

Is Social Capital Formation and Maintenance Under Threat in
County Sligo? A Critical Review and Exploration 1993-2013

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Declaration

**I CONFIRM THAT THE ENCLOSED IS ALL MY OWN WORK WITH ACKNOWLEDGED
EXCEPTION**

CANDIDATE: _____

Acknowledgement

I would firstly like to thank the people of Sligo who showed such support for this piece of research. The enthusiasm with which they embraced the project gave me much encouragement to conduct an in-depth analysis of the recent social and economic events which shaped much of their lives and caused them much unease and no little anger. Their pride in Sligo and all that is good about the town and county came through in abundance and it is to them that I owe the biggest debt of gratitude.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to assess the extent to which social capital formation and the commensurate maintenance of this substance, imputed to ‘bind society’, has been under threat in County Sligo over the period 1993-2013. Relatedly, issues around individualism, community and social self-encapsulation, as a consequence of the recent era of significant economic recession and austerity, are unpacked by providing a within case and non-generalizable case study of County Sligo.

Adopting a mixed method approach, this research was operationalized by undertaking an extensive literature review of social capital. From this review a list of issues and themes emerged. These initially informed a topic guide for a focus group session consisting of community activists from all walks of life in County Sligo. The views of the focus group participants laid the foundations for a quantitative survey which in turn paved the way for a number of one-to-one interviews with leading members of County Sligo society representing a range of organisations.

The findings from this research indicate that there is significant and widespread anger at the way leading institutions of the State behaved over the preceding decades including concern at the manner in which consecutive County Development Plans did not adequately facilitate, encourage or support the development of the *social capitalisation* of Sligo. Low levels of trust in society emerge as a major issue. However, people in County Sligo distinguish between interpersonal trust and institutional trust and indicate that they are prepared to reach out and engage in collective *re-social capitalisation* activities transcending social, economic, ethnic cleavages.

That human nature will find the strength to heal the wounds and face the future with hope and some confidence was the principle finding of this research and that Sligo people have a pride in their county.

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Chapter One Introduction

1.0 Introduction

What has happened to Irish society in the last twenty years? It is generally acknowledged that Ireland is a wealthy country, why then are its citizens in such economic and social difficulties? Did the materialism associated with the Celtic Tiger era change us? Are we more cynical, more embittered and individualistic as a result? This thesis, using County Sligo as a template, endeavours to answer these questions. Murphy (2008) asks: ‘*What impact might globalisation have on Irish Society?*’ This thesis asks: ‘In what way have events of the last twenty years affected Irish society and more particularly the development of notions of society and community in County Sligo?’ This thesis, mapped out in 2009, looks at County Sligo and traces how the economy and societal structures and ultimately social capital formation and development in the county have changed over the period under review. The theory of social capital, a relatively new concept to sociologists, is explored incorporated into the methodology to measure *changing levels* of social capital in County Sligo over the last twenty years. From relative obscurity twenty years ago social capital has emerged as a cornerstone of the debate on democracy and society in the internet age.

Liberal democracy is a three-legged stool, though, at present, it’s a pretty wobbly stool. One leg is government, providing public capital, another, the market, providing market capital and the third, civil society, providing social capital. To get things back in balance, the third leg needs strengthening
(Carnegie Trust 2010, p.24).

This thesis will expose the imperfections of the concept of social capital and with this in mind a reminder of what *it is not* is appropriate:

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them
(Putnam 2000, p.19).

The scope of this thesis cannot be taken to be generalisable to all of Ireland. It reflects the specific social and economic conditions in County Sligo at a specific point in time. The reader will be reminded of this again in chapter three, outlining the limitations of this research.

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows: section 1.1 provides a justification as to why this research topic was chosen for meaningful interrogation and deep exploration. Sub section 1.1.1 alerts the reader as to why it's a very timely piece of research and 1.1.2 explains why County Sligo is an appropriate case study. Section 1.2 sets the research in the context of the digital age. Section 1.3 outlines the layout of the thesis on a chapter by chapter basis. Section 1.4 describes the research topic and importantly outlines a number of research questions from which conclusions will be drawn. Section 1.5 reminds the reader of the very basic human need to belong in the community in section 1.5.1. Section 1.5.2 links the individual, sociology, and social capital together. Section 1.6 guides the reader to the case studies that describes County Sligo from both a social and economic perspective. Sub section 1.6.1 looks at influence of the EU on planning in Ireland, 1.6.2 looks at the origins of planning in Ireland over the last twenty years. 1.6.3 deals with the Sligo County Development Plan (2005-2011). Sub section 1.6.4 looks at the 2011-2017 Sligo County Development Plans. Section 1.7 takes a broader look at the social and economic make up of Sligo starting with subsection 1.7.1 and continuing in 1.7.1. Sub section 1.7.3 looks at County Sligo from a deprivation standpoint. Section 1.8 looks at Sligo town and its environs starting with a description of the regulatory framework in 1.8.1 and highlighting the key messages in 1.8.2. Subsection 1.8.3 gives an overview of the population characteristics of Sligo and section 1.8.4 goes into more detail. Section 1.9 details the community of Grange and contrasts the demographics of that community with that of Sligo town. Section 1.10 summarises chapter one. Section 1.11 provides a conclusion.

1.1 Why research the topic of Social Capital formation and maintenance in County Sligo?

As explained in more detail in the methodology chapter, this thesis is based on personal experience. With over thirty years of involvement in the community and voluntary sector, this researcher has experienced firsthand the changing nature of the sector and the impact this constant state of flux has on individuals operating within it.

From a low base in the 1970s money and wealth have accumulated in communities across Ireland and with these came power.

This brought a different perspective and with it people with a different outlook on the community and voluntary sector. Is this a good development? How will these new developments affect social capital levels and social capital formation in county Sligo? This thesis endeavours to find out.

In today's complex society where specialisation and professionalism is becoming ever more commonplace, the community and voluntary sector is still the domain of amateurs. The advent and subsequent demise of the *Celtic Tiger*¹ has left this sector with a loss of direction.

Following the collapse of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland, community, voluntary and charitable organizations have a key part to play in building a more caring, just and inclusive society
(The Wheel, 2011, p.1).

This thesis tests the perception that society has become more individualistic and that individuals have become more selfish in their outlook. This is the ultimate purpose of this thesis. Have social capital levels and social capital formation and maintenance *actually* changed over the last twenty years in County Sligo?

An extensive excavation of theoretical contributions on the subject of social capital is featured in chapter two.

1.1.1 Why do this research now?

By the middle of the first decade of the new millennium I, like many people in Ireland, began to seriously question where we were going as a society. I knew something was wrong. I decided to do something about my own sense of unease and approached IT Sligo in the autumn of 2008 about the possibility of undertaking research on the possible implications of what I was detecting and observing among community and voluntary organisations that I was familiar with. The timing of this research coincides with the post Celtic Tiger era.

¹ Commonly used term to describe the years of very high economic growth in the Irish economy from the 1994 to 2003.

At national level President Higgins was questioning our values:

During my Presidency, I also intend to hold a number of Presidency Seminars which may reflect and explore themes important to our shared life yet separate and wider than legislative demand, themes such as the restoration of trust in our institutions, the ethical connection between our economy and society, the future of a Europe built on peace, social solidarity and sustainability
(Extract from inaugural address, Dublin Castle, 11 November 2011).

1.1.2 Why is County Sligo chosen as the within case study?

Possibly more than any other county in the country Sligo has witnessed significant changes since it found itself on the ‘wrong side’ of the border with Northern Ireland in 1922. A quintessential ‘garrison town’, the grandiose plans envisaged by the Celtic Tiger planners has left the county and more particularly Sligo town reeling:

Sligo rightly sees itself as the “capital of the northwest”, easily outpacing Enniskillen. With a royal charter granted in 1613, it defines itself as a “city” even though the population within the perfect circle that marks the urban boundary is fewer than 20,000 – a far cry from the European threshold of 100,000 for city status.
Designated as a development “gateway” under the 2002 National Spatial Strategy (NSS), Sligo has significant strengths – not least its unrivalled topographical setting, with Ben Bulbin on one side and Knocknarea on the other, and the fast-flowing Garavogue river sweeping right through the town centre
(McDonald 2014, p.1).

McDonald goes on:

Unlike Limerick, there is no specific new vision or strategy for Sligo once its county and borough councils merge, other than the current Sligo County Development Plan (2011-2017) and the borough’s Sligo and Environs development plan (2010-2016). These will no doubt be reconciled after the councils become a single authority
(McDonald 2014b, p.1).

The above policies combined with a lack of evidenced based planning, created a seemingly chaotic scenario for Sligo town and county:

If Sligo County Council was a property developer, it would almost certainly be in Nama now. The council has accumulated a staggering debt of €94 million, at least some of it incurred by purchasing land at top-dollar prices during boom years
(Mc Donald 2014b, p.1).

These comments sum up Sligo. It was obvious something was amiss with County Sligo. This researcher started out by focusing solely on the social capital formation and maintenance dynamics of Sligo and this is still central to this thesis but the unfolding economic calamity warranted inspection also. Before proceeding further it is important to take stock of the much changed world of research over the last twenty years. The next section sets the scene for the methodology of this thesis.

1.2 Social capital, social research and the digital age

The astonishing pace of change in the world of research is succinctly described by Darnton (2008) when outlining the effect that the internet age has had on research and society in general. The origins of the internet age dates from the 1970s, although 1994 is the year generally recognised its starting point. Google, for instance, is only in existence since 1998.

From writing to the codex[books], 4,300 years; from the codex to movable type, 1,150 years; from movable type to the Internet, 524 years; from the Internet to search engines, 17 years: from search engines to Google's algorithmic relevance ranking, 7 years: and who knows what is just around the corner or coming out the pipeline? Each change in the technology has transformed the information landscape (Darnton 2008, p.2).

Murthy (2008, p.837 -855) dwells on the rise of digital technologies and the potential to open new directions in research. Noting that despite the growth of these technologies, their infiltration into popular sociological research methods is still limited compared to the uptake of online scholarly research portals. Murthy critically examines the possibilities and problems of four new research technologies – online questionnaires, digital video, social networking websites, and blogs – and their potential impacts on the research relationship. The author concludes that a balanced combination of physical and digital research not only gives researchers a larger and more exciting array of methods, but also enables them to de-marginalise the voice of respondents. However, access to these technologies remains stratified by class, race, and gender of both researchers and respondents (Murthy 2008). This thesis takes on board the views of Murthy (2008) in chapter three. The experiences of this writer in relation to research in the digital age will be noted in the methodology chapter.

1.3 Outline of this study

Chapter one introduces the reader to the topic. It poses the question as to whether Irish, and Sligo people in particular, really have changed over the last twenty years. Researchers often study a topic because they themselves have been affected in some way by it and this thesis is certainly in that category. The writer has over thirty years experience in the community and voluntary sector as mentioned previously.

The community and voluntary sector has grown over that period from a mainly charity led, poorly resourced sphere of society, into a multi million euro sector populated by individuals in full time paid positions. The reasons for writing a thesis on the topic of social capital are outlined in chapter three, as well as why Sligo was chosen.

Sligo was picked to study the changes in Irish society over the last twenty years for a number of reasons. It is a compact county with a large county town and a rural hinterland. It's close to the border with Northern Ireland and the effect of the Celtic Tiger is every evident. IT Sligo sees itself as playing a pivotal role on social issues in the region and expressed an interest in the topic under discussion from the outset. This thesis while strong on the academic aspects of the topic of social capital also contains many quotations and observations from leading figures across the full spectrum of Sligo society and is a valuable piece of research in that it captures the feelings of people in the immediate aftermath of the post Celtic Tiger era.

This thesis takes account of the human need to both *belong* to, and to *progress*, in society. It acknowledges that the individual exists as part of a community. Community can take many forms as outlined later in this thesis. Social capital and its place in sociology is explained and the importance of networking and trust is emphasised. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to describing Sligo from a socio-economic perspective.

Chapter two consists of an extensive investigation into all aspects of research already carried out on social capital including a critique.

The introduction reminds the reader that communities exist in many forms. Tonnies (1887) was the first to distinguish the differences between the rural and urban societies. More recently the advent of the internet age has accelerated the growth of virtual or imagined communities. Power in its different forms in society is acknowledged. The influence of wealth, or poverty, combined with education is highlighted and the importance of networking is emphasised.

The chapter moves on to discuss the first of the great conundrums of social capital, that is, defining it. It is generally agreed that trust and a spirit of reciprocity must be present for social capital to flourish. It is acknowledged that social capital exists in different forms, *bonding, bridging and linking*. Bonding social capital can even have dark side, people form groups to advance their own interests at the expense of other sections of society. The need for social capital in Irish society is highlighted and examples of case studies are given.

A portion of the literature review is given over to a critical review of the weaknesses and flaws associated with the concept of social capital. Capital is associated with the individual accumulating wealth while social is associated with groups working together for the common good. Therefore social capital is a contradiction in terms one would think.

The whole of western society is based on accumulating possessions rather than sharing. Even the notion that seemingly close knit communities can have high levels of bonding and trust is in doubt as exploitation can exist within communities. Wealth and high levels of social capital are not to be assumed to be automatic bed fellows. Poor communities often have better bonding and therefore higher levels of social capital. While researchers dwell on the core issues surrounding social capital the real value of social capital may be its secondary effects. As already mentioned social capital can have bonding, bridging or linking characteristics but group norms and a sense of social responsibility are vital for social capital formation. Social capital also has different dimensions such as structural, cognitive and relational it also has views such as consummatory and instrumental. Social capital can be seen as existing in different fields. Even the relationship and relative importance of the different capitals: economic, social, cultural and symbolic is debated. The place of government in the power structure of society is ambiguous and the much vaunted volunteer sector is questioned as to its democratic characteristics.

While definition is a big debating point when discussing social capital devising a reliable system of measuring it in the context of the theoretical framework of social capital both over time and at a point in time is crucial, this will be of relevance later in chapter three, the methodology chapter. It is agreed that no one question will test social capital levels but rather a range of topics combined will give a reasonable indication.

The reader will wonder as to why social capital is such a big topic in the last twenty years and the answer would appear to be that there is a growing awareness of the impact of alienation and isolation among individuals in society. The literature review points out that rich English speaking countries have a greater awareness of the topic because they are confronted with it on a daily basis: the rich and poor divide and growth of immigrant communities are forcing western societies to look at more social inclusive ways of ensuring that societies remain cohesive.

This raises the issue of how to develop enhanced levels of social capital with some writers advocating more community involvement in issues of concern to them while acknowledging that top down decisions by government are quicker but often appropriate. Finally in an Irish context the dearth of research on the Irish characteristics of social capital is pointed out.

The literature review then moves to looking at and describing the places where people do interact. Throughout the literature review the networking characteristics of social capital and *where* people meet and *how* they communicate arises. For this reason the literature is broken down into; *the first place* (family, citizenship and community); *the second place* (work, both paid and not paid); and *the third place*.

The family and immediate community where a person was born and grew up are the shapers of one's personality and the givers of mores, standards of behaviour, and sense of citizenship. This place is *the first place*. The place of the family in society and its importance to society was already mentioned and its influence is debated in this section. There is also recognition of the role children play in society and that young people have standards and a sense of community that is often overlooked. Indeed it is the parents who, albeit unconsciously, use the children as a crutch to join groups and through their children get involved in community activities. It is pointed out the traditional family largely no longer exists. Divorce, single parents, smaller families and increased urban living have influenced the family structure. The age of the internet has changed family life although not necessarily for the worst. In Ireland we claim to cherish children and youth but our high youth suicide rates are worrying. The importance of good sporting facilities and a good local school are hugely important influences in family life.

While it is seen as fashionable to get involved in activities involving families and children there is concern among community activists about older people.

While they are being well looked after at institutional level are not getting as much attention as they should be receiving at community level. It is acknowledged that the quality of life has improved over the last twenty years for older people.

Communities evolved from villages and market towns. Since the Industrial Revolution society has undergone huge changes. Growth of mega cities and the decline of the importance of agriculture led to initially human beings becoming machine like working long days for small pay: social agitation improved their lot.

Improved transport links starting with the railways and moving to the jet age broadened peoples horizons and finally the internet age made the world truly global. Ireland has experienced aspects of all of these changes over the last twenty years.

The other great change in Irish society is the influx of peoples from all over the world who want to make Ireland their home. Up to the early 1990s immigration from countries other than the UK was almost unheard of but within ten years all this had changed with asylum seekers numbers going from less than ten to over ten thousand applicants per year.

At national level research indicates that racism is on the rise although locally in Sligo there is a more relaxed, if cautious, attitude to people not born in Ireland and efforts are being made at both community and institutional level to integrate non Irish nationals.

Changing patterns of births are noted. The total numbers of births have remained steady at around sixty thousand babies per year. Large families are now replaced by more women having fewer children later in life. Declining family size notwithstanding Ireland still has one of the highest birth rates in Europe.

As is the case in many western countries citizenship is taken for granted and the notion of personal responsibility is not high on most people's agenda. Most regions in the UK have a civic education element on their school curriculum but not in Ireland. Any such initiative must be viewed as a long term project. Changing voting patterns in Ireland over the last twenty years are the strongest indication of a growing alienation between the citizen and the state and this decline must be arrested.

A number of writers dwell on the balance between the citizen and the state. Too much state interference and innovation gets stifled, too little and anarchy thrives. Currently in Ireland trust levels in regard to state institutions are at an all time low.

This section of the literature review finishes off by reminding us that Ireland has some unique characteristics that need to be researched further if we are to make decisions about our future. The Great Famine and the subsequent, and continuing, emigration patterns combined with the tumultuous birth of the Irish State in 1922 have left us with challenges which we still have not fully solved.

The literature review then moves to *the second place*: the work place. The work place was always a place apart and unlike the first place it is usually associated with economic as distinct from social factors. That said it is recognised by researchers that social exclusion can exist in the work place as well as in the community and that power structures exist also.

The growth of the voluntary sector is acknowledged and the existence of paid and unpaid staff working side by side is a growing phenomenon. The rise of interest groups and increasing lobbying in politics is noted. The changing relationship between the community and voluntary sector since the 1970s is charted but there is an acknowledgement that very little research has been done into the community and voluntary sector in Ireland and that without a clear definition its size and importance cannot be measured accurately. The centralised nature of Irish society is noted and comments about our colonial past still having an influence on local government are prevalent in many research papers. The balance of power is again discussed in the context of the wider world of work both paid and unpaid.

This leads the literature review into further observations on the changing world of volunteerism and the growth of the third or not-for-profit sector. Ireland, despite its historical links to the early co-operative movement has some catching up to do if it is to realise the full potential of the emerging not-for-profit sector. The link between citizenship, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurialship is explored from a social capital perspective. This leads on to philanthropy and how social capital levels affect society's views on the concept of giving. Once again Ireland has much to do to develop this area. The increasing levels of interest in social capital versus human capital over the last twenty years are noted. While the concept of human capital is around for over fifty years the concept of social capital is much newer and the two areas now enjoy similar levels of research. The importance of leadership styles in both the paid and unpaid work place is noted. A number of case studies at both national and local level are cited as to what can, or cannot, be achieved given the correct approach.

Regardless what economic or social topic is discussed income is a key issue. With income comes the topic of equality or inequality in society. Ireland because of its unique system of social transfers is, as always, a puzzle. It appears that the rich are getting richer but on the other hand our social welfare system would appear to be generous by international standards.

The role of the local school and education in general at community level is noted but the role of the third level institution in wider society is acknowledged and the concept of the triple helix comprising of third level intuitions, the state, and industry/community is explored. Balance and linkages are the key factors for a productive outcome is the conclusion. The role of the Institute of Technology, Sligo, (IT Sligo) in the local community is commented on.

The literature review moves on to *the third place*: the place where we meet people in a social setting and form informal bonds. It is, or should be, more relaxing than work and it allows interact with people from other sections of society. Like the world of work this area also has its own structure with many organisations in this sector having paid employees. Oldenburg (2001) drew out this concept of *the third place*, the place where we go to socialise, to form new bonds with groups outside our immediate family and community and distinct from the work place. The third place can be a place where we find expression and fulfilment often absent or constrained in the family and workplace environment.

The third place takes many forms but a few of the most important ones are specifically mentioned. Religion is acknowledged as an important meeting place. Its link to power and politics as well as a setter of norms and ethics is highlighted. The history of a number of countries and regions of the world in relation to religion and society at large is traced. The influence of religion on Irish society is traced.

Health and more importantly a sense of wellbeing are acknowledged as an important barometer of an individual's ability and willingness to participate in communal activities. In an Irish and Sligo context the decline and disappearance of traditional meeting places such as farmer's cooperatives, regular church attendance and the local shops is noted.

The emergence of a multicultural and more urban Ireland is recognised. The prospect of a more racist society is raised although Sligo would appear to be a more tolerant society than possibly other urban centres in Ireland.

The digital age and its effects on communication are noted and it is acknowledged that change is happening so fast that a definitive comment on its long-term affect on society is impossible at this stage of its evolution. Interwoven with the places people meet are the themes that arose in chapter two: education, class, income, age, colour, creed, race and nationality are all taken into account.

From all of the concepts and influencing factors described in chapter two a methodology to test the theories and viewpoints set out in chapter three, the methodology chapter.

Chapter three explains the methodology used to present the findings. It outlines to the reader the principle aims of this research, which is to track changes in individual and community attitudes towards community involvement, towards ones fellow man and towards politics.

Using a variety of methods to be described later an overall view backed up by a scoring system will determine whether or not social capital levels have dropped or risen over the period 1993 to 2013 in County Sligo.

The origins of the research question are explained. As mentioned already many research papers of this nature arise from an individual's direct experience of the nature of the topic. This is certainly the case in this instance and the author's background of a family business rooted in the region combined with previous education qualifications is outlined. The circumstances by which the researcher made contact with IT Sligo are explained and the overall scope is outlined.

The theory of the various research methods and approaches are explained and the reasoning for picking a particular approach is outlined. Above all the importance of validity, reliability, objectivity and ethics are emphasised.

The importance of combining a variety of research methods using a triangulation approach is outlined. The danger of bias is recognised and the need for overall balance and an avoidance of skewed data is recognised. The individual characteristics of one-to-one interviews, focus groups and quantitative surveys are described. A distinction is made between qualitative research and quantitative research and the strengths and weaknesses of each highlighted. The effectiveness of combining the two approaches into the triangulation process is acknowledged. The value of using a mixed method approach to research is explained.

The methodology chapter moves from the general to the specific and each research method used is described in detail. Starting with the literature review and explaining why the views of acknowledged are important when selecting appropriate research methods and moving on to focus groups, quantitative surveys and scoring methods used and finally noting the strengths and weaknesses of one-to-one interviews. Importantly the unexpected problems and challenges that cropped up during the research process and the alternative approaches taken are highlighted.

The strengths and weaknesses of the programs used in the quantitative survey, namely *Polldaddy* and *Statistical Program for Social Sciences* (SPSS) are described. The importance of ethics and data protection is noted. Finally a timeline of key actions and events in the research process is expressed in a table contained in Appendix J and an overall comment on the methodological chapter is outlined.

Chapter four documents the findings arising from the methodology. The framework for the methodology was designed around the literature review which involved an extensive review of all leading research works on the topic. An extensive review of the many facets of social capital was undertaken and documented in chapter two. A methodology appropriate to this study was subsequently designed in chapter three based on the knowledge base accumulated in chapter two.

A variety of investigative techniques were used in this research. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and questionnaires both online and face-to-face were utilised. A key characteristic of this thesis is that the people of Sligo from all walks of life were contacted. The focus group (2010) was held in IT Sligo and people from a cross-section of County Sligo were invited to attend (nobody refused), the ninety six people that took part in the quantitative survey were at chosen at random. Everyone from attendees at a farmer's mart to shop owners in Sligo town had an input. The people of County Sligo had their say and for this reason alone this thesis is worth reading. The methodologies changed as this study proceeded, for an explanation of why this occurred, see chapter three.

Chapter five discusses the issues arising from the findings and highlights aspects of the research which may warrant further discussion. One of the overall findings from this extensive and wide ranging study is just how little is known of the everyday lives of the people of County Sligo.

In chapter six the researcher recommends areas that need further research based on the findings. It takes each of the original research questions and one by one a conclusion is reached on whether or not the views originally expressed by this researcher are in fact valid. Chapter seven summarises the conclusions drawn from the study.

1.4 Research topic

Over the last five years much has been written about the ‘Celtic Tiger’ and its aftermath. The Celtic Tiger era (Gardiner 1994) is generally broken down into two parts: the ‘real’ part 1994 - 2000, and the ‘bubble’ part 2001-2008. Most commentators have dwelled on the economic consequences of policy decisions, often with a Dublin and east coast perspective. This thesis is not, primarily, about the economic impact of the Celtic Tiger. It was however written up in the aftermath of the economic crash traces the effects it had on individuals and communities in County Sligo.

It traces and attempts to measure the changes in attitudes of ordinary citizens towards each other, within their communities, and how they engage with their elected representative politicians. It uses the concept of social capital to trace a perceived decline in trust levels and a possible rise in individualism. Social capital has many definitions but is usually associated with levels of trust, reciprocity and the networking characteristics of individuals and groups in society. The literature review is peppered with varying definitions of social capital but most refer back to the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1993), each bringing their own perspectives on the concept.

This work is important because, this writer believes that like other momentous social upheavals’ in Irish history, such as the Great Famine of the 1840s and its aftermath along with the aftermath of the foundation of the Irish State in 1922, the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger post 2008 and the effects this had on the lives of ordinary people should be recorded. The study covers the period 1993-2013 thereby allowing inclusion of data from five census periods. In the early 1990s Ireland was a very different place, immigration was almost unknown, the fall of the Berlin Wall and its consequences had yet to affect us. At European Union (EU) level the euro currency was not in existence. The internet was yet to make its presence felt. The Celtic Tiger was making its first stirrings in parts of Dublin.

Unemployment was over ten per cent and emigration was the norm. This thesis takes into account all of these events when noting changing attitudes in the last twenty years. How this was done is extensively described in the methodology chapter. County Sligo, along with the other counties in the north west of Ireland, suffered some of the worst effects of the post-Celtic Tiger aftermath. IT Sligo, realising how profound the economic and social effects of flawed government policies would have on future generations, took part in an RTE documentary (*Ghost Land* 2010):

As part of the documentary, a group of Social Studies students from IT Sligo were taken by Dr Chris Sparks and Dr John Pender with the programme producer on a field trip to ghost estates in Leitrim and Longford. Students and lecturers were filmed looking around and asked for their thoughts. Following this, Dr Chris Sparks was interviewed about the ways that commodification of homes as saleable assets had led people into false beliefs about their economic powers, discussing how people lose sight of the value of their houses as homes and features of community living
(Pender and Sparks 2010, p.1).

IT Sligo has long recognised that the Institute cannot exist as a place apart: it must engage with and see itself as part of the wider community in Sligo and the surrounding areas. For this reason this writer approached the Institute with the proposal.

This writer has over thirty years of experience working on a voluntary basis in almost every form of club and society imaginable ranging from boy scouts to chamber of commerce to sports organisations. Therefore, this thesis is not solely a piece of academic work: it is grounded on real experiences gained over a long period of time. It asks the following research questions:

Q1: Has Ireland lost its sense of *community spirit* over the last twenty years?

Q2: Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

Q3: Is Irish society and, more widely, are Irish people becoming more individualistic and 'privatised'?

Q4: Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

Q5: Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

Before proceeding any further it is necessary to place the individual at the center of this study and recognise that individuals are an essential core component of communities and society. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the science of sociology has devised a number of frameworks and descriptions to rationalise the behaviour of individuals in groups.

1.5 Individuals need to belong

Before delving into key concepts and definitions of social capital the basic human need to ‘belong’ needs to be acknowledged and explored. What is it about humans that they need to belong and identify with a group or ‘tribe’? Why the need to feel ‘accepted’? Ravenhill (2008) citing Giddens (1991) writing on the subject of homelessness, surely one of the most isolating experiences a human can experience, has this observation:

Once there [on the streets] they become part of a continuum of social exclusion and inclusion where it [the group] caters for peoples need to belong, to be respected and to feel, as Giddens (1991) would argue ontologically secure. It is this need to ‘belong’ somewhere, anywhere and to feel secure that often acts as a catalyst or new members joining or helps to create a subculture for new members in an area (Ravehill 2008, p.145).

Coupled with the need for acceptance, an individual will have (generally) a need to progress in society. A persons level and type of engagement with their local community and the wider society will be influenced by that persons standard of living. Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’ thesis illustrates the link between the motivation to improve ones social and economic position in society and the steps needed to achieve *self actualisation*.

Humans need to belong. We are social animals and we react to events. We will adopt a ‘fight or fright’ stance as situations dictate. County Sligo, in common with the rest of Ireland, has had its share of momentous events in the last twenty years. What effect have these had on individuals and the communities they reside in? Has the consumerism of the Celtic Tiger era left its mark and have people become more individualistic and less community minded? As mentioned, ‘well being’ is increasingly seen as a measurement of community life (Doran *et al* 2014). Have communities less ‘social capital’ now than they used to have in the early 1990s? This thesis seeks to determine whether this assumptive question is evidenced.

What is the essence of this need to belong? Is it a feeling of well-being (Jackson and O’Doherty 2012; Carnegie UK Trust 2014). How important are concepts such as power and influence in society to the issue of belonging, communal membership and social capital formation and maintenance (Walzer 1983)? Etzioni (1998) sees good manners and etiquette as fundamental to society. All of these characteristics are complex components in the interplay of a host of variables that give rise to the ways in which societies and communities emerge, form, and evolve.

The absence of any one of these characteristics may, it is argued, affect social capital levels. Morgan and Swann (2004) use health as a barometer, Taft (2012) dwells on Ireland’s perceived growing wealth gap and the effects that this has on society and Kenny (2007) sees the availability of education to the adult population as crucial to social capital formation. Perhaps *the* most critical measurement of social capital levels in a society is *trust* (Putnam 2000).

Trust levels in Ireland remain very low when compared with other European countries.

Ireland in 2012 remained a society of distrusters. Clearly past events and the continued difficult economic climate make conditions in Ireland more challenging than elsewhere. Despite this, low levels of trust in both business and government are particularly concerning at a time when trust levels in neighbouring and peer countries have been recovering. This has now become a crisis for the leadership of Ireland’s business and government organisations who simply cannot function effectively where such a deficit of trust exists
(Cahalane 2013, p.1).

Have trust levels in Ireland and County Sligo decreased over the last twenty years? Are people still helping each other out and is the notion of *reciprocity* still alive and well in County Sligo? Identification with community is still important to Irish people (Inglis 2010) and indeed to people everywhere (Marsh *et al* 2007). Sligo, while scoring well overall in the quality of life indicators (Sligo Gateway Report 2013, p.44), lags behind nationally in terms of health and wellness: “For health and wellness, the Sligo Gateway returned slightly less than average results based on the indicator findings”.

Before proceeding further a look at the term *community* and a possible definition of *rural* is necessary.

1.5.1 The individual and the community

‘Community’ is a much bandied about and catch all term. Prior to the Industrial Revolution communities were predominately rural based where agriculture was the dominating economic and social force. The Industrial Revolution changed all that, there are now many interpretations and definitions of community. What exactly are we talking when we say ‘community’? This is a perplexing and much contested concept within sociology and will be explored further in chapter two, the literature review.

1.5.2 Defining rural

Throughout this thesis the word *rural* appears many times. What defines an area as rural? Even within the island of Ireland and across the EU *rural* is interpreted differently.

There is no single agreed definition of *rural*. The Irish Census of Population for example designates all those living in settlements of less than 1,500 inhabitants as the rural population. Thus, the category of aggregate rural areas includes villages of fewer than 1,500 residents, together with those living in the open countryside. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in their 2005 study proposed that settlements with a population of 4,500 or less should be defined as rural

(Walsh 2010, p.6).

As mentioned this piece of research dwells mainly on the social aspects of County Sligo but as is invariably the case society is influenced by the economic conditions prevailing at a given time. For this reason a social and economic profile of Sligo is included.

The sections following go into some detail describing and outlining the aims and objectives of the county development plan for County Sligo, Sligo town, and the village of Grange. An understanding of the context and policies from which these plans are formulated is necessary. The section following outlines the key events of the last twenty years from a planning perspective.

1.6 An overview of social and economic planning in Ireland

1.6.1 The influence of the EU on social and economic planning in Ireland

Broadly speaking this thesis covers the period from the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) to the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (2007). The Treaty of Lisbon was, among other things, a 'tidying up' of various earlier treatments and agreements that existed since the founding of the EEC in the 1950s. The EEC/EU was always conscious of the social role it had in improving the lives of its citizens and was, and is, a force for change in Ireland. In order to formulate appropriate policies at a regional level standard units of measurement were needed. At the beginning of the 1970s, Eurostat set up the NUTS, translated into English as National Units of Territories, classification as a single, coherent system for dividing up the EU's territory in order to produce regional statistics for the Community.

For around thirty years, implementation and updating of the NUTS classification was managed under a series of "gentlemen's agreements" between the Member States and Eurostat (Eurostat 2015). Work on the Commission [Regulation \(EC\) No 1059/2003](#), to give NUTS a legal status started in spring 2000.

This was adopted in May 2003 and entered into force in July 2003. NUTS 1 defines the country: NUTS 2 corresponds to a region of the country: NUTS 3 denotes a sub region. Therefore Sligo, a county of the Republic of Ireland (NUT 1) was part of the Border, Midlands and West region (NUT 2). More specifically County Sligo was part of the Border region (NUT 3).

The Irish NUTS 3 regions comprise the eight Regional Authorities established under the Local Government Act, 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order, 1993 which came into operation on January 1st 1994. The NUTS 2 regions, which were proposed by Government and agreed to by Eurostat in 1999, are groupings of the Regional Authorities (Census 2011).

As mentioned above the EU always claimed to have a strong social policy, yet as will become apparent below the Sligo County Development Plans, themselves a reflection of EU policy, make only scant references to the human aspect of the development plans. The plans are written with built infrastructure in mind with only minimal regard to the process of involving people and passing up the opportunity to advance social capital levels in County Sligo.

1.6.2 Origins of Regional Planning in Ireland

Regional Guidelines in Ireland were established by the Local Government Act 1991 and came into existence in 1994. Under this Act, the Regional Authorities had two main functions: to promote the co-ordination of public service provision and to monitor the delivery of European Union Structural Fund assistance in the regions. The Regional Authorities were dissolved in 2014 and were replaced by Regional Assemblies. The Regional Assemblies are themselves reflective of the redrawn NUTS 2 or National Units of Territories regions as defined by the EU. County Sligo is part of the of the Connacht/Ulster region. The Treaty of Lisbon (2007) is the piece of legislation from which all EU laws and directives currently derive.

1.6.3 Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011

The previous sections outline the evolution of national and regional planning in Ireland over the period of this piece of research. The Sligo County Development Plan is a component of the National Development Plan itself a component of the EU budget. The plan is drawn up in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002 and builds on the Development Plan for the County of Sligo 1999-2004. It reflects EU policies and is aligned to both territories and timeframes for budgets as defined by the EU.

As well as taking account of national and local planning requirements the plan also recognises its contribution to the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Regions 2004 -2024 (RPG's) of which county Sligo is a part.

Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011 (CDP) was adopted on 18 April 2005 and became operational on 16 May 2005, but it may be amended at any time.

The Plan consists of three publications:

Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011 – main document, which includes mini-plans for Ballysadare, Collooney and Grange (Section 11 of the Plan).

Record of Protected Structures 2005-2011 (does not include structures within the area covered by Sligo & Environs Development Plan).

Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council's joint Housing Strategy 2005-2011.

A telling comment that reflects the changing attitude of authorities towards detailed planning is the reference to 'statuary requirement', that is, grudgingly accepted.

“It may have been the case in the past that some county authorities previewed the preparation of a County Development Plan as more a statutory requirement rather than an opportunity to inform the public regarding its development policies and objectives. However in recent years there has been a noticeable increase in community involvement in the affairs of their local authority particularly in relation to key documents such as the county development plan. Sligo County Council welcomes the participation of the public...”

Councillor Patsy Barry, Cathaoirleach

1.6.4 Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017

As was the case with the 2005–2011 plan this plan again reflects EU policy. The statutory requirements are as in the 2005-2011 plan with an additional Development Plans-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage, Local Government 2007) reflecting an ever strengthening regulatory environment.

On 16 May 2011, Sligo County Council adopted its County Development Plan 2011-2017. The CDP 2011-2017 became operational on 13 June 2011 and will remain in force for six years from that date.

The change in language from the 2005 plan to talk about ‘engagement’ while far from perfect in reality at least indicates that the various strands of society are recognised.

“The publication of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 is the culmination of a comprehensive engagement between the public, the planners and the elected members of Sligo County Council. It is testament to the expertise and skill of the staff of the Planning Section of the Council. The Plan provides a strategy which will enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Sligo within an environment of outstanding quality”

Councillor Joe Leonard,
Cathaoirleach.

Having reviewed the plan in full this researcher can only conclude that while the plan contains many objectives conducive to the maintenance and growth of social capital levels in County Sligo it is a plan with an emphasis on infrastructure, the environment and job creation. It recognises that rural areas are in population decline and for this reason the plan incorporates a number of mini plans of which Grange is one. Grange is profiled in section 1.9 below.

1.7 County Sligo: A social and economic profile

1.7.1 Overview

Counties along the north western seaboard tend to have the largest area in Ireland and do not have towns with more than 10,000 people. County Sligo is the exception: it is comparatively small in area and Sligo town is the only town in the region that could be described as urban in the Irish meaning of the word. The Census (2011) notes that Sligo had a population of 65,393, consisting of 32,435 males and 32,958 females.

The population of pre-school age (0-4) was 4,594, of primary school going age (5-12) was 6,795 and of secondary school going age (13-18) was 5,099. There were 9,043 persons aged 65 years and over. The number of persons aged 18 years or over was 49,852. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home in County Sligo with 1,539 speakers.

Sligo town had a population of 19,452, consisting of 9,318 males and 10,134 females. The population of pre-school age (0-4) was 1,210, of primary school going age (5-12) was 1,506 and of secondary school going age (13-18) was 1,410. There were 2,633 persons aged 65 years and over. The number of persons aged 18 years or over was 15,695. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home in Sligo town with 1,021 speakers (Census 2011).

The now abandoned (Meredith and van Egeraat 2013) National Spatial Strategy (Ireland, Dept.Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2002) envisaged that Sligo would grow to one hundred thousand people in twenty years. Extra staff was taken on to prepare for this massive growth. Incredibly Sligo County Council was one of the most indebted County Councils in the country within ten years. The Lissadell House saga (see Appendix B) and possible legal bill of eight million euro, the amalgamation of town and county councils and a one million bailout from the government (McDonagh 2014:Mc Donald 2014a) must surely make this county a candidate for a study such as this.

1.7.2 Sligo and Ireland: Principle Socio-economic indicators

A glance at the Area Profile of Sligo (Census 2011) throws up some distinct characteristics. Age comparison with the rest of the state shows the 0-24 age groups equal or exceed the state levels. From 25–44 Sligo is significantly behind the national level only to surpass the national level in the 45+ age groups.

This indicates that many people in the 24- 44 age group left the region to seek work. Only 1,005 people are classed as farmers out of a total workforce of 25,434 or 3.95% of the workforce again following a trend of drift from the land (see Appendix A). 30% of the population of Sligo County has third level education; Dublin city, by comparison, had 37.6 % of the population in this category. Social class comparison by occupation mirrors the national situation and emphasis the urban nature of Sligo town in particular. The most concise and up to date data on Sligo town and county comes from the summary report (Gateway/Hub Development Index 2012);

- The Sligo Gateway recorded a population increase (Census 2011) of 7.87% on that produced in 2006, and 13.95% from that produced in 2002. The rate of population change between 2002-2006 and 2006-2011 increased by 2.22%.
- 42.14% of the population living within the urban area are classified as being dependent, compared with 55.47% in the county. The Gateway average for dependency is 49.53% and the Sligo Gateway figure sits close to the national average with a 50.87% dependency rate in 2011.
- The Sligo Gateway (5.79) is below the national Gateway average (7.29) in terms of the rate of new firm formations per 1,000 of the labour force.
- The Sligo Gateway experienced a lower than average unemployment rate of 17.63% in 2011. By comparison, the average unemployment rate for all Gateways for 2011 stood at 19.94%.
- The percentage of the labour force within the Sligo Gateway who hold a third level qualification has demonstrated overall growth of 8.05%, from 22.58% in 2006 to 30.63% in 2011.
- The amount of research and development funding allocated to institutions, relative to the number of third level admissions within the Gateway, has also increased from €215 per admission (2006) to €326 per admission (2010).
- River water quality within the Gateway is of an acceptable standard according to the latest figures released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The number of people who walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from work within the Gateway as a whole has decreased since 2006. This is despite the fact that a large number of people live within 30 minutes of their place of work.

- Another measure of connectivity and accessibility is the number of retail outlets per 100 households, which for Sligo (2.59) is higher compared to the other Gateways average (2.37).
- As is the case throughout most Gateways, broadband coverage in both zones of the Gateway has substantially improved from a low base since 2006. It has increased by 47.16% from 12.58% in 2006 to 59.74% in 2011.
- For health and wellness, the Sligo Gateway returned slightly less than average results based on the indicator findings. The Sligo Gateway has quite a high Years of Potential Life Lost- YPLL² (per 1000 population) level, and there was no perceptible improvement between 2006 and 2011. The number of GPs per 1,000 of population is on the national Gateway average. While the average birth weight in the Sligo Gateway has not changed between the period 2006-2011 and is marginally above the national Gateway average (but still the highest average birth weight of all the Gateways).
- Analysis of the crime figures for the Sligo Gateway illustrates a decrease in the overall crime rate between 2006 and 2011, which fell from 4.93 crimes per 100 of the population in 2006 to 3.77 crimes per 100 of the population in 2011. This represents a lower than the Gateway average (5.32) outcome.
- Analysis of the figures shows that the Gateway's urban core, although showing signs of improvement, experience a certain level of deprivation, a trend which has continued since at least 2006. The county has maintained its general level of affluence, but has deteriorated slightly since 2006.(Sligo Gateway Report 2013,p.38)

² This is a new indicator based on data which was unavailable at the time of the 2009 GDI; information from 2006 and 2011 was utilised to inform this indicator. YPLL is typically determined per 100,000 of the population, but for the purposes of this study has been scaled down to 'per 1,000 of the population' for comparative purposes (many Gateways have populations less 100,000).The life expectancy for an Irish adult stands at 79.6 years. For the purposes of calculating Years of Potential Life Lost, this was rounded to 80 years in this study. Further information is available from the CSO Life Expectancy Tables at: <http://www.cso.ie/Quicktables/GetQuickTables.aspx?FileName=VSA30.asp> andTable Name=Life+Expectancy and Statistical Product=DB_VS. Comparable European and OECD studies which must take into account a wide variety of life expectancies selects a more suitable 65 year value, meaning that in these studies any individual who dies over the age of 65 does not contribute to the YPLL.

- Teagasc ranked 302 towns(+1,500 population) across Ireland by unemployment rate and migration rate (O'Donoghue and Meredith 2014). County Sligo and County Cork are the highest ranked counties with Collooney coming in at number 14 and Strandhill at 53. Surprisingly Sligo town stands at number 258.

Appendix A contains tables of key economic indicators taken from census figures from 1971 to 2011. As regards community groups there are many outstanding examples in the Northwest of Ireland (see Appendix B).

1.7.3 Sligo and Ireland: Social Capital and Deprivation

In Ireland Truze Hasse, a social and economic consultant has developed the *Pobal HP Deprivation Index* (Hasse and Pratschke 2012). This index is now widely accepted as *the* model for measuring deprivation in Ireland, north and south, as it recognises the unique rural characteristics of Ireland thereby highlighting rural deprivation more effectively than indices developed for more industrialised countries. “All other published deprivation indices are subject to urban bias, to the extent that they fail to account for the nature of rural deprivation” (Hasse and Pratschke, 2012, p.1). Hasse and Walsh (2007) again highlight the unique characteristics of Ireland’s population dispersal and the challenges that it brings, citing *critical mass* and low density population of many rural areas and also poor recognition of the link between volunteerism and social capital noting that new comers are not being tied into existing communities. They also note the *clustering* of population into towns over 1,500 persons to the detriment of the adjacent rural areas. Sligo is not particularly deprived in comparison to the counties surrounding it (maps.pobal.ie) and appears to more closely follow the fortunes of the cities rather than the rural and border areas. There is a marked difference between west County Sligo and the more urban east County Sligo, containing as it does Sligo town, Collooney, Ballysadare Tubbercurry and Ballymote. West Sligo is dominated by the Ox mountain range so an east/west economic divide within the county is only to be expected.

The border between County Sligo and County Leitrim is also differentiated by a marked change of deprivation levels, as is the Sligo/Mayo border region, while County Sligo as a whole is depicted as being less marginal.

Generally speaking the *Pobal HP Deprivation Index* depicts the Border (NUT2) region as being the most deprived of the regions but looking at deprivation on a county level Sligo is mid table along with counties such as Galway and Waterford among others.

Section 1.6 and 1.7 looked at Sligo on a macro level. The next two sections, 1.8 and 1.9, look at two mini plans within the county.

Section 1.8 the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 is the last plan of its type as the area under investigation is now merged with the county. Section 1.9 looks at Grange, a growing village deemed sufficiently important to have its own mini-plan incorporated into the County Development Plan.

1.8 Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010 – 2016

1.8.1 Regulatory framework

This Development Plan for Sligo and Environs (SEDP) has been prepared under Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2006. The Plan is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Joint Sligo City and County Housing Strategy 2010-2017.
- Joint Sligo City and County Retail Strategy 2010-2017.
- Environmental Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment).

A range of national, regional and local policy documents have been reviewed as part of the preparation of this Development Plan.

The documents most relevant to the development of Sligo City are:

- at national level: the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2021 (NSS) and the National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP).
- at regional level: the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2004-2024 (RPGs) and the Connaught Waste Management Plan 2006-2011. A Western River Basin Management Plan (WRBMP), which covers most of County Sligo, is currently being prepared. The relevant provisions of this plan will be incorporated in the SEDP following adoption of the WRBMP.
- at local level: the County Development Plan 2005-2011 (CDP), Sligo Sub-regional Strategy 2001-2021 and the County Development Board's Integrated Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy for County Sligo 2002-2012.

1.8.2 Key messages

Key messages from these policy documents, to which this Plan responds, are as follows:

- The NSS identifies Sligo as an urban centre to be developed in an accelerated manner as a Gateway City to drive the overall development of the North-West. Drawing from Sligo Sub-regional Strategy 2001-2021, Sligo & Environs Development Plan 2004-2010 has set out the for the first time a growth framework for Sligo City. The SEDP 2010-2016 refines and consolidates this framework.
- The NDP prioritises capital investment in line with the objectives of the NSS through a specific chapter on balanced regional development. A Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF) has been specified in the NDP 2007-2013. This initiative aims at stimulating the growth of the nine gateways identified under the NSS. The NDP also mentions Sligo as part of the envisaged Atlantic Gateways Corridor.
- The RPGs seek to promote the growth of the NSS-identified gateways within a regional structure that also supports the development of other key settlements in the Border Region and the diversification of rural areas.
- The CDP responds to the call in the NSS for frameworks at county level designed to achieve balanced development in areas outside the gateways. The CDP establishes a hierarchical settlement structure and outlines the growth potential of key settlements, outside the Gateway. The CDP is also a tool for managing urban and rural development in the areas directly influenced by Sligo City.

1.8.3 Planning in Practice: O'Connell Street and eastern bypass

Throughout this thesis much will be made of the conflicts that arise between the main pillars of society. Broadly speaking these pillars are made up of elected representatives, government officials, state agencies and the community and voluntary sector.

When dealing with the spatial aspect of social capital the literature review breaks down human contact into three areas.

The first place (family and community), the second place (work place) and the third place (the places where people socialise). The third place in particular has drawn a lot of attention in recent years as this where people exchange ideas and express views, without the third place society would become very isolated and individuals would become very inward looking.

Towns and cities all over the world recognise the need to create spaces in the urban environment where people feel at ease. Historically many cities have world famous public parks. More recently the creation of traffic free zones aimed at ‘giving back’ the center of towns to the people are in vogue and have proven to be successful. Sligo town with its long history as a trading center displayed all the classic signs of a town unable to deal with the growing volume of traffic particularly in the last twenty years. It got its long awaited western bypass, itself controversial as it cut through communities. The proposal to give O’Connell Street back to pedestrians brought into play all the classic conflicts of interest and vested interests that bedevil projects in democratic society. It also illustrated the effectiveness of organising a campaign using social media as a platform. That over four thousand people or the equivalent of almost one quarter of the population of Sligo town joined <https://www.facebook.com/oconnellstreet> is significant. This is testimony to the strength of feeling on the issue of public spaces in towns and cities. In a rare show of unity the public, the traders and government agencies were in agreement that O’Connell Street should be pedestrianised, however councillors voted against the move citing, it would appear, the need to bring the eastern bypass into the equation at the same time. The issue of Sligo County Council, who had responsibility for the water pipes underneath the street, which needed repairing before the road could be pedestrianized by the Sligo Borough Council, demonstrated the complexity of the situation.

All this serves to illustrate that social capital in theory and practice are not necessarily the same thing. The effectiveness of the social media aspect will be noted in the methodology chapter, findings and discussion chapters.

1.8.4 Overview of population characteristics

With an estimated population of circa twenty five thousand in 2008, Sligo and Environs is the largest urban centre in the North-West. As detailed Census figures for the entire plan area are not available, the Gateway population is approximated by the total population of the Borough and the five adjoining Electoral Divisions (Calry, Drumcliff East, Drumcliff West, Kilmacowen and Knockaree) minus the population of Strandhill, Rosses Point, Ballincar, Rathcormack and Drumcliff (for the last two settlements, estimates were used). Thus, the population of the Gateway was estimated at 24,755 in 2006 (a fall of 492 persons compared to 2002).

During the intercensal period 2002-2006, the population of Sligo Borough decreased by 579 persons, from 18,473 to 17,894. This represents a loss of 3.1%, contrasting with the 3.9% population gain during the period 1996-2002.

In the same time, the five electoral divisions (EDs) adjoining the Borough, that is, Calry, Drumcliff East, Drumcliff West, Kilmacowen and Knockaree, saw their combined population increase by 458 persons, from 9,321 to 9,779. This is a 4.91% increase over four years, comparable with the 8.4% increase over the six years from 1996 to 2002.

In 2002, there were 38,780 people living in the Borough and the 29 EDs within 10 miles of the City Centre. By 2006, the population of the same area had grown to 40,011, which represents 65.73% of the total County population. This proportion is somewhat lower than its 2002 equivalent of 66.63% (38,780), but slightly higher than the 1996 ratio of 65.33% (36,468 persons).

The actual number of people living in Sligo Borough and within 10 miles of it has risen, slowly but constantly, by 3,543 persons, or 9.7% between 1996 and 2006. The Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme, covered most of the southern and eastern parts of County Sligo and adjoining areas in County Leitrim. The Scheme led to a mini-boom in house construction in towns such as Tobercurry and Ballymote, in smaller villages like Ballysadare, Collooney and Coolaney, and in nearby settlements outside the County boundaries, such as Dromahair, Manorhamilton and Kinlough in County Leitrim.

1.8.5 Demographic characteristics

The gender, age and dependency rate Census 2006 recorded a total of 19,402 living within the Borough and the environs as designated by the boundaries determined by the Central Statistics Office. Of this total, 52% or 10,128 were female and 48% or 9,274 were male. Circa 70% of this population was of working age, that is, fell into the 15-64 age bracket. There were 3,116 children under 14 years and 2,577 aged 65 and over, giving a total dependency ratio of 2.4 to 1 (2.4 persons of working age for every child under 15 or senior over 64). The Census (2011) shows that both the adult (15+) and child population had stabilised at 19,452 and 3,134 respectively.

The residents of Sligo by origin and ethnicity have changed dramatically since the early 1990s. Of the 19,402 people living in Sligo Borough and its environs as defined by the 2006 Census, 18,902 people living in Sligo Borough and its environs as defined by the 2006 Census, 18,902 were usually living in the area. Of these, 3,247 had been born outside Ireland, most of them in the UK (1,285). People born outside Ireland also included Poland (596), Lithuania (108), other EU states (424) and outside the EU (834). The census (2011) shows an increase in all of these categories. Between April 2005 and April 2006 (Census date), 1,306 persons had moved from other parts of the county to live permanently in Sligo town, with 690 more coming to Sligo from other parts of Ireland. From abroad there was an influx of 858 people in 2005. The Traveller community numbered 143 members in 2006. Alongside 17,298 white persons, Sligo was home to 141 Black and 385 Asian people.

A trend visible in many Irish cities is the decrease of the younger population segments combined with a steady increase in the older-age groups. While the entire town population has risen by 893 between 1996 and 2006, there were 838 fewer children under 14 in 2006 compared to 1996, and 325 more people over 65 in Sligo and Environs.

The proportion of under-14s has fallen sharply from 21.36% in 1996 to 16.06% in 2006, while the largest increase was in the share of the 45 to 64 group, from 17.78% in 1996 to 21.41% in 2006.

An interesting development during the 1996-2006 decade was a strong rise in the number of females in 1996-2002 (659 additional females) followed by a sudden drop in female population between 2002 and 2006 (413 fewer females), especially in the younger age brackets, 15 to 44 years.

At the same time, the male population has increased constantly, but with a marked slowdown between 2002 and 2006 with only 80 additional males registered.

Census data indicates an increasing mobility of Sligo's population, in particular residential mobility. While in 2002 the Census counted 982 persons who moved to Sligo City from the county and 587 who came from the rest of Ireland during the year before the Census, in 2006 the corresponding figures were 1306 and 690 respectively. It must be added that in 2002 there were 380 persons who had an address abroad one year before the Census, while in 2006 there were 858 such people.

It appears that Sligo's core population, which is those who were enumerated at the same address in successive censuses, consists of just over 15,800 residents, and there has been significant in-and out-migration between 1996 and 2002, in the range of 12-14% of the total number of residents. As a proportion, the number of Sligo-born residents has fallen slightly between 1996 and 2006, by 96 people (2.49%).

At the same time, the number of Sligo residents who were not born in the city has grown constantly during the decade 1996-2006: 12.37% more residents born in Northern Ireland: 26.22% more people born in England, Scotland or Wales: 14.43% more persons born in the rest of the EU (excluding the UK); and over three times more (+ 202.35% or 535) persons born in countries outside the EU.

In summary Sligo town has a whole set of indicators which are unique to the borough region. The most notable trends are the influx of adults, both Irish and non-Irish, and the decrease in the numbers of children (and families) living in the town. This last trend in particular has implications for community life and social capital levels. Where are all the children and families gone? Out to places like Grange it would seem. Grange is looked at in section 1.9.

1.9 Grange mini plan

The previous sections traced the evolution and implementation of EU, national, regional and county development plans. The preceding section portrayed Sligo town as becoming more multicultural and less family orientated with a relatively stagnant population growth overall. Grange on the other hand has a thriving family scene. Its national school has grown from a typical three teacher 'country school' to having over ten teachers. This section describes a mini plan within a county.

As part of this study of County Sligo it was deemed necessary to analysis in depth a typical rural village in County Sligo in order to further understand the social characteristics of a community in post Celtic Tiger Ireland. The village of Grange was chosen as a case study as it encapsulates many of the characteristics of the Celtic Era. Grange went from a village of 225 persons (Census 202) to 383 (Census 2006) and 578 (Census 2011) and has now far exceeded its population growth as envisaged in the Grange Mini Plan.

Grange is located approximately 19km (circa 12 miles) to the north of Sligo town. According to the census information the village had a population of 225 in 2002 (the figures for 1996 are not available). Grange is a designated Key Satellite Village, under the Settlement/Structure Hierarchy for county Sligo, while in the Regional Settlement Structure set out in the regional planning guidelines for the border region Grange is included in the category of Smaller Towns and Villages (Sligo County Development Plan 2005 -2011, p.169).

The key characteristics of Grange from a statistical point of view are outlined:

Grange has unusually high car ownership with almost fifteen per cent of houses having three cars as against nine per cent nationally and locally. It's a traditional place for families with almost half the households having couples with children as against closer to one third nationally. Unemployment is significantly lower than the national average. The dependency ratio is higher due to lots of young families and the third level post graduate population is higher than the national average. Home ownership at eighty five per cent is double the national average. Overall 'Grange' has weathered the economic storm of the last five years according to this analysis. A more detailed profile of Grange using data from Census (2006) and (2011) are available in Appendix C, Case Study 9.

1.10 Summary of chapter one

Chapter one lays out the basis of this research and sets the scene for that is a very thorough analysis of County Sligo and how social capital levels and social formation has changed over the period 1993 -2013. The reader is introduced to the topic of social capital and is made aware some of the limitations and difficulties of defining and measuring it. The timeliness and importance of the research topic is explained. The basic human need to belong is noted.

Starting in section 1.6 the reader is introduced to County Sligo from a socio-economic perspective. County Sligo, Sligo town and the village of Grange are all analysed separately. Finally a conclusion is drawn and the stage is set for chapter two.

1.11 Conclusion

Any discussion on social capital encourages diverse definitions and varied views on its importance. The latter part of this chapter focuses on the economic aspects of County Sligo and highlights how diverse even a relatively small area like Sligo is.

The reader armed with a basic knowledge of social capital and equipped with a map of the route this thesis takes to reach its conclusions can now proceed to chapter two, the chapter which gathers the writings and view points of the many aspects of social capital and how it is formed.

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Chapter one introduced the topic of social capital and described Sligo from a socio-economic perspective. This chapter is organised as follows: Section 2.1 deals with aspects of social capital and alerts the reader that there are different interpretations of social capital and that writers rank the various facets of social capital differently. The origins of sociology are briefly outlined in section 2.1.1. In section 2.1.2 a more detailed look at possible definitions of social capital is undertaken. The importance of shared or common ownership is emphasised. The notion of bonding, bridging and linking social capital is further examined. The importance of social capital in a political context is highlighted and the accompanying aspects of power and influence are introduced. Section 2.1.3 gives the reader some explanations as to why social capital as a topic has come into vogue in the last twenty years. Section 2.1.4 gives an explanation as to why social capital is mainly a topic in rich English speaking countries. Section 2.1.5 looks at why social capital is important for Ireland. Section 2.1.6 looks at unique influences on Irish society. Section 2.1.7 dwells on the essential characteristics of social capital.

The literature review then moves into a new phase in section 2.2. It lays out the seemingly straightforward definitions and aspects of social capital and takes a hard look at possible flaws and weaknesses of the topic under discussion. De Filippis (2001) and others take a critical look at social capital and expose weaknesses and ambiguities in the concept. A discussion on whether social capital is influenced ‘by’ society or whether society ‘is’ influenced by social capital levels is debated. The influence of factors such as education, wealth, race and volunteerism levels are all explored. The tendency for humans to act for their own benefit, as opposed to for the common good, is noted. The inherent conflict of interests that override and hinder community endeavour, and therefore inhibit social capital formation, is acknowledged. Section 2.2 lays out the ground for another big conundrum concerning social capital: can it be measured? Section 2.3 deals with this fundamental question. The section lays out the main areas of debate on measurement. It asks ‘Can social capital levels measure changes over time, and secondly, what variables does one use when measuring social capital levels?’

As in section 2.2 section 2.3 then proceeds to take a critical look at problems and flaws in measuring social capital and highlights the different emphasis researchers put on aspects of social capital when attempting to construct and promote a reliable methodology for measuring social capital.

At this stage, given the amount of viewpoints put forward regarding aspects of social capital and their measurement, section 2.4 is added to summarise all the points raised thus far and alert the reader to the main topics arising. This section will in turn act as the reference for the formation of a methodology to test the general viewpoint put forward: that social capital and social capital formation has decreased in County Sligo over the last twenty years. The literature review then moves into a new phase in section 2.5. The first place is an analysis of where people meet starting with the family and immediate community (section 2.5.1) with subsections on the role of sport (section 2.5.2) and the local schools (section 2.5.3). Social capital and how young people have a different relationship with the topic is outlined in 2.5.4. Similarly the unique social characteristics of older people are outlined in section 2.5.5. Section 2.5.6 asks the question ‘What do we mean by community?’ and describes a number of different types of communities. Ireland and multiculturalism is discussed in 2.5.7. This section charts the rise of multiculturalism in Ireland over the last twenty years. Our continuing high birth rate is noted in 2.5.8. Social capital and citizenship is discussed in 2.5.9. Ireland’s changing relationship with politics is noted in 2.5.10. Section 2.5.11 is a short summary of the first place.

Section 2.6 deals with the second place: the work place. Section 2.6.1 provides definitions for social exclusion, inclusion and social capital. Section 2.6.2 looks at the relationship between the pillars of society. Power and who holds it is examined in 2.6.3. Section 2.6.4 deals with volunteerism. Section 2.6.5 looked at the not-for-profit sector. Section 2.6.6 looks at social capital and entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurialism and social capital are explored in 2.6.7. Section 2.6.8 deals with philanthropy. Section 2.6.9 turns to group behaviour. The effects of income distribution are examined in 2.6.10. Education is looked at in 2.6.11. Section 2.6.12 provides a short summary of the characteristics of the second place. Section 2.7 introduces the third place. Section 2.7.1 describes the third place. Section 2.7.2 looks at religion. 2.7.3 deals with health and 2.7.4 looks at Irish meeting places. The internet is examined in 2.7.5. Section 2.8 provides a summary and 2.9 draws a conclusion.

2.1 Aspects of social capital

The next five subsections deal firstly with the origins of sociology and more recently social capital. Trust, a relatively new concept in sociology is introduced as a key component of social capital theory. Various definitions of social capital are described. An explanation for why social capital has become such an important topic in the last twenty years is given and then the focus turns to why the increased interest is concentrated on western English speaking countries. Finally a summary of the essential characteristics of social capital as documented in the thesis thus far is given.

2.1.1 Social capital and its place in sociology

Giddens (1986) sees sociology, together with social sciences in general, as inherently and inescapably part of the 'subject-matter' it seeks to comprehend. "As critical theory, sociology does not take the social world as a given but poses the questions: what types of social change are feasible and desirable and how much we should strive to achieve those" Giddens (1986, p.6). Sociology is concerned with the study of human societies. A society is a cluster, or system, of *institutionalised* forms of social conduct, that is, modes of belief that occur and re-occur over long spans of time and space, language is one example. The emergence of sociology as a science is intertwined with the two great revolutions. The French Revolution was the first time the peasants successfully changed an entire social and political system.

The Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth century started the drift from the land and the creation of large towns and cities. Giddens (1986) feels very strongly that *advanced* societies cannot be treated as though they were isolated from the rest of the world, or from societies that preceded them in time.

The link between levels of social capital, the economy, and education is generally recognised. Trust and networking are key components of social capital. Trust has never emerged as a topic of mainstream sociology, neither classical authors nor modern sociologists use the term in a theoretical context (Field *et al* 2000: Luhmann 2000).

DeFilippis (2001) acknowledges that the exact origins of the term social capital and who coined it are obscure. He credits Loury (1977, p.176) who observed that an individual's social origin, combined with the amount of social capital invested in the person, are strongly linked, as one of the first attempts to define the term.

Similarly acknowledging Bourdieu (1986) who sees capital, of any type, and power as synonymous is credited with raising the profile of social capital. DeFilippis goes on to give Coleman (1988) the credit for bringing the term social capital into mainstream American social science, Coleman simply stated that social capital has a social structure and that people acted within that structure.

Ganapati (2008, p.385) traces the intellectual origin of social capital in the scholarly world to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1986) and the American sociologist James Coleman (Coleman 1988). However, Robert Putnam (Putnam 2000), a political scientist, is credited with popularising the notion. The initial analysis of Bourdieu and Coleman centred on individuals or small groups as the units of prime importance. Bourdieu focused on the benefits accruing to individuals and families because of their social relations. For Bourdieu, social capital is a private good created deliberately by individuals and families through social relations. However, Coleman and Putnam expanded the concept of social capital as a public good. Social capital is defined by its function, it is inherent in the structure of social relations, and facilitates: “certain actions of individuals who are within the structure” (Coleman, 1990, p.302).

In summary, sociology as a social science only began to be recognised as such in the last two hundred years. Social capital, a concept based on networking and trust building within and between networks is an even newer concept in sociology (Giddens 1986).

Smith and Kulyncych (2002) question the use of the word ‘capital’ in the term ‘social capital’. They go back to Roman times for a description of what *capital* actually is. They point out that capital is a monetary term typically broken down into the principle sum as distinct from the interest payment on that amount. They also point to the individualistic nature of the capitalist system which is immediately at odds with the *social* side of the concept with its emphasis on the group and the solidarity or common cause that goes with it. Equally a distinction between human capital, which is generally studied in relation to economic outcomes, and social capital which is increasingly studied and discussed in relation to explicitly political ones such as democracy and participation in public affairs needs to be noted (Smith and Kulyncych, 2002, p.7). Human and social capital, while closely linked, did not always enjoy the same levels of scholarly attention as they do at present (Socialcapital.wordpress.com 2011).

“There is a compelling case for scholars of all normative persuasions to avoid the term social capital and seek alternative ones for studying these processes and relations, which, we agree, are certainly worth studying” (Smith and Kulyncych 2002, p.30).

How important is power and influence in society (Walzer 1983)? Etzioni (1998) sees good manners and etiquette as fundamental to a normal society. All of these characteristics are important to society. The absence of any one of these characteristics will affect social capital levels. Perhaps *the* most critical measurement of social capital levels in a society is *trust* (Putnam 2000).

Who exactly first coined the term *social capital* is not clear but as can be deduced from references in this review of pertinent literature, the term came into common usage about twenty five years ago.

2.1.2 Defining social capital

While there is no one accepted definition of the term *social capital* common themes run through all descriptions. Social capital has become a fashionable term to describe almost any form of human interaction. Even the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has identified social capital as having a role “Economists have added the focus on the contribution of social capital to economic growth” (OECD 2000, p.1).

Putnam (1993) credits a state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia, L.J. Hanifan, with coining the term social capital. Referring to parents participating in local schools Putnam cites Hanifan as observing that:

The community as a whole will benefit by the co-operation of all of its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbours (Putnam 1993, p.19).

De Tocqueville (1835) generally saw social capital as self interest rightly understood in other words altruism or self sacrifice is not the ultimate goal. The emphasis is on creating a co-ordinated action that is to *everyone's* benefit.

“All together now ...everybody... one, two, and three ... lift” (Leonard and Onyx 2004, p.4) and (citing Coleman 1990, 1998) “Social capital is the invisible resource that is created whenever people co-operate”.

(Leonard and Onyx, 2004,p.6) conclude:

that social capital is defined as the relationships among people in a social group, for example, family, community, society, (or a group based on other forms of affiliation) from which resources (information, influence, or opportunity) may be exchanged among group members (citing Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1995; Portes, 1998).

Many organisations have their own understanding of what social capital is. A *typical* example includes the following “the attitude, spirit and willingness of people to engage in collective, civic activities, over time, social capital builds what may be termed as social infrastructure” (CSC 2001,p.1). Another view ordains that social capital is essentially composed of “People, their capacity levels, institutions, cultural cohesion, education, information, skills, and knowledge” (SMARTe 2011, p.1). Social capital generally refers to the set of norms, networks, and organisations through which people gain access to power and resources, and through which decision making and policy formulation occur (Grootaert 1998).

Other writers take a similar view of the various forms of social capital. *Bonding* social capital could be said to be based on a given similarity or a shared close identity (Leonard and Onyx, 2004). *Bridging* social capital refers to the links made between different social groups (Healy and Coté 2001). It could be argued, therefore, that bridging social capital is based on *creating* similarity so that connections can be made across groups such as ethnic groups, political groups and regional groups. The third type of social capital, *linking* social capital refers to creating links in order to get access to resources and power (Woolcock 1998).

In an Irish context social capital could be described as: “Networks working together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among group” (National Economic and Social Forum, 2003, p.3).The NESF goes on to break down social capital into *bonding* social capital (bonding to people like you for getting by in life), *bridging* social capital (linking to people not like you for getting on in life) and *linking* social capital (to people at a different step on the social ladder).

The NESF (2003, p.7) comments on the need for social capital in the community: “as central government cannot possibly meet every conceivable need”. Donoghue *et al* (2005), using the experiences of the community groups in County Cavan, illuminate the real life conflicts that occur in communities.

Donoghue *et al* (2006) go into some detail outlining the nature and extent of community and voluntary sectors in Ireland highlighting the importance, complexity and increasing level of regulation in these sectors. The declining influence of religious entities is also noted. As such, linking social capital, unlike the two other forms of social capital, is not based on similarity, necessarily, but on creating vertical links or relationships, to get access to resources and power, they conclude.

Finally it is important to recognise that social capital has a number of forms, dimensions, and strands. Four important forms of social capital are identified by O'Brien and Fathaigh (2004).

Firstly: obligations and expectations (doing favours for and receiving favours from other people), secondly: informational potential (sharing useful information that may inform some future action), thirdly: norms and effective sanctions (the establishment of community values and shared standards of behaviour) and fourthly: authority relations (skilful leadership that informs others' actions).

Willem and Scarbrough (2006) identified a number of different dimensions of social capital and particularly its relationship with knowledge sharing with respect to the political dimension. Coleman 1988 (citing Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) identifies three dimensions of social capital, that is, the *structural* dimension (organisation structure and network configuration), the *cognitive* dimension (shared codes, language and narratives), and the *relational* dimension (trust, norms, obligations and identification).

Derosé and Varda (2009) take an alternative look at social capital and suggest that three dimensions of social capital exist: cognitive, behavioural, and structural. Cognitive indicators of social capital refer to what people *feel*, for example, feelings of trust toward others. Behavioural indicators of social capital include those things that people do, for example, voting and participation that reflect social ties and resources within communities. Structural indicators of social capital are those measures that one refers to when studying social capital, for example, density and strength of ties, and redundancy of interactions.

They point out that all three of these dimensions apply to studies at all levels, both individual and community, and across the bonding, bridging, and linking types of social capital identified elsewhere. As with any alternative to what is known as *capitalism*, people will eventually gravitate towards those networks that advance their social and economic standing in the community.

Putnam (2000, pp.319 -325) gives examples showing that communities that trust each other and network, prosper both socially and economically.

The approach developed by Portes (1998) identifies two distinctive strands in previous studies of social capital which he terms the *instrumental* and the *consummatory* views. The *instrumental* view sees the establishment of social capital as based on reciprocal relationships, while the *consummatory* view (Coleman, 1988) sees social capital as the result of the development of social norms and identification with a group. The instrumental view includes the *social network* and *structural* aspects of social capital.

It is acknowledged that social capital through these means can benefit others who do not participate.

In an Irish context O'Doherty (2007) places social and civic participation, social networks and reciprocity, trust and general views of one's local area as key *defining* characteristics.

2.1.3 Why the increased interest in social capital in the last twenty years?

Healy (2003) neatly sums up the main drivers of this increased interest; increasing inter-dependency among different social agents and actors implying complexity and an organic view of social processes and organisation combined with the limitations of an individual rational choice model to explain human behaviour. The role of community in mediating the impact of various factors, in particular areas of existing research such as economic growth, education, public health is noted. A recognition of the role of various 'non-corporate' and civil society actors and their complementary role to that of the State and Market. The less tangible forms of utility, satisfaction and societal well-being and their dependence on both *hard* and *soft* underlying determinants. Increased public concern about a claimed reduction in social capital (citing Putnam, 2000) has itself become an issue.

2.1.4 Why is the social capital centred on English speaking countries?

Healy (2003, p.14) observes that interest in the concept and measurement of social capital has arisen mainly in English-speaking countries, including to a limited extent, Ireland. There is a developing but secondary interest in some, but not all, member states of the European Union. English speaking countries appear to have undergone more rapid change in recent decades therefore the State and the role of inter-personal trust and cooperation has assumed greater attention.

If the fall in farming numbers is one of the indicators of a major change in Irish society then the rise in the number of people from other parts of the world living in Ireland must be one of the other great indicators of change over the last twenty years. Racism is on the rise in Ireland.

An area where inaction is particularly problematic is in the area of racist crime and incitement to hatred. Significant problems with our current legislation, the Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, have been noted at the national and the international level. For many years now the Act has been under review. However, we are yet to see any legislative change or clear outcome as a result of the process. At a time when we see evidence of an increase both in the level and severity of racist incidents across Europe, action in this area must be a priority (ENAR 2010, p.1).

Contrasting Northern Ireland with the Republic Keenan (2014) comments that ‘hate crimes’ are a weekly occurrence in the north, a legacy of the troubles.

Ireland, on the face of it, is making an effort to recognise and integrate all sections of society. Citing OECD (2014) the young and unemployed have been hardest hit, while the old are hardly touched – typical of OECD countries. As is always the case with Ireland, our patterns of social transfers make it difficult to pinpoint the level of inequality. However, Keenan (2014) points out that in relation to expenditure on public health Ireland stands out as having one of the biggest gaps between money spent (well up to OECD levels) and satisfaction with the service (well down).

Another factor to take into account is the increasingly ageing population of wealthier countries. People are living longer and positive ageing is becoming increasingly popular as a topic. This will be looked at further in section 2.5.5.

As can be seen from the comments above, Ireland has plenty of reasons to acquire an understanding of the essential characteristics of social capital, if we are all to live together harmoniously.

2.1.5 Why is social capital important for Ireland?

The National Economic and Social Forum (2003) points out that the market cannot meet every conceivable need. According to the NESF, communities must get involved and empowerment of local communities, to develop their own solutions and modes of self-help, in relation to expenditure on health, is an important challenge in the design of social policy.

The report goes on to point out that while the term social capital is new in Ireland, the concept is not. Social capital draws on processes which are crucial in community development and in the functioning of a democratic, inclusive, and cohesive policy. Community development helps generate higher levels of trust and social presentation.

It is clear that social capital and community development are intertwined and that a fully functioning community development sector is vital to the process of generating social capital.

2.1.6 What are the key societal influences unique to Irish society?

In addition to the forces that shape society in general, Eipper (1986) identifies the institutions of church, state and business as the key influences in the community of Bantry, County Cork. He cites the War of Independence, the Civil War, the Catholic versus Protestant factor and the foundation of the Fianna Fail party as important influential factors. Eipper (1986) sums up the society in Bantry, a typical Irish market town, as being characterised as one of class: strongly affected by the balance of power between the classes, and the presence of a class consciousness. Intertwined with the story of Bantry is our link to the British Empire and its legacy as a coloniser. Kirby (2010) gives further insights into why Irish society has evolved the way it has in later sections particularly since the 1870s – a period which saw the foundation of many voluntary organisations in Ireland. Murphy (2011) in a wide ranging review of influences on Irish civil society cites the crushing failure of the 1798 Rising, the failure of the Industrial Revolution to ignite and the failure of the left, particularly the Labour Party, to become a real force as key influences on Irish society.

2.1.7 What are the essential characteristics of social capital?

As can be deduced from comments previously made, every commentator has their own particular views on social capital. Generally they all highlight certain characteristics that must be present for social capital to work. They write of numerous and dense connections, co-operation and trust, honesty (very important), informal constraints (without the use of force), the need to recognise the concept of reciprocity, the necessity for unwritten but generally understood norms. The principles of redistribution (of knowledge and power), recognition (of all sections of society), representation (everyone can have their say) and respect must be present. Social capital is not an alternative to existing policies: it's a potential complement to them.

2.2 Social capital: A critique

DeFilippis (2001) takes a critical look at the rapid rise of the concept of social capital in the previous decade. His principle concerns are the tendencies to ignore, or not understand, the issue of power within communities and that social capital has become divorced from economic capital. DeFilippis (2001) critiques Putnam's work and gives his views on what social capital is (or is not). DeFilippis notes that Putnam (1993) reinterprets social capital as not so much as *realised* by individuals but as *possessed* (or not) by individuals or groups.

Putnam (1993) highlights the link between social capital, civil society, and the notion of trust. Putnam links the promotion of good democratic government to social capital. Putnam highlights the *win-win* concept associated with voluntary organisations working for the good of society. Organisations come in many forms ranging from church groups to trade unions. "Where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, and even nations prosper" (Putnam 2000, p.319).

DeFilippis (2001) is critical of the idea of a community *possessing* anything. DeFilippis argues that while community development might be many things it is above all else linked to people improving themselves economically through co-operation. An institution or an individual can possess something, but DeFilippis believes that a community cannot. DeFilippis acknowledges Putnam (1993) and De Tocqueville (1835) who highlight the link between social capital and civil society and notes the propensity of Americans to create and join civil society organizations.

DeFilippis believes that De Tocqueville's views of American society are over simplistic as the America of the eighteen thirties is very different from the America of today. DeTocquevilles (1835) utopian view of American society did not, for instance, take account of what the slaves might have thought of society if they were given a chance to speak. Equally Putnam's win-win view of all voluntary groups is not always accurate according to DeFilippis.

For example, while Putnam (1993) amalgamates organisations ranging from church groups to trade unions together he neglects to point out that local Chambers of Commerce and trade unions, for instance, could never see eye-to eye. DeFilippis' more jaundiced view of social capital is more realistic in the opinion of this researcher.

The utopian view of Putnam as regards social capital is simplistic. Society is full of factions, each with their own objectives, even if they are to the detriment of other sections of society.

Similarly Besser (2008), commenting on small town social capital and civic engagement, while agreeing with Putnam's general conclusion on the decline in social capital, casts doubts on specific aspects of that conclusion. A combination of both *bonding social capital* and *bridging social capital* provide the optimum situation for community development (citing Agnitsch *et al.*, 2006: Putnam, 2000) concludes Besser. Once again this researcher agrees with Besser's realistic comments particularly in relation to small towns.

DeFilippis (2001) furthermore takes issue with Putnam's separation of *social* from *capital* and therefore economics. DeFilippis, in his critique of Putnam's, work casts doubt on the link between social capital and economic growth and believes that Putnam's assertion that there is a link between the two is weak. There is little or no theoretical or empirical work to support the link contends DeFilippis.

Leonard (2004, p.5) points out that, "there is a misplaced optimism that somehow social capital can compensate for economic capital or in some cases pave the way for the acquisition of other forms of capital". In a sense, this is putting the cart before the horse. A number of studies have demonstrated how areas rich in social capital habitually under-perform economically compared to other regions, contends Leonard (2004).

Commenting on the unusual characteristics of West Belfast, Leonard (2004) noted that making the transition from bonding to bridging social capital may not necessarily lead to the positive outcomes envisaged by Putnam but rather reinforce existing social, economic and political inequality.

DeFilippis (2001) agrees with Putnam on the importance of trust but believes that Putnam's view on immigrant communities in American cities ignores the exploitation within communities and the blocking out of other communities. DeFilippis is sceptical of Putnam's views of networking but agrees with Weber, who generally noted that within social and economic organisations, the individual will use open and closed associations according to what suits the situation.

Putnam (2000) puts great emphasis on ranking the American states using wealth as indicators of social capital. DeFilippis points out that only three of the top ten states ranked using Putnam's indicators have incomes above the national average.

This is at odds with Putnam's view that wealthier communities have stronger, more effective, networks and poorer communities have weaker networks. Putnam contends that the decline of communities and the rise of the individual is a negative development for everybody.

DeFilippis argues that professional classes, for instance, have enjoyed a long period of prosperity despite no real bonding and that Putnam's link between social capital (and lack of it) and economic prosperity does not hold up.

Another criticism of social capital theory and research is the frequent lack of conceptual clarity in distinguishing between social capital and its consequences (Portes, 1998: Stone, 2001). Social capital, the actions taken as a result of social capital, and the consequences of those actions are frequently conflated.

On this issue, Stone (2001) points out the important distinction between proximal and distal outcomes of social capital. *Proximal* outcomes consist of direct actions such as voting in elections or volunteering to be part of a neighbourhood watch programme: these are actions which relate directly to the core components of social capital, such as, relationships, trust, and norms of reciprocity.

Distal outcomes, on the other hand, are indirect consequences of social capital resulting from the proximal outcomes. More effective government and lower crime rates are examples of distal outcomes.

Hooghe and Stoole (2001, p.134) deal with the secondary effect of social capital in the context of the *rainmaker effect* of participation in civil society.

Fukuyama (1999) argues, while social capital has been given a number of definitions, many of these refer to manifestations of social capital rather than social capital itself.

Arnold (2003) also sees flaws in Putnam's (2000) views. He asserts that the selection of data by Putnam (2000) is heavily weighted toward middle-class organisations and mores, for example, bridge clubs and churches are more important centres of social capital, in Putnam's eyes, than are bars, pinball parlours, and the like. Importantly, he believes that Putnam's perspective on social capital neglects the importance of the relationship between the citizen and the state in the construction and maintenance of community.

Ironically, it would seem that government institutions and policies have no part to play in facilitating important features of social life: this does not mean that it will not seek to influence community life (Kisby, 2009).

Nevertheless, admits Arnold (2003), few critics disagree entirely with his conclusion that in America (and other places also), lifestyle changes are associated with privatised leisure pastimes.

O'Brien and Fathaigh (2004) attribute the social capital theory debate to the works of three main authors, namely, James Coleman, Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu. Coleman's (1988, 1990) interpretation of the concept is the most frequently cited in the literature (O'Brien and Fathaigh 2004).

They agree with Coleman (1988, 1990) who sees social capital existing in the structure of *relations* between individuals and is thus largely intangible but go on to expand on this. Its potency (O'Brien and Fathaigh 2004) is realised in its capacity (just like physical and human capital) to facilitate productive activity.

This is achieved through the formation of social relationships built up over time which enables individuals to achieve their interests over-and-above those that can only be attained independently.

O'Brien and Fathaigh (2004) highlight Coleman's emphasis on family and community as the building blocks for high levels of social capital. They link Coleman and Putnam's views, with the emphasis on trust, resources, and power, and they believe that this view is flawed and therefore problems can emerge from this general perspective.

In relation to Coleman's approach, for example, Dika and Singh (2002, p. 44) write about a blurring of the distinction of *resources* from *the ability to obtain them* in a given social structure. In addition, the emphasis on the family and the community's role in mediating social capital often means that not enough attention is paid to the individual's role in society. Siisiainen (2000, p.4), for example, points to an inadequate coverage of the concept of *distrust* and its singular association with pathological forms of collective action. This treatise obscures the role of conflict in activating alternative forms of social action. O'Brien and Fathaigh (2004) turn to Bourdieu's theories to fill the gaps in theory not identified by Coleman and Putnam.

Firstly, Bourdieu, according to Fathaigh (2004), highlights the link between education and the individual and the resulting *power* coming from better education. The second important theme in illuminating Bourdieu's theory is that of *capitals*. This concept is subdivided into: *economic*, *social*, *cultural*, and *symbolic* categories. The third and final theme is that of *fields*.

This concept relates to a structured space of forces and struggles, consisting of an ordered system and an identifiable network of relationships that impact upon the *habitus* of individuals. Education is thus regarded as a field since it sets its own *rules* that regulate behaviour within. O'Brien and Fathaigh (2004) conclude that social capital is a complex phenomenon and that there is a need to question *how* social capital is both conceived and utilised.

By way of a conclusion on what social capital is (or is not) DeFilippis (2001) proposes that social capital must be reconnected to economic capital to have any meaning at all. Any attempt to define social capital without the recognition of power and who holds it is flawed. Equally, any attempt to ignore the inbuilt conflict that exists between competing interest groups in a given community is utopian and unrealistic.

Hooghe and Stoole (2003, p.7) mirroring these conclusions, lament the amount of attention given to *measuring* social capital and the almost total neglect of "how social capital might be generated". They go on to generally acknowledge that the concept of social capital, while important, is very difficult to define. The role of the family, voluntary sector, politics and the growing *third* or *not-for-profit* sector are all factors to be acknowledged (Hooghe and Stoole 2003, p.33). They finish this point with the conclusion that social capital levels in a community are the result of the triangular relationship between the state, the family, and civil society.

Hooghe and Stoole (2001, p.45) cite a key question asked in the World Values Survey 1981 and again in 1990: "Generally speaking, would you say most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"

They note that the levels of trust had risen in nearly all countries except France and Spain in that period. They point out that, with particular reference to France, participation in organisations and trust levels do not evolve jointly or in the same manner. The type of organisation one joins has a bearing on trust levels. A person who actively participates in the trade union movement will have a different experience to those doing charity work. The *haves* in society will be more trusting than the *have not's* because the *haves* command and receive respect in society.

They go on to point out that while governments and corporations have come to recognise the importance of social capital they don't really know how to go about effectively generating social capital.

Hogghe and Stoole (2001, p.10) point out that causal relations between government policy and the resultant effects on society are complex and not as clear and straightforward as suggested. They highlight the importance of voluntary organisations and *whether* and *how* they foster generalised trust and other attitudinal aspects of social capital such as norms of reciprocity. They point out that most authors on the subject of social capital highlight the importance of people being members of multiple organisations and the link between voluntary organisations and attitudinal aspects of social capital. Overall they conclude (p.11) that “the generation of social capital is dependent upon sustained and synergistic interaction between civil society and government institutions”. Hogghe and Stoole (2001, pp.67-89) examine passive membership, noting that organisations with paid staff tend to be less democratic than purely voluntary entities and leads to people giving money rather than time, a phenomenon that is on the increase.

They point out (p.85) that some organisations may function as information systems and point to the Norwegian characteristic of publishing almost five journals per head of population annually. They cite Putman (2000) who defines these types of organisations as *tertiary* as against the classic *secondary associations* with their face-to-face interaction. They (citing Almond and Verba, 1963) highlight the role of passive members who see themselves as having an influence by the very fact of their membership and their financial contribution:

Active participation did not contribute significantly more to social capital than did passive support and also contrary to expectations, participation in non political associations contributed to attitudinal aspects of social capital such as trust and civic engagement only when accompanied by involvement in associations with more manifest political purposes (Hogghe and Stoole, 2001, p.83).

Hogghe and Stoole (2001, p.84) contend that Putnam is *mistaken* in placing voluntary organisations at the centre of his social capital thesis, as there is no evidence to support this. They go on to examine the relationship between voluntary associations and democratic attitudes (p.89) and while accepting that there is a positive correlation between the two they point out that little or no research exists to explain the causal mechanism for this positive correlation. They point the existence of the ‘dark side of social capital’ as pointed out by Putnam (2000, pp.350–363).

Organisations such as the Klu Klux Klan are an example of people joining for the wrong reasons: most people who join organisations already have a high social conscience. They recognise the effects that peer group attitudes can have on individuals and point out while group pressure is well known amongst young people it is also present in the adult population as well.

Turner's (1982) Self Categorisation theory "that socialisation will be most successful when the individual is integrated in a group with a relatively homogeneous value pattern" (cited in Hogghe and Stoole 2001, p.94) is also another important factor that must be taken on board in an critical analysis of social capital formation. Finally they raise the issue of ethnocentrism in the context of growing issue of migrants both within and from outside Europe and America.

Schneider (2007) goes into some detail analysing the distinction between civic engagement and social capital in the context of the not-for-profit sector.

Findings suggest that participation in social-service agencies through volunteering or donations does not necessarily lead to greater civic engagement. The principle reason for this is that individual organisations, while fostering bonding social capital, do not necessarily cause or allow the individual to see the wider picture in terms of society as a whole. Schneider (2007) asks two questions: What are the differences between civic engagement and social capital, and how do those differences play out in non-profit organisations? When, and how, are civic engagement and social capital connected?

Trust building will be a huge issue going forward, education is central to this process:

Putnam, who remains the bellwether in all these discussions, said very little about education in his first forays with social capital. He now hails the importance of education in general, and places civics education at the top of the "agenda for social capitalists," especially well-designed service learning programs (Farr 2004, p.28).

One's level of education is a key influence on one's participation in wider society and one's views on social capital in all its forms and the self selection process. The rise of multiethnic societies has of course profound implications for the whole notion of civil society and how we govern ourselves.

Ganapati (2008, pp.385-386) echoes the critical comments of many writers and dwells on three topics in particular. The first set of criticisms, according to Ganapati (2008), is methodological: in particular the confusion between cause and effect, agreeing with Portes (1998) who argues that linkages between social capital and building community trust would be tautological if both implied strengthening social networks. The methodological inseparability results in creating circular arguments. DeFillipis (2001) extends the methodological critique further. He contends that the social capital approach draws on methodological individualism, whereas it is treated as a public good.

The second set of criticisms has to do with the downside of social capital. Indeed, the feel-good versions of social capital literature focus exclusively on benefits, and pay little attention to deleterious effects. The third set of criticisms relate to the politics, or the lack of it, of social capital. In this, critics contend that Putnam's emphasis of norms and trust in the social capital approach eschews political conflicts and power relations that are inherent in social relationships (DeFillipis 2001).

Ganapati (2008) contributes to the debate on the link between the moral, social, and physical aspects of the community. He critically reviews three approaches: communitarianism, social capital, and new urbanism combined with smart growth. Communitarianism, he goes on, takes a *moral* approach toward community. The social capital approach emphasises *social networks*. New urbanism and smart growth are explicitly concerned with the *physical* environment. The three approaches have gained significant attention among scholars in recent years.

Portes (1998) identifies four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on members, restrictions on individual freedom, and downward-levelling norms. More recent works of the protagonists also explicitly acknowledge that not all forms of social capital are productive – a reference to the *dark side* of social capital.

There are also doubts, whether networks such as voluntary organisations can revive civic and political engagement Ganapati 2008 (citing Boggs 2001: Newton 1997:Edwards and Foley 1997: 1998).

On a more positive note, Ganapati (2008) acknowledges social capital and its role in building community economic capacity, and (citing Portes and Mooney 2002) concedes that social capital has a key role in fostering entrepreneurial community development.

Anderson *et al* (2007) commenting on social capital and its link to entrepreneurship ask whether social capital is actually a true *capital* or if the metaphor of capital is misplaced. Bourdieu (1986) conceives social capital as one of a group of capitals that intervene to shape or amplify the effects of class origins. Anderson *et al* (2007) comment that Bourdieu has been criticised for not developing the concept further and cite Barbieri (2003) who berates Bourdieu for concentrating instead on the parallel concept of *cultural capital*.

Schuller *et al* (2000) in their review of the social capital as a concept, identify three central criticisms: that it is too diverse in definition, leading to it being unintelligible, that it is being applied to the examination of so many social issues as not to be taken seriously and that it presents real problems of measurement due to being so diverse that it is difficult to define and reliant on proxy indicators making it prone to validation problems.

Schneider *et al* (2000), when attempting to measure the relationship between social capital and economic growth, highlights unique characteristics of each European country and in the case of the larger countries, each region. The authors use Putnam (1993) as their reference point in picking out the weak points of the theory of social capital. While acknowledging the ground breaking work of Putnam (1993) in relation to Italy's regions they conclude that his observations are too general to be regarded as conclusive.

They conclude that the relationship between cultural factors and economic growth are vague and ambiguous at best. The one factor that they highlight as important is communication within society and note that the political climate and the institutions that carry out government policy effects the level of trust in the community, trust of course being a critical factor in determining levels of social capital. More detailed work needs to be carried out if the true influence of social capital on society is to be determined concludes Schneider *et al* (2000).

Akdere and Roberts (2008) explore the benefits and drawbacks of social capital theory and practice from an economic and human resources point of view,(citing Sandefur and Laumann 2000), and identify three important benefits of social capital: information, influence and control, and social solidarity. They also acknowledge the pitfalls associated with groups as outlined already in this section.

Hooghe and Stolle (2003, p.14) agree that general conditions, such as trust and a level of prosperity and security, must be present for social capital to flourish but note that the *rainmaker effect* is important. The rainmaker argument states that the benefits provided by associations do not remain limited to the members themselves but can be seen as a collective good. They point out, however, that the triangular relationship between family, state and wider society is deeply embedded in the generation of social capital. As the reader will now realize, a debate rages on the importance of the various aspects of social capital. Section 2.3 deals with the other issue with social capital: Measurement.

2.3 Can social capital be measured?

Measuring social capital is a complex area and one which has many imperfections. Two broad approaches have been taken. The first is to conduct a census of groups and group memberships in a given society and track changes over a time. The second approach is to use survey data on levels of trust and civic engagement (Fukuyama 1999). Grootaert (1998) produces a very comprehensive set of indicators of levels social capital by taking into account common phenomena such as crime rates, days lost to strikes and suicide rates.

“Like researchers on global warming, we must make do with the imperfect evidence that we can find, not merely lament its deficiencies” Putnam (2000, p.23). Field (2003) is skeptical of Putnam’s attempts at using long established surveys to measure changes in American society. The General Social Survey, conducted every two years since 1974, is one example of longitudinal data (cited by Putnam 2000).

The assiduous recording keeping of thousands of club secretaries, county clerks and church treasurers across the decades is much more reliable than frail recollections of ‘how things used to be’ (Putnam, 2000, p.415).

There is a risk of over-stretching the concept to include too much at the same time such as empirical measures and using proxy variables that are poorly matched to the underlying concept(s). Researchers may end up trying to “...explain too much with too little...” (Woodcock, 1998, p.155). A generic term such as social capital amalgamates different strands of social behaviour and attitude and treats these as universally equivalent or outside specific cultures, institutional settings, historical contexts and power structures.

To some extent, the above objections can also arise in relation to human capital concludes Woodcock (1998). Notwithstanding the difficulties in reliably measuring social capital, other people believe that reasonably accurate tables can be constructed. Since there are no direct measurements of social capital, the Caux Round Table for example, has created a Social Capital Achievement score for one hundred and ninety nine countries using fourteen different measurements as an approximation of social capital achievement (Young and Lindstrom, 2009).

The fourteen measurements of social capital achievement are grouped into three community sub-systems: economic activity, social/cultural variables, and legal and political institutions. The central message is that the institutes, values, and practices that participate in shaping wealth creation are the social capital of a society.

Countries with high levels of social capital achievement are more economically prosperous and provide a higher quality of life for its citizens. Countries with low levels of social capital are more prone to poverty, and more severe economic, political, and social inequities. Ireland was ranked ninth in the world in 2009 along with seven other European countries. New Zealand came third and was the only non European country to make it into the top ten. Ireland had dropped down to number seventeen in 2012 (Young, Purcell and Babajanov 2013) a position similar to that held in 2005.

The European Values Survey (2008) also attempts to measure social capital. The European Values Study is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research programme on basic human values. It provides insights into the ideas, beliefs, preferences, attitudes, values and opinions of citizens all over Europe. It is a unique research project on how Europeans think about life, family, work, religion, politics and society and it is conducted every nine years. The sample size was set to one thousand interviews in each country, with an additional quota sample of two hundred young people aged eighteen to twenty four.

In the EVS (1990), representative multi-stage random samples were conducted in some countries and quota samples in other countries. The target population was eighteen years and older. In 1999, nationally representative samples were used – however, the quality of the samples varies.

There was an improvement in the corresponding survey in 2008. All countries employed a representative multi-stage random sample of the adult population of eighteen years and older. Face-to-face interviews were conducted for every survey. Overall, Ireland retains a significantly higher score in terms of belief in God (or a god) than other European countries.

Dika and Singh (2002) are sceptical of measuring social capital using education levels as a yardstick and point out that measurement difficulties stem from the issues and gaps in the conceptualisation of social capital.

Morrow (1999) (cited in Dika and Singh 2002) noted that most of these measures, such as, number of parents, number of siblings or household size, church attendance for instance, are crude and arbitrary.

Dika and Singh (2002) go on to point out that fascination with the idea that we are in social decline leads to the argument that the source of our discontent is found in lack of social control and cohesion as opposed to increasing inequality which might be the real cause our social problems.

Kalu and Remkus (2010, p.7) use alternative tests to measure levels of trust. These measures include: levels of communication with co-workers, frequency of communication with public leaders, number of times written to newspapers, and attendance at public meetings. Their principle test was the Mann-Whitney (1947) test which allowed for the comparison of responses from local government officials and non-profit officials. This test allows an examination of whether two sets of responses have the same distribution.

Graddy and Wang (2008) measure ethnic homogeneity and religion of a community. They adapted the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index to capture the levels of social capital using the American county as the unit of measurement. Narayan and Cassidy (2001) devised a Global Social Capital Survey based on an empirical study in Ghana and Uganda. Communication, norms, trust, at both community and political level were the main characteristics highlighted as indicators of levels of social capital. Onyx and Bullen (2000) identified three factors: community participation, agency, and trust. The five communities surveyed using these indicators differed significantly in terms of the general and specific factors. All were in the Sydney, Australia area: some were rural, some affluent, and some poor.

Better measures of social capital are essential, and work is under way in a number of countries to develop survey instruments. One option would be for the OECD to explore the possibility of an international pooling of resources in this area – perhaps the development of a common survey instrument, linked to the OECD's continuing work on educational indicators (OECD 2001, p.71).

Fahmy (2006), dealing with measuring social capital among young people under nineteen years of age, uses indicators such as number of times written to a newspaper, contacted a politician, attended a local protest meeting, active in a local voluntary group as evidence of social action or inaction. Younger people scored much lower on these questions than the over thirty age group. Fahmy (2006) points out that younger people, for a variety of reasons, adopt a different approach and that therefore measurement of social capital from an older person's perspective is not always appropriate.

Welshman (2006, p.3) points to social exclusion indicators drawn up by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation which uses a wide range of health areas including, for example, teenage pregnancy, lone parenthood, parenting, mental health, low birth weight, and obesity as a basis for the measurement of social capital.

Adam (2007, p.272) takes a comprehensive look at social capital across Europe and ranks countries according to free time spent in civil organisations. Denmark and the Netherlands are the clear leaders closely followed by Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

Generally speaking, the further south and east one goes in Europe, the lower the volunteerism rates. Adam (2008) deals with two sets of issues. The first one concerns the distribution of stocks of social capital across European nations. Using the conventional proxies like trust and associational involvement on the basis of data from cross-national surveys (European Values Study, European Social Survey, Euro barometer), the main tentative trends and patterns are outlined.

The second set of issues refers to the quality and credibility of data. Adams (2008) emphasises the problems of measuring social capital over time using the same parameters as the questions asked are often altered and therefore direct comparisons are not possible, also the same question asked in different countries might be interpreted differently. It can help if a triangulation approach is taken, that is, take the three organisations mentioned in the study and attempt to correlate the different surveys.

Lillbacka (2006) differentiates between the individual and the group and notes that the more variables used the more complex the measurement task. Four potential indicators are considered (citing Coleman 1988): interpersonal trust, the respondent's social network, self-efficacy, and membership in voluntary associations. Various factor models are tested for cross-context stability and unidimensionality in three sub samples, Finnish survey data from 2001 are used.

Tavits (2006, p.217) believes that measurement of the components of the budget of an administrative region is usually a good indicator of its activities with regard to the interaction between government and the populous it serves. Sbragia 1996 (cited in Tavits 2006) developed key indicators of performance and financing, focusing on expenditure on community development and housing which serves the purpose of capturing redistributive policies, expenditure on police and fire protection measures the level of allocation policy activism.

From the examples outlined above it appears possible to produce rankings between countries but *measurement over time* is a much more difficult exercise. Adams (2008, p.161) points out that: "the level of reflection and critical assessment of the main theoretical and methodological dilemmas has increased" (citing Schuler, Baron and Field 2000; Morales, 2002; van Deth 2003; Stolle & Hooghe 2005).

Zmerli (2010) comments on the relevant aspects of the European Citizen, Involvement, Democracy (CID) Survey (2001) covering thirteen European societies. This survey collected information about eight different norms of citizenship, and respondents were invited to place themselves on an eleven point scale (also see Denters *et al* 2007).

Adam and Roncevic (2003) point out that for epistemological reasons it is not possible to devise a single measurement system for social capital mainly because it can't be defined as a concept and that its usage is broadening in meaning all the time. Burt (1992) introduces the notion of *structural holes* or lack of them as an important indicator of levels of social capital. Burt (1992) measures social capital in terms of network constraint, more constraint means fewer holes. Because structural holes are the source of social capital, according to Burt fewer structural holes result in poorer levels of social capital. Small, dense, hierarchal networks are the most constraining entities for building social capital (Burt 1997).

Besser (2008) also points out that Putnam's attempt to measure levels of social capital in American states by ranking was done on a state by state basis and notes that the characteristics of rural and urban parts of any given American state make it impossible to give an overall verdict on the level of social capital particularly over time. In common with industrialised countries all over the world, American urban areas are expanding at the expense of rural areas. Tonnies (1887) concept of rural and urban society is relevant to this observation.

As stated at the outset, one of the key research questions posed in this thesis is if there is a social capital deficit in Sligo and whether or not social capital formation and maintenance has been affected (and in what ways, if at all) over the longitudinal period under investigation. This implies that it must be measured, but measured against what is the question? One way of judging how our society is performing is to look at other countries from a variety of viewpoints. Researchers at University College Dublin have looked at the subject from a medical point of view.

Delaney *et al* (2007) noted that Irish citizens have the highest self-reported good health rating in Europe, a finding backed up by other studies and further enforced with data derived from the 2002 and 2005 European Social Survey. Mohseni and Lindström (2008) concluded that age, sex, country of origin, education, economic stress and (horizontal) trust might skew the association between the political trust in the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) and self-rated health variables. Rostila (2007) also uses health for measuring social capital levels in the EU countries.

Derose and Varda (2009) critically review the work of numerous researchers and how they approach the measurement of social capital using health as the subject matter.

Healy (2002) introduces the measurement aspect of social capital from an Irish perspective. Healy (2003, p.14) outlines a number of possible areas to be considered when attempting to measure social capital and uses the work of a number of international bodies as a guide. As evidenced herein, there has been a rapid development in discussion of the concept of social capital in the last twenty years. Readily available indicators have been used, frequently based on single-item measures such as questions on the extent to which people trust others, or questions on membership of associations or participation in voluntary or community activities.

Efforts to measure social capital arise from a view of, firstly, how networks and norms are located in a wider conceptual framework, and secondly what role different types of evidence play in understanding the role of networks and norms in explaining important phenomena. The respective agendas of public policy-makers and researchers seek a more explicit role for social relations and various features of civil society in explanatory models of human behaviour.

Theoretical, empirical and policy exploration in the domain of social capital is therefore timely, however, these attempts and aspirations are not without significant challenges (Healy 2005a):

Although fragmentary evidence was available on the measurement of some aspects of social capital in various surveys over recent decades, the NESF (2003) survey represented the second focussed attempt to measure social capital in Ireland. The first was the survey of social capital and health undertaken by the All-Ireland Institute of Public Health in Ireland in 2001 to test the relationship between health and social capital (Healy 2005b, p.58).

A recurring theme in Healy's works is the lack of longitudinal research on values and attitudes in Ireland. Despite the dearth of historical research, Healy (2005a) goes into some detail outlining what research has been carried out. By linking the characteristics of human and social capital he comes to some firm conclusions on certain aspects of his research namely that:

Demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status and size of location, were found to have a stronger relationship with social capital measures than socio-economic measures based on income, occupation, employment status or level of educational attainment (Healy, 2005b, p.63).

Hillard and Nic Ghiolla Phadraig (2007) analyse data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), an international co-operative project of cross-national survey research carried out on an annual basis across forty one countries. The study provides a unique source of measuring attitudes before and after the Celtic Tiger era using a variety of important themes in international comparison at a crucial time of increasing globalisation. Three main themes are covered: economic aspects of change: family and gender: and cultural change.

2.4 A summary of the literature review so far: Identification of topics/themes arising.

As the reader will now realise social capital as a topic has given rise to a very large number of publications over the last twenty years. Apart from a general recognition that trust and a spirit of reciprocity must be present for social capital to flourish almost every other aspect is subject to debate. This section takes all the main viewpoints and condenses them into a preliminary framework for testing the viewpoint of this thesis: that social capital levels have dropped in Sligo over the last twenty years.

Notwithstanding that the majority of the academic papers in the literature review so far are based on international research there are sufficient articles with an Irish dimension to identify the important themes that need to be applied in the research process.

Issues such as changes in contact levels with neighbours and friends emerge. Power and who holds in society is important to people as levels of social inclusion and exclusion hinges on how power is exercised. Trust emerged as a core concept and any decrease of trust in society needs to be exposed. The state of civil society in Sligo needs to be analysed. Is Sligo more unequal now than it was twenty years ago and is society *fairer* now than in the past? Has the quality of life improved in Sligo over the last twenty years? Is racism on the rise in Sligo? Changes in volunteering and changes in attitudes to volunteering and community participation need to be investigated. Sligo peoples relationship with their politicians needs to be examined. What do Sligo people think of the new arrivals from other parts of the world and indeed other parts of Ireland? Is community spirit alive and well in Sligo? The differences in outlook arising from the place one lives, such as Sligo town or rural Sligo needs to be acknowledged as does ones gender, age and education. Ones attitude towards religion and changing morals and ethics in society needs to be tested.

The topics identified in this section of the literature review will be incorporated into the research process as will be mapped out in chapter three.

2.4.1 Introduction to the research process: Mixed method approach

An indication that the research process to be adopted will be discussed at greater length in chapter three, the methodology chapter, is appropriate at this point. As the reader is aware much attention is given to defining the characteristics of social capital which is qualitative in its nature. The measurement aspect of social capital also gets prominence.

The measurement of social capital is overwhelmingly quantitative although qualitative research has its place also.

Therefore a mixed method research process needs to be adopted. Suffice to say at this point that the views of leading authors such as Bryman (2004) and Sarantakos (2005) will be taken on board when constructing the research process. The more technical aspect of analysing the quantitative data requires the input of (Laird Statistics (2012) and an overall common sense approach as described by Millar *et al* (2003) will be discussed.

This thesis has now mapped out the main concepts and themes and will now move on to look at how these themes and concepts relate to social capital formation in County Sligo using the first place, the second place and the third place as a benchmark.

2.5 Where do people meet?

2.5.1 The First Place: The Family

As with almost every aspect of social capital, the importance of the family in society and its role in social capital formation is the subject of debate. Edwards *et al* 2003, p.7) note that the three main theorists on social capital all take different views on the importance and role of families in the creation of social capital. Bourdieu and Coleman locate families at the centre of their conceptualisation, whereas Putnam decentres families. (Edwards *et al* 2003, p.7) believe that “Social capital is a feature of large communities, regions or nations rather than individuals or families”. Bourdieu, in particular, sees the family as a place in which capital assets are transmitted over time from one generation to the next: “When people are born they have access to differing types of capital, which can explain how privilege or disadvantage is transmitted”, Edwards *et al* 2003, p.9 (citing Bourdieu 1986).

Hofferth *et al* (1999) points out that there are two distinct views on the family and its position in society and its association with the concept of social capital. One view (citing Parcel and Menaghan 1993, p.121) concentrates on the internal characteristics of the family taking into account factors such as family size, employment, and level of income, parenting behaviour, and length of time that the family has lived in the community. The other view sees the family as networking with the wider community (Coleman 1998).

Hofferth *et al* (1999) dwell on levels of assistance given to families in the United States in terms of time and money and also between blacks and whites. Family ties are strong for both classes but black people rely on friends to a greater extent for help. Affluent whites are more self sufficient and have weaker ties amongst the wider community.

Hourigan (2011, p.185-210) commenting on Limerick concludes that family characteristics are *the* most important influence on a person's life. Commenting on neighbourhood and community characteristics Hourigan links mobility and trust: the more mobility the more trust. Interestingly Hourigan believes that knowing your neighbours and trusting them is not the same thing.

Leonard (2005) echoes the conclusions of other authors noting that children are often seen as a by-product of their parents. Children display an awareness of belonging to the wider community by engaging in actions such as befriending and doing paid errands for older people and belonging to church groups.

Putnam (2000, p.276-295) reminds us that family structure has changed a lot in the last twenty years: divorce, single parent households, white flight to the suburbs and the influx of people from poorer parts of the world into cities and even small communities have changed the traditional family unit.

While statistics on Irish birth rates are high compared with other European countries it should not be assumed that we especially cherish children, indeed judging by our high youth suicide rates we seem to take children for granted (Ó Caollaí 2014). It is apparent that parents are increasingly aware of the positive effects of participation in sports and pastimes. The cultural value of children and the cost of raising children all contribute to fertility rates. Fahey (2001), like the ERSI (2007), does not give any definitive answer to why the Irish have a high birth rate other than to give international examples of the effect of religious background on birth rates. The situation by 2012 is summed up as follows:

The number of babies born in Ireland in 2012 was down 3.2 per cent on the year before. However the country still boasts the highest birth rate across the 27 European Union states with 15.6 births per 1000 people. The average birth rate for the 27 EU countries is 10.4 per 1,000 population (Irish Times 2013).

Intertwined with our high birth rate are our unusually close family ties and the following observation sums up the importance of the family in Ireland:

The 'Economist' [Magazine] concluded a few years ago that Ireland had the best quality of life in the world for two main reasons: our wealth and the network of friends and family that sustain most people living here. More recently Trinity College's Social Policy and the Ageing Research Centre and the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUIG, came to the same conclusion (Molloy 2013, p.13).

All of the above comments deal with well documented aspects of family life but as with all aspects of 21st century life, technology and the ongoing international economic crises has brought a new dimension.

Stoud (2013) drawing on American and European research notes the growing trend of *fledglings*, many in their late twenties and thirties returning home to live with their parents due to high house prices, less job security and lack of finance.

It's not all bad news notes Stroud as many parents enjoy the live dynamic that the returning *fledgling* brings. "They are also the generation that has remained the most tightly tethered to their parents, thanks to the mobile phone" (Stroud 2013, p.6). These are phenomena familiar to many post Celtic Tiger Irish families.

It is also worth reminding ourselves that Irish people are citizens of the Republic of Ireland the moment they are born and with that comes both rights and responsibilities.

In summary, while theorists will debate as to how important the family is at international level in Ireland, the family is still a very important factor when it comes to debating community life. The next three sections look at other influences which come into play very early in a person's life and thereby play a role in social capital formation.

2.5.2 Sport and families

Burnett (2006) investigates the effect that sport has on a community and highlights the bonding and bridging benefits that sport brings to individuals and families participating whether through playing or administrating the activity.

Jarvie (2002) uses Scottish society and its obsession with sport, to link communitarianism, sport, and social capital together. He examines its effect on Scottish communities, noting that football clubs have now turned themselves into public limited companies, losing their community identity and shared ownership in the process. Sport is an aid to fostering social capital but it is not completely straightforward, notes Jarvie (2002).

In an Irish context, the decision by the GAA to bring in pay-per-view games has stirred up much debate about the role of sport in community life according to Sullivan and Murphy (2013). Siggins (2015), commenting on a study which Dr Orla McGarry undertook with teenage members of an Irish-based Muslim population, discovered they found it “very difficult” to fit into Irish society unless they were very involved in sport. While this is an observation of teenagers, a group outside the scope of this study, the implications for family life and the wider members of the Muslim community in the context of promoting social capital are obvious.

Life in Ireland for Muslim teenagers can be “isolating, lonely and frequently dampened by incidents of racism” (Siggins 2014, p.1 citing McGarry).

At local level the importance of Sligo rovers as a unifying force in Sligo society is evident;

When the Sligo Agricultural Society first opened the gates of the ‘Show Grounds’ in 1908, they immediately made it clear that the grounds would be available for soccer, gaelic and other sports, a tradition that was adhered to with great generosity over the course of the next century, confirming the Showgrounds importance as a major social, sporting and community amenity for the people of Sligo (Colreavy 2015).

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (2014) promote involvement in sport across all sectors of the community and recognise the benefits that participation in sport brings.

The role of sport in social capital formation is undoubted but the not everybody identifies with sport. For many, the local school has a huge influence on their adult lives.

2.5.3 The role of the local school

McNamara *et al* (2009) study class differences in the context of parents interacting with teachers. The middle-class parents in the study tended to react collectively, in contrast to working-class and poor parents who had no such collective backup. The middle-class parents were also able to draw on contacts with professionals (including other teachers) to mobilise the information, expertise, or authority needed to contest the judgments of school officials. Race *is not* a significant issue according to McNamara *et al* (2009): it *is* a significant issue believes White and Gager (2007).The role of the local school in instilling a sense of citizenship in young people is discussed in section 2.5.9.

The local school has a role in the formation in social capital in teenagers but how do younger people in the eighteen to mid thirties age bracket perform? Young people and social capital will be looked at next.

2.5.4 Young people and social capital

Whiting and Harper (2003) explore the issues concerning young people's supposedly lower awareness of social capital and raise the following issues which point to the need for more detailed research. Firstly, standard quantitative measures of social capital indicate that young people are less likely to participate in social and civic activities. They are less likely to vote, less likely to be involved in their local community and less likely to undertake formal voluntary work. However, qualitative research indicates that young people have higher levels of social capital compared to the standard quantitative indicators.

This may be because the social capital indicators used on surveys are not relevant to young people believe Whiting and Harper 2003(citing UK, Home Office Citizenship Survey 2001: UK, Department for Work and Pensions, Families and Children Study 2003).The gap in the measurement of social capital among young people aged sixteen to twenty four years still exists, they point out. Deviren and Babb (2005) produced a very detailed questionnaire designed to contrast the attitudes and activities of people under twenty five and those over that age.

Existing studies of young people portray them solely as consumers of social capital rather than producers (Morrow, 2002). It does not account for the ways that young people "socialise in friendship networks, participate in local activities, generate their own connections and make links for their parents" (Morrow in Edwards *et al*, 2003, p.12). Many of the social capital indicators hinge on viewing *community* as a geographically bounded area.

However, this is problematic for young people because they define community as more of a *community of interest* based around school, town centre and street, friends and relatives' houses, concludes Morrow (2002). Whiting and Harper (2003) concur that because of these narrow approaches to the measurement and conceptualisation of social capital mean that young people's civic and social participation is underestimated, and that young people are perceived only as consumers and not producers of social capital.

The writers point out that the quantitative evidence base is improving however, resulting in a better understanding of social capital levels among the young.

White and Gager (2007) find that participation in extracurricular activities varies by age, sex, race, residence, and family structure. They also found that race and sex interactions significantly affect levels of school-related activities.

Asian girls have higher participation rates than white girls and Asian boys. In addition, economic status appears to have a big effect on extracurricular activities in school and therefore social capital levels will be similarly affected.

Ravanera *et al* (2003) makes the link between youth, education, and integration into society. They specifically looked at data covering 1986, 1992 and 1998 and analysed time use between work and education for men and took into account the time taken with child rearing and domestic work in the case of women. They generally conclude that the greater the individual's education, the greater the usefulness of that person and the more integrated into society that person will be. Levels of volunteerism will also increase among the more educated.

They recognise that the general economic conditions will have a bearing on youth participation as youth unemployment is always greater in recessionary times than for the older age groups.

Weller (2008) makes an important contribution to our knowledge of youth participation in Irish civil society, concurring with the general view that younger people network differently and have their own perspective on society and want to participate.

Older students will often talk about the level of engagement of third level students in the 1970s and 1980s. Twenty years ago students began to develop a more conservative outlook and withdrew from the wider political and social world. This reinforced the general view that students were only interested in socialising and passing exams. An initiative, COLLEGEFOOTPRINT aimed to highlight the social involvement of students in third level institutions in Ireland;-

COLLEGEFOOTPRINT challenges students to do at least one positive deed every day for a month, capture the deed on their phone and share via the Twitter machine or Facebook with the hashtag #COLLEGEFOOTPRINT- changing the way the world looks at students but also earning a bit of life affirming, "ah sure look, aren't they an awful sound young thing altogether", positivity filled karma (Ragireland 2014, p.1).

From comments above it is obvious that younger people network differently and have different priorities than the over twenty five age group, but this does not mean that they do not have a social consciousness.

Youth and younger people have their own perspective on life and therefore display characteristics of social capital in their own style. People change as they go through life and it's natural that older people will also display aspects of social capital in their own way. Ageism and social capital is looked at next.

2.5.5 Ageism and social capital

In commenting on positive ageing, meaning healthy, successful and productive ageing, Asquith (2009, p.267), highlights the need for critical research that begins from the perspective of older people and how they construct the meaning of ageing well, rather than the discourses generated by government agencies concerned with public spending. Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra 2006 (cited in Asquith 2009, p.265) argue that there is a strong correlation between activity and wellbeing.

They posit: "however wellbeing in later life is less a result of what older people do, but rather of who with and how they feel about them".

Asquith (2009,p.267), commenting on positive ageing, meaning healthy, successful and productive ageing, highlights the need for critical research that begins from the perspective of older people and how they construct the meaning of ageing well, rather than the discourses generated by government agencies concerned with public spending. Commenting on the links between social capital and ageing from an Australian point of view, they highlight the need for critical research that begins from the perspective of older people.

Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra 2006 (cited in Asquith 2009,p.265) argue that there is a strong correlation between activity and wellbeing, however wellbeing in later life is less a result of what older people do, but rather of who with and how they feel about them.

The preceding sections deal with aspects of social capital but what of community itself? The characteristics' of community are looked at next.

2.5.6 Community

The characteristics of communities in the context of today's increasingly urbanised and more detached society were already outlined in section 2.2. The place and importance of community in the context of the first place is highlighted here. As noted already the relative importance of family in the generation of social capital is debated. The analysis of the importance of the family in section 2.5.1 has the word 'community' in almost sentence. Family and community are intertwined. Community is part of an individual's extended family. Throughout this thesis so far much reference has been made to community but what do we mean by *Community*? Anderson's (1991) concept of *imagined communities* where, except for small groups, all the members never meet and therefore nobody knows exactly what the rest of the community thinks about issues. Land or sea boundaries, the level of comradeship between all the members, the presence (or absence) of racial and ethnic groups, perceived common ancestry and blood ties are all influences on society according to Anderson (1991) who believes that xenophobia is the *new racism*. He also dwells on how decisions are actually made in a community and the role of civil society.

Putnam (2000) explores today's society through American eyes and concludes that social capital is strongest in the more prosperous northern states and least evident in the poorer southern states. He highlights the need for effective community groups and the link between poverty, education levels and getting things done.

Field *et al* (2000) explore the link between social capital, the economy and education and identifies trust and networking as being the key components of social capital. Fukuyama (1992) in his examination of the fall of Communism and the effect of Reaganism and Thatcherism on this collapse, surmises that trust might be the only characteristic left when all else is in a state of change in society. Fukuyama (1992) cites Japan as a nation which operates on trust even in places like car assembly plants. As regards networking, authors generally take Cassells (1999) view that everything from European Councils of Ministers meetings to drug trafficking gangs is operated on networks.

Florida (2002) coined the concept *creative class* and how it is transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life is another unique and contested look at *new communities*. "The creative class are a class of workers whose job it is to create meaningful new forms" Florida (2002, p.8).

The creative class is composed of scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and architects and also includes people in design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content. Individuality and independence are the hallmarks of this demographic group.

Florida (2002, p.244-5) developed the *Creativity Index* which looks at four elements:

the creative class's share of the workforce: innovation, measured as patents per capita: high tech industry, using the Milken Institutes widely accepted Tech Pole Index and diversity, measured by the Gay Index, a reasonable proxy for an area's openness.

Using this index, the cities listed can be rated and ranked in terms of innovative high tech centres, with San Francisco the highest ranked. Just as with Putnam's state rankings Florida's city rankings have come under scrutiny. Montgomery (2005) is very sceptical of Florida's theories.

Community can be understood as a body of people with an ongoing relationship stemming from shared interests or something in common. The relationship may be based around a locality, a shared identity or experience of discrimination involving self determination, collaborative action and moral and political principles (Jackson and O'Doherty 2014, p.10).

The advent of the internet has changed the way we all interact with each other. Rheingold's (2001) portrayal of so called *virtual communities* and how people that never actually meet can form close bonds. The *internet age* is dealt with in more detail later.

The traditional notion of community is certainly changing especially for places like Ireland where society never had to accommodate people from other cultures. Social capital and multicultural Ireland will be discussed next.

2.5.7 Social capital and multicultural Ireland

If the drop in numbers involved in farming is one of the indicators of a major change in Irish society then the rise in the number of people from other parts of the world living in Ireland must be one of the other great indicators of change over the last twenty years.

Ireland over the centuries had an influx of peoples mainly from other parts of Europe. Jews, Quakers, Huguenots as well as people from the neighbouring regions of the UK all made their homes here.

No group, in the Republic of Ireland, were ever numerous enough to make a lasting impact on Irish society. It must be acknowledged that many groups left a legacy in the form of major industries and unique village settlements all over Ireland. Even in Sligo, the traditionally strong Protestant business class, eventually made way for the rising Catholic population. As the census (2011) figures portray, monocultural Ireland is vanishing and we *natives* will have to accommodate the new arrivals. A glance at the census figures for Ireland from 1991 to 2011 portrays a country of increasing diversity. The numbers of applications seeking asylum status from January 1991 to December 2011 (Reception and Integration Agency 2011) show that nine people applied in 1991, that figure stood at almost twelve hundred by 1996 before climbing to almost twelve thousand by 2002.

In 2011 a steady drop back to just under thirteen hundred applications should be viewed as an indication of more stringent conditions on the part of the authorities. People from all over the world see Ireland as a desirable place to live and this represents a huge change from 1991. The Reception and Integration Agency report (2011) breaks down the origins of the applications for refugee status and it reveals that Nigerians are the biggest group followed by other African countries and some Asian countries. People applying for refugee status is only one aspect of Ireland's new found position as a multicultural society.

A number of agencies have looked at how the new arrivals are settling in and more importantly how the *native Irish* are adjusting to *them*. For instance, a report from the Migrant Rights Centre in Ireland concluded that "Growing hostility towards migrants is a worrying development in the current recession" (MRCI 2010, p.4). The report goes on to cite leading politicians who have expressed anti-migrant sentiments. For instance, the report quotes Noel O'Flynn, a Fianna Fail TD, as having suggested that the state ought to 'Pay foreigners to leave'. This view was apparently expressed to back a proposal ventured by Fine Gael's Leo Varadkar who supported a policy to 'bribe' unemployed immigrants to leave Ireland according to MRCI (2010).

McGrath (2010) looks at social capital in Ireland from a migrant's perspective, focusing on the family and work lives of Brazilian migrant parents in Ireland who for at time settled in Gort, County Galway in large numbers and describes their influence on south Galway society.

Fanning (2002) addresses the issue of racism in Ireland and notes that Irish society is not without blemish when it comes to treating minorities with respect and looking at them as equals. On the world stage the Irish played a big part in the British colonial system, a brutal system at times. Notwithstanding the writings of internationally acclaimed writers on how societies function in general, communities imagined or otherwise, are shaped by shared experiences:

The Irish mind has been fashioned by church, climate, colonialism and geography: this combined with an incredible variation in scenery is matched by an almost equivalent in character
(McDonagh 2001, p.7).

Ireland, even since McDonagh (2001) made his observations, has changed considerably in the makeup of its population. Census 2006 when compared to Census 1991, for example, highlights the rapid increase of nationalities in the Irish population. The 1971 Census(Appendix A), the eve of Ireland's joining the EEC, is almost unrecognisable when the numbers involved in farming are analysed over following forty years

Donoghue *et al* (2005) agree with McDonagh (2001) on the unique influence that the county system has on the Irish psyche. They pick six organisations in County Cavan and analyse their work and how county identity works for (or against) them. This study is outlined in more detail in Appendix C, Case Study 2. They make a number of points about social capital and its link to the Irish county identity which includes a sense of belonging to an *imagined community*, as Anderson (1991) described nationalism.

They explore the concept of county identity as one route to belonging to an imagined community focusing on trust and networking. Secondly, voluntary organisations have facilitated the organisation of voluntary participation on the basis of an over-arching sense of *sameness*. County identity is the common link to solving some of the challenges faced by voluntary organisations in the context of enormous changes to the social fabric of Irish society.

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI 2013) notes that attitudes are hardening towards migrants. Ireland appears to be going from one of the most liberal countries in 2006 to a situation where attitudes towards migrants have hardened considerably in 2013. We are now one of the most intolerant countries in Europe concludes the ERSI report.

In an Irish context, our attitude towards Irish Travellers illustrates a lot, the discrimination may have become more subtle, but it hasn't gone away (O'Connell 2013). The non-Irish national population now stands at almost twelve per cent of the population, a rise of almost thirty percent since 2006 (CSO 2012,p.1). Contrast this with the 1996 Census which points out that ninety three percent of the persons usually resident in the state were born here: of these nearly four out of five live in the county where they were born (CSO 2002, p.5).

It is obvious that, economic crises notwithstanding, Ireland is seen as a hugely attractive place to live and work. As is to be expected the relatively sudden arrival of peoples from other, unfamiliar, cultures has proved challenging for the authorities.

Gardaí admit that this new phenomenon of multiculturalism is one that is causing serious headaches for detectives due to lack of knowledge about the background of these people according to Cusack (2002). While one cannot say that increased crime rates and multiculturalism are linked, murder is the most serious manifestation of crime and while Ireland, traditionally, had low crime rates twenty three murders were committed in 1991 rising to fifty two in 2001 and seventy eight in 2007 (National Crime Council 2007) with no sign of any reduction.

Keenan (2014) makes the observation that we are at least making the effort to integrate the new arrivals, although how successful we are remains to be assessed. At local level Sligo County Council has a program in place to foster integration (Galligan 2012).

Hourigan (2011, p.190) notes that "intuition says that social diversity is good but this is barely tested in academic research and what research was done does not support this view".

At international level Tungohan (2009) looks at the issue of temporary migrant workers and highlights the legacy of the colonies and other past policies. She wonders how exactly this group fits into society in the host country and whether the *bottom up approach* with its supposedly egalitarian connotations has any meaning for them.

In multicultural Ireland the native Irish come into contact with people from other cultures in their everyday community life. Schools and clubs cater for people of all backgrounds and in the case of rural communities where numbers are always needed to make an activity viable they are a welcome addition. Nevertheless racism is a fact of life in Ireland as it is in every other country and this will be dealt with later in the section on *the third place* (2.7).

2.5.8 Population and birth rate

An area equivalent to the present day Republic of Ireland registered a decline in population from just over 6.5 million in 1841 to 3.1 million in 1911(Central Statistics Office 2004, p.7). The effects of the Great Famine and the subsequent dramatic loss of population due to emigration in the latter half of the nineteenth century were the main contributing factors to this decline.

The subsequent high level of emigration was often a solution to the splitting of small farms amongst large family units with the associated risk of economic ruin for all - a lesson learnt from the famine years.

The ERSI (2007) also notes this trend and highlights that almost seventy two thousand births were notified to the National Perinatal Reporting System in 2007. This represents a significant increase of over nine percent in births for 2007 compared with 2006. The estimated birth rate of over sixteen births per thousand people represents the highest birth rate of any of the twenty seven EU countries in 2007.The report does not give any specific reason why births rise and fall other than that women are delaying child birth and having more children in their thirties than their mothers. The recession has done nothing to dent trends. This report, while recognising the difficulties of explaining family size, neatly sum up components of Irish fertility rates citing supply side factors such as levels of sexual activity, availability of contraception and abortion and couple formation. On the demand side the cultural value of children and the cost of raising children all contribute to fertility rates. The Perinatal Reporting System (ESRI 2013) confirms the importance of family in Irish society although the reports points out the growing proportion of non Irish nationals who make up the total births.

Fahey (2001), like the ERSI (2007), does not give any definitive answer to why the Irish have a high birth rate other than to give international examples of the effect of religious background on birth rates. The situation by 2012 is summed up as:

The number of babies born in Ireland in 2012 was down 3.2 per cent on the year before. However the country still boasts the highest birth rate across the 27 European Union states with 15.6 births per 1000 people. The average birth rate for the 27 EU countries is 10.4 per 1,000 population
(as cited in *The Irish Times*, Tuesday November 19, 2013).

Intertwined with our high birth rate are our unusually close family ties:

The *'Economist'* [Magazine] concluded a few years ago that Ireland had the best quality of life in the world for two main reasons; our wealth and the network of friends and family that sustain most people living here. More recently Trinity College's Social Policy and the Ageing Research Centre and the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUIG, came to the same conclusion (Molloy 2013, p.13).

From the moment a person is born they acquire rights. Even the most dysfunctional society recognises the right of the newborn baby to be classed as a citizen. Social capital and citizenship is looked at next.

2.5.9 Social capital and citizenship

Zmerli (2010) investigates the relationship between the citizen and the state and concludes that it is an ambiguous one, citing Esser (2008) who notes that social capital acts on norms associated with citizenship in two different ways. Firstly, it varies with the specific norms of citizenship. Secondly, the different components of social capital do not necessarily exert similar effects. The specific nature of the relationship between social involvement in voluntary associations and social trust, on one hand, and norms of social citizenship (economic, political and social rights), social order (abide by the laws), autonomy (to be able to think for one's self), and participation (voting in elections), on the other hand, needs further scrutiny. Zmerli (2010) citing, Denters *et al* 2007, pp. 99-102 concludes that among the social capital indicators, social trust turns out to be the strongest and most consistent antecedent of norms of citizenship.

Kisby (2009) (citing Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998) focuses on civics and its connections to the educational system in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Kisby (2009) recognises the *communitarian* outlook of the AGC report which is at odds with the neoliberal /republican outlook on society. The AGC Report is clear that its goal is to facilitate *active citizenship* (UK, DFEE/QCA, 1998, p.25), defined in terms of citizens being: "willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life" (UK, DFEE/QCA, 1998, p.7). It defines citizenship education in terms of three strands; "social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy" (UK, DFEE/QCA, 1998, p.11).

The impact of the concept of social capital on the citizenship education initiative in England through its influence on the normative content of the policy, as embodied in the report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (AGC 1998) led to the inclusion of citizenship in the National Curriculum in England, but not Wales and Scotland.

In Northern Ireland lessons in citizenship have previously been provided by schools through education for mutual understanding and cultural heritage, two compulsory cross-curricular themes underpinning the Curriculum for Northern Ireland.

However, since September 2007 local and global citizenship has become a statutory component of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum, meaning in effect that citizenship education is now “a statutory entitlement for all young people from the ages of eleven to sixteen” (McEvoy 2007, p.140).

Dika and Singh (2002) chart the rise of social capital as a concept and while pointing out that it could be a passing fad, the authors concede that the concept has caught the attention of America’s educators and policy makers seeking to improve America’s schools.

While acknowledging the work of Coleman, with his emphasis on parent-child relationships, and Bourdieu, who places great emphasis on cultural background, as forming the foundation of the link between social capital and educational attainment, the authors highlight the gaps in methodology from a measurement point of view. They chart the changing trends in research by focusing on minority groups in the early 1990s, reflecting Bourdieu’s interpretation of social capital. Research later in the decade focused on relationships within and between families reflecting Coleman’s outlook on social capital and how grade points, dropout rates, and other key indicators reflected family circumstances. In the early years of the new millennium the visibility of social capital in educational research literature sharply increased.

Coleman’s theoretical framework continued to guide most of this work, although a few of the studies used Bourdieu’s framework of social and cultural capital as basis for drawing conclusions.

Kisby (2009) concurs with Benton *et al* (2008) concluding that while the schools initiative did not appear to have any short term effects the prospects for the longer term appeared more positive.

Voting patterns are commonly used as an indicator of an individual's level of interaction with society. In an Irish context Lyons and Sinnott (2003) analysed General Election, Local Election referendums and European Election patterns over the previous thirty years.

Whereas factors such as the type of election (General or European) are significant, the authors can only point to age (greater participation) and people from farming/rural communities (less numerous) as definite factors in establishing why Ireland is at, or near the bottom of, voting turnout in general elections in European Union.

Why the decline is the most dramatic in Europe over the period is not answered in this study, which the authors point out, is a work in progress.

Ireland fares better in European rankings with higher turnout in urban areas for these elections. The authors note that Tonnies (1887) view of society (urban versus rural) is appropriate in the Irish context.

Lyons and Sinnott (2003) express puzzlement at the seemingly low turnout at elections in Ireland. The problem of estimating the *true* voting turnout in Ireland lies with the electoral register (O'Leary 2007), Ireland's electoral register has exceeded the adult population for decades. The electoral register could be over stated by as much as half a million for such diverse factors as dead people not being struck off and people emigrating or even moving to another part of the country. Inadequate record keeping is the problem it seems.

The right to vote is the way citizens express that right. The next section deals with the citizen and the political world. The cornerstone of democracy is the right to have a say in how one's country is run.

2.5.10 Social capital and politics

Tavits (2006) explores the link between social capital and government performance, dividing the latter into two areas - policy activism and administrative efficiency. Social capital may be related to government performance either because it increases the level of political sophistication and facilitates cooperation within society, helping people to voice their policy demands better, or because social capital, being shared also by the bureaucratic elites in the political arena, facilitates cooperation and helps to overcome the agency problem within the bureaucratic organisation. The former argument links social capital to policy activism while the latter links it to administrative efficiency.

Studies involving German and American federal governments provide support for the former but not for the latter argument.

Claibourn and Martin (2007) conclude that high social capital levels seem to enhance the ability of some citizens to hold the executive accountable for policy outputs. They acknowledge that the complexity of policy formation has always confused the voter and cite Campbell *et al* 1960 who noted that policy accountability on the part of citizens is nearly impossible due to lack of knowledge of particular policies and what has led to them: the mass electorate is not able to appraise either its goals or the appropriateness.

Tavits (2006) by way of summation (citing Rothstien 2001) notes that social capital appears to be the highest in countries where government is actively involved in service provision: Scandinavian welfare states are a good example.

The use of different policy tools reflects and affects the exercise of power notes Tavits 2006 (citing Hood 1986: Peters and van Nispen 1998: Putnam 1993). In civic communities' government is a partner not an outside actor interfering in the life of the community notes Tavits 2006 (citing Berman 1997b) who warns of the danger that government activity may kill private initiative and as a result may lower the level of social capital.

Albano and Barbera (2010) explore the link between social capital, the welfare state, and political legitimacy. Using four political models: Liberal (United Kingdom), Mediterranean (Italy), Conservative (Germany) and Social-democratic (Sweden) they conclude that people who spend their time helping others, in the context of a weak welfare state, also have a critical attitude toward the political system.

By contrast, in cases of stronger welfare states, people who spend time helping others do not express this critical attitude as much. Germany and Sweden therefore score higher than Italy and the United Kingdom.

Albacete (2010), using Spain as an example, notes that social capital is expected to increase democratic health because it develops links of cooperation and trust that cross-cut social cleavages. However, if the structure of social capital is just a reflection of its context, in the existence of a political cleavage, social capital will reproduce the societal fragmentation, or line of division, instead of healing it. In other words, bonding rather than bridging is the dominant force which can produce the *dark side* of social capital.

Krishna (2002) notes that different types of agents help establish connections between citizens and the state in different cultural and institutional contexts.

Krishna (2002) points out that political parties' are weakly organised in India and in other developing and transitional countries.

Constructed mainly from the top down, and without many grassroots-level offices and associations, parties have only weakly enabled upward representation by ordinary Indians and independent agents have arisen to fill this institutional vacuum in rural north India.

In interwar Germany, the Nazi Party in the absence of a functioning political system, made the critical linkages and democracy was destroyed as a result (Berman 1997a).

Casey (2009) looks at the connection between social capital and government policy and how the *linking* aspect of social capital is affected. An initiative in Texas, USA which encourages investment in low income and minority communities is used as a model. Structural social capital is an important consideration according to Casey (2009) because when collective action does occur in conjunction with linking social capital the results can be a win-win for all concerned. Structural social capital is defined by Casey (2009) as the networks, linkages, and practices within and between communities.

Social capital, in the structural sense, moves beyond an understanding of social capital as evidenced through individual associational life toward an understanding of the pattern of linkages between different segments of society, including top-down forms, private and public sector ties, and bottom-up forms, ties that transcend narrow neighbourhood and community boundaries concludes Casey (2009).

Community groups can often find themselves feeling powerless when confronted with decisions made on their behalf, but without their input. Andersen (2008) puts the emphasis on *bricolage* or the art of finding solutions to problems using resources available locally, for instance combining existing knowledge, know-how, and social capital in innovations.

The concept of bricolage captures the flexibility and capacity for problem solving prevailing at the grass roots, and creating solutions which only a locally based bottom up approach can conceive as against a top down centralized politically based approach.

Kalu and Remkus (2009, p.7) using the social constructivist approach focus on how differences in the construction of ideas, identities, historical experiences, and world views, with all the inbuilt biases, form the foundation through which people see, understand, and frame important public and national issues.

The need to measure changes in social capital over time is noted and their approach is outlined in the section dealing with the measurement of social capital below.

Kalu and Remkus (2009), using the US state of Alabama as an example, and using a twenty year time frame starting from the early 1990s, chart the relationship between public representatives and the not-for-profit sector from a social capital point of view and taking into account the evolution of information technology. Although the findings suggest that both county commissioners and not-for-profit leaders have similar preferences regarding key indicators of social capital, the mechanisms by which it evolves is different in both institutional frameworks.

Results drawn from a series of analyses indicate that county commissioners are more likely to rely on interpersonal networking for getting things done, as opposed to relying on ICT-induced networking, which is more characteristic of leaders of not-for-profits. The effectiveness of synergy in achieving community goals involving public bodies and community organisations is emphasised. Newton (2001), commenting on the links between trust, social capital, civil society, and democracy, concludes that social capital and political capital, while linked in theory, are in fact driven by very different factors and can change rapidly as events dictate. According to Newton, trust levels in particular can be very volatile and he has reservations about simply asking '*Do you trust people?*' For Newton it's much more complicated.

Finally from an Irish perspective Mair (2010, p.4) sums up four paradoxes of Irish politics. "We have a passive citizenry, a passive political class, a moribund party system, and yet seemingly effective political leadership". We inherited our civil service model from our colonial past and this has stood us in good stead as against a political class which shirks responsibility, notes Mair (2010). Sheridan (2014), citing Mair (2010, p.4) "We have never respected the State. We see it as something to be dodged, ripped off, and milked for personal, local, constituency benefit". Mair (2011) called it amoral localism; we lost sight of the broader collective interest a long time ago.

Murphy (2011) points out that only two percent of the adult population in Ireland are members of a political party and this is one of the lowest in Europe. Our colonial past still haunts us it appears.

2.5.11 Overview of the first place

As already stated this literature review, having first highlighted aspects and weakness of social capital, introduced the concept of ‘places’; *the first place, the second place and the third place*. So far the general characteristics of social capital have been looked at and in this section aspects and characteristics the first place was examined. Society by its nature cannot be precisely broken down into sections. Boundaries cannot be fixed in a democratic society, therefore, where one section or sphere ends and the next begins are not easily pinpointed. The next section- *the second place* focuses on the work place both paid and unpaid and the power structures that exist alongside and within the workplace.

2.6 The second place: work place

The first place is generally associated with growing up and with familiarity. It’s a feature of modern life that people move from where they grew up to another region to find work but nevertheless the first place is often a ‘fall back’ in the event of a setback. It’s associated with safety (or should be). The first place is generally associated with Tonnies (1887) *Gemeinschaft* which conveys notions of community, co-operation and common purpose. The second place is a much colder place where self interest dominates. *Gesellschaft* with its connotations of individualism best describe this arena. Commercial, spatial and formal laws dominate and it’s a place more associated with urban society and often shaped by economic forces. Harris (2001, p.22) re-examines Tonnies original theories on *Gemeinschaft* and expressed them as being based on the idea that “in the original or natural state there is a complete unity of human wills”. Harris (2001, p.52) contrasts this with *Gesellschaft* where: “a group of people also live together peacefully but without being essentially united, indeed on the contrary they are essentially detached”.

Work and the *market place* take many forms in today’s society and each of these will be explored in this section, but first a return to that notion of belonging is necessary and the inclusion/exclusion that can occur when one leaves the first place and enters the second.

2.6.1 Social capital, social exclusion and social inclusion

“Social exclusion means being unable to access the things in life that most of society takes for granted” (Age Concern UK 2010, p.1).

Cassidy (2003) defines the main social terms as follows:

- Social capital: Networks, understanding and values that shape the way we relate to each other and participate in social activities.
- Social cohesion: Bringing together, in an integrated way, economic, social, health and educational policies to facilitate the participation of citizens in societal life.
- Social exclusion: The process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate life skills. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies or of generally improving their lives.
- Social inclusion: Ensuring the marginalised and those living in poverty have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives, allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.

Irish social policy claims to be very committed to promoting social inclusion as described below:

A core overall aim of Government is to systematically reduce poverty, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016. Related aims are to reduce social exclusion and promote greater social inclusion and social cohesion
(Ireland, Department of Social and Family Affairs Strategic Plan 2009, p.6).

The report goes on:

All departments have committed to a range of social inclusion objectives to implement the Government’s key objective of building an inclusive society
(Ireland, Department of Social and Family Affairs Strategic Plan 2009, p.10).

A similar view prevails at local level:

The term “Social Inclusion” is a relatively new one: however the process of social inclusion is not new to local authorities. In fact, in its broadest definition, social inclusion is a central part of what local authorities are all about
(Galway County Council 2004, p.1).

As can be seen from the above comments, the promotion of social inclusion is a key component of social policy among all the main political parties in Ireland. Similarly a key value of the European Union is solidarity combined with the core concept of subsidiarity³. Key actions include the development of Social Inclusion Units: Structures developed or being developed to extend key elements of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) to local level and to promote social inclusion as a key priority within local government.

In addition measures to encourage civic involvement and political commitment, designed to inspire people, give voice, and engage with civil society should be promoted.

Greene and Bourke (2013) point out that given that few of the social surveys in Ireland gather data on ethnic identity, much of the discussion around discrimination is based on nationality. As more migrants become Irish citizens, it becomes increasingly important to measure the experiences of naturalised or second-generation migrants. Greene and Bourke (2013) are more specific on discrimination among the workforce commenting that the gap in unemployment rates between Irish and non-Irish nationals widened in times of recession, standing at over eighteen per cent for non-Irish nationals in 2012, compared to over fourteen per cent for Irish nationals for the same period, a difference of four percentage points, as against a two percent points difference in 2008.

Welshman (2006,p.2) remarks that since the early 1990s academics are beginning to analyse the concept of social exclusion, and notes that in the past fifteen years or so it has tended to supplant *poverty* as a key indicator of the individual's standing in society.

Lewis 1966 (cited in Welshman 2006) compared one hundred low-income Puerto Rican families from four slums in greater San Juan with their relatives in New York. The two groups from the same background living in different environments evolved differently. Lewis highlighted the inherited nature of poverty, the children had 'learnt' how to survive in an impoverished society and they in turn will pass on this 'knowledge' to their children.

³ The word subsidiarity is derived from the Latin word subsidiarius and was first described formally in Catholic social teaching . The concept or principle is found in several constitutions around the world (for example, the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which asserts States rights and further, the rights of the people). Subsidiarity is perhaps presently best known as a general principle of European Union law. According to this principle, the EU may only act (i.e. make laws) where action of individual countries is insufficient. The principle was established in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht.

The New York group, comparatively speaking, prospered. Burke *et al* (2009) also uses two comparable groups, Latino and Filipino women, and observed their attitude to health care. The first group were immigrants to America: the second group were born in America. The women's attitudes were compared by levels of perceived self-efficacy, measured by confidence in one's ability to complete a task such as getting a mammogram. This test has long been used as a predictor of an explanation for health behaviour and as the target of health behaviour interventions. Burke *et al* (2009) note that intervention studies have shown that changing a person's confidence in her or his ability to perform a particular behaviour, changes her or his perceived self-efficacy, will likely change behaviour itself. Lewis (1966) points out that the environment one lives in and the effects that it has on social capital formation are very important.

Hampton (2010) uses volunteerism as a basis for studying groups, emphasising that social capital is different from cultural capital in that it relates to the opportunity structures that tie people to resources through a network of embedded social relationships.

Such social relationships are shaped by power, social inequality, and the informal dynamics of trust. In contrast, cultural capital includes those internalised attributes related to a person's education and experiences, for example, knowledge, language, demeanour, attitudes, desires and aspirations. The acquisition of cultural capital is primarily supported through economic resources or social class privilege. Hampton (2010) illustrates how issues of power and inequality, or what may be termed as *covert racism*, can impact access to social networks and to resources and opportunities even within an organisation that explicitly seeks to promote equal opportunities. Chaney (2002) using the newly formed Welsh Assembly as a case study, acknowledges the challenges of building a truly inclusive society as outlined above. He concludes that it takes a lot of skill and effort to build trust between all the stakeholders in society but acknowledges that since Welsh people now have a greater say how they govern themselves and social inclusion has improved as a result.

2.6.2 What is the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and how does it link with civil society and the political framework?

Government should recognise the legitimacy of the Voluntary and Community Sectors' diverse roles and its own responsibility to promote a healthy sector, a *concordat* or *compact* should be drawn up between representatives of the Government and the sector, laying down basic principles for future relations, Deakin Commission Report 1996 (cited in UK, Home Department 1998)

The Compact is a memorandum concerning relations between the Government and the voluntary and community sector. It is not a legally binding document. Its authority is derived from its endorsement by Government and by the voluntary and community sector itself through its consultation processes.
(UK, Home Department 1998, p.1).

Kirby (2010) breaks the emergence of a modern Irish civil society into three eras: the pre- independence era from 1870 to 1920 which saw the foundation of many organisations that are still important today.

Kirby (2010) contends that the period from 1921 to 1987 was dominated politically by Fianna Fail and that the earlier civil society movements were largely subsumed into the political arena.

The various social partnership agreements running from 1987 to 2007, while appearing to be inclusive were in fact just another tactic to control the community and voluntary sector, concludes Kirby (2010), a point acknowledged by Coakley and Gallagher (2005).

Kirby (2010, pp.16-19) is particularly critical of the emphasis on service provision over capacity building but takes encouragement from the reaction of older people to the 2008 review of medical cards for the over seventies and the 'No' vote in the Lisbon Treaty. Many groups depend on government funding to some extent, resulting in a dependency culture which may do little to address issues such as social inclusion (Kirby 2010). It is difficult for groups to be over critical if the threat of funding being withdrawn exists (Powell and Geoghegan 2004).

Coakley and Gallagher (2005, p.356) chart the rise of interest groups in the Irish political system. They break interest groups into those with a *sectional base*, that is, business groups and trade unions and those that are *cause centred*, such as, for instance, the Irish Wheelchair Association.

They cite Therborn (1995, p.307) who noted that, while Irish membership of cause centred groups appeared high; it is in fact low by west European standards. In the intervening years we still haven't caught up, if social economy activity is used as a measure:

In Europe the [social economy] sector accounts for between 4% and 7% of GDP, but in Ireland it represents just 3% of GDP. Achieving a European average of 5% would lead to the creation of 5,000 jobs annually in the sector over five years
(Clann Credo 2010, p.7).

Many people believe that politics is where the real power is and in that regard Coakley and Gallagher (2005, p.361) focus on the status of the social pillar. They note that the social pillar had come to be accepted as intrinsic to the conclusion of any national development plan. The Combat Poverty Agency (1989) highlighted the need for community participation in public planning and linked public participation, citizen rights, community action and access to local decision making structures as being central themes of community development. The report goes on to note that this sector has grown enormously over the last two decades.

However by the sixth agreement -'Sustaining Progress 2003-5'- the Community Platform was becoming ever more disenchanted by what they perceived as government failure to treat them as equal partners in the process:

“While community development has empowered poor people, it has failed to change the balance of power in their favour, the voice of those in poverty has been heard, but only up to a point,”
(Lee 2006, p.24).

Lee (citing Kelleher and Whelan 1992) comments that the way the work is carried out is as important as the programme of development being undertaken, emphasising the importance of the *process*.

Harvey's (2002) analysis of the strategies voluntary groups use to influence policy in Ireland, acknowledging that the voluntary and community sector has become much more professional and therefore more influential. Harvey (2002, p.6) contends that: “an important negative characteristic of the Irish political system is that it is poorly resourced by public standards”. This situation has been largely rectified and the Library and Research Service now provides backup to members of the Oireachtas. A Users' Entitlement Guide, approved by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission on 19th October 2006 (Oireachtas Library and Research Services 2012) now exists.

Not alone must our public representatives be knowledgeable and well informed: the same applies to the public. “Knowledge of the system and persistence are vital to successful lobbying” (Harvey 2002, p.9).

Community groups are part of a complex struggle for supremacy over how society interacts and evolves. Daly (2007) outlines key facets and trends in Irish civil society.

Daly (2007) sums up the situation noting that a civil society exists when individuals and groups are free to form organisations that function independently and can mediate between citizens and the state (citing Webel 1925). Powell and Guerin (1997) make the observation that while civil society is frequently equated with the voluntary and non-governmental sector it should be looked at from the wider point of view of citizenship within the state. The wider society is seen as a triangle of State, Market and Voluntary sectors. They conclude that civil society consists of essentially *pre-state* institutions, mainly family and the community in which people live along with social capital and trust are basic building blocks of a civil society model working in practice. As to civil society in the wider society, they wonder if it’s really just tokenistic political lip service? They also question the effectiveness of voluntary organisations and also wonder if they are always democratically accountable.

In their conclusion they note that while there is a trend towards individualism in society there is a counter trend towards a more invigorated civil society. The need for training in this sector, if the bottom up approach is to be effective, is of paramount importance (Powell and Guerin 1997).

Walsh *et al* (1998) examine the role of local partnerships in the promotion of social inclusion in Ireland and agree with many of the concerns highlighted by Powell and Guerin (1997). The relationship between self appointed groups acting as spokespersons for society in general and the scepticism of citizens to this development was highlighted on Primetime (2011,RTE 1, 4 July 21h30) current affairs programme.

A key question raised in this programme of the community/voluntary sector was: *Who are you to represent us?* The community and voluntary sector has its flaws and weaknesses. Despite the apparent shortcomings of community groups and the need for more resources for the community and voluntary sector, most indicators show that civil society is active and even thriving (Carnegie Trust 2010). The OECD (2012) paints a less encouraging picture for Ireland however. While placing us at the top of the rankings for community participation it has this to say about our levels of civic engagement:

Trust in government is essential for social cohesion and well-being. In Ireland, 29% of people say they trust their national government, less than the OECD average of 39%. High voter turnout is another measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process. In the most recent elections for which data is available, voter turnout in Ireland was 70% of those registered. This figure is slightly lower than the OECD average of 72% (OECD 2014, p.7).

Moreover, these concerns were given expression in previous research wherein:

Civil society organisations do not seem to have the power, capacity, or *willingness* to frame policy issues in innovative ways.....In other words: it cannot just be assumed that local partnerships are democratic by design and that the policies they produce always correspond to the preferences of the populace. For this reason, the authors advocate the introduction in Ireland of more explicit institutional linkages between the partnerships and representative institutions at local level (Teague and Murphy 2004, p.9).

Tovey *et al* (2007, p.87) explore the concept of what is referred to as *the state* and give examples of why it's not easy to define. The relationship between the inhabitants of Northern Ireland and those living in the Republic is an example.

The Catholic view of what constitutes 'Ireland' and 'Irishness' is not the same as those of the Ulster Protestant. Equally, the notion of what it means to be 'Scottish' can mean different things to different people. In other words, the terms *Ireland*, *Irish Society*, and the *Irish State* are not one and the same concludes Tovey *et al* (2007). In post Celtic Tiger Ireland the role of the citizen in creating a modern Ireland is an important one.

Dillon (2009) concurs with Cassidy (2009) in recognising that irresponsible individual behaviour is a factor in economic crashes but agrees with Cassidy that it's up to government, not regulators, to create the rules and the norms for society and citizens. Bradley and Kennelly (2008) link the education system to the ability of students to perform their own research, solve real life problems and develop capacity within communities. Finally, Dillon looks at the Finnish system and their values and concludes that we have much to learn from them.

Powell and Geoghegan (2004) make the point that community development work needs to adjust to changing the economic realities of globalisation by widening its focus to incorporate sustainable economic life in communities beset by unemployment, marginalisation and poverty.

Komolafe (2009) charts the changing nature of community development from one of charitable works in the 1930s to the 1960s and thereafter its move towards action research, and empowerment. Thomasson (1962, pp.408-418) was one of the first to document *Muintir na Tíre's* more pro-active role in Irish Community Development.

Komolafe (2009) goes on to point out that despite the strong policy context and the proliferation of community development activities and community development studies there is limited sociological research in this area.

For example, in Ireland, there are no national baseline databases that give information on community development workers and their numbers, profile employment, context work settings, responsibilities, experience, education, and training. In contrast, surveys of community development workers have been undertaken in the UK and Northern Ireland, including relatively recent surveys, Komolafe (2009). This further reinforces the views of others such as (Daly 2007) that unless there is extensive and detailed research conducted no real progress can be made in advancing the cause of the community and voluntary sector and this in turn has major implications for assessing the levels of social capital present in Irish society.

Komolafe (2009) as part of research undertaken by the Combat Poverty Agency, showed that seventy one per cent of the community development organisations surveyed were registered, voluntarily, with the Donegal County Development Board. Komolafe (2009) suggests it might be possible to use this finding in a national study as a method for mapping community development organisations on a county and regional basis, Komolafe (2009) notes that the South and Mid West Community Development Support Agency (2006) make observations regarding mapping out community organisations in Ireland.

Other works of note on the subject of community development include The Wheel Publication Report (2008), a profile of volunteer-based organisations (Prizeman, 2008) and an audit of community development in the cross border region (Harvey, 2008). Since the 'Barrington Report' (Government of Ireland 1991, p.14) successive governments have advocated change at local level and have recognised the main problem areas.

MacCarthaigh (2013) commenting on the changing nature of Irish sub-national governance, recognises that Ireland needs to undergo the greatest transformation of local government since the foundation of the state.

Ireland inherited a system based on an ‘English’ model, a very centralised model, Ireland should look to the Nordic models instead which give their citizens a greater say in their local government. (MacCarthaigh 2013) acknowledges that a series of reports have been published which have directly or indirectly made recommendations for reforming Irish sub-national government, both in structural terms with a view to consolidation, but also in relation to resource allocations. This section recognises the need for greater social inclusion if social capital levels are to be raised. The reality is that power and who holds it is central to any discourse on society.

2.6.3 Power and who holds it

Hensby *et al* (2009) looks at networked political activism, a global civil society, and individualised forms of public participation and assesses the challenges these pose to the established membership based social movement organisations. Hensby *et al* (2009), like Lukes (2005) explore the power struggle between sections of society. Lukes (2005) dwells on what he identifies as the *three faces of power* model. His theory claims that governments have three ways in which they control people’s decision making power: open democratic debate, non-decision making power (block out certain issues) and ideological power (influence the way people think about issues).

As with Eipper (1986) *power, and who holds it*, is identified by Lukes (2005) as a key component of how society functions. Meenaghan (1976, pp.126-131) points out that communities that are structurally complex will probably be pluralist and communities that are not structurally complex will probably be elitist. Meenaghan links this general conclusion to Tonnies (1887) description of different types of society.

Meenaghan (1976) is cautious against attaching any general ground rules to power structures as no two situations are the same. Economic, political, demographics, and specific community issues will exert their own influences on how power is devolved. Zacharakis and Flora (2005, pp.208-307), following a three year study of a small farming community in the American mid west region, concluded that: “community development projects frequently tend to reproduce existing leadership structures rather than create opportunities to expand community leadership beyond existing leadership pools or cliques”. They concede that while many people will belong to a number of groups and organisations, bonding, rather than bridging social capital will be the norm.

Their study would seem to confirm the views of Meenaghan (1976) and Tonnies (1887) comparing small rural societies and larger urban ones. The comments so far in this section portray a stark, but realistic, picture of society. There are however alternative viewpoints as promoted by Walzer (1983) who deliberates on the concept of ownership in society.

Recognised as one of the leading proponents of *communitarian* thinking he has long argued that political theory must be grounded in the traditions and culture of particular societies and has opposed what he identifies as the excessive abstraction of political philosophy.

Similarly, Etzioni (1997) another leading proponent of the communitarian viewpoint, sets out the need to balance freedom with morality, and autonomy, with community. Etzioni (1996, p.xviii) proposes a new golden rule: "Respect and uphold society's moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy".

Etzioni (1988) continues on this theme examining the role of ethics, moral values, and community in economics. Overall he argues for the replacing of the neoclassical paradigm with the "I&We" paradigm, "collectives are more consequential in forming the choices of individuals than the individuals themselves" (Etzioni 1988, p.181).

Parks-Yancy (2006) writing on social capital and careers found that blacks suffer a social capital deficit relative to whites and that men and whites' career advantages accumulate over time, whereas in the case of women and black people the opposite often happens. The disadvantages that they are born with will act as a hindrance throughout their lives. Thus, race, gender, and social capital resources contribute to unequal career trajectories. Lin (2001) suggests that there are two processes by which inequality can occur: firstly: *capital deficits*, in other words access to networks needed for advancement and secondly: *return deficits* where, for instance, two middle managers, one white and one black, spend an equal time and effort cultivating bonds with their superior.

When it comes to promotion the white person gets it on race grounds. The white persons return on networking effort is greater than that of the black person's concludes Lin (2001).

2.6.4 Social Capital and volunteerism

Volunteerism is at the heart of social capital. Volunteers are deeply embedded in most cultures and should be recognised and further encouraged in their activities to strengthen civil society. We have known for a long time that volunteerism constitutes an enormous reservoir of skills, energy and local knowledge
(De Raad 2003, p.1).

De Raad (2003,p.1) addresses what he called a: “strong link between the mobilisation of social capital and volunteerism as a development concept.” He contends that voluntary action needs to be factored into the national development planning of countries across the globe:

“If the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015 is to be achieved, the significant contribution of volunteerism, as one manifestation of social capital, needs to be much more widely understood and recognised”
(De Raad, 2003, p.1).

Similarly, Adam (2007) points out that active membership in voluntary organisations is especially important for learning skills, self help, and mutual co-operation. Economic conditions coupled with levels of education are the key factors influencing levels of volunteerism in a given year (Corporation for National and Community Service 2011). Daly (2007, p.159) highlights the fact that the voluntary sector used to be linked mainly to charitable works but that from around the nineteen seventies more radical community groups emerged with an emphasis on empowerment, concurring with Powell and Guerin (1997) who are sceptical of the relationship between the state and civil society. Daly (2007) believes that a more mutually supportive relationship is needed: an analysis of voluntary and community organisations is the key to understanding civil society in the Republic of Ireland. “Lack of financial and human resources is also a factor in limiting the development of the voluntary sector” Daly (2007, p.163) echoing the view of many commentators. Gibbons (2003) acknowledges aspects of the general problem of effective community participation in this area but doesn’t put forward solutions. Our *willingness* to confront issues and policies is called into question.

The changing nature of community development and its increasing diversity is noted and the demand for more empowerment is noted especially over the last fifty years.

“The nature of voluntary work [in Ireland] is changing and today’s volunteer has to approach his/her voluntary work with a distinctly professional style” (West Training & Development Ltd 2003, p.37).

Murphy (2011) citing The Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) found both volunteering and community involvement increased over 2002–06 with one-third of adults involved in ‘civic activity’, compared in one in six across Europe.

Volunteer Ireland (2013) announced that over fifteen thousand volunteers signed up through volunteer.ie and local Volunteer Centres in 2012, an increase of sixteen percent on 2011 levels and a record high. According to the agency applying the average industrial wage, this voluntary effort has an equivalent value of over €10.2 million. The most popular areas of interests for volunteers in 2012 were: ‘Arts, Culture and Media’, ‘Health/Disability’ and ‘Youth/Children’.

Of those who signed up to volunteer in 2012, two thirds were female. Nearly sixty per cent of newly registered volunteers had never volunteered before. Volunteers are predominately young, over thirty five per cent of volunteers were aged between sixteen and twenty five. Almost two thirds of volunteers were aged under thirty five.

The numbers volunteering have doubled since 2008 concludes the agency. Sligo Volunteer Centre was awarded the Volunteer Centre Quality Award in 2012.

When people were asked about (Census 2006, vol. 11, p.172) volunteering activities, Sligo town reflected the national rates for people fifteen years and older with a sixteen per cent participation rate. County Sligo as a whole scored over eighteen per cent reflecting the rate in Connacht as a whole.

So far in this section various aspects and facets of the *second place* have been examined the next section brings these concepts together.

2.6.5 Social capital, civil society and the not-for-profit sector

Civil society organisations encompass all those in the space between the public sector and the private sector. Civil society organisations range in size from the cooperative movement and trades unions to local community and faith groups (Carnegie UK Trust 2005, p.1).

Laurie (2005) highlights some key characteristics pertaining to the growing civil society sector (otherwise known as the independent sector, non-profit sector, the not-for-profit sector, the third sector, and the nongovernmental sector) in particular its sense mission.

Laurie (2005) goes on to point out that not-for-profit organisations across the globe are growing and producing impressive employment numbers and providing important services. “The not-for-profit and voluntary sector encompasses both professional paid staff, and not-for-profit organisations as well as a larger and more diverse population of smaller, informal groups and grassroots organisations” Brainard and Siplon (2004, p.5). While key criteria for defining the sector are debated, generally accepted guidelines include that set of entities that are organised, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing, voluntary to some meaningful extent, and of public benefit, and generally serve some public purpose and contribute to the public good. Included in that definition are membership associations, local community groups, clubs, churches, healthcare providers, educational institutions, social service agencies, advocacy groups, and many more.

Laurie (2005) makes the general point that with this much diversity in the sector the structures are many and varied leading to problems in defining and measuring the sector. Putnam (2000, pp.319-325) notes that communities that trust each other and network, prosper both socially and economically and that social enterprises aid trust building.

Edwards (2005) concludes that civil society is simultaneously a goal to aim for, a means to achieve it, and a framework for engaging with each other about ends and means.

2.6.6 Social capital and entrepreneurship

Anderson and Miller 2002 (cited in Anderson *et al* 2007) argue that entrepreneurship draws upon the social in two distinct ways. Firstly, because entrepreneurs are a product of their social environment they will be conditioned by that environment and may even perceive opportunities in a manner that is influenced by their social background. Secondly, each business forms part of a social web of interaction within which the economic elements are conducted. They conclude (citing Aldrich and Zimmer 1986: Young 1998) that the presence or absence of social capital is likely to influence the nature of the business and that each situation is unique. Although the entrepreneurial benefits of social capital are becoming well established, our understanding of the connection is limited (Anderson *et al* 2007).

Bryce (2006) explores a more inclusive approach to understanding the performance and purpose of not-for-profit organisations in today's world. This approach envisions the not-for-profit organisation as a social capital asset and agent in a specific relationship to the public. This relationship is depicted in a principal-agent paradigm and the performance is in the public policy process. The public policy arena is to the not-for-profit sector as the marketplace is the firm's. Not-for-profits do more than fill in for market or government failures. They also regulate, facilitate, assist, and modify markets and play a significant role in every aspect of public policy, that is, from determining party platforms to the implementation of policies. In the public policy process, they have a comparative advantage as agents of citizens and firms, concludes Bryce (2006).

2.6.7 The link between social capital and social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change. Rather than leaving societal needs to the government or business sectors, social entrepreneurs find what is not working and solve the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution, and persuading entire societies to move in different directions (Ashoka 2013).

For social entrepreneurship to flourish in a society all characteristics outlined in the previous section above must be present. The writers below succinctly sum up the relationship between the two concepts, pointing out that the exact relationship between both concepts have not been extensively explored:

While social capital has been applied in a variety of contexts, the nature, role and application of social capital in an entrepreneurial context have not been extensively explored. The nature of social capital presents a conceptual puzzle in that it is said to be both glue, which forms the structure of networks, and at the same time a lubricant that facilitates the operation of networks (Anderson and Jack 2002, pp.193-210).

Servon (1998) reminds us that micro-enterprise programmes help in the creation of networks that build social capital especially in poorer communities. Reflecting the international position, very little is known about social entrepreneurship in Ireland. While social entrepreneurship is new to Ireland co-operatives are a long established concept. It would appear that both social entrepreneurship enterprises and co-operatives fulfill the same needs and have the same objectives (UCC 2014).

With specific reference to the co-operative sector:

A key issue that emerged when analysing the co-operative sector is the significant lack of data available on co-operatives in general, both nationally and internationally. In order to get an accurate picture of the co-operative sector, including its economic and social contributions, good robust up-to-date statistics are [on the co-operative sector] required (Forfas 2007, p.7).

Doyle (2012), notes that very little is in fact known about social entrepreneurial in Ireland and points out that one of the most successful community based enterprises in Ireland, the Credit Union movement, doesn't generally lend to other community based organisations. Forfas (2013) recognises the need for more development of, and research into, the third or not-for-profit sector:

The Action Plan for Jobs 2012 recognised that all parts of society and of the community can share in, and contribute to, our economic renewal. In particular the Action Plan noted that there is a strong Social Enterprise base in Ireland, which could be further examined with a view to determining its potential for job creation (Forfas (2013, p.2).

The report goes on to define what a social enterprise is and how the Irish government can play a part in its further development. At county level, the creation of Local Enterprise Offices is the latest attempt to give County Councils an input into job creation in all its forms.

There is some evidence that voluntary organisations are beginning to recognise the role of social entrepreneurialship in their activities. Scouting Ireland (2013) offered a scholarship to the USA for the purposes of learning more about the role of social entrepreneurialship. Whether the political sphere will be more of a hindrance than a help remains to be seen. The Gaelic Athletic Association, while initially reluctant to be drawn into the area of job creation, have teamed up with the Innovation Academy, University College Dublin, to promote a certificate (level 7) in rural entrepreneurialship (GAA 2014). The recent controversies surrounding the charity sector in Ireland and the slow pace of implementation of the Charities Act (2009) highlights the need for more research in to the not-for-profit sector:

Six years on from the publication of the White Paper, and with increasing prominence of non-profit matters, there remains a great need to re-assert the position of non-profit issues in policy and political discourse and not merely at the level of rhetoric (Donoghue *et al* 2006, p.14).

As with community development generally, concerns about the effectiveness of partnerships and grass roots involvement in social entrepreneurial activities are an issue:

What partnerships are clearly successful at is creating a new class of social entrepreneurs at local level, whose role is that of activating and accessing multiple sources of funding for their communities. It is unclear whether the policy preferences of these new community leaders always coincide with those of their constituencies
(Teague and Murphy 2004, p.9).

Regardless of which type of entrepreneurial activity one takes, resources must come from somewhere and the next section on philanthropy addresses this issue.

2.6.8 Social Capital and philanthropy

All enterprises need resources. The classic economic view breaks all resources into land, labour, and capital. We have already dealt with volunteerism in all its forms now it's time to look at philanthropy and the part it plays in the third or not-for-profit sector. Brown and Ferris (2007) define philanthropy as a private action for the public good and denote it as a critical indicator of the capacity of a community to identify public problems and to develop strategies for addressing them. Philanthropic behaviour is relatively well defined and fairly well understood. Individuals make charitable contributions of money (giving) and time (volunteering) to organisations and individuals in need of such contributions.

Selfless or not, these acts involve a degree of compassion and commitment to others, as such, philanthropic behaviour is likely to strengthen the bonds between givers and their beneficiaries.

Less well understood is the role social capital plays in eliciting philanthropic behaviour from individuals in a community. Brown and Ferris (2004) seek to redress this gap in our knowledge of the connection between social capital and philanthropy.

Social capital has important impacts on giving and volunteering. Network-based social capital has important impacts on both religious and secular giving, and norm-based social capital has important effects on both secular giving and volunteering. In addition to analysing the link between social capital and philanthropy and other variables such as education, level of income and age, Brown and Ferris (2004) highlight problems with the measurement of social capital.

Brown and Ferris (2007) further explore the relationship between human capital (education), religiosity, and social capital and note that different scores apply depending on whether social capital is included in the equation or not. This, they point out, raises questions about the other variables (human capital and religion) and their effects on philanthropy.

Graddy and Wang (2008) chart the rise in community foundations in America and how social capital levels in a community influence the success of these foundations. Philanthropy and social capital levels are strongly linked. Community foundations, or grant making public charities, are well positioned for a community leadership role as they serve a defined geographic area and must demonstrate broad public support from diverse funding sources to maintain their public charity status.

They are one of the fastest growing forms of organised philanthropy in the past decade. They point out that those communities with older well educated, white, married and religious people will have the highest levels of giving. This group will also have more disposable income.

They also note that successful community foundations will usually be in existence for a long time, in other words the act of giving will be embedded in the community. In Ireland, while there was a long tradition of leaving a portion or all of one's wealth to the Catholic Church after death, the notion of *philanthropy per se* is a relatively new concept. Philanthropy Ireland note Graddy and Wang (2008) has its roots in a voluntary and informal association of grant makers established in 1998 called the Irish Funders Forum. In 2004 the organisation was established as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and the name was changed to Philanthropy Ireland. Its main objective is to promote the concept of giving.

Coleman (2014) like Clann Credo (2010) implies that Irish people are beginning to realise that social entrepreneurialship has a place in society but that there is more to do.

2.6.9 Social capital and group behaviour

At the very outset of this thesis the basic human need to meet others was discussed. But what happens when people *do* meet? Fifty years ago group behaviour was not even a legitimate course of study, thirty years ago the attention was on the traits of the leader and the group, today research is focused on group participation and collaboration (Gershenfeld 2004).

Social capital with its characteristics of trust, norms, ethics and networking appears to complement human capital with its emphasis on the individual and levels of education.

Academic interest in the two concepts followed differed:

It took “social capital” about a quarter of the amount of time to become as dominant a concept in academic circles as human capital. Scholarly attention to social capital from 1993-2003, 10 years, advanced it to the point that it took “human capital” 40 years to achieve, from 1963-2003. Prior to 1963 interest in both concepts was comparatively very low (Socialcapital.wordpress.com 2011, p.1).

When a person joins a group they change, people’s individuality and views become warped, unsettled, and distorted-anxiety levels heighten (Gershenfeld 2004). From a sociologist's view point, the need of the individual to belong and be accepted is part of the human condition.

Gershenfeld 2004, p.108, (citing Goffman 1959; 1963) commenting on the individuals in the group, likened them to actors on a stage. The factors influencing group behaviour and the effect the individual has on the group and vice versa are many and varied.

Norms, goals (clear or unclear) size of group, leadership style, working environment, conflict, relationship with other groups all influence the level of success or failure of the group and the individual. Gershenfeld (2004, p.219) puts much emphasis on the attention given to *transformational* leadership associated with motivation, stimulation and acknowledgement of the individual, and taking the long view. *Transactional* leadership focuses on the immediate situation and the need to get the job done as quickly and as easily as possible (p.220). Gershenfeld (2004) concludes that the traits associated with transformational leadership were more critical to success than those associated with transactional leadership although (citing Guasello, 1995) elements of the two can complement each other.

Buchanan and Huczynski (1997), examining organisational behaviour from a business and commercial viewpoint, see a world of increasing competitiveness and increasing pressure on the organisation and the individual to conform and perform.

Citing Wendell and Bell (1995, p.349-350) they note that: “top-down, autocratically directed, rigidly hierarchical, fear generating organisations are giving way to adaptable, team committed players at all levels”. Buchanan and Huczynski (1997, p.73) comment that what one finds in the literature may not always reflect what one finds in organisational practice.

Robb *et al* (2004) take a look at the communication between the follower and the leader in a health and social care setting as against the harsher commercial profit orientated entity and ask ‘*what qualities do staff want in a leader*’? (p.353): the question is almost an impossible one to answer they conclude.

Knowledge sharing and the communication issues that go with it are huge issues in many organisations. Widén-Wulff and Ginman (2004) acknowledge the increasingly complex nature of knowledge sharing in the business world. However, they point out that the concept of social capital in the field of information behaviour in organisations is new and needs a more solid theoretical framework. The objective of their paper is to contribute to a better understanding of how social and informative aspects are anchored to each other and to explore the mechanisms behind knowledge sharing. Possible measures and contexts for this kind of research are suggested.

McDermott 1999 (cited in Widen-Wulff and Ginman 2004) acknowledges the challenges of understanding, organising, and managing knowledge.

McDermott (1999) summarises the challenges as a technical challenge to design human and information systems to organise information, but also to think together. There is also a management challenge to create a knowledge sharing environment and also a personal challenge that is connected to the fact that knowledge resides in the minds of employees.

Knowledge is mainly seen as an intangible asset and needs to be managed through a cognitive approach. Also, contextual and cultural means are important to encourage knowledge sharing and communication. Mc Dermott (1999) recognises that there is a social challenge to develop communities that share knowledge. Research in many fields often captures the strength provided to people by their social networks under a social capital paradigm.

Kallio *et al* (2008), using the Lahti region of Finland as a test case, note that while knowledge sharing and networking is useful it can, as Florida *et al* (2002) point out, it can suffocate creativity if bonding social capital becomes the dominant form.

Widén-Wulff and Ginman (2004) acknowledge that there are as many types of organisational structures as there are problems to be solved. They take the view that social capital can be divided, using a three dimensional model into a *structural*, a *content* (cognitive), and a *relational* dimension.

There are four communication functions that provide social capital: information exchange, problem identification, behaviour regulation, and conflict management. The third dimension, the *relational* dimension, is concerned with expectations and obligations as central features of social capital, where trust and norms are a prerequisite for good communication.

Van Emmerik and Brenninkmeijer (2009) investigate the characteristics of groups from a group social capital perspective. They found that cross-level interactions had a moderating effect on group social capital.

The association of deep-level similarity (personalities and attitudes) effects team functioning, but there was no such relationship found for surface-level similarity (age, sex, ethnic background). They conclude that, especially in teams with high group social capital, deep-level similarity was associated with improved team functioning.

Allik and Realo (2004) examine the relationship between the individualism and collectivism and how the individual is affected by an increasingly industrialised and wealthier society.

They note in their conclusion that a correspondingly strong association between individualism and social capital was observed in the comparison of over twenty countries and the fifty American states. Durkheim 1893 (cited in Allik and Realo 2004) observed that when individuals become more autonomous and seemingly liberated from social bonds, they actually become even more dependent on society. Hofstede 1980 (cited in Allik and Realo 2004) in his impressive study of forty national cultures, identified and elaborated four dimensions of cultural variation: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity. Allik and Ralo (2004) credit Hofstede (1980) as highlighting the psychological link between the individual and the collective aspect of social capital.

Kennedy (2003) using Grange, County Sligo as a test case, discovered that while community development on the one hand conjures up visions of unity and purpose, the reality can often be very different. Kennedy (2003) attempted to educate the residents of Grange into thinking more logically and scientifically. Kennedy (2003) with his background in quality control management soon realised that the social sciences involved a very different set of processes and that the behaviour of individuals, even seemingly rational individuals, could change radically once they were introduced into a group setting.

Community development and how it might, and should, work and what actually happens when theory meets practice are not always compatible. Kennedy (2003) remarks that individuals, interest groups, institutions and industries behave differently depending on what role is being played out.

Kennedy (2003) attempted to match scientifically driven management systems, where the institution is the dominant force and the human input is secondary with informal, and imperfect, community groups where the individual is the dominant force. Kennedy described his approach as a 'CYSTEM' where the four c's **C**lients, **C**ulture and **C**limate are set in a particular **C**ontext.

Kennedy's (2003) findings are similar to the comments of Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) above. Gibbons (2003), using Ballyhoura on the Limerick/Cork border as a testing ground, developed the ADOPT model to put social capital and community development into action against a background of rapid social change in Ireland.

The five letters of this acronym represent different components of the model, namely: **A**udit - the local area to identify the community constituency: **D**istrict - the model advocates the establishment of a recognised systems level between the local and the community levels to facilitate enhanced participation of the community constituency: **O**rganisation - the enhanced role of the community sector in the local development system needs to be accompanied by improved transparency and the establishment of recognised gateways for groups and individuals to access the policy process: **P**lanning - the model recognises participatory planning as a key mechanism to address issues of exclusion and to build social capital from the grassroots level and **T**raining - by enhancing the human capital of community representatives through training.

Commins (2003) is sceptical of its success in the long term. While acknowledging that by using the ADOPT model, 'fall off' from community groups decreased and education and governance levels increased (p.17). The ADOPT model is, by its rigid nature, process orientated and crucially will require state recognition (p.19). On this last issue Commins (2003) is especially sceptical.

Social capital, the individual, and the organisation are inextricably linked and one can only conclude that the ideal organisational model has yet to be invented, certainly there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

2.6.10 Income distribution

McWilliams (2005) declares that *Ireland has arrived*, but goes on to classify Ireland as an economy in a head-long drive of over consumption, over borrowing and over work. So while Ireland was classified as one of the wealthiest countries, the UNDP Annual Report (2005) also notes that Ireland is also one of the most unequal in terms of wealth. The EU defines income inequality as the ratio of total income received by the twenty percent of the population with the highest income (top quintile) to that received by the twenty percent of the population with the lowest income (lowest quintile) Eurostat.ec (2008).

Taft (2012), using similar data, also concludes that Ireland is an unequal society and getting more unequal as the recession bites. Generally, the trend is for the more developed countries to be below Ireland's score, that is, more equal.

Lawless (2015) points out that the top twenty per cent of households hold seventy per cent of net assets, similar to the Euro area as whole.

In Ireland, the concentration of wealth at the top end of the distribution is driven by two factors: larger holdings of real assets and relatively smaller holdings of debt. There is a marked difference in spending patterns between the under forty five age group and their older counterparts. The Celtic Tiger crash and its consequences will be felt by the younger group for years to come is the conclusion.

Tovey *et al* (2007) point out that the Celtic Tiger did nothing to address the unequal nature of Irish society. Features such as late industrialisation and the resulting late development of characteristics consistent with *modernity* arising out of our slow transition from an economy based on agriculture to one where industry is the dominant force at work need to be factored in when analysing Irish society over the period of this study is undertaken. The flight from the land especially in the early years of Ireland joining the EEC backs up Tovey *et al* (2007) comments on modernity. From the time we joined the EEC in 1972, to the first stirrings of the Celtic Tiger era twenty years later, there was almost no net increase in the numbers of people at work due to the continuing drift of people from the land (Appendix A). Irish people either went into industry or emigrated during that period. The role of women changed alongside this transition as more opportunities opened up in the workplace. The male dominated rural society gave way to a more complex industrial society.

During this period there were some developments in the area of redistributing income but, uniquely in Europe, property was not taxed.

Tovey *et al* (2007, p.51) point to our colonial past and note that the dependency theory, that is, the *acceptance* that wealth flows from periphery regions to the centre still dominates.

In Ireland's case the historical export of live cattle to Britain was an example of the coloniser exploiting the invaded country. The modern day equivalent, according to Tovey *et al* (2007), are the transnational corporations (TNC's) who often work in the same way as the colonisers of the previous centuries.

Tovey *et al* (2007) notes that the OECD (2014) highlights the difference between Ireland's GNP (wealth created from all sources) and the country's GDI (Gross Domestic Income) which takes into account outward flows of money generated by TNC's and immigrants sending home their savings.

Woodcock, (1998) contrasting seemingly similar regions of Asia, comes to the conclusion that the dependency theory can prevail if society allows it to.

The Dependency Theory is particularly relevant to Sligo and the northwest: a TNC can create jobs but move to another country leaving former employees and the local economy with major social and economic problems. While measuring social and economic equality is problematic Ireland has had an unequal distribution of wealth with a relatively high percentage of the population living at poverty levels throughout the last twenty years (Crotty 2000: Ryan 1990). As can be deduced from the passage below the problem of unequal wealth is still a factor in Irish society.

Despite reports from bodies such as the UN that *prove* how unequal the distribution of wealth is in Ireland: "the lowest social welfare payments in Ireland were the highest of their kind in the EU... before cash supports are added" (Keenan 2011, p.1)

As further proof that Ireland is a mass of contradictions:

Ireland had (based on UNDP 1997 data) the highest level of poverty in the Western world outside of the United States and was one of the most unequal among Western countries with the richest 10 per cent of the population 11 times wealthier than the poorest 10 per cent. This is despite the fact that Ireland was ranked the fourth richest country in the world...but significantly one study claimed that the percentage in persistent poverty fell from 11 per cent of the population in 1997 to 6 per cent in 2000...Ireland was becoming a more intolerant society also (Ferriter 2004, p.663).

Exactly how poverty and inequality is measured is an issue. Taft (2012) adds his observations to the debate on Ireland's unequal society and offers convincing data that we are indeed an increasingly unequal society. Newly agreed international standards will challenge the assertion that we are a just society (*The Irish Times* 2012a).

Finally O'Brien (2015, p.7) citing recently new research, based on data from the 1993-2013 period, on people's wealth (a stock) as distinct from people's income (cash flow) notes that in fact Ireland is not becoming more unequal over the decades and we broadly reflect the euro zone countries.

New figures compiled by the central banks and national statistical agencies give a clearer picture of the composition of wealth in euro zone countries. O'Brien (2015, p.7) notes that this research has historically being given much less attention that one might have imagined given its importance to individual well-being.

Home ownership is a crucial factor in determining the relationship between wealth and income in a country. While Austria and Germany, both Germanic societies where renting is more common, have the highest concentration of wealth among a small number of individual's income patterns are about average for the euro zone countries.

Ireland is slightly more equal in its wealth distribution patterns and slightly more unequal in its income distribution. Mobility in society, that is, whether poor people can become wealthy over time is still an unknown concludes O'Brien (5015).

2.6.11 Social Capital and education

The link between education and ones position in society is well known. IT Sligo, as the major third level institution in the region, has afforded thousands of people an opportunity to progress in life since it opened over forty years ago. While primary and secondary schools are located in the community, third level colleges involve, for many, a move out of the safety of the first place and into the second place. This is the first time most people experience having to make personal decisions: budgeting and very often a part time job is part of the experience. While most of the courses provided by third level institutions are linked directly to the world of work, many have a social and community emphasis. Education and poverty levels are strongly linked.

Etzkowitz (2002) investigates *The Triple Helix* of University, Industry, and Government collaborating to encourage innovation. He makes the distinction between the three entities working independently of each other or closely collaborating with each other and the effect each approach has on outcomes.

The bottom up approach, where industry and the individual is the instigator of development, or the government top down approach which also has to be recognised as having an influence on the level of innovation in an economy. Yokakul and Zawdie (2009) look at *The Triple Helix* using small food producers in Thailand as a case study. They trace the emerging interaction of the main players and note, like Etakowitz (2002), that it is important that there is a balance between all the actors otherwise innovation gets smothered.

Kenny (2007) notes that there is an excellent infrastructure of policies in place to guide the provision of education and training services to the rural or peripheral communities, and to the under-class or disadvantaged communities in Ireland. There is a high level of expertise and competence among the institutions providing education and training. However, Irish society retains a class boundary that has ensured relative stagnation rather than innovative change in education and training. The underclass continues to drift and the gap widens.

Kennedy (2003) alludes to a similar gap between theory and practice in rural and community development. There is a need to address the class issue at the core of the provision of services to rural areas of Ireland, concludes Kenny (2007).

Income and access to education is another contentious issue with commentators leaning (McWilliams 2005) towards the side of unequal access, the rich having more access to education.

The Skilbeck Report (2001) recommended that the university sector extend its proactive outreach work. Specifically these recommendations were: extending opportunities for higher education, increasing variety and choice, strengthening partnership with industry and community organisations (Skilbeck 2001). Finally this comment sums up the theory if not the practice:

Community development and community education are inextricably linked. Community development practice should be evidence based rather than evidence informed. Community development can be a powerful social force in any society (Jackson and O'Doherty 2014, p.2).

The points raised in this section relate to the citizen and the role of third level education. This assumes that the adult is fully literate. The Library Service had this to say:

In advanced western economies there is a significant proportion of the population who remain functionally illiterate. According to National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) 25% of adults (age 16-64) lack basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This compares with 3% in Sweden and 5% in Germany. Ireland was surveyed again most recently in 2011 as part of the OECD Survey of Adult Skills and the results of this international survey are due to be published in October 2013 (Ireland, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government 2013, p.23).

This report raises very serious issues about our whole educational system and no meaningful discussion can take place about civic engagement while literacy rates remain this low. A further blow to literacy in the community is the prospect of libraries actually closing. Whereas this seems to be a nationwide policy (Irish Independent 2015) Sligo's public libraries (Irish Times 2015) are being linked to the disastrous state of its finances as described in chapter one. In addition to the public library in Sligo town there are only three other libraries in Sligo: Enniscrone (west) Tubbercurry (south) and Ballymote (south east) with on public library in north Sligo.

2.6.12 Summary of the second place

The second place is one defined by the harsher realities of life. It is the place that dominates that middle portion of an individual's life where the desire to make ones mark manifests itself. Economic forces dominate and life can be hard. Community and wellbeing can take a back seat at times but the desire to find personal space and a sense of fulfillment draws people into the third place.

As with many issues in the world of sociology, trying to precisely define where one sphere of influence finishes and another starts is almost impossible. This section of the study of social capital now moves towards defining and describing the third place.

The final section has been labeled 'The Third Place', the place where we go to socialise and to feel part of the wider community.

2.7 The Third Place

2.7.1 A Description

As outlined and highlighted already at the beginning the period covering this study the ways in which humans communicate with each other has changed dramatically over the last twenty years. As regards communications, the advent of the internet in the nineteen nineties, and in the last decade a broadband network t

o carry previously unimaginable levels of information, has come in to existence. Household corporate names such as Google and Facebook didn't exist in the early nineteen nineties, nor were there any similar entities in existence. Equally the seemingly unstoppable rise of big business has consigned a whole swathe of traditional meeting places to folk memory. Changing agricultural practices combined with a more urbanised society have created a scenario envisaged by Tonnies (1887).

Many of the traditional meeting or third places have almost ceased to exist. Oldenburg (1989) recognising that informal meeting places were under threat, set out to define what *the third place* was and what role it played in society.

Oldenburg (1989) states that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place. The growing influence of the third sector and the not-for-profits are a reflection of social capital levels present, or absent, in society. In what is commonly referred to as the *internet age* where people meet and how they communicate is becoming increasingly important if we are to understand how communities make decisions and get things done. Oldenburg (2001, p.2) defines the third place as “a setting beyond home (the first place) and work (the second place) in which people relax with good company on a regular basis”.

Just as one of Putnam's (2000) examples was of computer programmers from different companies in Silicon Valley setting up a microbrewery as their third place, Oldenburg gives examples of numerous coffee shops, pubs, gyms and restaurants across America functioning as the third place and how important these outlets are for informal contact of mutual interest to the community that surrounds its catchments area. The owners were often *characters* who had the interests of the patrons and the wider community at heart. Oldenburg bemoans the loss of many of these outlets and harks back to the America as described by De Tocqueville (1835) as an example of how Americans used to organise themselves independent of government.

Third places were often the meeting point where town halls got built: “The town halls are all built now but we sorely need it to construct the infrastructures of human relationships” (Oldenburg, 2001, p.2).

He goes on to paint a picture of growing affluence and with it isolation in communities since World War Two. Public parks, playgrounds, schools, transportation in fact anywhere that people of different backgrounds might come into contact are being shunned. Oldenburg bemoans the rise of the commercial chains based in shopping malls and the *unifunctional zoning* policy which have killed off the traditional neighbourhood meeting places.

In Ireland and the UK the *public house* was the traditional meeting point for many people. The decline of this type of establishment without a similar replacement is one of the big transformations in Irish society over the last twenty years. Pubs allowed people from all walks of life and all classes to mingle (Economist 2010).

Is County Sligo going the way of American society as portrayed by Oldenburg and Putnam? It certainly looks as if it might be.

Scarborough (2008) illustrates this phenomenon of people’s need to meet in an informal setting by categorising Irish pubs and the people who frequent them. A similar study was undertaken in the UK during period before and during the Second World War (Mass Observation 2009) published in 1943, was one of the first sociological studies of its type in which the social habits of people in general were observed and documented, the pub being just one topic.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is generally recognised as a good framework upon which to build social capital and sow the seeds for capacity building. UN-HABITAT (2008) looks at the *needs based* versus an *asset based* approach. The needs based approach is centred on the government looking at what communities are lacking and using standard measurements to invest in these communities to eliminate the *deficit*.

Critics will point to the top-down approach to this method and the dependency culture which can take root, capacity building using ABCD is slower, but more deep rooted, the report points out, and therefore more beneficial to society.

It is also generally accepted that distrust arises through lack of prior consultation between government departments and the people for whom the investment is intended.

Proponents of the needs based approach will cite ability to achieve results in a shorter space of time rather than an asset based approach as crucial. The asset-based approach seeks to identify, and capitalise on, the tangible and intangible assets available to a community rather than on what it lacks. To policy-makers and neighbourhood activists, community assets matter because, as public goods, they benefit residents in different ways, for example housing and service delivery. Vibrant communities promote and signal a strong sense of belonging and attachment to place and, in the process, re-energise housing markets; whereas weak and depressed communities suffer from weak markets and failed government policies.

It is obvious that the community and voluntary sector deserves to have more of a say in matters directly affecting individuals however the sector's own short comings in terms of governance needs to be acknowledged and that training is needed UN-HABITAT (2008) (citing Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Sanoff; 2000: Green and Haines, 2002: Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: Arefi, 2004 a: 2004 b).

To restore the balance between government imposed 'solutions' and communities wanting to have an input into issues Etzioni (1993) calls for a reinvention and reinvigoration of social and political institutions, also the restoration of the balance between rights and responsibilities. Hooghe and Stoole (2003, p.7) take issue with the attention that the *measurement* aspect of social capital attracts but the more important issue, in their view, is the *generation* of social capital and the need for more research in this area. They go on to note that policy makers have few clues as to how to generate social capital and that both society centred and institution centred approaches have a role to play.

Third places, then, are anchors of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction. All societies already have informal meeting places: what is new in modern times is the intentionality of seeking them out as vital to current societal needs. Oldenburg (2001) suggests the hallmarks of a true third place are meeting places that are free from any barrier of entry both socially and economic. The value of informal meeting places in society is increasingly recognised.

The next sections deal with aspects of the third place.

2.7.2 Social capital and religion

As defined already, social capital is rooted in the concepts of trust, reciprocity and networking as well as fostering bonding, bridging and linking to different sections of society. Putnam (2000) remarks that religious communities are one of the most important sources of social capital in society. They provide an important incubator for civil skills, civic norms, community interests and civic recruitment by helping people learn to give speeches, run meetings, manage disagreements, and bear administrative responsibility. Their members befriend others who often join the community and engage in various forms of community activity. Religious communities also help create social capital by motivating members to take part in charitable and voluntary activities. Burleigh (2006) deals with the influence of religion on European countries, both east and west, and also its effect on the Americas concentrating particularly on the period from the aftermath of the First World War to the present time. Notwithstanding that Christianity was the common dominator, no two countries could be said to have similar experiences.

It would be easy to assume that social capital needs western democracy to flourish and while this is largely true it is not always the case. Burleigh (2006) explores religions extraordinary interference and influence in twentieth century politics.

From Russia to Mexico, Burleigh traces the relationship between church and state. That relationship was often tense and occasionally violent, with priests and nuns killed and Church property confiscated. The Catholic religion was caught up in class warfare in many countries.

The biggest test that faced the Catholic Church in Europe in the last century was its relationship with Nazi Germany. Germany was approximately two thirds Protestant in the lead up to the Second World War.

Burleigh (2006), backed up by research, points out that leading Catholics, including many from the universities, were outspoken against the pagan nature of Nazism. Bishops were put under house arrest and priests were sent to Dachau and other camps. The Protestant population on the other hand largely acquiesced to Hitler's demands. Burleigh (2006,p.190) notes that Pius XI, taking his lead from his predecessor Leo XIII in his encyclical to German Catholics emphasised the primacy of Natural Law, the importance of the individual personality and the sacrosanct position of the family. Leo XIII saw unbridled liberalism, communism and fascism as immoral and evil.

Ciftci (2010) drawing from research on Islam and social capital, like Burleigh (2006), acknowledges that each country and region has its own levels of democracy which effects the networking aspects of society.

Obviously the position of women in society, which in turn shapes the education system, combined with various levels of authoritarian regimes will have a huge effect on social capital. In general Ciftci (2010) sees the process of modernisation as the key influence on social capital levels in Islamic societies.

Jeong (2010) uses the unique characteristics of South Korea to explore the effect of different religions in the same country. Protestantism, (8million), Catholicism (3 million), and Buddhism (10 million) co-exist in this country. Drawing data from the late 1990s, the World Values Survey shows that Christianity increases individuals' civic engagement, while Buddhism does not have an impact on civic engagement. With respect to trust, neither religious affiliation influences individual's personal trust levels. Anheier and Salamon 1998 (cited in Jeong 2010) insightfully suggest four dimensions of religion: an emphasis on charity and philanthropy, modularity, institutionalisation, and autonomy.

According to them, each religion (Protestantism, Hinduism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, and African religions) displays different levels of each of the four dimensions.

Adopting their perspective, one assumes that the presence of these four dimensions for each religion stimulates the formation of individual members' social capital.

Hooghe and Stoole (2001,p.51) link religion to trust levels and point out that the more centrally controlled Catholic Church is often linked to lower levels of trust in 'Catholic countries'. In contrast, in a country where the Protestant religion dominates a higher level of trust is evident.

Bielenberg (2009) reminds us that from the cradle to the grave the Catholic Church still yields an astonishing amount of power in Ireland. From hospitals to schools the church owns and runs many key institutions in Ireland. The church still has influence in the media says Bielenberg citing the ringing of the Angelus on RTE 1 as an example. Bielenberg (2009) notes that while we are, along with Poland, one of the most catholic countries in the world, we along with the Italians, show scant regard for official teachings of the church but overall we are still conditioned by our religious beliefs. Bielenberg points out that this influence is not confined to the Catholic Church, the Protestant denominations have their own power bases also.

It is not easy to shift these power bases but movements such as the Educate Together movement are gradually overcoming obstacles placed in their way by conservative elements entrenched in Irish society. Cooney (2010) points to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's assertion that *strong forces* in the Catholic Church wanted the truth about clerical sex abuse scandals to remain hidden, as an example of unseen power in action.

In many countries, in both the east and west, the church and state were often at odds with each other. Contrast this with Burleigh's description of Ireland of the nineteen thirties in the where the 1937 Constitution which recognised the *special position of the Catholic Church* by banning divorce and encouraging women to stay at home, get married, and have children. These events led to tiny elite dominating the everyday lives of ordinary citizens. The results of this almost unquestioned power has only recently (officially) came to light in the form of a number of reports on abuses within the Catholic Church from that period up to very recent times.

Burleigh (2006, p.153) goes on to contrast the Irish situation, post World War Two, with other European countries of the time, ranging from the Catholic Croats and its links with the vicious Fascist Ustashe movement (some of whom were taken in by Ireland after the Second World War) to the Iberian peninsula, and emphasis just how much influence the Catholic Church had (and still has) in Ireland. Burleigh (2006) is not alone in his strong views on Ireland:

The Catholic influence in Irish social policy is not by any means unidimensional or simplistic though. The principle of subsidiarity is a towering influence... ordains the role of the state and other social institutions in the development and wellbeing of individuals.

A form of a 'no go area' is declared between the family and the state as individuals and families must be (enabled to be) self-sufficient... middle class nationalists were averse to paying high taxes and that there was a receptivity, in the early period in the life of the state anyway, to laissez-faire economic policies
(Daly and Clavero 2002, p.32).

More recently the Irish Times (2012b) paints a dismal picture of the Irish Catholic Church. A complete loss of respect and authority has unfolded with seventeen percent of Irish Catholics not believing in the afterlife and forty four percent not believing in hell. However forty four percent still go to mass at least once a month, people still see the church as part of the community and they want to belong.

In summary this section on religion highlights Putnam's (2000) assertion that social capital can have a dark side. Ireland's relationship with religion is a prime example of this dark side (Burleigh 2006). The next section looks the role of health in society and its role in promoting social capital.

2.7.3 Social capital and health

Ginman (2003) points out that social capital has been studied extensively by researchers in the social and health sciences, whereas information and communication sciences have paid considerably less attention to it, although it is a generally accepted fact that the individual is formed by his or her social environment. The power of the social environment and openness of communication between the members in a group particularly stresses the social tolerance of the individual. The importance of the information culture in this process is brought up for discussion in this paper.

Social capital, as a communicative paradigm, is relevant concludes Putnam 2000. (Ginman 2003) noted that people who join groups live longer than people who live in self imposed isolation. Mohseni and Lindström (2008) link self-rated health and trust levels in Sweden and, perhaps not surprisingly, find that people with low levels of trust in politics often have poor health. Hourigan (2011, p.185-210) links social capital, health and inequality and reminds us that poor living conditions, whether caused by low income or dysfunctional communities, causes stress which in turn leads to health problems.

The remaining topics of this section look at the changing nature of traditional meeting places (section 2.7.4) and the influence of the internet age (2.7.5) and any ramifications these may have on the formation and maintenance of social capital.

2.7.4 Traditional Irish meeting places

At the beginning of this section the theoretical notion of what a third place is and what role it plays was outlined. This thesis covers a period of extraordinary change in Irish society, a period in which not alone a host of new or enhanced communication patterns emerge in society but also the demise and in some cases virtual disappearance of some traditional Irish places.

Scarborough (2008) deals extensively with the changing pub culture the North West of Ireland especially in the context of its traditional importance as a third place.

The uniqueness of the Irish pub can be judged by the proliferation of Irish pubs all over the world, not just catering for emigrants but for societies with no corresponding entities of their own. Scarborough (2008) while recognising that there are a number of variations of the Irish pub, such as pubs with food, pubs that cater for younger people, pubs catering for the tourist, pubs with a shop, a post office, or an undertaking business attached all serve a principle function: they are meeting places. The Irish pub fulfils all of Oldenburg's (1989) criteria to be classified as a third place.

That the Irish pub is, or was, synonymous with Irish society is beyond doubt. Scarborough (2008) spent many months visiting pubs recording what the local Irish pub meant to patrons. The overriding message was that it was a place that people left at home and comfortable in. Smith (2012) writing for the Financial Times cites a weak economy but more tellingly changing lifestyles which in turn is leading to some pubs closing. The social value of key community meeting places is universally recognised;

The post office network is a key national resource. It is important when considering the post office network that it is viewed as more than a group of commercial entities: it serves a valuable social purpose, which plays a unique and important role in communities around the country (Grant Thornton 2012, p.2).

While it is beyond doubt that many of Ireland's traditional meeting places no longer play the central role in society they once did, one area which has grown in influence is that of sports and pastimes. In the last twenty years existing community facilities have been greatly enhanced and new organisations catering for new interests have come into existence.

Even long established sporting institutions have developed a social inclusion strategy (GAA 2009). The role of the family and the roles of sport were already discussed earlier in the section on the first place but the role of sport itself: particularly where there is a youth dimension also has to be recognised in creating a valuable meeting place for parents.

The various development plans for Sligo town and county recognise the value of green areas for sporting activities often specifically for the young. There seems to be no recognition of the need for public parks or squares as originally envisaged by the planners of the eighteenth hundreds.

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan focuses on the Garavogue River as a greenway but no mention of developing a public square in the heart of Sligo:

The provision of an amenity corridor from the shores of Lough Gill to the Garavogue estuary and Sligo Bay would encourage walking, cycling and would promote the use of other planned recreational facilities by residents of both north and south city areas. The waterside recreational corridor will be complemented by a network of cycle and pedestrian ways linking residential areas with the city centre, public squares, employment areas, pocket parks, playing fields and the natural environment beyond the city boundaries.

(Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016,Ch.5,p.3).

If the traditional meeting places are gone, or in decline, where and how are people meeting and communicating? The internet, as already mentioned is the biggest influence on our lives over the last twenty years and this will be looked at next.

2.7.5 Social capital and the internet

One of the newest influences on all societies is the rise in influence of the internet and associated technology. Rheingold's (2000) concept of *virtual communities* highlights this phenomenon. The Central Statistics Office 2009 (citing 'IctIreland' 2008) notes that internet usage is more prevalent in the south and east of Ireland, reflecting the presence of higher concentrations of industry and third level institutions. Women are also greater users of the internet, reflecting their occupations. Ireland's level of internet connectivity is approximately that of the EU. Our text messaging per person, in 2008, was the highest in the EU, reflecting the young population.

Irish Times (2014) reminds us that Berners-Lee gifted us the web twenty five years ago and changed our communications forever. More than any other phenomenon to affect us over the last twenty years the 'invention' of the web must top the list.

The pace of change in this area is so fast that anything that this researcher writes will be out of date by the time its read. It is however worth looking at other communication devices that equally had a huge affect on people's lives.

Horning (2007) examines the role that community networks can take in fulfilling McQuail's (1987) call for a more democratic-participant form of mass media.

Comparing the early use of radio to the direction the internet is taking, Mc Quail points out that they both started as a means of communicating information to the community and its citizens but quickly became commercialised and profit orientated.

Community networks, which are online grassroots organisations designed to promote local community initiatives, increased their internet presence in the 1990s. However, their number has declined in recent years. Earlier research has suggested that community networks fail because they lack a unified identity, have not determined their specific purpose, and do not provide relevant information to network members. Research suggests that community networks are currently working toward developing content that promotes social capital but that far fewer networks are using their sites to promote strong democracy, a phenomenon that needs to be promoted (Horning 2007). Arnold (2003) when looking at *intranet* systems in new housing developments in Australia reminds us that society's previous experience of the telephone is instructive here (citing Graham and Marvin, 1998): a telephone call to someone does not simply substitute for a visit, the telephone is used to facilitate face-to-face meetings and to preserve ties that might otherwise weaken in the intervening period between face-to-face interactions. The telephone facilitated more visits and more links, not less: it is probable that the intranet will serve the same function in the future.

The internet may also increase the quantum of communication within weak and strong social networks (Arnold 2003, p.82). The National Geographic Society 2001 (cited in Wellman *et al* 2001) survey of forty thousand Americans and Canadians found that internet use neither increases nor decreases other forms of communication. The overall volume of contacts with friends and relatives through all media forms is higher for people who use e-mail, because e-mail does not substitute but is an additive to other forms of communication. Members of the community will communicate via the intranet and will meet face to face more often, as each mode enforces the other is the conclusion. Horning (2007) concludes that community networks may be declining, in part, because they fail to promote their own communities. Furthermore, many have become nothing more than one more poorly designed bulletin board. Community networks seem to draw fewer users to their domains because the same information is available in much more appealing forms in numerous other places on the Web which are often more commercially minded. The arrival of the internet has not adversely affected the way people communicate. Robinson and Martin 2010 (citing the American Time Use Survey 2003- 2006) point out those early studies of the impact of information technology (IT) on society suggested that it had a negative impact on social life as well as on mass media use: radio and TV is an example of early intrusion.

More recently, a succession of mass ‘broadcast’ forms of communication emerged, the cinema, radio, but most prominently television. Currently Facebook and Twitter are evolving at a rapid rate.

An unexpected, but important, issue in the use of new technologies: the greater use of communications technologies was not linked with greater participation in voluntary organisations, but was linked with increased communication amongst people who were already members of such organisations and increased communication amongst all individuals, whether members of voluntary organisations or not (see also Hampton & Wellman, 2002)
(Komito 2004, p.1).

Bearing in mind that this study of social capital in County Sligo will take into account all networking characteristics the internet usage rates in the BMW (Border, Midland and West) region and the rising influence of the internet as a communication tool the usage figures are significant. Internet coverage has become a crucial factor in where people choose to live. Reliable access to broadband in rural areas of the north west of Ireland is a very real issue even in 2011 (Mayo Advertiser 2011). This presents *reliability* challenges for any survey carried out in Sligo and the surrounding areas using the internet.

In common with most countries, access to the internet is a major issue and studies have found (O’Donoghue and Meredith 2014, p.1) that access in the northwest of Ireland is significantly lower than in Dublin and the south and east of Ireland indicating a lower level of industrialisation as much as anything in the north west of Ireland and Sligo.

2.8 Summary

2.8.1 Introduction

Sociology as a science is only about two years old and social capital is one of the newer concepts to emerge from within that science. Social capital is characterised by trust and reciprocity between individuals and within communities. The overarching issues to emerge from any discussion on social capital is defining it and measuring changes in levels of social capital both over time and between societies. Social capital has a number of dimensions the most important being: bonding, bridging and linking.

Social capital has come to prominence as a result of recognition that society is becoming more polarised and that individuals are becoming more inward looking.

The multicultural aspect of even traditionally homogeneous societies like Sligo has drawn attention to the need for inclusiveness in society.

Healy (2003) in particular cites increased interest in social capital as recognition of the increased complexity of society and perception that social capital levels are decreasing. Healy also notes that it's English speaking countries that have the highest increases in social capital levels. The National Economic and Social Council (2003) recognised that central government cannot provide every need and that communities must get involved: conditions for social capital to flourish must be present. The National Economic and Social Council notes that attitudes are hardening towards immigrants and racism is on the increase.

The need for norms and structure to exist in society and groups for trust building leading to social capital formation and building is recognized. The link between education levels and power is highlighted. The role of the family is debated and the growing third or not-for-profit sector is noted. The triangular relationship between the family, the state and civil society and the need for balance between the three is noted. The growing influence of professional people on volunteer based organisations is highlighted and the wider effect that this is having on society is debated.

The need to promote the concept of communitarianism is highlighted and the difficulty of successfully achieving it is acknowledged. The existence of a dark side of social capital is acknowledged and that bonding social capital can be counterproductive. The link to human capital and behaviour of the individual is acknowledged when discussing social capital and communities.

Where people and how people meet and communicate in the present age is noted; the concept of the first, second and third place is mentioned. The loss or decline of traditional meeting places in particular is highlighted. The current trend for a top down approach to decision making for communities is noted and the resulting alienation of individuals highlighted.

The importance of participation, in both social society and civic society is emphasised. For these reasons it is important to be aware of the characteristics of social capital and equally to be aware that there are many contested facets of social capital.

2.8.2 Contested aspects of social capital

Social capital as a concept is far from perfect and different researchers and writers place different emphasis and order of importance on the various facets of sociology. The basic unit of society, the family, is contested. My view is that one's family and neighbourhood influence behaviour for life and therefore social capital must be treated as a public good. For other writers, even the term capital, is offensive as it implies individualism, tradeoffs and compromise and this unfortunately is a fact of life.

Putnam (2000) notes it even has a dark side: people bond for their own advancement at the expense of others and exclude the bridging (horizontal connections) and linking (vertical) aspects of social capital. DeTocqueville(1835) possibly got the balance right when he described social capital 'as self interest rightly understood'. Social Capital undoubtedly represents a utopian view of society. DeFilippis(2001) for instance points to DeTocquevilles view of America where 'everybody' gathered in town halls: 'everybody' didn't include the slaves in the fields,or the natives who lost their lands.

Some writers emphasise that social capital cannot be used as a substitute for economic capital but given that high levels of social capital and democracy go hand in hand and both of these must be in existence for economic activity to flourish this view is suspect. Hooghe and Stoole (2003) points out the secondary nature of social capital and that the fallout from individual and group behaviour is its real strength and this is undoubtedly a valid point. Communitarianism with its emphasis on morals and ethics is a view point promoted by Etzioni(1993) and this represents the probably unattainable high ground.

Ganapati (2008) doubts whether voluntary networks can revive civic political engagement on their own and of course the answer is that they can't. Asset Based Community Development is recommended as a people centred approach to community development but its limitations, mainly structural, are noted.

The notion of social capital being possessed as opposed to realised is raised. The notion that people do not join organisations as they used to is raised and the reality that organisations within a given community can be at odds with each other is highlighted: exploitation within communities occurs. The difficulties of promoting linking social capital in particular are highlighted. Economic and social capitals are very different and need to be recognised as such, wealthier people possibly don't need to connect to their neighbours and have become more individualistic. Is social capital really only a by-product of society or is it more central than that?

2.8.3 Measuring social capital

If describing and defining social capital is a big topic then measuring levels of social capital in a given society at a given time, or over time, is the big issue.

Grottaert (1998) promotes the use of a comprehensive set of indicators as a method of measuring social capital levels and this will be the method used in the methodology of this thesis. The Caux Round Table also promotes the use of multiple indicators. The European Values Survey (2008) also uses a basket of indicators. Another method is to track changes in a given collection of organisations over time. Longitudinal surveys can be influenced by changes within the organisations and the rise and fall of numbers and therefore *weighted* influence and the results would have to be regarded as suspect.

Lillibacka(2006) warns that too many indicators will result in a more complex results and this is a problem also as the results become almost unusable.

A distinction is made between social capital among of different ages. Equally urban and rural societies can interpret social capital differently. Health and wellbeing has emerged as a barometer of social levels. Adam and Roncevic (2008) point out that the definition of social capital is changing all the time an this creates measurement problems in time.

The remainder of the chapter deals with the three ‘places’ that people meet.

2.8.4 Social capital and the first place.

The first place denotes the family and places where one grows up and makes develops bonding, bridging and linking social capital. As already noted above the importance of the family in social capital formation is debated, a lot depends on one's background. In America, for instance, studies show that poor black families have higher levels of social capital because they need each other, whereas affluent whites can live very isolated lives. Hourigan(2011) points out that knowing your neighbours and trusting them is not the same and cites social mobility as a big factor. If you are poor you cannot move and therefore have to make the best of a bad lot. Children are a huge factor in family life as they are often the catalysis for social interaction between adults. The importance of sport and the local school is acknowledged. The first place is where the notion of citizenship is formed. As mentioned above the advent of the internet and the transformation of Ireland into an urban, multicultural society has profound and ongoing implications for Irish society and this part of what this thesis is about. If our continuing high birth rate is anything to go by we still value family life.

The teaching of citizenship in schools is an ongoing debate and no firm conclusions have been drawn from initiatives in the UK and Northern Ireland. Voting patterns in Ireland would suggest that we are losing our links with politicians. A lot depends on the political ethos of the country: countries with a bigger welfare state will have more civic engagement.

2.8.5 Social capital and the second place

The second place is associated with the work place. The first place might equate to Tonnies(1887) *Gemeinschaft* (community life and co-operation) whereas the second place is associated with *Gesellschaft* or a colder individual place full of conflicts. Social exclusion can abound in the second place, indeed social exclusion is the new poverty according to some commentators. Racism is a fact of life in the work place. The environment ones lives in can have a big influence on how one does in the second place. Studies of immigrant groups in America show marked contrasts between the immigrant group and the population that stayed at home.

The second place might be a place of work but within that it needs to be recognised that not all work is paid. The voluntary sector is a huge sector in Ireland and some would say it's the glue that holds society together. The rise of the voluntary sector from charitable organisations to institutions with resources of their own and the resulting power and influence that comes with this is noted. The rise of the not-for-profit sector is also another force on the crowded stage that is civil society. The social entrepreneur is the new hero of the civil society sector but Doyle (2012) notes that we do not know much about it in Ireland. Coakley and Gallagher (2008) detail this change and how it influences politics. Daly (2007) remarks that the relationship between the community and voluntary sector and the political sphere is much more complex than it used to be. International studies place trust levels in Ireland at a low level when it comes to politics and this is needs to be tested further.

This thesis will take attempt to measure trust in our political institutions. Power, and who holds it, is probably the rawest of all aspects of social capital. Etzioni(1993), as previously mentioned, promotes respect as a counter to the corruption that often goes with power. Philanthropy, which always existed in Ireland, mainly in the form of giving to religious organisations, is now being examined in a wider context.

Individuals must eventually merge into groups if they want to achieve common aims. Group behaviour is a science in itself and is probably the greatest hindrance in community groups as individual behaviour can be unpredictable. Knowledge sharing is a crucial but not a natural condition in Irish society and social capital formation particularly bridging and bonding capital is to be encouraged.

Income distribution is probably the biggest factor in influencing societal attitudes and cohesion and most commentators point out that Ireland is an unequal society and becoming more so. Education and access to it is crucial in overcoming inequality. Etzkowitz (2002) promotes the triple helix in a community setting: university, community and government and emphasis that balance is vital for success. If any sector is too strong then the others get smothered. In Ireland we have a good education infrastructure but the gap between the institutions and the general population remains.

2.8.6 Social capital and the third place

The third place is the place where people meet informally outside the realm of the first place and second place. Third places are anchors of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction. While informality might be the hallmark of the third place many people are part of organisations that themselves are organised along formal lines. An example is the major religious institutions. Burleigh (2008) looks at a number of countries as regards church and state relations and reminds us that in times war and economic hardship the church often played a role in the outcome. More importantly religion is an important incubator for civic skills and norms according to Putnam (2000). Oldenburg (2001) promotes the importance of the *third place* as a meeting place for the exchange of views and the generation of ideas. In Ireland the pub is a classic third place. The internet age has changed everything and the rise of virtual or imagined communities as described by Anderson (1991) are now commonplace.

In Ireland, prior to the Celtic Tiger era, one could automatically assume that the attendees at any meeting would be almost all Irish this is no longer the case.

An ageing population means that health and social capital are becoming an ever more important area of study. Hourigan (2012) links poor social and living conditions to poor health and lower levels of social capital. Traditional meeting places such as the pub and the village post office are looked at and their importance for social interaction noted.

The influence of the internet is looked at and it would appear that it is an aid to communication rather than a hindrance just like the radio and television in earlier eras.

2.9 Conclusion

Field *et al* (2000) wonder if social capital really has a place in society. They conclude that social capital is neither tidy nor mature and it can be abused, analytically and politically, and its future is unpredictable but that it offers much promise.

This chapter extensively reviews the many facets of social capital, including a comprehensive critique of the topic. Like Field *et al* (2000) it can be deduced from the literature review chapter that that social capital as a topic and a concept is indeed neither tidy nor mature.

Social capital, by its nature, reaches out to the better nature and higher aspirations of human beings. That social capital is open to abuse and manipulation is beyond doubt. Social capital with its links to volunteerism, philanthropy and altruism will always be a target for politicians who regardless of their platitudes will see it as a free resource. Social capital with its many facets will also be the source of many reports and studies each with its own emphasis depending on what organisation is publishing it.

Field *et al* (2000) state that the future of social capital as a concept is unpredictable and hints that it might be just a passing fad. In the intervening years social capital has established itself as part of the matrix and now features in many reports from organisations more associated with economics and the economy.

Social capital then can indeed offer much promise but the concept has come a long way since Field *et al* (2000) expressed reservations about its future. More research is needed to make it a true mainstay of sociology.

Chapter Three Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the general methodology of the study, the research design, research instruments, and the interviewing procurers used. This section outlines the methods and techniques used in this study. It builds on theoretical viewpoints and empirical research techniques as outlined in the literature review.

Section 3.1 briefly reminds the reader of the aims of this research as laid out in chapter one and two. Section 3.2 outlines the origins of the research question. Section 3.3 puts detail on the framework and research process as applied in this piece of research. Subsections outlining in detail tools such as the *Polldaddy* and *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* as well as an overview of techniques used including focus groups, qualitative surveys and one-to-one interviews and finally the importance of triangulation and the mixed method approach are described. Section 3.4 moves from the theory to application. Starting with 3.4.1, the Sligo focus group, each subsection describes in detail how the theory just described above was applied to this piece of research before finishing with a description of *blogs* in section 3.4.5. Section 3.5 outlines the limitations of this piece of research. Section 3.6 highlights the ethical considerations. Section 3.7 reminds the reader that a timeline of key actions and events in the life of this piece of research is available in Appendix J. Section 3.8 contains a summary and critique and section 3.9 finishes with a conclusion.

3.1 Aims of this research

The aim of this research is to compare over a period of twenty years, from the early 1990s to 2013, the attitude of people towards volunteerism, sense of community, and to assess whether or not their trust levels have changed. People's attitude towards modern day politics, their views on a changing society and their views on multicultural Ireland will also be traced.

Ultimately the question: 'Is social capital formation and maintenance under threat in County Sligo? A critical review and exploration 1993-2013' will be answered.

Therefore, this thesis is not solely a piece of academic work: it is grounded on real experiences gained over a long period of time.

It starts with the following hypotheses:

Q1: Has Ireland lost its sense of *community spirit* over the last twenty years?

Q2: Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

Q3: Is Irish society and, more widely, are Irish people becoming more individualistic and 'privatised'?

Q4: Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

Q5: Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

The background of the researcher often gives a clue as to why this particular question was asked and why a particular approach or emphasis was used when answering it. The next section answers both.

3.2 Origins of the research question

Upon completing the Leaving Certificate in 1976 I enrolled for a Bachelor of Commerce in UCG now NUIG (National University of Ireland Galway) in the autumn of that year. It was a requirement that a subject from the Arts Faculty be studied in year one. I picked sociology. Sociology was considered an easy subject to pass so it was understandably a popular choice. Luckily the lecturers, among them Michael D. Higgins, currently President of Ireland, made the subject interesting and relevant. I passed the end of year exam and this, so I thought, was the end of my career as a sociologist. Tonnies, Comte, Durkheim, Marks, Maslow and others were consigned to the recesses of the mind. After graduation in 1979, I followed the trail taken by many students and went first to London and then to America for over a year working in all the usual casual jobs that students are happy to take for while. I wanted to see the world, or the first world at any rate. I was curious. I lived in San Francisco, then as now, a hotbed of innovation, both from an economic and social point of view. The sociologist in me came to the fore and I found myself observing not just *how* the citizens of that city lived but *what* motivated them. In 1981 I returned home to Ballyhaunis, County Mayo where I have lived since.

I took over the running of my family's business in the west of Ireland. The business was classified as a *wholesale bottler*. The business bought Guinness stout in bulk barrels, bottled it, and sold on the product to pubs.

All the major brands of soft drinks, beers and ciders were also bought in and sold on. As the home drinking culture began to emerge in the Ireland of the 1980s, the 'off trade' began to play an increasing role in the business, an early sign of people withdrawing into their homes.

The *bottling* part of the business had already reverted to a Diageo (Guinness) plant in Dublin. This commercial activity, while drawing on my business knowledge acquired from my NUIG days also brought this writer into contact with individuals and their communities in many parts of the west of Ireland.

I developed an understanding of the problems and challenges of living in a peripheral region of Ireland. Locally I became involved in a range of youth clubs, sports clubs, and business organisations through the 1980s and into the 1990s.

From around the early 1990s I detected a hardening of attitudes particularly in the giving of one's time to community work and it appeared that selfishness was setting set in. The Celtic Tiger era with all its trappings emerged and this seemed to accentuate these sentiments. All the while during this period rural Ireland was still in decline both socially and economically. The wholesale bottler disappeared entirely.

My experiences of the 1980s and 1990s in rural Ireland stayed with me. In 2004 I decided to go back to college. I enrolled in NUIG and completed a diploma (level 7) and degree (level 8) in Rural Development 2004-2008. The course was delivered by the Department of Economics. I realised that after four years of study I probably needed to specialise and move on to a Masters (level 9). In the autumn of 2008, while working in Sligo, I scanned the Sligo Institute of Technology website. An article promoting The Creative Community & Social Research Centre (CCSI) interested me. I contacted the author, Dr. Chris Sparks. I described my background and outlined my thoughts on Irish society and west of Ireland society in particular. I was introduced to Dr. John Pender and the research question as outlined was formulated.

3.3 Theoretical framework and research process

A literature review is an assessment of a body of research that addresses a research question. A literature review identifies what is already known about an area of study. It may also identify questions a body of research does not answer and make a case for why further study of research questions is important to a field. It is a research journey which starts with framing the question.

The process is *iterative*, that is, as understanding of the subject deepens, the researcher will return to earlier steps to rethink, refine, and rework your literature review (Garson and Lillvik 2012) who describe the literature review as a journey.

As outlined in the previous section the research question was formulated and this allowed the research process to begin.

As the reader is aware my background was in the commercial sector and therefore I needed to reacquaint myself with all of the theorists from my UCG/NUIG sociology course. Dr. John Pender introduced me to a host of writers and theorists who had written academic publications and books of note in the intervening years.

I acquainted myself with writers such as Giddens (1986), Walzer (1983), Etzioni (1988), Oldenburg (1989), Anderson (1991), Putnam (2000), Florida (2002), Lukes (2005), Daly (2007). In addition, as a registered student, I had access to a range of journals on line through the IT Sligo Library: Jstor, Emerald, Ebrary, Irish Times Archive databases were all searched. The library itself while having a number of publications which mentioned social capital in the text has, apart from Putnam (2000), no publications devoted to the topic. Thanks to advice from Dr. John Pender, the SAGE data base, as mentioned elsewhere, opened up for free for four weeks in October 2010 and this allowed a large amount of high quality academic publications to be downloaded and researched over the next nine months. The SAGE files, more than any other source, provided the backbone of the literature review.

In tandem with getting reacquainted with current sociology theory and developing my knowledge of social capital I realised that survey work would be part of the research process. A survey of the entire adult population of County Sligo was not feasible without the assistance of a large group of people so a sample of the target population would be required. Sarantakos (1998, pp.139-141) defines sampling as the processes of choosing the units of population which are to be included in the study.

As Sarantakos (1998) points out, small scale sampling with limited resources such as time, manpower and money will challenge the ideals of validity and reliability. Probability sampling with its strict probability rules concerning equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected for the sample is beyond the resources and scope of most researchers believes Sarantakos (1998) who recommends non-probability sampling as an acceptable alternative. Non-probability sampling makes no strict claim on representativeness. It is generally left up to the researcher or the interviewer to decide which sample units should be chosen. Non-probability sampling lends itself to exploratory research, observational research and qualitative research, all of which feature strongly in this study. Procedures used in non-probability sampling include “purposive or judgmental sampling where the researcher purposely chooses subjects who in their opinion are thought to be relevant to the research topic” (Sarantakos 1998, p.152). Quota sampling is where the researcher sets a quota on the number of respondents to be chosen from specific groups of people within the target population. Finally Sarantakos (1998) points out that sampling has a place in qualitative as well as in quantitative research methods and sensibly recommends that, particularly in one-to-one interviews, once the point is reached where no new data or information is gained from additional interviews, then it can be assumed that a representative sample has been achieved.

As the process of reviewing the literature associated with social capital unfolded it became clear that, it would take two years to review the full range of topics from all sources.

In this section dealing with the theoretical framework, an outline of sources were used to build up a body of knowledge which formed the literature review were described. The information contained in the literature review in turn gives direction and form to the research process. A major part of the research process involves quantitative survey work.

Two research programmes were needed to compute the results from the quantitative survey, *Polldaddy* and *SPSS* (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), both of which were part of the research process. These are described in the next sections.

3.3.1 *Polldaddy*

As is common with students engaging in qualitative research for first time, data collection and analysis is a step into the unknown. As is well known by business students, price is only one component of the decision to buy a product: reliability and quality, as well as backup and supports are important. When researching for a suitable package for creating the quantitative survey, *Polldaddy* was picked because of its connections to IT Sligo and *Wordpress*. *Wordpress* is a free and open source blogging tool and a content management system. As a novice in the area of survey work, this researcher had to self-learn the characteristics of data collection using analytical packages. As a registered student of IT Sligo I had access to the student mail. From time to time a request to answer a survey would appear among the many emails: invariably the package used was *Polldaddy*. Newspaper articles (Guardian 2010) were high in their praise of the *Polldaddy* organisation. A number of students also used the *Survey Monkey* package, but overall both had similar characteristics. Obviously the package had to be selected before the questionnaire could be sent out and the fact that *Polldaddy* allowed free surveys of up to two hundred people with an option to send out a new survey in further blocks of two hundred was a major factor in deciding to choose this package. The fact that the organisation had an office on campus and were prompt in answering any questions I had gave me the confidence that I could proceed with this package. It was anticipated that as many as one thousand people would answer this survey at the time of selection. In addition to allowing up to two hundred people to respond at no cost to the researcher, another feature of the package was that up to ten topics with ten questions in each section, that is, one hundred questions could be asked. This was also a major factor in picking *Polldaddy*, as the survey, as planned, was very wide ranging. The design of the questionnaire was formulated from the topics and issues arising in the literature review in chapter two. It was also necessary to incorporate issues of an economic nature as described in chapter one. Therefore the questionnaire included sections relevant to Sligo society, power in society, trust, community life, values and ethics, equality, politics and questions relating to place of residence, level of income and level of education, age and gender. In addition to these characteristics, *Polldaddy* as part of the *Wordpress* organisation, allowed for a potential link up with a blog set up –see below. However, it transpired this was not used as the blog did not attract much interest. Appendix F gives the full details of the *Polldaddy* survey.

3.3.2 SPSS

This program consists of an integrated series of computer programs which enable the user to read data from questionnaire surveys and other sources, for example, medical and administrative records to manipulate them in various ways and to produce a wide range of statistical analyses and reports, together with documentation. The original version of SPSS was written in the late 1960s by two post-graduate political science students who despaired of having to use the programming language FORTRAN for processing, manipulating and analysing data from questionnaire surveys.

They brought their data to a programmer to produce an aid to help users write commands in plain English. Because of its straightforward English-like command language and impressive user manual, it spread quickly throughout the social (survey) research community. Later SPSS Inc. turned to business rather than social research applications and developed a graphic user interface (GUI), based on drop-down menus rather than syntax (Hall 2014). Most users will have access to SPSS via their college or workplace.

Collecting the responses using *Polldaddy* was the first step, analysing the data was the next part of the process. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a programme provided, free of charge, by IT Sligo for use by students. The programme is loaded on to a designated computer in the college by the technical department. A visit to the Irish site reveals the following:

Centered on analyzing data about people, their opinions, attitudes and behavior our mission to "drive the widespread use of data in decision-making" derives directly from two themes...
(www.spss.ie 2013).

It is safer if the data between *Polldaddy* and SPSS is transferred manually in the opinion of this researcher.

In summary, academic journals, books, newspapers and the internet were all searched for relevant articles, opinions and views. It also became obvious that there was an Irish dimension to the topic and towards the end of this study it emerged that Sligo itself, as reviewed in chapter one, was a worthy case study in its own right.

3.3.3 *Focus groups*

Sarantakos (1998, pp 180- 186) notes that the use of focus groups as an aid to social research is steadily increasing. They are used as a preliminary study leading to qualitative research, as a supplementary source or as part of a multi-method study. In any case, focus groups involve persons specially selected due to their particular interest, expertise or position in community in an attempt to collect information on a number of issues and ultimately facilitate group discussion as a toll for data collection and to further refine a final topic guide. Focus groups can aid both quantitative and qualitative research processes, the optimum number in a group is ten, notes Sarantakos (1998), who also notes that large groups, rather than a number of small groups, are often used for the sole purpose of cost and therefore the validity and reliability of the outcome suffer.

The *moderator* or *facilitator* presents the focus group with issues and observes and documents how they react both individually and collectively to the topic. A *consensus* view arising out of the group's *reaction* and *interaction* (individuals often argue with each other) will be of interest to the facilitator. Unobtrusive guidance is the hallmark of a good facilitator. Group dynamics come into play and for this reason a good recording system is vital, who said what and *how* (nuance) they said it is hugely important. Even with good equipment, transcription is not always clear. Two or more people talking at the same time can be a problem.

Some voices coming out fainter than others will mean skilful positioning of the recorder is crucial. The researcher should know that he or she has enough groups when repetition comes into play. On the basis that *stratification* (age, gender, sex, and class) will come into play also then the upper range, that is twelve in a group, rather than five might be appropriate. Other issues to be considered are *no-shows* on the day and it is recommended that extra people are invited to allow for this possibility. Two recorders are recommended as recalling the group in the event of a failure of the main recorder can prove difficult. The size of a group can influence the level of emotional involvement of the participants.

Bryman (2004) does not go into specifics, but notes that difficult topics lend themselves to smaller groups and he is wary of large groups generating for instance a *wall of silence*, which can happen if some of the group have no knowledge or no interest in the topic.

Bryman (2004, p.350) uses a variety of studies to illustrate reasons for variations in the number and composition of groups. A typical group by Macnaghten and Jacobs (1997) used eight groups ranging in size from six to ten. The participants were selected by age, ethnicity, gender, occupation, retired people, urban, rural and interestingly (and unusually) each group had *two* sessions. It was not envisaged that this study would require a second round of interviews for either the focus group or the individual interviews. This study used a semi-structured format in which a topic guide was used to make sure nothing was missed. Bryman (2004) is aware of the limitations of focus groups: a huge amount of data can be very quickly produced resulting in many hours of analysis: if the recording is unclear then this compounds the challenge of drawing accurate conclusions. Studies using the same participants for both one-to-one interviews and focus groups can produce very different responses especially for emotional topics. This should not be an issue for this study. Interviewees and focus group members will be separate and the topic is not of a highly emotional nature.

Bloor *et al* (2002) give a detailed guide as to where focus groups fit into a piece of research and highlight the strengths and limitations of the use of focus groups. Bloor *et al* (2002, pp.89-99) summarise the main criteria for the use and effective deployment of focus groups. Focus groups have a less prominent role as a standalone method and are used more as an ancillary method within a multi-method research design. Group norms can hide individual differences, they point out. Focus group research does not provide validation of the findings through *triangulation* but they can deepen and enhance our understanding of the topic.

Bloor *et al* (2002) see the role of the facilitator as one of guidance so as to make the groups stay on the topic and emphasize the need for good preparation in the area of content, venue, time, and an appropriate group makeup. Since the main purpose of focus groups is to access group norms and understandings, there are clear advantages in recruiting participants from existing social groups. For example the level of attendance will be higher as the groups will not want to let each other down. On the other hand, a group composed of strangers will decrease the likelihood of known dominant members imposing their views on the outcome. While the study requires that the entire range of the population under investigation is covered by age, for example, it is important to only have the minimum number of groups needed as a ninety minute group session involving a number of groups could easily produce over one hundred pages of transcript.

The use of virtual focus groups can be cost and time effective and their views can be revisited via email a number of times.

Finally, Bloor *et al* (2002) dwell on focus groups and their place in being the catalyst for the formation of views leading to transformative action by those groups. While a focus group is not the same as a project steering group, in the latter the group controls the execution of the project it can, by its existence and participation in the process influence the outcome of the subject of the study.

When deciding on a methodology for this thesis this researcher took into account the many issues exposed in the literature review. Prior to making contact with any individuals or groups a comprehensive search for similar studies undertaken in Ireland was conducted (Appendix C). The appropriate view was taken as the situation demands, that is, an *epistemological* orientation, or on occasion, an *ontological* orientation was applied.

An understanding of the fundamentals of research is important as outlined below:

Validity, reliability, objectivity and ethics are vital in good research along with precision in measurement and replication but are acknowledged to be difficult if not impossible to achieve under qualitative conditions
(Sarantakos 1993, p.18).

It is also important to realise that credibility is a vital outcome of any research:

Qualitative inquiry means empathetic neutrality with the researcher passionately seeking understanding of the world rather than ephemeral objectivity or a subjectivity that undermines credibility
(Sarantakos 1993, p.46).

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have a place in researching social capital, a mixed method is recommended in studies of this nature. As part of the research design it was decided that focus groups would form a central role in the generation of early insights. “A focus group is a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non threatening environment,” (Krueger & Casey 2000, p.5). Focus groups are an important component of any research process and are purely qualitative in their approach. To fulfill the criteria of reliability and validity, the research process needs other avenues of research to complement, or contradict, the findings of the focus group. Quantitative surveys are one such technique and this will be discussed next.

3.3.4 Quantitative survey

Bryman (2004, p.86) breaks down survey work into two branches: Structured interview (face-to-face or telephone) and a self completion questionnaire (supervised/ postal/ internet).

The advantages of using an email based questionnaire include efficient use of time, anonymity (for the respondent), possibility of a high return rate and standardised questions. “The overriding concern in devising research questions, and deciding what is most important, is that the research should be feasible” (Munn and Drever 2007, p.2) who also generally remark that the researcher must also be aware of the limitations of questionnaires.

Questionnaires are strong on *description* but weak on *explanation and* the information collected can also be superficial, as closed questions are mainly used (p.5). Testing a hypothesis is a more time efficient and more direct way of measuring a view point (p.7). Random sampling is based on the principles of an *equal and independent* chance of being selected. Sample size and getting a *representative view takes* skill (clear, short, easy to understand questions) and preparation (particularly with stratified sampling) with thirty being considered the minimum size, (Munn and Drever 2007). “The margin of uncertainty depends entirely on the size of the sample and not as you might think on the whether the sample is a large proportion of the population” (Munn and Drever 2007, p.16). Question order is also important, begin with general/open questions if possible and leave personal details to the end (p.26). It is vital that the questionnaire is tested:

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that until you have done your [pilot study] questionnaire you will not know how well it works. Only then can the problem of low response rates and misunderstandings with questions be dealt with
(Gilliam 2000, p.42).

“For tests to examine the *association* between samples /answers, such as *correlation*, Pearson’s Correlation is recommended,” (Perry *et al* 2004, p.94). The sample needs to properly reflect the population – it needs to be *unbiased* (Perry *et al*, 2004, p.97). Perry *et al* have concerns about over-reliance on *significance testing* (p.98) and place more emphasis on *reliability analysis* (p.356) using Cronbach’s Alpha, particularly appropriate for questionnaires measuring anxiety, health or happiness. Cronbach’s Alpha is expressed as a score of between 0 and 1.

A score of between .7 and .9 is considered 'high' for instance. The most popular method of testing for internal consistency in the behavioural sciences is coefficient alpha. Coefficient alpha was popularised by Cronbach (1951), who recognised its general usefulness. As a result, it is often referred to as Cronbach's Alpha.

Cronbach (2002) simply states that the alpha formula is one of several analyses that may be used to gauge the reliability of psychological and educational measurements.

This formula was designed to be applied to a two way table of data where rows represent persons and columns represent scores assigned to the person under two or more conditions.

Drost (2011) remarks that coefficients of internal consistency increase as the number of items goes up but only to a certain point. For instance, a 5-item test might correlate .40 with true scores, and a 12-item test might correlate .80 with true scores. Consequently, the individual item would be expected to have only a small correlation with true scores.

The scoring system is usually a scale developed by Likert (1931). Ideally, in a Likert scale question, all of the items would be categorically similar so the summed score becomes a reliable measurement of the particular behavior or psychological trait you are measuring. The scale is balanced on both sides of a neutral option, creating a less biased measurement.

Sarantakos (1998) points to the 'Likert Scale' developed in 1931 which is constructed around a continuum of agreement/disagreement of which subjects are asked to give an opinion. The answer/opinion is given a score typically from 1(strongly agree) to 5(strongly disagree). No opinion/no response is given a score of 3. This is the scoring system used in the quantitative survey in this thesis. While very popular and simple to use, it cannot be assumed that the scale ranging from 1 to 5 is uniform in its progression. People with strong opinions will score at each end of the scale but those with undecided views might waver in a particular direction on a given day, thereby distorting the final result. The reliability of Cronbach's Alpha and the Likert Scale are greatly enhanced by the emergence of analytical tools such as *Polldaddy*, described in section 3.3.1 and the SPSS package as described in section 3.3.2.

Having reviewed all correlation models it was decided to use Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the general hypothesis as outlined in section 3.1. See full analysis of Cronbach's Alpha in Appendix H. See findings in chapter four and discussion of findings, in chapter five.

3.3.5 One-to-one interviews

The use of the internet might only draw responses from certain sections of the population, for instance, younger more affluent sections of the population with access to the internet might reply in relatively large numbers whereas poorer and/or older members might not reply at all. In addition to all of these concerns it is possible that rural areas could be under represented because of internet connectivity issues.

In developing survey questions to test for levels of social capital, a number of key analytical differentiations and considerations are important.

These include recognising that levels of social capital in the population change over time (Harper 2002) and also that distribution of social capital by age, gender, educational attainment, social class and ethnic group will influence responses, Blaxter *et al* 2001 (cited in Harper 2002) place particular emphasis on age as an agent of change. Also “Young people’s civic and social participation may be underestimated due to the nature of the measurement and conceptualisation of the social capital indicators” Deviren and Babb (2005, p.4).

3.3.6 Triangulation

Triangulation is the process of bringing the diverse segments of the research process together and testing one against the other for reliability and validity. Triangulation is defined to be “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.126).

Reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness, rigour, and the quality of qualitative modelling. One of the tried and tested methods in social science research that ensures reliability and validity of findings resides within the process of triangulation (Denzin 1978).

Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes (Webb *et al* 1996, p.3).

Mason (1996, p.190) suggests that triangulation methods are conceived as a multiple methods approach and it “encourages the researcher to approach research from different angles, and to explore their intellectual puzzles in a rounded and multi-faceted way.”

Therefore, this research includes information from qualitative research (interviews & focus groups), quantitative research (surveys) and documentary evidence such as journals, official government and Non Governmental Organization (NGO's) reports, policy documents and various newspaper articles.

Triangulation in summary can only happen when theory becomes practice.

3.3.7 Mixed Method and Summary of Theoretical Process

The mixed method research process mentioned (Krueger & Casey 2000) previously add a further dimension to the triangulation approach and as signposted in chapter two this approach will be use in this methodology.

The essential goal of mixed methods research is to tackle a given research question from any relevant angle, making use where appropriate of previous research and/or more than one type of investigative perspective. Sometimes referred to as mixed methodology, multiple methodology or multi-methodology research, mixed methods research offers you the best of both worlds: the in-depth, contextualized, and natural but more time-consuming insights of qualitative research coupled with the more-efficient but less rich or compelling predictive power of quantitative research. These approaches are far more comprehensive than attacking a problem from only one point of view and, with the emergence of strategies and tools for blending these different types of data, allow for the crossing of disciplinary boundaries like never before.

This section framed the theory: it informed the reader of the evolving nature of research. The advantages of focus groups, surveys and one-to-one interviews were highlighted. The emergence of various computer packages over the decades was highlighted and the results that can be achieved when all the tools available to the modern researcher were described. The next section applies the theory.

3.4 From theory to application

3.4.1 Sligo Focus Group

As outlined in the case studies in Appendix C, the use of focus groups is an important part of the information gathering process. A framework appropriate to the study of social capital in County Sligo was devised as an aid to establish the level of social capital as it exists at present and how it has changed over time.

I registered as a student in November 2009. By the spring of 2010 an extensive, if basic, knowledge of the topics that encompass the concept of social capital had emerged. It was time to test the knowledge gained from the literature review to date on real people. As previously outlined focus groups are considered to be ideal for testing and confirming ideas and concepts. With the end of academic year 2009/10 approaching it was decided to hold a focus group session. A number of factors needed to be present for the focus group session to be successful.

Following best practice, a maximum of ten people would make up the group. The group would be drawn from all strands of Sligo society. Balance, along with a high degree of *representativeness*, was the key to getting the maximum amount of reliable and valid information from the minimum amount of people. It was obvious that attempting to get the required ten people to come voluntarily to a meeting for ninety minutes, at an agreed time would be a challenge. As mentioned, the focus group needed to be held before the college year finished, so the start of June 2010 was deemed to be the last possible week for the group to come together. The venue selected was IT Sligo as this was a neutral venue regardless of the final makeup of the group. The college authorities were approached and a suitable room was identified and provisionally booked. The room needed a table capable of seating up to eleven people: ten participants and the researcher. It needed to be out of earshot of adjoining rooms and passageways with no possibility of an echo. A room was identified which suited the requirements and which would easily be found by the participants as they were not regular visitors to the college. IT Sligo were accustomed to students holding interviews which needed to be recorded and had recording equipment for such purposes. The recording equipment was booked for a range of dates. As recommended in the literature review a Dictaphone was bought locally in Sligo as backup and tested to ensure familiarity with the equipment.

In tandem with the arranging of the place, date and time, the list of participants had to be drawn up. As was apparent from the literature review no reliable database of community groups exists in Ireland, and County Sligo was no exception.

A local directory of community organisations had been published by Sligo Community Forum (2006) but as is often the case with such initiatives the publication was a once off and therefore quickly out of date. It did however provide the basis of drawing up a possible list of groups who might like to send a representative to participate. The first difficulty was that the people in the directory were often not the officers of the organisations listed anymore so goodwill was required to make contact with the current officers and this was generally forthcoming. The directory also had the shortcoming of not having large *mainstream* organisations on its listings. The contacts for these organisations had to be sourced elsewhere, usually via their website. The criteria for inclusion on the short list were drawn up. The organisations needed to have a large membership or at least be clearly representative a large section of the population.

Given that this researcher was working alone with no resources, the focus group needed to be a success as recalling this group or setting up more groups would be beyond the capacity of the interviewer.

Therefore great care was needed in selection of the participants. The final approach taken was to conduct a focus group of eight people, many of who represented the principle sporting, farming and social organisations in County Sligo. Rural and urban, young and old, well off and disadvantaged, native and non Irish national were identified as groups which needed to be represented. It was clear from the literature review that the different *strands* of the Irish democratic process needed to be represented, and while politicians were not asked, a representative of the Sligo Leader Partnership Company was included on the list. A list of eighteen groups satisfied at least one of the criteria for an invitation to participate. Many of the groups requested a copy of the topic guide and indication of what other groups might be participating and these were emailed to everybody. Preliminary phone calls were made to the final list of people and organisations, and the last week in May emerged as a suitable week for the majority of candidates. Out of the eighteen (Appendix D) on the list, ten groups were identified as being particularly important to ensure maximum performance from the group. The literature review noted that normally a researcher could expect a lot of refusals and even the people who promised to come might not bother turning up.

This did not happen with this group as everybody wanted to talk about Sligo society and everybody who said they would come did arrive. The final list of representatives included people from the Gaelic Athletic Association (County Sligo), Irish Farmers Association (Sligo), Sligo Leader Partnership, Age Action (Sligo), a representative from Cranmore Residence Association, a Polish housewife and care worker, Sligo Credit Union and a retired journalist who sat on a number of community groups' boards. The only group who could not attend, due to a clash of dates, was Sligo Travellers' Group.

It needs to be noted that getting immigrant organisations to participate in this and other strands of the research process proved difficult, and while the Polish person who did participate did prove informative, it was due to the fact that the researcher knew this person that a representative from the *non native* population participated. Monday, 31st May 2010, was selected as the date and 11 a.m. was the time suitable for everybody. The room was confirmed and direction signs were erected on the morning. On the morning I greeted everyone as they arrived and introduced everybody.

As it turned out the group was very knowledgeable about Sligo life and most people knew each other already. The college tape recorder did not materialise on the morning of the interview. My own Dictaphone proved to be more than adequate for the group. A quick sound test with the group before we started gave everyone the confidence to proceed.

Issues identified in the literature review formed the topic guide (Appendix E) to be used in the focus group were read out and. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants and also to allow their observations to be taped and possibly used later for triangulation with the other segments of the methodology, a volunteer consent form was signed by all the participants, this is also included in Appendix F, Section1. Finally, before the session proper started, everyone introduced themselves on tape. The tape was then turned off. A new section of tape was started and by prior agreement nobody said their name and the researcher did not ask them a question by name. The participants were identified by their voices for transcription purposes. It should be noted that the participants were evenly split between male and female. The session went smoothly with all participants getting equal speaking time.

All preliminaries completed and the session started with a question to each participant in turn. As agreed before the tape was turned on, the researcher would intrude as little as possible and work with hand signals and nods as required to give direction as so as to make maximum use of the ninety minutes allotted. The focus group (Sligo Community Focus Group 2010) discussion on topics arising in the literature review formed part of the framework in constructing the online survey questionnaire. The participants in the survey remain anonymous at all times. No personal details were asked for and the organisations contacted sent adult participants only. The participants were informed that in order to protect their privacy they would be known only by a capital letter when it came to quoting their views on a topic. The main issues arising from the topic guide were addressed. At the end of the session everybody was thanked and tea or coffee was offered but it was coming up to lunch time and people needed to get away. The tapes and transcripts of the focus group and one-to-one interviews are in the possession of the researcher as are their identities.

3.4.2 Sligo quantitative survey

Immediately following the focus group interview the remainder of the summer of 2010 was spent transcribing the contents of the tape. The next step would be setting up an internet based quantitative survey. The answers to the questions posed in the focus group, combined with new issues not previously apparent, were used to construct a questionnaire. The original plan was to proceed to launching the quantitative survey however an unexpected opportunity presented itself in September 2010.

The SAGE Corporation opened up their database for free accesses for four weeks. This was an opportunity which was too good to miss and the entire four weeks were spent scanning (visually) the hundreds of documents with social capital content. By October it was obvious that a vast amount of information was unloaded. This researcher requested a year off to analyse the documents and add them into the literature review. This put the quantitative survey back a year.

By the autumn of 2011, armed with a vast amount of new information, the processes of constructing a questionnaire recommenced. As mentioned, *Polldaddy* and other similar providers of survey packages were investigated. By the end of the year, the format and content of the questionnaire was finalised.

Sligo Credit Union agreed to provide space on its website. A pilot study was undertaken and alterations completed. Everything was set up by January 2012 and ready to go in February 2012.

Because of cost and time constraints it was not possible to carry out mass sampling of the general public on a face-to-face basis, a target of one hundred was deemed to be sufficient. The topics, as they emerged, from the literature review and the focus group formed the basis for the questions posed in the quantitative survey.

The groups of participants chosen in the face-to-face survey mirrored the societal makeup of the region as per the demographical data highlighted in chapter one. The respondents who went directly to the Polldaddy site were, by their nature, random. The face-to-face respondents, while targeted for certain attributes, that is, a balanced mix of society were individually random respondents.

Having already completed a level 8 degree in NUIG, I had come into contact with a number of graduates from NUIG, UCC, UCD and NUIM. I got to know them and stayed in contact and became friends with them. When I needed to test a pilot version of the questionnaire I was able to call on a small number of trusted, experienced, and qualified people before putting it up on the internet so as to eliminate inconsistent and ambiguous questions.

After feedback from the pilot survey a final list of questions was drawn up (Appendix F). The survey consists of 57 questions covering 7 topics as signaled in chapter two, section 2.4. In addition 3 categories covering level of income (6 sub categories), place of residence by population size (5 sub categories), and a personal profile (12 categories). In order to standardise the format throughout all questions, 5 fields (strongly agree, agree no opinion/not relevant, disagree, and strongly disagree) were used. The questions were therefore of the *closed* variety. Ninety six people responded to the questionnaire over a six month period from December 2011 to May 2012.

Using a similar methodology as outlined in other studies of note (see Appendix C) it was decided that a well known organisation with a strong membership base in Sligo should be asked to co-operate and allow their site to be used so as to give the study some status and therefore highlight its importance.

The case studies of relevance included 'Bowling together in the Capital', 'Social Capital in County Cavan', 'Policy & Practice: Context for Education & Training for Rural Adults in the Republic of Ireland', 'Relying on the few?

A Study of Voluntary and Community Participation in County Clare’, ‘ADOPT: A Development Model designed for the Irish Local Government’. ‘In Each Other’s Shadow: What has been the impact of human and social capital on life satisfaction in Ireland?’, ‘Irish pubs as the third place’, ‘Volunteerism in the Irish youth worker sector (with specific reference to Sligo Town and Limerick City as case studies)’, ‘Grange: A social and economic profile’. All of these have questionnaires, one-to-one interviews and focus groups in their methodology.

One case study sent out a questionnaire using a well known website and many of the case studies set up multiple focus groups. All of the groups were conscious of the need to involve as many sections of the society as possible.

The questionnaire used the *Polldaddy* organisation (see 3.3.1 for full description) for layout and data collection purposes (see Appendix F, Section 2). The next stage involved selecting an organisation that was well known and trusted in County Sligo who also had a large membership and used the internet as a regular method of communication, a list of potential organisations was drawn up (see Appendix D).

Sligo Credit Union with over twelve hundred members was approached and they agreed to give the survey their full co-operation. The link was passed on to the participating organisation who then acted as a collection point. It was this organisation that sent out the questionnaire and not the researcher. The survey was posted on their website in late February 2012.

By early March it was apparent that people were not going to participate to any significant degree. The internet method was not going to work. Taking a lead from methods highlighted in the literature review and also case studies in Appendix C it was decided to leave the internet option open but to go out on to the streets of Sligo town and countryside and meet people where ever they normally gathered and ask them to fill in the questionnaire. In order to counteract some possible skewing of data a *mass observation approach* was deployed (Mass Observation 2009).

The researcher approached people at random on the streets of Sligo or in places such as financial institutions, railway and bus stations, shops, IT Sligo, farmers' marts, housing estates and other commonly frequented locations. This gave a qualitative dimension to the study as people invariably had a comment to make on the questions posed.

Approximately seventy of the ninety six respondents completed the survey in this way. A second group of IT Sligo students were asked to participate using the internet and this produced a number of responses from mainly female students, male students cooperated willingly once they were approached face-to-face. To reduce the chances of bias or the skewing of data no location yielded no more than fifteen responses. Age and gender were kept broadly in balance in the under twenty five category although female respondents outnumbered males by approximately 2:1 in the older age brackets. It is acknowledged that many of the younger population (under thirty) were students in IT Sligo and this *skews* the results somewhat, young people who left school and went to work or who were unemployed could very possibly have different views on society.

All direct responses, that is people who used the *Polldaddy* link, were automatically recorded on the *Polldaddy* database (see Appendix F, Section 3). The face-to-face respondents were manually imputed into the *Polldaddy* site so as to standardise all sources. The *Polldaddy* results were transferred to the SPSS statistical analysis programme for a fuller description, all data was coded so as to allow the programme to operate to its fullest extent.

Why did the internet survey in Appendix C seem to go without a hitch and this survey only produced a small amount of responses? The difference between all the surveys in Appendix C and this one is that in the other case studies the survey work was largely face-to-face conducted with a team of people and a budget. This researcher had to work entirely on his own with no budget and only goodwill as a resource. The sole case study using the internet was Dublin based which had accesses to potentially one million people and it received less than four hundred responses. County Sligo and possibly surrounding counties had approximately fifty thousand potential respondents.

The reason this questionnaire has fifty seven questions, divided into seven topics, is a recognition that no one question or set of questions could adequately or reliably answer a highly subjective topic, that is asking people to quantify their feelings on society over time *and* express that in a score. Therefore the *overall* score is the best indicator.

Where practical, files could be split using the SPSS *Split file* option, but this researcher decided not to produce a large amount of data which could clutter the central question and the subsequent findings. The varied socio economic characteristics were acknowledged by using as many varied locations as possible.

In order to summarise or condense both variables and questions into manageable groups without losing any data a spread of topics covering all aspects of life is recommended (Harper 2002: Healy 2005b: O'Doherty 2007).

Demographic factors are stronger than economic factors (Healy 2005b) and this was borne out by the results (Appendix I). For summary of results see findings chapter five.

In summary taking into account the vast amount of combinations and permutations that the data arising from this survey produced, a pragmatic approach was taken. Miller *et al* (2002, p.174) note that ten variables will produce fifty two relationships that can be very difficult to clearly explain. The patterns that *underlie the correlations between groups of variables* will give a clearer picture concludes Miller *et al* (2002).

3.4.3 Grouping and coding of answers (using asterisks)

In addition to the systems of classification outlined above this researcher, again taking a lead from Millar *et al* 2002, (p.174), also devised a system designed to *group* answers by *strength of response* by coding answers using asterisks thereby highlighting the clear cut responses and also the more ambiguous answers.

As explained below in more detail below *grouping* of answers is the key to making the vast amount of data associated with the quantitative survey *readable*. To achieve the goal of making the results easily comprehensible the data was grouped by:

- Topic (Healy b 2004)
- Strength of response (Millar *et al* 2002)

In Appendix G, the *Polldaddy* and SPSS frequencies report outlines the categories of answers as described below. The number of asterisks denote the code and the number in brackets denotes the number of questions falling into that category: fifty seven in all. The purpose of this exercise is to act as an aid to summarising the findings.

Responses where 60% people or more either strongly agreed/ agreed or strongly disagreed/ disagreed with a statement are denoted**** (33). Responses where 60 % people or more agreed or disagreed when the *no opinion/not relevant* responses are added in are denoted*** (12). The remaining questions which are deemed ambiguous, that have no clear pattern in their answers are denoted** (10).

Two scale questions are *negatively worded* (Coakes and Ong 2011, p.49). Question 53 '*Local Politicians are people I admire*' and Question 54 '*National politicians are people I admire*' produced a predictable high *Disagree* and *Strongly disagree* response.

The alternative was to ask a *leading question* such as *I don't admire politicians* thereby producing a Strongly Agree or Agree response. Questions 53 and 54 are denoted*(2).

Q.44 *Undocumented migrants deserve citizenship* also produced a high *Disagree* and *strongly disagree* but is not categorised as a negatively worded question and therefore is not recorded as such.

3.4.4 One-to-one interviews

In order to research, in-depth, the issues arising from the focus group and taking into account comments made in The National Economic and Social Forum (2003, p.4) on how they *would* conduct research on social capital, a series of semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in relevant organisations.

Bryman (2004, pp.318-343) deals extensively with interviewing using qualitative research.

Bryman (2004, p.319) rules out ethnography (in its traditional meaning) since it “entails an extended period of participant observation which is very disruptive for researchers because of sustained absence from work and/or family life.” Similarly an unstructured approach to interviews could lead the researcher into areas not directly relevant to the research topic. Quantitative interviewing on the other hand is very narrow and gives the interviewees no room to express what could be an important opinion or view point. The *semi-structured interview* is one where the researcher has a list of questions to ensure that specific topics will be covered. This is the *interview or topic guide* and all topics listed on this guide were being covered.

In addition to making sure all the key topics are covered, it is necessary to ensure that they are addressed in the correct order so as to ensure that there is a *flow* to the in interview. Where possible, this researcher interviewed people that have worked in the same position or in the same type of organisation for at least the last ten years so as to get a measure of change in society. Bryman (2004) makes references to *life history* and *oral history* interviews and their usefulness in documenting past events in peoples life's especially if can be backed up with items such as diaries and correspondence.

Interviews can prove to be unproductive if certain conditions are either present or absent. Bell (1993, p.95) warns of the dangers of interviewers who have strong, pre-conceived views, on a topic being biased.

Where this comes across in the interview it could lead to an outright personality clash leading to very poor data forthcoming. Awareness of one's bias is one thing, but controlling it is another matter (Bell 1993).

Kvale (1996) lists qualification criteria for an interviewer: knowledgeable (about the subject), structured thinking, (clear and simple) sensitive, open, steering, critical (where necessary), remembering (what was said previously), and interpreting (clarification where necessary) all of which needs a balanced and ethnically sensitive approach.

In addition to these criteria, the interviewer should use a range of question types as necessary. Questions can be: introducing, follow-up, probing, specifying, direct, indirect, and interpreting. The use of silence is sometimes a good way of allowing the interviewee time to clarify their answers. General questions are avoided as this leads to the interview drifting off into irrelevant ground. Overall, it's important for both the interviewer and interviewee to be relaxed and focused, interruptions are to be avoided and this includes background noise. Bryman (2004) draws attention to the use of sampling as a technique. Because of time and cost constraints it was proposed to target people from the list below and on the basis that the opening questions asked from each person will be the same, common themes and answers will emerge in sufficient consistency to give this study reliable and valid data. As the interview proceeds the questions will become more targeted towards the person's area expertise.

Because of the long term (a twenty year period) nature of this study people who have worked in the particular organisation or very similar organisations were deemed to be the most appropriate interviewees. Bryman (2004) makes numerous references to the *feminist* approach with its connections to a deeper meaning to answers. In this regard the lists of interviewees were as gender neutral as possible when conducting one-to-one interviews and in focus group session also.

By interviewing people from various organisations an element of *triangulation* is present in the research thereby increasing levels of reliability and validity. The process of selection setting up the interviews was similar to the focus groups except that the interviews were usually at the person's place of work, or a place of their choosing. As with the focus group participants, a confidentiality document was signed and afterwards all interviews were transcribed.

A cross section of individuals with a connection to the following organisations were interviewed;

- Religious/Clergy.
- Western Development Commission.
- Local TDs, members of the Senate, county councilors and MEPs.
- Leader/Partnership companies.
- Sports administrator.
- Youth worker.
- Community Activists.

Eight people, all holding high ranking positions in their organisations and all with many years experience in their fields were drawn from the list above.

Finally it was decided to analyse a community in County Sligo from a qualitative perspective (Census 2006 and 2011) and six people, all residents of Grange in north Sligo were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. County development plans covering the last decade were also analysed to give a quantitative dimension to the research.

3.4.5 Blogs

As previously noted in the literature review, the arrival of the internet age has changed the way we send and receive information and interact with each other dramatically. In an attempt to tap into this vast stream of communication, this researcher created a Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/JohnDurkan1>). Twitter is a growing online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them (Twitter 2013). Created in October 2011 the *posts* concentrated on following mainly Irish organisations with strong links to the promotion of sustainability and social inclusion. In addition to following others this researcher sent out regular blogs with social capital as a theme, a small but high quality group began following the site. The followers were mainly from Ireland but some from Northern Ireland and USA. In addition to opening a twitter account a social networking bog was created. (<https://irishsocialcapital.wordpress.com>). This site was linked to the Twitter account and provided another avenue for the public to give opinions and comment on the topic of social capital. As was the case with the Twitter account, the traffic was small and served to illustrate how difficult it is to get the attention of large numbers of people for topics of a social nature.

3.5 Limitations

The limitations in carrying out this research are as follows:

This thesis cannot be taken to be generalisable to all of Ireland: it reflects the specific social and economic conditions in County Sligo at a specific time in its history.

An awareness of personal sympathy bias towards disadvantaged people groups in particular and equally antipathy towards people who command positions of power was noted. I overcame personal bias by training myself not to interrupt the interviewees. I had a well defined list of topics laid out before I met the interviewees.

I researched a range of organisations and only picked the ones with the most relevant background (Appendix D).

The difficulties in the interpretation of issues arising from both the qualitative and quantitative sections of the research are recognised. Extensive research at the literature stage left the researcher well placed to deal with all responses. As mentioned already a well defined topic list helped to lessen subsequent interpretation issues.

Lack of resources in the area of organising all the focus groups, one-to-one interviews and getting enough respondents to complete a questionnaire was a challenge.

The analysis of Grange, County Sligo, while displaying many of the characteristics of a 'within case study,' cannot be classified as a full within case study as it is not a totally stand alone study and the researcher did not have the time or resources to fully explore all the unique social characteristics of Grange: a typical limitation of this piece of research. In summary while 'Grange' is of a level 9 standard it could turn into a level 10 with more time and resources.

The researcher is aware that the period being studied coincides with four census periods. Central Statistics Office reports from this period will be the main source of secondary data.

Although I lived in Mayo, I worked in Sligo in local hotel and organised my interviews around my free time and days off whenever possible. Initially when I started this research in 2009 I was still working full-time and it was not possible to work and study at the same time. The recession in the hotel business saw my hours decreasing from forty hours to twenty four in the winter time. I supplemented by income by signing on for the jobseeker' allowance.

A decrease in my hours meant less money and this in turn meant that coming up with college fees was more challenging. In the academic year 2010/11 I took a year out from college. This had two advantages: I did not have to pay fees that year so the period that I had to come with fees was three years rather than two. SAGE publications opened up their data base for one month in September/October 2010 for free.

I downloaded over two hundred publications on the topic of social capital and used the gap year to read them all and include them in my literature review. This helped in overcoming possible limitations as described above.

The library in IT Sligo, while not containing an extensive catalogue of relevant literature on social capital, was adequate for all other research needs.

3.6 Ethical considerations

In today's cynical world, ethics is occasionally talked about but seems to be regularly ignored. "The modern researcher must confront the ethics and politics of research, the age of value free inquiry for the human disciplines is over," (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.6). Compiling a report or piece of research using tried and tested research methods, as already discussed, is one aspect of ethics but publishing the findings in full can also create a dilemma (Becker 1964). Will full disclosure of facts harm an individual or group, especially if the researcher was given information in confidence? (Bynner and Stribley 1978).

Systematic considerations of ethical problems in reporting are outlined:

First, the social scientist has multiple loyalties: to those who have allowed or sponsored the study, to the source from which research funds were obtained, to the publisher of the research report, to the other social scientists, to society itself and to the community or group studied and its individual members...three kinds of harm can be done by a sociological research report: It may reveal secrets, violate privacy or destroy or harm someone's reputation.

(Ficher and Kolb (1953) cited in Bynner and Stribley 1978, p.327).

From the comments and quotes outlined above, ethics and all its inbuilt dilemmas are an issue that must be at the forefront of one's mind at all times especially when dealing with disempowered groups (Hood, Mayhall and Oliver, 1999).

Keeping in mind the caveats outlined above, the course of the research the following guidelines were adhered to and only adults were interviewed.

Anonymity and privacy of the participants was respected. Appropriate measures were taken to store research data in a secure manner, in accordance with the provision of the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003). Only one dictaphone was used for interviews. This was purchased by me and tested before each interview to ensure perfect working order. All interviews were on a one-to-one basis in a private location out of earshot of any third parties. The Dictaphone remained in my possession at home at all times.

Professional competence in relation to integrity, respect for human rights, diversity, and sensitivity of the research participants was ensured by asking the participants to sign a confidentiality form (Appendix F). If a person being interviewed requested that a door in the interview room remained open while the interview was in session, this was granted.

3.7 Timeline and key actions

See Appendix J.

3.8 Summary and critique

The debate on whether social science should be scientific with an adherence to facts or be more creative and less concerned with hard facts comes down to two methodologies. Quantitative research uses numerical values as its basis for measuring all aspects of human opinion and feeling and is guided by rules. Qualitative research on the other hand with its emphasis on human feelings relies on the interviewer or facilitator to interpret these feelings is much broader but open to misinterpretation. Durkheim was aware that bias and preconceptions are the enemies of social sciences. These conditions can apply to both qualitative and quantitative approaches as if an inappropriate starting point is taken then the wrong conclusions can be the outcome unless of course the researcher is willing to realise the mistake. Triangulation is employed to ensure testing the various approaches against each other for flaws. Triangulation only works well if the information supplied from the various outcomes is itself valid and reliable.

The aims of this research, as outlined in section 3.1, with its emphasis on the high moral ground are themselves suspect. Did this researcher pick this subject and more importantly this particular approach as a result of personal experiences?

The answer is 'yes' and therefore trying to eradicate built in bias and preconceived notions of this researcher took a very long time, possibly two years.

This thesis was set in the early years of a truly new area, that of the internet, an age in which humans began to communicate, or not, with each other in new ways. Blogs and internet based surveys were experimented with in this piece of research on a scale not encountered before. This researcher has doubts about this type of research and was proven to be correct (I believe). Internet based research, just like social research itself, can be a part of the mix but cannot be the sole basis of forming an opinion: face-to-face contact is vital.

The three avenues of research used: focus groups, quantitative survey and one-to-one interviews all three have one thing in common, they were all conducted in the middle of an economic and social crises in Ireland. If the research took place five years earlier the sentiments expressed might be very different, so caution is needed when drawing conclusions.

3.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter outlines the research methods used and justifies why it was important to use a number of approaches. While the limitations as noted above are recognised, the use of triangulation methodology produced reliable and valid data. The adherence to high standards of research practice ensured that ethics and best practice were upheld. The findings in the next chapter puts detail on the theoretical research as outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

The findings of this thesis are the culmination of an economic and social overview of County Sligo in chapter one and an extensive literature review in chapter two resulting in the development of a customised methodology to test research questions outlined earlier in chapter three. This chapter seeks to unpack the main findings of the mixed method approach deployed. Starting with a focus group, moving on to a quantitative survey, and finishing with one-to-one interviews, this chapter presents the insights and evidence provided by a myriad number of actors and respondents. To undertake this task, this chapter is organised as follows:

Section 4.1 summarises the fundamental characteristics of social capital and its relevance to Sligo society.

Section 4.2 dwells on socio-economic aspects of County Sligo in 4.2.1. The characteristics of Sligo borough and similarly rural Sligo are described in 4.2.2.

Section 4.3 moves to the findings of the literature review. Section 4.3.1 deals with defining and describing social capital. Section 4.3.2 focuses on Irish and Sligo characteristics. Section 4.3.3 deals with measurement aspects of social capital. Section 4.3.4 presents the findings on the places people meet.

Section 4.3 necessarily, provides a distilled assessment of the highly complex and ever expanding literature on the topic of social capital and uncovers a number of macro findings on this phenomenon. Firstly a fundamental finding was that the term *social capital* is almost unknown outside of academic circles. Much of the literature review is devoted to defining social capital and describing its characteristics from an academic viewpoint. As regards Irish and Sligo society it is recognised that the characteristics of social capital are practiced in everyday life but nobody describes it as such. Secondly a large proportion of the literature review is taken up with analysing various pieces of research on the subject of the measurement of social capital. For this reason the findings from the literature review will be reviewed in a section on its own. The findings from the other sections will then be compared and contrasted with those from the academic sphere.

Section 4.4 and subsections outline the insights generated by focus group attendees. Section 4.5 and subsections unpack the findings of the quantitative survey.

Section 4.6 and subsections move on to the one-to-one targeted interviews in which a number of leaders in their fields give their views on Irish and Sligo society past and present. The topics discussed were based on issues arising from the literature review.

Section 4.7 and sub sections highlight the findings arising from the methodology chapter, focusing in particular on the lessons learnt from applying the theory and turning it into practice. Section 4.8 draws attention to areas where the literature review differs from the findings at local level in Sligo. Section 4.9 summaries the principle issues arising in the chapter. Finally section 4.10 draws conclusions and sets the scene for a discussion of the findings in chapter five.

4.1 The fundamental characteristics of social capital and its relevance to Sligo society

Liberal democracy is supported by three pillars: democratic government which provides public capital, the market place which generates market capital and civil society which promotes social capital (Carnegie 2010).

Putnam (2000) goes further and reminds us that while social capital is about connections among individuals it is not to be confused with human capital which is concerned only with the properties of individuals.

Social capital has particular relevance in Sligo and Ireland at the present time because the concept is rooted in the community and voluntary sector, a sector that is left to pick up the pieces of the ruinous Celtic Tiger era and its aftermath (The Wheel 2011).

President Higgins at his inaugural address in 2011 spoke of the need to restore trust, a core characteristic of social capital and the need to reconnect society and ethics.

Social capital in an Irish and Sligo context is not just a vague academic concept: it is real and needs to be constantly monitored. A functioning society will have all the characteristics needed to promote social capital. Like the canary in the coal mine who will die if gas gets into the air, equally the death of social capital in society is a sure sign that there is 'poison' in the system.

Social capital is particularly relevant to Sligo because one of the pillars of liberal democratic society, the government, foisted singularly unsuitable economic policies on Sligo and left the county with one of the highest debt levels in the country.

This in turn wrongly promoted excessive investment by individuals in the property sector which impacted on both market capital, on the individuals themselves and civil society in general.

Finally this thesis while set against a period in which Ireland and Sligo needs to redefine themselves is also conducted against a background of a rapidly expanding social media with an increasingly ‘virtual’ aspect to society in which people no longer connect directly like they used to.

Despite the influence of the internet age the core human need of the company of other humans and the need to belong and connect rises above all else (Ravehill 2008). We need to feel good about ourselves and be part of something bigger (Jackson and O’Doherty 2012).

Tonnies (1887) made much of the differences between rural and urban society. Rural society is characteristic by co-operation and communication whereas urban society is all about the individual and self promotion. One of the more surprising findings of this thesis is just how diverse even a small county like Sligo can be. As outlined in sections 1.6. to 1.9 inclusive the socio-economic drivers of rural Sligo with its largely homogeneous society are a world away from the much more diverse populations of Sligo town.

Finally a major overall finding is that there is a lot more to researching social capital than might be first assumed. Normally the literature review could be completed for a topic of this nature in one year. The literature review for this thesis took two years, reflecting the complexity of the topic of social capital.

The next section and subsections go into further analysis of chapter one.

4.2 The socio-economic characteristics of County Sligo

Sligo is not particularly deprived in comparison to the counties surrounding it (maps.pobal.ie) and appears to more closely follow the fortunes of Irish cities rather than the rural and border areas of Ireland. There is a marked difference between west County Sligo and the more urban east county Sligo containing as it does Sligo town. For this reason Sligo borough and environs are studied separately from rural Sligo.

Sections 1.6 to 1.9 outline the methodology behind the constructing of County Development Plans. One starting finding is just how impersonal the plans are.

While all County Development Plans are written in the same language, Sligo County Development Plans are strangely vague and aspirational and make more references to reopening railway lines that were constructed for different social, economic and in the case of County Sligo geopolitical conditions. New roads leading to Dublin are of more interest to planners than the promotion of tourism for instance.

4.2.1 Sligo borough and environs

The findings from chapter one regarding Sligo borough and environs are that it has undergone much change in the period of this study. Using Sligo's Gateway status as a basis for comparison between itself and towns of similar population and status around the country Sligo town comes out just average in many categories such as the unemployment rate but also in new business formation.

Conversely its health and wellbeing score is below the Gateway average. Overall the Sligo scores are similar to the other Gateway towns.

When it is ranked using unemployment and migration patterns as a measure it is ranked 258 out of 300 towns above the population of 1,500. The development plans for Sligo borough paint a picture of a much more adult based population over the last twenty years with many young foreign nationals arriving for employment. The other big feature is the loss of almost nine hundred children or nearly thirty per cent of the under fourteen population. Families are deserting Sligo town and if Grange is considered typical then they are heading out of town to the rural districts. As mentioned in chapter one probably the most important economic driver is the effect of the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme, which covered most of the southern and eastern parts of County Sligo and adjoining areas in County Leitrim.

4.2.2 Rural county Sligo

County Sligo as a whole is diverse in terms of its population makeup and the economic drivers that shape that diversity. As stated above Sligo town and its surrounding districts have undergone considerable change in recent years. Rural Sligo has undergone much change also but even there it is not uniform. As shown in the Grange mini plan in chapter one the population of the village has increased significantly over the last twenty years. The most striking finding is that while Sligo town lost almost thirty percent of its under fourteen population, Grange's under fourteen population grew by a similar amount and would grow more if planning laws allowed more houses to be built there.

While Grange is diverse in the makeup of its native Irish population it has relatively few individuals from other parts of the world. Grange is typical of villages to the north of Sligo town who benefit from Sligo towns economic growth but villages in west and south Sligo don't enjoy the spin off from Sligo town to the same extent.

As already noted in chapter one, the border between County Sligo and County Leitrim is also differentiated by a marked change of deprivation levels, as is the Sligo/Mayo border region, while County Sligo as a whole is depicted as being less marginal.

Surprisingly, while County Sligo is described as a border county because of its proximity to the border with Northern Ireland there was almost no mention of its influence on Sligo society and only a brief reference to its economic influence on the north Sligo and the Grange area.

The overall finding of the two subsections is that the characteristics and drivers of change in Sligo town are very different from rural County Sligo although one compliments the other. While the thrust of this thesis is on the social aspects of County Sligo the economic aspects of the county need to be taken into account as well. The next section turns to the fundamentals of the subject at hand.

4.3 Findings generated out of the review of literature - the development of thematics: distilling existing research findings on social capital.

4.3.1 Defining and describing social capital

Social capital is a relatively new topic in sociology: even twenty five years ago it barely featured in discussions about society. That theorists have broken it down into a number of forms, dimensions and strands is a finding. That social capital can have a dark side is a surprising finding. An important finding is that social capital has secondary characteristics, that is, it can positively affect the behaviour of others mainly by establishing norms across society.

Trust, a core component of social capital, never featured in sociological discussions in the past. The exact origins of who coined the term 'social capital' are unclear. That trust is not a concept traditionally associated with sociology is surprising. Trust has become a big topic in society, the fact that the concept has moved into centre stage is significant. The importance of networking has emerged as an important component of mitigating an increasing concentration of power in society. Social capital accrual is itself an issue raising the spectre of the dark side of social capital.

Social capital has a social value, particularly in today's multicultural societies. Relatively prosperous societies like Ireland are a magnet for immigrants from other countries wishing to make a life for themselves. Cities and large towns like Sligo are particularly attractive to immigrants seeking not alone low paid (by Irish standards) jobs but the possibilities of advancement. Social exclusion, isolation and marginalisation are the enemies of social capital formation. Social capital is of particular interest to countries like Ireland which as seen an influx of peoples from many parts of the world. Prior to the period covered by this piece of research Ireland was one of the most homogeneous societies in the world. The scale and speed of the transition from one of the 'whitest' societies in the world to a multicultural society in less than twenty years is a finding.

Social capital has an economic value but exactly how strong the relationship is between the two is debated. In absence of empirical work it's impossible to make a definitive finding on this issue. Central government cannot possibly meet every conceivable need and so the input of individuals and groups is required. High levels of social capital in a society are a sign of the presence of norms, values, a sense of obligation and responsibility. A spirit of reciprocity will also exist under these conditions.

Throughout the literature review there are numerous references to cultural capital and its importance in influencing social capital levels in society. The influence of cultural capital is an underestimated factor in social capital formation. Ireland as a former colony needs to acknowledge its former colonial status and the need to develop policies that include all of its citizens. Those policies need to reflect today's society.

The assumption that wealthier communities automatically have stronger levels of social capital is not necessarily true. Putnam's ranking of the top ten American states only has three states with above average national income. Social capital and wealth are not directly linked.

Engagement between government and the citizens it represents is an essential ingredient of a true democracy. Networking is seen as a core element of social capital. The place of the family within the concept of social capital is the subject of debate. Some writers don't see the family as a core component of social capital but place society as a whole in the centre.

The topic, by its very nature, has an influence on every facet of human interaction. Many writers are sceptical of the importance or even the very existence of social capital and remind us that while social capital cannot be *possessed* by an individual this in fact is exactly what often happens. The need to promote *communitarianism* in society is acknowledged and the difficulties of achieving this goal are also acknowledged.

Chapter two generally concentrates on the myriad characteristics of social capital globally while acknowledging the regional and national aspects of the subject and the Sligo dimension. The literature review reveals that there is no single universally accepted definition of what social capital actually is. Writers debate its links, real or imagined, with economic capital.

The position of the family in society how it influences on social capital formation is debated. Equally how social influences social capital levels. Even the use of *capital* along with *social* is questioned as capital invariably implies an acquisition of something. The myth that social capital is all embracing is debunked with numerous theorists pointing out in particular the *dark side* of bonding social capital. That social capital can have a dark side could be described as one of the more startling findings, whereas *linking* and *bridging* social capital is invariably good. *Bonding* social capital can be inward looking and controlling. Social capital has a *structural* dimension (organisation structure and net work configuration), a *cognitive* dimension (shared codes, language and narratives), and a *relational* dimension (trust, norms, obligations and identification). Social can be viewed as *instrumental*, that is, relationship based and also it can be viewed as *consummatory*, that is, concerned with the promotion of social norms.

It is often the *secondary* or *fallout actions* from individual or group actions that can have the most profound effect on wider society. Stone (2001) distinguishes between *proximal* or direct actions and *distal* or secondary aspects when it comes to assessing the effect of social capital on society. The *rainmaker* effect of social capital may be its strongest point concludes Stone (2001).

Power and who holds it, is a huge issue within communities as it influences the levels and type of social capital in society. DeFillips (2011) is particularly critical of Putnam's (1993) portrayal of social capital as a *win-win* concept in society when the reality is that different sections of society will *bond* to form power bases often at the expense of other sections of society.

The link between politics and social capital levels is also keenly debated. Whereas this writer initially took the view that the community and voluntary sector was something outside of politics various academics point out that individuals and groups need to participate in political debate. Passive membership of organisations or passive views about politics does nothing to promote social capital in society yet many people will happily become paid up members and leave decisions to others. Politicians recognise the value of community input but government institutions on the other hand are less willing to engage with individuals and groups to solve communal problems. Some writers promote the use of the methodology of Asset Based Community Development as a vehicle to promote the educational aspect of community development.

They acknowledge that while this approach has long term benefits problems can be solved quicker by engaging with government agencies.

The attitude of the administrators of government policy is an important factor in influencing participation among the citizens in communities. Civil servants who engage with local residents encourage social capital formation: however over engagement can kill initiative.

Etzioni (1993) calls for the reinvigoration of social and political institutions and the restoration of the balance between rights and responsibilities. This is a call that's as old as democracy itself. This leads to the debate on what constitutes a community. Communities can be rural based, urban based, imagined, virtual, creative and interest based.

The urbanisation of society has, with its fixation on individual advancement, shifted the balance away from the historically important rural based society where co-operation was needed for the community to survive. Even in today's rural communities where farming is still the backbone of the local economy increased mechanisation of farming combined with the commute to the larger towns and cities on a daily basis has eroded traditional values.

As already noted nothing about social capital can be taken for granted. It was traditionally assumed that rural societies had better *bonding* attributes than their urban counterparts but this is not, as highlighted in chapter two, as straightforward as it first appears. Studies in America, with its mix of strongly urban and strongly rural states, show how the correlation between rural communities and strong bonding and urban and weak bonds are assumptions that cannot be substantiated.

Income levels and education along with race are the other key components to be taken into account when measuring social capital levels. However even here there is disagreement as to how important each is. Social capital has emerged as a topic in English speaking countries more so than the rest of the world: these countries are generally the wealthiest and so attract people from other parts of the world who want to share in this wealth. This creates its own problems both internally (rich and poor divide is accentuated) and externally (people from other parts of the world want to live there but seek also to keep the culture of their home country).

Sport, as we have seen, has a very positive influence on community life as it lends itself to bridging and linking social capital. Sligo Rovers FC is a good example of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. Religion, on the other hand, can be bonding in its nature and therefore not always a force for good community relations.

Much has been made of the position of the family within the social capital debate but until recently it was assumed that children and young people did not have any noticeable levels of social capital, it is now accepted that they do – it's just *different*.

Education and its links with social capital are recognised because with education comes knowledge and with knowledge comes power. There is however some disagreement among theorists on how powerful the effect of education is.

Volunteerism and social capital would seem to be compatible but even here the growth of voluntary organisations from charitable institutions to wealth creating institutions with power and influence leaves the reader in doubt as to whether social capital even exists in the ethos of such organisations.

That volunteering and general civic engagement are not directly linked is yet another startling finding. The distinction between paid and unpaid 'work' is not a distinction made in the literature review and this is surprising. The 2006 census devoted a section to volunteering patterns in Ireland and this yielded very useful information. Participation in rural Sligo was significantly higher than Sligo town but on par with Connacht as whole. Sligo town was in line with the national average. Volunteering participation rates in Ireland are rising, particularly among the younger sections of the population.

Philanthropy is identified as having an influence on social capital levels. In the more *mainstream* and predominately capitalist business model, good levels of social capital are considered to be a perquisite for good team work.

Less well understood is the role social capital plays in eliciting philanthropic behaviour from individuals in a community. Communities with high levels of social capital also tend to produce good entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are a product of their social environment and communities with high levels of social capital tend to produce social entrepreneurs although the strength of the link is unclear.

Establishing the link between social capital levels and the nature of *civil society* within a community or country is found to be fraught with problems mainly because the definition of civil society is ambiguous. The even more ambiguous definition of what constitutes a *community* is highlighted.

The *virtual* nature of contact between individuals and the communities they identify themselves with has been brought into sharp focus with the advent of the computer and, in the case of Sligo and the northwest of Ireland, the *broadband* age.

Notwithstanding all the negative perceptions regarding the increasing use of the internet as a communication device, research uncovered in chapter two suggests that it doesn't supplant *traditional* methods of communication and points out that the telephone and the radio had similar effects on society when they first appeared and they, like the computer, are in fact an aid to communication rather than a barrier. The 'O Connell Street' case study as described in chapter one is an example of the internet playing a useful role in promoting social capital. The notion of the third place is seen as increasingly important as a counteraction to the virtual nature of communication. Indeed the very notion of community needs to be redefined in the world of the internet.

That high social capital levels and high levels of trust are strongly linked is one of the few uncontested areas connected with social capital. As reviewed, high social capital levels generate good levels of social inclusion and less exclusion and therefore improved levels of mental and physical health should be present in the community.

As highlighted in the literature review different countries and regions within those countries have their own characteristics and dimensions, often influenced by historical factors. Ireland is no different and so the next section looks at social capital from an Irish perspective.

4.3.2 Irish and Sligo characteristics

The legacy of the British Empire is still with us and this has a profound effect on Irish society to this day, whether it's religious (Catholic and Protestant), economic (an island with an international border), political (parties with origins in civil war) and lastly the people themselves, who are shaped by the origins of the Irish state. Sligo is typical in this regard with many reminders of its former status as the 'capital of the north west' still in evidence. The notion of community and county identity, as exploited so well by the Gaelic Athletic Association, is very strong. The sense of place is hugely important in the Irish psyche. The famine of the 1840s and the resulting mass emigration left its mark. One of the most visible characteristics of Irish society is the high birth rate by international standards although it is not clear why this is so. Our continuing attachment to property ownership is still strong as the Celtic Tiger era showed.

The other big debate, itself a finding, is just how unequal Irish society is. It appears to be very unequal by international standards although it is pointed out that there is no common agreed international criteria for measuring distribution of wealth in a given society. Exactly how poverty and inequality is measured is an issue. Trust levels in Ireland and County Sligo has decreased over the last twenty years.

At institutional level it's obvious that people are angry but make a distinction between institutions and communities. People are still helping each other out and the notion of *reciprocity* is still alive and well.

In common with most countries, access to the internet is a major issue and studies have found (O'Donoghue and Meredith 2014, p.1) that access in Sligo and the northwest of Ireland is significantly lower than in Dublin and the south and east of Ireland indicating a lower level of industrialisation as much as anything in the north west of Ireland.

Reliable access to broadband in rural areas of the north west of Ireland is a very real issue even in 2011 (Mayo Advertiser 2011). This presents *reliability* challenges for any internet survey carried out in Sligo and the surrounding areas using the internet as not everybody has an equal chance of participating in such a survey.

The influence of the EU is one of the major forces for change in Ireland over the last forty years and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 has had a particular influence on the *bottom up* process though the centralist nature of government remains (Coakley and Gallagher 2005).

The low opinion that Irish people have of their politicians and the Irish political system is a cause for concern. Irish people express a very low level of trust in their politicians by international standards. Daly (2007) outlines key facets and trends in Irish civil society remarking on the gaps in our knowledge of the community and voluntary sector. If the fall in farming numbers and the rise in urban society is one of the major changes in Irish society in the last forty years, then the rise in people from other countries coming to live here in the last twenty years is the other major change. While at first we were ambivalent and even bemused at all the new arrivals, attitudes are hardening as the recession continues to have its effect on Irish people. It is obvious that, recession notwithstanding, people from all over the world see Ireland as a good place to live. The change in the makeup of the population of Sligo is evidence of its economic and social attractions.

As mentioned, the view of social capital as researched by academics and social capital as practiced in communities are not always compatible. Kennedy (2003) was one of the few to approach community development from an academic perspective and the main finding, using Grange as a case study, was that the two views are not compatible.

The need for training for communities is a recurring finding among theorists. Interestingly, as will be outlined below, the responses among interviewees in the focus group and the one-to-one interviews are at best lukewarm about formal training.

They place more emphasis on participation and doing than on formal learning, with the exception of Munster based Respondent O who sees the local third level institution as having a vital role in community development.

The legacy of our colonial past is still evident (Tovey *et al* 2007) and the dependency theory, that is, that wealth *must* flow to the centre from the periphery is still evident in the Irish psyche. Ireland is overly dependent on multinationals is the finding. Ireland and Sligo is still tribal in its thinking is the view of many commentators in the one-to-one interviews . Sligo's job creation statistics would suggest a lack of innovation and a need to promote entrepreneurship.

4.3.3 Measuring social capital

If defining social capital is one of the major *qualitative* undertakings of researching the concept then the measurement of social capital levels in society is the *quantitative* goal. Chapter three deals with the methodology of devising, and then implementing, reliable methods for collecting data. Focus groups need to be carefully constructed and must be objective and free of bias. Similarly one-to-one interviews must be structured but not too structured. The quantitative survey is built on topics arising in the literature review and implemented using the best mathematically based practice.

Adam and Roncevic (2003) point out that for epistemological reasons it is not possible to devise a single measurement system for social capital mainly because it can't be defined as a concept and that its usage is broadening in meaning all the time.

In an Irish context O'Doherty (2007) places social and civic participation, social networks and reciprocity, trust and general views of one's local area as key measurement barometers. These elements are all incorporated into this thesis.

As with the qualitative research aspect of measuring social capital defining what it is you want to measure is the key to producing reliable data.

Firstly there is the recognition taken from the literature review on qualitative properties of social capital that no one topic is *the* topic by which social capital is measured, social capital is best measured by constructing a basket of indicators. Defining what those indicators are is very important as, particularly in the case of longitudinal research, they need to be consistent if comparisons are to be made over time.

Secondly, and this is important to note, in countries with steadily changing population profiles, the indicators may stay the same over time but the population profile may not. This will probably skew data and therefore affect reliability.

The literature review gives examples of a number of studies where the methodology might be the same but the list of indicators might be very different.

Measuring social capital levels over time and across countries and regions within those countries is fraught with difficulties. Healy (2005b) appears to have constructed a reliable list suitable for Irish society in which it is demonstrated that social indicators are more important than economic indicators when it comes to measuring social capital.

Finally Murthy (2008) in chapter one section 1.2 reminds us that research in the digital age brings its own challenges and to this end measuring the *level of interest* in a topic in the information age is relevant.

Chapter three, the methodology chapter, deals extensively with devising measurement models for social capital. This researcher's own experience was one of great difficulty making contact with participants using social media. However the O'Connell Street case study as described in section 1.8.3 showed that in the right circumstances and given the right topic social media can be used to good effect in modern day social research.

4.3.4 Places where people meet

The literature review having outlined the main characteristics and challenges of defining and measuring social capital moves into more specific ground by breaking down human interaction into the *first place* with an emphasis on family, community, sport, local school, citizenship, the particular characteristics of younger people (18+), ageism, multiculturalism, Ireland's high birth rate, citizenship, politics, and finally looking at some characteristics of Irish society in the context of the first place.

In the context of the first place international commentators cast some doubt on the importance of the family in the greater scheme of things. There is no such debate among the Irish theorists. The importance of the family in Ireland as the foundation upon which society is built is unquestioned.

Any mention of family will invariably bring community into the discussion. Community in Ireland is akin to the extended family and is the first point of contact in which people fulfil the basic need to connect with other like minded people. The nature of community life has changed radically over the last twenty years. The decline of farming is often accompanied by declining population and this combined with the growing trend of commuting to work has affected rural society in particular.

In urban areas the influx of people from not just other countries but also other parts of Ireland has left many people not knowing their neighbours.

Ireland was a largely monocultural society in the early nineties. Twenty years later Ireland has become a multicultural society and racism is on the rise.

As already mentioned family life is important to Irish people and our high birth rate bears this out. Even a recession and declining standards of living do nothing to dent the birth rate – one of the highest in the western world.

It's well known that Irish people are very enthusiastic about sport. Sport incorporates bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Ireland with its amateur status for many games, particularly at community level recognises the positive influence that sport has on communities. Sligo Rovers FC is a good example of local pride.

The role of the local school is recognised as a place where social capital formation takes place. A distinction is made between middle class parents and other groups particularly as those parents can identify with the teachers whereas parents from other backgrounds may not be in a position to mobilise the information needed to contest a decision of a school. Whether race is an issue in schools is debated. The role of the school in developing good citizens is acknowledged.

While this thesis concerns itself with adults it makes a distinction between young adults and older people. Two findings stand out: The first is that young adults communicate with their community on a different level to older people. Secondly younger people need to be assessed differently from adults when attempting to measure social capital levels. Youth employment, a talking point in these recessionary times, will have a bearing on community involvement and this can have both a positive and negative impact on society.

Capable people who should be gainfully employed are giving their time for free and this can have harmful effects in the long run.

At the other end of the scale aging is also becoming increasingly topical. People are living longer and it's no longer enough to just exist. Positive ageing and a sense of well-being is the new goal.

The link between the norms associated with good citizenship and those of social capital is not as straight forward as it seems and is in need of further scrutiny. The one clear common characteristic is that trust must be present. Voting patterns should reveal a lot about people's sense of citizenship. Irish voting patterns portray a declining interest in politics but this must be tempered with an unreliable method for compiling the electoral register.

Social capital can influence political engagement through its bridging and linking characteristics but seems to have less influence on administrative policy: politicians are at least answerable to the electorate. Countries with strong welfare systems will elicit more engagement from the populace.

In countries with strong regional differences bonding social capital will dominate in the regions and so enforce cleavages, already present, at national level. In Ireland our position as a former colony is still evident and its citizens and our political system often react passively to events. Our lack of respect for the state is noted. The state is something to be used for personal gain. In summary social capital should not be confused with political capital. Sligo as town in close proximity to Northern Ireland is aware of this.

The overall finding concerning the first place is that all its characteristics are important if the citizen is to make a successful progression to the next place: *the second place*.

The *second place* is generally associated with the work place, a place where the harsher aspects of life such as social exclusion exists—often linked to racial and gender issues. Social exclusion and its links to poverty is recognised, indeed it is described as the *new poverty*. Social surveys on social exclusion in Ireland tend to be based on nationality rather than ethnic background. Since the recession started in Ireland in 2008 non-Irish nationals have a higher unemployment rate than native Irish. The environment in which a person lives can have a major impact on their performance in the work place.

Power, who holds it and how it is exercised, is an issue in the second place. The status of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland was gradually eroded in the various partnership programs leading to much disenchantment. Employers and the civil service usually have the greatest influence on policy and decision making in any negotiations. Despite this the community and voluntary sector has become much more professional over the decades. The level of democracy and accountability within the community and voluntary sector is questioned. Trust levels in Ireland are well below OECD average, citizens do not trust politicians or the political process. The distinction between paid and unpaid/volunteerism work is noted and the tensions that can exist when the two are present together are outlined. The conflicts of interests between the voluntary sector and the political world are highlighted. More research is needed into the community and voluntary sector to establish its size. The new found interest in the third or not-for-profit sector is noted and the rise in influence of the community and voluntary sector is noted although the overall finding is that the community/third sector is still the weakest sector when it comes to influencing government policy in Ireland.

Ireland's not-for-profit sector is still underdeveloped by international standards and the government is only beginning to attempt to understand the sector. Social capital and philanthropy are strongly linked. Ireland has a long history of giving to the church but on a wider level it's almost nonexistent. The individual as part of a group as distinct from the individual working alone is noted and the influence of group behaviour is analysed. The main finding is that the behaviour of an individual in a group is very different and often disconcerting even for the individuals themselves.

The role of third level education and its interaction with government and communities is looked at from a triple helix point of view. Balance between the three entities is the key ingredients for success. Too much influence by government leads to a smothering effect and the social capital dividend is diminished. Education and poverty levels are strongly linked. Access to education in Ireland is still skewed towards the better off.

In summary the second place is one where economics and power is the dominant force and where life can be harsh and full of conflicts and unfulfilled goals.

Where then do people go to find satisfaction and personal fulfilment and relax? They go to the *third place*. As mentioned in chapter two Oldenburg (2001, p.2) defines *the third place* as "a setting beyond home, *the first place*, and work, *the second place*, in which people relax with good company on a regular basis". The first finding or reminder about the third place is that it always existed.

The second finding is that a lot of the traditional third places have all but disappeared. In rural Ireland and Sligo changes in farming practices combined with a more urban based economy have completely changed rural living. Even in urban centres traditional meeting places such as the local pub or the bank on the corner are disappearing.

The emergence of a multicultural Ireland and the decline of the role of the churches have brought tremendous changes to Irish life. Religious communities are still incubators for social capital. The presence of Christianity encourages civic engagement. However Catholicism is linked to lower trust levels in society. The Catholic Church still has a substantial influence in Ireland. Religion in Ireland took on a bonding nature that could be described as dark social capital. Religion influences social engagement and Christianity influences the level of civic engagement. Within Christianity trust levels vary with protestant communities demonstrating higher levels of trust compared to catholic congregations. Irish people have a selective relationship with religion and don't automatically adhere to church teachings.

Irish people identify strongly with their county although the border forces a distinction between Ireland and Irishness. The arrival of peoples from other countries has hardened attitudes to people from outside the EU in particular and racism is on the rise. Ireland recognises that it needs to be more inclusive and there are programmes in existence to promote inclusiveness, not just at government level, but among sporting organisations as well. Ireland always had a racist attitude towards Irish travellers.

The rise of the internet generation in tandem with the disappearance of traditional pastimes and occupations has left the population confused about what community stands for anymore. The arrival of the internet is not all bad however and just like the telephone, radio and television the internet promotes communication. Indeed poor broadband availability in the north west of Ireland is cited as a disadvantage.

Where meeting places *are* available such as public parks, playgrounds and transportation people are avoiding them and therefore isolation is self imposed to a degree. As noted in chapter one Sligo town has a classic case study of the importance of public space. The proposed pedestrianisation of O'Connell Street and the related Eastern Bypass exposes all the conflicts of interest that can occur in communities. The citizens of Sligo wanted the street to be traffic free but the politicians (believed) they saw a bigger picture in the shape of the eastern bypass and blocked the move.

Field *et al* (2000) expressed doubt about the long-term importance of social capital as a concept but concluded that it held much promise. Judging from the number of academic works on the subject it appears that social capital is a permanent topic for discussion.

The main findings arising from the literature review may be viewed as a summary and an introduction to the next sections which in effect test the findings of the literature review.

4.4 Unpacking the research findings: Focus Group

As outlined in the chapter three, a focus group was held in IT Sligo. The following is a thematised account of the responses provided by participants. As outlined in the methodology chapter the participants are identified by a capital letter. Sub-section 4.4.1 unpacks the responses to topic guide issues explored with participants.

4.4.1 Findings from the focus group on the notion of community

Participants were asked to convey their thoughts on the notion of community.

When I say 'community' what thoughts come to mind?

The following was expressed by focus group participant E:

“In terms of community participation? Participation is one thing...hard to describe...if we are to have a society that functions...as opposed to individuals living in boxes, there has to be some glue that keeps it all together ...it's the glue that keeps us all together...how you fasten that and how you harness that and how you get people out of their comfortable chairs in the evening...To take on responsibility is the real key to it”.

Focus group participant B was of the opinion that:

“Community is one of the most important aspects of society. I feel that with a good community structure anything can be achieved within that community”.

Participant G believed that:

“The local pub is under threat and the average age of the farming community is almost fifty five years and there is a lot of loneliness that needs to be addressed...we need more participation to combat this”

Participant F concluded that:

“Participation is about how one participates. There are two notions of participation one is about participative democracy or demonstrative democracy and it does bring in how one participates in that society or that community...?”

4.4.2 Findings from the focus group on the issue of community participation

In response to the question:

Is community spirit alive and well compared to 10 years ago?

Participant D felt:

“Participation in community groups would be confined to people over the thirty five years of age group and it's very difficult to get the younger people involved. I am not sure if this is true of the rural areas but certainly the urban areas...”

Participant E provided the following insight:

“It is still alive and well. It is very different to what it was ten or twenty years ago...and when you ask people what they think of things ten or fifteen years ago they always think it was not as good as it was and people ten or fifteen years before that will probably say the same but in general terms people do tend to rally around when there is a real need to (general agreement)”.

Participant B believes:

“The role of the community group is that they are mandated by the wider community to be the voice of that community”.

Participant A held the view that:

“I suppose just going back a little bit [on issues in this session] there has been huge changes in society in the past ten or fifteen years. We have become very much an urban society here [in Sligo] as is the case in other parts of the country. There will always be key drivers and key leaders. People may not get involved on a day to day basis but if they are asked to do a certain job on a certain day they will come out and do it. The other big issue is to get younger people involved and the way to do that is through training and giving them responsibility. We had a situation last weekend where we could get seventeen and eighteen year olds supervising younger players. I think that if you give young people responsibility they will respond and pay it back later on”.

4.4.3 Findings from the focus group on issues around the impact of newcomers and community life

What impact has the influx of people from other cultures had on community life?

“There are a few small organisations in Sligo who have made a big contribution. The Sligo Volunteer Bureau was mentioned [earlier] with over eight hundred members many of them non Irish or new Irish and they are having a significant effect on organisations and hopefully in time will integrate into organisations. One of the difficulties of integrating the new Irish into society is that they are very mobile... they are mobile in the town [of Sligo] and mobile in the country [of Ireland]. You do a bit of work with them in the school and you suddenly find that they have moved to another part of the country or gone back to their own country” Participant A.

Participant D believes:

“One of the developments that have come from this influx of people is the rise in volunteerism. I found that one organisation that I am involved in that about a third of the people are Polish and some Czech Republic”

Participant C observes:

“I can only speak for myself but I feel part of the community. I have lived in different parts of Sligo and it was just rented accommodation and there was no real communication between neighbours. The estate I live in now is mostly students so there is not much communication but the carer work that I do I need to feel part of the community”.

Participant G held that:

“There has been some change in small ways and some influx of people moving in... possibly people from another locality buying up small farms... also people buying holiday homes - they are not really part of the community – they come and they go but apart from that there has not really been much change. Planning is the other big issue where the son or daughter cannot get planning permission to build on the family farm and that is holding communities back and the planning authorities have created a lot of difficulties. On the other hand they allow Enniscrone and Dromore west to build holiday homes and destroy these places. So there is an imbalance there”.

4.4.4 Findings from the focus group on issues which indicate that Irish society has deteriorated over the last twenty years

Has Irish society deteriorated over the last twenty years?

Participant H expressed the following observation:

“I would say it has decreased. People have become more individualistic. On the other hand there are some contradictions in what I am saying; Sligo is exceptional for volunteering with a lot of people involved in the active volunteering area through the social services the active retirement and the senior help line. It’s a less caring society now... a lot less caring...” (This view was generally agreed with by all focus group participants).

Participant D concurred;

“Well I have regular dealings with both the state institutions and a lot of the community sector and I would still be trusting of them. I would say that by and large ninety five percent of them are ok but the other institutions and not just the Catholic Church are getting a very bad press. I sometimes think (pause) ...maybe I am wrong on this...but I sometimes think there is a movement afoot to undermine the institutions of the state ...and also the catholic church and also some of the other churches as well because I have had some dealings with them and people will just say... ahh well we just don’t trust the catholic church ... now I will expand on that one because I am involved in St. Annes catholic church and I play key board at most of the masses there. We recently had to put in a security system... a security camera system which would have been unheard of in any of the churches ten years ago and all of the churches have them now .We would say that some ten percent of the people who go into the church now do so just to see what they can get out.. rob... yes I would say it’s definitely as high as ten per cent”

4.4.5 Findings from the focus group on participants perspectives on issues of trust levels in society

Have trust levels fallen?

“I would say it’s about the same. Most people join organisations for the right reasons and very soon you will find out if they are there for some other reason...” (Participant A).

Participant C was equally upbeat:

“I take people as I find them. I trust people. Polish or Irish makes no difference to me. Do I find Irish society more open than other countries I lived in? Polish and Irish are much the same. Germans for instance are different. That is my experience”.

Participant D had mixed views:

“We have become less trusting over the last ten years especially – an emphatic yes. I have travelled fairly extensively and I would say that we are as trusting as most countries”.

Participant B was also optimistic:

“Most people can be trusted and come with a good side to them so on a personal level I trust people. On a professional level I would be more cautious. At community level I would trust people until proven otherwise and have been seldom very let down by people. When that happens you tend to ‘pull in your horns’ for a while and possibly become overly cautious and may unfairly use a bad experience against the next person”.

Participant F distinguished between inter person trust and institutional trust:

“With trust comes respect and the level of involvement at community level. People will feel that the institutions of the state have let them down...but that’s another days work .But on a personal level I experience huge levels of trust among people”.

Participant G was more cautious:

“There was always great trust in rural communities and that’s still there and will continue to be there. When a stranger comes in there is wariness until he or she proves themselves. But it is changing... it is not too many years ago since leaving the key in the door or the car all night was taken for granted. People are more afraid now ... not of the people within the community but of the outsider”.

4.4.6 Findings from the focus group on participants perspectives on major institutions of the state

What are your views on the major institutions in this country?

Participant F in response to the previous comments "... could I just say one thing... and I agree with everything you say there but I believe that people have taken a bit of a knock with the key political institutions and the state and I would that that is a marked change and I would say that political democracy should not be based on what I would call political clientism in that organisations should not be directly involved with political interest groups ... And be available and avail of that which is their entitlement in any case on the basis of equality ...that would be a major step forward. And I think that this is very positive as an outcome as regards this bit of a black [hole?] we have fallen into recently."

"Could I just say one thing about state institutions and the press and while a lot of people would give out about them it is the press who have done a lot of favours for us all...they may have got down to business and exposed what has been covered up for years. I think that when all of this comes out there will be proper governance there will be proper health and safety procedures there will be proper child care regulations that are required" (Participant A).

Participant D takes an alternative view:

"We went from the stage where we did not really have investigative journalism in this country on a proper scale. I suppose it was invented in this country when we got Seven Days [television programme]and to a large extent the Late Late Show [television show on RTE 1]but now we have gone the other way investigating everything and anything and I don't think it's healthy".

Participant E was of the view that:

"...I think that the whole system of political patronage stinks and has stank/stunk for such a long time and I am apolitical and I have not been a member of any party for such a long time".

Participant D had another view on politics:

"I am a member of a political party and have been for about forty years and I have seen big changes in the last twenty years... young people are not getting involved...you may get them to join the college cumman (political committee) at this level but the amount of them that will continue on is very small and I think if you took a look at the average age of councillors ... which is the people we deal with at this level you will find ... I think... that the average age is going up. And I think it's a very dangerous political precedent and I am saddened by it and I know people on all sides of the political divide. Twenty years ago we would not be having this discussion. Certainly forty years ago this would not be an issue but I am afraid that a small minority ... have ruined it ... now you know it's not just an Irish phenomenon ... the British system bad"

4.4.7 Findings from the focus group on participants perspectives on the issue of whether or not people are volunteering

Are people still volunteering like they used to?

“At the moment there are a lot of people out of work and if you talk to them they have very good backgrounds and can volunteer their services and their time in the future. Certainly the few organisations that I am involved with I don’t find it that hard to get volunteers ... they need to be cajoled sometimes but once you get them involved they give a lot to society” (Participant A).

“On the whole I find the level and quality of the volunteers extremely good and once you put the word out that help is needed you get the response? For example a men’s group have set up and last week we needed help and the men’s group turned out... so over all I would see the volunteers in local communities as something very positive” (Participant B).

Participant D observes:

“They will work to a certain level but once it gets to the administration level it gets more difficult to find help. As regards work...I know from a personal level that before I was made... I took early redundancy two years ago I was finding it more and more difficult to give time to volunteerism. Productivity and all that goes with it leaves people very drained after a day’s work. The other thing that the commute[from rural areas]...which I suppose is an east coast problem more than in the west and that also eats into a person’s time”.

“A lot of the work in credit union ... and organisation that was founded by volunteers and the directors are still volunteers and the change over the last ten years as credit unions got bigger and volunteers. That relationship between paid staff and volunteers is very different from what it was and in a perfect world that would be ok... but the ask has got bigger ... the ask for Sligo credit union [directors] to take responsibility for over 65 million turnover... and it’s a big ask and to try and make it attractive to volunteers when they could do something else and to ask them to reflect??(unclear) on all the responsibility ... on a professional basis the work is easy it’s the decisions[to be made] that is hard” (Participant E).

4.4.8 Findings from the focus group on participants perspectives on the extent to which, if at all, community groups are democratic

Are community groups democratic in their dealings?

Participant F was upbeat:

“... the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 and the major social and economic programme that came out of that...indeed it helped reform the common agricultural policy and effected [positively] rural Ireland (agreement from rural representative)...but the key elements of community participation is about participation and it is about the ‘bottom up’ approach and it is about the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ where all decisions are made at the lowest level possible”... I just want to say also that there are over six hundred community group’s involved in community work in County Sligo. The Sligo Volunteer Bureau has over seven hundred and fifty people working and it’s increasing all the time. I am constantly so in awe and so impressed at the people of Ireland giving their time to their communities. I think...social capital...volunteerism... GAA clubs...it’s just fantastic...There is a huge amount to all of this and there are different sectors. For example I would not be reading the company or organisation accounts but I would be reading the corporate accountability accounts sector. But it is something that I might not necessarily speak to but I might speak to the community and voluntary sector we have to segregate the words and the titles that we use and the work that we do because we are working towards the same ends for the betterment of society.

Participant E was more critical:

“...the professionalism of volunteerism is becoming a factor...take the LEADER application as an example...there is now so much to the application that you would now almost need a PhD in form filling...there does need to be that bridge which supports innovation at local level (unclear) for the community and voluntary sector because the audit trails are everything...” “...the situation has got serious in the last five years. Of the five main organisations that I am involved in four of them have to take out professional indemnity (murmurs of agreement)” (Participant D).

4.4.9 Comments on whether Sligo people’s quality of life has improved overall over the last twenty years

Has the quality of life improved in Sligo over the last 20 years?

Participant G: “Rural communities are heading towards a very sad situation as I see it. The local post offices, the local Garda station, the little shop on the corner are all closing”.

Participant F was more positive than the rural based participant G:

“The standard of living has increased dramatically (and in that regard) I don’t necessarily agree that the quality of life in rural Ireland has deteriorated. The rural transport initiative involves huge numbers of volunteers all helping their neighbour’s avail of this service ... forty percent of whom could not use their free travel passes before. That was a key government initiative that has brought life to rural Ireland... there are now twenty five thousand people in rural Sligo using public transport that never used it before ... never met their neighbours ... so it’s not all doom and gloom (general agreement) at all. There are schools now where children are going on waiting lists where two teacher schools were closing down before ... there has been a huge increase in community activity but its different (directed at Billy) and its changing and I think it’s about educating together and moving together in a very positive way... the issue of the older single farmer is certainly there and we are doing a lot of work around that but I do think it’s very positive at the same time”.

Participant H was also positive:

“... going on from what [participant F] says...I think that the proof is that people are living much longer...I think that is the acid test... that the standard of living is gone up (agreement from Participant F) but I suppose the one thing that would annoy people of our generation and annoy many Irish people is that most or many decisions are taken without our consent and this makes us feel marginalized especially that many of the decisions are made in Brussels... I must say I resent that and the democratic process seems to be overlooked in recent years and I know that there have been dramatic improvements in infrastructure over the years but the price of democracy could be the negation of democracy”.

4.4.10 Findings from the focus group on participant’s perspectives on the question of whether Irish society is fairer than it used to be

Is society fairer than what it used to be?

A number of male voices say NO. One female (Participant F) [strongly] believes that it is.

“I see an unequal society a lot in my job” (Participant B).

“Could I just mention insurance and the costs associated with it and the need to have it is huge issue” Participant (A).

4.4.11 Findings from the focus group on participants' perspectives around people taking responsibility in society

Are people taking personal responsibility?

“I would still say that society was fairer but I think that it is about people taking responsibility about that to themselves...” (Participant F).

“I think that if you give young people responsibility[18+] they will respond and pay it back later on” (Participant A).

“There is big divide [in society] putting on my MABS hat I would say that fifty percent of the people coming through the door feel that society has treated them unfairly but I would not have that, because of the Celtic tiger, they have been greedy and gullible and I know from my own experience that I was getting offers of unsecured loans in my door. I never got caught up in that but lots did and people who had to buy a house in that era are now in negative equity and from that point of view have been treated unfairly by society” (Participant D).

4.4.12 Overall findings arising from focus group

As discussed above, participants attending the focus group session were asked to define *community*. One person defined it as the glue which held society together and the sense of responsibility that goes with it. Another person saw community as people networking while recognising that social status has an influence. One participant saw community as a group of people with the potential to achieve almost anything it sets its mind to. The first three comments were from Sligo town, a fourth rural based person painted a bleaker picture of a traditional way of life under threat.

The group was then asked to comment on the participatory aspect of community. One person was strongly of the opinion that young people (generally the under 35s) were not as involved as they could be, another emphasised the importance of participation and democracy.

The notion of community and level of participation within these communities were linked and the group was asked if *community spirit* is as strong now as it was twenty years ago. All eight participants commented on this issue and the consensus was that community spirit is alive and well but that the nature of it is changing. Younger people go about things differently and the growing urban/rural divide was mentioned.

In the towns the influx of people from other countries has changed the composition of communities although not necessarily for the worse. A senior citizen from Sligo town remarked that the quality of life has decreased over the last twenty years.

The issue of trust was raised and the group was asked to comment on changing trust levels over the years. The group were generally upbeat about trust levels in Ireland at community level but not so at an institutional level. The Polish member (participant C) of the group thought that Irish people are more open than other countries in which she lived.

An example of churches having to install security cameras was cited as a sign that societal mores were breaking down.

The group was asked to give an opinion on attitudes towards volunteerism in Sligo. Overall, the opinions expressed were positive: the rising jobless rate was having an impact as well qualified people were available to help out in a range of organisations but administration tasks were not popular. In a rural context, the time spent commuting was having an impact on time left for voluntary work. The link between involvement and responsibility was highlighted especially among young people where the benefits can be seen later on. The level of responsibility attached to volunteers working in the credit union was cited as an example of an imbalance. The increasing financial cost associated with bureaucracy was noted.

The *bottom up* approach and the levels of democracy in groups were raised. The person running a programme promoting social inclusion was overall very impressed at the level and quality of participation among groups. The core principle of *subsidiarity* and its inclusion in the Maastricht Treaty (1991), according to one participant, ensures that community democracy is enhanced. Governance was considered to be adequate among community groups. In fact, for some focus group participants, governance was perceived to be excessive. The rural transport scheme was given as an example of improving quality of life. The fact that people were living longer was a sign of an improving quality of life. The one negative issue was the increasing influence of the EU in making decisions for citizens. The verdict was that this trend is not good for democracy. The mobility of the new arrivals was cited as a factor and it appears that they are not generally here long enough for them to integrate into Irish society.

The *fairness* of society was raised and the example of people from all walks of life getting into financial difficulties because of rash decisions taken in the Celtic Tiger era was noted. Greedy people need to recognise that they must take responsibility for their actions although the people in negative equity should be treated more favourably was the consensus view. Section 4.4 now unpacks findings generated out of the quantitative survey.

4.5 Quantitative survey

4.5.1 Overview

The mechanics and data generated as a consequence of deploying a survey to capture the perspectives of a significantly larger number of respondents, as discussed in chapter three, differed from the focus group and the one-to-one interviews (see below) in that it was the most technical and complex of the three data collection methods used to operationalize this research. It involved a computer based scoring system, the use of an online survey dissemination facility, *Polldaddy*, and a data analysis programme, SPSS.

Taking a lead from Healy (2005b) the fifty seven questions (Appendix F) are laid out by questions divided into topics: Irish Society (five questions), Personal Power (five questions), Trust (five questions), Community Life (thirteen questions), Values and Ethics (nine questions), Equality (nine questions), Political (eleven questions).

Question eight profiled where people lived, question nine asked about income level and question ten dealt with age, gender nationality and education levels. The questions themselves were set out according to best practice as recommended by experts in the field as previously discussed in chapter three.

In addition to Healy's conclusions it is important to remember that no *one* question measures social capital. As explained below in more detail *grouping* of answers is the key to making the vast amount of data associated with the quantitative survey *readable*.

To achieve the goal of making the results easily comprehensible the data was grouped by:

- (a) Topic (Healy b 2004)
- (b) Strength of response (Millar *et al* 2002)

The quantitative survey consists of fifty questions (Appendix F) covering seven topics as described above. In order to standardise the format throughout all questions, five fields (strongly agree, agree no opinion/not relevant, disagree, and strongly disagree) were used. The questions were therefore of the *closed* variety: ninety six people responded to the questionnaire. The varied socio economic characteristics were acknowledged by using as many varied locations as possible.

As previously explained in chapter three the *Polladdy* package allowed up to one hundred questions to be asked free of charge. Up to ten questions within each question could be asked and this researcher made full use of this facility.

The topics or *signifiers* represent the themes which emerged firstly from the literature review and secondly from the focus group.

4.5.2 Unpacking the research findings: results of survey

The literature review provided the basis for a topic guide for the focus group. The literature review was, (in the absence of any Irish in-depth work on the topic of social capital), a largely international perspective on the topic. The focus group was therefore a testing ground for these perspectives. The focus group, comprising people from a cross section of County Sligo had their own particular views on the topics raised. The literature review and the issues raised in the focus group provided the basis for the next layer of research: the quantitative survey. A detailed account of how this survey was constructed is outlined in chapter three.

4.5.2.1 Sligo context

Notwithstanding the enormous changes in Ireland's social and economic fortunes particularly since the early 1990s, Sligo and the northwest is still overwhelmingly Catholic in its makeup (almost 90%) and its population overwhelmingly *White Irish*, therefore one might expect a similar percentage of the respondents in this survey to fall into this category. Overall the profile of the ninety six respondents mirror the population make of County Sligo. The only significant difference concerned responses to a question concerning *level of education*. In this survey forty seven percent of respondents replied that they had second level education only and fifty three percent had third level education.

Figures from the Central Statistics Office (Census 2011) for County Sligo note that of those aged fifteen years and over and whose full-time education had ceased, over sixteen per cent were educated to at most primary level only: a further fifty four per cent attained second level while almost thirty per cent were educated to third level. As acknowledged, many of the younger respondents are students of IT Sligo and therefore this survey is over represented by third level graduates, or more precisely, young people studying at third level institutions but who have not yet graduated.

4.5.2.2 Coding of answers by asterisks

When all the data from the survey was inputted this researcher realised that the combinations and permutations were enormous and difficult to distil. For this reason answers were *grouped* for ease of reading as described previously and presented below. The amount of information produced by even a seemingly small survey was itself a significant finding.

4.5.2.3 Questions with similar responses

33 questions had a 60% or greater response rate when the strongly agree/agree or strongly disagree/disagree responses were amalgamated. Generally speaking people were very clear on a range of issues. This group of questions produced widespread agreement regardless of the background of the respondents and therefore this researcher feels that no further in-depth explanation is warranted. Questions 53 and 54 (recoded), as described above, bring this category to 35 of the 57 questions asked.

4.5.2.4 Questions with somewhat divergent answers

12 questions produced a 60% or greater response rate when the strongly agree/agree or strongly disagree/disagree responses were added to the no opinion/not relevant responses.

4.5.2.5 Questions with very divergent answers

10 questions produced very mixed and, therefore, inconclusive answers.

Q.5 Ireland is a better place to live in now than 10 years ago.

Q.16 I have a smaller number of close friends now than 10 years ago.

Q.17 I have no time to spare for volunteering.

Q.18 Communities have cliques.

Q.21 Volunteers are not valued.

Q.37 My religious beliefs inform my values and ethics.

Q.42 All nationalities get on well together.

Q.48 I contacted my local TD in last 5 years.

Q.49 I attended an open meeting in the last 5 years.

Q.52 Contacted my local public representative in the last 5 years.

4.5.2.6 Summary of statistical results.

When the Cronbach’s Alpha test applied to the data collected (as reviewed in chapter three) the results are as follows: A score of .79 indicates that the hypothesis is correct: that overall levels of social capital have dropped over the last twenty years in Sligo and the northwest. However when the test is run for each individual topic – Irish Society, Personal Power, Trust, Community Life, Ethics and Values, Equality and Political the scores are low to moderate.

No single question, as pointed out in the literature review, can be considered to be *the* question that measures social capital. A range of topics are required to build a model that can give a composite picture and subsequently a score. Not alone this but *within* each topic a further subset of questions are required. In this thesis fifty seven questions were deemed to be of relevance. Never-the-less it is possible to pick the most relevant question from each subset that reflects the topic and these are amalgamated into the table below. N=96 for all questions and equates to 100%.

All respondents were given the option of replying as follows:-

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Irish Society: (Q.1) People are not as friendly as they were

Finding: over 55% of respondents strongly agree/agree with this although over 35% disagree or strongly disagree. 10.4% have no opinion.

N=9/ 9.4%	N=43 44.8%	N=10 10.4%	N=31 32.2%	N=3 3.1%
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Personal power: (Q.10) *Unseen individuals and organisations are making decisions*

Finding: a massive 85% strongly agree/agree with this and a major concern is exposed.

N=40 41.7%	N=42 43.8%	N=10 10.4%	N=3 3.1%	N=1 1%
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Trust: (Q.13) *I trust the people in my neighbourhood as much as I did five years ago.*

Finding: Trust levels at community level is still high with 64.5% of people strongly agreeing /agreeing with is statement.

N=16 16.7%	N=46 47.8%	N=17 17.7%	N=11 11.5%	N=6 6.3%
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Community: (Q.25) *My community matters to me*

Finding: Sligo people still indentify with their community with over 79% strongly agreeing/agreeing.

N=32 33.4%	N=46 45.8%	N=8 8.3%	N=8 8.3%	N=2 2.1%
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Ethics/Values: (Q.30) *I have friends from outside my own peer group who do not share my world view.*

Finding: nobody strongly disagrees with this statement /Sligo people are broadminded.

N=14 14.6%	N=56 58.3%	N=16 16.7%	N=10 10.4%	N=0 0%
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Equality: (Q.39) *Community spirit is decreasing*

Finding: this question seems to contradict ‘My community matters to me’; social capital often throws up contradictions such as this. Almost 70% strongly agree/agree with this statement.

N=13 13.5%	N=53 56.3%	N=6 7.3%	N=22 22.9%	N=0 0%
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Politics: (Q.47) *It’s very important that people vote*

Finding: Sligo people are realistic, sensible and responsible it would appear – yet voting patterns don’t reflect this strongly held opinion. Almost 90% strongly agree/agree with this statement.

N=53 52.1%	N=31 37.5%	N=7 5.2%	N=4 4.2%	N=1 1.0%
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Cronbach's Alpha: summary of results

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.793	.798	57

The overall view point is correct according to the results of the quantitative survey: social capital levels have dropped over the last twenty years.

The research questions are, as outlined in chapters one and three:

Q1: Has Ireland lost its sense of *community spirit* over the last twenty years?

Q2: Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

Q3: Is Irish society and, more widely, have Irish people become more individualistic and 'privatised'?

Q4: Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

Q5: Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

A second test to see if significant correlations flagged under demographic factors outweigh those under the economic factors also proved to be correct.

Results (see Appendix I) of 'A Test of Correlations'.

X = significant correlations, O = no significant correlation.

Summary of Correlations

Factors	Ireland	Power	Trust	Community	Values	Equality	Political
Demographic	O	X	X	X	O	O	X
Economic	O	O	O	O	X	O	O

The ‘Summary of Correlations’ above is derived from Healy’s (2005b) observations and deductions and is one of the few strongly grounded pieces of research (in this writer’s view) that is relevant and reliable when it comes to both isolating the components of social capital and then measuring the overall result. The questionnaire, as already outlined, was drawn up based on topics arising from the literature review and Healy’s observations form part of the process. The format of the questionnaire was therefore compatible with Healy’s demographic and economic approaches.

In order to summarise or condense both variables and questions into manageable groups without losing any data a spread of topics covering all aspects of life is recommended (Harper 2002; Healy 2005b; O’Doherty 2007). Demographic factors are stronger than economic factors (Healy 2005b) and this was borne out by the results (Appendix I).

In summary taking into account the vast amount of combinations and permutations that the data arising from this survey produced, a pragmatic approach was taken. Miller *et al* (2002, p.174) note that ten variables will produce fifty relationships that can be very difficult to explain. The patterns that *underlie the correlations between groups of variables* will give a clearer picture concludes Miller *et al* (2002). The reason this questionnaire has fifty seven questions divided into seven topics is a recognition, as exposed in the literature review, is that no one question or set of questions could adequately or reliably answer a highly subjective topic, that is asking people to quantify their feelings on society over time *and* express that in a score. Therefore the *overall* score is the best indicator. Where practical, files could be split using the SPSS *Split file* option, but this researcher did not use this option for ease of reading.

4.6 Unpacking the research findings: one-to-one interviews with expert respondents

4.6.1 Overview

Ireland elected to become an independent country in 1922 and with it evolved the complex system of elected representatives, the civil service, various agencies to run the many government backed programmes and a growing community and voluntary sector which increasingly has people in paid positions within its ranks. In this section a number of individuals holding key positions within their organisations were interviewed.

The issues and themes arising from the focus group, as outlined in the previous section, informed the generation of a semi-structured set of interview questions. Below are the main observations arising from the one-to-one interviews. As is generally agreed by many social commentators, including one of the respondent's (K) in the one-to-one interviews, Kirby (2010) and Eipper (1986): that Fianna Fail (the dominant political party), the Catholic Church (dominant religious institution) and the GAA or Gaelic Athletic Association (dominant sporting body) have collectively exerted the greatest influences on Irish society since the foundation of the state.

This section includes a series of one-to-one interviews with prominent and long serving members of the three organisations just mentioned. An interview with an MEP (Member of the European Parliament) and an officer with a leading west of Ireland based development agency along with the views of a Sligo based private consultancy business specialising in community development are also included. The final two interviews were with a senior official at a LEADER Company and a local county and town councillor. The findings below highlight the main points arising from the interviews and that the discussion of the findings in the next section will involve a more in-depth analysis of what the individuals said.

4.6.2 Irish Society and the Celtic Tiger

What effect had the Celtic Tiger on Irish society?

Most of the respondents were down beat but the last two respondents (O and U) were positive:

“The boom created more greed and less caring... its [caring society] coming back” (Respondent K).

“The Celtic tiger era had a huge effect...? Getting volunteers was difficult ... but people are coming back ...” (Respondent L).

“ I can pinpoint a particular day, a particular hour when I was actually at Galway races and I go to Galway races once a year and started going a few years ago and haven't gone a lot of years but I went a few years just for ladies day and it was 2007. You couldn't move, you couldn't make a phone call, you couldn't even buy a drink, the style was something else ...whatever. Just at some point I looked around me and I was incredibly claustrophobic and I said to friend of mine who was with me 'I am not staying here any longer and I said we just can't' so we left and it was like the last days of the Roman Empire it never seen anything like it” (Respondent N).

“We lost the run of ourselves and we acquired attitudes” (Respondent J).

“The council here in Sligo [town] purchased land at the very top of the market to prepare for this great boom but of course it never happened. We never got one cent under the gateway/city status and then of course with this massive infrastructure and big loans... Now of course there were some positive things. We invested a lot of money in water and we have one of the best water systems in the whole country” (Respondent Q).

“Most areas in Sligo town have a community park and outdoor facilities of all kinds and there has been a huge amount of work done in that area, but at the same time, there is a big disconnect from the local community...there is not the same interest at all from the local community. People have nowadays to go to work...if they are lucky enough to have a job and go home in the evening and close the door and that’s a great problem because, you know, you don’t have the community fully involved”(Respondent Q).

“We need to devise ways of getting people more engaged. People coming home and going into their houses and turning on the TV and not engaging is not a good thing” (Respondent T).

“We did not see any side effects of the Celtic Tiger. We still have problems in communities but with a development officer in place this can be worked on. Cross connectiveness is vital, for example, the tennis club trains people from working class areas and people see that there is no difference”(Respondent O).

“The community spirit in Grange is very strong... it always had an energy ...it was passed on” (Respondent U).

4.6.3 Community

What does the word ‘community mean to you?

Most respondents were reflective and the Grange based respondents (R and S)

were positive about the whole notion of communities achieving goals.

“Community has evolved...migrant communities...the internet has effected different generations. Regulation has changed things, for example, smoking bans...forty five or fifty year age group seems to be a dividing line in attitudes...also that the sense of space is different now... cheaper air travel...Skype...commuting to London from Knock Airport to London and back at weekend...therefore more connected with the outside world” (Respondent I).

“Three or four years ago the making of money was all important ...now they are coming back to what is really important...coming to realise the importance again of community ... it’s slow ... rural areas were always more cohesive than urban areas... the growing urbanisation of the country is a factor ... sport is growing in the community and children are well catered for. Care based organisations are also mostly voluntary and Sligo is exceptional ...” (Respondent J).

“Community is about helping each other out...Sligo Rovers and GAA are good examples ... Functions are good for fundraising...innovation is alive after fifteen years ... people will help now rather than throwing money at you ...” (Respondent K).

“... involving local people... Our organisation is centred on the parish ...tribal ...some communities have no club and their sense of identity is lessened...” (Respondent L).

“I think of voluntary groups... economic and social ... how can I help my local community ... coming together...history...disability...communities of interest ... voluntary and community are not exactly the same ...but I never think of the EU as a community !!!” (Respondent N).

“The key to Grange is that it moved with the times ...it didn’t cling to what was there. The people were moveable (adaptable)...Organisations in the past that were led by the priest and the teacher, the doctor and the merchant princes have been augmented by a more broad based community involvement” (Respondent R).

“The Celtic Tiger came to an end on the twenty ninth of September 2008...we got the guarantee on that date...people in this locality bought houses at about three hundred and sixty thousand euro and now they are being sold at about one hundred and fifty. We are lucky that we have nothing like the problem of south Sligo in terms of unfinished estates” (Respondent S).

“The sports complex [in Grange] is second to none and we had that when nobody had anything like it in the North West. Michael Carney, not a native of Grange, developed the north Sligo athletic club which is great for integration of different strands of the community” (Respondent S).

4.6.4 Rural society and economy

Comments on rural communities and their unique characteristics and challenges?

“Rural communities are more closely knit and better able to organise... more energy... urban areas not as much trust because people don’t know each other. Middle class people are the backbone of any initiative” (Respondent J).

“The EU and CAP made mistakes but without it we would be worse off. Framing is very volatile and very global...now the weather is problem. Government cuts are having an effect” (Respondent N).

“The Celtic Tiger changed population patterns. Small communities where I come from are now being challenged by the newcomers, often Dublin based, and that’s good” (Respondent M).

“There are people moving from the UK and people moving from big cities like Dublin into rural Ireland and they are slotting in very well actually...it [Lissadell rights of way] is a huge issue and farmers will be more cautious now about the whole question of people on their land and that’s a great pity” (Respondent Q).

“In the future the once off house is probably taboo. The people now living in the estates who in the past were entitled to once off houses won’t get them in the future and this will be a problem for the county planners”(Respondent R).

“Maybe we are too parochial but the parish structure remains the rock upon which we are built” (Respondent L).

“Yes we are too parochial and we need more research. *Board match* is a good database; the department [of Agriculture] has a database. People are good at sharing and there are great people out there...succession planning is vital...social capital is becoming more important” (Respondent P).

“The commute is draining... but in the local community crèches are opening and this is helping” (Respondent P).

How about job creation opportunities in rural Sligo?

“There is never a good time to set up... better infrastructure ... the urban /rural division is going to be more apparent... even in Sligo the urban/rural divide is evident”(Respondent M).

“Employment is the challenge for the up and coming generation. Traditional industries are gone. The bypass when it comes will affect businesses. The roads are better and people don’t stop as much. The internet is good here. We are only 24 miles from the border and this can be an advantage. Farmers get good value for machinery parts and major purchases across the border” (Respondent R).

“The tiling firm used to employ eighty people but now it’s gone but the engineering firm now has eighty workers from zero...Abbott, the IT and the hospital are all on the north side of Sligo. The new bridge in Sligo was only opened in 2004, prior to that getting around Sligo town could take up to forty minutes”. People wanted to live on the north side of Sligo. Rosses Point was too expensive” (Respondent S).

“There is no forum for jobs initiatives in this area. People have good jobs in town and so it’s not an issue. The only employment initiatives are the TUS schemes. The fun centre is a new initiative and some people are into farmers markets” (Respondent T).

“The fact that Grange always had its own post primary school was a big help. The VEC School focused on the trades and if you look around the village now you will see that a good few of the businesses focused on the trades and this helps employment” (Respondent U).

4.6.5 Power and democracy

Are community groups democratic?

“Human nature will always be there! Drawing up a memorandum of association and define terms of office ... drawing up a constitution is important... bring in professionals to draw up rules...” (Respondent J).

“LEADER [the rural development program] is democratic but all groups have strong personalities...but that’s nature...change must come from the community and politicians will follow...Irish politics is very personal (funerals) but becoming less so... the clinics could have two hundred people twenty years ago... now only a few” (Respondent K).

“Women don’t push themselves forward ...so no change...”

(Respondent P/female).

“A good bottom up community plan would help” (Respondent T).

“I could meet a person like you today and you could be the nicest individual and I could go into a meeting and you could be the greatest...!!!you could imagine...Community groups want to rush into action...There is a massive wall/barrier between theory and practice in community development...The system is greater than the sum of its parts. I replaced the S with C and created a CYSTEM” (Respondent V).

4.6.6 Trust

Has trust in society being eroded?

“Trust is very surface level at societal level ... the Celtic tiger strained this ...the residual effect is still there ... revenge is associated with debt forgiveness ... at commercial level trust is gone ... access to working capital is difficult for small business...the organisation I work for is now providing working capital for viable well established business... plenty of small business in the west have good ideas but no access to funds” (Respondent I).

“It’s coming back but a long way to go... trust is gone... the GAA, the Church, and Fianna Fail were the pillars... two of three in trouble and might never get back ... the current government made to many promises and now can’t deliver... people now don’t trust anyone”(Respondent K)

“Trust is very important ... financial institutions have no trust anymore. People are regrouping after the Celtic Tiger and re-evaluating their lives. The Celtic Tiger had a strange energy...but not everybody got caught up in it. The loss of services for people with disability is hard especially when the state is moving out... communities are moving in” (Respondent N).

“... I would love academia to reflect on the topic of trust ... I see the topic of social capital being flagged more often... Why is Sligo not like Galway? In terms of social capital County Sligo needs to reflect on this... There is better co-operation on the tourist sector now and the bounce is evident, you need the IT Sligo, county council, and the agencies all working together” (Respondent I).

“The biggest barrier is communication” ...along with conflict (Respondent V).

4.6.7 Education and role of IT Sligo in the region

How important is IT Sligo to the region?

“Yes education changed things however older people are also very good at the internet ... younger people feel more self empowered and less dependent on the political system” (Respondent I).

“...Sligo is an educational hotspot... In general the entrepreneurial spread is across all backgrounds ... more could be done to promote more market led educational training ... not optimised yet...a need to prepare people for jobs rather an more education... a need to turn an idea into reality... the perception is that the west is isolated whereas similar regions in the UK don't see it as a problem” (Respondent I).

“No I don't see interaction increasing at all. Could be improved on, for example, open up the library more, I know it's open but groups don't know this” (Respondent M).

“I have been in the IT usually at functions and formal occasions, but apart from what we read in the papers we don't know much about it. You are right we should be more part of the college. It might be heading in that direction but they need to do more” (Respondent Q).

“The college, the students, and the politicians are all part of the community ... there should be no imaginary walls. It's very important that IT Sligo is part of the democratisation of society” (Respondent N).

“Yes definitely...IT Sligo should be involved in tourism and marketing and event management. The archaeology department is working with the Armada Group but that’s because some of the lecturers live here rather than policy” (Respondent T).

“We always work with universities, first UCD [University College Dublin] and now Tipperary IT and UCC [University College Cork]” (Respondent O).

“The link in the north east of England is not as strong as here ... the north east of England has one and a half million people and is sparsely populated ... but the region had direct responsibility and they eliminated duplication...in Ireland the county council structure is creating duplication while in fact everything is run from Dublin ... Romania, Bulgaria and Ireland are the most centralised countries in Europe... our organisation has twelve staff for eight hundred thousand people whereas the northwest of England had three hundred people for one and a half million people... when selling Dublin you use ABC [points]when selling the west you use DEF ... we are competing with the other regions of Europe. Ireland needs bigger regions. Sligo got almost nothing during the Celtic tiger ... the business we want have not gone to Dublin but to Brittany, Wales and Scotland. Our organisation is close to the customer... we need more of this because it works. The triple helix is growing in the west with better interaction between the third levels and the agencies. We are a peripheral economy but it is not a barrier and the quality of life here is good ... energy self sufficiency is going to be huge issue and this region has the resources, for example, wind energy ... the community model in Austria is a good example of self sufficiency...”(Respondent I).

“I started work with this Leader Company in late 1980s, communities needed help ... empowerment was the result. Twenty years ago there was a lot of apathy...community recreation officers had a major effect...the right leadership and focus is vital. Planning and capacity building is important ... we brought in Pat Gibbons from UCD to help and he devised the ADOPT principles. The communities analysed itself and did a SWAT analysis. Thematic groups ...small groups ... are feeding into the draft plan. Planning training structures along with support... the level of quality and quantity increased as did participation” (Respondent O).

“We see huge potential for more links with third level institutions ...the Institute for Managers of Community and Voluntary Organisations for example, is very important...” (Respondent P).

“I felt in the late 1990s that Grange would be a community that could apply quality throughout the community. I didn’t know that that meant... I read a few academic papers from America. My thoughts were that a community could have ISO 9000. We got some money and set up an office in Grange and for four years we sat like fish in a fish bowl looking out at the people of Grange” (Respondent V).

4.6.8 Equality and Social Inclusion

Is society less inclusive than it was in the past?

“not really a factor in our organisation ... we get a mix of social enterprises and private commercial ...mostly private... we get a mixed bag of people ... some with a little money and many with more money ... many believe that they need to tap into the political system but that’s Irish society ... The one group that don’t come to us are the rich ... They have access to funds from other sources” (Respondent I).

“... non nationals [that contact our organisation] tend to be in the main from the UK or America ... not much Asian ... Chinese are only interested in their own internal market ...not many eastern Europeans either... this will take time ...tourism prices are still too high and this is a drawback...the eastern Europeans are happy to work in the tourism sector” (Respondent I).

“Not much community involvement from Polish ... Philippines involved... Polish seem not yet sure of their future ... want to go back ... most don’t call Ireland home ... so no buy in... Philippines and Indian use Gilhooley Hall but not the Polish any more. Polish attendance at mass steady ... but working all the time in hotels so can’t get together much” (Respondent J).

“Some good, some bad ... we probably let in too many... but the plan to make Sligo a 100,000 population town is laughable now... we did not think it through” (Respondent K).

“...if they go down the road of local authority housing or they go looking for benefits and things like that it...you know... it’s not racism ...it’s just people concerned about their own patch and that the cake is not big enough to be sharing around but these people [new arrivals] are working and going to the local college and they are making a contribution to the area and they are part of the future” (Respondent Q).

“A lot of work done in the GAA but we realise we have more to do. We have special committee on social inclusion started by Martin and Mary McAlesse” (Respondent L).

“We look for people who are interested rather than electing people for the sake of filling positions. The initiative had to come from the top down as it doesn’t come from the bottom. Non nationals and travellers are now catered for. We have wheelchair hurling. We recognise our limitations, for example, scor (music) –it’s not really our area. We are now making links with other organisations” (Respondent L).

“The GAA was not good at inclusion traditionally but we are improving. The GAA has changed more than any organisation in Ireland over the last twenty years. Letting in rugby and Croke Park opened people’s minds and attitudes started to change” (Respondent L).

“The Celtic tiger saw better funding but now it’s all pulled back ... the poor areas will always find it difficult ... kids learned from their parents ... schooling has improved and the kids get a better start in life ... spearheaded by community groups” (Respondent J).

“Generally people are better off ... we are used to more supports ... debt is the new issue ...more stress... in the eighties no debt ...now... suicide and depression” (Respondent K).

4.6.9 Civil Society

What is the state of civil society in Sligo?

“... We are still a young country ... the German Lander system is a good model which promotes family businesses to become international businesses ... Citizenship and trust needs to be reflected on ... we need to find solutions ... and stand up for our communities ... the Celtic Tiger has damaged us psychologically” (Respondent I).

“I think we are confident... it’s a new nation... we did well abroad ... Irishness is known all over the world ... the fact that we had no riots says something about our maturity ... we want to knuckle down and get on with it ... there is energy there ... community groups have a lot of energy and drive... unseen power is a problem ... the globalisation of society is actually making us smaller ... Dev [deValera] had one view but Enda [Kenny] must take the international view” (Respondent J).

“Can’t say off hand but it’s mostly males who apply for start up grants ... can’t say why” ... (Respondent I).

“People are often in it for themselves...the top people in *non profit* organisations get paid huge amounts ...I am very sceptical of these sorts of organisations... entrepreneurship is a state of mind in any sphere including the civil service” (Respondent K).

“Our organisation traditionally worked on informal links ... not as strong as it was. Our organisation can’t solve all the social ills of Ireland ...we can only support” (Respondent L).

“Hard to give a verdict on social entrepreneurialship?...did a lot of work myself ... hard to make a profit ...substitution is needed...Riverstown creamery closed because it was uneconomical. The commute is having a big effect on communities...people are gone to work in the bigger towns all day” (Respondent M).

“As with any initiative strong management is vital...a local business recently closed because its management changed...governance training and the role of the director is important. How about the co-ops? There is growing interest in the co operative structure. We are sending twenty people on the BSc Rural Development course in UCC” (Respondent P).

“Training is important but the *doing* is vital also...it provides the seeds for future entrepreneurs...” (Respondent I).

“Participation in our sporting organisation is rising ...emigration was not foreseen when we wrote our plans but some are returning again” (Respondent L).

“Coaching courses are developing, on line officer training are now being organised... leadership courses at county level ...we have a constitution which allows our organisation to develop over the longer term. We need training because people have got more litigation conscious” (Respondent L).

“Most of our clients are local authorities... community groups are very low in training ... too messy and time consuming. Communities think status and image is important ... meaningless in reality. Groups are increasingly drawn into regulation... LEADER program is top down and all about form filling ...used to be more community friendly ... still not focussed enough on outcomes. Accessing funding is too complex for the typical group... our company has professional indemnity. Governance or lack of it is very dangerous for communities - a constitution is necessary...” (Respondent M).

How about the younger people in their thirties for instance? Are they getting involved?

“They are more involved in sporting organisations and not much in the caring organisations such as St.Vincent De Paul and this is a slight worry ... the Christian ideal might be lacking ... so whether it's totally altruistic is a point... Church attendance is not what it used to be” (Respondent J).

“Younger people have good values but led by peer groups and not as able to stand on their own feet ... they must wear the Nike shoes and are influenced by Facebook for example” (Respondent J).

“A challenge initially but once [the young people] bought in it works.... the process is very long. We find that if you bring in the young kids the older children and youth and their parents will eventually follow. We did community consultations recently with transition year students and I was amazed... they were very switched on. Inter generational isolation is embedded with forty year old grandparents in some housing estates for instance” (Respondent P).

“I think that the younger people are generally very responsible and have a better attitude to life and to the future and their local area than my generation and I know people will always complain about young people and say that they have no respect or no ‘this’ or no ‘that’. I don’t mind ...I think young people are very positive and I think that’s great for the future. I honestly believe that they are far more concerned and far more caring in a lot of ways and that doesn’t get out there because if you have someone who ‘goes off the rails’ and they bring the whole thing down ...I certainly believe that there is great respect for the older generation from the younger people and its very positive...” (Respondent Q).

“Education is the key in communities... confidence ... critical analysis ... sometimes you need the stimulus from local government but mostly the lead must come from the community...and the politicians will follow” (Respondent J).

“People don’t realise all that’s available...more education is needed in the sector” (Respondent K).

“Ireland is good at community development ...people more time poor now. The *Facebook* generation networks differently ... kids don’t play on the road anymore. The *third place* has changed ... the pub and the creameries are not there as a meeting place anymore. Small towns are changing with the multiples taking over. Networking is the key. The younger people don’t have the informal contacts that the older people have. Financially, people are more stressed. Even community sports days have to train people ...more expense” (Respondent M).

“Governance is important ...structure ...see it as a work in progress...a more joined up approach is badly needed” “Personally speaking mandatory training can be off putting” (Respondent M).

“Being strategic and being professional is the future...using programmes to lever in money for social inclusion is a skill in itself...no money for social inclusion as such” (Respondent P).

“Yes [with less councillors] you will have to have community involvement to help you deal with big geographical areas to see what is happening” (Respondent Q).

4.6.10 Values

Are traditional values like volunteering being eroded?

“Informal verbal communication is the best ...spin won’t work ... it must be real. We plan around blocks of seven years. The planning starts about two years before we implement” (Respondent O).

“...volunteerism has become more diversified...talking to people in organisations it’s as strong as it was...thirty years ago it was more confined... the environment is huge now ... service learning in NUIG and other colleges... students getting involved in community projects... The 2006 census had a question on volunteerism but not in the 2011 census. Johns Hopkins has done work on this. Expectations are different... its more democratic now... traditionally white middle class and male but [its] changing now. Getting migrants involved is still difficult. Health is another area that has expanded... I meet numerous groups in the area of health...so it’s not just the GAA anymore...tag rugby is huge for instance” (Respondent N).

“Volunteerism is still very strong in rural parts rather than in urban areas and I know this from my position on the county council. Volunteerism is very, very strong and we have some terrific volunteers in rural areas but it is much more difficult in a bigger town. In a small rural town everyone knows everyone and they want to come together even if it’s only just a fundraising day to clean up the streets or whatever. It’s extremely difficult to organise that kind of activity in a bigger town and I see that clearly here in Sligo” (Respondent Q).

4.6.11 Politics

Has political life changed in Ireland?

“ The Fianna Fail cumann system was a good example of the bottom up approach...it was not dismantled but it fell away. In the 1970s elections started to be bought ...we have a sense of community but not of state. Fianna Fail has moved to one man one vote system. Reform of the Oireachtas is vital ... governments change but the system doesn’t” (Respondent K).

“When you talk about the workings of the council ...there was a far better relationship between councillors and officials in my area in my early days in politics. There was far less a staff and officials and you could go into city hall in Cleavargh ...there was about twenty five staff in city hall in 1985 whereas there are over a hundred there now. You walked in [then] to the housing officer, to the local engineer, to the account...to any one of the staff. You could walk in the door and sit down. There are five times as many staff in there now and you would find it very difficult to meet anyone that you had not had an appointment with. So there is a turn off there, they don’t really want ...the modern staff they don’t want to engage or see it as their job to engage with public representatives and the community as well” (Respondent Q).

“Reform the Seanad ... everybody should have a vote. The Oireachtas should involve more people with expertise ... the Seanad can help this process ... the media gives little coverage to the Seanad...members of Seanad are enthusiastic about reform” (Respondent K).

“The county manager holds all the power ...the system is wrong...the Taoiseach should pick five ministers from civil society and move towards American system” (Respondent K).

“People involved are enthusiastic about reforming the constitution but it’s too superficial...there is a responsibility on us all to improve ... two generations of people feel this sense of entitlement, this needs to change” (Respondent K).

“Some advancement in female participation... gender quotas won’t work you just end up with ambitious people on committees” (Respondent K).

“... undoubtedly yes we are still a post colonial society... we are still tribal ... even though it’s long gone... the country comes second ...the people least able to drive the country forward are mostly in control...trust building is vital...in terms of community development is a now very important ... the community must lead not wait for government ...like other European countries ...caring is good – it promotes economic growth ... we have too much economic uncertainty now ... civic engagement is vital ... good leaders such as our current president is important. Schemes such as Job Bridge are good ... people could work in the local community for six months ... Reskilling and experience will come... and employment ... schemes make people feel good and to get involved in social enterprises” (Respondent I).

“Yes ...the politicians created this [reliance] themselves to make themselves needed. A more bottom up approach is definitely needed” (Respondent M).

“Ireland and Portugal are among the most centralized countries in Europe and it’s getting worse. The county managers are too powerful... democratic deficit is the community not the elected representatives. The Irish version of deficit is that politicians are not involved in EVERYTHING. Representative democracy and participatory democracy are not the same. People are more alienated but the internet has changed everything. California with its proposition system is not working but they are learning their lessons about the difference between particularity and representative democracy. The sense of subsidiarity is very important to Irish people, people are more knowledgeable now” (Respondent N).

“Young people don’t see politics as relevant because it’s not explained to them. I pick examples and tell young people how it affects them and then they see the reason for politicians. Even national school pupils will see the relevance” (Respondent N).

“Teach people how to influence decisions. I worked with professional groups - teachers, doctors etc. Get common standards. Demystify politics. The EU is more low key and slower but decisions affect everyone eventually” (Respondent N).

4.7 Findings arising from the methodology chapter

4.7.1 Overview

The methodology chapter lays out the proposed implementation of the theory designed to test the research questions posed. The methods to be used were signposted in the literature review but until the theoretical approach is operationalised it remains just that: theory.

The first finding for this researcher was that this part of the thesis was a steep learning curve. Whereas the principles of qualitative and quantitative research were familiar to this researcher from NUIG some of the computer packages such as SPSS were totally new.

4.7.2 The origins of the research question and personal bias

I was aware when I started this piece of research that I was biased against what I saw as the *establishment*. The establishment in my mind was anybody with power. People with power were the enemy of true community development regardless of their background. As mentioned previously it took about two years to realise that it is often the case that people who seemed to have power were in fact constrained by forces outside of their control and were in fact following policy. The policy could be government policy or that of the organisation they represented. I began to realise that the democratic system when its working as it should builds in safeguards to ensure everybody is answerable to somebody.

Personal bias as already mentioned can cloud judgement and distort the facts and therefore call the entire research process into question. Eliminating personal bias involves the controlling of one's emotions and blocking out past experiences.

4.7.3 Data analysis packages: Strengths and weaknesses

The use of the two computer packages as selected proved to be a learning experience. The *Polldaddy* package, while adequate for collecting data, was very weak on data analysis. It was necessary to transfer all the data across to the SPSS package before even the most basic data analysis could begin. The SPSS package on the other hand was almost overwhelming in its ability to take even the most basic data and compile multiple reports on data inputted.

As will be discussed in the next chapter it would have been better to have undertaken a course on the use of computer packages dealing with research first as this would undoubtedly have influenced the scope of the quantitative survey.

While the two packages combined did eventually produce a reliable and satisfactory set of results it was left to the ingenuity of the research to identify which reports would produce meaningful data.

4.7.4 The experience of conducting a focus group

Section 3.3.3 on preparing for a focus group session was full of warnings about what could go wrong if the preparation was careless. Even more of a worry was the warnings of what could go wrong during the focus group session. As it transpired the focus group went without a flaw and proved to be pleasurable experience, The one question which was not asked but should have was *'Tell me what you know about social capital?'* or possibly *'When I say 'social capital' what does that mean to you?'*

4.7.5 Lessons learnt from conducting the quantitative survey

As with the focus group the theory, while useful, could not prepare this researcher for the shock of finding out that this survey was just one more piece of research in most people's mind. The difficulty of attracting attention via the internet was brought home in dramatic fashion. The very poor response to the internet based survey was a wakeup call necessitating swift and decisive action. The decision to approach people directly, while time consuming, proved to be much more fruitful and rewarding. The finding was that the internet is a crowded place with lots of messages vying for the attention of the individual and that skill is needed to be successful at gathering information via the internet. Trust is certainly a factor in any survey work. Sligo people certainly like to know who is carrying out the survey and why.

4.7.6 The one-to-one interviews in practice vs. theory

This part of the research process proved to be the least problematic and the semi structured nature of the interviews as recommended in the methodology theory reflected the outcome in practice. This researcher began to develop better interviewing skills as the interviews rolled out.

4.7.7 The theory of triangulation and mixed method approach in practice

As mentioned previously many of the principles of research were encountered by this researcher in NUIG but never actually practiced on this magnitude. The value of approaching the research from as many angles as possible was apparent at the end of the research process. Triangulation and the mixed method approach in practice proved their worth.

4.7.8 Overcoming limitations in practice

The limitations placed on the researcher working alone were brought home in this thesis. The total absence of funding meant that employing people to help with research was out of the question. This aspect of the research will be mentioned in the discussion chapter.

4.8 Findings unique to Sligo

4.8.1 Pride of place.

The characteristics of social capital as outlined in the literature review allude to, for instance, national and regional characteristics and the notion of an imagined community when it comes to defining nation or statehood. The case studies in Appendix B mention the special place of the county in Ireland when it comes to defining the community and cites the GAA in particular as exploiting (in a positive way) the ‘pride of parish’ to harness the energy of communities. This ‘pride of place’ does not come across in the literature at an international level.

The Sligo people that participated in the various strands of the research process were all anxious to portray Sligo as a good place to live. Conversely there was a counter message that people are not participating in community life like they used to. While this mixed message could apply to anywhere in Ireland the strength of both messages warrants further discussion.

The one-to-one interviews with community activists in Grange demonstrated the pride of community. The entire Grange based interviewees (R,S,T,U) spoke of the tradition of community development in Grange and all took pride in the overall progressive outlook that exists in Grange. Grange may be a small village in the north of Sligo and Grange may be only thirty minutes drive from an international border (Northern Ireland) but all of these other communities are secondary. Grange, thanks to Michael Carney, who is not a native, has an outstanding athletic club.

Grange in common with the residents of Sligo town have a relaxed and open attitude to newcomers regardless of where they are from. Whether the individual is from ‘over the border in Donegal’ or from the other end of the world if that individual is prepared to pitch in and help to make Grange a good place to live then they are welcome.

Racism, a growing issue in Ireland, does not appear to be a major problem in Sligo any negativity appears to be focused on entitlements: mostly in the area of social transfers.

Comments of local councillors in the one-to-one interviewees comment on the tribal nature of politics in Ireland. The fierce pride of place in Grange explains this.

4.8.2 Trust in society: the Sligo perspective

That trust is a fundamental characteristic of social capital is not in question. The level of trust in society is the key indicator of whether social capital levels are rising and falling in society over time. This thesis raised trust as a topic in all aspects of the research process. One of the surprising findings was that Sligo people, regardless of background, made a distinction between institutionalised trust and individual trust. In other words Sligo people distinguish between interpersonal trust and the trust they place in the major institutions of state whether they be government, financial institutions or religious institutions. This facet of trust first emerged in the focus group, the first strand of the research process and therefore this researcher could incorporate this aspect of trust into subsequent strands.

This thesis, in line with similar international studies, amalgamated all facets of trust. That all trust is not the same in the minds of the citizens of Sligo is a significant finding. This calls into question international practices when it comes to measuring trust levels in society and by extension measuring social capital levels. It needs to be pointed this feature of trust was taken into account when the comprehensive list of questions was prepared for the quantitative survey.

4.8.3 Post colonial Sligo and Ireland.

This thesis did not set out to test whether Sligo was still in a post colonial phase and yet references were made to the lingering effect of our status as a former colony. The one-to-one interviewees who worked in other countries in a similar capacity to their work here were openly critical of our dependency culture, particularly in the north west of Ireland (and Sligo).

Certainly Sligo seems to be somewhat lacking in the area of innovation and the dependency theory and over reliance on central government is still in evidence.

In the political sphere locally based politicians are much narrower in their focus and their views reflect the tribal nature of local political. At national and European level however the interviewees from this strand of the research process who are also elected politicians can see firsthand the short comings of our political system, often a legacy of our former colonial status and the violent origins of the Irish state. As mentioned in section 4.8.1 respondents R,S,T,U all display pride of place in Grange. In contrast Munster respondents Q and P, the only participants who were not west of Ireland participants placed much more emphasis on self help. Are Connacht and Sligo people still looking for handouts?

4.8.4 The attitude of Sligo people to social research

The literature review made much of the need to provide inducements to participants in order to ensure that a viable number of individuals would engage with the research process. This was not the experience of this researcher. Sligo people would appear to be uniquely generous with their time and this reflects their interest in their community and the world around them.

4.9 Summary

This chapter begins the process of drawing together the diverse opinions from both the academic world as described in the literature review and the thoughts and observations of citizens of County Sligo. The reflections of individuals qualified to speak on behalf of organisations across the full spectrum of the community and voluntary sector are also documented.

Social capital is a relatively new concept in sociology. Its importance in the wider sociological and societal debate is questionable. While trust as a concept within social capital is acknowledged the key issue of whether trust can be measured is greeted with scepticism. The concept of bonding, linking and bridging social capital is accepted. The fact that bonding social capital can have undesirable side effects on society casts a further doubt on the topic. One finding from the literature review is that it's often the secondary or fallout actions of people working together that create conditions conducive to promoting social capital. Society influences social capital levels rather than the other way round. Volunteer levels are a key indicator of the levels of social capital present in society at a given moment. Sligo is on par with the rest of Ireland for volunteering rates. Nothing is simple about social capital. Even the basic concept of rural communities working together as distinct from urban societies being individualistic is not straight forward. Income, education, sport, religion and democracy all influence levels of social capital. The emergence of the internet or broadband age has had a profound effect on how individuals and communities communicate - although it's not all negative.

History still plays a big part in influencing societal mores particularly in Ireland which many regard as a young country. Our transition from a colony with agriculture as its main economic base to an urban based multicultural society heavily influenced by the EU of which Ireland is a member has had profound effects on society particularly over the last twenty years.

Having highlighted the main characteristics of social capital, the literature review then breaks down aspects of social capital into the first place, (with its emphasis on family and community), and debates the importance of what many, but not all, regard as the foundations of social capital enhancement.

The second place is mainly associated with work, both paid and unpaid, and is mainly associated with economic rather than social wellbeing. The second place is not portrayed as a place where social capital can flourish but as a place where power is the dominant driver.

It's for this reason that people often turn to the third place, the place where they can find fulfillment and enjoyment and be part of a group. The third place can have its own conflicts but it's also the place where social capital levels can thrive or die.

This chapter then moves from the academic findings to the findings arising from the comments and opinions of the people of County Sligo. The remainder of the chapter is divided into the findings arising from the focus group, the qualitative survey findings, and the one-to-one interviews. Notwithstanding that each exercise was conducted under its own conditions in order to satisfy the criteria of reliability and validity, a number of common outcomes were apparent. Anger was apparent among all the participants, mostly directed at politicians but with their fellow citizens also. Distrust of institutions of all hues was apparent but a distinction was made regarding trust among individuals and within communities. The sense of community is still very important to the citizens of Sligo. The spirit of volunteerism is still alive and well even if it has changed, especially given the rise of paid professionals amongst their ranks. Conversely the people feel that other people don't care as much about community life. Politicians are held in low esteem yet people still maintain contact with them and think that it's important that people should vote.

At individual level people feel more cut off from friends and neighbours and generally feel they have less power over events concerning their lives. Despite this most people feel that the quality of life has improved over the last twenty years although rural and older citizens feel that the society is working against them more so than younger urban dwellers.

The application of the theory of the research process as outlined in the methodology chapter proved to be a steep learning curve. The research process demonstrated that, as is so often the case that until the researcher experiences firsthand the real life challenges of conducting research no real lessons can be learnt.

This chapter finishes by contrasting the aspects of social capital as they arose in the literature review and contrasting them with the findings arising from the research process in County Sligo.

A number of findings unique to Sligo emerged. Pride of place matters to the citizens of Sligo. Sligo people distinguish between trust at institutional level and interpersonal trust. Sligo and the west of Ireland still have a post colonial or dependency approach to life. Sligo people are relaxed about people moving to live in the county from other parts of Ireland and the world but are still tribal in their political outlook.

In summary this chapter started with a description of social capital and highlighted its principle ambiguities and contradictions. It moved on to describing the views of the people of County Sligo and once again found many contradictions. A short conclusion of the chapter sets the scene for a discussion on why social capital can throw up so many contradictions.

4.10 Conclusion

The tumultuous developments in Irish society over last twenty years make any longitudinal measurement of changing social capital levels very difficult. Yet this is what this thesis is attempting to incorporate. The findings chapter exposes the anger that people feel about the society they live. It also exposes the innate human desire to improve their lives and the lives of those around them. The findings produce many commonalities and some contradictions. These will be discussed in the next chapter: chapter five.

Chapter Five Discussion of findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the points arising from the findings chapter.

A number of key topics emerged from an extensive literature review. The topics as detailed below include: key characteristics of Irish society, power and who holds it, the importance of trust, the relevance of community, whether values and ethics have declined in society, equality in society, and lastly the relevance of politicians and the political system in people's lives.

This chapter starts with an outline and overview of the overarching theme of the findings in 5.1. Section 2 goes into more detail on a discussion of the findings. 5.2.1 discusses the characteristics of County Sligo from a socio-economic point of view. 5.2.2 highlights the talking points arising from the literature review. Subsection 5.2.3 highlights the issues arising from the qualitative survey. Section 5.3 and subsections are devoted to discussing the topics one by one and attempts to draw all strands into the discussion. Irish society (5.3.1), Power (5.3.2), Trust (5.3.3), Community (5.3.4), Values (5.3.5), Equality (5.3.6) and Political (5.3.7) are all looked at. Section 5.4 ponders whether or not the findings produced any new information about social capital and more particularly Irish and Sligo society. Section 5.5 and subsections takes each research question and individually discusses whether or not this thesis produced a satisfactory answer to each question. Limitations are acknowledged where necessary. Section 5.6 provides a summary and 5.7 a conclusion.

5.1 Main findings

Social capital conveys an overall theme of co-operation and respect, trust, reciprocity, where social participation and social networking are conducted for the common good.

Social capital is a much researched subject within sociological circles but almost unknown as a topic outside of the academic world. In the course of conducting, firstly a focus group, and then a quantitative survey the term 'social capital' never arose. The respondents who participated in the research never actually the term 'social capital'. It did arise in the one-to-one interviews but only where the interviewee had a third level degree that brought the individual into contact with the term.

As mentioned in the findings chapter, the literature review is treated separately from the other strands and is discussed on its own merits in this chapter also.

Definition and measurement are the two challenges confronting any researcher attempting to understand social capital. There is broad agreement among researchers of the key characteristics of social capital as outlined at the beginning of this section.

One of the main findings of this research is that devising a reliable model by which social capital can be measured over time and between different societies requires a deep understanding of the concept and recognition of its weaknesses and limitations.

On the issue of measuring a subjective topic which social capital essentially is, this researcher mentioned the difficulties encountered when trying to engage the public in large scale quantitative analysis. As mentioned in the findings the ‘O Connell Street’ case study was instructive in that it showed that social media can work in certain situations. In retrospect it is obvious that the term social capital is almost unknown as a topic or concept among the general public as this was undoubtedly off putting to the ‘lay man’. Was the wrong approach initially taken? The answer is probably yes. What then should a more appropriate approach be? The approach eventually taken by this researcher in hindsight was the right one. When the topic is difficult for the ‘man in the street’ face-to-face contact results in much better results. However the question still remains as to whether or not the social media approach would have at least made more of a contribution to the overall research had this researcher received more training in research using social media methods. The answer is probably yes. A possible aid to promote and enhance research using social media will be proposed in chapter six.

Before discussing aspects of the literature review the socio-economic aspects of Sligo will be analysed first in 5.2.1.

This section provided a brief overview of the main findings, that is, the challenge of defining and measuring social capital. The next section goes into more depth discussing each of the topics outlined above.

5.2 Analysis of the findings

5.2.1 Socio-economic aspects of Sligo

As recognised in chapter one no sociological discussion about any society can take place without including an overview of the economic characteristics of that society also.

One early finding is that Sligo is a good place to live and its towns and the county rank high up on the quality of life scale in Ireland, although Sligo town does not score as highly. Why does County Sligo feature so highly in a number of surveys? Participants in the focus group and the one-to-one interviews, analysed later, describe Sligo as being 'exceptional' for community involvement. This sentiment conveys a pride among the people involved in community activities.

In reality the participation rates for volunteering in Sligo broadly reflect the national rates (Census 2006). Obviously social capital levels must be high for this level of community participation to be present. Healy (2003) contends that the economic forces in society are not as strong as might be imagined.

The question is 'Does social capital levels, already present, allow community participation to flourish or does community participation influence social capital levels?' Sligo is portrayed as an economic basket case in chapter one yet Sligo people still seem to get on with life. This raises the question as to how much influence the economy can have on the social fabric of society. The role of IT Sligo in fostering community involvement and promoting education in all its forms comes up in the focus group session and in the one-to-one interviews. Adults who are not, and never were, students of the institute feel remote from it. Can anything be done to encourage more people into IT Sligo?

The findings from chapter one on socio-economic aspects of County Sligo start with a review of the main influences on planning in Ireland in the last twenty years. The main influence on national and regional planning is the EU. The increasing standardization of EU regions, including Ireland's regions, using the NUT's system is helping to create uniform and cohesive plans although this uniformity might not suit individual regions.

Sligo town is the largest town in the province and with approximately one third of the population of the county, it is a significant rural hub set in a very rural region. Sligo was designated as a 'gateway city' under the now abandoned National Spatial Strategy. This strategy was singularly unsuited to Sligo and resulted in an inappropriate and far too ambitious growth target for the county.

The most visible legacy from this failed initiative is the state of County Sligo's finances. Sligo County Council is one of the most indebted county councils in the country.

The Lisadell House saga concerning rights of way left a huge financial and psychological legacy on how business is conducted at county council level.

As mentioned the 'Gateway' strategy was inappropriate for Sligo but for statistical purposes it proved useful for comparing Sligo town with other gateway towns. Sligo scores above average on many levels including higher third level participation and lower crime rates and a lower dependency ratio than other similar size towns. Some surveys, give Sligo town a very low ranking using employment rates and population movement as a guide, this is puzzling. If some of these surveys prove one thing it's that measuring something as subjective as social capital and quality of life using just a few indicators is liable to give every selective, subjective, and possibly inaccurate answers.

Much attention has been paid to deprivation in recent years. The *Pobal HP Deprivation Index* (Hasse and Pratschke 2012) developed specifically with Ireland in mind has proven to be very influential in how resources are directed at individual communities. No such index exists for measuring social capital levels in Ireland. Does Ireland need a social capital index? Any such index would have to be robust enough to deal with changes in society as a longitudinal dimension is vital. Could IT Sligo take a lead role in developing and maintaining such an index?

As regards deprivation scores the Border, a NUT 2, region is among the most deprived regions in the country, with the exception of County Sligo. Deprivation scores vary within the county with the west and south of the county significantly more deprived than the north and east of Sligo. Should the more deprived areas of County Sligo receive tax incentives designed to stimulate economic development?

The County Development Plans are driven by EU policies and increasingly must tie in with EU budget in terms of where money is spent and timing of this spending. The County Development Plans paint a broad picture of the aspirations of the planners and contain many infrastructural targets which may not happen soon or indeed ever. Are the plans too general? Should they be more specific and more realistic?

With the exception of an emphasis on the core objective of providing housing there is no evidence of the County Development Plans being directly concerned with people and for this reason two mini-plans are included in this thesis. As mentioned in chapter four it is obvious that the promotion of Sligo's natural assets is not high on the agenda: natural assets include people. Why is this approach taken despite all the discourse about using local strengths?

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010 – 2016 which was written as a separate plan provides a useful insight into the changing social make up of Sligo town and its immediate hinterland.

Drawing on statistics from the recent census figures a picture of a dynamic and rapidly changing town is painted. While the overall population grew the area lost almost one thousand children or over a quarter of it's under fourteen population. All the other segments of the population grew, young adults, middle aged and retired people are all more numerous than ten years ago. People moved in from everywhere, other parts of Ireland, other parts of Sligo, and from other parts of the world. The effect of the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme during this period is certainly a point for discussion and debate.

How much of an effect had this scheme on population movement within the county? Undoubtedly it had an effect but how much and were other factors at work?

The County Development Plan, recognizing that the area covered by the plan is too large and too diverse, includes a number of mini plans. Grange was picked out because in contrast to Sligo town, it has undergone a population explosion of children under age fourteen. Indeed the main problem Grange has is that more people want to live there but the County Development Plan taking its lead from EU directives discourages any more house building. Will this pent-up demand eventually be a source of angst in the community? Grange in contrast to Sligo town is still, relatively speaking, a very homogeneous place to live. The jobs are in Sligo town so newly arrived immigrants have no interest in living so far away from their employment.

In summary this section paints a picture of very varied and rapidly changing Sligo economy and society.

5.2.2 Literature Review

Social capital by its nature encompasses almost every social topic imaginable, this, as one would expect generates a huge number of academic articles in numerous journals and periodicals. The first, and not unexpected finding, is that not everyone is in agreement with what are the central issues and characteristics of social capital and which are the most influential. Some, for instance, argue that family and neighbours are the first and most enduring influences in personal social capital levels. Others put education and race ahead of all other influences.

Still others question whether society influences social capital levels or whether social capital forms independently of society and in turn exerts a positive influence on key institutions in society?

It might be that the positive actions of individuals and groups have a secondary or knock-on effect in society and that 'leading by example' is the real test of social capital levels in society.

At academic level devising reliable models for the measurement of social capital is a fundamental issue. This thesis constructed a model drawn on research from a number of sources. Using Cronbach's Alpha as the yardstick for testing the central posit 'that social capital levels have decreased in County Sligo' the conclusion is that social levels have decreased. Does Sligo and Ireland need further research into this key issue of reliable measurement?

Section 5.2.1 discusses Sligo from a socio-economic view point. Chapter four highlights the economic value of social capital in society. There is no doubt that active participation of citizens in the democratic process has benefits. Why then do individuals and groups feel excluded and marginalised when it comes to having an input into decisions which affect their lives and those of their communities? The level of education in society has a bearing on how the individual approaches issues. Power or more precisely the balance of power within society is major issue and within the academic debate on social capital. Should there be more community education? Would this redress the uneven struggle between the citizen and the apparatus of state?

What do we mean by community? Ireland, like all societies, has class differences and in the case of a border county like Sligo religious divides. In addition the divide between rural and urban was much more pronounced in the past. These communities were easily recognizable and defined themselves. As pointed out in the findings chapter the coming of the internet age combined with the arrival of people from many different cultures has led to the emergence of many new communities that did not even exist twenty years ago. How does society engage with these communities?

Sport was always a great bridging force within a community but the growth of professionalism in sport has alienated the traditional supporters of team games in particular. In Ireland the amateur sports rooted in the community has always had a value but does this status need protection? How important is the bridging and linking aspect of sport for the promotion of social capital particularly in multicultural Ireland?

The newly arrived immigrants often have distinctive religious beliefs. Religion is still a force in Irish society even if active participation is on the wane. How can the various religious institutions act as a bridging and linking force in modern Irish society? Racism and intolerance of all kinds appear to be on the rise in Ireland (MRCI 2011). What part can religion play in arresting and reversing this trend?

Philanthropy has always existed in Ireland but operated on a very narrow base. People mostly donated through the church in Ireland. The practice of philanthropy needs to be promoted. What part can the promotion of a better understanding of social capital play in this?

Social entrepreneurship, like philanthropy, is still underdeveloped in Ireland. Social entrepreneurs need to be encouraged: they need the right social attitude to flourish. Good social capital levels need to be present. What is the influence of enhanced social capital levels on producing social entrepreneurs?

Academics regularly debate the state of civil society in Ireland and highlight its deficiencies. The community and voluntary sector is always drawn into the debate. What constitutes civil society in Ireland? What constitutes the community and voluntary sector in Ireland?

On a social level the literature review highlights the disappearance of 'third places' particularly in rural communities. People recognise the need to have informal contacts in a non threatening environment. It is also recognised that the growth of virtual communities and the advent of the internet age circumvents the need for direct human contact. People are not comfortable with this development. What can be done to rejuvenate communities and get them talking to each other again?

Trust is a fundamental facet of social capital. Trust levels in Ireland are very low by international standards. What can be done to raise trust levels in Ireland using social capital as a platform?

Income inequality and growing inequality in general in society is regarded as having a major influence on bonding and bridging social capital. As with all aspects of social capital the debate on the true level of inequality in society is often based on personal opinion rather than grounded research? Should County Sligo conduct research of its own on the topic?

As mentioned previously in relation to deprivation scores the need to devise an appropriate methodology for measuring social capital is a major goal in the debate on the relevance of social capital. Ireland has yet to devise a consistent model by which social capital can be measured over time. Does Ireland need such a model?

The local school is still a much valued institution in Irish community life. Can the local school play a more direct part in promoting aspects of social capital? Would the introduction of a civics course help?

Finally much of the literature review is taken up with the concept of the first place, and the importance of family and community. There is no doubt that the first place plays an important part in character building for future life.

The second place or work place is increasingly a more demanding and more competitive environment. The second place impacts on the third place, the place where people make linkages. The third place has changed dramatically in this more urbanized and more internet connected society. What can be done to promote the third place? More specifically what how can 'third places' be developed to enhance the quality of life of both the young and the old?

As explained earlier the literature review was discussed separately and will be incorporated into a more specific discussion later. This thesis now moves from the academic sphere to the points raised by the people of Sligo as expressed in, firstly, the quantitative survey.

5.2.3 Quantitative survey

The quantitative survey covered seven topics with twenty one categories spread over fifty seven questions. The respondents were male and female and ranged in age from eighteen years and upwards. The first item to be discussed in this section was whether this was too ambitious an undertaking? The answer is that it probably was. This researcher would at this point admit to being naive. Social capital is a complex subject and there is no one answer to all the possible questions arising from a piece of research such as this. While the breadth and depth and general scope of the undertaking of the quantitative survey can be justified as outlined already in the methodology chapter, chapter three, common sense must also prevail and therefore only the main points arising will be discussed as well as some individual questions where this researcher feels it is relevant to do so.

Most of the questions asked on the topics of community engagement, politics, ethics and values produced the predictable negative responses. However there was mixed responses to questions relating to a decreasing quality of life. A significant number of people think Ireland and Sligo is a better place to live now than ten years ago. Not everybody is cynical about community and the ethos of volunteering despite the seeming decline in morals and ethics is still very much alive. People still keep in contact with their politicians despite their dissatisfaction with the profession.

Sligo people have an open mind about people from other countries living in Sligo but feel that Ireland and Sligo have enough new arrivals for now. The problems of integration would appear to be among the people from other parts of Europe and the world rather than among the natives. How can we natives encourage these new arrivals to call Ireland 'home' and play a more meaningful part of County Sligo life?

As described in chapter three questions were grouped by strength of response for analytical purposes. Questions dealing with changing levels of equality, level of happiness, unseen power, personal safety, greed, decreasing importance of religion, and strict law enforcement, all scored sixty per cent or more when *agree* and *strongly agree* answers were added together. Does this convey and confirm the perception that Sligo society has turned in on itself? It would seem that it has.

However other questions would give the perception that we haven't lost faith in ourselves or the society we live in. Questions dealing with sections of society, such as, the top should help the bottom, children's rights, gay marriages, mortgage assistance, all scored sixty per cent or more in the combined *strongly agree* and *agree* categories where added together. An interesting *qualitative* comment from respondents across the population surveyed regarding gay rights was that they accepted gay people but drew the line at children being brought up by gays. Are the Sligo people a fair minded and open minded people? It would generally appear that we are.

On issues dealing with friendliness, levels of honesty, values of older people, workplace, caring society, personal power, and contact with neighbours, decreasing number of friends, a less convincing picture emerged with sixty per cent plus levels being reached only when the no opinion responses were added in. Significantly question 6 'Ireland is a better place today than 10 years ago' gave a broader range of responses than one might expect. Over fifty percent disagreed: the picture is not completely clear but conveys a message of advancement in spite of everything.

Questions dealing with community produced a positive response. People feel good about the place they live in and those who live there. Both personal and government participation responsibility are important, views on how valued volunteers are in community life are mixed but overall positive, professionals taking over is a mild concern, lack of time and money issues are not cited as barriers to community participation. However question 39 '*community spirit is decreasing*' elicited almost seventy per cent agreement. Why is this, especially when people feel good about their communities?

It's a source of concern and merits a more in depth investigation. Is it because, as postulated above, we are turning in on ourselves as a society?

As mentioned our attitudes to the new arrivals show that we are comfortable with the new communities but over sixty per cent believe that undocumented migrants should not get citizenship. The message is clear, we have enough people coming to make their home in Ireland and Sligo.

In relation to undocumented migrants it would appear that people from outside the EU are not all that welcome here. Like the question on gay rights Sligo people are tolerant but only up to a point.

Overall it appears that Sligo people are more tolerant and relaxed about having people from other regions of Europe and Ireland living in their communities than Irish people as a whole. Sligo people while more relaxed about living with people from other backgrounds but have limits. What are these limits?

Questions dealing with politics produced the predictable negative responses yet over fifty per cent of respondents contacted a public representative in the last five years, a massive ninety per cent believe we should vote. We may not admire our politicians and we may distrust the political system but we realise that we need both. Apathy among young people towards politics not as clear cut as might be assumed with only fifty four per cent of all respondents agreeing that young people do not believe in politics. Among the general population the question '*changing government makes no difference to me*' produces seventy per cent agreement. Once again younger adults are being stereotyped it would appear. What exactly do we want from our politicians?

Foreign nationals were reluctant to participate in the survey. This finding could be construed to mean that Sligo natives are more trusting and more open than natives of other countries, it could also be a sign that foreign nationals don't want to participate in Irish life. Are people from other countries reflecting what they experience 'at home' or is something else amiss?

As if confirm the decline in the association between religion and main stream society less than forty per cent of respondents linked religion to personal values. Why is this? The answers to the questions asked while overall confirming that many people feel about society also throw up some questions which are not adequately answered in this section. Over all the attitudes expressed are largely reflective of those in the literature review.

This section proved to be the most challenging from a technical point of view. This researchers knowledge of communication in the internet age was certainly challenged. The 'O Connell Street' case study was instructive in that it demonstrated that the right mode of communication in the right circumstances and targeted at the right audience will produce results.

The next section, exploring the one-to-one interviews, adds some further perspectives to the discussion chapter and then a composite picture will emerge from all three approaches. The themes identified in the earlier chapters will be used as a basis for discussion in the sections following.

5.3 A discussion of the findings by topic

5.3.1 Irish society

As noted in the literature review the Industrial Revolution started the drift from the land. Ireland while hardly touched by the Industrial Revolution had its own defining event in the shape of the Great Famine of the 1840's. World wide and particularly since the end of the Second World War and the breakup of the colonial empires, huge numbers of people from the former colonies have moved to 'the west' in search of a better life. Finally in the last twenty years the world became truly global with the advent of cheaper travel and global communication systems (Literature Review).

All the comments in the next sections were generated by the focus group participants unless stated otherwise.

The biggest change in Ireland over the last twenty years is the growth of urban areas. How has this changed our social structure? The recent arrival of people from many countries has changed the makeup of communities in Sligo but nobody can say with certainty how well these groups have integrated: it's too soon to make a judgement *seems* to be the verdict.

Many urban areas and small towns have experienced an influx of people from other countries who are very mobile in terms of moving jobs or locality. Is this creating an unstable community structure? As already mentioned previously these are very new issues for Irish society.

An individual's first experience of social capital is the family. How is the family unit coping in these times of great change? How does one define a *family* in modern Ireland? This is the first issue that needs to be addressed.

Unemployment is back on the agenda after a period of almost full employment. To what extent do modern work practices affect volunteerism? Has rising unemployment affected people's attitude to volunteerism? People with ability are losing their jobs and this is drawing them into the voluntary sector. This is a new phenomenon and it's difficult to give a definite answer on the relationship between work/unemployment and volunteerism at this point in time.

The feeling that we are still a young country and even in a post colonial phase is a recurring theme. The tribal nature of Irish society also came across in the one-to-one interviews. Do we need to promote good citizenship? Do we need to teach civics and citizenship in our schools?

5.3.2 Power

Are community groups equipped to meet the challenges facing in today's complex world? Frustration expressed at the complex nature of applying for financial assistance for projects would suggest that more help and training is needed.

Is the passive member of voluntary organisations becoming more common and are they leaving it all to the active member? The rise of professionalism in organisations is causing some friction with volunteerism suffering was the opinion of the focus group.

Has EU dominance alienated us from society around us? The person speaking from a senior citizens perspective was firmly of the opinion that the growing influence of the EU is alienating citizens from politicians. Does the EU need to reform?

How effective is the *bottom up* process and how is the principle of *subsidiarity* actually observed and applied? The focus group was upbeat on the level of participation in communities and accepts that there will always be individuals that will try to dominate groups.

Knowledge is power. Two of the one-to-one interviewees are very interested in the issue of job creation in Sligo and the North West. They link education and a person's ability to create their own job as crucial. Does IT Sligo need to take stock of the courses it runs in the area of community education?

On the issue of the triple helix, in this context the position of Sligo IT and the wider community everybody, in the focus group, agreed that the interaction is good but it could be better. The Munster based LEADER interviewees see interaction between their communities and the third level institutions of the area as vital. Should Sligo and the North West look to this company and follow their strategies?

Not all power is necessarily bad. Power with a sense of responsibility is a good thing. A distinction was made between the individual and the institutions. Interviewees, particularly those with experience of, and exposure to, the commercial sector were very critical of the financial institutions. This reflects the comments of the financial manager in the focus group: trust between the financial institutions and the individual is nonexistent and vice versa.

The traditional bank manager was part of the community and knew when to lend and when to refuse. The recklessness of the Celtic Tiger era and the closure of branches destroyed this link. Given the strength of feeling about the nonexistent trust levels the question must be asked if communities need an entirely new banking system. Should the Credit Unions 'rebrand' themselves?

5.3.3 Trust

That trust is not a fundamental issue in sociological circles is surprising. Does the notion and importance of trust need to be promoted more?

The focus group believes that people still have high levels of trust but are more cautious on an individual level. On an institutional level they feel very let down. Should trust be measured on two scales, at community level and at institutional level? The state and financial sectors come across very poorly. How can trust be rebuilt?

How does the corporate sector, in addition to the political and religious sector, affect our trust levels? As mentioned previously people are very disillusioned with Ireland's major institutions.

There was agreement within the focus group that at public sector level the funding situation is well regulated – too well regulated it would seem. Is this a deterrent for groups? It's definitely a deterrent is the opinion of all present in the focus group. While appropriate regulation is a good thing may be overly complicated at times. Are the present generation of community activists paying for the sins of the previous generation who may have abused the system? Can these regulations be reviewed and possibly simplified?

5.3.4 Community

Whether rural communities possess higher levels of social capital is open to debate and similarly the quality of community life in affluent communities as against poor communities is not always as clear cut as it seems. The political system and associated culture of a country is an influence as is the dominant religion. Even the definition of community and citizenship is open to interpretation. The literature review reminds us that there are imagined communities, creative communities and virtual communities all have their own characteristics. *Traditional* communities, that is, the image of the rural, almost self contained, community has being under threat for hundreds of years.

Rural communities are losing key institutions (as they see it) and feel under threat. How real is the threat? The threat is very real to those living in rural areas. People in Sligo town don't seem to see centralisation as a crisis was the view of the focus group.

The feeling among all most of the focus group and one-to-one participants is that young people are not getting involved in their communities – especially in administration duties. How true is this? All the people in both the focus group and the one-to-one interviews were over thirty five and in the absence of a young person this cannot be answered conclusively from the focus group alone.

Community groups are not static and the nature of community is changing. How is it changing? Everybody agreed that *the nature of participation* in community activities is changing but nobody could *put their finger on it* in the focus group session.

How strong is the mandate of community groups? This depends on the status of the group in the community it would seem according to the focus group.

Communities come in many shapes and forms. The participants in the one-to-one interviews took a wider view than the focus group participants by identifying migrant communities, commuting communities, rural and urban communities, caring communities, communities of interest, apathetic communities, empowered communities, parish based communities, all of which feature in the literature review. Does a person's occupation, position in society and involvement in communal life change ones perspective on what community means?

5.3.5 Values

The participants in the focus group were very strong on values in society as can be judged from the comments below.

Are younger people being given enough responsibility and challenges? Do younger people have good values? The person involved in a sporting organisation gave the example of young people refereeing matches and the sense of responsibility it instilled in those people. The message is that young people want and need responsibility and challenges but don't get enough opportunities. How can this energy and desire to make a mark be channelled into something positive?

It would appear that new arrivals from other countries are getting involved in community work. How widespread is this and is it growing and deepening? As already mentioned nobody seems to know as there is too much economic upheaval in Sligo at present, people are losing their jobs for instance.

Everybody in the focus group agrees that people have become more individualistic and less caring yet the voluntary sector seems to be thriving. How can the two outlooks be reconciled? The focus group could not give a definite opinion on where the community and voluntary sector is positioned at the moment.

Are people willing to take on responsibility for issues affecting their daily lives? While the people present are willing to take on responsibility (they all agreed to come to the focus group session) the feeling was that not enough people are willing to step forward. People will respond to a call for assistance if asked was the opinion of the group. Does this place all the responsibility on a small few people in the organisation? The group agreed that while it's the nature of groups to rely on a few, usually the officers, at any given time, people will rally round when it counts.

Most of the one-to-one interviewees see a divide between the under fifties and the older citizens of the community. The interviewees, like the senior citizen in the focus group are apprehensive about the lack of involvement of the younger population in the caring side of community involvement. They acknowledged that the younger section of the population is interested in child centred activities such as sport. More involvement in the caring organisations is needed but how can this be fostered?

5.3.6 Equality

Many people feel that society is not fair and has become more unequal. How true is this? This question gave the most variation in answers among the focus group participants. The person working with an inner city housing estate was adamant that society is becoming more unequal while the more middle class people in the group see improvements in society with more supports. Rural representatives look at the society from a rural perspective and they are apprehensive about the future (Focus Group).

Has the growth of professional people in organisations affected the way people participate in organisations? Is it getting overly expensive to run some organisations? The cost and threat of legal action is definitely a growing factor in organisations and leading to difficulties was the opinion of one community activist in the group. Do people feel unequal or more to the point do they feel unequal to the challenge?

On the issue of the rich/poor divide and whether it's growing the one-to-one interviewees were of the opinion that despite the recession and the harsh economic climate the assistance available to poorer sections of society has improved over the last twenty years. All of the interviewees are successful well off people and possibly the people at the margins of society would have a different view. The participants of this survey, including young people lucky enough to get to college, could not be described as disadvantaged. Should there be more research into the lives of Sligo's less fortunate people?

As regards community groups it is acknowledged that they could be more professional and responsible in promoting equality in their own groups but do community groups value training?

Despite these short comings, and reflecting the opinions of the other strands of this study, democracy among groups is improving. The position of women has improved and could improve further if women themselves push themselves forward. The position of women in society is still a big topic of discussion (One-to-one interviewees).

How can we encourage women to take on more responsibility in community and voluntary groups? Is there a need to study women and their work in the community and voluntary sector in Sligo and the North West?

As regards the need for training for community groups the one-to-one interviewees are not enthusiastic about mandatory training. The views of the interviewees are at odds on the issue of training. Should community groups get training and should it be mandatory before they get assistance?

The new arrivals can be divided into the European communities and the rest of the world. The Eastern Europeans don't call Ireland 'home' was the comment of one interviewee. They don't see themselves as being equal partners in Irish society. It's now ten years since the Eastern European countries joined the EU and started to arrive in Sligo in large numbers. How much do we know about these people? Should they be interviewed to see what their aspirations are as regards Ireland? The Pilipino and Indian communities in Sligo would appear to have a stronger community identity if their participation in church affairs is to be taken as an indication according to one of the interviewees. Why is this?

5.3.7 Political

The participants in the focus group were unanimous in their anger at the conduct of the political classes yet nobody put forward solutions to ensure that the economic and social crises that existed did not happen again. Should there be more constructive debate at community level about our political system? The politicians interviewed acknowledged that younger people are apathetic about politics but noted that once an issue is explained to them and they can see the effect it will have on their lives and that of their family they become much more interested. Younger people don't want to get involved in political parties. It's not worth the trouble it seems. Can more be done to promote politics among young people?

5.4 Did the findings produce any *new* information?

Broadly speaking the research process at an international level dwelled on the opinions of writers and academics from around the world, mainly over the last twenty years. Many books and journal articles have been published and many of the writers quote each other. Therefore it is difficult to say if in an international context that anything *new* was discovered. Confirmation of what's already the perceived attitude might be a more accurate observation. As regards the Irish dimension the *newness* of the information gathered is open to debate. Certainly this thesis is one of the very few pieces of research undertaken in Ireland since the economic crash and possibly the only one that uses 'social capital' as its yardstick measuring such fundamental issues such as quality of life and trust in society.

As highlighted in chapter four, section 4.8, the people of Sligo did draw out some new dimensions of social capital that the literature review did not and these aspects should be followed up. The next section analyses each of the research questions and the unique views of Sligo's citizens will be incorporated into this.

The surveys and interviews already described in this thesis took place in a time of a huge economic crises and the information gathered is therefore *new*. When this writer started formulating the research question in late 2008 it was apparent that all was not well with the Irish economy but nobody could have anticipated the devastation that the Celtic Tiger era would leave in its wake. By the time the focus group was conducted in 2010 it was obvious that there was a lot of anger at the way the economy was handled by the politicians and the banks.

Separately the Catholic Church was coming under scrutiny at a level not seen before in Ireland concerning past abuses. Finally Fianna Fail, the dominant political party since the foundation of the state, came close to imploding. The one-to-one interviews conducted in the spring of 2013 allowed people prominent in the previously mentioned organisations to air their views. Coming so soon after the events as already described the one-to-one interviews must surely be the first, and possibly only, time the interviewees were asked their opinion on Sligo society in general and their own organisations perspective in particular.

One new finding stands out for this researcher and that is that the Celtic Tiger era had a profound economic and social effect on every individual and every organisation in this country.

At the time of writing up the findings people were also talking about individuals and communities regrouping and reevaluating their lives and assessing the lives of those around them.

The major finding, for this researcher, was that Sligo people still like to meet the person conducting the survey, faceless internet based surveys doesn't suit them. Sligo people are willing to help you out and give their time and are interested in what you are doing. Students are better at participating in internet based surveys: females are the most co-operative whereas males are better at participating in face-to-face surveys.

Throughout this survey, carried out in public places, natives of other countries mostly refused to participate, citing lack of time or poor English language proficiency however enough foreign nationals did participate to make the findings valid. One foreign female working on a social programme in Sligo refused to respond to the *Polldaddy* link sent to her remarking, by email, that the questions were too personal.

As regards the quantitative survey questions relating to people from other regions of the world showed that we are comfortable with other cultures living in our communities with two provisos, that we have enough immigrants for the moment and that asylum seekers should not be supported or granted residency in Ireland. These views seem to suggest that people from other parts of Europe are acceptable, up to a point, but people from outside Europe are not welcome. In more recent times a number of articles have started to appear in Irish newspapers and elsewhere referring to increased levels of racism.

Another overall finding was that the SPSS reports emanating from even a seemingly small survey were very large and too detailed to be read with ease, however when the topics were grouped they made more sense. A system of classification as described in the methodology chapter was required.

5.5. An analysis of each research question

5.5.1 Has Ireland (and Sligo) lost its sense of community spirit over the last twenty years?

That community spirit has taken a battering over the last twenty years is beyond doubt. At rural level the increasingly centralised administration of both public and private institutions has certainly changed and possibly destabilised rural society.

No sooner has the typical rural community come to terms with the loss of one institution than another announcement is made with further loss of services. Rural communities are in a constant battle with political and economic forces to keep their communities viable. Despite this Irish people still identify with their community but whether they are willing to participate in community activities and volunteer their time is another matter. The answer to the question '*do you think the government should more to help communities*' elicited over ninety percent agreement. This seems to be the missing link: 'let the government do it' when in fact it's impossible for government to cover every conceivable need. Sligo people *profess* to having a sense of community spirit and a pride in their community but the comments of local councillors in particular paint a bleaker picture. The councillors, and some community activists, talk of people going home and closing their doors in the evening. Trust levels are low in Irish society and people are more cautious is the conclusion and as a result community spirit is lagging.

5.5.2 Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

As identified in the research process there is a divide between academics and the citizen concerning social capital. Academics are still grappling with the concept of social capital and therefore cannot decide on what exactly social capital is. Without a clear definition as a base to work from it's impossible to identify patterns of configuration.

In contrast to the academic world the citizens of Sligo have no such hang-ups about social capital. They are unaware of the term but, unknowingly, are familiar with the characteristics of social capital. Trust, reciprocity and networking are part and parcel of their lives.

The time frame of the research process gave the thesis a longitudinal dimension. The focus group interviews of 2010, the quantitative survey and the one-to-one interviews over the next two years each produced a different viewpoint. Anger was the dominant feature of the focus group and this came out in the quantitative survey also but the one-to-one interviews were more reflective.

As previously mentioned people are reassessing their own lives and that of their community in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger. Social capital at community level is being reconfigured. People are beginning to co-operate with each other 'because they have to' as one interviewee put it.

5.5.3 Is Irish society, and more widely, are Irish people becoming more individualistic and 'privatised'?

A clear message from the quantitative survey is that Irish people are becoming more cautious and inward looking. They have less contact with their neighbours, less friends and are less trusting. That people are becoming more 'privatised' is true. Local politicians speak of people going home and locking their doors and turning on the television. However the focus group noted that while community participation is changing they can't put their finger on how it is changing. They do know that when people are asked to do something they will invariably get involved. Have Irish people talked themselves into a state of anxiety about community life? Are people *really* becoming more 'privatised'? It might not be as profound as everyone thinks. Are the politicians themselves out of touch with the communities they supposedly serve?

5.5.4 Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

That there is a lot of soul searching going on is without question. When researching the process for setting up a focus group the literature review cautioned against assuming that everyone who said they would participate would in fact turn up. Not alone did I get no refusals, everyone turned up as well, some individuals giving up their lunch hour. Sligo people have had their belief system tested. Fianna Fail, the dominant political party of the state since the 1930s is a shadow of its former self with no hope of immediate revival according to its own public representatives. The public are very conscious of the greed which gripped Irish society and want no more of it. People want to redefine society.

One clear observation that this researcher detected during the period covering the focus group session in 2010 through to the quantitative survey (largely conducted face-to-face) and up to the finalisation of the one-to-one interviewees at the end of 2014 is that the anger of the immediate period of the post Celtic Tiger was replaced by a more reflective mood by the end of 2014. The comments contained in all three strands of the survey work as expressed in chapter four expressed on the one hand an acceptance that *individuals* have become more privatised but that *community spirit* is still strong.

There is a danger of conflating an increasingly privatised society with a corresponding fall in morals and ethics. This is not necessarily the case. Sligo people feel let down and betrayed by the institutions they thought were there to assist them. It is only natural for people to retreat into their own personal safety zones in a time of uncertainty and upheaval. Sligo people still have a sense of right and wrong and this is not confined to just the older generations but to all ages.

A good example of community spirit is Grange. Grange people are positive in their outlook. The comments from respondents (R,S,T,U) with Grange connections are overwhelmingly positive. Ethics and morals and with it community spirit are passed on in communities. Grange people see the value in passing on good community values and teaching the younger members of the population that community endeavour can work.

5.5.5 Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

As mentioned above the dominant political parties are under suspicion like never before. People are not sure who they want to represent them and only time will tell what their voting preferences will be in the next election. The last election in 2011 saw Fianna Fail decimated. As the quantitative survey showed people recognise that we need a political system that can be trusted but at the present that trust is low even by international standards. Sligo based politicians accept that people have lost faith in politics.

5.6 Summary

This chapter brings together the many opinions and topics arising from the various strands of this piece of research. It attempts to find common ground on issues arising but also to highlight unique perspectives arising from each section. Each topic as already defined from earlier chapters is discussed and where necessary a suggestion as to how gaps or shortcomings might be eliminated. Finally the original research questions are analysed individually to assess whether or not this thesis satisfactorily drew conclusions on each topic.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter threw up as many questions as answers and confirmed yet again that topics associated with the concept of social capital are never straightforward.

This chapter effectively ends the journey of discovery that began with this researcher walking in to IT Sligo in the autumn of 2008, a place I had never set foot in before! The first two years of this thesis was conducted in front of a computer screen and a new pair of glasses!

The real action started with the focus group session in June 2010. The people of Sligo gave me, a Mayo man, their time and their honest views of Sligo society in the middle of an economic crash not witnessed since the foundation of the state. Sligo people were in the middle of an economic war and yet they came out fighting. This researcher grew to admire Sligo people for the pride they show in their town and county. If there was any frustration on the part of this researcher it was that Sligo undersells itself. Forget about Galway or Killarney! Sligo has a lot going for it and Sligo people need to cast off the post colonial /dependency culture and sell itself as a good place to live.

The next chapter, Recommendations, will suggest actions to be taken to move Sligo on to the next phase of its development.

Chapter Six Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

This chapter, as the title implies, recommends courses of action arising from the *combined* views of all strands of this research. International research and more particularly, Irish research on the topic of social capital, are taken into account. The comments and views of the participants in the focus group, who are all community activists, are acknowledged. The data and views arising from the quantitative survey are incorporated into the overall recommendations. Finally the opinions of key people across a range of organisations ranging from religious to political to sport as well as specialist organisations dealing with communities provide the foundations for valid and relevant recommendations are recognised.

It should not be assumed that any one recommendation is more important than another. Section 6.0, the introduction, includes the original research question in sub section 6.0.1. Section 6.1 provides a brief summary of the characteristics of social capital broken and its two main topics: definition 6.1.1 and measurement 6.1.2. Section 6.2 makes a number of recommendations relevant to the meeting places as highlighted in the literature review. Sub section 6.2.1 deals with the first place; 6.2.2 the second place and 6.2.3 the third place. 6.3 Makes recommendations to address the limitations of this thesis. Section 6.4 summarises the chapter and 6.5 draws some conclusions.

6.0.1 The research question

Is social capital formation and maintenance under threat in County Sligo?

: a critical review and exploration 1993-2013

Q1: Has Ireland lost its sense of community spirit over the last twenty years?

Q2: Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

Q3: Is Irish society and, more widely, are Irish people becoming more individualistic and ‘privatised’?

Q4: Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

Q5: Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

6.1 A summary of the characteristics of social capital

6.1.1 Definition

Social Capital is a relatively new topic in sociological circles. The notion of trust, one of the main pillars of the theory behind the concept of social capital was historically never considered to be a facet of sociology. Social capital is still not fully understood and is therefore difficult to define precisely. Ireland needs more research on the subject of social capital.

Social capital has an economic value. For social capital to flourish an open and democratic society must exist. Social capital needs an open economy where information and ideas can be freely exchanged without barriers or sanctions. The presence of high social capital levels contributes to the search for solutions to societies problems. Contrary to free market economics where the accumulation of personal wealth is the main goal social capital promotes the notion of sharing or communitarianism.

The economic value of social capital needs to be promoted more.

Ireland needs an agreed definition of social capital if it is to expand its own body of literature and thereby develop its own policies on how to promote aspects of social capital suitable and relevant to Irish society. IT Sligo should take a role in this initiative. Power and who holds it and how individuals and institutions use it have a huge influence on social capital formation. The interaction between the body politic and its citizens is one of the most prominent examples of social capital in action. Sligo people are keenly aware that decisions affecting their future are increasingly being made by people and institutions they never meet. Sligo council town was one of the largest borough council in the state to be abolished. Sligo has already had one singularly bad experience of inappropriate public policy. The National Spatial Strategy and the Gateway City status did not suit Sligo. Will the amalgamation of a large urban town and a rural society prove equally disastrous? This thesis recommends that a review of the revised local government arrangement in Sligo is undertaken.

The growing level of passiveness in society has a huge bearing on the functioning of many organisations. The rise of paid staff in what were formally voluntary organisations needs to be acknowledged and scrutinised.

Similarly political parties are seemingly increasingly becoming detached from its grass root supporters and volunteers. Older politicians complain that younger people don't want to run for public office at local level unless there is a clear chance of advancement at constituency level and possibly a becoming a minister. This study highlights the need for a functioning political system in which people place trust, is vital. Young people need to be attracted into politics. This thesis recommends that a study is conducted among younger people in Sligo to assess why so few are attracted into politics.

Responsibility, personal and otherwise, is an issue that recurred throughout this thesis both in the literature review and the interviews with the people of county Sligo. The literature review has a number of theorists (Etzioni 1993) promoting the notion of communitarianism. Like 'social capital' 'communitarianism' is neither a term nor a word in use in everyday conversation but is practiced by many people. Communitarianism and social capital need to be brought more into the everyday language of the citizens of Ireland and Sligo. Societies that have a high level of communitarianism need to be studied and compared with Sligo.

The urban/rural divide, while easily differentiated from an economic perspective, is not so easily divided at social level due to the decline in traditional communally based farming practices and the corresponding daily commute to the larger towns for work. The commute does not seem to be so acute in the Sligo catchment area. The commute is one aspect of modern living that is cited as a barrier to involvement at in community activities. As highlighted in the Grange mini-plan some households have three cars, this seems excessive. It is recommended that a study of commuting patterns in County Sligo be undertaken and solutions found to both the time and cost associated with commuting. Sport has an undoubted bridging characteristic and draws in adults through the participation of their children. Education, volunteerism and philanthropy all have positive effects on social capital levels although how strong the effects of each are is unclear. Sligo would seem to be well served with sporting facilities and additionally a number of commentators have noted the 'exceptional' level of volunteerism in county Sligo particularly where it comes to youth related activities. However whereas traditional 'Irish' sports and pastimes seem to be well catered for many of the non-Irish nationals now living in Sligo will not be familiar with, and will not participate in sports, which are not familiar to them.

It is well known that sport unites individuals and communities. It is recommended that a needs analysis is carried out to determine if County Sligo needs to promote more diversity in area of sports and pastimes.

An area that is not well understood in Ireland or Sligo is that of philanthropy. This thesis recommends that philanthropic patterns are studied in Sligo to highlight areas where this area of community development could be further promoted.

The broadband age has undoubtedly altered people's communication patterns and while it allows people to avoid direct contact if they wish it is not necessarily detrimental to society. A study of broadband usage among the adult population of County Sligo is recommended.

Irish society has unique characteristics, mostly rooted in our history as a former colony. Trust at personal and community level is still alive and well but trust at institutional level is low even by international standards. The unequal nature of Irish society is debated and while it's difficult to make direct international comparisons the weight of evidence would suggest that we have become more unequal over the years. A forum to address all aspects of inequality should be set up in County Sligo to see if issues associated with inequality can be addressed.

As a former colony Ireland still displays many of the traits associated with post colonialism and this is manifested in the way citizens view the state. The state is viewed as something separate and to be used and abused for personal gain. We need to promote citizenship in Ireland and County Sligo especially as Ireland increasingly becomes a multicultural society. A study devoted to how Sligo people view their relationship with the state should be conducted.

Judging by the numbers of people immigrating to Ireland it is a desirable place to live in spite of its many imperfections. The difficulty in getting people from other countries to participate in the various strands of this research was striking. On the surface it appears that everybody is existing happily in Sligo but the reality appears somewhat different. Very little is known about the lives of immigrants. This study recommends that a piece of research dedicated to understanding the lives of non-Irish nationals living in Sligo be commissioned.

Finally, and by way of a summary of this section, social capital cannot exist in the literature. It must relate to people, in this case to the people of County Sligo.

As highlight in earlier chapters County Development Plans are ‘cold’ in their approach to development. Plans must be ‘people proofed’. Politicians and planners speak of the need to engage with people but it rarely works they way it should. More research is needed on how community groups can participate in the drawing of plans.

6.1.2 Measurement

If defining social capital is one of the challenges of the topic then measurement of it is the other. While trust is a fundamental component of social capital, measuring trust levels alone will not produce a reliable measurement of social capital. Trust, like many aspects of social capital is subjective and subject to influences on the human psyche which can change over time.

Chapter five, the discussion chapter, discusses the ways in which a reliable and consistent index of social capital levels could be devised which would satisfy the need to measure social capital levels on a longitudinal basis. In an Irish context very little research has been carried out on social capital in general and even less on how to measure it over time. The research needs to take the same approach as the Pobal Deprivation Index in devising a reliable and consistent methodology for tracking changes in social capital formation. Like some of the American based studies and also the European Values studies it only needs to be conducted every few years.

Just as the consumer price index is compiled using a ‘basket’ of indicators which can change somewhat from time to item so must social capital measurement be comprised of a basket of reliable indicators. A recommendation therefore is that IT Sligo initiates a research initiative designed to produce an index suitable for Ireland but which also has an international dimension.

This writer having gathered a vast amount of material from the quantitative survey was faced with the task of making sense of it all and producing an easily read report. This proved to be a very daunting task mainly because the operation involved using SPSS. This writer had never heard of SPSS and had no knowledge of how to input the information. That nobody in IT Sligo could use the program was a surprise. A lot of time was spent on learning how to use it from books. This researcher believes with hindsight that more information might have been yielded from the questionnaire had training being provided. IT Sligo needs to run courses on this package and other analytical systems.

6.2 Meeting Places

6.2.1 *The first place*

If social capital stands for anything it's the promotion of human interaction for the betterment of society. The notion of describing how, why, and where people meet can be broken down into 'places'. The first place is, strictly speaking, the family but also the immediate community where a person first comes into contact with other people and society. It is associated with youth and formative years. Surprisingly there is a debate over the importance of the family in social capital formation but surely the family is *the* foundation upon which all else is built. The findings from the focus group suggest that while Sligo town has witnessed an influx of people from many parts of the world the population of rural areas is still predominately made up of Irish people, although not necessarily Sligo people.

People from other counties and regions of the UK are moving in to rural areas of Sligo for lifestyle reasons. While there are indications of a rise of racism in Irish society Sligo seems to have a relaxed if cautious attitude towards the newcomers. The focus group were of the opinion that Sligo society has deteriorated overall but don't attribute this decline to any group or faction, it's the rise of individualism and the decline in community involvement that's the issue as they see it. Not knowing ones neighbours is a problem and leads to a decrease in trust at community level. Democracy at community level is strong and the focus group noted that if anything the emphasis on social inclusion was over regulated at EU level. The female members of the group were more optimistic about the increasing fairness in society than the male members who were more downbeat. Individuals must take responsibility at community level was the key message from the group. Despite the upbeat attitude towards democracy there remains an undercurrent of discontent. Some see the older generation dominating community affairs and blocking out the younger sections of society. A number of interviewees suggested that the under fifty population have a different perspective on society. Sligo needs a study of attitudes concerning community involvement directed at people in the twenty to fifty age groups. An all male and an all female focus group with the same topic guide would be a useful experiment. These people are the future and if they are still resident in Sligo in their twenties it suggests that they will be here for the remainder of their lives.

Notwithstanding the battering at individual and community level the findings from the quantitative survey suggest that Irish people still believe in community and still recognise the need for politicians and the importance of voting. The people of Sligo believe that community spirit is decreasing and that people are becoming more individual in their habits. The under thirties are involved in community life but mainly in activities that involves their children. A number of interviewees voiced concerns over the lack of involvement among younger people in the caring aspect of community life. Notwithstanding the reservations about aspects of community life in Sligo a number of comments noted that Sligo was exceptionally good for community participation in general. This perception needs to be tested and recommendations made for improvement where necessary.

Overall the result of the quantitative survey as measured using Cronbach's Alpha indicates a less trusting and more individualistic society. While the overall score paints a picture of a more selfish society the individual topics as described in chapters two and three indicate that social factors rather than economic factors are the most influential drivers of change. The topics are: Irish Society, Personal Power, Trust, Community Life, Ethics and Values, Equality and Political.

The Celtic Tiger had a huge effect on all aspects of Irish life and negatively impacted on the volunteerism aspect of community life in particular. Greed took over and this had long term implications for small businesses and family life also.

Much has been made of the isolation associated with modern living. How much of this is true and how much is imagined? More research is needed into the lives of individuals and families in county Sligo access whether or not people really are more isolated.

6.2.2. The second place

The second place is associated with the work place: it's the place where economic factors hold sway. While volunteerism is unpaid work and a component of social capital the work place is essentially about self advancement. The second place is associated with all that is *anti* social capital: power, racism, inequality of all hues and individualism abound.

A significant portion of chapter one was taken up with a socio-economic analysis of county Sligo and also a separate analysis of Sligo borough and environs. A key finding was that two very different societies, each with its own economic drivers, exist side-by-side in the same county.

Sligo borough has attracted in adults from other countries and other regions of Ireland for the job opportunities that were created during the boom years. Conversely families either moved out of Sligo town or were started in the more rural areas of Sligo in the twenty years under review. As already mentioned the effect of the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme, which covered most of the southern and eastern parts of County Sligo, and adjoining areas in County Leitrim has obviously something to do with this movement. As was the case in other parts of Ireland the price of property had an economic impact which in turn impacted on the social makeup of many rural towns and villages in the county. Irish planning laws are heavily influenced by EU directives. The policy of restricting residential building in smaller towns and villages is a source of angst in Irish society. The traditional Irish custom of selling a site to a neighbor or giving a site to a family member is being discouraged. What effect does this have on the traditional Irish extended family? A study of rural Sligo's communities needs to be undertaken to assess whether or not EU policy on rural spatial strategy is suitable for Sligo society.

The world of work is traditionally associated with paid labour and the pursuit of profit but in more recent times the value of volunteerism is becoming more recognised. The growth of paid employees in what were traditionally volunteer led organisations is a source of tension.

The growth of the not-for-profit sector is also a notable trend. The characteristics of social capital must be present for this sector to be successful. Social capital values need to be promoted more in the work place and particularly in not-for-profit enterprises.

Finally while it might appear that the traditional for profit business has no role to play in community life, the loss of a major employer in a town or village can have major knock effects for community life. The role of the local school in producing future entrepreneurs, social and otherwise, is recognised. On regional level the role of IT Sligo is recognised as having a huge influence on not just employment but society in general. Sligo town compares well other similar sized towns in most areas but is behind in the formation of new companies and businesses in general. Job creation is vital but Sligo is behind the national average. Why is this? Research is needed on this issue.

As mentioned in the findings chapter some surveys, particularly the Teagasc surveys, give Sligo a very low ranking using employment rates and population movement as a guide. Sligo town and other large towns and cities in Ireland need their own index to measure quality of life.

The National Spatial Strategy which promoted Sligo as a gateway city of potentially one hundred thousand people was inappropriate and damaged the town and county economically and psychologically. Are current government policies suitable for Sligo? Can IT Sligo host a forum on government policy as it applies to Sligo?

Questions relating to problems in the workplace in the quantitative survey did not highlight any significant problems. It would appear that workplace legalisation is adequate to deal with any problems that might arise. While the status of volunteerism did not pose any problems for the participants in the survey a study of volunteerism in County Sligo is recommended. The example of volunteers coping with major financial decisions in credit unions is cited as a cause of stress.

6.2.3. The third place

This is the place where people go to escape the harshness of the second place and the constraints of the first place. The third place is often an extension of the first and second place and often the people are acquaintances from the community and work place. Individual fulfilment and a sense of wellbeing, especially among the older population is the hallmark of the third place. Major institutions in society are also 'third places', religion is an example and so are the major sporting organisations. These organisations can display *bonding* characteristics which sometimes are of a *dark* nature.

Many of the traditional third places such as the local pub, shop and the local church either closed or are very much diminished in their importance in community life. The disappearance of traditional meeting places is especially noticeable in rural areas where reliable access to the internet is also problematic.

The low levels of trust, even by international standards, in politicians and major institutions of state are a feature Irish life. Trust in local and national politicians needs to be rebuilt and it needs to start at local level. A symposium entitled 'Sligo after the Crash' is needed for people to have their say on the future of Sligo.

As mentioned in the context of the second place IT Sligo has a role to play in job creation and also in community life. The concept of the triple helix, that is, the interaction of educational institutions, government agencies and the community/industry sector is vital for the advancement of society and fostering social capital yet there is a perceived gap between the IT and the wider community. Education promotes confidence and critical analysis in society.

IT Sligo needs to conduct its own research into how it might interact further with the community it serves to promote all aspects of community life.

The word responsibility crops up a lot among all the groups and individuals. The notion of citizenship is considered to be weak in Ireland and Sligo. This researcher is a scout; the good deed for the day is central to the scouting movement. Therefore it is recommended that good citizenship be taught in schools as early as possible – and in a Sligo and Irish context.

The ability of groups to take on increasingly complex projects in the face of increasing regulation (and litigation if anything goes wrong) is an issue. Free education on the topics of project planning at community level and an awareness of the laws relevant to community groups should be made available to all.

Rural areas of the region feel under threat socially and economically, in Sligo town residents don't share this anxiety. Rural crime and rural poverty are different from urban crime and poverty. A study of the lives the inhabitants of rural Sligo needs to be carried out.

Younger people need to be given more responsibility in community life. How can they be encouraged into community life? This area needs more research.

The answers in the quantitative interview portrayed Sligo people as being relaxed with the new multicultural Ireland, at least in relation to citizens from other parts of the EU. Some research is suggesting that we are becoming more racist. A reliable data base of racial discrimination and abuse needs to be set up in the region.

Despite all the advances in education and all the equality legislation women are not coming forward to chair community organisations or engaging in politics. Measures designed to improve the participation of women at the top of community and political organisations need to be devised.

Town councils were abolished and LEADER subsumed into the county council structure, possibly losing its community and voluntary identity in the process. The power of the county manager is growing and with it an ever more bureaucratic society is evolving. A series of workshops is needed to make communities aware of the decision making structures at local level.

Research is needed into the area of social entrepreneurialship at PhD level. IT Sligo needs to get involved.

6.3 Recommendations to address the limitations of this thesis

This thesis while appearing to answer the principle question ‘Is social capital formation and maintenance under threat in County Sligo?: a critical review and exploration 1993-2013’ has undoubtedly shortcomings arising from limitations.

The first limitation was that this large piece of research involved making contact with almost one hundred and fifty participants by a single person. If IT Sligo or some other appropriate institution is to take on the task of measuring social capital changes in Sligo then funding needs to be put in place to review the research process used in this thesis and a new revised quantitative survey involving a team of people needs to be devised.

As discussed in the previous chapter, chapter five, the ‘O’Connell Street’ case study gave this researcher food for thought on how research using social media might be enhanced among social researchers. A glance search of the IT Sligo (2015) website to view courses on offer with a social or digital media content reveals a course delivered by the School of Business and Social Sciences that may be of assistance to social researchers. ‘BB in Digital Marketing course No. SG539’ may provide some skills enhancement for social researchers. This course may need to be modified to include at least some modules that would be of direct benefit to social researchers. Particularly in the case of Masters (Level 9) and Ph.D (Level 10) students who have no training in digital media it is recommended that they are given an opportunity to acquaint themselves with this course. The need for training in the operation of SPSS was mentioned above. The need for training in social/digital media research is also needed prior to operationalising a piece of research.

Each individual research question will be looked at and the limitations of each highlighted in the next four sub sections.

6.3.1 Are notions of social capital formation continually being reconfigured?

Of all of the research questions posed this question needs a vast amount of research to determine whether or not notions of social capital formation are continually being reconfigured. As mentioned already defining social capital is a fundamental problem. That social capital is a product of the society it exists in is itself in doubt. The literature review poses the question ‘does social capital influence society or does society influence social capital’? This researcher can only recommend that more detailed research is needed on the topic of social capital.

6.3.2 Is Irish society and, more widely, Irish people become more individualistic and ‘privatised’?

As mentioned already this thesis was undertaken at a point in time by one individual. The largest portion of the study was the quantitative survey. Ninety six people were randomly approached at a number of locations. It is impossible to say whether or not, based on one survey, that this question is conclusively answered. A larger, multi-location, study is needed to conclusively answer this question. The results as presented in chapter three would certainly indicate that we are.

6.3.3 Are societal and community values, mores, morality and wider public ethics in a process of re-definition?

This question like the previous one has the same limitations. As was exposed in the quantitative survey the assumption that older people have higher standards is not necessarily true. Older people themselves recognise that their own peer group have their weakness and see a lot of positives in the younger sections of society. Younger sections of the population mostly respect older people. Values are mostly associated with age and this might not be a fair reflection of the younger population, more research is needed.

6.3.4 Has trust in the political system and politicians been significantly undermined?

The question is not in doubt, trust has been eroded. What is in doubt is how to fix the problem of trust in the political system. This thesis brought up some interesting contradictions in that people still contact their local politicians even if they don’t trust them. Once again the limitations of this research were exposed in that it cannot conclusively answer the question.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has an eye on the future. It makes recommendations based on issues arising from an extensive literature review. These issues were further analysed by engaging with Sligo people, firstly by holding a focus group in 2010 and then designing a quantitative survey based on the topics arising from the literature review and the focus group.

The subsequent one-to-one interviews with a number of highly placed people in a variety of organisations in County Sligo gave further insights into the lives of individuals and communities in the region.

The recommendations if not followed through will remain a wish list. Therefore this researcher makes the overall recommendation that each individual recommendation is scrutinized separately to see if further action is needed and then implement a plan of action.

6.5 Conclusion

The recommendations emerging from the research conducted are wide ranging and sweeping. This thesis cannot solve all the ills of Sligo society. This thesis exposed many issues which need further research if meaningful solutions are to be found and implemented.

The final chapter in this thesis will provide a concise summary of the vast amount of information that emerged over the course of over four years of research.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This thesis asked the question: Is social capital formation and maintenance under threat in County Sligo? : a critical review and exploration 1993 to 2013.

This thesis can be viewed from two principle perspectives. The first view is that it is a piece of research on the concept of social capital with the aim of assessing whether or not it actually has any meaning in sociology and suggesting that in reality it is nothing more than a hazy academic concept with no place in the real world.

The second view is that this piece of research is really about Sligo town and county and how society has changed in the county over the last twenty years and that the concept of social capital is used as a yard stick for measuring this change.

The reality, in the mind of this researcher, is somewhat different. This writer undertook this research out of deep personal unease. Ireland and Sligo began a period of accelerated change over a twenty year period beginning with in the nineteen nineties. At the conclusion of this research the country was still striving to come to terms with enormous social and economic change in the second decade of the new century. Ireland and Sligo seemed to have become a more materialistic and uncaring place. The goal of this research was to prove or disprove this perspective. The topic of social capital with its notions of trust and reciprocity began to emerge in political and other circles towards the end of the Celtic Tiger era. The fact that this topic entered into the vocabulary of Ireland was significant in the mind of this researcher.

While a resident of east Mayo I worked in Sligo and experienced firsthand the rapid growth of a small Irish county with a relatively large urban population. Along with economic changes in both the public and private sector the influx of people from other parts of Ireland and other countries into this region in the north west of Ireland made County Sligo the perfect testing ground for my theory: that Irish and Sligo society had become more individualistic and materialistic. The same theory coming from an academic perspective was that social capital levels had dropped and that social capital formation had regressed or stopped entirely.

The overall conclusion is that Irish society had indeed become more individualistic and materialistic and that people have become have become less trusting. However to finish this piece of research on that note would portray an inaccurate picture of hopelessness.

7.1 Debating points

7.1.1 Can social capital be defined?

Social capital can be defined in theory: it's constructing the exact wording of the definition that's difficult. Provided one adheres to the notion that social capital is rooted in the notion of trust between individuals and that spirit of reciprocity must exist in the community then defining social capital is not, or should not, be difficult. Theorists write about trying to read too much into the concept thereby clouding the issue and this writer would certainly agree with the notion of 'keeping it simple'

7.1.2 Does social capital have role in social science?'

The first issue to be debated before a definite conclusion can be drawn is whether or not social capital has any substance or is it simply a fad or phase in the evolution of sociological theory and practice? Social capital while appearing in the social literature from time to time over the last hundred years suddenly came to prominence less than thirty years ago. Why would a topic seemingly so important in social theory have remained almost unnoticed for so long? Human capital, a close companion of social capital, also suffered from neglect up until about fifty years ago but now is accepted as a very important component of both commercial and social organisations. Field *et al* (2000) concludes that social capital may have an uncertain future but that its future holds much promise and this researcher takes a similar view. Social capital is still an unproven social topic and will in time come to be as accepted as the concept of human capital is now.

The second and related issue is what is it that the basic notion of trust was historically never debated in sociological circles? This alone is enough to raise some doubt in the mind of this researcher as to whether social capital as a topic within sociological theory has any real meaning. Following a very extensive trawl of the literature review over a period of two years the conclusion is that it has a meaning and at the time of writing some usefulness but as to why trust was historically never a debating point in sociology is a mystery.

7.1.3 Can social capital be measured?

Having accepted that social capital has a place in sociology theory and that it may prove to have a more central role in the future the next big debating point is whether or not social capital can be measured? In the mind of this researcher there is no doubt that it can. However measured against what is the question? That social capital is subjective both as a concept and as a tool for measuring human perception of society at moment in time is not an issue.

As outlined in the chapter three, the methodology chapter, a number of developments in the world of sociology have made the arduous process of making sense of large volumes of data possible. Starting with the Likert Scale in the nineteen thirties social research began to improve on previously vague notions of people's individual opinions. Twenty years later the development of Cronbach's Alpha proved to be a reliable test of hypothesis using the Likert Scale as its tool for assembling data. Notwithstanding these developments it took a further twenty years for computers to emerge capable of processing large amounts of data.

The development of the statistical package, SPSS, moved quantitative social research another step closer towards the emergence of reliable reports. Finally in recent years the addition of analytical packages such as Polldaddy brought quantitative social research within reach of everybody.

7.1.3.1 Can social capital be measured over time?

A piece of research such as this can capture a social perspective involving a cross section of society at a given moment in time; it can also produce a result in the form of a number. The process of tracking the changes in this perspective over time raises the bar as regards the reliability of the research. The range of questions asked, how they are framed, and the setting in which they are asked are of crucial importance. Lastly the consistency of the range of questions asked is crucial. Questions added or subtracted or reformatted will alter the result and make comparisons over time more difficult. Nevertheless changes in social capital among a given population over a period of time can certainly be tracked provided the foundations of the research are correct and appropriate.

7.1.3.2 Can social capital levels be compared between different societies?

Measuring social capital across different societies *and* over a period of time is devilishly complicated and fraught with difficulties. Even in a seemingly homogenous society like the United States of America the different states have significantly different sub-cultures. Not alone are some states more rural than others but the population of the states bordering Mexico are markedly different from those bordering Canada. Even within the states the decline in farming communities and the rise of urbanisation will affect social capital characteristics over time.

In Europe the European Values Survey is fraught with inconsistencies with the format having changed over time thereby making reliable assumptions difficult. The fact that this survey has been adjusted reflects the uncertainty as to what social capital actually is. This uncertainty all points to the need for more research on the topic.

The conclusion, from a quantitative perspective, is that reliable results can be generated using a suite of packages provided the methodology itself is constructed on tried and tested social research methods. What about social capital from a qualitative perspective? Conclusions formed from social capital and qualitative research is next.

7.1.3.3 How effective is qualitative research for measuring social capital?

That the measurement of social capital is a subjective exercise is generally accepted. The literature review established that there are many views on the factors which make up the framework required to define and measure social capital. The quantitative strand of this thesis eventually formulated a questionnaire consisting of fifty seven questions but yet this on its own was not enough. A qualitative strand was needed to reinforce the methodology. The value of approaching the goal of measuring social capital changes in County Sligo over a period of twenty years using a variety of methods was recognised. The principle of triangulation reinforced by the mixed method approach was adopted in this thesis.

Qualitative research typically analysis what individuals or small groups express about a topic. Focus groups and one-to-one interviews, especially when the topic guide is semi-structured, are uniquely suitable to extract views on a topic.

Not alone can people freely express themselves but often the tone of voice on a topic can be very informative. Qualitative research adds a dimension to social capital research that quantitative research alone could never deliver.

7.2 Conclusions arising from the findings: The Sligo perspective

This chapter has so far drawn conclusions relating to the theoretical aspects of social capital. The purpose of this thesis is to assess whether or not the people of Sligo are still willing to engage in community activities or whether they have become more individualistic and privatised.

Chapter one outlined the socio-economic changes that have occurred in County Sligo in the last twenty years. The overall conclusion is that County Sligo and Sligo town have both undergone radical change resulting in a much changed relationship between rural and urban Sligo.

Notwithstanding that areas of rural Sligo, such as Grange, have weathered the social and economic upheaval of the period successfully the overall message is that rural Sligo is struggling to hold on to what it has while Sligo town is at least retaining services. The continued drift from the land and the changing population make up and general demographics of both rural and urban Sligo while different are both profound.

Chapter four analyses the data, both qualitative and quantitative and presents the findings. The focus group, the quantitative survey and the one-to-one interviews all produced views and comments on Sligo life. Mindful of the limitations that will invariably surface when a piece of research of this magnitude is undertaken by an individual with only resourcefulness as an asset a number of findings with regard to Sligo people and community life come through.

Sligo people are angry with the institutions of state, principally the body politic and the financial institutions. Trust levels in society is a central part of social capital research but Sligo people go further and divide trust into interpersonal trust and trust in institutions. Sligo people are willing to reach out and trust their fellow citizens, albeit more cautiously. Trust in institutions is at rock bottom. Sligo people have a very poor opinion of their politicians but recognise that a functioning political system is essential. Sligo people are proud of their county and the communities in which live. They are open to accommodate anyone who wants to make Sligo their home so long as they display a willingness to 'pitch in'.

7.3 Recommendations and final conclusion

Chapter six takes the findings and makes recommendations. The role of IT Sligo in leading the way forward for County Sligo features in many of the recommendations. Central to the debate on the future of Sligo is the role that education can play in community development and this calls into question the role of IT Sligo. This thesis exposes how little is known about the lives of the new arrivals in particular. It also highlights the economic difficulties imposed on County Sligo by inappropriate government and EU policies and recommends that IT Sligo has role to play in the economic future of county Sligo also.

Finally it can be concluded that this thesis did satisfactorily answer the central question regarding changes in social capital levels in Sligo and found that Sligo people have become more cautious but not necessarily more selfish in their dealing with their fellow citizens.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Changes in the composition of the workforce in relation to farming.

Ireland 1971	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	2,978,248	1,495,760	1,482,488
Total under 14 years	872,927	446,146	426,781
Total 14 years and over	2,105,321	1,049,614	1,055,707
Total gainfully occupied(14 and over)	1,119,531	831,664	287,867
Total not gainfully occupied(14 and over)	985,790	217,950	767,840
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	288,753	263,434	25,319
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	25.79%	31.67%	8.79%

1971 Census. Volume IV. Occupations

County Sligo 1971	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	50,275	25,887	24,388
Total under 14 years	13,390	6,885	6505
Total 14 years and over	36,885	19,002	17883
Total gainfully occupied(14 and over)	18,990	14,831	4159
Total not gainfully occupied(14 and over)	17,895	4,171	13724
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	8167	7,730	837
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	27.15%	52.12%	20.12%

1971 Census. Volume IV. Occupations

Ireland 1991	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	3,525,719	1,753,418	1,772,301
Total under 15 years	940,547	482,838	457,736
Total 15 years and over	2,585,145	1,270,580	1,314,565
Total labour force (15 years and over)	1,382,870	911,200	471,670
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	1,202,275	359,380	842,895
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	165,112	149,430	15,682
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	11.93%	16.39%	3.33%

1991 Census. Volume 6. Occupations

County Sligo 1991	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	54,765	27,248	27,508
Total under 15 years	14,295	7,310	6,985
Total 15 years and over	40,461	19,938	20,523
Total labour force (15 years and over)	21,119	13,735	7,384
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	19,342	6,203	13,139
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	3,632	3,333	299
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	17.19%	24.26%	2.27%

1991 Census. Volume 6. Occupations

Ireland 2006	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	4,239,848	2,121,171	2,118,677
Total under 15 years	864,449	443,044	421,405
Total 15 years and over	3,375,399	1,678,127	1,697,273
Total labour force (15 years and over)	2,109,498	1,213,867	895,631
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	1,265,901	464,260	801,642
Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	88,414	80,117	8,297
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	4.19%	6.60%	0.93%

Census 2006. Volume 8. Occupations

County Sligo 2006	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population as per: Table 8A,B,C.	60,894	30,257	30,637
Total under 15 years	11,922	6,181	5,741
Total 15 years and over	48,972	24,076	24,896
Total labour force (15 years and over)	29,545	16,607	12,105
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	19,427	7,469	12,791
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishermen	1,800	1,663	137
Agriculture etc as % of total at work	6.1%	10.01%	1.13%

Census 2006. Volume 8. Occupations

Ireland 2011	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population as per: Principle Demographic Results.	4,588,252	2,272,699	2,315,553
Total under 15 years	979,590	501,189	478,401
Total 15 years and over	3,608,662	1,771,510	1,837,152
Total labour force (15 years and over)	2,232,203	1,228,868	1,003,335
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	1,376,459	542,642	833,817
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishermen	94,267	n/a	n/a
Agriculture etc as % of total workforce	4.22%		

Census 2011.

County Sligo 2011	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population as per: Principle Demographic Results.	65,393	32,435	32,958
Total under 15 years	12,948	6,225	6,723
Total 15 years and over	52,445	26,210	26,235
Total labour force at work (15 years +)	25,434	13,108	12,362
Total not in labour force (15 and over)	26,850	12,554	14,296
Agricultural, Forestry and Fishermen	1,005	n/a	n/a
Agriculture etc as % of workforce	3.74%		

Census 2011.

Appendix B: Examples of social capital in action in Sligo and the northwest.

In line with Ireland's high rate of involvement in the social and third sector economy there are a large number of examples of communities and organisations working together to enhance their quality of life and those of others can be found in the Sligo region

1. Achonry, County Sligo.

Connacht Gold Co-operative is a fine example of people coming together and using the natural resources of the area for the betterment of all. The ability of large numbers of farmers to successfully adapt to change is impressive.

Connacht Gold was established on 1st November 2000 by the merger of North Connacht Farmers' Co-Operative Society (NCF) and Kiltoghert Co-Operative Agricultural & Dairy Society Ltd.

NCF was established in 1972 by the amalgamation of four co-ops in the North-West Region i.e. *Achonry, Rathscanlon (Tubbercurry), Riverstown and Kilmastranny*. In 1973 and 1974, six other co-ops in the region joined the new co-op, namely *Gurteen, Ballaghaderreen, Kinlough, Kilbarron (Ballyshannon), Palmerstown (Killala), and Ballintrillick*. The ten co-ops pooled their resources to form one strong multi-purpose co-op in order to exploit the opportunities presented for the development of agriculture in the North-West on Ireland's accession to the European Economic Community in 1973, (now the European Union). The Co-op has *14,100 farmer shareholders* throughout Connacht and Donegal. They are grouped into *24 Electoral Groups*, each of which elects an Advisory Committee which in turn elects the Board of Directors. Many employees are also shareholders and they have their own Electoral group and Advisory Committee, which elect a Board member (Connacht Gold 2000).

2. Gleann Cholm Cille .Co. Donegal.

Fr McDyre (1910-1987) came to Glencolmcille in 1951. He saw a community dying through lack of official assistance and huge numbers of young people emigrating. His main achievements are outlined on www.gleanncholmcille.ie. He helped establish weaving, knitting and vegetable-processing factories and campaigned successfully for electricity and piped water schemes. The fish-processing factory in Míin an Aoire which provides seasonal employment to 200 people is a direct result of Fr. McDyer's work. Fr McDyer's Folk Village Museum was founded in 1967 as part of the cultural revival.

Fr McDyer recognised that tourism could play a key role in revitalizing rural Ireland but stressed that it must be both environmentally and culturally sensitive. In 1967 he was the driving force behind *An Clachán*, - a museum representing three hundred years of domestic life in south west Donegal. The museum has proved to be highly successful with over 30,000 people visiting it each year. Fr McDyer inspired a local co-operative to build a Holiday Village of traditional style houses for visitors to rent during the

summer. These houses continue as holiday homes to this day with families returning every year to spend their summers in Gleann Cholm Cille. (Gleanncholmcille 2010)

3. Arigna, Co. Leitrim.

Coal mining was carried on in Arigna for almost four hundred years. The work was hard but it brought a level of prosperity to the area in times of economic hardship. The mines became gradually uneconomic. In the 1980's, the government promised a Crow Coal (the name given to the lower grade coal being mined) burning Power Station; this however failed to materialise. With the winding down of the existing Power Station, Arigna's main source of employment was no longer required and in 1990 the Mines closed for the final time. With almost every family in Arigna dependant on the income from the Mine, the blow to the community was significant. The opening of the Mining Experience in 2003 is an indication of the determination and passion within the community to preserve a history which had meant so much for so many generations as well as opening up new opportunities for the Area (Arigna Mining Experience 2011).

4. Foxford, Co. Mayo

Foxford Woollen Mills Visitor Centre was opened in May 1992. It tells the story of a remarkable nun, Mother Agnes Morrogh-Bernard (1842-1932), who founded the Foxford Woollen Mills and transformed the town and district. She made Foxford synonymous throughout the world with high quality tweeds, rugs and blankets.

In 1892 with borrowed money, practical advice from a Protestant Freemason, and her own unshakable faith in divine providence, Sister Agnes Morrogh Bernard created the Foxford Woollen Mills. Her idea was simple, by meeting Divine Providence half way she could help people to help themselves. Where others had only found no end of poverty this dynamic Sister of Mercy always managed to see potential. Originally Irish wool was used at Foxford and shearing of sheep by the Moy was a common sight.

However local wool, apart requiring an environmentally demanding scouring process, is tough and only suitable for rough cloth. Sheep from Italy, France, the UK and Australia were specially bred for their wool. The fast flowing River Moy was tapped for power. The Congested Districts Board, impressed by the nun's managerial skills gave a substantial grant to capitalise the industry and local weaving skills were put to work. Within a few years trust in providence had paid off; the rugs and blankets from Foxford not alone gained in reputation, but began to produce a real profit. The quality of the product produced at Foxford has never diminished, but the mills as a business, eventually declined.

Having survived for longer than most, Foxford's Providence Mills ran out of money in 1987 and 85 people came back from their summer holidays to find the receiver in possession. It looked like the end for Foxford mills but the vision of some local people won through but eventually, after opening a new visitor centre in 1990, the tour buses began to arrive. The Mill currently receives up to 70,000 visitors per year and Foxford has become one of the most important tourist destinations in Mayo (Foxford Woollen Mills 2010).

5. Lisadell House. Co. Sligo.

Large scale Philanthropy is not a common feature of Irish community but a good example exists just outside Sligo town .Two successful business people outline their vision on www.lissadellhouse.com :-

OUR VISION was to transform the estate into a flagship for tourism in Sligo and the North West, and to provide a secure environment for our seven children. We do not wish to exploit Lissadell commercially but to restore the house and gardens to their former glory, and make Lissadell self-sustaining, if possible. We do not want Lissadell to become a golf course, an exclusive hotel, an upmarket housing estate or apartment complex, a holiday village or a caravan park. To this end both of us, and members of our family, have spent every possible spare moment of our time working, inside and outside, in order to make this dream come true. We have received no financial assistance from the State or from any tourism authority. We have avoided the easy options to exploit and develop Lissadell commercially.

Edward Walsh, Constance Cassidy and family.

“The High Court has ruled that public rights of way exist across the grounds of historic Lissadell House in Co. Sligo” (RTE News 2010). A lesson in social capital not functioning as it should, even when the intentions of the promoters are good. Involve *all stakeholders* from the beginning is the lesson.

Appendix C: Case Studies

The case studies outlined below are similar to the one proposed for County Sligo:

Case Study 1

‘Bowling together in the Capital’:

An action plan for social capital and active citizenship in the capital prepared for Dublin City Council (Communities First Task Force 2005). Beginning from the existing strengths, the City Council undertook the following actions designed to engage with citizens and communities:

1. The Schools Competition, December 2004. Aimed to at young people to get their views on the community they live in.
2. The Community Questionnaire, May 2005. Posted on www.dublin.ie it drew 370 responses from all sections of the population.
3. The Communities First Summit, May 31 & June 1 2005.
4. The Communities First Charter, June 2005
5. The Unsung Heroes Awards, May 2006
6. The Social Capital Research Project, November 2006

Tom Martin & Associates/TMA in association with Chris O'Malley and Associates were commissioned to prepare a report for Dublin City Council on a study into the development of social capital through citizen engagement by straightening communities in Dublin city. As part of their research methodology, TMA used a range of data collection techniques in order to collect and analyse the information to achieve these objectives. The techniques used were:

Literature review: TMA carried out an extensive review of the literature on social capital both in Ireland and also internationally.

Survey: A questionnaire-based survey of a representative sample of 400 people in the Dublin city area was undertaken on people's interests, and participation, in community and voluntary activities. The questionnaire was piloted before it was used in the survey.

Consultation with key stakeholders: Over 25 face-to-face and telephone interviews were held with a representative cross-section of international, national and local organisations and individuals involved in the development of communities on a range of social capital issues.

Focus group sessions: The research team made presentations on their draft findings to groups of community and voluntary groups in each of the five Dublin City Council areas and facilitated discussions with the participants on key issues. A total of 120 people attended the five area focus group sessions.

Workshop: TMA presented the research results at a workshop attended by members of the Dublin City Community First Forum and representatives of organisations who had been interviewed as part of the consultation with key stakeholders.

The Communities First Action Plan, 2007.

Case Study 2

Social Capital in County Cavan.

Methodology of Study:

Using the county structure as the basis for common identity relationships and networks are examined. This study looked at how and whether voluntary organizations use county identity as an organizational resource.

Six organisations, as described below, were selected for participation in this study. Using the sampling frame which had been assembled, as part of the larger project in which the Centre for Non-profit Management is involved, to map the non-profit sector in Ireland. The authors drew up a number of criteria for the selection of Cavan-based organisations (Donoghue *et al* 2005).

In each organisation, the CEO or equivalent was interviewed (in-depth, semi-structured interview), a focus group interview was held with volunteers and an organisational case study conducted. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The interviews explored the concept of county identity, organisational and personal identification with the county or immediate environment, social capital generation and personal identification with the organisation.

Voluntary Organisations Participating in the Study

GAA	Large national organisation with a strong identity at county level
Enable Ireland	Large national organisation with an identity built on the area of disability. Re-branded in recent years.
Cavan-Monaghan Rural Development Co-Operative	Regionally-based organisation with a clear focus on two counties
Cavan Ploughing Association	County branch of an organisation with an identity based on an agricultural activity.
McNean Women's Group	Local cross-border organisation with links to the county branch of the ICA.
Bailieborough Drama Group	Locally-based organisation involved in cultural activity

Case Study 3

Policy & Practice: Context for Education & Training for Rural Adults in the Republic of Ireland.

Kenny (2007) in his study outlines how the target population was broken down into categories:-

Categorisation of the Research Population

A comprehensive database of people and groups involved in rural community development at local, area and national level was compiled. The population was categorised for research standardisation and homogeneity. Four research categories were identified. These are:

1. Members of community groups – Volunteer non-paid members of local rural community based non-governmental groups
2. Community Development workers - Paid or non-paid individuals contracted to work for non government or governmental agencies in a rural community development
3. Intermediaries such as facilitators, researchers, consultants and membership supports engaged within rural community development.
4. Members of funding agencies, policy makers and or statutory agencies – Any individual active in policy development and funding in rural development.
5. Questionnaires

The standard draft questionnaire which Irish Rural Link received from Carnegie Commission was reviewed by the Rural Community Development Skills Advisory Committee.

It was recommended by the committee that the draft questionnaire was too generic and the layout needed modification for the target categories. The Advisory Committee advised the tailoring of the questionnaire for each of the four specific categories to increase specificity and relevance. This reduced completion time and increased response rate. The response rate was approximately one third for category one and over half for all other categories.

6. Focus groups

The Rural Community Development Skills Advisory Committee decided that four focus group meetings would be held, one for each of the four specific categories identified. The advisory group also advised that each focus group would be geographically spread to increase quality of accuracy of information emerging; one town per province was chosen for this.

Case Study 4

‘Relying on the few?’ A Study of Voluntary and Community Participation in County Clare.

The author notes the immense changes taking place in Irish society and emphasises the need to anticipate it, map it, manage it, learn from it, challenge it, and understand it. King (2004,p.98) realises the difficulties of trying to achieve all of the aforementioned : “Mapping change is akin to seeing a mirage on a road on a sunny day, perceived certainties can easily give way to disappointed realities”.

Issues for consideration arising from this study include;

(a)The effects of wider social change on the voluntary and community sector with particular emphasis on participation levels. King (2004,p, 99) notes that “social change is connected to socio-political change, *western* values as promoted by American writers such as Putnam are the dominating force at present”. The rise of individualism as noted by bodies such as the ERSI and the Combat Poverty Agency is seen as a negative feature.

(b)While there is no long term way of measuring levels of voluntary participation in Ireland the nineteen nineties were perceived as a period of decline. Therefore the author was surprised to find that approximately 40% of the population was engaged in some form of voluntary actively.

(c)The County Clare study is a mix of urban/industrialised such as Shannon town and rural/farming such as Tulla. “significant social change is no predictor of levels of community participation, even seemingly identical communities can have very different social structures and levels of involvement” (King2004, p.101).

Reasons given for not getting involved ranged from: to busy, nobody asked them, with one in five saying they were shy of speaking in a group. Also non participants felt that the people involved were doing a good job and they were not needed.

(d)As regards the profiles of committee members the study notes that the chairperson tends to be male, the secretary female and the PRO male. Males like to take the more visible less bureaucratic positions leaving the more stressful position of secretary to women. Committees tend to be made up of housewives, teachers and farmers.

The study identifies the main categories and links them to gender, social class and age.

Areas of Involvement	Dominant Gender	Dominant Social Class	Dominant Age
Sport and Leisure	Men	Middle class	Young people/adults
Campaigning /advocacy	Women	Middle class	40's and 50's
Parish / Religious	Women	Middle class	40's and 50's
Rural /Farming	Men	Middle class	40's and 50's
Political	Men	Middle class	40's and 50's - young people absent.
Social /Community	Men and women	Middle class	40's and 50's
Trade union/profession	Men and women	All classes	40's and 50's
Caring	Women	Working/middle class	All adult age groups
Cultural and Heritage	Men	Middle class	40's , 50's, 60's

General Conclusions and observations from this study include:

(a)A recommendation that voluntary organisations should read the Employment and Equality Acts to see if they comply, a recommendation echoed in 'Bowling together in the Capital' (2005).

(b)A recommendation that politicians practice what they preach about social capital.

(c)An observation that involvement in the community and voluntary sector can be a bad experience especially if there is a lack of social inclusion resulting in the individual feeling socially excluded.

The methodology of this study centred on interviewing 932 people of which 380 said they were involved in community organisations and 552 were not involved.

Case Study 5

ADOPT: A Development Model designed for the Irish Local Government.

Gibbons, P.F. (2003) devised a development model to strengthen the community sector in Ireland's local development process. The purpose of the study is to design a community development model that will strengthen the voice of the community sector in a single rural area in Ireland. The methodological approach adopted in the study is that of action research. The study area is typical of rural Ireland in every way except perhaps its particularly strong community development tradition. This area has the resources, in terms of experienced staff and communities with a wealth of development experience, to contribute to the design of a new model that can act as an example for communities wishing to strengthen their position in the local government process. A strategy to strengthen the community sector in the study area was designed and tested.

The strategy is described as a composite of contemporary community development models designed to address key issues of democracy, social inclusion, accountability, partnership and social capital.

This composite models builds on three pillars, namely: a participatory planning process that promotes inclusion, enhanced networking and agreed vision at community level; establishing accountable structures that provide co-ordination, legitimacy and a forum for improved communications at community and district levels; and, finally, accredited community training that enhances local social capital by bringing together leaders from mutually dependent communities to learn by sharing information and working together towards an agreed mandate.

The study's conclusion and the recommendations are presented as a community development model. This model is named ADOPT. The five letters of this acronym represent different components of the model, namely: **A**udit - the local area to identify the community constituency: **D**istrict - the model advocates the establishment of a recognised systems level between the local and the community levels to facilitate enhanced participation of the community constituency: **O**rganisation - the enhanced role of the community sector in the local development system needs to be accompanied by improved transparency and the establishment of recognised gateways for groups and individuals to access the policy process: **P**lanning - the model recognises participatory planning as a key mechanism to address issues of exclusion and to build social capital from the grassroots level: and **T**raining - by enhancing the human capital of community representatives through training.

The training is delivered at district level and therefore encourages leaders from mutually dependent communities to come together to learn about the evolving local development system and to share information from their respective communities.

The model was presented at a national seminar to an audience of more than seventy local and community development experts. The outcome of this seminar was a call to pilot the model in a number of local areas in Ireland to test its transferability. A number of local areas have already shown an interest in testing the model and the process has begun in areas adjacent to the study area.

Case Study 6

In Each Other's Shadow: What has been the impact of human and social capital on life satisfaction in Ireland?

In this thesis Healy, T. (2005a) studies the nature of human well-being and agency. It considers and contrasts various notions of well-being and relates them to various types of human capability, including human capital and social capital. Part A develops a conceptual framework that integrates various notions of well-being and capital under the concept of human capabilities - the capacity to live the good life as valued by the human agent. A number of tensions and unresolved conflicts are identified with respect to the use and understanding of well-being. The evidence relating to those factors that impact on well-being in the specific cultural context of Ireland will be considered in Part B drawing on one particular cross-sectional data source - the NESF Survey of Social Capital (2002). The analysis of data suggests that some empirical measures of informal social ties and reciprocity are highly associated with subjective well-being. The impacts of marital status, income and unemployment, described in the literature on well-being, are also confirmed in this analysis. However, caution is needed in drawing any general conclusions with respect to 'social capital' and its impact on human well-being more generally. The author explores the relevance of both the conceptual framework (Part A) and the supporting empirical research, that is,

(Part B) for different areas of practice - personal development, families, organisational change and governmental action. In conclusion, the study outlines a number of challenges for the development of social dialogue around norms and public interests as well as research grounded in community experience.

Case Study 7

Irish pubs as the 'third place'.

Summary.

There is considerable interest in alcohol in Irish society, yet minimal sociological understanding of its consumption, particularly of the sites where most drinking is done: the country's 8,750 pubs (Scarborough, G. 2008). Despite widespread public discussion on the role of the pub, there is scant social science evidence to better inform debate. Pubs are central to Irish community and are key site of social interaction. But the industry has been changing: liberalisation licensing laws the rise of the 'superpub', themed bars and increased restriction on access. We know little of the social effects of these changes. American sociologist Ray Oldenburg has argued that 'third places' (neither workplace nor home) are crucial to the maintenance of the community and the enhancement of social capital. The pub is the archetypal third place, but Oldenburg is concerned that modern pubs are less able to provide this vital function.

The Research Team

Dr. Perry Share Research Supervisor Department of Business & Humanities, IT, Sligo. Ms. Gwendolyn Scarbrough Research Student Department of Business & Humanities, IT, Sligo. Project Details: Aims and Objectives of the proposed programme of research.

The project aims to test Oldenburg's claim in an Irish context: to establish the role of the pub in the community; the nature of interaction within pubs: how public drinking is shaped by social structure; key trends in the pub industry; and whether pubs operate as 'third places'. It is also the aim of the research to increase the social scientific understanding of pubs and to access their importance in Irish social life. The research will largely be ethnographic: it will collect qualitative data from a sample of pubs in the North West, based on interviews, close observation and documentary analysis. This will be supported by historical research and the collation of existing statistical data in relation to the licensed trade.

Scarborough (2008,p.93) recounts some detail on the methodology used "Fifty four in depth interviews lasting approximately forty five minutes on average ranging from two hours to twenty five minutes". Some degree of purposeful sampling was used taking into account gender, nationality/ethnicity, age and also 'non-drinkers'. Different types of pub had to be accounted for – traditional, trendy, music, urban, rural.

Case Study 8.

Volunteerism in the Irish youth worker sector (with specific reference to Sligo Town and Limerick City as case studies).

Volunteerism in the youth work sector Irish youth work is characterised by being predominately voluntary in nature. We value greatly this characteristic and wish to see volunteerism maintained and even further developed ... we value it as a process which enriches our society...It involves people in taking in an appropriate degree of responsibility for various aspects of their community life and in diminishing an unhealthy dependency bureaucratic institutions' (O'Sullivan, 1980).

The Research Team;Dr. Perry Share Principal Researcher Department of Business & Humanities, IT, Sligo. Mr. Pat Forde Research Student Department of Business & Humanities, IT, Sligo.

The role of volunteers has remained a strong feature of Irish youth work, however in recent years with the advent of the Celtic Tiger economy the focus has lessened somewhat: it is increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers; people are more inclined to seek paid work; and the contribution of Community Employment schemes is becoming more problematic (Share and Forde 2006).

Case Study 9

Grange; A profile of the Census 2006 and 2011.

Grange Profile. Statistics with more 10% difference from county/region/national figure in BOLD. Statistics based on 5km radius of village. http://www.airo.ie/geo-profile based on 2006 census. 2011 census profile not available.				
Household Statistics	Grange	Republic of Ireland	Border	Sligo
Total Number of Households	680	1469521	161828	21480
Households 1 Couples With Children %	45.74	35.2	37.19	34.67
Households 3 Cars %	14.56	8.72	8.87	9.08
Households 0 Car %	9.12	19.75	18.24	18.23
Economy Statistics				
Total Population 15 +	1532	3375399	366440	48972
Total Labour Force 15 +	975	2109498	220905	29545
Total Non Labour Force 15+	554	1252919	144429	19268
Population At Work 15+	924	1930042	198493	27328

Population At Work (LF) 15+ %	94.77	91.49	89.85	92.5
Population At Work (T) 15+ %	60.31	57.18	54.17	55.8
Population Unemployed 15+	51	179456	22412	2217
Population Unemployed (LF) 15+ %	5.23	8.51	10.15	7.5
Population Unemployed (T) 15+ %	3.33	5.32	6.12	4.53
Population Students 15+	160	349596	35462	5433
Population Students 15+ %	10.44	10.36	9.68	11.09
Population Home Duties 15+	166	387014	45197	5233
Population Home Duties 15+ %	10.84	11.47	12.33	10.69
Population Retired	155	377927	45185	6258
Population Retired %	10.12	11.2	12.33	12.78
Population Unable to Work 15+	73	138382	18585	2344
Population Unable to Work 15+ %	4.77	4.1	5.07	4.79
Population Other 15+	3	12982	1106	159
Population Other 15+ %	0.2	0.38	0.3	0.32
Economic Dependency Ratio	65.48	74.21	84.05	78.62
Education				
Third Level Postgraduate %	7.36	6.16	4.36	5.46
Third Level Doctorate	5	14412	648	143
Third Level Doctorate %	0.38	0.51	0.21	0.35
Housing				
Total Permanent Private Households	677	1462296	160771	21352
Owner Occupied Total	575	569966	59687	7573
Owner Occupied Total %	84.93	38.98	37.13	35.47
Owner Occupied With Mortgage	297	498432	64160	8480
Owner Occupied With Mortgage %	43.87	34.09	39.91	39.72
Owner Occupied No Mortgage	277	1068398	123847	16053
Owner Occupied No Mortgage %	40.92	73.06	77.03	75.18
Year Built After 2000	138	249443	30302	3379
Year Built After 2000 %	20.38	17.06	18.85	15.83
Population				
Total Population	2039	4239848	468375	60894
Total Dependency Ratio %	52.62	45.83	51.46	49.39
Young Dependency Ratio %	37.95	29.73	32.96	29.25
Old Dependency Ratio %	14.67	16.09	18.49	20.14
Religion Statistics				
Catholic	1790	3681446	410610	53650
Catholic %	87.79	86.83	87.67	88.1
Industry Statistics				
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	65	89277	13462	1795
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing %	7.03	4.63	6.78	6.57
Building and Construction	127	215184	26225	3155
Building and Construction %	13.74	11.15	13.21	11.54
Manufacturing	137	262223	28982	3871

Manufacturing %	14.83	13.59	14.6	14.16
Commerce	167	523695	44977	5682
Commerce %	18.07	27.13	22.66	20.79
Transport and Communications	30	105705	8730	1109
Transport and Communications %	3.25	5.48	4.4	4.06
Public Administration	61	101264	10628	1788
Public Administration %	6.6	5.25	5.35	6.54
Professional Services	238	318695	36410	6163
Professional Services %	25.76	16.51	18.34	22.55
Industry – Other	99	313999	29079	3765
Industry - Other %	10.71	16.27	14.65	13.78
Drive or Car Passenger %	64.93	56.47	58.7	61.09
Accessibility				
Total Permanent Private Households	677	1462296	160771	21352
Broadband	33	292110	18896	2510
Broadband %	4.87	19.98	11.75	11.76
Other Connection	294	390535	47883	6879
Other Connection %	43.43	26.71	29.78	32.22
No Internet Access	340	703907	86848	11429
No Internet Access %	50.22	48.14	54.02	53.53
Not Stated	10	75744	7144	534
Not Stated %	1.48	5.18	4.44	2.5
Home PC Yes	406	828356	84212	11494
Home PC Yes %	59.97	56.65	52.38	53.83
Home PC No	263	599417	73569	9505
Home PC No %	38.85	40.99	45.76	44.52
Home PC Not Stated	8	34523	2990	353
Home PC Not Stated %	1.18	2.36	1.86	1.65
Social Class Statistics				
Social Class Total	2039	4239848	468375	60894
Social Class 1 - Professional Workers	148	277062	21136	3763
Social Class 1 - Professional Workers %	7.26	6.53	4.51	6.18
Social Class 2 - Managerial and Technical	680	1117986	114917	16488
Social Class 2 - Managerial and Technical %	33.35	26.37	24.54	27.08

The corresponding table for 2011 is not available however key indicators can be constructed from using the combined data from the electoral districts of; Lissadill North, Lissadill East and Rossinver West. These three electoral districts form the area approximating to ‘Grange’.

Data compiled from 2006 and 2011 census:

Total Pop.	Lissadill North	Lissadill East	Rossinver West	Total (not weighted)
2006	1128	637	233	1998
2011	1440	782	256	2478(+24.02%)
0-14 Pop.(%)				
2006	306(27.13)	161(25.27)	55(23.61)	522
2011	406(28.29)	195(24.94)	77(30.08)	678(+29.88)
65+ Pop.(%)				
2006	95(8.42)	56(10.68)	28(10.3)	179
2011	143(9.93)	67(8.67)	23(8.98)	233(+30.16)
Dependency Ratio 0-14 years				Average (not weighted)
2006	42.09	39.46	29.89	37.14
2011	45.57	37.50	49.36	44.14
Dependency Ratio 65+ Pop.				
2006	13.07	16.67	15.88	45.62
2011	16.05	12.88	14.74	43.67
Dependency Ratio. Total Pop.				
2006	55.16	56.13	51.30	54.19
2011	61.62	50.38	64.10	58.70

Appendix D. List of (potential) participating organisations

Organisation	Status	Comment
Active Retirement Association	Attended Focus Group	Senior Citizens/Sligo
Community Forum/Mayo	Visited office /will assist	700 organisations
Community Forum/Sligo	Made Contact /Positive respon	
Cranmore Residents Association	Attended Focus Group	Inner City Estate/Sligo town
Credit Union /Sligo	Attended Focus Group	Financial
GAA/ Sligo	Attended Focus Group	Sports Body
Irish Farmers Association	Attended Focus Group	County Sligo Branch
LEADER /Partnership/Sligo	Attended Focus Group	Social Inclusion Unit.
Macra Na Feirme	Offer of a contact by member	Mayo /Sligo
Polish Community	Invited to focus Group	Did not attend / contact via LEADER only
Sligo IT Students		
St.Vincent De Paul /Sligo		Participated in survey.
St.Vincent De. Paul/Ballina	Recommended by Ballina	Sligo
Travellers Support /Sligo	Visited office / will assist	North Mayo/West Sligo
Volunteer Center /Mayo	Invited to Focus Group	Could not attend/clash of dates
Volunteer Center /Sligo	Visited office /will assist	Mayo

Appendix E: Topic Guide for Questionnaire with Sligo Focus Group.

(full transcript incl)

Final agreed framework of questions

Areas of interest by: age / gender / activity e.g. sport, community enhancement activities etc.

What do you understand by: society / community / participation?

Do you think that the concept of community is alive and well? Do you think that the state supports this?

Do you feel part of a community?

Why do we need community groups?

What is the function and role of community groups?

Within your own organisational setting, do you see yourself as a 'gate keeper'?

As a group do you feel that you are more involved in community activities now than in the past? If not, why not?

Has the profile of your community changed much in the last ten or twenty year's .For example younger families, houses being bought and sold bringing new arrivals?

Are there many people from other countries living in you locality? Do you have contact with them?

Do you think people from minority ethnic backgrounds and other 'newcomers' to your area have been included in the lifeblood of your community? If yes, please provide examples. If no, why do you think this has happened?

Do you have as much regular contact with the people in your street/road/village as you had in the past?

What do you understand by 'social capital'? – Examples please

Do you think that this is a useful term?

Do you think societies and communities can be approximated or classified in social capital terms?

Whose responsibility is it to ensure 'social capitalisation' of society and communities?

How do you perceive levels of social capital in Ireland and your own area today?

Do you think that most people can be trusted? (World Values Survey question)

Or

Would you say that most people can't be trusted? (World Values Survey question)

Do you think that the level of trust in the community has changed over the last twenty years?

Do you trust the state institutions that you have regular dealings with?

Do you trust the political system? Do you feel excluded from decisions made that affect you?

Has paid work interfered with time previously set aside for community activities?

Have you ever felt that some community clubs and societies are not run in an open and democratic fashion? Have you ever been put off from joining an organisation for this reason.

Do you feel that clubs and societies should be more regulated? Is governance an issue?

For those of you that have children in the school system has the role of the school changed over the years? Do you go to school meetings? Were you ever on a parent committee? Do you fundraise for the school or help out in any way?

Do you feel that Irish society is 'fair' or is it getting more unequal?

Do you think that there are social cleavages in society that may exclude groups from full participation and membership? Is the gap between the 'haves' and have not's growing?

Focus Group Volunteer Form

I volunteer to take part in this research and I am aware that any information and material I contribute may be used for research purpose. All information gathered in the course of this discussion will remain strictly confidential.

Sign..... Date.....

Appendix F: Cover letter and list of questions

A Survey to measure peoples changing view of society in Sligo and the northwestern counties of Ireland.

I am a registered student with the Sligo Institute of Technology . I am studying for a Masters (MA) . My topic is Social Capital. Social Capital is a relatively new concept dealing with changing levels of trust, honesty, networking in groups , helping each other out, and attitudes to volunteerism.

I am attempting to measure how these levels have changed over the last 20 years. I hope to use the information gained in this questionnaire to promote the need for training for individuals and groups so as to allow the community and voluntary sector to participate in the decisions that effect our lives and our community.

Please note that no personal details are asked for in this survey . The returned questionnaires will be deposited in the link attached and will not be used for any other purpose or passed to any other individual or organisation.

Please complete and return by : _____

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation .

Yours sincerely,

John Durkan.

Sligo Institute of Technology ,

Ash Lane,

Sligo.

Section 2. List of Questions

Q.1

Ireland *

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. People are not as friendly as they were.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. People are not as honest as they were.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. People today are not as happy with life as they were five years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Older people have better values than younger people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Ireland is a better place to live compared to 10 years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q.2 Personal Power *					
	St. Agree	Agree	no op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
6. If you are in employment, do you feel that your workplace has become more unfriendly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. If you are unemployed, do you feel that society is less caring?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I feel that I have less power over my life now than I used to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Society is less equal than it used to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Unseen individuals and organisations are increasingly making the decisions that affect my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q.3 Trust *					
	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
11. Society used to be much 'safer' and 'trusting'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Society is all about personal advancement and not about helping one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I trust the people in my neighbourhood as much as I did five years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I am more cautious in my dealings with individuals than I used to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I have less contact with my neighbours than I used to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q.4 Community life *					
	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
16. I have a smaller number of close friends than I had 10 years ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I am not involved in communal activities because I have no time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I am not involved in communal activities because there is an insider 'clique'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
19. I am not involved in communal activities because it costs too much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I am not involved in communal activities because it has become too professional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Volunteers are not valued in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Membership of my community is readily available to all new comers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. In my community my opinions matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. People need to take more responsibility for themselves.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. My community matters to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. People in communities need to participate more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. The Government needs to actively help communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. It is easy to join a community organisation in my locality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.5

Values and ethics *

	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
29. Religion has lost its central position in Irish l life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. I have friends from outside my own peer group who do not share my world view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Networking with people in power is important because it helps me to advance up the social ladder.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. I believe that people at the top of society should help people at the bottom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Society should be tougher with law breakers no matter what their background.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. Health care should be universally and freely available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Child benefit should be means tested.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. People unable to service their mortgages should be afforded a debt amnesty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
37. My religious beliefs inform my values and ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.6
Equality *

	St. Agree	Agree	No op.	Disagree	St. Disagree
38. People at the bottom of society should get more state assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Community spirit is decreasing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. I am comfortable associating with people from other nationalities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. Ireland has too many people from other countries living here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. People from all nationalities get on well together in Ireland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. Children have a better life now than when I was growing up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. Undocumented migrants deserve Irish citizenship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. Children's rights should be enshrined in the constitution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. Same sex couples should be allowed to marry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.7

Political *

	St. Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	St. Disagr
47. It is very important that people vote in elections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. I have contacted my local TD in the last five years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. I attended an open meeting on an issue of concern to me in the last five years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50. Politicians do not have the interests of the people at heart.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51. Young people do not believe in politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52. I have contacted my local urban/county councillor in the last five years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	St. Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	St. Disagr
53. Local politicians are people I admire.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
54. National politicians are people I admire.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. Changing of governments in Ireland makes no difference to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. Political parties represent the interests of global and European elites.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58. The EU/IMF bailout has destroyed Irish national sovereignty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.8

Personal Details - Where you live . Countryside or village/small town/medium town/large town/Sligo

	under 1,000	1,000 to 2,999	3,000 to 5,999	6,000 to 9,999	10,000 to 20,000
Please tick the box that best represents your community population size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.9

Personal Details – Income (before tax) . (tick 1 box) *

	under 10,000	10,000 to 15,000	15,000 to 25,000	25,000 to 35,000	35,000 to 45,000	45,000 +
My income before tax	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q.10

Personal Details - Age/ Sex/Education /Nationality (please answer all questions) *

	Yes	No
I am a male aged 50 +.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a female aged 50+.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a male aged 25 - 49.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a female aged 25 - 49.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a male under 25 years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a female under 25 years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was born in Ireland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am an Irish Citizen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a citizen of another EU country.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
I am a citizen of a country outside Europe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I belong to an ethnic minority.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a refugee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe in God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a third level qualification/recognised skill.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have leaving certificate/second level education only	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="button" value="Continue"/>		

Section 3. Responses to questions asked in Section 2.
 Summerised Responses to Survey (as compiled by Polldaddy)

Question1 Ireland (*Mandatory*) Answers96100% Skip

	ST. AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	ST. DISAGREE
People are not as friendly as they were.	9	43	10	31	3
People are not as honest as they were.	14	39	14	28	1
People today are not as happy with life as they were five years ago.	25	51	13	4	2
Older people have better values than younger people.	10	45	11	23	7
Ireland is a better place to live compared to 10 years ago.	3	21	18	40	13

Detailed Report

Question02 Personal Power (*Mandatory*) Answers96100% Skip

	ST. AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION /NOT RELEVAN T	DISAGR EE	ST. DIAGREE
If you are in employment, do you feel that your workplace has become more unfriendly?	10	13	41	27	5
If you are unemployed, do you feel that society is less caring?	8	25	52	9	0
I feel that I have less power over my life now than I used to .	18	33	9	30	6
Society is less equal than it used to be .	24	43	9	17	3
Unseen individuals and organisations are increasingly making the decisions that affect my life.	40	42	10	3	1

Detailed ReportQuestion3 Trust (*Mandatory*)

Answers96100% Skip

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Society used to be much 'safer' and 'trusting'.	21	52	8	12	3
Society is all about personal advancement and not about helping one another.	14	45	9	19	9
I trust the people in my neighborhood as much as I did five years ago.	16	46	17	11	6
I am more cautious in my dealings with individuals than I used to be.		55	9	19	2
I have less contact with my neighbours than I used to.	10	43	11	27	5

Detailed ReportQuestion04 Community life (*Mandatory*)

Answers96100% Skip

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I have a smaller number of close friends than 10 years	12	36	7	33	8
I am not involved in communal activities because I have no time.	15	23	9	41	8
I am not involved in communal activities because there is an insider 'clique'.	6	23	20	36	11
I am not involved in communal activities because it costs too much.	3	17	17	48	11
I am not involved in communal activities because it has become too professional.	4	18	17	46	11
Volunteers are not valued in my community.	7	23	13	40	13
Membership of my community is readily available to all new comers.	13	38	21	14	5
In my community my opinions matter.	5	30	23	27	6
People need to take more responsibility for themselves.	25	52	5	9	0
My community matters to me.	27	46	8	8	2
People in communities need to participate more.	31	54	4	2	0
The Government needs to actively help communities.	49	37	3	2	0
It is easy to join a community organisation in my locality.	18	42	8	18	5

Detailed Report

Question05 Values and ethics (Mandatory)

Answers96100% Skip

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Religion has lost its central	33	46	7	7	3

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
position in Irish l life.					
I have friends from outside my own peer group who do not share my world view.	14	56	16	10	0
Networking with people in power is important because it helps me to advance up the social ladder.	5	47	21	18	3
I believe that people at the top of society should help people at the bottom.	43	41	4	5	1
Society should be tougher with law breakers no matter what their background.	39	39	6	9	1
Health care should be universally and freely available.	47	36	6	4	1
Child benefit should be means tested.	35	32	8	13	3
People unable to service their mortgages should be afforded a debt amnesty.	25	35	18	12	1
My religious beliefs inform my values/ethics.	7	29	17	32	6

Detailed ReportQuestion06 Equality (*Mandatory*)

Answers9498% Skip

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
People at the bottom of society should get more state assistance.	15	43	14	21	1
Community spirit is decreasing.	13	53	6	22	0
I am comfortable associating with people from other nationalities.	26	46	17	4	1
Ireland has too many people from other countries living here.	11	28	20	19	16

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
People from all nationalities get on well together in Ireland.	6	26	18	36	8
Children have a better life now than when I was growing up.	16	30	21	23	4
Undocumented migrants deserve Irish citizenship.	1	12	22	36	20
Children's rights should be enshrined in the constitution.	34	43	10	3	1
Same sex couples should be allowed to marry.	22	37	20	9	3

Detailed Report

Question07 Political (*Mandatory*)

Answers96100% Skip

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
It is very important that people vote in elections.	53	31	7	4	1
I have contacted my local TD in the last five years.	25	17	4	25	25
I attended an open meeting on an issue of concern to me in the last five years.	23	29	6	18	20
Politicians do not have the interests of the people at heart.	27	35	15	14	5
Young people do not believe in politics.	23	28	17	22	6
I have contacted my local urban/county councilor in the last five years.	17	29	7	16	22
Local politicians are people I admire.	1	8	16	27	39
National politicians are people I admire.	2	10	12	27	40
Changing of governments in	17	46	7	15	6

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Ireland makes no difference to me					
Political parties represent the interests of global and European elites.	35	23	17	12	4
The EU/IMF bailout has destroyed Irish national sovereignty	45	27	10	7	2

Detailed Report

Question08	Personal Details - Where you live. Countryside or village/small town/medium town/large town/Sligo					Answers96100% Skip
	UNDER 1,000	1,000 TO 2,999	3,000 TO 5,999	6,000 TO 9,999	10,000 TO 20,000	
Please tick the box that best represents your community population size	37	22	10	5	22	

Detailed Report

Question09	Personal Details - Income (before tax). (tick 1 box) (Mandatory)						Answers96100% Skip
	UNDER 10,000	10,000 TO 15,000	15,000 TO 25,000	25,000 TO 35,000	35,000 TO 45,000	45,000 +	
My income before tax is	30	16	20	8	12	9	

Detailed Report

Question10	Personal Details - Age/ Sex/Education /Nationality (please answer all questions) (Mandatory)	
	YES	NO
I am a male aged 50 +.	18	78
I am a female aged 50+.	11	85
I am a male aged 25 - 49.	10	86
I am a female aged 25 - 49.	21	75
I am a male under 25 years.	18	78
I am a female under 25 years.	20	76
I was born in Ireland.	85	11
I have a disability	10	86
I am an Irish Citizen.	91	5
I am a citizen of another EU country.	6	9

	YES	NO
I am a citizen of a country outside Europe.	5	91
I belong to an ethnic minority.	4	92
I am a refugee.	1	95
I believe in God.	77	19
I have a third level qualification/recognised skill.	54	42
I have leaving certificate/second level education only	43	53

Appendix G: Frequency as per responses in Polldaddy Survey

Notes		
Output Created		03-OCT-2012 12:14:38
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Documents and Settings\s00094951\My Documents\Sligo Social capital.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet1
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	96
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics are based on all cases with valid data.
Syntax		FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Area Income Age Irishborn Nationality Status Religion Education Q01 Q02 Q03 Q04 Q05 Q06 Q07 Q08 Q09 Q10 Q11 Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20 Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24 Q25 Q26 Q27 Q28 Q29 Q30 Q31 Q32 Q33 Q34 Q35 Q36 Q37 Q38 Q39 Q40 Q41 Q42 Q43 Q44 Q45 Q46 Q47 Q48 Q49 Q50 Q51 Q52 Q53 Q54 Q55 Q56 Q57 /ORDER=ANALYSIS.

Questions with 60% or greater for Strongly Agree/ Agree are coded(33)****:

Q3,9,10,11,12,13,14,19,20,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,32,33,34,35,36,38,39,40,41,44,45,46,47,50,55, 56,57.

Questions 53 and 54 are out of necessity ‘negatively worded’ and show a 60% Strongly Disagree/Disagree. These are coded (2) *For computation purposes these questions will be re coded as recommended (see above).

Questions with 60% or greater when No opinion is added are coded (12) ***:

Q1,2,4,6,7,8,15,22,23,31,43,51.

Questions with less than 60% for Strongly Agree/ Agree/ No opinion are coded (10) yellow**:
Q5,16,17,18,21,37,42,48,49,52.

All questions were abbreviated to fit SPSS program. Long version available in Polldaddy survey (above).

Frequency Tables

Frequency as per responses in Polldaddy Survey (Appendix F. Section 3.)

Size of population	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
0-999	40	41.7	41.7
1,000-2,999	22	22.9	64.6
3,000-5,999	8	8.3	72.9
6,000 - 9,999	6	6.3	79.2
10,000 - 20,000	20	20.8	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Level of income before tax	Frequency	Percent	Cum. Percent
Euro.			
0-9,999	31	32.3	32.3
10,000 -14,999	16	16.7	49.0
15,000 - 24,999	17	17.7	66.7
25,000-34,999	14	14.6	81.3
35,000-44,999	11	11.5	92.7
45,000- 59,000	7	7.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Male/Female	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
male 50+	19	19.8	19.8
female 50+	12	12.5	32.3
male 25- 49	11	11.5	43.8
female 25 -49	14	14.6	58.3
male 18- 24	23	24.0	82.3
female 18 -24	17	17.7	100.0
Total	96	100.0	Male 33.7/Female 66.4

Born in Ireland	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	85	88.5	88.5
No	11	11.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	
Irish /rest of EU / Rest of world	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Irish Citizen	90	93.8	93.8
citizen of EU country	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Refugee or ethnic minority	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
not relevant	79	82.3	82.3
Disability	12	12.5	94.8
ethnic minority	4	4.2	99.0
Refugee	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Believe in God?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	77	80.2	80.2
No	19	19.8	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

2nd or 3rd level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd level only	45	46.9	46.9
3rd Level or skill	51	53.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q1.

People less friendly	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	9	9.4	9.4
Agree	43	44.8	54.2
No Opinion	10	10.4	64.6***
Disagree	31	32.3	96.9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q2.

People less honest	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	14.6	14.6
Agree	39	40.6	55.2
No Opinion	14	14.6	69.8***
Disagree	28	29.2	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q3.

People less happy	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	25	26.0	26.0
Agree	52	54.2	80.2****
No Opinion	13	13.5	93.8
Disagree	4	4.2	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q4.

Older people have better values	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	10.4	10.4
Agree	45	46.9	57.3
No Opinion	11	11.5	68.8***
Disagree	23	24.0	92.7
Strongly Disagree	7	7.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q5.

Ireland better today than 10 years ago	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	3	3.1	3.1
Agree	22	22.9	26.0**
No Opinion	18	18.8	44.8
Disagree	40	41.7	86.5
Strongly Disagree	13	13.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q6.

Workplace more unfriendly	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	10.4	10.4
Agree	13	13.5	24.0
No Opinion	41	42.7	66.7***
Disagree	27	28.1	94.8
Strongly Disagree	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q7

Society less caring	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	8.3	8.3
Agree	25	26.0	34.4
No Opinion	54	56.3	90.6***
Disagree	9	9.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q8.

I feel that I have less power over my life	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	17.7	17.7
Agree	34	35.4	53.1
No Opinion	9	9.4	62.5***
Disagree	30	31.3	93.8
Strongly Disagree	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q9.

Society is less equal	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	24	25.0	25.0
Agree	42	43.8	68.8****
No Opinion	9	9.4	78.1
Disagree	18	18.8	96.9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q10.

Unseen power is increasing	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	40	41.7	41.7
Agree	42	43.8	85.4****
No Opinion	10	10.4	95.8
Disagree	3	3.1	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q11.

Society is not safe anymore	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	21	21.9	21.9
Agree	52	54.2	76.0****
No Opinion	8	8.3	84.4
Disagree	12	12.5	96.9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q12.

Society is all about personal advancement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	14.6	14.6
Agree	45	46.9	61.5****
No Opinion	9	9.4	70.8
Disagree	19	19.8	90.6
Strongly Disagree	9	9.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q13.

I trust my neighbours	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	16	16.7	16.7
Agree	46	47.9	64.6****
No Opinion	17	17.7	82.3
Disagree	11	11.5	93.8
Strongly Disagree	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q14.

I am more cautious	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	11	11.5	11.5
Agree	55	57.3	68.8****
No Opinion	9	9.4	78.1
Disagree	19	19.8	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q15.

I have less contact with my neighbours	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	10.4	10.4
Agree	43	44.8	55.2
No Opinion	11	11.5	66.7 ***
Disagree	27	28.1	94.8
Strongly Disagree	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q16.

Smaller number of close friends	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	14.6	14.6
Agree	38	39.6	54.2**
No Opinion	5	5.2	59.4
Disagree	29	30.2	89.6
Strongly Disagree	10	10.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q17.

I have no time to spare	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	15.6	15.6
Agree	23	24.0	39.6**
No Opinion	9	9.4	49.0
Disagree	41	42.7	91.7
Strongly Disagree	8	8.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q18.

Community have cliques	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	6	6.3	6.3
Agree	23	24.0	30.2**
No Opinion	20	20.8	51.0
Disagree	36	37.5	88.5
Strongly Disagree	11	11.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q19.

It costs too much money to get involved	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	3	3.1	3.1
Agree	17	17.7	20.8
No Opinion	17	17.7	38.5
Disagree	48	50.0	88.5
Strongly Disagree	11	(61.5)11.5****	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q20.

Professionals taking over	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	4	4.2	4.2
Agree	18	18.8	22.9
No Opinion	17	17.7	40.6
Disagree	46	47.9	88.5
Strongly Disagree	11	(59.4)11.5****	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q21.

Volunteers are not valued.	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	7	7.3	7.3
Agree	23	24.0	31.3**
No Opinion	13	13.5	44.8
Disagree	40	41.7	86.5
Strongly Disagree	13	13.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q22.

New comers welcome	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	15.6	15.6
Agree	40	41.7	57.3
No Opinion	22	22.9	80.2***
Disagree	14	14.6	94.8
Strongly Disagree	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q23.

In my community my opinions matter	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	7	7.3	7.3
Agree	32	33.3	40.6
No Opinion	24	25.0	65.6***
Disagree	27	28.1	93.8
Strongly Disagree	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q24.

People need to take more responsibility	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	30	31.3	31.3
Agree	52	54.2	85.4*****
No Opinion	5	5.2	90.6
Disagree	9	9.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q25.

My community matters to me	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	34	35.4	35.4
Agree	44	45.8	81.3*****
No Opinion	8	8.3	89.6
Disagree	8	8.3	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q26.

People should participate	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	36	37.5	37.5
Agree	54	56.3	93.8*****
No Opinion	4	4.2	97.9
Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q27.

Communities needs government	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	54	56.3	56.3
Agree	36	37.5	93.8*****
No Opinion	4	4.2	97.9
Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q28.

Easy to join organisations	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	20	20.8	20.8
Agree	43	44.8	65.6*****
No Opinion	10	10.4	76.0
Disagree	18	18.8	94.8
Strongly Disagree	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q29.

Religion has lost its central position	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	33	34.4	34.4
Agree	47	49.0	83.3*****
No Opinion	7	7.3	90.6
Disagree	6	6.3	96.9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q30.

Friends from outside my peer group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	14	14.6	14.6
Agree	57	59.4	74.0****
No Opinion	16	16.7	90.6
Disagree	9	9.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q31.

Networking is important for advancement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	5	5.2	5.2
Agree	48	50.0	55.2
No Opinion	20	20.8	76.0 ***
Disagree	19	19.8	95.8
Strongly Disagree	4	4.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q32.

The top should help the bottom	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	44	45.8	45.8
Agree	43	44.8	90.6****
No Opinion	3	3.1	93.8
Disagree	5	5.2	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q33.

Be tough with law breakers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	39	40.6	40.6
Agree	41	42.7	83.3****
No Opinion	5	5.2	88.5
Disagree	10	10.4	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q34.

Health care for all	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	47	49.0	49.0
Agree	39	40.6	89.6****
No Opinion	6	6.3	95.8
Disagree	4	4.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q35.

Child benefit should be means tested	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	35	36.5	36.5
Agree	34	35.4	71.9 ****
No Opinion	10	10.4	82.3
Disagree	15	15.6	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q36.

Mortgage assistance for people	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	25	26.0	26.0
Agree	35	36.5	62.5 ****
No Opinion	22	22.9	85.4
Disagree	13	13.5	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q37.

My religious beliefs inform my values and ethics	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	7	7.3	7.3
Agree	30	31.3	38.5**
No Opinion	17	17.7	56.3
Disagree	36	37.5	93.8
Strongly Disagree	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q38.

More state assistance for the poorest	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	15.6	15.6
Agree	44	45.8	61.5****
No Opinion	15	15.6	77.1
Disagree	21	21.9	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q39.

Community spirit is decreasing	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	13	13.5	13.5
Agree	54	56.3	69.8****
No Opinion	7	7.3	77.1
Disagree	22	22.9	100
Total	96	100	

Q40.

I am comfortable with other nationalities	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	26	27.1	27.1
Agree	48	50.0	77.1****
No Opinion	16	16.7	93.8
Disagree	5	5.2	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q41.

Too many people from other countries Living in Ireland.	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	11	11.5	11.5
Agree	32	33.3	44.8
No Opinion	19	19.8	64.6 ***
Disagree	19	19.8	84.4
Strongly Disagree	15	15.6	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q42.

All nationalities get on well together	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	6	6.3	6.3
Agree	29	30.2	36.5 **
No Opinion	18	18.8	55.2
Disagree	36	37.5	92.7
Strongly Disagree	7	7.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q43.

Children have a better life now	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	16	16.7	16.7
Agree	32	33.3	50.0
No Opinion	21	21.9	71.9 ***
Disagree	23	24.0	95.8
Strongly Disagree	4	4.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q44.

Undocumented migrants deserve citizenship	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	1	1.0	1.0
Agree	12	14.6	15.6
No Opinion	22	22.9	38.5
Disagree	36	40.6	79.2
Strongly Disagree	20	(61.4)20.8****	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q45.

Children should have rights	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	34	35.4	35.4
Agree	46	47.9	83.3 ****
No Opinion	12	12.5	95.8
Disagree	3	3.1	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q46.

Same sex couples can marry	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	22	22.9	22.9
Agree	40	41.7	64.6 ****
No Opinion	21	21.9	86.5
Disagree	10	10.4	96.9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q47.

People should vote	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	50	52.1	52.1
Agree	36	37.5	89.6 ****
No Opinion	5	5.2	94.8
Disagree	4	4.2	99.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q48.

I contacted my local TD in last 5 years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	24	25.0	25.0
Agree	17	17.7	42.7 **
No Opinion	4	4.2	46.9
Disagree	26	27.1	74.0
Strongly Disagree	25	26.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q49.

I attended an open meeting in the last 5 years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	21	21.9	21.9
Agree	29	30.2	52.1 **
No Opinion	6	6.3	58.3
Disagree	20	20.8	79.2
Strongly Disagree	20	20.8	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q50.

Politicians have no interest	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	27	28.1	28.1
Agree	37	38.5	66.7 ****
No Opinion	15	15.6	82.3
Disagree	15	15.6	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q51.

Young people do not believe in politics	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	24.0	24.0
Agree	29	30.2	54.2
No Opinion	15	15.6	69.8 ***
Disagree	24	25.0	94.8
Strongly Disagree	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q52.

Contacted my local public representative in the last 5 years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	17.7	17.7
Agree	32	33.3	51.0 **
No Opinion	7	7.3	58.3
Disagree	17	17.7	76.0
Strongly Disagree	23	24.0	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q53.

Local politicians are people people I admire	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	1	1.0	1.0
Agree	10	10.4	11.5
No Opinion	16	16.7	28.1
Disagree	31	32.3	60.4
Strongly Disagree	38	(71.9)39.6 *	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q54.

National politicians are people I admire	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	1	1.0	1.0
Agree	9	9.4	10.4
No Opinion	16	16.7	27.1
Disagree	31	32.3	59.4
Strongly Disagree	39	(72.9)40.6 *	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q55.

Changing government makes no difference	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	17	17.7	17.7
Agree	50	52.1	69.8 ****
No Opinion	7	7.3	77.1
Disagree	16	16.7	93.8
Strongly Disagree	6	6.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q56.

Political parties and global elites/same	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	35	36.5	36.5
Agree	28	29.2	65.6 ****
No Opinion	17	17.7	83.3
Disagree	12	12.5	95.8
Strongly Disagree	4	4.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Q57.

Bailout destroyed sovereignty	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	46	47.9	47.9
Agree	31	32.3	80.2 ****
No Opinion	10	10.4	90.6
Disagree	7	7.3	97.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Appendix H:Crombachs Alpha. A test for Reliability

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	96	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	96	100.0

Reliability Statistics – Overall Score

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.793	.798	57

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min.	Max.	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Variances	1.155	.419	2.503	2.083	5.968	.163	57

Reliability Statistics- Irish Society

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.441	.424	5

Item Statistics

Irish Society	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
People less friendly	2.75	1.105	96
People less honest	2.61	1.089	96
People less happy	2.02	.870	96
Older people have better values	2.71	1.160	96
Ireland better today than 10 years ago	3.40	1.081	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Variances	1.136	.757	1.346	.588	1.776	.050	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
People less friendly	10.74	6.068	.274	.215	.354
People less honest	10.88	5.184	.485	.304	.178
People less happy	11.47	7.894	.026	.101	.502
Older people have better values	10.78	6.173	.219	.104	.397

Ireland better today than 10 years ago	10.09	6.696	.163	.093	.435
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Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
13.49	8.779	2.963	5

Reliability Statistics-Personal Power

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.523	.517	5

Item Statistics

Personal Power	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Workplace more unfriendly	3.04	1.025	96
Society less caring	2.67	.763	96
I feel that I have less power over my life	2.73	1.252	96
Society is less equal	2.31	1.136	96
Unseen power is increasing	1.78	.836	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Mini	Max	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Variances	1.038	.582	1.568	.986	2.692	.167	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Workplace more unfriendly	9.49	7.284	.107	.069	.575
Society less caring	9.86	7.234	.270	.113	.484
I feel that I have less power over my life	9.80	4.560	.523	.296	.274
Society is less equal	10.22	6.025	.289	.198	.470
Unseen power is increasing	10.75	6.863	.311	.134	.461

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
12.53	8.925	2.988	5

Reliability Statistics-Trust

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.413	.406	5

Item Statistics

Trust	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Society is not safe anymore	2.21	1.025	96
Society is all about personal advancement	2.63	1.225	96
I trust my neighbours	2.43	1.093	96
I am more cautious	2.44	1.003	96
I have less contact with my neighbours	2.73	1.138	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.485	2.208	2.729	.521	1.236	.040	5
Item Variances	1.209	1.007	1.500	.493	1.490	.040	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Society is not safe anymore	10.22	6.994	.181	.064	.381
Society is all about personal advancement	9.80	5.487	.355	.187	.229
I trust my neighbours	10.00	7.537	.049	.017	.475
I am more cautious	9.99	6.831	.227	.069	.350
I have less contact with my neighbours	9.70	6.276	.255	.158	.324

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
12.43	9.026	3.004	5

Reliability Statistics- Community Life

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.595	.597	13

Item Statistics

Community Life	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Smaller number of close friends	2.82	1.298	96
I have no time to spare	3.04	1.281	96
Community have cliques	3.24	1.131	96
It costs too much money to get involved	3.49	1.016	96
Professionals taking over	3.44	1.054	96
Volunteers are not valued.	3.30	1.189	96
New comers welcome	2.52	1.086	96
In my community my opinions matter	2.93	1.078	96
People need to take more responsibility	1.93	.861	96
My community matters to me	1.96	.983	96
People should participate	1.71	.648	96
Communities needs government	1.52	.680	96
Easy to join organizations	2.43	1.167	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min.	Max.	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.640	1.521	3.490	1.969	2.295	.465	13
Item Variances	1.112	.419	1.684	1.265	4.016	.155	13

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Smaller number of close friends	31.50	25.747	.354	.261	.550
I have no time to spare	31.28	26.752	.279	.278	.568
Community have cliques	31.08	27.340	.294	.348	.565
It costs too much money to get involved	30.83	29.319	.159	.421	.591

Professionals taking over	30.89	26.018	.462	.458	.531
Volunteers are not valued.	31.02	27.221	.279	.356	.568
New comers welcome	31.80	27.087	.339	.234	.556
In my community my opinions matter	31.40	30.326	.051	.224	.613
People need to take more responsibility	32.40	29.673	.179	.242	.587
My community matters to me	32.36	30.024	.102	.356	.601
People should participate	32.61	29.208	.353	.330	.567
Communities needs government	32.80	30.539	.145	.140	.591
Easy to join organisations	31.90	28.242	.201	.287	.585

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
34.32	32.095	5.665	13

Reliability Statistics-Ethics and Values

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.473	.504	9

Item Statistics

Ethics and Values	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Religion has lost its central position	1.95	.977	96
Friends from outside my peer group	2.21	.807	96
Networking is important for advancement	2.68	.989	96
The top should help the bottom	1.71	.845	96
Be tough with law breakers	1.89	.983	96
Health care for all	1.66	.779	96
Child benefit should be means tested	2.11	1.132	96
Mortgage assistance for people	2.27	1.031	96
My religious beliefs inform my values and ethics	3.04	1.114	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Maximum Minimum	/	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.168	1.656	3.042	1.385	1.836		.205	9
Item Variances	.940	.607	1.281	.675	2.111		.059	9

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Religion has lost its central position	17.56	11.849	.265	.192	.419
Friends from outside my peer group	17.30	12.108	.326	.320	.406
Networking is important for advancement	16.83	12.772	.119	.143	.474
The top should help the bottom	17.80	11.845	.349	.171	.396
Be tough with law breakers	17.63	13.226	.056	.071	.496
Health care for all	17.85	12.357	.297	.230	.417
Child benefit should be means tested	17.40	12.663	.080	.120	.495
Mortgage assistance for people	17.24	10.879	.389	.234	.366
My religious beliefs inform my values and ethics	16.47	12.883	.058	.104	.503

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
19.51	14.589	3.820	9

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.334	.344	9

Item Statistics- _Equality

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
More state assistance for the poorest	2.47	1.036	96
Community spirit is decreasing	2.40	.989	96
I am comfortable with other nationalities	2.03	.864	96
All nationalities get on well together in Irel.	2.95	1.276	96
All nationalities get on well together	3.09	1.106	96
Children have a better life now	2.66	1.141	96
Undocumented migrants deserve citizenship	3.66	1.003	96
Children should have rights	1.86	.829	96
Same sex couples can marry	2.29	1.035	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.601	1.865	3.656	1.792	1.961	.313	9
Item Variances	1.080	.687	1.629	.942	2.372	.082	9

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
23.41	13.823	3.718	9

Reliability Statistics- Political

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.461	.443	11

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
People should vote	1.65	.846	96
I contacted my local TD in last 5 years	3.11	1.582	96
I attended an open meeting in the last five years	2.89	1.493	96
Politic have no interest	2.25	1.095	96
Young people do not believe in politics	2.57	1.246	96
Contacted my local public rep. in the last 5 years	2.97	1.483	96
Local politicians are people I admire	3.99	1.041	96
National politicians are people I admire	4.02	1.026	96
Changing govt. makes no difference	2.42	1.149	96
Political parties and global elites	2.19	1.182	96
Bailout destroyed sovereignty	1.83	1.023	96

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	2.717	1.646	4.021	2.375	2.443	.611	11
Item Variances	1.481	.715	2.503	1.787	3.498	.335	11

Item-Total Statistics

Political	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
People should vote	28.24	24.710	.311	.127	.411
I contacted my local TD in last 5 years	26.77	21.168	.300	.339	.387
I attended an open meeting in the last five years	27.00	22.421	.240	.248	.414
Politicians have no interest	27.64	25.392	.131	.234	.451
Young people do not believe in politics	27.31	26.743	-.020	.174	.499
Contacted my local public rep. in the last 5 years	26.92	19.888	.450	.445	.324
Local politicians are people I admire	25.90	25.400	.148	.319	.446
National politicians are people I admire	25.86	28.750	-.160	.390	.522
Changing govt. makes no difference	27.47	24.231	.220	.409	.424
Political parties and global elites	27.70	25.329	.111	.206	.458
Bailout destroyed sovereignty	28.05	24.618	.234	.279	.423

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
29.89	28.039	5.295	11

Appendix I:A Test of Correlations

COMPUTE Demographic=SUM(Age,Area,Irishborn,Nationality,Status,Religion).
 COMPUTE Economic=SUM(Income,Education).
 COMPUTE Ireland=SUM(Q01,Q02,Q03,Q04,Q05).
 COMPUTE Power=SUM(Q06,Q07,Q08,Q09,Q10).
 COMPUTE Trust=SUM(Q11,Q12,Q13,Q14,Q15).
 COMPUTE
 Community=SUM(Q16,Q17,Q18,Q19,Q20,Q21,Q22,Q23,Q24,Q25,Q26,Q27,Q28).
 COMPUTE Values=SUM(Q29,Q30,Q31,Q32,Q33,Q34,Q35,Q36,Q37).
 COMPUTE Equality=SUM(Q38,Q39,Q40,Q41,Q42,Q43,Q44,Q45,Q46).
 COMPUTE Political=SUM(Q47,Q48,Q49,Q50,Q51,Q52,Q53,Q54,Q55,Q56,Q57).

Correlations

		Demographic	Ireland
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.163
	N	96	96
Ireland	Pearson Correlation	.144	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.163	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Power	12.5313	2.98753	96

		Demographic	Power
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.312**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	96	96
Power	Pearson Correlation	.312**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	96	96

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Trust	12.4271	3.00436	96

Correlations

		Demographic	Trust
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.291 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	96	96
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.291 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	96	96

^{**}. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Community	34.3229	5.66521	96

Correlations

		Demographic	Community
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.204 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	96	96
Community	Pearson Correlation	.204 [*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	96	96

^{*}. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Values	19.5104	3.81960	96

Correlations

		Demographic	Values
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.641
	N	96	96
Values	Pearson Correlation	.048	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.641	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Equality	23.4063	3.71789	96

Correlations

		Demographic	Equality
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.627
	N	96	96
Equality	Pearson Correlation	-.050	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.627	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Demographic	9.6667	2.76317	96
Political	29.8854	5.29522	96

Correlations

		Demographic	Political
Demographic	Pearson Correlation	1	.291**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	96	96
Political	Pearson Correlation	.291**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	96	96

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Ireland	13.4896	2.96291	96

Correlations

		Economic	Ireland
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.546
	N	96	96
Ireland	Pearson Correlation	.062	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.546	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Power	12.5313	2.98753	96

Correlations

		Economic	Power
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.907
	N	96	96
Power	Pearson Correlation	-.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.907	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Trust	12.4271	3.00436	96

		Economic	Trust
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	-.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.271
	N	96	96
Trust	Pearson Correlation	-.113	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.271	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Community	34.3229	5.66521	96

Correlations

		Economic	Community
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.005
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.964
	N	96	96
Community	Pearson Correlation	.005	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.964	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Values	19.5104	3.81960	96

Correlations

		Economic	Values
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	96	96
Values	Pearson Correlation	.327**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	96	96

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Equality	23.4063	3.71789	96

Correlations

		Economic	Equality
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.280
	N	96	96
Equality	Pearson Correlation	.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.280	
	N	96	96

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Economic	4.3125	1.72482	96
Political	29.8854	5.29522	96

Correlations

		Economic	Political
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.751
	N	96	96
Political	Pearson Correlation	.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.751	
	N	96	96

Appendix J:Timeline of action

September 2009 –January 2010	Literature Review – Scope out
January 2010 – September 2010	Primary Data Collection. Set up focus groups and Interviews
September 2010 – March 2011	Write up

The actual timeline was longer and involved a radical change in approach as outlined:

Action	Month(s)	Comment
Complete Registration.	Nov. 2009	Take on board comments /suggestions of external examiner- ‘allow more time for literature review’
1st Draft Literature Review.	Nov.2009 – May 2010	Research all relevant books and journals in Sligo IT Library. Make full use of databases.
Sligo Community Focus Group	31 st May 2010	Assemble group of community leaders from across County Sligo. Issues arising from Literature discussed. Meeting taped, with agreement of all present. Confidentially respected and document signed.1.5 hour’s duration.
Make progress report to tutor.	June 2010	College closes for summer break. Ongoing work on Literature Review. Transcribe Focus Group tape using approved research methods as described.
Meeting with tutor re next phase. SAGE recommended.	September 2010	SAGE Publications opens its database to all comers for free for one month.
Search SAGE and download all relevant files for future reading.	15 th Sept.2010 -15 th Oct.2010	Using <i>social capital</i> as main search topic over 200 files were downloaded.
Meeting with tutor. Ongoing contact with tutor.	October 2010	Decision taken to extend the literature review by 1 year until September 2011. Comment/prediction of original external examiner proves to be correct.
Reading and referencing SAGE files and other relevant sources: newspapers,TV.	October 2010- September 2011	Large amount of high quality research from around the world contained in SAGE files and other sources.
Make progress report to tutor.	September 2011	Literature Review deemed to be largely ‘scoped out’ all major aspects of and issues relating to Social Capital identified.
Start constructing questionnaire.	October 2011	Questions based on issues arising from Focus Group and Literature Review.
<i>Polldaddy</i> format used.	November 2011	Pilot study conducted. Questionnaire sent to 6 people in various parts of Ireland. All have a third level degree in a social science. Reply’s noted (qualitative element) and Polldaddy survey tracked. Questions changed/added/ deleted where necessary.

Blog started on wordpress .com (www.irishsocialcapital.com) and linked to Twitter. Sligo Credit Union approached about launching questionnaire.	December 2011	Attempt to interest a local paper in running a column on social capital issues. Initial interest expressed but no action taken by paper. Decision to collect all replies through 'Polldaddy'. No need for face to face survey work was the assumption.
Sligo Credit Union agree to post the survey on their front page	January 2012	Questionnaire rechecked and deemed fit for circulation.
Questionnaire posted on Credit Union site. A potential 12,000 customers can reply.	February 2012	Questionnaire posted up for 2 weeks. Only a small number of reply's – all from Credit union staff. A change of tactic needed
Discuss situation with tutor. Blog and twitter posts (linked) continue. Small number of notable individuals and organisations 'follow' the posts.	March 2012	Suggested that I go out to various places in Sligo town and county and ask people to fill in the questionnaire on pre printed sheets. Agreement that is an appropriate course of action. 100 individuals is the target.
In addition to leaving the questionnaire on the Polldaddy site (some responses) a location survey is started. Approximately 10 locations are selected. Young/older, urban/rural, well off /disadvantaged are included. A maximum of 15 and a minimum of 6 from any one category are deemed appropriate to keep a balance.	March 2012 – June 2012	Sligo Credit Union public office used as pilot study for this approach. 15 people fill in questionnaire in one day. Very few refusals. Following this success a housing estate, the railway station, a cattle mart, students and staff in Sligo IT, shop owners/managers, were approached. High response rate in all cases. People happy to co-operate once the nature of the survey was explained to them. Students email in Sligo IT used on basis of computer familiarity- mainly female students' reply. Male students' cooperate when approached directly. Qualitative dimension arises from face to face interviewing.
96 replies collected.	June 2012	Survey closed
Analytical process of survey begins.	June – September 2012	57 questions on 10 topics and 20 relating to socio-economic background make it impossible to analyse manually. SPSS recommended.

Analysis of qsurvey completed.	September – December 2012	SPSS is a specialised program and required extensive research in order to get the best results possible.
One to one interviews begin.	January – March 2013	A cross section of organisations (see 4.8.5/Appendix D) selected and individuals contacted.
One to one interviews completed. Transcription completed.	March – July 2013	The interviews were typically of 50 minutes duration. A lot of time and attention needed for accurate transcription.
Findings chapter completed.	August 2013	The data completed proved to be much more involved than originally envisaged.
Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusions chapters completed.	September 2013	Thesis submitted to John Pender for initial reading.
Review of first draft with John Pender	January 2014	Grange was selected as a sub profile of County Sligo
Agreed on methodology for Grange with John Pender.	February/ March 2014	Census 2006 and 2011 analysis for Grange and one to one interviews conducted.
Write up second draft	April 2015	Second Draft submitted.