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**Participation by place-based community
organisations in local development: case studies
from East Cork**

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**Thesis submitted to the National University of Ireland for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2010

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List of abbreviations

ADM	Area Development Management Ltd.
CASP	Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020
CDB	County Development Board
CDP	County Development Plan
CCC	Cork County Council
CIE	<i>Coras Iompar Éireann</i> (Irish Rail)
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CVF	Community and Voluntary Forum
DCRGA	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DOELG	Department of the Environment and Local Government
DSCFA	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
ECAD	East Cork Area Development Ltd.
ED	Electoral District
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
FÁS	<i>Foras Áiseanna Saothair</i> (Training and Employment Authority)
FSA	Family Support Agency
GACA	Glanmire Area Community Association Ltd.
GCA	Glounthaune Community Association Ltd.

HSE	Health Services Executive
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITF	Interdepartmental Task Force (on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems)
JOC	Joint Oireachtas Committee (on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs)
LAP	Local Area Plan
LDP	Local Development Programme
MCF	Midleton Community Forum Ltd.
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NCV	National Committee on Volunteering
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPW	Office of Public Works
PPU	Planning Policy Unit (Cork County Council)
SHB	Southern Health Board
SLAP	Special Local Area Plan
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
TFAC	Task Force on Active Citizenship
UN	United Nations
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Introduction: The ideology of community

Speaking in November 2004, on the occasion of her inauguration as President of Ireland for a second term, Mary McAleese addressed the issue of Ireland's economic accomplishments and of the tumultuous social change they had wrought. While acknowledging that the nation was enjoying a new-found confidence built upon unprecedented material prosperity, the President enunciated a view that not all of the consequences of rapid transformation could be regarded positively:

Infrastructure of all sorts is struggling to catch up, including the human infrastructure we offer each other through friendship and community solidarity. The cushion of consumerism is no substitute for the comfort of community.

She went on to praise the voluntary work undertaken in "*our nation's great heartland of community*", which she had viewed first-hand during her previous term of office and highlighted the need for "*resilient communities*", stating: "*It will be my mission to nurture and celebrate commitment to community and to responsible citizenship*".

The utterances of the President were by no means exceptional in contemporary political discourse and echoed similar sentiments expressed at the turn of the millennium. Tony Blair, for instance, in his speech to the British Labour Party conference in October 2001, proclaimed: "*The governing idea of modern social democracy is community*". Just

four months later, George W. Bush, in his infamous ‘Axis of Evil’ State of the Union address to the US Congress, called for a new culture of responsibility, selflessness and voluntary commitment in order to “*rebuild our communities*”. These statements were not merely bland political rhetoric: on the contrary, they can be situated within a deeper intellectual debate on community, modernity and development. The idea of community, so often dismissed as obsolete, endures and continues to occupy an important position in social theory. Reputed scholars across the fields of sociology, political science, historical studies and other disciplines continue to offer fresh insights and perspectives (Delanty, 2003a; Bauman, 2001; Castells, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Beck, 1998; Giddens, 1998; Hobsbawm, 1994).

President McAleese’s comments touched upon three central and interrelated aspects of the discussion surrounding the concept of community. The first is that economic progress represents a threat to community, that modernisation and sense of community are oppositional and incompatible, and that as a society develops its sense of community is undermined. The second is that, in spite of wealth and material prosperity, the idea of community, with sense of belonging and mutual support at its core, nonetheless remains desirable and worthy of preservation. Community provides a bulwark against the insecurities and uncertainties of a globalised world. Finally, there is a point of view which argues that, far from being unlikely bedfellows, the idea of community can rescue modernity from its ills. Resilient and responsible communities can address problems that states and markets are incapable of tackling.

Conventional, twentieth-century social theory forecast a pessimistic fate for the idea of community. The mainstream sociological interpretation contended that, as

societies modernised, more impersonal, formal and rational societal relations would replace the traditional, informal and personal bonds of community. Modern societies, characterised by fluidity of movement, mass communication and state institutions, created conditions incompatible with the survival of community and social class, not kinship or affinity to local place, formed the basis of collective identity. Modernity was presented as a threat to community and, as society developed, the intricate ties of fealty that held communities together would be irrevocably sundered. The transition from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (society) elucidated by nineteenth century German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies expressed this perspective most succinctly and his writings influenced community studies well into the twentieth century (Ife, 2002, p.16; Delanty, 2000, p.116; Hobsbawm, 1994, p.308).

However, the weight of empirical evidence contradicts theoretical wisdom and confirms that community retains its importance for people in their daily lives and, what is more, that community activism has become increasingly organised, formalised and sophisticated. The proliferation of new social movements in both the developed and developing world within the past generation, often as a response to the effects of global capitalism, was rooted in communal values. Politically-motivated community activism was the bedrock of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the popular revolutions that led to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe (Alexander, 1998). In the later decades of the twentieth century, identity-based community organisations coalesced around heretofore marginalised social groups, such as women, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. Most recently, information technologies, particularly the Internet, spawned virtual communities unbounded by place and space.

Although disparate in nature and markedly different from traditional forms, all of these social, political and cultural materialisations of community are based upon common understanding, a sense of belonging and a search for security in an insecure world, and they point towards newer post-traditional ideas of community (Delanty, 2003a).

From amongst the varied expressions and understandings of community, this thesis is most concerned with the renewed political interest in restoring community as expressed by McAleese, Blair, Bush and others. Political scientists and policymakers have incorporated the concept of community into a wider philosophy that endeavours to address the shortcomings of development theory and the crisis of modernity (Schuurman, 1993). This new discourse emerged from a context of disillusionment with, and the very real failures of, both the developmental state and neo-liberal ideology, and also as a result of popular apathy towards participation in democratic modes of government. Furthermore, development theory has been overshadowed by the spectre of environmental degradation at global level now that the scientific consensus concerning humanity's detrimental impact on the earth's biosphere is well established. The power of community has been invoked by those who view it as a positive force for improving the fortunes of humanity.

The notion of a 'Third Way' represents the clearest articulation of the centrality of community in present-day political deliberations relating to development and modernity, and it symbolises an attempt to move beyond established left- and right-wing ideologies. Associated primarily with Tony Blair's New Labour administration in the UK, where the texts of sociologist Anthony Giddens have formed an underlying influence, the Third Way emerged as a central plank of governments across the developed world around the

turn of the millennium as they sought to adapt social democratic principles to the harsh realities of unfettered global capitalism and looming environmental crises (Giddens, 2001; 2000; 1998). Advocates of the Third Way assimilated the concept of community into their political project, grounded it in communitarian thinking and linked it to ideas such as active citizenship, social capital, civil society and sustainability (Etzioni, 2000; 1998; Putnam, 2000; 1996; Powell and Guerin, 1998; 1997). In doing so, they sought to promulgate a new, normative conception of community.

Two related concepts suffuse this dialogue on community: sustainable development and civil society. Sustainable development is generally conceived of as the need to integrate environmental and social considerations into economic development processes and originated due to uneasiness with dominant paradigms of development. Proponents of the notion identify local communities as one of the most appropriate vehicles for delivering a sustainability agenda (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000; Warburton, 1998). Civil society refers to the realm of organised public life outside of the state and the market, that is, to the range of organisations, groupings and associations that are inspired by communal values (Deakin, 2001). These two concepts have been twinned, and community-based organisations within civil society are visualised as part of a triadic model of sustainable development, operating in partnership with the state and the private sector and acting as a counterbalance to them (Howell and Pearce, 2001). While there are clear differences in the manner in which this has been undertaken in different contexts, the underlying trend is clear: the cultivation of and engagement with the community sector is a major political priority.

Community, therefore, can be conceived of in almost ideological terms and the concept is subscribed to by a range of interests who believe it can rescue modernity from its ills. Community groups based in civil society are at the forefront of endeavours to reinvigorate democracy, as participative forms of governance eclipse long-standing representative structures. Community activism is heralded as the powerhouse in the drive towards more sustainable forms of development and the resolution of environmental problems. The community has become the site for delivery of social services in a more user-friendly and efficient manner than the Welfare State. Social malaise and crime can be addressed, it is argued, by rejuvenating community spirit. Community activism appears as a core tenet in the search for resolutions to the manifold social, economic and environmental problems of post-industrial societies.

There is something of a paradox, however, surrounding the invocation of community-based solutions to such dilemmas. As Hobsbawm (1994, p.389) observed: *“Never was the word ‘community’ used more indiscriminately and emptily than in the decades when communities in the sociological sense became harder to find in real life”*. Notwithstanding the aforementioned emergence of identity-based, virtual and postmodern forms of community, the stability and vitality of community structures in the modern world remains open to question. It might well be contended that calls for a revival of community are fanciful and are not grounded in the reality of lived existence in urban-industrial societies, characterised as they are by social fragmentation and dislocation. Whether or not organised community activism contains the latent potency implied by theorists and political leaders, and whether communities have the capacity to

act in concert with the state and the market to pursue a common sustainable development agenda, are matters which demand closer scrutiny.

Crucially, current debates on community are interspersed with geographical themes. Community has traditionally been associated with place and geographical proximity, but whether this is the case in a globalised world is a point of contention, as place-based communities appear to have been eclipsed by aspatial, identity-based communities (Deakin, 2001). Conversely, there is a perspective which suggests that globalisation actually heightens sense of local identity and attachment to place and has lent impetus to a rediscovery of the relationship between community and locality (O' Riordain, 2001). From a political perspective, the Third Way, allied with theories of sustainability, stress the requirement for decentralisation of decision-making power the local level, thereby placing grassroots community groups at the heart of development processes. Whether the connection between community and place can be reinvigorated, therefore, takes on a great deal of significance in development theory. Taking all of these issues into consideration, this thesis explores the position of place-based community organisations in contemporary development processes at local level.

A number of questions derive from this central concern. What have been the implications for community organisations of this new political focus? How have they responded the state's endeavours to entice them into new systems of governance and how is power distributed within such systems? Is the community sector an equal partner with the state and the private sector in the triadic approach to development? Or is partnership merely a façade formulated by the state to stifle communities as arenas of protest and instead manipulate community organisations for its own ends? These questions must be

placed in a broader theoretical context and Chapter 1 elaborates upon the conceptual foundations of the debate. A range of issues are explored, including the contested nature of development, the genesis of the Third Way and how it has been operationalised, the significance of the notion of governance, the link between community and geography and the increasing sophistication of formal community organisations.

Ireland provides a rich milieu for investigating the research agenda. Reflecting on the rapid transformation of Irish society in the late twentieth century, one commentator remarked: *“Ireland is a more extreme case of a phenomenon that has touched every part of the world: globalisation”* (O’ Toole, 2003, p.3). Although Ireland’s integration into the global economy intensified in the 1960s, it was the Irish experience during the years 1995-2005 that was most remarkable. Economic growth and development surpassed the rest of the world, while the level of growth was unparalleled in the history of the state. The most noteworthy products of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ narrative included population increase, employment growth, a property boom, greater car ownership, completion of major infrastructural projects and inward migration. However, concern was voiced about the weakening of communal values and environmental degradation: O’ Connell (2001, p.7) drew attention to *“a lingering sense of ambiguity and a vague sense of unease, despite the success”* and broached the view that *“the cost of modernisation and economic success and a bland liberal consensus is the loss of identity and character, a sense of who we are”*. These circumstances brought questions regarding the direction of Irish society, and associated matters of community, planning and development, to the forefront of public consciousness.

Against the backdrop of rapid economic change, community as a social and cultural idea has arguably retained its importance in the Irish context. In comparative terms, Ireland has long had a strong sense of place-based community, which can be ascribed to the relative lateness of the process of modernisation and urbanisation, along with the historical influence of organisations like the Catholic Church, the Gaelic Athletic Association and *Muintir na Tire*, who have spatially organised their affairs on the local parish system. In recent times, a European-wide survey found that “*The highest percentage of [voluntary] organisations with a neighbourhood or local community focus are found in the Republic of Ireland*” (Gaskin and Smith, 1995, p.81). The persistence of place-based identities and of voluntary organisations founded to serve their interests provides the Irish state with an interface through which it can readily engage with the community sector. What is more, the Third Way philosophy has unquestionably influenced Irish social policy in this area (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.257-60). How these durable communities have interacted with the politically-loaded vision of community promulgated by the state is the core subject of this thesis.

The research agenda is explored with reference to the voluntary community sector in the East Cork region of Ireland, adjacent to Cork, the Republic’s second-largest city (see Fig. 3.1, p.126). Traditionally a productive agricultural area, it has not remained immune from the changes that have swept the country. By virtue of its proximity to Cork City and its Harbour, its human geography has been indelibly altered since the 1990s. The pharmaceutical industry, established in the region as far back as the 1960s, deepened its presence and was complemented by newer technology companies (Brunt, 1998, pp.21-24). Major infrastructural developments, such as the East Cork Parkway and the Jack

Lynch Tunnel, made East Cork more accessible from the city. As a consequence, development migrated from the south and west of the city to the east: this was reinforced by the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) 2001-2020, which earmarked East Cork for substantial residential and industrial development (Atkins et al., 2001). Areas of East Cork close to the city experienced above-average population growth in the past fifteen years, allied with substantial housing construction. Nonetheless, parts of East Cork were less affected by development pressure and remained predominantly rural in character. East Cork, therefore, presents a variety of geographical milieus in a relatively compact area.

Chapter 3 sets out the overall social and economic context within which community organisations operate in contemporary East Cork. It sketches the genesis of Ireland's integration into the global economy, tracing its roots to a paradigm shift in official thinking in the late 1950s and, more recently, to the advent of social partnership in the late 1980s. Developments in East Cork are scrutinised in more detail, with particular attention paid to demographic issues, housing and infrastructure. There is a key focus on physical planning and how this imposed an official vision for the development of the Greater Cork region through a series of strategic land use and transportation plans dating back to the 1970s. The most recent of these, the aforementioned CASP, has had, and will continue to have, major ramifications for the communities being studied.

Chapter 4 addresses the manner in which community sector within the study area adapted to the process of modernisation. Communities across East Cork witnessed major changes to their physical, social and economic environments. It was not surprising that

they sought some input into the nature of these changes, and voluntary community groups acted as conduits for local opinion. The persistence of these place-based communities and the ways in which they define themselves is the initial concern. The history and structure of local community groups is then charted and details of how they have assumed complex legal and organisational structures and increasingly sophisticated *modus operandi* are spelled out. Factors that motivated people to involve themselves in voluntary community organisations are investigated and consideration is given to the mounting difficulties community organisations faced in attracting members.

Chapter 5 delves deeper into the relationship between community and state in modern Ireland. The enthusiasm with which social policy makers embraced concepts such as civil society and social capital is explained. A key document examined is the government's White Paper on the Voluntary and Community Sector, published in 2000, which acknowledged the significance of the sector and pledged to give it a formal role in public policy making (Government of Ireland, 2000a). The emergence of partnerships at local level is critiqued; these local development groups brought stakeholders together at grassroots level and utilised EU funding under programmes such as LEADER and URBAN to implement local development strategies. The period since 2000 saw a host of additional measures put in place to involve communities in social policy formulation and implementation in local planning and development. Irish Local Authorities underwent reform, and the establishment of City and County Development Boards aimed to bring civil society into the local decision-making process.

The key issues raised in Chapters 3-5 are elaborated upon through a series of case studies of specific communities in East Cork in Chapter 6. An explicit case study

methodology was employed and is detailed in Chapter 2. This approach utilised a blend of techniques, including interviews, documentary analysis and participant observation. The case study approach was especially suited to geographical research and to considerations of issues of power relations and development. Furthermore, the case studies selected concentrated upon various aspects of the relationship between community, state and private sector in the following geographical locales.

Glanmire lies on the fringes of Cork City and developed into a satellite town over the past thirty-five years, with the population increasing to over 12,000 by 2000, mainly through the development of large private housing estates (see Fig 6.2, p.353). In its local development plan, produced in 2000, the Glanmire Area Community Association (GACA) identified the lack of social facilities and services, the absence of a sense of community identity and the non-existence of a local urban council as key issues in local development (GACA, 2000). The process of devising this development plan and efforts at its implementation is examined.

Lying just to the east of Glanmire, Glounthaune differs in character in that the nature of settlement leaned towards one-off housing rather than estate-style development, allowing the village to retain a more rural character (see Fig 6.3, p.374). It is generally perceived as an affluent, middle-class residential location. In 2002, Glounthaune Community Association (GCA) embarked on a unique community initiative based on the concept of social capital in an effort to address malaise in local voluntary activity. The Community Timebank project, which received significant financial support from local industry, drew explicitly upon communitarian philosophy and principles.

Carrigtwohill was, until recently, a small village in Cork's rural hinterland (see Fig 6.4, p.392). Its strategic location on the main N25 route, combined with the completion of a road bypass of the village in 1994, precipitated unprecedented change. In 2000, private developers announced a proposal to construct 1,600 new homes in Carrigtwohill, causing a great deal of concern in the local community. Carrigtwohill Community Council expressed reservations about the proposed scale and pace of development, along with the lack of social service provision, in its submissions on local planning affairs. The case study here reflects upon community involvement in the statutory planning process and on the relationship between the local community group and private developer interests.

Midleton is the largest town in East Cork and is centrally located within the region (see Fig 6.5, p.414). It has an important function as a retail and services centre for its agricultural hinterland, while industry in the town is chiefly based upon food processing. It too has experienced substantial development and population growth since the mid-1990s. The town contains several local authority housing estates, and the focus here is on Midleton Community Forum, established in 1997 to promote an approach to social exclusion based upon community development theory in three of these estates. The Forum received substantial state support towards social services delivery and its participation in this model of local development forms the core of this case study.

Fieldwork was undertaken in two further study areas, both situated in a more rural context and, although case studies are not presented for these locations, the data collected does inform Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Ballycotton is a coastal fishing village approximately 12 miles south-east of Midleton, with a population in 2006 of the order of 400. Proposals

to redevelop the pier for economic and tourism purposes were put forward by Ballycotton Development Company in 1999. However, efforts to study this issue encountered unforeseen problems. Dungourney and Clonmult is a sparsely populated rural area in the uplands north-east of Midleton, where dependence on agriculture remains high. Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council was less active than the other community groups and there was no specific issue that could be examined through a case study.

While the areas and voluntary groups under investigation are in relatively close geographical proximity to one another, the contexts are different enough to justify the inclusion of all groups. Each voluntary group examined has a different history and structure; some were affiliated to the rural development organisation *Muintir na Tire*, while others adopted an approach to their work based on community development theory, centred on notions of empowerment and inclusion. Each organisation also reflected, through their work, the social class structure in their locality, which varied considerably between urban, suburban and rural locales. These areas, therefore, serve as appropriate laboratories for an empirical investigation of the linkage between community, modernity and development.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to investigate, analyse and explain why and how the concept of community enjoys such an exalted position in contemporary political and academic deliberations regarding development and modernity. An overarching line of reasoning inherent in much of the theoretical development literature contends that a vibrant civil society, rooted in a local community context, empowered through participatory governance, harnessing voluntary activism and committed to sustainable development principles, can provide a normative model for societal development and thereby help to remedy the ills of post-industrial societies (Ife, 2002; Deakin, 2001, pp.16-17; Prugh, Costanza and Daly, 2000, p.xv; Munck, 1999, pp.206-7; Warburton, 1998). What is more, this deductive theoretical prescription has become an underlying element of public policy programmes across the developed world, yet is arguably remains theoretically weak. It must, therefore, be subjected to critical reflection and compared with the actuality of existing places and communities. A geographical analysis can bring fresh perspectives to bear on this discussion.

A review of the academic literature concerning the themes of community, modernity and development must take a number of factors into consideration. Firstly, the

volume of material that has been produced on these topics can appear daunting and, in order not to be overwhelmed by the scale of the literature, one must be selective in the choice of texts. Consequently, this review concentrates primarily on theoretical and conceptual literature. Secondly, apart from geography, interest in the questions sketched out in the introduction extends across a number of the social sciences, including sociology, development studies, political science, planning and environmental studies. An interdisciplinary approach, therefore, has much to offer and, in any case, is arguably unavoidable. Moreover, a striking feature of the literature across all disciplines is the recurrence of the fundamental geographical themes of locality, scale and place, indicating that geography itself can contribute to the broader interdisciplinary debate.

Thirdly, in spite of, or perhaps deriving from, their widespread appeal, there is little evidence of theoretical consensus on concepts such as community, civil society, development and sustainability. On the contrary, these terms have been interpreted from a number of perspectives and their substantive meanings are widely contested (Loughran, 2003, p.4; Eden, 2000, p.111; Alexander, 1998, p.2). In addition, their significance in public as well as academic discourse means that political interests have appropriated them to serve their ends and are continually jostling to impose their interpretations. Finally, almost all debate within the social sciences of late has taken place in the wider context of and, in fact, has spawned a growing reflection on the purpose of academic research and uncertainty regarding the value of scientific knowledge (Eden, 1998; Beck, 1992). Critical attention has been directed at the relationship between science, state policy and public debate (O' Riordain, 1998). It is clear that former certainties about the purity and objectivity of scientific knowledge no longer prevail.

The review commences by situating the debate on community within the broader framework of development theory. It outlines how different interpretations of development, such as neo-liberalism and post-development, prevailed during the 1980s and 1990s, but gave way to the notion of sustainable development, which has become the dominant paradigm and which places strong emphasis on local communal activism. This new understanding of development has informed the Third Way and the advent of this political philosophy reflects efforts to chart a new direction for modernity. The context for the genesis of the Third Way and the centrality of community and civil society to progressive politics are explicated in section three. In section four the themes of civil society and community are explored in greater depth. The manner in which communitarianism, a particular interpretation of community, has been favoured by policy-makers is explained. Radical views of the purpose of community activism which stand in opposition to the communitarian worldview are also scrutinised.

The political infatuation with community can only be comprehended in the context of the transition from government to governance. This has brought communities into structures of power and decision making and section five ponders ideas such as partnership and participation, while also highlighting critical perspectives and the significance of participatory planning. The implications of the politicisation of community for the organisational nature of the voluntary community sector are explicated in the penultimate section. Here it is shown that the deepening relationship between community organisations and the state has fundamentally altered the nature of community activism. Finally, an explicitly geographical focus is brought to bear. The discourse of communities and development is replete with geographical themes including

global-local relations, the significance accorded to the local arena, decentralisation of decision-making and the persistence of place-based communities. These spatial features of the debate inform the overall research agenda.

1.2 Understanding Development

1.2.1 Discourses of Development

In recent human history there have been few notions more powerful and pervasive, or more closely connected with modernity, than the idea of development. Yet the twilight of the twentieth century was epitomised by a mounting sense of crisis surrounding the project of modernity as social and economic progress was destabilised by the surfacing of new social, political and environmental dilemmas. This section reviews development theory over the past two decades. It initially outlines the historical origins and philosophical features of the concept of development. It briefly alludes to the triumph of neo-liberalism following the collapse of communism, before probing the diffusion of post-development in the early 1990s, a school of thought which represented an attack on the very foundations of development theory. The post-development literature is itself critiqued and the resilience of the idea of development is explained with reference to the emergence of sustainable development.

Development represents the conflation of an array of subordinate ideas and concepts, amongst them progress, instrumental rationality, scientific and technological advancement, economic growth and planning and it signifies humanity's desire to shape and control the natural world for its own material benefit. The historical origins of development discourse can be traced to 18th century Europe, specifically Enlightenment

philosophy and classical economic theory, as well as the configuration of a number of forces, namely the emergence of the modern economy, the modern state and modern science (Tucker, 1999, p.4; Schuurman, 1993, pp.23-26; Coleman, 1990). The basic and straightforward theory of modernisation and development which emerged at this juncture subsequently migrated from the philosophical to the political and public realms and has persisted and spread for two centuries (Shanin, 1997, p.66).

Since then, the idea of development “*occupies the centre of an incredibly powerful semantic constellation. There is nothing in modern mentality comparable to it as a force guiding thought and behaviour*” (Esteva, 1992, p.8). According to the discourse of modernity and development, history became a programme whereby societies moved from a state of barbarism, chaos and poverty to one of civilization, order and wealth (Shanin, 1997, pp.65-66). Central to this new conceptualisation of history was the idea of progress, referred to by Sbert (1992, p.195) as “*the most ubiquitous notion in the formation of modern thought*” and by Shanin (1997, p.65) as “*the major philosophical legacy left by the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries*”. Adherents of development and modernisation presented progress as the manifest destiny of all societies, as something not only necessary, but inevitable (Slater, 1995, pp.65-67; Esteva, 1992, p.9). It is not surprising that this idea gained currency at a time when European societies were encountering other societies to a greater degree than ever. Progress, civilization and modernisation were used to justify the European worldview and its dissemination through colonial expansion (Tucker, 1999, p.5).

Development was underpinned by notions of a linear trajectory of progress, a controllable universe, intentional social engineering and successive improvement in the

human condition (Ikeotuoyne, 2002, p.71). In order to operationalise the project of development, strategies of control were required and the production and deployment of knowledge was central to this. The hegemonic status of the idea development from the late 18th century onwards can, therefore, be connected to the birth of institutional social sciences, the expansion of state administration and the genesis of physical and social planning, all of which formed an organising framework for societal development. Critiques of development have drawn upon the ideas of Michel Foucault to examine this multifaceted relationship between development, knowledge, planning and state power (Diawara, 2000; Santos, 1999, pp.33-34; Schuurman, 1993; Escobar, 1992, p.133).

Foucault argued that the emergence of the social sciences and the production of scientific knowledge were linked to the elite's desire to monitor and regulate human behaviour. The Enlightenment was the first period that humans, as individuals, became the object of detailed scientific analysis. Knowledge generated by the state and academic institutions facilitated progress; geography, for instance, was intimately linked to 19th century colonial expansion by European powers. Foucault's concept of discourse is, however, perhaps his most significant contribution to aiding an understanding of development. Discourse refers to power as a discursive system, or "*all inclusive language games which are 'productive' of knowledge*" (Delanty, 2003b, p.124). The concept explains how dominant worldviews prevail and how this is connected to both knowledge and power. Development can clearly be understood as a discourse; it offered a hegemonic, unchallenged and homogenising metaphor for interpreting the world and humanity's place in it (Delanty, 2003b; Strathern, 2002; Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000, pp.64-67; Rabinow, 1984).

Development, then, has always been intimately tied to knowledge and to political power. According to Slater (1995, p.76):

In today's discussion of the significance and dispositions of development, the politics of the production and deployment of knowledge has become an increasingly pivotal question.

What is more, the institutionalisation of scientific disciplines and knowledge production was closely connected to the ascendancy of the state during the 19th century. The modern state has acted as the guarantor of progress and development. Its principal objective, therefore, has been the efficient administration and management of its territory, ensuring peace, order and security so that the economic sphere could flourish and prosper (Kothari, 1997, p.143). Nandy (1992, pp.268-270) contends that the modern nation-state has always possessed strong ideological links with the doctrine of development, while Shanin (1997, p.68) commented that: "*The most significant 'material' representation and instrument of the idea of progress has been the modern state*". Furthermore, the authority of the state was rooted in scientific and technological expertise, with science and state power reinforcing one another.

Intertwined with the state's role as guarantor of development was the requirement to gather information about society and assemble plans for orderly development. The consolidation of power within state institutions was, therefore, paralleled by the genesis of social and physical planning. This necessitated the formation of a progressively more complex bureaucracy whose task was to gather, process and analyse information in order to formulate policies for economic and social development. As a result:

Planning techniques and practices have been central to development since its inception. As the application of scientific and technical knowledge to the public domain, planning lent legitimacy to, and fuelled hopes about, the development enterprise (Escobar, 1992, p.132).

Planning gave the state the means to engineer and direct social change, but its critics have pointed out that it also made it possible for the state to dominate and intervene in the lives of its citizens. Furthermore, due to its dependence on scientific knowledge, planning has been exposed as highly ideological, concerned with nurturing the developmental needs of hegemonic interests, rather than as a value-neutral and objective exercise to promote the common good (Nandy, 1992, pp.268-271).

All modern political philosophies have subscribed to the discourse of development and their success or failure has been predicated on achieving developmental goals. The idea has been “*hailed by the IMF and the Vatican alike, by revolutionaries carrying their guns as well as field experts carrying their Samsonites*” (Sachs, 1992, p.4). Strategies of modernisation, industrialisation and social engineering underscored communist, liberal capitalist and social democratic models. The twentieth century witnessed acute struggles between these competing ideologies, yet the notion of improved material well-being for all humanity has underpinned all of them and remained unquestioned. Along the political spectrum, there was little disagreement on the fundamental end point of development; there were merely differing views about the most appropriate means of reaching this goal. At the dawn of the 21st century, one observer maintained that the quickest way for any public representative to ensure political oblivion

was to make utterances contrary to the prevailing paradigm of improvement and progress for all (Wallerstein, 1999).

Following the demise of the Soviet bloc in the early 1990s, it appeared that the neo-liberal perspective on development reigned supreme. Neo-liberal prophets, such as Fukuyama, confidently proclaimed the end of ideology and, with it, the ‘end of history’ (Hart, 2002, p.812). Capitalism had emerged victorious from the struggle with state-centred socialism and was considered the only viable form of economic organisation (Berthoud, 1992, p.70). The free-market policies of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations had been vindicated and the concept of interventionist development by the state became politically redundant. This standpoint was in the ascendancy throughout the 1980s and early 1990s among international development institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, as well the US and British governments and came to be christened the Washington Consensus (Hart, 2001, p.651; Fine, 1999).

Neo-liberalism presented a one-dimensional vision that accorded primacy to the market as the sole guiding principle of social organisation, which was nowhere more succinctly expressed than by Thatcher’s statement that: “*There is no such thing as society*” (cited in Strathern, 2000, p.38). Through its endorsement of deregulation, privatisation, fiscal rectitude and trade liberalisation, the neo-liberal agenda sought to remove all barriers to the operation of the free market and the spread of capitalism (Reboratti, 1999, p.213). This prescription would, it was contended, spread the benefits of economic growth to all areas of the globe and all sectors of the population. Furthermore, it sought to relegate social democratic policies to a marginal position, chiefly by rolling back the safety net of the Welfare State and slashing public provision

of health, education and other social services (Bourdieu, 1998, pp.25-35; Schuurman, 1993, p.11). The triumph of neo-liberalism, however, was by no means universally celebrated and dissenting voices began to call into question the very foundations of development theory.

1.2.2 Post-Development

Notwithstanding the hegemonic status of neo-liberalism, disquiet and opposition became evident during the early 1990s. In his introduction to *The Development Dictionary*, for instance, Wolfgang Sachs (1992b, p.1) stated baldly that:

The idea of development stands like a ruin on the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work. Moreover, the historical conditions which catapulted the idea into prominence have vanished: development has become outdated. But above all, the hopes and desires which made the idea fly, are now exhausted: development has grown obsolete.

A harsher dismissal would be difficult to find, yet Sachs was not alone among social scientists in his condemnation of development; the 1990s brought forth a growing body of critical and often polemical work (Munck and O' Hearn, 1999; Rahmena and Bawtree, 1997; Sachs, 1992a). Development, which had provided the foundation for human endeavour for over two centuries, came under relentless attack. Disillusionment with the concept originated from the so-called impasse of development theory in the 1980s and signalled a mood among some scholars that Modernisation, Dependency, World Systems

and Neo-liberal theories of development were conceptually and practically defunct (Schuurman, 1993, p.1).

This radical post-development literature was firmly grounded in postmodern conceptions of discourse, power, and knowledge and sought to undermine the validity of the idea of development. It attempted this by tracing the historical roots of the concept from the Enlightenment to its consolidation in the aftermath of World War II in the form of Modernisation theory and onward to the present-day ascendancy of neo-liberalism, at each step endeavouring to discredit its philosophical and theoretical foundations. Influenced by postmodern social theory, post-development sought to excavate the archaeology of the development idea and to deconstruct its myths and metaphors, presenting it as an ideologically constructed discourse rather than a historically immanent process.

In outlining the philosophical basis of development, the post-development critique sought to expose it as a specific creation of powerful elite interests that was subsequently imposed on the rest of the world and not as a natural, pre-ordained, historically inevitable path. Detractors condemned the universal, evolutionary and reductionist metaphors of the development paradigm. Post-development literature contended that development should not be presented as a universal enterprise applicable in all spatial and social contexts. Furthermore, it perceived the notion that all societies should aim to evolve towards or emulate the stage reached by the developed world as prejudiced and profoundly Eurocentric (Tucker, 1999, p.2; Shiva, 1997, p.161; Schuurman, 1993, p.26; Esteva, 1992; Sbert, 1992). Finally, the post-development position rejected the manner in which the development paradigm reduced all non-developed, non-European societies to a

traditional, backward state, arguing that this was stereotypical and ignored the diversity of non-European ways of life. As Tucker (1999, p.8) commented:

Discourses of progress, development and modernization are constructed on the basis of the false polarities of 'traditional' and 'modern'. These temporal metaphors used to conceptualise otherness and distance in historical time are transposed on to spatial realities and used to designate a normative development trajectory.

He went on to state that these myths of development need to be deconstructed as a prerequisite to overcoming the theoretical impasse and creating alternative visions.

Post-development rejected the primacy accorded to economic growth and the market system in mainstream development theory and this rebuff was informed by the profoundly unequal spatial and social nature of development. Powerless people and places were largely excluded from the process of modernisation and were, instead, exploited by the powerful as sources of cheap labour and raw materials. This process commenced during the colonial era when European countries expropriated Latin America, Africa and large parts of Asia, often through the use of brute force, to facilitate their own development. Capitalism created core-periphery cleavages between, on the one hand, the affluent Western world of Europe and North America and, on the other, the colonised nations of the Third World (Johnston, 1996, pp.69-71; Sachs, 1992, p.3).

In addressing the relationship between development and community, post-development literature asserted that community, a locally-based, cultural phenomenon, cannot be reconciled with the homogenising vision of modernisation and development (Ikeotuoye, 2002, p.70). This arises because the values that underpin a sense of

community, such as mutual aid, reciprocity and solidarity, are antithetical to the competitive, individualistic values inculcated by market-led development (Berthoud, 1992, pp.84-85). Latouche (1993, p.40; p.102) supported this perspective, stating that *“economic growth creates maladjusted people”* and that within the ethics of modernity *“it is not demanded of individuals that they take care of others”*. Modernity was more concerned with personal freedom rather than collective interests or equality, and social change since the 18th century was directed towards individualism (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p.22; Coleman, 1990, pp.300-301). In responding to the demise of community, post-development called for a return to the local community context as an arena for political action and socio-economic organisation.

1.2.3 The limits of Post-Development

Although the post-development perspective provided some positive interventions and lucid insights into the debate on development theory, latterly it has been subjected to numerous criticisms. Perhaps the most significant admonishment was the fact that while deconstructing the development paradigm, post-development failed to offer any valid theoretical alternative. It was accused of being politically evasive, nihilistic, directionless and self-indulgent, of leading development studies down a theoretical dead end while having little or nothing to offer in practical terms (Blaikie, 2000, p.1033; Pieterse, 1998, p.361). Such criticisms often came from those in the field of development practice, who argued that the rejection of development offered no succour to those who continued to suffer from poverty and exclusion (Diawara, 2000, p.365). The pessimistic tone of much of the literature indicated that many post-development writers in fact saw no clear

prescription for progressive action, a fact related to their rejection of the imposition of any type of normative value system (Blaikie, 2000, p.1035).

Some post-development writing did make references to a reconfiguration power away from the global level and towards new social movements based in local grassroots communities and of reinvigorating a sense of community in which social and environmental concerns would be accorded the same weight as economic ones (Douthwaite, 1999; Munck, 1999, pp.201-207; Esteva and Prakesh, 1997; Dryzek in Johnston, 1996, pp.139-141). However, this remedy was criticised for being theoretically weak, for relying upon an overly romantic conception of local communities, and for falsely assuming that new social movements were unanimously opposed to development. As Pieterse (1998, p.364) pointed out:

The quasi-revolutionary posturing in post-development reflects both a hunger for a new era and a nostalgia politics of romanticism, glorification of the local, grassroots community with conservative overtones (sic).

Post-development failed to consider the existence of differential power relations and discourses at local level and underrated the complexity of development processes (Diawara, 2000, p.365).

One of the more ironic criticisms of post-development was the fact that, like the development discourse that it sought to emasculate, it advanced a reductionist, monolithic and selective argument. The conception of power employed was crude and simplistic, only examining the operation of power from the top downwards. Furthermore, capitalism was presented as a monolithic force sweeping across the globe and insufficient attention was paid to the differentiated spatial impacts of capitalist development (Hart, 2001,

p.651). Successful development interventions were often ignored, as were critical perspectives on ethnic hostility, persecution and oppression of women in many traditional societies. The postmodern literature, therefore, stood accused of being highly abstract and highly selective in its targets (Blaikie, 2000, p.1039). Diawara (2000, p.367) echoed these sentiments by advocating more fieldwork and greater interaction with local knowledge as the basis for a reconstruction of development theory.

Post development did not bring about the demise of development as a concept and, on the contrary, at the dawn of the new millennium “*development is back on the agenda with a vengeance*” (Hart, 2001, p.649). The appeal of the idea of development endured. The question remained, however, that if post-development was undermined, did this pave the way for the triumph of neo-liberal dogma, or was there a viable alternative understanding of development. Fine (2002, p.796) noted at the time that the “*current intellectual climate marks a dual retreat from the extremes of neoliberalism and postmodernism*”. Indisputably, there was and is significant resistance to the hegemonic neo-liberal development paradigm and this created an opening for the advent of middle-of-the-road, compromise theory of development. It is in this context that the emergence of the concept of sustainable development must be understood.

1.2.4 Sustainable development

Sustainable development has surfaced as a central concept guiding academic research and political decision-making over the past twenty years and it initially materialised as a response to the prominence attained by ecological issues in political debate since the 1970s. This culminated in the publication of *Our Common Future*

(1987) by the UN Commission on Environment and Development, more commonly known as the Brundtland Report (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000, p.10). *Our Common Future* laid the foundations for the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, at which world leaders came together to produce and endorse Agenda 21, a proposition for achieving sustainable development into the 21st century. The international profile and political momentum underlying the concept have been maintained by the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change in 1997 and by the second Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). This section outlines the main features of the sustainability discourse before discussing the disputes over the interpretation and implementation of the concept.

Sustainable development has experienced a spectacular rise to occupy a position as “*the dominant global discourse of ecological concern*” (Dryzek, 1997, p.123). Its influence has become pervasive and “*political leaders and public administrators now routinely justify policies, projects, and initiatives in terms of the contribution they make to realizing sustainable development*” (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000, p.1). Furthermore, it is idea that attempts to facilitate consensus among the varying views in the development debate, acting as “*a rallying point of public debate, knowledge building practices and political strategies to cope with a series of unprecedented world problems caused by major transformation processes*” (Becker et al., 1999, pp.1-2). Clearly, it is also a holistic and integrating discourse that seeks to address a range of issues (Dryzek, 1997, p.121). However, if one examines the intricacies of the debate, it is apparent that sustainability is a highly contested concept that has been subjected to a diversity of interpretations.

Firstly, though, it is necessary to outline the contours of sustainable development on which general agreement exists. The argument for sustainable development is grounded in a realisation that:

the legitimate developmental aspirations of the world's peoples cannot be met by all countries following the growth path already taken by industrialised countries, for such actions would overburden the world's ecosystems (Dryzek, 1997, p.129).

It has been estimated that ten times the earth's available resources would be required to provide the planet's population with the standard of material wealth currently enjoyed by inhabitants of the developed countries (Redclift, 1999, p.71). Clearly, this is not achievable, yet the underdeveloped countries remain wracked by poverty and suffer from the unequal distribution of global wealth. Sustainable development seeks to balance the need for resource conservation and environmental protection with the necessity to create wealth to address pressing social problems, maintaining that these two goals are not incompatible (Adams, 1995, p.359).

However, this is about as far as the consensus extends. One of the key features of sustainable development is that it lacks clear, workable and adequate definition. Indeed, it is almost customary for those writing on the topic to refer at the outset to the lack of conceptual clarification (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000; Becker, Jahn and Steiss, 1999; Reboratti, 1999; Adams, 1995). Sustainable development, as Eden (2000, p.111) points out, is a *“slippery concept”* and *“the only thing about sustainability that academics seem to agree upon is that there is no clear meaning or definition”*. Indeed, some would

argue that it now constitutes little more than a rhetorical catchphrase used by politicians and others without consideration for any deeper meaning (Reboratti, 1999, pp.207-209).

A number of reasons can be postulated for the lack of clarity regarding the meaning of sustainable development. Firstly, it is a highly ambitious concept that attempts to embrace a huge variety of concerns. *“Sustainable development ought to be recognised as a concept that necessarily covers all facets of development”* (Reboratti, 1999, p.213). It seeks to address patterns of production and consumption, resource use, population issues, social justice and equity, global environmental problems, transport, housing and nutrition (Becker, 1999; Sachs, 1999; Dryzek, 1997). It envisages interventions at a range of geographical scales, from the global to the local, attends to the problems of both the industrialised North and the underdeveloped South, and can be understood *“as a common challenge faced by all nations”* (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000, p.11). The range of issues under the umbrella of sustainable development is not exhaustive, reflecting the complexity and interconnectedness of the problems it seeks to address and it is hardly surprising, therefore, that succinct definitions remain scarce.

Secondly, sustainable development is essentially a normative concept that incorporates subjective value judgements (Sachs, 1998, p.10). It is ultimately qualitative rather than quantitative and, as a result, it can and has been defined and socially constructed differently in varying political and cultural contexts (Acsehrad, 1999, pp.49-51; Redclift, 1999, pp.59-60). Indeed, it has been argued that a universal definition would be undesirable and impossible to implement, as sustainability demands that societal development trajectories should be inherently diverse. Giddens (1998, p.56) contends that it *“is more of a guiding principle than a precise formula”*. It differs from

conventional development theories in that it does not seek to impose a universal, linear model of progress (Becker, Jahn and Steiss, 1999, pp.5-7).

Finally, the fact that sustainability has garnered such widespread support has created a major battle over its interpretation. Actors in the development process are continually seeking to define the concept in terms favourable to themselves. In this regard, it has often been compared to democracy, justice and other universal ideas in that it is “*essentially contestable*” (Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 2000; Dryzek, 1997). It is a “*constant discursive field*” (Becker, Jahn and Steiss, 1999, p.1) and the struggle to control the interpretation of sustainability is an ongoing one. Nonetheless, as in the conventional development discourse, issues of power and knowledge are central in this battle. As Acselrad (1999, p.51) suggests:

Those in dominant positions in the social space are also in dominant positions in the field of the production and representation of ideas. If state and business – hegemonic forces in the developmentist (sic) project – incorporate the critique of unsustainability of the development model, they also occupy a privileged position to provide the very notion of sustainability with content.

The debate on sustainable development, therefore, has been characterised by a semantic of conflict as contradictory demands are put forward. For some it validates the continuation of conventional, growth-oriented development, while for other it calls into question the entire edifice of modernisation (Becker, 1999, p.287).

O’ Riordain and Voisey (1998, p.24) point out that “*the sustainability transition is plagued by a clash of interpretations regarding the purpose of sustainable development*”. For the purposes of simplicity, two broad but contrasting viewpoints can be elucidated in

the spectrum of perspectives on sustainable development. On the one hand the technocentrist view, often referred to by its opponents as weak sustainability, or ecological modernisation, represents the interpretation of governments and international institutions and is favoured by the political mainstream. In contrast, the eco-centric viewpoint, or strong sustainability, calls for a more fundamental re-evaluation of developmental goals and significant transformation of economic and political systems. It finds support amongst those of a more radical political persuasion (Douthwaite, 1999, p.159; Dryzek, 1997; Johnston, 1996, pp.8-9; Adams, 1995, p.369).

Theoretical debates in the field of development studies have been informed by political circumstances and have, in turn, generated political responses. Disquiet with linear theories of development, such as Modernisation theory, and with more radical approaches founded on neo-liberal economics led to the resistance in the form of post-development. This body of work was itself subject to criticism owing to its pessimistic and nihilistic tone. However, the emergence of ecological issues onto the political agenda forced a reappraisal of the foundations of development theory. This gave rise to the concept of sustainable development, which had become the dominant paradigm at the turn of the millennium. From a political perspective, sustainability has found most approval within a refashioned form of social democracy known as the Third Way.

1.3The Third Way

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 terminated the debate on whether capitalism or socialism was the most effective form of economic organisation (Deakin, 2001, p.xvi). It also seriously undermined the more moderate expressions of

leftism, particularly social democracy, in Europe and elsewhere. Faced with the fact that there seemed to be no viable alternative to capitalism and, with neo-liberal politics in the ascendancy, social democrats were forced into a reappraisal of their political project. Many aspects of conventional social democratic theory were called into question, among them the Welfare State, while new issues were emerging onto the wider political stage, most notably economic globalisation, the ecological crisis and public disaffection with the political system. It was in this context that the concept of a 'Third Way' began to gain currency.

Giddens (1998, p.26), with whom the Third Way is most closely associated, explained that it provided:

a framework of thinking and policy-making that seeks to adapt social democracy to a world which has changed fundamentally over the past two or three decades. It is a third way in the sense that it is an attempt to transcend both old-style social democracy and neoliberalism.

Even prior to this description, policies grounded in the Third Way approach were being implemented across the globe and during the 1990s social democratic administrations came to power in the US, the UK, the Netherlands, France and Italy. Giddens, indeed, was a confidant of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his self-declared aim was to endow the New Labour government with a solid theoretical foundation. This section will examine the context that gave rise to the Third Way, before considering how this context informs its most salient characteristics.

Giddens' project was born out of the belief that, despite the demise of the left, many of the values that drove socialism and social democracy "*remain intrinsic to the*

good life that it is the point of social and economic development to create” (Giddens, 1998, p.1). The Third Way retained faith in the fundamental direction of modernity, development and political idealism. It did not share with post-development intellectuals the view that the idea of progress was outmoded, nor did it agree with the postmodern claim that subjectivity and relativism encumbered progressive politics. Yet it was hostile to the negative social and environmental implications of rapacious free-market capitalism and sought to counter the dominance of neo-liberalism (Giddens, 1998, p.15). However, in order to advance their agenda, advocates of the Third Way had to face up to and address a number of challenges.

Firstly, globalisation has become one of the defining catchphrases of the contemporary era. Not only is capitalism now largely unopposed by alternative forms of economic organisation, but the interconnectedness of the global economy has intensified. Capital now moves around the globe more easily, more rapidly and in greater quantities than ever before and the power and wealth of transnational corporations has proliferated. However, it would be a mistake to consider globalisation merely in economic terms and it has also impacted upon culture, politics and the flow of information. The massive growth in communications technology and international media is evidence of this. Consequently, it has implications for the everyday lives of billions of individuals as *“human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place”* (Scholte in O’ Sullivan, 2006, p.16).

The key point about globalisation is that all parts of the world can now be affected immediately and directly by distant events (Giddens, 1998, p.31). However, different places can react in different ways to the effects of globalisation. The phenomenon,

therefore, should not be equated with homogenisation; if anything the opposite is the case and local identities have been rejuvenated as a result of deeper contact with the outside world and cities and regions attempt to draw attention to their distinctiveness (O' Riordain, 2001, p.ix). The challenge for national governments in the global era is how to equip themselves to deal with a rapidly shifting and uncertain world. This is especially pertinent given that political power is being transferred upwards to global economic and political institutions, such as the UN, the IMF, and the WTO and downwards to regions, cities, and localities that are becoming more assertive in determining the direction of their own development (Holmes, 2009; Giddens, 2000, pp.122-124).

Promoters of the Third Way have also had to resolve the problem of political agency and consider how their progressive programme can be implemented. This undertaking has been made more testing by the rising popular disaffection with conventional political processes which has characterised the latter half of the twentieth century. This phenomenon is evinced by declining voter turnout in elections, falling membership of political parties and trade unions across the developed world, and wide-ranging political apathy (Giddens, 1998, p.51; Tam, 1998). It is, therefore, increasingly difficult for leaders to motivate the electorate around a specific political programme or ideological position. Furthermore, the intensification of globalisation has hampered the ability of national governments to address economic concerns and has threatened the power of the nation state. Supranational institutions such as the EU have assumed greater political power, but appear to some to lack democratic accountability.

As society has become more disparate and diverse, contemporary politics has been typified by a multitude special interest groups, some of them opposed to or

competing with one another, each one jostling to have their voice heard on the political stage (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.310). Beck (1997; 1998) developed the notion of sub-politics to provide a conceptual understanding of this phenomenon. The old institutions of politics have lost their power and credibility. *“Politics breaks open and erupts beyond the formal responsibilities and hierarchies”* (Beck, 1997, p.100). Self-organised, extra-parliamentary groups and associations of ordinary citizens dictate the agenda; such organisations are not linked to social class or political parties. They were, for instance, instrumental in bring the environmental issue to the attention of the ruling elite and are also prominent in the international peace and women’s movements (Korten, 2000). For those endeavouring to promote an all-encompassing perspective such as the Third Way, getting one’s message across in this multidimensional cacophony proves complicated.

Problems of political agency and the emergence of sub-politics can be linked to the shifting nature of social solidarity in developed societies and the related issue of individualisation. In the pre-modern era, social solidarity was maintained through the tribe, clan or peasant community. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nationality and social class formed the bases of collective identity, but in the global era these markers of group identity are no longer as significant and in advanced societies have, in fact, broken down (Beck, 1997). It follows, therefore, that *“social solidarity can’t be guaranteed by the top-down action of the state or by appeal to tradition”* (Giddens, 1998, p.37). New forms of social solidarity have emerged and they are founded upon a new relationship between the individual and society.

The new dynamic between the individual and society is defined by the experience of individualisation, a concept which should not be confused with freedom or with self-

centredness. Instead, it refers to the fact that each person must navigate their way through a complex social context and carve out their own individuality from a myriad of choices. Whereas in the past people had little choice about the class or community they were born into, in the present day identity is chosen, not inherited. One's biography and identity becomes a self-determined, do-it-yourself project (Beck, 1997). As a result:

Communal spirit can no longer be ordained from the top down, but must instead be freed up by questioning and brought about in struggling through individual and biographical problems (Beck, 1998, p.35).

New social networks and movements that have originated as a consequence of individualisation are more fluid and heterogeneous and individuals may subscribe to a multitude of identities. One of the political outcomes of this is that old allegiances to the nation-state are diluted.

The Welfare State was one of the most cherished accomplishments of social democracy in the post-War era, yet the Third Way seeks to address some of the deficiencies of this system. Dependency and the appearance of the urban underclass have been amongst the more unwanted side-effects of welfare provision. In addition, the neo-liberal right has used these problems to undermine their opponents on the left, while at the same time using every opportunity to slash social expenditure. Consequently, reform of the welfare system, along with an emphasis on the so-called new mixed economy of welfare which accords centrality to the community and voluntary sector in social service delivery, have been amongst the hallmarks of the Third Way (Etzioni, 2000, p.18; Giddens, 1998, pp.99-117; Gaskin and Smith, 1995, p.6).

Finally, the ecological crisis is now an issue that no political philosophy can ignore. In endeavouring to explain its implications for politics and society, Beck's thesis of the risk society provides lucid insights (Beck, 1992). The first point that must be acknowledged is that environmental problems are products of progress and development as "*modernization increasingly rebounds upon itself*" (Eden, 1998, p.425). Destructive as well as productive forces have been unleashed by modernisation, risks of all kinds abound as a consequence and they threaten the very survival of humanity. Such hazards include global warming, loss of biodiversity, nuclear accidents and risks associated with genetic manipulation. These issues call for what Beck terms reflexive modernisation, which incorporates reflection upon and a critique of progress, science and technology (Beck, 1992).

In the risk society there is growing uncertainty and anxiety about the future and the ability of science to devise adequate solutions to these manifold problems. Expert knowledge is increasingly questioned by a sceptical public. The major political questions that arise are: "*Who should bear responsibility for the consequences of present action ... who provides security if things go wrong, how and with what resources?*" (Giddens, 1998, p.63). It is in this context that the discourse of sustainable development has garnered support in the political sphere. Sustainability attempts to refashion the idea of development, placing ecological issues at its core, while simultaneously assuaging the fears of citizens regarding the future of humankind.

In summary, an assortment of new issues and priorities has appeared on the political landscape within the past generation: globalisation, the advent of sub-politics, the rise of new social movements, the crisis of welfare dependence, ecological issues and

risk. All of these issues mark out the context in which the Third Way has emerged as a formula to address these issues from a social democratic standpoint. However, it remains just one of a variety of possibilities. Neo-liberals continue to press their message of free trade and small government, while on the left critics of the Third Way, who remain vehemently anti-capitalist and cling to the old socialist position, view it as “*warmed-over neoliberalism*” (Giddens, 1998, p.25). Furthermore, “*the conflicts that erupt here take on the character of doctrinal struggles within civilization over the proper road for modernity*” (Beck, 1992, p.39). Clearly, the idea of development remains central to politics and society and the very fact that it continues to be so strongly contested is proof of this.

The Third Way endeavours to address an array of social, economic and political affairs, but one of its core precepts centres upon broadening public participation in the process of social, economic and environmental development. This has precipitated reform of decision-making institutions at all levels of government and significant changes to systems of welfare provision. Crucially, civil society and its constituent community-based organisations have been accorded a central role in this process of renewal. Furthermore, there can be no doubt as to the relevance of the Third Way to the Irish context:

Giddens’ Third Way project is almost an exact description of the character of community development in Ireland over the past decade. All of its features are present (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.259).

The following sections, therefore, elaborate upon these key aspects of the Third Way: the role of community and civil society in development processes; the switch from

government to governance; the implications for the organisational nature of the community and voluntary sector of new modes of welfare provision.

1.4 Civil society, community and development

1.4.1 The genealogy of civil society and community

The most relevant aspect of the Third Way for this thesis is the manner in which it has reinvigorated the concepts of civil society and community. Both of these ideas have long and complex histories and over the past twenty years they have been placed at the heart of the debate about the future direction of advanced industrial societies. Communitarian philosophy, which represents one specific outlook among many, has been highly influential among those who subscribe to the Third Way vision. However, there are those who disagree with the communitarian perspective and alternative interpretations of civil society and community present a more nuanced picture. In addition, civil society and community are interlinked with the attainment of sustainability. This section will outline the principal features of both of these concepts and recent attempts to revive them in social and political theory. It will then pay special attention to the predominant communitarian argument and the associated notions of active citizenship and social capital. The communitarian perspective is then critiqued and alternative understandings of community and civil society are briefly summarised.

Civil society has been referred to as '*a notoriously slippery concept*' that defies precise delineation (Bebbington et al. in McIlwaine, 1998, p.416). Definitions and interpretations of civil society abound and reflect a mixture of political idealism, opportunism and activism, although the lack of conceptual clarity undoubtedly

contributes to its broad appeal. In general terms, civil society is taken to denote a certain area of society that exists outside the state and the market, but which is nonetheless a public space. *“The words civil society name the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks ... that fill this space”* (Walzer in Deakin, 2001, p.4). This seemingly straightforward definition masks the depth and complexity of this arena. Civil society comprises a huge variety of interactions, associations and networks and includes voluntary organisations, community groups, trade unions, co-operatives and professional and philanthropic organisations (McIlwaine, 1998, p.416). Powell and Guerin (1999, p.5) note that *“Civil society is frequently equated with the voluntary or non-governmental sector”* and voluntary activity is central in driving activism in all types of associations. Civil society has come to be conceived of as the third sector, counterbalancing the power of the state and the market. Consequently, *“It creates an intellectual and political opening where different actors can criticize and practically address contemporary social problems”* (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p.3).

An important feature of civil society is that associations taking place within it should be free and spontaneous. Communities of the pre-modern era were held together through repressive and overpowering patriarchal or religious systems of thought. Conversely, the latter part of the twentieth century witnessed an associational revolution based on freedom of organisation and identity emerged as a foundation for group formation in civil society (Deakin, 2001, p.14). Gender, race, environmentalism, sexuality, culture, faith and attachment to place have inspired communal identity at the turn of the millennium (Korten, 2000). Political freedom, higher levels of education and easier access to communication mean that the individual can associate more readily with

like-minded persons (Powell and Guerin, 1997). Latterly, information technology, especially the Internet, has played a crucial part in this revolution. The fluid and unprompted nature of the social networks that are the foundation for civic activism implies that they cannot be artificially manufactured by the state or the private sector (Deakin, 2001, pp.3-7).

In parallel with civil society, community continues to be a topic of interest among social theorists. Although dismissed over many decades and often claimed to be redundant as a means of explaining present-day patterns of social organisation, the idea of community has refused to die and its popular appeal endures (Loughran, 2003, p. 9; Amit, 2002, p.1). One reason is because “*Community is almost always invoked as an unequivocal good, an indicator of a high quality of life, a life of human understanding, caring, selflessness and belonging*” (Joseph, 2002, p.vii). In an unstable globalised world, wracked by insecurity, uncertainty and fear, the qualities of sanctuary, belonging and mutual support that community encapsulates make it an appealing and sought-after aspiration. The term continues to be appropriated by a whole range of social groups who use it to cast themselves in a positive light and, indeed, this very fact is an indication of its potency. What is more, it is a contested concept and there are various political, social, cultural and geographical understandings of the key characteristics of community.

Definitions of community are almost as numerous the numbers of works on the subject. Generally, the term is taken to connote a particular form of social organisation founded on small groups, neighbourhoods and spatially bounded localities. Conventional sociological monographs presented community in structural terms; it was associated with place, proximity and locality and was linked to identifiable geographical areas (Delanty,

2000; 2003a, p.2). Anthropological works stressed the important of symbolism, meaning and belonging, making the study of community an interpretative exercise, but recently there have been calls for a return to a more empirical approach in this field (Amit, 2002; Cohen, 1986). Postmodern analyses of community centre upon identity and recognise that contemporary communities are more fluid, open and unconstrained than ever before. Delanty (2000) argues that the core components of postmodern community express the emotional demands of solidarity, trust, and autonomy and that place and proximity have lost significance.

It is not the intention here, however, to probe the numerous definitions of civil society or community, but rather to explain the revival of these concepts. In considering this, it is worthwhile to briefly outline their history and genealogy. In Ancient Greek philosophy, civil society and community were essentially one and the same; Aristotle's concept of the *polis* was an urban community which encompassed all social, political and economic relations (Delanty, 2003a, p.7). During the Enlightenment, civil society was also referred to as the public sphere and it was conceived of as the realm of society outside the state that embraced all forms of co-operative social relations (Alexander, 1998, p.3). Jürgen Habermas argued that the type of discussion prevalent in eighteenth century European civil society provided the basis for public input into matters of political concern and that these rational arguments could in turn have a bearing on public policy (Calhoun, 1996). Alexis de Tocqueville, who toured the fledgling democracy of the United States in the 1830s, also noted the preponderance of free associations of citizens and their vital place in democratic culture (Delanty, 2003a, p.82; Howell and Pearce,

2001, p.43) The fact that these illustrations from the past are often invoked by those seeking to restore civil society to a position of importance in the present day is telling.

The debate surrounding community has been characterised by what Delanty (2003a, pp.7-27) calls a “*discourse of loss and recovery*”. Many current interpretations of community hark back to the past, when, it is argued, sense of community was stronger and bonds between individuals tighter. Bauman (2001, p.3) says that nowadays community is conceived of as “*another name for paradise lost – but one to which we dearly hope to return*”. Tönnies distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society) has been highly influential in this respect. Indeed, most analysts employ the concept of community “*as a vehicle for interrogating the dialectic between historical social transformation and social cohesion*” (Amit, 2002, p.2), implying that community cohesion has deteriorated from a presumed zenith in the past. Adherents of community feel that there must be a return to the values that underpinned communities prior to the onset of modernisation. This view is based around a romantic, nostalgic and rose-tinted understanding of community as an ideal state of existence.

The desire to resurrect civil society and community from their historical philosophical origins can be traced to the late 1980s and the perceived significance of civil society and community activism in both the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of apartheid in South Africa were factors in this renewed interest (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.7; Young, 2000, p.154). Since then, they have occupied a central position in social and political theory, with several interpretations apparent. Civil society and community are now viewed as part of a prescriptive model for the future organisation of society which seeks to reconcile global capitalism and democratic citizenship and

provide a new basis for the good society (Powell and Guerin, 1999, pp.5-8). Critics of the Welfare State view the community and voluntary sector as an alternative provider of social services in a non-bureaucratic and efficient manner. From a liberal perspective, civil society is “*the force par excellence symbolising freedom, antistatism and the defence of democracy*” (Howell and Pearce, 2001, pp.3-4). Grassroots organisations understand the concepts as part of a broad discourse encompassing empowerment, participation and democracy and as a means of challenging globalisation and neo-liberalism (Korten, 2000; McIlwaine, 1998, p.415). Community, therefore, has become “*the universal ideology of our time*” (Delanty, 2000, p.120) and “*is one of the most motivating discourses and practices circulating in contemporary society*” (Joseph, 2002, p.xxx). However, from amongst the many understandings of community and civil society, one perspective predominates, namely communitarianism.

1.4.2 Communitarianism

The appropriation of the concept of community by political interests is the crux of this thesis and it finds its strongest expression in the political philosophy known as communitarianism, which has in turn had a profound influence upon the Third Way. Communitarianism traces its roots to Ancient Greek and Roman notions of civic republicanism. The modern communitarian movement originated in the United States in the 1980s and was influenced by American liberal political thought. More recently, its most forceful advocate has firmly attached it to the Third Way project (Etzioni, 2000, p.12). Consequently, this philosophy has underpinned mainstream interpretations of community and civil society in governments across Europe and North America.

Communitarians have connected the conceptually separate, yet related ideas of community and civil society and they have endeavoured to re-establish the connection between them which they claim was extant in the pre-modern era. In their view, strong communities can act an alternative to the state as a basis for politics and as such they should constitute part of a new policy agenda for governments in advanced societies. The idea of a political community of citizens who freely associate in groups of all kinds, who act as reservoirs for democratic values, and who are socially conscious and politically active is central to this mainstream interpretation of civil society and community. In particular, the participation of civil society and communities in socio-economic development processes, public policy and in addressing social exclusion is an essential component of the Third Way (Etzioni, 1998; Tam, 1998; Hirst, 1997).

Communitarianism is an explicitly political, as distinct from sociological, understanding of community and is manifestly normative. It arose as a reaction to the perceived increase in individualism and the destructive social effects of neo-liberalism during the 1980s and holds that modern societies are afflicted by an erosion of value systems and concomitant social decay. According to its advocates, neither an authoritarian state nor a rampant free market alone can provide for all the needs of humanity; an alternative means of addressing social issues must be devised. Communitarians view civil society and strong communities in glowing, optimistic terms and there is undoubtedly a strong ethical dimension to their message. The communitarian movement has brought the debate about values to the heart of twenty-first century politics (Rose, 1999, p.180).

Tam (1998, pp.13-16) identifies the three main principles of communitarianism as co-operative enquiry, mutual responsibility and citizen participation. Co-operative enquiry presupposes that inclusive and fully-informed debate and discussion, involving the entire populace, is a prerequisite for building strong communities. Mutual responsibility implies that all members of a community have responsibilities towards one another, based on shared norms and moral values. Finally, citizen participation requires that everyone affected by particular structures of power should have an input into the decisions taken by that power structure. Underlying these principles are virtues such as trust, justice, democracy, reciprocity and voluntarism (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p.4). Communitarianism can be conceived of as a ‘civic religion’ which identifies a “*select, authoritative and agreed table of virtues to be promulgated, acquired and lived out within a unified moral community*” (Rose, 1999, p.170).

The creation of a moral community is arguably the ultimate purpose of communitarianism. There is a belief in communitarian literature that all human communities should subscribe to certain objective common values. Within this moral community and its agreed commitment to basic values and norms lies a shared understanding of the common good and how it should be pursued. In addition, agreement about the foundations of this moral community should be arrived at as a consequence of inclusive deliberations. The rebuilding of communities, therefore, must become a conscious political strategy (Rose, 1999, p.182). Transmission of this moral culture enhances social order and thus helps to identify and sanction inappropriate, destructive and anti-social behaviour. Cultivating existing communities and creating new ones is, according to Etzioni (2000, p.18), “*essential for the provision of much social good*”.

Personal responsibility and active citizenship, allied to the mobilisation of communities, are amongst the fundamental tenets of the Third Way and complement communitarianism (Giddens, 2000, p.2). Communitarian theory extols participation in public life and the polity and with it the idea that citizens have responsibilities towards one another as well as rights. This involves a new conceptualisation of the relationship between the individual and society, with a stress on active citizenship. Active citizenship denotes full participation by individuals in society and political decision-making processes, particularly in relation to initiatives that directly affect them.

According to Powell and Guerin, (1997, p.20) the active citizen, *“forms the cornerstone of civil society, since s/he has embraced a form of solidary individualism that addresses the imperative of the common good”*. The conventional perspective on contemporary societies holds that individualism is predominant and that traditional social bonds of community have been torn apart by modernisation. The concept of solidary individualism, however, maintains that individualism and social solidarity are not incompatible and that, paradoxically, greater individual freedom lends itself to a stronger sense of community. Contemporary societies are more educated and literate and more intensive communication facilitates greater interaction among people, promoting empathy, trust, and altruism (Dyck, 2002, p.121; Powell and Guerin, 1999, pp.9-10).

Finally, the most prominent idea in communitarian thinking is the ubiquitous yet contentious concept of social capital. Associated chiefly with the work of American political scientist Robert Putnam (2000; 1996) and also with sociologist James Coleman (1990; 1988), it refers to the connections between individuals and social networks based on trust, mutual aid, civic virtue and reciprocity. Social capital can be regarded as a

resource for individuals that they can utilise to improve their social connections and ultimately their quality of life (Coleman, 1990, p.317). Putnam (2000, pp.18-19) explains that “*the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value*” and, moreover, that dense, reciprocal social relations can contribute to strong civic virtue. Social capital, therefore, benefits both the individual and the wider society of which they are a part and, consequently, can be viewed as a vital component of civil society and a building block of communities.

Putnam’s influential composition *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) makes a number of arguments based on his interpretation of social capital. He links prevalence of social capital to successful economic development and greater well-being, stating that “*an impressive and growing body of research suggests that civic connections help make us healthy, wealthy and wise*” (Putnam, 2000, p.287). Those who are more involved in social networks and who interact more with others in the community are also more likely to be successful in their chosen career. Social networks are often utilised by those seeking employment and are also crucial to business success. Thus, a positive correlation is established between a strong sense of civic virtue and a healthy economy, with social capital conceived of as the ‘missing link’ in socio-economic development. The levels of trust, participation and reciprocity that the presence of social capital engenders makes it easier to resolve problems collectively, makes business transactions more straightforward and deepens social solidarity (Putnam, 2000, pp.288-289).

Secondly, Putnam attempts to show that social capital is under threat in the United States. Drawing on a huge arsenal of empirical evidence, he charts the decline of

associational interaction and membership in formal and informal organisations across the country. From the mid-1960s onwards, political, civic and religious participation, as well as informal social connections and membership of voluntary organisations, declined dramatically and simultaneously amongst all social classes and groupings (Putnam, 2000, pp.31-147). Factors contributing to these trends include urban sprawl and increased mobility, the advent of the mass media, particularly television, and financial and work-related pressures (Putnam, 2000, pp.189-246). However, the critical aspect that Putnam identifies is the generational change between, on the one hand, the World War II generation and, on the other, the ‘baby-boomers’ of the post-war era and the present-day ‘Generation X’, with the former being much more civic minded than their descendants (Putnam, 2000, pp.247-276). These trends, he argues, are indicative of a declining stock of social capital in American life and have major implications for social cohesion and ultimately economic well being and he concludes by calling for a greater effort to restore social bonds and renew community spirit (Putnam, 2000, pp.420-414).

A review of political pronouncements and policies in the developed world over the past decade and a half indicates the growing influence of communitarian thinking among the political establishment. Delanty (2000, p.120) notes that:

The appeal to community was central to Bill Clinton’s election campaign of 1992 and Tony Blair’s election campaign of 1997 was very much articulated in terms of a neo-republican idea of community.

In Ireland, former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern provided a testimonial for *Bowling Alone* and his Fianna Fáil party invited Putnam to address a party think-in in 2005. It will be shown in Chapter 5 how communitarianism has permeated Irish social policy as it relates to the

community sector and civil society. The fact that the discourse of communitarianism has attained hegemonic status necessitates an examination of critical views and alternative positions on civil society and community.

1.4.3 A critique of communitarianism

The attention garnered by communitarianism among the political establishment has relegated other understandings of community to a more marginal position. But this in turn has produced a two-pronged criticism of the communitarian argument, firstly from those who see the value of strong communities and civil society yet find fault with the communitarian analysis and, secondly, a more radical view which claims that those in power have appropriated community and civil society and integrated them into the Third Way to serve their own ends. This section will highlight some of the weaknesses in communitarian discourse.

In the first instance, communitarianism does not sit well with pluralism, diversity and multi-culturalism, all of which are features of contemporary societies. It emphasises values and morals which it believes to be universal, yet in a multi-cultural society, where a variety of belief systems exist, the communitarian notion of a unified moral community and shared norms of behaviour appears problematic. There are those who argue that it is based upon the myth of community as a cohesive totality derived from pre-modern times and cannot be applied to postmodern societies (Delanty, 2000). Questions have been raised about who decides upon and oversees the “*shared notion of the ethically good*” inherent in communitarianism (Beck, 1997, p.104), amid assertions that communitarians are silent on issues of power and naive in contemplating societies devoid of conflict.

How communitarianism can be reconciled with social diversity and difference remains one of the main challenges for its proponents (Hoggett, 1997, p.14). There are many who would undoubtedly find a communitarian society bland and suffocating. As Bauman (2000, p.148) points out: *“The attraction of the community of communitarian dreams rest on the promise of simplification: brought to its logical limit, simplification means a lot of sameness and a bare minimum of variety”*.

Furthermore, communitarianism accepts and acquiesces with the prevailing economic order. While it takes issue with the excesses of neo-liberal dogma, it broadly accepts that markets are necessary and even celebrates aspects of capitalism, such as entrepreneurship (Joseph, 2002, p.8). *“Third Way societies recognise that the market is the best engine for the production of goods and services, for work and thus jobs, for economic progress”* (Etzioni, 2000, p.47). Rather than seeking to fundamentally alter the economic system, they merely aim to socialise the economy and attune it to human needs. For those with strident anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation attitudes, communitarianism undermines the potential of communities to acts as sites of resistance to authority. Referring to Putnam, who is considered the high priest of the communitarian movement, Joseph (2000, p.12) argues that: *“The social value of local community formation, for Putnam, is not in the challenges that such communities might offer to dominant regimes, but rather in that they are sites of incorporation into hegemonic regimes”*.

Detractors of communitarianism view it as part of a wider political attempt on the part of the political right to manipulate community groups, which is linked to their desire to roll back the Welfare State. It has been argued that communities are being inveigled

into providing social services that should be made available by the state, thereby facilitating reductions in public expenditure favoured by neo-liberals. Vested interests consider genuine grassroots democracy a threat to their position of dominance and communitarianism gives them a vehicle to hijack civil society and bend communities to their will. In these instances community groups become merely technical tools in development processes, used to implement the agenda of powerful institutions. The discourses and language employed in attempting to build partnership relations ultimately favours the powerful rather than those they are seeking to engage.

It is perhaps the concept of social capital that has drawn the most ire, particularly from the left. *Antipode*, the radical geographical journal, devoted a special symposium to the issue in 2002. Fine (2002) endeavoured to expose the numerous defects and weaknesses of the concept, claiming that social capital's broad scope and definitional elusiveness meant that it could absorb criticism rather than having to answer it. He concluded that "*the attraction of social capital derives less from the unconsciously scurrilous scholarship of its founders and more from their having tapped the intellectual nerve of social theory at the turn of the millennium*" (Fine, 2002, p.797). Social capital, therefore, merely emerged in the right place at the right time and is a malleable concept that suits the current climate of uncertainty in the social sciences.

Focusing on *Bowling Alone*, DeFilippis (2002, pp.790-795) objected to the excessively empirical and quantitative inclinations of Putnam's analysis and his lack of theoretical nous. Moreover, he was highly critical of the manner in which Putnam's work was appropriated by the political right, as it suited their wider agenda. *Bowling Alone*, DeFilippis claimed, ignored unequal power relations, provided ammunition for

those who oppose state regulation of the market and “flows very easily into a ‘blame the victim’ perspective. That is, if you are poor, or your neighbourhood is poor, it is because you have not networked enough and have not constructed enough social capital” (DeFilippis, 2002, p.794). Conflict is totally absent from Putnam’s analysis, and social networks and relationships are win-win for all involved.

The chief problem, therefore, with social capital and communitarianism generally is that it presents social relations in glowing and optimistic terms, where everyone benefits and no-one loses from being part of a community. This ignores the empirical existence of unequal social relations characterised by conflict, domination and oppression. Howell and Pearce (2001, p.29) point out that: “*Lack of attention to power and social differentiation is a major lacuna in the social capital literature*”. Critics have demonstrated that social capital may not always have positive connotations attributed to it by its advocates and, furthermore, that social movements such as Nazism, the Ku Klux Klan and the Mafia were characterised by strong networks based on social capital (Deakin, 2001, p.72). While Putnam (2000, p.22) does acknowledge that social capital can be put to malevolent uses, he chooses to concentrate predominantly on its positive connotations without offering a critical analysis.

In summary, while there are many who accept that communities should occupy a more central place in the circuit of political power, the manner in which communitarians propose that this should be achieved has not found universal favour. The moralising tone of communitarianism’s followers rankles their opponents; Beck (1998, p.13), for instance, refers disdainfully to their “*sanctimonious rhetoric of community spirit*”. Their philosophy indulges in a fetishization of community; it idealises and romanticises

communities of the past and believes that this supposedly blissful state of affairs can be recaptured. Yet a community founded on this nostalgic dream would be stagnant, dull and conformist. Its critics contend that the conservative and quasi-religious overtones originate from communitarianism's roots in Middle America. What must be sought out instead, they say, is a more subtle understanding of community that is more compatible with postmodernism (Rose, 1999, p.182; Joseph, 2002, p.ix; Delanty, 2000).

1.4.4 Radical community development

Although there is substantial opposition to the dominant communitarian paradigm, this resistance does not take the form of a unified, coherent corpus of literature. On the contrary, radical and alternative conceptions of community and civil society are informed by a range of intellectual influences, including feminism, anarchism, post-structuralism, environmentalism, and Marxism and, more specifically, the work of Friere, Gramsci and Beck (Ledwith, 2005, p.11). Nevertheless, these various understandings share a common view of civil society and community as inherently heterogeneous, characterised by conflict and unequal power relations. What is more, communal activism within civil society provides an opportunity for grassroots, often marginalised, community-based movements to articulate a critical response to the local effects of global capitalism and to defy the dominance of the Third Way and communitarianism (Ledwith, 2007; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Ife, 2002; Howell and Pearce, 2001).

Alternative and radical conceptions of community and civil society spring forth from the aforementioned advent of sub-politics and find expression in the collective

action of new social movements. New social movements have arisen in the developed and developed world in recent decades and they share several characteristics; they are based around communities of interest or geography; class is not the primary factor of identity; they are democratic and anti-authoritarian; culture and identity play an important role; and they are based on principles of self-help and empowerment (Fisher, 1993, p.6). Such movements possess what is termed an insurgent consciousness and they provide '*resistance to the one-sided logic of capitalism, statism and fundamentalism*' (Delanty, 2003a, p.65). Very often they are concerned with global issues, most notably the environment, but in other instances they embody highly localised reactions to globalisation (Howell and Pearce, 2001, pp.35-36; Fisher and Kling, 1993, p.xii).

Of particular interest here is the manner in which the activities of new social movements are informed by community development theory. Community development represents a specific theory and practice of community activism with a number of defining features. It is primarily concerned with addressing the predicament of those who live in poverty, suffer from disadvantage and are victims of discrimination. Although focused on grassroots activism, community development theory also recognises that poverty is an outcome of structural forces at the macro level (Lee, 2006). The resolution of inequality, therefore, can only be attained through wholesale and revolutionary changes to the economic, social and political order.

Community development necessitates, in the first instance, the recognition of the relationship between the local circumstances in which individuals and communities act and the economic and political superstructure: according to committed radical activists, 'the personal is political'. Through a process of communal education and dialogue,

communities obtain a greater awareness of the root causes of their subordination and are liberated from hegemonic worldviews; Brazilian educationalist Paolo Friere coined the term ‘conscientisation’ to explain this method (Ledwith, 2005, pp.97-99). A more nuanced awareness of their position in wider world empowers communities and provides them with the intellectual capital to challenge domination and oppression. Their efforts can be enhanced by forming coalitions with like-minded organisations, thereby building networks and alliances at regional, national and global levels to effect fundamental change (Ledwith, 2007; 2005; Ife, 2002).

Community development theory shares certain principles with communitarian theory, particularly in terms of its focus upon inclusive debate to identify priorities for action and on participation by individuals in decisions that affect them. However, it differs fundamentally in its overt advocacy of a more socially just and equitable society and also in its more adversarial relationship with the state and capitalism. Furthermore, those who subscribe to radical community development acknowledge social differentiation and celebrate cultural diversity and in this respect community development contrasts markedly with the homogenising and totalising perspective of communitarianism (Delanty, 2000). Latterly, ecological principles such as sustainability and holism have been incorporated into community development approaches. Warburton (1998, p.10) notes “*a political belief in the potential for community development at neighbourhood level to create social change and tackle poverty and inequality*”.

Beck (1998; 1997) has attempted to outline how an alternative vision of community and civil society could be operationalised. In *Democracy Without Enemies* (1998) he maintains that “*without the expansion and strengthening of political freedom*

and its social form, civil society, nothing will work in the future” (Beck, 1998, p.7). Renewal of civil society is possible owing to the prevalence of co-operative or altruistic individualism in advanced societies and because, contrary to conventional wisdom, people’s priorities do not revolve solely around material gain and affluence. Social solidarity, volunteering, helping others and participating in social movements are important priorities for postmodern individuals, and altruism and individualism are in fact mutually supportive. *“Thinking of oneself and living for others at the same time, once considered a contradiction in terms, is revealed as an internal substantive connection”* (Beck, 1998, p.9). Neo-liberals, communitarians and traditionalists have all responded to current social trends in their own ways, but weaknesses are apparent in each approach: the neo-liberal glorification of the market represents a threat to both the individual and society; communitarians forget that strong community bonds can be as dangerous as no community bonds; traditionalists attempt to defend the old-world view.

There are a number of fundamental questions in the current debate around mobilising civil society and community activism in contemporary societies:

How can the longing for self-determination be brought into harmony with the equally important longing for shared community? How can one simultaneously be individualistic and merge with the group? How might the variety of voices which vie within each of us in a confusing world be combined into a political statement and action pointing beyond the present day? (Beck, 1998, p.3).

These matters can be addressed within the framework of cosmopolitan republicanism, an idea that is characterised by five principles: the new significance of the individual; the

centrality of cosmopolitan agencies and institutions; the new significance of the local; the crucial importance of an active civil society for democracy; and finally sweeping institutional reform (Beck, 1998, pp.14-15). Crucially, from a geographical perspective, this remedy contains an important spatial theme; an argument for the transfer of power to the local arena:

Civil society and political freedom have their social origin and their locus in a tangible local area. Strengthening civil society therefore implies strengthening local politics and identity (Beck, 1998, p.15).

Whether a renewed sense of local identity and attachment to place could, as Beck advocates, be fostered around urban green parks requires more detailed elaboration.

Beck also calls for greater investment in civil society and communities, financed by taxes on multinational corporations, who have avoided paying taxes due to the internationalisation of capital, yet continue to enjoy the benefits of wealthier societies in spite of shrinking public funds among many governments (Beck, 1998, pp.55-64). *“We must break the taboo on speaking of this new social injustice. Those who profit from globalisation must be made accountable for the general welfare”* (Beck, 1998, p.61). Clearly, his proposal to compel multinationals into contributing to civil society is a radical one. A second key characteristic of Beck’s renewed civil society is public work. This concept implies work that involves caring for others, the use by professionals of their skills for public benefit as well as personal gain and a greater degree of active citizen participation in society. Beck views earning-based work and voluntary work in a grassroots-based civil society as complementary. He surmises that greater investment in

civil society is what is required; *“We have to delegate power and authority to it, and in every respect: technologically, economically, educationally”* (Beck, 1998, p.60).

In summary, the centrality of civil society and community in contemporary political and social theory is clear. However, there are competing views as to what the role of civil society should be and the terms on which it should relate to the state and the private sector. Communitarianism expresses optimism regarding the potential of communities to contribute to the common good and their prescription, including concepts of active citizenship and social capital, has been endorsed by the political establishment. Alternative conceptions of civil society and community strike a more truculent tone; they are grounded in radical activism and seek to challenge inequality and the status quo. On all sides of the debate, however, the need to involve civil society in decision-making structures has been acknowledged. In order to assess the extent to which this has occurred, the topic of governance must be examined.

1.5 From government to governance

1.5.1 The meaning of governance

The extent to which civil society and the community organisations which constitute it have become genuine and equal participants in development processes is the core research question in this thesis. The Third Way and the associated communitarian outlook cultivate civil society and community, ostensibly placing them at the heart of decision-making about developmental issues. This has entailed a modal shift from government to governance that has been evident across the developed world over the past two decades. The notion of governance addresses a range of issues around how to

improve the working of government. In this section, the origins of the governance concept are outlined with reference to notions of participation and partnership. Following this, a critical appraisal of governance is offered. Finally, the centrality of collaborative planning to the implementation of governance is explained.

The past twenty years has brought forth an in-depth debate as to how government and administration in modern democracies can be improved (Lovan, Murray and Shaffer, 2004, p.1). A number of justifications for reform have been put forward. It has been widely recognised, for instance, that the old institutions and practices of representative democracy are inadequate and that large segments of the population are alienated from the political process. The hollowing out of the state due to globalisation from above and the renewal of local and regional identities from below has neutered the state's ability to address complex policy issues (Acsehrad, 1999, p.45). In addition, societal pluralism and diversity make modern societies more difficult to govern as it increases the range of interests and needs that have to be addressed (Hirst, 1997). Furthermore, citizens are more educated, have greater access to information, and are less tolerant of corruption or wastage of public funds; they are more watchful and critical of those in power and demand greater accountability. Reform of the state and of government, with an increased stress on quality of services, performance, transparency and value for money is, therefore, one of the basic organising principles of the Third Way (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.118; Giddens, 1998, p.69).

Consequently, political leaders have sought to broaden involvement in power structures and processes of policy- and decision-making through the involvement of non-state actors. This new dispensation is referred to as governance; it arises because no one

institution acting alone, not even the state, has the capacity to devise and implement solutions to the crisis of modernity. It stems from the realisation that development is a multi-dimensional process incorporating environmental and social, as well as economic, objectives and that the state cannot deliver on all of these (Newman, 2005, p.119; Lovan, Murray and Shaffer, 2004, p.4). The two other principal circuits of power, the market-driven private sector and civil society, which is driven by communal values, must be brought on board. As a result, there is a shift in emphasis from representative democracy to what has been termed deliberative, associative, or participatory democracy. Governance calls for a new theory of the distribution of power that is more attuned to the requirements of reflexive modernisation (Beck, 1997; Hirst, 1997).

Governance is based upon two key principles, participation and partnership. The concern with participation is indicative of the communitarian influence and originates because “*the crisis of democracy comes from it not being democratic enough*” (Giddens, 1998, p.71). Consequently, there are stronger efforts to involve citizens to a greater extent in decision which affect them. A host of procedures and practices have been devised to meet this end, such as public consultation, surveys of public service users, citizen focus groups, and committees and various round table fora. All of these reflect a concern by the state to imbue public policy with greater legitimacy and garner popular approval (Newman, 2005, p.122). The depth and scope of participatory measures can vary; Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation, for example, recognised eight levels of participation ranging from cynical ploys to manipulate public opinion to initiatives designed to give citizens effective control of decision-making (Arnstein, 1969). Participatory techniques are viewed as a particularly effective way to engage with hard to

reach groups like the urban underclass who are estranged from the political system (Loughran, 2003, pp.39-45).

Participatory democracy is allied with notions of active citizenship and empowerment inherent in the Third Way. There is virtuous circle at work; it is assumed that as more power and is devolved to groups within civil society they will respond by taking a more active role in governance and become more skilled and effective at meeting their own needs. In the words of Powell and Guerin (1999, p.14) “*The emphasis of active citizenship is on participation in the decision-making process, leading to empowerment of the citizen*”. Empowered citizens and communities take more responsibility for their own development and become less reliant on the state. In fact, ardent communitarians envision a situation where communities and civil society becomes the primary seat of power, with the state taking a secondary role (Hirst, 1997, p.42).

Participation also complements and is influenced by the discourse of sustainability. The Brundtland Report, for instance, outlined that a principal precondition for sustainable development is the need for:

a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making...The law alone cannot enforce the common interest. It principally needs community knowledge and support, which entails greater public participation in the decisions which affect the environment (cited in Warburton, 1998, p.6).

It has been widely recognised that ordinary people need to be closely involved in initiatives for sustainable development which is indicative of the realisation that sustainability cannot be enforce or imposed from the top down, but requires the support

and understanding of the entire population. Werner (1999, p.238), discussing the psychological aspects of sustainability, comments that; *“Environmental empowerment occurs when people have ‘agency’, when they feel effective and take control over environmental events in their community”*. If a situation develops where people have no active role in addressing the problems raised by sustainability, they will become merely dependent on the state to ensure that the transition occurs.

Partnership is the second key principle related to community and civil society which underlies the transition to governance. Partnership denotes formal processes and structures whereby all interest groups with a stake in decision-making are represented and participate on a joint and equitable basis in reaching such decisions (Little, 2001; Walsh, 1998). The state, the private sector, and civil society, comprising the voluntary community sector, are generally conceived as the three pillars of partnership and through this arrangement they construct formal relationships for decision-making. Therefore, *“Civil society is asked to participate in a new triadic model of development along with the state and the market, in which its primary function is to counterbalance the power of the state”* (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p.2). There is a fundamental emphasis on process as well as outcome and all three sectors should work towards establishing consensus and resolving common problems. In addition, partnership bodies tend to exhibit an all-embracing approach and commonly seek to attend to the entire gamut of developmental issues. It represents an integrationist, collaborative, and pragmatic approach to socio-economic development (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.38).

Partnership, like participation, provides a further link between governmental reform and sustainability. One of the most significant documents that emerged from the

Rio Summit in 1992 was Local Agenda 21. This stressed the centrality of the local context in the drive towards sustainability and made it imperative on each local authority in all countries that signed up to Agenda 21 to draw up and implement a Local Agenda 21 action plan for their area. Moreover, local consultation and participation aimed at achieving consensus amongst citizens, private enterprise, and local authorities was central to this process. Furthermore, each Local Agenda 21 plan was supposed to be specific to the area for which it was drawn up, taking into account the unique geographical, demographic, environmental, and socio-economic factors of that area (Mullally, 2002, pp.3-5). At European level, Baker (2000, p.315) notes that “*commitment to partnership is seen as the backbone in the EU’s approach towards the promotion of sustainable development*”.

A dimension of partnership that is not always given due attention is the private sector’s relationship with civil society, which is built around the idea of socially responsible capitalism and the associated concept of corporate social responsibility. Socially responsible capitalism seeks to bring about changes in the nature of capitalism by making business assume greater responsibility for the social and environmental consequences of their actions, while also promoting the common good by supporting the work of communities in civil society. As Howell and Pearce (2001, p.67) point out:

By bringing business and civil society into partnership, the socially responsible approach to capitalism seeks to make capital ethical, to inject it with a new morality, and in doing so, to reconcile the creative yet socially and environmentally destructive effects of capitalism, without however undermining the market principle of economic organisation.

This softer version of capitalism proposes a role for civil society in economic affairs and creates links between the corporate and social worlds.

This is put into practice through corporate social responsibility (CSR), which, amongst other things, induces corporations to provide a certain percentage of their profits, along with technical support and advice, to voluntary organisations working in civil society. A key aspect of CSR is that companies enter into such arrangements of their own accord and in partnership with the state and the third sector. It is argued, in some instances cynically, that CSR provides large multinationals with the opportunity to present a positive image and to counteract negative publicity (Buckley, 2001). Funding donated, therefore, is seen as an investment rather than a cost and the fundamental principles of profit generation remain intact.

The switch from government to governance has manifestly changed the role of the state. It has become an enabler and facilitator of participation and partnership rather than acting in a top-down and heavy-handed manner. To quote Beck (1997, p.140) “*The authoritarian action state has given way to the negotiation state, which sets up stages and conversations and directs the show*”. Consequently, it is in the interest of the state to promote civic culture and encourage participation by citizens. Many modern states have put in place complex policies to foster strong communities, develop a healthy civil society, and to promote voluntarism. Nonetheless, although there are mixed views on how much power should be granted to civil society, there is general agreement that too much community could be as undesirable and harmful as too little. State institutions must, at the very least, retain control over functions such as the rule of law, protection of basic human rights and the judicial system (Etzioni, 2000, p.28; Young, 2000, p.181).

1.5.2 A critique of governance

The overarching aim of the transition from government to governance is to revive democratic culture. However, governance, participation and partnership are not without their critics and several shortcomings have been identified. First of all, the switch to governance nominally entails a transfer of power away from the state and towards civil society. However, there are those who maintain that this seldom takes place and that “*the extent of the displacement of embedded forms of power by new governance technologies can be overestimated*” (Newman, 2005, p.130). The state retains a good deal of control in many ways, not least by determining the structure and agenda of partnerships and, alongside this, the “*the places, norms and rules of participation*” (Newman, 2005, p.133).

In addition, a distinction can be drawn between strategic and operational power; while partnerships cede operational power to communities, the state determines the overall strategic direction of the process (Hart, Jones and Baines, 1997). There may also be important power brokers in the private sector who remain outside of partnership processes yet retain influence behind the scenes. Indeed, formal partnership arrangements can distract from the manner in which informal networks can make their presence felt in public decision-making (Hillier, 2000). In a scenario where a ‘business as usual’ or ‘old boys club’ approach to decision-making persists in spite of the presence of partnership procedures, pledges to take on board the concerns of communities can appear to be empty rhetoric.

There are those who adopt a more cynical view of state-directed participatory development. It is claimed that governments have hijacked the concepts of participation

and partnership for their own ends to reinforce their control over and administration of development. Rose (1999, p.176) argues that the state has laid claim to the idea community and has put in place agents, institutes, and practices of control in order to instigate what he terms “*government through community*”. Governments have endeavoured to manipulate the challenges to their authority inherent in participatory development and have instead used it as a means to legitimise their own power and impose their own worldview (Rahmena, 1992, p.117).

Ironically, many bottom-up initiatives are designed and imposed in a top-down manner and the level of bureaucracy that accompanies them can suffocate civil society and undermine the independence of community groups (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.39). Escobar (1992, p.143) argues that participation “*is most often conceived not in terms of a popular power that people could exercise, but as a bureaucratic problem that the development institution has to solve*”. This creates a major paradox at the heart of the present relationship between the state and the third sector i.e. “*This third space must ... become the object and target for the exercise of political power whilst remaining, somehow, external to politics and a counter-weight to it*” (Rose, 1999, p.168).

The very notion of participatory politics and multi-sectoral partnerships has been accused of being naive and overly idealistic. Consensus, social cohesion and integration are the paramount goals of partnership processes. This ignores the *realpolitik* of disorder, dissent and conflict that characterises everyday political deliberations. As Dryzek (1997, p.98) stressed: “*Politics in capitalist democratic settings is rarely about disinterested and public-spirited problem solving in which a variety of perspectives are brought to bear with equal weight*”. Even in an effective partnership, consensus on contentious issues

will be impossible and as a result there will always be winners and losers. Moreover, the third sector is at a distinct disadvantage as it lacks the finance and technical resources available to both the state and the private sector. While partnership is based upon the assumption of equality between the three pillars, this is rarely the case in practice and community and voluntary sector partners can find themselves on the margins.

Finally, there is often an assumption that those acting as a voice for civil society within partnership structures are actually representative of a wider community constituency. However, studies have shown that, in reality, participation can be limited to small numbers of people, that democratic practices within partnerships are imperfect and that the democratic credentials of many community-based organisations can be dubious (Sterling, 2005, pp.149; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.237). Precise rules and procedures for the selection of representatives from the community and voluntary sector onto partnerships do not always exist. Public agencies are habitually predisposed towards civil society groups who acquiesce with government, to the exclusion of more radical and politicised community associations (Newman, 2005; Lohan, Murray and Shaffer, 2004). There are even those who contend that the term participatory democracy is a misnomer; it is neither fully participative nor entirely democratic (O' Cinnéide in Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.238).

To summarise, governance has been central to the process of state reform that has been initiated by many Third Way administrations. Its proponents argue that increased participation by citizens and communities in the decision-making process and collaborative partnerships between different interest groups will create a more vibrant democracy. Such renewal is a priority in the present time given the complexity of

development processes and the need to promote sustainable development. New structures and practices have been created to achieve this aim and the community and voluntary sector has been accorded a central role in governance. Yet many believe that the entire edifice of partnership is a facade designed to bring civil society under the control of the state. It is in the realm of planning that a deeper appreciation of these issues can be obtained

1.5.3 Participatory planning

The centrality of planning to the discourse of development was alluded to above (pp.21-22). Physical, spatial and social planning underpins the administration of modern economies and societies; traditionally, the state held primary responsibility for initiating, adopting and implementing plans and policies, albeit with heavy reliance on scientific knowledge and expertise drawn from academic institutions. The transition to governance, however, has altered procedures and practices of planning and policy-making. Increasingly, participatory or collaborative approaches have become the norm, generating a more significant position for special interest groups and the general public at all stages. Community organisations, amongst others, have been accorded an important place in participatory planning exercises, particularly at local level.

Participatory planning was spawned by dwindling public confidence in the institutions of government and in scientific rationality (Beck, 1992, pp.155-180). Conventional planning applied positivist science to development and policy-making, but this was carried out in a paternalistic and often arrogant manner by professional bureaucrats. Participatory planning reflects the difficulties that conventional planning

and policy-making faced in addressing complex issues and in attaining consensus where competing interests were present. Habermas' concept of communicative rationality forms an underlying influence and the collaborative approach is informed by transparency, openness, and consultative procedures that seek to generate debate on different options and sponsor widespread involvement by the public. In some instances, bottom-up, participatory models of planning involve grassroots communities in information gathering and analysis, identifying priorities and needs as well as implementation. It is, therefore, very much in harmony with the participative and partnership-based elements of governance (Allmendinger, 2002).

Participatory planning can be situated within a wider discourse of civic science. In order to address public misgivings about scientific knowledge, efforts to reintegrate science with the public domain and with non-experts outside the scientific community have more significant. Civic science is grounded in the recognition "*that science must become an increasingly interactive process between lay and expert people, reconnecting science and its cultural context*" (Warburton, 1998, p.3). Furthermore, there is a growing acceptance that knowledge is socially constructed and that a plurality of perspectives exists. Science is just one means of interpreting the world; civic science acknowledges that there are other kinds of knowledge, especially local, vernacular and indigenous knowledge, that should be incorporated into planning and decision-making in order to gain public confidence (Eden, 1998, p.429). This represents a challenge to conventional scientific discourse in which the solutions to problems are presented by experts and should be uncritically accepted by the public. O' Riordain (1998, p.112) surmises that

“The whole point of civic science and empowerment is the actual transfer of respect and power to grassroots level”.

Civic science, therefore, openly acknowledges that development, knowledge and decision-making are inextricably linked. Accordingly, it becomes *“meaningless to talk of a socially disconnected scientific function”* (O’ Riordain, 1998, p.110). Civic science discloses the social and political processes underlying scientific research and attempts to reduce their mystique and make science more accessible to the general public. It stems from the need for a stronger link between knowledge and action that sustainable development demands, given the immediate nature of the problems it seeks to address. Science and the plans and policies which draw upon scientific expertise will only achieve legitimacy in a context where the general public understands and can make some input into the knowledge on which policy decisions are based (Redclift, 1999b, pp.270-272).

Community organisations have sought to exploit the opportunities afforded to them by the transition to governance. New partnership structures and policy-making procedures have opened up possibilities for groups based on a voluntary ethos to have an input into decision-making, although as some critics have pointed out, governance does not always deliver what it promises. Furthermore, the community and voluntary sector forms only one part of the three-part model of partnership and can find itself in opposition to the state and the private sector, both of which have considerable resources and expertise at their disposal. In order to participate effectively in development processes, therefore, it has become incumbent upon voluntary community groups to adopt a more professional culture.

1.6 Voluntarism and Community

1.6.1 Volunteering: the cornerstone of civil society

The discourse of civil society has volunteering and voluntary activity at its core. According to many analysts, volunteering is conceived as the central element of civic activism and voluntary community organisations represent the purest manifestation of civil society and community mobilisation (Deakin, 2001; Howell and Pearce, 2001; Powell and Guerin, 1999, p.7). In political terms, government efforts to promote citizen participation and civil society have been closely intertwined with voluntarism. The United Nations designated 2001 as International Year of the Volunteer, while the Irish Government published a White Paper in 2000 in an attempt to develop a coherent policy on the link between the state and the community and voluntary sector (Government of Ireland, 2000a). These developments can clearly be connected to the significance attached to civil society in mainstream political discourse. This section will examine growing academic and political interest in volunteering, the key question of volunteer motivation, and ongoing changes in the organisational structure of the voluntary sector and its relationship with the state and the market.

Commencing an examination of volunteers and volunteering is in itself problematic. The voluntary sector is generally conceived as occupying a position between the private sector and the state, as the ‘third pillar’ of society, and defining it presents similar difficulties to defining the wider civil society (Powell and Guerin, 1997, p.11). According to Pearce (1993, p.16): *“The initial problem is that the voluntary sector itself is amorphous. It is a leftover sector defined by what it is not – nonprofit nongovernment – rather than by what it is”*. What is more, the relationship between the

voluntary sector and the community sector is not always clear-cut. Some commentators draw a distinction between voluntary organisations and community groups, based on factors such as size, activities and ethos; others regard the community sector and the voluntary sector as identical and place them under the umbrella of civil society (Government of Ireland, 2000a). The range of actions undertaken by volunteers and the variation in the size and scale of organisations also makes precise definition difficult. Much of the literature emphasises the role of organisations that provide social services. However, one study found that sports and recreational activities accounted for a higher proportion of voluntary activity in Europe than social services (Gaskin and Smith, 1995, p.34).

An upsurge in empirical research on voluntarism has accompanied interest in civil society and community since the early 1990s. In the United States, the Centre for Civil Society Studies at John Hopkins University has pioneered work both nationally and internationally (Howell and Pearce, 2001, p.50). Empirical studies of the voluntary sector have also taken place in Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland, where the National College of Industrial Relations has forged links with John Hopkins University (Powell and Guerin, 1997; 1999; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999; Gaskin and Smith, 1995; Ruddle and Donoghue, 1995; Smith, Rochester and Headley, 1995). The aims of such studies have been twofold. Firstly, they have analysed the characteristics, attitudes and motivations of individuals who volunteer. Secondly, they have looked at the organisational structure and activity of the voluntary sector as a whole and based on this have attempted to forge definitions of voluntary activity. The ultimate aim of this systematic empirical approach is the development of a theoretical and conceptual

foundation for the study of the voluntary sector that will recognise for the first time its critical role in society.

A central aspect of the debate revolves around the *raison d'être* for voluntary activity i.e. the reasons underlying why people choose to undertake unpaid work. Two principal perspectives are evident. The first emphasises the predominance of philanthropic, charitable and altruistic motivations; individuals volunteer in order to help others, particularly the less well off in society, as doing so provides them with a sense of personal satisfaction. They may also feel bound to assist others by moral or religious obligations, taking on an evangelical role. Historically, this is the stereotypical image of the volunteer dating back to the Victorian era and this rationale for volunteering continues to dominate amongst the upper and middle classes in the present day (Deakin, 2001, pp.29-35; Kendall and Knapp, 1995, pp.71-73). Those organisations that are based upon principles of philanthropy and altruism tend to have longer histories and are often associated with religious orders or denominations. They are more likely to be socially conservative and their involvement in voluntary work can stem from their desire to maintain social stability. As Crickley (1996, p.28) points out, such organisations are mainly charitable in nature and their approach involves “*helping others out of duty and compassion while accepting inequality as inevitable*”.

However, mutual aid and reciprocity are also motivational factors. This is part of a different tradition with its roots in the friendly societies and working men’s club of 19th century Britain (Smith, 1995, pp.28-29). According to the Beveridge Report on the voluntary sector in post-war Britain, this type of voluntary activity “*has its origin in a sense of one’s own need for security against misfortune, and realisation that, since one’s*

fellows have the same need, by undertaking to help one another all may help themselves" (cited in Smith, 1995, p.28). Therefore, people may benefit both individually and collectively from their involvement in such voluntary community activities. Mutual aid has had a strong relationship in the past with the working classes and rural peasantry, those at the lowest tier of society who had most to gain from co-operating with one another. In the contemporary voluntary scene it finds expression in grassroots community groups and new social movements and with groups who consider themselves marginalized. Voluntary organisations based on mutual aid are more likely to be secular and more politically radical than ones based on philanthropy (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, pp.71-73). Their work is often founded upon community development theory and their agenda is one of equality, empowerment and social justice.

Research has pointed out, however, that voluntary activity is not always motivated by altruism or mutual aid. Individuals may volunteer for personal gain, such as to enhance the prospects of their political career or to improve their standing within the community. Often those who volunteer may be considering a long-term professional career in social services and therefore become active to gain necessary work experience. Volunteering can be an important social outlet, providing an opportunity to meet with others of similar points of view and for conviviality (Smith, 1995, pp.15-17; Pearce, 1993, pp. 61-78). Recent European-wide empirical studies have shown that meeting friends, personal satisfaction and broadening life experience featured strongly amongst the reasons why people chose to become volunteers and the authors concluded that *"there is a mixture of personal, altruistic and functional reasons for people getting involved in their volunteering"* (Gaskin and Smith, 1995, p.43).

More recent theoretical analyses, however, has called into question the oppositional nature of the altruism versus mutual aid debate in voluntary sector studies. In fact, it is claimed that they can be reciprocally supportive motivations, in what Powell and Guerin (1999, p.8) refer to as “*solidary individualism*”. They identify the existence of both active citizenship, which implies participation in the institutions of civil society, and dutiful citizenship, in the form of obligations towards others, as key aspects of the renewed debate on voluntarism and civil society. In contemporary societies “*the individual seeks to achieve a moral commitment through involvement in the community*” (Powell and Guerin, 1997, p.21). Beck (1998) calls this development co-operative or altruistic individualism and argues that it is central to reflexive modernisation. Theorists of social capital also contend that social relations, above all those involving voluntary activity, can benefit both the individual and the wider society and “*they claim to have discovered a civilizational configuration between altruism and self interest*” (Powell and Guerin, 1999, p.10).

Theoretical speculation on the nature of volunteering has been based upon an ever-increasing body of empirical data and there is a strong international comparative element to much of this work. Gaskin and Smith (1995, p.30) allude to this in their Europe-wide analysis of volunteering and reveal that “*There is a marked degree of consistency in the demographic and socio-economic profile of volunteers across Europe*”. In the majority of studies voluntary activity is positively correlated with higher income, higher socio-economic status, greater levels of formal education and professional and skilled employment, while participation is highest among the middle aged (Ruddle and Mulvihill 1999; Gaskin and Smith, 1995; Ruddle and Donoghue, 1995; Sheard,

1995). A feature of much of this research is that it is highly empirical in nature, employing statistical techniques to produce voluminous quantitative data on the characteristics of volunteers. To date, however, much of this work has lacked qualitative analysis and theoretical depth. In many instances there is a failure to probe newly-emerging forms of volunteering related to the environment and radical social movements.

1.6.2 Voluntary organisations in the mixed economy of welfare

The second major focus of research into voluntary activity has concentrated on the organisational nature of the sector. The John Hopkins project has endeavoured to arrive at a universal definition of what constitutes a voluntary organisation and there now appears to be broad agreement in the literature as to what its fundamental features are. It should be formal, self-governing, independent, non-profit distributing and voluntary. Nonetheless, the sector consists of a “*bewildering array of organisational forms, activities, motivations and ideologies*” (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.66). While many voluntary organisations may generate an income through trading or service provision, profits arising from this are reinvested in the organisation rather than being distributed among members, thereby differentiating a voluntary group from a co-operative. The autonomy of groups indicates that they are separate entities from state bureaucracy and business. However, the emphasis on formally constituted organisations can often mean that smaller, informal groups acting at grassroots level can be excluded from analysis (Gaskin and Smith, 1995; Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.85-86; Routledge, 1995).

Voluntary organisations across the developed world have been subjected to significant changes in recent decades, particularly arising from their relationship with the

state and the advent of participatory forms of planning and development. The nineteenth century was a Golden Age of voluntary activity, but the advent of the Welfare State reduced the space in which voluntary organisations acted and lessened their responsibility for social service provision (Deakin, 1995). However, the Thatcher government in Britain, followed by the genesis of Third Way politics, saw renewed efforts to give voluntary organisations a role in replacing public services and tackling social problems (Gaskin and Smith, 1995, p.6; Fisher, 1993, p.18). Deakin (1995, p.63) comments that: *“Developments in the role of the state – especially in the field of welfare – have been one of the major determining factors in defining the tasks that voluntary agencies have carried out”*. Welfare provision under Third Way administrations occurs through what has been termed the mixed economy of welfare, where social services are provided through voluntary organisations and private enterprise, acting in concert with the state (Giddens, 1998, pp.99-117).

The voluntary sector is now conceived of as having a vital function in bridging the gap between the citizen and the state. Examining the sector across Europe, Gaskin and Smith (1995, p.106) conclude that:

A significant common trend ... appears to be the role of voluntary work in providing a social infrastructure – a communally-based network and support system whose prime goal is improving the social quality of life, spanning leisure, welfare, education, social inclusion and social change.

Therefore, the sector is increasingly taking on the role of a shadow state or *“a para-state apparatus”* (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.86). Meanwhile, the state itself has become an enabler rather than a provider of welfare and services, contracting out service provision to

the voluntary sector through funding programmes. There are positive and negative aspects to this ongoing trend. Voluntary organisations can be less bureaucratic and closely in tune with service requirements at the grassroots. However, they may become too dependent on state funding and the contract culture with the state, amid concerns regarding the democratic accountability and unrepresentative nature of some organisations (Deakin, 2001; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, pp.16-20). Furthermore, opponents of the prevailing trend contend that the voluntary sector cannot act as an effective substitute for the state in the comprehensive and equitable delivery of social services (Powell and Guerin, 1999, p.15).

Partnership now defines the deepening relationship between the voluntary sector and the state across Europe and beyond. One important organisational consequence of partnership has been the development of a more professional and bureaucratised voluntary and community sector. Many larger organisations now employ paid staff and executives, rather than the volunteers themselves, are responsible for the operation of the organisation and day-to-day decision-making. Deakin (1995) has charted the emergence of a corporate managerial culture within the voluntary sector since the 1980s. This is, he says, one aspect of the contractual relationship with the state and organisations that fail to adopt this culture can find themselves marginalized from funding programmes.

Many voluntary groups, therefore, have *“kitted themselves out with the paraphernalia of the enterprise culture: mission statements, logos, personal identification with tasks, ‘passion’ for excellence”* (Deakin, 1996, p.62). Critics have argued that this new business-like culture actually undermines the core principles of voluntarism. However, the counter argument to this states that the limits to voluntary

effort must be recognised and that professional support for volunteers is necessary for them to operate effectively (Sheard, 1995, pp.116-117). Training initiatives involving volunteers are another manifestation of the increasingly specialised environment within the sector. They can be aimed at making groups more efficient and effective and to improve their performance in local development initiatives and institutions (Varley and Ruddy, 1996, pp.76-77). However, as many training initiatives are state-directed, they can be viewed as another measure to stage-manage voluntary sector participation in public policy.

In conclusion, the focus on volunteering by academics and researchers, alongside the more sophisticated and professional approach of voluntary community organisations, can only be understood in the context of Third Way politics, the transition to governance and the more central role of civil society in the process of sustainable development. The key concern of this thesis, however, is whether these new political circumstances have yielded benefits for community groups and whether they actually have a genuine say in decision-making processes. A geographical analysis can bring unique insights to bear in this debate, as themes of space, place and scale pervade the literature and it is to these issues that attention must turn.

1.7 Space, place and scale; geographical perspectives

While this review has thus far drawn upon themes and ideas from a range of social science disciplines, there are several features of the literature on community, civil society, governance and development that are explicitly geographical. Three specific dimensions are explored below. Firstly, the issue of scale in contemporary development

theory warrants attention, particularly the fresh significance accorded to the local arena in the theory and practice of development, as well as the relationship between global and local circumstances. Secondly, discourses of governance and sustainability attach primacy to place and locality and promote decentralisation of power and decision-making to sub-national level. Thirdly, the part played by identification with one's local place in motivating community-based activism is a topic where a geographical analysis can bring unique insights to bear. Overall, geography's integrated and horizontal perspective allows practitioners to bring a holistic viewpoint to bear on what is an often confused debate.

A central topic within development theory and particularly discussions of sustainability is that of scale. Buttimer (1998) examined sustainability in terms of the relationship between different scales from the local to the continental as part of a European-wide investigation into the dynamics of scale and development. The concept of discretionary reach was employed in the project and this denoted:

the realms, both spatial and institutional, within which access to – and responsibility for – resources, information and decision-making about landscape and life can be negotiated (Buttimer, 1998, p.18).

Discretionary reach is intimately tied to the geography of development and three spatially-based realms can be identified: administratively-defined, which relate to political and social decision-making; functionally-defined, relating to economic systems and urban fields of influence; and perceptually-defined, which are locally created by people and which are linked to sense of place and cultural traditions.

A challenge in understanding geographies of development and sustainability is to recognise the tensions between the three aspects discretionary reach and how their scale horizons have been transformed in a globalised world. Empirical data from Buttimer's project, which was based upon a study area in rural Tipperary, showed that administrative and functional realms have become increasingly transnational in their reach as political and economic power have been transferred to supranational institutions and multinational corporations. On the other hand, the perceptually-based realm, in rural Tipperary at least, remains rooted in the local scale; this is the realm of everyday personal experience and community activity. When exploring the relationship between these different realms one must take cognisance of where decision-making power is vested. One must also be attuned to the nature of the interactions between bottom-up, local discretionary reach and top-down, national and international structures (Buttimer, 1998, pp.19-21).

In terms of the accomplishment of sustainable development, the principal geographical question, according to Eden (1998, p.112) is "*at what scale should we measure and plan for sustainability?*" Uncertainty abounds regarding the most appropriate spatial level for undertaking action. Many of the problems that have arisen as a result of unbridled capitalism and runaway globalisation have implications for the planet as a whole and demand a global or, at the very least, a transnational focus. As a consequence, amongst the chief tenets of the Third Way is that much more cogent and effective international and global institutions are required to neutralise dilemmas such as climate change. Nation-states, therefore, must surrender some of their power to organisations like the United Nations and the European Union (Giddens, 1998).

The local arena, however, is also recognised as the key battleground in the effort to realise sustainability, a perspective pithily expressed by the familiar maxim of environmentalists: “*think globally, act locally*”. It has been argued that solutions to global social, economic and environmental problems will only come about through the conflation of actions undertaken at local level and that people in their own local environments must feel a sense of agency and ownership of the sustainability agenda. This is complemented by “*the rediscovery of the significance of the local*” in debates surrounding civil society (Deakin, 2001, p.59). The counter-argument, however, stresses that this view places unwarranted faith in the capacity of local communal activism to redress the negative effects of global capitalism. The emphasis on the local scale in development theory also brings into question the relationship between various scales. Whether developmental outlooks at the local scale that are grounded in local concerns and issues can be reconciled with globalisation and the developmental requirements of transnational capital is a particularly pertinent issue.

The local arena, therefore, has assumed paramount importance in contemporary perspectives on development, community and civil society, particularly among policy-makers. This can be explained by association between pre-modern communities and place in both the popular imagination and classic sociological theory. A local, place-based community is a physically tangible entity embodied in a geographical territory and can, for that reason, provide the focus for communal activism and developmental initiatives (Bauman, 2001, p.113). Local places inculcate a sense of cohesion, belonging and identification. Furthermore, the theme of locality occupies a central position in the conceptual armoury of community development theory (Powell and Guerin, 2004, p.252).

Discourses of governance have sought to latch onto this; consequently, “*participative governance has tended to privilege communities of locality as the prime focus for public participation*” (Newman, 2005, p.126). The new partnership arrangements and local governance structures that have emerged in Ireland over the past two decades are an evident instance of this. These bodies have a pronounced local, territorial focus and well-defined geographical areas of operation .

Overall, the notion of governance places considerable emphasis on geographical factors of locality, territory and place:

Place and territory are becoming the focus around which collective action (and governance) will integrate: they suggest that issues of place identity and place quality, in particular, prove cogent for mobilising interests (Sterling, 2005, p.144).

Architects of the Third Way have, therefore, appealed to people’s attachment to place in an effort to encourage them to participate in the governance project. This recognises that, in spite of the mobility and dislocation inherent in modern life, many people retain a strong psychological bond to the place where they live. Provision of public spaces, such as community centres, parks and other public facilities, which provide nodal points for civic activism, is another recurring geographical theme. In localities where such facilities are available it is considered that they can enhance sense of community and encourage participation. Civil society must be complemented by a civic geography that facilitates associational activity (Barber, 2001, p.274; Beck, 1998).

Connected with the transition to governance and the emphasis on the local scale is the issue of decentralisation of political power and decision-making. Decentralised

development occupies an important place in post-development writings and alternative development and the influence of anarchist philosophy is apparent (Nandy, 1992, pp.271-272). According to Acsehrad (1999, p.47):

A decentralised development would attempt to raise the degree of micro-regional self-sufficiency ... Democratic participation and socialization of politics would be conditions for a development that would have the participation of civil society in the forums created to discuss decisions of public interest.

Local autonomy, self-sufficiency, free choice and discursive politics are key features of this vision of political reform (Kothari, 1997, p.145; Johnston, 1996). It has been argued that decentralised governance should take place through voluntary self-governing associations that would be publicly funded and which would give citizens a voice in relation to issues that affect them (Hirst, 1997, p.18). Decentralisation is also compatible with the principle of subsidiarity, which is a cornerstone of EU political discourse and which advocates that decision-making should take place at the level closest to the grassroots whenever possible (Baker, 2000).

Decentralisation of decision-making to local communities facilitates the attainment of sustainable development. Advocates of decentralisation contend that people can relate much better to their own local context and decentralised administration provides them with a greater sense of ownership of local government structures and plans (Bridger and Luloff, 1999, p.377). Participatory planning allows policies to be devised that are sensitive to local context and considerations and permits local knowledge to be included in the process. In addition, decentralisation means that decisions on social and

economic development can be taken closer to the grassroots level, allowing their impact and effectiveness to be more closely monitored. Nevertheless, those of a radical persuasion argue that a great deal of rhetoric surrounds this issue and that there has been little substantive transfer of power to local level.

Finally, the interconnection between community and place is inherent in much of the literature that seeks to place the concept of community at the core of social theory. However, whether the link between community and place remains extant in twenty-first century developed societies is a point of contention. Most scholars draw a distinction between, on the one hand, territorial communities that are based on proximity and face-to-face interaction and, on the other communities of interest where geography is not the prime marker of communal identity (Amit, 2002; Deakin, 2001, p.5). What is more, the predominant view is that geographical communities have been eclipsed by interest-based communities, so that there are now communities without localities and localities without communities (Beck, 1998, p.36).

Nevertheless, there are those who argue that a yearning for place-based communities can still be discerned in contemporary societies. Bauman (2001, p.12) speculates as to whether this might be linked to the insecurity of the modern world:

Where the state has failed, perhaps the community, the *local* community, the physically tangible, 'material' community, a community embodied in a *territory* inhabited by its members and no one else, will purvey the 'being safe' feeling which the wider world evidently conspires to destroy? (emphasis in original)

Deakin (2001, p.5) identifies “*a distinctive communitarian perspective, deliberately pitched at the local level, concerned with the obligations and duties arising out of proximity*”, signalling that attempts to revive community are very much rooted in place.

Whether or not place-based communities have been eclipsed as a result of modernity remains one of the contentious issues in community studies and it a critical issue in a geographical study such as this. Nevertheless, there is evidence that many people continue to opt to develop or maintain connections with the place where they reside and with their neighbours. In other words, “*‘Place’ now becomes reconceptualised as an identity one chooses as much as one which is accepted as fate*” (Hoggett, 1997, p.8). This, however, does not signify actual continuity with the place-based communities of pre-modernity, but perhaps a nostalgic longing for the past. It should also be stressed that place- and interest-based communities are not mutually exclusive and individuals can consider themselves members of either or both.

Governments have preferred place-based communities as the basis for partnership, consultation and participation as they are the most obvious and convenient way for them to engage with community interests. However, it may be incorrect to assume common relationships or associations between people living in the same area; they may not share any common interests or a sense of belonging and there may in fact be tension or conflict between different factions in a particular area (Loughran, 2003, pp.39-45). Moreover, community organisations often proclaim that they represent a certain geographical area, such as an estate, neighbourhood or village, but their democratic mandate is often questionable. However, communities as they are conceived by partnership agencies may not actually exist on the ground and residents of the

functional area of a partnership may not have any special identification with that area (Hart, Jones and Baines, 1997).

In summary, the geographical themes of place, scale and locality are critical to an appreciation of the multifaceted relationship between community, civil society, governance and development. There is much, therefore, that geographical imagination can bring to these deliberations: critical analysis of the connection between community and place; a sharpened awareness of the territorial matrixes of power and decision-making; geographical perspectives on the political economy of development; the feasibility of local arena as a platform for accomplishing sustainability. An analysis that is sensitive to these geographical factors can ensure that simplistic and reductionist notions of place, community and the local scale are avoided.

1.8 Conclusion

This review outlined how notions of civil society and community have become central to the debate about the future direction of modernity. Recent theories of development, along with related concepts of democratic governance, sustainability and the Third Way, attaches considerable prominence to the involvement of the so-called third sector, which comprises an assortment of community-based activism. Ordinary citizens and the communities in which they live, it is argued, contain the inherent potential to address the difficulties facing civilisation in the early twenty-first century. The voices of community and voluntary organisations must be listened to and their knowledge appreciated; they must be empowered and must work in partnership with state and private enterprise; their local horizons must become the arena for decision making;

they must be permitted to have a major input the direction of their own development. This, at least, is the theory of how a globalised world must be run, according to those who subscribe to the Third Way and it is a view that has been in vogue for over a decade.

The extent to which there has been, in practice, a transfer of political power to local communities is the principal question that this thesis seeks to answer. The East Cork region and some of its constituent communities is the scene for the exploration of this issue. Recent industrial, residential and infrastructural development has altered its human geography and has placed planning and development issues at the forefront of local consciousness. Rapid social and economic change has generated a sophisticated and professional response from highly active local community organisations. The state has responded in turn and partnership, participation, and sustainability have all entered the lexicon of local governance in East Cork. Nevertheless, conflict has been evident between community, state, and private sector interests and there are competing stances regarding the development of the area.

The themes explored in this review can be grouped into four clusters of research questions and Chapters 3-6 are informed by these sets of queries. The first array of research questions revolves around the political economy of development and related issues of globalisation, scale, planning and sustainability. How is the development of local areas conditioned by global economic forces and by official planning policies framed at European, national and regional level? How are the macroeconomics of globalisation played out at the micro level and what are the social and demographic implications of this for local communities? These questions are pertinent for two reasons. Firstly, the development of East Cork shapes the social context in which the

communities within the area operate. Secondly, the manner in East Cork has been shaped by globalisation serves as a reminder that the community sector in the area is just a small component of a much larger picture. Chapter 3 provides a narrative of the development process in East Cork and addresses these questions in the light of profound socio-economic change within the region in recent decades.

A detailed understanding of the community and voluntary sector is a prerequisite for examining the renewed importance attached to civil society in the practice of politics. A number of questions arise in the literature, such as the linkage between sense of community and place, the representativeness of community groups, their *raison d'être* and the membership characteristics of organisations. Do sense of place and local identity act as motivational factors for community activism? Are place-based concepts of community relevant to people in a society in rapid flux? Is it possible to develop theories that can aid our comprehension of voluntary work? These matters are dealt with in Chapter 4 through an investigation of specific place-based community organisations in East Cork. Their history, structure and everyday activities are scrutinised to give a clearer picture of the nature of the third sector.

The principal focus, however, is upon the participation of the voluntary community sector in local development through partnerships arrangements with the state and the private sector. The review pointed out that communitarian principles have guided political leaders in their engagement with communities and that the switch to governance has endeavoured to foster co-operation and consensus. However, there are those who do not subscribe to this mainstream vision and their criticisms raise many questions. To what extent has civil society's interaction with the state through the partnership model

proven successful? Is it, as some have suggested, merely a means of state manipulation for its own ends? Do voluntary community groups contain the potential to contribute to complex policy issues, or does the political attention invested in civil society place unfounded faith in the capabilities of volunteers and the extent of civic virtue? Chapter 5 hones in on these questions with reference to the engagement of East Cork's community groups with state authorities at local and national level

Finally, power and knowledge pervade all of the issues under discussion and any research must take cognisance of this. Those who have the power to determine discourses of civil society, community and sustainable development are in a stronger position to impose their worldview. They may also use scientific and technical knowledge to validate their perspective. At the same time the powerful may encounter resistance, which can involve the deployment by communities of local and vernacular knowledge in a challenge to dominant paradigms. How is the conflict between competing visions of development played out? Who decides what appropriate and sustainable development is? Who sets the terms for voluntary sector participation in partnership? Do social and physical planning initiatives and official policies take adequate account of local community-based knowledge and, if not, why not? Answering these questions necessitates unearthing the relations of power and resistance between the various actors in local development. The case studies presented in Chapter 6 attempt this in a focused and detailed manner.

Chapter 2: A case for the case study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to undertake an examination of the complex interaction between community organisations and state institutions in local development processes and explores a number of themes. Firstly, the importance of a reflexive approach to research is stressed; connected to this is an emphasis on intertwining theory and practice. Secondly, the position of values in the social sciences is investigated and linked to this is a concern with power and knowledge. This leads finally to the development of a pluralist methodology, founded principally on the case study method, yet employing a melange of fieldwork techniques, with the primary emphasis on qualitative data. In order to introduce the methodological approach, however, it is necessary initially to consider the wider debate on epistemology and methodology, which has, of late, been framed in terms of the tension between modernist and postmodernist approaches.

2.2 Epistemological considerations

2.2.1 Current trends in epistemology

The principal consideration of any methodological approach employed in the social sciences centres upon the effective and accurate representation of the real world

through the prism of academic research. Traditionally, the process has been viewed as straightforward: research should be based upon a predetermined hypothesis or theoretical position. Empirical study allows the researcher to reject or accept their hypothesis and to contribute to the refinement of a particular body of theory. This modernist view of science is characterised by rationality, objectivity, progress and certainty. Hall (1999, p.9) remarked that “*The conventional task of epistemology is to ‘found’ inquiry on a single, logically consistent theory of knowledge*”. Immediately, however, he pointed out that “*As the twenty-first century dawns, this project has become highly suspect*”.

The advent of postmodernism presented a major challenge to conventional methods of understanding the world through empirical investigation. Postmodernism “*rejects epistemological assumptions, refutes methodological conventions, resists knowledge claims, obscures all versions of truth and dismisses policy recommendations*” (Rosenau in Alvesson, 2002, p.1). Grand theories and metanarratives, which were the hallmarks of social science since the Enlightenment, were forcefully attacked (McLennan, 2002). Instead, postmodernism depicts the means by which knowledge is socially constructed and how historical processes, the social organisation of inquiry, the political economy of knowledge, ideology, funding, competition and social networks undermine the integrity and independence of scientific research and the knowledge it produces (Hall, 1999, p.12). Disciples of postmodernism assert that there is no such thing as universal truth; research is always embedded in social, political and ideological contexts.

Undoubtedly, the postmodernist critique of epistemology is potent, cogent and wide ranging and must be addressed by any serious research. Nonetheless, the researcher

risks being drawn into a quagmire of negativity and nihilism: one of the criticisms of postmodernism is that it can be ultimately self-defeating and, if taken too seriously, it can make academic research futile. It “*encourages a retreat from saying something of relevance and interest to audiences other than ... academia, audiences presumably interested in knowledge of value to aid their understanding and possible problem solving*” (Alvesson, 2002, p.41). It has been argued, therefore, that a balance must be struck between an outright rejection of conventional, modernist science and a dismissal of postmodernists’ concerns. Alvesson (2002, pp.29-45), for instance, proposes that postmodern ideas can be utilised in a positive way to critique and improve upon existing research techniques. Affinitive postmodernism, a softer version that propounds local, situated knowledge, methodological pluralism and marginal perspectives represents perhaps an acceptable compromise position.

2.2.2 Pluralist and reflexive social research

As the postmodern critique of epistemology has taken root, the concept of reflexivity in social research has become more prominent. Reflexivity denotes continual reflection by the researcher upon their own relationship to the object of their study. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1999; 1998; 1993), with whom reflexivity is most closely associated, referred to this as “*the objectification of the act of objectification*” (Jenkins, 2002, p.47). In other words, the researcher must take two steps back, examining not only the object of their study, but also the act of study and observation itself. Reflexivity aims to overcome the biases and distortions generated by a researcher’s position, which might be related to their social origins and class, their

position in the wider academic and intellectual field or the very manner in which they construe the world around them. As such, it represents an attack on the notion of social research as an objective, free-floating, detached pursuit. What reflexivity must identify and neutralise is *“the collective scientific unconscious embedded in theories, problems and (especially national) categories of scholarly judgement”* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.40). It is, therefore, the cornerstone of endeavours to overcome the opposition between radical relativist postmodernism and absolutist modernist rationalism.

Closely allied to the advent of reflexivity are attempts to develop stronger links between theory and research practice. Bourdieu (1998, p.2) favoured *“research in which the theoretical and empirical are inseparable and which mobilises numerous methods of observation and measurement”*. Empirical work is the necessary basis for theorising, while a solid theoretical foundation is essential for fieldwork and data gathering; they are mutually dependent and supportive. Oppositions between theory and research, between qualitative and quantitative techniques, and between ethnography and statistical data are artificial and constricting (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp.27-28). This leads social research away from a view of theory for its own sake and from the use of methodological tools in the absence of a theoretical vision. It also leads to the employment of a range of research techniques that *“must constantly be reflected on in actu”* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.30). Both Alvesson (2002) and Hall (1999) concur broadly with this trend towards the intellectualisation of method. Additionally, Hall (1999, p.4) supports the notion of utilizing multiple research techniques, maintaining that *“heterogeneous methodologies of research are not autonomous, they are deeply connected, and sometimes dependent upon one another”*.

A final key aspect of pluralism and reflexivity centres upon the significance of values in social research. Modernist science draws a strong distinction between objective facts and subjective values, favouring the former over the latter. Hall (1999), however, observes that:

The program of isolating facts from values has by now become deeply problematic. This development affects all disciplines and methods, but it poses the greatest challenge for the legitimization of science (Hall, 1999, p.12).

Incorporating values into academic research presupposes a greater role for academics in public debate and social dialogue. Moreover, in real-world terms, values and ethics have become central to ongoing debates on development, civil society and community. Solutions to environmental problems, social malaise and political indifference arguably must incorporate values judgements and Flyvbjerg (2001; 1998) advocates a useful approach for integrating values and ethics into empirical research.

2.2.3 Values and power in social research

Flyvbjerg (2001) identifies the weakness of contemporary social science as rooted in their efforts to mimic and emulate the natural sciences by developing cumulative and predictive theory. While such an approach has borne fruit in the natural sciences, the social sciences have consistently lagged behind in the development of predictive laws and universal theories. The major reason for this, he argues, is that theory building requires abstraction and decontextualisation from real world situations, while the study of human society should always pay attention to context. *“The context for an event studied by a researcher thus determines whether the event should at all count as a relevant event for*

the study” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.42). While the natural sciences study inert physical phenomena, the social sciences are interested in fluid and dynamic patterns of human behaviour. This is a fundamental difference, and Flyvbjerg argues that the same approaches cannot be employed by the natural sciences and the social sciences, as the latter are not amenable to laws, rules and theories that ignore context:

The problem in the study of human activity is that every attempt at context-free definition of an action, that is, a definition based on abstract rules and laws, will not necessarily accord with the pragmatic way an action is defined by the actors in a concrete social situation (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.42).

Instead, Flyvbjerg endorses a new approach to social scientific research derived from classical Greek philosopher Aristotle, which he terms *phronesis*. Aristotle wrote on the three intellectual virtues of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. Both *episteme* and *techne* remain extant in contemporary science in the form of scientific knowledge based on general analytical rationality and technical knowledge based on practical instrumental rationality respectively. *Phronesis* differs from both of these and is concerned with value rationality or “*things that are good or bad for man*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.57). Research following this approach stresses context, the particular and the power of example as opposed to general rules and the universal. However, “*despite their importance, the concrete, the practical and the ethical have been neglected by modern science*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.59). It is precisely at the current juncture in human history that value rationality needs to be placed at the core of the social sciences, given the pressing nature of social, economic and environmental problems.

The phronetic approach to social research can be summarised in three value-rational questions: “*Where are we going? Is this desirable? What should be done?*” To these three questions, Flyvbjerg adds another in his efforts to incorporate issues of power into *phronesis* i.e. “*Who gains and who loses out, and by what mechanisms of power?*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.60). Several methodological guidelines are derived from these basic questions. Phronetic social science is concerned first and foremost with values and power and how these relate to knowledge, rationality and truth. It emphasises getting close to reality and studying events in their real world context. Consequently, primary considerations include small-scale studies, ‘thick’ description and “*searching for the Great within the Small and vice versa*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.133). The case study method is central to this approach as a means of investigating events as they occur in reality. Everyday life and everyday people are seen as significant. Narrative is the preferred technique for writing in phronetic social science, given the aforementioned interest in context, detail and the dynamics of ‘how’.

Flyvbjerg’s concept of phronetic science repositions social research away from the quest for universal, context-independent theories and objective scientific knowledge. Instead, it proposes an approach whereby values and power relations are made explicit, including the values of the researcher and their own position in networks of power. Rather than producing the ‘right’ answers for the public, phronetic social science seeks to make an input into ongoing public dialogue, recognising that there is no single authoritative body of knowledge or theoretical position. The phronetic approach should, therefore, “*transform social science to an activity done in public for the public, sometimes to clarify, sometimes to intervene, sometimes to generate new perspectives,*

and always to serve as eyes and ears in our ongoing efforts at understanding the present and deliberating about the future” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.166).

This methodological approach is most apparent in Flyvbjerg’s monograph on the Aalborg Project, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (1998). Throughout this in-depth case study of the award-winning planning project for rejuvenating the centre of this northern Danish city, he documents the manner in which knowledge, power and rationality are linked in everyday planning practice and political decision-making. An examination of underlying values and power structures allows one to develop a lucid and intelligible method for investigating the role of community groups in development processes, where numerous competing interpretations and perspective are evident, while Flyvbjerg’s emphasis on context and real-world situations complements a geographical study. Consequently, his ideas, within the wider milieu of reflexive social science and pluralist epistemology, provide a foundation for the case study approach outlined below.

2.2.4 The case study approach

While the label ‘case study’ is frequently utilised in the description of research projects, there is often a lack of clarity surrounding what this method entails, but it is arguably an approach that is in harmony with the pluralist/reflexive position. The principal characteristic of a case study is its attention to context, or, more accurately, the relationship between the object of study and its wider real world context and it is based upon the conviction that examining this relationship is essential for true understanding and explanation. Consequently, case studies are conspicuous by their in-depth focus, their attention to detail and their preoccupation with relationships between phenomena

(Hamel, Dufour and Fortin, 1993, pp.1-3). This method is particularly suited to posing questions of 'how' and 'why', to considerations of contemporary events and to unearthing networks of power (Yin, 1994, p.1).

Yin (1994) emphasises that time boundaries are desirable in the design of a case study, but geographers might stress that well-defined spatial boundaries are also highly pertinent. For that reason, case studies are attractive to those undertaking place-based analyses at a range of geographical scales. The strong emphasis on context and situation in case study research complements geography's commitment to fieldwork, while the concern with holistic analysis also heightens its attractiveness to practitioners of the discipline. Geographers have long displayed a concern with synthesis and developing integrated understandings of relationships between human and physical phenomena (Buttimer, 1998, p.29). Case studies offer an effective means of achieving this aim.

Nonetheless, case studies have generally been viewed as one of the poor relations amongst methodological techniques and a number of criticisms recur (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Yin, 1994). Amongst the foremost is the insistence that an examination of a single case cannot provide any wider understanding outside of its own particular context and, consequently, that it is impossible to generate universally applicable theoretical propositions on the basis of a stand-alone case study. This perspective considers case studies useful only for generating hypotheses in the initial stages of a research project, not as a core element of a methodology that can contribute to cumulative theoretical development. From an epistemological perspective then, the use of case studies to spawn generalisable theories is at odds with the long-established positivist paradigm (Gillham, 2000, p.2).

Case studies, however, operate utilising a different logic to that of positivist social science. The deductive approach employed by positivists commences with a hypothesis which is tested against the results of empirical research. Conversely, case study research employs an inductive approach that does not commence with a staunch, preconceived hypothesis and shows less consideration with proving or disproving existing theories (Gillham, 2000, p.2). In the initial stages of a case study, reviewing the context is accorded as much importance as reviewing the current theoretical and conceptual literature. During the data collection phase, open-mindedness on the part of the researcher is essential. Nothing that crops up in the field is ruled in or ruled out and there is no rush to judgement, but rather unhurried, deliberate consideration of the entire context and all the information to hand. Nonetheless, case studies do aim to arrive at some form of theoretical interpretation, but it can be termed grounded theory: “*theory that is grounded in the evidence that is turned up*” (Gillham, 2000, p.12).

There is a paradox here, in that theory grounded in a particular context would appear by definition not to possess any wider validity. Nonetheless, proponents of case studies maintain that it is possible to generalise on the basis of a single case. The key issue is the ability of the researcher to locate and study what are known as strategic, revelatory, or critical cases, that is, cases that allow one to conclude, “*if it is valid for this case, then it is valid for all cases*” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.78). Experience, intuition and rigour are desirable faculties when endeavouring to achieve this goal. Major scientific theories developed by luminaries such as Marx, Freud, Galileo, Newton and Einstein were, it has been argued, based upon well-constructed, singular case studies that were ultimately proven to have broad applicability. In fact, it has been asserted that “*more*

discoveries have arisen from intense observation of very limited material than from statistics applied to large groups” (Beveridge in Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.75). For that reason, case studies deliver a comparatively fruitful return on investment of time and resources.

With respect to the practice of case study research, it can be described more precisely as an approach rather than a method, in that case studies draw upon multiple sources of empirical evidence, incorporating ethnographic research, other qualitative practices and quantitative techniques, but going beyond all of these individual methodologies (Yin, 1994, p.xiv). Consequently, one of the principal challenges facing case study researchers lies in cross-referencing data from a variety of sources, through a process known as triangulation. Judicious attention to detail is required in according the correct magnitude to pieces of data collected using diverse methods, especially when conflicting evidence presents itself. The advantages of a multi-method approach that draws upon a variety of sources arises from the coverage and flexibility it provides, but it does place a greater workload on the researcher and the range of techniques chosen require careful consideration. Another important facet in the design of a case study, which should be built from the outset, is the concept of a ‘chain of evidence’, often incorporating a field log or diary, that allows an external observer to assess the link between the initial research agenda and ultimate conclusions (Yin, 1994, p.98-100).

A fundamental imperative of a case study is to arrive at some degree of synthesis and to provide an integrated, holistic account of the subject under investigation. Therefore, the first priority when presenting the findings of such research is what anthropologist Clifford Geertz termed ‘thick’ description, reflecting on the detailed data that has been gathered and offering a totalising version of events (Gillham, 2000, p.12;

Hamel, Dufour and Fortin, 1993, p.33). Flyvbjerg (2001) advocates the employment of a narrative writing style, pointing out that accounts of specific places, events and actors can help bring the context to life. However, case studies are not concerned with mere storytelling. The researcher must also endeavour to understand the phenomena under examination, to provide interpretations and explain the subject matter to his or her readership, at all times situating their analysis with reference to the context in which the case study has been undertaken. This relates back to the primary purpose of the case study; the marriage theory and practice and the formulation of grounded theory.

An exemplary case study should almost read like a good anecdote and so it represents a powerful device for communicating the results of research projects. Gillham (2000, p.101) points out that “*the meticulous description of a case can have an impact greater than almost any other form of research report*”. Quality case studies contain the potential to invigorate the dialogue between academia and the public and to break down barriers between them. With their emphasis on narrative description, their focus on contemporary events, their exploration of power and *realpolitik*, and their ‘common sense’ approach, they are more likely to grasp public attention and promote greater public understanding of key social and environmental issues than more staid forms of scientific reportage. In the contemporary context of widespread public misgivings about scientific institutions and research practices, this must be regarded positively.

2.3 The practice of case study research

2.3.1 Introduction

This section explains how the case study approach was put into practice during the conduct of fieldwork. A variety of data-gathering tools were utilised and each one of these is critiqued separately. Participant observation, carried out while the author was employed as a community worker in the area, was important in the initial determination of the research agenda and the delineation of the study area. Official publications and statistics, along with a host of other documentary sources, were consulted in order to sketch the broad context. In keeping with the qualitative inclinations of this work, the primary emphasis was on face-to-face interviews; fifty-four of these were conducted with a range of actors in local community development in East Cork. Finally, an online questionnaire was drafted and administered, although this method of surveying the general population did not prove as successful as had been envisaged. In conclusion, the manner in which all of the data collected was crystallised into a number of case studies is explicated. Each case study reflects particular local circumstances and attempts to illuminate the power relations between those involved in local development and planning.

2.3.2 Defining the study area

From a geographical perspective, defining the spatial boundaries of a research venture is of utmost importance when outlining the parameters of the study. Accordingly, the rationale for choosing East Cork as the study area is elucidated here and the geographical boundaries of this region are specified (see Fig. 3.1, p.126). In selecting East Cork as the spatial focus of this work, two considerations were paramount. Firstly,

East Cork can be described as a territory with its own sense of regional cohesiveness and identity, notwithstanding the fact that its inhabitants also subscribed to spatially-based identities at greater (county, national) and lesser (parish, neighbourhood) geographical scales. Secondly, East Cork lies on the doorstep of Cork City, Ireland's second largest urban centre and this profoundly impacts upon the geography of development in the region. There is considerable internal differentiation within East Cork, largely influenced by proximity to the city, which is explored in detail in Chapter 3. There was, therefore, tension between the internal cohesiveness of East Cork and the external influence of the city.

East Cork's sense of regional identity is apparent merely by glancing at the telephone directory, which reveals that twenty-four businesses in the area have adopted the prefix 'East Cork', ranging from East Cork Bouncing Castles to East Cork Tyres. Probing the addresses of these entries allows one to conclude that Middleton and Carrigtwohill constitute the core of East Cork. Since the early 1990s, awareness of East Cork in the public mind has been heightened by the increased significance of regionalism and spatial considerations in public policy. The advent of the EU's LEADER II programme provided the impetus for the formation of East Cork Area Development Ltd (ECAD) in 1995, a local partnership company which merged enterprise interests with community-based, agricultural and tourism concerns. ECAD's flagship project under LEADER II was the East Cork Bird Trail, an eco-tourism project that sought to exploit 19 sites of ornithological interest stretching from Cork Harbour to Youghal, which was promoted with the slogan 'East Cork Unique'. Furthermore, ECAD spawned another

regional organisation, East Cork Tourism, which consisted of accommodation and service providers committed to regional marketing.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that East Cork's sense of itself is a recent phenomenon. Physical geography and its impact upon agricultural production has, for centuries, marked this out as a distinct location. The terrain of East Cork is undulating and far less rugged than that further west in the county, while soils are lighter and more fertile and the climate drier and sunnier, than areas to the north and west (Lafferty, Commins and Walsh, 1999; Murphy, 1993). Arable farming, therefore, is a more viable economic proposition than in many other parts of Ireland, and East Cork has a reputation as a grain producing area dating back to the 18th century (O' Flanagan, 1998). Browne (2001), in a recent study of agricultural change, stressed the predominance of arable farming in distinguishing East Cork from adjoining regions, while the world-renowned Jameson Whiskey Distillery in Middleton reflects the suitability of the area for the production of malting barley.

In cultural terms, the East Cork Division of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is a further marker of regional distinctiveness. GAA activities, especially hurling, are the predominant sporting and cultural influence in the area, and the role of the GAA in inculcating spatially-based identities is well recognised. The East Cork Division provides the foundation for administering GAA affairs, including the organisation of championships. It is also known as the Imokilly Division, a name which harks back to the historical Barony of Imokilly, a territorial unit dating from the Middle Ages. The fact that the Imokilly region has produced many of Cork's greatest hurlers, both past and present, is a source of much regional hubris.

It is possible from the foregoing to outline the East Cork region. The southern and eastern boundaries of the region can be delimited quite easily and consist of the Celtic Sea and the boundary with County Waterford respectively. Cork Harbour and Cork City mark the south-western and westernmost margins of what would typically be considered East Cork. The northern and north-western fringes are less clear. In this author's view, the M8 motorway and the River Bride valley provide the most suitable, if somewhat arbitrary, boundaries of East Cork to the northwest and north, with the settlements of Watergrasshill, Rathcormac, Castlelyons and Conna representing the outermost extremities of the region.

Nevertheless, a more important consideration in the selection of study area and the individual case studies within it relates to the proximity of East Cork to Cork City. The city has perhaps the single largest bearing on the human geography of East Cork and its influence pervades population distribution and density, settlement patterns, development and planning, transport infrastructure, industrial location and environmental issues. As one moves from west to east across East Cork, away from the city, the region takes on a more rural character. Over the course of the period being examined in this thesis, the city spread its tentacles out along the major road and rail transport corridors, and the spatial reach of planning policies and patterns of commuting provided the clearest evidence of the expanding realm of the metropolis. In fact, portions of East Cork closest to the city have almost been subsumed into it, becoming what has been termed 'peri-urban' areas (Walsh, 2006).

The six locations where in-depth fieldwork was undertaken reflect varying degrees of influence of Ireland's second largest urban centre. Glanmire is on the

doorstep of Cork City, while Dungourney and Ballycotton are remote rural areas much further removed from Cork's sphere of influence. Situated between these extremities, the settlements of Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill and Midleton have, over the course of time, been absorbed into the domain of the expanding metropolitan area. These study areas permitted an examination of the interaction between voluntary community activity and local development and planning issues in a diverse, yet relatively compact, spatial arena.

2.3.3 Participant observation

Participant observation forms the basis of many ethnographic and anthropological studies and allows the researcher to obtain, to some extent, an insider's perspective and to unearth data that would be unobtainable through other methodologies. This author was in a unique position in this respect having been employed as a community development officer with East Cork Area Development (ECAD) in Midleton for 2 years prior to the commencement of research and for a further 18 months in the early stages of research. Daily, face-to-face contact with voluntary community activists, public sector agencies and local authority officials, through involvement in project management, community education initiatives, public planning consultations and local partnership structures, was a feature of this occupation. Not only, therefore, did this position allow the author to acquire an indepth familiarity with the foremost issues in local development and planning; it had an even more fundamental influence upon the actual selection of the thesis topic and the direction of research.

Through ongoing and regular immersion in the study area over an extended period, the author built up working relationships with the principal actors in the local

community development sector. Undoubtedly, this network of contacts was a significant resource when it came to making requests for interviews and negotiating access to documentary material at later stages. It was necessary, however, to stress the distinction between the author's position as a professional community worker and as an academic researcher. In some instances, people assumed a formal connection between these two roles when, in fact, none existed, and this occurred even after the author had left ECAD. Participant observation threw up other barriers that had to be negotiated. Interviewees, for instance, often assumed an elevated level of knowledge of the topic under discussion and, at times, commented that 'you know all that already'. Furthermore, the author had professional and personal relationships with some interviewees that presented challenges when broaching potentially controversial questions or issues. Overall, however, the author's privileged insider position in relation to the subject matter being studied provided an additional level of insight and was invaluable in laying the groundwork for other research techniques employed.

2.3.4 Establishing the context: objective data

While the importance of values and the limits of objectivism are central tenets of the phronetic approach, it was, nonetheless, necessary to consider objective data i.e. data of a factual and descriptive nature. This allows one to investigate features and phenomena within a given society that can be "*materially observed, measured and mapped out independently of the representations of those who live in it*" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.8). Sources of this type of data varied. Official statistics, maps and other data collated by the state and its agents have long been utilised by social scientists and,

indeed, the quantity of information produced by state institutions has grown dramatically. Official plans and policies formulated outside of the study area, but impacting upon it, also required consideration. Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon researchers not to take such information at face value, but to subject data gathering procedures, systems of classification and policy pronouncements to a thoroughgoing critique.

Census of Population data was analysed to ascertain patterns of demographic change across East Cork. This data was highly useful in that it is collated at Electoral District (ED) level and furthermore is collected at regular intervals of five years. It therefore gave an indication of spatial variations between local areas and also allowed changes over time to be pinpointed. Chloropleth mapping techniques were employed to exhibit these patterns. The wide-ranging nature of the Census data, covering as it does not only crude population statistics, but also family structure, household ownership, employment, social class, car ownership and transport patterns, made it possible to map an array of indicators of social and economic change in local communities.

The state has taken increased interest in the voluntary community sector and this has been reflected in the more intricate policies devised at national and European Union level. It was imperative to take cognisance of this policy context, of its expression in specific policy documents and legislation and of the manner in which policies devised at higher spatial scales impacted upon the local arena. It was also necessary was to unearth the linkages and, sometimes, the contradictions between different strands of official policy, such as economic, planning, community-related and environmental policies. Furthermore, government policies alter on an ongoing basis; recent legislation on the legal status of the voluntary sector was one instance of this (Oireachtas Éireann, 2009).

One of the features of the relationship between community and state has been interaction between spatial development planning and the voluntary community sector. Procedures for devising statutory local authority development plans in Ireland are set out in national legislation, most notably the Planning and Development Act 2000, which stipulated that two public drafts must be produced during the process of making a development plan, while also allowing for public input in the form of written submissions. In reality, the entire planning system became the site for numerous conflicts as economic growth and physical development intensified in the latter half of the 1990s. Planning submissions, therefore, provided a rich vein of information, particularly when submissions from competing interests, such as community organisations and private developers, were studied. Close scrutiny of the final plan adopted by the local authority, or of decisions on planning permission for individual developments, afforded an opportunity to gauge the influence of these rival stakeholders.

Other disparate documentary sources that did not emanate from the state helped to cast light on the issues under investigation. East Cork Area Development permitted access to individual community project files and these were an invaluable information resource vis-à-vis the nature and structure of local community groups. Local newspapers, maps and miscellaneous written sources were also consulted where it was thought they could provide insights. Community organisations operate at a level where they compile written records, which included minutes of meetings, planning submissions and funding applications. However, there seemed to have been reluctance on the part of most groups approached to permit unfettered access to such material. In the author's view, this stemmed perhaps from the belief that such information might not be returned, rather than

from any desire to hamper disclosure of information, but logistical difficulties were also a factor. Community organisations rarely possessed a central archive of documentary material and different committees or officers held different types of records. Accessing such material proved difficult in these circumstances (see Appendix I for primary/unpublished sources). In summary, this objective data made it possible to sketch the context in which the institutions, communities and individuals operate on a day-to-day basis and it was utilised to determine the focus for unstructured interviews.

2.3.5 Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews provided the main source of primary data for this thesis, and are among the chief methods of data collection in the social sciences. Postmodernists, however, have cast doubt on this method as an accurate means of investigating what takes place in the world outside the interview situation, pointing out that the interviewee, the interviewer and the social situation undermine the interview as a knowledge producing activity (Alvesson, 2002, pp.107-114). It is possible, nonetheless, that if a researcher is aware of the potential shortcomings of interviews in advance and if they employ a reflexive approach throughout the process of preparing, conducting, transcribing and analysing interviews, such dialogues can yield utilizable information.

Bourdieu outlined three significant weaknesses of interviews (Jenkins, 2002, pp.52-54). Firstly, they are characterised by a discourse of familiarity that makes certain assumptions, takes these for granted and, consequently, leaves important underlying issues unexamined. Secondly, as a product of the interviewer's lack of acquaintance with the interviewee, the interview is "*an outsider-oriented discourse ... couched at the level*

of the general, eschewing the detail of particular cases and situations” (Jenkins, 2002, p.53). Thirdly, interviewees may be overly concerned with showing off their level of knowledge and impressing the interviewer and may adopt a disposition that does not accord with their everyday demeanour. An additional criticism might be that interviewees are acutely aware of politics of the interview situation and may have a vested interest in how the issues under discussion are represented. This may lead them to disclose information favourable to their own perspective, while simultaneously withholding unfavourable information (Alvesson, 2002, pp.113-4).

Bourdieu (1999) offers guidance on how these drawbacks and distorting effects can be overcome, based on his own experience of utilising unstructured interview techniques in a thought-provoking study of social exclusion in France. To begin, he views the relationship between a researcher and their subject as a social relationship that can be characterised by all types of distortions arising from the researcher’s position in the social hierarchy, resulting from what he terms ‘symbolic violence’. The first step for the researcher, therefore, is to minimise this symbolic violence.

Instead, the interviewer-interviewee relationship should be one of “*active and methodical listening*”, combining “*a total availability to the person being questioned*” with “*methodical construction, founded on the knowledge of the objective conditions common to an entire social category*” (Bourdieu, 1999, p.609). The researcher should familiarise themselves with the social context of the interviewee and, as far as is possible, endeavour to place themselves mentally in the place of the subject. Patronising attitudes, based on perceived social or intellectual superiority, should be avoided. The aim:

is to give oneself a *generic and genetic comprehension* of who these individuals are, based on a (theoretical and practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are a product (Bourdieu, 1999, p.613) (emphasis in original).

It is incumbent upon researchers to possess an extensive knowledge of the subject prior to undertaking interviews, while within in the interview situation, attentiveness, self-abnegation and openness are crucial on their part. Constant reflection by the researcher, which is consistent with Bourdieu's broader sociological method, is called for.

Bourdieu conceives of the interview as "*a sort of spiritual exercise*", where, ideally, the interviewee should almost take over the conversation and should come to perceive it as an opportunity for them to make their hidden experiences explicit so that they will find "*joy in expression*" (Bourdieu, 1999, p.615). He refers to this as the maieutic method i.e. bringing the latent ideas, thoughts and opinions of the interviewee into clear consciousness. What the interviewer must avoid is imposing their own view of what the central problems or issues are, or hijacking the opinion of the interviewee, as often occurs with the predetermined questions in structured interviews and closed questionnaires. Instead, they should try to dispose of all their own presuppositions and preconstructions (Bourdieu, 1999, pp.619-620).

Implementing Bourdieu's concept of the interview in a practical research context proved challenging, particularly given his stress on the importance of experience and intuition in conducting interviews and the necessity for improvisation and adaptability within the interview situation. A broadly unstructured approach to interviewing was applied; explicit themes and issues were probed, but a predetermined set of questions was

not used. Initially, six interviews were conducted and these were reviewed and reflected upon to ascertain if amendments were necessary to the style of interviewing or to any of the themes being explored. Undoubtedly, the author's familiarity with local community development issues in the study area and the social proximity to interviewees was a significant advantage. Establishing close personal contact, trust and genuine interaction between interviewer and interviewee, hallmarks of what Alvesson (2002, pp.108-109) refers to as the romantic approach to interviewing, was facilitated by the author's prior knowledge of East Cork and its community organisations.

Possibly the greatest potential pitfall in the interview situation is allowing one's own preconceptions and prejudices to come to the fore by putting leading questions to interviewees or attempting to put words in their mouths. Every effort was made to frame questions in such a manner that the interviewer's attitudes and opinions were not made explicit, thereby reducing any potential influence in biasing the responses of interviewees. For example, consider the following two questions that might be employed in an interview. 1. What sort of difficulties do you think will arise from the proposed scale of housing development in Carrigtwohill? 2. What will be the implications arising from the proposed scale of housing development in Carrigtwohill? The first statement implies that the questioner believes that problems will arise, while the interviewee may not necessarily concur with such an assessment. The second statement is more value-neutral and is therefore more likely to elicit the respondent's true opinion, rather than an opinion they think the interviewer wants to hear. It took concentration to avoid letting one's own perspectives and biases impact upon the discussion and in some instances there were lapses in this regard. Having said that, this should not be regarded in entirely

negative terms; very often provocative statements or pointed questions elicited equally pointed replies and helped to energise the discussion.

Other difficulties were encountered in managing and controlling the interview scenario. Those involved in community organisations tended to be articulate individuals and could talk unprompted for lengthy periods. A balance had to be struck between, on the one hand, allowing the interviewee to express themselves and maintaining the flow of conversation and, on the other hand, interjecting to clarify particular points or pose questions and this usually required a spur of the moment judgement call. As has already been pointed out, the author's own experience in community work gave insights into the backgrounds of interviewees that might not have been apparent to other researchers. However, due to the author's previous employment, the interviewer often turned interviewee as community activists raised questions relating to the work of ECAD. In one exchange, the chairperson of a community group initiated a lengthy interrogation on the possibility of funding from ECAD for a local playground, in spite of the fact that the author had left his position with that company eighteen months previously.

It has already been stressed that the overall case study approach relies on attention to detail and specific information. However, the interview did not prove the most suitable technique for gathering precise data. Interviewees' recall of facts and specific details was, at times, unclear, all the more so when events further back in time, such as the origins of groups, were being explored. Indeed, statements made by interviewees could not always be taken at face value and there were instances where they did not show a grasp of the topic under discussion. In such cases, it was necessary to defer to

documentary sources to clarify some matters, and where the written source contradicted the oral one, the former was given greater weight.

There was also some reluctance among interviewees to broach potentially controversial topics, in spite of assurances that no individual would be identified by name in the text. In adopting such a stance, interviewees showed an acute awareness of the politics of the interview situation. One community group member asked for the recording device to be switched off while they made critical comments about another group member. In Ballycotton, displeasure with fieldwork techniques used by a previous researcher in the area (Peace, 2000), who “*was lucky he wasn’t murdered*”, hampered efforts to interview locals. A representative of one organisation preceded their interview by asking if they were entitled to a ‘right of reply’ in the event that any critical comments made about the organisation by other interviewees appeared in the thesis.

Transcribing of interviews took place after all fieldwork had been completed, which meant that, in some instances, there was a lapse of over a year before the spoken word was consigned to paper. In retrospect, this had more disadvantages than advantages, and transcribing interviews in tandem with conducting them would have been preferable. Firstly, there were several points that came to light when transcribing interviews where further clarification or elaboration would have illuminated matters. This could have been sought, perhaps by phone, in the days following the interview, while the discussion was still fresh in the mind of the interviewee. Unfortunately, it was less feasible to attempt this where there was a lengthy time lag between recording and transcribing. Secondly, prompt transcription would have allowed material from interviews to be used more effectively to lay the groundwork subsequent interviews,

especially within the same community organisation, thereby generating a kind of snowball effect and providing links between conversations with different community activists.

In summary, a reflexive approach to interviewing was utilised and the style and manner of interview technique was constantly reviewed. Conducting interviews was a learning process in itself, which made it possible to strive for improvements as the research progressed. Interview situations required intuition, attentiveness and mental sharpness, skills that could only be honed through practice and experience. It was also important to recognise that each interviewee differed in their approach; some were very conversant, while others were less forthcoming with opinions. Overall, greater assurance with utilising interview techniques was developed as more and more interviews were conducted (see Appendix II for list of interviews).

2.3.6 Online questionnaire

Interviews focused on those who were heavily involved in community organisations and local development, but it was also considered that a questionnaire survey of the general population would provide useful data and place the interviews in context. In recent years, developments in information technology have provided a new and more efficient method of questionnaire administration and the use of web-based surveys has gathered momentum. Consequently, it was decided to employ a web-based survey as a data-gathering tool within East Cork; these allow for relative ease of data collection and minimise the input of time and energy required by the researcher (Murray and Fisher, 2002; Murray and Smith, 2002). The most obvious drawback of this

technique is that a large proportion of the population does not possess Internet access. Information Society Commission data showed that in 2000 just 41% of Irish adults had access to the Internet, rising to 53% in 2002, and that Internet access was skewed according to age, location, gender and social class (Information Society Commission, 2001).

The questionnaire designed for this study consisted of four sections, with closed questions employed throughout (Appendix III). Three sections were concerned with participation in voluntary community groups, views on power relations in local development and local government, and attitudes towards sustainable development respectively. The final section sought socio-economic data on respondents and was designed to be comparable with Census of Population data, thereby allowing the representativeness of the survey to be determined. Respondents were also given latitude to provide additional information and opinions. The questionnaire went online on 8th February 2004 and was hosted at <http://www.ucc.ie/ucc/depts/geography/ecs/>. In order to minimise the potential pitfalls of the survey, a wide reaching publicity campaign, incorporating both print and electronic media, was employed to boost the response rate. The aim was to maximise exposure of the general public to the survey in the study area.

A total of 86 responses were received over a three-month period. Over one quarter of replies were received on the first day, while three-quarters were received in the first week. The reason for this was that the electronic means of publicising the questionnaire generated a much better response than print media. There was little noticeable impact upon responses arising from the publicity in newspapers, and indeed the majority of responses had been received prior to these articles appearing. Upon

detailed analysis, however, it was clear that the respondent population was disproportionately young, single and educated: 56% of respondents classified themselves as students (Table 2.1). What the results indicated, therefore, was that an online survey is more likely to generate a response from younger people, particularly third level students, who are more likely have Internet access. Arising from the unrepresentative nature of the survey, a decision was taken not to analyse the results in depth.

Table 2.1 – A comparison of the socio-economic characteristics of questionnaire respondents and Census 2002 data from East Cork

	Questionnaire respondents	East Cork Census 2002 (Pop. aged >15 years)
% aged 15-24 years	49	19.2
% single	62.8	39.0
% with Third Level education*	61	27.3
% female	51.2	49.7

Source: online questionnaire and Census of Population 2002. *Census data refers only to those whose full-time education has ceased. Many respondents were in full-time Third Level education.

2.4 Conclusion

The methods and techniques used to gather primary data were grounded in pluralist and reflexive schools of thought. Fieldwork drew upon a range of research techniques, but the case study method was adopted as the means of drawing together this diverse dataset. One of the principal advantages of the case study approach is that it

complements a geographical analysis due to its attention to context and its holistic focus. In addition, as a method, the case study sits well with an examination of power relations in local community development due to its attention to detail and to real-world scenarios.

Bourdieu (1998, p.2) captured the essence of the case study when he stated:

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, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a ‘special case of what is possible’ ... that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations (Bourdieu, 1998, p.2).

The case study method is applied to the East Cork region as a whole in Chapters 3-5, where issues of socio-economic change, voluntary community activity, and the relationship between the community sector, the state and the private sector are considered respectively. In Chapter 6, individual community organisations and the settlements which they represent are the focus of analysis, allowing for more detailed scrutiny of the key research themes.

Table 2.2: case studies undertaken in each of the study areas

Study area	Case Study
Glanmire	Glanmire Area Development Plan 2000
Glounthaune	Community Timebank project
Carrigtwohill	Terrysland Housing development
Midleton	Midleton Community Forum

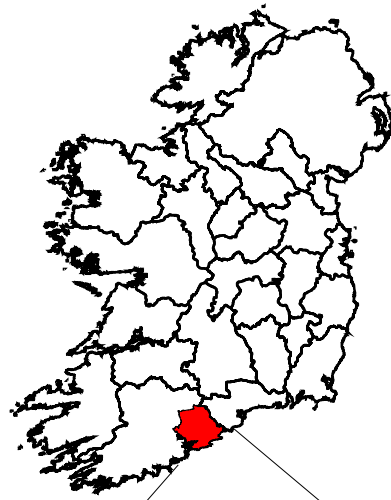
Chapter 3: Planning and development in East Cork

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter stressed the centrality of context to the methodological approach employed in this thesis. It emphasised that human activity is irrefutably linked to the spatial, temporal, social, economic and environmental situations in which it occurs. This chapter, therefore, aims to provide a background context for the analysis of voluntary community activity that forms the core of subsequent chapters; an understanding of the changing human geography of East Cork is indispensable to a study of the voluntary community sector. It will describe, in the very widest terms, the development of the East Cork region (Fig 3.1). The aim, in short, is to tell the story of the modernisation of East Cork. Although not neglecting a long-term perspective, the main emphasis is on the accelerated social and economic alterations of the past decade and a half, coinciding with the period of Ireland's so-called 'Celtic Tiger' economy. The following pages primarily draw upon statistical and official sources to provide an objective overview of change and seek to map, chart and tabulate phenomena that are indicative of modernisation and development.

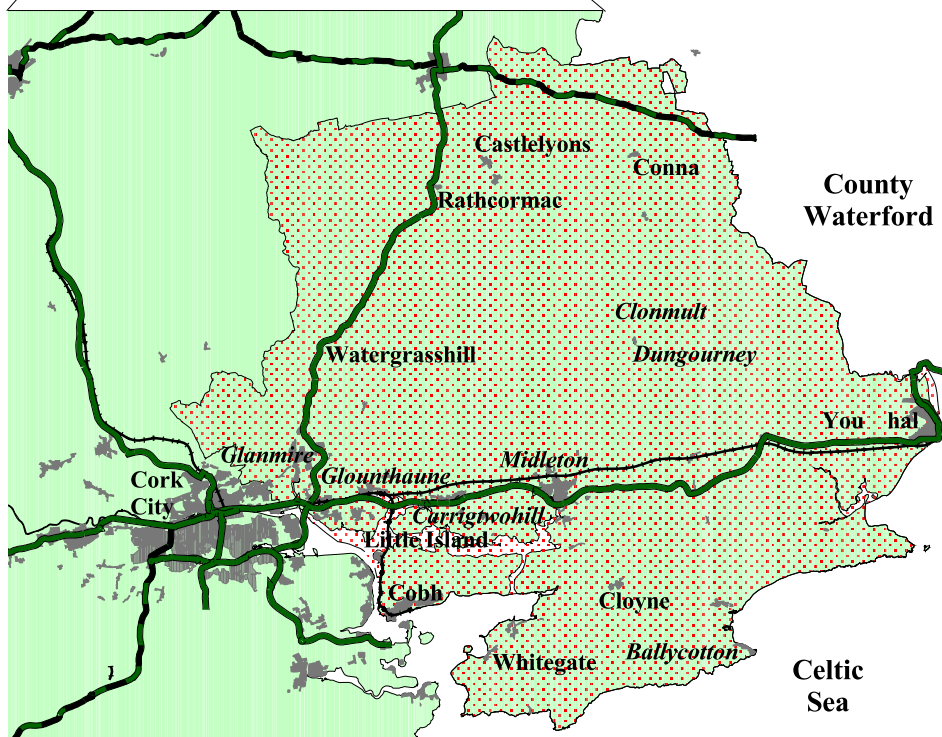
Since the late 1950s, East Cork has been progressively drawn deeper into the global economic and political system, and this has had significant repercussions for its human geography. It has created a new economic landscape due to the increased influence of trans-national capital and to changes in the scale, nature and distribution of

Figure 3.1 - Location Map of East Cork



Legend:

-  National Primary Roads
-  National Secondary Roads
-  Railway Lines
-  Urban Areas/Towns
-  Study Area
-  County Cork



Source: Ordnance Survey of Ireland

0 5 10 15 20 Kilometers



population and settlement. Major infrastructural projects have had implications for travel and movement, while there have been consequences for the natural environment arising from development. The role of planning policy and government institutions in an increasingly bureaucratised development process requires careful scrutiny. One must also position East Cork in the wider regional and national contexts in order to fully appreciate how it has changed.

It is important at this juncture to clarify and delineate the spatial and temporal focus of the following pages. Section 3.2 places the development of East Cork in the wider national context and identifies the late 1950s and 1960s as critical in the genesis of an Irish national planning and development paradigm that has had an overarching impact upon development processes. While primarily concerned with East Cork, the study area's propinquity to Cork City ordains that any meaningful consideration of planning and development matters must have regard to the relationship between East Cork and the wider Cork metropolitan region. Consequently, section 3.3 assesses how the national development paradigm has found expression in and around Ireland's second-largest city, principally by probing the adoption and implementation of a series of land use and transportation plans for the Greater Cork area since the 1970s. A key consideration in this thesis is the social ramifications of economic development, and section 3.4 utilises choropleth mapping of data from the four most recent Censuses of Population to display the principal demographic changes. Finally, section 3.5 aims to conceptualise the nature of social and demographic change in the study area and draws upon other research in the Irish context to support its conclusions.

3.2 Ireland's national planning and development paradigm, 1958-2006

3.2.1 Ireland and the global economy

The late 1950s and early 1960s marks the period during which Ireland embraced a modernist discourse of planning, development and economic growth. This new paradigm was rational and reasoned in nature, receptive to external influences and ideas, and envisaged a comprehensive, focused and progressive programme for national development. Consequently, this period is almost universally regarded as a watershed in the socio-economic history of the nation. Change was initiated against a backdrop of mass emigration and economic depression throughout the 1950s and the failure of the newly-independent state to deliver on a vision of domestic self-reliance and economic advancement. The official national development paradigm that emerged at this juncture contained three central aspects of interest, all of which have endured to the present day. Firstly, it was primarily driven by economic considerations and the necessity to create employment, sustain population and stymie emigration. Secondly, it was transnational in its focus, and looked towards foreign direct investment, particularly in export-oriented manufacturing industry, as a means to generate growth. As a consequence, Ireland was gradually integrated into the globalised capitalist economy and this had a profound impact upon the nation. Thirdly, physical and spatial forward planning initiatives, aimed at providing the infrastructure to guide progress, have underpinned the new paradigm from the outset.

The new departure was articulated originally by the Department of Finance in the *Programme for Economic Expansion* (1958), an historic document that heralded a sea change in official attitudes. The Programme favoured the expansion of manufacturing

industry as the engine for employment creation. Throughout the 1950s, the economy had been stagnant, emigration averaged 50,000 per annum, and there were genuine concerns that this depression would continue. The new policy marked a break with the approach since independence, which had attached primacy to native manufacturing and agriculture. Protectionist economic policies were abandoned in favour of free trade, and foreign investment, heretofore discouraged, now began to be encouraged (Lee, 1989, p.344). This policy shift was, according to one of its chief architects, a conscious and coherent effort to co-ordinate the development process and was supported by a series of fiscal and regulatory initiatives (Whitaker, 1983, pp.9-11).

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) had been established in 1949 to market Ireland as a location for foreign direct investment (FDI), but its brief had been restricted in its early years by protectionist legislation, notably the Control of Manufactures Act, which dictated that companies had to remain under majority control of Irish owners (MacSharry and White, 2000). However, with the introduction of Export Profit Tax Relief in 1956 to attract export-oriented manufacturing industry, the IDA began to take on a key role in promoting inward investment. The Anglo Irish Free Trade Agreement of 1966, followed by accession to the European Economic Community in 1973, which had been a goal of the government since the early 1960s, added to the country's suitability in the eyes of international investors by facilitating accessibility to large export markets. These policies helped usher in a period of unprecedented economic growth, allowing Ireland to benefit from the global economic boom of the 1960s. Approximately 550 new industrial enterprises were established in Ireland during the

1960s, and 68% of them resulted from foreign investment (Van Egeraat and Breathnach, 2007; Johnson, 1994; Lee, 1989; Brunt, 1988; Murphy, 1975).

Economic growth was accompanied by a growing official preoccupation with physical and spatial planning, reflecting wider European post-war inclinations, as well as the influence of international organisations, such as the World Bank and the United Nations. The new planning system instituted at this time was explicitly linked to development and modernisation and was characterised by a strong managerial ethos (Bartley, 2007, pp.33-34; Grist, 2003, p.221). Consequently, the 1960s brought forth a profusion of legislation, policy documents and reports on planning and regional development. There was a concern with balanced spatial development, evident in the Buchanan Report of 1968, which promulgated the concept of regional growth poles. Concentration of development in specific locations, it maintained, was necessary in order to maximise public investment and secure self-sustaining critical mass. Although political expediency meant that this policy was not overtly approved, it came to form the core of the official national developmental agenda (Johnson, 1994).

Meanwhile, the Local Government Act of 1963 introduced, for the first time, statutory five-year local authority development plans and also provided local government with powers to facilitate economic and commercial development. Through zoning maps and written statements for individual settlements, development plans conveyed the planning agenda to the level of every town and village in the country. An insight into the official mindset was afforded by the comments of the then Minister for the Environment during the Oireachtas debate on the Act, when he stated that: *“Other countries in Europe are using physical planning to advance their economic development and we cannot*

afford to ignore their example” (cited in Roche, 1982, p.200). The establishment of An Foras Forbartha in 1964, a state body charged with conducting research into physical planning, along with the division of the country into nine planning regions, were further indications of governmental attraction to planning.

Economic expansion in the 1960s precipitated wider social and cultural change. For the first time since before the Great Famine, the population of the state increased and emigration fell off sharply. Ireland was opened up to international cultural influences through the medium of television, while censorship policies that had proscribed literary works, both foreign and domestic, were revoked. The Catholic Church, whose influence pervaded many aspects of Irish life, underwent its own process of reform. The decision to provide free second-level education, alongside the ongoing expansion of third-level learning, had important effects that only became fully apparent in later decades. Liberal social movements began to coalesce around issues such as women’s rights, the environment and community development. Ireland had begun to exhibit the hallmarks of a country on the path to modernity.

Accession to the then EEC in 1973 sustained Ireland’s trajectory towards free trade and the internationalisation of its economy. Campaigners for membership contended that the country could look forward to the opportunities inherent in access to a large European market. The subsequent 15 years, however, provided something of a rude awakening as a deep economic recession set in. A complex mixture of forces was responsible for the downturn, but it is not necessary to dwell on them in detail. The warning signs were perceptible prior to 1973 in the form of rising inflation and unemployment, excessively generous pay increases in the public and private sectors and

the government's deviation from the long-standing principle of balancing the current budget. Subsequently, the first international oil crisis of 1973 propelled the economy into a more pronounced downward spiral. The government resorted to borrowing to rectify the situation and stimulate economic buoyancy. This, however, only served to exacerbate matters, and by the second oil shock of 1979 the slump was well and truly entrenched, characterised by mounting national debt and a deteriorating balance of payments (Lee, 1989, pp.465-471; Whitaker, 1983, pp.12-14).

The oil crises and global recession indicated that there was a price to be paid for participation in the international political and economic system; that price was ceding control over national circumstances to the vagaries of global capitalism. There was little that state authorities could do to halt the flight of multinational capital and jobs. Furthermore, while membership of the EU was an advantage in Ireland's ongoing efforts to attract foreign investment, traditional indigenous industries, protected for decades by tariffs and lack of competition, found it difficult to survive in this more competitive environment. As a result, employment in domestic industries fell continuously throughout the 1970s and 1980s owing to this 'shake-out' phenomenon. Rising unemployment and a reoccurrence of emigration levels not witnessed since the 1950s were the foremost indicators of economic malaise. Other factors that contributed to the dismal situation included the high economic dependency ratio resulting from the increased birth rates of the 1960s, and political instability, exacerbated by violence in Northern Ireland.

In retrospect, the 1980s can be construed as a period of harsh readjustment for Irish economy and society, although the onward march toward modernisation could not

be reversed. The people had tasted the fruits of modernisation during the 1960s, and there was no question of a return to de Valera's vision of economic nationalism and self-sufficiency. For a first decade and a half, the modernist paradigm of development had appeared to serve the country well, and even when negative implications of globalisation began to surface there was little alternative but to stay the course. In spite of the recession, therefore, the national development discourse remained, by and large, unchallenged. A vigorous debate on industrial policy did take place during the early 1980s, when the Telesis Report, commissioned by the NESC, queried the degree of emphasis on foreign investment and criticised the IDA for massaging employment figures. However, the dearth of a home-grown enterprise culture meant there were few alternative wellsprings of wealth creation to that of foreign direct investment (Van Egeraat and Breathnach, 2007, p.130; Lee, 1989, pp.531-537). Lee (1989, p.521) captured the prevailing mood of pessimism when he asserted that if the economic situation were to be turned around in the future, it would occur by '*sheer accident*', not as a result of foresight. As this national sense of despair deepened during the late 1980s, however, a degree of prescience by policymakers did attempt to sow the seeds of recovery.

3.2.2 Understanding the 'Celtic Tiger'

Much has been written on the remarkable success of the Irish economy since the early 1990s. That there has been massive social change as a consequence is not challenged. Furthermore, there is broad agreement in the literature as to the factors that contributed to this period of sustained growth; a range of economic, demographic and

institutional dynamics feature in the debate. However, there is less agreement on the weight that should be given to individual aspects, while the manner in which the Celtic Tiger story should be interpreted has been widely contested. This section begins by outlining the foremost indicators of economic growth, before considering the main explanations for the changes of the past decade and a half. It then weighs up the deeper analyses of the manifold transformation of Irish economy and society, and the various interpretative frameworks that have been put forward are dissected.

In outlining Ireland's prolific economic success, there is no shortage of evidence. In respect of almost every economic indicator available, the success story that was Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century can be read. The principal macroeconomic indicators, GDP and GNP, grew remarkably. Annual GDP growth from 1987 to 2006 averaged 6%, and peaked at 11.5% in 2000. GNP growth was less spectacular, primarily due to the repatriation of profits by foreign multinationals, but nonetheless outperformed the rest of Europe, with annual growth reaching a pinnacle of 10.4% in 2000. During the period of most sustained growth, from 1995 to 2001, the national economy expanded by more than 50%. The National Debt, which had threatened to spiral out of control during the 1980s, dropped from 87.7% of GDP in 1990 to 23.7% in 2005. By 2004, Ireland had the second-highest GDP in the EU after Luxembourg; a stark contrast to its accession year of 1973, when it was the poorest member state (IDA, 2007; 2006; CSO, 2006; EPA, 2006; Atkins et al, 2002, p.91).

Developments in the labour market were a central feature of the wider economic turnaround. Throughout the 1980s, Ireland was again blighted by emigration and unemployment, the latter reaching a high of over 300,000, or 15% of the labour force, in

1993. However, by 2006, the absolute number unemployed had halved to around 150,000 and, due to a more sizeable labour force, the proportion had dropped to just 4.4%. In contrast, the number at work increased during the same period by almost 75%, from 1.18 million to 2.06 million (IDA, 2007, p.7; CSO, 2006, p.33). This surge in the labour force contained a high proportion of young people and new female entrants. Indeed, female participation in the labour force escalated markedly from 30% in 1985 to 51% in 2005 (CSO, 2006, p.27).

Associated with these labour force trends were more wide-ranging demographic transformations. The population of the state reached 4.23 million in 2006, the highest figure in almost a century and a half and an increase of one fifth on 1991. Net emigration ceased in the early 1990s and many who had left a decade earlier returned home, joined by migrants from across Europe, Africa, America and Asia, all seeking to avail of the opportunities afforded by the 'Celtic Tiger'. Accession of the new Eastern European member states to the EU in 2004 intensified immigration, and by 2006 over one in ten of the state's population were foreign nationals. Spatially, population growth was concentrated in the Greater Dublin Area and, to a lesser extent, on the fringes of Cork, Limerick and Galway. This was reflected in the ongoing urbanisation of the Irish populace, the Census for 2006 recording that 60% of all inhabitants resided in towns and cities (CSO, 2007b).

National prosperity was a boon to the personal circumstances of individual citizens. Estimated disposable income per person rose by 75% between 1987 and 2003 and ostentatious displays of this new wealth became commonplace as the country embarked on a spending spree (CSO, 2006, p.176). Consumer spending on goods and

services increased by over 80% between 1995 and 2005 (EPA, 2006, p.7; CSO, 2006, p.165). Not only did the number of private cars more than double between 1990 and 2005, but there was also a trend towards larger vehicle sizes (EPA, 2006, p.56). Outgoings on foreign travel grew to such an extent that they outstripped expenditure by visitors to Ireland for the first time ever in 2003 (CSO, 2006, p.329). Affluence allowed the Irish to indulge in their fondness for communication by adopting new information technologies; per capita usage of mobiles phones was the highest in Europe in 2006 and high-speed Internet usage had grown quickly from a miniscule base less than five years previously (Commission for Communications Regulation, 2007). Latterly, it appears that extravagance has been fuelled by personal borrowing; the number of credit cards exceeded 2.2m, and credit card debt €2.3bn, in 2005 (CSO, 2006).

Undoubtedly, a general 'feel-good' factor manifested itself and the national mood was largely one of self-assurance. Economic factors played a primary role in improving circumstances, although achievements on the global stage in sport, entrepreneurship, arts and culture were applauded and enhanced Ireland's status internationally. The country was held up as a model that other nations should aspire to and several endeavoured to replicate the conditions that generated Ireland's economic growth and surpass its performance (O' Toole, 2003). However, the complex and interrelated dynamics of Ireland's economic success are difficult to weigh down specifically. A plethora of opinions were proffered in attempting to explain the transformation of Irish economy and society from verging on Third World 'basket case' in the late 1980s to a place with one of the highest standards of living in the world just over a decade later.

The roots of the transformation can be traced to 1987, when the abovementioned economic crisis forced the government into harsh decision-making. Drastic cuts in public spending were introduced in an effort to curb the national debt and bring public finances under control. It was in the context of the government's need to enlist wider support for these extreme measures that the first national partnership agreement, the *Programme for National Recovery 1987-1990*, was forged. Like the *Programme for Economic Expansion* three decades earlier, it represented a new departure in governance, initiating a collegiate and corporatist approach to policy that was termed social partnership. This consisted of sectoral groupings, including trade unions, business interests and the farming sector, collaborating with state agents to devise and implement an agreed agenda for social and economic policy. The social partners acquiesced with wage restraint and cuts in public expenditure, while the government promised lower taxes and the fruits of economic recovery at a later date (Rush, 1999; Walsh, 1998).

The *Programme for National Recovery* was succeeded by a further five, three-year social partnership agreements. Social partnership, therefore, became a fundamental creed of Irish policymaking and “*has in effect been elevated to a shared political ideology*” (Walsh et al. in Kirby, 2002, p.40). The acceptance of social partnership stemmed from the government's view that a co-operative and consensus-based attitude, rather than one of confrontation, offered a better chance of resolving national difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties. As a consequence, partnership infiltrated public policy and decision-making at all levels of governance, and was credited with fostering peaceful industrial relations and lower taxes, while protecting those on social welfare and low pay. From the perspective of this thesis, the most important aspect of this revolution was the

transfer, during the 1990s, of the social partnership model to the local development arena through the creation of an array of local structures, including Area Based Partnerships and County Development Boards (Barry, 1998; Walsh, 1998).

Effective public policy did not, in itself, deliver growth, it merely positioned Ireland to benefit from favourable external circumstances. In 1993, the Single European Market came into being, allowing unfettered movement of goods, services and labour across the EU. Furthermore, under the Maastricht Treaty of the previous year, Europe embarked on a process of more concentrated economic integration by initiating the formation of a single currency. These developments coincided with an upturn in the US and global economies. Global economic output grew more in the period from 1995 to 1998 than it did in recorded history up to that date (O' Toole, 2003, p.11). Ireland, located as it was 'between Boston and Berlin', was, according to Tánaiste Mary Harney, in a prime position to exploit the situation. Moreover, the UK's repudiation of the single currency meant that Ireland was the only English-speaking country in the Eurozone, augmenting its attractiveness for American investors. An additional outcome of European Monetary Union (EMU) was that under the so-called Maastricht criteria, aspiring member states had to bring their budget deficits and debt/GDP ratios in line with stringent limits. In the case of Ireland, this meant that there could be no return to the profligate public finance policies of the 1970s.

Throughout this period, the IDA continued to play a key role in marketing Ireland aggressively on the global stage as a destination for FDI. It took full advantage of the global boom and, by international standards, its ability to attract inward investment was remarkable. Approximately 20% of total foreign investment into the EU found its way to

Irish shores, surpassing even the quantity attracted by the UK. Leading global corporations in the IT, healthcare and pharmaceuticals sectors set up operations during the 1990s. By 2006, almost 1,000 foreign multinational enterprises, employing 135,000 people, were based in Ireland (IDA, 2006, p.4). Of late, the emphasis on attracting knowledge-based operations and research and development facilities revealed the IDA's more sophisticated and nuanced grasp of the global marketplace. Alongside the work of the IDA, Ireland's low corporate tax rate was central to its capacity to draw in FDI: it stood at just 10% until 2003, when pressure for tax harmonisation from the EU forced a rise to 12.5%. However, it remains amongst the lowest in Europe, and any further pressure to bring the rate into line with the rest of the EU is likely to meet stiff resistance.

The European Union contributed in a more direct way to Ireland's development, and expenditure under the European Structural and Cohesion Funds was widely credited with setting the wheels of the economy in motion. Reform of European funding mechanisms in 1988 brought about a substantial increase in the revenue obtainable, and Ireland, as one of the poorer member states at the time, benefited from IR£17bn funding between 1989 and 1999, the highest per capita support in the EU. Undoubtedly, these resources helped finance critical infrastructure, particularly roads, water and sewerage, which were subsidised up to a rate of 85% under the Cohesion Fund. Furthermore, this occurred at a time when national expenditure in these areas was minimal and the proportion of national government spending derived from European sources stood at 8% as late as the mid-1990s (Kitchin and Bartley, 2007, p.12; O' Toole, 2003, p.19; MacSharry and White, 2000, pp.154-157). However, commentators generally agree that such funding was not the primary engine of economic growth, and former Taoiseach

Garret Fitzgerald ascribed one tenth of growth in the decade to 1998 to such supports (Fitzgerald in MacSharry and White, 2000, p.161). On the other hand, the ESRI calculated that the Single Market was much more advantageous to Ireland, accounting for three times more growth than the Structural Funds (ESRI in MacSharry and White, 2000, p.161).

Both Structural Funds and the social partnership model had a further important implication, in that they compelled the government to adopt longer-term, strategic thinking regarding economic and social policy. Bartley (2007) associates this with a paradigm shift in planning from a modernising/industrial methodology towards entrepreneurial planning, which was more flexible and results-oriented, incorporating concepts such as public-private partnerships and enhanced public participation. Public sector reform over the course of the 1990s further embedded this more pragmatic culture in the civil service, as government responded to the pressures of globalisation and competition for investment (Bartley, 2007, pp.36-40). This found practical expression in the formulation of sectoral, six-year operational development programmes during the period 1994-1999, which were succeeded by a comprehensive National Development Plan (NDP) from 2000 to 2006; the approval of these plans by the EU guaranteed continued access to Structural Funds. This approach, allied with the social partnership agreements, also ensured continuity in official policymaking. A spatial element was also built in to this process when, as part of the NDP, the state was divided into two regions for the purposes of public expenditure. The adoption of the National Spatial Strategy in 2002 consolidated this strategic mindset (Government of Ireland, 2000b; 2002).

A more conjectural, but nonetheless important, factor in contributing to economic growth was demographic change. The initial wave of economic expansion in the 1960s reduced emigration and led to higher birth rates throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, the economic dependency ratio was high during the 1980s, placing additional strain on the economy. As the twenty-first century approached, this young, well-educated pool of people entered the labour market and the national dependency ratio almost halved between 1989 and 2001 (Fitzgerald, 2003, p.32). O' Toole (2003, p.24) pointed out: *"This dramatic shift in the nature of the Irish population had very significant economic consequences. In 1986, there were 22 dependants for every ten workers in the Irish economy. By 1999, there were 14 dependants for every ten workers"*. In 2007, just under one third of the population was between 25 and 44 years, at the peak of their productive powers as workers and spending power as consumers (IDA, 2007).

The youthful population that entered the labour force during the 1990s was comparatively well educated. As far back as the late 1960s, the government had invested in free second-level education, and this policy began to pay economic dividends. Widespread vocational training courses were also provided under the European Social Fund prior to the economic boom, while third-level student enrolments more than doubled between 1990 and 2004 (CSO, 2006, p.105). Political factors should be borne in mind. Ireland enjoyed relatively stable government, with the Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat coalition serving two full terms of office between 1997 and 2007, and the neo-liberal philosophy of this administration was well disposed towards business and enterprise. Allied to this, the end to widespread violent political conflict in Northern Ireland following the paramilitary ceasefires in 1994 and the Good Friday Agreement in

1998 created a climate more conducive to facilitating inward investment both north and south of the border.

3.2.3 Interpreting Ireland's development

How does one make sense of and interpret from a theoretical standpoint the multiplicity of reasons behind Ireland's startling economic performance, and what weight should be accorded to the individual causative factors outlined above? An overarching theme present in almost all analyses is globalisation. Several indices of this phenomenon have ranked Ireland amongst the most globalised nations on earth. The AT Kearney/*Foreign Policy* Globalisation Index placed Ireland at the top of its scale of most globalised states for three consecutive years from 2002 to 2004 (Kearney, 2007). Although not strictly designed as a measure of globalisation *per se*, the *Economist* Intelligence Unit's Quality of Life index positioned Ireland at the top of a table of 111 states in 2005, indicating that Ireland's fortunes had risen in parallel with globalisation. Meanwhile, Ireland steadily climbed the United Nations Human Development Index rankings, from eighteenth in 2002 to fourth in 2006 (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). Closer scrutiny of the criteria utilised in these varying catalogues of globalisation gives deeper insights into the nature of Ireland's development. Its positioning in these rankings had much to do with the manner in which it embraced free trade and economic liberalisation. In terms of general human welfare, social development and adoption of technology, however, the country compares less favourably with others (O' Sullivan, 2006, pp.34-38).

Globalisation brings the debate about Ireland's development into sharper focus for a number of reasons. Firstly, it begs the question as to whether the economic boom can be accredited to the foresight of policy makers, or if it had more to do with external factors outside the direct control of those in power at national level. Some have claimed that Ireland has merely been a staging post for foreign multinationals, and that there has been a degree of good fortune attached to economic success (O' Hearn, 1997). Secondly, various forms of globalisation have been identified and it has been maintained that Ireland conformed to the Anglo-Saxon variation, characterised by a more rampant form of capitalism, while social cohesion and environment issues were secondary priorities. Finally, globalisation frames discussions regarding the future direction of the country, and whether it has the capacity to sustain its leading position in the event of a global downturn. In a considered review of the unceasing challenges of globalisation for Ireland, O' Sullivan argues that: "*In Ireland's case the Global Question asks how a small open nation can independently manage the effects that globalisation has on its economy, society and public life*" (O' Sullivan, 2006, p.4).

The debate on globalisation, in one way or another, informs various interpretative points of view that have been promulgated in the literature on the 'Celtic Tiger'. Kirby (2002) has chosen to segregate these interpretations into three main blocs: the mainstream, hegemonic, neo-liberal argument; left-of-centre critiques informed by Marxism and other critical social science theories; and studies grounded in the field of political economy. These varying interpretations offer quite different accounts of the nature of Ireland's development and, indeed, of the concept of development *per se*. Allied to this, a differentiation can be made between adulatory appraisals of the past

decade and a half and more critical explanations that raise legitimate concerns about the nature of Ireland's development.

The mainstream, hegemonic interpretation of the Celtic Tiger attests that neo-liberal economic policies formed the nucleus of Ireland's economic growth. Neo-liberal thought was in the ascendancy internationally during the 1980s and was the core philosophy of the Thatcher and Reagan administrations in the UK and US respectively, as well as the World Bank and the IMF. This neo-liberal approach to development stressed low taxes, deregulation, privatisation and a hands-off approach by the state vis-à-vis economic matters. Economists and vested business interests, who stressed factors such as low labour costs and competitiveness in creating Ireland's wealth, were the prime advocates of neo-liberal analysis in the Irish context. Its prominence was also due in no small part to the Progressive Democrats, a political party with right-of-centre leanings, who were voluble junior partners in coalition government from 1997 to 2007.

Neo-liberalism assumes that the benefits of growth will trickle down to benefit all sectors of society and that markets are the best tool for satisfying needs. In Ireland, neo-liberalism served as much as a justification for the continuation of policies favourable to business as an interpretative framework to explain past performance. Business representatives featured regularly in the media calling for measures to sustain low costs and competitiveness. While it was certainly the case that elements of neo-liberalism informed policy changes in the late 1980s, to ascribe the Celtic Tiger completely to the adoption of this philosophy is misleading, as it marginalises the role of both the state and EU institutions in fostering the conditions for economic revival. Nonetheless, there can

be little doubt that neo-liberalism was the guiding perspective of the most powerful elites in business and politics.

Left-wing analyses of Celtic Tiger Ireland were generally grounded in Marxist or critical social science perspectives. They tended to lay stress upon globalisation and structural factors in explaining how Ireland had been transformed. However, they may themselves be criticised for lack of empirical investigation, and often downplayed the very real improvements that had taken place in the living standards of ordinary workers. Allen (2000), for instance, refers to his work as an attempt to build a left-of-centre political alternative in contemporary Ireland, claiming that a “*discontented majority*” (emphasis added) have not benefited from the boom. He offers limited evidence to support his supposition that the majority of the population were discontented and does not offer a convincing account of the precise nature of their disgruntlement.

Political economy approaches constituted the third main strand of understandings of Ireland’s recent development. Through a mixture of empirical evidence and theoretical explanation, these works examined the relationship between the state and the market. They acknowledged the centrality of public policy initiatives, such as social partnership and the work of state agencies like the IDA, in fostering conditions that allowed Ireland to benefit from globalisation. The role of the EU in Irish affairs was also accorded significance. Political economy represented a more balanced interpretation in that it gave weight to both institutional and market factors, both nationally and internationally. Kirby (2002, pp.113-123) termed his own analysis New International Political Economy and adopted a multidisciplinary approach drawing upon critical

theory, development theory and power relations to outline a holistic perspective on change.

Critical accounts of Ireland's development from political economy and social science viewpoints drew attention to more unwholesome aspects of the Celtic Tiger. Dissonant voices questioned the extent to which the country has been truly transformed and what social groupings have benefited the most. The chief issue raised in such analyses has been poverty and social exclusion. It was contended that Irish society became more socially unequal, that relative poverty increased and that marginalised groups, such as the disabled, the elderly and Travellers did not benefit from the strong economic performance. Several studies highlighted issues such as 'poverty among plenty' and the advent of 'the working poor', while Ireland has consistently ranked poorly in the UN Human Poverty Index (Linehan, 2007; O' Sullivan, 2006; McAleese, 2006; O' Toole, 2003; Kirby, 2002; O' Hearn, 1997). What is more, poverty and exclusion exhibited a spatial as well as a social dimension, and pockets of disadvantage endured in areas of the larger cities and the rural northwest, leading to accessibility-rich and accessibility-poor places (Bartley, 2007).

Allied to poverty and exclusion, concern was expressed regarding the general lack of adequate social protection and social services in modern-day Ireland. The state of the health service generated derisory commentary and was the focus of most antagonism, but deficiencies in education, childcare, youth services and public transport were also extensively documented (Kitchin and Bartley, 2007a; Fitzgerald, 2003; O' Toole, 2003; O' Connell, 2001). The community and voluntary sector, rather than the state, continued to provide many social services, with mental health services being one notable example.

These deficits in social infrastructure impacted negatively on the daily lives of the most vulnerable. Moreover, they, along with those who benefited economically, also had to contend with traffic congestion and longer hours spent commuting, house price inflation of 181% between 1997 and 2004, and the rising cost of living (O' Sullivan, 2006, pp.87-88). Environmental degradation, street crime and violence, and mounting homicide and suicide rates were other less salutary features of the Irish experience during this period of economic growth. There was what O' Connell (2001, p.7) noted "*a lingering sense of ambiguity and a vague sense of unease, despite the success*" and a view that sense of identity and communal values had been sacrificed at the altar of material prosperity.

Some analysts posited a relationship between inequality and social exclusion and the nature of neo-liberal economic growth that characterised the Celtic Tiger. Neo-liberalism created a low tax/low spending system in Ireland, and consequently, social spending and welfare protection were low by comparative European standards. What is more, social expenditure did not rise in parallel with the rate of GDP or GNP during the boom years of the 1990s (Fitzgerald, 2003; O' Toole, 2003). Social issues were neglected arguably as a result of government anxiety that any interference might threaten the basis of economic growth and competitiveness (Kitchin and Bartley, 2007a, p.24). Indeed, a notable feature of the most recent General Election campaign in May 2007 was the broad consensus about the need to keep income taxes low, even among left-of-centre candidates. In a state governed in accordance with such neo-liberal dogma, "*competitiveness in the global economy becomes the ultimate criterion of public policy*" (Cox in Kirby, 2002, p.162). The economy directs society, not vice-versa, and social issues are sub-ordinate to the requirements of the market. This appears to be the chief

legacy of Celtic Tiger Ireland, and it has important implications for the community-related issues examined in this thesis.

In summary, this section has reviewed Ireland's adoption of a policy of economic liberalisation and modernisation in the late 1950s, which integrated the country more tightly into the global economy. This agenda had a number of distinctive features: attraction of foreign manufacturing investment; concentration of investment in specified geographical regions in order to generate critical mass; reliance on physical planning to facilitate economic growth; and the involvement of public sector agencies in place promotion. The genesis of this discourse and its persistence must be understood in the light of the accelerating mobility of international capital and the associated shifts in the locational patterns of industrial investment. The fundamentals of this discourse have remained largely unaltered, and governments over the decades have chosen not to desist from the modernist paradigm. In fact, it became more entrenched during the second wave of growth in the 1990s, when neo-liberal economic philosophies came into the ascendancy. Consequently, Irish fortunes are now tied more closely than ever to global circumstances, and the country is on a treadmill that demands policies to foster economic growth. Worryingly for some, this has placed economic considerations above broader social and human development in the hierarchy of national priorities. This overview of the national situation has been essential for understanding the context in which voluntary community activity takes place. However, it is also important to look at how the paradigm of modernisation has found specific expression in the Cork area.

3.3 Development and change: The Greater Cork area, 1958-2006

3.3.1 The emergence of Greater Cork area

Cork, as Ireland's second-largest urban area, was clearly well positioned to take advantage of the new emphasis of national policy in the 1960s. Prior to this, it was apparent that Cork City and the Harbour area constituted an embryonic strategic location for industrial development, as evidenced by the establishment of the Whitegate Oil Refinery in 1957 and the Verolme Dockyards in 1959 (Brunt, 1998, p.22). By the early 1970s, the harbour contained six major industries employing approximately three thousand people, including the major US pharmaceutical company Pfizer, which arrived in 1969. Overall, the Cork area, and the south-west region of which it formed a part, was the most successful region in the country in attracting foreign direct investment and the attendant employment and grant aid (Brunt, 1980). However, there was patently room for improvement: in 1972, for instance, Cork Harbour Commissioners disclosed that over forty foreign investors had approached them over the previous three years with a view to locating around the Harbour, but that infrastructural deficits meant that these industrialists could not be facilitated (Cork Harbour Commissioners, 1972). While the region, therefore, possessed significant locational and natural attributes in the eyes of potential investors, the absence of a forward-thinking approach was perceived as a constraint to further progress.

It is within the context of the modernising official discourse and rapid economic development at national level that the emergence of planning in Cork must be considered. While industry was being attracted, the deficiencies of the area from the perspective of inward investors were apparent to public sector agencies. Initiatives carried out at the

time, such as the Cork Main Drainage Study (1965), the Cork Traffic Study (1968) and the Cork Harbour Development Plan (1972), pointed to potential barriers to further growth in terms of lack of infrastructure and congestion. Statutory development plans under the 1963 Local Government Act for both Cork City and Cork County were first produced in 1967 by the respective planning authorities. However, the most significant initiative was the Cork Sub-Regional Planning Study (1971), undertaken by *An Foras Forbartha* in co-operation with Cork City and County Councils, and with the support of the United Nations. It acknowledged the pervading national milieu, stating that; “*in principle a planned approach to the management of the nation’s life has been adopted*” (Gillie, 1971, p.1). This study, commonly referred to as the Gillie Report after its author, can be considered the first major attempt at strategic planning for the Cork area and its influence pervaded all ensuing plans (Mansergh, 2000, p.457).

Although covering the entire county, the Gillie Report represented the first official recognition in planning terms of a ‘Greater Cork’ area, encompassing the city and its environs, the Harbour and much of East Cork, which was perceived as having significant potential for development and growth. In this respect, it reflected the concept of growth poles advocated for Ireland within the Buchanan Report and in spatial terms, it detached Greater Cork from the remaining portion of the county. Two different planning agendas, therefore, were prescribed for the urban and rural parts of Cork County. It noted, furthermore, that foreign industrial investment had been the engine driving growth in the Greater Cork area in the previous decade and that this needed to be consolidated and expanded to ensure future growth. Recognising the limits of the domestic market, Gillie also pointed out that “*For the most part, Irish industry can only expand by taking*

part in foreign trade. Therefore, from the first it must be internationally competitive” (Gillie, 1971, p.67). Those considering the development of the sub-region needed to have increasing regard to the demands of international investors in terms of infrastructure and facilities, and the report stressed that *“international conditions must constantly be borne in mind”* (Gillie, 1971, p.67). According to one commentator:

The basic thrust of the Gillie Report was that economic opportunities available at the time were largely concentrated around Cork City and the harbour, and that as resources were limited, this was the only area where substantial proactive investment was likely to yield an adequate return (Mansergh, 2000, p.468).

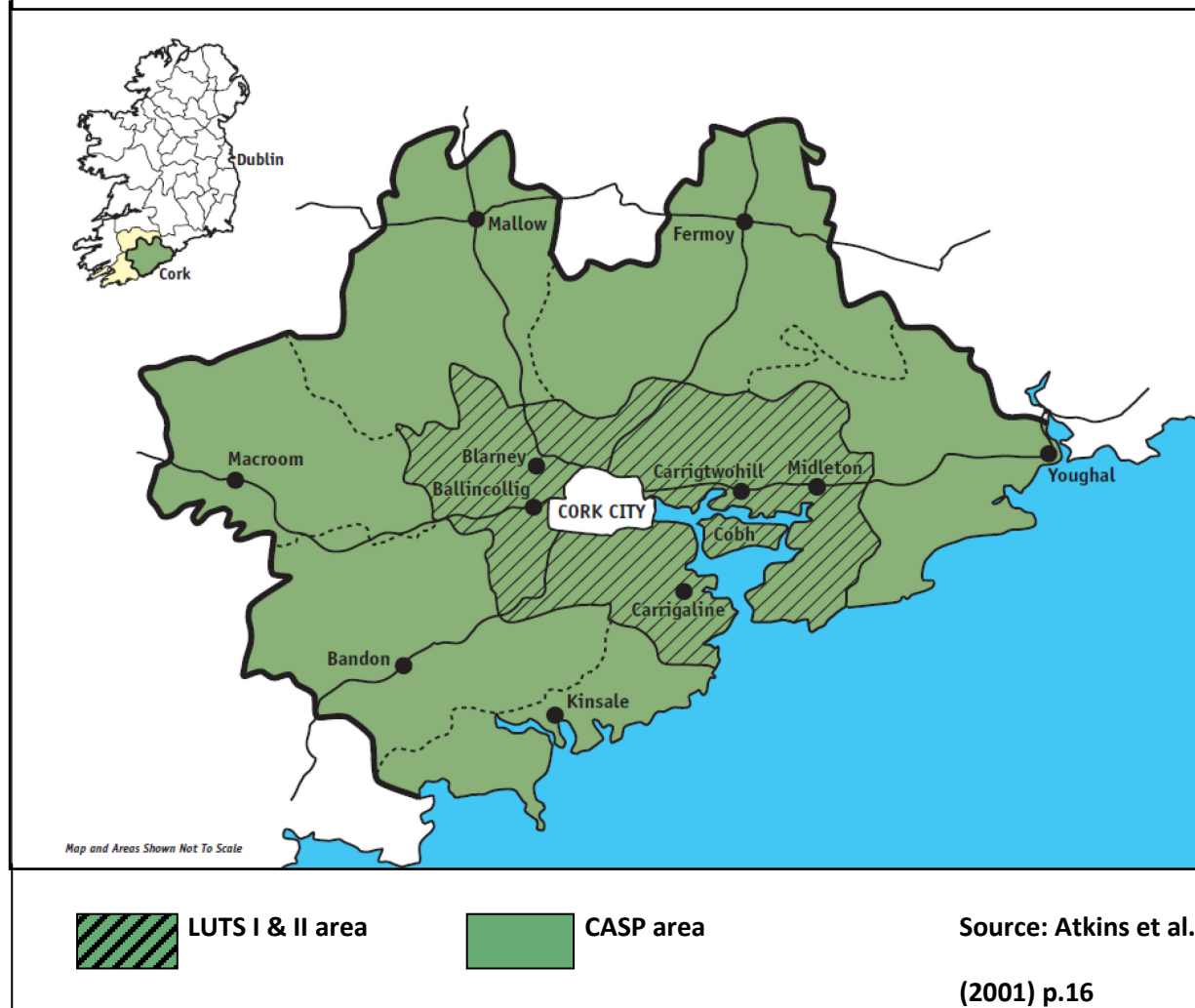
The Gillie Report provided an overview of possible options for Cork, but did not set out a detailed development strategy. It did, however, signify a more managerial approach by the public sector agencies to economic development and undoubtedly had a strong bearing on the next main initiative in strategic planning in Cork, the production of the Land Use and Transportation Study (LUTS) (Skidmore et al., 1978). The significance of the LUTS can be ascribed to a number of factors. Firstly, it represented an integrated approach by the public agencies involved, including the South West Regional Authority, Cork Corporation and Cork County Council, as well as the IDA, Cork Harbour Commissioners, *Coras Iompar Éireann* (CIE) and the Electricity Supply Board (ESB). Nationally, the Department of the Environment also gave its imprimatur to the study. Additionally, LUTS put forward an integrated strategy to develop the Cork area by addressing land use and transportation issues simultaneously and it took a long-term approach to the issues under examination. While such an approach to planning was

in vogue internationally, the study was the first of its kind nationally (Mansergh, 2000, p.482). It is also interesting to note that the consultants appointed to carry out the study were based in the United States and one assumes they brought fresh perspectives and ideas from across the Atlantic.

The LUTS incorporated and refined many of the policies laid out in the plans of the previous decade, notably the Gillie Report and the Cork Harbour Development Plan. It also, for the first time, defined the Greater Cork area in specific geographical terms, encompassing the commuting belt of the city and including large portions of East Cork and the harbour area, referring to it as “*an established base for development*” (Skidmore et al., 1978, p.12) (see Fig 3.2). Employment-led growth was the mainstay of the plan, and it stated that: “*Attainment of the population and employment projections is dependent on the creation of manufacturing jobs. The Plan therefore seeks to attract major international industrial development.*” (Skidmore et al., 1978, p.6). LUTS represented a strong affirmation of the belief that planning could deliver orderly growth and development, but also realised the necessity of concentrating development in the most competitive areas in order that infrastructural investment could be maximised.

LUTS was a considerable achievement for its time; however events conspired to create difficulties in its implementation. Cork suffered disproportionately from the national economic downturn of the early 1980s. The closure of the Dunlop and Ford plants and the Verlome Dockyard in particular had a major impact, but traditional manufacturing industries generally, along with the construction sector, were badly affected. Unemployment almost doubled in Cork City and County between 1981 and

Figure 3.2 – Area encompassed by the LUTS I & II plans (1978-2000) and the Cork Area Strategic Plan (2001-2020)



1984, reaching a rate of 19% (Cork County Council, 1986, p.18). It was unsurprising, then, that LUTS failed to meet its own population and employment targets. It had projected a population of 259,000 for the LUTS area in 1991, yet the actual population in that year was just 234,000. In terms of employment, initial predictions for new employment creation proved accurate, but job losses were seriously underestimated (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.47).

Where the LUTS did achieve notable successes was in the delivery of major infrastructural projects. Under the plan, £111m was expended on road projects, which was above the initial target of £96m, while outgoings on water and drainage projects were broadly in line with original objectives (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.32). In fact, the existence of a comprehensive plan for the Cork region strengthened the case for funding for such projects when resources became available from the late 1980s from EU Structural and Cohesion Funds (O' Cinnéide, 2005, p.380). When the time came to reconsider the LUTS, therefore, the review's authors could affirm that "*the Cork area is now well served in terms of water supply, industrial land availability, port and airport facilities and road access, and work is already underway in relation to most remaining infrastructural deficiencies*" (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.5). With this latent capacity in situ, the Cork area was ripe for major economic development.

3.3.2 LUTS II, the CASP and the 'Celtic Tiger' in Cork

In spite of economic downturn, the land use planning approach enshrined in the LUTS continued to form the bedrock of the official agenda and was further entrenched in the review of the LUTS, which took place in 1992. This successor document, known as

LUTS II, acknowledged that despite the economic slump of the intervening fourteen years, the original aims of LUTS remained highly relevant and valid. It did not, therefore, seek to elaborate a new programme, but to reiterate the existing developmental agenda and to address the shortcomings of the initial strategy, which consisted mainly of the failure to attain the employment and population projections set out in 1978 (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.1). Furthermore, while LUTS I had been successful in garnering improvements in physical infrastructure, LUTS II made it clear that positive environmental and community qualities were also necessary in the pursuit of economic development (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.9).

LUTS II recognised that employment was the principal challenge facing the Cork area and restated that fostering manufacturing industry was the primary solution. It sounded a more realistic tone than LUTS I, however, when it admitted; “*While the plan cannot create employment, it has been and will remain a robust framework for directing land use and infrastructure investment policy*” (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.1). Nonetheless, LUTS deepened the prevailing paradigm, calling attention to the fact that industrial investors were becoming progressively more discriminatory in their choice of locations:

Economic activity is becoming increasingly mobile, (particularly those which are growing fastest) and many economic sectors show increasing concern that they are located in areas with a good physical, social and cultural environment, that is satisfactorily planned and working efficiently (Skidmore et al., 1992, p.15).

The increased regard for worldwide factors was also apparent in the argument that international transport access and linkages, through Cork Airport and Port, were more

significant than local transport for the development of the local economy (Skidmore, et al., 1992, p.92).

While LUTS II can hardly be credited directly with subsequent economic growth, the presence of a comprehensive land use plan did ensure that the Greater Cork area was well positioned to benefit from the national and global economic upturn of the 1990s. By that time older, uncompetitive industries had all but disappeared and employment was growing in newer enterprises. The pharmaceutical industry was well established in Cork, and electronics, one of the few sectors to expand during the recession, also began to attain primacy (Brunt, 2005, p.372). Industrial development reflected international trends with the promotion of high technology business parks on the outskirts of the city, revealing the advent of post-Fordist models of industry and the footloose nature of multinational enterprise. The consideration given to the presence of an educated labour force, pristine environmental conditions and access to international transport, particularly airports, were further indicators of this more advanced phase of global capitalism.

Cork's relationship with long-term spatial planning matured further with the adoption of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) in 2001, the successor to LUTS, which set out a strategy for the development of the region until 2020. The CASP acknowledged the new situation arising from the economic boom and highlighted fresh challenges for the Cork region. It adopted a larger spatial definition of the Greater Cork area, determined by locations within 45 minutes commuting time of the city, and incorporated towns heretofore not included in the catchment of LUTS, such as Mallow, Youghal and Fermoy (Fig 3.2). This was a response to the growing sphere of influence of Cork, which, in common with other modern cities, had spawned an 'urban field' or 'daily urban

system' (Hourihan, 2005a, p.277). Furthermore, it delineated the 'old' LUTS area as the Cork Metropolitan Area and aimed to develop this as a single, integrated unit for housing, employment, educational facilities, and social and recreational amenities.

In one important respect, namely the necessity to lure foreign direct investment, CASP persevered with the basic philosophy of LUTS I and II. It argued for the need to develop Cork as a European City Region, with the ambition and ability to attract international business. Intensification of competition for such investment in the context of globalisation was highlighted throughout the document:

Mobility of foreign investment and people is at an all time high. Competition to attract mobile capital and skilled people has never been fiercer, evidenced by over 1,500 promotion agencies and several thousand local authorities in Europe alone (Atkins et al., 2001, p.16).

In this tussle for capital, the strategy emphasised that Cork should endeavour to entice knowledge-based enterprises, centred on innovation, research and development. The appropriate sectors identified as the nuclei of new employment creation included biotechnology, informatics, telecommunications and internationally-traded services. These operations would need to be connected to international markets and *"the activity of exporting products, goods and services will be critical for much of the future growth"* (Atkins et al., 2001, p.94).

Two aspects of economic development were given special attention in the strategy. Firstly, CASP stressed the importance of innovation, referred to as a *leitmotif* in regional development and *"a key driver of Cork over the next twenty years"* (Atkins et al., 2001, p.69). In fact, it was suggested that geographical peripherality was no longer relevant;

instead the greatest threat of peripherality came from “*an inability to respond to change*” arising from a lack of innovation. Secondly, CASP advocated the nurturing of clusters of economic specialisation, founded upon firms, research institutions and supporting infrastructure. Pointing out that this had already occurred in Cork in pharmaceuticals and electronics, it argued for the necessity to sustain these clusters and foster new ones in order to attract ongoing investment. Indeed, the entire plan was peppered with examples from Europe and North America of centres of innovation, technopoles and cluster-based regional economies whose example Cork ought to follow.

At the heart of the CASP’s vision to capture attention for the Cork region on the global stage was a place marketing programme. The strategy called for Cork to develop an ambitious profile of itself that could be presented to the outside world. A key component of this marketing initiative was Cork’s brand image, which would proclaim the unique and valued assets of the region, such as innovative capacity, creativity and educational excellence. In the contest to develop knowledge-based economies, such intangible assets, the CASP argued, would be as significant as physical infrastructure, and would serve to highlight Cork’s competitive advantages in these respects over other regions (Atkins et al., 1992, p.68).

Apart from the content of the CASP, its tone also deserves comment. A self-aggrandising tenor prevailed throughout, with repeated reference made to Cork’s ‘remarkable strengths’. The necessity of a flagship project to adorn this new vision for Cork, and which would garner international acclaim, was explicated; the proposed Cork Docklands rejuvenation, the new town at Monard and the new suburban light rail system were mentioned as possibilities. A sense of urgency can be detected throughout the

strategy. Targets had to be set and progress achieved quickly to ensure that Cork would not lose out in the race to attract investment, since it was perceived that by merely standing still the region would go backwards. Related to this was the need to generate rapid momentum, particularly for development proposed along the new rail corridor between Blarney and Midleton (Mansergh, 2005, pp.426-7). Overall, the CASP expressed confidence in Cork's strengths along with an eagerness for change, while embracing the challenges arising from globalisation.

The CASP was devised at a time of remarkable economic growth and as such was concerned with addressing the effects of such development. As a result, and also due to the prominence of environmental issues, there was an underlying agenda of sustainability running through the plan, particularly in relation to the public transport proposals and the related necessity to encourage high-density housing. This was most evident in the scheme to revitalise the rail corridor from Blarney through the city to Midleton, arguably the linchpin of the entire strategy. Not only would this project have positive environmental benefits in terms of stimulating a shift away from car transport, but positive social benefits would also accrue, as the spatial imbalance that had long afflicted the north and east of the metropolitan area would be redressed. However, the version of sustainability propounded in the CASP could be termed soft or weak sustainability. Economic growth and development formed the underlying motivations, with arguably little intrinsic concern with environmental protection. Addressing environmental issues served only as a means to an end; to make Cork more attractive for capital investment and to stimulate economic growth.

Like its precursors, CASP adopted an inter-agency approach, with Cork County Council and Cork City Council assuming lead roles, but with a wide range of involvement from public sector agencies in the transport, industrial, educational, and utilities sectors, along with elected public representatives. However, CASP differed from the LUTS strategies in that it involved public consultation, which included the opportunity for individuals to give their views through public exhibitions, a questionnaire and written submissions. The CASP itself stated, “*public consultation has been a critical component of this process*” (Atkins et al., 2001, p.147). While this exercise was a new departure, the process was subject to criticism among communities in East Cork and will be subjected to closer scrutiny in Chapter 5.

In summary, the three strategic plans for Cork over the past three decades signify the escalating influence of globalisation upon the region. Each strategy was grounded in the overall national planning and development paradigm that emerged in the 1960s and, therefore, each was predicated on the primary goal of attracting foreign investment. As globalisation intensified, this demanded a more sophisticated response from Cork’s public authorities. Accordingly, the CASP addressed a much wider complex of issues, such as place promotion and innovation, than either of the LUTS documents, reflecting the advent of what has been termed disorganised or flexible capitalism (Bartley, 2006). In almost every aspect of its ambition, Cork has had to defer to the requirements of the international economic system.

Embracing integrated land use and transportation planning has served Cork reasonably well from an enterprise point of view. Major infrastructural projects were delivered during the 1980s and 1990s, and sectoral clusters have provided employment in

the pharmaceuticals and technology industries. However, there are some caveats. LUTS I set out to attain “*the achievement of the social benefits which can result from sensitive planning*” (Skidmore et al., 1978, p.6). It had been assumed that these benefits would trickle down to all sectors of society and could be evenly distributed across the region. Nonetheless, social exclusion and spatial inequality still beset the Cork region when the CASP was being formulated. Both LUTS I and II also promoted public transport and specifically mooted the re-opening of the railway line to Midleton. In this respect, they both failed to deliver and it fell to the CASP to revisit the issue. In endeavouring to rectify the shortcomings of previous strategies, CASP ascribed critical importance to portions of East Cork. It is for this reason that the repercussions of the CASP, and indeed the LUTS, for the study area for this thesis warrant closer examination.

3.3.3 Modernity in East Cork, 1958-2006

This section looks at the particular implications of the modernisation process and the attendant planning discourse for the study area. It intends to show how the phenomenon of economic globalisation and the necessity for state planning to respond to this has shaped micro-level geography of East Cork and how the development of places and communities within it has been subordinated to regional and national considerations. Each strategic land use and transportation plan established a broad framework for location of housing, industry and transport networks, and their implementation has had major geographical effects. In addition, they set out specific proposals for individual towns and villages across East Cork. The following paragraphs, therefore, convey how

the official macroeconomic developmental agenda has played out in the local contexts in which community organisations operate.

Like the wider Cork City region, the process of modernisation and industrialisation in East Cork can be traced to the 1960s. During this decade, the food processing sector in particular delivered significant growth, through a combination of both foreign and domestic investment, and East Cork's principal town, Midleton, emerged as a prime location. East Cork Foods, for example, a subsidiary of the publicly-owned Irish Sugar Refining, was established in the town in 1963 to process local vegetable produce and expanded its facility in 1965. The Frigoscandia cold storage company, Danish-owned and "*one of the largest in Europe*" arrived in 1969, purchasing a 30-acre site at Knockgriffin with the expressed aim of instituting Midleton as "*Ireland's first food town*" (Falvey, 1998, p.266). The early 1970s saw the establishment of the Cork Co-Operative Mart, which subsequently went into partnership with International Meat Packers to develop a meat processing plant. The long-established Irish Distillers plant also experienced a major expansion. These developments added value to local food products and, moreover, created employment and embellished East Cork's reputation as a centre of food production. Midleton Urban District Council, mindful of the need to maintain the town's image as a location for investment, produced a brochure in 1969, had it translated into French, German and Italian and arranged for its wide distribution (Falvey, 1998, p.267).

In this context, it is not surprising that East Cork came to feature in subsequent plans drawn up to promote development in the Cork region. The Gillie Report, for instance, noted that Midleton "*although 12 miles from the city, is recognised as very*

closely associated with it and now only fully to be understood as part of the ‘greater Cork’ complex” (Gillie, 1971, p.19). It projected that the town could increase its population to 10,000 by the mid-1980s. LUTS I re-iterated this viewpoint and envisaged an 80% increase in employment and a 100% increase in population by 1991 (Skidmore et al., 1978, p.192). Indeed, these ambitious targets had been flagged prior to the publication of the LUTS when, in 1977, the Cork County Manager, opening a development of local authority housing in the town, commented that Midleton “*will develop faster than any other centre either in Cork City or county*” (Falvey, 1998, p.295). LUTS I also anticipated the construction of a road bypass and the re-opening of the rail line to Cork, which had been closed to passenger traffic since 1963.

Midleton’s growth was to be propelled by increased availability of manufacturing employment at Little Island, Carrigtwohill and Whitegate, combined with the development of transport infrastructure linking residences and workplaces. The IDA, imbued with increased powers in 1969, had purchased strategic land banks at several locations around the harbour; 950 acres at Ringaskiddy, 90 acres at Carrigtwohill and 450 acres at Little Island. In addition, two private industrial estates were developed at Little Island, the Sitecast Estate in 1971 and the Sisk Estate in 1979 (Lyons, 1987, p.105). LUTS I designated Little Island as a strategic location for major industry and expected that it would become the largest employment area outside of the city, with 6,200 jobs by 1991. Nearby, Carrigtwohill was also viewed as a significant employment growth point that would benefit from a natural gas pipeline, a southern road bypass, and the re-opening of the rail line. Glanmire and Glounthaune, meanwhile, were seen as attractive

residential locations with the former having greater capacity to accommodate housing development, with a target set for a population of 5,000 in 1991.

These ambitious targets for East Cork's towns and villages did not fully materialise during the 1980s. Employment creation, and consequently population growth, where it did occur, was located in areas south and west of the city rather than those to the north and east. LUTS II sought to redress this spatial imbalance, but did not suggest any major deviation from the original strategy. It underlined that the corridor from Little Island through Carrigtwohill to Midleton should act as a focus for employment and industry, while reopening of the rail service to Carrigtwohill and Midleton was once again put forward. Glanmire did experience some population growth and, due to construction of a new bypass, was earmarked for further residential development.

CASP, like its predecessors, devised an elaborate programme of growth for East Cork which, despite positive trends during the 1990s, contained, in the view of planning officials, unfulfilled development potential. In this instance, a more substantial proposition was put forward in relation to rail transport. A new rail service with regular trains would operate between Blarney and Midleton and would act as a catalyst for the growth of this area. Hence, Midleton and Carrigtwohill were again earmarked for high-density residential development. Glanmire, Riverstown and Glounthaune would also cater for infill residential development, particularly in areas close to the rail line, but major development was not contemplated for these areas as it would damage the landscape. Arguably, the entire strategy hinged upon the successful delivery of the rail

project, which placed East Cork at the heart of Cork's planning and development agenda at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

At the time of writing, more than eight years following the adoption of the CASP, there is evidence that the principal elements of the strategy relevant to East Cork are being implemented. After a detailed feasibility study, the Department of Transport announced in 2004 that €115 million of funding would be made available for the commuter rail network, and work on the project commenced in 2008. The new rail service commenced operating in 2009, with new stations in Midleton and Carrigtwohill. Both of these locations had witnessed major housing and commercial development prior to this, while Special Local Area Plans for both adopted in September 2005 proposed further expansion and zoned land accordingly. However, industrial development received a setback in October 2007 with the announcement by German pharmaceuticals company Amgen of its decision to defer a major investment in Carrigtwohill.

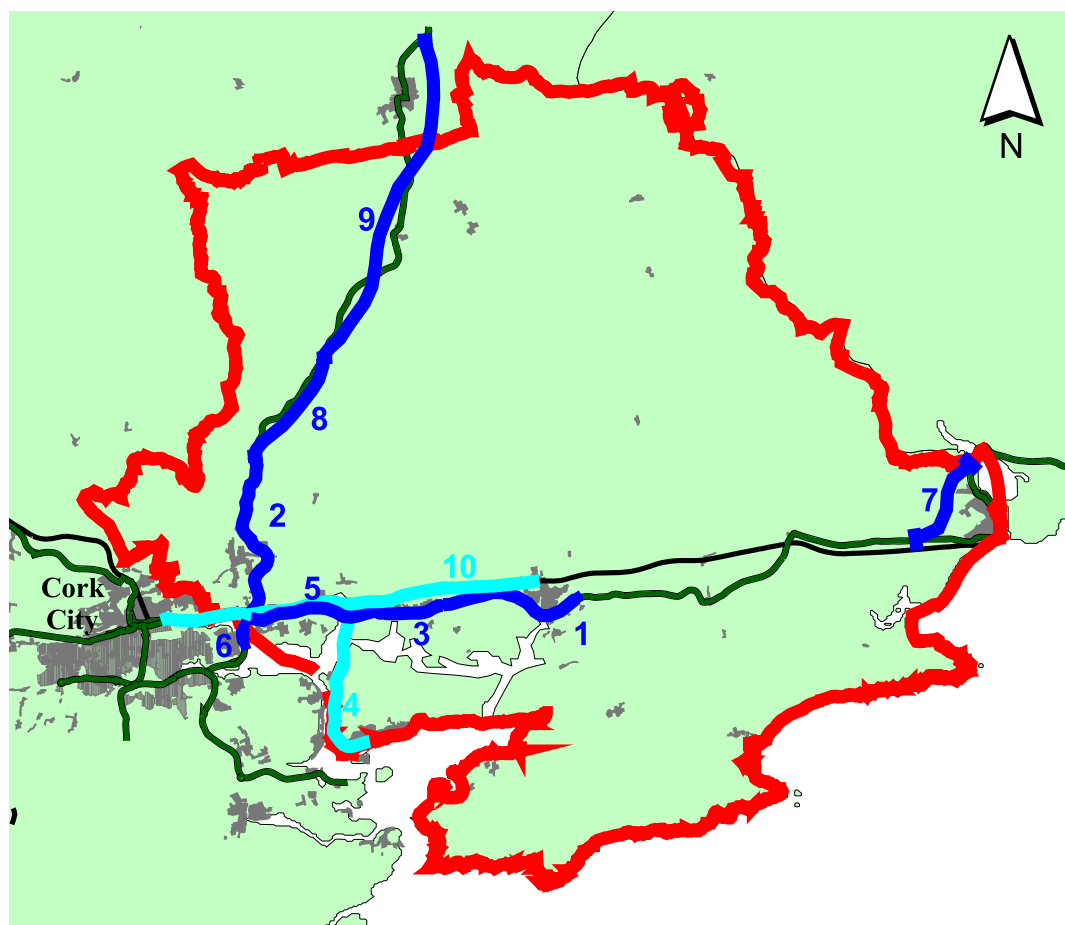
Figures 3.3 and 3.4 provide a synopsis of the impact of planned development and industrialisation on East Cork. Figure 3.3 highlights major developments in road and rail transport infrastructure, including dates of completion. Spatially, the pattern of road development has been a radial one, progressing outwards from Cork City over time. The first phase of road development consisted of projects close to the city as identified by LUTS I and, although it took time to bring all of these to fruition, by the opening of the Lee Tunnel in 1999 the Cork Metropolitan area possessed a first-rate road network. More recent road developments occurred under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and concentrated on improving the linkages between Cork and both Dublin and the south east region, bypassing towns and villages along these routes. The overarching

emphasis on road development facilitated car transport and reduced journey times. It also opened up hitherto rural parts of the Greater Cork area to urban-generated development, allowing the city to spread its tentacles into the surrounding hinterland. The more recent preoccupation with rail is indicative of the sustainability dimension of contemporary planning.

From a geographical perspective, transport improvements have occurred along two principal axes. One runs eastwards from Cork through Midleton and Youghal, linking the city to Waterford and Rosslare Harbour in the south-east of Ireland. The second extends north-easterly along the route to Fermoy and onwards towards Dublin. Locations along or close to these transport arteries have become the primary sites for intensive residential and industrial land use in East Cork. The zone between the city and Midleton, which is served by both rail and road and which lies within the Cork Metropolitan area, has experienced greater levels of development as a consequence of these new transport networks. Locations further from the city, however, such as Youghal 48km to the east and Fermoy 35km to the north-east, have also become part of Cork's urban field as new infrastructure has facilitated commuting.

Figure 3.4 displays the location patterns of multinational industry in East Cork in 2007. A clear concentration in and around Little Island and Carrigtwohill is evident, with the former the base for over half of all such enterprises in the region. Meanwhile, both Midleton and Youghal are home to three multinationals each. The spatial distribution of multinationals is very much an outcome of planning policy. Owing to its proximity to the city and to transport corridors and the ready availability of suitable land, Little Island was designated as a key manufacturing location in LUTS I and remained so in subsequent

Figure 3.3 - Transport Infrastructure Improvements in East Cork 1986 - 2008



Number	Transport infrastructure project	Type & location	Date completed
1	Midleton bypass	Road N25	1986
2	Glanmire bypass	Road N8	1992
3	Carrigtwohill bypass	Road N25	1994
4	Cork-Cobh rail upgrade	Rail	1996
5	East Cork Parkway	Road N25	1998
6	Jack Lynch Tunnel	Road N8/N25	1999
7	Youghal bypass	Road N25	2003
8	Watergrasshill bypass	Road N8	2004
9	Rathcormack/Fermoy bypass (motorway)	Road M8	2006
10	Cork - Midleton rail re-opening	Rail	2008

Legend:

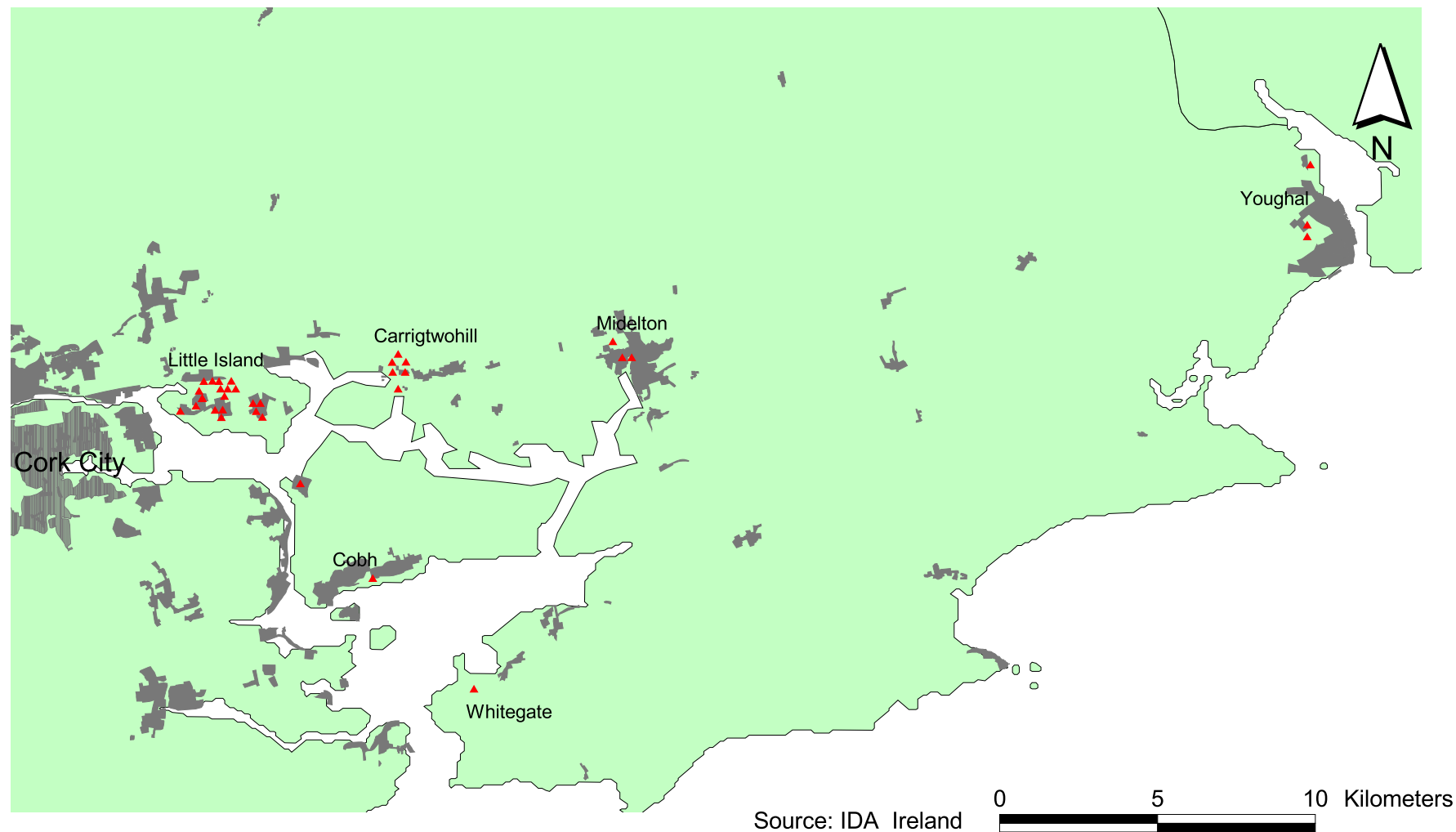
-  Study Area
-  National Primary Roads
-  Railway Lines
-  Urban Areas/Towns
-  County Cork

0 5 10 Kilometers



Source: National Roads Authority, Iarnród Éireann

Figure 3.4: Multinational Enterprises in East Cork , 2007



land use plans. Carrigtwohill possessed similar attributes and was similarly designated, albeit it was not as important as Little Island. Fig 3.4 shows, above all else, the manner in which integrated land use and transport planning has served to facilitate transnational investment. Large swathes of rural East Cork, however, are without any significant industrial presence.

Currently, major corporations such as General Electric, Johnson and Johnson, Pfizer and Pepsi Corporation have branch plants or subsidiaries located in East Cork, and in 2007 approximately 3,500 people were employed by multinational enterprises. Latterly, the healthcare sector has obtained a foothold in the Greater Cork area, and US corporations GE Healthcare and Stryker have branch plants in Carrigtwohill. The presence of these companies has ensured the further integration of East Cork into the global economy. Browsing their websites, one notes that these corporations have branch plants and research facilities located around the world, linking the study area either directly or indirectly with almost every country on the globe. In addition, numerous Irish-owned industries provide specialist services, particularly engineering, to East Cork's multinational sector.

In summary, this section has shown how proximity to Cork City has had a major bearing on the development of East Cork. In particular, those advancing an agenda of modernisation and development have, since the 1970s, targeted the east-west corridor along the north of the harbour from Little Island to Midleton. Successive planning initiatives have endeavoured to promote a comprehensive programme of industrial, residential and infrastructural development along this corridor. Latterly, the expanding influence of Cork City was acknowledged in the CASP, which included all of the East

Cork study area under its remit. As a result, even the furthest reaches of the county along the Waterford border are conceived as being part of the Greater Cork region. Furthermore, key aspects of the CASP proposals centre upon communities in East Cork. In exploring the relationship between modernity and community, therefore, the next step is to analyse how these planning initiatives have impacted upon social and demographic change.

3.4 Social and demographic implications of economic change in East Cork

3.4.1 Introduction

Having discussed four decades of planning and economic development at national and regional level, the remainder of this chapter is concerned with the social and demographic legacy of this period of economic transformation and the impact of change at community level within the study area. Consequently, this section examines four interrelated themes. Firstly, it outlines the manner in which patterns of housing construction and settlement have altered. Secondly, the demographic repercussions of these housing trends are examined in terms of growth in population numbers and differences in the age structure and family cycle of the population. Thirdly, the labour force and social class composition of the population are summarised; here the relationship between social trends and economic change is most visible. Finally, patterns of mobility between places of residence and employment, along with the impact of technological innovations on place-based communities, are scrutinised. In presenting this analysis, the scale and pace of social change are undeniable and, furthermore, the

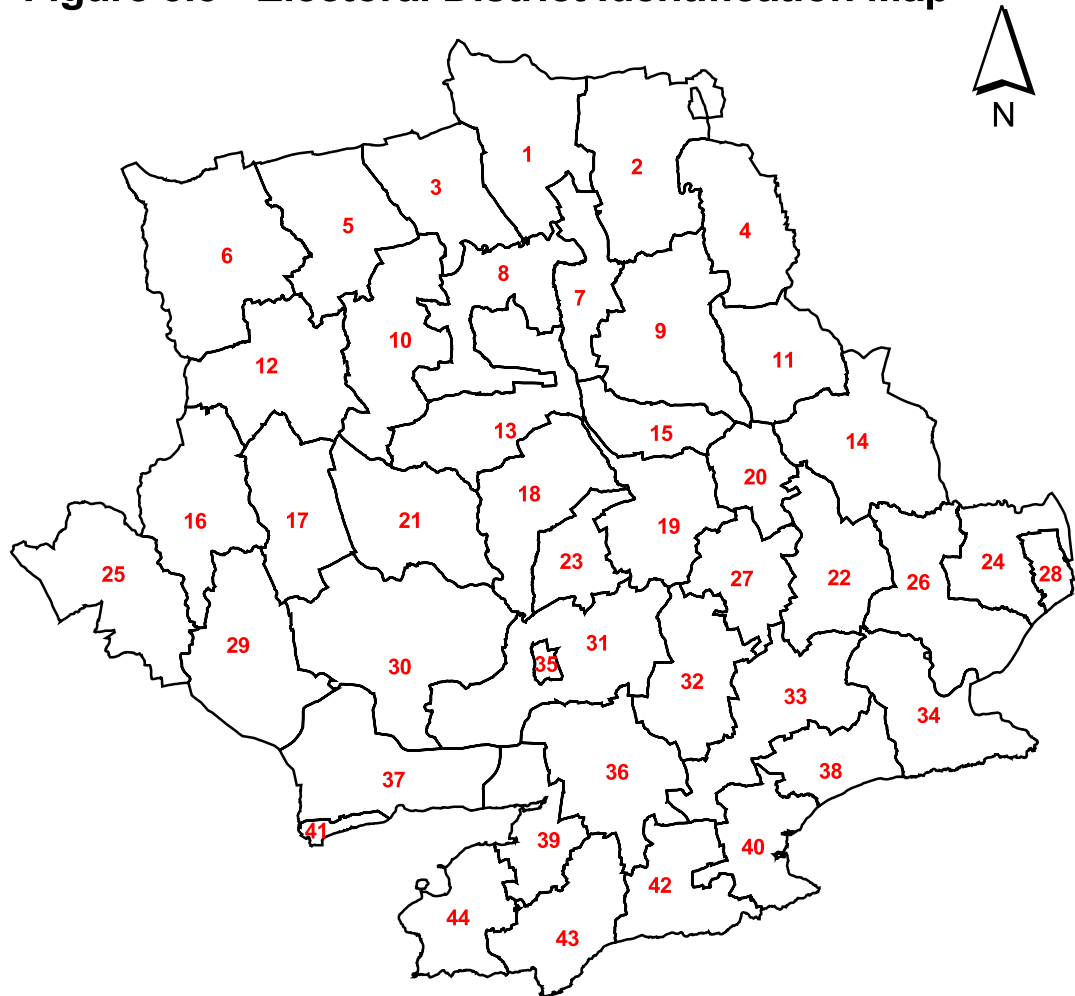
linkages between these changes and economic development and planning policies become apparent.

The hypothesis advanced is that demographic trends across East Cork, especially over the past decade and a half, indicate increased heterogeneity, mobility and dislocation within the population of East Cork, and this has implications for place-based community organisations. There are some key themes that warrant specific attention, amongst them population flux and the greater mobility of individuals, employment change, including feminisation of the labour force, and developments relating to family and household structures. What is most striking, however, is the strong spatial dimension and significant intra-regional variations are displayed through choropleth mapping of Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) from the Census of Population published at Electoral District (ED) level (CSO, 2007e). The influence of location with respect to Cork City is patent in many of the maps and Cork, although not part of the study area, firmly clasps East Cork within its sphere of influence. Since the pace of social change has intensified over the past fifteen years, most attention focuses on the period since Census 1991.

3.4.2 Housing and settlement

Prior to the 1960s, large-scale developments of housing, both nationally and in East Cork, tended to be state-sponsored public schemes. Many of the older housing schemes in the towns of Middleton, Cobh and Youghal date from the period between political independence and the 1950s. Over the course of the 1960s, the private sector eclipsed the public sector as the main provider of housing and has maintained its position since then in line with the experience of other European countries (Hourihan, 2005b,

Figure 3.5 - Electoral District Identification Map



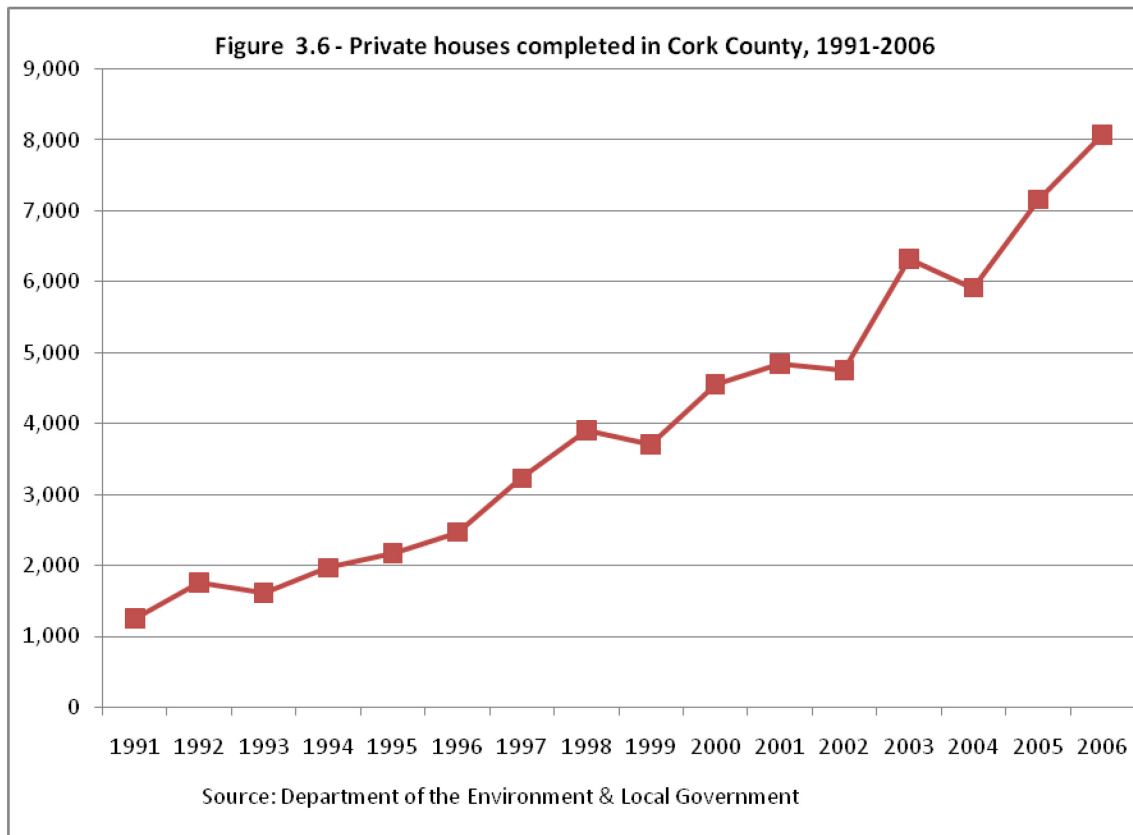
DED Number	DED Name	DED Number	DED Name
1	Coole	23	Ballyspillane
2	Knockmourne	24	Youghal Rural
3	Castlelyons	25	Rathcooney (pt)
4	Curraglass	26	Clonpriest
5	Rathcormack	27	Mogeely
6	Kildinan	28	Youghal U.D.
7	Aghern	29	Caherlag
8	Kilcor	30	Carrigtohill
9	Ballynoe	31	Midleton Rural
10	Gortroe	32	Castlemartyr
11	Kilcronat	33	Ightermurragh
12	Watergrasshill	34	Kilmacdonogh
13	Templebodan	35	Midleton U.D.
14	Ardagh	36	Cloyne
15	Clonmult	37	Cobh Rural
16	Riverstown	38	Garryvoe
17	Knockraha	39	Rostellan
18	Templenacarriga	40	Ballycottin
19	Dungourney	41	Cobh U.D.
20	Dangan	42	Ballintemple
21	Lisgoold	43	Inch
22	Killeagh	44	Corkbeg

0 5 10 Kilometers



p.282; Roche, 1982, pp.227-8). The Cork County Development Plan of 1967 saw the adoption of a satellite towns policy in an endeavour to influence the location of housing development and prevent urban sprawl. On foot of this policy, private housing estate developments began to spring up in East Cork. Suncourt Estate, constructed in 1968, was the first major private housing development in Midleton (Falvey, 1998). Glanmire also emerged as a location for private housing during the 1970s and early 1980s, with nine housing estates constructed (GACA, 2000; Manning, 1992). Private suburban housing development slowed in the Cork region during the 1980s owing to economic recession and associated emigration. The number of new houses completed per annum in Cork City and County during the 1980s was lower than during the 1970s and it was 1994 before construction returned to pre-recession levels (Department of the Environment, 2007; Hourihan, 2005b, p.286).

The upsurge in housing construction since the early 1990s has been one of the defining features of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. Figure 3.6 shows the massive increases that took place in Cork County between 1991 and 2006. In attempting to decipher the roots of the growth in demand for housing, a series of reports produced for government are particularly instructive (Bacon and McCabe, 2000; Bacon, McCabe and Murphy, 1999; Bacon, 1998). Economic conditions at national level deserve primary attention, since the availability of employment and rising disposable incomes meant that those who wished to purchase homes had the means to do so. Moreover, lower interest rates in the run up to European Monetary Union facilitated borrowing for house purchases (Bacon, 1998). Overall, the 1990s witnessed increased demand for housing and, although the



number of completions increased year on year, house prices continued to rise due to ongoing demand. Housing output in Cork grew by 142 per cent between 1993 and 1998 (Fig. 3.6), yet in spite of this the average cost of a new house rose by over one-third between 1996 and 1998 to approximately IR£90,000/€114,000 (Bacon, McCabe and Murphy, 1999). Prices continued to soar, as house price inflation hovered between 10 and 20 per cent per annum, and by 2006 the cost of a new home in Cork averaged €298,000 (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2007).

There was an underlying social and demographic dynamic to the buoyancy of the housing market, which was as apparent in East Cork as it was nationally. Ireland experienced high birth rates in the 1960s and 1970s and those born in this period were entering the household formation ages of 25 to 44 years throughout the 1990s, creating

increased demand. In addition, Ireland went from a situation of net emigration in the early 1990s to one of net immigration by the mid-1990s. Furthermore, immigrants into the country were comprised largely of those of household formation age, with over half of the 44,000 arrivals in 1997 aged 25 to 44 years (Bacon, 1998, p.1). Many had left Ireland in the 1980s and were returning home due to the improved economic climate.

Social factors in relation to household formation and size were also fundamental. In more advanced economies, the general trend is towards delayed marriage, smaller families and a higher proportion of one and two-person households. Indeed, the percentage of one and two person households nationally rose from 41.9% of the total in 1988 to 46.8% in 1997 (Bacon, 1998, p.2). In East Cork, the household occupancy rate fell from 3.7 persons per private housing unit in 1991 to 3.1 in 2002 and 2.9 in 2006, again indicating the tendency towards smaller households. In fact, between 1991 and 1996 approximately 70% of the growth in households in Cork was due to falling household size (Mansergh, 2000, p.544). Even with a static population, such a trend would create demand for new housing units. In the context of immigration and population growth, it further fuelled the property boom.

Geographically, certain patterns were evident in housing construction. Firstly, the population of Cork City, which declined throughout the twentieth century, continued to fall during the 1990s, notwithstanding national population growth. Due to unprecedented house price inflation, homes close to the city centre were beyond the means of most of the populace. Even a cursory glance at newspaper property supplements or in estate agents' windows indicated that houses of comparable size and quality tended to be less expensive the further they were from Cork City centre. This contributed to a drift of

population from Cork city into the surrounding hinterland, notably to satellite towns, where more affordable homes had been constructed. In addition, the city region's new and extended road network, along with easier access to car transport, made it feasible for workers to be domiciled further from their place of employment. Many parts of East Cork, therefore, became prime residential locations.

Figure 3.7 displays the distribution of private housing development in the most populated EDs in East Cork, utilising data from the Census of Population which requested homeowners to provide the date of construction of their residence. The three main towns, Cobh, Midleton and Youghal, along with the EDs of Rathcooney and Caherlag adjacent to Cork City, contained the highest proportion of older housing stock, built prior to 1990. Between 1991 and 2000, Riverstown, Midleton Urban and Youghal Urban were the settings for an explosion in housing construction. Since 2000, however, smaller settlements throughout East Cork, such as Watergrasshill, Rathcormack, Cloyne, Aghada (Corkbeg ED), Castlemartyr (Ightermurragh ED) and Knockraha all witnessed significant housing development. In many of these villages, over 50 per cent of existing houses have been built since 2001 as large private estates sprung up on their outskirts. What this data indicates is that, over the course of the housing boom, the construction sector focused its energies further and further away from the city and exploited opportunities for development in smaller villages.

The spatial expression of changing patterns of housing construction since the 1990s becomes more apparent upon examination of additional Census data. The percentage increase in private households between 1991 and 2006 indicates clearly that location with respect to the city was the dominant factor in determining the location of

Figure 3.7 - Housing completions in the most populated EDs by phase of completion

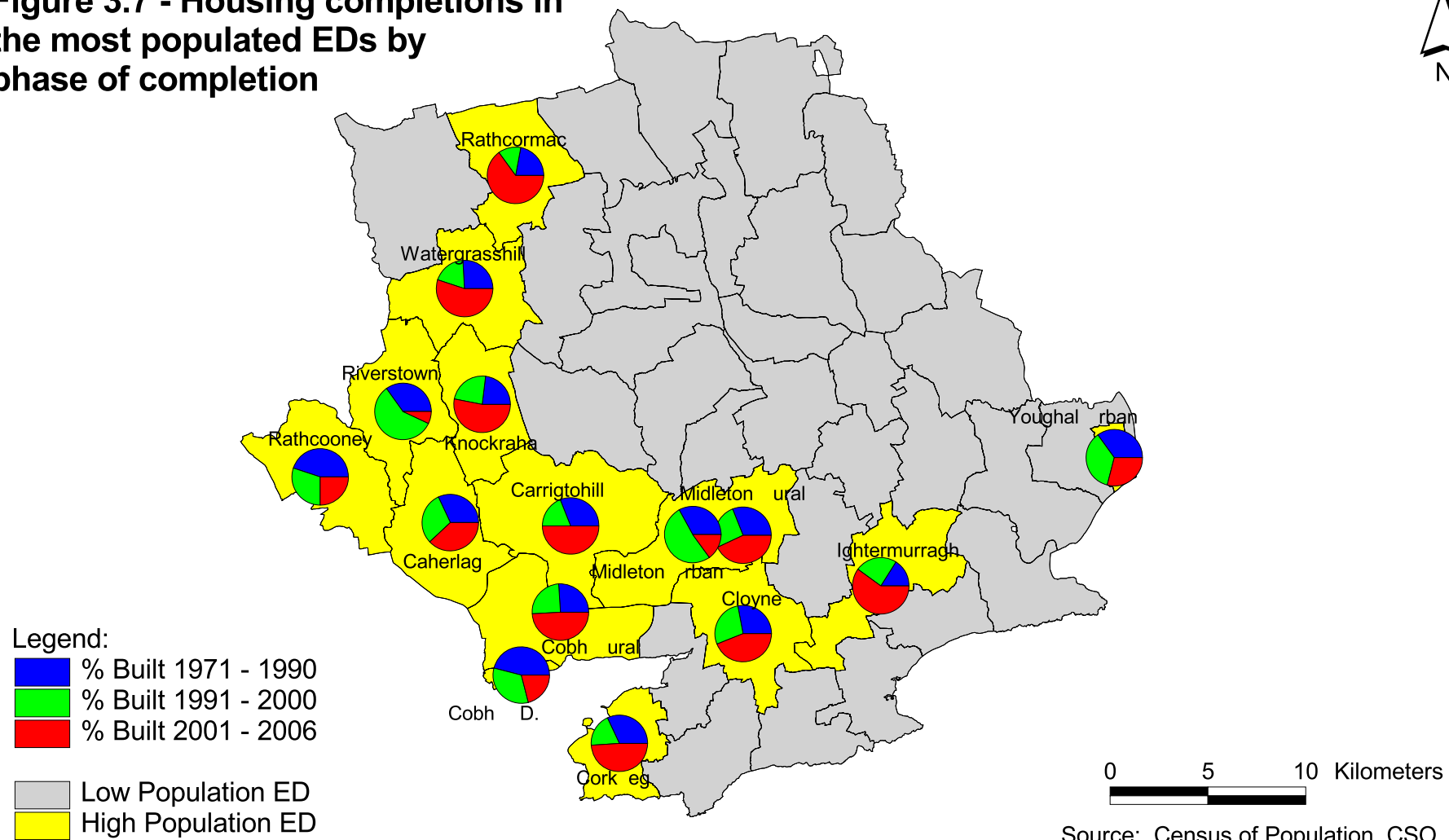


**Figure 3.8 - Percentage increase in private households
in East Cork EDs, 1991-2006**

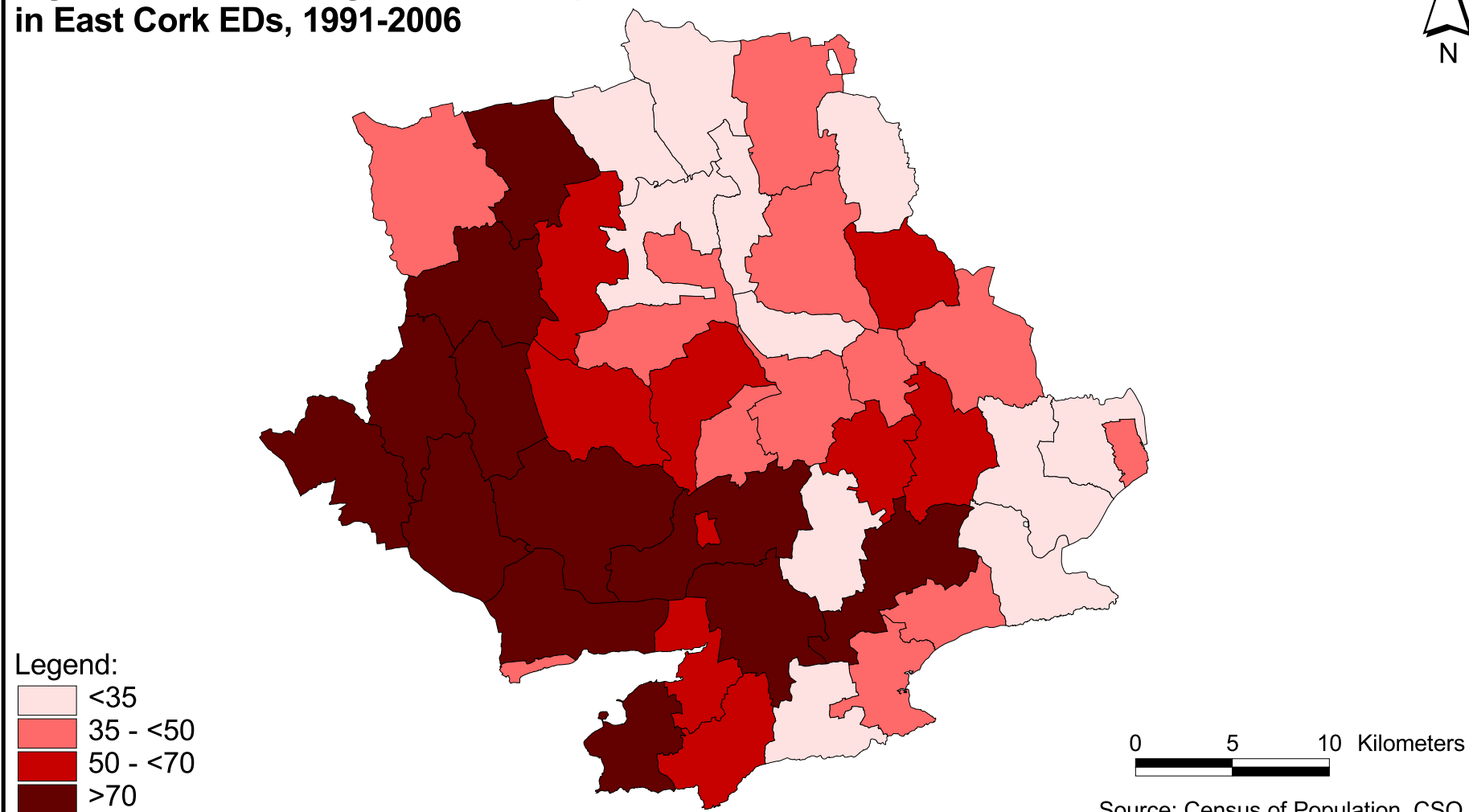
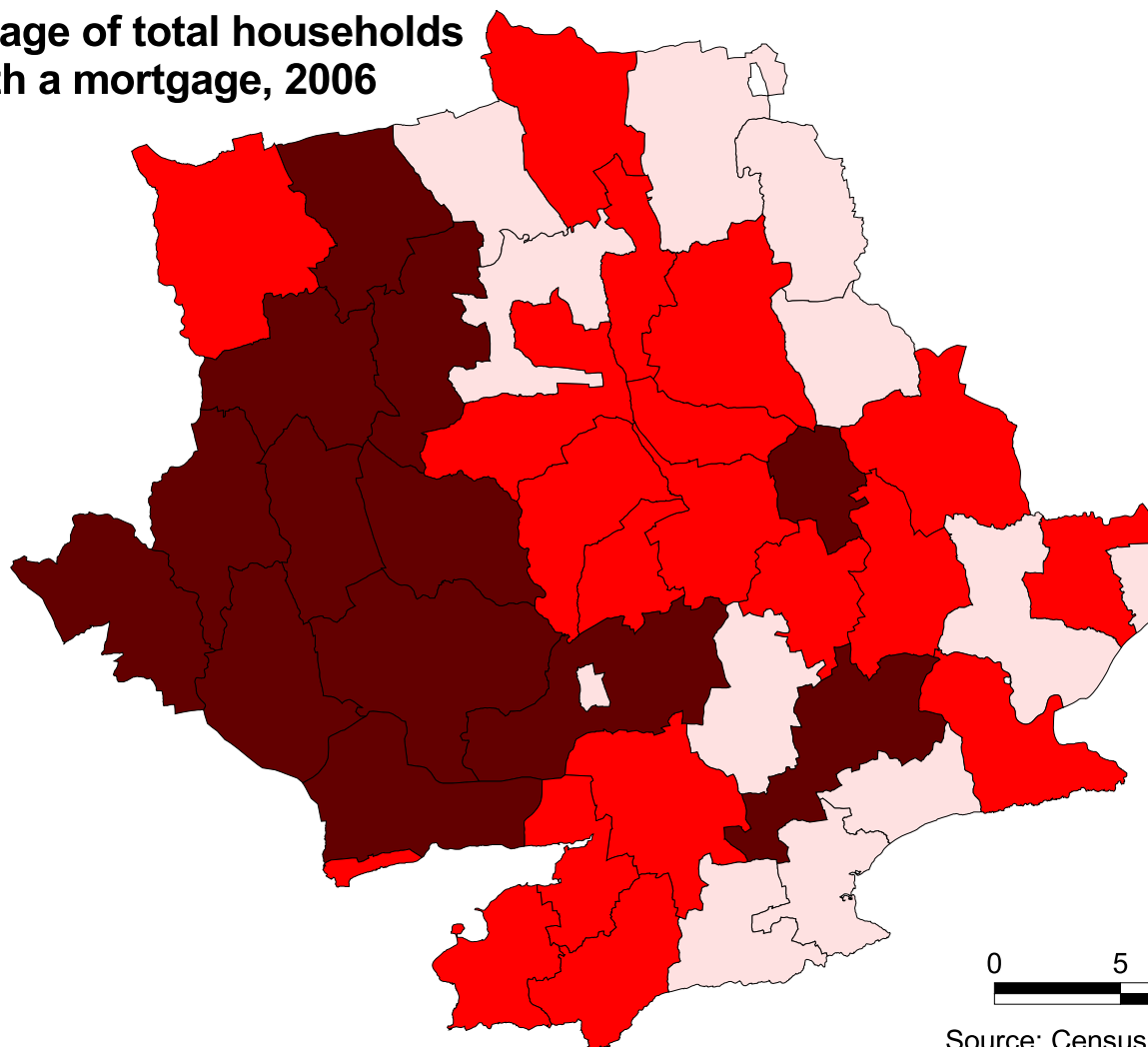
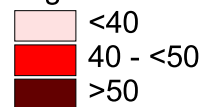


Figure 3.9 - Percentage of total households owner occupied with a mortgage, 2006



Legend:



0 5 10 Kilometers



Source: Census of Population, CSO

housing developments (Fig 3.8). DEDs adjacent to the city, particularly Riverstown, Caherlag and Knockraha, witnessed large-scale increases in the number of private households. Elsewhere, there was evidence of burgeoning housing development around Midleton and Cobh, and in the lower harbour area around Whitegate. More recent housing growth occurred in settlements situated along the principal road corridors, the N25 and N8.

The nature of occupancy varied considerably across the study area. Figure 3.9 shows private households with a mortgage as a proportion of the total in 2006. Higher proportions of mortgaged households corresponded closely with areas of most recent housing development and were located primarily in EDs that where there was easy access to the City. In contrast, in remoter rural areas, the majority of households were owner occupied without a mortgage, indicating a more established and long-standing settlement pattern. Cultural factors in Ireland tend to favour outright ownership of property, and Census data also indicated that private rented accommodation was scarce outside the three main towns, while local authority housing was generally confined to the towns and larger villages. The relative proportions of mortgaged, non-mortgaged and local authority housing had implications for social structure and community activism that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.4.3 Population size, structure and composition

This sub-section outlines changes to the size, structure and composition of the population. Rural communities are generally regarded in the popular imagination as places of stability, or even stagnation, immutable and homogenous, and founded on long-

standing attachments to place over many generations. Consequently, it is generally held that significant demographic change invariably has an impact on the sense of community associated with these rural locales. The broad focus is upon the East Cork region, but analysis highlights trends in individual EDs where appropriate. In the first instance, population growth in East Cork has been substantial since the early 1990s (Table 3.1). The overall increase of 38.9% in just fifteen years surpassed growth rates for Cork County as a whole (17.3%) and the state (20.2%).

Table 3.1 Population growth in East Cork 1991-2006

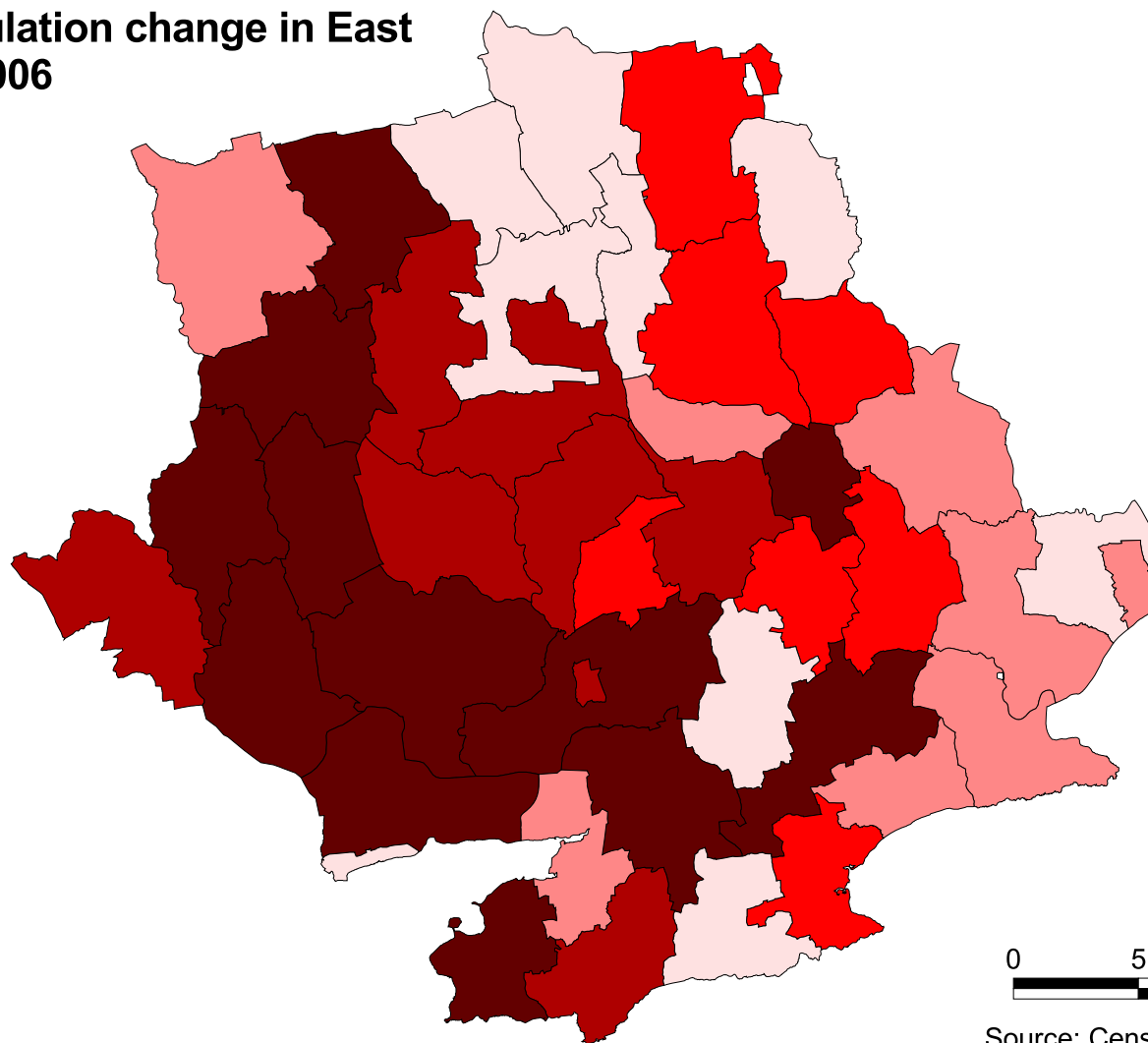
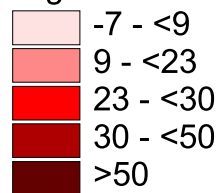
Year	Population	% increase	Cumulative % increase
1991	58,579	-	-
1996	60,552	3.4	3.4
2002	69,854	15.4	19.2
2006	81,392	16.5	38.9

Source: Census of Population, CSO

Table 3.1 does not, however, illustrate the significant spatial variations in population growth across East Cork (Figure 3.10). Areas closer to the city experienced unparalleled growth since 1991. The highest rate of growth was recorded in Knockraha ED (88%), but in Riverstown ED, which forms the core of the Glanmire study area, the population grew by 81%. The adjoining EDs of Caherlag (63.5%), Cobh Rural (70.4%) and Carrigtwohill (60.3%) also witnessed growth rates which were far above national and regional averages. Further eastwards, population growth was less pronounced, although Middleton and the lower harbour area around Whitegate showed substantial gains. In the

**Figure 3.10 - Population change in East
Cork EDs, 1991-2006**

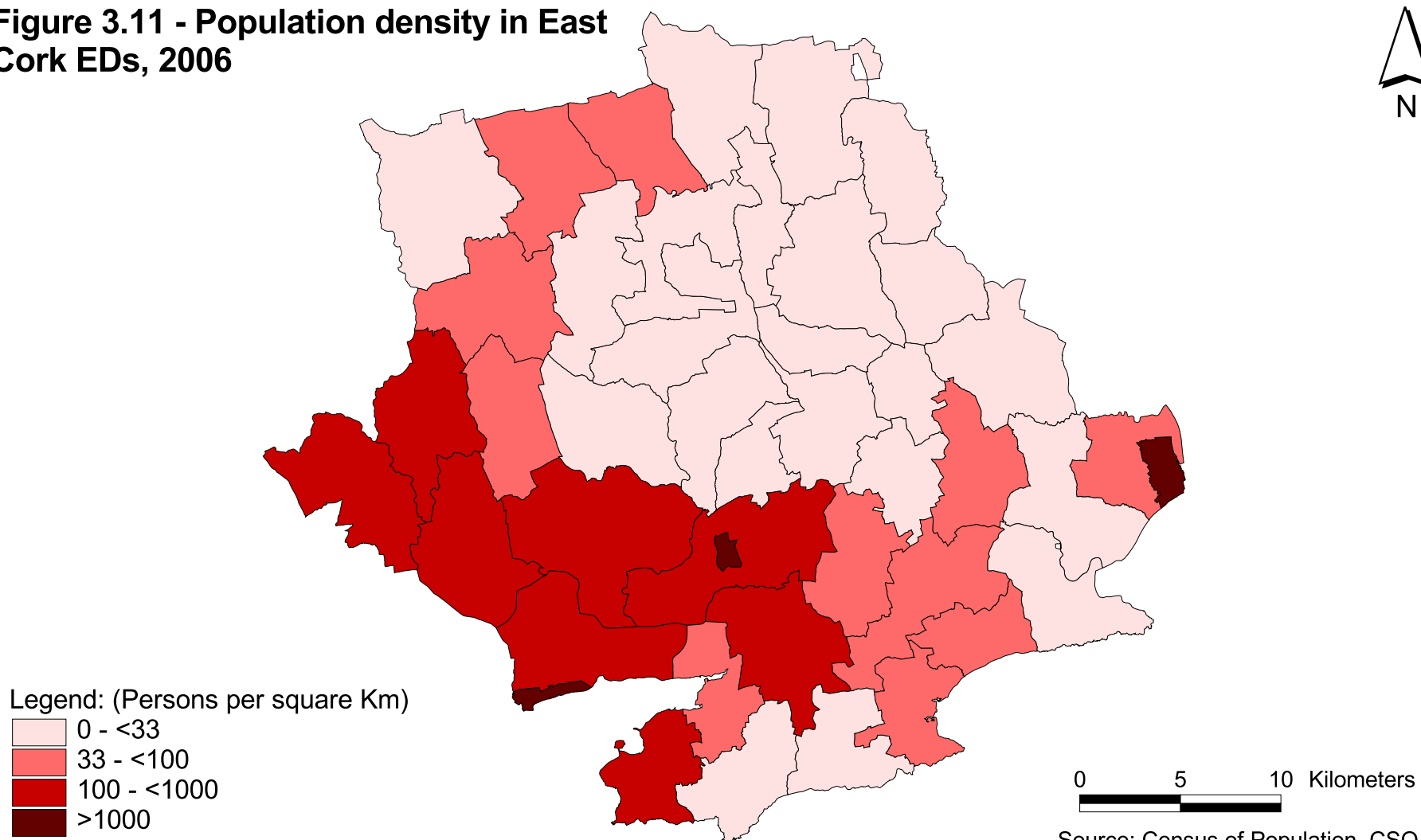
Legend:



0 5 10 Kilometers

Source: Census of Population, CSO

**Figure 3.11 - Population density in East
Cork EDs, 2006**



rural areas to the north and east, and along the coast, population also increased, but at lower rates than the aforementioned EDs. Meanwhile, there were individual EDs within this area, such as Kilcor, Ballintemple and Castlemartyr, that experienced falling numbers of inhabitants.

Figure 3.11 indicates the population density in the East Cork region in 2006. Cobh, Middleton and Youghal, the three principal towns in the region, appear as main hubs, with over 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometre. The EDs in the Cork-Middleton corridor and around the Harbour comprised the next tier. Smaller towns and villages along the N25 route east of Middleton and also along the M8 route northwards had less dense concentrations of residents. Meanwhile, the upland area to the north and east was the most sparsely peopled portion of the study area. What is apparent when Figures 3.10 and 3.11 are compared is that the areas of highest density correspond broadly with those of greatest population growth. Clearly, major population growth was concentrated around already established centres and the improved road network and did not dissipate to any great extent into those rural areas which lacked adequate transport infrastructure.

Scrutiny of age structure revealed some interesting facets of the population explosion. Comparisons between different cohorts of the population from different censuses indicated that certain age categories were disproportionately represented in terms of growth, while some age categories exhibited decline. For the purposes of this analysis, the results of 1991 and 2006 Censuses were evaluated. Comparing the population cohort aged 15-24 in 1991 with that aged 30-39 in 2006 was instructive from the point of view that this age cohort would have been passing through the household and family formation stage during the 1990s. Analysis of the 30-39 year old cohort in East

Cork in 2006 revealed an increase of 55.3% on the 15-24 cohort in 1991, a greater rate than that for the increase in the overall populace. In some EDs, this increase was significantly greater; in Knockraha, Riverstown, Rathcormack and Ightermurragh, for instance, the increase was above 200%. Crucially, all of these EDs were locations for major residential developments. These figures, therefore, point to a major influx into East Cork of people in their early thirties, especially couples, seeking to settle down, start families and raise children.

Conversely, cohort analysis showed that the number of younger adults in their late teens and early twenties increased only slightly between 1991 and 2006 and actually declined in many EDs. There were almost 10,000 aged between 0 and 9 years in East Cork 1991, but by 2006 the number of 15 to 24 year olds had increased by only 5%. What was most notable was that this age cohort had declined significantly in most EDs, even where total population had increased. In some remoter rural districts, for instance, such as Clonpriest, Ballintemple and Kilcor, it decreased by a factor of more than one in five. Furthermore, in areas where it did increase, the augmentation was well below overall population growth. This so-called 'brain drain' of younger people has long been a demographic feature of rural areas as those reaching adulthood leave either for further education or in search of employment. The continued exodus of young adults (15-24 years) and the pre-eminence of adults aged 30-39 years had implications for community activism that will be elaborated on in Chapter 4.

The influx of people of family formation age had knock-on effects on family structure in the study area and data on family cycle from the Census provides information on this aspect of demographic change. The CSO defines a family nucleus as a husband

and wife, or a cohabiting couple. They are classified into various types according to whether or not they have children and the age of the eldest child. The most notable statistic in East Cork was the growth in young, recently married couples, classified as “pre-family” nuclei i.e. a husband and wife with no children and where the wife is under 45 years old. This sub-group comprised 6.4% of all family nuclei in 1991, but increased to 7.2% in 1996, 12.2% in 2002 and 14.5% in 2006. An examination of their spatial distribution within East Cork revealed further interesting patterns. Young couples comprised a higher proportion of families in areas of population growth, new housing and mortgaged households, primarily close to the city, but also around Midleton and the lower harbour. In Knockraha ED, for example, one in four family nuclei in 2006 consisted of young couples.

Housing development and population growth presaged a more dynamic and mobile population. Census 2002 provided new information at local ED level concerning this aspect of Ireland’s population. For the first time, the proportion of non-Irish nationals was detailed at ED level, while there was also information on the number of inhabitants who had not lived at their current address 12 months prior to the Census being conducted. Both of these statistics can give a measure of the degree of heterogeneity within any specific area. Furthermore, the inclusion of these variables in Census 2006 allowed for comparative analysis and made it possible to identify some trends.

On average, one out of every ten inhabitants enumerated in East Cork in Census 2006¹, representing over 8,200 individuals, had not resided at their current address twelve months prior to the Census. This data is suggestive of considerable movement of people and the influx of a significant amount of new residents into the area. The comparable

¹ Figures excluded children under 1 year of age.

figure of 8% from Census 2002 reveals that this pattern of mobility had been sustained over a number of years. Closer analysis reveals that, on average, over two thirds of these new residents in 2006 came from another part of Cork County, just under 10% from elsewhere in the country, while over one fifth came from outside the state. At the level of individual Electoral Districts, there was considerable spatial variation. In particular, areas close to the city and adjoining the main towns, where fieldwork indicated that new housing developments had been completed during 2005, contained high proportions of new residents. In Rathcormack and Carrigtwohill EDs, for instance, 21.6% and 15.4% respectively had moved to the area in the previous twelve months, which coincided with the completion of housing estates in these areas.

Immigration has been a defining feature of Irish demographics in recent years and had led to pronounced changes in the composition of the population. East Cork was not immune from the trend of new arrivals; in 2006, 9.2% of the population were foreign nationals. Within the area, concentrations of foreign nationals were evident in the towns, particularly Midleton, and in settlements with large quantities of new housing stock, such as Carrigtwohill, Rathcormack and Whitegate. However, even remoter rural EDs were not unaffected by the influx of this new cultural grouping. Accession of ten new EU Member States in 2004 was an undoubted influence, and statistics showed that Eastern Europeans comprised a high percentage of foreign nationals. The arrival of people from countries across the EU and the wider world has undoubtedly led to greater social and cultural diversity in local communities.

Conventionally, the past decade and a half has been viewed as a period of modernisation, accompanied by growing secularisation, during which the influence of the

Catholic Church on public affairs has declined. However, observations from fieldwork indicated that religion and community remained strongly intertwined at local level, particularly given that the Catholic parish remains one of the strongest spatial expressions of community. This analysis is supported by an examination of Census data. Almost nine in ten of the population of East Cork described themselves as Catholic in Census 2006. Furthermore, this proportion had fallen by just four percentage points since 1991, in spite of the well-documented turbulence encountered by the Catholic Church during that period. In addition, actual numbers of Catholics increased by 33.1% between 1991 and 2006, growing at only a slightly lesser rate than overall population. Anecdotal evidence supported the contention that Catholicism retained an important position in shaping values systems.

In summary, it can be concluded that the size, structure and composition of East Cork's population altered significantly as a consequence of Ireland's Celtic Tiger economy. Growth took place at above average rates and was concentrated in existing population bases, especially those close to the city. This new population was primarily young and in the early stages of the family cycle. There was evidence of a more heterogeneous population structure due to the influx of people from outside the area and from outside the state, but statistics on religious affiliation indicated that traditional values retained a good deal of importance.

3.4.4 Labour force and social structure

Demographic changes were accompanied by significant changes to the labour force throughout the study area. Although agriculture is traditionally strong, and the land

is fertile, East Cork was not unaffected by broader trends in Irish and European agriculture. The proportion of the total labour force employed in farming continued on a downward trend during recent years, falling by almost one-quarter between 1981 and 1996. This author's own direct involvement with a survey of the agricultural sector in the region in 1999 gave an insight into the situation on the ground (ECAD, 2000). While a core group of about one third of the region's farmers remained viable and productive, the remaining two-thirds had difficulties in adapting to agricultural change and reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Some of these farmers and their spouses had already taken up alternative income-generating opportunities off the farm, while advisors within the local development sector and statutory agencies, such as Teagasc, recognised the need to encourage other farm families to do likewise. It is not the intention here to offer detailed analysis and statistics on the changing face of farming in East Cork (see Browne, 2001), but the overall trend is clear; agriculture offers fewer economic and employment opportunities for those living in the region than it did in the past.

The past forty years brought about a transfer to secondary and tertiary sector jobs as industrial and services sectors became established. However, it was not until the 1990s that major changes in employment came about. Economic growth led to falling unemployment following a decade of recession, and between 1991 and 2006 the proportion of the population aged over 15 years at work rose from 44.7% to 61%. This denoted a doubling of the gainfully employed from just fewer than 19,000 to over 38,500. Employment increased in all occupational sectors apart from agriculture, but the largest increases occurred in the administrative, construction, professional and 'other' sectors. The most recent data revealed that East Cork had a diverse occupational structure,

broadly in lines with national averages, without any great dependence on any one type of employment. The manufacturing sector, although strong, saw its share of total employment fall during the 1990s, and accounted for 15 per cent of the workforce in 2002. This author's 2007 estimate placed the number employed in multinational manufacturing concerns based in East Cork at around 3,500, although many of these employees would be domiciled in Cork City whilst working in Little Island.

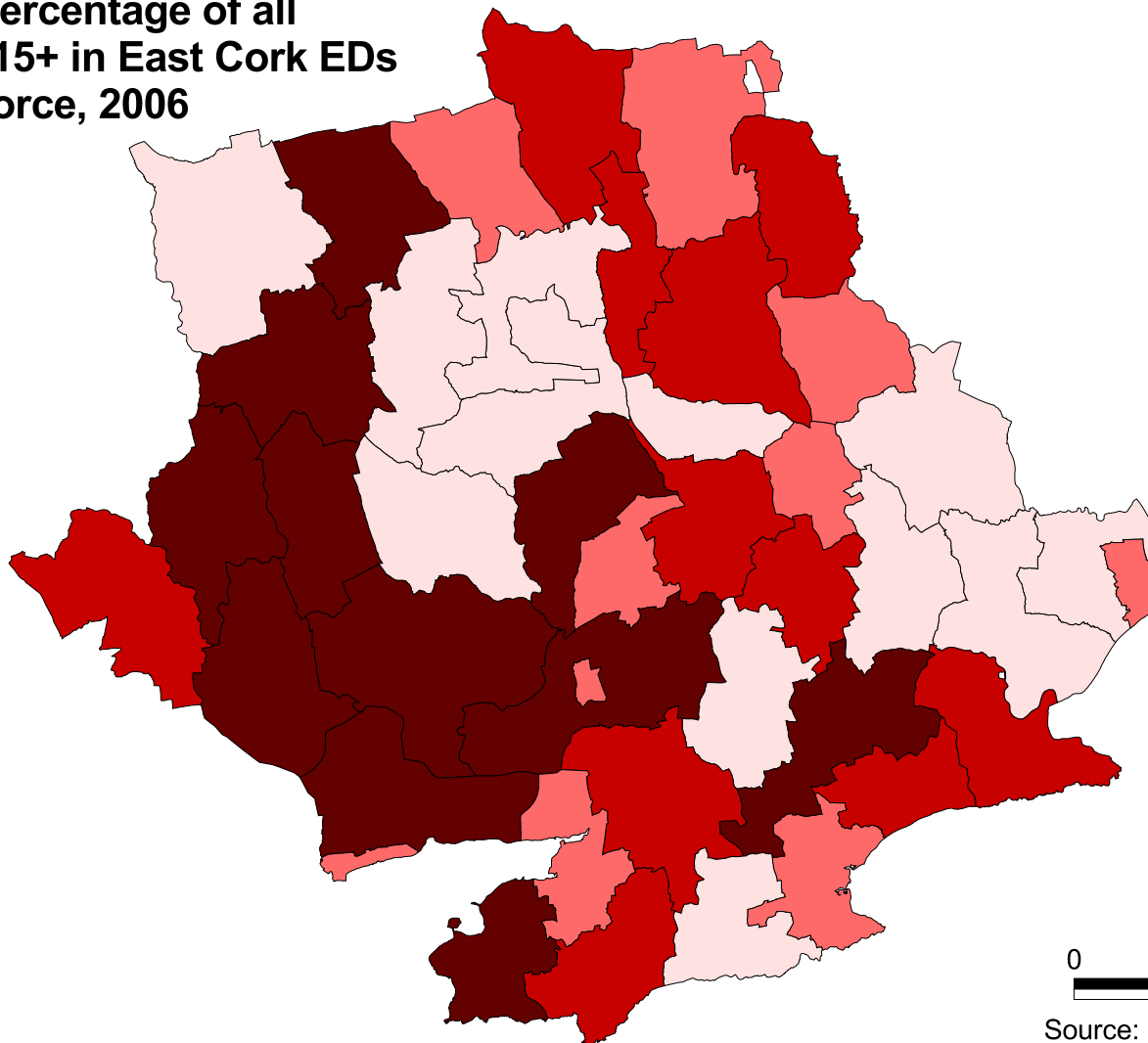
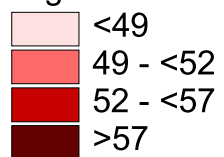
A critical trend in the labour force was its feminisation. The number of women at work in East Cork increased by 172% between 1991 and 2006, rising from approximately 5,800 to over 15,900. The statistics showed little distinction between married and single women in the uptake of employment, but geographical factors had a more significant bearing (Figure 3.12). Involvement of women in the workforce was lowest in the remoter rural areas and highest in areas adjacent to the city. While it was apparent that women from both urban and rural areas have taken up employment, the proportion doing so was greater closer to the city. This may reflect greater access to and opportunities for employment in suburban areas, but also economic necessity due to increased housing prices and the need to meet mortgage repayments. In rural areas, some spouses were involved in farm work and, therefore, were not in a position to take up off-farm employment.

Changes in the labour force can be linked to other characteristics of the population, notably educational attainment and social class. It appears that those areas characterised by an influx of newcomers also contained, broadly speaking, well-educated and upper middle-class residents. The spatial pattern of third level educational

Figure 3.12 - Percentage of all females aged 15+ in East Cork EDs in the labour force, 2006



Legend:



0 5 10 Kilometers

Source: Census of Population, CSO

Figure 3.13 - Percentage of population aged 15+ in East Cork EDs with a Third Level education, 2006

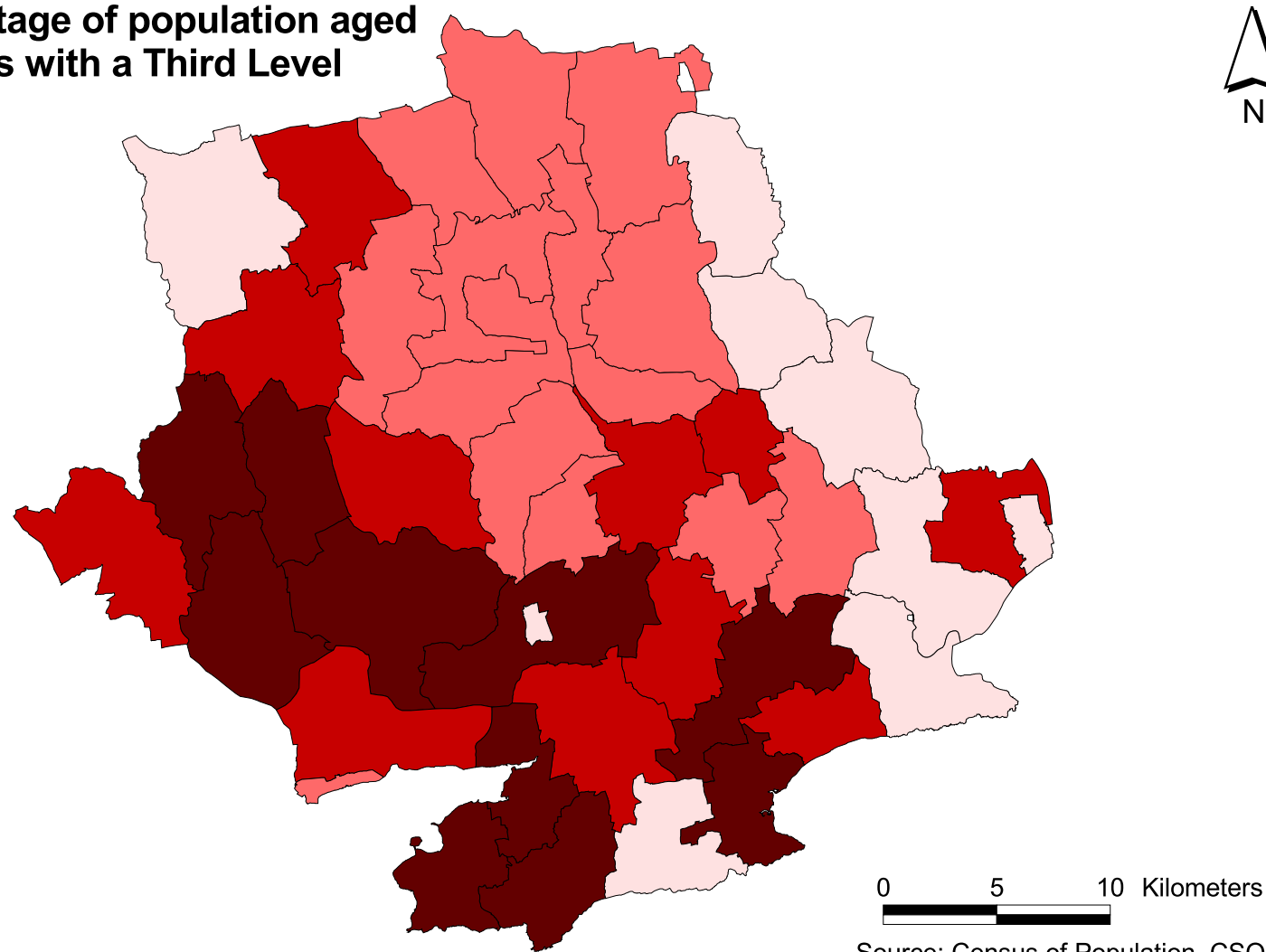


Figure 3.14 - Percentage of households in East Cork EDs in socio-economic groups A, B & C, 2006

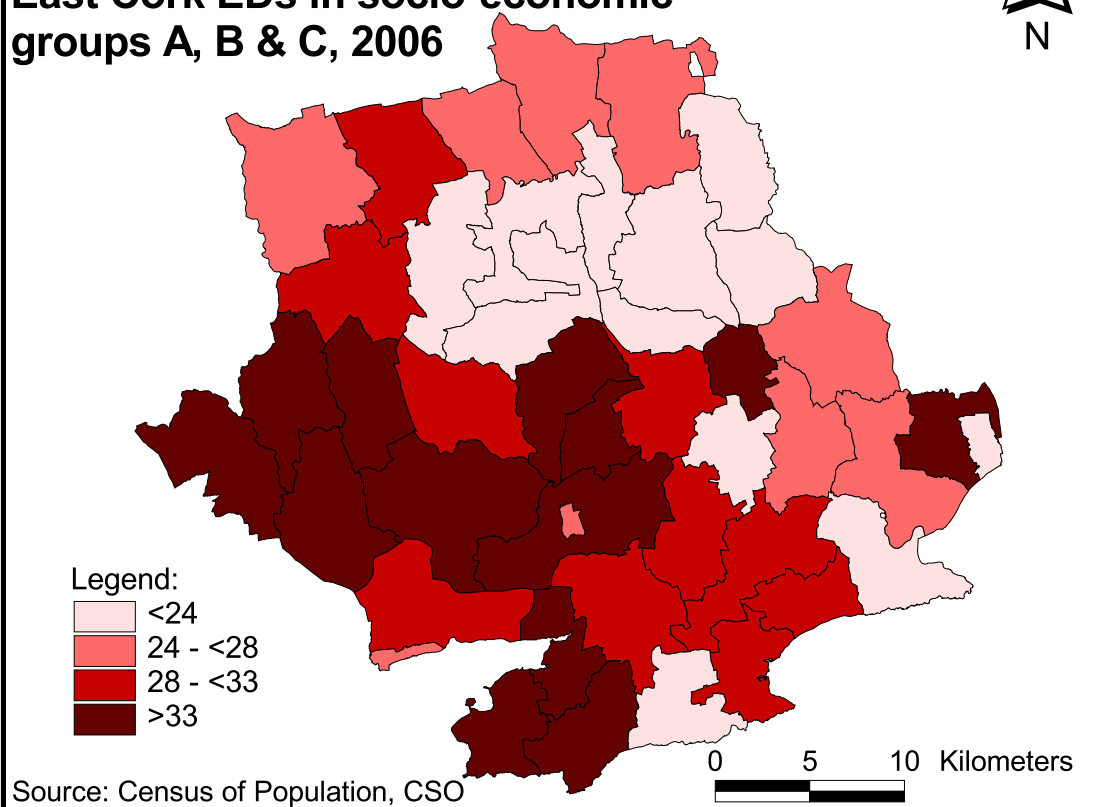
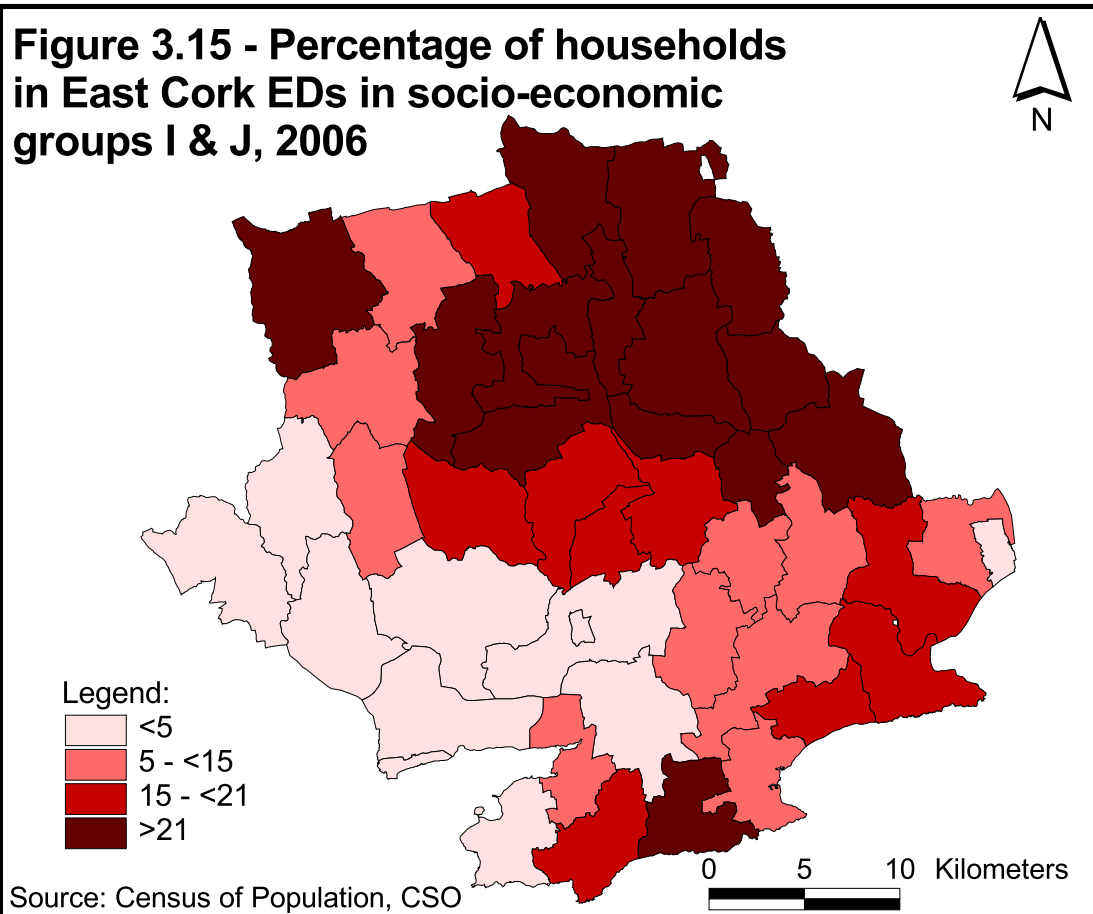


Figure 3.15 - Percentage of households in East Cork EDs in socio-economic groups I & J, 2006



attainment (only classifying those whose full-time education had ceased) illustrates that the EDs closest to the city and those surrounding Midleton showed the highest levels of graduates (Fig. 3.13). This corresponded closely with the spatial distribution of households classified by the Census in socio-economic groups A, B and C (Fig. 3.14). This social class grouping consisted of those employed in management and professions. On the other hand, areas in the uplands to the north and the east contained a higher than average proportion of households in socio-economic groups I and J, the categories used to classify farmers and farm labourers (Figure 3.15). The distribution of these social groupings across East Cork was perhaps the starkest indication of the difference between more traditional, rural ways of life and the more dynamic, modern lifestyles of those inhabiting the immediate hinterland of the city.

3.4.5 Travel and mobility

Perhaps the most significant demographic trend in terms of impact upon a sense of community has been the huge increase in mobility and connectivity with the wider world that has occurred over the past two decades. This was evident in terms of increased movement in physical space, largely facilitated by car transport and recent road infrastructure improvements and by deeper trans-regional and transnational linkages through the adoption of new information and communications technologies. Both of these trends are examined in this section, which displays that the people of East Cork became more interconnected with places outside of their immediate localities.

Better road infrastructure, along with economic prosperity, facilitated a dramatic increase in car ownership. Nationally, the number of private cars rose twofold between

1990 and 2005 to over 1.6 million, with an estimated 406 cars per thousand of population in 2005. Furthermore, in 2006 car travel accounted for a growing proportion of all journeys to work, at 63.6% of the total (CSO, 2007d). One notable feature of this increase was the growth in the number of households with two or more cars, and the decrease in the proportion of houses with no car. In 1991, for instance, 29% of households in East Cork did not own their own car, while just 20.4% had two or more cars. The comparable figures in 2006 were 13.5% and 51% respectively. It was clear, therefore, that more people gained access to regular transport by car than was the case in the past, and the fact that over half of households owned two or more cars was particularly notable in this respect.

Figure 3.16 displays the relevant data on two car households from Census 2006. A clustering of such households is evident to the north of Midleton and Carrigtwohill, where approximately six in every ten households owned two or more vehicles. This is a largely rural agricultural area, but is positioned between the main N25 and N8 routes, and is therefore within easy commuting distance of the city and the industrial estates of Little Island. Some coastal EDs also exhibited higher than average levels of ownership. In contrast, towns, where there was easier access to public transport, services and employment, levels of ownership were lower. In remoter rural areas, where there was ongoing service rationalisation and little or no public transport, cars were regarded as a necessity rather than a luxury for daily living.

Just how important cars have become in the daily movement patterns is indicated by Figure 3.17, which shows the percentage of daily travellers to work and education who travelled by car, either as a driver or as a passenger, in 2006. Car journeys were

Figure 3.16 - Percentage of households in East Cork EDs with two or more cars, 2006

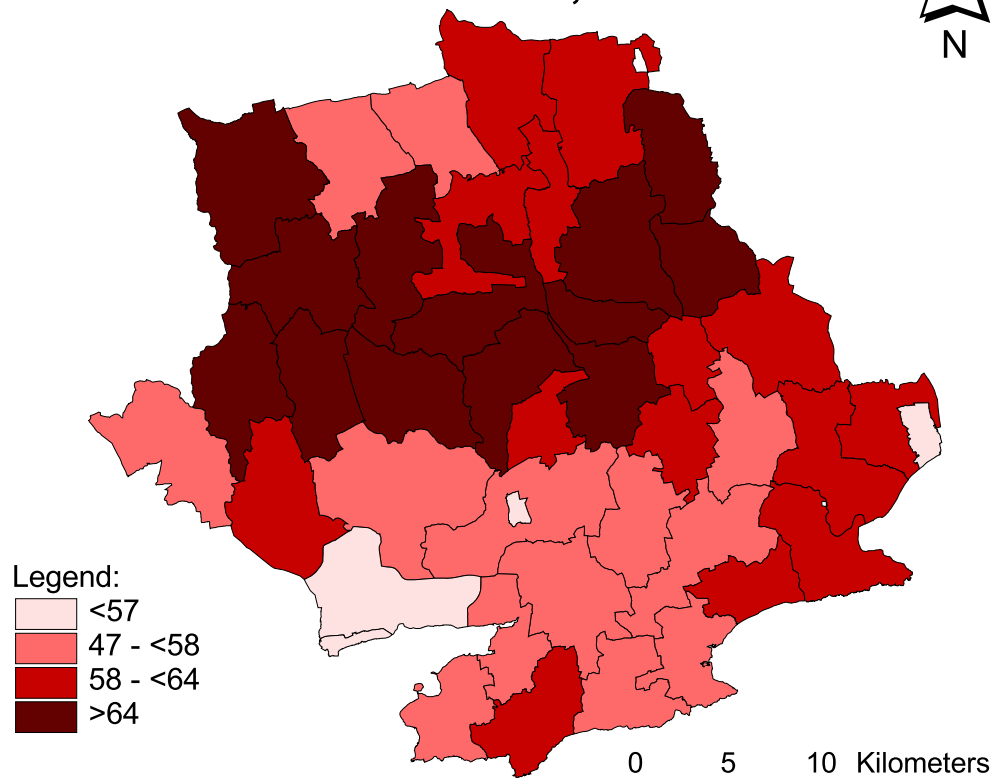
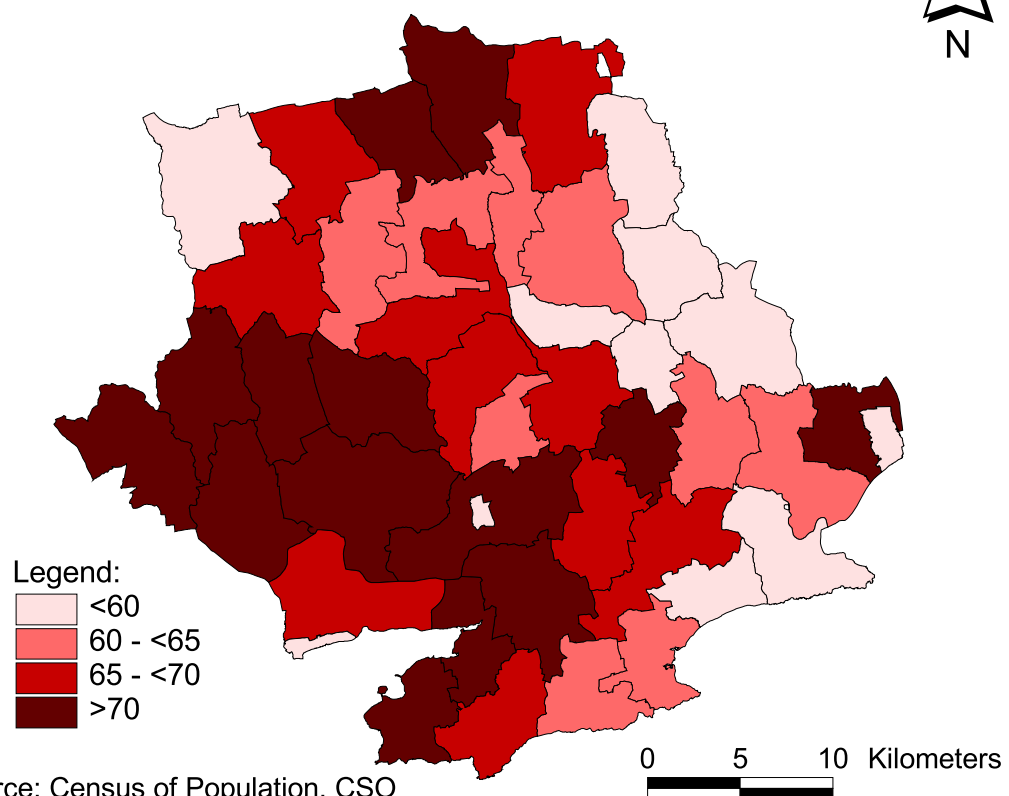


Figure 3.17 - Percentage of total daily travellers in East Cork EDs who travel by car, 2006



highest in areas closer to the city and around the towns of Midleton, Youghal and Fermoy, although not within the towns themselves. This indicated commuting patterns from the surrounding rural hinterlands into these urban centres for education and employment. The increase in car drivers and passengers between 1991 and 2006 was remarkable; those driving daily grew by 271%, while car passengers increased by 327%. It should be noted that these figures included students travelling to school and college, as well as those working, and may reflect a widely remarked-upon tendency for parents to drive children to school.

Geographical patterns of daily travel are a key concern, and both Figure 3.18 and 3.19 provide evidence of the influence of Cork city on daily travel patterns. Firstly, the percentage of total travellers with a daily journey time of more than thirty minutes in 2006 is shown. It is possible to discern a concentric arch, centred upon Cork City, which stretches from the southern coastal area eastwards and northwards and then turns back westward through the rural hills. Journey times were generally shorter for those living closer to the city and the principal towns. A similar pattern emerged when physical distance was mapped. Figure 3.19 displays the proportion with a journey distance greater than twenty-five kilometres and highlights how lengthier trips were more prevalent further away from the urban centres. It is clear that daily travel from the rural and coastal areas into the urban centres has become a significant aspect of life in East Cork.

The application of information and communications technology to all aspects of life was underlined in Census 2002 which sought, for the first time, to measure ownership of personal computers and access to the Internet in Irish homes. Such technologies allowed individuals to network outside of their immediate geographical horizon. Figure

Figure 3.18 - Percentage of total daily travellers in East Cork EDs with a journey time >30 minutes, 2006

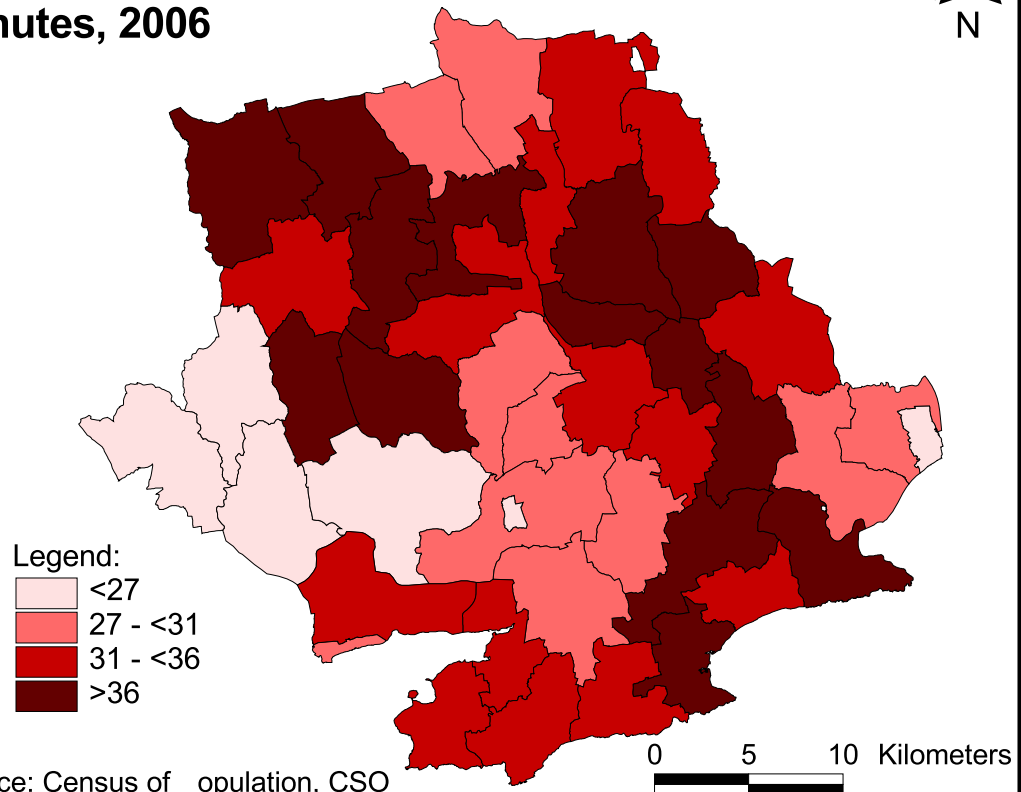


Figure 3.19 - Percentage of daily travellers in East Cork EDs with a journey distance > 25km, 2006

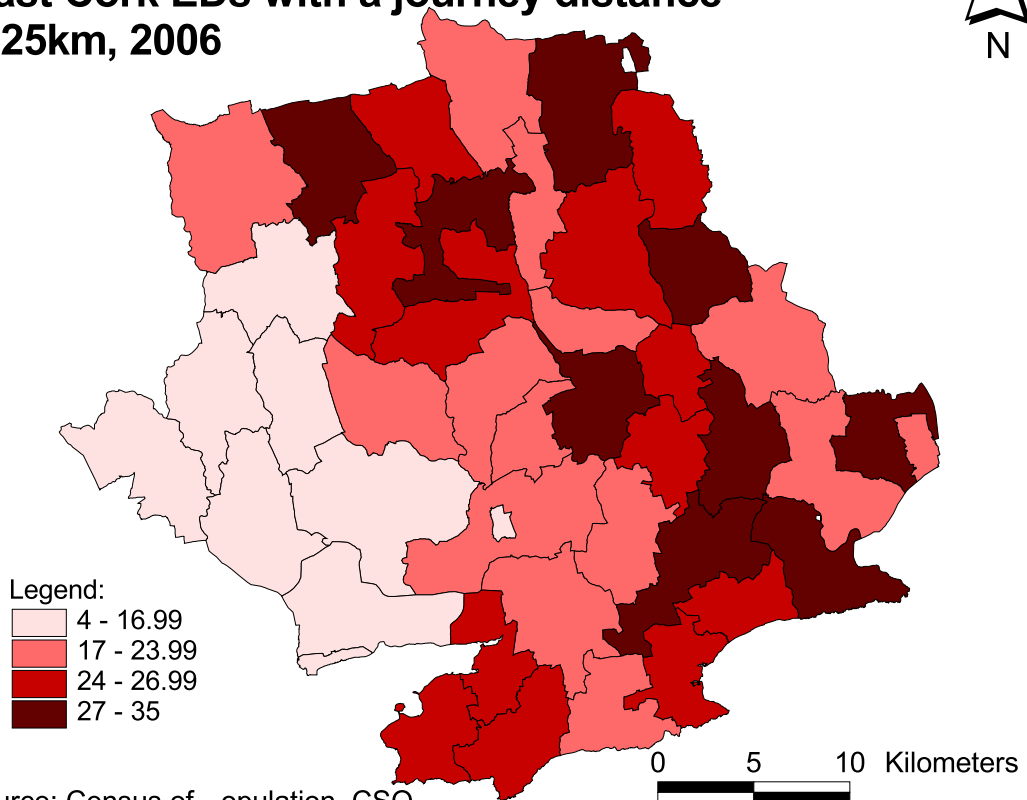
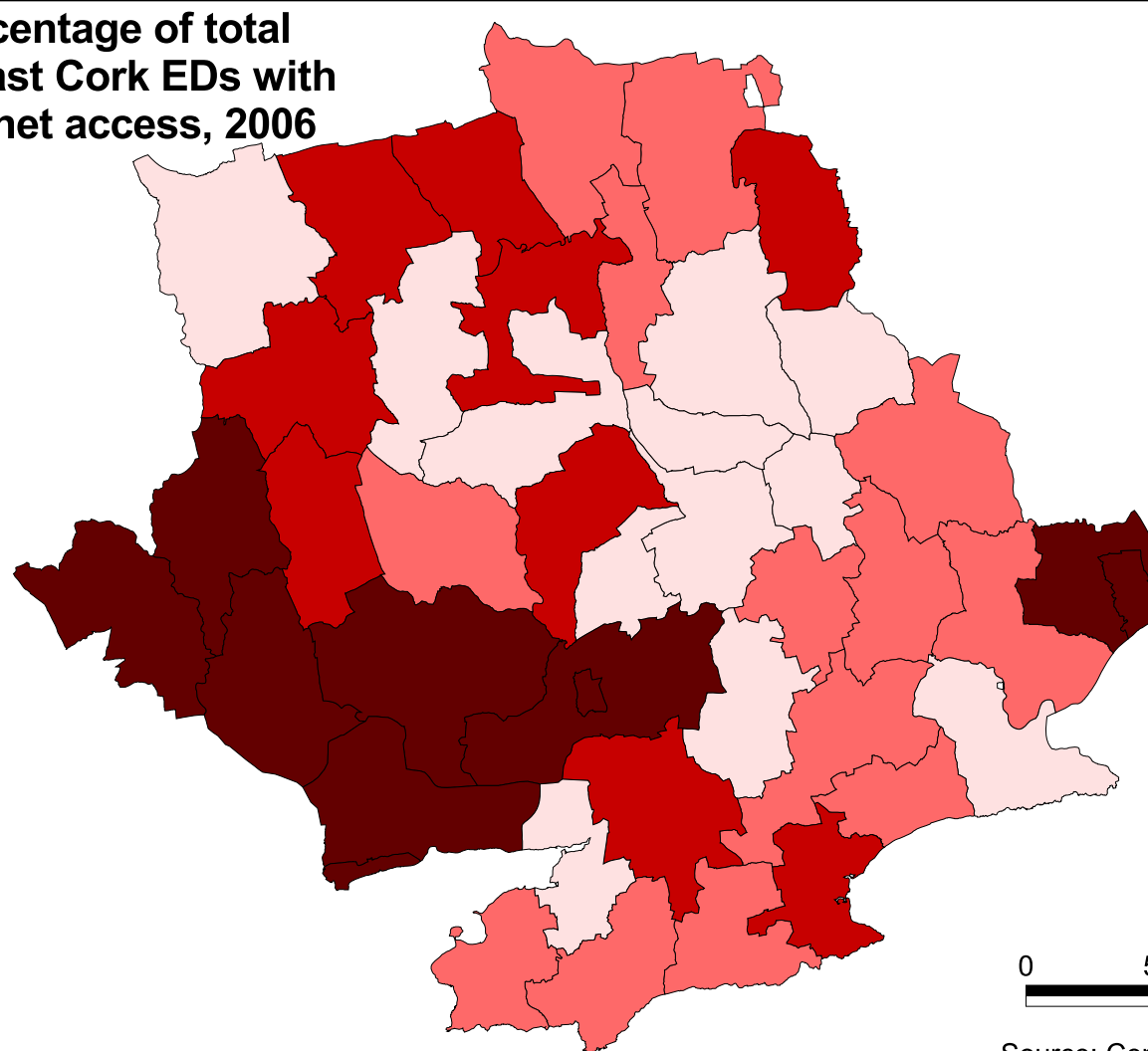
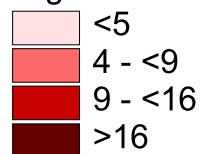


Figure 3.20 - Percentage of total households in East Cork EDs with broadband Internet access, 2006



Legend:



0 5 10 Kilometers

Source: Census of Population, CSO

3.20 illustrates the spatial distribution of private households with broadband Internet access in 2006. A clear pattern is perceptible, with a strong concentration closer to the city where over four in ten households were online. Data concerning ownership of personal computers (PCs) were similar, although not all PC owners enjoyed Internet access. What is apparent is that utilisation of information technology in the home was higher in the more affluent, well-populated areas close to the city. The urban areas of Midleton and Youghal showed lower than average levels of IT access, indicating perhaps a combination of social deprivation in such urban areas and free access to Internet services in public libraries. Another notable figure was the considerable differential in the uptake of IT, with a range of approximately 25% between the lowest and highest EDs.

Undoubtedly, the information society had penetrated into East Cork and, although it was difficult to ascertain the exact type, nature and frequency of information flows, Internet access and PC ownership undoubtedly indicated the further incorporation of the region into the wider global system. Information technology facilitates the development of communities without propinquity, and is often perceived as a threat to established, place-based communities. Conversely, IT can be employed to strengthen, rather than diminish, local community identity through the development of community-oriented websites. Indeed, several community organisations in East Cork had developed their own web presence where local news and information on their activities was posted. They saw this as a tool to promote pride in one's locality and generate a sense of place.

3.5 Conclusion: interpreting the changing geography of East Cork

3.5.1 Interpreting change

Section 3.4 presented a wealth of data on the transformation of East Cork in the modern era, especially since 1991. That there was rapid social and demographic change is irrefutable. The challenge is to understand and interpret these patterns of change and to ascertain if there is any relationship between the different variables. Some of the more prominent indicators include significant population growth based upon an influx of new residents, unprecedented housing development, increased car ownership and evidence of widespread commuting, the expansion of labour force participation, notably among women, and a more diverse population in terms of employment, education, social class and place of birth. From a spatial perspective, a differentiation is apparent, based primarily upon distance from the city. The axis from Cork to Middleton and, to a lesser degree, the axis from Cork to Fermoy, experienced intensive modernisation and change, while the remainder of the region continued to exhibit many of the traits association with rural Irish populations.

This chapter closes by offering an interpretation of these social and geographical changes, and focuses particularly on the implications for communities. There are two main lines of argument in the analysis put forward; firstly the spatial and geographical elements of change are theorised, and in doing this East Cork is placed in the wider national context. Following this, the social and demographic alterations most pertinent to an examination of community issues are outlined. This sets the scene for a more detailed examination of community issues at the local level in Chapter 4.

3.5.2 Geographical interpretations

Employing a comparative perspective *vis-à-vis* other parts of Ireland can provide a deeper appreciation of the geographical transformations that have occurred in East Cork. In this respect, recent work undertaken at NUI Maynooth, along with Horner's (2002) analysis of changing regional configurations in Ireland, is useful. The Centre for Local and Regional Studies, NUI Maynooth devised a typology of Irish rural areas, derived from Census 1996 data, for the government's National Spatial Strategy (2002). The typology classified each ED into one of seven categories based on a range of socio-economic indicators, and produced choropleth maps to illustrate the findings. What was clear from the study was that the influence of Irish cities and urban areas was spreading into their surrounding rural hinterlands. These 'peri-urban' areas were defined as "*rural areas close to the main urban centres, broadly corresponding to immediate urban areas of influence*" (Centre for Local and Regional Studies/Brady Shipman Martin, 2000, p.iii). They were characterised by high population density, a high proportion of professional and services employees and low dependence on agriculture. A large portion of EDs in East Cork between Cork City and Midleton were classified as peri-urban. The rural typology has since been revisited by scholars at the Centre for Local and Regional Studies to incorporate Census 2002 data (Walsh, 2006). This analysis showed that the peri-urban zone, and by extension the spatial influence of Cork's urban field, had expanded to include areas to the south and east of Midleton.

Other categorisations in this rural typology were based upon the relative strength of the agricultural sector. Rural parts of East Cork outside of the peri-urban zone were classified mainly as 'strong agricultural', characterised by high agricultural productivity

and large farms. However, a significant number were classified as ‘strong agricultural areas adjusting to restrictions in output’, reflecting falling farm numbers as agriculture faced pressure from CAP reform and related changes in the economic environment. A small number of EDs on the fringes of the study area fell into the ‘structurally weak’ category. In the national context, however, rural areas of East Cork remained relatively prosperous due to their strong agricultural base. This point is supported by Lafferty’s (2000) study Ireland’s agricultural geography.

Horner (2002), in an analysis of the changing regional geography of Ireland, confirmed the spread of urban influence into the countryside, but made a sharper distinction than the rural typology. He divided the Republic into just two categories, ‘City Ireland’ and ‘Rural and small town Ireland’, and classified the Cork metropolitan area as an emerging or developing city region. His delimitation of the Cork City region corresponded with the area covered by the CASP i.e. the commuting hinterland of the city. The chief trait of ‘City Ireland’ was that such places “*can offer* accessibility to, and diversity of, opportunity” arising from their favourable relative locations (Horner, 2002, p.146, emphasis in original). Such opportunities include third-level education and availability of information, expert health services, access to air travel, specialist retail and financial services, and a variety of leisure facilities. By contrast, such diversity of opportunity is not available in rural and small town Ireland, which differs markedly from city areas in demographic, economic and cultural terms (Horner, 2002, pp.145-149).

The analyses of Centre for Local and Regional Studies and Horner, when combined, provide an interpretative framework that helps to understand the changes that have take place in East Cork. It can be surmised that the portions of East Cork closest to

the city afford more life chances and opportunities for those living there, and that this made the corridor from Cork to Midleton more attractive for new residents. Employment, education, leisure facilities and a range of services were more readily available given that this area, which encompasses Glanmire, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill and Cobh, had been thoroughly integrated into the Greater Cork complex. These settlements, therefore, contained a higher proportion of more affluent, educated individuals, employed in highly-paid professional jobs and a virtuous circle of development was generated. In contrast, EDs further to the north and east exhibited many of the traits of traditional rural areas, particularly high numbers involved in agriculture. Many Irish rural areas have long been characterised by a vicious circle of socio-economic decline rather than a virtuous circle of development. Rural East Cork, however, has been spared this due to its relatively strong farming sector. In addition, commuting patterns indicated that even the remotest parts of the study area were drawn into the sphere of influence of the Cork City region.

At a more fundamental level, what has happened in East Cork is evidence of the profound transformation of Irish life that occurred as a consequence of modern capitalist development. Planning policy underlay much of this, and planning reworked the social and economic geography of East Cork, concentrating public investment and services in specific locations. Crucially, planned development subordinated local community interests to city region and national concerns. The major land use strategies for the greater Cork area prescribed plans for individual communities in the name of promoting the development of the wider region. Whereas many towns and villages in East Cork would previously have been stand-alone settlements serving their immediate rural

hinterlands, under the aegis of state-directed planning and modernisation they became integrated into the Greater Cork complex through residential development and employment creation. Places have been radically altered and the effects of this on local, place-based identities must be a central consideration for geographers.

3.5.3 Sociological interpretations

Apart from the spatial element of change, there are some aspects that are of particular relevance to the sociology of community. Conventional sociological theory attested for many years that modernisation and economic change had negative implications for placed-based communities. This mainstream discourse argued that rapid changes in population size and structure, the shift from agricultural to industrial and service-based employment, and increased heterogeneity and mobility among the population undermine the bonds that hold communities together and the places upon which they are founded (Section 1.7). Given the experience of East Cork since the early 1990s, it can be surmised that social and economic change has had a considerable impact upon communities in East Cork and, by extension, upon community organisations. The statistical data presented thus far, however, provides some background regarding the effects of the transformation of East Cork upon its communities.

Housing and population increases were one of the most notable demographic trends in East Cork, the majority accounted for by inward migration. Couples in the early stages of the family cycle, often with young children, comprised a disproportionate amount of this influx. Additionally, people from outside East Cork, including foreign nationals, constituted a growing segment of the population. Two inferences may be

drawn from this. Firstly, the arrival of newcomers into an area alters the social composition of the population, and can sometimes lead to tensions between insider and outsider. This can degenerate into a 'them versus us', or native versus 'blow-in', mentality which undermines community solidarity and cohesion. Secondly, changes in the age and family structure of the population may create new demands for certain social facilities and services. As it falls to voluntary community groups to provide some of these services, it may be necessary for them to respond to the needs of this new population, and may lead to efforts at community integration. It is not altogether clear, however, whether or not the arrival of large numbers of new residents is an entirely positive or negative force for place-based community identities.

The massive increase in the numbers at work in East Cork has undoubted implications for voluntary community activity. Those who are based at home, who are out of work or retired have traditionally formed the core pool of volunteers. As participation in the labour force increased and as the number of dual income households grew, this may have had a negative impact on human resources available for community groups. In particular, the increasing proportion of women participating in the labour market raises issues for the community sector, in that it marks a shift away from the traditional role of the female as housewife, mother and carer. This, in turn, creates demand for services to fill the gap created by spouses absent from the home and the community, the most significant of these being childcare. Community organisations have come to the fore in providing locally-based social services as a response to the changing nature of the family.

This chapter has illustrated how mobility and connectedness with the outside world became more pronounced in East Cork. It might be inferred that people have more tenuous relationships with the places where they live as daily commuting to and from work, facilitated by greater car ownership and better road infrastructure, became more commonplace. Greater affluence, more frequent travel and the advent of the Internet broadened the horizons of individuals beyond their immediate locales. It is likely that people's attachments to their own neighbourhoods, localities and parishes weakened.

It might well be concluded, therefore, in line with conventional sociological theory, that the manifold social and demographic transformation of East Cork as a consequence of modernisation represented a threat to established communities in the area, to peoples' sense of place and identification with their localities. Whether or not this argument can be sustained is one of the themes of the next chapter. In any event, Census data and other official statistics presented in this chapter cannot provide a conclusive answer, since such figures can provide only an overarching and objective picture of the wider East Cork region. Community, and the associated notions of identity, belonging and sense of place are far more abstract, local and subjective concepts. A closer analysis of the subjective views of those familiar with East Cork's local communities is required.

Chapter 4: East Cork's community organisations

4.1 Introduction

Across East Cork, a mood of pessimism pervaded among people engaged in the voluntary community sector when fieldwork was conducted between late 2003 and late 2004. *"Communities were never worse in this country than they are now,"* (TB4, 14/05/'05) admitted one community activist in Glounthaune. In neighbouring Glanmire, a member of the Community Association remarked; *"There are no volunteers any more. The Celtic Tiger killed all that"* (GM10, 11/07/'04), while in the coastal village of Ballycotton one individual who had given a lifetime of service to local community organisations conceded that *"voluntarism is getting pretty thin on the ground"* (BC1, 02/12/'03). It appeared, on the surface at least, that a decade of material prosperity had blown an ill wind for community groups. In fact, as was suggested in one quote above, many pointed to a direct causal relationship between the economic boom and the deteriorating fortunes of organised community action. Such an assessment is in line with the mainstream sociological narrative (Ife, 2002, pp.14-15; Joseph, 2002, p.6), but whether or not it stands up to a thoroughgoing analysis is the subject of this chapter.

Chapter 4 is composed of three core sections. Initially, the organisational nature and structure of community groups is outlined. Issues such as the provenance of groups, the degree to which they represent the areas that they endeavour to serve and their legal

status are probed. The following section dissects the *raison d'être* of community groups, assessing the range of activities that they undertake and the motivations underlying them. The multifaceted and diverse nature of community activity presents itself forcefully here. Finally, the fundamental theme of the impact of social change upon the community sector is examined, with the central emphasis on volunteering. This section weighs up possible reasons for the apparent decline in voluntary commitment, and offers some interpretations based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

In assessing these issues, this chapter strives to give a voice to those at the 'coalface' in East Cork's community sector. It draws upon forty-four face-to-face interviews with individuals involved in six community organisations across the study area¹. These interviews dealt with a variety of matters pertaining to community activity, and encompassed a range of perspectives. Data from official sources is also utilised, and both East Cork Area Development and the Cork County Development Board provided baseline information on community groups in the area. The recently published results from Census 2006, which provided the first ever comprehensive statistics on the extent of volunteering in Ireland, were especially valuable. Furthermore, the author's experience operating professionally as a community worker in East Cork and elsewhere informs the contents of the following pages.

It is imperative at this juncture to underline the distinction between informal, social manifestations of community and formal community organisations. Community

¹ The six organisations are Glanmire Area Community Association Ltd., Glounthaune Community Association Ltd., Carrigtwohill Community Council Ltd., Middleton Community Forum Ltd., Ballycotton Development Company Ltd. and Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council.

can find expression at the micro-spatial of the townland, housing estate or neighbourhood. This form of community is intimate, sociable and small-scale, and relates to everyday encounters between people living at close quarters. It is the world of borrowing tools from next door, checking in on the elderly woman down the road, or chatting over the back fence. It can be surmised that such relationships with ones' immediate neighbours stem from a deep-rooted need for familiarity, security and mutual support. Evidence from interviews confirmed that these casual local networks continue to be important for many people.

However, this informal aspect of community is not the primary focus of this chapter, which instead examines the more structured expressions of community in the shape of groups that are formally constituted and have an identifiable organisational configuration. Geographical scale is a crucial issue and community associations tend to operate at the spatial level of the parish, village or town i.e. at the level just above the immediate local environs. Nonetheless, formal community groups derive much of their strength from informal social activity and, in turn, act to nurture this sense of community spirit. However, neighbourliness and sense of community at micro level does not require articulation through formal organisations, and informal linkages between people living in the same place are sustained in the absence of a community association. Conversely, there were instances of robust community groups centred upon a small core of dedicated activists who had only tenuous linkages to the broader local community. The central point is this; that while they are interconnected, informal social networks and formal community organisations are separate entities.

Some examples can assist in illustrating this argument. In Dungourney/Clonmult, the local Community Council had discussed winding up the organisation due to lack of interest and poor attendance at meetings. Nevertheless, several of those interviewed expressed the view that it was a place where “*everybody knows everybody*”, and that there was a potent element of mutual support in the local community (DC3, 12/03/’04; DC5, 08/04/’04). In Glounthaune, the Community Timebank project was established to encourage “*a connected community*” at parish level, but its architects soon discovered that social life at townland level was of most significance for people. Consequently, they set about developing initiatives to support communal activity in local neighbourhoods. It is clear, therefore, that the issue of informal social networks impinges on an examination of community organisations, and it features at several points in the following discussion.

4.2 The origins, nature and structure of community associations

4.2.1 The genesis of East Cork’s community organisations

If the formal nature of community organisations is their defining feature, then the origins and structure of such groups merit attention. This section traces the genesis of community groups in the six study areas, and distinguishes them from the myriad of other associations within civil society. It profiles the individuals participating in community groups and scrutinises the key topic of representativeness. It outlines the somewhat ambiguous legal status of voluntary groups and current policy initiatives to address this, while the issue of insurance and risk is touched on briefly. Finally, the concluding paragraphs attempt to discern whether there is an ideological basis to the community sector and also explore the relationships between community associations and other

institutions of power at local level, specifically the Catholic Church and local party politics.

The origins of community, both as a concept and in empirical terms, can be traced to pre-modernity. Communities existed throughout history, and community as an idea was deliberated upon by the philosophers of Ancient Greece (Delanty, 2003a, pp.6-7). It is commonly understood that sense of community was more widespread and potent prior to the onset of modernisation, is something that has been lost in the interim, but remains worthy of recovery. In Ireland, this nostalgic outlook harks back to the rural *meitheal* system, where bonds of mutual aid and kinship were especially important to subsistence ways of life. Indeed, Arensberg and Kimball's anthropological classic *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940) presented a vivid portrait of this system of mutual support among the farming community. What is absent, though, from this account and other discussions of rural Irish communities, is any reference to formal community-based organisations (Schefer-Hughes, 1979; Brody, 1973).

Formal community organisations, then, have a more recent provenance and can be regarded as creations of the modern era. This was apparent upon examination of the genesis of groups being studied in East Cork. Carrigtwohill and Dungourney/Clonmult Community Councils emerged from *Muintir na Tire*, a national rural development organisation founded in the 1930s and which, over the following decades, established local councils across the country. Councils were formed in the aforementioned localities in the 1940s and 1970s respectively. Ballycotton Development Company Ltd. was incorporated in 1969 when the scion of the local Anglo-Irish aristocracy wished to bestow lands he owned around Ballycotton for recreational purposes, but chose not to

make this donation to the County Council. This provided the impetus for local community interests to coalesce to form a limited company for the purposes of taking ownership of the land. The community associations in both Glanmire and Glounthaune were established in the 1970s and 1980s owing to the arrival of new residents into these areas and the resultant surfacing of needs for social and recreational services. Midleton Community Forum is just a decade in existence, and was one of a new wave of groups founded during the 1990s under the aegis of state-sponsored community development initiatives.

In more specific terms, certain key events triggered and are central to explaining the formation of these associations. In the early years of Glounthaune Community Association, opposition to a proposal to develop a zinc smelter at nearby Little Island in 1970-'71 played a significant part in mobilising community activism (Leahy, 1991; TB1, 26/01/'04). Two particular occurrences energised locals in Glanmire and led to the establishment of a community group: the first was local resistance to a plan by Cork County Council to dam the Glashaboy River in 1979; the second was the coming onto the market in 1980 of the vacant former national school in Riverstown, which locals were keen to acquire and develop into a community centre (Manning, 1992, pp.14-16). The origins of Ballycotton Development Company have already been touched on, while the impetus for the formation of Midleton Community Forum arose from a public meeting in 1997, facilitated by East Cork Area Development Ltd., which was seeking to tackle social exclusion in the town having received government funding for this purpose under the Local Development Programme. In Midleton, then, and also in the *Muintir*-inspired councils in Carrigtwohill and Dungourney, group formation was driven to some degree

by external agencies, while specific local happenings were key drivers in the other three study areas. The diverse circumstances in which these groups were founded are indicative of the disparate nature of community action.

The formation of community organisations can be viewed from a theoretical perspective as a reaction to the transition to modernity. From the examples listed above, they often emerged from a context of change and development in a particular locale, arising as a conscious attempt to shield or salvage a sense of community in the face of a perceived threat. In some cases, new residents in an area, keen to declare their intent to integrate into the existing community, were instrumental in establishing community groups. The majority of the management committee of Midleton Community Forum, for instance, were not natives of the town, while in both Glounthaune and Glanmire, newly-arrived inhabitants contributed significant energy to the formation of community associations. The manifold transformations associated with modernisation and development, including industrialisation, the decline of old elites, demographic change and mobility, and state intervention set the context in which community groups came into being.

The associations studied formed only one part of a broad and diverse civil society in East Cork and it is useful to position them within the wider, so-called third sector. An overview of voluntary community activity in the study area in 2007 indicated the burgeoning range and quantity of groups in existence. Although there is no complete listing of community organisations in East Cork, the Cork County Development Board and East Cork Area Development Ltd both maintain registers of the groups that they work with. In addition, information gleaned from other organisations, interviews,

websites and local media supplied further knowledge on the number of groups active in the area. Table 4.1 outlines the type and number of voluntary community groups extant in 2007, categorising them in accordance with their main activities.

This table should not be regarded as comprehensive in terms of establishing the number of groups in the area and, if anything, underestimates the quantity of organisations; some operate under the radar of organs of state and the media. It does, nevertheless, indicate the diversity of activity taking place across civil society in East

Table 4.1 Voluntary community organisations in East Cork, 2007

Category of community/voluntary group	Number of Organisations
Sport and Recreation	75
Community Councils/Community Development Groups/Residents Associations	57
Women's groups	13
Environment and Heritage	10
Youth and Children	42
Artistic and Cultural	23
Charitable and Anti-poverty	14
Disability	6
Miscellaneous	3
Total	243

Sources: Cork County Development Board, East Cork Area Development Ltd., *Imokilly People*, Carrigtwohill Community Council, *Glanmire Area News*, Foróige, Macra na Feirme, Irish Countrywomen's Association, Gaelic Athletic Association, Football Association of Ireland, Irish Rugby Football Union, Lions Club Ireland, St. Vincent de Paul, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Cork County Athletics Board, Scouting Ireland, *In Touch* newsletter

Cork. The predominance of sports clubs reflects the strong sporting heritage of the region, but there is also a notable amount of special-interest and identity based organisations addressing matters such as women's issues, the environment, cultural issues and disability. What is more, these groups vary considerably in size, structure and membership; one size does not fit all when it comes to organised community activity.

The groups that are the focus of this thesis fall into the category of 'Community Councils/Community Development Groups/Residents Associations' and they possess several features that distinguish them from other types of voluntary groups. Foremost amongst these is an overarching link to place and a well-defined geographical ambit. Whereas other groups also label themselves in accordance with a specific geographical territory, their association with place does not take on the same level of significance as it does with community councils and associations. Related to this is the fact that, to a greater or lesser extent, these organisations see themselves as representing the local population to the outside world, particularly state agencies. Finally, they are wide-ranging in their outlook, rather than single-issue or subject-specific, and their remit commonly embraces social, environmental and developmental matters. In some cases, their structure acts as an umbrella for a host of sub-committees addressing different areas of concern.

4.2.2 The people of East Cork's community organisations

The degree to which community groups truly represent local attitudes is a pivotal issue, and many associations hold public elections in order to seek local endorsement for

their activities. It should be pointed out that there is no legal obligation upon groups to hold elections, since state agencies and funding organisations are, by and large, quite content to deal with groups regardless of whether or not their management is elected. *Muintir na Tire*, however, has a longstanding policy of elected community councils, while other national and regional community development bodies encourage groups to prioritise representativeness as a goal. This helps to avoid an oft-repeated criticism made against community groups; that they are merely a collection of individuals motivated by self-interest rather than wider community concerns. Holding elections gives an organisation greater legitimacy both inside and outside the community and empowers it to speak more authoritatively for the population of the area. Owing to their strong attachment to place and space, this is more pertinent to the types of organisations being studied here rather than special interest voluntary groups with weaker links to place.

Electoral procedures amongst several community groups in East Cork replicate those of official state elections. The geographical bailiwick of the group, usually a settlement or parish, is segregated into zones based on townlands, housing estates or station areas. Each zone returns a certain number of candidates, depending on its population. Nominations are sought in advance, and ballot papers are distributed to every household, with voting usually taking place over an extended period of several days. In the main, the official electoral register is used as the basis for determining the electorate. The entire process requires a considerable input of voluntary time. The elected council sits for a defined term of office, which ranges from two and four years, and chooses officers from within its own ranks. However, they also co-opt individuals who they

believe will strengthen the group, while other voluntary organisations in the area are often entitled to nominate a representative.

While community groups strive to be democratic in nature, the manner in which candidates are elected is not always straightforward. Consider the following account from one group member in Carrigtwohill about how he became involved in the Community Council:

I knew nothing about the Community Council until ... there's an old man up the road here and he just came to me one day and he said '*look it's time for you to do your part and there's elections coming up and you're going to be elected*', and this man up the road basically he organises the elections and he decides who's going on next and that's it. So I said fair enough, I figured I suppose I should give it a go (CT3, 14/04/'04).

Several aspects of this anecdote shed light on how electoral systems operate at local community level in East Cork. Firstly, it is uncommon for candidates to actively seek office, and canvassing in elections, although permitted, is rare. More usually, people are asked to become involved, perhaps by the present incumbent for the area, or by a long-standing community activist in the locality who, like the "*old man up the road*", works behind the scenes co-ordinating appointments. Furthermore, it is clear that it is possible for a person to move from a position of relative ignorance of a community association to one of deep involvement in a relatively short time. Linked to this is a view that all local residents should 'do their bit' and that there is a common duty to devote voluntary time to at least one term of office. The points made above were re-iterated by other interviewees,

many of whom became involved in groups simply because they were asked, or even cajoled, to do so. What is clear, therefore, was that while community elections had an outward appearance of formal procedure, they were often, to some extent, stage-managed.

In practice, the nature and regularity of elections varies between groups, and often indicates organisational vitality. Moreover, while most organisations aspire to being democratic, there was a noticeable trend of decline in the frequency of community elections. In Glanmire, successful elections were held four times during the first decade of the Community Association's existence following its formation in 1981 (Manning, 1992). During the 1990s, however, they were discontinued and, at present, new members merely require ratification at the annual general meeting. In Glounthaune, a former member of the Community Association remarked: *"Currently I'm not aware of when the last public election took place in Glounthaune, so I see therefore a decline in the interest and support for the Community Association"* (TB6, 11/06/'04). He perceived an organisational weakness owing to the failure to hold elections and argued that all community organisations needed to have an electoral mandate from their constituency, noting that community representation should not entail *"just turning up in a pub ... electing yourself"*. In contrast, an officer in Carrigtwohill Community Council, where elections were being held around the time interviews were conducted, asserted that the group was strengthened by virtue of its democratic procedures. This helped to negate criticism of Community Council decisions by individuals in the area, as critics could be challenged to put themselves forward at the next election (CT1, 25/11/'03).

In places where elections were not employed, or had fallen out of fashion, organisations resorted to less complicated means of engaging with potential members. Many interviewees became involved in community groups having received a request to join from an existing member. The majority of the membership of Middleton Community Forum, the most recently formed of the six groups, had been asked directly to participate, and the group has never contemplated holding a public election. In this body, it appears that one central figure played a key role in identifying and enrolling new people, a pattern repeated in other groups. However, this is not to say that membership of community groups was in any way restricted or selective. On the contrary, on the rare occasions where interviewees with no previous contact with a group had volunteered their services, they were readily welcomed into the group.

Nevertheless, regardless of the various strategies utilised to bring people together in a group setting, the inability to attract new members and resultant manpower shortages were undoubtedly key challenges facing community organisations. Indeed, some volunteers admitted that they would have left their organisation if they could convince someone else to replace them and expressed feelings of being trapped. What emerged most strongly was the fact that if an association did not have some systematic means of bringing people on board, such as elections or person-to-person recruitment, they lacked any source of fresh personnel. Consequently, there was a fear that they would become stagnant, or that a perception would develop amongst the wider community that the group was a clique and did not welcome newcomers. The shortfall in membership was a recurring theme in interviews and a source of anxiety for community leaders. The reasons for this will be explored later in this chapter.

What kinds of people emerge from these selection processes to serve with community groups? No qualifications, other than a willingness to serve the community, are necessary for participants. However, the calibre of those that come forward has a strong bearing on the fortunes of the organisation, since voluntary community work has become increasingly complex, demanding and bureaucratised. Those groups with knowledge and expertise at their disposal are, therefore, more likely to succeed in achieving their objectives and a group's membership is its most valuable resource in this regard. In a world where information has attained importance in all spheres of human activity, some community groups adopted a strategy of actively seeking out individuals with specific skills. There were instances in the study area where groups endeavoured to attract volunteers with legal, accountancy, management and engineering backgrounds, as this helped to circumvent the costs of such services.

Assessing the profiles of those interviewed, it is apparent that community organisations are largely the preserve of both the middle class and middle aged. All interviewees, with the exception of one, were over 35 years of age and the vast majority were married with families. A more or less equal balance existed between both genders. In some areas, the occupational backgrounds of group members reflected the socio-economic profile of the areas they served. In Glounthaune, the Community Association had an accountant, a solicitor, company directors and other professionals among its ranks. Glanmire Area Community Association's membership was also drawn chiefly from the professions and from public servants. These organisations covered the EDs of Caherlag, Rathcooney, Riverstown and Knockraha, which had significant percentages of residents in the higher social classes (see Fig 3.14, p.190).

Meanwhile in the rural areas of Carrigtwohill and Dungourney, the profile of members was more socially diverse, with several members from the agricultural community in the latter. Those at the helm in Ballycotton came mainly from the local business-owning class. In Ballycotton and Dungourney, however, the core membership of both groups consisted of just a handful of individuals. This reflected the low population base of these areas and, owing to their small scale, these organisations did not constitute a cross-section of the wider community. Overall, the working class and unemployed were not strongly present, except in the case of Midleton Community Forum, which was established with a specific agenda of tackling social exclusion in a town where, according to Census 2006, 22% of inhabitants were in the semi-skilled or unskilled social classes.

In order to crystallize the membership into an effective working unit, groups generally adopt a committee structure incorporating a division of labour and prescribed roles. Committees usually consist of a chairperson and deputy chairperson, a secretary, joint treasurers and, sometimes, a public relations officer. Nevertheless, the co-existence of these formal roles with more relaxed attitudes to the business of community groups was evident in the following account from a former chairperson of one group, reflecting on the experience of his first Community Council meeting:

I went to the first meeting and they were looking for nominations. It was very, very difficult because most of the people there, only one or two had been on it before, and they didn't want to get involved in any of the officerships (*sic*). So as soon as I went in ... I had a rolled up piece of paper

and a biro ... someone said; *'You can be the chairman, you have the rolled up piece of paper and the biro'* (DC2, 01/03/'04).

While the above example was an extreme case, it is fair to say that, like the selection of members, the appointment of officers in community groups can be a rather haphazard process. Undoubtedly, while community groups may be officially constituted associations, formality can be regarded to some extent as a veneer. Rules and procedures exist, organisations generally have a governing constitution or similar document, but there is a general reluctance to adhere rigidly to the letter of the law.

Like any other type of institution, leadership is crucial to the operation of community organisations, especially given that the scale of groups is such that one individual can exert considerable influence and authority. Furthermore, there is a keen awareness amongst community activists as to the importance of a dynamic and charismatic leader with the ability to energise others, delegate tasks, identify priorities and negotiate on behalf of their group. Strong leaders are regarded in a positive light by other group members, and are the public face of the organisation. As one interviewee pointed out; *"The organisation will flourish and will excel itself if it has a good leader at the top, and I think that applies to any organisation anywhere. It all boils down to the chairman"* (TB6, 11/06/'04). However, the role of chairperson of larger and more active community groups has become more demanding; one chairperson estimated that during a particularly busy period he devoted between twenty and twenty-five hours per week to community matters, while another, who was semi-retired, claimed that combining his role with full-time employment would be impossible (CT1, 25/11/'03; GM2, 10/03/'04).

4.2.3 Legal issues and risk in East Cork's community sector

The manner in which personnel become involved in community groups reveals something of the casual and unceremonious nature of the sector. However, it is important not to overstate this, since community organisations have a distinct legal personality, and aspects of their structure and work are characterised by ever-increasing regulation and bureaucracy. Community groups can choose from one of a number of options when deciding upon a legal structure; a company limited by guarantee, incorporation as a charity or an unincorporated association are most frequent choices, while a trust, a friendly society or an industrial and provident society are available but less popular alternatives. However, it has been widely acknowledged that none of these choices are wholly adequate and that a comprehensive legal framework designed specifically for voluntary community activity is lacking (Gaskin and Smith, 1995, pp.10-12; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, pp.20-21). At time of writing, several legislative and regulatory initiatives are taking place or are planned by national government, but making law in this area has proved challenging.

Table 4.2 Dates of group formation and incorporation as limited companies

Organisation	Group formation	Company incorporation
Glanmire Area Community Association Ltd.	1980	1990
Glounthaune Community Association Ltd	1970	1989
Carrigtwohill Community Council Ltd.	1947	2001
Ballycotton Development Company Ltd.	1969	1969
Midleton Community Forum Ltd.	1997	2000

Sources: community organisations, Companies Registration Office

In the absence of a specific legal instrument for community organisations, the majority of groups had chosen the incorporation of a company limited by guarantee to structure their affairs. All but one of the six groups being examined here had formed limited companies (Table 4.2). However, it should be noted that, apart from Ballycotton, there was a time lag between group formation and company incorporation and, furthermore, that the formation of companies by communities is a relatively recent phenomenon. This trend indicates the increasing complexity and bureaucratisation of the community sector over the past two decades. Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council was exceptional in that it had remained as an unincorporated association; this organisation was relatively small and inactive and served a rural locale which did not have the same breadth of developmental issues to contend with as suburban and urban groups.

The main reason for adopting the limited company structure is that it affords legal protection to the constituent members of the group by virtue of the fact that the company is a separate legal entity from the individual members. Consequently, community activists are not personally liable for damages should a legal action be brought against their organisation, which would not be the case with an unincorporated association. The perception that society has become increasingly litigious was the principal motivation for company formation. The limited company also holds advantages in terms of the acquisition and transfer of property and other assets and is less cumbersome than a charitable trust in this respect.

However, there are several reasons why the limited company structure can be considered unsuitable for the needs of community groups. It imposes additional costs and

paperwork, both in the initial incorporation phase and in the requirement to file annual returns with the Companies Registration Office. Typically, the professional services of solicitors and accountants must be engaged. Furthermore, legislation governing companies is intended to facilitate and regulate business and enterprise, whereas community organisations are markedly different in nature, being not-for-profit entities uninvolved in trading activities. In this author's experience, there is grounds for believing that apprehensions surrounding the role of company director dissuades individuals from getting involved in community groups and that individuals who do take on this role may not be fully cognisant of their legal obligations as directors.

The government's White Paper on the community and voluntary sector acknowledged the pervading ambiguity and pledged to take measures to address the situation (Government of Ireland, 2000a, pp.86-87). Since then, a number of consultative processes and reports have been undertaken by the Law Society, the Law Reform Commission (LRC), the Company Law Review Group (CLRG) within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA) (Law Reform Commission, 2006; DCRGA, 2003; Law Society, 2002). Representatives from the community and voluntary sector have participated in these processes. A Charities Bill, which legally defines charities for the first time, is currently passing through the legislative process. There are also proposals to put in place specific legal structures for third sector organisations; the Law Society and the LRC have proposed a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), modelled on recent legislation in the UK, as an appropriate legal vehicle for charitable trusts. Meanwhile, the CLRG have suggested a Designated Activity Company (DAC) as a

remedy for community organisations which are incorporated as companies. However, the diversity and complexity of the third sector has undoubtedly complicated efforts to address the legal situation. This is because the distinction between a charity, a community group and a voluntary organisation is, in practice, blurred, and there is considerable overlapping between these sub-sectors of civil society.

It is debateable whether or not new legislation governing the structure of community groups is desirable. The third sector is characterised by diversity and flexibility and legislation aimed specifically at it could impose unwelcome rigidity and restrictions on the operations of groups. Chief amongst these is an increased bureaucratic burden; the debate on legal reform indicates confusion and what must be avoided is any situation that might create multiple requirements with regard to reporting to state agencies, particularly for smaller groups. In addition, the introduction of further legislative measures could merely add to uncertainty regarding the appropriate structure for groups, a point acknowledged by the Law Reform Commission (Law Reform Commission, 2005, p.45). The state's desire to control and regulate the sector may be counterproductive, as compliance with extra legal requirements could well prove a burden for groups who rely on voluntary effort. The business sector is well known for its resistance to state intervention in the marketplace and it might well be argued that the voluntary community sector should adopt a similar stance, as it may lose more than it gains from regulatory reform. Deakin (2001, p.82), for instance, highlights a viewpoint that community groups operate in a more natural and spontaneous manner without state intervention and that a form of '*creative chaos*' should be permitted. In any case, the

outcome for community groups at grassroots level remains to be seen and their legal status continues to be ambiguous.

The underlying motivation for adopting the limited company structure stems from a genuine anxiety among community organisations relating to the litigious nature of modern society. Most organisations own property, such as community centres, which are utilised for public events, and they regularly arrange activities like festivals, litter clean-ups and fundraisers. These facilities and activities carry inherent risks of damage or injury to persons and, consequently, must be covered by public liability insurance. As the chairperson of one group pointed out, *“The litigation situation that has arisen in this country is horrendous, and if you provide a facility that causes someone to have an accident you’re in big trouble”* (BC2, 05/02/’04). Once a group has been incorporated as a limited company, it can take out an insurance policy in the name of that company, thereby protecting individual members from liability.

Nevertheless, insurance remains the ‘bugbear’ of the community and voluntary sector. Outgoings on insurance represent the most significant running cost incurred by most community organisations. One group member complained that *“we were crippled by insurance over the years ... it was a lot out of funds when you wouldn’t have that much funds”* (GM1, 11/02/’04), sentiments which were echoed by other activists. There was also evidence that fear around the issue of risk impeded community activity and prevented new volunteers from coming forward. In this author’s experience, one of the first questions raised when any new community project was proposed was what the legal and insurance implications were likely to be. One activist in Middleton outlined the potential knock-on effect of this:

Now once somebody raises that question, everybody else balls up like a hedgehog and they start thinking about it, and the next thing you'll find at the next meeting those people have pulled out, because they've gone home, they've discussed it with their wife, and their wife has expressed concern. 'Are we out on a limb here?' ... and they pull out of the organisation (MF6, 12/02/'04).

He concluded that, "*insurance, without a doubt, without a doubt is probably the biggest problem and it is all-pervasive*".

Developments since these interviews were conducted have, however, helped to defray the costs of insurance for community organisations. In 2006, the National Federation of Community and Voluntary Fora negotiated a deal with a private insurance company on behalf of their members, which includes four of the six groups being studied. This collective bargaining initiative led to significant reductions in insurance premiums of up to 50% for some groups, as well as more flexible insurance policies. Notwithstanding this, however, the risk scenario outlined above has a detrimental effect on voluntary community participation, and does not sit well with the ethos of the sector. There are clear tensions and contradictions between the legal and insurance obligations imposed on community groups and their preference for more relaxed approaches to their activities.

4.2.4 Ideology and power in East Cork's communities

The manner in which each of the six groups recruited members, the legal context in which they operated and the structure they adopted were, by and large, similar. A

further issue to be considered was the extent to which there were discernible core philosophies underpinning each group. This subsection considers the underlying ideologies within the community sector in East Cork, and whether the work of groups was guided by any particular values or political beliefs. Related to this is the impact upon community groups of other configurations of power operating at local level. This involves an assessment of the relationship between community groups and the party political system at local level and the Catholic Church.

One might think that community groups located in close proximity to one another would be directed by similar principles, yet there were noticeable differences between the six organisations. Two of them, Carrigtwohill Community Council and Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council, were affiliated to *Muintir na Tire*. Critiques of this organisation and its constituent councils have characterised them as ideologically conservative and grounded in traditional attitudes (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, p.14). Whether this criticism remains valid in the early twenty-first century is debatable. *Muintir* has changed as an organisation, and although it could hardly be called radical, it has shed a good deal of its traditional baggage (MT1, 25/05/'04). Through its participation in the planning and development process, Carrigtwohill Community Council certainly displayed an ability to embrace progressive ideas and was at pains to point out that it was not 'anti-development' or fundamentally opposed to modernisation and change.

Community development theory, with its emphasis on empowerment of the marginalised and challenging inequality, represents a more radical approach to community work (see pp.55-58 above). Unsurprisingly, this outlook played a role in the

work of Middleton Community Forum, which was established to tackle social exclusion in three local authority estates in the town. Several members of the group had undergone education and training and spoke of the significance of this set of ideas for them and the group. Conversely, the Community Timebank project initiated by Glounthaune Community Association was inspired by communitarian theories, principally the concept of social capital and the work of Robert Putnam (Putnam, 2000). This way of thinking about community has garnered increasing attention from public policy makers and this may partly explain why it was embraced in Glounthaune. Yet communitarian theory has its detractors, many of whom regard it as inherently conservative and reactionary (see pp.44-55 above). This topic will be debated thoroughly through a case study of the Community Timebank project in Chapter 6.

Overall, however, overt ideological approaches were not strongly manifest among East Cork's community groups. Of greater significance was localism and attachment to place, an outlook referred to as "*a type of patriotism*" (BC1, 02/12/'03) by one community activist, but patriotism in a local rather than a national form. What was deemed to be in the best interests of the locality and its people guided the work of groups to a greater degree than left- or right-wing inspired viewpoints. One professional community worker who worked across the East Cork area observed that:

The vast majority of community groups do not take on a political agenda.

The vast majority of community groups are there to get the playground, are there to get the childcare facility, are there to get whatever resources their community needs. They're not there to take a political stance and challenge either their local or national political representation (EC1, 10/05/'04).

This populist and pragmatic stance reflects the wider Irish political culture, where the main political parties occupy the centre ground. It gives community groups an opening to criticise state institutions and the development process on specific local issues, but has also allowed them to cultivate relatively cordial relations with party political interests.

At the more mundane level of local politics, the relationship between community groups and various factions deserves scrutiny. Community groups tend not to be aligned to political parties and consciously endeavour to distance themselves from the machinations of local party politics. The widely held view is that political interference is a destructive force in community organisations and that groups do not wish to leave themselves open to the accusation that they are merely tools of a political party or of an individual local politician. However, it is well recognised that community organisations have served as a breeding ground for aspiring politicians, and most of the elected representatives in East Cork have a record of activity in the community sector. Community organisations also recognise the advantages of having elected representatives supporting their position, and usually engage in political lobbying on matters of local concern. Consequently, they did cultivate local representatives from all political parties, but in equal measure in order to maintain a politically neutral stance.

The situation in Glanmire, however, indicated the difficulty community organisations faced in trying to remain detached from the ‘cut and thrust’ of politics. Here, two prominent members of the Glanmire Area Community Association (GACA) put themselves forward as candidates in the local authority elections in June 2004. Fieldwork was being undertaken in this area in the run up to this election, but mixed views were articulated regarding whether or not this was a positive development for the

GACA, whose Memorandum of Association states expressly that it must be “*unaffiliated to any political grouping*”. Several of those who expressed reservations about the candidacy of the members referred to this and to the fact that the GACA had always been apolitical. However, the counter argument was that the Glanmire area, where the population had grown rapidly, was underrepresented politically, having just one Councillor out of four in the Blarney Electoral Area. It was felt that the political route could reap dividends in terms of better facilities and services that had heretofore proved unattainable.

The two candidates, one standing for the Progressive Democrats, the other for the Labour Party, also expressed contrasting views. The following extract from one interview captures the nature of the sometimes hazy connection between party politics and community activism;

Q. So you’re standing in the local elections. Is that as a community candidate? A. I’m standing for the Progressive Democrats, but let’s put it this way, I’m as much a community candidate as them [the PDs] because my life has become very much community-oriented (GM2, 10/03/’04).

The other candidate admitted, somewhat paradoxically, that members of the Community Association should not be “*political people*” and that political involvement potentially undermined the credibility of the Association. He also stated that the Glanmire Area Development Plan, which he had been heavily involved in producing in 2000, would form the basis of his political manifesto (GM4, 18/03/’04). While community groups, therefore, generally desire to maintain an arm’s length relationship with local politicians, the case of Glanmire illustrates that this proved difficult in practice.

The Catholic Church has long been recognised as the predominant power in social and community life in Ireland, and priests were *de facto* leaders in most rural communities. Historically, the Church played a significant role in mobilising communities; *Muintir na Tire* was established by a priest, Canon Hayes, in the 1930s and *Muintir* Community Councils have since been organised spatially in line with the Catholic parish system. In broader terms, many aspects of Christian teaching, such as ‘love thy neighbour’, mutual support and charitable works complement and have indisputably shaped, discourses of community in Ireland. Three priests who were involved in their local community organisations were interviewed to ascertain their perspective on community matters, while the role of the local clergy was broached in other interviews (TB8, 23/06/’04; CT6, 23/06/’04; DC3, 12/03/’04).

The position of the Catholic Church and clergy in Ireland has altered indelibly in the past generation. Declining vocations and religious observance have weakened its impact on the lives of people. In spite of this, there was evidence that Catholicism retains its importance, albeit in the background rather than at the forefront of public consciousness; Census 2006 recorded that almost 90% of the population of East Cork described themselves as Catholic (CSO, 2007b). One priest pointed out that although regular religious observance had diminished, people still gravitated towards the church at defining moments in life, like baptisms, weddings and funerals (CT6, 23/06/’04). The question here is to what extent the influence of the Church continues to permeate the community sector.

Each of the three priests acknowledged the changing situation in their communities and in terms of community groups they saw their role as supportive rather

than one of leadership. One priest said it would be counterproductive for the clergy to be too much to the forefront. In any case, the workload of individual clergymen had grown as a consequence of population growth and falling religious vocations and their pastoral duties took first preference (TB8, 23/06/'04). Nonetheless, the clergy did retain a measure of authority. In one area, where the local priest was not heavily mixed up in community activities, the chairperson of the community group expressed regret at his lack of involvement and said that an active priest was an asset in any community as their word would carry greater weight with local people (BC2, 05/02/'04). An East Cork-based community worker argued that the local priest was viewed by funding agencies as "*a safe pair of hands*" and consequently their support was often sought by groups when applying for finance (EC1, 10/05/'04). The Community Timebank in Glounthaune consciously sought to enlist the support of local priests for their initiative and used the pulpit at mass to publicise the project.

The relationship between community groups in the study areas and local priests and politicians was, by and large, a co-operative and cordial one. Clergy and elected representatives were first on the list of invitees to community functions and AGMs. Community organisations enlisted the support of these power brokers for their endeavours, most notably where major projects and applications for funding were concerned. It is perhaps because they did not want to confront figures of authority or set off local conflicts that community groups rarely challenged the Church or politicians and they were governed by pragmatism rather than idealism in this respect.

4.3 The *raison d'être* of East Cork's community organisations

4.3.1 The purpose of East Cork's community organisations

While the previous section detailed the structural and organisational aspects of community groups in East Cork, it did not give a feel for the underlying reasons why these bodies exist or what their day-to-day activities entail. This section, therefore, looks more closely at the purpose of community groups. It assesses the range of activities that groups are involved in and analyses how they expend their energies. What is apparent is that community organisations prove highly flexible and responsive to local needs. Following this, the deeper motivations that underpin community activism are explored, drawing upon the experiences of those interviewed. While there are a number of reasons why people choose to participate in community groups, the central place of children and young people in fostering community cohesiveness is debated at length.

One of the primary and fundamentally important roles that community organisations perform is in acting as a forum to discuss matters of local concern. Owing to their very existence, they facilitate contact between individuals living in an area and provide people with an avenue to raise and debate local issues with their peers. Arguably, all other activities undertaken by groups stem from this most basic purpose. What often commenced as a response to a specific situation developed into an organisation with wider concerns; the origins of the groups in Glounthaune and Glanmire around single-issue campaigns have already been highlighted. The key point is that by bringing people together, these events stimulated interaction on other topics of concern, and the groups matured from single-issue campaigns into more broad-based, structured community organisations.

This networking role of community organisations is perhaps their most elementary purpose. It is in this respect that the connection between informal social networks and formal community organisations is closest; issues surface on the agenda of groups if they are being spoken about by local residents. Community groups founded on a strong grassroots social network, therefore, are more attuned to the needs of people in their localities. For instance, several members of Middleton Community Forum stressed that prior to the formation of their group, there had been no vehicle through which unemployment and social exclusion was debated simply because *“nobody networked”*. One group member pointed out that this aspect of community work was the foundation for all other activities: *“You have something in common, you get together and then you can support each other. But if the social element disappears then there’s no reason for you to interact with your neighbour really, so you can’t get support or give support”* (MF1, 02/12/’03).

These comments were echoed in Glanmire by a community member who, when reflecting on what he saw as the major problems in the community such as crime, litter and traffic congestion, remarked: *“If you’ve people coming together and talking about problems like this, they can get something done about it”*. However, the difficulty he perceived was that the community was *“not really cohesive”* and, as a result, *“a lot of those problems are not being tackled”* (GM7, 18/06/’04). Similarly in Glounthaune, it was explained that the apparent weakness of the Community Association was rooted in the *“lack of any linkages or discussion around the future, or discussion around children or youth, or trying to resolve seemingly difficult issues”* (TB4, 14/05/’04). It is clear that these interviewees considered communication an essential prerequisite for effective

community action. Needs and priorities could not even be identified, not to mind addressed, if there was minimal social interaction. Even in a situation where a group was not very active, the fact that it existed as a channel of communication was important. In Dungourney, for example, when a local landowner sought a licence to accept construction waste on part of his land the Community Council, which had been almost dormant, suddenly found itself inundated with queries and calls for action as local opposition mounted.

Evidently, active social networks are an important component of community groups, but sustaining such networks and fostering social connectivity locally presents a challenge to organisations. Orchestrating social events and activities is a method used by groups to meet this challenge and is another central task of groups. These events include festivals, musical events and dances, excursions, school reunions and table quizzes, amongst others. Although they might be viewed merely as convivial or celebratory occasions that are of little substance or broader significance, such events are important for a number of reasons. From an organisational perspective, they elevate the profile of groups and often act as fundraisers for specific projects. In addition, camaraderie and group cohesiveness are essential for the successful functioning of community organisations and such occasions are an important social outlet, helping to bond and energise the community.

Social activities in the community perform two crucial roles. Firstly, they give the populace an opportunity to collectively appreciate their sense of togetherness and identity. Such events often have an impact on the wider fortunes of the organisation, as was evidenced by festivals held in two of the study areas. Carrigtwohill Community

Council was rejuvenated in the late 1990s when an annual festival, which took local heritage and history, particularly the link with nearby medieval Barryscourt Castle, as its theme, was initiated. The festival provided the impetus for other projects which celebrated local identity, including a calendar containing photographs of the area and the restoration of a local well. Dungourney was for many years a venue for a vintage farm machinery festival that was a focal event in the parish, drew enthusiasts from across Munster and beyond and “*put the place on the map*” (DC6, 19/04/'04). However, when one of the chief organisers stepped down from the Community Council in the mid 1990s, the festival lapsed and one local expressed the view that this had a negative effect on the organisation as a whole, as the community lost an important social hub.

Secondly, these community-based social events provided an avenue through which newcomers into an area could integrate with the established residents. In Glounthaune, for instance, a local hotel was converted into an official reception centre for refugees and asylum seekers in 2001 at a time when the immigration issue was emerging nationally. This development caused some tension in the community. In response, Glounthaune Community Association (GCA), in conjunction with the local primary school, organised a unique St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2003. The parade was based on a multicultural theme and adopted the slogan ‘think global, act local’. Participants from all nationalities living in the area, including the reception centre, marched in the parade behind the flags of their respective nations. Ancillary activities on the day incorporated music, dance and food from across the globe. It was a profound statement of the community's wish to welcome the new arrivals to the area. In an area like East Cork,

where there has been a large influx of new residents, public occasions such as this served to broadcast a sense of community to newcomers.

An increasingly important role of community organisations is the delivery of a range of social services to people living in their localities. Almost all groups were involved to a greater or lesser extent in supplying child and youth-related supports; the organisations in both Glanmire and Midleton ran crèche facilities, while the Glounthaune Timebank project prioritised the establishment of a youth forum. Meals on Wheels schemes, which require considerable human resources and logistical planning to provide affordable meals for people unable to fend for themselves, were in operation in both Glounthaune and Carrigtwohill. Carrigtwohill Community Council also provided a catering service for bereaved families after funerals in the village. Refreshments were provided in the community centre by a team of volunteers; the fact that users paid for the service through a donation rather than a fixed charge reflected its community-based, non-profit ethos. All groups were involved in supports and services to the elderly, either directly or by assisting other local organisations dedicated to working with this segment of the population.

Several aspects of social service delivery within community settings are notable. It is generally the more vulnerable sections of the population, especially young people and the elderly, who present the focus for systematic service delivery. This reveals much of the ethos of community organisations; caring for those in need, mutual support and provision of services at a cost affordable to all are key tenets. Another guiding principle for most community-based services is that they operate on a not-for-profit basis, with services merely required to cover their own costs. While much of the work performed by

communities in this respect is valuable, there are limitations on the level of support that volunteers can provide. More intensive services, such as those required by people with disabilities, for example, are beyond the compass of the type of locally-based community organisation being studied here. Social services delivered by community groups, therefore, while regular and efficient, operate at a localised scale. Yet this should not in any way diminish the accomplishments of voluntary organisations, nor lessen the importance of services to their end-users.

Alongside the soft infrastructure made available through social services, community organisations play a role in developing physical infrastructure and maintaining their local environments. There were two ways in which this is achieved; through construction and maintenance of small-scale infrastructure locally and by lobbying other agencies to provide necessary infrastructure. Community organisations, for example, have been responsible for directly furnishing their localities with a host of facilities, including community centres, public parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, walkways, landscaped areas and group water schemes. Like the social services provided, this infrastructure is small scale, but nonetheless important to the locality. In addition, groups are heavily engaged in maintaining the physical environment of their communities; litter clean-ups, grass cutting and tree planting are undertaken regularly and participation in environmental competitions, such as the national Tidy Towns awards, is commonplace. These aspirations towards pristine surroundings reflected the middle-class constituency of many community groups, and the positive impact on private property values was mentioned as a justification for efforts to enhance the environment.

The issue of amenities and facilities assumed heightened importance in the study areas given the magnitude of development and population increases described in Chapter 3. Community representatives contended that proper physical infrastructure had not accompanied housing development; this included basic public utilities like footpaths and street lighting, but also recreational facilities and public services in the spheres of health and education. The spectre of social malaise was regularly invoked by community activists, who cited instances in Cork city and Dublin where social breakdown had arisen due to large-scale housing developments that were unaccompanied by adequate facilities. As a result, a core argument made by community organisations was that physical infrastructure should be put in place prior to or, at the very least, in tandem with housing development and it was on this basis that they lobbied public representatives and state agencies. In Glanmire, where the scale of development eclipsed all other areas, the Community Association was at the forefront in pressing the case for a new Garda station, a day-care centre, a medical centre, a new community centre, a scout hall and sports facilities. As one member of the organisation remarked; *“at the end of the day it’s all about getting concrete, getting something built”* (GM2, 10/03/’04). The intensive campaign for these facilities explains, to a large degree, the politicisation of the GACA referred to earlier (see p.228-9 above).

The provision of social services, amenities and facilities by community organisations is one of the core concerns of this thesis. It has drawn community groups into the development process and bound them more closely to the state and the private sector. In endeavouring to serve their local areas, community organisations have inveigled, negotiated with and come into conflict with state bodies and private developer

interests. These three sectors hold sometimes radically different developmental visions for East Cork, with each one vying to impose their point of view. State agencies have attempted to harness the potential of community groups to achieve policy aims, particularly in terms of social service provision, while developers have also recognised the value of engaging with local interest groups. However, concern has been voiced that community groups are toothless partners in this triangular relationship. Chapter 5 and 6, which contain a series of case studies, delve deeper into these issues.

The final activity of community groups under consideration, which has been touched upon earlier, is the manner in which groups act as a voice for their community, particularly in dealings with outside agencies. In the context of globalisation, increased state power, and the emergence of spatial and social planning, interaction between local communities and the outside world has deepened. Whereas many rural communities would have been sheltered somewhat from external forces in the pre-modern era, in the contemporary era decisions taken at centres of power at regional, national and international scales have a direct impact at local level. Moreover, consultation with local communities by state bodies on a range of matters has become *de rigueur*, while it is now considered best practice for property developers to initiate discussions with community associations in advance of making major planning applications. A community organisation's power, therefore, depended to a large extent on its ability to present itself as the legitimate voice for the area and to advocate on behalf of local residents.

Part of this role involved information dissemination and more elaborate communications and public relations strategies. In this context, groups can act as a two-way conduit, passing information from state organs and developers to the local

population and vice-versa. Community groups, therefore, frequently develop their own media to connect with their local audience and embrace new technologies for so doing. However, publication of community newsletters and production of websites is costly and only larger community organisations had successfully undertaken this. Adoption of logos, mission statements and other public relations paraphernalia are also increasingly common aspects of the sector. For instance, upon assuming office, one former chairperson of the Glanmire Area Community Association changed the name of the group, devised a new logo and rebranded the community newsletter in order to boost the organisation's profile. Community planning, a process whereby a group consults within the community and sets out its developmental vision for the area, had also become widespread and encapsulated this trend towards self-promotion.

The foregoing does not claim to be an exhaustive list of the activities of community organisations in East Cork, nor does it aim to rank them in order of importance. Indeed, those involved in groups frequently pointed out that no single role of their organisation predominated and that all of the diverse activities of the group contributed in one way or another to the well-being of the area. Furthermore, the various functions of groups were interrelated and complemented one another rather than being mutually exclusive. In carrying out such a broad range of functions, community organisations showed themselves to be quite flexible and adaptable and their ability to identify and address needs at local level was their greatest strength. What was also apparent was that different priorities existed in different groups, depending on organisational membership and local circumstances. Finally, groups have had to become

ever-more professional in their work in order to effectively address a more complex range of issues.

4.3.2 Motivations for community activism

Clearly, community groups in the study area undertook a range of activities and their ability to tackle diverse issues has been remarkable considering their almost complete reliance on voluntary effort. Allied to this is the diversity of motives for those who engage in community work on a voluntary basis. Understanding the reasons why people volunteer is one of the main considerations of this chapter and interviewees were queried directly on this topic. Their reasons may help explain why other individuals are more reluctant to volunteer their time, and why numbers participating in community groups appears to be waning. Consequently, an exploration into what drives volunteers may have practical application in terms of assisting community organisations to strengthen their membership.

In endeavouring to come to a deeper understanding of voluntarism, this section draws upon diverse theoretical perspectives summarised in Chapter 1 (pp.75-80). Conventional understandings of voluntary activism have distinguished between, on the one hand, altruistic and charitable rationales and, on the other, motivations founded on mutual support and reciprocity. More current schools of thought have sought to move beyond this dualism and have posited a connection between altruism and self-interest. Terms such as solidary individualism and co-operative individualism have been coined to explain this disposition in contemporary societies (Powell and Guerin, 1999, pp.9-11; Beck, 1998, pp.6-9). Meanwhile, group work theory, which has been influential in the

practice of community work, contends that people join groups in order to fulfil some need or want and that if such needs are not satisfied, they will not remain within the group. The needs that people seek to meet through participation in groups can range from basic material requirements to deeper emotional desires (Benson, 2001). What was apparent in the community sector in East Cork was that all of these theoretical explanations had some basis in reality and that a multiplicity of factors inspired involvement in community organisations.

Many of those involved cited altruistic motives for their interest in community organisations. Helping others out of a sense of civic responsibility or duty featured in several interviews. *“I think we should all put something back into the community”* (GM5, 31/03/’04), said one community activist, while another affirmed: *“I suppose everyone has a small sense of public service”* (DC2, 01/03/’04). A founder member of one group, who had been active in his community for twenty-five years, expounded on this issue when he observed that:

A number of people do feel a certain obligation to their fellow residents to try and, I suppose, to improve everybody’s lot to some extent, and that really is it. I suppose, if you like, it’s a religious thing, it’s an ethical thing, it’s a political thing, to give some of your time and talents to other people. That’s always been the way (GM9, 28/06/’04).

Although not explicitly stated by interviewees, in this author’s view religious convictions predominated as a factor influencing work in aid of the less well-off and vulnerable. This is a reflection of deep-rooted Christian belief and teachings, and the historical role of the Catholic organisations in promoting charitable work in Irish society.

However, selflessness alone was not the predominant motivating factor. It was apparent that many of those who gave assistance to others derived personal satisfaction from doing so. This reflects Beck's concept of altruistic individualism, the notion that *'Thinking of oneself and living for others at the same time, once considered a contradiction in terms, is revealed as an internal substantive connection'* (Beck, 1998, p.9). His perspective was reflected in the comments of one member of Dungourney Clonmult Community Council, who made a telling statement about voluntary work: *"You do get good fulfilment out of it. But you must enjoy doing it though. If you're not enjoying it you have no business [doing it] because you get no satisfaction"* (DC5, 08/04/'04). Therefore, while volunteers did not profit in any material sense from their actions, there were instances in all study areas where they obtained gratification through participating in organisations. The parent who headed up the playground committee in Carrigtwohill, the tutor who assisted disadvantaged children in Midleton Community Forum's homework support club, the activist in Glounthaune intent on establishing an initiative to combat isolation among the elderly; all were assisting others but benefitted themselves from the process, albeit in intangible ways. It must be stressed, though, that this satisfaction did not emanate from public acclamation; the point was frequently made that praise was scarce and voluntary work was, by and large, thankless.

Alongside altruistic concerns, another strand of thought highlights collective action founded on the principle of mutual aid as a factor encouraging voluntarism. Two aspects of this can be distinguished. Firstly, there was a strong realisation among community activists in East Cork that a cohesive group could achieve what an individual could not; the old adage of strength in numbers was called to mind. As one group leader stated; *"I*

can see the opportunities if you can get people to do something and to get involved you can achieve a lot" (CT1, 25/11/'03), while another commented; *"I've always believed that if people act together they'll get far more done than if they act individually"* (GM9, 28/06/'04). Such cooperative action is the bedrock of a community group's power and suffuses their various tasks and projects. In particular, the value of a united front when dealing with external agencies, such as local authorities and property developers, was well recognised. Moreover, it has become customary for community groups to collaborate with one another and form alliances on particular issues.

Secondly, another rationale for mutual supportive activities was that, as well as conveying collective benefits on the community, co-operative enterprises also served the individual interests of community members. At the most basic emotional level, the shared human desire for knowledge about one's surroundings was fed by the strong sense of community nurtured by community groups. One interviewee, in explaining the importance of the idea of community, put it in the following terms:

My understanding is that a lack of knowledge breeds suspicion and if you don't know who your neighbour is or if you don't know anything about the people around you, you probably have a greater reason to be suspicious of that area or of the people around you (CT1, 25/11/'03).

Community organisations guard actively against such ignorance by fostering social connectivity, thereby providing people with greater reassurance and a sense of security. Individuals were able to tap into a social network based in their locality and it was recognised that knowing one's neighbours was intrinsically valuable. In this way, both the community as a whole and its individual members gain.

Yet the communal and personal advantages of a locally-based social network went beyond mere acquaintance of the other. The desire for friendship, belonging, acceptance and togetherness was a strong stimulus for group participation, and the social lives of community members were bound up with their role in organisations. Meetings would be preceded or succeeded by conversation on local news, or sometimes by a drink in the pub. “*There is a bit of a buzz*”, explained one woman in Carrigtwohill, who said that being active in the community was more appealing than a sheltered life at home (CT2, 01/03/’04). In particular, it seemed that the need for social contact influenced peoples’ initial decision to join groups. Furthermore, what was noticeable during fieldwork was that those who had moved to an area from elsewhere were often at the forefront in community organisations, something which almost certainly arose from their desire to bond with others and blend into their new surroundings.

There were other ways in which individuals gained from being part of a collective and which made it attractive for them to join groups. Actions undertaken in solidarity with others attained more importance at times of crisis, such as when members of the community were afflicted by bereavements and family tragedies, serious illness or personal difficulties. A culture of reciprocity helped to cut down on loneliness and isolation and gave people a space to discuss their problems and anxieties. As was pointed out earlier, a mutual support network can exist at grassroots level even in the absence of a formal community organisation. Nevertheless, community groups saw the cultivation of an atmosphere of mutual support in the wider community as one of their central purposes. In summary, the apparent contradiction at the heart of mutual aid is that people came together as much out of vested interests as a desire to help others. However, in doing so,

they effectively acknowledged that many important human needs could only be met through co-operative effort i.e. “*by undertaking to help one another all may help themselves*” (Beveridge in Smith, 1995, p.28).

The link to place is a defining characteristic of the community organisations studied, and attachment to place featured as a reason why people became involved in their communities. Many interviewees identified strongly with the place where they live and saw their community as unique and as a ‘place apart’ in the world. One individual in Ballycotton expressed the distinction between members of Ballycotton Development Company and other residents who were enamoured with the area’s scenic surrounds but were not absorbed in community matters: “*They love it, they love it, but when I’m talking about love of place, it’s **love of place to do things for the place**. It’s a different thing*” (emphasis added) (BC1, 02/12/’03). This attachment to one’s home place might best be described as local patriotism, and it was the sense of pride and well-being engendered by living in a place that had a strong community spirit and a well-maintained physical environment which spurred people into acting to maintain these aspects of their localities.

Attachment to place was, therefore, linked to a desire to preserve local identity and sense of community. This was particularly pertinent in the context of rapid changes to the nature of place arising from major development. One group member in Carrigtwohill, which was facing transformation from a village to a town as a result of proposed housing developments, confessed that the Community Council did feel under siege and that they had grave reservations about the impact of what they perceived to be an unacceptable level of development on the community’s identity. The GACA prioritised the preservation of the area’s distinctive wooded landscape in their

development plan and called for strict planning enforcement to ensure this. On the surface, these stances might be regarded as reactionary and a quintessential instance of the NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) attitude for which community groups have been frequently castigated. But it is hardly unexpected that people with a strong attachment to their locality should fight against wholesale changes to their community, and opposition to developments often succeeded in galvanising large numbers of people. As will be seen in the case studies, community resistance to large-scale, rapid and poorly planned development was not unreasonable.

One key motivation which emerged from interviews, which had not been anticipated in advance, was the extent to which voluntary activity in community organisations was driven by family circumstances, especially children. Moreover, there was just one instance of where this had featured in the literature (Dyck, 2002). Most of those interviewed were parents and without being prompted on this issue, eighteen of them mentioned their own children or young people generally as a factor that provoked them into becoming active in their local community organisation. Furthermore, the role of children assumed more significance in the commuter belt areas close to the city, especially Glanmire and Glounthaune, where there had been major housing development and where a large proportion of the population were not natives of the places where they lived. This point has implications for ongoing attempts by groups to attract new members.

There were a number of reasons why a strong connection between children and community exist. Firstly, the social horizons of young children were very much local. Primary schools operate at a local community level, often drawing their students from the

same geographical area as community organisations draw their members. Sports and recreational activities for youth also bind them to their localities to a greater extent than adults. Another reason proffered was that children are more sociable than grown-ups and more likely to interact with other young people in their neighbourhood (TB3, 23/04/'04). What was significant from the point of view of community groups was that contact between children set in motion contact between adults. As one community activist pointed out, when speaking about the parental chore of transporting children to sports games and other social activities:

You suddenly get wise and you decide, you know, you tie in with the neighbours, so one of you goes on Monday night and brings all the kids, or somebody brings them down and somebody else brings them back.

He added that *“it's only since we've had kids that we've really got to know our neighbours around here”* and that *“kids really tie you into a community”* (CT3, 14/04/'04). Doing things for their children integrated people with their neighbours, the wider community and with their local community organisation.

The importance of children was evident in the projects undertaken by community groups. Playgrounds had been developed in Glanmire, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill and Midleton just prior to fieldwork being undertaken and in the first three of these areas, the community associations had initiated and co-ordinated the construction of these facilities. Such projects required significant fundraising, but they also generated a huge degree of pride and job satisfaction among the individuals involved. Childcare services were the main focus of the work of Midleton Community Forum, while Glanmire Area Community Association also ran a playschool in the community centre with support from

the HSE. Both of these facilities were organised on a community-based, not-for-profit ethos and provided a valuable and affordable service for working parents. A more general concern with youth welfare was also evident in all study areas.

The central role of children in fostering social connections within communities and spawning voluntary activism is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, community is generally considered to be founded on long-standing attachment to place over previous generations. However, the type of new communities that seem to be emerging are focused more on the future than the past, as adults are motivated to undertake voluntary work out of concern for the well-being of their offspring. To quote one Glanmire parent:

I feel that people who are actually politically conscious and community active are generally people whose children reached the age of seven, eight, nine, ten, where they feel that they must then go and do something for the future of their children (GM4, 18/03/'04).

Secondly, it points to the persistence of the link between family and community, but in a very different way from the world of Arensberg and Kimball. Finally, if community organisations face ongoing difficulties in attracting new members, then the knowledge that children are an important motivating factor may be useful to them. Connected to this is the current demographic profile of East Cork; Chapter 3 pointed out that a high proportion of family nuclei were at the pre-family stage i.e. young couples without children, most notably in areas of new housing (p.186). Arguably, as these families start to move through the family cycle and raise children, they may become more connected to and interested in the community organisations around them.

A diversity of motives underpinned community activism in East Cork, and each of the various theoretical perspectives had some validity. Some individuals were stirred by a desire to help the less well-off, others saw the value of collective action, while the need for human contact also drove people towards group participation. However, the more nuanced understanding of community participation advanced by Beck and others, centred on the idea of solidary individualism, seemed to have greatest relevance, as people volunteered out of a combination of self interest and a wish to contribute to the betterment of their communities. This paradox can be explained by the fact that there were basic human needs that individuals could not meet on their own, but which could be satisfied through partaking in groups. Overall, different motivations were significant for different individuals and people were often enthused by more than one factor.

Given the ethereal, psychological and subjective nature of volunteer motivations, it is difficult to be conclusive on this matter, and the topic requires more focused and in-depth research. As with many aspects of human behaviour, discussions on voluntarism call to mind the nature versus nurture debate. In other words, are certain types of personalities predisposed towards voluntarism, and could one posit the existence of a 'community' gene? Or, do people's impulses to get involved in community associations arise from their upbringing, family background, social class and education? These questions are important as they impinge greatly on the discussion regarding efforts to arrest the apparent decline in voluntary community activism.

4.4 Crisis in East Cork's community organisations: real or imagined?

4.4.1 Introduction

This chapter opened by presenting several assertions that voluntary community activity was waning in East Cork and this point emerged forcibly right across the area when interviews were conducted. Groups consistently mentioned consolidating membership, attracting newer and younger members, and integrating new residents in their areas as their biggest challenges. Human resources, rather than financial or physical resources, were where organisations were experiencing the greatest shortfall. This section begins by weighing up the reasons outlined by interviewees for the apparent fall off in commitment to community associations. It then analyses the results of several surveys on voluntary activity that have been undertaken since the early 1990s, before presenting more recent information on this topic from Census 2006 (Fig. 4.1). Following this, an effort is made to compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative data on this topic, pointing out the parallels and contradictions between them. The aim is to determine whether or not there are solid grounds for believing that voluntarism is, indeed, under threat. The reasons proffered by interviewees for the human resource dilemma in community groups are scrutinised systematically in the light of all the available evidence. The section concludes with a considered interpretation of the nature of voluntarism in the study area.

4.4.2 Activists' perspectives on volunteering

The belief that community involvement was in serious decline was expressed throughout the study areas. A community member in Carrigtwohill captured the general disposition, stating succinctly:

I think it's an accepted phenomenon that people are not getting involved as much any more in community organisations and that people are spending less time in their own homes and they're not getting to know each other as much as people used to before (CT4, 14/04/'04).

Numerous reasons were put forward for this lack of enthusiasm for community work and the following paragraphs summarise these perspectives. One supposition centred upon the pressures of time and money associated with modern lifestyles. Connected to this was a perceived attitudinal shift associated with the spread of individualism and prosperity in contemporary Irish society. Television, the nature of housing development and organisational limitations within community groups were also invoked as having a negative effect upon the sector.

The opinions advanced by interviewees regarding growing pressure on peoples' time was one familiar to any observer of Irish life over the past decade. The broad hypothesis advanced by those in the community sector was that there were more people working than ever before. Furthermore, these people worked longer hours and, in many cases, were undertaking shift work, part-time jobs and other irregular work patterns. In addition, they spent more time commuting as a result of growing traffic congestion and the greater length of their journeys to work. The necessity to drop young children to school or to childcare facilities before the working day commenced consumed another

portion of their daily routine, given that it was more likely that both parents were working. When these workers returned home, they then had to face into domestic duties, such as helping children with homework, preparing school lunches and other household tasks. Given these lifestyle circumstances, it was inevitable that such people would have little inclination to become involved in voluntary community groups, especially when group meetings generally took place on weekday evenings.

Alongside pressure of time, financial stress was cited as a contributory factor. Chapter 3 outlined the spiralling house prices nationally over the past decade, the housing construction boom across East Cork and the high proportion of homes owner-occupied with a mortgage (pp.171-180). The view put forward by community representatives was that those who had purchased houses faced significant mortgage repayments, placing many families on a financial treadmill. Both partners had to find employment in order to pay for their homes, in most cases necessitating ownership of two family cars. Children below school-going age had to be placed in full-time childcare, which proved scarce and costly and absorbed a large proportion of the family budget. People were disposed to working longer hours and travelling longer distances to increase their earning power. In this way, the issues of lack of both time and finance were interrelated, a view articulated by a Glanmire community member who surmised: *“I honestly believe that people have less time now and I think it’s all down to this dreaded house and mortgage”* (GM3, 15/03/’04).

A second thesis advanced by those at the core of community groups was that a cultural and attitudinal shift, linked to improved economic conditions, explained people’s disinterest in organisations. Individualism and self-centredness, regarded as ‘dirty words’

by many community-conscious people had, they argued, become more prevalent and was linked to greater private wealth. In Glanmire, a member of the Community Association asserted that he had noticed this first hand and, referring to his fellow residents, remarked rather snidely;

As soon as you can afford two new cars, or you can afford that new boat or that caravan, you're not spending any time in your community ... and you're too interested in staying at home and playing with all your new playthings that you can now afford (GM7, 18/06/'04).

The contention was that whereas lower incomes pushed people towards involvement in their local community, more disposable income meant that they were more likely to pursue individual hobbies and pastimes or travel and take holidays more frequently. This was founded on the conventional view that modern modes of living, characterised by individual freedom and personal consumption, were not compatible with communal action.

This argument contradicted the one already presented and claimed that indifference, as opposed to the pressures of modern life, lay behind the lack of enthusiasm for community work. There was also a suggestion of a generation gap between the middle-aged community activists and the younger cohort who had grown up in more prosperous surroundings. The difficulty in obtaining volunteers was spelled out in the following terms:

Before, you could get ten or twelve guys on a summer's evening doing some project or something, and that has become more difficult and a lot of the

younger people don't seem to want to be involved or don't feel it incumbent upon themselves to be involved (BC2, 05/02/'04).

Whereas a generation ago "*people loved to do voluntary work*" (DC5, 08/04/'04), in the interim "*values have changed an awful lot*" (GM10, 11/07/'04) and nowadays "*people are prioritising different things*" (CT1, 25/11/'03). It was claimed that the present generation were of a different frame of mind when it came to getting to know their neighbours and helping those around them, and that they were wary about committing to organisations.

Several commentators, notably Putnam (2000), ascribed a large share of the decline in community consciousness to television and it has already been pointed out that there was some awareness of his ideas in the study area. Although television was mentioned by only a handful of interviewees, they did make some interesting comments. One woman, who made frequent house calls as part of her voluntary work, referred to the ubiquitous nature of television, observing that; "*No matter how early you go in the morning to anyone, there's a television on*" (MF3, 02/12/'03). The point was made that people had lost social skills because they were more prone to watching television in the home, while it was suggested in Glounthaune that it was more attractive for people to observe and connect with fictitious soap opera communities, such as *Coronation Street* and *Fair City*, than to engage with their own locality. Undoubtedly, television was regarded as a causative factor in sedentary lifestyles and diminishing social interaction; an anathema to community cohesion.

The nature of demographic change happening across East Cork was presented as another threat to established communities. Although community group members did not

speaking ill of newcomers into their areas, and there were no signs of major tension between native and outsider, there was a sense in which the former regarded the latter as ‘other’. This outlook was manifest largely in Glanmire, Glounthaune and Carrigtwohill, where extensive housing development had occurred and the scale, pace and physical aspects of development were raised as concerns. A volunteer with Carrigtwohill Community Council wondered aloud as to how residents in a recently completed estate of 300 houses on the edge of the village could be made to feel a sense of belonging, articulating a viewpoint that such large-scale construction projects did not foster attachment to place and community (CT1, 25/11/’03). Allied to this was a genuine fear that change would erode the existing identities of places and that development was occurring so rapidly that it would be impossible to integrate older and newer inhabitants. Finally, it was considered that maintaining community cohesiveness in the face of population growth was also a challenge. *“I’m sure there’s a critical figure of population where you’ll get communities to work”*, commented one observer (CT6, 23/06/’04) and, although he did not venture a precise figure, the widespread view was that population increases experienced across East Cork were detrimental to efforts to sustain place-based community organisations.

All of the explanations outlined so far referred to circumstances outside the control of community groups, but some interviewees mulled over their groups’ internal workings and were of the view that organisational weaknesses dissuaded potential volunteers. Amongst these was the inability of groups to deliver results; in Glanmire, for instance, one member pointed out that several matters that the GACA were attempting to tackle had been on their agenda for ten years but little progress had been made (GM7,

18/06/'04). In some cases, the failure to identify or address the needs of the community had led to a proliferation of special interest groups at local level, such as parents' associations, childcare groups, residents' associations and the like, which usurped the role of place-based groups and rivalled them for resources. This is indicative of the changing shape of the community sector, where identity has become as significant as place in community formation.

Procedures associated with community group work were also alluded to by interviewees. Factors such as poor leadership, perceptions that groups were a clique, boredom with meetings, bureaucracy and the rigid structure of organisations were identified as weaknesses which impinged upon the work of organisations. Such was the scale of place-based groups, the departure of even one or two committed leaders or the presence of a mediocre leader could have a detrimental impact. In addition, some community activists admitted that awareness of their organisation in the locality was quite low or that there was a view among non-members that the group was stale or ineffective. There was a feeling in some quarters that the more formal nature of contemporary community work had taken much of the enjoyment element from volunteering, making it difficult to attract new members (MF2, 02/12/'03). If an organisation was perceived to lack drive or vitality, it was likely to appear unattractive to potential members in the locality.

In summary, the predominant view among interviewees was that attracting volunteers had become increasingly difficult and an assortment of explanations was offered. The plight of time-starved and cash-strapped commuting couples has become a leitmotif of Celtic Tiger Ireland and was considered a major reason for current trends.

However, this was contradicted somewhat by the argument that changing values was the chief cause. The former view pointed to economic and social circumstances outside peoples' control as preventing them from participating in their communities. In contrast, those who asserted that attitudes had altered suggested that individuals were exercising their free choice and that choice was a selfish and indifferent one i.e. not to contribute to their local community. All of the reasons put forward were qualitative in nature and based on interviewees' life experience, observations of their society and anecdotal evidence. There may well be some grain of truth in all of these rationalisations. The next question, therefore, is to assess whether these accounts accord with more objective information on the current nature of volunteering, and whether it is correct to conclude that patterns of volunteering have indeed altered as a consequence of modernisation and change. Examining the growing body of quantitative data on volunteering in Ireland can shed further light on this issue.

4.4.3 Measuring voluntary activity in Ireland and East Cork

As policy and academic interest in civil society have grown, so too have efforts to study and understand the community and voluntary sector. This trend is apparent both internationally and in the Irish context and efforts to generate knowledge have focused primarily on quantifying the extent of voluntary activity. This section summarises the result of four analyses undertaken since the early 1990s and the main objective is to utilise this data to ascertain if voluntarism and, above all, participation in organisations, has in fact decreased and if evidence supports the views outlined in the previous section. Firstly, a series of surveys undertaken by the National College of Ireland (NCI) during

the 1990s are outlined (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999; 1994). Two further investigations were completed in 2002 and 2006 by the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) and the Task Force on Active Citizenship (TFAC) respectively; an important aspect of these studies was that they were designed to be comparable (Task Force on Active Citizenship, 2007a, 2007b; NESF, 2003). Finally, the results of Census 2006 provided the first ever comprehensive data on the extent of voluntary work in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2007c).

Table 4.3 Comparison of the result of various surveys of voluntary activity in Ireland since the early 1990s

	Formal volunteering	Informal volunteering	All volunteering
National College of Ireland 1992	n/a	n/a	39%
National College of Ireland 1994	23%	20%	35.1%
National College of Ireland 1998	20.8%	20.5%	33.3%
	Engaged in voluntary community group	Regular volunteer	
National Economic and Social Forum 2002	21.7%	17.1%	n/a
Task Force on Active Citizenship 2006	29.0%	23.1%	n/a
Census 2006	n/a	n/a	16.4%

Sources: Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1995, p.vi; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, pp.51-2; National Economic and Social Forum, 2003, p.51; Task Force on Active Citizenship, 2007b, pp.2-5; Central Statistics Office, 2007c, p.169

Table 4.3 displays the key results from these surveys. It must be stressed at the outset, however, that direct comparisons between the data are not possible. Each study employed different methodological and sampling techniques. Nevertheless, the three NCI studies utilised compatible methods and allow one to identify trends during the 1990s. In addition, the NESF and TFAC reports were based upon similar sampling techniques and questionnaires, which make it possible to analyse them side-by-side. Given that the Census of Population covered the entire country and, therefore, did not rely on random sampling, it must be regarded as the most authoritative source of data. Overall, however, it is difficult to be conclusive about trends in voluntary activity and how they have been affected by economic change.

Having forged links with the Centre for Civil Society Studies at John Hopkins University, the National College of Ireland oversaw three studies of the voluntary sector in Ireland in 1992, 1994 and 1997 (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, p.3). A random sample of approximately 1,000 adults nationwide was undertaken. In attempting to classify voluntary activity the study stated: “*A distinction was made between activities carried out in an organisational setting - formal volunteering - and activities carried out independently, outside of any organisation, club or association - informal volunteering*” (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, p.5). The figures for informal and formal volunteering were aggregated into an overall figure, which took into account that some individuals were involved in both kinds of volunteering. The initial study in 1992 recorded an overall participation rate of 39%, but by 1998 this had decreased to 33%. Between 1994 and 1998, there was a decline of just over 2% in the proportion involved in formal volunteering within organisations.

The first of two comparable studies carried out by the NESF occurred in 2002, and its measurement of voluntary participation was part of a wider study of civic engagement designed to contribute to *The Policy Implications of Social Capital* (2003). A random sample of 1,181 adults was surveyed. The study was repeated in September 2006 by the Task Force on Active Citizenship, which had been established by government in April of that year and given a remit to investigate issues relating to citizen participation. It carried out its research, called the Survey of Civic Engagement, with the assistance of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Similar sampling techniques and wording of questions to the NESF study were employed, but a slightly smaller sample of 1,045 was used. Reports analysing the results and making policy recommendations were published in March 2007.

Similar to the NCI surveys, the NESF and TFAC studies also sought to distinguish between two forms of volunteering. Firstly, respondents had been asked if they took part in any regular, unpaid volunteering outside the home, which can be considered somewhat similar to the NCI description of informal volunteering. The relevant proportions for 2002 and 2006 were 17.1% and 23.1% respectively. Secondly, respondents had been asked if they were actively involved in any community or voluntary group in the previous twelve months; this aspect of volunteering was analogous to the NCI's definition of formal volunteering. This percentage also rose from 21.7% in 2002 to 29.0% in 2006. These figures were surprising given that they contradicted the downward trend identified by the NCI reports during the 1990s.

The Task Force reports, therefore, contended that there was scant statistical evidence for the prevailing mood of pessimism, arguing instead that “*over the last 15*

years, levels of volunteering and community involvement in Ireland have not declined in any marked or noticeable way” (TFAC, 2007b, p.2). Although they acknowledged the pervading view amongst community representatives that volunteers were hard to come by, the Task Force claimed that their findings did not support this assertion. Indeed, community organisations and residents’ associations of the kind being studied in this thesis were identified as one of the main contributors to increasing community engagement (TFAC, 2007b, p.9).

The Task Force, however, offered only a brief and tentative analysis as to why civic engagement grew, ascribing it to a range of factors, such as higher incomes, rising education levels and greater awareness about social participation. Clearly, scope remained for a deeper analysis of the possible linkages between such factors and the apparent growth in voluntary activity and the Task Force did, in fact, signal its intention to carry this out (TFAC, 2007b, pp.4-8). A further criticism might be levelled at the methodology employed; the two key questions in the survey related to regular voluntary activity and active involvement in a voluntary or community group. Yet the distinction between these two aspects of active citizenship was, arguably, not clear-cut and could have been open to differing interpretations by respondents, particularly given that the survey was conducted by telephone (TFAC, 2007b. p.25).

The results of the Task Force/ESRI survey were soon followed by the publication in November 2007 of the Census 2006 report on voluntary activity (CSO, 2007c). Census 2006 was the first census to investigate the extent of voluntary activity in the state and this official interest must be viewed in the context of wider policy concerns. Both the White Paper on the Community and Voluntary sector in 2000 and the aforementioned

25 In the last 4 weeks have you done any of the following activities without pay?
 ✓ *ALL the boxes that apply.*

1	☐	Helping or voluntary work with a social or charitable organisation
2	☐	Helping or voluntary work with a religious group or church
3	☐	Helping or voluntary work with a sporting organisation
4	☐	Helping or voluntary work with a political or cultural organisation
5	☐	Any other voluntary activity
6	☐	No voluntary activity

Plate 4.1: The question from the Census 2006 questionnaire which sought information on voluntary activity. (Source: CSO, 2007a, p.148)

NESF report had pressed for more thorough and detailed data collection on voluntary community activity. Plate 4.1 reproduces the relevant question from the Census questionnaire. Curiously, the term ‘community’ was not employed in the classification system used, nor in the wording of the question. Consequently, members of the kind of place-based community groups that are the focus of this thesis could potentially have chosen from three of the five options available.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 present data from the 2006 Census at a range of spatial levels from the state to selected EDs in the study area. Table 4.4 indicates overall participation rates in voluntary activities and distinguishes between genders. At national level, approximately one in six adults had performed some voluntary work, while the proportion was slightly higher in Munster. There was, however, an appreciable

difference of four percentage points between Cork City and Cork County, which pointed to greater community participation in rural contexts. While male and female rates of volunteering were equivalent at national level, the county and local figures show a slight preponderance of male participation. This can probably be explained by greater male contributions to sporting organisations, which are strong in Munster and which was a sector in which males eclipsed females by a ratio of more than two to one.

Table 4.4 also indicates that the rate of voluntary activity in East Cork as a whole approximated with the provincial and county averages and was somewhat higher than the national average. Within East Cork, however, there was considerable spatial variation in the extent of volunteering. Aghern ED (32.9%), in the rural north-east, had a rate of participation over two-and-a-half times greater than Midleton Urban ED (12.2%). Figure 4.1 maps volunteering across the entire region and displays a clear spatial pattern. Volunteering was more widespread in upland, rural areas which were a considerable distance from the city. Conversely, lower rates of participation appeared in and around the towns of Midleton and Cobh and, to a lesser extent, in EDs closer to Cork City and close to the N25 route. As Fig 4.1 indicates, the catchment areas of both Ballycotton Development Company and Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council had high rates of participation, while Midleton Community Forum and Glanmire Area Community Association were situated in areas of lesser activity.

The geographical distribution of volunteering can be explained with reference to the socio-economic data which was presented in Chapter 3. Broadly speaking, areas of highest volunteering corresponded with areas of lowest population growth (Fig. 3.10) and population density (Fig. 3.11), low proportions of mortgaged households (Fig. 3.9), high

Figure 4.1 - Percentage of the population aged 15+ involved in voluntary activity, 2006

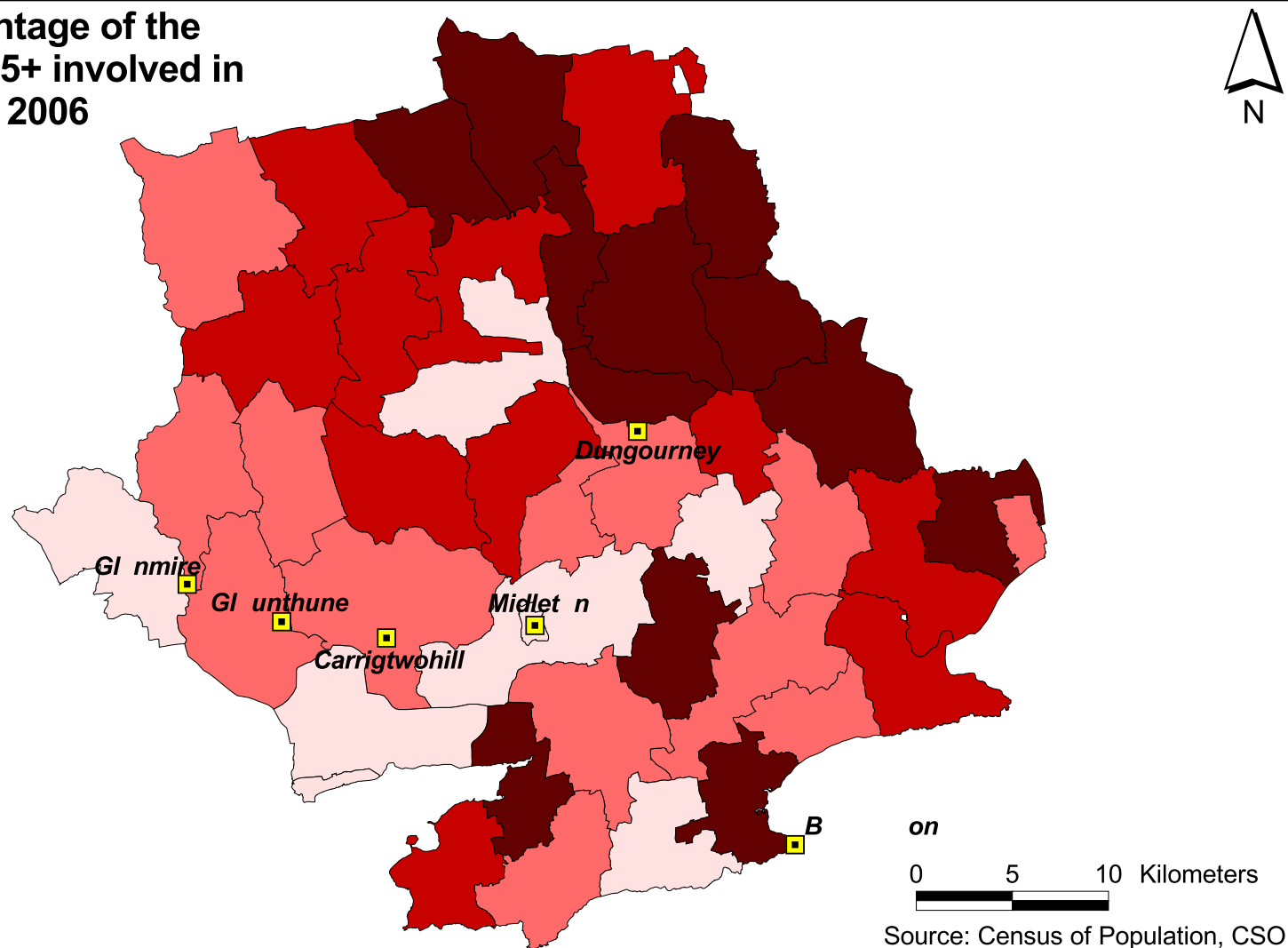


Table 4.4 Percentage of population aged >15 years, males and females, involved in voluntary activity, 2006

	Total	Males	Female
Ireland	16.4	16.4	16.4
Munster	17.2	17.4	17.0
Cork (City and County)	17.0	17.5	16.6
Cork City	14.0	14.4	13.6
Cork County	18.1	18.5	17.7
East Cork	17.2	17.6	16.8
East Cork highest ED (Aghern)	32.9	32.9	32.9
East Cork lowest ED (Midleton Urban)	12.2	12.5	12.0

Source: Census of Population, CSO

Table 4.5 Percentage of total volunteers involved in various voluntary activities, 2006.

	Social and Charitable	Religious and church	Sporting	Political and Cultural	Other	Involved in >1 activity
Ireland	34.8	25.9	32.6	8.5	25.4	27.2
Munster	34.8	23.7	35.5	8.4	25.3	27.7
Cork	35.1	23	35.2	8.2	24.9	26.4
Cork City	38.7	25.3	27.6	9.6	26	27.3
Cork County	34.1	22.3	37.3	7.8	24.6	26.1
East Cork	35.9	21.1	36.2	7.2	24.7	25.1

Source: Census of Population, CSO

proportions in the agricultural classes (Fig. 3.15). In contrast, those EDs with proportionately fewer volunteers were those that had experienced demographic fluctuations as a consequence of economic change. There had been major influxes of new residents owing to housing development and these were predominantly young and in the early stages of the family cycle, while many were not natives of the area. It is not coincidental that Middleton Urban ED had the lowest rate of voluntary participation and also the highest percentage of foreign nationals (18.6%) in East Cork. One can surmise, therefore, that rural, agricultural areas with a more settled and stable population base were more conducive to community participation, while urban and peri-urban areas with a heterogeneous socio-economic profile were populated by individuals who were less likely to volunteer.

Table 4.5 shows the breakdown in the type of voluntary activity undertaken. At national level, social and charitable work was the most common, followed by membership of sporting organisations, within the region of one-third of all volunteers involved in each of these activities. Over 25% of volunteers nationally placed themselves in the 'other' category. This categorisation probably contained members of environmental, youth and special interest organisations, but in the absence of any specific categorisations for community, it is conceivable that it could also contain some members of community councils and community development groups. Approximately one-quarter of volunteers at all levels were involved in more than one endeavour. Within East Cork, participation in sporting organisations was higher than average, which was an exhibition of the region's strong sporting heritage. Involvement in religious, political and cultural activity, however, was slightly lower than the national and regional equivalents.

Some indication of the socio-economic characteristics of volunteers was also provided by the Census, although only at national level (CSO, 2007c, pp.169-171). Age emerged as a key determinant of voluntary activity, with participation rates of 45-54 year olds almost double that of 25-34 year olds nationally. The mid-thirties, therefore, appeared as a significant cut-off point in relation to age, with rates of participation differing markedly above and below that age cohort. Social class was another dividing line in terms of participation; those in the higher socio-economic groupings, comprising employers, managers and professionals, were approximately twice as likely as semi-skilled and unskilled workers to be involved in voluntary groups. In this respect, the Census corroborated the results of previous studies, which had also linked volunteering to certain socio-economic characteristics, most notably higher levels of education and income, age and employment status (TFAC, 2007b, p.4; NESF, 2003, p.50; Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999). Furthermore, the data reiterates a point made earlier in this chapter (pp.221-2); community organisations are largely, though not exclusively, a middle-aged and middle-class domain.

Comparison of the various datasets does not allow definitive conclusions to be drawn. The NCI reports identified a decrease in voluntary activity during the 1990s, but the findings of the NESF and Task Force reports claimed a reversal of this trend. Census 2006, in turn, recorded a rate of participation in organisations which was almost half that of the NESF or Task Force studies. Some of these variations can be ascribed to methodological differences; in terms of organisational participation, the NCI and the Census queried people on their activity in the month prior to the survey, while the NESF and Task Force sought to measure participation over the twelve months preceding data

collection. In this author's view, the Census data provides the most comprehensive and, therefore, the truest and most irrefutable data on organised voluntary activity as it did not rely on random sampling techniques. However, any claim that voluntarism is either declining or increasing, or what the impact of social and economic change has been, rests on shaky foundations. All that can be said with certainty is that only a relatively small proportion of Irish citizens appear to be heavily involved in the voluntary sector and that the vast majority of the country's populace shies away from participating in their communities in a meaningful way.

4.4.4 Reconciling qualitative and quantitative accounts

The previous two subsections present perspectives from two different sources on the nature and extent of voluntary activity. Some of the issues raised by the quantitative reports are at variance with the viewpoints of those interviewed. In particular, the opinion of the Task Force that voluntarism grew between 2002 and 2006 contradicts the views of community representatives interviewed during this same period. Census 2006 provided important data but, because it was the first census to examine the issue, trends in voluntarism cannot be identified. This section assesses both the qualitative and quantitative data and draws upon some of the findings of Chapter 3 to ascertain whether or not the concerns of community activists are well founded. It also sets out an interpretation of the substantive issue of the vitality of the community and voluntary sector. The forces impacting upon voluntarism at both macro-level, such as socio-economic change, and micro-level, such as issues peculiar to certain groups or places, are assessed in order to gauge their relative impact.

One clear commonality emerges from a review of all data relating to the sector, and that is that community associations are, in the words of one interviewee, “*a minority sport*” (TB6, 11/06/’04). According to the census data, just one in six of the population took part in any kind voluntary group in the month prior to enumeration. As Table 4.5 shows, the work of these volunteers was spread across sporting, charitable, religious, political and other activities, meaning that volunteers in the place-based community organisations which are the focus here only constitute a small portion of all volunteers. The attitudes of the non-volunteering portion of the population varied. According to community representatives, every area contained its own dissatisfied rump, the so-called “*why don’t they?*” brigade who complained and raised problems but do little by way of contributing time (BC1, 02/12/’03). What was more prevalent was that the majority of local inhabitants were quietly supportive of groups and were happy to see good work being done, without seeking to get personally involved. “*There’s a kind of a silent praise. If people aren’t criticising you, generally you can take it that they’re backing you*”, said one group leader (CT1, 25/11/’03).

Any judgement on whether or not the amount of people volunteering has actually risen or declined must be withheld in the absence of sufficient hard data. Nonetheless, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. When the results of the NCI studies are analysed alongside Census 2006 data, it can be inferred that participation in organisations has fallen. Both sources provided specific information on organisational involvement in the month prior to their respective surveys, thereby allowing a valid degree of comparison. While the NCI reports indicated that 20.8% of those queried were involved in formal volunteering under the auspices of an organisation in 1998 (Table 4.3), Census

2006 gave a figure of 16.4% nationally. This supports the views of those involved in East Cork's community groups and, therefore, must be given some credence.

The NESF and Task Force reports, however, highlighted higher levels of participation in community associations and an increase between 2002 and 2006. It is possible to reconcile this paradox when one considers that these studies looked at participation over a 12-month period. The most plausible scenario is that community groups could draw upon more widespread support in the community on a once-off basis for specific projects, annual events, fundraisers and other irregular activities. Despite this, as the NCI and Census figures show, the core membership committed to the day-to-day running of groups has fallen. This view is informed by the author's own experience of working with community groups, where it is patent that groups can have significant peripheral membership, but that a handful of committed activists carry a disproportionate share of the workload.

Why, if the statistical evidence is so inconclusive, did such negativity exist amongst interviewees and were their opinions well-founded? Several variables which influence tendencies to volunteer were mentioned by community activists. Foremost of these was the observation that economic change was a root cause of community change. There can be little doubt that economic circumstances in both East Cork and Ireland improved remarkably over the past decade and a half and that employment, disposable income and consumer spending increased. The outward signs of such wealth were noticeable throughout East Cork. Yet the precise impact of this profound social change on the voluntary sector is debatable. The contention that affluence lay behind the unwillingness to participate is difficult to sustain, as all available data shows that

participation is higher as one moves up social class, educational and employment scales, and lowest among the unemployed and unskilled workers. On this basis, levels of volunteering should not have decreased in Ireland over the past decade.

Lack of time was also cited frequently by community representatives. Supposedly busier and more hectic modern lifestyles have accompanied economic development, thereby depriving people of the opportunity to volunteer. Ireland is just one of two EU states that do not carry out an official Time Use survey, making detailed assessment of this issue problematic (NESF, 2002, p.64). However, the evidence to hand does not support the stated position. In relation to hours spent at work, the only data specific to East Cork comes from Census 2002, which showed that the area's labour force did not work above average or inordinately long hours; the average working week in East Cork was 40.75 hours (CSO, 2007e). Unfortunately, this issue was not surveyed in Census 2006. In 2002, there was a noticeable difference between urban and rural areas, the former having a shorter average working week. Bearing in mind that rural areas had higher levels of volunteering in 2006, this data would appear to disprove the argument that employment conditions had negative ramifications for voluntarism. Farmers and other rural inhabitants worked longer hours than their urban and peri-urban counterparts, yet still found time to become involved in their communities.

Statistics on time spent travelling to work also challenge the widely-held view in the community sector about commuting. According to Census 2006, the proportion of total travellers in East Cork with daily journeys to work, college and school greater than

forty-five minutes was just one in ten². In addition, lengthy commuting was more commonplace in the remoter rural parts of the region, and less so in places adjacent to the city, such as Glanmire and Glounthaune, where the ‘weary commuter’ argument was most often heard amongst interviewees. What might be termed intermediate range commuting i.e. 15-29 miles or 30-45 minute journeys, did increase between 1991 and 2006, from roughly 10% to 16% of total travellers, but not to an extent that it can be said with confidence that it contributed to a significant negative impact on community groups. While long-distance commuting has become part of the overall Irish experience, East Cork’s well-developed road network and its proximity to Cork City meant that travel to and from work did not take up a major portion of time for the majority of residents of the area.

If macro-level economic change has not unduly harmed community activism, other reasons must be sought. The situation within individual associations, for example, may have been responsible for the perception that membership trends were in decline. Theories of group work have postulated that all groups pass through a number of stages of development from initial formation to their ultimate demise. This model was applicable in the case of some East Cork groups³. Glanmire Area Community Association (GACA), for instance, was formed in the early 1980s and was at its strongest during a period of heightened activity throughout that decade. However, as the core

² This data must be interpreted with some caution because, as well as adults in the labour force, they include school-going children and students, whose relatively shorter daily journeys skew the figures.

³ The five stages of group development are generally referred to as ‘forming’, ‘storming’, ‘norming’, ‘performing’ and ‘adjourning’ (Benson, 2001).

membership got older and fewer replacements came forward, the group began to display signs of fatigue and disillusionment. Similar patterns appeared in Glounthaune, Ballycotton and Dungourney, where groups had become less active, or almost dormant, as they moved towards the later phases of group development. One member of the community in Dungourney likened the situation to a sports team and said that the cycle was a natural and normal one and could be brought on when one or two dynamic figures departed from an organisation (DC6, 19/04/'04). A further reason may have been the failure to achieve a major group goal; the lack of progress in implementing the Glounthaune Community Plan and ineffectual efforts to upgrade the harbour in Ballycotton had a detrimental impact on group morale in both instances.

There were discernible differences between the six study areas in terms of their perceptions of the extent of the manpower crisis and their reactions to it. A more pessimistic outlook had taken root amongst members of the GACA, which was not surprising in the context of the major changes witnessed in the area. In Glounthaune and Carrigtwohill, however, while community organisations did recognise the challenges posed by change and development, they were prepared to tackle these head on and a more optimistic tone could be detected. In March 2004, for example, Carrigtwohill Community Council co-ordinated an exhibition at which twenty-five local clubs and organisations promoted their activities and attempted to entice new members. The event was preceded by the distribution of a flyer to all new households in the area. Glounthaune Community Association responded with their unique Community Timebank initiative, which aimed to cultivate greater social connectivity in the locality.

One factor which was arguably overlooked in analyses of the changing nature of voluntarism was demographic change. Census data highlighted a number of significant population trends in East Cork; not only has the number of inhabitants grown, but many of these new residents have come from outside the area. The profile of those who had taken up new housing across East Cork was that they were young and were in the pre-family stage of the life cycle and this group has increased as a share of the overall populace (see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3, pp.171-194). There is, therefore, according to a member of the GACA, ‘a *teething process*’ that will need to take place (GM10, 11/07/’04), and the vast housing estates that have sprung up across East Cork over a relatively short period will require time to ‘bed down’. Given the earlier findings on how children assist in integrating adults into the community, it could well be surmised that as newer segments of the population in East Cork settle into the area and begin to raise families, they will become more connected to local community organisations and will have a greater incentive to participate. There are, perhaps, valid grounds for believing that community organisations will experience an upsurge in the not too distant future.

The fact remains that, notwithstanding fluctuations upwards or downwards in volunteering, community organisations are the preserve of a small number of individuals. Despite efforts by groups to attract more members, this situation is likely to continue, and it is difficult to envisage a situation of universal participation, or even participation by the majority of the population, in formal community organisations. Why is there such reluctance to get involved? Although there are many variables influencing the situation, it could be argued that the growing workload attached to community groups acts as a major disincentive and this level of exertion is a product of the closer relationship with

the state. State institutions have sought to court the community sector in relation to many aspects of policy. The next chapter, therefore, looks at the growing and more intricate ties between community groups and the state, and asks whether this actually serves the best interests of the voluntary community sector.

4.5 Conclusion

The amorphous and diverse nature of community groups makes theoretical analysis difficult. However, it is not the aim of this chapter to offer an overarching theory of voluntary community associations, but to outline some findings about the nature and health of the sector within East Cork. There were some features and characteristics that were applicable to all of the groups studied, but what must be emphasised is that each one was unique to its own place. Voluntary community groups are fundamentally grounded in both people and place and consequently differ from one location to another. This conclusion outlines where comparisons can be made, but also stresses that contrasts exist between community groups, even where they operate in close geographical proximity to one another.

Section 4.2 emphasised that all formal community organisations in East Cork had a relatively recent history, having originated in the past half century. They had their roots very much in informal communal networks at local level, but were distinct from them. Organised community action took hold in each of the study areas as a reaction to modernisation and change, since the development of a more complex relationship between local community, the state and the private sector, compelled communities to adopt formal structures. This provided them with the means to represent their interests

and to be a voice to the outside world. Nevertheless, groups were not founded upon radical or confrontational ideologies of community work and tended to conform to the culture of pragmatism which characterises Irish politics generally. A trait of all groups was that in carrying out their work they straddled the realm of formal, legal structures and the informal nature of local community life.

Section 4.3 catalogued the diversity of group activities and the motivations of those involved. While groups may have been similar in origins and structure, their functions were very much dependent on local needs and circumstances. This local knowledge base of groups, combined with their ability to identify and respond to local priorities, was their greatest strength. The factors that drove people to contribute their time were also varied, but the centrality of children in prompting people to take part in community organisations ranks as one of the foremost findings of the research.

The vexed question of trends in voluntarism and the apparent decline in commitment to community was explored from qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Although there was a widespread notion that macro-economic growth was a causative factor, convincing proof was lacking. A stronger case could be made for stating that conditions particular to individual places or organisations shape the vitality of community activism. Demographic change, for instance, was highly differentiated across East Cork, and the strengths and weaknesses of individual groups also played a role. In any case, community associations were a minority activity and those involved predominantly from middle-aged and middle-class backgrounds.

Finally, the one common theme across all groups was the increasing complexity and bureaucracy of community work. Insurance was a key issue for community

associations and, along with the necessity to adopt complex legal structures to protect against risk, imposed significant burdens. The diversity of tasks undertaken by groups and the range of services they provided added greatly to the workload for volunteers. This trend arguably made it unattractive for potential new members to join. In order to fully understand this aspect of the community sector, its relationship with the state requires further investigation.

Chapter 5: Community and State

5.1 Introduction

Within the past generation a bewildering array of public programmes has created a progressively tighter bond between community organisations and state institutions. In Ireland, the roots of this new relationship can be traced to the late 1980s and the formation of local Area-Based Partnerships, which drafted in community representatives to tackle the pressing economic and social predicament in co-operation with public agencies and the private sector. These new structures cemented their status during the 1990s by drawing down funds under EU programmes such as LEADER and URBAN. In tandem with this, the Community Development Programme was introduced in deprived localities to assist community groups in addressing poverty and social exclusion, with the Family Resource Centre Programme, which commenced in 1994, having similar aims and objectives. The Community Employment (CE) scheme, operated under the aegis of the state training and employment authority FÁS, gave community groups a role in reducing long-term unemployment and boosting the social economy, while more recently, the RAPID and CLÁR initiatives have sought to negate disadvantage in urban and rural contexts respectively. Meanwhile, community alert and neighbourhood watch groups have, since the 1980s, engendered co-operation between volunteers and the police force to prevent crime.

To continue: the Department of the Environment provides substantial funding for community-driven construction of social housing and also rewards local environmental maintenance and conservation efforts. These generous rates of state support for voluntary housing are matched by those for community-based, non-profit childcare services under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme. Reform of the healthcare system since the establishment of the HSE in 2004 has also laid greater stress on care in community settings and voluntary organisations have received resources to this end. Local projects set up by the Regional Drugs Task Forces in towns and cities over the past decade have had a strong element of community participation from the outset. Community groups are also amongst those who have exploited to the fullest potential the statutory requirement for public consultation that now accompanies spatial planning at all scales and have been identified by government as key players in the achievement of policy objectives on sustainable development. Their ties to local authorities have become more intricate since the formation of County and City Development Boards in 2000. In short, the voluntary community sector has been accorded a more weighty position in the design and delivery of many facets of public policy.

In parallel with the profound social and economic transformation of Ireland since the early 1990s, relations between the state and community and voluntary groups have altered markedly. Not only has the link between state agencies and community organisations deepened and the level of interaction intensified; it has also become more formalised and structured. A plethora of policy pronouncements, legislative measures and funding programmes have created new terms of engagement between officialdom and community. In particular, the reformation of arrangements for policy- and decision-making and the rise of new governance structures and

numerous quangos¹ have endeavoured to give the relationship a secure organisational foundation. This trend must be considered in the context of the wider modal switch from government to governance which has been reproduced across Europe and the developed world as states seek to broaden involvement in public policy and development processes. The specific implications for place-based community groups in East Cork, along with their reaction to the state's efforts to court them, are the predominant themes of this chapter.

The initial section outlines the policy context underpinning the connection between the state and the community sector, focusing on developments at both EU and national level. The objective is to consider the conceptual basis of policy and to uncover how and why notions such as partnership, participatory democracy and active citizenship came to prominence. Key documents that form the basis of community and voluntary sector policy, along with strategies related to wider matters, such as planning, sustainability and governance are decoded. The fundamental questions to be explored, however, centre upon the manner in which state policies have been operationalised at the grassroots. In this respect, the degree to which decision-making power has been devolved, the extent to which the community sector has been accorded an equal role in local development processes and the nature of power relations within the new systems of local governance are crucial issues.

The remaining three segments of the chapter examine how the participation of community groups in new modes of governance has played out in practice. Firstly, there is a focus upon new partnership structures at local level which have endeavoured to tie community

¹ The term 'quango' derives from 'quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation' and is generally taken to denote any organisation that is created, appointed and supported by government, but which operates in an independent or semi-independent manner.

groups into developmental decision-making processes. Secondly, community involvement in spatial planning is scrutinised in order to ascertain the extent to which community groups have had a genuine input into the physical development of their localities. Finally, the provision of social services in community contexts as part of the so-called mixed economy of welfare approach is explored. In each of these three sections, a bottom-up view is presented and the overall aim is to assess the extent to which community groups have become genuine partners in decision-making about local development issues. Consequently, these sections draw upon the interviews conducted with community activists that were utilised in the previous chapter, which are supplemented by a further ten interviews with professional community workers and local authority officials in East Cork. The author's experiences and insights as a first-hand observer of and participant in these modes of governance also inform the contents of this chapter.

5.2 The conceptual foundations of public policy

5.2.1 Introduction

This section is concerned with three distinct but cross-cutting public policy themes, all of which impact to a greater or lesser degree on community groups. Firstly, over the past decade the Irish state has devised a new policy agenda in relation to the third sector, endeavouring to harness the vitality of and create a climate conducive to voluntarism and community-building. Secondly, during the same period, successive governments have carried forward a thoroughgoing reform of systems of governance to cope with the changing nature of the state in an era of globalisation. Participation of and partnership with community interests have been the lodestars of this process and attempts to reinvigorate governance at local level are of explicit relevance. Finally, the concept of sustainable development has garnered widespread attention in official

circles, and the manner in which sustainable development policies and concomitant changes to the spatial planning system have opened up opportunities for community involvement are considered. In terms of all of these policy initiatives and their impact upon community groups, Ireland has mirrored trends in other developed countries and the following pages pay due attention to the influence of the European Union.

5.2.2 Embracing the third sector

While the Irish state has had a close relationship with the community and voluntary sector since political independence, much of it has been of an *ad-hoc* character. It is only since the mid-1990s that the connection has been formalised and a deeper, more comprehensive and structured policy approach markedly altered the nature of the link. Numerous official publications have acknowledged the important contribution of diverse community and voluntary associations to the social and economic life of the nation (TFAC, 2007a; NESF, 2003; NCV, 2002; Government of Ireland, 1997, 2000a). Growing policy interest has been accompanied by a concern with surveying and documenting the nature of civil society, and systematic gathering of information on all facets of voluntary activism by state agencies has become commonplace (CSO, 2007c; TFAC, 2007b). Policy-makers view this knowledge as the foundation for more intensive co-operation with the third sector. The fundamental question to be addressed is how and why this preoccupation on the part of the state originated and became established and how this relates to international trends. Proceeding from this, one must excavate the mindset underpinning public policy and understand the role that the state has cast for the community and voluntary sector in contemporary Ireland. Only then is it possible to arrive at a full appreciation of the central policy themes and objectives.

Ireland resembles many other nation states and international institutions in terms of its recent preoccupation with civil society. The United Nations World Summit for Social Development in 1995 provided the context for the emergence of volunteering onto the international agenda. Two years later, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers; that year was also marked by a UN Commission for Social Development document which drew attention to the correlation between volunteering, sustainable development and social integration (UNESCO, 2001). The year 2001 also saw the publication of two OECD reports on social capital and public participation in policy-making (OECD, 2001a; 2001b), while the World Bank was another significant global development institution that endorsed this new policy agenda (World Bank, 2001; 2002). At EU level, concerted interest in the voluntary sector can be traced to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which acknowledged the need for co-operation with charitable foundations and associations. In the same year, a Commission Communication on special interest groups recognised the fundamental importance of making EU institutions open to outside input and identified non-profit organisations as one faction among many interest groups who routinely lobbied the Commission on policy issues. It proposed the publication of a directory of these non-profit groups, while at the same time outlining that openness and simplicity would be amongst its principles in dealing with all outside agencies (CEC, 1992).

A more explicit appreciation of the role of civil society within the EU emerged in a Commission Communication of 1997 promoting the role of voluntary organisations and foundations. This acknowledged that voluntary groups had historically “*played a major role in the mobilisation of public opinion in favour of development*” (CEC, 1997, p.5), but warned that the lack of a coherent policy framework across the Union inhibited the contribution that the

sector could make to addressing social problems. Moreover, it contended that a strengthened voluntary sector could act as a wellspring of economic growth and employment creation, and that public authorities should ensure that training measures were put in place to allow voluntary organisations to reach their full potential. The document aimed to address the dearth of information on the sector by including a research report on the legal and fiscal frameworks for voluntary organisations across the Union. Crucially, the Commission invoked the principle of subsidiarity when it recommended that detailed policy formulation on the voluntary sector should take place at Member State, regional and local level (CEC, 1997, pp.9-11).

A further discussion paper issued by the Commission in 2002 called for a stronger partnership between voluntary, non-governmental organisations and European institutions. Pointing to the dynamic and diverse nature of the third sector, it outlined several key reasons for promoting better participation, including the need to foster participatory democracy and the contribution that NGOs could make to policy formulation and project management. The necessity to streamline and simplify existing funding procedures was prioritised (CEC, 2002). Overall, EU policy chiefs have exhorted Member States to build up linkages between public administration and civil society, yet they have not done so in a prescriptive way through regulations or directives. Instead the Commission has set out broad guidelines and suggestions for individual governments to consider when devising their own policies. To date, therefore, a detailed and overarching EU policy on the sector has not been formulated, although an environment favourable to interaction between government and civil society has been laid down.

One can clearly position the Irish policy debate within this international and European discourse on volunteering, governance and development; indeed, Irish policy-makers have frequently cited the aforementioned reports within their own policy documents (NESF, 2003,

pp.15-17; NCV, 2002; Government of Ireland, 1997, pp.40-45). The Irish response has been expressed in a series of significant policy initiatives, beginning with the publication of a Green Paper entitled *Supporting Voluntary Activity* (Government of Ireland, 1997), which was succeeded by a more comprehensive White Paper in 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000a). This led to the formation of the National Committee on Volunteering, which issued its report on volunteering in 2002, while the policy think-tank the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) produced *The Policy Implications of Social Capital* the following year (NESF, 2003; NCV, 2002). In 2005, the Joint Oireachtas Committee with responsibility for community affairs contributed its views on the volunteering issue, focusing on its economic dimension (JOC, 2005). Finally, 2006 saw the formation of the Task Force on Active Citizenship, which issued several reports in 2007 on citizen participation and civic engagement (TFAC, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c). It is not intended, however, to give a detailed review of each individual document, but rather to identify and explicate some recurring themes that form the foundation of this new direction in policy.

It is vital to place this intense desire by the state to embrace communal and voluntary activity in its broader political context (see Chapter 1, pp.18-41). By the dawn of the 1990s, older political philosophies of both left and right were perceived as redundant and had proved inadequate in guiding social and economic progress across the developed world. A central problem identified in the Green Paper on Voluntary Activity was the persistence and, indeed, growth of a socially excluded underclass, many of whom were afflicted by long-term unemployment and welfare dependency. In addition, such citizens were becoming more alienated from and less likely to participate in the political process (Government of Ireland, 1997, p.22). Moreover, in a more globalised marketplace and, in particular, in a small open

economy like Ireland, low tax regimes had become fundamental to attract multinational investment and the left-wing concept of tax and spend came to be seen as outdated. Linked to this was a view that public expenditure should be targeted at productive infrastructure rather than social support and that welfare dependency should be minimised. This shift in the official mindset regarding the process of social and economic development is the first step in explaining why the state set out to forge closer links with the third sector.

At the start of the millennium, therefore, the state appeared to have stepped back from committing to directly provide for the welfare of its citizens, and was instead urging individuals and communities to assume more responsibility for addressing social, economic and environmental problems. The Government White Paper, for instance, stated:

The Government's vision of society is also one which actively encourages people as individuals and as members of groups to look after their own need ... without depending on the State to meet all needs (Government of Ireland, 2000a, p.33).

In a similar vein, the NESF concluded that the third sector would have to take on a greater role in societal development:

The State and the Market cannot meet every conceivable need and have to be complemented by a strong and vibrant civil society. Empowerment of local communities to develop their own solutions and models of self-help is an important challenge in the design of public policy (NESF, 2003, p.v).

Unlocking the potential of the community sector now occupies a core position in social policy. This may represent an acknowledgement by the state of its prior failings in the social policy arena, but the state's motivation can also be interpreted cynically as a self-interested ploy to reduce public expenditure.

There are a number of key concepts that prop up the new relationship between state and civil society, and a notable facet of the policy agenda is the manner in which authors of policy proposals have drawn upon social theory and political science literature to underscore their position. In this respect, the influence of communitarian philosophies permeates the official position. Firstly, active citizenship is central to the debate; this notion implies that, in addition to holding civil and political rights, individuals also have duties and responsibilities towards others. According to both the Green and White Papers, and the Task Force on Active Citizenship, active citizens are those who participate fully in all facets of public life, especially community groups and voluntary organisations (Government of Ireland, 2000a, p.42; Government of Ireland, 1997, p.25). The Task Force states that *“being an Active Citizen means being aware of, and caring about, the welfare of fellow citizens”* (TFAC, 2007a, p.2). Such civic-minded individuals are, it is contended, the cornerstone of a healthy democratic society and are at the core of the government’s efforts to promote participatory modes of governance.

In many contemporary societies, the weight of responsibility for human welfare and the common good has shifted from the state to the public at large. The state’s new role has been conceived of as a facilitator, and the Enabling State promotes *“assisted self-reliance ... where local mobilisation is assisted through the provision of external resources and technical assistance”* (Government of Ireland, 2000, p.43). The concept of the Enabling State presupposes that governments should not directly intervene in every social problem, nor can they initiate or control community activism, but they should aim to provide a framework that facilitates citizens who wish to confront issues in their own localities. Funding the voluntary sector to deliver services, along with providing training, advice and a supportive legal and fiscal environment are the tools that the Irish government has utilised to meet this end. This has necessitated new forms

of governance, based around concepts of consultation and partnership, which will be explored fully in the next section.

Alongside active citizenship and the Enabling State, the concept of social capital appears throughout policy pronouncements related to the community and voluntary sector. Social capital is inherent in all social relations and its ubiquitous presence in current social and political theory has been discussed in Chapter 1 (pp.50-52). Ireland has not been immune from its spreading influence and from a policy perspective social capital has been understood as a form of latent energy or a resource held by communities that can be harnessed and put to work for the benefit of all (TFAC, 2007b, p.8). However, the pragmatic application of social capital in real-world contexts, rather than definitional purity, was the priority of the NESF report on the subject. This exploration of its possible repercussions linked the concept to a host of policy matters, including local government reform, economic competitiveness, public health, spatial planning, transport, business performance, crime prevention and educational attainment (NESF, 2003, p.16; p.33; pp.40-44). Social capital has come to be thought of as a crucial component of community development processes, almost as a ‘magic bullet’ that can be the source of solutions to a multitude of issues.

The manner in which the state has overtly grounded its policy in these high-minded concepts and the way in which it has drawn extensively on the academic literature is noteworthy and seldom occurs in other areas of public policy. The Task Force on Active Citizenship, for example, published *The Concept of Active Citizenship* as a supporting document to its main report; in this work it elaborated upon the philosophical origins of the concept, referring to Ancient Classical and Enlightenment scholars (TFAC, 2007c, pp.3-4). Other policy documents have also cited theoretical compositions on social capital and civil society and have sought to

connect these ideas to everyday voluntary activity and the work of place-based community organisations operating at local level (NESF, 2003, p.29; NCV, 2002, p.6). It may be surmised that this constitutes an attempt by policy-makers to provide their strategies with greater legitimacy and, as such, reflects the fundamental nature of a shift in political thinking away from left- and right-wing approaches and towards a Third Way position.

A number of key objectives stem from the newly-devised policies. Of critical significance is the role ascribed to the sector in tackling social exclusion and poverty and addressing welfare dependency. Historically, the Catholic Church assumed an important position in welfare and social service provision in Ireland, operating as a shadow welfare state, but falling religious vocations has meant that it no longer has the capability to fulfil this role (Government of Ireland, 1997, p.31). Contemporary community and voluntary organisations, characterised by an ethos of self-help, mutual support, participation and equality are viewed as having the potential to deliver social services, advocate on behalf of their members and address pressing social needs and they can do so in a more flexible and effective way than state institutions. Communities in which people live have become the arenas in which problems of disadvantage and exclusion are best tackled. In Ireland, therefore, the vast majority of government funding to the sector has been allocated for social service and social protection issues (Government of Ireland, 2000a, p.45).

In order to attain its policy objectives, gathering information on all aspects of volunteering has emerged as a prominent aim of the state. Statistical and research reports have appeared as appendages to most policy documents and many are critical of the dearth of adequate data and issue recommendations for more comprehensive studies of the sector. The Joint Oireachtas Committee, for example, highlighted the urgent need for research, while the

Central Statistics Office included a module on social capital in its Quarterly National Household Survey in 2006, as well as a question on volunteering in Census 2006 (CSO, 2007c). The results of statistical research produced by the NESF and the Task Force have been scrutinised in the previous chapter (pp.265-266) and they have gone some way towards filling the void of information. Consultation with voluntary groups has been an integral part of policy formulation, but has also served as a means of eliciting knowledge about voluntary community groups and how their role can be strengthened. The preoccupation with obtaining this data indicates that knowledge, along with the power that it bestows, has assumed paramount importance for government endeavours to progress its policy agenda.

Chief among the government's policy objectives has been the encouragement of volunteering, thereby increasing the numbers active in their communities. Volunteers are lauded and idealised as model citizens and events such as the Special Olympics in 2003 are held up as examples of what can be accomplished through voluntary effort (JOC, 2005). A recommendation repeated throughout various reports calls for the introduction of a national volunteer recognition scheme similar to the honours system in the UK, which would celebrate outstanding individual endeavour in the field of voluntary community activity (TFAC, 2007a, p.19; JOC, 2005; NCV, 2002, p.ix). The social, economic, psychological and health benefits of belonging to a strong social network are highlighted in an endeavour to persuade people to connect with others and participate in their communities (TFAC, 2007a, p.3). A network of volunteer centres, resourced by the state, is presently being extended across the country to spread this message and to support those who want to volunteer. In fact, the Task Force on Active Citizenship set an ambitious target of increasing the number of adults active in their communities by sixty-thousand per annum for three consecutive years (TFAC, 2007a, p.28).

Education and training for volunteers have been prioritised as a policy objective so that those who want to participate in their communities can be inculcated with relevant skills and knowledge. Proposals have included the promotion of volunteering at all levels of the formal education system, as well as greater resources for adult education and lifelong learning initiatives to improve the skills and capacity of those already involved in community activism. The Joint Oireachtas Committee added its voice to the viewpoint that public funding should be conditional on groups having proper training and management procedures in place for their volunteers, while the Task Force recommended that funding programmes should set aside a specific percentage to cover training and capacity development (TFAC, 2007a, p.18; JOC, 2005). The contention is that training, allied with a generally more professional approach to managing human resources, serves to maximise the energies of existing volunteers and can make voluntary organisations more attractive to prospective members.

The agenda of the state is also disclosed through its concern with the economic dimension of community and voluntary activity. The Joint Oireachtas Committee set out “*to advance the economic arguments for the support of volunteering*” and commissioned a private consultancy to examine the issue from a macroeconomic perspective and gauge the value of volunteering in Ireland in monetary terms (JOC, 2005, p.1). The latent potential for the third sector to generate employment has been frequently referred to, as has its capacity to contribute to economic development. Furthermore, it has been suggested that as well as co-operating with state institutions, the community and voluntary sector should forge closer, mutually-beneficial ties with business. The private sector is identified as an additional source of financial support for groups, but also as a contributor of human resources and technical advice. Employer-supported

volunteering, whereby companies facilitate community activism amongst their workforce, is another persistent topic in policy circles (TFAC, 2007a, p.12; JOC, 2005; NCV, 2002).

The recurrence of many of these policy objectives over an extended period raises questions about policy implementation. The two most recent publications, by the Joint Oireachtas Committee in 2005 and the Task Force in 2007, uncovered evidence of dissatisfaction within the community and voluntary sector connected to the failure to implement the recommendations of prior reports (TFAC, 2007a, p.6). Aside from this, the gaps and shortcomings in policy must be considered. A homogenised view of community and voluntary organisations prevails in policy documents, and arguably due consideration is not given to variations in the size of groups and their capacity to engage with the state. In addition, the relationship between the state and the sector is put forward almost entirely in positive terms, while the fact that the third sector can often challenge the state or serve as an arena of protest is seldom mentioned. It is also apparent that the state has not been overly anxious about how representative groups are or what mandate they hold and have taken the *bona fides* of community groups at face value. However, the key question is whether or not the government is sincere in its intentions when it describes the third sector as an important partner in social and economic development and whether there has been a real transfer of power from state to community. In order to understand this one must look at issues of governance and decision-making.

5.2.3 From government to governance

The development of more elaborate links between the state and the third sector must be seen in the context of the changing nature of the state in post-industrial societies and the consequent imperative towards reform of state institutions. The rise of multinational corporations and the prevalence of supranational institutions like the EU have disempowered national governments. At the same time, pressure for local and regional autonomy has increased, undermining the state from below. Citizens have also become more alienated from the political process and both turnout in elections and trust in political institutions have declined. In order to meet these challenges of a rapidly changing and uncertain world, there has been a shift away from hierarchical notions of government towards the more fluid concept of governance. Governance denotes a more inclusive, transparent and accountable approach to policy-making, and seeks to attain greater legitimacy for public policy by involving a range of non-state actors (Newman, 2005; Lovan, Murray & Shaffer, 2004; Rose, 1999; Giddens, 1998).

The debate at European level has framed the Irish response to the issue of governance. The Commission published a White Paper on Governance in 2001, in which it acknowledged the difficulties faced by contemporary democratic institutions. It admitted that many Europeans felt alienated from the work of the EU and that this problem trickled down to national and regional administrations. In order to reconnect with citizens, the Commission identified the reform of governance as one of four main objectives for the EU, acknowledged that change would be required at all levels and that civil society had to be a central player in this process. *“The goal is to open up policy-making and make it more inclusive and accountable”* (CEC, 2001a, p.8). Five key principles of good governance were spelled out: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. In addition, the significance of the local arena, the primacy of

partnership structures, and the necessity for systematic consultation and dialogue comprised other aspects of renewed policy- and decision-making (CEC, 2001a, pp.10-14).

The commencement of reform in Ireland predated the EU's White Paper and an array of measures was undertaken over the course of the 1990s. Social partnership became well entrenched at national level and was transmitted to sub-national level following the establishment of local Area-Based Partnerships from 1991 onwards (Crickley, 1996, pp.7-10). The formation of the NESF in 1994 gave the social partners a further opportunity to make an input into policy formulation. In 1996, the Strategic Management Initiative proposed a major overhaul of the public service and promulgated a new overarching ethos, focused on service delivery, on the public as customers and on a more business-like approach to the work of government, incorporating strategic planning. Better co-ordination of services, reducing bureaucracy, decentralising decision-making, ensuring value for money, and efficient use of resources were additional core precepts in this process of change (DOELG, 2000, pp.3-4).

A significant milestone in the progression towards more open government occurred with the passing of the Freedom of Information Act (Oireachtas Éireann, 1997). Government departments and state agencies became more open in their dealings with the public and adopted new information and communication technologies to this end. Public consultation on all types of public policy initiatives became routine, as government actively sought the input of ordinary citizens. The key objective of government throughout has been *“to develop a modern, flexible and responsive public service capable of meeting the challenges posed by a rapidly changing global environment”* (DOELG, 2000, p.13). The end result is that government has now become less hierarchical and has been superseded by a more dynamic heterarchy characterised by greater interaction between different sectors and geographical scales (Bartley, 2006).

Local government is the level of public administration closest to community organisations and, as a result, constitutes an important concern for this work. It is widely acknowledged that the local government system in Ireland is a poor relation of its counterparts elsewhere in Europe; it has a much narrower range of functions, lacks financial independence and is dependent on central government for a large share of its resources (Callanan, 2003; Quinn, 2003). Indeed, Irish local government has long been regarded in the public mind as a byword for inefficient services and suffocating bureaucracy. Reform of the local system appeared on the political agenda at several junctures since the 1970s, but only piecemeal changes were carried out as opposed to a more wholesale renewal that would have brought Ireland into line with other jurisdictions (Keoghan, 2003). However, as part of the aforementioned modernisation of national government, the rainbow coalition administration of the mid-1990s attempted to bring about more meaningful change at local authority level following the publication of *Better Local Government* (DOELG, 1996).

Many of the guiding principles within *Better Local Government*, along with *Modernising Government: The Challenge for Local Government* (2000), replicated those at national level. Efficient use of resources, delivery of quality services and proper funding of local government were three features of the more strategic, customer-oriented and corporate approach. From a community perspective, however, the prioritisation of local democracy and greater involvement by the public in local government was of greatest interest. It was stated in more than one policy pronouncement that local government would have to embrace new models of democratic participation. *Better Local Government* stressed: “Representative democracy can be strengthened by the involvement of local people in a meaningful way in devising new approaches to meet community needs” (DEOLG, 1996, p.17). Similarly, the Local Government Act of 2001

aimed to “*support community involvement in local authorities in a more participative local democracy*” (Oireachtas Éireann, 2001, p.1).

A significant report by a special Interdepartmental Task Force on Local Government and Local Development contended that “*local government must become participative as well as representative ... local government does not operate at present in a manner geared towards energising local communities*” (ITF, 1998, p.35). In order, therefore, to harness the vigour of the community sector, this report urged all local authorities to adopt partnership processes and the associated norms of community development, inclusion, flexibility and area-based approaches. These principles contained much terminology that would have been alien to local government and called for a change of mindset in institutions not always noted for their enthusiasm in engaging with the public. Consequently, new structures in the form of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), which drew their membership from elected representatives, business, community and other sectoral interests and brought a long-term, planned dimension to the work of county and city councils, were established to give expression to this new discourse of local governance.

In spite of these changes, a complicating factor in the process of reform remained; the presence of new Area Based Partnerships on the local development landscape. The partnerships had originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s in order to foster innovative and grassroots-led responses to social and economic malaise, and utilised funds from EU and national programmes to achieve this aim. Their success was based on creative skills, a local, area-based approach and their strong community base (Chisholm, Enright and O’ Shaughnessy, 2000; Crickley, 1996). However, flaws in the system had become apparent by the mid-1990s. Local authorities felt somewhat aggrieved by the fact that these bodies were given new responsibilities and funding

while they remained neglected (Walsh, 1998). In addition, there was little co-ordination between local authorities and the partnership companies, and public confusion regarding the roles of the various agencies operating at local level led to duplication and hampered the work of different agencies (ITF, 1998, p.32). There was also a perception that partnerships were beyond democratic control and unaccountable to elected representatives.

To address this situation, the aforementioned Interdepartmental Task Force set out to examine how the two contrasting systems could be integrated to further improve public administration at county and sub-county level. The Task Force issued an initial report in 1998, in which it recommended new local governance structures based around the idea of vision planning and involvement of all relevant agencies. The outcome of this process was the establishment of County/City Development Boards (CDBs) in 2000 under the umbrella of each local authority. Guidelines produced by the Task Force in 1999 set out the terms under which the Boards should operate. They consisted of representation from the widest spectrum of society; business interests, community representatives, local authorities and state agencies. Each board was charged with devising and implementing a ten-year strategy for the social, economic and cultural development of its functional area to ensure the integrated delivery of public services at local level. Widespread consultation was to precede the production of these strategies. The County/City Development Boards were envisaged as a new departure and signalled the deepening of social partnership and participatory democracy at local level (ITF, 1999, pp.8-10).

There were two important offshoots from local government reform and the formation of the CDBs that related specifically to the community sector. The first was the formation of Community and Voluntary Fora (CVF) in each local authority area. These bodies were set up to

act as a mechanism for community and voluntary groups to make their input into the CDB strategy, while also affording organisations an opportunity to network and debate matters of mutual concern. The CVF representatives would be elected by all community and voluntary organisations on an Electoral Area basis (ITF, 1999, p.19). Secondly, a stronger role for local authority Electoral Area Committees was envisaged. These committees comprised County and City Councillors and dealt with physical and infrastructural development issues, such as roads and housing, at local level. Under new proposals, they were to be expanded to include the relevant local CVF members when discussing issues of community concern and it was foreseen that they “*should become the vehicle for expressing the views of all strands locally*” (ITF, 1999, p.21). The CVFs and Area Committees aimed to copper-fasten progress towards more participatory forms of democracy at the micro-level.

It has been in the interest of government to strengthen and resource the community and voluntary sector so that it can participate fully in new governance structures. Many aspects of local government reform, therefore, are interlinked with national policy on the third sector. Perhaps of greatest import has been the government’s aspiration to change the organisational culture of local authorities. Participative democracy, partnership, decentralisation and community development have become the new mantras in the administration of public affairs. These concepts are connected to another growing policy concern for national and local government, one which also connects with civil society; the idea of sustainable development.

5.2.4 Community and sustainable development

Since its inception, a recurring theme in sustainable development discourse has been community participation. The Brundtland report in 1987 and Agenda 21, an outcome of the Rio

Summit in 1992, both acted as clarion calls for greater efforts to engage with ordinary citizens on developmental issues. Sustainable development, according to the EU's 2001 strategy on the issue, can act as a catalyst for institutional reform and can, therefore, be connected to initiatives on governance and partnership (CEC, 2001b). Owing to the fact that sustainability requires building consensus among different and often competing interests, civil society is one of many sectors consulted about social, economic and environmental matters. A key dimension of sustainability centres on action in the local arena and it is at this level that communities are called on to contribute. Implementation of sustainable development policies, therefore, has impinged upon the official discourse of community activism and voluntary participation.

When it began to seriously address sustainable development in the mid-1990s, the initial focus of the Irish government was on the local context. In 1995, guidelines were published on Local Agenda 21 aimed specifically at local authorities (DOELG, 1995). This policy document was inspired by Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21 agreement which had called upon all local authorities to produce a strategy for sustainable development for their functional areas by 1996. The government's guidelines were not intended to be prescriptive, but gave individual local authorities the flexibility to respond to their own local circumstances. In this respect, it mirrored the global concern with involving people in the process and with meaningful action. Dialogue and consensus-building were, therefore, identified as essential elements of the process of drawing up a Local Agenda 21, and it was stressed that the entire community should be involved.

In striving to involve people in the Agenda 21 process, the guidelines perceived the role of local authorities as one of co-ordination, raising awareness and motivation. County and City Councils, for example, were urged to provide the public with information on environmental problems and to engage in dialogue with citizens (DOELG, 1995, pp.15-17). However, the flow

of information could occur in both directions and community organisations were identified as a resource in this respect when it was stated that “*Local groups can be well placed to identify the particular needs of their communities*” (DOELG, 1995, p.15). A range of organisations under the broad umbrella of civil society were identified as potential participants in this process, and included residents’ associations, environmental groups and other community organisations. Local Agenda 21 was seen to complement and could build upon already existing partnership and consultative mechanisms. In this way, it fitted into the wider reform of governance outlined in the previous section. Each local authority had to appoint a dedicated Local Agenda 21 officer who would prioritise moves towards sustainable development.

In tandem with local activity, national level policy on sustainable development progressed with the publication of a national strategy (DOELG, 1997). The strategy was concerned primarily with sectoral issues in the national context, but it did have something to say about the local community milieu. The active participation of society was held up as an important overall goal, as was the principle of shared responsibility for the environment. Government also pointed to the campaigning role that community and environmental groups had played in raising awareness of the need for sustainable development and encouraged local authorities to support such work. In fact, a new annual Environmental Partnership Fund was put in place to finance local environmental projects undertaken by voluntary organisations (DOELG, 1997, p.164).

The strategy also identified the spatial and physical planning system as in need of modification to advance the sustainability agenda. Subsequently, a major overhaul and updating of planning legislation took place in 2000 with the passing of a new Planning and Development Act (Oireachtas Éireann, 2000). Three sections of the Act are relevant when examining the role

of community groups in local development. Firstly, public consultation for development plans at all spatial levels became a statutory requirement and stringent timescales and procedures were set out in law; prior to this, public consultation had not been mandatory and when it did occur was extempore. Secondly, the Act introduced statutory Local Area Plans at the micro-level of towns and electoral areas, with a provision that a local authority could enter into an arrangement with a local community group for the purposes of preparing such a plan. Finally, the Act made reference to the need for “*proper planning and sustainable development*”, stating that all development plans had to comply with such principles. Curiously, though, the Act did not contain a legal definition of proper planning and sustainable development, which gave planning authorities greater freedom to interpret the concept on their own terms.

In the meantime, progress towards sustainability was buttressed with the publication of a revised set of Local Agenda 21 guidelines for local authorities by national government in 2001. The Minister for the Environment identified “*greater local ownership of and participation in local decision making for sustainable development*” as the core of Local Agenda 21, which again placed communities at the heart of the debate (DEOLG, 2001, p.4). Crucially, the new guidelines sought to dovetail sustainable development with the aforementioned process of reform in local government. The new CDB structures provided an institutional framework for implementing sustainable development, with guidelines stating that “*the County/City Development Board process should be considered, given its strategic intent, as the Agenda 21 process for each city/county*” (DEOLG, 2001, p.16). The document also identified numerous projects which the government viewed as prototypes that could be imitated by communities nationwide. A community plan produced by Glounthaune Community Association in 2000 was included amongst these exemplars of best practice (DOELG, 2001, p.58).

In summary, Chapter 2 expounded upon the theoretical interconnection of community, voluntarism, sustainable development and governance in the Third Way project. The foregoing discussion has elaborated upon how both international institutions and the Irish state have placed the Third Way agenda at the core of their social policies. The influence of the wider intellectual and political debate concerning the role of communities in local development upon specific aspects of Irish social policy is, therefore, clearly apparent. Furthermore, the connection between public policy on the community and voluntary sector and other policy domains is unambiguous. Undoubtedly, therefore, the objective of involving community and voluntary organisations in planning and development is not a peripheral policy issue; it goes to the heart of the changing nature of the state and of the requirement for sustainable development. The Irish state has courted civil society because it sees it as an important player in helping to achieve wider developmental goals.

While policy has been framed at the international, European and national scales, the key concern here is how policy has been implemented at a grassroots level. Critics have argued that the pronouncements of policy-makers have rung hollow, and that there has been little substantive change in day-to-day decision-making at local level. Space does not permit a detailed analysis of all relevant policies and issues. Consequently, the remainder of this chapter concentrates on the three most far-reaching and, in the view of this author, most significant interfaces between the community sector and the state within the East Cork area. Firstly, the establishment and operation of new local development and local governance structures are scrutinised; included in this analysis is the Area-based Partnership Company operating in the study area, ECAD Ltd., as well as the Cork County Development Board (CDB) and the Cork Community and Voluntary Forum (CVF). Secondly, the engagement of community groups with the spatial forward

planning system is outlined, against the backdrop of statutory public consultation, rapid physical development and the adoption of the Cork Area Strategic Plan. Finally, the role of groups in providing social services in their localities in partnership with state agencies is examined.

5.3 Partnership and new local governance in East Cork

5.3.1 Area-based partnerships²: the case of East Cork Area Development (ECAD)

The centrality of the partnership concept to Ireland's official developmental discourse since the late 1980s was alluded to in Chapter 3. In the early 1990s, this model was transmitted to the local arena and government established twelve local partnership companies on a pilot basis to devise and implement innovative programmes for economic and social development. Initially funded under the EU's Poverty III programme, the rural partnerships subsequently availed of support under the LEADER I rural development programme. The advent of LEADER reflected a paradigm shift in development theory internationally; sectoral approaches towards social and economic advancement had been eclipsed by more integrated and holistic area-based practices, in which developmental initiatives were more sensitive to local circumstances and geography. The experiment with local partnership was deemed successful enough to spread the model nationwide and by the commencement of the LEADER II programme in 1995 the establishment of a further 23 local development companies ensured that all rural areas of the country were under the coverage of an Area Based Partnership.

² Area-based partnership is just one of the terms used to describe organisations such as ECAD. They are also variously referred to as local development partnerships, local development agencies and local action groups.

Anticipation of LEADER II funding provided the impetus for the formation of East Cork Area Development (ECAD) Ltd. in 1995. The company was a coalition of disparate interest groups, chief among them the East Cork Enterprise Board, a network of business people from the region, along with local branches of the Irish Farmers Association and the Imokilly Federation of *Muintir na Tire*. Heretofore, these organisations had been pursuing their agendas separately, but the prospect of grant aid acted as an inducement to bring them together under the umbrella of ECAD. LEADER II commenced in East Cork in 1996, with a total budget of approximately £1.7m, and the following year ECAD was awarded the contract to implement the Local Development Programme (LDP), a government-funded scheme to address social exclusion at local level. ECAD's board of directors, which oversaw the implementation of these programmes, consisted of community representatives, those affiliated to local Chambers of Commerce and the tourism sector, and employees of state agencies operating in the area; these were joined in 2000 by three members of Cork County Council.

Owing to the area-based philosophy on which it was founded, ECAD operated with a broad remit, which included small enterprise development, tourism promotion, environmental enhancement, training programmes and addressing social disadvantage. However, the foremost consideration here is the relationship between ECAD and the community-based organisations described in Chapter 4, and the extent to which these local groups were empowered through their engagement with ECAD. Partnerships such as ECAD have been held up as examples of bottom-up, participatory development in action; they provide communities with a forum to articulate their concerns and participate in decision-making about developmental initiatives in their localities. The counter argument has been that partnerships were in fact a creation of the state and public funding was intended to stimulate community activism on the government's terms.

Interestingly, one ECAD board member acknowledged that those involved in its formation were acutely aware of the LEADER I programme in West Cork and that they were driven by the prospect of a similar funding initiative for their area. This raises an important, albeit a hypothetical question; whether or not ECAD would have arisen organically in the absence of state intercession.

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the work of ECAD had a significant impact upon the community sector in East Cork. The company provided a professional structure that community organisations could approach for advice and information and employed a team of community workers to engage directly with groups. Indeed, a board member admitted that a voluntary management structure could never have aspired to offer a comparable level of support (EC4, 14/07/'04). What is more, ECAD accorded a central place to community revival within the broader process of rural rejuvenation and, in doing so, espoused the language and principles of community development, incorporating notions such as participation and inclusion. Much of this would have been new to East Cork's community sector. One highly significant measure of the LEADER programme, for instance, was Animation and Capacity Building; in local development parlance, this referred to the process of energising communities and equipping them with the capabilities of self-reliance and independence.

Animation was crucial; one interviewee referred to the dearth of active community organisations in the region prior to the advent of ECAD (EC3, 26/05/'04). Although *Muintir na Tire* along with Glounthaune and Glanmire community associations were represented on the board from the outset, many other areas of East Cork lacked effective community representation. Under the LDP, ECAD was instrumental in forming new community structures in the three main towns of Cobh, Middleton and Youghal. Community training was also identified as a critical

funding stream and annual training programmes were a central feature of ECAD's work from its inception. Indeed, one community training programme focused on the theme of community planning, a topic which will be considered in more detail below, and encouraged communities to adopt strategic visions for their localities. It would be a mistake, then, to measure ECAD's impact on East Cork's community sector solely in terms of tangibles, such as finance; the organisation made a more profound impact by initiating a new phase of professionalised community activism.

Consequently, the bar was raised for community groups who wished to participate in local partnership and avail of support. As one ECAD spokesperson pointed out when interviewed: *"when it comes to it, whether we like it or not, if a community structure or body wants to attract resources for itself ... it's got to have a professional face"* (EC3, 26/05/'04). Community groups could not expect funding unless they proved they had the capacity to plan their activities and manage any public monies received. Some of East Cork's community groups adapted well and rose to this challenge. Very often, these organisations were represented on ECAD's board and sub-committees; they became adept at drawing down funding and were regular attendees at training programmes and other events. For various reasons, however, other community groups were less involved. A former chairperson of Dungourney/Clonmult Community Council, for instance, remarked that the entire philosophy of ECAD *"went over the heads"* of the group that he led (DC1, 01/03/'04). One interviewee from Glanmire commented that *"We're under the umbrella of ECAD, but we're finding that umbrella doesn't cover us very well"*, and added that *"maybe it's our fault"*, reflecting a perceived limitation on the part of his community (GM2, 10/03/'04). For a variety of reasons, therefore, some groups did not engage

as strongly as others with the cutting edge approach to local community development espoused by ECAD.

An oft-repeated criticism of partnerships has been that, because the approach is based around consensus, contentious issues are not addressed. One particular episode in East Cork lends credence to this argument. In 2001, Indaver Ireland Ltd. applied for planning permission to construct a hazardous waste incinerator near Ringaskiddy on Cork Harbour, and a campaign of community opposition was initiated owing to public health concerns about dioxin emissions. Many community representatives who had engaged with ECAD over the years, some of whom had been on its board and sub-committees, were active in the protest movement. Local business interests, however, who were faced with rising waste disposal charges, professed their support for the project; they were represented on ECAD's board through the local Chambers of Commerce. Ultimately, ECAD could not take a clear-cut position on the issue as it could well have proved divisive. The incident showed up one of the major weaknesses of partnership and had ECAD not been wedded to the state and business, and had been instead under the sole control of local community organisations, it would undoubtedly have been vociferous in its opposition.

Overall, the work of ECAD has impacted positively on many community groups in the study area, and the statements of several interviewees affirmed this point. The partnership organisation operated at a level above place-based, local community associations, but was nonetheless close to the grassroots. It was, therefore, more attuned to events on the ground than state institutions and, consequently, could be more flexible and responsive to local issues. Community groups that built up a fruitful relationship with ECAD were drawn into a more focused and strategic method of community organisation. They were exposed to and absorbed

new ways of thinking and fresh ideas around local development, planning and sustainability. This often forced them to look beyond their limited local horizons to consider regional, county and national issues. In a world where global and national events impinged upon local communities, this was to their advantage. It must be noted that specific individuals within local community groups provided leadership in developing strong relations with ECAD.

Nevertheless, ultimately ECAD and other partnerships across Ireland were creations of government, and the state continued to exert tight control upon them, above all in terms of their structure, the rules under which they functioned, the funding they received and their financial reporting requirements. Hart, Jones and Baines (1997, p.189), in their analysis of community empowerment, distinguish between strategic and operational power and this also characterised the position of community groups within ECAD. Communities could dictate local priorities and expenditure and played a strong role in the day-to-day operations of ECAD. However, this occurred only within wider strategic parameters laid down by the state. This was indicative of a pluralist, as opposed to a radical, paradigm of community work, not challenging the structures of power but acquiescing with the existing system and pointed to the lack of a radical edge to community activism and representation in East Cork.

5.3.2 Cork County Development Board

Local development agencies such as ECAD became well entrenched as the 1990s progressed, but they had originated and developed outside of the more established local government system. There were few linkages between the two and even evidence of strained relations as local authorities felt their role was being neglected or usurped. A process of local government reform was initiated nationally (see 5.2.2 above), resulting in the establishment of

the Cork County Development Board (CCDB) in March 2000. Its membership was symptomatic of the partnership ideal; local authorities, local development agencies, state agencies and the social partners were represented in broadly equal measure. Cork CDB was, owing to the county's size, the largest in the country with thirty-eight members initially, which deviated markedly from the recommended total of twenty-five. The Board aimed to integrate strategic planning and service delivery among its constituent members through the formulation and adoption of a ten-year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the county. The primary consideration in this section is the implications of the CDB's activities for the community groups under scrutiny.

The paucity of community group representation on the CDB is the first issue that requires comment. Just three of the thirty-eight members were chosen from among local community organisations, although small-scale community and voluntary groups could influence the process indirectly through the elected local authority and local development agency representatives. Overall, however, influence of community groups within the CDB was outweighed by local politicians, professional civil servants and special interest groups. It could be said that in practice the constitution of the CDB did not live up to the principles of community involvement, participatory democracy and voluntarism that were espoused in the national policy pronouncements that laid the ground for CDBs (DOELG, 1999, p.8). Voluntary participation was the exception rather than the norm and public servants, alongside the growing cadre of development professionals, were the main drivers of the process.

Cork CDB embarked on a two-year process to produce its Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development, which was finalised in April 2002 (CCDB, 2002). This detailed and glossy publication contained 323 actions under diverse headings such as balanced

and sustainable development, quality of life, infrastructure and education & training. It is striking, therefore, that awareness of the CDB strategy was extremely low amongst the community group members interviewed. While five out of the six groups studied had registered as community organisations with the CDB, for the majority this was the furthest extent of their involvement. Although the work of the CDB was broached in some interviews with community group members, it was apparent that only a well-informed handful were aware of the details of the process and no interviewee raised the CDB strategy in discussion without first being prompted. This is not to say that the CDB strategy did not have some impact at grassroots level; but there was a clear disconnection between the CDB and place-based community groups.

Generally, it was those in leadership positions in East Cork's communities who were most familiar with, and who had attended some meetings of, the Cork CDB. These community representatives conceded that there was some value in the CDB in that it allowed them to get to know the personalities involved in the various state agencies. More often than not, however, an unsympathetic view was advanced. The most frequent criticism was that in attempting to surmount duplication and streamline local development systems the CDB had, in fact, the opposite effect and added another layer of bureaucracy. Furthermore, the additional meetings that participation in the CDB entailed extra strain on volunteers who were already active in their own localities, while much of the work of the CDB was seen to be irrelevant. One interviewee was left to conclude that "*The Community Council couldn't give a damn about what's happening at County Development Board level really*" (CT1, 25/11/'03). A mixture of ignorance, indifference and denigration, therefore, characterised the relationship between the CDB and community groups.

When examined from an objective standpoint, the issue of scale may help explain the lack of community buy-in into the CDB. While the CDB's focus was at county level, the horizons of community organisation tended to be localised in nature. Furthermore, a representative of the CDB conceded that the principal economic development agencies, chiefly the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, had also shown a lack of commitment to the process. Their scale of operation was at national and regional rather than county level. Attempting to marry the concerns of various organisations with different scale horizons had proved difficult. Another weakness of Cork's Board centred upon its size and unwieldy structure. One community representative drew attention to the fact that the thirty-eight members met just four times annually and that such infrequent activity could not lead to fundamental change (EC2, 12/05/'04). This problem was compounded by the fact that the CDB and its administrative wing, the Office of Community and Enterprise, was ineffectual in compelling other public agencies to fulfil their commitments to the actions laid out in the Strategy. When one considers that the CDB lacked its own financial resources to implement actions, it can only be concluded that the body was never going to effect significant change.

Many of the criticisms of the CDB process in Cork were reiterated when the government commissioned an independent evaluation of CDBs nationally (DOELG, 2008). Undertaken using a qualitative methodology, the review, which was carried out by Indecon Ltd., concluded that CDBs had been effective in bringing stakeholders together and had performed well as information-sharing networks. However, it identified the lack of commitment from some agencies and the fact that CDBs appeared toothless in many aspects of their work as deficiencies. The dearth of in-depth co-operation between the various agencies emerged as a shortcoming; while information was freely exchanged between them, there was a reluctance to share resources.

The Community and Voluntary Fora, which will be discussed below, failed to attain the level of recognition that community representatives felt it deserved. One can argue strongly that, from the perspective of community participation at least, CDBs failed to live up to their initial promise.

It has been widely argued that the transformation to sustainable development requires local decision-making structures that allow effective participation by ordinary people and grassroots community organisation (Warburton, 1998). At their inception, the County Development Boards appeared to promise a great deal in this respect. In practice, the case of Cork has shown that CDBs were reformist rather than revolutionary in nature. The work of Cork CDB was largely a technical and bureaucratic exercise in achieving synergies between public sector agencies at local level. To this extent it achieved limited success, but only by focusing upon a small number of priority areas and working through sub-committees. Ultimately, however, the CDB has not delivered the kind of sweeping institutional changes that might herald a path to sustainability based on participatory community activism.

5.3.3 Cork Community and Voluntary Forum

The establishment of Cork Community and Voluntary Forum and the greater prominence ascribed to local authority Area Committees were of more direct relevance to community groups than the County Development Board itself. The Cork Community and Voluntary Forum (CVF) was set up in February 2000 to provide an avenue for community and voluntary sector representation. Groups who registered with the CVF were entitled to elect delegates on an Electoral Area basis. Cork CVF comprised two members from each of the county's ten Electoral Areas; the vast majority of the study area for this thesis is located in the Middleton Electoral Area

and thus chose two members. The work of the twenty-member forum was supported by three full-time professionals in the Office of Community and Enterprise and three CVF members were chosen to speak for the Forum on the CDB itself. As well as acting as the voice for the community, it was envisaged that CVFs would address matters of specific concern to community groups, such as public liability insurance, attracting new volunteers and sourcing funding. Since its inception, Cork CVF has published a regular newsletter and maintained a website.

On the whole, Cork CVF can be regarded as an unsatisfactory experiment in community participation and a number of factors justify this assertion. Firstly, across the breadth of community groups and individuals surveyed, levels of involvement were low and awareness of the CVF could best be described as vague. An official in the Office of Community and Enterprise, interviewed in October 2004, estimated that the 750 groups in Cork County who had registered with the CVF constituted perhaps only one third of the total (CCC2, 05/10/'04). This argument is supported by the data for East Cork; in February 2005 there were 86 community and voluntary groups in the study area registered with the CVF, even though the author estimated that there were 243 such groups across East Cork. In addition, there was certainly no strong sense that the CVF was at the forefront of a cutting-edge switch towards more participatory democracy or that community groups were in any way animated by the process. Indeed the author's own experience as a community worker in East Cork and, more recently, in the North Cork area reinforces the view that, by and large, local community organisations had not embraced the CVF.

The dearth of awareness and participation raises question about the representativeness of the CVF membership. Even the Community and Enterprise official admitted that the mandate of

some CVF representatives was “questionable” and went on to state frankly “*I can’t admit that they’re the real voice of that sector*” (CCC2, 05/10/’04). Two reasons for this can be identified. Firstly, the screening of groups who register with the CVF was not stringent. While community groups had to provide basic details on their officers, membership numbers and main activities, a more thorough check to assess the group’s *modus operandi* and democratic credentials was not carried out. Allied to this, all groups were given an equal weighting regardless of their size, composition or constituency base and so relatively small special interest organisations held the same clout as large groups representing entire parishes or villages. Although there was no evidence that the system had been abused, one community activist in East Cork argued that registering bogus community groups with the CVF would be a relatively straightforward exercise (EC2, 12/05/’04).

Secondly, low turnout at many CVF elections undermined the organisation’s authority. This was borne out by the author’s experience of an election held to fill a vacant position for one of the two CVF representatives for the Midleton Electoral Area in May 2002. Just a handful of community activists were present on the night. This was in spite of the fact that the outgoing CVF member for the area had telephoned over 60 groups in the preceding days to encourage their attendance. Moreover, one of the candidates for the vacancy had a suspect background in terms of community participation. This individual had been pursuing a personal issue under the guise of a community group, of which he was the one and only active member. Even though he was unsuccessful in his bid, the fact that he was permitted to go forward illustrated the inherent flaws in the CVF process and brings the debate concerning representative versus participatory models democracy into sharp focus. Participatory initiatives such as the CVF were clearly devalued if those who participated did not have a solid support base in their local communities.

Like the wider CDB process, only a well-informed few, who were generally in positions of leadership in their community organisations, who acted as the main point of contact between their group and external agencies, were fully apprised about the intricacies of the new CVF structures. Like the CDB, criticism of the CVF was strident. Such was the strength of the views of one community leader he specifically asked not to be quoted directly on the issue. He found that the Forum was of little relevance to the day-to-day operation of grassroots community groups and that it merely duplicated many of the activities of partnerships like ECAD. Another activist who was familiar with the CVF claimed that because it lacked its own budget, it had achieved very little in terms of concrete results and concluded that *“if you asked me could I pinpoint what was achieved by the Community and Voluntary Forum, something of significance, I’d find it very hard to find it”* (EC2, 12/05/’04). Finally, CVF meetings added to an ever-increasing calendar of meetings that voluntary activists were expected to attend, adding to their workload.

In tandem with the establishment of the CVF, rejuvenation of local authority Area Committees aimed to complement the shift towards participatory democracy. These committees had been set up on an Electoral Area basis and their function was to improve delivery of services at local level by overseeing the implementation of local authority policies and spending programmes. Their membership consisted of elected representatives and local authority officials, but a key proposal accompanying the establishment of CDBs/CVFs was that representatives from the community and voluntary sector would be added to each Area Committee, thus strengthening local involvement. To date, however, this proposal has not been carried through, primarily due to resistance from County Councillors, who have been reluctant to cede power to what they perceive to be unelected and unaccountable community representatives.

The failure to deliver on this policy objective has undoubtedly undermined community confidence in the new model of local governance. Referring specifically to the appointment of community representatives onto the Area Committees, one interviewee stressed; *“Until such time as that is done, I think the Community and Voluntary Forum will be a talking shop”* (EC2, 12/05/’04).

Cork County CVF was a comparatively young organisation when interviews were conducted during 2004 and whether or not it has made progress in the interim must be examined to give a more thorough assessment. A national federation of CVFs was established in 2005 and this collective went on to negotiate an insurance scheme with a private company tailored to the needs of community groups. This has significantly reduced insurance premiums for these groups and has been an important cost-saving initiative. On balance, however, the impact continues to be weak. The CVF has unfulfilled potential to act as a voice for the community sector to highlight the issues faced by groups and to challenge government and the private sector. However, it can hardly be referred to as an independent voice given that it is ultimately a creation of the state and did not emerge organically from the bottom-up.

On the surface, it would appear that the state has gone to significant lengths to include community organisations in decision-making at local level through a host of new institutional arrangements. The Area-based Partnership bodies established in the early 1990s espoused a bottom-up approach to local development and had strong community representation. Reform of the local government sector at the turn of the millennium precipitated the birth of County Development Boards and Community & Voluntary Fora. Part of the rationale for these new structures was the necessity for participatory forms of democracy. In practice community organisations have not gained any significant power and the state has retained a strong level of

control over the local development system in terms of determining structures, operating rules and financing. One could argue that what has really occurred is that the model of bottom-up, grassroots participatory development has in fact been imposed from the top down and that this fundamental contradiction explains the failure of state policy in this area.

5.4 Community participation in spatial planning

5.4.1. Introduction

The switch from government to governance and the desire to increase public participation in decision-making which underwrote the CDBs and CVF was also reflected in adaptations made to Ireland's physical planning system. The Planning and Development Act of 2000 represented perhaps the most significant overhaul of the statutory planning system since its initiation in 1963. The requirement in law for public consultation was its most significant aspect; the Act obliged planning authorities to initiate a comprehensive dialogue with interested parties as part of the process of making development plans and set out stringent procedures and timetables to guide this process. Heretofore, public consultation had been *ad hoc*, piecemeal and optional. A new form of development plan, the Local Area Plan, designed to ensure proper planning at micro-level, was another feature of the Act of particular interest to the community sector. Finally the Act signalled the arrival of sustainability as a key concept and sought to promote "*proper planning and sustainable development*" at all levels.

However, community involvement in the planning system was not characterised by the well-intentioned ideas of partnership and consensus-building. Instead, arising from the massive expansion in all forms of material development which accompanied economic expansion, the planning system became the battleground where competing interests jostled to impose their

views as to how change should take place. Community groups were just one voice among many clamouring to be heard and attempting to determine the nature of physical development. This placed communities in opposition to, and often in conflict with, other interests such as private developers, landowners and the business sector and their considerations or opinions were not always taken on board. This section reviews the physical planning process in Cork from the perspective of community involvement and questions the degree to which community concerns can be reconciled with other planning goals, particularly the promotion of economic growth and development. It examines the CASP, the process of drawing up the Cork County Development Plan 2003 and a number of Local Area Plans which were adopted in 2005.

5.4.2 Cork Area Strategic Plan

Chapter 3 outlined how a series of long-term, strategic land use plans have shaped the economic development of Cork since the late 1970s. The most recent of these, the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP), was commissioned early in 2000 after the LUTS II plan has reached the end of its lifespan (Atkins et al., 2001). Like previous strategic plans for the Cork area, it intended to set out a broad-brush and long-term strategy for the physical development of the metropolitan region which would guide future provision of transport infrastructure and zoned land, linking specific locations to explicit development proposals. An overarching concern was that Cork should be made attractive for inward investment and that economic development should be facilitated. The CASP was adopted in October 2001 and set out a twenty-year vision for the Cork area which included the entire East Cork region (see Fig 3.2, p.153). Given its strategic nature, an understanding of the CASP is vital to provide the background to the formal participation of East Cork's community groups in the planning process. Consequently, the

primary consideration here is to ascertain whether or not the process by which the CASP was produced accorded with the shift towards participatory governance and partnership.

There are two aspects of the strategy which had a bearing upon the manner in which it was compiled. Firstly, the CASP, like its precursors, was not a statutory plan and was not governed by planning legislation, which meant that there was no legal obligation upon the authorities to undertake public consultation. In addition, the area covered by the CASP was not a legally-defined administrative area, but a more nebulous spatial entity; the commuting hinterland of Cork city. Secondly, although it was commissioned jointly by Cork City Council and Cork County Council, a consortium of private planning consultants, led by W.S. Atkins, directed the production of the document, which arguably put the process at a further remove from the general public. These issues are significant here because the CASP sought to induce major changes in many of the settlements included in this study, notably Glanmire, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill and Middleton. In this sense, the strategy had a much more profound impact upon East Cork's communities than the work of the CDB or CVF and, therefore, whether or not the voices of community groups were taken on board deserves attention.

Appendix B of the finalised CASP document summarised the consultation process (Atkins, 2001, pp.146-153). It described the constitution and roles of the various committees which had made an input into the strategy; these were, in descending order of involvement, the Study Team, the Steering Group, the Advisory Group and the Member's Forum. The ten stages that brought the strategy from its initiation to its conclusion were also sketched out. Moreover, this appendix made a number of assertions relating to the conduct of the consultation: that *"public consultation has been a critical component of this process"*; that consultation had been ongoing throughout the project; that the community and voluntary sector had been represented;

that there was public support for the process and outcome of the study. When one examines the consultation process in detail, however, each of these assertions can be challenged and, indeed, refuted.

First of all, it is necessary to spell out the nature of the consultative process as it related to community and voluntary groups. A total of twelve public exhibitions were held at ten separate venues from November 20th to December 1st 2000, providing just short of eighty hours of public input. Three of these half-day events to showcase CASP took place in the East Cork area, in Cobh, Middleton and Youghal. At each exhibition, the key themes and issues were presented in textual and graphic format. The main instrument utilised to gauge public opinion on the strategy was a brief questionnaire (Plate 5.1). This contained nine statements relating to the proposed strategy and asked respondents to tick ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘not sure’ in each case. Those who wished to make further input were invited to make written submissions. It will be argued here that this consultative process was flawed in terms of its timing, the methodology employed and the level of public response.

The first weakness of the public consultation related to its timing. By the commencement of exhibitions in November 2000, the Study Group, which was the body working on the strategy on a daily basis, had been in operation for more than six months. During this period, considerable background research had been undertaken, a preferred strategy had been identified and an interim report had been published in August 2000. In fact, the main goals and objectives of the CASP had been discussed as early as June 2000. All of this occurred prior to any public discussion and before community and voluntary groups had any opportunity to make a meaningful input. This lends weight to the contention that public consultation was merely an exercise in tokenism and that the essence of the CASP had been settled upon in advance by the

Be part of the Cork Strategic Plan Study

questionnaire

Please note that this leaflet contains limited information.

We hope that you will visit the exhibition or our website (www.corkcorp.ie/corkstrategicplan.html) where more information will be available.

We want and value your views, so please complete this questionnaire and return by post. Alternatively, you may write to us at the FREEPOST address given overleaf. The deadline for questionnaires or other submissions is 15th December 2000.

Many thanks for your help

About you

a. Are you

Living

☐

Working

☐

Visiting

☐

Studying

☐

In the Cork area?

Other (please state)

b. What is your age?

Under 18

☐

18 - 30

☐

31 - 44

☐

45 - 60

☐

Over 60

☐

c. Where do you live?

d. Where do you work/study?

e. Name (optional)

f. Organisation (optional)

Your views (please tick one box for each question)

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. New housing development should be accessible to public transport, to the City and other centres	☐	☐	☐
2. High quality, convenient public transport should be provided, and car use discouraged at peak times and in urban areas.	☐	☐	☐
3. Higher density development should be encouraged in order to support public transport.	☐	☐	☐
4. Housing units, types and sizes in the same area should be mixed to promote balanced communities.	☐	☐	☐
5. Business and job opportunities; shopping and social facilities should be integrated with housing development to reduce travel and car usage, and create complete communities.	☐	☐	☐
6. A clearer distinction should be made between urban and rural areas to reduce urban sprawl.	☐	☐	☐
7. The countryside should be protected and high quality agricultural land should be conserved.	☐	☐	☐
8. Heritage and amenity locations should be protected by strong environmental policies.	☐	☐	☐
9. The City has an important role as the heart of the region, and should be regenerated to attract high quality jobs, housing and services; and to protect historic areas.	☐	☐	☐

If you would like to make any additional comments regarding the Preferred Strategy for 2020 please use the space below (or write to us at the address given overleaf)

Plate 5.1 – Questionnaire used as part of the public consultation exercise for the Cork Area Strategic Plan in November and December 2000. (Source: Atkins et al., 2001)

professional planners and bureaucrats who were centrally involved in the process.

A close analysis of the questionnaire would lead one to conclude that it was purposely designed to elicit responses favourable to a predetermined agenda. There was arguably very little likelihood of significant public disagreement with statements such as “*New housing development should be accessible to public transport, to the City and other centres*”, or “*The City has an important role as the heart of the region, and should be regenerated to attract high quality jobs, housing and services*”. These leading statements and the generally positive responses they provoked gave the impression of strong public support for the strategy. Only one question generated a less than positive reaction; just 46% agreed that “*Higher density development should be encouraged in order to support public transport*”, while 19% of respondents disagreed and 34% expressed uncertainty. How this was interpreted by the report’s authors was telling; they commented that “*this theme needs to be further developed with the communities to develop understanding of the range of benefits that would accrue from raising densities from the extremely low densities that exist in Cork at present*” (Atkins et al., 2001, p.149). In other words, concerns expressed by the public were founded on ignorance and their perspective had to be altered to bring them into line with the expert view. This undoubtedly goes against the spirit of public consultation. In any case, just 261 completed questionnaires were received, representing just 0.075 per cent of the population of the CASP area, or one questionnaire for every 1,330 individuals.

Forty-nine individuals and organisations availed of the opportunity to go a step further than the questionnaire and make a detailed written submission. However, over one quarter of

these came from members of the Advisory Group, who were insiders in the process. Business groups, academics and individuals also featured prominently amongst those who advanced their views in this way. Carrigtwohill Community Council was the only community organisation in East Cork which gave its input in writing, and across the Greater Cork area the contribution from community organisations was weak. ECAD also made a submission, in which this author was heavily involved and which did endeavour to raise issues on behalf of communities. The view advanced by ECAD was that the CASP failed to consider the social impacts of the level of development proposed for East Cork and that the views of communities were not being considered in the strategy. Given the late timing of these submissions, it is debateable as to whether they had any discernible impact upon the final strategy.

The declaration that the community and voluntary sector were represented can also be disproved. The basis for this claim appeared to be that the CASP Advisory Group, which met regularly during the process and made formal comment on the Interim Report, counted the Directors of Community and Enterprise for Cork City and County amongst its members. These public sector officials headed up the administrative arm of the CDB and CVF bodies. They were not, however, mandated by community and voluntary groups and could not in any way be considered a representative voice for the sector in relation to the CASP. Moreover, they provided just two members on the twenty-three member Advisory committee. Local area partnerships, such as ECAD, might have provided a more effective means of articulating community concerns, yet they were not represented on any of the groupings that oversaw the production of the CASP. To claim, as the CASP document did at several junctures, that the community and voluntary sector was centrally involved was patently not the case.

When one considers the scope of the CASP and its long term implications for the development of Cork and its communities, the adequacy of the public consultation process must be called into question. It was at odds with the trend towards inclusive policy-making and participatory governance which was being espoused in official circles both prior to and after the completion of the plan. Quite how 261 questionnaires and a small number of written submissions, all of which came at a stage when most of the groundwork had been done, can be interpreted as a meaningful exercise in public consultation or as a ringing endorsement of the strategy is mystifying. Admittedly, the CASP did improve on the LUTS plans, which had been drawn up with no public consultation whatsoever. However, the consultation process was neither thorough nor indepth. As one planner who was closely involved in the process confessed, “*there was no way it was going to be more than nominal*” (CCC5, 16/02/’05). While the CASP, therefore, did not accord with the new dispensation of partnership and governance, it had a bearing upon development planning at county and local level and provided the backdrop to the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans.

5.4.3 Cork County Development Plan 2003

Simultaneous with the production of the CASP, Cork County Council began a review of its County Development Plan in the latter half of 1999. At that time, the Planning and Development Bill was at draft stage and public consultation on development plans was not yet obligatory, yet the Council’s Planning Policy Unit (PPU) showed some foresight by taking soundings from community groups and other interested parties as part of an extensive schedule of public meetings. It was in this context that Glounthaune Community Association approached ECAD in November 1999 seeking a technical assistance grant to help them prepare a written

planning submission for their community. ECAD utilised £5,000 of LEADER monies to engage an environmental consultancy, RPS Cairns, to provide training, not only to Glounthaune Community Association, but to all community organisations across East Cork who wished to undertake this community planning exercise. One distinctive feature of the process was that Local Agenda 21 was employed as a guiding framework for the training programme, thereby placing the notion of sustainable development at the heart of this experiment in participatory planning. In addition, an ECAD file note refers to a meeting between ECAD executives and a Senior Planner from the PPU in January 2000 where the latter stated that he was “*very enthusiastic*” about the proposed training and added that “*The County Council would welcome the opportunity to meet with community groups as opposed to landowners and property developers*”. From the outset, it appeared that this training initiative would be based on a collaborative partnership and the principles of participatory democracy.

The PPU and RPS Cairns commenced the community planning process with a joint public meeting in Middleton in January 2000 attended by over one-hundred community activists from across East Cork. This was followed by three workshops during February facilitated by the consultants, at which there was significant voluntary input from individual communities. The end product was that fourteen community organisations presented their finalised submissions to the County Council at a ceremony on June 7th 2000. These documents highlighted a range of social, economic and environmental issues in each locality and community groups anticipated that the needs identified for their areas would be enshrined in the forthcoming County Development Plan. As one community worker involved in the process commented: “*There was certainly a sense around the time that this was very important and that it was great that they were being asked their opinion at the beginning of something rather than very much at the end*”

(EC5, 15/09/'04). Indeed, the entire enterprise was commended the following year by the government in their revised guidelines on Local Agenda 21, which made specific reference to the Glounthaune Community Plan, declaring that it “*represents a major input by the community to develop the locality over the next seven years*” (DOELG, 2001, p.58).

The eagerness with which community organisations embraced this participatory planning process was based upon the assumption that their proposals would be addressed speedily. Nevertheless, over two and a half years had expired by the time the Cork County Development Plan was formally adopted in January 2003. A number of reasons for this lengthy delay can be postulated. Cork County Council decided to restart the process when the Planning and Development Act came into force in late 2000 and were thus compelled to adhere to the strict two-year timetable set out in the legislation. From a planning perspective, there were also advantages in delaying the process until after completion of the CASP in October 2001 and the launch of the National Spatial Strategy in November 2002. Two further developments had a profound impact upon the eventual outcome. Firstly, the influential Senior Planner who had initially invited community groups to make submissions and who had enthused about the East Cork community plans departed from the PPU. Secondly, when the County Development Plan was eventually adopted, it only addressed zoning issues in the twenty largest settlements in the county, omitting many smaller communities in East Cork. It was stated that detailed planning for these smaller settlements would be addressed through Local Area Plans.

Consequently, when interviews were conducted with community representatives throughout 2004 and early 2005 a strong air of disillusionment was palpable. Glounthaune Community Association's plan, for instance, had been singled out at national level as an exemplar of participative community planning; yet one exasperated community activist there

delivered a harsh judgment on the entire exercise, saying “*the whole thing is a joke from the bottom up*” (TB6, 11/06/’04). This view was supported by another long-standing member of the GCA, who at one stage of the interview dejectedly leafed through a copy of the plan and commented; “*as far as we can see ... there’s total lip service being paid to that effort*” (TB1, 15/03/’04). Elsewhere in East Cork, one interviewee accused Cork County Council of “*trying, I suppose, to whitewash people and tell them they’re being involved whereas ... I think they’ve no say whatsoever*” (BC1, 02/12/’04). One GACA member, referring to their costly and detailed plan, also criticised the County Council, stating bluntly that “*we here in Glanmire are of the opinion that they do not take the opinions of local communities into consideration*” (GM4, 18/03/’04), while in Carrigtwohill a sense of bitterness was expressed because the long hours of voluntary effort invested in the community plan appeared to have come to nought (CT4, 14/04/’04). There was no denying that, four years after the submission of community plans, there was a high level of dissatisfaction with the outcome. The challenge, however, is to explain this harsh, often virulent, condemnation by community representatives.

A combination of interrelated factors provides an understanding of the interviewees’ comments. First of all, the adoption of the County Development Plan was beset by the aforementioned lengthy delay. What is more, this occurred in spite of the fact that Cork County Council initially imposed a deadline of May 31st 2000 for all community submissions. The closing date had lent a sense of urgency to the formulation of community plans and created an impression among community activists that the issues raised by them would be addressed shortly afterwards. In addition, community groups expended considerable sums to get their plans professionally printed, in some cases incorporating maps and colour photographs, and circulated copies widely in their localities. The completion of the plans was accompanied by extensive

fanfare and publicity; Glounthaune, for instance, invited a junior government minister to formally launch their plan, Glanmire Area Community Association's plan was publicly endorsed by Brian Crowley MEP, while the Cork County Manager attended a function in the Jameson Heritage Centre, Midleton in June 2000 at which plans for East Cork were presented. At that time it seemed that the planning submissions heralded a new relationship between community groups and the local authority. Four years later, however, many of those interviewed felt that an opportunity to build upon the momentum, enthusiasm and energy generated in the early months of 2000 had been spurned.

The perceived failure of Cork County Council to promptly address the issues raised in the community plans was compounded, in the eyes of community representatives, by the pace of development across the region. As Chapter 3 has shown, the period between 2000 and 2006 was one of unprecedented housing development and population increase in East Cork. During this time of rapid change, community groups were at pains to point out that they were not opposed to development. On the contrary, in both their plans and interviews, they stressed the need for plan-led development, where infrastructure, community facilities and services would be put in place in tandem with housing development so that potential negative social implications of major development could be circumvented. Many of their specific demands reflected their desire for proper planning and sustainable development, in line with the principles of Local Agenda 21. The perception, however, was that the County Council had not adequately regulated the construction sector during the boom and had facilitated poorly planned housing developments and this confirmed the view that the community planning exercise had been mere tokenism.

Comments made by two of the driving forces behind the Glanmire plan, which were echoed in other communities, illustrated that the principal reason for the negative attitudes was

the failure of the community planning process to produce tangible benefits. One interviewee posed the question: *“Where is the physical proof or physical action that Glanmire is benefiting at this moment from these plans? There’s no evidence. I don’t see any evidence of it”* (GM3, 15/03/’04). The principal author of the Glanmire plan asserted that *“there hasn’t been one single issue identified in this community four years ago that has actually come to fruition”* (GM4, 18/03/’04). Coastal erosion in Ballycotton, a comprehensive master plan to guide the physical development of Carrigtwohill, a community sports facility in Glounthaune: these were among the concrete local issues identified which communities had asked planners or other state agencies to address. The fact that little or no progress had been made on these and other issue plans explains much of the interviewees’ indignation.

Nonetheless, a critical analysis demanded that validity of the community representatives’ stance should be scrutinised. Accordingly, two County Council planners were interviewed and queried about the planning process and contested many of the claims made by community groups. One planner was adamant that there had never been a commitment to incorporate all community concerns into the County Development Plan. He emphasised that the process of making a development plan was ultimately a function of democratically-elected County Councillors, who had to have regard to other interests and that community groups could not be given free hand to dictate its content (CCC3, 06/10/’04). Moreover, the duration of the process for adopting the County Plan had been made clear to community groups at the outset, thus countering their criticisms of the lengthy delays; this is supported by one press report which followed the completion of the community submissions (Kelly, 2000). Planners pointed out that they had to marry consideration of local issues with regional and national matters, whereas communities were preoccupied with local concerns. The view was expressed that community

groups were often too parochial in their outlook and that they ignored the significance of national and county-wide planning (CCC3, 06/10/'04; CCC4, 05/11/'04; CCC5, 16/02/'05).

Furthermore, some demands made by communities, such as provision of schools and health services, were not spatial planning issues *per se*, but fell under the remit of other state agencies. County Council planners, therefore, somewhat unfairly bore the brunt of condemnation from community representatives when, in fact, weaknesses in the broader system of local governance were to blame. It was noteworthy, for example, that there was only a tenuous connection between the County Development Plan and the County Development Board (CDB) strategy referred to earlier. In many ways, planners were sympathetic to community concerns and emphasised that they valued the input and local knowledge of community groups. There was common ground in term of the recognition of the need for plan-led development. However, planners were constrained by a system where developers, landowners and private interests were also striving to make their imprint on the Development Plan and by the lack of a more integrated and co-operative approach to development among public sector agencies.

In retrospect, then, several misunderstandings and mixed messages beset the experiment in community planning in East Cork in 2000. An ECAD press release which followed the submission of the plans, for instance, stated: "*It is hoped that these plans will be **included** in the County Development Plan*" (emphasis added). The use of such loose and ambiguous language was bound to lead to a lack of clarity surrounding the process of making a development plan and about expected outcomes. There appeared to be an overly simplistic perception among some community representatives that the entire contents of their plans would be adopted *en bloc* by the County Council when in reality the process was not as straightforward as this. While the training provided to community groups by ECAD had been valuable in terms of mobilising local

communities to plan for their future, its weakness was that it neglected to position these community plans in the wider statutory planning process. In summary, it can be said that a more measured and strategic community planning methodology may have yielded a better outcome. In any case, a new instrument, the Local Area Plan, provided an opportunity to redress the fractured relationship between the local authority and East Cork's community groups.

5.4.4 Local Area Plans 2005

When one examines the CASP and the County Development Plan it could well be concluded that planning policies centred upon community participation and partnership were founded upon hollow rhetoric and that community representatives felt very much let down by their engagement with these processes. Local Area Plans (LAPs), however, seemed to offer grounds for optimism. LAPs were introduced under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and signalled a new departure in Irish planning. Section 18(6) of the Act enunciated an important dimension of LAPs, stating that: "*A local authority may enter into an arrangement with any suitably qualified person or **local community group** for the preparation, or the carrying out of any aspect of the preparation, of a local area plan*" (Oireachtas Éireann, 2000, emphasis added). This gave planning authorities the scope to involve community groups directly in LAPs, in keeping with the concept of participatory development, something which would arguably have boosted community confidence in the end product.

Following the adoption of the County Development Plan, Cork County Council initiated ten LAPs for each of the county's Electoral Areas, along with three special LAPs for locations along the new suburban rail corridor proposed in the CASP, namely Monard/Rathpeacon, Carrigtwohill and Midleton, in June 2003. It was envisaged that these plans would address

smaller settlements and rural areas which had not been specifically dealt with in the County Development Plan. The detailed consultative process for LAPs allowed for public input at three separate stages; pre-draft, following the publication of the draft and after the publication of any proposed amendments to the draft.

This statutory process was augmented by a one-day workshop on the LAPs organised by the PPU in April 2004, which targeted attendance by members of the CVF and representatives of the local partnership companies, including ECAD. One of the stated aims of this workshop was “*inclusion of community groups’ needs in the Local Area Plans*” (Cork County Council, 2004, p.1) and according to one of the planners interviewed it was a “*huge success*” (CCC3, 06/10/’04). Several themes which communities had highlighted in 2000 reappeared in the report of the workshop; lack of community facilities, the inappropriate scale and pace of development and the need for plan-led development. Most importantly, there appeared to be a genuine engagement between planners and community representatives and many shared concerns about the need for proper planning.

This author decided to assess the depth of the planners’ commitment to inclusive participatory planning. A submission was made on the draft Carrigtwohill Special LAP in February 2005 exhorting Cork County Council to enter into a legally binding arrangement with Carrigtwohill Community Council to prepare the plan under the aforementioned Section 18(6) of the Planning Act (see Appendix IV). The Community Council had been exceedingly active on planning issues and was in a strong position to advocate on behalf of the wider community. In their formal written response, the County Council chose not to take on board this suggestion, stating that they considered the standard consultative procedures to be adequate. This would indicate that a fully-fledged partnership between the PPU and community organisations

represented a step too far for the local authority; they were prepared to take on board significant input from communities but at the same time retained overall control of the LAP process. Indeed, to date there has been no instance anywhere in the state where a community organisation has been taken on as a formal partner in the preparation of a LAP.

Owing to the fact that the fieldwork was completed prior to the adoption of Cork's LAPs in September 2005, it is not possible to offer a thorough evaluation of community involvement in these plans. However, given that the topic did arise in several interviews, a number of brief points can be made. First of all, many of the community organisations who made submissions on the County Development Plan made little or no input into the LAP process, even though the latter were undoubtedly far more relevant to local issues. Certainly there was not the same degree of community mobilisation and enthusiasm surrounding the LAPs as there had been when the County Development Plan was being compiled a few years previously. It appeared that there was disenchantment with the entire concept of planning. Protracted delays in completing the LAPs intensified this climate of frustration; although the process commenced in mid-2003, it took over two years for the LAPs to be finalised. This meant that there was a five-year hiatus between the plans drawn up by community organisations and the implementation of statutory plans that addressed the situation at local community level.

There is arguably a widespread perception that community involvement in the planning system is reactionary and negative in nature. On the contrary, this section has shown that East Cork's communities attempted to engage positively with the planning system and took a progressive view in relation to the need for plan-led development. The CASP, however, showed little consideration for the community perspective and was primarily aimed at facilitating economic development. Both the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plans were

plagued by lengthy delays at a time when East Cork was experiencing unprecedented change. It is unsurprising, then, that community organisations were highly frustrated by their encounters with the planning system. New legislation and a fresh approach based around consultation and listening to community concerns promised much at the outset but ultimately failed to deliver.

5.5 Community organisations and the social economy

5.5.1 The mixed economy of welfare

Social service provision can be considered alongside reform of governance and the planning system as a key locus of interaction between community and state. In this respect, the concept of the mixed economy of welfare has been central to the Third Way vision; rather than assuming sole responsibility for meeting welfare needs, the state acts in concert with the community and private sectors. This approach arose due to the perceived problems associated with the post-War Welfare State and the mixed economy aims for greater flexibility, innovation and autonomy in meeting the needs of the vulnerable in society. Decentralisation of service provision and the greater involvement of local communities in identifying welfare needs and supplying services have been features of this transition. The mixed economy has generated mixed points of view; critics maintain that it allows the state to offload its responsibilities for societal well being onto other sectors and facilitates neo-liberal public spending cuts (Section 2.3).

The mixed economy philosophy has been influential in the Irish context and has trickled down to the level of the community organisations being examined in this thesis, many of whom were involved in the provision of small-scale social services in their localities. Arguably, implementing state-funded programmes and delivering social services represented the most

intensive interaction between state agencies and community organisations on a day-to-day basis. Voluntary community bodies have become central to the implementation of social policy across a range of areas, most notably childcare and disability services. This section briefly appraises the operation of two specific aspects of the mixed economy of welfare in the study area, analyses the challenges faced by community groups in delivery of these local services and considers whether or not the best interests of community organisations are served by their participation in the mixed economy of welfare.

5.5.2 FÁS Community Employment (CE) Scheme

The Community Employment (CE) scheme was introduced by the state training and employment agency, FÁS, in 1993. At the time of its initiation, unemployment was at 15% nationally and this new labour market scheme had a dual purpose. Firstly, it provided part-time work and associated training for the long-term unemployed with the ultimate goal of enabling their return to regular employment. Secondly, such work took place in community settings and in doing so allowed community organisations to act as sponsors of the scheme, identify work priorities that would benefit the community and avail of CE participants to carry out such labour. In 1998, there were over 40,000 participants on the scheme working across a range of areas including childcare, Tidy Towns and maintenance of community facilities (Giblin, 2001). By the turn of the millennium, the CE scheme was embedded across the Irish community sector, including the East Cork area. Both Carrigtwohill Community Council and Glanmire Area Community Association were sponsors of the scheme. In Carrigtwohill, CE workers acted as caretakers in the community centre. The scheme also fulfilled this role in Glanmire, in addition to providing administrative services to the community association and two assistants in the

community playschool. In both instances, the CE supervisors, while nominally employees of FÁS, had close ties to the respective community associations (CT2, 01/03/'04; GM5, 31/03/'04).

Where CE schemes were in operation, they were regarded as almost indispensable to the functioning of community organisations. *“I’d say you’d find it very difficult to operate without them (CE workers)”* (GM1, 11/02/'04), said one Glanmire interviewee, while the chairperson of the community association asked rhetorically *“Who’d do all the typing? Who’d do all the filing?”* (GM2, 10/03/'04). This issue attained heightened relevance during fieldwork as this period coincided with government rationalisation of the scheme. From a macro perspective, CE was scaled back because economic growth had reduced long-term unemployment. Consequently, the number of places on the scheme was cut from 37,500 in 1999 to 28,000 in 2002 and 20,000 in 2003. This reflected the philosophy of the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat coalition, who stressed that the scheme should merely act as a pathway to employment (O’Brien, 2002; Murray, 2003). However, the adverse impact upon the provision of community services brought about by the reduction in numbers received less consideration from government.

The CE scheme, therefore, could be regarded as something of a double-edged sword for community groups and illustrated the risks that community organisations faced as a result of participating in the mixed economy. It was valuable in the sense that it provided a pool of paid labour for communities, but once the government had attained its objective this pool began to shrink. In a climate where voluntarism was, by all accounts, declining, community groups found it difficult to replace this paid labour with voluntary effort. As one interviewee who was intimately familiar with the CE scheme pointed out;

Twenty years ago we had plenty of volunteers here but ... I suppose I shouldn't say it ... but FÁS in a sense have done away with volunteers. The fact that people are here now, and voluntary people know that there are people here all day paid to do the job ... you'd find it very difficult to get people to take over in a voluntary capacity anymore (GM5, 31/03/'04).

An ethos of voluntarism is one of the defining features of community development; the CE scheme had served to undermine this, with negative consequences for community organisations.

5.5.3 Community-based childcare provision

Childcare was another social service where community organisations were drawn into the delivery of social policy as a result of macroeconomic considerations. Throughout the 1990s, encouraging women to seek employment was a political priority as it helped to meet a growing demand for labour. Figures for East Cork presented in Chapter 3 illustrated the dramatic rise in the uptake of jobs by women; between 1991 and 2006 the number of women at work grew from approximately 5,800 to over 15,900 (p.190). However, as the number of women entering employment increased, existing childcare services proved inadequate to meet demand. Rather than putting in place a state-run network of childcare facilities, government policy focused upon support for private and community-based childcare provision. Under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP), introduced in 2000, capital expenditure and running costs for crèches were funded up to a rate of 90% (Office of the Minister for Children, 2006). County Childcare Committees were established throughout the country in 2002 to act as a conduit between community applicants and national funding departments.

Glanmire Area Community Association and Middleton Community Forum both provided childcare facilities in their respective localities. The former ran a community playschool and crèche catering for over eighty children. Funding came from national government and the Southern Health Board (now the HSE) and two CE workers staffed the facility. The latter organisation had availed of the EOCP for a full-time crèche, which was the chief activity at the organisation's centre and offered a low-cost service to disadvantaged families from surrounding estates. One interviewee in Glanmire expressed pride in the fact that their childcare service was not for profit, that it was managed by local parents and that the crèche and playschool were affordable for those on lower incomes (GM3, 15/03/'04). Clearly, benefits accrued to community organisations from being able to serve the interests of their populace.

There were, however, a number of caveats. In Glanmire, it was felt that the level of funding received from the Southern Health Board to assist in the provision of childcare services was inadequate and, more generally, that the good work being carried out by the GACA was not properly acknowledged. *"I think we, as a community association, who are a voluntary organisation, are getting the Southern Health Board and whoever else is involved off the hook because we're providing a very, very valuable resource cheap"*, commented one member of the management committee (GM3, 15/03/'04). In fact, the crèche and playschool sub-committee of the GACA has to undertake local fundraising to ensure that the service could be maintained. Furthermore, the fact that much of the funding was short-term in nature made the future viability of services precarious. In Middleton, it was apparent that substantial time and energy went into the management of the crèche, perhaps to the detriment of other areas of work. In fact, one member of the management committee acknowledged that the group was in danger of becoming

funding-led i.e. focusing on childcare provision simply because the government was directing resources at that particular service (MF4, 29/01/'04).

This overview of the social economy projects has been brief, but it has been necessary to touch upon this aspect of the state-community relationship. Government would claim to have the best of intentions in allocating resources to community-based services. Nonetheless, there is a strong argument that this model has been counterproductive. Firstly, the level of resources required has, in the view of many community representatives, not been sufficient. The cynical case, as expressed by a community worker with ECAD, was as follows:

I think things like childcare, proper healthcare, proper educational support are all the responsibility of the state ... there's no doubt that those services are palmed off to the voluntary sector because they can be done by them on the cheap (EC1, 10/05/'04).

Secondly, provision of social services at the behest of the state has arguably undermined the ethos of voluntarism and self-reliance which should form the core of all community work. The fact that paid employees operated the CE schemes and childcare facilities compounded the impediments that many organisations faced in attracting volunteers. Additionally, the process of obtaining state funding for services was mired in bureaucracy and uncertainty and did not put community-based services on a secure, long-term footing. The mixed economy of welfare had arguably drawn community groups into relationship of dependence upon the state and had denuded their autonomy.

5.6 Conclusion

The development of a more intensive bond between state institutions and community organisations over the past two decades is clearly apparent to anyone familiar with the community and voluntary sector. From a theoretical perspective, the Third Way approach has placed the concept of community at the heart of contemporary political debate, reflecting wholesale changes in thought about how societies should be developed and governed. Notions such as governance, sustainability, partnership and active citizenship have underpinned this new political discourse. The initial sections of this chapter outlined and analysed how the Irish state has been influenced by this international trend. Successive governments have forged more elaborate policies relating to the community and voluntary sector and have prescribed an important role for communities in measures to reform local governance and implement sustainable development. This has found practical expression in a vast array of official programmes and new structures.

Ostensibly, then, local community groups are supposed to have a much stronger role in the design and delivery of public policy, all the more so at the local level. Participatory democracy requires a transfer of power from elected representatives to citizens who are active in their communities. Decentralisation of control towards the grassroots has been another recurring theme in the debate. This chapter aimed to gauge how far the state has gone in implementing the worthy ideals of community participation. It strived to assess the extent to which community groups in East Cork have been truly empowered and to consider whether they could bring their influence to bear on local social, economic and environmental development. The analysis presented has shown that a large gap existed between theory and practice.

First of all, the operation of new governance structures which were established at local level was dissected. It was concluded that bodies such as the County Development Board and

the Community & Voluntary Forum were structurally weak and have been largely ineffectual. Community representatives who had been involved delivered a harsh verdict on their work, stating that they had created a further level of bureaucracy. Area-Based Partnerships, such as ECAD, had fared somewhat better in their engagement with community groups and were more attuned to the needs of local community organisations. Nevertheless, ECAD was constrained in its activities by rules and procedures laid down by central government and remained almost totally dependent on the state for financial resources.

Reform of the planning system, which brought about statutory public consultation, seemed to augur well for community participation. However, the CASP, which impinged significantly upon East Cork from a planning and development perspective, involved minimal public or community consultation. While community organisations, therefore, could attempt to influence planning at a lower level, through the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plans, the overall strategic direction had been set out in advance without their input. In any case, the efforts of communities to engage with the forward planning system were frustrating and disappointing and there was a strong sense that a significant and innovative exercise in community-led planning during the early months of 2000 had ultimately proved fruitless. Finally, the brief examination of community group involvement in social economy projects indicated that there were mixed views on the benefits to local communities. While groups were enabled to provide valuable services in their localities, their voluntary ethos was somewhat undermined.

Chapter 4 presented evidence that community groups in East Cork were having difficulty in retaining membership and that there was a general view that voluntarism was in decline. It could be maintained that a principal reason for this was the deepening relationship between

community groups and the state. The community sector is now far more professionalised and bureaucratised than it was and a primary cause of this has been the greater level of interaction with state institutions. On the surface, this has been a beneficial arrangement for community groups, in that they have been able to access financial resources and professional support. At another level, however, the state has promised far more than it has delivered. It has arguably raised false expectations and has not created structures and processes to allow for genuine and meaningful participation by community groups in local decision making. The series of case studies in the next chapter will endeavour to delve deeper into these matters and to sketch out in greater detail the nature of the relationship between local community and state.

Chapter 6 – Case studies

6.1 Introduction

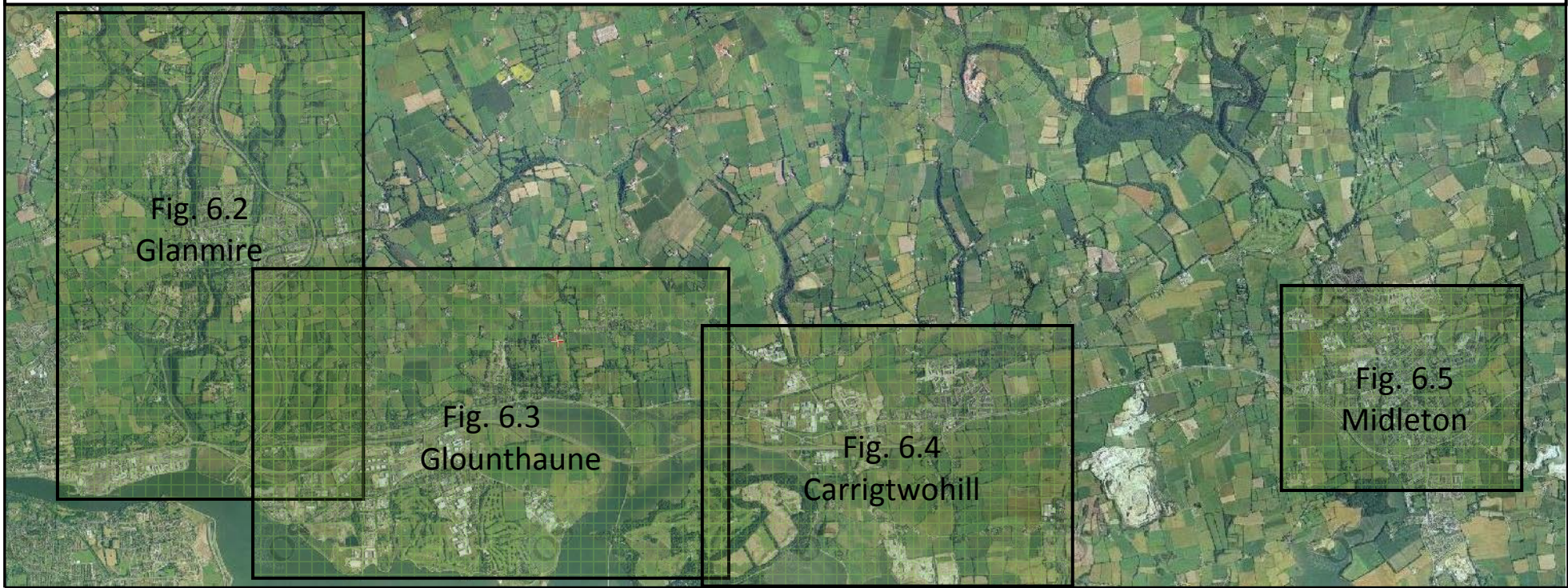
In Chapter 3, the nature of change and development in Ireland and East Cork in the modern era was addressed, with the primary focus on the Celtic Tiger period. It aimed to connect social change at local community level to national and global economic forces and to planning policies at national and regional level. The concomitant trends in voluntary community activity in six study areas were explored in Chapter 4; here it was explained that community organisations had originated as a response to modernisation, but that more intensive patterns of social change over the previous decade had been accompanied by the growth of a more professionalised community sector, which also coincided with a human resource crisis in many organisations. The core themes of this thesis was the subject of Chapter 5; the relationship between the state and community groups and the advent of participatory approaches to local decision-making based on a partnership ethos. Successive governments have propagated political discourses that have ostensibly placed communities at the centre of development processes. However, the evidence uncovered leads one to conclude that substantive change was more illusory than real; the communities of East Cork felt they had minimal influence on the profound transformations that were occurring around them.

In this chapter, the issues raised in Chapter 5 are developed and elaborated upon through a series of case studies that probe the power relations between community organisations, local

and national government institutions, and business interests in East Cork. The notion of a triadic model of development lies at the heart of discourses of community, civil society and sustainability. This theoretical prescription advocates co-operation between community, the state, and the private sector to arrive at an agreed agenda for social, economic, and environmental development (Howell & Pearce, 2001). The previous chapter showed how this approach to socio-economic development has had a significant influence in the Irish policy context. The case studies presented in this chapter endeavour to ascertain the reality of the relationship between community, state and private sector at micro-level. They suggest that development processes at local level are characterised by conflict as much as consensus and that community groups have not been equal partners in determining the course of East Cork's development.

Four case studies are presented below for the communities of Glanmire, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill and Middleton respectively (Fig.6.1). Each case study follows a similar structure. First of all, the locale and setting for the study is set out, giving a sense of place and history to each area, describing its micro-geography and its key social, economic and environmental characteristics. This is followed by a detailed narrative of key dates and events, broadly adhering to a chronological sequence. In conclusion, the underlying agendas of each of the main actors in the case study are analysed and each case study is connected to broader theoretical issues. All studies focus on issues that encapsulate the nature of the relationship between community, state and private sector in each area. As such, the studies aim not only to inform about local circumstances, but also to speak to wider issues in local community development.

Fig. 6.1 – Satellite image of case study areas



Source: Ordnance Survey of Ireland interactive map 2005 (www.osi.ie)

Case studies are not presented for two of the six locations in which fieldwork was undertaken, namely Dungourney/Clonmult and Ballycotton. Although several interviews were conducted in Dungourney/Clonmult during 2004, the Community Council was almost dormant at the time and, indeed, members had discussed winding up the organisation (DC1, 27/01/'04). There was no singular pressing concern around which a case study could be constructed, or no recent issue which had motivated sustained community action, nor any which called into question the power relationships between the community and other interests. This may, in itself, indicate something about the nature of community activism. Ballycotton Development Company was involved in a long-running campaign to modernise the local pier and this would have formed a suitable case study, but limited data were available to probe this issue in depth. Furthermore, as indicated in Chapter 2 (p.120), the conduct of a previous academic study in the village created difficulties in accessing interviewees.

Each study utilises a range of sources (see Chapter 2, pp.111-124). The author's own observations of each area, gleaned while employed in East Cork and during fieldwork, along with the written records of community groups and data from the Census of Population, provide the contextual background. Official documents, both published and unpublished, were highly instructive. Planning application files in the possession of Cork County Council, which can be freely inspected by the public, were particularly important in the case of Carrigtwohill. Submissions on development plans by landowners, property developers and community groups are ordinarily unavailable to the public, but Cork County Council's Planning Department permitted access to these documents. ECAD provided access to its project files relating to the study areas. Glounthaune Community Association supplied extensive written information on its Community Timebank project. Interviews were crucial in providing the insights and

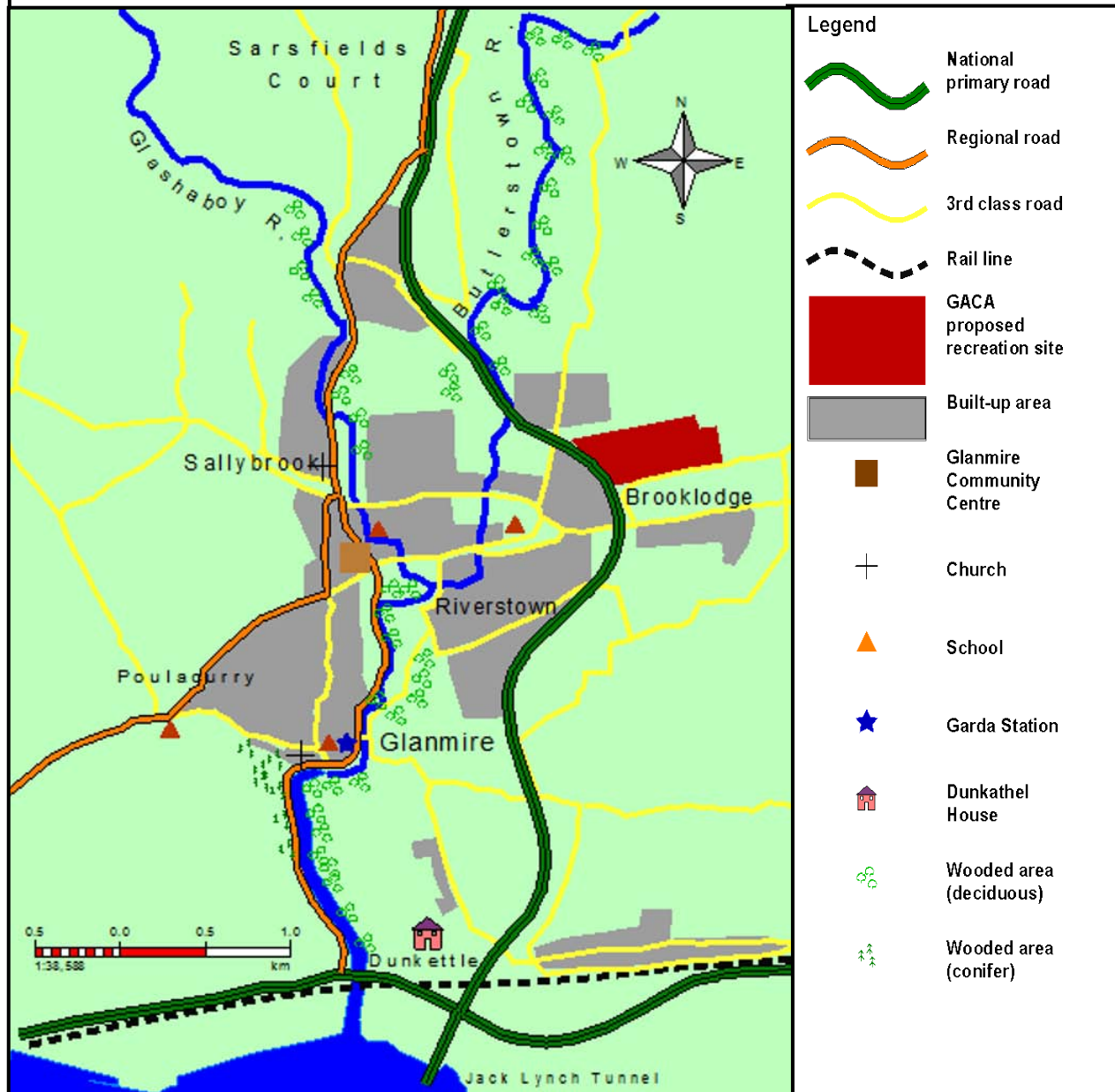
perspectives of actors in the local development process. Requests made to the Family Support Agency, the state agency responsible for administering funding to Midleton Community Forum, under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 were particularly important in obtaining files pertaining to Midleton which would otherwise not have been readily available (Oireachtas Éireann, 2003; 1997). Local newspaper archives and community newsletters were employed to establish or clarify sequences of dates and events.

6.2 Glanmire

6.2.1 Glanmire in context

Almost three miles east of Cork City, the Glashaboy River pierces the low ridge of hills to the north and enters Cork Harbour (Fig 6.2). From its estuary, the river extends upstream through a steep, wooded valley. It was the Glashaboy and its tributary, the Butlerstown, which attracted entrepreneurial activity to the area in the late eighteenth century. During this period, the riverbanks were home to over a dozen industrial mills, breweries and other factories and the ruins of some of these buildings still mark the landscape. A historical publication by the Glanmire Area Community Association indicates that one cotton mill employed a female workforce of over one hundred (GACA, 2002). Simultaneously, the environs of Glanmire became the dwelling place of many of Cork's so-called merchant princes, whose prosperity was founded on the burgeoning trade through the port of Cork during this era. Dunkathel House (1790), Riverstown Lodge and Glanmire House (1750) remain as testaments to the allure of the area as a residential location. From the 1850s, however, the fortunes of native enterprises and elites took a turn for the worse as the Industrial Revolution brought competition from larger-scale British enterprises (Lyons, 1987, p.66).

Fig. 6.2 - Glanmire



The Glanmire valley remained predominantly rural in character into the early half of the twentieth century. Four village nuclei were located within the valley; Glanmire, Riverstown, Sallybrook, and Brookelodge. Although the four villages are separate entities, the overall area encapsulated by them is commonly referred to as Glanmire, as this is the name of the Catholic parish. Their proximity to Cork City, combined with changing settlement patterns as the twentieth century progressed, shaped a new geography for the area. Glanmire's designation as a satellite town in the first Cork County Development Plan in 1967 heralded a fresh phase of development. During the 1970s, private housing estates were constructed and this trend continued into the early 1980s; estates were concentrated in areas north of Glanmire and north of Riverstown. There was a lull in development during the economic recession of the mid-1980s, but further intensive housing construction accompanied the economic boom of the late 1990s. In particular, the completion of the Glanmire bypass in 1992 and the Jack Lynch Tunnel in 1999, which made the south side of Cork City easily accessible from Glanmire, made the area attractive for developers and residents alike and contributed to escalating property prices. Over the past forty years, therefore, approximately thirty private housing estates mushroomed within Glanmire parish. The result was that the population spiralled from roughly 1,000 in the late 1960s to somewhere in the region of 12,000 by 2000 (GACA, 2000).

Ascertaining the exact population is problematic because, for the purposes of the Census of Population, Glanmire is treated as a suburb of Cork City rather than a stand-alone town. What is more, LUTS I & II conceived of Glanmire as a dormitory town, which has wedded it to the Cork metropolitan area from an economic and employment perspective (Skidmore et al., 1978; 1992). Currently, there is little indigenous economic activity, apart from retailing along with some transport companies, warehousing and light engineering, and the limited amount of zoned

industrial land makes major industrial development within Glanmire unlikely. Consequently, most inhabitants work elsewhere in the Cork metropolitan region and daily traffic congestion points to considerable commuting. Census 2006 data on the social class structure showed almost two in five of the population in the higher socio-economic groupings and the area has undoubtedly attracted many professionals and public sector employees.

Accessibility contributes to Glanmire's desirability as a residential location, but its setting is also significant. Its verdant surrounds and tracts of mature, broadleaf woodland lend a tranquil, semi-rural ambience, while the steep-sided valleys and the maze-like road network ensure privacy and seclusion. Views tend to be occluded and there is no single vantage point from where one can get a sense of the scale of settlement. As a result, a stranger passing through the area would probably be surprised to learn that over twelve-thousand people inhabit this self-contained dormitory town. There is no identifiable core or nucleus to the Greater Glanmire area and, although the four villages have merged into one another over time, each retains its own sense of separateness. Nevertheless, there is an indisputable bond between them in terms of community identity, arising from their shared location within the Glashaboy-Butlerstown valley. In addition, three of the villages are situated in the Catholic parish of Glanmire, while the fourth, Brookelodge, although situated in Glounthaune parish, has habitually aligned itself with Glanmire. Sporting loyalties, most notably expressed through the Sarsfields GAA club, are another marker of community distinctiveness.

It was pointed out in Chapter 4 (pp.209-211) how the vitality of place-based community organisations is conditioned by the extent to which inhabitants of an area subscribe to a sense of communal identity and this is an issue that requires investigation in Glanmire given the large influx of newcomers. The spurt of population growth during the 1970s provided the impetus for

the establishment of the Glanmire Area Community Association (GACA)³ in 1980 and fostering attachment to place and community cohesion have been amongst its central objectives in this rapidly-growing area. It has endeavoured to mobilise the community, to organise social activities and to lobby for facilities and services. In its early years, the association held regular community elections, and candidates were duly returned to represent their respective housing estates and townlands (Manning, 1992). From the early 1990s onwards, however, elections became more sporadic and, by the turn of the millennium, the extent to which the recently-arrived populace subscribed to the agenda of the GACA was a moot point. The organisation had weakened from its halcyon days of the 1980s, the core membership had aged and an air of disillusionment was palpable.

Coincident with the sense of malaise within the GACA since the mid-1990s, the changing environment of the Glanmire area was a matter of considerable public debate and concern, as is evident by an analysis of local media and planning submissions by local residents in late 1999 and early 2000. A proposed waste transfer station at Sarsfield's Court spawned local objections, as did plans for a major landfill site at the headwaters of the Glashaboy River (*Evening Echo*, 2000, p.5; *Glanmire Area News*, 2000b). The environmental by-products of large-scale housing construction and population growth, including traffic congestion, flooding, litter and the dearth of public amenities and services were the subject of comment (GM8, 28/06/'04). Meanwhile, voracious property developers continued to pay inflated prices for development land (Barker, 1999). It was pointed out in Chapter 4 that community organisations are often spurred into action as a local response to a crisis generated by regional or national developments. This

³ The organisation was initially known as Riverstown Area Community Association, but changed its name in 2000.

certainly holds true in the case of Glanmire. The fortunes of the GACA and the production of the Glanmire Area Development Plan in the early half of 2000 must be considered in the context of the manifold social transformations generated by economic development in the late 1990s.

6.2.2 Glanmire Area Development Plan

In early 2000, the need for a strong community group to advocate on behalf of Glanmire had never seemed more pressing. Services such as schools, childcare centres and recreational facilities, along with physical infrastructure such as roads, were straining to meet increasing usage. The GACA was also mindful of the need to harness the support and abilities of the incoming population. A new chairperson took office in April 2000 and set about trying to rejuvenate local community activism. The name of the organisation was changed to reflect the stronger association with Glanmire in the public mind and the defunct community newsletter, *Glanmire Area News*, was re-launched (*Evening Echo*, 2000b; GM3, 15/03/'04). In the lead article of an early issue, the chairperson issued a clarion call for a new wave of community activism with the exhortation; “*Who can deny that this is a time for us, the residents of our burgeoning mini-city of Greater Glanmire, to take stock?*” (*Glanmire Area News*, 2000a) This renewed sense of purpose contributed to the genesis of the Glanmire Area Development Plan (GADP).

The process of participatory community planning instigated by ECAD in January 2000 and which was designed to feed into the Cork County Development Plan review was outlined in Chapter 5.4.3. The GACA had ties with ECAD since the latter’s formation in 1996 and was represented directly on the company’s board. ECAD’s initiative was timely from a GACA point of view. However, it was not until April of that year that the GACA decided to commence

drawing up a community plan for Glanmire and, at the monthly meeting of the Association, a steering committee of four members was established to pursue the project. Cork County Council had set a deadline of late May for the receipt of all submissions, giving the group just six weeks to prepare their plan. According the committee chairperson, this tight timeframe did have an advantage in that it focused minds and set a tone of urgency in the committee and the wider community (GM4, 18/03/'04). Remarkably, this individual chose to take six weeks leave from work to concentrate all his attention on compiling the plan.

In keeping with best practice in community planning, the sub-committee initially undertook an indepth public consultation exercise during April and May 2000. A public meeting held in a local hotel was attended by approximately 250 people; the large crowd indicated that the GACA had tapped a current of interest in the community. The steering committee then divided the Glanmire area into eleven sub-districts and held a series of workshops with residents in each to ascertain the important issues at the grassroots. Information gathered through these meetings and workshops was supplemented by a questionnaire survey, designed and analysed by a professional sociologist. Nine hundred households responded to the survey, creating a pool of data which could be utilised in the plan. Finally, the steering committee liaised with over ninety clubs, community organisations, business interests, public agencies and individuals to establish their views (GM4, 18/03/'04; *Evening Echo*, 2000c). As the committee chairperson and chief author of the plan pointed out, “*we attempted to accommodate any interested party who felt they had something to offer*” (GACA, 2000, p.3). The GACA chairperson’s foreword complemented this view, stating, “*it is a document which is truly representative of the views of the people of Glanmire*” (GACA, 2000, p.3).

The *Glanmire Area Development Plan 2001-2007* was unveiled on Friday, June 2nd 2000 in Glanmire by Munster MEP Brian Crowley, having been formally submitted to Cork County Council the previous week (*Glanmire Area News*, 2000c). In terms of presentation, the completed plan exuded a professional air. Multiple copies of the thirty-six page document were produced at a cost of IR£2,500. Printed in full colour, it was embellished with maps, photography, pie charts and other visual material, while photographs of children and of the distinctive sylvan landscape of Glanmire decorated many of its pages. A photo of three toddlers emblazoned with the caption “*It’s their future*”, dominated page one. Indeed, this preoccupation with the future welfare of children was a noteworthy aspect of the plan and reiterates the argument made in Chapter 4 linking young people with the *raison d’être* for contemporary community activism (pp.251-253).

It was not only the style of presentation that was striking; the substance of the plan bore the imprint of an expert approach. The plan called for a strategic approach to development in Glanmire, urging the authorities to ensure a balance between economic, social and environmental development. The vision statement, a device widely used in community planning to encapsulate the essence of a plan, was expressed succinctly in the GADP: “*In a word, our vision statement can be summed up as ‘Community’*” (GACA, 2000, p.8, emphasis in original). The information-gathering exercises which fed into the plan, for instance the traffic survey, indicated that the committee were cognisant of the role that technical knowledge could play in conferring authenticity and legitimacy to their agenda. In addition, the actions spelled out in the plan were explicitly connected to the principles of Local Agenda 21, the UN blueprint for sustainable development which emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit. This was a deliberate endeavour by the steering committee to utilise the practices, techniques and discourses of planners and

development professionals. Clearly, this was viewed as a precondition for being taken seriously by decision-makers in Cork County Council and state agencies.

The GADP contained over forty actions and, in each instance, a timeframe was established while state agencies and other parties whose co-operation would be required were listed. Its focus was primarily on what might loosely be termed quality of life issues. The prominence ascribed to traffic congestion and inadequate public transport was symptomatic of the large commuter population. Health and safety considerations featured strongly, as indicated by demands to improve road safety and develop health facilities and services. There was a marked preoccupation with built heritage and the environment and the necessity to protect the unique landscape and historic character of the place from haphazard development was spelled out. Overall, the content and tenor of the plan owed much to the middle-class constituency of Glanmire and it could hardly be considered a radical programme. By subscribing to the concept of sustainability, the plan's authors had embraced an approach to local development based upon partnership and consensus with public sector agencies.

Apart from the GADP, the significance of planning and development issues in Glanmire was evinced by numerous other submissions on the County Development Plan by local groups and residents. These also brought to light unease about the pace and scale of housing development in the area and deficiencies in social amenities. Of greatest interest was a submission from the Environmental Sub-committee of the GACA made in September 1999, a full eight months prior to the completion of the GADP. This sub-committee had been in existence for several years and had been active on planning matters in Glanmire (GM8, 28/06/'04). Their submission was made just one week after a meeting with Cork County Council's Senior Planner. Although it consisted merely of a three-page letter with no maps or

photographs included, it did highlight broadly similar issues to the GADP. However, the fact that this committee appeared to have had minimal input into the production of the GADP is puzzling.

On the surface, the GADP was a laudable effort in bottom-up, participatory community planning, affording the people of Glanmire an opportunity to have some bearing on the future development of their area. Yet by its very nature, it pointed to the weakness of community organisations in the circuits of power and decision-making regarding local development issues. Throughout its pages, the phrases '*propose*' and '*call for*' recur. Actual implementation of the plan depended, by and large, on the commitment and goodwill of Cork County Council and a myriad of state agencies. The role of the GACA was merely to highlight matters of local concern; in itself it had little substantive power to effect change in the locality. Whether or not the County Council and other state agencies whose co-operation was sought gave due consideration to the expressed concerns of Glanmire community is the central point. A fuller analysis of how the plan was formulated and what efforts were made to implement it can shed light on this.

6.2.3 Participatory planning: theory and practice

The concept of community planning occupies an important interface between community and state. It is a relatively recent notion in the Irish context and has been a component of the policy shift towards including communities in local development processes since the 1990s. An informed understanding of the dynamics of community planning can, therefore, provide insights into the nature of participatory governance in Cork and Ireland. This section presents a more subtle analysis the GADP: it examines the degree to which its objectives were attained, probes

the evident disillusionment with the outcome within the GACA and revisits its formulation and attempted implementation. It then endeavours to explain why the GADP did not fulfil its apparent potential and suggests that an ineffectual local governance system failed to facilitate meaningful participation by community organisations.

The air of apathy towards community planning amongst groups in East Cork was articulated in Chapter 5.4.3 and was felt as strongly in Glanmire as in other communities. When interviewed during 2004, those most heavily involved in the GADP felt that scant progress had been made, chiefly owing to lack of co-operation on the part of the public authorities. Reflecting on the plan, one interviewee stated: *“It’s great to have consultation and it’s great to have plans, but plans are nothing unless they’re enacted and I don’t see anything ... where is the actual action?”* (GM3, 15/03/’04). The question must be posed as to whether this criticism was warranted in the case of the GADP. The following paragraphs, therefore, select some of the key social, environmental and economic issues and actions in the plan and evaluate whether or not the views of the GACA had been taken into consideration.

One pressing demand pertained to the need for the establishment of a Town Council for Glanmire. The plan proclaimed that *“structures must be put in place through which the voice of the local community can be heard”* (GACA, 2000, p.26). Quoting the results of the questionnaire survey, it stated that less than 5% of residents could name all of their local elected representatives and this pointed to a democratic deficit in Glanmire. A Town Council, it was proposed, could rectify this. The provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 were cited, and the Department of the Environment & Local Government and Cork County Council were identified as the appropriate partners to assist in the delivery of this objective. Principle 6 of Local Agenda 21, which specifies that all sections of the community should be empowered to

participate in decision-making, was invoked. To date, however, Glanmire, like many other Irish towns which grew rapidly around the turn of the millennium, remains without a Town Council. Most recently, the Green Paper on Local Government (2008) was non-committal about the establishment of new Town Councils, arguing that the advantages of local participatory democracy had to be balanced against issues of resources, scale and efficiency of service delivery (DOELG, 2008b, p.78).⁴

The shortage of recreational facilities for the young population of Glanmire was highlighted at several junctures in the GADP. Consequently, one of the most significant objectives centred upon a ten hectare parcel of land at Brookelodge owned by Cork County Council. This land had been zoned for light industry in previous statutory development plans. The GADP, however, called upon the County Council to rezone the land for use as a recreational and amenity area to provide space for local sports clubs, stating: *“This land is ideal for the recreational needs of the area and should be developed, in partnership with the GACA and other bodies, into a multi-purpose amenity area with all the attendant facilities”* (GACA, 2000, p.17). Various reports by planning officials at successive stages of the County Development Plan process did not entertain the proposal to any degree and the site remained zoned for industrial use, without any alternative location having been zoned for recreational facilities.

The pace of development in Glanmire, alongside the view that much of this was poorly planned, created a set of interlinked problems which the GADP sought to address. There was a fear that the Cork Metropolitan Green Belt, which separated Glanmire from the City and other adjacent settlements, would be eroded and that Glanmire would, as a result, be denuded of its

⁴ Indeed at the time of writing, the future of existing Town Councils is uncertain. The McCarthy report on public sector expenditure of July 2009 contained a recommendation that all Town Councils should be abolished.

identity as a distinct place. In addition, the unique wooded landscape of the area, which was much celebrated in the plan, was perceived to be under threat. Community representatives maintained that they welcomed housing development, but only in the context of a plan-led approach that would address these apprehensions. However, two zoning decisions made in the County Development Plan 2003 indicated scant regard for community concerns.

At Poulacurry South, to the west of Glanmire village, an 11.5 hectare parcel of land was zoned for residential development, despite the fact that it was part of the Green Belt in the 1996 Development Plan and regardless of sustained opposition by the GACA. This land had been owned by property developers Murnane & O' Shea Ltd. since the early 1990s and was the subject of a successful planning application for twenty-seven houses in 2006. A 30 hectare portion of open land south of Glanmire village at Dunkettle also had its zoning altered from agricultural to residential to facilitate housing development, again ignoring vociferous local resistance. This land formed part of a site purchased by O' Flynn Construction Ltd. for €24m in 2003, who subsequently unveiled plans for a development which included over 600 houses (Barker, 2003). It is unquestionable that, at a time of significant market demand for housing, these decisions displayed the manner in which macroeconomic considerations, specifically the government's desire to bring more housing units onto the market, took precedence over local disquiet.

As housing development continued unabated, problems surrounding poor service provision in Glanmire were exacerbated. With this in mind, the GADP had advocated the provision of a day-care centre for the elderly, a family resource centre and a library, all of which were non-existent at the time. Moreover, the existing community centre, health centre and Garda



Plate 6.1 – The Glashaboy estuary, with Glanmire village in the background. Note the steep, wooded valley slopes which give Glanmire its distinctive setting. (Source: author’s photograph)



Plate 6.2 – New housing development at Poulacurry, Glanmire. This land was rezoned for housing in 2003 in spite of opposition from the GACA. (Source: author’s photograph)

station were judged unsuitable to meet growing demand and required replacement with new facilities. Nevertheless, when fieldwork was conducted during 2004, only the library had been put in place and, while a new medical centre opened shortly afterwards, the majority of the facilities sought were still not in situ five years after the GADP was produced. In summary, the GACA, recalled one member, had been “*praised to the high heavens*” by officials for their plan, yet in practice it did not attain the majority of its core objectives (GM8, 28/06/’04). The roles of the GACA, the County Council and other state agencies must be critiqued to determine why this was the case.

There is arguably an unhealthy tendency in community studies to treat community groups in quasi-heroic terms at the expense of critical analysis. However, a judicious investigation of the workings of the GACA and the formulation of the GADP brings some intriguing factors to light. First of all, the GADP listed four individual members of the steering committee which coordinated the production of the plan. Yet two of these, when contacted for interview, attested that they had a minimal role in the process (GM6, 05/05/’04). Another declined a request for an interview as she felt her role in the plan was so limited as to be negligible. One member contended that “*the formulation of the plan itself was bizarre*” (GM7, 18/06/’04). This individual, who was an officer of the GACA at that time and had been nominated onto the steering committee, claimed he was not consulted or involved during the actual six-week period when the plan was being drawn up and felt frustrated with, and alienated from, the exercise. In addition, while the steering committee could potentially have served as an important vehicle for pursuing the objectives of the plan, it disbanded shortly afterwards, a fact that was bemoaned by its chairperson (GM4, 18/03/’04).

Best practice guidelines for participatory community planning suggest that the wider GACA membership should have featured prominently in preparing the GADP. Yet one founder member, who had served terms as both chairperson and secretary, admitted “*I wasn’t really involved in that ... I’m not really au fait with much of that*” (GM1, 11/02/’04). In a telling remark, the GACA chairperson in 2004 referred to the document as “*John’s plan*” rather than the GACA’s plan (GM3, 15/03/’04). Other prominent GACA members echoed these sentiments and divulged that they had, at most, peripheral involvement in the GADP (GM5, 31/03/’04; GM9, 28/06/’04). In addition, the GACA’s Environmental sub-committee, which was active on planning and development issues throughout this period, appeared to have had a marginal role in the plan. There was no suggestion of conflict between the two sub-committees; rather it seems that there was minimal contact and co-ordination between them (GM10, 11/07/’04). Had they combined their personnel and resources, the GACA as a whole would have been in a stronger position to follow up on the GADP.

One can surmise, based on what has been outlined, that there was not a strong sense of ownership of the plan within the GACA. It is evident that the process of drawing up the plan was, by and large, directed and undertaken by one individual, who had taken six weeks leave from their job and lacked strong contributions from the core membership of the organisation. Moreover, the plan was produced in a short timeframe of six weeks, which further reduced opportunities for meaningful input. A longer-term, more cohesive approach to the plan would have been more beneficial in terms of garnering greater support. It might have ensured that the entire GACA formed a united front committed to pursuing its implementation. Having said this, there was little evidence of fundamental disagreement with the content of the plan and there seemed to be a consensus among GACA members who were interviewed that its objectives

enjoyed the backing of the Association as a whole. The principal weakness in the preparation of the GADP, therefore, centred upon the process, which was flawed from the perspective of participatory community development, rather than the end product.

What cannot be disputed is that the GADP presented a cogent argument to public authorities regarding the need for proper planning and development in Glanmire at a time of rapid growth. Consequently, the fault for the failure to implement its actions must lie primarily with the public authorities and this brings into focus weaknesses in the local governance and development systems in Ireland. In the first instance, the GADP was conceived as a submission to Cork County Council as part of the production of the new statutory County Development Plan. However, from a legal standpoint, the GADP only carried the same weight with planners as each of the remaining 1,838 submissions, the majority of which were from individuals. Although it was compiled by a community-based organisation which had taken soundings from a large proportion of its catchment population, planners were not obliged to take on board any of the GADP's recommendations. No mechanism existed through which community-based submissions could be given special consideration. One planner who was interviewed admitted that the Planning Policy Unit valued the insights provided by community organisation, such as the GACA, but that decision-making functions relating to the County Development Plan remained the preserve of elected County Councillors (CCC3, 06/10/'04).

The case of the GADP illustrates that representative and participatory models of democracy do not sit well together. Community-based planning is founded upon popular participation and on giving people a say in local affairs. It necessitates harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers and appeals to their attachment to place and community pride. Social and environmental issues are more likely to come to the fore in this approach. In contrast,

the traditional planning system has its roots in representative democracy. Furthermore, it is more rigid and technocratic and is more concerned with macro-level issues and facilitating economic development. Where tensions emerge between the wishes of local communities and those of officialdom, the latter are more likely to prevail. While Council planners, therefore, did seek input from community organisations such as the GACA in compiling the County Development Plan, they did not fully embrace community-led planning.

County Council planners should not shoulder the entire responsibility for addressing the breadth of issues raised in the GADP; many were not physical planning issues *per se* and fell outside their remit. They included demands for improved public transport, social services and amenities, adequate provision for the future expansion of schools and protection of the environment and heritage. These matters were the province of other state agencies: the Southern Health Board (now HSE), ESB, CIE, VEC, EPA, OPW, SW Regional Fisheries Board, Coillte, the Department of the Environment & Local Government and the Department of Education were specific in the plan as partners for various actions. Although several of these agencies were consulted when the plan was being drawn up, there is no evidence that they were followed up in any systematic way once the plan was completed. At any rate, many of them operated at regional or national level and their institutional cultures would not have been open to dealing directly with community organisations about localised claims or issues, unless perhaps the demands of the community accorded with their own plans and strategies.

The roles of the Cork County Development Board and the Community & Voluntary Forum in local development were outlined in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3. These new bodies could conceivably have provided a framework for the GACA to engage with state agencies and to seek commitments on some of the actions in the plan. However, as with other East Cork

communities, there was a low level of awareness of, and engagement with, the CDB and CVF in Glanmire. The CDB strategy, finalised in 2002, made no specific reference to Glanmire or the GADP. In any case, these new local governance structures had proven largely ineffectual, as they lacked autonomy and genuine decision-making powers. Indeed, as the work of the CDB proceeded, it became clear that its strategy was too unwieldy and it was eventually forced to prioritise a small number of actions. Overall, the fate of the Glanmire plan indicated the need for deepening democracy, for creating flexible decision-making structures more attuned to local circumstances and for a more sustained engagement between state agencies and community organisations. Quite what structures or institutional changes might be required is beyond the scope of this discussion; all that can be said is that existing arrangements were inadequate.

The GADP had not been consigned to the scrapheap in 2004, but by that stage attempts to achieve progress had taken a new route. The relationship between the GACA and local party politics was touched upon Chapter 4. Although the group was expressly apolitical, there was a feeling among some interviewees from the GACA that the Glanmire area was underrepresented politically at County Council level; just one of four Councillors in the Blarney Electoral Area was a Glanmire resident. Consequently, the view was expressed that the only way to redress poor planning and lack of facilities was to amplify Glanmire's political voice. *"I honestly think that politically is the only way to go. You must have clout; you must have clout inside in the Council Chamber"*, opined one leading figure in the association (GM3, 15/03/'04). The GADP and other East Cork community plans were conceived of as exemplars of a new grassroots participatory democracy in action, but it was through the conventional system of representative democracy and party politics that community leaders in Glanmire ultimately sought to pursue their aims.



Plate 6.3 – Michael Burns was a local election candidate for the Progressive Democrat party in June 2004 while simultaneously chairperson of the GACA, illustrating how community organisations can often be closely linked to party politics. (Source: author’s photograph)



Plate 6.4 – A panoramic view of Glounthaune village from the East Cork Parkway. The old village is on the shoreline in the left foreground, the Church in the right foreground, while the houses on the slopes above this have been developed since the 1970s. (Source: author’s photograph)

When interviews were being conducted in early 2004, the chairperson of the GADP Subcommittee and principal architect of the plan was a candidate for the Labour Party in the June 2004 local elections. He stated frankly *“I’m standing for politics myself, for the Labour Party, and my agenda, my manifesto, is that development plan. It’s as simple as that”* (GM4, 18/03/’04). Meanwhile, the then Chairperson of the GACA was a candidate for the Progressive Democrats. He too conceded that the GADP was a component of his political agenda: *“I’m just taking the extracts out of it ... and I’m working on the bits then that I can work on”* (GM2, 10/03/’04). This stance was re-iterated in his address to the AGM of the association that year, when he stated that the GACA would have to become more political in its approach in order to attain its objectives. That members of the GACA thought it necessary to go down the political route was an acknowledgement of the fundamental failure of participatory planning. The case of the GADP demonstrates that, in spite of new policy initiatives and reform of existing institutions, the local governance and development systems remained weak in terms of listening to and addressing community concerns. Politicians and policymakers have waxed lyrical about the necessity to include the community voice in local decision making, but their innate conservatism meant that they did not carry this radical departure through to its fullest implications.

6.3 Glounthaune

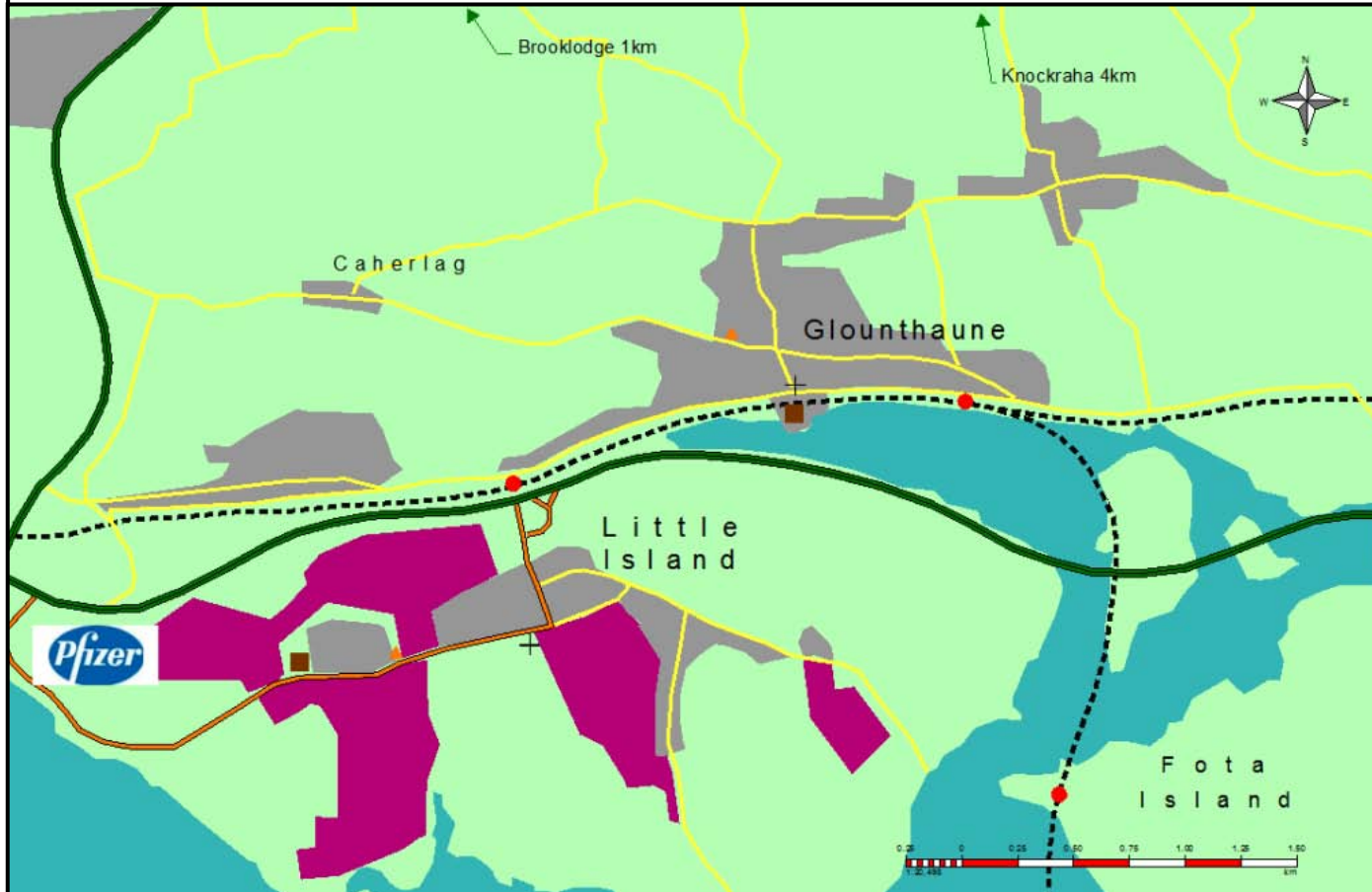
6.3.1 Glounthaune in context

Situated two miles east of the Glashaboy estuary, Glounthaune village overlooks the innermost reaches of Cork Harbour (Fig 6.3). The Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart is the chief landmark and focal point in the village, although the settlement pattern is dispersed. The

community encompasses an area within a two mile radius of the church to the north, east and west and in 2000 there were an estimated 3,500 inhabitants in 750 households within this neighbourhood (GCA, 2000, p.4). The former N25 road and the Cork-Cobh rail line run in parallel from west to east through Glounthaune and serve as its southern boundary. Across the road and rail line from the church, the old village, dating from the 19th century and consisting of several houses, along with the community centre and a public house, is discreetly tucked away on the shoreline. Like Glanmire, Glounthaune exhibits the historic influence of the landed gentry and of the port of Cork. Rockgrove House and Wallingstown House were the homes of aristocratic families, and in the early 19th century local quarries provided ballast for vessels sailing from Cork (Erins Own, 2009).

To the north of the village centre, a steep ridge rises to 300 feet. *“I always thought that the northern ridge facing south was the best part of Cork to build, to live”* professed one interviewee who was part of a wave of newcomers in the late 1960s (TB1, 26/01/’04). Like the south-facing slopes of Sunday’s Well and Montenotte in Cork City, Glounthaune became a location of choice for those seeking placid, semi-rural surrounds. Its topography offers fine vistas of the inner harbour area, seclusion and a pastoral setting. Glounthaune retained a rural character until the 1960s, but witnessed a spurt of urban-generated housing when the national economy blossomed four decades ago. In contrast to Glanmire, though, the nature of development in Glounthaune was characterised by one-off houses rather than estate-style developments and where housing estates were built they were relatively small. The steep terrain and the absence of a public sewerage system acted as restrictions in this respect and current planning policy indicates that this situation is likely to prevail. Nowadays, travellers along the East Cork Parkway can get a full appreciation of the nature of settlement along the hill above

Fig. 6.3 - Glounthaune



Legend

	National primary road		Built-up area		Church
	Regional road		Industrial area		Community Centre & Timebank offices
	3rd class road		Rail station		Pfizer Little Island plant
	Rail line		School		

Glounthaune. Those traversing the old N25 route, however, as all motorists would have done before 1998, would have been unaware of the extent of housing on the high ground above them.

During this author's tenure as a community worker in East Cork in 2002, an outdoor event took place in Glounthaune which provided an opportunity to observe the comings and goings in the village centre on a Saturday afternoon. A noticeable feature was the large number of BMWs, Mercedes, four-wheel drives and other luxurious vehicles passing by. A local man and fellow observer, was led to remark '*there's money in Glounthaune*'. There can be no denying that Glounthaune is a more sought after residential location than other settlements in its immediate vicinity and, as a consequence, has attracted more affluent, upper middle-class occupants. This is borne out by Census data which indicates that in 2006 Caherlag ED, in which Glounthaune is situated, had the highest proportion (41%) of any ED in East Cork in the ABC socio-economic grouping. Many of those living here form part of the managerial cadre for multinational enterprises in nearby Little Island, one of the main industrial locations in the Cork region, while others work as professionals in city-centre offices. When a local pub was put on the market in 2000, a promotional piece referred to some of its clientele as the "*Six o' Clock club, which comprises well-heeled office types who stop off on the way home from work*" (Barker, 2000). All of this combines to give an impression of Glounthaune as a well-to-do area.

Glounthaune village is the centre of the Catholic parish of the same name, which also includes the settlements of Little Island 1.5km to the south, Knockraha 5km to the north and Brookelodge 3km to the north-west. A previous study of the parish's changing social geography drew some interesting conclusions which remain relevant to a present-day analysis (Lyons, 1987). A central finding was that the four settlements within the parish each possessed distinctive social identities and territorial groupings. As Lyons attested: "*The varying lifestyles*

of different sections within the parish have an expression in space which is reflective of the particular influence of affluence, industrialisation, new off-farm employment and mobility patterns” (Lyons, 1987, p.23). While Glounthaune was and continues to be primarily an upper and middle-class settlement, Little Island has a more working-class populace, Knockraha, until very recently, remained a farming community and Brookelodge showed stronger connections with nearby Glanmire than Glounthaune. Furthermore, Lyons observed a clear distinction, in terms of attachment to place and sense of community, between the influx of newcomers, who had arrived since the late 1960s, and the established residents of the area (Lyons, 1987, pp.163-183). This situation still prevailed when fieldwork was being undertaken for this thesis and was a factor which influenced the operation of the Community Timebank project discussed below.

A further important point to emerge from Lyon’s thesis referred to community involvement in Glounthaune. Newcomers to the area, rather than established residents, were instrumental in establishing Glounthaune Community Association (GCA) in late 1960s, a point re-iterated by a number of interviewees for this thesis (TB1, 26/01/’04; TB10, 12/07/’04). Indeed, the GCA has since served as an important vehicle for the integration of newcomers into Glounthaune and as recently as 2002 it spearheaded efforts to welcome asylum seekers who had been housed in a local hotel. Meals on Wheels, a community newsletter and social activities for both young people and the elderly were amongst the other activities undertaken by the association. Elections onto the committee of the GCA had been commonplace during the 1980s and 1990s but, mirroring trends elsewhere, they had become less frequent in later years (TB6, 11/06/’04).

In late 2001, Glounthaune Community Association (GCA) found itself in a similar position to its neighbouring organisation in Glanmire. A detailed and costly seven-year

community plan had been produced and submitted to Cork County Council in June 2000. Twelve sub-committees, with a total membership of over one hundred, had participated in the process in the months prior to this (GCA, 2000). Upon completion, the plan, whose cover page was embellished with a facsimile watercolour painting of the village, was launched by the Minister of State for the Environment and Local Government, Dan Wallace TD, to widespread publicity and was subsequently praised in an official report by his department (*Imokilly People*, 2000; DOELG, 2001, p.58). Frustration mounted, however, as it became apparent that the wishes of the community were far from being met, if at all. This contributed to a sense of disillusionment within the GCA and the organisation seemed to lack a sense of purpose and direction. Attendance at association meetings slackened and there were concerns about its likely demise. This spurred some local community activists into initiating a unique response.

6.3.2 Glounthaune Community Timebank

In November 2001, a group of former GCA chairpersons and long-serving members gathered to debate the future of the organisation. As a result of their deliberations, the group arrived at a number of conclusions. Within the GCA, the hierarchical structure of the organisation and boredom with routine meetings had dissuaded locals from getting involved. The group took cognisance of the impact of wider societal changes; there was a perception that apathy, affluence, individualism, increased employment and commuting were giving rise to less frequent volunteering. One individual, who was instrumental in initiating this process, brought a new concept for discussion. He proposed establishing a Community Timebank in Glounthaune to reinvigorate community activism. This person had a long history of voluntary work at local and national level and was convinced that the Timebank concept, which had originated in the

United States, could work successfully in Glounthaune (TB1, 26/01/'04). Other GCA members rowed in behind the idea and a formal steering committee was established to develop the project.

The concept of the Community Timebank was straightforward. All local residents would be approached and encouraged to 'bank' a certain amount of their time, say twenty hours per annum, as an indication of their willingness to become involved in voluntary activities. They would also be asked to signal their specific interests, skills and needs. This commitment would be recorded in a computerised database which would grow into a bank of tens of thousands of hours and which would form a resource at the disposal of the entire community. A co-ordinator, employed on a full-time professional basis, based in Glounthaune Community Centre, would match the interests and skills of members with the needs of local residents or voluntary organisations, such as Meals on Wheels, Tidy Towns and sports clubs. There would also be potential to establish new community groups as fresh interests were unearthed. Indeed, over 170 potentially new groups were identified at the outset, including support groups, pressure campaigns, social and leisure pursuits, sports clubs and welfare-related organisations. This was designed to make the Timebank appealing to a wide range of people.

Underlying the Timebank project was a conviction that benefits would accrue by deepening local social networks, but that social connectivity would not come about by happenstance and had to be facilitated. The Timebank aimed to generate voluntary participation, while simultaneously providing an opportunity for people to become acquainted with like-minded individuals. A sense of common identity would grow from the grassroots and the trend towards individualism and social isolation would be reversed. Crucially, individuals would only get involved freely and on their own terms and they would not be pressurised or cajoled into community work. Glossy promotional literature was produced and distributed urging

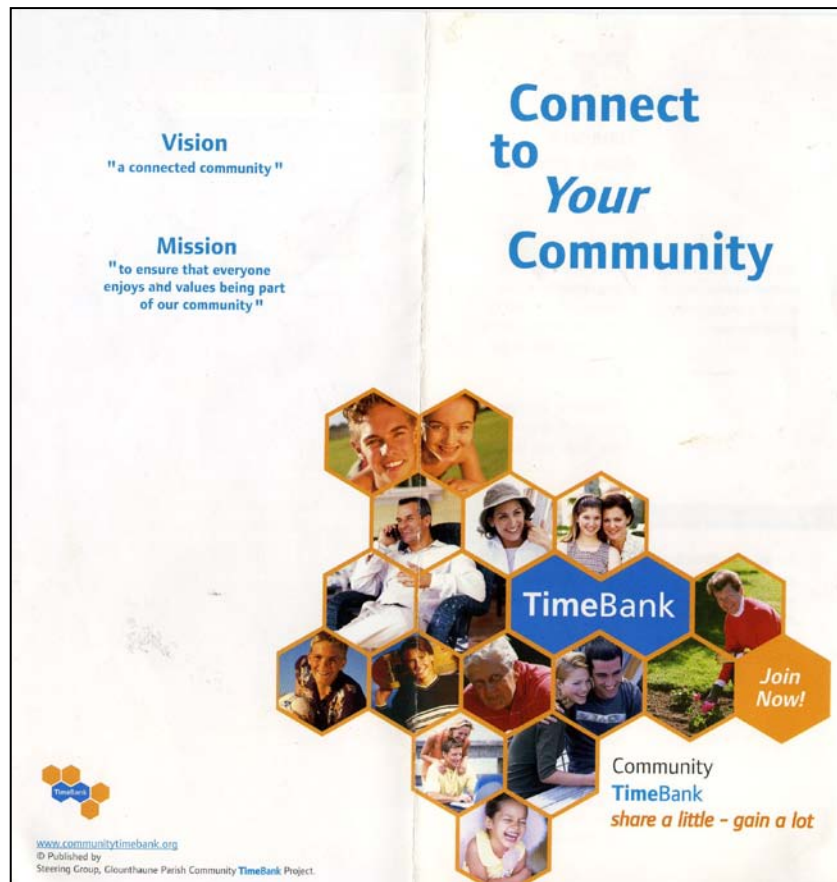


Plate 6.5 – cover of a promotional brochure for the Community Timebank, indicating the professional approach surrounding the initiative. (Source: Community Timebank Steering Committee)



Plate 6.6 – Amongst the projects organised through the Community Timebank was a Tidy Towns clean-up of Glounthaune, advertised here by a sign on the outskirts of the village. (Source: author's photograph)

parishioners to “*share a little, gain a lot*” and to fulfil the vision of “*a connected community*” (Plate 6.5). The project, therefore, would create benefits at both an individual and a community level and those advocating it maintained that improved physical and mental health, lower crime rates, better care for children and the elderly and more enterprise success would arise from the vibrant, well-connected community that the Timebank sought to create.

In March 2002, GCA applied to ECAD for funding, submitting a comprehensive business plan and seeking €65,000, the maximum grant available under the LEADER programme. After much deliberation, ECAD decided that the project merited a start-up grant of €7,500 to allow it to be tested, but declined to make a long-term commitment. Furthermore, some of the steering committee made personal financial endowments. A co-ordinator was appointed shortly thereafter and the Timebank was formally launched in April 2002, with recruitment of members commencing immediately. The centrality of the co-ordinator’s role meant that finance was a high priority for the steering committee. The business plan contained five-year projected accounts and identified potential sources of funding, both private and public, including multinational companies in Little Island. It was envisaged, however, that the Timebank would, in due course, become self-sustaining through membership contributions as locals came to appreciate its value and supported it accordingly.

The growing sophistication and professionalisation of the modern Irish community sector was clearly exhibited in the Timebank. Indeed, much of the paraphernalia of a business organisation suffused the project. Substantial research was undertaken in advance, which drew upon academic studies to provide a solid conceptual foundation. The vision of “*a connected community*” and the mission “*to ensure that everyone enjoys and values being part of our community*” were in the same vein as motivational statements utilised in the corporate world.

Meanwhile the Timebank logo, based on a honeycomb design, was cleverly designed to visually encapsulate the interconnectedness of community. In addition, a marketing strategy was devised, consisting of colourful brochures and information booklets which were distributed to homes, along with a website. The pivotal place of information technology in the Timebank model was a further sign of the progressive nature of the project. The overall approach was indicative of the occupational backgrounds of the steering committee, which included people in the field of project management and accountancy, as well as company directors and solicitors.

From a geographical perspective, a notable facet of the Timebank was that it was initiated on a parish-wide basis. It was considered that the diverse social make-up of Glounthaune parish, with middle, working-class and farming constituents, would serve as a more effective laboratory than the GCA catchment area alone. Furthermore, the steering committee adjudged that a larger population base could potentially provide sufficient means to make the Timebank financially self-sufficient if and when state and private sector funds dried up. This necessitated the GCA forging links with sister organisations in Little Island, Knockraha and Brookelodge, and it was acknowledged that there was initial suspicion about the motives of “*the Glounthaune set*” within these groups (TB4, 14/05/'04). However, the Timebank received vital backing from the Catholic clergy, who allowed steering committee members to use the Mass pulpit to disseminate their message and the project eventually took root in all corners of the parish. The Church itself benefited from this arrangement; one of the first projects organised by the Timebank was the repair of a stone wall outside the parish priest's house.

In October 2003, multinational pharmaceutical company Pfizer, who had a branch plant in Little Island, announced a donation of €100,000 to the Timebank, with a proviso that this had to be matched by a €50,000 community contribution. This funding was significant in that it

allowed the full-time co-ordinator to be retained into the medium-term. It also meant that the Timebank was not compelled to seek further support from public sources, which the steering committee were reluctant to do given the inevitable bureaucracy accompanying state funding. In any case, in January 2003 ECAD had declined to commit additional funds to the Timebank. Curiously, Pfizer did not attach any conditions to its gift and was content to merely benefit from the positive publicity attached to the Timebank. Explaining the rationale behind their decision, the Pfizer website commented: *“Pfizer Little Island has a goal to ensure that the company has a more meaningful involvement in the local community, and this goal was to be a determining factor in Pfizer’s involvement in supporting the development process of the initiative ...Pfizer is helping Community Timebank from the walking to the running stage”* (Pfizer, 2005).

At the outset, the Timebank appeared primed to become a success. By August 2002, 275 locals had joined, rising to over 300 by October, meeting initial membership targets. Several new groups and projects emerged, including an environmental clean-up involving young people, a musical appreciation society and a hill-walking club and all of these produced new social connections. This was accompanied by extensive and positive national media coverage (*Irish Times*, 2002; Martin, 2002). At a plenary session in September 2002, the NESF praised the Community Timebank, stating that it complemented the Agreed Programme for Government, which included a commitment to supporting the development of social capital locally. However, by 2004, this early momentum seemed to have stalled somewhat; in July of that year there were just 850 members, still well short of the April 2003 target of 1,000. Question marks surrounded the future financial sustainability of the Timebank beyond the expiration of Pfizer funding in March 2005. This uncertainty merits a closer examination of the underlying rationale for the project.

6.3.3 Building community: communitarianism in practice

The Community Timebank offers some intriguing insights into current theoretical debates about the nature of community and illuminates many of the key issues in the literature. Indeed, it would arguably be difficult to find a more stark illustration of the manner in which social theory can be appropriated and applied in a real world context by local community activists. The project was firmly rooted in communitarian theory and drew heavily on the concept of social capital (see pp.47-50). In doing so, it sought to create an idealised community and its proponents believed that bringing such a vision to fruition would alleviate many of the problems associated with contemporary societies. As such, it represented a reaction to the social transformations being experienced in Glounthaune and Ireland. However, the feasibility of reconstructing a sense of community and attachment to place in the manner that the Timebank sought to do is questionable.

In popular consciousness, much of the contemporary debate on community is characterised by what Delanty (2003, p.10) refers to as “*a discourse of loss and recovery*”. The common understanding revolves around the view that social bonds were stronger in the past, that they have declined with the onset of modernisation and that they must be restored to improve social well-being. This perception was certainly prevalent in Glounthaune and the Timebank was founded on the conviction that social connectivity, voluntary participation and community spirit were in terminal decline. In fact, several interviewees harked back to the *meitheal* system of subsistence farming in pre-modern Ireland and stated that the Timebank aimed to reproduce similar ‘give and take’ arrangements (TB1, 26/01/’04; TB4, 14/05’04). The Timebank’s

architects were confident that this element of mutual support could be recaptured, despite the fact that socio-economic relations amongst the 19th and early 20th century Irish peasantry bore little resemblance to social conditions in Glounthaune at the turn of the millennium. It should be stressed that this romantic vision of community and the attendant nostalgia for a bygone era was not confined to Glounthaune and in this author's experience it influences many current perspectives amongst those involved in community organisations.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the Timebank was the manner in which it was grounded in communitarian theory and inspired by the work of American political scientist Robert Putnam in particular (see pp.50-52). The near-infatuation with Putnam's ideas in some academic and policy-making circles has been a feature of debates on community in the past decade. The Timebank was no exception and Putnam's writings informed the steering committee's discussions during the gestation of the project in late 2001. Many committee members had read *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000) and referred to it in interviews (TB2, 15/04/'04; TB9, 06/07/'04). They earnestly concurred with Putnam's thesis on the decline of community-based connections and bought into his prescription for their recovery. In addition, a Timebank information booklet produced in 2004 for distribution locally acknowledged Putnam's influence on the project and outlined the significance of his principal concept; social capital.

Social capital and related notions of reciprocity, trust and mutual support were at the heart of the Timebank. It was a concept that could be grasped by the non-expert, as the Timebank information booklet explained in the following terms: "*The equivalent of financial capital in society is "Social Capital" – or in other words: volunteerism, goodwill, kindness etc. ... its value cannot be underestimated.*" What is more, the Timebank committee firmly believed that increasing social capital locally would bring about positive social and economic benefits.

The relationship between the Timebank and social capital illustrates that community groups can and do take a considered and reflective approach to their work and are not averse to engaging with complicated ideas from the academic realm. This tendency was also evident in Glanmire, where the GADP had utilised the principles of Local Agenda 21. In contrast to the GADP, however, where the adoption of LA21 was somewhat opportunistic, there was a strong sense that those involved in the Timebank had steadfast faith in the concept of social capital.

Analyses of social capital and communitarianism have pointed out that they owe much to outlooks and worldviews from business and economics. This connection was manifest in the Community Timebank. As the chief instigator of the project explained when describing its origins: *“it struck me that flatter-type organisations which the private sector were experimenting with should be replicated in the voluntary sector”* (TB1, 26/01/’04). At a more practical level, the entire initiative was arguably modelled along business lines and indeed one interviewee went so far as to compare the operation of the Timebank to a recruitment agency. Those behind the project pursued their mission with an entrepreneurial zeal and stressed the innovative and risk-taking nature of the Timebank enterprise. This was underpinned by a detailed business plan, a marketing strategy and regular progress evaluations. At one point, there were two full-time employees and a further part-time worker and a second Timebank office was opened in Little Island. None of this is surprising and the Timebank was merely an extreme expression of the business ethos that has permeated voluntary community activity across Ireland.

At a purely practical level, however, the appropriateness of such a business-style approach to community work is debatable. With two full-time employees and two offices, ensuring the financial viability of the project in order to retain staff was an overriding priority. Furthermore, following the initial ECAD grant, the committee decided not to seek further

funding from state bodies and instead relied wholly on corporate and local donations. The Timebank initiated the formation of a corporate network for local businesses in 2004, including the manufacturing companies in Little Island, which was undoubtedly an attempt to tap into corporate goodwill and attract donations. However, given the major reliance on the Pfizer donation, which expired in March 2005, the long-term sustainability of the Timebank was still uncertain when interviews were conducted during 2004. The experience of the Timebank would seem to indicate that it is extremely difficult to run a community project along quasi-corporate lines, even in an affluent area such as Glounthaune with a considerable multinational presence on its doorstep.

Communitarian philosophy has been taken to task for its inherent conservatism, particularly by those who interpret community action as having a radical purpose. As an instance of communitarianism in practice, it can be argued that the Timebank exhibited such conservative tendencies. The Timebank's literature bemoaned the individualism and atomisation of modern society, yet it did not explore the overarching macroeconomic forces which starved people of time. Phenomena such as increased commuting, shift work, and working unsocial hours were products of Celtic Tiger Ireland and certainly contributed to declining social connectivity, but the Timebank offered no prescription for remedying these underlying problems. While radical community development theory is generally grounded in a critique of capitalism, the Timebank took the economic and political status quo as a given. This could be attributed to Glounthaune's upper middle-class constituency, something captured in the following observation by a community worker familiar with the project:

We can be rich people hanging out in Glounthaune going, f**k we've an amazing sense of community spirit, I love living in Glounthaune, it's brilliant, I know all my

neighbours, everybody says hello, I'm not afraid of being burgled, I've got a brilliant community here ... and that's great, but that's not challenging poverty or challenging inequality or challenging the status quo (EC1, 10/05/'04).

The Timebank aimed to improve community spirit, which was an admirable goal, but issues of inequality and social exclusion, which provide the rationale for community work in other parts of East Cork, were not major priorities.

The Timebank, then, can certainly be viewed as reactionary. It did not seek to confront the obvious macro-level causes of community decay. Instead, faced with social malaise and apathy, Glounthaune Community Association's response was to try and recreate an idyllic, utopian, place-based community that offered sanctuary from the outside world. In this oasis, positive human values would blossom and negative ones would be banished. The following comment from one of Glounthaune's principal community leaders is telling in this respect:

It would be useful to be able to enjoy living in a local community at the level of socialising and entertainment and pursuing one's hobbies and interests, but much more particularly in being able to rear one's family in a caring, concerned community **free from the worries of external influences and some of the trends we're getting now towards very anti-social behaviour** (TB1, 26/01/'04 - emphasis added).

This "*caring, concerned community*" would be insular and a mirror-image of the parochial communities of times past. In essence, therefore, the Timebank's message was that Glounthaune community should retreat behind the walls and pull up the drawbridge.

From a geographical point of view, the Timebank vision of community was strongly connected to a sense of place. It deliberately sought to appeal to the long-standing attachment to

the parish, emphasised the value of being socially networked at a local level and organised casual meetings at townland level so neighbours could get to know one another. The observation of one interviewee regarding the connection between home, security, community and place is worth quoting at length:

You drive home from work every day, you like to drive in through the gates of your house and you like to have your garden looking nice, your house looking nice ... to see the place looking well gives you that feel-good feeling. I mean your home, that can be extended out to the park you're living in, or the village or the community that you're living in. That feeling when you come inside your own gates can be extended out as far as maybe the boundaries of the village where that starts, that you're proud of the community you're living in. As a result then people will want to stay here (TB8, 23/06/'04).

While the conventional view is that the link between community and place is no longer extant, the Timebank endeavoured to revive the latent attachment to place in Glounthaune and to restore a sense of homeliness and local pride.

At a more profound psychological level, an examination of the rationale for the Timebank exposes an undercurrent of fear in the psyche of middle-class Glounthaune. Interviews and Timebank documentation were interspersed with allusions to loneliness, isolation and apathy and the negative social consequences thereof. Suicide prevention, for instance, was explicitly mentioned as a justification for the project. A committee member who had committed to establishing a Timebank project to tackle isolation among Glounthaune's elderly explained their predicament, as he saw it, in the following terms:

They fear about financially being able to support themselves going forward. They fear being simply in their houses or their place of residence on their own. They fear being dead for some days before people know they're not on this earth any more (TB2, 15/04/'04).

In addition, apprehensions about crime and anti-social behaviour surfaced more strongly in Glounthaune than in other study areas. All of this illustrates a deep feeling of insecurity and a belief that only by resurrecting a sense of community could a dystopian future be avoided.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2003) linked the contemporary craving for community with the insecurity of an uncertain and unstable globalised world, as individuals seek shelter from the vicissitudes of modern life. This observation goes to the core of what the Community Timebank project was about. It also brings into focus perhaps the most vexed question in the contemporary debate on community; whether it is possible to construct or create a sense of community or, as in the case of Glounthaune, to reverse the apparent decline in community spirit. One could justifiably contend that the common understanding and sense of belonging upon which community is built is natural, tacit and organic, that it cannot be manufactured or wished into being. Bauman himself asserted that the imagined state of bliss offered by the idea of community could never be realised in practice and compared those who aspire towards community to the mythical Greek figure Tantalus, who was condemned to reach for things not within his grasp. It is arguably for this reason, therefore, that the idealised community which the Timebank sought to bring into being will ultimately remain elusive.

Seven years after its formation, the Community Timebank continues to operate from its base in Glounthaune Community Centre, but the initiative has arguably yet to realise the ambitions of its founders. Indeed, by all appearances the activity of the Timebank has

diminished since fieldwork was conducted during 2004. Nevertheless, there were many praiseworthy aspects of the Timebank. It represented a concerted, constructive and genuinely bottom-up effort to improve social connectivity in the heart of Cork's commuting belt. Without a doubt, the individuals involved were well-meaning and motivated by the best of intentions. They were confident that, by building a caring community, many social problems could be averted and positive benefits would arise. What is more, the Timebank placed great stock in the independence of the community and did not get drawn into a relationship where they relied on state support.

However, the overriding sense one gets is that the Timebank was flawed conceptually and too indebted to the concept of social capital. Furthermore, it was founded upon nostalgia for a romanticised community of a bygone era and the overly-optimistic assumption that this could be recaptured. Whether such a systematic and mechanistic approach to building a sense of community can succeed is contentious. Moreover, the Timebank did not confront the economic and political factors that contributed to the loss of community in the first place. It is difficult to disagree with Bauman's (2001, p.17) assertion that: "*Contemporary seekers of community are doomed to share Tantalus' lot; their purpose is bound to elude them, and it is their own earnest and zealous effort to grasp it that prompts it to recede*". What the Timebank did clearly illustrate was that the longing for a sense of community and the associated feeling of security continued to be sought out in spite of, or perhaps even owing to, the economic prosperity that characterised Celtic Tiger Ireland and Glounthaune in particular.

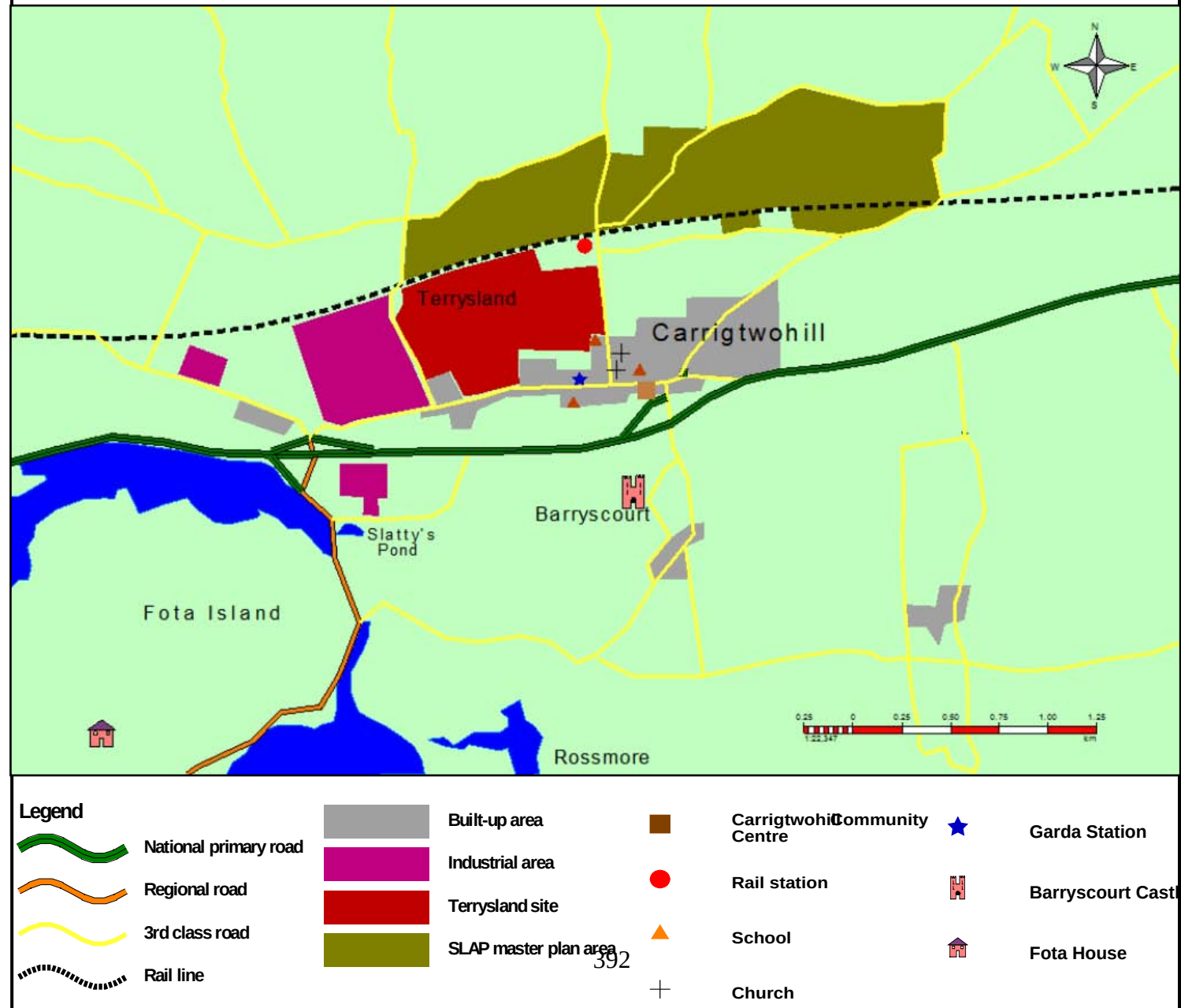
6.4 Carrigtwohill

6.4.1 Carrigtwohill in context

Glounthaune occupies a narrow strip between Cork Harbour and high ground to the north, but to the east a broader expanse of land opens out, forming a natural corridor of fertile agricultural terrain that extends as far as Youghal. Carrigtwohill is the gateway to this lowland area and the village stretches out in a linear fashion along the old N25 road (see Fig 6.4). The unusual geological formation from which *Carraig Thuathail* (a rock worked to the north) derives its name, along with the underlying network of limestone caves, are considered significant by speleologists and locals alike (Carrigtwohill Community Council, 2005). The village core contains many of the facilities and services typical of an Irish settlement of comparable size, including a Catholic Church, a community centre, a Garda station, primary and secondary schools, retail outlets and several pubs. As recently as the mid-1990s, the population of the village was in the region of 1,000, with a further 2,000 or thereabouts in the wider parish.

South of the village, Barryscourt Castle, a 13th century Norman stronghold and former seat of the Barry family, serves as a reminder of the strategic import of the area. In 1234, Sir David de Barry was granted a royal charter to hold a weekly market in Carrigtwohill, beginning a centuries-long association with fairs and markets that have defined one of the principal functions of the settlement. In fact, an annual fair day initiated by the Community Council in 1998 attempted to revive and celebrate this aspect of local heritage (*Imokilly People*, 1998a). Restoration of the castle commenced in the late 1980s and it is now an important tourist attraction. Nearby Fota House, built during the 1820s, with its associated Arboretum and Wildlife Park, is a further link with the past which also draws present-day visitors. Slatty's

Fig. 6.4 – Carrigtwohill



Pond, located between Barryscourt and Fota, is one of twenty sites on the East Cork Bird Trail, which was designed to promote natural habitats for tourism purposes.

These tourism enterprises are relatively recent developments and agriculture has been the traditional mainstay of economic activity. Dairying is the chief farming system, but the soils are suitable for a range of uses and there are also several specialist tillage farms. The strong farming sector has given rise to numerous small-scale food enterprises. Of late, however, Carrigtwohill has become a strategic manufacturing location of regional importance. A large area of industrial and commercial activity is sited to the west of the village, dominated by a 90-acre IDA-owned estate, which was put in place during the 1970s. In 2007, this was home to six multinational branch plants, with medical devices and pharmaceuticals prominent. Carrigtwohill was also to have become home to US biotechnology company Amgen, which announced a \$1 billion investment in a site east of the village 2006, but the project was postponed indefinitely the following year (*Irish Examiner*, 2007).

In spite of its strong economic base, one interviewee readily admitted that Carrigtwohill does not hold the same allure as adjacent settlements; “*it doesn’t have an address like a Rochestown or whatever*” (CT1, 25/11/’03), implying that Carrigtwohill lacks the reputation and appeal of more up-market, affluent locales. This could be ascribed to a number of factors. The presence of a large landfill at nearby Rossmore and several large quarries close to the village have a detrimental environmental impact, while the significant industrial presence may also dissuade potential residents. The landscape is relatively flat, low-lying and devoid of trees and does not offer the same level of privacy or scenic attractiveness as Glanmire and Glounthaune. Furthermore, there is a more diverse social mix within the parish, consisting of farmers in the

rural hinterland, working class in the local authority housing estates in the village, small business owners and middle-class commuters.

Nevertheless, there was a conspicuous sense of unity and community in Carrigtwohill and an evident attachment to the place was expressed by interviewees. As one of them observed, this sense of togetherness was bolstered by the fact that the parish of Carrigtwohill had just one settlement, one church and one set of schools, which contrasted with most other Irish parishes where there tends to be multiples of these (CT6, 23/06/'04). Community spirit, as a phenomenon, is difficult to quantify, yet the impression gleaned from fieldwork was that residents took pride in their community and, in particular, that a special effort was made to welcome newcomers to the area. Geography played a role in facilitating neighbourly relations. One person who had moved from elsewhere described how community life *“was all concentrated around a very small area of the village ... that’s where all the interaction took place, that’s where all the people seemed to meet each other”* (CT5, 21/06/'04). What is more, there was an overriding belief that this sense of community contributed greatly to the quality of life in the village.

Carrigtwohill Community Council has been mindful of this community spirit and has worked to nurture and preserve it. It is amongst the oldest community organisations in East Cork, with an unbroken history of activity dating back to 1947. A large community hall was constructed in the early 1950s and was a major social venue in East Cork (Carrigtwohill Community Council, 2005). Today, the centre remains the hub of community activities and is utilised by many of the two dozen or so community and sporting organisations in Carrigtwohill. A children’s playground at the rear of the building was completed in 2004 following a volunteer-led fundraising drive. The organisation itself is distinguished by its strong representative nature;

elections to the Council were held while interviews were being conducted. These polls bring fresh membership to the Community Council every five years and provide the group with a solid mandate to act on behalf of the community.

Like similar groups across East Cork, Carrigtwohill Community Council undertook a community plan in early 2000 which was subsequently submitted to Cork County Council (Carrigtwohill Community Council, 2000). The plan was collated by the Local Authority Liaison sub-committee of the Community Council. It was a concise but candid document and aimed to preserve the “*remarkably strong and vibrant*” community spirit of Carrigtwohill through the proper control of development in the village. While it acknowledged that the number of houses in Carrigtwohill was likely to quadruple in the short-term, it called for “*the phased, orderly and sustainable development of Carrigtwohill*” and for “*the provision of infrastructure, amenities and services in tandem with all development*”. It placed the onus on Cork County Council to ensure a proactive approach to planning, but insisted that the Community Council should be consulted on environmental and development matters and sounded a combative note when it warned that the Community Council “*cannot support any development which contravenes this plan*”.

Up to this point, Carrigtwohill’s experience of urban-generated development had been more recent than either Glounthaune or Glanmire. The Carrigtwohill bypass (1994) and the East Cork Parkway (1998), however, provided a high quality road link to Cork city (see Fig 3.3, p.167). Meanwhile, the Minister for Public Enterprise endorsed the re-opening of the disused railway line in 1998 and planners began working toward facilitating this (*Imokilly People*, 1998b). Additional land was zoned for housing in Carrigtwohill in 1999 and by the following year 750 houses had been recently completed or were at planning stage. The CASP was also in

the early stages of production, although in time this would propose further substantial growth for Carrigtwohill. In the words of one local, Carrigtwohill was “*primed for development*” (CT4, 14/04/’04). However, there was one housing proposal above all others that alerted locals to the scale of change facing their community.

6.4.2 Macro-level forces and micro-level impacts: the Terrysland development

In December 2000, an application for planning permission to build 1,600 houses at Terrysland, Carrigtwohill was made by Gable Holdings and Blandcrest Ltd. The 56-hectare site was located between the village’s Main Street and the disused railway line to the north. It was the largest application of its kind ever made to Cork County Council and also included provision for a hotel, a supermarket, retail units, a crèche and the reservation of land for a primary school. One exceptional feature of the project was eight, five-storey apartment blocks and overall, 33% of units in the development consisted of apartments. Separate applications were made for two distinct phases of the development, which was planned to take place over a twelve-year timeframe. Construction along the southern half of the site, closest to the village centre, comprised Phase I, while development closer to the rail line comprised Phase II. Once completed, the development would increase the population of Carrigtwohill by 4,000 and the developers anticipated that younger people would make up a high proportion of purchasers.

The application was preceded by meetings between the developers and County Council planners, although details of these discussions are not on record. On the advice of the latter, the developers sought a meeting with Carrigtwohill Community Council prior to submitting their application. Community leaders were taken aback at the scale of the proposed development. Although they had foreseen considerable development in the village, the size, nature and rate of

the Terrysland development went beyond what they had predicted in their community plan. They expressed their concerns to Gable Holdings/Blandcrest representatives and suggested some amendments, but when these were not taken on board they decided to formally object to the application. They engaged the services of a planning consultant to assist them in preparing an analysis and critique of the developer's proposal. What is more, this move had the backing of the wider community. The Community Council's objection was just one of sixty-three lodged by local residents and other community-based organisations during January and February 2001. Indeed, it was apparent upon consulting these that the Community Council played a key part in mobilising and co-ordinating opposition.

The principal grounds for the Community Council's objection were that "*in the absence of an adopted local plan, the proposal is premature*". In taking this position, the Community Council stressed that they were not opposed in principle to development, but their key demand was for the preparation in advance of an overall local plan to guide the inevitable expansion of the village and one which would allow the community to make a direct input into its future development. They felt that Carrigtwohill should be a model for good planning, that the transition from a village to a town should be organic and orderly, and that development should occur in stages that would allow the incoming population to be absorbed into the community. They also argued that facilities and amenities should be put in place in tandem with population growth and were of the view that the Terrysland development did not make adequate provision in this regard. Perhaps the most contentious aspect of the development was the multi-storey apartment blocks and the Community Council contended that these were out of character with Carrigtwohill's rural setting and that social problems would arise if they were permitted. The

objections from individual Carrigtwohill residents were somewhat more emotive, but they shared broadly similar concerns.

The application was subjected to a lengthy assessment by County Council officials, one of whom concurred with the community's advocacy of a local area plan, but conceded in a file note that this was not feasible:

It is accepted that in an ideal world, a detailed local plan would first be prepared by the local authority in advance of such a large scale application. However, the reality is that there are not sufficient staff resources available to become involved in this currently non-statutory function.

What is more, the file demonstrates that the County Council were broadly in favour of the application and stated that detailed discussions had already taken place with Gable Holdings/Blandcrest Ltd. Carrigtwohill had been identified as a location that was suitable for major expansion and the Senior Planner's report attested that "*the principle of the major development of these lands has been accepted*". This, however, would have been unknown to Community Council representatives when they met with the same planning executive, a few days after this report was written, to argue their case. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that following the receipt of additional information and clarifications from the developers in March 2001 around matters such as traffic, recreational provision, social and demographic issues and architectural design, Cork County Council granted planning permission, subject to eighty-seven conditions, on June 6th 2001.

The Community Council appealed Cork County Council's decision to An Bora Pleanála (The Planning Board). The Board's inspector began a thorough and lengthy investigation of



Plate 6.7A – A view of the Terrysland site looking south-east, taken in April 2004. Earthworks signalling the early stages of construction are apparent in the right of the picture. (Source: author’s photograph)



Plate 6.7B – A view of Terrysland in February 2010, showing the extent of development in the intervening period. Note the high-rise apartments in the left centre. (Source: author’s photograph)



Plate 6.8 – High rise apartment development at Terrysland, Carrigtwohill. (Source: author’s photograph)



Plate 6.9 – The new railway station at Carrigtwohill. High density housing along the re-opened rail line through East Cork is a central element of the CASP. (Source: author’s photograph)

the application, which appraised the developer's plans and the various objections and produced a fifty-six page report in February 2002. This considered in detail the pros and cons of the proposed development and recommended refusal of permission. It is interesting to note that, in making this recommendation, the inspector concurred with many of the points made by the Community Council. After deliberating on this report, the Board delivered its verdict in May 2002 and decided to grant permission, subject to twenty-seven conditions. Consequently, sixty of the original eighty-seven conditions set down by Cork County Council, some of which the Community Council were in agreement with, were removed.

In the meantime, Phase II of the Terrysland development had not yet been approved; at the time of the application in December 2000 the land in question was outside the development boundary of Carrigtwohill and was zoned for agriculture. Phase II was significant in that a portion of the site had been reserved for a new rail station and a park-and-ride facility, an arrangement which, in all likelihood, stemmed from the pre-application discussions between planners and developers. When the new County Development Plan was adopted in January 2003, the lands in question had been rezoned and the application proceeded. Cork County Council granted permission in March 2003; the decision was appealed once more to An Bord Pleanála, whose inspector again recommended refusal of permission but was again overruled by the Board in October 2003. By now, the developers had overcome all hurdles within the planning system and could proceed with construction, which began in February 2004.

It had become apparent at that point that further major development was impending. In October 2001, the CASP pronounced that "*extensive growth will be focused in Carrigtwohill*" (Atkins et al, 2001, p.34). This was confirmed by the County Development Plan (CDP) 2003, which indicated that Carrigtwohill could grow by 2,420 households up to 2011, leading to a

500% increase in population. It also affirmed that even more growth could be accommodated if and when the rail line re-opened (Cork County Council, 2003). Shortly thereafter, in April 2003, the Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study was published by Iarnród Éireann; this spelled out the economic viability of a new rail service and recommended re-opening of the line as early as 2008 (Faber Maunsell, 2003). In July 2003, the County Council signalled its intention to prepare a draft Special Local Area Plan (SLAP) for Carrigtwohill, as well as other locations along the rail line. A public exhibition was held in Carrigtwohill in November 2003, but the draft plan did not emerge until January 2005 and was finally adopted in September 2005. The SLAP outlined the need for 3,700 new dwellings in Carrigtwohill up to 2020 in order to meet growth targets set out in the CASP and zoned additional land accordingly (Cork County Council, 2005a).

Although they failed to stymie the Terrysland development, the Community Council had continued to pursue their objectives and to challenge development proposals through the forward planning system. They were the only community group in East Cork, for instance, to make a written submission on the CASP and made numerous detailed submissions during the process of producing both the CDP and the SLAP. In parallel with this, there was regular face-to-face contact at the highest level between Community Council members and County Council officials, including the County Manager. In fact, at the suggestion of planning officials, community representatives visited Cambourne, Cambridgeshire in the UK in early 2004, a new town upon which planners felt Carrigtwohill could be modelled. Throughout this period, the central arguments of the Community Council remained consistent. In the first instance, they pressed for the need for a comprehensive master plan to guide the growth of Carrigtwohill. In addition, they continued to advocate for the provision of adequate social and community facilities and amenities in tandem with housing development.

The SLAP represented a ‘victory of sorts’ for the Community Council. It zoned 128 hectares north of the railway line for a new residential neighbourhood of 2,000 houses. However, the SLAP specified that a master plan would have to be agreed in advance in relation to the development of these lands and would have to include detailed proposals for a 7-hectare educational campus, a 20-hectare sporting facility, a community centre and a cemetery. Primary responsibility for producing the master plan rested with developers and landowners. Crucially, however, they were required to consult with community groups, elected representatives and the general public. It was evident, therefore, that planners had accepted much of the Community Council’s reasoning and that the community would have advance input into the development of Carrigtwohill beyond 2005. While welcomed by the Community Council, the master plan came too little, too late in relation to the Terrysland development. As a submission by the Community Council on the draft SLAP commented:

The encouragement to continue with submissions provided by the Planning Policy Unit and attempts in this plan to address some of our concerns is appreciated, notwithstanding that, as regards substantial areas, including Terrysland (South), the horse has already bolted.

The case of the Terrysland development illustrates the inadequacies of the planning system from the perspective of community participation. Although the CASP, the CDP and the SLAP represented a strategic approach to the development of Carrigtwohill and took on board the considerations of the Community Council, the Terrysland proposal predated all of these and thus the planning system failed to address community concerns in respect of that development.

6.4.3 Conflicting interpretations of development

The case of the Terrysland development reveals much that can aid an understanding of community participation in local development. Firstly, it brings to the fore conflicting interpretations of the nature and purpose of development and of sustainability. Secondly, it is informative in terms of geographical aspects of development and shows how decisions made at national and regional level can impact at a local scale and how tension can arise between these different scales. Thirdly, it allows one to explore whether place-based sense of community can be sustained in the face of intensive and rapid economic change, or whether a strong sense of community is invariably adversely affected by macroeconomic factors. Finally, it exposes the power relations between community, state and the private sector in local development and makes it possible to ascertain the influence of each sector and whether, in line with the notion of participatory governance, the perspectives of community organisations carry any significant weight. Each of these issues will be analysed in turn below.

The manner in which development is contested and can lead to conflict was clearly apparent in Terrysland, where contrasting views on the scale and pace of the proposal were expressed. The property developers, Gable Holdings and Blandcrest Ltd., were motivated principally by profit and admitted as much to community representatives.⁵ One of those who had participated in meetings with developers summed up their position: “*He has only one goal in his head and that is to make as much money as he can ... and I have met the developers here and they have no bones about telling you that*” (CT3, 14/04/'04). During this period, market demand for housing was at unprecedented levels and the developers were seeking to reap the benefits of

⁵ The developers of the Terrysland site declined a written request for an interview.

this scenario. The extent to which they were inspired by financial considerations was also manifest during the appeals to An Bord Pleanála when they sought reduce the amount of financial development contributions payable by them to Cork County Council.

The Community Council approached the Terrysland development from an altogether different perspective. Their interpretation was that the proposed development represented a poorly planned approach to the growth of Carrigtwohill and would create a host of social and environmental problems due to the dearth of facilities and services. As a result, they felt compelled to oppose the project. However, the Community Council had little direct power to shape matters. Although they did meet with, and voiced their concerns to, representatives of Gable Holdings/Blandcrest Ltd. on several occasions, these were largely fruitless exercises. Consequently, they were dependent on Cork County Council, the body legally responsible for planning, to address the perceived shortcomings of the Terrysland development and they petitioned them accordingly.

One might consider the County Council as a neutral arbiter between the community and the developers, but this was far from the case. From the standpoint of strategic planning and development, there was an important subtext to the Terrysland project. Although the planning application predated the CASP and the County Development Plan 2003, Carrigtwohill was already being viewed in official circles as an important strategic location for development. For instance, the County Council Architect's report on the application, dated January 19th 2001, argued that *"a major expansion of residential development in Carrigtwohill is a desirable objective in relation to the development of the Greater Cork area"*. Re-opening the disused rail line was a crucial component of the official vision, but railway authorities had indicated that the economic viability of this proposal depended upon high-density housing development. It would

not be an exaggeration, therefore, to state that one of the most important elements for the success of the strategic planning vision for the Greater Cork area hinged upon a positive outcome at the Terrysland site.

Undoubtedly, those with a stake in Terrysland had different ideas about what constituted appropriate development. Connected to this were varying interpretations of sustainable development. The planners' sustainability agenda revolved around high density housing which would facilitate the re-opening of the railway, introduce a more environmentally-friendly form of transport and reduce car-based commuting. Carrigtwohill was identified in a planner's report on Terrysland as *"one of the prime areas available for **sustainable** residential and commercial/industrial growth"* (emphasis added). On the other hand, the Community Council's interpretation of sustainability emphasised social factors, and they opposed the Terrysland project because *"we would see the proposals for Carrigtwohill as they stand as unsustainable"*. Arguing that the lack of social facilities, combined with the presence of multi-storey apartment blocks, would lead to a repeat of social problems witnessed in many inner city-areas, such as ghettoisation and crime, one Community Council member declared; *"I actually believe ... if this planning is wrong, that people will die unnecessarily"* (CT1, 25/11/'03). The fact that each side could apply the principles of sustainability to their conflicting positions displays the malleable nature of the concept when it is implemented in practice.

Central to the conflict over Terrysland and the different interpretations of development was the issue of geographical scale and, in line with Buttimer's (1998) notion of scale horizons, the horizons of the parties involved (Chapter 1, pp.84-5). Cork County Council's outlook was conditioned by economic and political factors at the macro scale. Chapter 3 pointed out how the CASP aimed to enhance the Greater Cork region's participation in a competitive, globalised

economy (pp.156-160). In addition, there was an important spatial dimension to the CASP in that it sought to shift the focus of development within Metropolitan Cork to the corridor between the city and Midleton and Carrigtwohill was at the heart of this zone. Furthermore, County Council officials admitted to community representatives that they were under instructions from the Minister for the Environment and Local Government to sanction more housing developments in order to meet national targets and relieve market pressure. As one interviewee asserted; *“There’s a target now of so many houses per annum and the Minister Martin Cullen doesn’t give a rattle where they’re built”* (CT3, 14/04/’04). The combination of these global and national forces, therefore, contrived to bring about profound and rapid change at the local level in Carrigtwohill.

The community, meanwhile, were firmly local in their outlook. Consequently, their viewpoint was affected by the local impact of the Terrysland project, particularly in terms of its impact upon place and community. One of the strongest protests expressed by locals related to the profound change to the nature of place that would arise from such a sizeable development. One individual’s planning objection asserted that *“we do not want to see our village turned into a town”*, while another stated that *“Carrigtwohill has always been a pretty rural village and the proposed development would completely alter its character”*. In particular, the five-storey apartment blocks were deemed totally unsuitable for a rural setting. While the Community Council itself took a more pragmatic stance and realised that some level of development was unavoidable, they still harboured grave misgivings about its scale and how this would lead to a more urbanised form of development. They argued for lower density development that would be more suitable to the rural character of Carrigtwohill.

Allied to the wish to preserve the rural character of Carrigtwohill was the perception that this was indelibly linked to the strong sense of community. Yet again, comments from individual objections to the planning application reflected this. *“Carrigtwohill, like many places in Cork, has a sense of community. If development of this scale goes ahead, it is without a doubt that it will be lost”*. Another local objector was less pessimistic, but still foresaw challenges in integrating the new development. *“It will be difficult enough to accept this new population into the community life of Carrigtwohill in a way that will keep the spirit and self-identity of the community alive”*. The assumption in these and other similar comments was that if Carrigtwohill grew beyond a certain size, then its sense of community would be eroded or even lost entirely. This suggestion is an intriguing one from the perspective of the geography of place-based communities, as it suggests that there is an ideal size, either in population or spatial terms, for a community. Indeed one interviewee remarked *“I’m sure there’s a critical figure of population where you’ll get communities to work”* (CT6, 23/06/’04). How one might establish this ideal size, however, is unclear and would require a far more indepth analysis than can be presented here.

One might assume that the views of Carrigtwohill Community Council and the wider populace were founded upon a conservative and reactionary parochialism. However, the Community Council were at pains to point out that they were not resistant to change and development. On the contrary, some interviewees welcomed many of the benefits that would arise, such as the proposed hotel and the rail service. Their principal argument was that development needed to be carried out in a planned and orderly manner. *“We tried to make it clear from the beginning that we weren’t objecting to development per se”*, said one sub-committee member, who added; *“Our call was always that the development of the village should*

be led by the [County] Council” (CT4, 14/04/’04). Representations of community groups in Ireland often focus upon and criticise their implacable and dogmatic opposition to planning issues. To present the situation in Carrigtwohill in such a light would, however, be an injustice to the Community Council and, what is more, would fail to capture the subtle nuances of the situation.

A further interesting facet of the Terrysland development is what it reveals about power relations and decision-making in local development. The Community Council undertook a lengthy campaign of resistance and their approach showed that they were attuned to the *realpolitik* of the development process. The cosy concepts and institutional arrangements of local partnership offered little to them in terms of trying to have their voices heard and instead they took a more confrontational position. Consequently, they felt it necessary to “*play hardball*” at times and to adopt a more forceful stance, utilising a range of tactics to make their influence felt. This commenced with detailed formal objections to the development, firstly to Cork County Council and then to An Bord Pleanála, as well as co-ordinating objections from the wider community. Furthermore, the Local Authority Liaison sub-committee also had direct negotiations with officials at the highest level in Cork County Council and with representatives of Gable Holdings/Blandcrest Ltd. When construction began, one sub-committee member mobilised residents living in the vicinity of the Terrysland site to write letters to the County Council highlighting breaches of planning regulations, which resulted in planning enforcement notices being sent to the developer. Finally, submissions were made at all stages of the County Development Plan and the Special Local Area Plan, a process which also mustered support from other groups, clubs and organisations in Carrigtwohill.

In spite of this sustained grassroots activism, the local development system was unable to fully address the concerns of the community. The saga of Terrysland pointed to the inadequacies and limitations of the local governance system. One of the key issues raised by the community related to the societal implications of the development and in one of their many submissions they stated “*We believe that Cork County Council has completely failed to plan for the **social impact** of such a unique level of growth in a Community*” (emphasis in original). This criticism can be considered valid and it exposes the inherent weakness of Irish local authorities. Planners’ remit only extended as far as land use and transport matters, while the wider local government system provided physical infrastructure such as roads, water and sewerage systems. However, the range of social services and supports necessary for a large-scale development such as Terrysland were not planned in any systematic way and this arose from the narrow range of functions of Irish local government. The new structures at local level, the CDB and CVF, were also impotent in this respect. As was alluded to in the Glanmire case study, many social service issues were the remit of state agencies, not the local authorities. A prime example concerned the matter of educational services. Planners had compelled Gable Holdings/Blandcrest to reserve part of the Terrysland site for a primary school. However, one planner revealed that they had sought information from the Department of Education about the latter’s plans for new educational services in Carrigtwohill, but that little information or co-operation was forthcoming (CCC3, 05/10/’04).

A further shortcoming of the planning system centred upon the fact that it was slow to respond to the rapid pace of development. The Terrysland application was submitted prior to the new Planning and Development Act 2000 and was approved before the CDP 2003 came into force. It was not until September 2005 that the Carrigtwohill SLAP came into effect but by this

stage construction at Terrysland was already well underway. Planners had recognised the argument for a Local Area Plan for Carrigtwohill when the initial application was submitted in December 2000, but spurned the opportunity to carry out a plan as they were not bound by legislation at the time and claimed to be short of resources. A response by Cork County Council to objections, contained within the An Bord Pleanála Inspector's report, is telling in this regard:

An Area Plan is to be prepared following completion of the (County) development plan review. A moratorium in the interim on major development, given the current climate of development pressure and lack of planning authority resources would be unreasonable.

Here is an unambiguous acknowledgement by the County Council, made in August 2001, that a Local Area Plan was still some distance into the future, but that regardless of this hiatus development had to be permitted. Clearly, proper planning practices were not adhered to. Planners arguably should have been more proactive in determining the shape of Carrigtwohill; that they were not was perhaps inevitable given the context of the Celtic Tiger.

More than any of the case studies presented here, the case of Terrysland illustrates that, in practice, notions of participatory governance and of allowing community groups an input into decision-making ring hollow. Carrigtwohill was faced with profound changes and the Community Council endeavoured to respond on behalf of local residents. Despite raising several valid concerns about the implications of the Terrysland development, these issues were not, in essence, addressed by planners in any meaningful way. Indeed, the fact that there had been significant discussions behind closed doors between planners and developers in advance of the planning application and that, as a result, the Terrysland development was almost a *fait accompli* before the Community Council even became aware of it, indicates that community groups can

often be powerless to influence developments on their own doorstep. It is perhaps best to leave the last word with one of the members of the Local Authority Liaison sub-committee who summed up the relationship between the community and the powerful decision-makers in the following terms.

There is no mechanism there whereby local people get to put in a proper say in how things go. They consult, they listen, but it's part of the process that they have to do, and I think in many cases they just tick the box; '*well we've that done, that's it*'. I don't think there was real meaningful dialogue on this (CT3, 14/04/'04).

This represents a harsh indictment of participatory governance and shows that, in Carrigtwohill at least, community groups felt excluded from the circuits of power.

6.5 Midleton

6.5.1 Midleton in context

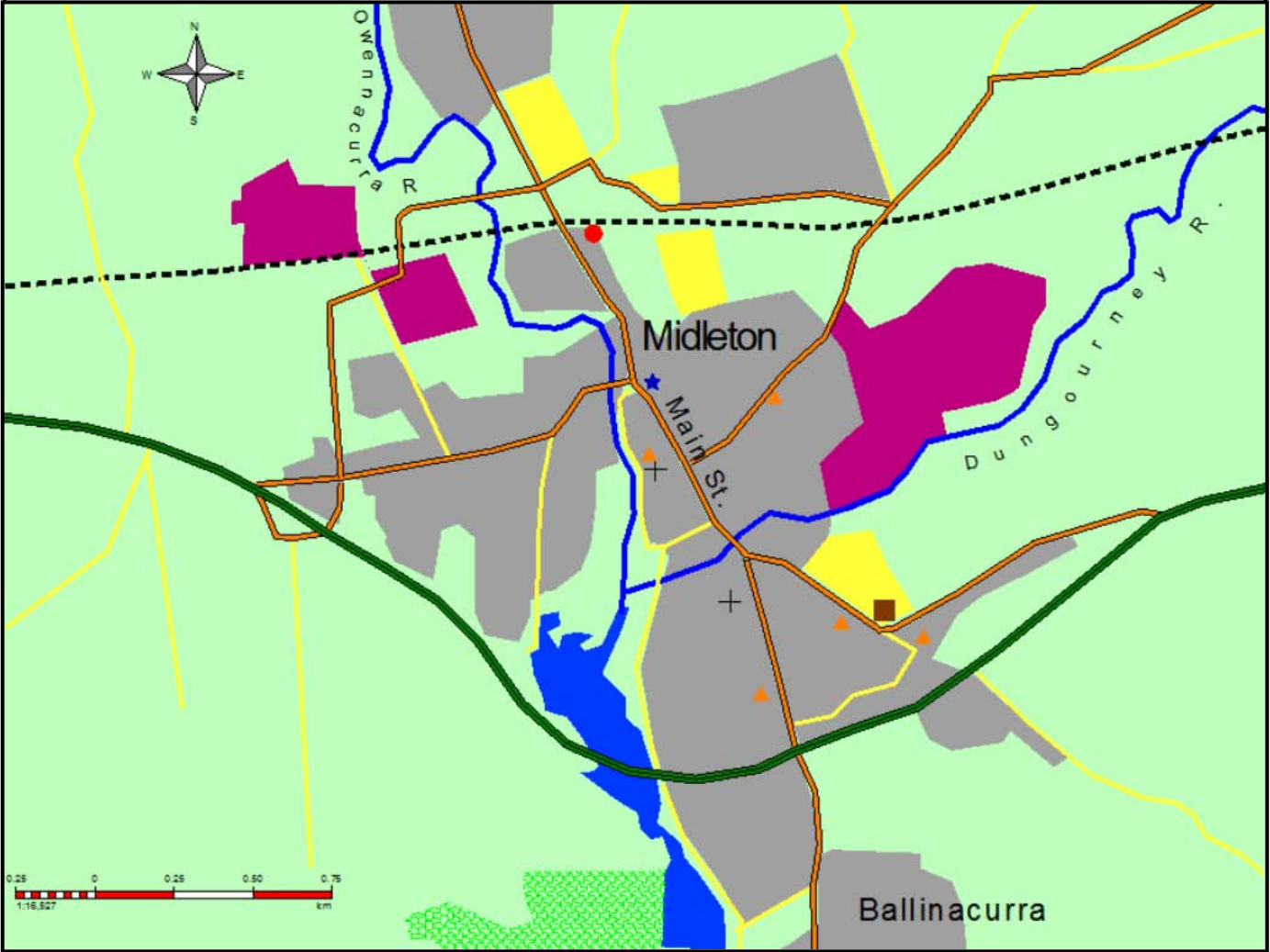
Situated at the heart of East Cork, approximately 5 miles east of Carrigtwohill, is Midleton. Its Irish name, *Mainistir na Corann* (St. Coran's monastery), reveals its origins as a medieval monastic settlement at the confluence of the Owennacurra and Dungourney rivers. It is the principal town in East Cork and serves a large rural hinterland at all points of the compass (Fig 6.5). Indeed, this surrounding area is amongst the most fertile and productive agriculture land in the country and it particularly suited to arable farming (Browne, 2000; Lafferty, Commins & Walsh, 1999). From the late eighteenth century onwards, Midleton's rapid expansion owed much to these circumstances and regular markets and fairs helped the town to thrive. Flour milling, distilling and other food processing operations emerged during this period to supply British soldiers fighting in the Napoleonic Wars and the quays at nearby Ballinacurra

on upper Cork harbour provided the point of exit for produce (Falvey, 1998, pp.23-32; O' Flanagan, 1998, p.14).

Midleton consolidated its position during the 19th century thanks to the arrival of rail in 1859, while the awarding of Town Commissioner status in 1857 provided a local government structure. The town's long main thoroughfare took shape at this time and became home to a variety of retail outlets (Falvey, 1998, pp.32-44). Into the twentieth century, food and agri-business continued to form the basis for industrial activity, although the sector had a chequered history. The Jameson Distillery is unquestionably the source of the town's most renowned product and the company remains a major employer. However, several food processing operations which were established during the first wave of modern industrialisation in the 1960s and early 1970s have since faltered. These have had a detrimental impact on vegetable growing in particular, while the closure of the town's cattle mart in 2002 was a further sign of changed circumstances in what had been the dominant economic sector.

Despite the declining importance of agriculture, Midleton has experienced major growth since the 1970s and planning policies have played a considerable part in shaping the town. Midleton was identified in the Gillie Report and LUTS I & II as containing latent potential for development and as a location which could contribute to the economic advancement of the larger metropolitan region (pp.162-3). Consequently, it was the first town in the Greater Cork area to be bypassed by road in 1984, while improvements to the sewerage system during the 1980s facilitated housing development. However, the economic climate of that decade meant that the planners' vision for Midleton did not come to fruition and it was afflicted by high unemployment. Nevertheless, the town and its environs grew rapidly from the mid-1990s and its population increased by over one-sixth between 1996 and 2002. Midleton has now become the

Fig. 6.5 - Midleton



Legend

- National primary road
- Regional road
- 3rd class road
- Rail line

- Built-up area
- Industrial area
- Midleton Forum target estates
- Wooded area

- Midleton Family Resource Centre
- Church
- School
- Rail station
- Garda Station

base for a large commuter population and its primary function remains as a service centre rather than an industrial zone. More recently, the CASP envisaged a trebling of the size of Midleton by 2020 and a Special Local Area Plan in 2005 set out detailed proposals in this respect.

“Midleton was always counted as being a pretty well-off town” (EC4, 12/07/’04) explained one long-standing resident but, although this reputation for prosperity is well-founded, an incongruous feature is the presence of considerable areas of local authority housing. Public housing has been constructed during every decade since the 1930s, and Census 2006 figures indicated that a combined total of 258 houses were rented from the local authorities in Midleton Urban and Midleton Rural EDs. In fact, within the Urban District, local authority housing comprised almost 13% of total dwellings and the layout of the town is such that separate areas of local authority housing are found at both ends of the 500m-long Main Street. Occupied principally by working class residents, these estates have formed concentrated pockets of poverty and social exclusion with disproportionate levels of unemployment and welfare dependency that would be largely absent in rural communities. Moreover, as recently as the late 1990s the housing waiting list stood at 375, as many were unable to afford to purchase their own homes given escalating property prices.

As a result of this large quantity of social housing, Midleton’s population has a more diverse social composition than many of the surrounding rural areas. Although there was a substantial bourgeois population connected to its function as a market town, in 2006 over 22% of the Urban District’s inhabitants were in the semi-skilled and unskilled social classes, the highest proportion in East Cork. What must also be considered is that many of the town’s residents were not natives; Census 2006 indicated that one in eight had lived elsewhere just twelve months previously. In addition, census data revealed the highest proportion of foreign nationals (18.6%)

and the lowest levels of voluntary activity (12.2%) in East Cork. These factors, combined with the size and historic urban setting of Midleton, undoubtedly impact upon sense of community identity and attachment to place. As one interviewee explained:

Midleton was always a bit too big for community spirit you see. You had a community spirit but you didn't have the whole community in the one thing, if you know what I mean. Whereas in Carrigtwohill if you had ten good people the whole community was around them, whereas in Midleton if you had ten, you didn't have the whole community around them, you had a certain amount of the community who were interested (EC4, 12/07/'04).

The issue is clearly one of geographical scale; in relation to community formation, a different dynamic to rural and suburban settlements would be expected in Midleton.

This, however, is not to suggest that Midleton was or is devoid of communal activity. There is considerable historical evidence of community mobilisation (Falvey, 1998, p.220, p.270). Currently, several groups exist, but they tend to occupy distinct niches around specific issues, such as youth, disability and environmental matters. There are also numerous residents' associations that seek to represent the interests of particular housing estates. Sports clubs, especially the GAA, have traditionally been strong and active in the town. Yet there is no overarching community body of a comparable nature to the GACA or Carrigtwohill Community Council. This can be explained, in part, by the presence of the nine-member Town Council. Midleton is unique amongst the case study areas in having its own local government structure, which fulfils many of the functions undertaken by community groups in other locales. The overall sense one gets, therefore, is that community action in Midleton is somewhat fractured and

disjointed. It is in this context that the genesis and operation of Midleton Community Forum must be considered.

6.5.2 Midleton Community Forum

The growing engagement between the state and community organisations over the course of the 1990s was outlined in Chapter 5 and a host of new policy initiatives were introduced on foot of this. The Local Development Programme (LDP), which commenced in 1995, was one such funding arrangement and in 1997 ECAD was awarded the contract to administer the LDP in East Cork. This programme was focused specifically on addressing poverty and social exclusion and it contained three distinct measures; services to the unemployed, community development and youth initiatives. Although deprivation was an issue in the principal towns of East Cork, including Midleton, ECAD found that representative, community-based structures for the excluded sections of society were weak or non-existent, making delivery of the LDP difficult. Consequently, during 1997 ECAD's development staff began a sustained effort to put such structures in place.

To this end, ECAD organised a public meeting in Midleton on September 15th 1997. It was attended by representatives of a diversity of special interest community and voluntary groups in the town, including the Cloyne Diocesan Youth Federation, the East Cork branch of the Irish Wheelchair Association, a local adult literacy group Altrusa, a local parent & toddler group and a newly-formed women's group. In addition, several individuals who were unemployed or parenting alone were also present. The attendees were bound together by their common experience of social exclusion in one form or another and formed part of the so-called 'target groups' for the LDP. The chief outcome of the meeting was that these disparate elements

combined and Middleton & District Forum materialised. *“I would never have met half the people that I met if I hadn’t attended that meeting”* one Forum member acknowledged (MF1, 02/12/’03) and the fact that the group originated clearly by design rather than accident is a point worth noting.

Initially, Middleton & District Forum’s core membership fluctuated between ten and fifteen and they met monthly to discuss common issues and aims. The group’s base in these early days was the Avoncore Resource Centre, located in a deprived local authority estate north of the town centre and the majority of the members resided in this and other public housing estates. ECAD’s support, in terms of funding, guidance and information, was vital during this formative stage and its staff assisted the group in identifying their priorities. As a result, by June 1998 the group had produced a twenty-page, three-year plan containing a number of aims and objectives. The overarching goal was to create a new resource centre in Middleton which would then act as a focal point for the group. Furthermore, it would allow the Forum to attain other objectives, such as delivering information and services to the community and organising training and education courses for disadvantaged sectors of the population.

At a more fundamental level, the work of the group was grounded in community development theory from the outset, something reflected in their mission statement:

The Middleton and District Forum promotes and encourages the full participation of all in community life through equality, inclusion, personal development and community education.

The community development approach stresses active participation by marginal groups in identifying collective needs and determining the nature and direction of their own development, with a strong emphasis on process as well as outcomes. In particular, the focus of community

development is upon addressing the root causes of disadvantage, inequality, powerlessness and discrimination (pp.57-9). It is guided by a number of key principles, amongst them equality and inclusion. At the time, the concept and principles of community development would have been relatively new in the East Cork context and they differed from the more traditional approach of rural community groups, making Middleton Forum unique among the case study groups.

The group's plan was submitted to ECAD to substantiate a request for funding and £2,700 was granted to allow the group to undertake a four-day training course in September 1998. The focus of this intensive session was to further clarify objectives, develop group cohesiveness, investigate funding options and lay the groundwork for the development of the resource centre. At this point, the group had eleven members and was aiming to increase its profile in the wider community and to initiate contact with statutory agencies (*Imokilly People*, 1998c). Simultaneously, the group established and equipped a small office to deal with its growing administrative workload. The next stage in the group's progression took place in January 1999, when they applied to ECAD for funding to employ a part-time community development worker. Group members took an active role in the recruitment process and the worker commenced in April 1999. Indeed, ECAD continued to fund the position to the amount of £26,800 until December 2000. Further group training in June 1999 focused on helping the group to register as a limited company, evaluating its work to date, developing a more detailed programme of action and training members in computer skills.

Funding the establishment of a resource centre with a range of community services was beyond ECAD's capacity, and in October 1999 the group made a preliminary application for funding under the Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme (FCSRCP) operated by the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs (DSCFA). This was a

national government initiative to fund “*neighbourhood centres who aim to help combat disadvantage by improving the functioning of the family unit*”. The application process was a lengthy one and necessitated detailed information, including a list of proposed actions, a socio-economic profile of Middleton and a three-year projected budget. By that stage, the group, now operating as Middleton Community Forum (MCF), had developed links with St. Pancras’ Housing Association, who were constructing a voluntary housing project at Beechwood Estate on the southern side of town. The latter’s plans made provision for a community building and, following a period of negotiation, they delegated management of the building to MCF for use as a location for the resource centre.

In March 2000, MCF was accepted in principle into the FCSRCP. However, the assurance of funding was contingent on the submission of a comprehensive, three-year plan outlining their objectives, the budget required for each year and how the group proposed to measure and evaluate their success in achieving its objectives. With the support of DSCFA staff, the group compiled a sixty-page plan and submitted it for approval in October 2000. A formal contract was signed the following month which outlined several stringent legal, accounting and employment requirements with which MCF had to comply. The agreement guaranteed the group funding of £48,000 annually from 2001 to 2003 inclusive and a full-time co-ordinator and a part-time administrator were recruited in early 2001. Later that year, the community building at Beechwood was completed and MCF relocated to this new facility.

With two staff in place and a base from which to operate, MCF was in a better position to secure finance from other sources to develop additional services to the local community. Substantial public funding, for both capital expenditure and staff costs, was acquired to provide low-cost, community-based childcare services and this necessitated an extension to the building.

An after-schools service was also put in place, which provided school-going children with additional tuition. FÁS Community Employment scheme support was obtained to provide additional part-time staff for the facility. Training courses and other events were organised in response to demands identified in the group's plan. MCF had come a long way in a relatively short length of time and when the three-year funding programme concluded at the end of 2003 the group was accepted into the programme for a further three years, securing its future until the end of 2006. On the surface, at least, it appeared that the group had cultivated a fruitful relationship with the state and had benefitted from the substantial resources on offer.

6.5.3 Community and state: an unequal partnership

Midleton Community Forum had the closest relationship with the state of all the community groups studied. Indeed, it originated as a response to a state-funded initiative, the LDP, while the early progress of MCF was facilitated by public funding channelled through ECAD. As the group matured, they entered contractual relations with government to provide social services in their locality. Throughout, MCF's work was informed by an explicit community development ethos, although two contrasting theoretical interpretations regarding the relationship between community development and the state are apparent in the literature (Ledwith, 2005; 2007). The pragmatic, pluralist position emphasises the positive benefits to communities that can arise from partnership with the state and argues that more effective social services are provided when target groups are actively involved in their design and delivery. The more radical perspective contends that the main function of community development theory is to challenge the state and the manner in which it preserves the inherent inequality of the social, economic and political status quo. Community groups should, therefore, eschew cosy relations

with government, who have merely commandeered the concept of community development to contain and control grassroots radicalism. Midleton Community Forum's history and work provides a touchstone for assessing these polarised interpretations.

From an objective perspective, there were indisputably many positive aspects to the formation of Midleton Community Forum. It provided a representative structure for marginalised and excluded sections of Midleton's population, giving, in community development parlance, 'a voice to the voiceless'. Under the guidance of ECAD, MCF followed the well-established procedures for developing a model community organisation. Members identified common issues and concerns through regular group discussions and the group fashioned a programme of actions and undertook training to improve their capacity to pursue their objectives. This groundwork eventually enabled the Forum to source funding and hire professional staff and also to put in place sub-committees to address specific issues such as childcare, education and finance. The group successfully married their own local knowledge to a professional approach and showed an ability to adopt a more elaborate and complex structure to progress their work in behalf of the disadvantaged.

Community development is governed by many commendable principles and these were manifest in the work of MCF. One key underlying rationale for community development is that it encourages collective action, empowers people and builds their capacity to address their own circumstances. This collective focus was, from the outset, one of the strengths of MCF. Furthermore, the group proclaimed that values such as inclusiveness, equality and participation were central to their work. The group's adherence to these core principles, when combined with the fact that its membership consisted of unemployed people, lone parents and people with disabilities, amongst others, gave the work of MCF a great deal of legitimacy. It also provided

insights into issues affecting the local community that might not have been apparent to state agencies. For instance, the group undertook formal needs analyses in several local authority housing estates. This grassroots strategy meant that MCF was attuned to the needs of disadvantaged sectors of Middleton's population and was in a strong position to address them.

The Forum and the individuals comprising it became more capable, confident and assertive as they progressed. They showed an ability to collate detailed information, compile programmes of work and skilfully manage funding applications and programmes. Several members mentioned that their involvement in MCF had been personally enriching and rewarding. One interviewee elaborated on this point:

The whole experience of being involved in community development has benefited me on a personal level, you know, whether it's from the self-confidence of being able to sit in a room of twenty people and I might know two of them and being afraid to open my mouth ... to being able to say '*I don't know you, but you're wrong*' (MF4, 29/01/'04).

Prior to their involvement, many members of MCF had been welfare dependent and several would have not attained high levels of education. Documents compiled by the group often gave vent to this sense of exclusion and powerlessness and their endeavours to overcome this must be regarded affirmatively.

In a more tangible sense, MCF became quite adept at securing resources on behalf of the marginalised communities of Middleton. From its origins in 1997 until the end of 2003, the group was granted over €600,000 in public funding from a range of agencies; ECAD, the SHB, ADM and the DSCFA. This allowed the group to attain its primary objective of putting in place a professionally staffed resource centre, occupying a new building close to its target communities.

In addition, MCF was in a position to extend the building to provide a state-of-the-art crèche run on a not-for-profit basis and in a manner that made childcare services affordable to low-income families. It put in place training and education opportunities at the request of locals and developed the resource centre as a drop-in and information point. In comparative terms, the group was amongst the most successful in East Cork at attracting finance for its activities, which was an outcome of its intimate association with state funders.

Chapter 4 outlined the importance of networking in the developing cohesive community structures (pp.236-7). A crucial component of MCF's success was that it built networks and alliances where none had existed previously. According to one activist, an organisation along the lines of MCF did not appear prior to 1997 because "*nobody networked*" (MF1, 02/12/'03). The Forum rectified this situation and created linkages with and between many community-based organisations in Midleton. Productive working relations were also created with locally-based staff of state agencies. In addition, through its participation in national funding programmes, MCF became a member of regional and national networks of community development groups. This brought an added dimension to the organisation's work as it shared knowledge and experiences with similar groups in towns across Cork and further afield. Through networking events and discussions, MCF members were exposed to new ideas and concepts and this informed the practice of their work.

Undoubtedly, Midleton Community Forum was a successful organisation when viewed from a certain vantage point and its pragmatic partnership with government yielded certain benefits. However, those of a politically radical persuasion would point to the fundamental contradiction at the heart of MCF. Although it was a grassroots, community-based organisation its activities were, to a considerable extent, controlled and directed by state funders. In the first

place, MCF originated as a response to the advent of the state-funded LDP in East Cork when ECAD sought to establish groups to effectively channel these funds to the disadvantaged. As its ties to the state became more intricate, its independence was arguably eroded. MCF and similar groups might be correctly termed bottom-up community development directed from the top down.

One community worker in East Cork explained this paradox in the following terms and, although he referred specifically to the Community Development Programme, his remarks could equally be applied to the Family Resource Centre programme in which MCF was a participant:

The term community development has been hijacked by the Irish government. There's a view within Irish government circles that community development really only takes place within the parameters of their Community Development Programme. So what you see is that groups that call themselves community development groups who go into that programme become shackled by government because they're dependent on them for funding and the government dictates the agenda. It will allow those groups a little leeway, but ultimately at the end of the day the government has the say in what they do or do not do (EC1, 10/05/'04).

This type of critical viewpoint, although not widespread, would be shared by those who regard the true purpose of community development as challenging government policy, attacking the structural causes of poverty and inequality and bringing about fundamental social change. Such a perspective would view the close relationship between community and state inherent in government funding programmes as anathema.

The level of control exercised by just one funding agency, the DSCFA, becomes apparent upon examining files relating to MCF.⁶ Following the group's acceptance into the funding programme, they became bound by a contractual agreement with government which had a number of stringent legal, accounting and technical conditions attached. In the first instance, the group were obliged to register as a limited company and to submit audited accounts and an annual report to the DSCFA each year. The format of the annual report had to comply with a template supplied by the DSCFA and was required to detail how aims and objectives were being attained. Throughout the three-year period, MCF was also compelled to submit quarterly financial returns to the DSCFA, accounting for all expenditure in the previous quarter and projecting expenditure for the coming quarter.

Additional oversight of the work of MCF came through a Cork City-based regional support agency, Teamworks, themselves appointed by the DSCFA. This organisation was in frequent contact with MCF, monitoring its activities and ensuring that it engaged in regular evaluations of work to date and forward planning for future priorities. Teamworks oversaw an intensive schedule of management training for the voluntary committee to equip them with the skills necessary to administer large amounts of public funding. It also assisted MCF to draw up a host of policies in relation to matters like confidentiality and data protection, child protection, recruitment and employment, all to ensure smooth operation of the resource centre. While the level of supervision associated with the DSCFA funding was exceptional, other funding programmes availed of by MCF also brought with them a heavy administrative workload. The

⁶ Files relating to the Family Resource Centre Programme for the years 2000-2005 inclusive were obtained from the Family Support Agency under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003.

main implication of this bureaucratic system was that failure to comply with funding conditions would have negative repercussions for the group.

The necessity for accountability for public monies was the primary justification for the paperwork associated with community projects and this argument was recognised and accepted by MCF members (MF3, 02/12/'03; MF5, 12/02/'04). Nonetheless, this model of community development was, without a doubt, counterproductive in terms of encouraging community participation in the Forum. The range of administrative tasks was a significant burden upon the voluntary management committee, who bemoaned the amount of time both they and staff spent complying with a plethora of rules and regulations, pointing out that this distracted them from more pressing concerns (MF3, 02/12/'03; MF4, 29/01/'04). In its early incarnation, MCF could count on a core membership of between ten and fifteen, but by 2003 many of these had drifted away without being replaced, leaving just seven members on the central management committee. A founding member of MCF explained this loss of human resources with reference to the comparatively large workload. *“For a group like this it’s much, much more of a commitment and a lot of people drop out because they feel they can’t make the commitment”* (MF1, 02/12/'03).

The precarious nature of funding also contributed to a lack of willingness to get involved. Although generous financial resources were provided to MCF, the contractual nature of funding arrangements with government meant that future support was by no means guaranteed. What is more, not all funding applications made by the group were successful. An existing member cited an instance of one individual who had left the group and the reason why this transpired:

One person who joined the childcare sub-group got so fed up because she’d been in the sub-group a year and she felt we were still talking about the same things. This

person said: *‘Look, I’ve had it; I’m not interested in spending twelve months talking about an application that may not come in. I’ve got other things to do with my time’* (MF1, 02/12/’03).

The group’s Annual Report in 2002 was clear about the relationship between state-imposed bureaucracy and the pressure felt by volunteers, stating that *“the amount of time expected from voluntary management to attend meetings, training, seminars and network events continues to place strain on goodwill”*. Committing time and effort to MCF appeared to be a chore for some members rather than a pursuit that volunteers found beneficial.

This atmosphere of frustration permeated many aspects of MCF’s work and was indisputably a product of their relationship with the state. What is more, it was apparent when fieldwork was conducted in late 2003 and the group were in the process of preparing a new three-year plan for submission to government for approval. An air of fatigue was discernable amongst several interviewees and many appeared drained by the level of commitment they had already given over previous years. One group member made a telling revelation about the reasons for his continued involvement. *“What motivates me now to stay involved is the fact that I know that if I go there’s no-one else to do anything. At the moment it is an element of feeling trapped, it is at the moment”* (MF4, 29/01/’04). There were prospective new members in the housing estates adjacent to the resource centre, but the group found that *“there is reluctance to become involved in what is now perceived to be such a large undertaking”*. This disinclination was founded upon a fear among potential volunteers about assuming responsibility for such large amounts of finance and about taking on a role in managing a busy community facility.

It was clear that MCF benefited from significant state resources and was, therefore, in a position to achieve its main aim of a resource centre for Middleton and also to make social

services available to the community. The guidance, support and training provided by state agencies were important in assisting the group to develop a cohesive and effective management structure. However, it was also obvious that MCF was very much constrained by its contractual relationship with state agencies. The nature of this relationship was such that it deprived the group of independence of action; one could not imagine, for instance, MCF confronting state agencies in the same manner that Carrigtwohill Community Council had done. Such a course of action would invariably have led to the threat of withdrawal of finance. In addition, the red tape associated with their work had a de-motivating effect on the voluntary management and hampered efforts to attract new members.

Partnership between state and community has been a cornerstone of the Third Way philosophy and it found clear expression in the relationship between MCF and the Irish state. There are those who would argue, however, that such linkages have been more beneficial to the state and the power relationship is unbalanced. MCF management was not blind to this contradiction. *“Every once in a while there’d be a discussion about were we in fact doing the government’s work, were we in fact taking responsibility off them for providing services that they should be providing”* one member admitted (MF1, 02/12/’03). The broad consensus among group members was that it was better to avail of government support for community groups rather than allow a scenario where the state would renege entirely on its obligations and little or no social services would be available. However, one can conclude that, from the perspective of grassroots community development, partnership with the state was, at best, a double-edged sword.

6.6 Conclusion

These case studies have endeavoured to elaborate upon the main theme of this thesis, namely the extent to which the considerations of place-based community organisations genuinely influence development at local level. Chapter 5 showed how a series of interrelated policy changes, institutional experiments and legislative initiatives since the mid-1990s sought to place communities at the heart of decision-making, although the evidence showed that this was more rhetorical than real. This chapter dealt with the same topic in greater depth by focusing on real-world scenarios and on the experiences of grassroots, place-based community groups in specific spatial and temporal contexts. All of these groups were situated in a region where, and during a period when, profound and rapid change was taking place, as global and national economic forces precipitated significant social and environmental transformations at the local scale. Community organisations responded in various ways on behalf of their constituent populations.

In Glanmire, the community association invested energy in a participatory community planning exercise which won official praise but which ultimately failed to attain most of its objectives. While weaknesses within the GACA were a factor, the primary reason was that, in spite of the supposed policy shift, the governance system was largely unreceptive to community concerns. As a consequence, community leaders decided that the political route would be more productive for pursuing their agenda. Glounthaune Community Association also participated in community planning and also felt disillusioned with the outcome. In contrast to Glanmire, however, Glounthaune shunned the political path and instead sought to create an idealised “*connected community*” through a unique experimental initiative, the Community Timebank. While it was a laudable initiative in many respects and significant in that it represented

something of a retreat from engagement with external forces, whether or not the Timebank could achieve what it set out to do was questionable.

In Carrigtwohill, an altogether different situation prevailed. Faced with the prospect of wholesale changes to their village, the Community Council adopted a combative course of action, confronting the County Council and developers head on in a battle over different interpretations as to what constituted proper planning and development. Although the Community Council failed to have their considerations taken on board in relation to the major Gable Holdings/Blandcrest project at Terrysland, their persistence meant that they secured a victory of sorts when the Carrigtwohill SLAP was finalised in 2005. Finally, Midleton Community Forum was part of the new wave of community groups whose emergence was closely connected to the changing nature of welfare provision. Substantial public funding gave MCF the capability to deliver social services to disadvantaged housing estates in Midleton. The bureaucratic nature of funding programmes, however, constrained the group and its team of volunteers and indicated that, from a community development perspective, a close relationship with the state can be counterproductive.

The four case studies displayed considerable diversity in the manner in which community groups responded to change and this heterogeneity was an outcome of several factors. Social class was clearly significant. In Midleton, for instance, the presence of a socially-excluded, welfare-dependent cohort explained why the work of Midleton Community Forum was based around community development theory. In contrast, Glounthaune's population was predominantly upper-middle class and it was arguably for that reason that the concept of social capital took root. Events and circumstances specific to each local area, such as the Terrysland development in Carrigtwohill, must also be considered. Official policies also had a variable

effect; planning policies differed from one community to the next and state funding programmes targeted certain areas more so than others. Charismatic leadership from influential individuals within community organisations cannot be discounted. What the case studies show was that the relationship between community organisations and powerful state and market forces was by no means uniform, even within a relatively confined geographical area such as East Cork.

Overall, the principal conclusion that can be drawn is that community organisations can be important players in local development, but their position remains marginal. The governance of socio-economic development continued to be controlled largely by the state and the private sector. The third sector, of which the locally-based, voluntary community groups studied here form a sub-section, continued to be a poor relation. Through the mechanisms of local partnership, its presence was increasingly acknowledged and there was a greater deal of formalised interaction between community groups and the state. There was, however, little suggestion of a real transfer of power to the grassroots. Where there was conflict between the agenda of state or private sector interest and communities, the latter generally came out second best.

Conclusion

The theme of community has been pervasive in political discourses of the past two decades; this much was made evident in the opening pages of this thesis. The review of literature in Chapter 1 situated the revival of interest in the concept of community within a wider theoretical debate about the future of modern societies. Social, economic and environmental crises have generated a heightened sense of uncertainty about the future of modernity and its founding notions of development and progress. Older political philosophies of right and left, along with related theories of development based on neo-liberalism and the developmental state, have appeared increasingly redundant and have been eclipsed by new approaches which place concepts of civil society and community at the heart of development theory. In particular, community has become a central theme in contemporary social democracy and has been manifest in the Third Way project. The Third Way has, in turn, been informed by communitarianism, a body of theory which emanated from the United States in the 1980s, but which has garnered widespread approval amongst policy makers across the Anglophone world.

Rebuilding communities and rejuvenating community spirit has, therefore, become a conscious aim of public policies throughout the developed world and Ireland has been no exception. Notions of partnership, participation and governance have underpinned this new agenda as governments have sought to harness the energies of civil society in the pursuit of

policy objectives. This approach to development envisages the third sector, which is the sphere of communal activism and organised volunteering, operating in concert with the private sector and the state to pursue agreed programmes to address social, economic and environmental issues. This necessitates the empowerment of local communities and is founded upon the belief that local activism can be a potent force for positive change. Moreover, the debate is replete with geographical themes, such as the significance accorded to the local arena, decentralised decision-making and the link between community and place. Yet given that civil society and community is in reality often pitted against the seemingly irrepressible forces of global capitalism and state power, the appeal to community might well be viewed as overly idealistic and unrealistic.

Critical voices have called into question the intentions of policy-makers, have claimed that substantive change has not occurred and have argued that the Third Way has merely camouflaged the ongoing ascendancy of corporate power. Consequently, this thesis set out to assess the degree to which the third sector is an equal partner in the triadic model of development and to examine how the salutary notions of partnership and participation have played out in practice during a phase of rapid economic growth in Ireland. It chose to examine this issue through an analysis of place-based community organisations in East Cork, an area where transnational economic forces precipitated profound social transformations during the period under investigation. The methodology employed centred upon a case study approach, whereby a range of data-gathering techniques was employed, but the data was crystallised into an overarching case study of the East Cork region, as well as four studies of community organisations operating in discreet locations within East Cork. As a method, the case study complements a geographical analysis, as it has distinct temporal and spatial boundaries and allows different forms of data to be drawn together into a coherent whole. What is more, the

case study provides an appropriate means of exploring the relationship between community organisations, state agencies and private sectors interests, such as property developers, at local level.

In order to investigate the extent to which community groups can bring their influence to bear upon development processes at local level, it was necessary in the first instance to outline the nature of development in the study area and this was done in Chapter 3. Here the development of East Cork was positioned within a broader national paradigm which emerged in the late 1950s and which prioritised economic growth by facilitating foreign direct investment. Subsequently, a series of sophisticated strategic land use and transportation plans for Cork hastened the region's integration into the global economy. As a result, when an economic upturn arrived in the mid-1990s, East Cork experienced an unprecedented level of population growth and housing construction. The profound effect of global capitalism at the micro-level was clearly apparent in the manner in which economic development had given rise to housing construction, population growth, socio-demographic change and new economic patterns across East Cork.

The distinctive nature of place-based community groups was outlined in Chapter 4. Their place-based focus distinguishes them from issue-based organisations with which they co-exist in East Cork. Formal place-based community organisations emerged as a response to modernisation and development, yet the degree to which they truly represent the inhabitants of the areas they serve varies. By and large, they are not driven by ideological causes, tend to take a pragmatic approach and are very much local in their focus. Several factors motivate participation in these organisations, but the role of children in precipitating parental involvement was an unforeseen finding of the research. Overall, however, the view amongst community

activists in East Cork was that participation in groups had declined and that currently people had become more reluctant to get involved in community organisations. The grassroots perspective, therefore, is that rapid social and demographic change had not been favourable for community organisations.

The core research questions of the thesis were directly addressed in Chapters 5 and 6. First of all, the extent to which state policy has been influenced by communitarian thought was spelled out in Chapter 5. Here it was shown that the Irish state has sought to develop closer relations with the community and voluntary sector over the past fifteen years and has envisaged a deeper role for the sector in the formulation and implementation of social policy. The remainder of this chapter examined how the interaction between community and state has played out at a local scale in the East Cork area, focusing on three particular issues; new local governance structures, participatory planning exercises and social economy initiatives. It was shown here that in practice, community organisations wielded negligible influence in decisions about local development matters and that their relationship with the state was a highly unequal one. Participatory planning, undertaken by community organisations in early 2000 to feed into the Cork County Development Plan, was one notable instance of where community groups felt marginalised and excluded. In addition, attitudes towards new mechanisms of local governance such as the CDB and the CVF ranged from negativity to indifference.

The case studies presented in the final chapter showed that the experiences of community groups across East Cork were by no means uniform and illustrated clearly how local circumstances, personalities and group characteristics dictated the response of place-based community groups to modernisation and change. In Glanmire, for instance, the work of the GACA took place in the context of rapid population growth and a dearth of social and

community facilities. A potent sense of disempowerment was expressed and community activists were of the opinion that the GACA's voice was not being heard at local authority level and that the participatory planning exercise undertaken by the organisation in 2000 had been futile. Consequently, leading figures in the group chose to go down the political route and stood as candidates in the local elections of June 2004. Glounthaune Community Association had a similar experience to the GACA in terms of its engagement with participatory planning, but the reaction of the GCA was entirely different and reflected, to a large degree, the socio-economic profile of an area with more affluent residents. The GCA's focus turned to reviving social networks at local level through the unique Community Timebank project. This initiative sought to create an idealised, network-based community that would help locals to cope with the uncertainties of the rapidly changing world around them. Even though Glanmire and Glounthaune are neighbouring communities, the course of action taken by the two community organisations varied markedly.

One can also contrast Glanmire and Glounthaune with the community organisations in Carrigtwohill and Middleton. Carrigtwohill Community Council largely eschewed the partnership concept and took a more adversarial approach to their dealings with Cork County Council and property developers. Although their struggle to have their voices heard was a protracted one, and they failed to stymie the Terrysland development, they did succeed in shaping the Special Local Area Plan for Carrigtwohill in 2005, something which must be regarded as a victory for their sustained campaign of activism. Initially, this community organisation sought to defend and preserve Carrigtwohill's rural identity, but came to adopt a more pragmatic stance and accept that development and change was inevitable. Their focus then changed to ensuring that the process of change from a village to a town should be properly planned and managed.

Midleton Community Forum, on the other hand, had a more co-operative relationship with the state; this had helped the group to attain its objectives of providing resources and services to its constituency of disadvantaged families. Success had, however, come at a price, in that the group lacked independence and its volunteer corps was burdened by the workload associated with state funding. This was something of a contradiction in that the Forum's work had from the outset been guided by the inherently radical principles of community development. Overall, what the case studies showed was that the community sector is inherently diverse, even within a relatively confined geographical area such as East Cork.

This thesis did not set out to develop generalisable theoretical propositions with regard to the nature of community activism or the role of formal community groups in local development processes. In this author's view, academia can make a far better contribution to our understanding of the world by carrying out indepth analyses of real world scenarios, thereby illuminating our understanding of the processes of social and economic development and change at local level. The case study approach employed here has shown that each community and each locality is by its nature unique and that a reductionist approach that attempts to generate sweeping theoretical propositions will fail to capture the subtleties associated with the distinctive context of each individual community. This is where geography, with its focus on place, space and scale, can make an important contribution to an understanding of community in the contemporary world.

Nevertheless, there were clearly several common themes across the different community organisations studied and they were faced with many similar challenges and issues. Furthermore, given that this thesis stemmed from the author's close professional involvement with and personal interest in community issues in East Cork it seems appropriate to conclude

with some broad observations and recommendations about the role of community organisations in the Irish local development scene and how they can better position themselves to achieve their aims. Partnership has defined the relationship between community groups, state agencies and private sector interests over the past two decades. At time of writing, however, Ireland's partnership model is under growing strain owing to the macroeconomic downturn. Yet this may not be entirely disadvantageous from the perspective of community organisations. The evidence uncovered by this thesis has shown that the community sector has been the poor relation within the partnership approach, as it does not possess the human, financial or technical resources enjoyed by state agencies or by the private sector and is disempowered as a result. Community organisations may be better served by adopting an arm's length relationship with the state and a more independent stance. While this may entail some pain due to the loss of state resources, it would arguably be beneficial for community organisations in the longer term.

The community organisations studied here are small-scale and locally-based and their capacity to influence development processes are somewhat limited. Nevertheless, Carrigtwohill Community Council is an exemplar of how a committed group of activists can pressurise local authorities and property developers into taking on board their arguments. This occurred because of the organisational strength of the Community Council; it had a strong democratic mandate and was in a position to mobilise support in the wider community. Furthermore, it has also undertaken systematic efforts to bring fresh membership to the organisation and to facilitate community-building in the locality. The Community Council engaged with Cork County Council and with property developers Gable Holdings, but did so on its own terms and did not waver in its aim of obtaining a master plan to guide the development of the village. There is a

lesson here for other community organisations; achieving aims and objectives requires sustained attention to the *realpolitik* of local development.

In the final analysis, strengthening the role of community organisations and of civil society generally in the development process requires genuine devolution of political power to the grassroots level. In the Irish case, this necessitates thoroughgoing reform of the local government system, which has long been recognised as weak and relatively toothless. The reform measures undertaken at the turn of the millennium, when the CDBs and CVFs were established, have proven largely ineffectual to date. Decentralisation of political power to local level would arguably engender greater participation in civil society as communities would have a better opportunity to shaping the development of their localities. However, in practice the opposite seems to be happening; political decision-making systems are increasingly focused outwards and upwards towards the realm of global capitalism and facilitating economic development is the chief priority of planning and development policies. Whether an accommodation can be reached between local, community-based concerns and the international economic system, and whether differing interpretations of development at different geographical scales can be reconciled with one another is questionable.

Appendix I – Primary and unpublished sources

Cork County Council

Planning application files

Reg. No. S/00/7607 Application by Gable Holdings Ltd. at Terrysland, Carrigtwohill

Reg. No. S/00/7674 Application by Gable Holdings & Blandcrest, Terrysland, Carrigtwohill

Submissions on draft County Development Plan 2002

No. 113 Riverstown Area Community Association

No. 496 Madge Fogarty, Beal Inse, Upper Riverstown, Glanmire

No. 1400 Meadowbrook Residents' Association

No. 1606 Glanmire Court Residents' Association

Submissions on draft Carrigtwohill Special Local Area Plan 2005

No. 6629 Carrigtwohill Community Council

No's 8136, 8137, 6710 Gable Holdings Ltd.

Planning Policy Unit (2004) *Community and Voluntary Sector Local Area Plan Workshop:*

Day's Proceedings, The Kingsley Hotel, Cork, 3rd April 2004

East Cork Area Development Ltd.

LEADER II programme project files

261 Community Timebank

331 Community Training 2000

Local Development Programme project files

0025 Avoncore Family Resource Centre

0026 Avoncore Women's Group

0071 Midleton & District Forum

0079 Midleton Forum Upgrade Computer

0102 Midleton Forum Worker

0104 Midleton Forum Training

0113/0121 Midleton Resource Centre Upgrading/Beechwood Community Office

0122 Midleton Community Forum – Interim Funding

National Rural Development Programme project files

2018 Community Timebank

2063 Midleton Community Forum Youth Arts Project

3109 Glounthaune Playground

Family Support Agency/Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs

Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme; annual files on Middleton Community Forum, 2000-2006 inclusive, acquired under the Freedom of Information Act

An Bord Pleanála

Planning appeal files

Ref. No. PL 04 125446 Inspector's Report; Terrysland, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Ref. No. PL 04 125446 Board Direction; Terrysland, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Ref. No. PL 04 131129 Inspector's Report; Terrysland, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Ref. No. PL 04 131129 Board Direction; Terrysland, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork

Glounthaune Community Association/Community Timebank Steering Committee

Glounthaune Parish Community Timebank Draft Business Plan, March 2002

Community Timebank progress report to East Cork Area Development Ltd., August 28th 2002

Community Timebank report to East Cork Area Development Ltd., October 25th 2002

Community Timebank Information Booklet

In Touch monthly newsletter (May 2004 – May 2005)

Evaluation of Community Timebank by Prof. Frank A. Fear, Michigan State University,
November 2005

Carrigtwohill Community Council

Submission/Observations of Carrigtwohill Community Council on Proposed Amendment to
Draft County Development Plan, October 2002

Initial comments on proposal to prepare Special Local Area Plan for Carrigtwohill, July 2003

Midleton Community Forum

Midleton Community Forum (2000) Family Resource Centre Workplan 2001-2003

Midleton Community Forum group policies: Recruitment procedures; Equality Statement;
Policy document on usage of Oakwood Centre; Out of Schools Service policy; Staff policy,
Child Protection policy

Appendix II - List of interviews conducted

GM1 – 11/02/'04	CT3 – 14/04/'04	EC1 – 10/05/'04
GM2 – 10/03/'04	CT4 – 14/04/'04	EC2 – 12/05/'04
GM3 – 15/03/'04	CT5 – 21/06/'04	EC3 – 26/05/'04
GM4 – 18/03/'04	CT6 – 23/06/'04	EC4 – 12/07/'04
GM5 – 31/03/'04		EC5 – 15/09/'04
GM6 – 05/05/'04	MF1 – 02/12/'03	
GM7 – 18/06/'04	MF2 – 02/12/'03	CCC1 – 01/09/'04
GM8 – 28/06/'04	MF3 – 02/12/'03	CCC2 – 05/10/'04
GM9 – 28/06/'04	MF4 – 29/01/'04	CCC3 – 06/10/'04
GM10 – 11/07/'04	MF5 – 12/02/'04	CCC4 – 05/11/'04
	MF6 – 12/02/'04	CCC5 – 16/02/'05
TB1 – 26/01/'04		
TB2 – 15/04/'04	BC1 – 02/12/'03	MT1 – 25/05/'04
TB3 – 23/04/'04	BC2 – 05/02/'04	
TB4 – 14/05/'04	BC3 – 15/03/'04	Misc1 – 31/05/'04
TB5 – 25/05/'04	BC4 – 02/04/'04	
TB6 – 11/06/'04		
TB7 – 17/06/'04	DC1 – 27/01/'04	
TB8 – 23/06/'04	DC2 – 01/03/'04	
TB9 – 06/07/'04	DC3 – 12/03/'04	
TB10 – 12/07/'04	DC4 – 29/03/'04	
	DC5 – 08/04/'04	
CT1 – 25/11/'03	DC6 – 19/04/'04	
CT2 – 01/03/'04		

Appendix III – Online questionnaire survey

Development and Planning Issues in East Cork Communities

An Internet Questionnaire Survey

Your participation in this Internet questionnaire is being requested. This survey is part of my research for a PhD in Geography at University College Cork.

All information given will be treated strictly confidentially. No individual will be identified on the basis of his or her answers. All results will appear in statistical form only.

Thank you for your co-operation and time.

Introduction

The Celtic Tiger era brought planning and development issues to the forefront of public concern in East Cork. There has been major development in housing, transport, industry and services. The population has grown rapidly. Local government reform means that local communities are supposed to have a greater say in the development of their area. Community groups have drawn up plans and taken part in consultation processes to try and make their voices heard. Planning, development and community issues have created public debate and sometimes controversy. At a global level it has been pointed out that the current level of development threatens our environment and our future well-being and that development needs to become 'sustainable'. This questionnaire gives you the opportunity to make your views known.

- The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete
- Please try to answer all questions to the best of your ability
- Simply use the mouse to click on your option for each question
- Please submit just one completed form per person
- Only residents of East Cork¹ should complete the questionnaire
- Please remember to click the 'submit' button at the end

¹ If you consider where you live to be part of East Cork, then you are most welcome to complete the questionnaire

Section 1 – Participation in the community

Q.1 Do you take part in your local community group?

(The term 'community group' includes Community Councils, Community Development Groups, Community Associations and Residents' Associations)

Yes

☐

No

☐

(If No, click here to skip to Question 6)

Q.2 How long have you been active in your local community group for?

More than 20 years

☐

5-10 years

☐

11-20 years

☐

Less than 5 years

☐

Q.3 How often do you participate in local community activities (e.g. group meetings, projects and events, raising funds, making grant applications etc.)? (choose one)

Once a week or more often

☐

Every second week

☐

Once a month

☐

2-6 times during the year

☐

Once a year

☐

Only when asked to do so

☐

Never

☐

Q.4 Have you ever held any of the following positions in your local community group?

(choose more than one if applicable)

Chairperson

☐

Secretary

☐

- Treasurer ☐
- Committee member ☐
- Other (please name) ☐
- I have not held any position ☐

Q.5 What are the reasons that you became/are involved in your local community group?

(choose more than one if applicable)

- I like helping other people ☐
- It's a good way to meet people and to socialise ☐
- I believe in contributing to local community effort ☐
- It was/is the first step towards a career in community development ☐
- It was/is the first step in a career in local politics ☐
- I want to make my area a better place to live ☐
- I have a strong attachment to the place where I live ☐
- Other reasons (please type details in the box below) ☐

Q.6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about community groups?

Community groups can have a strong influence on local planning and development issues

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Community groups are just talking shops with no real clout

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Community groups should be given more recognition, support and funding from the state

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Community groups do not always represent the views of all local people

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Community groups can help to make an area a better place to live and provide important amenities

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Community groups are only doing work that the state or local authorities should be doing instead

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Q.7 Do you take part in any other local voluntary organisations? (choose more than one if applicable)

GAA club/other sports club ☐

Church/religious organisation ☐

Working with the elderly ☐

Working with the poor/disadvantaged ☐

Working with young people ☐

Neighbourhood Watch/Community Alert ☐

Environmental group/Tidy Towns ☐

Other (please name) ☐

Section 2 – Local Development and Local Government

Q.1 Who do you think **has the most influence** upon local planning and development decisions?
(choose one)

Property developers/investors/speculators	☐
Elected representatives (Councillors/TDs)	☐
County Council officials	☐
The general public	☐
Local community groups	☐
Special interest groups/pressure groups	☐
Don't know/no opinion	☐

Q.2 Who do you think **should have the most influence** on local planning and development decisions?

Property developers/investors/speculators	☐
Elected representatives (Councillors/TDs)	☐
County Council officials	☐
The general public	☐
Local community groups	☐
Special interest groups/pressure groups	☐
Don't know/no opinion	☐

Q.3 Who would you approach first if you wanted to make representations about local development issues?

County Councillor/Urban District Councillor	☐

Local TD	☐	
County Council/Urban District Council official	☐	
Local community group	☐	
State body (please name)	☐	
Other individual/organisation (please name)	☐	
Making representations is pointless and a waste of time	☐	
Don't know/no opinion	☐	

Q.4 Do you think Local Government/County Councils in Ireland should be given more power?

Yes	☐	No	☐	Don't know	☐	No opinion	☐

Q.5 Would you be in favour of the introduction of some form of local taxation, or the re-introduction of rates on households², to fund Local Government?

In favour of	☐	Opposed to	☐	Don't know	☐	No opinion	☐

Q.6 Are you in favour of or opposed to the planned development of a hazardous waste incinerator at Ringaskiddy, Cork Harbour?

In favour of	☐	Opposed to	☐	Don't know	☐	No opinion	☐

Q.7 Are you in favour of or opposed to the re-opening of the railway line between Cork City and Midleton?

In favour of	☐	Opposed to	☐	Don't know	☐	No opinion	☐

² Domestic rates on households consisted of an annual levy on each household that was collected by the Local Authority.
Domestic rates were abolished by the Fianna Fáil government in 1977.

Q.8 Are you in favour of or opposed to one-off housing in rural areas?

Yes, permission should be granted in all cases

☐

Yes, but with restrictions on some types of housing

☐

Applications should be decided on a case-by-case basis

☐

Permission should only be granted to people already

from the area

☐

Permission should not be granted in any case

☐

Don't know/no opinion

☐

Q.9 Were you involved in any way in making a submission to the Cork County Development Plan 2003?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Q.10 Will you be voting in the local elections in June 2004?

Yes, I will be voting

☐

No, I won't bother

☐

I'm undecided

☐

I'm not eligible to vote

☐

Section 3 – Sustainable Development

Q.1 Which of the following would you associate with the term sustainable development?

(choose more than one if applicable)

Protecting the natural environment

☐

Taking steps to reduce poverty

☐

Ensuring continued economic growth

☐

More democratic decision-making

☐

Preventing unnecessary development

☐

Reducing the amount we consume

☐

Lower standards of living

☐

Giving power to local communities

☐

Equal distribution of resources

☐

Reducing waste and pollution

☐

Q.2 In your opinion, is it possible to continue economic growth and development while protection the natural environment at the same time?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

☐

No opinion

☐

Q.3 Would you be prepared to accept more environmental or 'green' taxes (e.g. plastic bag tax) in order to fund environmental protection?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

☐

No opinion

☐

Q.4 In your opinion, has the natural environment of your area deteriorated in recent years as a result of development?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know

☐

No opinion

☐

Q.5 Sustainable development means that as a society we can have it all: economic growth and prosperity, social justice and equality, and a clean, safe environment.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Strongly agree

☐

Agree

☐

Unsure

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Q.6 Sustainable development means a 90% reduction in the use of energy and resources in developed countries, including Ireland, over the next 50 years?

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Strongly agree

☐

Agree

☐

Unsure

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

☐

Section 4 – Information on yourself

Q.1 What area of East Cork do you live in? (Click on the arrow and choose an option from the drop-down menu)

Q.2 How long have you lived in the area where you now reside?

All my life	☐	5-10 years	☐
More than 20 years	☐	2-4 years	☐
11-20 years	☐	less than 2 years	☐

Q.3 Are you a native of the town/village/parish where you live?

- Yes ☐ No ☐

Q.4 What is your current occupation? (Click on the arrow and choose an option from the drop-down menu)

Q.5 What level of education have you achieved? (Click on the arrow and choose an option from the drop-down menu)

Q.6 What is your gender?

- Female ☐ Male ☐

Q.7 Which of the following age groups are you in?

- < 15 ☐
- 15-24 ☐

25-44

☐

45-64

☐

65+

☐

Q.8 What is your marital status?

Married

☐

Single

☐

Separated/divorced

☐

Widow/widower

☐

Please add any other comments you wish to make in the box below.

Click the 'submit' button to send the completed answers.

Submit

Click the 'reset' button if you wish to start again.

Reset

If you have any other comments you wish to make, or if you would like to provide any additional information in person, you can contact me:

Conor Ryan c/o Geography Department, University College Cork, Western Road, Cork

Telephone (021) 4904427

E-mail c.j.ryan@student.ucc.ie

Appendix IV

Author's submission on Draft Special Local Area Plan for Carrigtwohill, February 2005

Background

This submission arises from the author's research for a PhD in Geography at University College Cork, examining community involvement in local planning and development processes in the East Cork area. The views expressed are the personal views of the author and do not reflect the views of the Geography Department, UCC.

Planning process

Current development theory recognises that there is a need to emphasise more participatory forms of democracy and decision making in light of the need to advance a sustainability agenda. It is now widely accepted that citizens need to be more directly involved in development issues that impact upon them and their areas, and that representative forms of democratic decision-making by themselves are not sufficient to address increasingly complex social, economic and environmental development issues. This perspective is supported by United Nations, European Union and national government policies.

- The Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, (1987) states that sustainable development requires "a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision making...The law alone cannot enforce the common interest. It principally needs community knowledge and support, which entails greater public participation in the decisions which affect the environment".
- The European Commission's *Strategy for Sustainable Development* (2001) says that while public authorities provide the overall framework, it is ultimately individual citizens and businesses who must deliver the changes necessary for sustainable development.
- The Irish government's *Guidelines on Local Agenda 21* (2001) state, "the core of Local Agenda 21 is to encourage greater local ownership of and participation in local decision making for sustainable development".

Sustainable development, therefore, needs to be built from the bottom up, at the local scale, in communities, towns and villages, and through partnership between local authorities, communities and the private sector.

Local Area Plans are a new departure in the Irish planning system and potentially provide an important vehicle for implementing sustainable development at a local level. The Workshop involving the Planning Policy Unit and the Community and Voluntary Forum of the County Development Board in April 2004 was a notable achievement in this regard. However, the legislation allows the relationship between local authorities and community groups to develop to another level and to incorporate issues that are specific to individual communities and settlements. The Planning and Development Act 2000, Part II, Section 18 (6) states that “A local authority may enter into an arrangement with any suitably qualified person or **local community group** for the preparation, or the carrying out of any aspect of the preparation, of a local area plan” (emphasis added).

Carrigtwohill is home to a strong and vibrant Community Council, with elected representatives from all areas of the parish, including all areas covered by the Special Local Area Plan. The Community Council has an active and committed planning and development sub-committee, which has already made an important and positive input into the local planning process over a number of years through submissions and meetings with Cork County Council and various developers. A number of Community Council representatives also travelled to Cambourne in the UK to investigate good planning practice in town planning and development there. At present, the Community Council envisages taking on an umbrella role to co-ordinate the response of all voluntary community organisations and clubs in Carrigtwohill to the draft Local Area Plan.

It is proposed here that Cork County Council enter into a legal arrangement with Carrigtwohill Community Council Ltd. for the purposes of preparing the final Local Area Plan, in line with the terms of the legislation cited above. An eight-month period remains before the plan will be finalised and adopted, and considerable detail will have to be worked out in the interim. There are a number of advantages of such an arrangement.

- By involving the Community Council directly in the preparation of Local Area Plans, the wishes, concerns and opinions of local communities can be addressed in detail and placed on a secure legal footing within plans.
- It will increase the sense of public ownership of the Local Area Plan and will heighten public confidence in the planning process.
- It will be an improvement on the *ad hoc* nature of arrangements over the last number of years, where the Community Council has met and negotiated with developers and the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis relating to individual developments.
- It will allow Cork County Council to benefit from local community knowledge, and therefore provide a resource for planning officials.

Such an arrangement should not, however, be construed as giving the Community Council free hand to dictate the nature and content of the Plan, but rather that they can be allowed to be deeply involved in the preparation of the Plan.

A number of steps could be taken to develop this arrangement.

- Firstly, the Planning Policy Unit should seek legal clarification on the section of the Planning Act referred to above and explore how such a legally binding arrangement with a local community group might be put into operation.
- A template outlining the procedures/‘terms of reference’ for Community Council involvement, and incorporating a timetable/schedule of meetings, should be drawn up.
- Specific issues relating to Carrigtwohill where the Community Council could make an input could then be identified. Issues relating to open spaces, civic spaces, schools, road improvements, transport routes etc. are areas of work where the Community Council could provide a valuable insight.

The adoption of the Cork Area Strategic Plan means that it is almost inevitable that Carrigtwohill will be a location for major housing development and population growth over the lifetime of the special Local Area Plan. The LAP provides the opportunity to ensure that the development of Carrigtwohill will be plan-led and sustainable, and that all

necessary social, community and recreational facilities can be provided in tandem with development. Carrigtwohill can serve as a model of good planning and development practice that can be replicated elsewhere in the future, for example at Monard/Rathpeacon.

Zoning issues

Town Centre zonings T-02 and T-03

These zonings are welcome, as they will help to maintain the Main Street as the core area of Carrigtwohill, in line with the wishes of the local community as expressed in the Carrigtwohill Community Plan 2000. More detailed consideration will need to be given to the density of development and accessibility issues. The height of buildings should be restricted to three stories or less to avoid overshadowing Main Street and to maintain the village character. Access to these areas should focus upon pedestrians and cyclists and the Plan should prohibit the development of a multi-storey car park on either of these sites, as this would exacerbate already severe traffic congestion on Main Street. T-03 is particularly inaccessible, but there is potential for vehicular access to this site from the N25 slip road. However, this would be one-way access only and would traverse the existing Well Lane walkway developed by the Community Council with public funding.

Housing

Density issues

The table below sets out the proposed residential densities on sites zoned for housing in Carrigtwohill. This is largely in line with good planning practice as outlined in the Department of the Environment's Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Residential Development (1999). Residential densities of between 25 and 35 units per hectare allows for efficient use of land, and the proposals for Carrigtwohill balance the need for a relatively high density of housing necessary to ensure the feasibility of the railway line, while generally confining the highest densities to the smallest sites, and having lower densities on fringe settlements. With proper design and layout, the proposed residential strategy should assist in maintaining a semi-rural character in Carrigtwohill.

Phasing of housing development will be important. The plan should provide detailed information regarding the issue of ‘trigger points’, which will ensure that community amenities and facilities are in place prior to or are provided in tandem with development.

Label	Location	Proposed Units	Approx. Area (hectares)	Density (units per hectare)
R-01	Terrysland North	740	29.6	25
R-02	Poulaniska	18	0.5	36
R-03	Poulaniska	880	35.2	25
R-04	Terrysland South	35	1	35
R-05	Bog Road	20	2.4	8.3
R-06	Bog Road	70	6.8	10.3
R-07	Terrysland South	1370	11.9	40.4
R-08	Terrysland South	As above	22.0	40.4
R-09	Terrysland East	38	2.1	18.1
R-10	Quarry	100	9.4	10.6
R-11	Station Road	45	2.9	15.5
R-12	Station Road	23	0.9	25.5
R-13	Terrysland South	84	2.8	30
R-15	Rear ECI	10	2.5	4
T-01	Town Centre	100	3.5	28.5
X-01	Station Quarter*	250/300*	10.6 (?)	23.5/28.3

*The draft plan is unclear about the number of dwellings proposed for the Station Quarter site, and also about what proportion of the overall site will be used for residential development. Paragraph 5.2.2 refers to “a minimum of 300 dwellings”, while both Objective TRA 5-4 and Figure 6.1 give a figure of 250 dwellings.

Part II Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act allows local authorities to include details on “standards for the design of developments and structures”. The Local

Area Plan should incorporate incentives to encourage more sustainable forms of housing, including use of alternative energies (solar, geothermal), and sustainable building materials. Incentives could take the form of a percentage reduction on levies for developers who opt to build such types of housing. Although it might be argued that there is little market demand for sustainable housing, and that the additional costs incurred would be unattractive for both developers and house buyers, Cork County Council strongly needs to consider taking a far-sighted and proactive approach to promoting the development of sustainable housing construction. Given that all proposed housing in Carrigtwohill is likely to be subjected to substantial development contributions, a partial derogation on development contributions could have a significant positive impact.

Open Space

The zonings O-01 and O-04 are welcome. The Local Area Plan should commit Cork County Council to moving quickly upon adoption to purchase these lands and develop them in co-operation with local community and sporting organisations so that facilities will come on stream in tandem with housing development. A small portion of O-01 at the northeast corner is already on the market.

Provision of open space should give attention to quality as well as quantity. In this regard the merits of zonings O-02 and O-05 in terms quality is questionable. Both are linear in nature and this may present management difficulties in the future (ref. DoE Residential Density Guidelines, 1999, paragraph 5.7.3). It is also questionable whether these open spaces would be of any benefit to residents not immediately adjacent to these areas.

O-02 consists of an ESB way leave. O-05 forms part of the Fota Rock development. A portion of O-05 has already been built upon and other portions comprise the access road to the estate and car parking spaces. Therefore, the extent of this open space is nowhere near as large as indicated on the zoning map. If adjacent land is developed as currently zoned, it will also border an industrial development. A tree planted buffer is already in

place along the eastern end, but is undoubtedly not the 10 metres in width proposed. The draft plan proposes no walkway or pathway through this area. The area is also adjacent to the N25 dual carriageway, and noise pollution is significant. All of these factors diminish this area as a quality recreational space.

An additional consideration in the provision of open space in Carrigtwohill is the fact that one-quarter of housing developments in Carrigtwohill must be reserved for social and affordable housing (County Development Plan 2003, 6.3.3). Furthermore, the draft plan also contains no proposal for passive open space. If Carrigtwohill is to grow to its projected size, then a town park should be developed with walks, gardens, forested areas etc, similar to Fitzgerald Park in Cork. There is a strong argument in favour of zoning additional open space in the area. Barryscourt and Slatty's pond provide options here (see below).

The Local Area Plan should also set out details regarding the ownership and future management of all open spaces.

Additional open space - Barryscourt

Barryscourt Castle and Gardens is a significant tourist attraction, a prominent local landmark and a protected structure. It currently lies just outside the development boundary for Carrigtwohill and within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Consideration could be given to extending the development boundary to include some or all of the area around Barryscourt and zoning it as a passive open space. This area could then be developed by the County Council and the local community as a town park for the expanded settlement of Carrigtwohill.

Barryscourt is a five-minute walk from the village centre and is safely accessible to pedestrians and cyclists via the flyover of the N25. Development of recreational space in this area would have to be sensitive to ecological and heritage considerations. Such a zoning would ensure the protection of the valuable natural and cultural heritage of Barryscourt and acknowledge its importance to the identity of Carrigtwohill.

Slatty's Pond

Slatty's Pond lies within the Great Island Channel proposed Natural Heritage Area (1058) and candidate Special Area of Conservation (1058). It is one of the sites on the East Cork Bird Trail. The Community Council has carried out developments in this area, such as tree planting. Although it is remote from many of the main residential areas of Carrigtwohill, consideration could be given to zoning this area as an open space and carrying out developments that might be sensitive to its ecology e.g. bird watching hide similar to Ballyvergan, Youghal.

Industrial Zoning I-04

This site lies to the east of the village and is zoned for a large stand-alone industry. The feasibility of this zoning should be reconsidered in the light of a number of points.

- The fact that the site is surrounded on three sides by housing or land zoned for housing purposes means that any application for a large industry is likely to meet significant local opposition.
- The wishes of the Community Council as outlined in their Community Plan of 2000, which favours industrial development on one side of the village only (p.11)
- The wishes of the landowner as indicated in submission No. 378, Appendix A of the draft plan
- The fact that the western side of Carrigtwohill already contains a large amount of land zoned for industry.
- The fact that this site has been marked for major industry since 1996 and has not yet been developed would seem to indicate that it is unsuitable.

Educational, Institutional and Civic zonings

Schools

Schools perform an important function in new and expanding communities in terms of helping newer residents to integrate with established residents, and act as a hub of community activity. The Draft plan contains proposals for sites for two new 16-class primary schools to meet the need of the expanding population. The capacity of these two new schools should be in the region of 400 pupils each.

It is unclear as to whether the existing primary schools will be integrated into these new school campuses. Every effort should be made to ensure that this will be the case, even if this requires the reservation of additional land and the construction of larger schools. The long-term vision should be for one boys' and one girls' primary school serving Carrigtwohill. Separate schools to serve the new residential areas will hinder efforts at community integration.

Cemetery

Reservation was made for a cemetery in Carrigtwohill in the draft County Development Plan. However, this land was amended for housing without any additional provision for cemetery space. The Local Area Plan should make provision for a new cemetery.

Other civic amenities

The Local Area Plan should reserve a site for a library.

Cork County Council should liaise with the Southern Health Board to identify whether land needs to be zoned for health purposes.

In the event of new schools being built and the existing school buildings becoming vacant, these sites should retain their current zoning status.

Other issues

Environmental Impact

The Planning and Development Act 2000, Part II Section 19(4)(a), requires Local Area Plans to give consideration to the likely environmental impacts of the implementation of a local area plan. No such consideration is apparent in the draft plan for Carrigtwohill. This reflects poorly on Cork County Council's approach to planning and sustainability issues. Environmental impacts should be assessed from the outset and should be incorporated in all aspects of planning and development, in line with Agenda 21.

Roads

There are a number of minor roads to the north of Carrigtwohill that lie outside the development boundary. These roads are generally narrow and winding. As housing

development progresses, it is likely that these roads will witness an increase in pedestrian traffic, particularly as many recreational walkers may wish to climb the hills to enjoy the very fine vistas of the harbour area. Consideration should be given in the Local Area Plan to resulting road safety issues.

The draft plan has zoned a considerable area of land to the northwest of Carrigtwohill for industrial development (I-01, I-02 and I-03). The roads servicing this area are poor quality rural roads. However, the draft plan makes no proposal for road improvements in this area, which is not even included on Figure 5.4. Consideration should be given to such road improvements.

Summary

The Special Local Area Plan represents an opportunity to develop Carrigtwohill in an effective and sustainable manner and is necessary given the scale of development. The re-opening of the rail line, the reservation of land for schools, the provision for active open space, and the town centres zonings are positive aspects of the draft plan. However, the plan arguably remains weak in terms of passive open space provision, reservation of land for civic uses other than schools, and the lack of an environmental impact assessment. Considerable detail still needs to be worked out. It is suggested that a legally binding arrangement with Carrigtwohill Community Council would be an effective way to address these issues.

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