taylor, 2002). However, conducting semi-structured interviews results in the collection of a disorganised dataset. This means to interpret the data it must be organised into categories of meaning, or codes. Interview transcripts are a puzzle, and coding allows us to discover its hidden treasures (Silverman, 2005; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Essentially what coding aims to do is to: "allow the researcher to communicate and connect with the data to facilitate the comprehension of the

emerging phenomena and to generate theory grounded in the data" (Basit, 2003: 152).

Coding can begin with a list of codes. These might be derived from theory or literature relevant to the research (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Or alternatively, the coding can take a more inductive approach, and codes are grounded in the data and emerge from it. The latter is the case in this research. The data itself and the objectives of the research drove the coding process. It was guided by the research questions, aiming to identify what the interviews could elucidate about the characteristics and role of AFIs in the food system. Other themes also repeatedly emerged in the interviews, and data was also coded around these themes.

Analysis of textual data can also occur to different intensities of analysis. In this research, the intensity of coding was generally at the sentence or paragraph level. Because of the number of interviews, and the nature of the research objectives, coding at a more detailed level, such as coding of individual words, was not carried out. Johnston (2002) discusses intensive textual analysis of qualitative data in social movement studies and comments that this limits analysis to certain issues, such as ideology formation in movement development. Developing codes is also a gradual process. Saldana (2009) notes that coding happens in stages. As understanding of data develops, it often needs to be re-coded. It is important not to define final codes too soon, as themes that at first seem central may turn out not to be (Seidman, 1991). In the context of this research, the codes were re-categorised as the analysis progressed and the final result of the thematic analysis is a list of hierarchical themes with a number of sub-categories.

There are also different specific methods to approach coding. These can be linked with the broader methodological approach, such as narrative analysis or grounded theory. Narrative analysis involves using narratives as data and analysis involves identifying themes, as well as how the narrative is told, evaluating the rhythms of speech, such as pauses, where emphasis is added and other forms of expression, such as laughter, sighing and tone of voice (Wiles et al., 2005). Using grounded theory is based on developing theory from the data and involves beginning with theories,

collecting data to test them, analysis of this data and further data collection to re-test theories, meaning theory is built and refined grounded in data (Payne and Payne, 2004). A commonly cited approach to qualitative data analysis is thematic analysis. According to Bryman (2008) a set of procedures to follow when carrying out a thematic analysis are not defined, and other techniques such as grounded theory or narrative analysis also use the identification of themes in their approach to analysis. Content analysis is another common method and can be described as having a quantitative element as it can involve counting the frequency of words or phrases. The process encompasses "steps to reduce raw textual data to categorical units, and to assign numerical measures of occurrence and intensity" (Johnston, 2002: 77). Content analysis has also been adapted to and used in qualitative research and does evaluate the occurrence of words, but is a subjective interpretation of text and classifies according to themes and patterns (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe three different types of qualitative content analysis. The conventional approach to content analysis allows codes emerge from the data itself, with data read word by word to develop codes. A directed content analysis on the other hand uses key concepts as the initial coding categories. The third type described is a summative content analysis where keywords used as codes are developed from relevant literature. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) describe two approaches to qualitative content analysis. The inductive approach, which can be aligned with the conventional approach described above, involves open coding of the data, which are grouped into categories. The deductive approach starts with codes derived from theory or literature, and can be aligned with the summative and directed approaches described above. This research's coding strategy used an inductive qualitative content analysis.

The coding of the qualitative data occurred in a number of phases. The coded data were the sixty-one interviews and three site visits. It began with interpretation of a small number of interviews and then broadened out to encompass all of the interview data. The first phase of data interpretation began by printing a number of interviews and manually working through the interviews to identify repeated ideas and themes. Phrases and words summarising the meaning of text were made in the margins and text that seemed significant underlined. The coding process then moved on to coding

with the assistance of NVivo, a software package that facilitates analysis of qualitative data.

Using software can aid data analysis in a number of ways. Odena (2013) outlines a number of advantages. The practical advantages include that there is no printing, highlighting, cutting and sorting of quotations to organise the data and quotes can be quickly sourced. It can also aid better data analysis as data can be re-categorised with ease as themes become of more or less significance as the research progresses. Software does not however analyse the data, codes and themes must still be identified and assigned by the researcher. It does however reduce the tedious manual nature of organising and assigning categories to qualitative data (Basit, 2003). Using software can also aid in identifying the most relevant and recurring categories as the number of quotations and interviews categorised under different categories can be identified. This helps to substantiate claims made in the qualitative research and other research has taken this approach. For example, when analysing organic farmers' reasons for converting, Guthman (2004) cites the number of times a specific response was given as a reason for converting to organic. Table 5.8 (see page 148) shows the number of quotations categorised under each parent[15] code and the number/percentage of interviews/site visits that were coded under that category. This is not an essential part of qualitative research, Basit (2003) argues the quality and richness of the data is what is important. That said, Table 5.8 does however help to show the extent of particular themes in the qualitative data. For example, 94% of interviews have been coded to either 'social field' or 'economic field', with over a 1000 quotations coded to these categories across the interviews and site visit data transcripts. This highlights the significance of these themes in the qualitative data. The 'other capitals' and 'other fields' section of the table shows other themes emerging from interviews. These themes have lower coverage in the interview and site visit data transcripts. They were not however themes directly focused on in data analysis and coding, highlighting they could represent areas where further data analysis could be carried out on this rich body of qualitative data.

[15] 'Parent' is a term used in NVivo software to denote codes at the top of a coding hierarchy. 'Child' nodes are sub codes linked to a parent node.

Table 5.8 Parent code categories and extent of data coding in NVivo

Parent code category	Number of quotations categorised	Number of interviews/site visits coded	Percentage of total interviews/site visits
Cultural capital	275	47	73%
Cultural field	254	46	72%
Economic capital	145	38	59%
Economic field	1111	60	94%
Social capital	361	52	81%
Social field	1105	60	94%
Habitus	302	54	84%
Other capitals			
Environmental	6	5	8%
Legal	2	2	3%
Political	35	15	23%
Symbolic	36	24	38%
Other fields			
Environment field	70	21	33%
Legal field	198	50	78%

As coding progressed in NVivo the number of codes grew significantly. Codes were eventually condensed and hierarchical relationships between codes were identified and some code categories were merged. The final part of the coding moved on to situate codes within the Bourdieusian theoretical framework. The concepts of economic capital, economic field, social capital, social field, cultural capital and cultural field became the 'parent nodes' or the main coding categories. The initial codes identified were re-categorised as 'child nodes' or sub categories under these main codes. Some of the data coded in the early phases of coding was re-coded outside of these conceptual codes. Some coding under the 'habitus' concept, legal field, environmental fields, symbolic capital, political capital, environmental capital and legal capital was conducted. The number of interviews referenced under these codes was less numerous than the main code categories. Memos with notes on general observations made and patterns in the data were also made in NVivo as the coding and analysis progressed. These notes were very useful to help move from the analysis phase to writing up the findings of this research.

5.4 Conclusion

This research has worked to overcome some of the methodological criticisms made in how AFI research is approached. The methodology is informed by previous research on the study of AFIs and observations made on the appropriateness of certain data collection methods over others, such as the case study, the quantitative survey and the qualitative research interview. A number of interdependent steps were important in how the research was carried out, which were: the construction of a database, the selection of areas to focus data collection, semi-structured interviews to collect data and data analysis. These steps and methods are appropriate to this research, its objectives and context. Designing qualitative research to have respect for, and make effort to understand, diverse sectors is challenging as it uses smaller samples than quantitative research. This methodological framework allows a diverse sector to be better understood in the qualitative research context.

Methods that have previously been criticised could in future be appropriate to reintroduce to the study of AFIs, with specific research goals in mind that fit with these methods. For example, if AFIs were to form an overarching movement organisation, quantitative data gathering showing the economic value of the sector would be an important lobbying tool. The Capital Growth (2014) report does just this, measuring the financial value of food produced in London's food growing spaces in one growing season, finding it amounts to a value of £151,000 and 21 tonnes of food. Kneafsey et al. (2013) identify a lack of baseline and longitudinal data, and gathering this would require a quantitative methodological approach. Recent research also demonstrates the renewed value of the case study. For example, Ashe and Sonnino (2013) take New York school food reform as a case study and show how it has the potential to bring together diverse food system actors, such as producers, businesses and public sector groups, to upscale and increase the impact of AFIs. This approach addresses a pivotal research question about how to improve the value of AFIs and also offers insights for practice.

This research next moves on to document the findings in chapter six to nine. Participant observation and documentary analysis were very important in constructing the picture of Ireland's AFIs explored in chapter six. The qualitative

data from the semi-structured research interviews also feeds into chapter six, but forms the basis of the primary research findings explored in chapters seven, eight and nine.

Chapter 6

Food, agriculture and alternative food initiatives in Ireland

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a broad overview of AFIs and the agri-food scene in Ireland. It is constructed based on primary[16] and secondary[17] data sources. Firstly, to provide some general context, an overall picture of agriculture and food in Ireland is presented, focusing on the structure of agriculture, food policy, the agri-food industry, food retailing and consumer food issues. The chapter then moves on to look at AFIs and their broader context, focusing on artisan food and farmers' markets. Ireland's food consumers, for a variety of reasons, have also long been active in food production. This more community based perspective is also outlined, in the current and historical context. Organisations, groups and networks are also important, and their presence and goals are also detailed. This all provides a framework in which to situate the primary research findings developed in the next two chapters. It also provides evidence showing how AFIs are more than a group of initiatives with similar goals, but a network of individuals, groups and organisations, one of the central elements of how a social movement is conceptualised. Characterising AFIs and their practice in Ireland begins in the last section of this chapter, where the concept of the alternative food field is proposed, along with two key positions in this field, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. These categories are used to structure discussion in the remaining chapters.

6.2 Agriculture and food in Ireland

6.2.1 The changing structure of farming in Ireland

Agriculture in Ireland is a changing, transitioning industry, but the end point of this transition is unclear. At the farm level, farmers transition at different speeds, affected by a combination of drivers, such as technological progress, policy changes and local

[16] Qualitative research interviews, participant observation, attendance at events, seminars and conferences.
[17] Media sources, special interest books, press releases, submissions, reports and research papers.

structural characteristics (Walsh, 2007). Structurally, changes show a general trend of decreasing farm numbers and increasing farm size. The 2010 Census of Agriculture showed the number of farms decreasing by 1.2% over a ten year period and the average farm size increasing by 4.1%. Average farm size was 32.7 hectares, and 22% of farms were between 30 and 50 hectares, 15% between 50 and 100 hectares and just 3% over 100 hectares (CSO, 2012). The average Australian farm is 3,601 hectares, while compare this to the USA the average farm is 178 hectares and European average farm is 32 hectares. Scale is a key issue for farming to generate adequate income, even when intensive and technologically advanced (Cahill, 2014).

The existence of a two tier farm economy of commercial and marginalised farms has also been identified. Commercial farms tend to be specialised, innovative and use new technology to maintain competitiveness. Marginal farms struggle to compete with these more commercial farms and survive by relying on subsidies and off-farm employment (Crowley et al., 2008). The 2013 National Farm Survey provides further evidence of the tiered nature of farming in Ireland. It highlights income disparity between different types of farms and also between regions. The survey cites average farm income as €25,437. Just over half (51.5%) of farmers or their spouse were found to have an off-farm job. The average income on dairy farms was found to be well above average at €62,994 and on cattle farms below average at €15,667. Looking at income distribution, 23% of farmers earned less than €5,000 and 18% more than €50,000. The survey also found a heavy reliance on direct payments constituting farm income, which comprised 57% of incomes on all farms. Reliance on direct payments differed regionally. It was lowest in the south of Ireland and higher in border and western regions where direct payments on average comprised 116% and 107% of farm income respectively (Hanrahan et al., 2014).

While there are challenges facing the economic viability of Irish farming, it also has advantages that could be capitalised on. Macken-Walsh (2011) describes Ireland's small and middle sized farms as having advantages if they participate in differentiated commodity markets. These farms have high animal welfare standards and high numbers participating in agri-environmental schemes. Macken-Walsh (2011) argues potential exists to develop a brand marketing strategy differentiating

the produce of the family run farm in rural Ireland, as distinct from, but alongside, artisan food and undifferentiated commodity foods. However, Macken-Walsh (2011) also identifies challenges in realising the traditional Irish farm's potential, such as engaging indigenous farmers. There is a low engagement with such approaches, evidenced by the low rate of farm diversification[18]. In Ireland, 4% of farms have diversified activity, whereas in England 51% of farms have diversified (Meredith, 2011). The reasons for this are unclear and merit further study.

6.2.2 Ireland's agri-food industry

Food Harvest 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's (DAFM) vision for Irish agri-food and fisheries, states that this sector is Ireland's most important indigenous industry. Statistics related to agri-food on industrial production, employment and GVA help to illustrate its importance. Census of industrial production figures from 2012 showed the food and beverage sector accounted for 24% of all industry turnover and 26% of all manufacturing industry turnover (DAFM, 2014b). Employment in the agri-food industry accounts for 9.2% of total employment and just over 175,000 jobs. It is estimated to account for 7.1% of Ireland's gross value added (GVA), with primary agriculture accounting for 2.4% of GVA (DAFM, 2014d).

Food Harvest 2020 focuses on growth and outlines a series of growth targets that include increasing agri-food's primary output value by €1.5 billion, value added by €3 billion and export value to a target of €12 billion by 2020 (DAFM, 2010b). Agri-food is also expected to play an important role in Ireland's economic recovery. Export led growth is the focus of much national policy and planning. For example the Bord Bia *Pathways for Growth* report outlines how Ireland can capitalise on its natural advantages as a food producing nation in creating high value exports (Bell and Shellman, 2010).

Agri-food exports are growing, increasing by 9% over the 2012 to 2013 period. Some sectors are particularly important to the value of agri-food exports. For example dairy products/ingredients accounted for 30% and beef 21% of the total

[18] Research has found however that one third of farmers are interested in diversification (Meredith et al., 2012).

share of Irish agri-food exports in 2012 to 2013 period, while seafood accounted for just 5% and poultry just 2% (DAFM, 2014d). While the agri-food industry is strong in Ireland, it is not without its challenges. Food Harvest 2020 also acknowledges a number of challenges face agri-food in Ireland, such as the disparity between cost of production and remuneration for producers, international competition and international retail consolidation (DAFM, 2010b).

6.2.3 Food policy and food security

The reliance on direct payments in Irish farming (discussed in section 6.2.1) highlights the importance of the European Union's CAP to Irish agriculture. Cuts to the 2014 to 2020 CAP budget have been opposed by the Irish government, as well as by other EU countries (Beesley, 2012). Agreement on CAP 2014 to 2020 was reached in mid 2013. It will see payments to some smaller farmers increase and some larger farmers decrease under the new payments scheme which is based on number of hectares farmed (Cahill, 2013; Sheehan, 2013). The new CAP direct payment scheme will be implemented in 2015, which will also see milk quotas abolished and additional payment supports for young farmers. CAP 2014 to 2020 supports thematic sub programmes on SFSCs, but member states decide what measures they implement as part of their sub programmes (European Parliament and Council, 2013). Ireland does not appear to plan to implement SFSC measures strongly but under the draft rural development sub programme an 'Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme' will be introduced. This is a grant scheme supporting artisan food producers to market their produce, improve and validate production quality. The rural development programme also continues the existing Organic Farming Scheme (DAFM, 2014a; 2014c).

The previous section discussed the economic importance and potential of Ireland's agri-food industry. Critics argue there is little focus on the wider social, environmental and cultural impacts of the industry in agri-food policy, as some of Food Harvest 2020's criticisms highlight. Food Harvest is focused on productivity growth. Issues around the environmental impacts of its growth targets and future food security have been raised. Commenting on Food Harvest 2020, Wilde (2011) highlights the need for social, nutritional and environmental impacts of the food

system to become part of how its performance is evaluated and that Ireland doesn't have a formal policy statement outlining how food security is assessed. In a submission to Food Harvest 2020, An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland called for a strategic environmental assessment of the plan to review its impact on the environment. An Taisce also highlights that meeting targets could lead to competition for land between dairy and other farming sectors such as tillage, beef, sheep and horticulture. Food Harvest includes a target of increasing milk production by 50%. An Taisce questions if this could leave Ireland too reliant on one agricultural sector and that Food Harvest lacks vision on enhancing Ireland's food security and our reliance on imported grain, animal feed, fertilizer, fruit and vegetables (An Taisce, 2012). The Green Party Food Security Group's submission to Food Harvest argued the policy should focus on creating food production sustainability. Among other important measures discussed are the encouragement of new growers (e.g. urban food growers) and supporting the development of local routes to market (e.g. farmers' markets) (Green Party, 2010).

The overall policy context outlined so far does not provide a facilitative framework for major AFI development. That said, one Food Harvest 2020 objective that could link with AFIs and support the development of artisan food is that it aims to identify and exploit the potential for obtaining more Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) products in Ireland[19] (DAFF, 2010b). This economic focus towards agriculture and food is not new however. Tovey (2001: 337) has commented for example on how agriculture's role is firstly seen as economic, and its impacts on society and culture are not harnessed or valued: "Today in Irish society, agriculture has lost most of its significance other than economic: it is now simply one, decreasingly profitable or attractive, 'sector' within the economy. The idea of an agrarian social world is meaningless." Boucher-Hayes and Campbell (2009: 163) argue there is a laissez-faire attitude towards food issues in Ireland:

[19] Discussed further in section 6.3.2.3.

> "The Department of Agriculture distributes the cheques and implements Brussels policy. The Department of Health is there to look after us when it is already too late, and only allocates the tiniest proportion of its budget to its Health Promotion Unit. The Food Safety Authority's primary concern is bugs in the food chain…So who is here lobbying for change in how foods are made? In short, nobody with government backing."

Government agencies play their particular roles, for example implementing agri-environmental policy and providing services. The impetus to drive change towards a truly environmentally sustainable and culturally rich agri-food sector does not appear present in current policy. However, at the local level in Cork city and county, local food policy is gaining ground. Following in the footsteps of Toronto and Bristol food policy councils, as part of the World Health Organisation's Healthy City Initiative, the first food policy council in Ireland launched in Cork city in March 2014. The Cork Food Policy Council aims to promote sustainable food production and consumption in Cork, as well as contributing to food policy development. It is a broad partnership, including representatives from community, food retailing, local authority, environmental, farming and fishing sectors (Cork News, 2013; Cork Food Policy Council, 2014). The draft 2015 to 2021 Cork City Development Plan makes strong reference to the importance of food to Cork's cultural and economic development. One of its planned objectives is to prepare a 'Food Strategy' for the city focusing on development of food culture and quality food businesses (Cork City Council, 2014).

6.2.4 Food retailing in Ireland

Much like wider patterns of change, in Ireland food retailing is becoming more concentrated. The number of independent retailers are declining and dissatisfaction exists among farming groups regarding the return they receive for their produce from retailers. Data on market share complied by Kantar Worldpanel shows Tesco, Dunnes and Supervalu control 75.4% of the grocery market and Aldi and Lidl 13.5%, leaving just 11% for other outlets (Berry, 2014). The vast majority of food is retailed through supermarkets and retailers affiliated to a wholesaler. A review by the Competition Authority (2008) of Ireland's grocery sector found independent

retailers falling in numbers, alongside the expansion of multiples (e.g. Tesco, Dunnes) and retailers affiliated to a wholesaler (e.g. Supervalu, Centra). At the wholesale level, this report found a high level of concentration, with 95% of wholesale turnover in the grocery sector attributable to seven groups of operators, and within these, turnover concentrated among the two largest wholesalers, Musgrave and BWG Foods, which accounted for 80% of groceries turnover. The report also notes vertical integration deepening between wholesalers and their affiliated retailers or franchises, with wholesalers involved in retail branding and the range of products retailer's sell. Changes in Ireland's retail landscape have also been linked to local authority planning decisions and the development of out of town supermarkets. Boucher-Hayes and Campbell (2009) discuss how planning decisions negatively affected local independent businesses, such as butchers, greengrocers and newsagents in a county Tipperary town. Town centres with pay parking struggled to compete with out of town supermarkets offering a one stop shop and free parking.

These changes are not new, but reflect the continuance and intensification of a broader pattern of change. Just over two decades ago, Tovey (1991) described changes in the Irish agri-food industry. One change was concentration, such as in the beef processing and milk industries, but also fragmentation, where industries can break into two sectors, with one orientated towards mass production and the second speciality production, with the example of the baking industry cited. Another changing pattern described is internationalisation, with the emergence of multinational Irish food companies. These changes are also reflected in the patterns in Irish agriculture and food retailing described above. The fragmentation Tovey (1991) describes can be broadly aligned with artisan, speciality, local and organic food in Ireland, as well as with the small and middle sized farms that struggle to compete in mass commodity markets.

Issues relating to the concentration of power in food retailing have been highlighted by farming organisations, such as the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA). It has repeatedly called for increased retailer regulation, the introduction of a statutory code of practice and a retail Ombudsman to oversee implementation and investigate retailer's treatment of suppliers. The IFA's argument for statutory regulation is that

competition is not working for producers, consumers and suppliers because of power imbalances in the food supply chain. Retail multiples are said to have too much control over prices paid to producers, meaning they have to accept prices below the cost of production (IFA, 2010). In 2012, the IFA also made similar calls when the UK introduced legislation regulating the retail sector, including a retail adjudicator with powers to impose fines when retailers are in serious breach of the groceries code (Dermody, 2012; IFA, 2012). In 2013, a report by the Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine recommended the introduction of a groceries sector statutory code of conduct and measures to develop greater transparency in the grocery retail sector (Oireachtas Committee on Food, Agriculture and the Marine, 2013). The introduction of a code appears to draw closer, and lobby groups continue to push for its introduction.

6.2.5 Food consumption issues and the consumer

Many Irish consumers spend less time cooking than they did in the past. Boucher-Hayes and Campbell (2009: 163) suggest changes in our food habits have "engineered a quieter social revolution" where Irish households have changed from spending a full working day cooking every week, to now around a half hour a day. That said, consumers are now coming back to cooking, with increasing numbers enjoying cooking, even developing a passion for it, as well as baking from scratch, that is according to Periscope 2013, Bord Bia's biennial consumer survey. Periscope also found an increasing interest in local food, awareness of food miles and consumption of Fair Trade products. In 2005, 18% agreed buying local food was very important, while this increased to 32% in 2013. Awareness of food miles is increasing: 38% were aware of food miles in 2007 and it rose to 49% in 2013. In 2005, 11% bought Fair Trade when available, but this increased to 14% in 2013 (Bord Bia, 2013). Data prepared for Bord Bia by Ipos MRBI shows the 'grow it yourself' trend in Ireland has increased over recent years. Spend on fruit and vegetables for planting increased by 15% from 2010 to 2012, and from 2002 to 2012 was estimated to have increased by 60% (Neary, 2012).

The issue of food waste is also receiving greater attention. For example, as part of the National Waste Prevention Programme, the Environmental Protection Agency's

programme Stop Food Waste aims to reduce food waste and works with for example householders, schools, communities and local authorities (Stop Food Waste, 2014). Events that demonstrate the scale of food waste and its potential use have also occurred. For example 'Feeding the 5000' was held in 2012 in Dublin and 'Feed the City' was held in conjunction with Cork Food Policy Council's launch in 2014 (Cork Food Policy Council, 2014; Feeding the 5000, 2014).

Coupled with these trends however is that affording a good diet is becoming more challenging. Periscope also found consumers were increasingly concerned about price. Food poverty is rising in Ireland. Carney and Maitre (2012) found a 3% increase in food poverty from 2009 to 2010, and overall estimated that 10% of people lived in food poverty. It is understandable then to find that value for money is very important to consumers in Ireland and impacts their choice to shop at AFIs, such as farmers' markets. A Bord Bia (2011) survey found that farmers' markets are viewed as a place for foodies and represent an aspirational vision for how consumers would like to live. The survey also found a negative perception of price at farmers' markets, however when consumers visited them they were surprised to find good value on offer. The survey found consumers listed five important attributes of farmers' markets (food, localness, quality, value and the experience), but value was ranked the most important. If consumers felt they could not get good value at the farmers' market they were unlikely to attend.

Economic, environmental and social issues have been highlighted in relation to food, farming and its role in Irish society. DAFM focuses on the growth potential of the Irish agri-food and its role in economic recovery; interest groups raise broader issues, such as farm incomes, farm related environmental issues and food poverty. A broad range of food issues are also identified on the agenda of agents active in AFIs, who are also making efforts to address a range of issues in food, farming and society. The focus of discussion next narrows to look at AFIs and their wider context in Ireland.

6.3 A general context for alternative food initiatives in Ireland

6.3.1 Size and composition

The size and composition of AFI activities in Ireland is hard to definitively describe. In terms of the types of agents involved, they emerge from a diverse base. This is not a phenomenon primarily based in traditional Irish farming. A number of authors note the influence of a non-national population in the development of local, organic and artisan food in Ireland (Sage, 2003; Macken-Walsh, 2011; Tovey, 2006). For example, referring to organic production in Ireland Sage (2003:52) writes: "the backbone of the sector was formed by non-nationals." Macken-Walsh (2011) highlights that Irish artisan food culture can be at a distance from indigenous Irish farming, and a more diverse range of actors, both Irish and international, pioneered this food culture in Ireland, which is also a point made by Tovey (2006). Agents that can be described as part of the broad area of local food production and distribution include both: "farm households occupying the same land for several generations, but also settled New Age Travellers from Britain, American, German, Swiss, English and Irish ex-urbanites, women who had married into farming and fishing families, and returned Irish emigrants" (Tovey, 2006: 176). A Bord Bia (2011) survey of farmers' market traders found that 74% were Irish and 26% of another nationality.

While the number of AFIs in Ireland was discussed in the previous chapter outlining the research methodology; it is also important to note a general pattern of growth and development is observed in AFIs, in academic literature and more popular writings. Sage (2003: 55) writes of a growing network of 'good' food producers, making food of some distinction in its taste and appearance, of local origin or produced to specific methods of production and distributed through short supply chains. These good food producers also form: "spaces where consumers can obtain the products and engage in a deeper relationship with the artisans themselves." McKenna (2012) observes Irish food culture beginning to speed up in the early 1990s and continue to grow ever since. Co-author of the *Bridgestone Irish Food Guides* John McKenna comments that the bedrock of this new Irish food culture, written about in the Irish Food Guides in the early 1990s, still persists in the current edition. McKenna (2012) states: "what

we found then has been the people and the places that we have written about for almost a quarter of century." A constant growth and development of Irish food culture is also noted, even as Ireland entered a recessionary era, as each year the guidebook grows in length.

A pattern of growth in recent times is also evidenced by the increase in numbers of organic producers and percentage of agricultural land in organic production. In 2002, there were 923 organic food producers in Ireland and 0.7% of agricultural land was in organic production (DAFF, 2003). In 2007, there were 1,334 organic producers in Ireland and 0.9% of agricultural land was in organic production (DAFF, 2008). By 2010 this had increased to 1,639 and 1.2% of agricultural land (DAFM, 2013). The most recent figures put the number of organic producers at 1,721 at the end of 2011 (Bord Bia, 2014b). Positive future growth prospects for Irish artisan foods have also been found, such as in a 2012 Mintel study. Reporting on the study, Tuomey (2012) highlights that Irish consumers see artisan food as luxury items, but also notes an increasing interest in artisan foods because of a wish to support local enterprises, as well as in the health and provenance of food. Business outlook was also positive; the majority (76%) of small food producers saw their prospects as good. Another trend highlighted in Mintel's study is the growth of supermarket own brand premium ranges, which can be supplied by artisan producers and is positively impacting artisan food sales.

AFIs also include initiatives where consumers attempt to produce their own food. The numbers of these types of projects, such as allotments, community and school gardens, is not recorded in a systematic way, but efforts by interest organisations to develop public lists and directories have been made. This can be read as an indication that these projects are growing in number when there is a need to record and list their presence. Grow it Yourself (GIY) Ireland[20] has a Community Garden Initiative which involves mapping supply and demand for community gardens in Ireland (GIY, no datea). The organisation Healthy Food for All maintains the Community Food Initiative Directory, which is a list of projects, from food banks to school and community food projects (Healthy Food for All, 2012). Dublin

[20] The significance of this organisation is discussed in detail in section 6.3.5.

Community Forum (2009) has published the Dublin City Guide to Community Gardening which lists 43 existing and planned community gardens and allotments in Dublin.

The next section delves deeper into producer and consumer activities to provide a more detailed context for Ireland's AFIs. The first area focused on is the producer side of AFIs, focusing on small food businesses and food producers, and their involvement in the short food supply chains through farmers' markets. In this section some social and historical background surrounding activities, such as the cooperative and organic food movements, that sought to change food and agriculture in Ireland are also outlined. Then, in the next part of this section community food growing is explored, which for example includes allotments, community gardens and growers' groups. Similarly, some social and historical background on domestic and community food production in Ireland is also outlined.

6.3.2 Producer movements and food culture in Ireland

6.3.2.1 The cooperative movement

Historically, the cooperative movement is an important agricultural producer movement in Ireland. Tovey (2001: 328) notes how it is comparable with some organic production movements in terms of its aim to "by-pass state power, in favour of empowering agrarian social groups within their own local relationships." The cooperative movement emerged in the late 19th century and aimed to support the economic survival of small producers who were vulnerable to exploitation by middlemen and dealers. Most cooperatives were focused on dairy processing. Because of the beginnings of industrialisation and privatisation of dairy processing, farmers had less control over the market for their produce and cooperative creameries helped keep control in farmers' hands (Tovey, 2001; Jenkins, 2004). However, while cooperative agribusiness still exists in Ireland, Tovey (2001) is hesitant in claiming there is still a true cooperative movement and notes: "There is a story to be told about how a social movement which set out to de-commoditise relations within the food industry ended up creating a series of indigenous Irish TNCs which compete aggressively in the global capitalist system (Tovey, 2001:

323). It provides an example of how movements change, and are affected by the broad economic environment.

A small number of food cooperatives focusing on whole foods and vegetarian food trading emerged in the 1980s. The Dublin Food Coop was established as a consumer cooperative in the 1980s and runs a market where local producers' trade alongside the coops own whole food market (Murtagh and Ward, 2009). The Quay Coop was established in Cork in the 1980s as a workers' coop and now runs a vegetarian restaurant and a number of whole food shops in Cork (Quay Coop, no date). A renewed interest in the potential of the cooperative model in building more sustainable food supply chains is also observed, demonstrated for example by the conference 'Feeding Ourselves: How communities can benefit from co-operative food systems' held in 2013 (National Rural Network, 2013).

6.3.2.2 The organic food movement

The organic movement in Ireland has been described as stagnant, not because of Ireland's organic farmers or organisations, but because of poor public policy support and low organic farming support compared with other European countries. Negative media coverage is also implicated in contributing to the sector's challenges. Greater cooperation within the sector, between farmers, representative organisations, certification bodies and coops is identified as a way forward to improve its image and work together to market organic produce better (Moore, 2013).

Ireland's organic movement is centred on farming. Its first members however also worked on creating alternative lifestyles and had a commitment to the idea that the personal is political, that how you live your life should demonstrate how society is structured (Tovey, 1997). Moore (2006c) identifies organic farming in Ireland as far back as 1936, but pioneering organic farmers in the 1970s were the beginning of its modern phase. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Ireland's organic sector was small in relative terms, with just 300 organic farms in Ireland in 1995. It has grown significantly in the last 15 years, is distributed nationally and consists of around 1700 producers (Lapple and Cullinan, 2012; Bord Bia 2014b). Many of the pioneers of Ireland's organic movement in Ireland were not Irish farmers, but people that

migrated to Ireland from Germany and Britain in the 1970s (Tovey, 1997; Moore, 2006c). Lapple and Cullinan (2012) identify regional variation in Ireland's organic farming, describing three concentrated spatial clusters: the county Leitrim/Roscommon border, west county Cork and county Limerick. They question how the clusters can be explained and argue a number of factors are implicated, such as soil quality, access to regional funding, access to markets and the influence of a neighbouring organic farmer in overcoming barriers to adoption. The Leitrim/Roscommon border cluster is also linked to where the original organic pioneers first settled, as well as where land was cheapest (Tovey, 1997; 1999).

The Organic Trust, Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association (IOFGA) and Demeter certify organic produce in Ireland. IOFGA was once the main organic organisation, but a split in the Irish organic movement in 1991 resulted in the emergence of five new organisations breaking away from IOFGA (Tovey, 1999). Issues surrounding the split are complex, but centred around certification inspector independence (Tovey, 1999). Tensions persist in the movement. For example, a new organic farming organisation formed in 2013, the Organic Farmers' Representative Body, by a group of livestock farmers that felt their interests were not being represented by existing organisations (Irish Independent, 2013).

Tovey (1999) outlines how the Department of Agriculture began to show an interest in organic farming in Ireland in the second half of the 1980s, also in response to an increasing interest at the EU level. The Organic Farming Unit and a Pilot Scheme for Organic Farming were set up in 1991. Recent government policy has sought to expand the organic sector and a target of 5% of agricultural area devoted to organic production was set for 2012 (DAFF, 2008). While organic production is increasing, this target has not been reached and around 1.2% of agricultural land is currently in organic production (DAFM, 2011b; Bord Bia 2014b). Key actions of the Organic Farming Action Plan 2013-2015 aim to address growth obstacles (DAFM, 2013). Policy supports for organic farming have included the Organic Farming Scheme and the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (Lapple and Cullinan, 2012). The agri-environmental policy, the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) was also an important scheme that supported organic farming. The GLAS agri-environmental

scheme, part of Ireland's rural development programme (2014-2020), is the current agri-environmental programme and is open to all active farmers. REPS is also said to have contributed to a shift in Ireland's organic food movement in the 1990s. It had a strong influence on the sector's growth (Lapple and Cullinan, 2012; Tovey, 1997). Sage (2003) points to the fact that the groundwork for the organic movement in Ireland was done by non-nationals, and recent growth can be attributed to mainstream farmers converting to organic farming because of the conversion grants provided by REPS, which were a financial incentive. This brought more livestock producers into organics in Ireland, whereas prior to this organic production had mostly focused on horticulture (Tovey, 2006; Sage, 2003). This assimilation of organic farming with agri-environmental policy, Tovey (1997: 35) argues: "appears to support and extend organic farming but actually robs it of its central reason for existence, which is as an alternative method not of managing nature conservation but of producing quality food." Research has also identified reactions within the movement to these broad patterns of change. Moore (2006c) identifies a 'post-organic' phase in the organic movement, where producers practice the organic philosophy, but are not certified or in receipt of state supports. The development of farmers' markets in Ireland is identified as an important part of this phase, providing a "space for small, locally oriented, self-defined chemical-free producers to exist" (Moore 2006c: 32). Moore (2006c: 19) goes on to argue that the idea of post-organic producers existing is not a cycle in the organic movement, but a perpetual part of it and an example of the movement's "ongoing dynamic of power resistance."

6.3.2.3 Irish food culture and artisan food

Historically, aspects of Irish food culture have been under celebrated, possibly because of their simplicity. Sexton (1998: 7) argues: "our foods are simple and peasant in origin. Much is the legacy of poverty and harsh economic circumstances." Examples of traditional food and drinks outlined by Bord Bia (2010) include boxty, blood pudding, soda bread, farmhouse butter, nettle soup, spiced beef, smoked fish and poitin. Cowan and Sexton's (1997) study of Ireland's traditional foods explores the origins of foods such as drisheen, crubeens, tripe, Irish stew, smoked eel, oatcake, blaa, porter cake and simnel. Irish cuisine has since diversified and Sexton (1998) also notes a contemporary interest in more traditional foods such as cheese

making and wild foods. Ireland has also begun to celebrate less artisan aspects of our food originality, possibly spurred by emigrants longing for a taste of home. Iconic products include: Tayto Cheese and Onion, Jacob's Mikado Biscuits and TK Lemonade (O'Connell, 2009). Evidence of the growing interest in and study of Ireland's food history is also shown by the dedicated conference in 2013, Irish Food Products: A Historical Perspective organised by the Irish Environmental History Network and the Agricultural History Society of Ireland (Irish Environmental History Network, 2013).

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) are EU schemes to protect and promote the names of quality agricultural products. PDO products are produced in a specific geographical area using recognised skills. PGI products are closely linked to a specific geographical area and at least one part of production must occur in this place (European Commission, 2014b). The EU has developed research and policy in this area with view to improving existing and developing new quality schemes. For example, in 2013 the European Commission conducted a feasibility study on developing a labelling scheme for products of island farming and in 2014 mountain product was introduced as a regulated EU quality term (European Commission, 2013b; European Commission, 2014a). For producers of final products, PGO and PGI products generally gain a premium price when compared to equivalent standard products; however research has found it to be unclear if farmers supplying raw materials also benefit (Areté Research, 2013). In 2010, Italy had 193 PDO and PGI products, France had 170, the United Kingdom had 33 and Ireland had 4 (European Commission 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d). Ireland's PDO and PGI products are Imokilly Regato, Timoleague Brown Pudding, Clare Island Salmon, Connemara Hill Lamb, and since 2013 the Waterford Blaa. The Waterford Blaa applied for PGI status in 2012, which was granted the following year (DAFF, no dateb; Digby, 2013). As already highlighted, Food Harvest 2020 objectives include identifying and exploiting the potential for obtaining more PGI products in Ireland (DAFF, 2010b). Consultation prior to the preparation of the 2014 to 2020 programme for rural development in Ireland identified the need for support for artisan, organic and small scale food production, assisting producers particularly to add value to produce, strengthen their position in the marketplace (such as through

cooperation and direct sale) and increase their participation in EU quality schemes. The Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme will provide support in this area up to 2020 (DAFM, 2014a; 2014c).

Despite the low number of PDO and PGI products in Ireland, a strong artisan food sector exists. For example, Anderson and McLaughlin (2011) highlight how Irish cheese has had success at the British Cheese Awards in recent years. A National Food Award scheme is also operated in Ireland, Blas na hÉireann, which started in 2008 (National Irish Food Awards, no date). The *Bridgestone Irish Food Guide* has been published since 1989 and aims to be a guide to 'good food' in Ireland, described as speciality, artisan, individually produced and locally made foods (McKenna and McKenna, 2012). Bord Bia (2010) argue a resurgence in artisan food occurred in the 1980s, also influenced by the organic movement and Slow Food. Food Harvest 2020 acknowledges the importance of Ireland's artisan food sector and its role in achieving growth in the food industry. It is acknowledged to be an innovative sector and has potential to enrich Ireland's tourism. A strong artisan food sector is said to exist in south-west Ireland, and particularly west Cork. It is also linked with the organic food movement in Ireland in terms of motivation, where those involved were driven by a desire for a sustainable rural lifestyle based on the production of artisan or organic food (Sage, 2003). For example, Anderson and McLaughlin (2011) note the regional concentration of cheese-making in Ireland. In 2011, of the 60 registered farmhouse cheese-makers in Ireland 62% lived in Munster (30% in county Cork alone), 27% Leinster, 7% Connaught and 4% to 5% in Ulster.

Bord Bia (2010: 8) refer to the Irish farmhouse cheese industry as the "jewel in the crown" of Irish artisan food. A small group of pioneering cheese-makers reinvigorated Irish cheese-making in the 1970s and 1980s (Anderson and McLaughlin, 2011). Many produced raw milk cheese, whereas before this the tradition had almost died out (McKenna, 2006). In the 1980s these producers often produced cheese from their own kitchens, but in the 1990s food safety regulators required more stringent production standards. As a result, cheese-makers had to make adaptations to survive in a more highly regulated environment (Sage, 2003).

By the 1990s Ireland's population has become more food aware, with increasing knowledge of international cuisines and the quality of Irish food (Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009; Anderson and McLaughlin, 2011). Many food festivals are now annual, well established events, such as the Waterford Harvest Festival, the Irish Food Festival held in county Meath and A Taste of West Cork. Themed festivals are also emerging, such as the Ballymaloe Literary Festival of Food and Wine, which attracts international food writers and chefs. A growing interest in food is evidenced by the existence of these food festivals and the rising popularity of cookbooks, TV chefs, farmers' markets, food blogs and small food businesses. Deleuze (2012) argues Ireland has become a 'foodie' nation. However, this also needs contextualising, there is a new kind of food culture developing in Ireland, but it is by no means widespread. Fonte (2008: 204) for example writes: "A local food culture is not at all diffused and most Irish people regard food as fuel."

Farmers' markets are a very important avenue into the world of artisan, organic, local and quality food culture in Ireland. Advocates of farmers' markets argue they support the development and reinvigoration of Irish food culture. McKenna (2006: no page number) argues: "Our Irish food culture can stand up to the best in the world, and it is at the farmers' markets where you'll find the tastiest artisan foods sold by passionate producers with a real connection to the food they are growing, sourcing, making and selling." Anderson and McLaughlin (2011) note how many cheese-makers have recently started cutting out the middlemen and selling at farmers' markets. Moore (2006c) highlights the importance of farmers' markets in the post-organic movement in Ireland. Irish consumers also see farmers' markets as an important part of the Irish food cultural landscape (Bord Bia, 2011). Farmers' markets represent a central part of the bedrock supporting AFIs in Ireland and need thorough contextualising for this research.

6.3.3 The development of farmers' markets

In Ireland, a new breed of market, that became commonly known as the 'farmers' market', began to emerge in the mid 1990s. Primary and secondary food producers, such as growers, bakers, confectioners and farmers sold their own produce. Imported or other local food produce was also sometimes sold alongside this and specialist

food sellers, such as cheesemongers or butchers were also a feature. Farmers' markets received much media attention as they began to gain ground in the mid 2000s (for example see: MacConnell, 2006; Sheehan, 2006; Shoesmith, 2006; Healy, 2006; Pope, 2007; Kelleher, 2007). Questions around authenticity of produce and that most traders were not farmers were common criticisms (Sheehan, 2006; Kelleher, 2007; Moore, 2007; Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009). Boucher-Hayes and Campbell (2009) note how some consumers appreciated what these markets offered, which for them was value for money, quality food, but for others they became known as a place to buy highly priced organic and artisan foods and not standard weekly groceries.

The Coal Quay market in Cork city was established in 1996, followed by the Temple Bar market in Dublin city. These are reputed to be among the first markets of this new breed of market, the farmers' market, in Ireland (Interviews 11, 47). Markets continued to develop. The Midleton market in county Cork started in 2000 and in 2001 Skibbereen and Clonakilty markets started also in county Cork (Sage, 2003). The number of farmers' markets continued to grow and in 2006 there were between 80 and 100 markets and in 2009 around 120 (Moore, 2006b; Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009). As the number of farmers' markets grew, they also gained attention from government and development agencies for their potential role in tourism, rural development and future farm viability. A number of events of note also occurred in the late 2000s. The 1st All Ireland Farmers' Market Conference was held in July 2007 and the National Conference on Local Food was held in November 2007 (Moore, 2007; Bord Bia, 2007b). A Seanad debate on the merits of farmers' markets was held in December 2007. The Local Authority Forum on Farmers' Markets was held in January 2008 (Local Authority Forum on Farmers' Markets, 2008). Growth has peaked and numbers have decreased over the last few years. In November 2012 there were 163 farmers' markets listed on the Bord Bia farmers' markets list and in 2014 around 150 existed (Bord Bia, 2012a; Bord Bia, 2014a).

6.3.3.1 The farmers' market model in Ireland

Ireland's farmers' markets are not homogenous entities and this is reflective of the fact they emerge from local conditions in different ways. Bord Bia (2007a: 8-9) note

the diversity in Ireland's farmers' markets, distinguishing seven different types: municipal markets; private markets; traders markets; country markets; co-operatively run or community based markets; shopping centre markets and event markets. Moore (2006b; 2008) proposes three models of farmers' markets in Ireland; pioneering, participatory and privately run. Pioneering markets are the first markets that emerged in the south-west of Ireland and are linked to the strong alternative food culture in this region, which tend to have low rents and are run under a committee structure. Participatory markets are classed as those that developed after pioneering markets, since 2002, and have a similar structure to pioneering markets, in that they are committee run and generally have low rents. Privately run markets are controlled by one individual, who sets the rules and regulations of the market, and tend to be concentrated on the east coast and have higher rents than other markets. Bord Bia (2014a) distinguish traditional farmers' markets (country markets, rural farmers' markets) and more recently formed types of food markets (urban lunch-time markets, urban international food markets, cooperative markets).

Another important distinction to make about farmers' markets is that they can be sited in public or private space. Historical market rights in public space exist in many towns in Ireland and some farmers' markets operate on the basis of the historic right to trade in that specific place and at a specific time. This issue has been a source of some conflict. Sage (2007a) notes how historical market rights existed in 264 towns in Ireland, but under the 1995 Casual Trading Act these rights could no longer exist after ten years if not exercised. In 2006 market rights were due to extinguish if not exercised. A campaign developed urging people to exercise their market rights, such as by setting up a temporary stall on the relevant day and location, so as to preserve market rights for the next ten years (Indymedia Ireland, 2006). Sage (2007a) discusses two cases of historical markets in west Cork. Competing visions of how public space should be used existed, with tensions between local market traders and shopkeepers. This eventually led to arrests and impounding of market traders produce, as county and town councils stated traders needed casual trading licences to trade. However in a legal ruling, it was found that traders had a proprietary right to trade under historical market rights.

Ireland's farmers' markets are no doubt diverse. There has also been some research and debate as to how they should best be structured and managed. In the context of structuring farmers' markets so that small farmers can strengthen their control in the marketplace, drawing on the US and UK experience of farmers' markets, Moroney et al. (2009) argue there are significant benefits to a farmer/producer led model for farmers' markets in Ireland, however input from other stakeholders, such as local authorities and consumers, would also benefit the strengthening of farmers' markets. In a submission to Agriculture 2007 to 2010 the Irish Food Market Traders' Association (IFMTA) stated the best way for farmers' markets to be managed is through local authorities to provide stability, which is much needed. However it was also stated how they are managed needs a degree of flexibility to allow markets to evolve and retain their vibrancy (IFMTA, 2006). At the 2007 Farmers' Market Conference the need for greater support from local authorities and consistency in interpretation of the Casual Trading Act were issues raised. The need for greater liaison between local authorities and farmers' markets was also highlighted (Moore, 2007). A survey carried out by the Local Authority Forum on Farmers' Markets (2008) of city, town and county councils found that when asked if their local authority had a specific policy on casual trading relating to food, the majority didn't (76%). The Local Authority Forum on Farmers' Markets (2008) survey also found that when local authorities were involved with farmers' markets, their involvement was most often to provide a site (89%). The survey found that 53% were involved in running a local farmers' market and 57% involved by providing advice.

6.3.3.2 Certifying farmers' markets

As farmers' markets began to expand in Ireland, questions around their integrity were raised. A key issue was if, and how, to regulate them and the role of certification in maintaining standards. For example, in the 2007 National Farmers' Market Conference report it is noted:

> "There is no clear agreed position on certification of farmers' markets as of yet, though there is a palpable interest in having high standards. Bureaucracy, frequency, climate, regional socio-cultural factors, provenance, population, conflicting consumer expectations, rate paying shops, broader town management issues, a legacy of bad planning, the lack of farmers at the farmers' market and the misleading of consumers in the current, less regulated environment are all issues that feed into the dynamic" (Moore, 2007).

Some of Ireland's farmers' markets set their own requirements and principles that traders must abide by (for example: Mahon Point Farmers Market, no date; Ennis Farmers' Market, no date). The UK National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) has certified farmers' markets since 2002 (FARMA, no date). An advisory group was established in 2008 to examine the possibility of developing guidelines for farmers' markets in Ireland. This group recommended piloting a voluntary code of good practice, which was piloted and evaluated. In 2009 a Voluntary Good Practice Standard for Farmers' Markets was introduced in Ireland, which is administered by Bord Bia (2012b).

6.3.3.3 Inside Ireland's farmers' markets

Looking more closely at Ireland's farmers' markets, Griffin (2009) carried out a survey of 17 markets and 88 market traders and found that while also selling at farmers' markets, 26% also sold through farm shops, 37% also supplied independent shops and delis, 26% supplied hotels, restaurants and caterers, and just 8% supplied wholesalers, multiples and symbol groups. When asked about future aspirations, 33% said they wished to expand to other markets and 12% were happy to sell at the markets they currently did. Just 24% said they wished to supply supermarkets and multiples. A significant reason for not wishing to supply them was the complexity this adds to their business. Financial gain was the main reason given for starting trading at markets (Griffin, 2009). A Bord Bia (2011) survey found that 80% of farmers' market traders consider them their key sales channel and 48% had been trading at the farmers' market for over five years. The survey also found that over half of traders' produce or grow the produce they sell and that traders were generally

positive about the future of farmers' markets, with 91% of traders and market organisers found to be fairly or very positive about the future of farmers' markets.

From the qualitative, semi-structured interview data gathered for this research a number of further observations can be made on the general nature of farmers' markets in Ireland. Farmers' markets can be a stepping stone for some producers (Interviews 14; 60; 59). This can mean they are a space where producers trade during their start-up business phase. They provide a flexible space for small businesses to experiment. Getting involved does not often involve making a long term commitment. Some markets that were part of this research had a three month sign up period, whereas at others traders could decide on a weekly basis if they would attend, pending space being available at the market, which was allocated on a first come, first served basis (Interviews 48; 17). Traders however can be very committed to markets and these committed traders make a market work. As one interviewee comments: "there has to be a core" (Interview 23).

Facilities available at markets can restrict the produce on sale. For example one interviewee comments that if traders have access to electricity, traders can use fridges and they can more easily sell chilled and fresh produce, such as dairy produce and meat. However, once producers can keep produce at the required temperature, such as by using cooler boxes, this produce can still be sold (Interviews 11; 47). Because farmers' markets are focused on being places where producers sell their own produce, producers also must balance their time between farming and attending markets. Markets were found to generally trade one day per week with some trading for a half or full day. One interviewee comments in relation to the possibility of attending a different market each day of the week: "Then you are giving up farming so, it depends what you are selling really" (Interview 28).

Producer only farmers' markets were seen to be a nice ideal, but in terms of supporting the development of food culture in Ireland, a wider range of sellers were seen to be needed (Interview 47). A decent number and diversity of stalls at a market were seen to make markets viable and vibrant, and this diversity can be difficult to achieve. Markets were also found to be limited to a maximum number of stalls

because of available space, but if the total number of stalls gets to low level, markets can survive, but lose their vibrancy (Interviews 11; 14; 48; 17). Some markets operate a waiting list if the market is full to capacity, but also getting a stall at a market can depend on type of produce sold. As one market organiser commented, most of their waiting list was composed of people making apple tarts (Interview 14). Creating a successful market needs a careful balance between location, type and number of market traders, as the following comments help to illustrate: "it is a very subtle thing, what is a place of importance and what is a place that just really doesn't work… there are 1000s of people wanting to do markets more than there are places, especially the ones where they actually work and there is no point in doing the market where it is not going to work" (Interview 47).

Traders also cite that the volume of sales at farmers' markets can be unpredictable, and affected by bad weather on market day (Interview 19; 27; 28). Most of those involved will have another income source, be it supplying retail or restaurant trade, or their partner has a job outside of market trading. Successful trading at a farmers' market becomes more serious when it is the only income source (Interview 28; 32; 15; 44). The cost of renting a stall also varies between markets. Anecdotal evidence from the qualitative interviews carried out for this research suggest costs in Dublin are higher than elsewhere in the country, with markets in other cities and rural areas charging around €1 to €20 for a stall, whereas in Dublin costs could be between €60 and €80 (Interview 14; 47). Farmers' markets trading where there were historical market rights also seemed to have lower rents.

A number of organisations related to farmers' markets have emerged. They are important in establishing markets, raising food issues on the public agenda and engaging with state agencies representing and lobbying for the sector's needs. The Irish Organisation for Market and Street Traders (IOMST) was established in 1994 and provides insurance to market traders in Ireland (IOMST, no date). It has a broader role beyond farmers' markets in food and non-food markets in Ireland. The Irish Food Market Traders Association (IFMTA) was established as a representative group for market traders at farmers' markets. Among its work, it was represented on the DAFF stakeholder group set up to draw up best practice guidelines for farmers'

markets and has worked with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) in developing appropriate hygiene regulations for farmers' markets (DAFF, 2010a; Interview 11). When this research was conducted however, the group was dormant (Interview 11). Regional groups are also evident. The Cork Free Choice Consumer Group was established around 1990, which holds monthly public talks on food issues and was central in the establishment of the Coal Quay farmers' market (Sage, 2003). Growing Awareness, a local group in west Cork was involved in starting and lobbying for the establishment of Skibbereen farmers' market and organised two conferences in 1999 and 2000 on issues of genetically modified food and the globalisation of food and agriculture (Sage 2007a; Sage 2003; Interview 25).

Farmers' markets in Ireland are at a crossroads, they may develop to support a closer relationship between producer and consumer, or to predominantly become an outdoor takeaway food source in urban areas, and Bord Bia (2014a) highlights that measures are needed to steer these markets in the right direction and harness their potential for growth. Recommended actions include better infrastructure and support services, improvements in the range, food quality and service provided, better links so they can support food entrepreneurialism and innovation and measures to support their role in the wider community and culture.

6.3.4 Community supported agriculture and urban farms

A lesser observed pattern in Ireland are new models of farming, however some examples do exist. The development of CSA schemes is also observed and these partnerships between producers and consumers have been initiated in different ways. Producers can initiate the CSA and market it to build a supportive consumer group, or a consumer group can approach a local farmer to grow a specific crop for them. Examples can be found linked to Transition towns in East Cork and alternative food communities in West Cork, such as Bantry CSA, Ballydehob Food Group CSA and Kinsale Green Growers CSA. The Village, a project to establish an eco-village in Ireland also has a CSA project, Cloughjordan Community Farm. It was set up in 2008 and is said to be the first CSA scheme in Ireland (The Village, 2010). The fact that the concept is gaining ground is supported by the fact that a three day CSA conference occurred in 2012 organised by Cloughjordan Community Farm and other

groups such as the National Organic Training Skillnet, the Soil Association and IOFGA.

Interest in urban food production in city farms is also growing. In 2009 the Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) television series *Corrigan's City Farm* tracked developments on an old allotment site in Cork that twelve volunteers were aiming to transform into a city farm. In Dublin city, a rooftop urban farm produces food underpinned by sustainable principles, using up-cycled materials and innovative food growing technologies (Urban Farm, no date; Kelly, 2013).

This section has shown how farmers' markets emerged in Ireland, given an overview of the scope and nature of markets and also some key issues facing these markets. Farmers' markets and the traders that compose them form a central part of AFIs in Ireland. Next, this chapter addresses the other centrally important side of AFIs, where consumers themselves are the drivers through initiatives such as community gardens and allotments.

6.3.5 Producing our own food

Producing our own food is not a new trend in Irish domestic life; it is the rebirth of a tradition (Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009). Sexton (1998) outlines how a variety of produce was grown in the gardens of the upper classes in Ireland from around the 1600s to 1800s, whereas cabbage and potatoes was often the main feature in the gardens of rural cottiers. In more recent times, a combination of a growing interest in self-sufficiency, a desire for quality produce and the benefit of growing your own in managing household budgets, has created a resurgence in food growing. Boucher-Hayes and Campbell (2009: 51) question how food trends and fashions, such as the growing interest in local, organic or growing your own food will develop in the long term in Ireland. In the context of growing our own food, it is noted that "if we want it to be as local as our own gardens, we're going to have to put a bit of spadework in." If media coverage of the growing interest in producing our own food is any guide, this does seem to be burgeoning trend. A growth in demand for, and development of food growing spaces, such as allotments and community gardens, is well documented in print by the media and in Irish interest publications in the last

decade (for example: Powers, 2004; Hayes, 2006; Viney, 2006; Monaghan, 2008; Fallon, 2009; Boucher-Hayes and Campbell, 2009; Murtagh, 2011; Bell and Watson, 2012; Fallon, 2012b; Kelly, 2013). In a book dedicated to the topic, Fallon (2012b) explores how amateurs and experts grow their own food in Ireland, profiling food gardeners of different kinds, such as those whose livelihoods are based on food growing, and also home gardeners, allotment holders and school gardeners. A Grow Your Own (GYO) movement is referred to that is concerned with: "savouring the pleasures of home grown garden produce" (Fallon, 2012b: 3). GYO gardeners are described as sharing a determination in their approach, an: "unwavering, steadfast and dogged determination to grow at least some of their own food" (Fallon, 2012b:1).

Schemes to support communities to produce food locally have also emerged in recent years from different organisations. A dedicated grant scheme the 'Community Growers Fund' in support of allotment and community garden development and outreach to the unemployed has been run by the Community Foundation for Ireland, which has reached its fifth round of funding (Community Foundation for Ireland, 2014). It also organised the 'Community Growers' Conference in 2013 showcasing how the fund was used (Community Foundation for Ireland, 2013). *Safe*food launched a pilot 'Community Food Initiative' that ran from 2010 to 2012. Because of the success of the pilot programme it has continued to support the programme for the 2013 to 2015 period. The initiative has provided funding for projects that support access to affordable and healthy food, and many of the projects incorporate a food growing element (*Safe*food, 2013).

An important national level organisation is Grow It Yourself (GIY) Ireland that aims to inspire people to grow their own food and develop the skills to facilitate this. Among its activities is organising events, publishing information on food growing and running the social enterprise, the 'Grow, Cook, Eat' training centre. One of its key activities is the promotion and development of independent growers' groups, of which there are a number of types such as in schools, workplaces, communities, and online (GIY Ireland, no dated). Local groups are managed independently, but linked to the parent organisation. The first GIY groups started in county Waterford in 2008

and local meetings were well attended. In 2009 the national non-profit organisation GIY Ireland was launched to promote and support the development of growers' groups nationally. By November 2012, GIY Ireland numbered over almost 7,000 registered members, and in July 2014 this had grown to almost 9,500[21] (GIY Ireland, no dateb; GIY Ireland, no datec).

6.3.5.1 Allotments

In the early 1800s allotments were a part of Irish urban life. However, Bell and Watson (2012) describe an allotment movement growing stronger in the early 1900s, and the Vacant Land Cultivation Society formed in Dublin in 1909. However, from 1950 there was a decline in the number of allotments in Dublin. Cultural and economic changes contributed to the declining importance of allotments, such as the opening of supermarkets that met demands for cheaper food and an emphasis on economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Bell and Watson (2012) do however note a renewed demand for allotments during the 1980s economic recession, however growing your own at this time was stigmatised as an activity resorted to by the poor. A change occurred again, and a sharp increase in demand for allotments occurred in the mid 2000s (Hayes, 2006). This can be linked with the changing economic conditions in Ireland, but also changing food concerns around quality and environmental issues (Bell and Watson, 2012). This rising interest in allotment growing has resulted in an increasing demand for allotments and a new phase of allotment growing in Ireland.

Allotments can be provided by local authorities in Ireland. Until 2010, the law on allotments dated back to 1926. The 1926 Acquisition of Land Act stated local authorities may provide land for allotments when they can establish there is a demand for them, and that rents and fees collected can reasonably cover the costs of running an allotment scheme (Irish Statute Book, 2012). The Planning and Development Act now governs allotments (Irish Statute Book, 2010). It allows local authorities to set aside land for allotments and include developing allotments in their

[21] On November 8th 2012, 6985 was listed as the number of GIY Ireland members on the GIY Ireland website. Also stated is that the organisation had approximately 100 local GIY groups and over 30,000 people involved in the movement in Ireland. On November 15th 2014, 8953 was listed as the number of GIY Ireland members on the GIY Ireland website.

development plans (Murtagh, 2011). Waiting lists can be operated by local authorities for citizens seeking allotment plots. Murtagh (2011) found that waiting lists in the Dublin area had numbers between 33 and just under 500 on their lists[22]. If public land is not already available for allotments, local authority budgetary constraints may inhibit buying land for this purpose (Murtagh, 2011). Existing land owned by the local authority may be zoned for specific purposes, which can also restrict its use for allotments (Interview 1).

In the last few years private landowners, often farmers, have also moved into the allotment business. The website allotments.ie lists allotments by county (Allotments.ie, no date). Concerns over the private provision of allotments exists among allotment advocates, particularly that fees could be market led and result in plots being priced too high inhibiting most people from access (Interview 1, 2 and 7). A limited survey carried out by Murtagh (2011) found that a number of Dublin local authorities were moving to pricing allotments at €1 per square metre which resulted in public allotments costing between €50 and €250 annually. Private allotments were found on average to cost more than this. Overall from this research it is found that allotments in Ireland can be established in a number of ways. They can develop as a result of a local group of people coming together to rent land and then subdivide it themselves among the group as allotments (Interview 1), when farm land owners establish allotments for rent to the public on their land (Interview 7 and 27), or more traditionally, they are provided by local authorities. These patterns are discussed and analysed in more detail in Murtagh (2013).

Local organisations are also important in supporting and lobbying for allotments. Associations have been important in representing plot holders with the local authority managing their allotment site and have played a role in the establishment of new allotment schemes. For example, the South Dublin Allotments Association formed in 2004 and represents allotment holders at four public sites. The association

[22] The waiting list of 500 people is from the South Dublin County Council area with a population of 265,205 and the waiting list of 33 is from the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council area with a population of 206, 261 (CSO, 2011). While South Dublin County Council has a larger population, the much longer waiting list in the South Dublin County Council area can most likely be further explained by the presence of the South Dublin Allotments Association lobby group which encourages interested people to add their name to the waiting list and has increased the profile of allotments in the area.

was also important in campaigning for new allotment sites in the south Dublin area (Fox, 2006). The Clonmel Allotments Association in county Tipperary was important in getting allotments started in the town. From 2007 it lobbied for allotments and after one and half years a scheme was approved (Kelly, 2009).

6.3.5.2 Community gardening

Coinciding with the increase in demand for allotments, community gardens began emerging in Ireland in the mid 2000s. As a part of the Galway Healthy Cities initiative, a community garden was established in Ballybane in 2004 (Meagher, 2008). A community food project 'Growing in Confidence', initiated by the Organic Centre in county Leitrim in 2004, aimed to improve the health and well being of local people. The project focused on developing food growing and healthy cooking skills and a key part of the project's delivery was through developing community gardens. Two gardens were developed as part of the project in 2004 in Sligo and Leitrim (Share and Dunigan, 2005). A number of others have developed since, part of the Organic Centre's 'Growing Together' programme (Hallewell, 2009). Gardens emerged in Dublin and Cork cities around 2005 (Interview 57, Site visit 1). The Cork Mandala of Community Gardens was set up in 2005 with funding and support from Cork's European Capital of Culture project and other organisations, such as the Heritage Council and Cork City Council. It initiated seven gardens in the city (The Irish Times, 2005b). Among the first community gardens in Dublin was the Dolphin's Barn Community garden that started in 2005 by a local group of like-minded people, which is said to have been inspired by the Cork Mandala of Community Gardens and also gardens in Belfast (Baynes, 2005).

There has also been a proliferation of school gardens in the last decade and the first school garden conference was held in 2013, with the second scheduled for 2014 (School Earth Education, 2014). Teachers or parents with food growing skills and commitment to the garden are important in their development (Interview 5; 6). The existence of organisations locally with environment and food focused goals can also instigate these gardens in association with local schools. A number were developed as part of the Organic Centre's Growing Together Programme (Hallewell, 2009). The Kerry Earth Education Project (KEEP) has also been important in county Kerry,

and other parts of Ireland in developing school gardens (The Local Planet, 2005; Fallon, 2012a). Agri-Aware's Incredible Edible's programme supplies food growing materials to schools. Information and guidance is also important and resources are growing. Irish Seed Savers Association (ISSA) and KEEP have produced a guidebook *The Year Round Organic School Garden* (Bell, Ní Dhúill and Ní Fhlatharta, 2009). Bord Bia initiated the Organic Gardening for Primary Schools programme in 2008 and as part of this produced a DVD and teacher's resource book with curriculum linkages and lesson plans (Bord Bia, 2012c). In 2012, GIY Ireland initiated the 'The Living Classroom' project, in conjunction with other organisations such as Bord Bia, as an information hub for starting school gardens (Kelly, 2012).

From the community food initiatives analysed for this project, these initiatives emerge in a number of different ways in Ireland. They can develop at the community, grassroots level where a number of people come together in a community to establish a project. They can be initiated by organisations (for example community organisations or charities) or institutions (for example schools or hospitals). Their development can also be driven by pioneering individuals in a community[23].

Developing community gardens needs a range of resources. One is land and securing land for the establishment of community gardens can pose a challenge. Initiators of community gardens report that their efforts took as long as a year or more to find a site. Access to land can also be granted on a lease basis, with long term access uncertain (Interview 5, Site visit 1). Other resources include gardening materials and tools, and among community gardeners a culture of re-using and recycling exists. For example, wooden pallets can be used to construct compost bins, old carpets used as mulch or as an over-winter soil protector and food packaging as seedling trays. There are a number of hurdles to overcome when getting a project started and information on what is involved can help to overcome such issues (Interview 5, 8). Publications developed by advocates and initiators of community gardens have also been produced. The Organic Centre has published *Growing in Confidence Community Food Project How-To Guide* (Sands and Conaty, 2006). The Dublin City

[23] This pattern is discussed and analysed in more detail in Murtagh (2013).

Community Forum has published *The Dublin City Guide to Community Gardening* (Dublin Community Forum, 2010). The organisation Healthy Food For All has published *The Good Practice Guide for Community Food Initiatives* (Healthy Food For All, 2010).

Groups have also formed in conjunction with community gardens. The Community Garden Network was established in 2011, which is a member-run all Ireland network of community growers (Community Garden Network, 2013). Local network groups of community gardeners include Dublin Community Growers and Wicklow Community Gardening Group. This research found evidence that these organisations are restricted from flourishing because of the heavy reliance in the community garden sector on people's voluntary energies in establishing and running projects (Interview 3; 5). Links between groups, initiatives and organisations with a focus on sustainability and community gardens was also identified, such as Transition Towns, the World Social Forum and European Social Forum (Interviews 4; 5).

Two key parts of AFIs in Ireland have been detailed in this section, producer and community driven initiatives that bring food production and consumption closer together. These initiatives form the backbone of AFIs in Ireland. However a broader engagement with issues around food culture and sustainability is also facilitated by the work of a range of broader organisations, groups and networks, which are also an important part of this practice in Ireland, to which attention now turns.

6.3.6 Groups, networks and organisations

In relation to what is referred to as an alternative food movement in Ireland, Tovey (2006: 176) notes there are few formal organisations, however refers to "important movement institutions." One movement institution discussed is the Organic Centre in Leitrim, established in 1995. The centre started in a wooden hut by pioneers of the organic movement in Ireland (The Irish Times, 2005a). It has evolved to its current form, as a non-profit organisation that aims are to promote organic gardening, horticulture and sustainable living through training, demonstration and community projects. It runs an annual programme of courses on a variety of topics around sustainable living, such as food production, cooking, crafts and green energy. It is

involved in community food projects and runs a FETAC level 5 course in organic horticulture.

Another movement institution referred to by Tovey (2006) is the English Market in Cork City. The market has been operating in Cork city since 1788 and suffered two fires in the 1980s, but was restored. The produce sold for the first 200 years of the market were staples such as meat, fish, eggs, fruit and veg. In the 18th and 19th centuries it sold higher quality produce and had a middle class market, but this changed in the 20th century and became dependent on the working class market. In the 1990s the market changed again becoming a place to source traditional foods alongside those newer to the Irish market such as farmhouse cheeses, continental breads, olives and fresh pasta (Ó Drisceoil and Ó Drisceoil, 2005).

Another important part of Cork's food landscape is Ballymaloe House and Cookery School, and individual pioneers were central to its development. Sage (2003: 56) highlights the significance of individuals in creating, what is referred to as "critical nodal points in the construction of good food networks" and outlines the importance of Myrtle and Darina Allen and Ballymaloe restaurant, guesthouse and cookery school house as a nodal point of food and gastronomy in Ireland, with a food philosophy of cooking and celebrating local Irish food and traditions. Sage (2003: 58) argues "they serve as a vital nodal point through which messages about the meaning of quality food in Ireland today inevitably pass." Sage (2003) notes how Mrs Myrtle Allen was a founding member of Euro-toques, Cork Free Choice Consumer Group and president of the Cork Slow Food Convivium.

A number of organisations with broader aims, such as supporting quality and nourishing food, knowledge of food's provenance, artisan and environmental production methods and fairness in the food system, can be indentified in Ireland. When Irish farmhouse cheese making began to re-emerge in the 1980s, CÁIS, the Association of Irish Farmhouse Cheesemakers was established in 1983. CÁIS has acted as a representative group for the industry, engaging with DAFM on issues such as premises inspections and milk quotas, and Bord Bia around marketing issues (Anderson and McLaughlin, 2011). CÁIS members are also involved with the Slow

Food Irish Raw Milk Cheese Presidium, which was founded in 2005, and is committed to: "delivering a safe, high quality product from raw milk from their own or neighbouring herds" (Anderson and McLaughlin, 2011: 47). The global organisation Slow Food International began in Italy in the mid-1980s in an attempt to oppose fast food and its effect on food culture (Petrini, 2001). Ireland has a national organisation, Slow Food Ireland. Local Slow Food groups or 'Convivia' have also emerged around Ireland, and 14 Convivium were listed on its website in 2014 (Slow Food Ireland, no date). Euro-toques Ireland was formed in 1986, the Irish branch of Euro-toques, the European Community of Cooks. The organisation is composed of cooks and chefs who are committed to sourcing local, seasonal, quality food (Euro-toques Ireland, 2012). The Irish Seed Savers Association (ISSA) was set up in 1991 with the aim of preserving Irish bred agricultural varieties. For example it has worked to preserve a cabbage variety the Gortahork cabbage grown in Ireland since the early 19th century (Bell and Watson, 2012). It also has an educational role; it runs courses and produces publications. Members of the association received free heritage seeds so as to encourage growth of these crops (ISSA, 2011). It announced its survival was under threat due to lack of funding on 2014, and appealed to the public for donations (RTÉ News, 2014).

Marketing focused organisations have also emerged. Good Food Ireland is a membership organisation that promotes the link between good food and tourism. Members must meet standards to be accepted as members and generally be committed to using local food, supporting Irish farmers, producers and fishermen. It helps members to market themselves, lists detailed information on members on its website and produces a touring map of Ireland where all members are featured (Good Food Ireland, 2012). An increasing interest in sourcing Irish produced food has also emerged. Carroll (2012) outlines how 'Buy Irish Food' campaigns that encourage patriotic purchasing are not a new phenomenon, but the recent trend represents a re-emergence. One notable recent campaign is 'Love Irish Food' that began to promote Irish produced foods. To be a Love Irish Food brand, at least 80% of the product's manufacturing must take place in Ireland (Cullen, 2009).

Another type of initiative of note are food networks. A part of Ireland's rural development programme 2007 to 2013, LEADER aimed to support the community and economic development of rural areas. Local development strategies are implemented by local action groups at the county level (DAFF, no datea). A number of food networks that work to support and develop links between local food producers have been initiated with the support of these local action groups, such as: Artisan Food Producers of Meath, Offaly Delicious and Westmeath Food Network. From the interviews carried out for this research, participants of networks note that in the longer term the sustainability of networks can be uncertain. In one case after the LEADER local action group engaged less with the network it thrived and continued strongly, whereas in another when LEADER began to take a step back, the network was weaker on its own (Interviews 13; 53). Another scheme developed through LEADER was the local food branding scheme, Fuchsia, established by the West Cork LEADER programme. Sage (2003) notes ambivalence among some producers in signing up to the scheme, with some seeing its approach as similar to corporate marketing, while others saw being part of the scheme helpful in dealing with more stringent hygiene and risk management requirements.

Another important organisation historically, and to the present day, is Irish Country Markets Ltd. Each local country market branch is affiliated with the parent organisation Irish Country Markets Ltd, which was established in 1946. The first markets were modelled on the Women's Institute markets in England and the first country market opened in Fethard, County Tipperary in 1947. There are around 60 local branch country markets in Ireland. Markets originally established to help farmers' wives earn some extra money, known as 'pin money', to help support the household. Country markets also play an important role as a social outlet, however country market members highlight the need for new and younger members to keep the tradition alive (Country Markets Ltd., 2006). Sage (2003) argues however that country markets are dynamic spaces and producers involved in alternative food networks can join up with these existing market spaces helping to stimulate a new dynamic. In areas where food producers involved in alternative food networks have joined Irish Country Markets, it has reinvigorated these markets by broadening the range and volume of produce. Tovey (1999) also notes how country markets

provided an important site for the early organic movement in Ireland to interact and form a wider social network.

6.3.7 Campaigns, alliances and state representation

Campaigns have also emerged that can be associated with AFIs. The campaign to encourage people to practice their market rights was discussed in relation to farmers' markets in section 6.3.3.1. Another example of a coordinated action campaign by alternative food organisations in Ireland is the Campaign for Raw Milk Ireland that formed in 2011 to attempt to resist the government's plan to ban the sale of raw liquid milk. The campaign is supported by a number of the groups discussed above, such as CÁIS, Slow Food Ireland, Good Food Ireland, Bridgestone Irish Food Guides and Euro-toques Ireland. The ban did come into effect in 2012, however in 2013 a decision was announced to regulate the sale of raw liquid milk, rather than make its sale illegal (Campaign for Raw Milk Ireland, 2014). Sage (2007a) argues that hygienist conceptions of food safety can be challenging to alternative food enterprises in Ireland, and illustrates this using a legal case relating to raw milk cheese.

Ireland has also seen politically driven campaigns in the grow your own area. The Green Party launched its campaign 'Get Ireland Growing' in 2009 aiming to promote food growing, community gardens and allotments. The campaign website provides information on local food projects. Also part of the campaign was that Green Party representatives would write to city and county managers to make land available for allotments where demand exists (Green Party, 2009).

Stakeholder groups of artisan, local, speciality food producers and small businesses, such as the Artisan Food Forum and the Taste Council, represent a space facilitating engagement with state agencies and policymakers. The Artisan Food Forum is a stakeholder group, operated by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), which acts as a platform for discussion between artisan producers, the FSAI and other state agencies (FSAI, 2011). It is described as an ad-hoc forum and issues discussed at the November 2011 meeting included the raw liquid milk ban, mobile abattoirs, new labelling legislation and artisan Ireland labelling (FSAI, 2012). Another group of

note is the Taste Council of Ireland, which was established in 2003. It is a voluntary representative group of the small food business sector, mainly local, artisan and speciality food producers. Its mission is: "to empower and enable the Irish speciality food sector at a strategic level to maximise its current and potential contribution to Ireland's food and agri-economy, society, culture and environment (Taste Council, no date, no page number). It runs an annual summer school to assess the current and future contribution of the artisan and speciality food producer to the Irish economy. Its work includes: analysis of PDO/PGI and its relevance to Irish food; a farmers' markets strategy; and a project on the development of middle sized farms assisting them to add value to their primary produce (Taste Council, no date). At its 2014 annual summer school the major challenge highlighted was how artisan producers can differentiate their products from mainstream products that present themselves as 'artisan' style (Shelflife, 2014).

A campaign of note is Food Sovereignty Ireland, which is linked to the European Movement for Food Sovereignty. The concept of food sovereignty is originally linked to the international peasant movement La Via Campesina and was first proposed in 1996 (Food Sovereignty Ireland, no date). In 2011 delegates from Food Sovereignty Ireland attended the European Food Sovereignty Forum and were from groups such as Dublin Community Growers, Leitrim Organic Farmers Coop and Food Action Dublin (Food Sovereignty Ireland, 2011). This shows the cross collaboration between alternative food groups in Ireland.

A significant diversity of organisations, groups and networks exist as part of Ireland's alternative food practice. Hearing their voice is also facilitated to some degree through the existence of stakeholder committees within regulatory agencies and state bodies. Evidence also exists of their shared interests on particular issues, such as the issue of the sale of raw milk and food sovereignty.

So far, this chapter has illustrated the presence and general nature of AFIs in Ireland, and the broader organisations and activities associated with the practice of alternative food. The chapter presents evidence that this is a significant phenomenon in Irish society. It does not appear to be emerging from traditional Irish farming, but

from a diverse range of farmers, food producers and consumers. It emerges that actors from AFIs are engaged with policymakers, have successfully formed networks and organisations of their own and have captured the attention of community groups and development agencies that have supported them in different ways. In summary, a chronology of artisan food, organic farming, community food production and farmers' markets is outlined in Table 6.1 (see page 189). The table details how the 1970s and 1980s saw a re-invigoration of Irish farmhouse cheese-making and the establishment of the national association of Irish cheese-makers. Organic farming also emerged in Ireland in this period. The publication of the first Irish Food Guide towards the end of the 1980s also showed how an interest in Irish food culture had begun to grow. The 1990s saw organic farming continue to grow and the Department of Agriculture established an organic farming unit. During this decade new organisations were established such as the Organic Centre and the Irish Seed Savers Association. Farmers' markets also began to emerge. The decade starting at the year 2000 also represents another shift with interest in domestic food production growing, as well as community gardens and allotments emerging and growing in numbers. The number of farmers' markets had reached around 120 and the number of organic farmers continued to grow. Table 6.1 finally notes some changes in this decade. GIY Ireland has grown a large membership and a national network for community gardens has been established, showing how community and home food production have become more organised. Cork established it own 'food policy council', the first of its kind in Ireland. Overall, Table 6.1 highlights key markers over the last 45 years which all contribute to the shape of Irish food culture today.

Table 6.1 Broad chronology of farmers' markets, community food growing, artisan and organic food in Ireland

2010s
GIY Ireland had almost 9,000 registered members on its website in mid 2014
In March 2014, Ireland's first food policy council, the Cork Food Policy Council established in Cork
In November 2013, a new organic farming representative body established representing livestock farmers, the Organic Farmers' Representative Body
In 2013 there were 1639 organic operators in Ireland
National Community Garden Network established in 2011
Campaign for Raw Milk Ireland formed in 2011
2000s
Grow it Yourself (GIY) Ireland established in 2009
By 2009 around 120 farmers' markets existed in Ireland
First community supported agriculture initiatives emerge in Ireland towards the end of the 2000s
Voluntary Good Practice Standard for farmers' markets introduced in 2009
In 2007 there were 1334 organic producers in Ireland
Demand for allotments increases and first community gardens emerge in the mid 2000s
1990s
The Rural Environmental Protection scheme's financial support for organic farming contributes to expansion of the sector
A new Irish food culture begins to emerge, documented in the Bridgestone Irish Food Guides
In 1995, there were 300 organic farmers in Ireland
Organic Centre established in Leitrim in 1995
Organic farming unit set up by the Department of Agriculture in 1991
Irish Seed Savers Association set up in 1991
Emergence of contemporary farmers' markets
1970s/80s
First Bridgestone Irish Food Guide published in 1989
Association of Irish Farmhouse Cheesemakers established in 1983
Reinvigoration of Irish farmhouse cheese-making
Pioneers of the organic farming movement in Ireland migrate to Ireland from Germany and Britain
Organic and whole food cooperatives establish in Dublin (Dublin Food Coop) and Cork (Quay Coop)

Source: Summary and collation of evidence from this chapter.

6.4 The general structure and dynamics of the alternative food field

This chapter now moves to begin to explain the dynamics of AFIs in Ireland based on the primary data collected. The concepts of fields and capital, that form part of Bourdieu's theory of practice, provide the tools through which this research interprets and explains the social, cultural and economic dynamics of AFIs in Ireland. The structure of fields and the role of capital have been discussed in detail in

chapter four. To quickly re-cap, fields and capital are intertwined. Agents act in fields of social action and this is likened to players playing a game. Like games, fields have a logic on which their action is based and rules by which action is played out. Agents take up positions in the field and play certain roles. The structure of a field is defined by the state of relations of force between players in different positions. This force is determined by the capital the player possesses, its volume and structure. Capital affects the balance of power in fields and some forms of capital afford more power than others. Players can try to change which forms of capital are most valued in a field.

Up to now the term AFI has been used to refer to the empirical phenomenon under study. It is proposed in the next section that social agents acting in AFIs[24] can be understood as a social field - the alternative food field. Fields were discussed in chapter four. In summary, fields are relatively autonomous spheres where social action is played out. Key positions are an important part of their structure. Fields are relatively autonomous because field boundaries can cross over. Fields include law, education and the arts. Commentators have noted there are an endless number of them (Friedland, 2009). AFIs, and the social agents acting in them, are central to the alternative food field. Two key positions in the alternative food field are proposed, the positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. AFIs generally belong to either one position, but some AFIs cross-over in between the two positions. Categorising AFIs as a social field with two central positions, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*, structures how the research findings are discussed. In chapter seven and eight, this research identifies differences between the social, cultural and economic capital agents hold in different types of AFIs. These differences centre around agents being in either the *alternative food business* or *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. The nature of the two positions, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*, which construct the alternative food field are the focus of the rest of this section.

[24] Food organisations and groups were discussed earlier in this chapter. Their position in the alternative food field is not examined directly in this research. Some interviewees that were involved in both organisations and specific AFIs were interviewed for this research. Direct examination of the role and position of organisations and groups in the alternative food field is an area of future research. It could be particularly interesting in the context of further understanding of AFIs in the social movement context.

6.4.1 Positions and roles in the alternative food field

For the purposes of this research, AFIs in the alternative food field are understood as occupying two broad positions in this field - *alternative food business* and *produce your own*[25]. The alternative food field is also made up of players, or social agents, that are involved in AFIs such as farmers' markets, allotments or community gardens and play distinct roles, focused around their lifestyle or livelihood. For example small food business traders at farmers' markets occupy the *alternative food business* position and use this route to market to make a better living from agricultural produce and as a convenient route to market for their produce. Citizens who produce their own food in allotments and community gardens are in the *produce your own* position.

Occupying the position of *alternative food business* is centred around agents acting in farm-based, artisan and speciality food businesses focusing on selling in shorter supply chains, such as farm shops, farmers' markets, food coops and direct sale to specialist shops and supermarkets. Businesses in this position are small or micro scale food businesses[26]. Individual agents that occupy the position of *alternative food business* include agents such as primary food producers (e.g. farmers, growers), consumers, market traders, market organisers, secondary food producers (e.g. bakers, butchers) and specialist retailers. Occupying the position of *produce your own* are citizens that wish to produce more of their own food and make efforts to do this. Individual players in the *produce your own* position are citizens that have become more active participants in how their food is produced by being involved in AFIs such as growers' groups, community gardens and allotments.

A central aspect determining the differences between the two positions are two distinct roles, that of lifestyle and livelihood. For agents in the *produce your own*

[25] The two positions of the alternative food field, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*, are further distinguished in chapter seven and eight in terms of how capital circulates in these two major positions of the alternative food field. Based on the data collected for this research, section 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 are a summary of overarching patterns and roles I interpret to exist in the alternative food field. The interviews noted in brackets throughout these sections are examples of AFIs that represent the roles described, or where the general pattern described is observed.

[26] A micro enterprise has less than 10 employees, a small enterprise less than 50 and a medium sized less than 250 (European Commission, 2005).

position their practice tends to predominantly be part of their lifestyle. For players in the *alternative food business* position their practice is predominantly part of their livelihood, but can also often in addition be a part of their lifestyle[27]. For example, the interview data identified a trend among artisan and speciality food producers, that what can begin as a hobby or a 'lifestyle business' for example selling at one farmers' market or to a couple of local shops, eventually can become a full-time business, and central to their livelihood (Interview 49; 61). Players in the position of *alternative food business* can also make efforts to produce their own food for their household, which is part of their lifestyle (Interview 18; 19; 46; 61). Instigators of projects such as allotments and community gardens may become highly embedded in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. Their involvement in the field then becomes both part of their lifestyle and livelihood (Interview 3; 5). This also shows that positions and roles are not completely static, but can change through time. Allotments are another example where for some players, namely allotment plot holders, the role of their participation is part of their lifestyle. For others they can be involved as part of their livelihood. For example the farmers who rent allotment spaces on their land participate in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field as part of their livelihood (Interview 7; 27).

Alternative food livelihoods can be characterised in a number of ways. They are differentiated by the types of social agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field, such as farmers, artisan producers, specialist food producers and food entrepreneurs. Players in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field can take on more than one of these livelihood characterisations at once. For example, they can be a farmer involved in farmers' markets as well as being a speciality food producer (Interview 18; 46; 60).

Farmers in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field work to make a living from the land. They have a small food business based around selling/and or processing their own produce. They retail their produce at farmers' markets and/or sell it to independent and local retailers. They may be certified

[27] This observation is explored in further detail, illustrated with data from the research interviews, in relation to the *alternative food business* position in chapter eight, section 8.3.2.1 and in relation to the *produce your own* position in chapter eight, section 8.3.3.1.

organic farmers, traditional farmers or farmers who adhere to production principles they regard as similar to organic farming, but are not certified (Interview 11; 28; 34; 54). Another type of farmer in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field adds value to their farm produce, such as making yogurt or cheese with their milk, but distributes it in short (farmers' markets, independent shops) and/or long food supply chains (multinational supermarkets, multinational wholesalers). They attempt to retain more of their farm produce's value than farmers who sell directly into commodity markets. Their produce is differentiated in the marketplace and can be classed as speciality food (Interview 19; 29; 58).

Artisan food producers and speciality food producers are two other important types of social agents playing livelihood roles in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. It is important to distinguish between speciality and artisan. Artisan can be explained as premium quality foods where the personality of the producer, their skill, craft, passion and distinctive character is evident. There may be qualities of the food that are distinctive to a specific place, which is compared to what the French call terroir - the natural conditions that affect a product's taste. Speciality food is defined as gourmet or unique foods of superior taste and quality. It tends to be more widely distributed than artisan food, such as with specialist and multiple retailers (Taste Council, 2004). For the artisan food producer their craft is central to their livelihood. They have pride in and attachment to what they produce. They seek to preserve their distinctive methods of production and will not compromise these methods for the sake of increased production and sales (Interview 20; 22; 51). The speciality food producer is less driven by a particular method of production, but produces a quality food product (Interview 38; 49; 59).

Another social agent playing a livelihood role in the *alternative food business* position can be termed the food entrepreneur. They facilitate the circulation of economic capital in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. While all those who construct alternative food livelihoods could be termed food entrepreneurs, here the term is used to denote social agents that facilitate farmers, specialist and artisan producers to sell their produce. These can be specialist food market traders or food retailers (e.g. cheesemongers or butchers), small scale

wholesalers, as well as those who organise privately run farmers' markets (Interview 30; 41; 48).

Other roles identified that social agents' play in the *alternative food business* position are those of coordinators and helpers. Players can participate in farmers' markets beyond what they do to maintain their livelihood. Farmers or food entrepreneurs may also have been the voluntary instigators of farmers' markets. Farmers' markets may be coordinated by traders in the form of a market committee. Other traders who are not involved in the committee may be classed as helpers who contribute from time to time to the voluntary work that is necessary to sustain the initiative (Interview 11; 47; 50). This commitment beyond being part of a livelihood is important in sustaining AFIs in the position of *alternative food business*.

In the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field activities are characterised in terms of a number of different roles. Participants can play more than one of the roles identified at once. Activity in the *produce your own* position is generally carried out on a voluntary basis. These voluntary activities work towards creating a certain kind of lifestyle, represented here by the characteristic roles of instigators, coordinators and helpers. Coordinators take control of the initiative. There may be more than one coordinator in any initiative (Interview 1; 4; 6). However in some cases, coordinators may find funding sources that means the initiative they instigated on a voluntary basis can be a source of employment for them, or someone else they appoint. The role of coordinators in the *produce your own* position can evolve away from being part of a lifestyle and towards a livelihood (Interview 57). This however is generally temporary. Instigators are those who provide the first impetus for the initiative and drive its development (Interview 5; 8 57). Again, there may be more than one instigator in each initiative. After the initiative is established the instigator may remain involved, or may take a step back as coordinators become involved at this stage. The final role is that of helper, which is a temporary role. Participants already involved in the initiative may from time to time get involved at the organisational level, assisting instigators or coordinators, helping the initiative to function (Interview 3; 5; 6; 57).

While the general consumer was not included in this study, some tentative observations can still be made on the role of the general consumer in the alternative food field. The roles described in the preceding paragraphs are of participants more deeply involved in the alternative food field, who can be for example the organisers, leaders or instigators of AFIs. However the less engaged general consumer who shops for food at farmers' markets and local specialist shops, such as butchers, greengrocers, delis and health food stores is also vital to bringing economic capital into the alternative food field, particularly to those in the *alternative food business* position. These consumers play a less involved, but very active supportive role in the alternative food field. Without these consumers, those trying to live alternative food livelihoods would struggle to sustain their way of life.

A diversity of actors, playing different roles in different positions facilitates the alternative food field to function. It also appears that the positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own* don't have clear cut boundaries and can intersect. For example country markets are positioned in between the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions because they are a space where locally produced food is bought and sold, but with a lifestyle role, because participants value the social benefits they gain higher than economic benefits (Interview 31; 33). When country markets initially established the economic value gained from them was more important, providing rural women with a means to earn their own money to help support their household (Sage, 2003). Also CSAs do not sit firmly in one position or the other. It can depend on how the CSA is initiated. If by a group of citizens who are engaged with the project, then it can be more accurately placed in the position of *produce your own*. If initiated by a producer, and consumers are not very active in the project, it can then be classed in the position of *alternative food business* (Interview 15; 24).

The positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own* in the alternative food field are summarised in Table 6.2 (page 196). The positions provide a structure in which to situate analysis of the social, cultural and economic dynamics of AFIs using the concepts of field and capital that is carried out in the next two chapters. Finally in this chapter some observations on the general nature of fields and capital

in the alternative food field are provided as a context for the more focused discussion that is to follow in the next two chapters.

Table 6.2 The Alternative Food Field

Alternative food business position	**Intersections**	**Produce your own position**
Part of a livelihood in a way of life	Livelihood and lifestyle	Part of a lifestyle in a way of life
Food produced for sale	Food for sale and domestic consumption	Food produced for domestic consumption
AFIs include farmers' markets and small food businesses	AFIs include country markets, CSAs	AFIs include allotments and community gardens
Speciality, artisan, local, organic food		Vegetable growing dominates
The roles social agents play are characterised as farmers, artisan or speciality food producers, food entrepreneurs, coordinators and helpers		Agents characterised as coordinators, instigators, helpers and lifestyle businesses

Source: Summary of patterns discussed in section 6.4.2.

6.4.2 Field intersections and the alternative food field

According to a theory of practice, fields interact with other fields, their boundaries can overlap. They are relatively autonomous (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The alternative food field intersects with the social, cultural and economic fields. This basic dynamic is depicted in Figure 6.1 (page 197). Chapter seven shows how AFIs in the *alternative food business* position interact with the economic field where economic capital is the most valued capital, whereas AFIs in the *produce your own* position are less embedded in the economic field (see Figure 6.2, page 197). The social and cultural fields also insect with both positions in the alternative food field (see Figure 6.3 and 6.4, page 198). Economic, social and cultural capital's volume and structure in each of these positions of the alternative food field, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*, are examined in detail in the next two chapters. In the remainder of this section some broader observations on the structure of the alternative food field are detailed.

Figure 6.1 Intersections between Fields

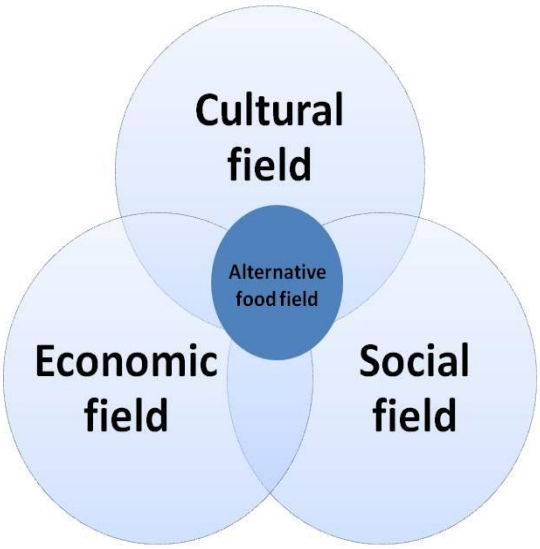


Figure 6.2 The Economic and Alternative Food Field Intersection

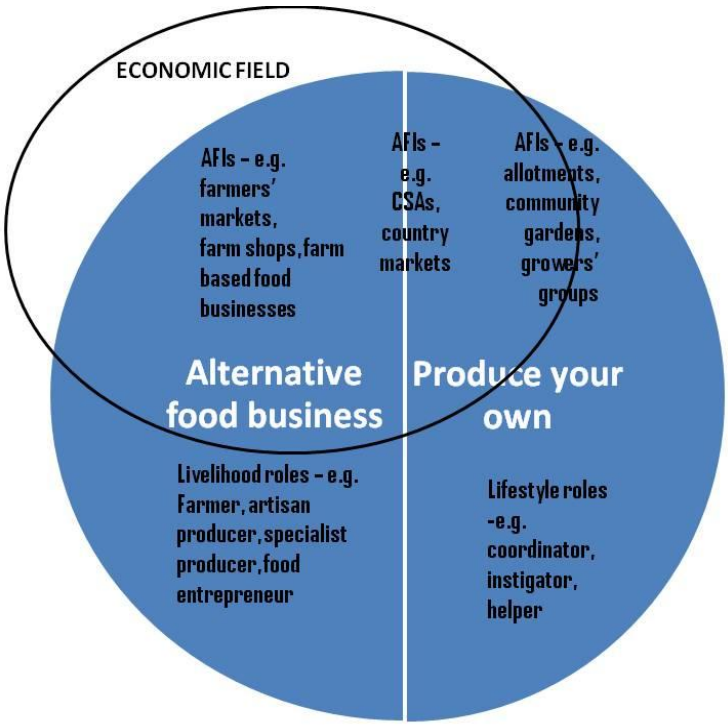


Figure 6.3 The Social and Alternative Food Field Intersection

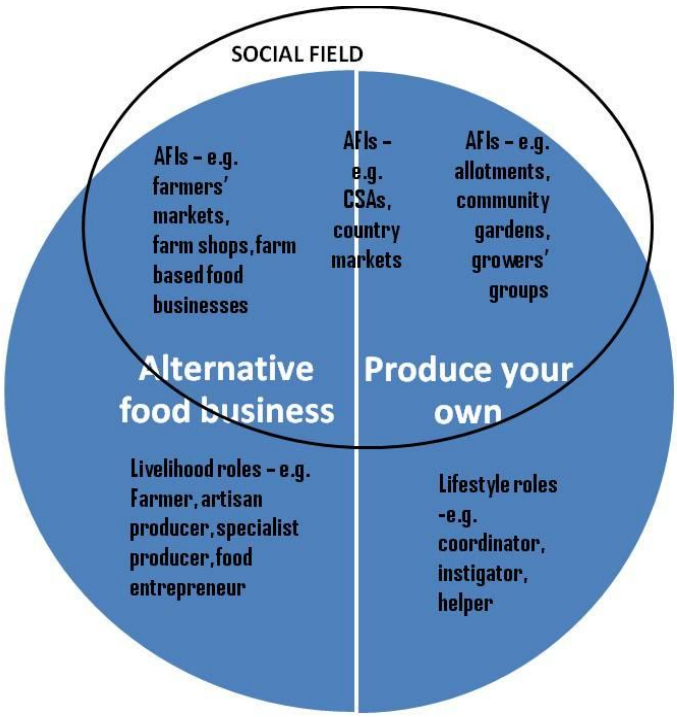
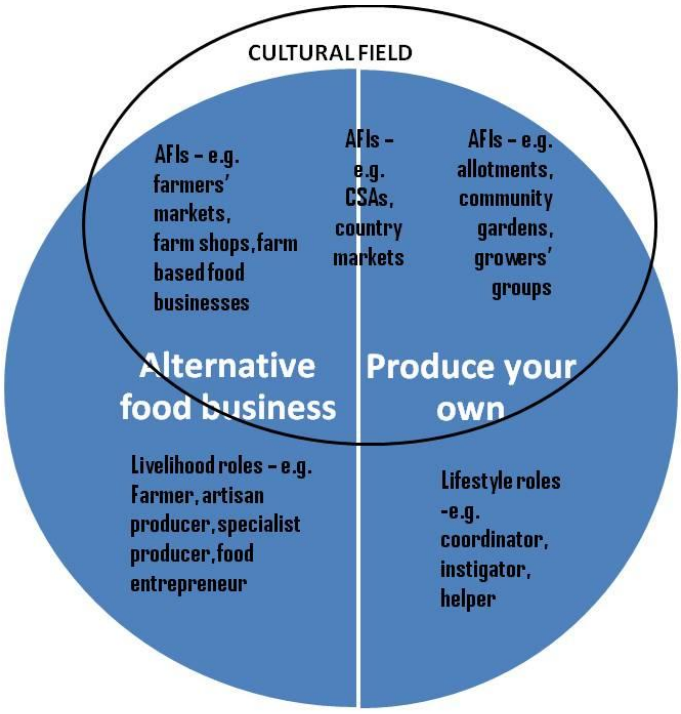


Figure 6.4 The Cultural and Alternative Food Field Intersection



While fields are relatively autonomous, some fields are more autonomous than others. Carolan (2005) for example argues the agriculture field is not very autonomous. It is argued that agriculture works at the boundaries of many fields and by its nature interacts with numerous other fields, such as legal, scientific, social and cultural fields. The alternative food field's intersections with the social, cultural and economic fields are explored in this research. Its intersection with other fields could be an area of future research. While meriting further detailed investigation, this research found evidence showing the alternative food field interacts with a diverse range of fields, such as the political and legal fields. Important and powerful players act from time to time in the alternative food field, drawing it into different social fields. Less central, but influential players include those who work in state agencies, such as rural development officers, food safety inspectors and civil servants in bodies such as Bord Bia, Teagasc, Enterprise Boards and Local Authorities. An example of interaction in the political field includes one interviewee in the *alternative food business* position's description of their participation in an Oireachtas Committee on food prices. Interaction in the legal field includes engagement on issues around food safety, such as for example the campaign to preserve the right to sell raw milk in Ireland, discussed earlier in this chapter. Another interviewee in the *alternative food business* position describes how a producer fought a legal battle to prove their produce was safe to eat, however when this producer was affected by the same problem, they chose not to get into the same legal battle, suggesting that legal capital may be low in the alternative food field, but is a valuable capital to gaining more power. Another issue in the legal field that arose in interviews were historic market rights, the legal battle to preserve them, changing European legislation and its potential impact on markets.

If operating in a number of fields, agents need to possess a diverse range of capital types to do so successfully. Agents in the alternative food field appear to need to understand the 'rules of the game' for a diverse range of fields and not just one or two specific fields of social practice. If the alternative food field interacts with a diverse range of fields agents participating in this field must also battle to gain the capital that will give them the ability to play the game in a range of fields. Certain

types of capital are more powerful and valuable in certain fields. This means it is likely that agents in the alternative food field do not hold a great degree of power in the diverse fields that they potentially act in. They are not the dominant agents in the field who hold most power. Alternative food agents must then try to gain more capital to gain more power in the fields they operate. Developing a better understanding of the different fields the alternative food field interacts with could further illuminate challenges faced by AFIs in their development.

It also appears that a key part of the structure the alternative food field is its loose, informal nature. In chapter eight (section 8.3.2.2 and 8.3.3.2) it will be discussed how the alternative food field interacts with the cultural field introducing informality and de-professionalisation of skills. In the economic field, rather than a complete reliance on economic capital, agents in the alternative food field introduce, to a small degree, informal exchange mechanisms such as swopping one resource for another (see chapter seven, sections 7.3.5 and 7.4.1).

It will be discussed in chapter eight how some agents in the alternative food field are involved for rewards for themselves, while others try to shape the field so that certain rewards are available to wider society and AFI participants. This is seen through for example the identification of the importance of leaders in the alternative food field (chapter 8, section 8.4.2). According to Bourdieu, social agent's involvement in particular fields is centred around the profits they seek (Bourdieu, 1985). Therefore not all agents acting in the alternative food field are driven by the same motivating factors.

For Bourdieu, the stability of relationships in fields is played out in terms of power and domination. If relations between agents are stable, and there is no struggle, this according to Bourdieu does not mean there is equilibrium, but there is effective domination. How capital is valued, and the volume agents possess affects who has the power to dominate (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997). So to relate this to the alternative food field, it would be logical to say there is not effective domination by the fields that the alternative food field interacts with. There is a struggle at work to change what capitals are most valued. A key pattern observed in

the empirical data discussed in chapter seven and eight is a struggle to change what capitals are most valued, with an attempt to bring social and cultural capital back into a stronger position in the economic field, and also to make economic capital of less importance and power. This is a difficult task, as will be shown in the next chapters. As players struggle to change valued capitals, this can result in conflicts and faces challenges. In the *alternative food business* position for example, other stronger players dominate the economic field, who can also try to coin in on economic capital available through the alternative food field (chapter seven, section 7.3.2) . Changing the value of capital in fields is also complicated by the fact that within the alternative food field itself there are different understandings of how the game should be played. For example, some alternative food agents in the *alternative food business* position are driven by a more economic ethos looking to 'alternatives' to make their involvement in agriculture more financially sustainable. Agents can also change their views on how the game should be played, where they move to become more deeply embedded, or less embedded, in the economic field (chapter seven, section 7.3.4).

Economic capital is the most powerful form of capital overall (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997). It dominates the economic field, which makes this a field where gaining power is very challenging. Attempting to gain adequate economic capital so that the alternative food field can effectively function is another key dynamic observed in this research (chapter 8, section 8.4.1). This is partly outside of the control of agents in the alterantive food field because factors outside of the field can limit the capital available to it. Examples include a particular grant scheme being abolished or changes to the funding available through LEADER local action groups.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of AFIs in Ireland, as well as related organisations and groups. It shows that one of the key tenets of the social movement concept is evident – individuals, groups and organisations are part of Ireland's broader AFI context. However this does not make a social movement and in the next two chapters the remaining facets of the social movement concept will be looked for

in the dynamics uncovered by exploring economic, social and cultural capital and fields in relation to the alternative food field.

Two key positions within the alternative food field were also proposed in this chapter - *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. In the next chapters, how capital is structured and circulates in the alternative food field, and how this field interacts with the economic, social and cultural fields is explored. This further develops an understanding of the social dynamics and characteristics of AFIs, addressing one of the main objectives of this thesis. This also illuminates aspects of power relations between players in the alternative food field and with others outside of this field, helping to offer insights into the role of AFIs as an agent of change in the food system.

Chapter 7

The dynamics of alternative food initiatives in the economic field

7.1 Introduction

In the alternative food field, agents in AFIs in the economic field seek to gain economic capital in order to give them a greater level of control in the agri-food system. This can be in an effort to make a living, either from the land, or a small food business. It can also be through producing some of their own food. In this chapter, the dynamics of this process are explained. Control, and power, is based around possession of the essential resource, economic capital. To expand the alternative food field and reduce the power of the economic field in the alternative food field, agents must seek to gain more economic capital. The dynamics between the economic field and the alternative food field, and how capital circulates are also considered in this chapter in relation to the concept of a social movement. It is proposed that how actors in the alternative food field attempt to control economic capital and alter its value in the economic field can be understood to represent challenging established practices and that actors are engaged in a cultural conflict. This is however a cultural conflict that is related to food production and consumption, which is embedded in the market economy. This then potentially places this phenomenon within a particular category of social movement, that is new social movements, a market based lifestyle movement that is acted out in public and private spheres of social action.

Before moving to the main discussion of this chapter, a picture of how AFIs operate in the economic field is outlined focusing on both the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions in the alternative food field. This provides a general basis for the rest of the chapter. Following this, the positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own* in the economic field are explored separately. The main discussion in this chapter is focused around the *alternative food business* position. It is anchored more deeply in the economic field, and a greater number of patterns need to be explained.

7.2 Economic capital in AFIs in the alternative food field

Economic capital is important in AFIs. Farmers and growers need land to produce food; small business owners need economic capital to acquire premises and raw materials. Economic capital provides the foundation for action in the alternative food field. Based on Bourdieu's (1986) definition of economic capital, that is any resource directly convertible into wealth or financial benefits, basic types of economic capital that circulate in AFIs include finances (e.g. money exchanged at markets, money used to rent allotments, grant aid, charitable donations), assets (e.g. agricultural land, portions of land for allotments and community gardens, food business premises) and other material resources (e.g. equipment, land).

In some AFIs, however, economic capital is a less central force than others. This is not a criticism of the AFI, but a reflection of its basic nature and aims. For example comparing farmers' market and community garden initiatives, economic capital exchange is vital to the functioning of farmers' markets because they are a place where food is bought and sold, whereas food is generally not bought and sold in community gardens. Initiatives in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field are less dependent on economic capital. AFIs in this position are less affected by economic capital because the circulation of economic capital is not for profit, but for the maintenance of the initiative[28].

Differences in economic capital circulation in different AFIs are because the goals of initiatives can differ. For example, for farmers' market traders, the economic capital they can capture from what circulates between the economic field and alternative food field is often the basis of their livelihood. For example, the following interviewees comment: "I wanted to do something that we could earn a living from on the farm that we love and stay on the land that we love" (Interview 50) and "it is a labour of love" (Interview 22). For AFI participants in the *produce your own* position, their participation tends to be part of their lifestyle rather than the source of their livelihood. They wish to grow some of their own food in an attempt to live more sustainably or reconnect with the land. For example, the following interviewee

[28] This observation is further developed with evidence from interviews in section 7.4.1 of this chapter

comments help to illustrate: “I grew up with the stories of my mum when she was a child and the farm…I think really that was the seed for me” (Interview 1) and “We have created a sort of a throw-away society…it is getting people back to thinking about the basic needs” (Interview 3).

Economic capital allows AFIs in the *produce your own* position to function, rather than being something participants wish to gain from it. A lower volume of economic capital is available in the *produce your own* position, but also a lower volume is needed for these AFIs to function. That said, some capital is necessary for the initiative to function, so a source must be found. The source can sometimes be acquired outside of the conventional economic space of the market, such as acquiring grant aid or donations (Interview 4; 57). For example land is needed to establish community gardens, but the land on which they are established is not often owned by the community gardeners, but a borrowed space from for example a local community organisation, a private landowner or farmer (Site visit 2; 1; Interview 57). That said, using other resources to gain needs normally acquired with economic capital is also important in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. But rather than being the resources that the AFI depends on for its existence, these capital sources play a limited role in the *alternative food business* position. For example this could be using the WWOOF system to reduce labour costs, borrowing machinery from other producers instead of rental or purchase or learning skills from other more experienced producers (Interviews 11; 18; 28; 32; 54).

There are thus differences in economic capital structure and volume in the different positions of the alternative food field. Economic capital is predominantly generated in the marketplace in the *alternative food business* position, whereas it emerges predominantly from grants, funding and generosity in the *produce your own* position. Overall, capital circulates in various ways in alternative food field, depending on the volume of capital circulating and capital’s role in the AFI. Gaining economic capital may be the primary basis for the initiatives operation (in the case of farmers’ market traders, for example), may only be partly be (in the case of country markets, for example), or is needed for the initiatives functioning, rather than a

separate goal in itself (in the case of community gardens, for example). These patterns explained by economic capital can be likened to the 'for profit' and 'not for profit' distinction between businesses and charities. The level of economic capital circulating differs between marketplace and community space, with most economic capital at the market end, and least at the community end. Some AFIs are closer to the marketplace and others closer to community space in terms of how capital circulates.

The above discussion frames the general circulation of economic capital in the alternative food field. In the next two sections it is shown how AFIs in the alternative food field work to change the value placed on economic capital in the economic field and to reduce the power of economic capital. The dynamics of this struggle between the alternative food field and the economic field are outlined based on the positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. It is argued that both in the *alternative food business* and the *produce your own* position that there is at struggle at work for greater power and control in the food system through this battle for a change in the value and power of economic capital. This can also be understood as representing a challenge to established practices in a cultural conflict and a struggle over resources and how they should be used, which are part of the central tenets of a social movement. How this challenge and struggle takes shape is discussed next, with what is being fought against and the conflicts that result outlined.

7.3 The struggle for greater control in the food system from the *alternative food business* position

The position of *alternative food business* in the alternative food field sees agents seeking to change the nature of economic relationships in food circulation and how economic capital circulates. Producers want to retain more control over the unpredictable nature of agriculture and food markets. Agents in this position get involved in AFIs to gain economic capital because they feel they are not gaining a sufficiently fair level of economic capital in mainstream agricultural markets. For example, describing changes over a 60 year period, commenting on the issues affecting two generations of farmers on the same land, one interviewee comments:

> "[we] had started a horticultural enterprise …when labour costs started to rise…there was the oil crisis and huge inflation…we were growing produce here and taking it to the market and every year we were getting less and less for our produce so we decided we were going to have to try and earn a living in a different way…do something that we could earn a living from on the farm that we love, and stay on the land that we love" (Interview 50).

Economic relationships between producers, and intermediaries between them and the consumer, such as wholesalers, distributors and supermarkets, are seen to be relationships where capital is exchanged and circulates in an unequal manner. For example, in interview 46 a producer compares the beef and pork sides of their farm business, and explains that they don't make a profit on the beef side of the farm, but do on the pork side, but explains this is because the pork is being taken direct to the consumer. Normally producers have a more passive role in the food system, where they don't have much power over what affects them in the economic field beyond the farm gate. Social agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field attempt to change the value and power of economic capital. A central part of how producers attempt to do this is by getting involved in trading in shorter supply chains, reducing the number of intermediaries, which absorb economic capital, between them and the consumer. The comments of one interviewee help to sum up the financial issues in farming and how occupying the position of *alternative food business* in the alternative food field offers hope:

> "…the total lack of economic returns that is being given to farmers …The fellas who are in the conventional system, it's not working anyway…They are not making any money anyway, God look at the Farmers Journal…you know every week it is like a nightmare, nightmare, doom and gloom you know and yet you talk to people who are involved in allotments or country markets and farmers' markets or they have found some specialist niche or something like that and they are full of enthusiasm and joy" (Interview 24).

The primary elements of the economic field that those in the *alternative food business* position in the alternative food field wish to change are next explained. The basic issues *alternative food business* agents have with long supply chains are outlined. The discussion then turns to issues of control, scale and economic capital.

7.3.1 Issues of economic capital control with long supply chains

The main principle underlying long food supply chains that agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field describe as problematic is how money rules decision-making. Supermarket chains are where most criticism is centred. *Alternative food business* agents argue the supermarket's primary focus is profit margin, which they feel is at the expense of other considerations. For example, in the case of vegetable growers, one interviewee highlights how some growers are suited to supply supermarkets, whereas others can't keep up: "It's all about costs for the supermarket, anywhere they can save costs, and that is basically where the thing has gone. And em some growers are big enough to supply supermarkets themselves, other growers aren't" (Interview 56). Economic capital is described as being the central ruling force in how the game is played in the economic field with some conventional retailers. If producers can't effectively play the game by these rules, there are no allowances made for them because of economic capital's controlling power. While supermarkets can be the focus of criticism, there is also criticism of how the wider food system operates, and how small producers simply can't make a living as part of it. It is argued a certain scale of farm is needed, for example the comments of this interviewee help illustrate this point: "a 50,000 gallon quota is marginal now…you need five times as big a farm as you did then to subsist even" (Interview 25). However for *alternative food business* agents, they do not accept

that this scale of food business is not viable, what they see as not viable is the inequality in the distribution of economic capital.

Dealing with larger food businesses is described as difficult to control for agents in the *alternative food business* position. For example, one interviewee describes how a business advisor suggests growing their food business and their reaction to this is:

> "I think I am going to try and be stubborn and say no, what we want to do is small farm shops and small delis because if you go to someone who are like [a large multinational wholesaler], they change their mind and go to someone else, you are out. And they are trying to make money, that is what they are in it for" (Interview 59).

Supermarkets are described as being led by profit, and must then operate in a certain way when profit is put first. Discounts and offers run by supermarkets are another area cited where supermarkets can treat suppliers unfairly. The view is expressed that the supplier must supply produce at a lower price to support these discounts and it is the supplier that ultimately loses out. For example: "Two for the price of one, you know, who is paying for all of this, you can't make something for nothing you know like so they are keeping their margin" (Interview 60). Also these comments help to further illustrate this point:

> "…in supermarkets, all they are concerned with is price and the lowest price seems to be the best thing but I think that is a false belief, how can you produce stuff below cost, somebody has to suffer and something has to go wrong somewhere along the line" (Interview 32).

Other pressures are also described as difficult to manage for agents in the *alternative food business* position. For example interviewees describe how their supply to the supermarket must be reliable, regular and to specific requirements. The volume ordered by the supermarket is changeable and one producer describes having to take back unsold produce. This is a difficult system for the small producer to work effectively in. For example, referring to a bakery supplying a supermarket the following comments are made:

> "That's a big glitch in the baking industry that supermarkets just order and order and order, you have to keep their shelves full, and if they don't sell the produce you have to take it back, and then credit them for that… as a supplier you are really at a lower rung than the supermarkets, the image that is out there is that if you get a place or shelf space at the supermarket then you are lucky, which gives them a sort of a power, and they kind of automatically abuse that power by doing things like that, and then if you are lucky enough to get in then after a few months they may then try and push you with prices, down you know, most producers would give, most would say ok I'll take the hit just to have the shelf with you" (Interview 42).

In the position of *alternative food business* it is also described that the international nature of competition gives supermarkets more control over the price they pay to Irish producers. One interviewee presents the view that if Irish suppliers can't supply at the price the supermarket wants, they will import. They will choose Irish, but will not accept Irish if imports are cheaper:

> "…the retailers would very much like to let the public think they are very very Irish oriented, they are, but provided it can be bought at the same price as an imported product… they have done their… convincing the public about how Irish they are and then it is down to making as much money as they possibly can, and as much as the other supermarkets, it is about margin. It is all about margin" (Interview 56).

However, while there is a general criticism of longer supply chains and large retailers, there are differences identified between supermarkets, some are perceived to be better to deal with than others: "Now I am in [multiple supermarket] now, they have been very good to Irish producers, artisan producers in general and in fairness to them I'd say they are not the worst, but go to [multinational supermarket] or any of the like of them and they are robbing the supplier I'd say. That is a huge problem" (Interview 60). This perception is evident among agents in the *alternative food business* position, however, those who do deal with multinational supermarkets don't

describe the experience negatively, but do describe their margins as being very tight. An interviewee who deals with a multinational supermarket talks of their hesitancy in getting involved with such a big business, but since doing so sees at least one major benefit of dealing with them. They may have to wait for payment, such as two or three months after delivery, but they pay reliably after this period:

> "…they are very good, they are very supportive and very helpful, and they pay, a lot of the small customers, really high end, who are supposed to support local producers and so on, don't pay…at least you know that they are going to pay, the margin might be tight but you know every week you get your cheque, that's very important for business so that's about the size of it" (Interview 29).

Payment may not be made by smaller businesses in a defined period, so there can be uncertainty over when producers will receive payment for their produce. So, dealing with a business that has a defined payment period can also give a certain kind of predictability and control over economic capital. Payment is certain after a period; however this may not suit all small food businesses. For many small food businesses because waiting for payment affects cash flow, they may find this difficult because of the scale of their business. So there can be an incorrect fit between small food producers and the supermarket model of production, because of the scale of business. However the interview data also shows producers can use the cash economy provided by short supply chains such as farmers' markets to help them to buoy up the longer waiting period that dealing with suppliers in longer supply chains can bring. For example: "farmers' markets these days, it's a cash economy, you are not waiting for people to pay you, em it's got lots of advantages really" (Interview 22). Whereas for others, dealing more directly with large retailers can work for their business and still allows them to retain more control over economic capital than if they traded raw commodities, or had other intermediaries between them and the retailer.

Other disadvantages of dealing with supermarkets are also described. For example, one grower comments on the presentation of their produce in supermarkets, and feels

that when this is taken out of their own hands produce is not retailed as best as it could be:

> "To go around picking stuff up and delivering it and you know the actual quantity of produce didn't merit that, and then we found that the shops were either not interested or they'd take half a dozen lettuce and if they didn't sell they wouldn't take any more until it had sold, but then it was far too old to sell then. Those sorts of practicalities, it just didn't make sense (Interview 16).

Also, the logistics of dealing with larger businesses means that food producers may need to become more like them, producing to their requirements. For example interviewees describe that they have had to make adjustments to their business so that they can trade with large retailers, such as having to make certain health and safety adjustments, such as tarmacing outside their processing premises to facilitate collection of deliveries. Some producers were found to be resistant to meeting what they see as excessive requirements to gain access to large retail markets. For example if producing to organic standards, organic certification is needed to communicate this to consumers in long supply chains. Some producers can identify with organic practices, but see certification as too costly and bringing what they feel are unnecessary requirements to their production processes. This then also means they can't sell their produce as organic. However if they get closer to the consumer, they can communicate the values that their produce is produced in accordance with to their consumer. A relationship of trust can be established between producer and consumer in shorter supply chains. The trust that shorter supply chains allows for can make up for official guarantees. Selling produce through longer supply chains such as multinational supermarkets needs official organic certification because the supply chain is longer and economic capital is not tied up with social capital. This dynamic is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Overall there is a view existing among agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field that ultimately small producers can't effectively compete in an economic field where economic capital is valued above all else: "It's really a problem with the food that's out there. We can never compete with

supermarkets. They are underselling small producers who can't produce at this level. They will just undercut" (Interview 9). Criticism of food retailing is ultimately because of the unfair levels of economic capital they can obtain from retailers. Agents in the *alternative food business* position have no problem dealing with large food retailers and businesses, if this is on what they see as fair terms. For example, one interviewee comments on their thinking about dealing with multinational supermarkets, that they would have no problem doing business with them if it worked for their business. For example:

> "I was like how do you feel about dealing with multinationals…do they pay…it can be 30 days credit from receiving the invoice, it's 30 days from when they received the invoice and then they bring it forward to the end of that month…so it is 60 days from the word go…they couldn't possibly do cash on delivery but I would insist on something almost similar before I would ever deal with, well the risk is exposure, I mean if they took on more than half of our sales, em they would be, the flour would come out of our pockets until they paid…he went bankrupt, you see he couldn't afford to buy more stock because they owed him I don't know how many 100s of thousands of euro (Interview 35).

Using shorter supply chains, reducing the number of intermediaries between producer and consumer, is one solution that those in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field are putting into practice to gain more control over economic capital. In interview 36, a horticulture producer describes dealing with supermarkets and suppliers, noting the price differences in what the producer is paid and what the retailer charges for produce. A process of change is described, where the producer moves away from longer supply chains, towards shorter, to retain more control over economic capital. The following quote helps to further illustrate this point: "I learned that lesson very early on that there was a big difference between what I was getting and what the supermarket was charging, and it was the same thing, it seemed to me that if you could build up a direct sale that you would be more secure in your income" (Interview 36). To make economic relationships fairer and more equitable, producers have to retain more control over the economic spaces in which their foods are sold, which seems to inevitably mean taking control, to a

certain degree at least, back into their own hands, reducing the disconnection between producer and consumer. Issues of the scale and structure of business are important when agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field engage with the economic field, which is the focus of the next section.

7.3.2 Economic capital control, scale and business structure

Agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field set themselves up so they have more control over economic capital and are then less vulnerable to the vagaries of the economic field. For example farmers see that their produce has distinctive qualities, such as, producing a specific breed of cattle or pork produced to free range standards, and work to create retailing structures that enable this to be communicated to the consumer, but also in a way that the producer has more control in this market. This may be through establishing a farm shop, online sales, trading at farmers' markets and/or supplying retailers directly. This allows producers to capture more of the economic capital that goes to others in longer supply chains, but can be captured by the producer in shorter supply chains. One interviewee, for example, describes the importance of capturing the 'retail margin' to make their business more viable: "[the farmers' market]…is the important one for us you see cause that gives us a retail margin as against a wholesale margin so it is very important" (Interview 20).

Retaining control is also driven by the personal goals that agents in the *alternative food business* position often have. This also then leads to certain decisions around business scale and expansion. Many operate on the small scale because they want to make a sustainable living for themselves. For example:

> "We are established, we are just about an established business now…I have seen so many people who got too big too quick and are now having to completely downscale…I am registered with the enterprise board…they give us a bit of information, everything they have always been saying is, well maybe you should now, increase, get bigger, take out a bigger unit, because we are kind of at max capacity…But to kit out a unit would take €150,000…I was like no, we are just about on our feet now, why would we put ourselves in arrears for four, five, six years… put ourselves in that much debt...I talked to other bakeries and…he has now got 6 shops and a huge unit, but he says he spends all his time working for his staff" (Interview 35).

And the comments below also help to illustrate this point:

> "Like I go to markets across the summer and there is a guy with me like and we could have terrible day, and I pay all my costs and I have to pay him and I'd have nothing left out of it and that is the reality and I mean you have shops there under pressure in town and they are paying their bills and they are paying their staff and they have absolutely nothing out of it and they are being hammered then with rates and with tax and like it is, it is the same as farming, like you could scale up a farm, and keep scaling up a farm and scaling it up and take on managers and at the end of the day are you any better off. At the end of the day if you have a reasonable set up work-wise and that you are not working every hour God sends, maybe have some part-time staff, get a good wage out of it, maybe that is enough, without going to town on it, so like that is the problem, if you scale up you could end up working for your staff, working to pay your staff and that is the reality, no questions about it" (Interview 60).

The approach to business of social agents in the *alternative food business* position sees them work on the small scale for strategic reasons. A small scale business is better suited to shorter supply chains where there is more control over economic capital at the producer end. Shorter supply routes are seen to be a better fit for

smaller producers because of the control it can give producers over the small amounts of economic capital (that is, in comparison to large food businesses) that circulates in the economic field from their business. There are also issues raised about getting involved in longer supply chains, producing larger volumes of produce and the compromises, such as on product quality, which have to be made to keep up:

> "…you know the supermarkets are pushing you back to…they are pushing you with volume and they are pushing you with price. We make a product, with quality, handmade, local product, and if you are to get big, you can't have it both ways, alright we could make more money, but that is not what we gave up our jobs for and went into this, we want to be able to produce and deal with people locally" (Interview 59).

Operating on the small scale also fits better with the economic outlook of agents in the *alternative food business* position. The outlook of growers described by one interviewee also shows how scale and retaining control affects how social agents operate in the *alternative food business* position. The broad business outlook for this group is local markets and supporting the local community. A number of organic growers (Interviews 15, 28, 32) referred to a scheme another grower was trying to get started between growers to supply supermarkets with organic produce. The following comments are made: "I asked around this area and nobody was really interested you know in producing for supermarkets … people were basically you know focused on running their own farm and supplying their own locality" (Interview 28). Rather than supplying large scale markets, local, smaller scale markets are the focus of their business. However local markets are not the only market agents in the *alternative food business* position look to. Their focus can also be local in terms of inputs and processing (e.g. local milk processed into yogurt or cheese), but national and even international in terms of the markets they supply. A pure local focus can be important to agents in the *alternative food business* position, but is not always. It depends on what they are producing. For example a vegetable producer may look to local markets because of the volumes they produce and local markets can sustain this, whereas a cheese producer may produce too large a volume for local markets to sustain. The scale at which produce is marketed is one area where agents in the *alternative food business* position can differ. Some aim to

operate in local scale markets, whereas for others the local scale is only a starting point for them. Some participants exhibit a strong view that their businesses must operate on a local scale, with selling at farmers' markets and/or supplying independent retail outlets their end goal. But for others local scale trading at farmers' markets is a product testing ground, and a temporary place to provide a safe entry point to a test market, before they launch into longer supply chains, because local markets can't sustain their business: "Oh yeah, I want to export. Ireland can't sustain me as a business…you are not like a big seller, you are a niche product, you need to expand and get volume, Ireland doesn't have volume" (Interview 55).

So in terms of control, the structure and scale of markets that agents in the *alternative food business* position engage in, the issue is not simply the geographic scale of markets, but their economic scale. Some *alternative food business* agents move to wider markets on a geographic scale, but moving to larger volumes on an economic scale can be seen as an issue. Moving to large volumes of production can be perceived as an inevitable move towards losing focus, and a move towards economic capital controlling the business: "I suppose you see if you get into volumes, if you get into producing masses of stuff it's very difficult to keep control, and you are much more interested in your margins, staff costs all that sort of thing" (Interview 22).

How agents struggle and attempt to impact change occurs at different economic scales. A central pattern emerging from the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field and its intersection with the economic field, is to build a business where there is more control over economic capital, but at the same time not let economic capital be the primary ruling force driving the business. Markets can be concentrated locally and/or regionally, but they do not have to be concentrated in this way as it may not be the right fit for the business, depending on what is being produced. National and international markets can also be part of the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field, once the business does not lose its other 'alternative' characteristics, such as producing an artisan product, or sourcing inputs from other local suppliers or ethical sourcing. Agents in the *alternative food*

business position of the alternative food field do show a preference for local markets, but local markets cannot always sustain their business.

Another important pattern in terms of business structure in the *alternative food business* position is that it is seen as logical to work on the basis of dealing with more than one retail or market outlet for their produce. This helps to reduce risk where gaining economic capital is not reliant on one or very few sources (for example if dealing with one large retailer). There is a view prevailing in the position of *alternative food business* that if agents deal with a number of suppliers, rather than supplying one supermarket chain, if an account is cancelled the consequences are less serious for the business. There is an ethic with some agents in the *alternative food business* position of spreading risk. This also is a strategy in managing the inevitable economic uncertainty that running a food business brings, even when an alternative approach is taken, based on supplying shorter supply chains, or a larger number of longer supply chains. The alternative approach does effectively reduce risk in so far as agents in the *alternative food business* position can, and importantly, gives them some control over the risks they are exposed to. For example: "I wouldn't put all my eggs in one basket…At least you are more or less in control of your own margins and you can get as much as you can out of it, in the marketplace for your produce" (Interview 60). These comments also help to further illustrate: "[If] you have all individual shops, alright one drops you; alright it is not the end of the world" (Interview 59).

The activities of agents in the *alternative food business* position are attempts to gain greater control over the economic capital available to them, to work in structures where they can predict to a greater extent how economic capital might fluctuate. Doing this does not amount to the same formula for all agents in the *alternative food business* position, and can change. Choosing the scale at which a business is run is not a simple process. Agents in the *alternative food business* position can choose specific approaches to how their business will be run, such as supplying local markets and supporting the local economy. This can sometimes be compromised because being involved in a business environment can steer people's approach. If their business is successful, and shows potential for growth and expansion into wider

markets, it is almost a natural reaction to grow the business. As one interviewee comments: "the whole thing kind of sucks you in" (Interview 58). Growing the business can impact the business in ways not envisaged and the value of approaches previously taken, such as focusing on local markets, can be seen in retrospect:

> "Now we have national, and now I am suddenly 90 days into it and I am realising there is more involved in this than I thought…like you go away from the kitchen sink…now I am suddenly in a factory with 3 or 4 people working and they have to be paid every week whether I like it or not and then the business bills…" (Interview 58).

Attitudes to the economic scale of business in the *alternative food business* position change and evolve. Some see moving to dealing with big business as a positive step (Interviews 29; 37; 38; 49; 55), whereas others develop the opinion from experience that long supply chains are hard to control, are unpredictable and move back towards shorter supply chains (Interviews 18; 32; 34; 36; 54; 56). Others are wary from the beginning of being involved with big business (Interviews 11; 32; 60; 51). So, the approach to gaining more control is also a dynamic, changing process, which is not linear but does seem to work in a cyclical manner, seeing agents in the *alternative food business* position move towards, and away from shorter and longer supply chains. This shows how external forces affect agents in the *alternative food business* position.

While the above discussion begins to explain how agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field work to change the power of economic capital in the economic field, it misses however a more complex picture around how this is played out, the struggles, conflicts and contradiction agents in the *alternative food business* position must face in doing so. In the next section a more multi-faceted dynamic is explained. Even though the power of economic capital is changed, this is only to a limited extent. Agents in the *alternative food business* position can better manage the unpredictable nature of the economic field, but producers can't gain complete control and remove unpredictability when it comes to the returns they receive for their produce. Gaining more control over economic capital is an unstable process. Also agents in the *alternative food business* position face a struggle with

other forces in the market, for example, other food producers are described as piggybacking on the values they practice.

7.3.3 Managing economic uncertainty and scarcity of economic capital

While agents in the *alternative food business* position have engineered a shift in power by moving to shorter supply chains where the number of intermediaries is reduced between producer and consumer, this does not give them optimum levels of control in how the alternative food field intersects with the economic field. Some uncertainties are an inevitable part of being a player in the economic field.

Other factors such as weather can also affect the economic capital gained in farmers' markets, making it an uncertain way to make a living. For example "it's not a guaranteed income as well either, dya know you don't know how many, like last November now for example like really if we didn't have money dya know from the summer we would have died a death, because it rained every single day we were at a market, you couldn't depend on it like" (Interview 27). And another interviewee makes a similar point: "say it is raining, people think, I am not going to that market today for some lettuce and some potatoes, you know, I will go to the supermarket tomorrow, at least I am inside and they have everything. The farmer who is there, or the small producer, he was working during the night or two or three days before, to have something on his stall, he is left with it" (Interview 51). Weather and environmental conditions are also a factor that producers must contend with that can affect their economic returns in a positive and negative way. One vegetable grower describes how weather affects their harvest:

> "Financially it is a kind of a hit and miss because like this year now in the frost we lost all of our carrots, and beetroot there was a big drop. The carrots were supposed to, and the beetroot, would have kept us going for another couple of months like. Eh potatoes, we lost as well, but you know every year you would lose a certain amount of stuff due to bad weather, not getting the plants in on time, it wasn't dry enough and things like that but still it is a better quality way of life" (Interview 27).

This uncertainty is a constant for producers, whether part of the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field or not. Changes in the food market, such as a factory closure, can wipe out a wholesale market for a producer. For example, one interviewee comments on the closure of a local vegetable processing factory, and suddenly the market they had for produce was gone (Interview 27). Whatever the supply chain producers are involved in, there will be economic uncertainty. However occupying the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field has its added benefits, for example in terms of quality of life and agents accept financial uncertainly for quality of life benefits.

Another aspect of being a part of food markets that is mostly outside of the control of agents in the *alternative food business* position and creates uncertainty are changes in regulations. For example referring to organic regulations one interviewee comments how they can cost producers in time and money: "because all these changes in rules they cost you a lot of time and effort. And money I suppose at the end of the day but em things always change anyway" (Interview 54). However, agents in the *alternative food business* position can also work to change their level of control and gain more control and certainty in this area. For example, in interviews reference is made to the FSAI Artisan Forum and its usefulness as a connection between small business and those governing food law. Also by organising and forming interest groups, progress can be made in this area. This shows how key agents act to try to overcome challenges to work towards supporting the development of AFIs. For example, in relation to farmers' markets, one interviewee describes how farmers' market traders formed a committee that allowed them to negotiate with the FSAI in determining fair and reasonable food safety regulations for farmers' markets:

> "We then negotiated with the food safety authority em we actually, hygiene regulations are reasonably ok for farmers' markets. What we won really was that they stopped looking at us as big businesses, we are small businesses…the rule says all perishable food must be kept at four degrees or less and so long as the person did that, no matter what it cost them and no matter how lenient it was if they could do that with cold box that's fine, so we really won that battle, otherwise they would have demanded that we have refrigeration trailers so we kept saying so long as the food is at four degrees that's fine, you can do that with an ice box" (Interview 11).

Uncertainty is also created because of the competition for scarce economic capital available to agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. Issues of economic capital control with long supply chains have already been discussed in this chapter. But factors more internal to the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field also affect control over economic capital. Agents in the *alternative food business* position compete for scarce capital. This means there can be internal competition between agents in the *alternative food business* position and there is not always room for new entrants. For example in farmers' markets there can be competition for a small slice of a market. One farmers' market trader describes how another stallholder's business was made unsustainable when a business selling the same produce opened close to the market: "…they made a lot of their own [produce]…they were in [the farmers' market] for a long time and the [shop] opened up…it took their business away completely, their business was just gone, overnight" (Interview 59).

Agents that struggle to gain economic capital from selling food itself can also sell their skills, teaching people to produce their own food. This can then empower consumers, enabling them to produce their own food and to rely less on using economic capital to obtain food. It shows how producers can adapt, and not rely entirely on food production to earn a livelihood. One interviewee who is involved in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field comments on their decision to not get involved in food production for sale in the market because the return from growing vegetables is too poor: "I mean I wouldn't try to sell vegetables

for a living because the margins are so low and you have to work so hard. I prefer to sell the skills and I can do that so far, I haven't maxed out on people's skill levels that no-one wants to buy any more skills" (Interview 6). A vegetable grower describes plans to develop an open farm, focusing on food growing and cooking skills, because of the difficulties of surviving on horticulture alone: "I mean know it's hard work…I mean I could make my life easier, I could actually do nothing and make more money" (Interview 32). If agents in the *produce your own* position develop good growing skills, their capacity to reduce their dependence on economic capital and the dominant market to source food is increased, strengthening this aspect of the alternative food field. But also, coming back to the issue of competition for scarce economic capital and selling skills, there is also only so much economic capital to go around. An interviewee who runs organic growing courses comments how the market is now saturated:

> "I think the market has been kind of saturated at the moment, all things organic, especially the organic growing courses, like with the evolution of all the GIY groups there are so many different things on, you know you kind of get it hard, but that is good, you know that people are getting keen and that people are growing…now people are finding different ways of exchanging skills so we just have to kind of move, move with the flow" (Interview 26).

It is through growing and spreading cultural capital that the capacity of this 'market' can be increased, which is discussed in the next chapter. For now, it is noted that other capitals, social and cultural, are important resources that can strengthen the alternative food field.

Another approach that those in the *alternative food business* position take is to work directly to make economic capital of less importance so as to reduce its power. This is the focus of the next section.

7.3.4 The battle to change the value of economic capital in the economic field

Making a living from the land, or from a small food business is central to how economic capital is generated in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. Economic capital is not easy to acquire by making a living from the land or a small food business. For example the following interviewee's comments help to illustrate this point:

> "It's not easy to make a living this way, the courses would make more than the farm…I'm sure you have heard about peak oil, it will all run out at some stage and this will affect the conventional trader who relies on oil and petrol to run his tractor and pesticides which are all based on petroleum. But when this runs out they will all have to go back to organic methods, what's going to happen then, it's really a chronic situation…It's just all about the money. It drives everything" (Interview 9).

In the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field a business ethic of economic sustainability emerges, rather than economic profitability. For many producers, there is not a single minded focus on profits. For example a producer recounts when they first began producing organic milk, but was selling it to the conventional dairy because there was no market for it, because they felt it was "the right thing to do" (Interview 25). That said, money still governs behaviour to a strong extent. Economic capital is a powerful form of capital and all agents need to acquire an adequate amount. Reasonably and rationally, it has to be a primary goal. Economic capital ultimately holds power, even when actors attempt to displace it. For example in interview 59 a farmers' market trader articulates strongly that they are not driven purely by money but ultimately it affects their decision making. For example they describe how it is important to support farmers' markets, but they choose not to trade at certain farmers' markets as they are not worthwhile economically. Their business ultimately has to be run as a business and can't continue to trade at farmers' markets that aren't sustainable economically.

Agents in the *alternative food business* position describe how they are trying to make a living, and not a fortune. They wish to make a sustainable living that satisfies

personal values and gain a fairer return for their produce. In short, other values are also held in importance alongside economic capital in the *alternative food business* position of alternative food field. Value based aspirations inform, shape and limit the pursuit of economic capital. These aspirations centre around: more environmentally conscious food production, organic food production, higher animal welfare standards in food production, producing an artisan or craft product, producing quality and nutritious food, practicing ethical values in business such as fairness in dealing with suppliers, workers and business colleagues. The following comments help to illustrate the general aspirational outlook held by agents in the *alternative food business* position:

> "I think sometimes it is not a case of one size fits all but I suppose we would be coming at it from the ethos, the principles that you would find in organics, like fairness and health and ecology and all the other ones that these are the principles that should apply generally to farming and that should be a base, it's like fair trade, absolutely farmers should get a fair price and that would be a principle, and that if you employ people that you would treat them fairly as well and that's the thing that modern commerce does not allow for at all, everyone is expendable when they are no longer useful, and even when they are useful sometimes" (Interview 21).

All agents in the *alternative food business* position do not hold all of these aspirations. The aspirations held differ. However one very common aspiration is a desire for a specific kind of personal lifestyle. For example how a living is made is balanced for example with raising a family: "we were going to have to try and earn a living in a different way and I didn't want to commute in and out of Cork. I had four children" (Interview 50). Economic capital must be generated to support a livelihood, but supporting this livelihood appears to be the primary goal for many, and not generating economic capital for its own sake. There are clear aspirations to live a version of the good life, where land sustains a livelihood.

Agents in the *alternative food business* position adapt and multi-task to make their living sustainable, while also allowing them to uphold their value based aspirations

as well as they can. For example, these comments highlight this point: "It's not a very easy way to make money…it wouldn't be a huge income earner, she is good like that she has cattle and she has a few other things on the go as well to keep her going" (Interview 11). However that is not to say there is never a compromise on values and aspirations. A business with strong environmental and ethical values is worthless if it cannot be economically sustainable, making economic capital have some fundamental control over the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field.

The aspirations held by agents in the *alternative food business* position ultimately affects the volume of economic capital circulating in the alternative food field. It places limitations on the amount of economic capital that can be acquired because the aspirations held can compete with obtaining higher levels of economic capital. However this can change through time, and capturing a higher volume of economic capital from the business can become more important as the business goals change, or simply have to be compromised. For example, one producer compares their approach to business, which is driven by an aspiration for a certain kind of life, and the different approach of a family member who is taking over her business, which is possibly more driven by economic capital:

> "It's nice to see the ethic I have stuck with is appreciated by some of the chefs and retailers, it's really special, really special but I certainly wouldn't be having any holidays out of it, I mean it is a labour of love…you don't make money, you are keeping your production, it has to be small, because…you are kind of caught between a rock and a hard place…[the family member] might chose to go a different route because [they have] got the techniques…the skills…[they are] not quite as fluffy about it…more focused and hard headed about it…[they are] going to do it to make money" (Interview 22).

The approach in this case is described as being tied with the objectives of the business, the parent's approach was a business to support the family and personal life choices, whereas the second generation may have different motives. This also highlights how not all agents in *alternative food business* position have the same mix

of values affecting their approach to acquiring economic capital. This also can create tensions among agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. Returning to consider the social movement concept, this does not necessarily mean solidarity does not exist, tensions can be a part of how a social movement negotiates values to change or make movement objectives clearer.

Agents in the *alternative food business* position can be critical of food businesses that they perceive to be driven by economic capital, without adherence to other values and processes. For example, in relation to how the organic farming movement has developed in Ireland, this interviewee describes their anti-business approach, whereas now motivations in the organic sector can be more business oriented: "I suppose em particularly when you started to have people who were much more business oriented and I think I would have been fairly typical at that time being fairly anti-business in many respects…obviously that attitude doesn't lend itself to setting up anything that is very big and certainly big business" (Interview 16). Another producer delineates two types of business-person in food production, and the values that go along with their approach:

> "In food production there's two types of people who go into it, one type of person goes into it because they are going to make money, they are less interested about what is going into it, rather than their margins at the end, and then there are more of us who get into it because we like to eat what we produce ourselves, and like to eat what our friends produce so…that they can live in specific way…I am more interested in staying in my local environment, working with local products and hopefully paying somebody maybe a little bit more for a really good raw material, because if I give it to somebody in this community it stays in this community" (Interview 22).

There was also a feeling that emerged from the interviews that others in the food industry piggyback on the values that agents in the alternative food business position practice in their food production. Others see the economic capital that can be captured from this aspirational, value based approach, but don't have the same dedication to the values. The inappropriate use of terms such as artisan, farmhouse

and local are described. For example: “farmhouse cheese and other products like that have been hijacked, to an extent, by the name ‘farmers’, it was everything, farmer’s bread, farmer’s everything…it wasn’t made by farmers, no more than remotely” (Interview 58). One interviewee makes reference to the ‘skulduggery’ (Interview 22) that occurs. Another describes how the term ‘local’ can be exploited, and the following comments highlight what kind of ‘skulduggery’ occurs:

> “I know of another man who was supplying half a dozen chickens every week…to a local restaurant…he went there for lunch one day and on the menu was free range chicken and his name…produced locally…he said they must have served 60 or so people his chicken and he was supplying them six birds so he stopped supplying them and he said take the name off the menu because it is just wrong and the chicken has come from God knows where and people are genuinely thinking ah this is, this restaurant is going out of its way to purchase from a local supplier” (Interview 46).

Values are central to how economic capital is captured in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. They inform how agents construct their businesses. But because agents interact with the wider economic field, others also see the economic capital that can be captured from piggybacking on the values practiced by those in the *alternative food business* position. This shows that a struggle exists between the alternative food field and the economic field, with agents in the *alternative food business* position working to maintain their own values in an economic field where others do not work on the same value system, and others who may seek to piggyback on the values agents in the *alternative food business* position practice.

This section has shown how attempts to change the value of economic capital in the economic field and introduce wider values is part of an ongoing struggle by *alternative food business* agents in the alternative food field. A further struggle that is evident in *alternative food business* position is acquiring economic capital, to which the discussion next turns.

7.3.5 Substitutes for economic capital and substitute because of its scarcity

Agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field circumvent the need for economic capital by substituting financial economic capital with other types of economic capital. There is a more informal economy at work in the *alternative food business* position that supports it and helps it cope with the scarce amount of economic capital available to it. However, there is an issue with the effectiveness of such approaches in substituting economic capital. These approaches tend to play a minor role in their contribution to overall economic capital needs.

Agents in the *alternative food business* position can reduce the need for financial economic capital in a number of different ways. For example the WWOOF system can reduce the need to employ paid labourers, where a number of hours of labour are swopped for food and accommodation. Producers may not be involved with the WWOOF organisation, but with international student exchange schemes. This approach to reduce labour costs can be viewed as helpful, but also can be seen to have limited value (Interviews 11; 54; 28). For example, this interviewees comments help illustrate:

> "You get some guy or some woman who just doesn't understand or they say yes, yes and I say are you sure, and they say yes, like we had onions planted upside down by one person all along one line, remember they are not coming from any agricultural background…I'd say one out of 40 will come with an agricultural interest" (Interview 28).

Part of this informal economy is the exchange of skills and knowledge, which can be acquired without access to formal training through social connections between agents. Producers describe learning from others who have been producing a product for decades and also from people they encounter by chance who provide inspiration and knowledge informing agents in the *alternative food business* position. There is evidence in the data that a generation of cheese-makers have helped to provide inspiration for another generation to produce dairy products with Irish milk. For example, the following comments help to illustrate: "we learned so much from him …he had an awful lot of information coming from, like Germany kept all that information and Italy and all those European countries whereas we either didn't have

it, or we lost it" (Interview 18). This has a strong link with cultural capital, where these skills and knowledge can be understood as cultural capital, and are used to substitute economic capital. Cultural capital and its relevance to the alternative food field is explored in the next chapter of this thesis. Social capital can also be used to make up for scarce economic capital. For example producers borrow other producer's equipment and share resources such as animal manure for use as fertilizer (Interview 11; 18; 32). Social capital is also focused on in detail in the next chapter.

While agents in the *alternative food business* position often run food businesses, this research found strong evidence that they are also often producers of food for their own homes to help manage a tight household budget and are geared towards creating food self sufficiency (Interviews 11; 18; 19; 24; 25; 26; 35; 46; 55; 61; 55). Primary food producers make best use of one form of economic capital they have, that is land. Producers in the *alternative food business* position, organic and traditional farmers, often use as few purchased inputs as possible so as to keep the need for economic capital down. It also emerged that a swapping culture was found among some producers at farmers' markets where their own produce was swapped for another traders produce (Interview 11; 59). But again this approach can only go so far, living a life based on subsistence is also challenging. For those who take this approach, it is evident that this is a supplementary measure. They are 'almost' self sufficient, but still need to shop in supermarkets. Their supply of home grown produce is limited, and requires effort and careful planning to go further:

> "We do try to be a bit self-sufficient with our lives, cause it is very easy to just get carried away, we didn't grow enough vegetables for ourselves this year which is kind of stupid, we'd be better off just to make sure we have enough vegetables and firewood for ourselves and what we produce after that we sell…If I got out there and did a bit of rotivating we could grow enough peas and beans to keep us for a lot of the winter really and potatoes" (Interview 25).

Another way agents in the *alternative food business* position can make up for scarce capital is by availing of grant aid. As with other ways to reduce economic capital needs, it can only go so far. Grant aid that supports alternative food enterprises is

generally to support start-up, or help with business development and does not support these initiatives on an on-going basis. Common sources of funding are from LEADER local action groups and local enterprise boards. Farmers' access to financial supports could be for example organic farming grants, REPS grants and CAP direct payments. The availability of grants, and what these grants are provided to support, can direct what kind of production agents in the *alternative food business* position become part of. Also some resist following grants for this reason. Interviewees describe how direct payments may encourage farmers to produce certain commodities: "I could stay here and do nothing and make more money than from what I am doing. This is back breaking work, you know planting spuds and growing, it's much easier to do cattle and the farming subsides have encouraged that even more" (Interview 32, paraphrased). Another interviewee comments on their reasons for staying with traditional methods, rather than moving into organics because of the available grant aid:

> "The reason we never went organic, I did look into it, was because the cost of em purchasing organic wheat is huge…I wouldn't be able to justify the price em in the fridge for people to be able to purchase…people are enticed into organics with the grants that are available, but it doesn't do anything for me because I would have to jack up the price of the meat which I don't think is fair" (Interview 46).

Another describes how adding value to produce is encouraged by the providers of enterprise grants:

> "They would be at our door on a regular, well not on a regular basis, but if I called up and said oh I have got a fabulous idea we are going to market beetroot pate or something, oh right yeah, tell me about it yeah we could fund you for that, how much will it cost, I don't know if you have seen Chicken Run, it made me think of it last night, anyway the chickens, the farmer, they decided eggs wasn't the way to make money, they could make more money with chicken pies" (Interview 28).

Grants can however sometimes be a good fit, because the AFI can already be putting into practice what is grant aided. For example, referring to REPS, one interviewee comments: "we went into it from the very beginning, it seemed like money for old rope to me, because I was doing most of the things anyway" (Interview 25). Grants can make up for scarce capital, but when considered in terms of struggling to impact change, following grants can mean the direction of agent's practice in the *alternative food business* position is guided by the economic capital available from grants and towards practices that are grant aided. However this research also found evidence of some agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field who resist this effect and attempt to work without the aid of economic capital grants because of their principles.

The above discussion shows how agents in the *alternative food business* position make adaptations to function in the economic field when economic capital is scarce. Their struggle is limited however because their efforts cannot make up for the scarcity of economic capital in their position and they must engage with the economic field to gain this essential resource. Agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field can however to a small degree change and reduce the power of economic capital and gain more control. This has limited impact, because of the ultimate greater power of the economic field and economic capital. This fact is the focus of the next and final section on the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field.

7.3.6 The power of economic capital in structuring the economic field

A more fundamental problem exists for agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field in gaining greater control and power in the

economic field. The interaction of the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field in the economic field is also impacted by the wider economic field. While *alternative food business* agents can change how capital is valued in the alternative food field, this does not extend to changing the wider economic field. For example, *alternative food business* agents have to charge a price for their produce based on the costs of production. The economics of production in a small food business, even when there are fewer intermediaries in the supply chain can result in food priced similarly to that from conventional markets. For example, discussing the economics of farmers' markets, interviewees describe how the costs do add up beyond producing their product, from renting a stall, to transport and refrigeration. Adding intermediaries, such as distributors, and the organic production and certification process also adds to the cost of the final product (Interviews 18; 21; 54). Traders also must supply what the market demands, which may not match perfectly what is produced, which creates inefficiencies. For example a beef producer who sells direct to consumers comments: "…then you have a problem of selling cuts, people want a steak, they don't want mince" (Interview 13). Agents in the *alternative food business* position also have to compete in a food retailing market where budget brands are sold alongside artisan foods in supermarkets. For example:

> "It's an expensive product, it's luxury, it's high end. We try to make it as cost competitive as possible but because of the quality of it, it's just not in the cheaper end, or the big volume end, so people I suppose obviously they are buying more cheap food because of the downturn and so on and we are finding now that the only way we can grow the company is to start exporting to the UK so we have just started that in a very small way and are just trying to build that up slowly" (Interview 29).

Price is seen to be an increasingly powerful factor impacting the food purchasing choices of consumers. For example:

> "Like if people are presented with two things, and one is English and one is Irish, and the Irish one is reasonably priced they will buy the Irish one…we are driven by price you see, and very, and rightly so in a lot of ways because I suppose now more than ever people are watching the pennies" (Interview 60).

Based on the views of agents active in AFIs, it emerged that the consumer may not see themselves as being able to afford to buy into the consumer side of the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. When there is a cheaper alternative available to them, and their budget is tight, the consumer is likely to choose produce that is cheaper, rather than that which is more fairly traded.

> "The reality is that farmers are simply not being paid enough to produce the quality that we say we need and they are being paid ludicrously low prices and the whole emphasis when people go shopping is, the only thing they think about is how cheap it is, and they are feeding their families and they are feeding themselves and the only thing that matters is how cheap it is" (Interview 50).

Agents in the *alternative food business* position do not just have to compete with cheap food, but also have to compete with the materialist, consumerist culture:

> "…it is nothing about being able to afford it…it is about priorities…I'll say ok well…how much did that phone cost you, how much did you spend on magazines last week, how much did you spend in the pub…we need to invest in it as an investment in our own health…if you don't put the money on the table you'll give it to the doctor or the chemist (Interview 50).

The approach of providing cheap food at all costs is viewed to be short sighted, for our health, the environment and food security. However the dominant type of initiative that aims to shorten the supply chain in Ireland, the farmers' market, does not appear to provide a viable alternative. While the foods sold at farmers' markets can be both staple and speciality, they also have to serve the consumer that attends

markets, which can push markets in a particular direction. For example: "There is someone who does veg…spuds and carrots and cabbage…it is great value, like you know better than going into the stores…there is definitely two tiers to it, you know because you do want to have the Jerusalem artichokes…if you didn't have the high end food, the expectation is quite high" (Interview 48). While good value basic food produce is available at markets, the role of markets as a place to do your weekly grocery shopping can be overshadowed by the role of markets as a source of less essential foods and as a social outing: One farmers' market organiser describes how their market has evolved from a place where staple produce was sold, to a market that is: "more of a cake sale, that Sunday morning thing, huge after mass factor and actually it is a huge social outlet" (Interview 48). Another farmers' market trader describes how a balance is hard to achieve, so that markets remain a practical shopping outlet and good, honest food at markets is kept accessible:

> "My customers are such a broad spectrum and a lot of them are not going to be into Slow Food…I know the food is accessible but I want it to happen more…like there is a dangerous edge you walk, like you have to keep it between buying crap and also not trying to pay stupid money for foods that are completely overpriced" (Interview 47).

There is a sense of catch 22 about *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field and its interaction with the economic field. Winning the struggle outright does not seem possible. Agents in the *alternative food business* position need economic capital. Economic capital alone does not drive AFIs, but it sometimes has to take priority over other considerations such as developing the local food economy. Producers have to make a living and they can't often compete with the cheap food economy of the conventional food system. This can mean then they will only survive if they supply a niche, higher end market. Economic capital is the dominant, controlling capital in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. Movements that depend on economic capital and engage with the economic field, such as the organic movement, have been criticised for becoming more like what they set out to oppose. The evidence here would also support a similar dynamic impacting this potential movement in formation. The power of economic capital does place limitations on the potential of food movements to

impact radical change. However, what is also important in changing the importance of economic capital are other forms of capital, such as social and cultural capital, and how they are valued. This is explored in the subsequent chapter. In this chapter next the focus of attention turns to the economic field and how struggles between the economic field the *produce your own* position of alternative food field are played out.

7.4 Battle for greater control in the food system in the position of *produce your own*

Citizens producing their own food take a more active role in the food system and become producers of some of their own food. Rather than relying on the market to provide food in exchange for economic capital, consumers to a certain extent take themselves out of consumer food markets, and take control of some of their food production. In the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, agents acting in these AFIs represent an attempt to withdraw from the economic field that normally governs how food is accessed. The reasons for this include having more control over how food is produced and taking control into citizens own hands and away from corporations. For example, one interviewee comments:

> "There is some choice between what we have come from many years ago, which might have been agricultural and what we have surrendered to, which is corporate forces, global forces which are in fact taking food away from where it belongs, food should be something that is sovereign to the people, it should not be under the control of private corporations. So talk about the idea of food sovereignty and em the atmosphere is right for land reclamation, you know the way we talk about land reclamation, well I think the atmosphere is right for food reclamation" (Interview 2).

There is a desire to re-position food in people's lives, where food is not just a commodity to be accessed with economic capital, but to make food a more central part of our way of life. Treating food as an economic commodity is viewed to have consequences for the environment and food security. For example:

> "We have gone full circle with this and em if we think about climate change and the amount of carbon emissions that is coming from mass agriculture and also the degradation of the ecosystem that is caused by mass agriculture, as in em overuse of fertilizers, overuse of pesticides, a lack of crop rotation, lack of reintroduction of organic matter into the soil and the preservation of soil biodiversity. I think we are looking at a very serious loss that will make it harder for us to feed our population" (Interview 2).

There is also a sense of nostalgia for how food production once had a more central role in people's lives in the past, but is lost now that food is most often accessed through the market. For example, the following comments help to illustrate:

> "I think for me, I grew up with the stories of the way my mum grew up, my mum grew up on a farm…having a cow, collecting the eggs, eating the peas, you know, and I thought I want that" (Interview 1).

And:

> "Even if you come to live in a city, you bring those influences so powerfully with you. The thing that drove me to allotments was that I wanted to re-connect with the countryside but my life, my family life, my working life was based in a city, so for a while, the only way to do that was to move out of the city" (Interview 2).

This nostalgia however is not purely idealistic, but practical and looking back to how lives were lived in the past and practices were more sustainable. For example, the following interviewee comments help to illustrate this point:

> "I was always interested in food for some reason, like I said I read Frances Moore Lappee, A Diet for a Small Planet, I read all those books, got really interested in food when I was young, em and my grandparents had a farm which I was very much influenced by…I grew up in suburban America and became very disillusioned with the whole way things, the sort of materialistic direction the country was going in at the time" (Interview 3).

The motivations for increased control at the citizen level don't just relate to food, but also have a strong link with a broader attempt to reduce unnecessary consumption and live more sustainably. Food can be the vehicle through which this desire to live more sustainably is practiced:

> "People feel that they can't exist without certain kinds of plastic wrap, you know all sorts of, taking a shower every day, you know all of this sort of unsustainable behaviour that we have created and I think to a large extent that is routed in the industrial revolution when we first started creating more product than we actually needed and then we kind of had to create insecurity in people to feel that they needed that product …for me, the fundamental thing that I am trying to work on with these projects is to really help people understand that there are basic needs and there are other kinds of needs that we have created" (Interview 3).

Attempting to withdraw to some extent from the economic field that normally governs food access means that the *produce your own* position in the alternative food field is not governed as much by the power of economic capital as the position of *alternative food business*. This then in turn affects the nature of the battle in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, which is next explored.

7.4.1 Low reliance on the economic field and low economic capital needs

Agents in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field operate in the economic field to the extent that economic capital is a resource they need, but is not a resource they are aiming to generate. Generation of economic capital, for its own sake, is not a motivation. Rather generation of other resources, enabling people, and

giving them the skills, to produce their own food[29], is the primary goal in this position. For example, referring to a themed open day, one interviewee comments on the importance of this day to them as an income source, but the greater value is if others replicate what they do, which ultimately means less income for their organisation: "I mean it is sometimes hard for us because eh you would probably have less income…But the idea…was always to kind of spread the message and get more people into grow their own organic food, so the more people do it…the better for everybody" (Interview 8).

While economic capital generation is not an end goal in itself in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, it is still a needed resource that is crucial for AFI operation in this position. Therefore, funding as a source of economic capital is of importance. The interview data shows how funding helps initiatives to become established and can also help their further development (Interviews 1; 4; 8). Funding sources are also diverse, and can include grants from local authorities, state agencies, businesses and organisations with social or cultural aims. There is also some ambivalence and debate in this position over accepting funding from certain sources. Some would hold the view that ethical rules should govern what funding is accepted, while others would support that any funding which can support the development of AFIs in the *produce your own* position should be taken up. For example: "There was one lot of funding that we got which we rejected because we felt that it wasn't ethical…it was in some ways a bit mad because it would have doubled our funding" (Interview 57).

Economic capital is a necessary resource in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. But beyond the need for land AFIs in this position, such as allotments and community gardens, are generally low in their economic capital resource needs. Resources include labour, skills, plants, seeds and gardening materials. In the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field acquiring resources is through practices where the use of economic capital is avoided. For example practices of this nature include: re-using and recycling materials instead of buying them new; participants donate or loan resources they have, such as tools,

[29] Which can be classed as cultural capital and is discussed in the next chapter.

seeds and skills; saving seeds for use in the next season; and holding events such as seed swaps where gardeners swap different types of seeds. This approach is also important so that projects are self sustaining and not dependent on funding sources. There are also differences in views towards funding, where funding can be crucial to enable the establishment of AFIs in this position, while in other cases they start without funding and continue to exist without it. The fact that initiatives can also exist without external funding, also makes resource generation without economic capital more important in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. For example: "I have actually never looked for anything like that, because I always think that if a thing can't stand on its own two feet it is not worth anything, it should be able to stand on its own, it's not an idea if it can't stand on its own" (Interview 7). There is also a sense that if funding is accessed, it must be spent, while many resources that can be gained with economic capital can also be gained without it. For example:

> "…like a kid in a sweet shop, but you'd be surprised, I mean I'd go in and go oh my God you know, I'm just not spending the money and then all of a sudden it was gone you know, then the rest of the garden, em we got stuff from the community, it was all donated, I mean this wood-chipping, it was donated by local farmers, the stones they were all got from the local field there, the local sawmills gave us the wood for the raised beds" (Interview 4).

The economic capital available through funding can change the nature of the project and mean that social and cultural capital is not drawn on as a resource. For example: "You can cushion things too much by having too much funding…by not having that extra, the communities felt they could do bits for themselves" (Interview 57). Social and cultural capital in the position of *produce your own* is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Funding can be useful to get a project started, but drawing on the resource generating economy of reusing, recycling and donations can also go far to sustain a project in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. For example, another interviewee comments on their approach, that is based on providing what the project

needs in a way that is not lavish or wasteful, but needs are simply met: "It's just you know simple things, a shed for tools, a place where they can go and sit down and have a meal you know. I mean you don't need a fancy restaurant, I mean this is our barn, it is absolutely fantastic" (Interview 7).

AFIs in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field can also establish with little or no funding; it is not an essential precursor to the development of AFIs in this position. From the data it is evident that funding can help get projects started and they can then take on a life of their own after this (Interviews 4; 8; 57). For example: "I mean a garden is there, once it is there, and it is a matter of maintenance then, and how people are interacting with the space" (Interview 57). When AFIs in the *produce your own* position gain enough economic capital to allow them to establish, the need for economic capital can reduce after this. For example describing a number of community garden projects initiated by an organisation, their continued existence beyond the period in which they were funded is noted: "in all those cases the people who went to that programme they are all doing it in the end without funding" (Interview 8). Economic capital can initially be important, but harnessing and creating social and cultural capital are what appear most important to the long term development and sustainability of AFIs in the produce your own position of the alternative food field. This dynamic is explored in detail in the next chapter.

7.4.2 The limitations of low economic capital resources

While resources normally acquired with economic capital can be sourced to a certain extent by accessing funding and generating resources without economic capital, one major resource, land, is difficult to gain stable access to without economic capital. In relation to community gardens, the organisation or group that initiates the community garden may already have access to land, which makes starting the project easier, because a major resource is already present. Community garden groups that don't already have access to land can approach landowners who have idle land suitable for food growing and ask permission to use this land for a community garden. One community garden successfully gained access to a site initially for three months, which eventually got extended to a year, and is renewed each year (Site visit 1). However, not all AFIs in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food

field acquire land without economic capital. Access to land for allotments is generally gained from the use of economic capital. Possession of a certain amount of economic capital becomes necessary to become an allotment grower, however in the case of community gardens, economic capital is not required to allow participation. This creates a different dynamic in how allotments in the *produce your own position* of the alternative food field interact with the economic field.

In the mid 2000s demand for allotments began to increase beyond their supply in Ireland (Interviews 1; 2; 7). Allotment plots are generally rented, either from a local authority or a private landowner. From this research two types of private allotments can be identified. Groups can approach a local landowner, rent a portion of land and then sub-divide it among the allotment group participants (Interview 1), or the private landowner provides the land, sets out the allotments and they are then rented by individual plot holders who provide the economic capital. The cost of privately rented allotments was as an issue of concern for agents in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. For example: "to me the farmer has the right to charge as much as market forces dictate, that's ok, but I think if you are trying to grow food for yourself and you are trying to save money for instance, €300 or €400 eats into a lot of what you might hope to save" (Interview 2). Another interviewee comments on the rising cost of insurance, and while they keep allotments as affordable as they can, this impacts on the price of a plot:

> "I think now they have jumped on the bandwagon…they have put up their rates, by €70 per plot here, so I have had to put up my fees which is very disturbing because I don't believe in having very expensive allotments, mine would have always been some of the cheapest and now I have to, would probably be on a par with some of them, but a lot of them are charging a lot more than that" (Interview 7).

If allotments are provided in the economic field where market forces rule what they cost, rather than an ethos of supporting people to grow their own food for social and cultural reasons, allotments become more embedded in the economic field. Allotment provision by landowners with a genuine support for the social and cultural value of allotments, or through local authorities, is seen as the more ideal way that

allotments be provided, rather than provision motivated by the economic capital to be gained from providing them (Interview 1; 2; 7). Allotment provision in a system where economic capital generation is a primary motivation moves away from the primary goal that has been identified in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, that is withdrawing from the economic field and economic means by which food is normally accessed. For example, the following quotation helps to further illustrate this point:

> "The movement towards private allotment schemes run by farmers themselves, I am very ambivalent about that…the idea that a farmer could lease his land out on a sort of a plot basis to local people, if it works as a system, fantastic, what concerns me is that it will become or has to some extent become a market led development in the last year or two, in other words I am concerned that local authorities will not see it as their business to provide allotments, I am concerned that it might be left to the private sector … the councils may see it as the farmer's business …There is a huge onus of responsibility on the local authority, because where there were allotments, they had to start quantifying the demand and maintaining waiting lists, some local authorities won't even keep a waiting list, that is how resistant they are, they are getting phone calls, they are gleaning them by saying they don't have allotments" (Interview 2).

However, being less embedded in the economic field also has its disadvantages. This research found the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field to be less embedded in the economic field than the *alternative food business* position. This also causes AFIs in the *produce your own* position to exist on uncertain ground. Community garden initiatives are not often initiated by organisations that own the land they garden, but are given access to land on a lease basis, which leaves the initiative vulnerable to eviction if the landowner wishes to use the land for another purpose. As with private allotment schemes, often rented on an annual basis, if the farmer operating the scheme wishes to put his land to another use, then allotment holders lose their plots when their lease ends. The control that these agents gain in the agri-food system is minimal and unstable. For example, one interviewee

describes the role they see for allotments, but because demand exceeds supply from this interviewee's local authority, their role in helping families to become more self sufficient is also threatened:

> "I always say that an allotment that is well looked after, a family can feed themselves with vegetables and fruit for most of the year, that is a family of two adults and two children…I have a certain vague concern that county councils, that in order to meet the demand on the waiting lists that they are allocating people plots that are entirely on the small side and I think they need to be sustainable, they need to be, each plot needs to hold the potential to provide for a family, their vegetables and fruit, because I think we are looking at potentially a situation where that will be necessary" (Interview 2).

It is also important to note that because of the newness of the *produce your own* position in the alternative food field; that people are returning to growing food, or newly developing these skills, and that access to land may only be a small allotment, back-garden or participation in a community garden, withdrawal from the economic field through which food is normally accessed can only be done in a very small way. Commitment and increased skill levels are required for people to develop greater self sufficiency in food production. For example, as one interviewee comments: "we are looking at needing to return to growing food as a way of life" (Interview 2). Growing food at home can also be limited by economic capital, where those who grow their own food and work to try and build up a sustainable lifestyle are held back by a lack of economic capital. They however make do with the resources they have in building this lifestyle. For example:

> "We have as much food as possible growing so I have no poly-tunnel, no greenhouse or nothing like that, because people say to me, I could do this if only I had, and I say to them, well no, I have only this and I still do all those things, so I think it's important to show that you can do a lot without being able to buy anything or have the acre or have anything like that…The lifestyle we have would be conducive to having an acre in the country, we have never actually had that, we had never decided to do that, or afforded to do that" (Interview 6).

Another area where low economic capital is seen to affect the development of the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field is in coordinating interaction between like-minded groups. Interviewees refer to attempts to set up networks between AFIs in the *produce your own* position, but note that because this position is sustained with volunteer labour, and also because often a few central people in a project take charge of it, there is little economic capital remaining to support wider action. Economic capital supporting organisations, staff or hubs for information is seen as needed. For example, the following interviewee comments help to illustrate this point:

> "Sometimes I think wouldn't it be great if it was a kind of an umbrella organisation, you know, lots of different projects that were happening around the city then could make use of it, you know, you could have a library and you could have a resource of books and magazine and CDs and we could have a website and put a newsletter together, but that needs financial support" (Interview 57).

Speaking about attempts to set up a local network of projects in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, the following interviewee comments:

> "People just don't have enough time to make it a viable concern, so it has kind of just limped along, we have a fairly pathetic website and what I think is really needed is funding so, it needs support, it needs one full-time person to kind of be there to write back to the emails frequently, and to hold the vision for it" (Interview 3).

Social and cultural capital are also vital resources in this transition, which are explored in the next chapter.

What this section has shown is that while the *produce your own* position's basic approach to gaining more control in the food system involves an attempt to withdraw to a greater degree from the economic field, this leaves this position with low economic capital, which limits the extent of control that can be gained. However what is also fundamental to the *produce your own* position in gaining more control is also the volume and structure of its social and cultural capital. A strong *produce your own* position in the alternative food field must also be rich in social and cultural capital. For example, the importance of leaders is discussed in the next chapter, and the following comments help to show how without some economic capital support, social and cultural capital must be very strong to allow for the development of a strong *produce your own* position in the alternative food field. For example: "Because you are the only person running an organisation your child needs help at school or something and that's it, you drop them all" (Interview 5). The structure and volume of these types of capital in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field, as well as the dynamics and implications of it, are explored in the next chapter.

7.5 Conclusion on economic characteristics and role

This chapter has detailed the dynamics of AFIs structured by the economic capital and economic field concepts. It has explored the economic dynamics of the alternative food field around two key positions *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. In this chapter we have seen how control, and power, is based around possession of the essential resource, economic capital. To expand the alternative food field and reduce the power of the economic field in the alternative food field, agents must seek to gain more economic capital. While the goal of

gaining a greater level of control is anchored in gaining economic capital, gaining wealth is not a primary goal of agents in the alternative food field. Economic capital is still however something that their practice ultimately depends on. Rather agents seek to change the value placed on economic capital in the economic field and change how economic capital circulates in the agri-food system. Agents also work to achieve their goals by trying to reduce the need for economic capital in gaining more control. This is an important aspect of how these agents attempt to gain more control in the agri-food system. Economic capital is scarce and hard to acquire in the alternative food field. It controls alternative food agent's actions, who must work to acquire a certain volume of economic capital so that initiatives can function. Agents also make up for scarce capital by circumventing the need for economic capital and acquiring capital by more 'alternative' economic exchange mechanisms that are supported by other capital forms. Agent's struggle to obtain more control over economic capital is an unstable process. There are many elements in the economic and other fields that affect this, such as changes in regulations, the activities of other food businesses and retailers, the unpredictable nature of food production and internal competition for scarce capital. Gaining more control depends on how well agents can capture adequate economic capital, or make up for what they don't have. Agents can adapt and change their approach in effort to more successfully gain adequate economic capital. However at the end of this struggle, what is seen is that economic capital is still a very powerful force in the economic field and power remains imbalanced. The efforts of agents in the alternative food field does not give them a lot of control and power in the wider agri-food system, but agents do successfully carve out a space for themselves in the intersection of the alternative food field and the economic field.

Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, a number of characteristics are evident, which are detailed in Table 7.1 (page 248). One characteristic of the alternative food field is its attempt to change the value of economic capital. Another is to change the scale and nature of relationships in the economic field, which is also tied to attempting to re-write the rules of the economic field, having greater control in the economic field and a greater ability to control its unpredictable effects. Other general characteristics are also observed. The existence of an informal economy is

found to support AFIs to make up for their weak economic position. This informal economy is also supported by social and cultural resources that circulate in AFIs. If AFIs are considered as part of the dominant food market, these initiatives could be understood as a trend or niche in the market. They do not provide an alternative to the dominant food market, they exist alongside it. The role of AFIs in the food system from this analysis of their economic dynamics is weak. They represent a small part of the overall food system.

Table 7.1 Economic characteristics of alternative food initiatives

Characteristic of field	**Alternative food field**	**Produce Your Own (PYO)**	**Alternative Food Business (AFB)**
Change the value of economic capital.	Economic capital does not rule above all else. Considerations such as food quality, environmental sustainability, fairness are balanced with the need for adequate economic capital.	Economic capital of lower value in PYO sphere – economic capital sustains initiative, or activities, as part of a lifestyle.	Economic capital of higher value in AFB sphere – economic capital must sustain a business as part of a livelihood.
Different patterns and scale of economic capital circulation.	Consumer and producer are more connected spatially, or can be disconnected spatially, but fewer agents are involved between producer retailer or producer and consumer.	Producer is the consumer meaning economic capital circulating is low.	Producer is more connected to the consumer, or retailer, meaning number of agents trying to obtain economic capital is lower.
Greater economic capital control and predictability.	Producers and consumers take more control over economic capital, which makes the economic field a more predictable place.	Greater control and predictability at the consumer end.	Greater control and predictability at the producer end.
Rewrite the rules of the economic field.	Greater freedom from the rules and restraints of the economic field.	Consumers less dependent on economic capital, big business, and how this impacts on their food.	Producers can gain economic capital without having to conform to rules of big business.

These characteristics represent the struggles of agents in the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions to change the position of producers and consumers in the economic field. Each has its small and partial successes. But the real challenge in strengthening the alternative food field and reducing the power of the economic field is not in just gaining more economic capital, but also strengthening other capital forms. If there is too much focus on gaining economic capital alone, then the alternative food field loses what makes it alternative. The alternative food field is limited by the power of economic capital and the wider economic field. Because there is too little economic capital circulating in alternative food field to sustain businesses and projects, they have to engage with long supply chains in the food system and the economic field more generally for survival, and also for the expansion and development of AFIs. This is because of the power of economic capital and ultimately it is those who hold economic capital who will hold most control. Because economic capital and people's livelihoods are involved and provide the basis of resistance in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field, this leaves real reorientation of control difficult to achieve from this perspective. They are locked into a need to survive financially, and the need for economic capital to sustain a livelihood. To do this they need to obtain economic capital from the food system and play by the rules of the economic field to a certain degree. The *produce your own* position is also limited because of the wider economic field. Physical work and skills are needed to grow your own food, and an easier option is available in the economic field for the exchange of economic capital. However the economic field can also be impacted by outside forces, such as the volume of social and cultural capital that is introduced to this field. In the cultural field, the generation of cultural capital generates consumer support, and in the social field, the generation of social capital provides for strong networks in the alternative food field which are also central elements that impact on the overall power struggles of agents in the alternative food field. Understanding the volume and structure of these capitals is also very important in more comprehensively understanding the role of AFIs in the food system.

Returning to the question of what the dynamics of economic capital in the alternative food field say about AFIs as a possible social movement, it is proposed that the characteristics of the alternative food field represent a struggle, a central aspect underpinning social movements. Economic capital is a necessary resource that allows AFIs to act on issues of cultural conflict. Access to resources limit a movement's development. They can also steer it in different directions. The more embedded the *alternative food business* position is in the economic field appears to leave it vulnerable to moving more deeply into the economic field and away from the alternative food field, and therefore also limiting movement formation. The less embedded nature of the *produce your own* position leaves it with limited economic resources, but less vulnerable to absorption into the economic field. However, as a potential social movement aiming to create change in the food system, both of these observations leave AFIs as a potential movement in formation in a limited position to impact radical change.

Chapter 8

The social and cultural dynamics of alternative food initiatives

8.1 Introduction

Economic capital in AFIs was the focus of the last chapter, where it was shown that AFI agents struggle to gain increased control over economic capital and compete with agents that are more dominant, who hold more economic capital, and hence more power in the food system. AFI's struggle to gain increased economic capital is also underpinned by an alternative approach to making money and using money. What supports this alternative approach is social and cultural capital. However also because of economic capital's power, social and cultural capital can be compromised by it. The broader social, cultural and economic dynamics displayed by AFIs as they interact in the food system are explored in this chapter. The nature of social and cultural capital in the two positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own* in the alternative food field are explored. It will be shown how social and cultural capital in the alternative food field can be used to gain and replace economic capital. Agents in the *alternative food business* position mostly use these capital forms to gain economic capital, while agents in the *produce your own* position use them to replace economic capital. Some comparisons are also made across the two positions in the alternative food field, and the study areas, highlighting how the dynamics between social, cultural and economic capital differ when analysed at these different levels. One central dynamic proposed is that capital dynamics differ in the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions of the alternative food field. It is proposed that one reason for this is because of their interaction with the economic field.

8.2 Social capital structure, volume[30] and impacts in the alternative food field

AFIs display a clear attempt to re-introduce social connections to play a more central role in the food system. This happens in different ways, and to different degrees, but at its foundation is social capital. According to Bourdieu, social fields overlap. The economic and the social field intersect and their degree of overlap can change through time because of changes in the volume of a particular kind of capital in that field. If the social field moves to intersect to a greater degree with the economic field, social capital increases in the economic field. AFIs, in the *alternative food business* position in particular, attempt to increase the volume of social capital in the economic field, which has been weakened in the modern food system[31]. Formed from connections between people involved in various ways in the alternative food field, the social capital circulating in AFIs has a multidimensional structure. The mix of business and friendship is a key factor that affects the structure of social capital, and the potential of social capital growing in volume, in the *alternative food business* position. The different nature of activity in the *produce your own* position, that business is not central, also affects the structure and volume of social capital in this position. Overall, the basic nature of social capital that circulates in the alternative food field sees respect and friendship exist alongside tensions and criticisms between agents. This is because agents hold social capital of differing structures and in differing volumes. The dynamic is also created by the role and power of economic capital in the alternative food field. Also, social capital is created on many spatial scales, through direct face to face interaction, and indirect, disconnected interaction.

8.2.1 Social capital structure and volume in the position of alternative food business

Alternative food business initiatives are a place of social interaction. *Alternative food business* agents can be seen as a close business community. One interviewee comments:

[30] 'Volume' is a term Bourdieu uses to describe a basic property of capital. It refers to the general amount of capital in existence, from high to low levels, rather than implying capital is precisely measured. Scholars have noted however that Bourdieu's use of the term volume has initiated thinking and efforts to attempt to precisely measure concepts such as social capital. The concept has most commonly been used however in qualitative rather than quantitative research and precisely measuring its volume is problematic (Van Der Gaag, 2005).

[31] This observation is discussed in more detail in section 8.4.1 of this chapter.

> "…it is the unorganised reality of a food community, I suppose what allows it to be a community, more than an industry, is that it is all owner managed, you know we are all involved, we are small producers, small businesses, it is quite personality dominated, like you have to have relationships with people so it is very much a community as opposed to an industry" (Interview 53).

There is recognition among *alternative food business* agents that social connections are important. The nature of these can be personal connections, such as friends or acquaintances. Friendships between producers, and also between producers and consumers are described. For example:

> "I have made loads of friends out of it, and I know people well. And then you will have customers that will be a bit special, that you will look after, and make sure that you have the right stuff in for them that they wanted, so it is quite a personal thing really" (Interview 54).

Farmers' markets are described as a community:

> "It is very much a social situation farmers' markets because if you look at anybody who has really got into it in any way it grows good strong communities" (Interview 30).

There are also social connections between alternative food actors outside of the AFIs agents are directly involved in. For example, one *alternative food business* agent describes their involvement with Slow Food, and attendance at its Terra Madre and Salone del Gusto festivals, saying: "…it was just such an eye opener to meet as many people who were as weird about their food as I was, you know what I mean, I met my tribe" (Interview 22).

Social capital also extends to consumers who are part of the *alternative food business* position. Traders recognise that the farmers' market has a social value for consumers, which is a pattern described by many involved. This value is not simply from the friendly conversation that can be exchanged and produce tasting

opportunities, but the information they can gain about food, how it is produced, and the personal touch that dealing face to face with your food producer brings:

> "…they love to talk with the producer…and if you give them a slice or a tester and so on they can judge, you know and in the supermarket there are no social contacts anymore, you know the buyers they don't talk, the various housewives, they don't talk anymore, you know, they are just passing with their trolley, and they are going to the till, if it is manned, the girl will say hello and the amount, you know the younger generation they choose the automatic cash register" (Interview 42).

This social capital does not exist for its own sake. Bourdieu (1986) argues the structure of social capital can have a reciprocal nature, and this pattern is observed in the social capital in the *alternative food business* position. Rewards tied to social capital's existence help sustain it, which are mutually beneficial to both consumers and producers. The social space of the farmers' market means that consumers can ask producers for what they want. For example in a number of interviews with market traders, they tell of how their customers requested products they didn't currently sell (Interviews 15; 27; 33; 59). One vegetable grower was asked if they would sell seedling plants; a secondary food producer asked to make personally tailored foods such as sugar free apple tarts suitable for diabetics and vegetable soup made with specific ingredients. The face-to-face transactions that happen at markets give consumers the opportunity to directly demand what they want and producers are only too happy to provide. Traders can also trial products with consumers at markets as their way of carrying out market research. Also at farmers' markets consumers talk to producers and become more informed about how produce was made, and at the other end of the scale producers recount they also gain benefit from this, as they get feedback, positive and negative, from customers about their products.

Social capital makes both being a food producer and consumer a more rewarding experience, and more meaningful than the mere buying and eating of food in more conventional ways. Transactions are mutually beneficial:

> "Very few people will actually treat you like a supermarket, where you just come and go…you know they'll always want to know, you know, what's in season, what's this and what's that, how would you cook this and how would you cook that, you know there is a relationship going on there which is fantastic…people appreciate what you do, and I don't mind doing it, it's a win-win for everybody" (Interview 34).

Traders at farmers' markets gain more rewards for their work by avoiding sale into mainstream channels where they have little or no contact with consumers. Producers show a confidence in what they have produced and are proud to face their consumer: "…what it is about at the end of the day as well, as far as we are concerned, you produce it, you sell it and you stand over it. You can't do that in a supermarket shop" (Interview 54). This implies integrity is at the heart of business transactions, which links with another central element in the building of social capital, and that is trust.

As explained above, the existence of social capital is dependent on the rewards that agents can obtain from exploiting social capital. But social capital does not just form where there are connections between people who can gain rewards from these connections. The generation of trust between agents is very important to social capital formation. Direct personal connections between agents and information provision between producer and consumer are two important aspects of how trust is built.

8.2.1.1 How trust is built and structures social capital

In the *alternative food business* position, the existence of trust between consumers and producers is identified and efforts to build trust are displayed. Trust can be built in a number of ways, for example in formal ways through certification of production processes, and informally through social events based around information provision and face to face interaction at markets. Informal trust building was found to occur at farmers' markets, for example. One producer who became tired of the bureaucracy of organic regulation and time invested in the certification process, chose to no longer certify produce, and circumvented the need for certification by inviting people to their farm, and also by selling through direct to consumer channels, such as farmers' markets and a box scheme. Consumers themselves were the verifiers that

produce met the standards of production they wished to support. Trust is established over time. The producer explains:

> "It's something like 30 or 40 pages of paperwork, ha, it's silly, you don't need it. The way we get around it is we invite the customers here…at the beginning when we were new we had a farm walk every year or every second year, so we invited all the customers here and what happens generally is that you get 50% of the people who come are actually customers, and 50% are just those who come are either doing growing themselves or they are just curious. So that's fine as well because they all talk. So we haven't had one now for the last three years…we had almost reached saturation point, when all of our customers had been" (Interview 11).

Other producers don't have the option of a formal certification process, such as for artisan, traditional and free-range meat producers. They have to give informal guarantees, by making connections between producer and consumer so that trust can be built. For example a producer of free range pork explains how information on their farming practices is important to customers. They can't give greater guarantees than this because there is no certification process they can go through. They describe how free range can be open to interpretation, and recount knowledge of free range egg and pork producers who were not adhering to a similar production system as they were. Organic certification would provide a guarantee for consumers that standards have been adhered to. When asked if they would consider organic, they tell of how they can't justify going organic because of the extra price premium this would add for consumers, and that their system is as close to organic as you will get (Interview 46). Again, making direct connections with consumers allows the producer to communicate with them about their production practices, allowing trust to foster and reducing the need for formal certification.

For some producers, formal guarantees to build trust between producers and consumers were also seen as important. Not everyone is assured that a socially constructed value such as trust is enough to base a primarily economic relationship

upon. This interviewee takes the view that socially built informal trust is not sufficient:

> "…coming in and trying to sell their 15 lettuces and saying well I grew them myself and I know they are three times the price of the ones in Supervalu, I haven't used anything on them, but you have to trust me" (Interview 35).

The organic certification process can be used in addition to, or as a replacement for, informal ways to build trust. It is also more stable than informal trust building. If the informal trust that is built breaks down there is a risk of consumers feeling cheated. For example:

> "…we knew there was no way we could come down and say home-grown, because that instantly brings into mind sloppily done…whereas we knew that if we did organic properly, with all the paper work, completely legitimate, we'd at least feel that we weren't trying to rip anyone off by charging a fair price, you know because there was no way we would be able to produce carrots at the 49 cent a kilo that you see in the supermarket and stuff" (Interview 35).

Consciously building trust is also carried out on a wider scale, outside of initiatives themselves and the direct connections they build. The activities of groups and organisations, such as Slow Food and Teagasc, can work on building trust. For example a Slow Food Convivium leader organised a farm walk and lunch with the aim of gaining consumer confidence and interest in eating venison (Interview 37). Trust building is not only important between producers and consumers, but also between producers. The state agency, Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, organises a number of organic farm walks annually. One organic farmer who hosts farm walks comments that this aims to break down barriers for conventional farmers thinking of converting to organics:

> "We do a farm walk every year now…the idea is to get, to encourage people to go into it, so they can come down have a tour, ask questions, you know and they have their own experts from Teagasc as well here…so I suppose it's one of the best ways to get people to, they are more encouraged I'd say when they hear the actual farmer saying look I'm doing it, this is how I do it and it's fine…I suppose like everything, it is very hard to change to something different, even say people who have milked cows all their lives, that sector is, a lot of farming is in difficulty now, it's very hard to change to do something else" (Interview 19).

Focus next turns to how social capital manifests itself through time, which illuminates a different perspective on how social capital is structured and says more about the longer term volume and power of social capital in *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field.

8.2.1.2 Quickly forgotten – time, weak social ties and social capital

The previous section has shown how social capital manifests itself is multidimensional. It is based on trust, and trust is generated in different ways. Possessing and building social capital has rewards and this is also evident in other research. For example research by Megyesi et al. (2011)[32] finds that social capital is very important in the economic success of collective farmers' marketing initiatives, mobilising other types of capital, such as financial, physical and human capital. But in addition to this, social capital can be used as a resource with rewards that are realised in the short term. Rewards can also be exchanged on a longer term basis where there are stronger social ties underpinning social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Waldstrøm and Lind-Hasse Svendsen, 2008). Exploring social capital in this way reveals more about its complex structure, as well as the effects social capital creates.

Consumers can buy into the benefits obtained from the social capital of the farmers' market for a short period. They can display a sort of fickleness, where they can become patrons of markets when a particular food issue is prevalent, and benefit from connecting with a producer so they can become more informed about the produce they buy. A producer and farmers' market trader recalls when dioxins were

[32] Discussed further in chapter four.

found in pork, this changed people's behaviour for a time, however it was short-lived:

> "I think there is an awful lot of education for people em out there as well that they need to learn about their food, but they are very quick to forget, you know like the pork scare that time, they are very quick to forget you know where their meat is actually coming from, there is a certain period where they are very cautious" (Interview 46).

This can be understood as social capital based on weak social ties and short term connection. The farmers' market space allows consumers to reconnect with their producer as a result of such food issues. Weak social ties can be immediately generated. However some consumers buy into the farmers' market approach at a deeper level and have greater loyalty. Their social ties are built up between producers and consumers on an ongoing basis. For example, the following farmers' market trader comments help to illustrate:

> "We have really loyal customers coming in every week, other than that it wouldn't pay ya to do it…I suppose it is a loyalty factor now that I have been there so long I wouldn't like to leave them down because they were good to me at the start when I was setting up…you see you get too involved with the people then, and it gets to the stage that you don't want to leave them down" (Interview 27).

A similar dynamic is seen to exist in the social relations that occur between producers themselves. Producers connect with each other and share resources such as information or physical resources such as machinery (Interviews 15; 18; 28; 32; 56). The volume of this social capital based on social ties can also vary. A farmers' market trader describes how the market evolved, with a rise and fall in traders when their market was establishing. A first flush of social capital was mobilised, and then waned:

> "At the beginning there were about 20 stalls and the whole street was closed and that then fizzed out over the summer, over the first summer. And then it really fizzed out…there were only five of us left really…So about five or six years ago it really started to take off, it's fine, you know. All markets start off like that you know, where they start off with a boom, there's lots of publicity and the whole community rolls in behind it. Then em a lot of traders, if they are not making enough money, the customers you know don't keep coming and you get this fizzle out and if the market is going to work you get a few people who are selling who can make enough to get by, then eventually if they stick it, it will get its own rhythm, and more stalls, so in fact what I say, our market went down to four or five people for three or four years, that's fine, we were all making a living out of it" (Interview 11).

This shows how social ties allowed the market to first emerge. Some of these social ties were built over time, however others remained weak and economic capital took precedence over this weak social capital. Some traders stayed because they wanted to make a living, others left because that is all they could do. In another interview with a country market organiser they describe there are a committed few on which the market depends and then: "you have the fair weather ones" (Interview 31).

The existence of social capital in the *alternative food business* position is dependent on trust. However bringing social capital into a business sphere inherently ties it up with economic capital. Tying social and economic capital is an aim for some agents. It allows them to circumvent regulatory systems and communicate information on the standards they produce their produce to direct to the consumer. The trust they build can act as a substitute for formal guarantees. But for some consumers and producers, they may value the commodities on offer, such as local, artisan and organic foods, and the standards that go into their production, but not the socially embedded nature of the exchange. From assessing the structure of social capital, it can be seen that *alternative food business* and less personally connected methods of food retailing are not polar opposites. Social capital can also be something that is disposable, and capitalised on to overcome short-term issues. For some however social capital is generated because of more deep-seated concerns, and valued more

highly. This section has discussed how social capital is not a uniform structure; strongly and weakly structured social capital play different roles in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. For example this section has discussed how strong social capital can support traders and consumers being more committed to farmers' markets. The patterns found highlight the multi-dimensional nature of the social dynamics in the *alternative food business* position. Next, a closer look at the nature of social capital in the *produce your own* position is outlined.

8.2.2 Social capital structure and volume in the position of produce your own

In a similar way that agents in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field can be loosely categorised as a food community, the same can be said about agents in the position of *produce your own* in the alternative food field. Social relations in the *produce your own* position are based around friendship, respect and admiration for each other, and also the enjoyment of participation in these initiatives. The comments of a community garden leader referring to another initiator of gardens, shows positive attitudes towards each other: "he has also kick started a community garden…very enthusiastic young fella" (Interview 5). Community gardens were generally found to be a means to grow community, rather than a garden focused on growing volumes of food and feeding people. For example one community garden initiator interviewed tells of living in an area for 20 years. Until the community garden started she only knew her immediate neighbours, but since the garden started five years ago they tell of getting to know a large number of people directly because of it (Interview 3). During participant observation at another community garden one gardener describes the garden as her pub, a place she can go to meet people, as she feels pubs are no longer a place she can do this because of the amount of alcohol generally consumed by patrons (Site visit 1). Allotments also have a social value created by the allotment space. There can be a sense of friendly competition between growers. For example, one allotment owner describes the banter that they have at the allotments, and how there is harmless competition between growers. The allotment holder describes how a journalist writing an article on their allotments picked up on this:

> "I was going on and taking about Joe, and saying flaming Geronimo and the state of those big turnips and the carrots and look at your kale and look at your, men be, you know, green eyed monster, which she picked up on this and all this went into the article (laughs). That's part of the banter you have" (Interview 2).

Generating social capital can be used with more specific aims in mind. For example a community garden initiator and member of the Transition Towns movement aims to reach out to wider society and create spaces that community can build around more sustainable ways of living:

> "…we once thought that everybody would eventually want to live in eco-villages. But now we realise that with mature recollection that, you know live the ideal…the bigger challenge is that we need to transition our existing communities into eco-villages" (Interview 5).

Efforts are made to connect people and many different types of social events are an important part of activities in the *produce your own* position, such as open days and annual barbecues at allotment sites; street parties in communities with community gardens; fair type events where garden produce is sold; events geared towards children such as face painting and educational workshops for adults such as on growing methods or permaculture techniques (Interviews 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8). Facilitating such connections to occur between people is viewed to be powerful:

> "I've said this a million times…if you replace…the walls between the terraces of houses, replace the walls between them with compost bins, you would probably start a social revolution, because you would start a social exchange between people that didn't exist when the walls were there and because I had just done that, I had been bringing my organic matter to a friend who had a compost bin in their garden I did understand the relationship that develops when you are sharing a compost bin (laughs), so it made complete sense to me and um so we started it just as an experiment, it was kind of um, in some ways a joke, you know, in some ways you know a social experiment, to see you know, well, where does this lead us" (Interview 3).

Establishing connections between people is not only important so that ideas can germinate, but also because of the resources that social connections themselves allow people to tap into. These resources are also not often gained by economic capital, but from harnessing social capital alone. Networking was found to be very important in establishing community gardens for example, where resources were pulled from many different social networks that the main instigators of projects were connected with, and outside of the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. When agents make attempts to start or expand projects, they link in with social capital that already exists in the wider community, outside of networks that are part of the exclusively *produce your own* position. Agents mobilise social capital, from those who are willing to help, such as from local religious organisations, farmers, community groups such as Tidy Towns and educational organisations such as the local Voluntary Educational Committee. Without this dormant social capital in the wider community, that is people there who are ready to help and offer resources, projects would be more difficult to start (Interviews 4; 5; 8; 57). The following interviewees comments help to illustrate:

> "The word just spread. We didn't have to do an advertising thing through community groups or anything to try and pull people in, we had people knocking on our door saying we want to be involved. And volunteers as well. Volunteers came and went…we would often have big work days, say a couple of times a month we would have a big work day, and we would just send emails, do a ring around, get whoever we could on board. There were a couple of things that just couldn't have happened without people basically breaking their back for us, some fantastic work was done. And people, a couple of people…they didn't get paid…but they were really key in holding a couple of the projects together" (Interview 57).

AFIs in the *produce your own* position can also provide example, and inspiration to others, where initiatives are observed by others, mobilising social capital and finding a place for it to be harnessed. Agents can make attempts to replicate a similar initiative, or certain aspects of similar initiatives, in one they are already involved in. For example, at site visit one, community gardeners describe how a community garden initiator from the south of Ireland visited them when they were starting their garden project in the east of Ireland, which was intended to provide them with inspiration and ideas. A broader example is GIY Ireland, which started with one local growers' group, then the establishment of a national charity to support the development of local growers' groups nationwide. It also successfully tapped in to the increasing interest in domestic food production and the existence of a latent social capital that was harnessed and fostered through the development of local groups.

8.2.2.1 How trust is built and structures social capital

In the *produce your own* position, where economic exchanges are few, trust is still important. However it is informally based and similar kinds of formal trust building mechanisms were not identified in the *produce your own* position as found in the *alternative food business* position, such as certification and regulation. Agents are entrusted with the land that they may borrow or rent. Community gardens trust that members will share garden produce in a way that is fair and they will contribute their labour. Allotment holders have to trust their fellow plot holders will not help

themselves to each other's produce. This informal trust works more effectively in this sphere because economic capital is not also part of exchanges.

Unspoken understandings between agents in the *produce your own* position also shows that there is trust among participants. For example, in one interview with an allotment organiser, where the allotments are based on an organic farm, the question is raised if there are any rules governing what chemicals allotment holders can use on their plots. The response shows the existence of trust. They see no need for formal rules, because of the values of people she feels are interested in growing their own:

> "…the people who grow here wouldn't have any interest in it anyway, the people who grow for themselves grow for particular reasons and one of them is that they want to grow nice stuff, they want to have fresh food and they want to have good food" (Interview 7).

So, in the same way as trust is foundational to social capital in the *alternative food business* position, trust is also important in generating social capital in the *produce your own* position. However, not everyone wants the social experience that building trust can be associated with. One allotment holder who is also involved in their allotment association describes how he walks around the allotments, and can tell who is interested in being part of the more social side of allotment gardening, and who is not:

> "They are not all members of the association, some don't want in any way to get involved in that, they just want the peace, the quiet…you tend to know as you go around, if you are doing a kind of a membership drive, if you have got someone who has their head down and they keep it down when they see you coming around with your papers or something like that, you know that they don't really want to become involved, so we just walk on, they want a bit of peace and quiet and that is what the allotments is meant to be about too…about recreation" (Interview 2).

Agents can participate to whatever degree they wish to, for example become involved at the organisational level with an AFI in the *produce your own* position, or they can participate on their own individual level for recreation. All levels of engagement are important to the *produce your own* position, but a certain balance is needed for AFIs in this position of the alternative food field to be successfully sustained. The more central role played by some participants is evident.

8.2.2.2 Individual and collective interests

Individual leaders who take responsibility for projects are very important in the *produce your own* position (Interviews 1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 57). Others will not take the steps to initiate projects, but will participate in them. This aspect of the social capital found in the *produce your own* position can limit its growth. Because there is an over-reliance on social capital to sustain a sector, when social capital is exhausted, further growth is unlikely. For example the following comments help to illustrate: "Because you are the only person running an organisation your child needs help at school or something and that's it, you drop them all" (Interview 5).

Those who do take control and lead AFIs in the *produce your own* position can feel strained by their level of involvement. For example, one organiser of local food initiatives describes their possible plan to build a house on the site where they run a number of local food initiatives, such as a GIY group and a food coop, and the need for a private space in between (Interview 5). Also because of low social capital, often just a few people take responsibility for the work associated with supporting and developing these initiatives. When initiatives are established, and steps are taken for groups to work together, the workload on leaders can increase. The need for paid

staff in organisations is highlighted as something that could be useful to help support their voluntary efforts. For example, the following comments help to illustrate the experience of community garden leaders who attempt to establish a representative organisation:

> "We have had two national community garden meetings, but currently they are on the backburner, there are a few people like me who would like to see it progress…it's not got off the ground yet…they had a great discussion on what would be useful to do, why would we meet up, and the same thing came up, a network to exchange information, the other was lobbying the government over land use and supports and that would still be really really great if that got off the ground…there are still people out there who would love to have a strategy, but we are not there yet. I think it may, it just hasn't yet…if you have a host organisation they can convene meetings, they can send out emails, they can collect databases of information and then it is housed somewhere" (Interview 5).

This aspect of social capital does however limit the development of such initiatives. Rather than just sustain initiatives, but have them grow in number, engagement at the more involved, leadership level is important. To then sustain these initiatives, engagement at a less involved level is still needed however. The findings of this research in relation to AFIs in the *produce your own* position correspond with Megyesi et al.'s (2011) findings, discussed in chapter four, which outline how the structural distribution of social capital is also found to create vulnerability as social capital is concentrated with leaders, rather than members, making leaders vital for the success of the initiative. Therefore this structure of social capital appears a wider pattern in AFIs, making their existence and success in the longer term vulnerable.

In the *alternative food business* position it was highlighted that individual interests come before collective. This can also be observed in the *produce your own* position. Other life commitments have to at times be prioritised. However, if social capital is strong enough in volume, and of the right structure, there should be someone else ready to carry on with AFI activities. For example, the following comments help to illustrate how this should ideally work:

> "Community is like a relay race, whoever is able to carry a load does until they can't any longer, at which point somebody else picks it up and continues. Knowing that there are others to carry the load is the security that community brings to us all, but knowing that there are some who can only carry little loads for shorter distances than others is what builds community" (Interview 5).

In reality, however, social capital is not present in the correct volume or structure to strengthen and grow the *produce your own* position. For example, another community garden initiator comments on how a local food growing organisation suffered because it didn't have enough man power:

> "…people just don't have enough time to make it a viable concern, so it has kind of just limped along, we have a fairly pathetic website and what I think is really needed is funding so, it needs support, it needs one full-time person to kind of be there to write back to the emails frequently, and to hold the vision for it" (Interview 3).

This structure and volume of social capital weakens the power of the *produce your own* position. Tensions and conflicts can break down social capital that exists and hinder social capital growth. Tensions that emerge in social relations among the agents in the *produce your own* position have less implications for the livelihoods of those involved, hence are of a different nature. Threats in this position can be threat of vandalism to garden sites and issues around securing land, for example. There is less tension in the *produce your own* position because social capital is not in competition with economic capital. However, there are differing capital structures in the *produce your own* position, which impacts on its current sustainability, and future growth. Some are more involved and hold social capital with stronger ties than others. Leaders who initiate initiatives have stronger social capital than participants that sustain initiatives[33]. Tensions that will affect the sustaining and growth of initiatives have been identified.

[33] Social capital can be defined as something that exists between groups. For Bourdieu, it can be possessed by individuals or groups: "Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less

8.2.3 Conclusions on social characteristics and role

Social capital is created in AFIs. Social capital is based around informal networks between producers and consumers and there is trust between agents and social rewards are gained from being a part of networks. Social capital is also however tied up with economic capital for individual benefit. Social capital structures the social relations of initiatives in the *alternative food business* position, it has greater ties with the economic field here than initiatives in the *produce your own* position. Some AFIs are more centrally located in the social field, while others occupy less space in the social field and are also embedded in other fields. This is also because of their overall practice, for example farmers' market traders are running businesses that are the basis of their livelihood, whereas community garden participants participate in these initiatives as part of their lifestyle. Table 8.1 summarises the social characteristics evident in the alternative food field from the application of the social capital concept.

Table 8.1 Social characteristics of alternative food initiatives

Characteristic of field	Alternative food field	Produce Your Own	Alternative Food Business
Social networks	Social structure of field is based on informal social networks.	Based on networks within communities.	Based on networks within communities and businesses.
Building trust	Trust is built informally and formally.	Informal trust building.	Formal and informal trust building.
Rewards from involvement	Producers and consumers gain rewards from their involvement in the field.	Rewards are cultural and social.	Rewards are economic, cultural and social.
Interests of the individual	Rewards are focused on benefits for the individual.	Rewards benefit individual lifestyles.	Rewards benefit individual livelihoods.

The main conclusion that can be taken from the social characteristics of AFIs in relation to the role of AFIs in the food system is that they restructure food circulation and embed it in the social economy as well as the market economy. In terms of the

institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 119).

social movement question, the social capital dynamics do point towards the possible existence of a market based lifestyle movement around food. Social capital is actively harnessed by some, but not all value social capital in the same way. Tensions can emerge when one player possesses social capital in greater volume than other players. Social movements however are not completely harmonious spaces. They must however be made up of networks of individuals that share solidarity. The structure of social capital does show solidarity between some agents in AFIs, but others don't show strong solidarity. This draws into question if AFIs can be considered a true social movement. They may just be one in formation and need to further build and grow solidarity between members. In the next section the dynamics of the alternative food field are explored in relation to the structure and volume of cultural capital.

8.3 Cultural capital structure, volume and impacts in alternative food field

AFIs display a clear attempt to re-introduce culture to play a more central role in food circulation. In Bourdieusian terms, AFIs attempt to change the importance of the cultural field within the economic field, and increase the volume of certain kinds of cultural capital within it. Cultural capital is therefore a key resource in the alternative food field. It is an important resource that is used to attract consumers and citizens to engage with initiatives. In this section, how the different forms of cultural capital manifest themselves in the different positions of the alternative food field, the *produce your own* and *alternative food business* positions, are explored. The cultural capital held by alternative food agents has a diverse structure. A key component of alternative food practice is embodied cultural capital, from which capital in its objectified and institutionalised states emerge. Later in this section the differences in how embodied cultural capital is expressed in the different positions of the alternative food field are explored. In the *alternative food business* position embodied cultural capital is expressed as lifework and in the *produce your own* position as lifestyle. But before moving to the main discussion of this section, in the next section the more general nature of food cultural capital is explored as represented by the AFIs in Ireland.

8.3.1 Food cultural capital dynamics from the alternative food field perspective[34]

Food culture in Ireland has been described as not well developed, however, as highlighted in chapter six, a strong food culture has emerged through artisan food and farmers' markets. A number of different types of cultural capital around food can be identified from Ireland's alternative food field, and cross the positions of *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. From this research, four different sub-types of 'foodie' cultural capital are identified: quality food cultural capital; ethical food cultural capital; sustainable food cultural capital and food knowledge cultural capital. Agents in the alternative food field may possess more than one type of foodie cultural capital at a time and possess capital to different degrees. Agents that possess different types of foodie cultural capital and interact support the growth of cultural capital[35]. For example, chefs that use local produce where possible, or retailers that make efforts so that local food producers can get their produce on shop shelves helps to support this capital's growth. The presence of foodie cultural capital in wider social fields is important for greater economic capital generation in the alternative food field. The nature of these different kinds of cultural capital in alternative food field is next explored.

8.3.1.1 Quality food cultural capital

Beginning with quality food cultural capital, descriptions of specific foods made by interviewees illustrate the dissatisfactions that exist among alternative food agents with the general quality, taste and freshness of widely available food. For example:

[34] Cultural capital dynamics are described here based on the alternative food field as a whole. Enough similarities were found across the two positions to merit their description as a whole. Further analysis could look for differences in the cultural capital in the *produce your own* and *alternative food business* positions of the alternative food field.

[35] Using Bourdieu's terminology, this might be termed supporting cultural capital growing in volume. Bourdieu also uses the analogy of a pile of tokens in poker game to denote the volume of capital an agent possesses (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

> "The head of lettuce out of the shop is like a big green watery ball" (Interview 61).

> "My heart sinks when I see you know the mix of cauliflower, carrots and broccoli, you know that it has come in the bags either frozen or pre-done and that's the veg. Or…the salads in the little baggies, where they have all the chemicals to keep them" (Interview 6).

> "You walk into a supermarket and you look at bags of vegetables, I don't really want any of them…broccoli, even if it is Irish, it has been there for three weeks" (Interview 35).

Quality food cultural capital is not just about taste and freshness, but also food that is closer to its natural state, and that is nutritious. For example:

> "If you go into the shop and buy a pot of jam, how many preservatives has it?" (Interview 31).

> "Regular soup, conventional soup…it's very salty, and there is a lot of thickeners and all of that, it keeps the price down you know" (Interview 19).

> "…well just people wanting to stop eating crap, you know and because that is what most people are doing out of the supermarkets is that they are just eating crap and all the supermarkets are responsible for that, along with the sort of globalised food industry" (Interview 21).

Agents can seek to re-establish the importance of tradition and also preserve it, or carry on traditions that may otherwise die out:

> "We are trying to move people away from the continental breeds [of cattle] to the more traditional breeds" (Interview 21).

> "He hadn't scythed oats for years and he was able to show us some of the older techniques that he had, and more importantly he was able to show us the old sheaf knot, which was a way of tying up the sheaves and it was invaluable" (Interview 24).

> "It kind of developed from em our grandmothers and our great-grandmothers, what did they have, they'd have a few hens at home and they used take the eggs in the basket to the shops and things that, that they'd have their egg money, so this is kind of only a step on from that" (Interview 31).

Conventional retailing channels are seen not to fulfil the needs generated by this quality food cultural capital. Farmers' market traders describe how they can offer this, for example:

> "People have said to us, why can't we get those in supermarkets, when it is the same vegetables coming from the same growers" (Interview 56).

> "Your choice is very limited in the supermarket, they only have competition on price, there is nothing about knowledge of fruit and veg, that is missing in supermarkets, all they are concerned with is price" (Interview 32).

Situating this cultural capital in time, quality food cultural capital has relatively recently developed in Irish society. For example, a cheese-maker describes their approaches to supermarkets in the late 1980s. At this time, they were starting their business and they describe the response received to stocking their produce, and the changes in supermarket and consumer attitudes today:

> "We went to supermarkets and again, you are either lucky or you are not lucky. Some of them would be I don't have that already, I'll give it a go, and others would say, ah, I have no sale for that here…we have Calvita, and we have Easi- singles, you know, and that most often came as their response…now they are more interested to see if the public that comes in like it, and they will say ok, can we do some tastings. There was no such thing as doing tastings in 1987 and 1988, and now people are doing tastings…people like to know who is behind the product…and the environment that it was made" (Interview 58).

8.3.1.2 Ethical food cultural capital

A central part of ethical food cultural capital in the alternative food field is a desire for a fairer food system that is less focused on profit, and more on serving people's needs, such as providing nourishing food and serving producers and consumers fairly in economic terms, as well as respecting animals and environments. For example agents are concerned that the problem of under and over-nourishment co-exist: "…that overwhelming statistic that over a billion people on our planet don't have enough food in their bellies to get through the day and another one billion people are obese" (Event 13).

A further illustrative example of the fairness aspect of ethical food cultural capital is seen from the words of a vegetable producer who also runs allotments on their farm. They describe how they applied a principle of fairness to their allotment customers, so that all parties are getting a fair deal:

> "I kinda counted what I took out myself out of the allotment and priced it at my prices, and you know, we'd be cheap enough for vegetables, and they kinda got their money back, and I didn't put that much work into it, I did at the start and then I kinda forgot about it and I got busy in the field, and I think they got value for money you know. Well I was just thinking in case we were charging too much or anything like that, to be fair to them like" (Interview 27).

Also central to ethical food cultural capital is developing ways that producers and consumers can both serve their needs equitably, be it a desire for fresh, quality, affordable food from the consumer perspective, and a desire to earn a fair living and provide quality, environmentally sound food from the producer perspective. For example:

> "We would be coming at it from the ethos, the principles that you would find in organics, like fairness and health and ecology…these are the principles that should apply generally to farming and that should be a base. It's like fair-trade, absolutely farmers should get a fair price and that would be a principle, and that if you employ people that you would treat them fairly as well and that's the thing that modern commerce does not allow for at all, everyone is expendable when they are no longer useful and even when they are useful sometimes" (Interview 21).

> "…at the farmers' market you would charge a little more than wholesale…you need to cover your costs too. And you know I think they [consumers] get a better deal out of it at the end of the day as well, I hope" (Interview 54).

This cultural capital is also not just about treating producers and consumers with respect, but also the animals in the production system, as well as the food produced. For example the chicken is cited in a number of interviews and appears the iconic example of what is unacceptable in the modern food system. For example, the following interviewees comment:

> "The producer can nearly always give you the product cheaper, but then obviously something has to give on the other side…that's why with intensive farming that so much of our food is produced by, that's why every now and then we get problems, because the integrity is not always what it should be…a €2.99 chicken, but at what cost, really?" (Interview 10).

> "However broke I am I wouldn't buy battery eggs, to me I couldn't, the poor chickens, that life…you can get your battery eggs, or battery chickens for €2.99…they are beginning to come back to the farmers market now more slowly, because they know they get the better quality" (Interview 59).

The question emerges if food is actually too cheap, and because of this not valued enough, for example the following comments are made about broccoli: "That's an insult to broccoli…selling produce for below the cost of production, you know it's sacrilege, so you know em there's a need for people to appreciate the value of food (Event 13).

The need for fair pricing is evident in ethical food cultural capital. One producer argues that the price of organic food represents food's true price. Organic production is a system where the environment and animal is respected, which adds costs, but this is all part of what it takes to produce food with a fair price:

> "…a lot of people are like, oh I would love to buy organic but it is so expensive, and my argument is organic food is priced actually, it's the real price, if you are buying mince at €4 a kilo, it is artificially cheap…organic food is the real price it costs to produce food of good quality" (Interview 35).

Ethical food cultural capital can be understood as cultural capital in the embodied form and becomes objectified cultural capital through the range of AFIs that exist in Ireland, and the food produced and consumed through them.

8.3.1.3 Sustainable food cultural capital

Creating more sustainable food production is a central part of embodied cultural capital in the alternative food field. Agents in the alternative food field are critical of food production methods and their impact on environments, our health and the wider consequences for the world we live in. For example:

> "I hope this does not sound frightening or exaggerated, but…we are looking at needing to return to growing food as a way of life, we have gone full circle with this, and em if we think about climate change and the amount of carbon emissions that is coming from mass agriculture and also the degradation of the ecosystem that is caused by mass agriculture, as in em the overuse of fertilizers, overuse of pesticides, a lack of crop rotation, lack of re-introduction of organic matter into the soil and the preservation of soil biodiversity. I think we are looking at a very serious loss that will make it harder for us to feed our population and will make farming unable to feed six billion, eight billion people…" (Interview 2).

> "I mean it's a different way of thinking, you going back to that thing. If I want my plants to be healthy I make sure that the soil is healthy, if I want my children to be healthy I make sure that they eat as much healthy, real food as possible" (Interview 11).

Sustainable food cultural capital is also part of a broader desire to move towards more sustainable ways of living. Agents are critical of how we live, our over consumption, and they work to live in ways that represent a path to more sustainable consumption, for example:

> "Actually the biggest impasse we have towards achieving sustainability is behavioural, we have created sort of a, throw-away society where people feel that they can't exist without certain kinds of plastic wrap…taking a shower every day, you know all of this sort of unsustainable behaviour that we have created and I think to a large extent that is routed in the industrial revolution when we first started creating more product than we actually needed and then we kind of had to create insecurity in people to feel that they needed that product, so we created all sorts of new kinds of products out of that because we had the potential to. Then we had to talk people into needing them" (Interview 3).

> "We also live this way, live out of that system ourselves. We also try and be as self sufficient as possible we have a wood heating system which is renewable, we have solar panels, we have a reservoir that collects water for the farm and pipes it around" (Interview 9, paraphrased).

The exact route to creating more sustainable food systems is however unclear. Some would argue focusing on local food production and consumption is the best approach. While others would hold the view that the answer is not simply local food supply chains over global. Embodied sustainable food cultural capital sees different issues that need to be balanced in moving towards the overall goal of more sustainable food. For example:

> "I think it makes a nonsense of the whole idea of ecological sustainability, you get food, process it and put it into tin cans or vacuum packs, and try to process it in a way that it sustains a long best before date em, the ideal is really the local food economy" (Interview 52).

> "It is not necessarily local, coffee is never local, it comes from miles away…they do fair-trade coffee…We try to consider as many parts of the business, but you'll never get it perfect, but you'll keep striving, you'll aim for it" (Interview 39).

While various routes to practice underpin embodied sustainable food cultural capital, it can also be argued they aim to end at the same point, creating more sustainable food. For example, a producer and farmers' market trader describes how consumers buy from them for various reasons, and this leads to greater benefits than their primary motivation:

> "…some people buy things because they want to buy local, they want to support you, they like having an organic farmer in the area where they go and buy a few bits and bobs, you know you are, you are one of the people that is here doing stuff and…people like to support you. Em, do you know, people would perceive it as healthy and environmental, they would, they would be in the one boat really, they would be intermingled. There is no doubt about that, they know that you are not damaging the land or the environment or the land in any way, plus you are producing something that is nice, tasty and healthy. It is a win-win really" (Interview 54).

Sustainable food cultural capital is also structured by the fact that the importance of some practices supporting sustainability can be held in higher esteem than others. This can result in contradictions emerging in how cultural capital translates from its embodied to objectified forms. For example, a farmers' market organiser is critical of some of the consumers who shop at the market: "Consumers are fairly well educated, I mean some of them are very hypocritical, like they'll pull up in their big SUVs and ask about air miles do you know" (Interview 45). Sustainable food

cultural capital may be practiced in food consumption but not in general consumption practice, or it can be harder to implement as a wider consumption practice. Also depending on the particular standpoint taken on an environmental issue, this can also mean that contradictions emerge. For example, debate exists around what constitutes truly sustainable food production. For example, one interviewee comments on their stance on wild versus farmed fish:

> "The word sustainability has been maligned and misused because I don't think that farming fish is sustainable at all, for all sorts of reasons. Taking a lot of wild fish…to make pellets to feed fish farms…you are starving the wild fish and wild fish populations are under threat…there is too much interference in the food chain, and I like to keep it very simple and very clear…I have had to argue my case so many times, like chefs in London will come up and go I think it is dreadful that you are working with wild fish, how does that sit with you that this is a completely unsustainable fish? I just look at them and I say well I am not taking that many and I am hoping that I am turning it into something absolutely wonderful that will make more and more people really appreciate these creatures and start to ask questions about why are they disappearing" (Interview 22).

AFI agents can also be very aware of the contradictions and challenges that living sustainably brings. For example:

> "We aren't at full production yet, it'll be quite a while before we will be. Any surplus…I feed us and I feed the WWOOFers…we used to have a very low carbon footprint…we grew or sold our own food, I walked everywhere with the kids you know buggies and prams and all the rest of it. If I had work it was in Dublin and I took a train there, if my husband had work he took a train there. We had a campervan for holidays. Then we moved to trying to promote a more eco-friendly ecological lifestyle for ourselves…we drive in a great big feck of jeep because we have to drive manure around the place, it guzzles diesel. We are on the road far more than we were before and our carbon footprint has definitely gone up" (Interview 5).

Limitations are evident in the alternative food field that see cultural capital translated from its embodied state to its institutionalised and objectified forms. It is the institutionalised and objectified forms of capital that result in embodied capital being translated into practice as part of lived lives.

8.3.1.4 Food knowledge cultural capital

A variety of specialist and detailed food knowledge exists among agents in the alternative food field. This includes knowledge of traditional and artisan production methods, organic and traditional farming and growing methods, and particular qualities of specific varieties of foods. Relating to farming and growing methods, knowledge of soil quality and health is identified. This also represents a specific view of the best methods of farming, that is without chemicals. The following quotes illustrate:

> "Modern farmers, first of all their soil is very sterile, because there's no humus, there's lots of compaction, the soil is very acidic because the soil is full of fertilizers which kills a lot of bacteria and then they put slurry straight on to that, so there's lots of bad bacteria in slurry, such as e-coli and it just multiplies" (Interview 11).

> "If there are a lot of earthworms it's a good sign but we forget sometimes that the earthworm just happens to be the cheeky Charlie that appears sometimes when we dig. We forget that there are millions of fungi, micro-organisms and other beneficial soil bacteria, and so on, that are absolutely necessary for the transfer of nutrients from the soil roots" (Interview 2).

Knowledge of the taste differences from production of particular breeds of plant or animal is identified. For example one interviewee talks about the qualities of Sarpo Mira potatoes and another the qualities of meat from one breed of pig compared to another:

> "They are huge potatoes…they tend to be quite waxy if you pick them early but if you leave them late they will turn into a floury spud, if you leave them late in the ground the taste improves, they are really good in roasts and chips and that sort of stuff, not great mash" (Interview 24).

> "Our pigs are pure bred…we are getting the full traits of each breed. There is no mixing of breeds at all, whereas if we brought in large white…you are going to reduce the fat content, which is great for some people, they are used to not having any fat on their meat but you are going to automatically affect the flavour of the meat, because you are not going to get the true traits of the meat that you get with the Saddleback or the Gloucester Old Spot" (Interview 46).

Knowledge of artisan and traditional production methods is evident. This is a central part of the cultural capital for some agents in the *alternative food business* position

of the alternative food field, which facilitates their generation of economic capital. For example this interviewee discusses how to nurture and create the best sourdough:

> "Every day we eh feed it and, every day we use it…white sourdough, we say white, but look you can see that there is a little bit of brown… because we feed our sourdough with type 80 flour which is sort of a white wholemeal flour, but nutritionally it is the best possible one, so we slip in a bit of nutrition when they are not looking" (Interview 20).

The nature of foodie cultural capital has been explored and detailed. Next the discussion moves to highlight how this cultural capital's existence, which is concentrated in the alternative food field, limits and challenges AFI development.

8.3.1.5 Limitations of foodie cultural capital volume and structure in the alternative food field

Foodie cultural capital is possessed[36] by agents in different combinations and volumes, which can present limitations in how cultural capital translates from embodied to objectified forms. For example, low levels of foodie cultural capital in wider social fields limits the development of and increases obstacles that agents in the alternative food field have to overcome.

Where a lack of foodie cultural capital poses a limitation in the alternative food field is engagement with other agents who hold power over economic capital and who don't possess foodie cultural capital in the same way as agents in the alternative food field. Agents in the alternative food field must engage with agents outside of this field, for example in local development agencies, local authorities, and officials that work and are involved with them such health inspectors, business mentors, local authority officials and local councillors. These agents are part of diverse social fields, such as the scientific, political and institutional fields. These agents may have access to economic capital, or can make decisions that cost agents in the alternative

[36] It was noted earlier in relation to social capital that it can be generated in groups, but also possessed by individuals (see footnote 33). The same is true for cultural capital and is more fundamental to its nature. Bourdieu (1986: 48-9) writes: "Cultural capital can be acquired…quite unconsciously…It cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent; it declines and dies with the bearer."

food field economic capital. If these agents shared more of the different kinds of foodie cultural capital, around quality, ethical and environmental food, valuing similar pathways as alternative food agents, this would facilitate the development of the alternative food field. For example some of those involved in farmers' markets describe local authorities as having a regulative and policing rather than a facilitating and supportive role. Small investments are described as having a big impact on a market, such as providing electricity, water and parking. An understanding and value for the cultural capital that markets express is viewed to exist more strongly in other countries. For example, one interviewee comments:

> "It seems like it's all rosy in the garden, every single thing, they really need to get their heads around…how we regulate them, like you can make it really easy, like you turn up and you go and you get a pitch and you do it and it is in the middle of town, that is, from what I see, that is the big big thing…and simple things like the minute you have electricity available to stalls means it just jumps, you can come along with those trailers, you can have meat, you can have fresh things that need to be kept chilled…you know just the structural things, and the minute they have you know…that is what they do, you go to Naples, or you go to places in France, that is what they do, not a problem…" (Interview 47).

A further example is the lack of understanding of artisan production methods highlighted by agents in the *alternative food business* position among some environmental health inspectors who deal with these businesses. For example an artisan bread baker describes the different recommendations made by different inspectors:

> "…having to deal with a different health inspector on the same issues is hell because one person will take you up on the fact that you are using tea towels to line your bread baskets when the other person would be like that is fine, do you change them every day, yes we do, well then it is absolutely fine, another person would be like no it has to be paper towelling, it needs to be thrown out every day, little things like that, and that's just frustrating" (Interview 47).

Another example is the attitude of some business mentors and the providers of enterprise grants, which was highlighted in chapter seven. To re-cap, the attitude was found that mentors can try to steer agents in the *alternative food business* position towards adding value to produce or expanding their business. This goes contrary to their foodie cultural capital, where staying small, or staying true to artisan methods is central to their business ethic.

In the *produce your own* position, a lack of awareness and value of this foodie cultural capital also causes restrictions and poses challenges when engaging with institutions. A comparison is made by one allotment organiser highlighting the differences between the legislation on allotments in the UK and Ireland:

> "They have much stronger legislation than we have, if you have five other people who pay rates and are voters, if you have five other people who ask their local authority to examine allotments they have to, we don't have any similar law" (Interview 2).

Ireland does not have such clarity in legislation and highlights the different value placed on allotments culturally in wider society. The existence of legislation to support allotment development when demand exists places their existence on a more concrete basis. For example, another initiator of allotments describes approaching their local council and setting up a meeting to talk about opening up some land for allotments and received a hostile response. Even though their local allotment group existed, they were told there was no demand for allotments by the institution they approached (Interview 1).

Foodie cultural capital may not be shared by the wider community and this can cause tensions. For example, the initiator of a community garden describes negative attitudes towards the garden because their compost was blamed for drawing rats to the area:

> "Just recently there was a bit of an uproar because there were rats on the street, and one woman…thought it was coming from the compost, but in fact I spent two days digging up all of the compost and there was absolutely no sign of rats coming out of it. They were more likely to have been attracted by the bins which hadn't been emptied for a week and were overflowing with rubbish. What people don't realise is that there are rats everywhere in the city and they are attracted by things like rubbish. There are horses just across the wall from the garden, and where there are horses there are rats too" (Interview 3).

These reactions can be attributed to a lack of widespread foodie cultural capital. But to overcome this, being involved in these initiatives expands understanding of food culture and empathy with how initiatives operate. For example taking an active part in producing your own food is viewed to increase appreciation of the effort involved, which may then also contribute to changing how people can prioritise cheap food over other ethical and environmental concerns. For example: "I think where…you sell cabbages for a euro…and how much work you put into it…they don't value that work at all…I think when people do it themselves they appreciate it more" (Interview 6).

General consumer attitudes towards, and the value they place on food, limits AFI development. Consumers can focus on price rather than quality, nutrition, or the wider environmental and ethical concerns that embody 'foodie' cultural capital[37]. For example, the following interviewees comment:

[37] Fonte's (2008: 204) comments, already highlighted in chapter six, that "most Irish people regard food as fuel" have some resonance with this view on Irish food culture.

> "I think that is probably one of our biggest downfalls, how we spend our money, you know because if we did support local we would be eating better, we would be eating fresher and we'd also be supporting local business, we'd be creating employment…but people don't see that at all …[in supermarkets] there might be offers on certain things, but other things could be twice the price of somewhere else, and they will get caught, but they don't see it, it's like there is a mentality, that you go there to the big place, it's cheap" (Interview 19).

> "All they see is…price, and say why is it that expensive? But if they really saw the story behind it, I think they would be really, really amazed, like from who is propagating the seed, so from that point of view, anything to open it up is going to help…so eh so the whole CSA thing, if it took off like it has in Oregon, California that would be good, but I think society, Irish society, I don't think is prepared to spend the money" (Interview 28).

The price issue is also highlighted by agents in the *produce your own* position, as well as the need for a greater awareness of how food is produced, and the general development and strengthening of food culture in Ireland. For example:

> "I lived in California and it was all about local food, it was the whole California cuisine, Chez Panisse food. Everybody gets to appreciate farmers' markets, heritage varieties, that kind of stuff was big when I was there. There was a whole cultural thing. Now this town is not ready for it, you know, people are like, you know, they want quantity, not so much quality" (Interview 6).

Agents in the alternative food field can be critical of the quality of food accepted by people in Ireland, and the place of food in their priorities. An allotment leader compares the Irish approach to buying fresh produce with consumers in continental Europe:

> "I go to the markets on the continent and people tell you all about their different spinach and their lettuce, you know and they em, the shoppers are…clued in…They know exactly what they are looking for, exactly. Here we tend to take, like the French want French, you know they won't take a limp head of lettuce home or carrots that are beginning to look a bit wizened" (Interview 2).

Other goods and services are described as being valued greater than food. It is argued affording good food does not have to be linked to wealth, but is about prioritising food over other consumables. For example, the following quote helps to illustrate:

> "It is nothing about being able to afford it…we are spending less of our money on food in real terms than we ever did since records began, it is something like 7% or 8% of our income in real terms so it is not about that. It is about priorities, it is about connecting the food we eat with how we feel, our energy, our vitality, our ability to concentrate. When people realise that so much depends on dinner, so to speak, they realise that cheapness should not be the only criteria. People say to me…very fine for you because you can afford it…well then I'll say ok, well how much did those Nikes cost you, how much did that phone cost you, how much did you spend on magazines last week, how much did you spend in the pub? It is about priorities, we need to prioritise food as being something that we need to invest in. It is an investment in our own health and the health of our family" (Interview 50).

In the *produce your own* position, the importance of working with the youth is highlighted. Being involved in initiatives in the *produce your own* position, such as community and school gardens, will increase their foodie cultural capital for their future lives and they will take the experience with them. For example, the comments of interviewees in the *produce your own* position demonstrate this in action:

> "…from my own personal life experiences, if you like, I knew that when you bought connection to the soil…nature, that it had an effect on how you cared about it, it had an effect on health, it had an effect on how kids saw food for instance, because the parents would come in and say 'mine don't eat vegetables', and I'd say 'well you should come in and see what they are eating out of the garden'" (Interview 5).

> "The school over the road used to come over every week and we would do an hour with some kids, and this group of boys was there and we had come over with some strawberry plants. The work is quite delicate, and some of them can be quite rough with them. This one boy took the plants and was very, very careful and was telling the other boys how to do it. And I looked at him and said 'I think I know you don't I?' He said yeah I used to come up to another community garden…This was three years later and the kid was probably nine…So he had learned from me at that stage how to handle the plants and it had stuck. And that is the foundation of good gardening practice, how to know the plants and understand them and work with them and treat them well" (Interview 57).

It seems that involvement in the *produce your own* position can influence consumer attitudes and help the growth of foodie cultural capital. Growth in this capital would strengthen the position of AFIs. However it is also very important to note that this is not a simple process.

For social agents that do not possess foodie cultural capital, the alternative food field can seem like a place just for those that do. If AFIs are held up and labelled as different, this can exclude those who don't have this capital and attract those who do. Agents in the alternative food field are to some extent aware of this fact. Agents in the *alternative food business* position make comments for example in relation to Slow Food. Connections and networks are built through involvement in Slow Food organisations, while others deliberately miss out on this because they don't want to label their food business so as to exclude those who might find labels such as Slow Food off-putting. Slow Food can benefit alternative food agents because it can

facilitate the building of networks, but it can also exclude some people, by being too tight to certain networks of people. For example:

> "I am a market trader and I know that my customers are such a broad spectrum. A lot of them are not going to be into Slow Food…I know the food is accessible but I want it to happen more…I want my business to grow naturally but they are people on modest incomes, of modest backgrounds, and they come in and buy food and I want them to enjoy it" (Interview 47).

And aside from Slow Food, a more general example is how the owner of an organic whole-foods store and vegetarian restaurant doesn't label their restaurant as vegetarian so as not to put customers off. This shows a similar way of thinking. The interviewee recounts how some of their customers have told them they had been coming for months before they realised they were a vegetarian place:

> "…we never really brand ourselves as a vegetarian café, we are just a café I guess, people just come. People can eat here for a very long time and not realise it is vegetarian…sometimes people can be a bit…no I'm not coming here, no meat, but then once they try it they can get okay with it, you just have to break the ice, once they can get beyond the idea of no meat for dinner…it always tastes nice and is nutritious" (Interview 39).

However there is also a challenge here, as agents in the alternative food field work to meet the expectations of those who do possess foodie cultural capital, but not exclude those who don't. Alternative food agents must also make sure the cultural capital they possess is visible to the consumers who are looking for it. For example, the comments of a farmers' market trader help to illustrate:

> "There's definitely two tiers to it, you know because you do want to have the Jerusalem artichokes…if you didn't have the high end food…the expectation is quite high, it is kind of a bit ironic really" (Interview 48).

Consumers that share similar embodied cultural capital will be drawn towards AFIs. However cultural capital can also exclude others who do not possess this alternative food cultural capital, but are holders of a more general cultural capital around food. Foodie cultural capital can also have an exclusionary effect in terms of participation in the alternative food field, where those who don't possess this cultural capital feel excluded or are not drawn to the alternative food field because they don't possess this capital. Overall however the above discussion highlights the importance of foodie cultural capital becoming more widespread and normalised for the expansion of the alternative food field. Its expansion into different social fields could make the ideas embodied in this cultural capital more accepted at many different levels, such as within the economy, the community and institutions. Next, attention turns to explore the distinct nature and dynamics of cultural capital in the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions of the alternative food field.

8.3.2 Cultural capital in the position of alternative food business

8.3.2.1 Embodied cultural capital – cultural capital expressed as livelihood

For some alternative food agents, being involved in AFIs centres around their deep interest in food, and the type of food they want to eat, as the discussion on foodie cultural capital has displayed. Based on the fieldwork conducted, involvement can also be about a livelihood that is based around their beliefs and values, creating a fair livelihood for themselves, and also a livelihood in which they have more control. Agents in the *alternative food business* position are passionate about what they do, work long and hard, but do so with fulfilment. A genuine labour of love exists. For example one interviewee comments:

> "as you get older you realise what is important in life, it's not having money, it's having a life and being able to live in a place that makes your heart sing when you get up in the morning" (Interview 22).

An 'opting out' element also exists. Professionals can change their careers and move to work in AFIs in the *alternative food business* position, which is viewed to be a more fulfilling, but potentially less economically rewarding way of life than their trained profession. For example describing the observations of another agent in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field, one interviewee comments: "what way did he put it…eh…the food world harbours many a corporate refugee" (Interview 44).

One organic farmer comments on the diverse backgrounds of organic producers, where organic farming can be an alternative career choice to an agent's trained profession:

> "Organic producers are coming from a completely different mindset, they are people, they are draftsmen, they are teachers, they have lived and they have thought about things, and they have said enough of this and they are deciding intentionally" (Interview 28).

This can also be combined with a broader agenda for change, beyond the aim of constructing an alternative livelihood. For example, the following comments illustrate:

> "There was a much more general wanting to change values and I suppose my doing what I was doing was partly to put into practice my own ideas of changing values but also very much immodestly wanting to influence others…it was all with the idea of at least provoking people into thinking about…questioning the assumptions of the consumer and greedy society" (Interview 16).

Many agents in the *alternative food business* position have made deliberate choices so that they have more control in their working lives, have a work life balance they can control, that is also based around foodie cultural capital of one kind or another. It

does appear however that few are actively trying to make this food culture more accessible and affordable.

A number of food businesses trading at farmers' markets that were part of this study started as a hobby, a hobby business or experimental business, but eventually became their livelihood (Interviews 20; 47; 49; 53 and 61). The following comments help to illustrate:

> "…so I converted that into a mini bakery, so if you can imagine a room twice the size of this room that's what we had and everything was in there, ovens, everything and em I used to do deliveries out of the back of my Jeep…now we have got to a stage where there's four of them, possibly five…and there are three vans on the road…somebody in the office here, so it's business all over again, which is what I was trying to get out of" (Interview 20).

> "They started cheese-making for the house, not as a business…like it was years and years ago, but eh the cheese was very nice, and people called around, when they visited they liked it and they would buy some of it, and it became a small business. It has been like that ever since" (Interview 61).

Action in the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field can also be about sustainability and the environment, living from the land as much as possible and minimising the need for external resources, such as food and energy. For example, one interviewee comments on what organic means to them:

> "Organic growing is more than agricultural, it's about living your life and it's about producing something that is primary, like food and being part of an organic community…I am not saying that these people are sort of leftie hippies, and they want to sort of grow a few turnips. Absolutely not, they are very sharp people. They are looking at this from a much, much bigger perspective" (Interview 28).

This can be understood as cultural capital in the embodied state becoming embedded in the livelihood of agents. A deep interest or a desire to live a certain way becomes a life's work. Embodied cultural capital can become part of the economic field and becomes a way to acquire economic capital. Agents are not however primarily driven by economic capital, but want a certain kind of lifestyle, which is underpinned by a range of different beliefs, such as developing food culture, more sustainable farming and positive environmental behaviours. AFIs in the *alternative food business* position provide a space to practice these beliefs, where agents can carve out a comfortable space for themselves.

8.3.2.2 Non-institutionalised cultural capital

A key part of the cultural capital in the *alternative food business* position is that knowledge is not accessed as formal institutionalised cultural capital. Informal ways of gaining knowledge play a strong part in how necessary cultural capital is acquired in the *alternative food business* position. Agents learn by doing things in practice, for example, from books and from other more experienced agents in the alternative food field. For example this interviewee is asked if they had experience of the specific skills needed for their business when they started, and they respond: "Not at all, I trained for teaching…I taught myself how to use the machine; I did lots of experimenting with salting and smoking" (Interview 22).

There is a strong sense of learning as you progress, acquiring knowledge and skills from others. Learning happens by doing things in practice, making mistakes and then finding a better approach. For example:

> "We opened a shop at the same time…in town in a little kiosk…But we realised that wasn't the way to sell…in the middle of a shopping centre where everybody is put off by the smell, so a shop came up" (Interview 53).

This interviewee goes on to describe further examples of how they have learned different aspects of running a food business in practice. What is learned is not just knowledge and skills, but also valuable lessons about how the world of business operates. The interviewee comments: "after that we got wise…we have learned how the system works" (Interview 53).

In the *alternative food business* position, there is a tendency towards informal learning to gain professional skills and food knowledge. For example, the following quote illustrates this point:

> "Like at the very beginning, nobody had any knowledge really. We never looked for anybody who would have had knowledge, but an interest and openness to wanting to know…now they wouldn't be food experts by any means, but they would be open to food and have an interest, but no training" (Interview 53).

Agents take on roles without having obtained professional qualifications or training in this role. For example interviewee 39 describes how the chefs who work in their café are not trained chefs. Agents running small businesses can often be trained in other fields, for example having obtained university degrees in areas not directly related to their business, such as science and teaching. Agents in the *alternative food business* position are also often required to be adaptable and play more than one role in the business at once. For example interviewee 58 describes themselves as a janitor, accountant and farmer. Agents encounter other people with specific skills, and can learn from them, or hire people temporarily to help guide them through. Interviewee 53 describes how their business operated in an ad hoc manner until a new employee introduced them to record keeping. Interviewee 18 describes how they learned about biodynamic farming and cheese-making from a number of sources, such as Teagasc courses and a visitor to their farm. Interviewee 58 learns

business skills through practice and learned cheese-making skills from experts in a nearby university. This approach also allows for the development of different kinds of business relationships. People learn from each other's skills and social capital is also built. This can however mean there are skill deficits.

While this de-professionalisation and acquiring of skills informally facilitates agents to initiate and run a food business, it can also be a drawback. A number of interviewees describe how they were full of hope and dreams when they first launched into their food business. For example: "we were quite naive when we did first come down" (Interview 35). As they get more deeply involved, they look back and see what they have learned. Also, there are a diverse range of social fields that agents must engage with, and because agents can play more than one role at once, this can be a weakness, where they do not possess the necessary cultural capital in the fields in which they operate, such as scientific, economic and legal fields, for example. Professional expertise, and the cultural capital that comes with this, would strengthen their position, however not having this capital does not mean they cannot engage with these fields and play an important role using their own knowledge that they have developed.

8.3.2.3 The role and ambiguity of institutionalised cultural capital

In the *alternative food business* position, while most knowledge is transmitted in informal ways, institutionalised cultural capital could be of increased value in future in the alternative food field. Institutionalising cultural capital through labelling schemes could potentially offer protection to the cultural capital that operating in the *alternative food business* position generates and less authentic producers and retailers can hijack. Terms such as farmhouse, artisan, local, handmade and homemade are used in various ways. The comments of the following interviewee help to illustrate how when certain terms were first in use they had meaning, but have lost some of their meaning as they have become more widely used in a looser fashion:

> "…you don't want words to become tired, I mean delicatessen and deli. Because once a word starts off and comes to a certain level it then takes off, like farmhouse, the word is dead, like farmhouse soup, what does it mean?...Artisan was a word that we have used, it came in probably six years ago and it was great, you know a new word, now it is a bit tired…I think they just have a life cycle…It is people's perception, it doesn't really matter what it really means, what it means is what it means when somebody says it. An artisan is, I don't know, well with economic changes as well, it is a bit too much of a luxurious word and maybe local works better because it is about support…Maybe local is the new word" (Interview 53).

While labelling regulations could inhibit the unfair use of terms such as 'farmhouse', 'artisan' and 'local', producers are ambiguous towards increasing the levels of regulations and standard they are subject to. For example, these comments help to illustrate the ironies that exist around communicating more information on production methods to the consumer and increasing the already high level of regulation that they must abide by:

> "…even down to the design of the label, the label often has to reflect the person as much as what is in the product. And the environment that it was made, and all that yeah and I suppose over the years again, farmhouse cheese and other products like that have been hijacked, to an extent, by the name 'farmers'. It was everything, farmer's bread, farmer's everything…it wasn't made by farmers, no more than remotely. But again there is a sense nowadays about identity, and about traceability and people are starting to look at produce, and they want to know where their produce is being made and where it comes from. And they want to know the person behind it and they will come and seek that out…there is more regulation, there is you know, regulations, if you want to do the multiples and you want to do the bigger shops, there are the HACCPs, …the BRCs…I mean the standards just keep going on" (Interview 58).

Definition of regulatory standards representing 'local' or 'artisan' food would represent an institutionalisation of embodied cultural capital. It could strengthen the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field in the economic field, as institutionalised cultural capital holds more power in this field than embodied cultural capital. In chapter seven it was discussed how dominant retailers and food businesses can piggy-back on the values that agents in the *alternative food business* position create. Institutionalising cultural capital associated with the *alternative food business* position would protect it from exploitation, but also creates a closer link between cultural capital and economic capital. For example, organic certification, Fair Trade, PDO and PGI labelling schemes can also be understood as types of institutionalised alternative food cultural capital. In relation to organic food, the conventionalisation thesis was discussed in chapter two, that as organic food has become increasingly institutionalised, it has moved away from the more holistic elements of the organic food production philosophy, and towards implementing a set of standards. There is then also the risk that if other areas of alternative food practice are more institutionalised, a similar dynamic could emerge. There are therefore then potential risks and benefits to greater institutionalisation of foodie cultural capital. The benefits are possibly economic and risks the erosion of authenticity.

Both in the *alternative food business* and in the *produce your own* positions of the alternative food field there is evidence of a desire for an alternative lifestyle different to the norm. Next, the discussion moves to focus on cultural capital in the position of *produce your own* in the alternative food field.

8.3.3 Cultural capital in the position of produce your own

8.3.3.1 Embodied cultural capital – cultural capital expressed as lifestyle

Cultural capital in the *produce your own* position can also be identified in the embodied form, expressed through the lifestyle, aspirations and choices of agents in this position of the alternative food field. A desire exists to incorporate food production into domestic life. For example: "I grew up with the stories…the farm, having a cow, collecting the eggs, eating the peas, you know, and I thought, I want that" (Interview 1). There is also a desire to reconnect with the land. This is more

difficult to do in urban spaces, yet can be achieved by engagement with the AFIs in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. For example, the following quote helps to illustrate:

> "If you come to live in a city, you bring those influences so powerfully with you. The thing that drove me to allotments was that I wanted to reconnect with the countryside but my life, my family life, my working life was based in a city, so for a while, the only way to do that was to move out of the city…Maybe if I can't go out and live in the country, well, maybe I can go out and bring some of the country back here…this allotment site…it just felt to me like a real haven without having to uproot'" (Interview 2).

Agents in the *produce your own* position also ask questions about the type of development path society is on. Commenting on how society is changing, and how food production and domestic food production are decreasing in value, this interviewee articulates the view that societal development is not on the best path, and that the value of food in our lives, from production to consumption, needs to change.

> "They are not making a good enough living off the land…it needs to come back to being the most attractive way of life, it needs to be the most dignified way of life…a person has their own land to grow their own food for their family, where-ever, Ireland, Britain, Brazil, wherever, and the most civilised society is the one that allows it to happen. We think that a civilised society is where people move away from the land, where they moved into cities and have central heating and tinned food, freezer food" (Interview 2).

This creates a need for the generation of a certain kind of cultural capital, where agents have the knowledge and skills to produce their own food, in an environmentally conscious way. The value of this cultural capital to advancing activities in the *produce your own* position is acknowledged by agents: "The important thing for me is that the concept is in people's minds, food can be grown in a sustainable, local way by people for themselves" (Interview 2). This cultural

capital is also linked with the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field. There is cross-over as agents in the *produce your own* position most likely cannot produce all of their own food, but will support producers with similar cultural capital who are active in the *alternative food business* position.

8.3.3.2 Non-institutionalised cultural capital

Another key part of the cultural capital in the *produce your own* position is that knowledge is not often accessed as formal institutionalised cultural capital. Informal ways of gaining knowledge are a strong part of how necessary cultural capital is acquired in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field. This is based around increasing all kinds of food knowledge, such as in the form of: food growing techniques; knowledge of animal breeds; knowledge of vegetable varieties; seed saving; and food preparation techniques. Knowledge acquisition is practical. Mistakes provide lessons and doing is a means of learning. Non-institutionalised cultural capital is important because agents are not held back from engaging in the *produce your own* position by not having knowledge and skills. Efforts are also made to demonstrate cultural knowledge and pass this on to others. For example, the practice of having a 'demonstration' allotment was found, where one allotment is used as a demonstration area showing how the allotment can be used to grow food (Interviews 6; 7; 27).

The social capital that AFIs themselves provide allows embodied cultural capital to grow in volume as knowledge is passed between individuals, for example between adults and children in school gardens or experienced and novice growers in allotments and community gardens. Community gardens work with children teaching them about how to plant and harvest vegetables (Interviews 5; 6; 57). At allotments, organisers can get an experienced gardener into the allotments to teach workshops and demonstrate gardening (Interviews 1; 4; 7). This re-skilling around food is a significant part of how agents in the *produce your own* position attempt to shape cultural capital and is an example of how non-institutionalised cultural capital is circulated.

More generally, in the *produce your own* position, food cultural knowledge circulates between actors that are part of networks in this position of the alternative food field. Agents in the *produce your own* position acquire cultural capital from each other, which facilitates it to grow in volume. The transfer of cultural capital between generations, such as for example between those who have grown up with farming and producing food for domestic consumption, and those who are newer to it, is an important part of how cultural capital is reproduced in the *produce your own* position. Another is knowledge of wild foods, how to recognise and prepare them. For example, an initiative leader in the *produce your own* position comments on their interaction with a Slow Food member who is organising a Slow Food event and wants to make elderflower cordial:

> "He came to me and said 'I want to make elderflower cordial' and I said 'uh that's ok' and he said 'I've been down at the markets and I can't get any elderflowers'…I said 'forget everything and just come here', he said 'have you got any?', and I said 'yes, you see that, there are about ten million elderflowers up there, go pick'" (Interview 7).

The above example shows how both agents possess cultural capital, but they possess different kinds of cultural capital. The Slow Food member doesn't hold all the food cultural knowledge they could, but the alternative food networks they are a part of allows them to expand their knowledge. Another example is the Slow Food inspired Grandmother's Day, which aims to promote and celebrate the importance of preserving inter-generational knowledge, and is described by another interviewee in the *produce your own* position. Recalling their attendance at a Grandmother's Day event, the rare knowledge and information that emerges is described:

> "They gave a bit of a presentation, then we all broke out into groups… different people of different ages…it was fantastic…some mad things that people were saying now, there was one woman now, she was saying that they lived by a river and her father used to catch eels right. At the time they had nothing, so they didn't have a box to put the eels in, so apparently what you do is just by the river on a bare bit of the ground is you grab a stick and you draw a circle and put a cross through the middle, and if you put the eel in the middle, it would not leave the circle. Now, I was like, I don't get it, are you mad, but apparently that works, other people in the group said it works...It's phenomenal, the skills around food and probably everything that we are losing…like how to skin a rabbit…uses of seaweed…"(Interview 4).

Alternative food lifestyles are underpinned by the transmission of non-institutionalised forms of cultural capital, which preserve traditional knowledge and develop food production skills. Also central to the distinct nature of cultural capital in the *produce your own* position is embodied cultural capital expressed as lifestyle, rather than as livelihood, as was identified the *alternative food business* position. Discussion next moves to focus on how capital circulates in the alternative food field.

8.3.4 Cultural capital circulation

Capital can circulate on many different spatial scales. Locally between agent's direct interaction and extensively between agents that don't have direct interaction. It can also be transferred between AFIs and to other social fields. Cultural capital is explored here to illustrate how capital is circulated and transferred at different scales between agents. Agents in alternative food practice attempt to alter the structure of the cultural field by promoting alternative food cultural capital[38]. AFIs are spaces that build cultural capital. They generate it and pass it on to other agents. This facilitates cultural capital preservation and also an increase in the volume of cultural capital. But differences can also exist in what type of cultural capital is valued, as the later part of this discussion on the circulation of capital reveals.

[38] Alternative food cultural capital is used here as a general term for cultural capital in the alternative food field. This capital may become embodied 'foodie' cultural capital.

Central players or 'leaders' are important agents in the circulation of cultural capital. But they are also dependent on a network of others circulating cultural capital at different scales. Those leaders who instigate AFIs will often acknowledge that they were an instigator in Ireland, but they got the idea from AFIs elsewhere. They are not generating original ideas, but learning from elsewhere, reproducing other's ideas or also adding to them. For example, one interviewee describes how they read about CSA schemes before initiating one in Ireland:

> "God knows where I first came across it…probably a few years ago. I had read a few articles on CSA…most were box delivery schemes…it would be a farmer and he would have maybe about 100 customers and he would give them a box say of seasonal vegetables and I thought, oh yeah, that's a great idea" (Interview 24).

Initiatives in both the *produce your own* and *alternative food business* positions of the alternative food field act as spaces for cultural capital circulation, allowing it to be passed on to others, therefore facilitating an increase in its volume. Therefore, the dissemination of information is important to circulating and building alternative food cultural capital. Information provides the seeds for the development of embodied 'foodie' cultural capital. These seeds are scattered through the activities of AFIs in both *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions of the alternative food field, and messages about the alternative food field are circulated in a variety of ways. Tastings and cooking demonstrations are common at farmers' markets. Organisations such as Slow Food hold local, national and international events. State bodies also contribute to cultural capital circulation to some extent, such as through Bord Bia's National Organic Week and Teagasc's organic farm walks. Other examples are events held at allotments or community gardens. In the *produce your own* position, the value of allotment open days is described:

> "The idea of it is great, open up the gates, let people come in, let people see what goes on, let people get the idea that the allotment exists. The concept or the system of the allotment is 100 years old in Ireland so it's more relevant than ever and it's a good time to talk about publicising it. It's a good time to say, look we have a system here where you as a family can go out there and grow all your own" (Interview 2).

The importance of working examples of new ideas is important to communicating their value to agents that are not familiar with them, and don't already possess the cultural capital that is at their foundation:

> "We got so many pumpkins and marrows and beans, full of nasturtiums, calendulas, loads of flowers, a big row of sunflowers, peas and it was really beautiful. We'll probably do the same this year. What it does is give a kind of a sample for people, to show in a small space the amount of food that you can harvest, just to show people what you can do in a really small area" (Interview 26).

Circulating capital can also be a central goal of some initiatives, for example in an interview with an education centre, part of their central mission is to spread information, which can be likened to sustainable food cultural capital:

> "The whole drive of the centre here is self-sufficiency and then I suppose the mission statement is to be a centre of self sufficiency and to be an example and a teacher…we get a lot of school retreats and school groups, like we do environmental programs for children. We have a load of inner city kids out tomorrow and we'd get a load of just random passer bys that have just heard about the centre…you'd get a lot of nuns…somebody was on to me just there, a gardening group of about 18 want to book in for a walk so you'd get a lot of horticultural groups, school groups, different gardening clubs, different retreats, programs for refugees. So in between doing the growing side, we definitely would have a lot of other stuff going on as well" (Interview 26).

The media also plays a role in helping to circulate information, which creating cultural capital depends on. Interviewees make reference to documentaries and media articles for example that resonate with alternative food cultural capital. This type of communication is important because it helps to circulate the alternative food agenda. For example:

> "Did you catch the television series…about the meat industry? Britain's really disgusting food was what he called it, and he manufactured this steak heart and he went into the legislation and said you know you can call that steak and it's only 51% meat, all the rest of it is nose, slicks, all the rest of the bits that wouldn't normally be used, but they certainly increased the margins for those that are using all the retrieved meat. He then went into other industries, the dairy industry, fishing. I saw the dairy one but that was gross" (Interview 22).

The importance of building cultural capital with different groups, for example among children and farmers, is also identified. In the *produce your own* position, initiatives are described as increasing children's food knowledge and their respect for nature, as the following quote helps to illustrate:

> "One group that we took out to the woods one day…it was brilliant and they obviously don't get a chance to go out to places like that. You know we were walking along, talking about the wild flowers and leaves that you could eat. And they were like you are kidding, that is disgusting…you give them a bit to taste, and they are like 'that is really good'. And things like rubbish, one girl threw a bottle on the ground and I asked her 'why did you do that?' She said 'well you know everybody else does it'. And I said 'well let's just have a think about that'. We had a whole discussion, some of the other kids joined in, about rubbish and throwing it away and how it does matter. It got them to think about it, just to change that idea around. And what you do or don't do does make a difference, even if it is just a small thing" (Interview 57).

In the *alternative food business* position the need for more traditional, conventional farmers gaining an increased level of alternative food cultural capital is identified, but this is seen as a challenge. Methods by which this can be facilitated are described by interviewees, for example:

> "Sometimes you get the odd farmer that comes to the farm walk, but they have to think differently...You see when you get an ordinary farmer coming here you see they do two things you see, they go 'how do you do, how do you manage the disease', and the second thing is, 'uh the weeds', and they know the names of all the weeds, because they know the sprays to hit them…you do your best to manage the weeds, you do your best to manage the disease, but you really don't worry, we don't have big problems with disease because the whole idea is prevention rather than cure" (Interview 11).

> "I suppose it's one of the best ways to get people to, they are more encouraged I'd say when they hear the actual farmer saying look I'm doing it. This is how I do it and look it's fine. It's you know, I suppose like everything, it is very hard to change to something different. Even say people who have milked cows all their lives, that sector is, a lot of farming is in difficulty now, it's very hard to change to do something else, to re-train" (Interview 19).

Capital is exchanged across the different positions in the alternative food field, *produce your own* and *alternative food business*. These positions complement each other, but also simultaneously differences in opinion exist. Economic and cultural capital can be exchanged between AFIs. For example, one interviewee describes how a local Slow Food Convivium interacts with an allotment group. Each group possesses different forms of capital, this capital is exchanged, and the result is different profits are obtained by each group. The Slow Food group possesses symbolic and cultural capital that is attractive to the allotment group. The international reputation of Slow Food is admired. The allotment group has economic capital, having access to property that the Slow Food group's events can be held on. The Slow Food group set the agenda for the focus of an event (a local food banquet) using its cultural capital. Between the two positions of the alternative food field, sub types of cultural capital can complement each other, but also come into conflict. Initiatives are social spaces that allow people to observe the work of others, in the same kinds of initiatives, or different types of initiatives, across the two positions of the alternative food field, *alternative food business* and *produce your own*. For

example a market organiser refers to a community gardener, saying that they have "done wonderful work" (Interview 52). Another community gardener speaks with respect for local food producers who trade at the farmers' market, saying they are: "very inspirational, they don't sell themselves…they are inclined to say, put themselves down and say very negative things, but they are doing fabulous work" (Interview 6). This opens up a space for admiration, but also criticism. Agents can also see the value of what they are involved in, but view other types of initiatives as less valuable. One market organiser talks about allotments for example:

> "We also originally wanted to do allotments as well, as a third element, but actually there was too much there to try…and I felt in particular, a little bit of a bubble is over the whole allotment thing, it might or might not just go kaput…There is indeed a huge expanding interest in growing your own but I'm not 100% convinced that the allotment thing sits neatly within most people's way of living" (Interview 44).

Similarly, a community garden leader in the *produce your own* position is critical of farmers' markets, while still benefiting from the value they provided them with, of opening up a social space for connection with like minded people:

> "I only occasionally have surplus and I had tried a farmers' market…I know farmers' markets are really popular and it's good in principle, but I am not very enamoured by them, you know, because they are rarely farmers' markets…we went annoyingly for profile, to get to know the people, but it wasn't viable" (Interview 5).

This shows how tensions can exist within alternative food practice, linked to the diversity of embodied cultural capital and if practiced through lifestyle or livelihood. For example, agents that possess strong sustainable food cultural capital can come into conflict with agents who possess strong quality food cultural capital.

8.3.5 Conclusions on cultural characteristics and role

AFIs cultural characteristics are more similar than their social and economic characteristics. Embodied cultural capital is expressed in both of the different positions of the alternative food field. In the *alternative food business* position embodied cultural capital is expressed as lifework and in the *produce your own* position as lifestyle.

Table 8.2 Cultural characteristics of alternative food initiatives

Characteristic of field	**Alternative food field**	**Produce Your Own (PYO)**	**Alternative Food Business (AFB)**
Embodied cultural capital	Different types of embodied cultural capital exist: Quality Ethical Sustainable food Food knowledge.	Embodied cultural capital in its different forms is expressed through lifestyle.	Embodied cultural capital in its different forms is expressed through livelihoods and lifestyles
Objectified cultural capital[39]	Capital is objectified through initiatives and products grown and produced, as well as festivals and events.	Allotments, community gardens, school gardens, open days, food produce.	Farmers' markets, artisan food businesses, food festivals, events, food produce.
Institutionalised cultural capital	Institutionalised cultural capital is not common.	Institutionalised cultural capital is not identified.	Institutionalised cultural capital exists in the form of organic standards and quality labelling schemes.
Non-institutionalised cultural capital	A culture of informal learning and knowledge sharing exists strongly, understood here as non-institutionalised. cultural capital	Non-institutionalised cultural capital, where knowledge and skills are shared informally, underpins the PYO sphere.	Non-institutionalised cultural capital exists where there is a strong culture of informal learning and knowledge sharing.

[39] Objectified cultural capital is not explored separately in this chapter. It is taken here to simply represent AFIs themselves and their food products.

Next, in the final section of this chapter, since the dynamics of cultural, social and economic capital have been explained in this and the previous chapter, aspects of these capitals are drawn together to understand how capital interacts in different social fields, through time, and in space, to affect the dynamics and overall impacts created by the alternative food field.

8.4 Some final observations on capital dynamics and impacts created by the alternative food field

The structure of a field is defined by the state of relations of force between players. Relations between players are affected by the capital they possess, its structure and volume. But central to explaining the effects of capital requires analysis to go beyond explaining the nature of capital and also explain how capitals act and interact in social space. Capital often does not work independently; often one form is dependent on another. Capitals are also tied up together, social and cultural capitals are tied up with economic capital. Some capitals are more powerful than others, with economic capital the most powerful and this affects the interaction between it and others capitals. In this section, some further patterns evident in social space based around capital, how it is generated, converted from one form to another, how it circulates and is exchanged in the alternative food field are explored. This helps to further tease out how capitals impact on the dynamics and potential impacts the alternative food field can have.

8.4.1 The dominant power of economic capital

For the alternative food field to occupy a stronger position in social space, possessing higher volumes of social, cultural and economic capital is important. However the overarching power of economic capital can be a problem for the alternative food field, limiting the generation of social and cultural capital and creating tensions when economic capital is valued over these capital forms.

For instance, establishing organisations that need voluntary input from members is challenging. Organisations, however, while requiring some work, do have benefits, in that they potentially generate social, cultural and economic capital. Some agents in

the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field see these benefits, while others do not. For example, a Slow Food Convivium member describes how being part of Slow Food brings marketing benefits to their business and that others locally don't see the wider benefits: "they don't appreciate what you can gain from it, it's free advertising and that is horrendously expensive" (Interview 37). Other factors that conflict with their participation are prioritised. Running a business and giving time to voluntary activities in organisations is challenging for agents in the *alternative food business* position. Individual interests come before collective efforts through participation in organisations. But when an agent's livelihood depends on their food business, and their time is already stretched with this, poor involvement in organisations is understandable. Commenting on their experience of Slow Food, time and financial commitments are highlighted as an issue:

> "You had to pay membership for it and you could go to Italy, you could go to France, go to Spain, go to Germany, you could go to a vineyard and then go to lemon groves and things like that, but if you have got a business and you are self-employed there is no-one you can delegate to or who will actually pay you so you can spend a week out there looking at lemon groves" (Interview 51).

While organisations do have benefits, there is a trade-off between these benefits and the needs of the individual and their business. The generation of economic capital takes precedence over social and cultural capital. For example, the following comments made in response to being asked if they are involved in Slow Food illustrate this:

> "It all adds to your good name and the perceived quality of the product you know but…they don't really help you, you know you are still on your own really" (Interview 54).

This shows the overarching power of economic capital, that its generation must be prioritised by agents. This limits the generation of social and cultural capital, as a lack of sufficient economic capital limits participation in organisations. But as the comments of interviewee 37 illustrate, spending time on what is viewed by most as a

social and cultural pursuit, can also result in economic benefits. However when economic capital is scarce, the long term view is less important, and present priority needs, often economic, are focused on.

But all agents in the *alternative food business* position don't prioritise economic capital to the same degree, and as capital circulates, social and cultural capital also get mixed up with economic capital. When agents in the *alternative food business* position possess different amounts of social and cultural capital and value it differently, this can lead to tensions in their economic relationships. For example, a trader at a farmers' market who primarily aims to sell Irish produce, doesn't have numerous suppliers, and their range is limited because of their primarily Irish sourcing policy. They describe being let down by one of their main suppliers, without notice or explanation. They faced the scenario of not having adequate stock to sell on their stall at the busiest time of year, and after this they moved on to find a new supplier. This can be understood in terms of social capital and how it is not shared by all agents in the *alternative food business* position. Their previous supplier didn't possess the same structure of social capital, and didn't see the importance of fulfilling mutual obligations, where both would feel obliged to meet their obligations because of the social capital they possess. Rather more importance is placed on generating economic capital by the supplier:

> "He has gone more towards factory production, bought a very expensive plant…and is still having problems getting it going, it's still not working correctly…when I went looking for the Christmas produce the year before last he said to me sorry, none at all, and I had been asking him about it, would he be ok…never said a dickybird to me…it's all about relationships, but never screwing the customer" (Interview 30).

This example shows how economic capital can get tied up with social capital, leading to tensions in the *alternative food business* position when the volume of social capital different agents possess is unbalanced.

Clearly, social capital and economic capital circulate in an interconnected way in the *alternative food business* position. This can also be illustrated by the AFI example of

farmers' markets. They double as an economic and social space, but are not valued as both by all participants. Some consumers treat them as an economic space, and some traders also find the connection between the economic and social challenging. A farmers' market trader describes how they display information about their production methods beside their stall, and a lot of people read before they approach:

> "I notice an awful lot of people are afraid to approach a stand in case they get collared to buy something, whereas I like people to be able to have a look, and then if they don't want to buy anything, then that is fine, but you find an awful lot of people, they stand back and they read, so they can find out some information by reading before they even approach you. And they will approach you then if they want to" (Interview 46).

From the producer perspective it was also found that socially embedded economic relationships can be demanding as the boundary between business and personal, public and private lives is crossed. For example one secondary food producer and farmers' market trader explained how it felt like people thought they owned a piece of you, and if you were absent one week they would feel let down (Interview 35). Another trader describes how he always did his best to inform customers if he would be missing for any reason (Interview 30). Another grower and farmers' market trader explains how they set up their farm shop so as to try and put some boundaries on when people would call for produce, which was personally disruptive, but also interruptive of their day to day work (Interview 54).

Because of the need for economic capital, alternative food agents must pursue it. But the pursuit of economic capital, at the expense of social and cultural capital, threatens what makes AFIs different in the food system. This threat can also emerge externally to the alternative food field, as agents in the wider economic field can also begin to recognise the potential for economic capital generation off the back of alternative food practice, and try to capitalise on the social and cultural capital generated and circulated by alternative food agents. More commercially oriented producers can move into producing what seem like similar products, but according to the smaller scale artisans, are not of the same quality as theirs. For example an artisan bread baker describes a commercial bakery making spelt bread that is not

100% spelt flour. They compete for the same customers, but aren't producing the same product. The commercial bakery jumps on board to gain economic benefit from the trust that has built up because of artisan producers production of genuine products:

> "…they made a spelt bread, but it was half wheat, but they weren't calling it spelt wheat bread, they were calling it spelt bread and there was wheat in it. People were buying it because it was spelt, but spelt is hugely expensive and it is much more difficult to work with so they were trying to catch on to this, that an awful lot of people are eating it now for dietary reasons. They don't care about the person buying it, their bottom line is that they want to make money out of it, and eh, on two levels it is annoying, they don't care about the consumer and they are also charging a price which is unrealistic, they are trying to piggyback on the back of, you know, companies that are trying to produce a good product, an honest product" (Interview 38).

Some alternative food agents see a need for increased regulation so they can protect what they do, and stop more commercial companies, or less authentic producers, from copying their products, and appearing as if they also adhere to similar standards. Voluntary certification is one option, but this is seen to bring alternative food actors into more commercial systems, and the economic field, drawing them away from the need to reconnect with their consumer, where the social and cultural fields interact with the alternative food field. Regulation and certification have their associated costs and make trust something that is paid for, rather than generated through cultivating social capital. Some disagree with the certification/regulation approach and feel that staying close to the consumer is more important than introducing increased levels of regulation. For example an artisan chocolate producer comes up against challenges in differentiating their product and competing with the bigger, more commercially oriented speciality chocolate makers. The artisan chocolatier chooses not to be certified organic, or certified fair trade. They describe how they deal with a cocoa supplier who pays a fair price for cocoa, but does not go through the fair trade system. They don't believe in this system and see them as a revenue generating exercise: "When you have to live off something that is created,

and people need to buy into that with a fee, then I have my remarks" (Interview 51). This producer gets over this issue by staying close to the consumer. They explain:

> "…some people were very surprised that we were making the chocolates and that we were approaching them, you know from the producer… to end user, shops in my eyes are an end user to sell the product…here in Ireland that was something that wasn't really done…an artisan producer says as well, straight to the customer I think, farmers' markets, and em to delicatessens" (Interview 51).

While trust is built in the *alternative food business* position, trust can also be threatened from within the alternative food field and affect the generation of social capital. Agents generate social capital through establishing trust, but also within the *alternative food business* position itself some agents may not be as genuine as others. For example one farmers' market trader describes how they go to lengths to produce their product to the required standard, go through a number of food safety inspections, while they see others who do not adhere to the same standards, operate under the radar of regulators and still sell to consumers what seems a similar product (Interview 59). Agents in the *alternative food business* position can be critical of each other. One producer for example respects some producers who are in a similar business, but does not see others in the same way:

> "They would be ones that I would have time and respect for…there would be much more of grá for what you are doing, a grá for the product…they take more time about it…and there are others…just slap it in there and watch the money roll" (Interview 22).

There is a dynamic interaction between social and economic capital. The greater value placed on the pursuit of economic capital by some agents can inhibit social capital generation. Agents in the *alternative food business* position are working for a slice of the small market available to them; they compete for their share of the amount of economic capital that is in circulation. Agents in the *alternative food business* position become sensitive to their competitors, especially those who are producing a product that they see as being less authentic to theirs, and they feel their

efforts are being overshadowed (Interviews 22; 51; 38; 59). Producers producing similar products can be critical of each other, if they view their competitor as not working to the same standard they do. This generates tensions and does not facilitate the building of social capital between producers, and also potentially threatens trust between producers and consumers because consumer attitudes are affected by the wider social field. Other interactions between these capitals include that social capital can exist as a precursor to economic capital generation. Relations among farmers' market organisers and traders reflect this pattern. Social capital can create a sense of mutual responsibility between agents. When commitment and responsibility to others is absent, this is evidence of the existence of weak social capital. A farmers' market organiser for example attempts to increase the number of stalls at their market, and describes how traders can be very reliable, but also unreliable:

> "Some of them are incredibly reliable…you know the ones we now have, with one or two exceptions, are very good, but I have had…people again saying oh yes I am going to start in your market I'll be up this week and blah, blah, blah. Half the time you don't even get a phone call to say they are not turning up, so there is a real gap there between the rhetoric of people saying they are totally committed to making this work…if you are committed you turn up…I think it is probably true in most markets, you know, except for maybe the likes of Temple Bar, because they are such a prestige market, if they don't show up they are gone…they have such a line of people there to take their spot" (Interview 44).

From the market organiser perspective, until the market is a success they are somewhat at the whim of traders, and their commitment to supporting the development of the farmers' market, which is supported by the possession of social capital. However when the market becomes popular, and economically successful, the opportunity to access economic capital creates a more reliable trader.

Economic capital is by its nature a more powerful form of capital than social and cultural capital. Hence when economic capital exists in a field, and when the field depends on it for its existence, there will be a struggle between the different capital forms, as well as a tendency towards economic capital becoming more dominant.

This is a pattern likely to continue in the alternative food field until this struggle is part of the awareness of players in the field and they actively resist it.

8.4.2 Capital circulation by central players in fields

In chapter four, it was discussed that according to Bourdieu (1986) groups can concentrate the collective power of their social capital with a small group of agents who represent the group and speak on its behalf. This is likened to nobility, or the leader of a movement. These individuals can also accumulate social capital, are well known and worthy of being known. The game in the alternative food field sees agents play different roles. A smaller number of agents in the alternative food field take more central positions as pillars supporting the field. They make greater voluntary efforts to support the development of the field, they take a leadership role. The pioneers of organic farming in Ireland are an example. One organic farmer comments:

> "We just went organic and em we just did organic, back then it was just a novelty thing really, like there wasn't really a market back then you know at all but it just develops you know. A few pioneers out there and people were beginning to talk about organic food and how their food was made and what was in it" (Interview 54).

Those who take this position are important in both initiating and sustaining AFIs. For example, a factor important in the survival of markets is that someone commits to take charge of their running. In many country and farmers' markets, there is a core of people who take charge, and take on much of the voluntary responsibility for running the initiative (Interviews 11; 25; 31, 37; 50; 57). This pattern can also be described as having a structure of leaders, who initiate and take the lead, and also others who participate, or who can be described as followers, but aren't as committed as leaders. For example, the comments of one interviewee help to illustrate:

> "You have to have people that know the running of it, and that can run it if you left. If you are lucky enough to have a few that have committed themselves, and do it year in, year out, and sometimes they might not get much thanks for what they do, but without that we wouldn't be here" (Interview 31).

Initiatives need to be started before those with lower volumes of cultural and social capital will become part of them. When they are established, this may automatically attract latent cultural and social capital that is waiting to be tapped into. For example, an initiator of farmers' markets describes:

> "10 years ago there was me, there was myself and one other…so now there are about 30, it just went du du du du du…" (Interview 47).

Also, in relation to farmers' markets, there is a recognition that a group of 'followers' exists. One interviewee suggests there is "food groupie kind of thing going on" (Interview 27). Another makes reference to a farmers' market trader who sells similar produce to what they do, saying that: "he has a good following as well" (Interview 34).

A similar pattern is also found where efforts have been made to establish groups and organisations. A few people take control of running the group and its associated activities. Wider active participation is described as being poor, even when there are economic connections between agents. For example, the organiser of a Slow Food Convivium comments:

> "We buy some organic vegetables from him, so we are all kind of in bed with each other…it is not a very big county, so we all know each other but he wouldn't get involved in anything" (Interview 37).

One interviewee aptly comments: "we all have our place in the choir" (Interview 50). However, agents may not wish to continuously play the same role. Leaders do not always want to remain leaders. They may wish to take a less active role and work to generate new leaders. But once established in a leader position it is difficult to move back as others can be reluctant to take on this role. Those who give their time can

eventually burn out and tire. If people do work together, they must also manage any differences in how people feel the group should develop. Some may be more oriented towards activities that generate economic capital directly, whereas others also see the value of generating social and cultural capital (Interviews 11; 25; 31; 37; 61). For example, one interviewee describes their efforts to establish an organisation, which was eventually successful, but as the organisation grew and changed away from their initial vision, their involvement ended:

> "What I was doing was partly to put into practice my own ideas of changing values but also very much immodestly wanting to influence others…it was started…here, on a second attempt again, the first time nobody came…I think this is typical of such situations, it became a clash I suppose…it cured me of any desire to be involved in any organisation" (Interview 16).

As organisations become more established, they may take on paid staff and those who were involved in establishment may stay as part of its governance structure in a voluntary capacity. This can also lead to tensions, as there can be a difference in attitudes to a job as a means to gain economic capital, compared to involvement where there is little economic capital to gain from it and is based on a labour of love or cultural capital (Interviews 16; 22). It is not just economic capital that negatively affects capital dynamics. Social and cultural capital can also come into conflict.

For capital to be valued, it must be recognised as important in the field. The work of agents who lead the way in the alternative food field in Ireland is important to increasing the recognition of its importance. These leading agents can be understood as representing 'cultural entrepreneurs' as described by Scott (2012). The group that Scott (2012) classes as cultural entrepreneurs are musicians, who are not paid for their music, but produce and perform music in their spare time. They lack economic capital, but use social, cultural and symbolic capital to make up for this, with the end goal that their career aspirations can be sustained. How they do this is convert social, cultural and symbolic capital into economic capital. Agents in alternative food field also use different kinds of capital as an asset to reach their goals.

8.4.3 Capital circulation in time and space

There is also evidence to suggest that cultural and social capital, which is supportive of the alternative food field, is stronger in the Southern area than the Midlands, East and Northwest areas of Ireland. This pattern does merit further research, but some observations can at least be made. For example, a different dynamic can be observed between the Southern and Midlands region in relation to starting CSA initiatives. One interviewee in the midlands region comments on their unsuccessful attempts to set up a CSA: "I tried to set up a CSA, but it was a non-runner, people are very suspicious of something new" (Interview 15). CSAs were found to be successfully running in the Southern region, and a very different attitude is found among those involved:

> "Things like the oat project are really good, like I don't even eat porridge much I mean I thought it was a really good local project to get involved in because it would create local food security" (Interview 25).

The first farmers' markets were established in the Southern region, led by a number of central figures, who were also found to be involved in organisations in the alternative food field. In the *alternative food business* position in the Southern region, earlier generations of agents in alternative food are observed to provide impetus for newer generations. One interviewee, who grew up on a dairy farm, describes how they observed the pioneering cheese-makers making cheese from the milk of their small dairy herd, and this provided inspiration to them to start a similar business on their farm:

> "…my father and mother were both farming and they were milking about 40 cows here so yeah the raw material was here and it was a very obvious thing to do…they would have been the origin of the species, they would have started…the revival of Irish farmhouse cheese…they had left the bright lights of Dublin and come down to the mountain, in West Cork and started milking 10 or 12 cows and making cheese and selling it, and sure I was if they can do it, and then it was what can I learn" (Interview 58).

Another interviewee, who more recently diversified into on farm processing of their milk, describes how they observed, and were inspired by, the farm business of interviewee 58:

> "I have always seen him in action you know and I always wanted to…I kind of envied him in a way because he had the cheese as a back up, you know it worked side by side with the farm and I always thought it was a very good way of doing it you know and I always felt he had an edge on all the rest of us dairy farmers. I just felt he had another I suppose string to his bow, or whatever the hell the saying is, he had another option, he had a start on everyone else" (Interview 60).

This cultural capital is transferred over time, but also in space. These examples describe how cultural capital can be transferred within a region, where agents are relatively close in spatial terms. This does not mean that cultural capital is not transferred in spatially disconnected ways, but when spatially connected, cultural capital transfer is likely to also be tied up with social capital. For example, interviewee 58 and 60 describe how they have got to know the cheese-makers that provided the inspiration for their own business and have worked together in organisations (Interview 58) or running events such as for Slow Food (Interview 60). Cultural capital is also transferred between agents who are spatially disconnected. For example, some agents are well known among those active in the alternative food field. They may have a positive reputation because they were among the first to start the particular kind of AFI, or they are particularly successful at what they do. For

example, an interviewee in the North-west comments on the work of another in the South: "I've got a lot of respect for her…they try and share resources and em invite each other to different people's events and things like that" (Interview 37). Cultural capital is also generated and transferred in the wider cultural sphere at the international level. The media and the internet are important vehicles for this. For example, one interviewee in the *alternative food business* position refers to the American food journalist's writings, Michael Pollan: "…you know we need to get back to what Michael Pollan says, you know eating food that is made up of less than five ingredients, rather than 50" (Interview 21). Another refers to a British baker and writer they admire: "a good book if you wanted to look at it is called *Bread Matters* by Andrew Whitley…they have got a really good campaign going in Britain called the Campaign for Real Bread" (Interview 38). And a final example is reference made to a website promoting the benefits of raw milk: "If you want to read a lot about raw milk, you should look up a website 'realmilk.com'. That has a lot of the facts, it's very scientific, it disputes a lot of the palaver that goes on" (Interview 11).

It does seem that those in the south have greater inter-generational and inter-personal cultural capital circulation, whereas the sources of cultural capital for those in other areas can be more spatially dislocated, and can be across networks in Ireland, and internationally. What is important to increase the volume of cultural and social capital? In terms of food cultural knowledge, or cultural capital in the embodied state, it is important that networks, events and relationships exist so that this can be transferred. Social capital is a precursor to allow this transfer of cultural capital to occur. So is the recognition of the importance of such transfer and preservation of cultural capital by agents, who for example record this cultural capital, or facilitate its transfer between agents. The Slow Food event 'Grandmother's Day' is an example. While a subject of debate, Slow Food can be accused of being elitist[40]. Its structures, aims and activities facilitate the growth of cultural capital. An elitist perception of Slow Food could however inhibit its reach. The role of AFIs and Slow Food's impact could benefit from breaking this perception down, which could be a area of future research.

[40] For example the debate around Slow Food and elitism has been discussed by the media (e.g. Levy, 2009) and by members of Slow Food itself (Slow Food Nova Scotia, 2009).

8.5 Conclusion

The social and cultural dynamics of AFIs in Ireland have a diverse and many levelled structure. As was outlined in chapter six, formal organisations are also a part of the social networks of the alternative food field. AFIs can be described as spaces where participants of specific initiatives become their own community and the initiative provides the space for this community to build. Between these communities are individuals who can engage to a lesser degree with the initiative, which forms the basis of the wider social networks which make up the alternative food field. This chapter has also shown how different forms of capital are valued differently by players in the alternative food field. There are also attempts by players to work towards making cultural capital of greater value. This chapter has also shown how economic, social and cultural capital are all interlinked in the alternative food field, which affects the dynamics of the alternative food field. This shapes the general nature of action, meaning different agents play different roles. Some possess a very high volume of cultural capital (cultural entrepreneurs) and actively take on the role of passing this on to others.

Chapter 9

Alternative food initiatives: evaluating their role and the social movement question

"...when they stop laughing at you and start fighting with you, you know you are getting somewhere" (Interview 11).

9.1 Introduction

The above quote illustrates that AFIs can have a battle on their hands to be taken seriously and must debate with power holders to prove their relevance[41]. Part of this battle is cultural, to be considered by governments and policymakers as an initiative of value to support and facilitate, as well as by consumers and producers as initiatives they can benefit from engaging with. It is also a battle within civil society, to develop strong civic and social networks that can support AFIs to work towards reaching greater achievements. The battle is also with the market and economic models that determine how our food system operates. Evidence of how Ireland's AFIs play their part in this battle is detailed in chapter seven and eight. This research also provides evidence detailing the characteristics AFIs display, illustrating their efforts in fighting this battle trying to impact change in the food system. In addition, the presence of this battle for food system change does not mean AFIs in practice are not without their own contradictions. Their existence in practice has helped to open debate on how to progress towards changing the food system in positive ways. Both those who criticise and praise AFIs have valid points. However an additional important point is that AFIs are complex, have a heterogeneous nature and face challenges. AFIs are a product of wider society and their interactions with it. This research has highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of AFIs, but with a more constructive outlook, aiming to understand their strengths and weaknesses to help progress AFI goals.

[41] The interviewee is referring to a time in Ireland when organic farming was not well respected and observes a shift occurring when its principles began to be taken more seriously and debated.

This research set out to address a number of primary objectives, which were:

1. Develop an empirically grounded picture of AFIs in Ireland.

2. Explore the social, cultural and economic dynamics of AFIs in Ireland.

3. Outline and explain the general dynamics and central defining characteristics of AFIs in the Irish context.

4. Evaluate what these dynamics and characteristics say about the role of AFIs and their ability to change the food system. Explore if AFIs and the broader organisations and activities associated with them can be classed as a social movement and what kind of social movement activity they might represent.

Objective one, two and three have been addressed in chapter six, seven and eight. This last chapter draws some final conclusions based on the social, cultural, economic and general dynamics of AFIs detailed in the previous three chapters. The central characteristics identified in this research are summarised and drawn together in Table 9.1 (see page 326). The chapter is focused on the second tier of analysis detailed in chapter one. The research has worked to understand the dynamics and characteristics of AFIs in Ireland because of the positive, negative and contradictory characteristics, as well as the questioning over the exact role of AFIs, discussed in chapter two's research review. Section 9.2 offers insights on how AFIs in the Irish context fit into this picture, based on the primary research findings. Objective four of this research is directly addressed in this chapter: to evaluate what the dynamics and characteristics identified can illuminate about AFI's role in contributing to change the food system. Also part of this objective is to explore if AFIs can be classed as a social movement and what kind of social movement activity they might represent. Again drawing from the primary research findings presented in chapter's six, seven and eight, section 9.4 of this chapter offers a new insight on whether AFIs can be considered a social movement and their role in this context.

Table 9.1 Characteristics of alternative food initiatives

Alternative food field *overall characteristics*	**Produce Your Own (PYO)** *distinct characteristics*	**Alternative Food Business (AFB)** *distinct characteristics*
Economic characteristics		
Agents work to change the value of economic capital. Gaining economic capital does not rule above all else.	Economic capital is of relatively low value. It sustains the initiative as part of lifestyle.	Economic capital is of higher value in AFB sphere because a business is being sustained as part of a livelihood.
Economic capital circulation patterns are based on the consumer and producer being more connected.	Producer is the consumer meaning economic capital circulating is low.	Producer is more connected to their customer. The number of agents trying to obtain economic capital is lower.
Producers and consumers attempt to take more control over economic capital to make the economic field a more predictable place.	Greater control and predictability at the consumer end of the supply chain.	Greater control and predictability at the producer end of the supply chain.
Agents attempt to re-write the rules of the economic field to obtain greater freedom from its rules and restraints.	Consumers are less dependent on economic capital and the rules of big business impacting their food sourcing.	Producers can gain economic capital without having to conform to rules of big business.
Social characteristics		
Informal social networks between agents structure the social field.	Networks based primarily within communities.	Networks based within and between communities and businesses.
Trust is built informally and formally.	Informal trust building is dominant.	Formal and informal trust building both exist.
Producers and consumers gain rewards from their involvement in the field.	Rewards are cultural and social.	Rewards are economic, cultural and social.
Rewards are focused on benefits for the individual.	Rewards benefit individual lifestyles.	Rewards benefit individual livelihoods.
Cultural characteristics		
Embodied cultural capital is identified in four forms: quality, ethical, sustainable food and food knowledge.	Embodied cultural capital is expressed through lifestyles.	Embodied cultural capital is expressed through livelihoods and lifestyles.
Objectified cultural capital exists in the form of initiatives themselves, their food produce and events associated with them.	Allotments, community gardens, school gardens, open days and food produce represent objectified cultural capital.	Farmers' markets, artisan food businesses, festivals, events and food produce represent objectified cultural capital.
Institutionalised cultural capital is uncommon. A culture of informal learning and knowledge sharing exists strongly, or non-institutionalised cultural capital.	Sharing knowledge and skills informally (non-institutionalised cultural capital) underpins the PYO sphere.	Institutionalised cultural capital exists (e.g. organic standards, PGI/PDO labelling) alongside a culture of informal learning/knowledge sharing, or non-institutionalised cultural capital.

Policy recommendations are made in section 9.5 based on the assessment of AFIs that this research has developed. New questions have also emerged, which make proposing a future research agenda an important outcome of this research, which is the focus of the final main section of this chapter (section 9.6).

9.2 Background and core AFI characteristics

In chapter seven and eight, AFI dynamics were detailed in terms of economic, social and cultural capital and fields. Characterising AFIs and their role was the focus of chapter two, the research review. These characteristics are next explored in relation to the findings of this research. An additional characteristic emerging from this research is also proposed – that AFIs are very important in revitalising and influencing food culture. The discussion is structured around Forssell and Lankoski's (2015) three categories of AFN characteristics: background, core and outcome[42]. The three distinctions are very useful in distinguishing AFI traits from their impacts. AFNs in practice display these characteristics to different degrees. Background characteristics are the non-conventional values and goals, such as sustainability and anti-industrialism, underpinning AFNs that drive their operation, but don't directly result in changes to food provision. Core characteristics are those that work to change food provisioning, such as producing different kinds of products and using different distribution networks. The three core characteristics identified are increased requirements for products and production (e.g. artisan, traditional), reducing the distance between producers and consumers (physical distance, value chain distance and informational distance) and new forms of market governance (e.g. Fair Trade, CSAs). Background and core characteristics are very important to achieving outcome characteristics of AFIs. Outcome characteristics are for example the strong relationships of trust that ensue because of core and background characteristics, such as the reduced distance between producers and consumers. Background and core characteristics emerging from this research are detailed in section 9.2 and outcome in section 9.3.

[42] It appropriate to use this classification in relation to AFIs because AFN is another way to categorise AFIs. The definition of AFN is discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.

9.2.1 Background characteristics

Background characteristics for Forssell and Lankoski (2015) centre around AFN values and goals. The research reviewed in chapter two identified a number of goals informing AFI practice. In sum, these centre around being different to the dominant food system and ideally contribute to a food system that:

- Values food as more than a commodity to be profited from.
- Provides fresh, nourishing, diverse, culturally embedded food.
- Is more environmentally sustainable than the dominant system, working with a respect for nature.
- Treats its participants with fairness, producers are rewarded fairly for produce, and consumers pay a fair price for food.

Key values and goals emerging from this research show strong similarity with the above values and goals. AFIs in the *alternative food business* position work to change the value of economic capital so that economic capital does not rule above all else, showing how the background characteristic of valuing food as more than a commodity to be profited from is present (chapter seven, section 7.3.4). The importance of the provision of fresh, nourishing, diverse, culturally embedded food, treating food system participants with fairness, and working towards environmental sustainability is identified in the dynamics of cultural capital and the discussion on quality, ethical and sustainable food cultural capital (chapter eight, section 8.3.1).

While these goals were identified as informing AFI practice in the research review, contradictions in practice were also identified (chapter two, section 2.4). A number of these contradictions were also identified in this research. For example, research has shown AFIs can reproduce the disconnected, individualised consumer and there is a need for better participation in AFIs, where engagement is more citizen than consumer based. A similar dynamic is identified in this research. Creating a consumer that engages strongly with AFIs to serve collective interests may be a worthy aim, however a desire for this does not mean it can happen easily. AFIs in Ireland are a product of their social context and AFI leaders face difficulties in generating adequate support from participants. In relation to the *produce your own* position leaders of initiatives highlight how the AFI's existence can depend on their

involvement (chapter eight, section 8.2.2.2). In relation to the *alternative food business* position, agents highlight how when farmers' markets were first initiated this stimulated a good degree of support, but this waned and left only the deeply committed participants (chapter eight, section 8.2.1.2). The volume and structure of social capital therefore is found to reproduce to some extent a disconnected consumer, but those that are more engaged and connected also exist. This however limits the extent of the role AFIs can play in contributing towards supporting a civically minded food producer and consumer. Enough of a critical mass exists so that AFIs can exist, and their existence in itself is a success, but AFIs will have a limited role until their critical mass of producer and consumer support expands.

The research review also identified another contradiction in practice that the research findings can offer further insight on. AFIs can move away from their original aims and risk absorption into the dominant food system. The dynamics of economic capital discussed in chapter seven in relation to the *alternative food business* position of the alternative food field show how AFIs are challenged by the power of the wider economic field and the scarcity of economic capital in this position, meaning they are not powerful players in the economic field (chapter seven, section 7.3). Agent's willingness to accept making a fair living and not a fortune can be undermined by agents who are not as genuine as they are in their practice of alternative principles, and who compete for the same scarce economic capital (chapter seven, section 7.3.4). This shows how agents who do stick firmly with their original aims struggle to survive in an economic field where others move away from alternative values. Interestingly the same risk of absorption was not identified to the same extent in the *produce your own* position (chapter seven, section 7.4). The activities of agents in the *produce your own* position are less dependent on economic capital and less impacted by the broader dynamics of the economic field. There is a lower risk of a move away from original aims as agents don't often chase economic capital. However AFIs in the *produce your own* position must rely on other capitals to provide resources, which are also challenging to generate, and limits the capacity of initiatives in this position in terms of the amount of food produced through it. Overall, **t**he role of AFIs in practice differs depending on the type of AFI. As well as this, different types of AFI have different strengths and weaknesses, as has been

highlighted in relation to *produce your own* and *alternative food business* initiatives in this research.

These contradictions however should not be read as reflecting AFI failure in achieving its goals in alignment with its values. These contradictions are reflective of the broad social context in which AFIs operate. This echoes Blay-Palmer et al.'s (2013) research in the Canadian context which highlights that community food initiatives often operate under pressures of inadequate funding, over-reliance on volunteer labour and conflicting objectives. If AFIs are to succeed in having a significant role, it appears they would benefit from strategic support. Policy measures could help to stimulate them and funding can help accelerate initiatives. However the likelihood of such strategic support developing would also need AFIs to more clearly prove their value and the holders of power to become aware and also value their importance. The lack of shared cultural capital between agents in AFIs and agents in wider society with power was identified in relation to the dynamics of cultural capital (chapter eight, section 8.3.1.5). Expanding 'foodie' cultural capital to wider society and to social agents that hold power would assist strengthening AFI's role and better reach their aspirational goals. This point is also explored further in section 9.4 and 9.5.

9.2.2 Core characteristics

A key aspect of core AFN characteristics is that they change how food is provisioned (Forssell and Lankoski, 2015). A number of characteristics that can be classified as core were identified in chapter two, the research review. One is how AFI's spatial structure differs from the dominant food system, bringing production and consumption closer together, by reducing the distance between production and consumption. This characteristic is strongly identified in this research through how social capital is structured in the alternative food field. In the *alternative food business* position, producers see themselves as part of a connected food community, are proud of their products and keen to communicate with their consumers. This also has positive impacts for consumers, giving them direct access to producers of their food and the opportunity to request certain produce (chapter eight, section 8.2.1). The presence of a community around food production and consumption is also

identified in the *produce your own* position where production and consumption are directly connected (chapter eight, section 8.2.2). The structure of economic capital identified in Ireland's AFIs is also linked with this characteristic. In the *alternative food business* position, the issue of poor control over economic capital when involved in long supply chains was identified (chapter seven, section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2). The response to this is to structure businesses differently, focusing on local markets and keeping business size within a certain scale. In the *produce your own* position, there is an attempt to opt out to some degree of disconnected food production and consumption markets and develop a low reliance on the use of economic capital to source food (chapter seven, section 7.4).

Another characteristic identified in the research review that can be classified as core is that while spatially production and consumption may be disconnected, consumption is connected to production through information about food's production. The presence of foodie cultural capital was identified in this research, highlighting the importance of food knowledge within AFIs, around issues such as food quality, sustainability and ethics (chapter eight, section 8.3.1). From this research it has emerged that food information and knowledge is centrally important to strengthening AFIs. The structure of food cultural capital that exists at present in Ireland's AFIs also limits their role (chapter eight, section 8.3.1.5). This is discussed in more detail in relation to outcome characteristics.

While the core characteristics of re-connecting production and consumption through direct connections, or through greater information circulation and exchange, are strongly evident in Ireland's AFIs, this research has also identified challenges that limit the benefits that can result from these characteristics. This issue is discussed further in relation to outcome characteristics below.

9.3 Outcome characteristics

Outcome characteristics are understood by Forssell and Lankoski (2015) as the products of AFNs, such as the trust generated by socially embedded economic relationships**.** This research identifies the establishment of socially embedded economic relationships as a key outcome of AFIs in Ireland, and adds new insights

on this observation below. Other outcomes identified from previous research include re-balancing power back towards those lacking power in the dominant food system and the provision of a space where food issues are debated. These outcomes are also discussed below and new insights proposed. In addition to these outcome characteristics, another central outcome characteristic of AFIs identified from this research is that they influence and modify food culture.

The social structures that AFIs promote mean that economic transactions are socially embedded. The social dynamics of AFIs in Ireland highlight this same pattern, but also reveal a more complex picture where social ties exist with different degrees of strength. Overall, initiatives and participants can be understood as part of a food community which are embedded in social relationships where strong social ties exist and trust is generated. But also weak social ties exist where agents don't wish to develop strong social ties with other AFI agents. In other cases mutual responsibility is not reciprocated and trust is undermined. Prioritisation of economic capital can limit AFI development, undermine trust and cause agents to disregard mutual responsibility (chapter eight, section 8.4.1). This research also found that in AFIs social capital can also be something that is disposable, and capitalised on to overcome short term issues (chapter eight, section 8.2.1.2). For some however social capital is deeper and valued more highly, with economic transactions more deeply socially embedded. Also some agents involved are not interested in developing strong social ties with other agents in initiatives (chapter eight, section 8.4.1). Social embeddedness is an outcome of AFIs, however it exists to different degrees, which impacts on the role AFIs can play in contributing towards an alternative food future.

Another characteristic identified in the research review was how AFIs attempt to re-connect disconnected agents in the food system, bringing power back to those lacking power in the dominant food system, to producers and consumers, enabling them to become more active food system participants. This research shows that AFIs do connect disconnected agents, but again if describing the *alternative food business* and *produce your own* positions of the alternative food field, the nature of this reconnection differs. In the *alternative food business* position it is not often with radical outcomes, but with the effect of providing information on produce,

consumers requesting particular produce or giving feedback on produce and the development of friendships between producers and consumers (chapter eight, section 8.2.1). In the *produce your own* position outcomes are not very radical either. Agents do produce more of their own food, learn skills from other participants and develop friendships (chapter eight, section 8.2.2). More radical outcomes would be to have a significant impact on reducing food poverty, or to provide significant local and regional food security.

Another key outcome characteristic of AFIs identified in previous research is that AFIs provide a space where food issues are debated. This research finds they are not alone a space for debate, but a space for the creation of food cultural knowledge. An important outcome characteristic identified in this research is the contribution of AFIs to generating and reviving food culture. Chapter six details the importance of farmers' markets in providing a market for artisan food and reviving older food traditions (section 6.3.2.3). The chapter also details how a range of foodie organisations, networks, groups and campaigns have emerged in recent years and develops a chronology of key events in relation to Ireland's AFIs (section 6.3.6, section 6.3.7, table 6.1). The presence of quality food cultural capital shows how agents in AFIs are dissatisfied with for example the quality of vegetables and the levels of salt or preservatives in food. Ethical and sustainable food cultural capital sees agents question the integrity of cheap food and the impact of intensive production methods on environments. Food knowledge is a cultural capital where agents possess for example good horticulture skills and knowledge of differences between different breeds of animal or vegetables (chapter eight, section 8.3.1). In chapter six, comments by Tovey (2001) are highlighted where it is argued that agriculture has lost its cultural significance and is increasingly viewed as a purely economic sector. Tovey (2001: 337) also questions "whether new 'agrarian projects for modernity' could develop in contemporary conditions, what form they might take and where they might emanate." Based on the findings of this research, it is concluded that AFIs represent these new projects, where culture and community is brought back in to agriculture.

The research finds one of the main outcome characteristics of AFIs has to be seen as their contribution to Ireland's food culture. Overall, the outcomes of AFI struggles are likely to resemble the intentions embodied in AFIs, but may disappoint the agents who have led AFIs and participated deeply in them. An observation made in relation to social movements is that their impacts are not often as its central proponents originally intended. Another key question emerging from the research review was around the role of AFIs, and that they are not a complete alternative to the dominant food system. Questions have been asked if they represent an oppositional, reactionary space, a niche market or the seeds of a wider movement. Focus next turns to assess what insights the findings of this research can offer in relation to AFIs as a social movement.

9.4 AFIs correspondence with the definition of a social movement

Chapter three focused on social movements and highlighted how they are concerned with how we live our lives. Social movements develop around a range of issues. Issues of concern for some movements affect certain sections of society, such as racial or gender equality issues. Other movements question the values which underpin the way we live our lives, and potentially every member of society could be a member of these types of social movements. Movements do not necessarily wish to change political structures and their action is not often centred in politics. Action can be focused in civil society and is concerned with influencing individual attitudes and awareness. Contemporary social movements are conceptualised differently to how social movements were traditionally. Action directed toward political and institutional contexts, with formal movement organisations an important part of them was central to how they were traditionally conceptualised. The existence of social movements says something important about society. People feel their efforts are not futile and they can impact change. Contemporary social movements depart in quite fundamental ways from older social movements and the main elements of how they can be defined are next discussed in relation to the general nature and dynamics of capital in fields in Ireland's AFIs. Based on the findings of this research, it is argued AFIs in Ireland represent the seeds of a social movement. The next paragraphs present evidence from the research findings detailed in chapters six, seven and eight to support this contention.

Movement members are vital to social movements. It was shown in chapter six how the alternative food field is composed of a diversity of individuals, groups and organisations. But this does not mean they are a social movement. The extent of AFIs in Ireland is however notable. AFI's presence has been built over a number of decades. But for the formation of a social movement the next step would be better coordination between AFIs and strategic action towards particular goals. Developing in this manner could also assist AFIs move closer to their more effective functioning. The critical mass exists for a social movement, but needs greater organisation and coordination at regional and national levels in Ireland.

Social movements must seek to influence the wider population (Byrne, 1997). Movements express values and promote these values to others. The promotion of an alternative food culture is evident in AFIs, evidenced by efforts to spread cultural capital through talks, food festivals and open days, for example (chapter eight, section 8.3.4). However while AFIs do promote the values that underpin them, these are a diverse set of values. Social movements promote a particular vision for change and wish to see this change become part of society as a whole. The particular vision AFIs promote is not wholly clear. The diversity of 'foodie' cultural capital illustrates this. It is focused on strengthening food culture, improving the quality of food, making food systems more sustainable and ethical (chapter eight, section 8.3.1). These could possibly form the vision for the alternative food movement if AFIs were to come together strongly as a movement. Members of movements do not always agree on all issues. Some may value sustainable food more highly than supporting food culture and this could result in tensions if one movement objective becomes overshadowed by another. Agents in the *alternative food business and produce your own* positions can disagree on which is the most important cultural capital to promote. For example evidence was found in this research where farmers' market organisers were uncertain of the value of allotments, and community gardeners were uncertain of the value of farmers' markets (chapter eight, section 8.3.4). AFIs represent a range of goals, and if a social movement was to form, tensions and disagreements would be likely. However this is also a trait of social movements, they are not always as harmonious as they appear on the surface.

Social movement activities can be focused in the public and private sphere. The public sphere can be likened to civil society. This is a space between the state and the market, in which there are many layers, such as social, economic and political. Social movements often form in this space (Keane, 1988; Foweraker, 1995; Purdue, 2007). Action in the private sphere, through how individuals live their lives, also forms an important part of social movement activities (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). A cross over between citizen and consumer has also been observed. The concept of citizen-consumer has been proposed by Soper (2004). This also highlights a potential cross-over between the spaces of public civil society and private life. Public spaces for action and interaction are important in Ireland's alternative food practice. Farmers' markets, community gardens and allotments are all visible public spaces where alternative food agents act. They represent an expansion of the public sphere and are new spaces of civil society. However also supporting this public sphere action is private sphere action through lifestyles driven by a deep interest in food and desire to live more sustainably.

The category of 'lifestyle social movement' was identified in chapter three, where agents live their lives in accordance with the change they wish to see in the world. Social movement action is through individual lifestyles rather than being part of traditional collective action or protest (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Haenfler et al., 2012). Individualised action based on lifestyle issues are considered part of what social movements are about. Some argue lifestyle issues are what modern social movements predominantly focus on (Johnston et al. 1994; Hamel, 1995; Connolly and Hourigan, 2006; Haenfler et al. 2012). AFIs share a strong affinity with the concept of a lifestyle movement, and appear to provide the seeds for the development of this kind of social movement. The exploration of capitals in AFIs showed how individual producers and consumers act in ways that allows them to practice their values, and social capital supports this. Their efforts may add up to wider effects, but they act as individuals. Participants generally seem to act for themselves in support of their own values embodied in their lifestyles and livelihoods (chapter six, section 6.4.1). AFIs provide a space for agents to put their

values into practice through embedding these values in their livelihoods and lifestyles.

Different types of movement members were also discussed in chapter three. Agents can occasionally participate in movements. Others who are more deeply engaged with movements are key movement members (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Leaders also play a central role in social movements. The concept of political entrepreneurs was discussed in chapter three. These actors are important in the emergence of movements because they initiate action, help to mobilise others and frame the issues of grievance to the movement (Tilly, 2004; Opp, 2009). Leadership can also be temporary. It can also be concealed, through organisations or groups, and individual leaders are not easily identified. From the analysis of alternative food practice using the concepts of field and capital a clear hierarchy among agents participating in the alternative food field was identified. The presence and importance of AFI leaders is strongly identified in this research. It was already proposed in chapter eight they can be understood as 'cultural entrepreneurs', but they can also be thought of as 'political entrepreneurs'. These entrepreneurs have been central to expanding of this potential movement (chapter eight, section 8.2.2.2, 8.3.4 and 8.4.2). Other recent AFI research has also identified the importance of leaders. Nelson et al. (2013) found that local community leaders are important in supporting community food initiatives, because of the skills and connections they have. They can communicate with key agents and also have an established avenue to do this.

A central role of social movements is to be knowledge producers and bring new ways of seeing the world to the fore. The nature of foodie cultural capital presented in chapter eight shows ambition for an alternative food future, creating a food system where there is human and environmental health, alongside equitable supply chains. AFIs may not deliver on this ambition, but they do contribute towards its delivery. In their various ways they illuminate central issues that are part of this ambition. Highlighting alternatives and expressing social conflicts, rather than providing the solutions to them, can be understood as an outcome of social movements (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Melucci, 1985; 1996a; Flesher-Fominaya, 2014). Through AFIs, and especially the circulation of foodie cultural capital, dissatisfaction is expressed

relating to the dominant food system. The existence of AFIs can be understood as the expression of a social conflict.

Social movements promote or oppose social change through conflict and struggle. In social movements there is conflict over control of the same resources and how these resources should be used. Capital is also compared to a resource, and the evidence in chapter seven and eight shows the struggle of AFIs to gain greater control over resources of value. Chapter seven focuses on economic capital. This chapter clearly identified a struggle to alter the structure of this capital so that economic relationships in food exchanges can better serve producer and consumer needs. However, while there can be struggle for social change in social movements, achieving social change is challenging. It was discussed in chapter four that social reproduction occurs more often than social change. Bourdieu is also concerned with why systems of domination often persist and social change is difficult. The exploration of capital and fields in this research helps to illuminate why social change is difficult in the context of the change AFIs attempt to steer. Agents in AFIs are limited by the power of the economic field. The structure and volume of social capital leads to the development of trust, but tensions also exist. The weak presence of institutionalised foodie cultural capital cultural in wider society is also an obstacle. The conflicts between economic, social and cultural capital illustrate how internal tensions between agents that share broadly similar goals can overshadow and inhibit wider goals. Earning a living for agents in the *alternative food business* position has to be prioritised over broader activities that would support cultural capital circulation. A struggle for change clearly exists in AFIs, but the future outcome of this struggle is unclear.

Networks of informal interaction are also an essential part of social movements. Networks in social movements play a number of functions. They circulate information and resources; they help to build bonds between members and recruit members (Byrne, 1997; Diani, 1997). Chapter eight, focusing on social and cultural capital, provides detailed evidence of the existence of informal interaction between agents, as well as the circulation of information and resources. Networks can also be submerged and lie latent until action around a particular issue is called for and latent

networks then become visible (Melucci, 1996a). Two campaigns are briefly discussed in chapter six, the campaign to oppose the ban on the sale of raw milk and the campaign to preserve historical market rights. These campaigns provide evidence for the existence of latent networks between agents in the alternative food field.

For a social movement to exist, networks and social struggle alone are not enough, they must be accompanied by the existence of strong solidarity between members. Social movement networks eventually become stronger when participants share strong bonds or collective identity. This leads to the identification of a group that share goals and vision for the movement. Collective identity is a process that bonds group members and facilitates their collective action. Collective identity defines the essence of a movement, the essential values that underpin it (Melucci, 1996b; Diani, 1992; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). The social and cultural capital dynamics identified in Ireland's AFIs are the main reason why it is argued AFIs represent the seeds of a social movement, and not a fully formed social movement. The prioritisation of economic capital and weakness of social capital in some cases shows that solidarity may not be present between all AFIs (chapter eight, section 8.4.1). The weak engagement of some participants and the strong reliance on leaders to drive initiatives is also evidence of poor social bonds. Values that underpin practice in the alternative food field were identified in chapter seven. Consideration of food's impact on the environment, natural resources and animal welfare standards are key values, as well as supporting the production of quality, nutritious food that preserves food heritage. However agents don't often hold all of these values in the same esteem and their efforts can focus on one aspiration above others. For example artisan producers are most concerned with food quality and heritage, home growers with producing quality, fresh food for their own consumption and organic livestock farmers with the environment and animal welfare. A multitude of issues underpin AFI agent's practice. From this research it is unclear if there are essential values common to all alternative food agents. Future research could explore the collective identity question in the AFI context.

Based on how Melucci (1996a) describes social movements, they do not necessarily offer solutions to the issues they highlight. They are the expression of a conflict, and

not the answer to a crisis. Practice in the alternative food field highlights a range of food issues and attempts to work towards reducing their severity. While it is important to evaluate how far AFIs can go in enacting the values they embody, it is also important to acknowledge the magnitude of the task of solving these issues. The strength of the opponent should be considered when evaluating a social movement's struggle. A social movement's ability to impact change is affected by the tasks size and the nature of the structures a movement attempts to oppose (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). Attempting to change the food system is a mammoth task and perhaps small successes are big victories. In relation to the economic field and economic capital, chapter seven begins to explain the extent of the challenge faced by AFIs. Agents attempt to gain power, but are fighting a strong economic opponent. Food is a basic need and we acquire this need through the capitalist market economy. Every single person with financial resources potentially has a part to play in this movement. Therefore a food movement needs to mobilise wide social support to make it effective on the broad scale. Food movements can however have small successes without widespread support. This might be the establishment of a good local farmers' market that enough local producers and consumers engage with to make it a success. The establishment of a community garden, where local people devote time to maintaining the space is another example. The existence of AFIs can be viewed as an achievement that sees agents put their values into practice and turn partly away from the dominant system. AFIs may not win their battle outright, but can still challenge their opponent.

Mobilising participation in social movements is an issue that particularly affects contemporary movements (Hamel, 1995; Miller, 2004; Share et al., 2007). Mobilising participation was also an issue identified in AFIs. Getting involved in organisations is challenging for agents in the *alternative food business* position for example because their time is already stretched through running a small business. Individual interests are prioritised over collective because action is tied up with earning a livelihood (chapter eight, section 8.4.1). Leaders feel their actions are important and if they do not act, initiatives may not continue to function. Participants engage to different degrees with AFIs. More active members mobilise the participation of individuals who identify with the movement in a more detached way.

In the AFI context, DeLind (1999) argues we need to create 'communitised individuals' where individuals are focused on building community around food for wider social benefit, but what is more often observed in reality is 'individualised communities', where individuals participate in AFIs to support their own individual needs, such as a preference for local food. This is a weakness in AFIs when understanding them from the social change/social movement perspective. It could potentially inhibit AFI development into a true social movement.

Movements continually change. They go through different periods where action is visible in public, to where it is focused in the private sphere. A cyclical nature is also observed in food movements. The ongoing evolution and change in Ireland's organic food sector has been highlighted by Tovey (1999: 57) who forecasts that the institutionalisation of the organic sector in Ireland is likely to have the following effect: "the 'organobureaucrats' will become another species of state agents and those who want a 'real alternative' may have to withdraw, re-group and start all over again". Potentially Ireland's AFIs could be this re-grouping. AFIs are also evolving with new AFIs emerging playing quite specific roles, showing their affinity with the social movement trait that they are continually changing. Newer forms of AFIs are learning from the mistakes of old, as Ballamingie and Walker (2013) outline. AFIs are evolving with new, more unique forms emerging that deal with specific issues. Ireland has its own novel and innovative initiatives. GIY Ireland, discussed in chapter six, is a network of local groups that assists people to produce their own food in different ways, be it in back gardens, allotments, community gardens or on windowsills. Other international examples of innovative, novel AFIs can also be identified. The University of Wisconsin-Madison coordinates the Open Source Seed Initiative, which launched in 2011 and aims to promote and maintain fair access to plant genetic resources on the global level. It began distributing seed that is not subject to patents in 2014 and seed saving and distribution is encouraged (Open Source Seed Initiative, no date; Shemkus, 2014). Another is the UK based Big Barn's Crop to Shop initiative which aims to encourage domestic food production and sale of surplus to retailers, improving access to affordable local food. The initiative launched in mid 2014 when it had over 500 retail partners (Big Barn, 2014).

Another question to consider is if the two positions within the alternative food field can be considered part of one potential movement. Other research has begun to distinguish differences in potential between different AFIs (Renting et al., 2012; Sonnino, 2012; Kneafsey et al. 2013; Anderson et al., 2014a; Taylor and Taylor-Lovell; 2014). Based on this research it is proposed the two positions are the seeds of one movement, but made up of two distinct parts, one market based section, *alternative food business* and one community based section, *produce your own*. The key differences between these positions are explored in chapter six (section 6.4). For initiatives in the market based *alternative food business* position, economic exchange is vital to their functioning. In the *produce your own* position economic capital is also vital, but to a lesser degree and agents attempt to circumvent the need for economic capital. Agents in the *produce your own* position of the alternative food field generate economic capital to sustain initiatives, and not for its own sake. This leaves the *produce your own* position in a stronger place as part of a social movement. Market based movements, such as the organic movement, have evolved away from their primary goals because of their primary link the market. Their success can become part their decline. As movements grow the market sees an economic opportunity in their success and movements can become less social and more market driven (Crewe et al., 2003; Guthman, 2004; Lockie and Halpin, 2005). If AFIs were divorced from the market potentially they could become a more radical social movement. Perhaps the *produce your own* position has more change potential than *alternative food business* because of its greater degree of independence from economic capital. But also it is more limited in some ways because of this, because less economic capital circulates within this position. The movement may need to deal in economic capital if it is to produce significant volumes of food. So in a sense if AFIs are to become more than a utopia, if community gardens are to become more than where citizens get their salads, and farmers' markets more than where they buy their artisan sausages and traditional cakes, AFIs could need to become a strong market based movement because it is economic capital that gives control and power to the dominant food system. If AFIs are to play a significant role in the food system as a means of food provisioning, maybe they must play the game and gain control over the key resource that its opponent now controls, economic capital. However

within AFIs, economic capital cannot be the sole ruling capital and other capitals must also be fostered and grown simultaneously, or else AFIs become more like the system it set out to oppose. Movements can move in cycles, and change occurs slowly. This may just be the beginning. The organic movement emerged in the 1930s and the Fair Trade movement the 1940s (Fair Trade Resource Network, 2007; Reed, 2010). These movements have had some achievements, but also weaknesses, and continue to change and evolve. Food social movements operate at a slow pace and change over time. Reed (2010) observes four phases in the global organic movement and it was not until phase three, around 30 years after the movement began that formal organisations were formed.

AFIs do display a number of the defining traits of social movements. Further research is needed to examine if they are moving towards becoming a true social movement. If AFIs do not become a social movement, this does not however mean they do not still play a role in contributing to changing the food system and creating an alternative food future. Next a number of suggestions on how the role of AFIs could be strengthened through practice and policy are discussed.

9.5 The role of AFIs in changing the food system and how to strengthen it – recommendations for policy and practitioners

This research has not found that AFIs serve a very different role than other research has already identified. But it does get deeper into understanding their role, and some AFI characteristics have been shown to weaken them. It is important to understand how AFIs are evolving and make efforts to uncover AFI weaknesses, to understand ways that AFIs can be strengthened to overcome challenges, assisting them move towards making a greater contribution to changing the food system. Some have argued it is too early in the development of AFIs to measure their overall contribution to social change, but that AFIs are growing and strengthening (Allen et al., 2003; Levkoe and Wakefield, 2014). This research would also support these observations. We can judge their interim contribution (which this research does for AFIs in Ireland), focusing on the first decade of the twenty first century, and especially the late part this decade.

AFIs face strong challenges from the dominant food system. In addition to this, the wider socio-economic context in which AFIs operate also places limitations on what they can achieve. AFIs play a role for a minority of producers in gaining a better farm income and for a minority of consumers to access to local, organic and/or artisan food. They are involved in a cultural battle working to increase food's cultural value, and are an aspect of culture that should be promoted and preserved. To achieve greater success, their recognition as an object of cultural value needs to increase. They may also benefit from becoming more political. Giddens (1998: 53) questions the impact leftist sub-politics that favours equality and social justice can have in the face of conventional spheres of politics and governance and suggests interest groups have significance, but cannot govern: "the idea that such groups can take over where government is failing, or can stand in the place of political parties, is fantasy." In a similar way, all 'alternatives' have a role, but are limited. AFIs have a role to play, but perhaps won't dominate without major shifts in political and cultural ideology. They can attempt to challenge, but possibly will have limited impact. This is not a reflection of their failure of their attempts, but wider social, economic, cultural and political structures. For example, the alternative food field partly intersects the economic field, and is also impacted by the wider economic field, such as the impact of price on consumer choice, the costs of production and the throwaway consumption culture. However, all of this said, the beginning of a shift is evident. AFIs are taken seriously by EU policymakers. EU public policy discourse has begun to pay attention to the role SFSC initiatives can play in supporting local agriculture. The conference 'Local agriculture and short food supply chains' was held in Brussels by the European Commission in 2012, and was addressed by European Commissioners for both health and agriculture, as well as the Prince of Wales (European Commission, 2012e). The European Commission has produced and commissioned research in this area. This research includes a study examining the potential for a local farming direct sales labelling scheme and another evaluating the current existence and future potential of developing SFSCs to a greater extent (European Commission, 2013a; Kneafsey et al., 2013). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014 - 2020 includes thematic sub programmes promoting SFSCs (European Parliament and Council, 2013).

Another challenge is that the dominant AFI in the *alternative food business* position, farmers' markets, do not provide a truly viable alternative for producers to sell and for consumers to buy food. This makes engagement with the wider economic field essential and can weaken their practice. Greater cooperation between AFIs could assist their development into a more viable alternative to domiant retailers. Initiatives lack wider scale strategic action, much action is localised or individualised. The formation of a critical mass and the development of a strong sustainable food lobby appears an important action. A range of organisations related to AFIs were identified in chapter six. The development of strategic alliances between organisations old and new (e.g. Irish Country Markets, the IFMTA, the Taste Council and organic representative organisations such as IOFGA), and where these alliances have a lobbying function would increase AFI's role as a shaper of policy. Working together is challenging however, tensions and splits can emerge when there is a slight mismatch in goals and agents are passionate about their objectives. The history of the organic movement in Ireland is an example (chapter six, section 6.3.2.2). This is why grassroots action, as well as facilitative policy is important to help AFIs become more influential. The food networks initiated by LEADER groups (discussed in chapter six, section 6.3.6) are an example of how policy initiatives can facilitate better cooperation between AFIs and developing a critical mass.

AFIs that exist in Ireland on the local scale are quite disconnected regionally and nationally. In chapter two, research which highlights the different objectives within and between AFIs was discussed. However inevitably, goals will differ and tensions will develop, which should be acknowledged (Anderson et al., 2014b). Acknowledgement of this, rather than trying to reconcile goals, may help AFIs to collectively move towards reaching greater achievements. Also in the context of the ever increasing concentration of control in the wider agri-food system, coordinated action among small players appears essential to gain any power. Initiatives could come together to form a critical mass and form strategic alliances with particular common goals in mind. The issue of multiple, complex and sometimes contradictory goals among AFIs can hinder action. However AFIs do not have to agree on all issues, but work towards change based on those that they do agree on. Practically this could be in the form of a national sustainable food organisation, that initiatives

are members of and each year central lobbying issues are identified and worked towards by the organisation's staff. This approach is also supported by wider research. In the context of local organic food cooperatives, Sumner et al. (2014) argue that forming stronger alliances and the traditional cooperative principle of cooperation among cooperatives is vital to strengthen food coops. Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2013) suggest that coalitions around common goals could be a way forward, firstly working towards more realistic achievable goals, and when successfully achieved, then move on to larger, more wider scale, challenging and complex goals. This would also correspond with how Bourdieu describes social movements should develop. Bourdieu (2003) argues European social movements need to unite across boundaries, such as nation states and cultures, developing organisation tools to aid coordination.

Another key action in strengthening the role of AFIs in Ireland would be to engage more indigenous farmers and traditional family farms and increase the level of produce that is sold in local markets where it is differentiated and connected to locality and producers. However key supports are needed to facilitate this, such as infrastructural and service support in local distribution and retailing. Much like how REPS supported the expansion of the organic sector in Ireland, significant financial supports for quality food development, artisan food production, also backed by processing, distribution and marketing support would engage more traditional family farms because economic survival is their major challenge. But this would also need political will and investment in wide scale artisan food development for small farms.

9.6 Areas of future research

There is plenty scope for research to work towards further understanding of how to build on, and strengthen, the role of AFIs in Ireland and elsewhere, in creating a more positive food future. Broader research, such as cross national learning and exploring the role of technology are detailed below as areas where future research could focus:

- In chapter eight, section 8.3.1.5 discussed how the structure and volume of cultural capital places limitations on AFIs. Greater levels of shared foodie cultural

capital between agents in AFIs and institutions such as economic development agencies, local authorities and food safety enforcement bodies could reduce the number of obstacles limiting AFIs because of their differing outlooks. In this digital age, exploration of digital communication technology's role (e.g. social media, digital communication tools) in growing foodie cultural capital shared between AFIs and institutions, as well as between AFIs and wider society is an important area of future research. This would help to assess if digital communication technology can play a significant role in the growth of foodie cultural capital outside of the alternative food field.

- Research in the area of political economy analysis could also assist the future development of AFIs. This could take the form of a policy review comparing and evaluating the extent to which a facilitative environment for AFIs is provisioned for in different national and regional contexts. It could focus on a range of policy areas, such as health, agriculture, planning and environment, comparing places where AFIs are more successful, and attempting to understand if AFI success can be directly related to a broadly facilitative policy environment, or if particular policies are important.
- This research has had a national focus. Following on from the policy review/political economy point above, broader cross national comparative research comparing Ireland's AFI landscape, with other more successful places, could provide important lessons in how to strengthen Ireland's AFIs as a force of change in the food system. This research could focus on understanding the cultural, social, political and economic contexts in which AFIs exist in different nations or regions.
- This research shows the breath of AFIs in Ireland, and details the context in which they exist. The evidence shows that AFIs are important, but central in taking AFIs forward is quantifiable evidence of their impacts. In the context of SFSCs, Kneafsey et al. (2013) argue true quantification of their impacts is very important in proving their measurable value. This research proves the firm existence of AFIs in Ireland and prepares the ground for quantitative research.

Future research focused on what combination of AFIs (e.g. numbers of farm shops, allotments and farmers' markets) and their ideal organisational nature (e.g. mass of individuals acting separately or citizens acting collectively) that will potentially

make for a more sustainable, equitable food system is needed. This however requires wider disciplinary engagement with AFI research, from disciplines such as economics and business. Social movement studies is also a research field which offers further potential in understanding how to tweak AFIs in ways that could result in them serving a stronger role in creating a more sustainable, equitable food system. Asking whether AFIs can be considered as a social movement is not just an academic exercise. Social movement theory provides fruitful ground for pragmatically focused research that can better understand AFIs for their more effective functioning. A number of areas have been identified from this research:

- This research has identified the presence of informal networks, and the existence of a struggle, key defining traits of social movements. The presence of collective identity is another key defining characteristic of a social movement. The next step to understand if AFIs can be considered a true social movement would be to understand if collective identity exists. Explaining the nature of this concept also helps to understand the degree of cross-over between agents' goals and the likelihood of tensions emerging in a movement. Tensions within movements can impact on achievement of goals as agents struggle to work together and splits can form.
- Leaders emerged from this research as central to spreading the seeds of this potential social movement. Further analysis of leadership, AFIs and social movements would offer insight on how to overcome the limitations that reliance on key leaders places on initiatives working for social change. Learning from other successful movements that have developed with the help of leaders could offer insight on how to strengthen the role of AFIs.
- Ashe and Sonnino (2013) argue that 'convergence platforms', such as food provisioning through schools, can help to join actors who currently act in disconnected ways in the US food movement, helping it to form a more coherent whole. The critical mass that exists in Ireland could potentially be converged in a similar way, hence showing that there is future potential if this critical mass is shaped and steered in the correct ways. Further exploration of AFIs using more specific social movement theories could help produce evidence that can to steer the movement in ways that strengthen it, such as around: the nature, extent and

importance of movement 'entrepreneurs' in strengthening AFIs and the food movement; the shape of networks between producer and consumer driven AFIs and how these networks need to evolve for greater effectiveness; the nature of social relationships holding networks together exploring if collective identity exists; the emergence, structure and successes of food movement campaigns, such as for example those focused on market trading rights and raw milk.

9.7 Conclusion

This final chapter has pulled together the various interlocking strands of this research. It depicts the characteristics of AFIs reflective of the Irish case. It considers AFIs in the guise of a social movement and tentatively suggests they can be considered as the seeds of a lifestyle movement. It also importantly identifies the dynamics present in AFIs and discusses how these dynamics impact on the role of AFIs in contributing to change. Ways that weaknesses could be overcome so that the role of AFIs in food system change can be strengthened are also discussed. Further research is also crucial to understand more specific aspects of AFI dynamics to develop evidence that can strengthen the future role of AFIs in changing the food system.

Ireland's AFIs are dynamic, changing initiatives. They embody contradictions that highlight the difficulty of the struggle they fight. AFIs are spaces that are part of civil society and symbolise the values that agents in civil society struggle to put into practice. Individual leaders who devote their energies are vital to their existence. AFIs face challenges and the question if they are they fighting a losing battle looms. The future of AFIs in Ireland is open.

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Appendix A

Publications and conference papers emerging from this research

2013

- Growth amidst decline: Ireland's grassroots food movement. *Spacing Ireland*. C. Crowley and D. Linehan (eds.) Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.128-139.
- Alternative food initiatives in Ireland: their power and role in practice. Paper presented at the *Conference of Irish Geographers*, May 17th, National University of Ireland, Galway.

2011

- Alternative food politics in Ireland. Paper presented at the *Sociological Association of Ireland 38th Annual Conference*, May 7th, University College Cork.
- Greenies, foodies and farmers – alternative food politics in Irish civil society. Paper presented at the *7th SSRC International Conference Workshop, 'We are what we do not eat': Linking Food Production and Consumption*. March 26th, School of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway.

2010

- A quiet revolution? Beneath the surface of Ireland's alternative food initiatives. *Irish Geography*, 43 (2) pp.149-59.
- Breaking cycles of movement dilution: the case of food. Paper presented at the *Learning from each other's struggles: Social movement, activist and militant research workshop*, June 20th, Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.
- Reasserting the 'good life'? The discourse and practice of grassroots food growing. Paper presented at the *Conference of Irish Geographers*, May 1st, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

2009

- co-authored with Ward, Michael. Food Democracy in Practice: a case study of the Dublin Food Co-op. *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, 42 (1) pp.13-22.
- The dynamics of contemporary adaptations in food supply chains. *Chimera: UCC Geographical Journal*, (24) pp. 29-59.
- Alternative food initiatives: fighting a losing battle or digging for victory? Paper presented at the *Centre for Co-operative Studies Summer School*, 11th June, University College Cork.
- The contemporary food movement: digging for victory or fighting a losing battle? Paper presented at the *Inaugural Irish Rural Studies Symposium*, 1st September, Athenry.
- Resisting transformation? Collective identity and Ireland's alternative food movement. Paper presented at the *Conference of Irish Geographers*, 15th May, University College Cork.

Appendix B

Events, conference and seminars attended

2010

- GIY Mullingar meeting, Belvedere House, Mullingar, February 18th
- Community Food Day, Fota House, Cork, March 6th
- GIY Local Champions Meeting, Ballymaloe House, Cork, March 20th
- Slow Food Dublin Meeting, Dublin, March 24th
- Common Agricultural Policy Conference, Tipperary Institute, March 26th
- The Lifeline Project Seminar, Lighthouse Cinema, Dublin, May 12th
- A Day in Transition, The Convergence Festival, Dublin, May 29th
- Irish Food Festival, Sheridan's Cheesemongers, Meath, May 30th
- Cashel Blue Workshop, Irish Food Festival, Sheridan's Cheesemongers, Meath, May 30th
- Burren Smokehouse Workshop, Irish Food Festival, Sheridan's Cheesemongers, Meath, May 30th
- World Union of Wholesale Markets Conference, Dublin, 25th and 26th June
- GIY Gathering, Guinness Storehouse, Dublin, September 18th
- Terra Madre/Salone de Gusto, Slow Food Festival, Turin, Italy, 22nd to 25th October

2009

- National Organic Food Conference, Birr, March 3rd
- Dublin Food Coop Annual General Meeting, Dublin, April 2nd
- Bloom Garden Festival, Phoenix Park, Dublin, May 28th
- Grow it Yourself (GIY) Ireland Conference, Waterford Institute of Technology, September 12th
- Waterford Harvest Festival, Waterford, September 12th and 13th
- Meet Your Local Organic Producer, National Organic Week event, Athlone, September 15th
- A Tale of Two Organic Farmers, National Organic Week event, Dublin Food Coop, 19th
- Artisan Food and Rural Tourism Conference, Tullamore, October 3rd
- Sitric Picnic, Sitric Road Community Garden, Dublin, October 18th
- Slow Food Evening, Cork Film Festival, Cork City, November 5th
- Community Supported Agriculture Seminar organised by Kinsale Transition Towns, Kinsale, November 11th

2008

- Bloom Garden Festival, Phoenix Park, Dublin, May 31st

2007

- National Farmers' Markets Conference, Athlone, July 2nd
- Local Food Conference, Mullingar, November 14th

Appendix C

Interview guide

Opening introduction
Thank participants for agreeing to take part in this study. Give participant a short overview of the purpose of the research. Assure participant their interview will remain confidential, explaining that quotes may be taken from the interview, but they will remain anonymous. Ask permission to record the interview. If refused, take written notes.

Interview topics

Background to initiative
- Length established
- Size and general nature of activities
- Challenges/supports when getting established
- Future plans
- Managed by group or individual

Personal background of interviewee
- Role in initiative and length involved
- Rural or farming background
- Trained in area
- Motivation for involvement

Engagement with regulatory authorities/government support agencies
- Receipt of funding, importance of this, administrative requirements for funding
- Barriers/supports from authorities
- Ease of engagement
- Attitudes

Involvement in organisations/ links with other similar initiatives
- Local, national, international
- Community engagement

Challenges affecting success and survival
- Challenges at beginning/ ongoing challenges (environmental, social, economic)
- Need for improved funding/training
- Policy supports

Additional comments

Close interview
Thank participants for their time and cooperation. Explain to participants they should receive a summary report of the research when it is complete.