



**NUI MAYNOOTH**

Gilacail na hÉireann Mú Nuad

# The Tara/Skryne Valley and the M3 Motorway; Development vs. Heritage.

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## Abstract

This thesis is about the conflict concerning the building of the M3 motorway in an archaeologically sensitive area close to the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath. The main aim of this thesis was to examine the conflict between development and heritage in relation to the Tara/Skryne Valley; therefore the focus has been to investigate the planning process. It has been found that both the planning process and the Environmental Impact Assessment system in Ireland is inadequate. Another aspect of the conflict that was explored was the issue of insiders and outsiders. Through the examination of both quantitative and qualitative data, the conclusion has been reached that the majority of insiders, people from the Tara area, do in fact want the M3 to be built. This is contrary to the idea that was portrayed by the media that most people were opposed to the construction of the motorway.

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## Chapter One: Introduction and Context.

### 1.1 The history of the Hill of Tara and the Tara/Skryne Valley.

The Hill of Tara is situated north of the village of Kilmessan and the town of Dunshaughlin and south of the town of Navan in Co. Meath in the midlands of Ireland, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Map of County Meath



Figure 1.1

Source [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie) (Irish Water Safety)

The Hill of Tara and its surrounding landscape is regarded as a very important heritage site, both nationally and internationally. Human activity on the hill goes back to the Neolithic period, almost six thousand years ago. (Bhreathneach: 1995) There are many monuments visible on the hill itself, however, there are also many sites below the surface, which have been detected by geophysical survey, in the government funded Discovery

Programme, which began in 1992 (Newman: 1997). It is not only the physical monuments on the hill or below the surface that make the Hill of Tara important. It is the associated myth and legend and also the spiritual and political history that has given Tara a huge symbolic importance. Tara has had a role to play in every era of Irish history – the Neolithic period, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Early Christian period, the Viking period and the Norman period.

Tara was originally the seat of the High Kings of Ireland, it was believed to be the centre of the country, with five roads (very ironic), radiating out from the hill to the different provinces of Ireland. The first references to Tara date back to the seventh century. However, it was in the ninth century that the political importance of Tara became a reality, when the title *Rí Teamrach* (King of Tara), was replaced with the title *Rí Erenn* (King of Ireland). Tara was again a focal point in the conversion of Irish people to Christianity. It was on the Hill of Tara that St. Patrick converted the High Kings to Christianity.

During the 1798 rebellion, Tara was the site of a famous battle. Tara was once more a political focus in 1843, when Daniel O'Connell held a monster meeting on the hill attended by one million people. (Bhreatnach: 1995). Tara, today, is yet again the scene of a political debate, as the conflict between those who support the proposal for the building of a motorway in the Tara/Skryne Valley and those who are opposed to this development rages on.

Tara was a ritual site; people buried their dead on the hill. For four thousand years, the hill was used as a ceremonial complex, which consisted of a necropolis, a sanctuary and a temple complex (Bhreathnach, Fenwick and Newman: 2004). The hill itself was only used as a burial ground. This is evident from the monuments on the hill, for example the Mound of Hostages and the Rath of the Synods. This is why the Tara/Skryne Valley is so important archaeologically. People lived in the valley. Tara should be looked on not only as the hill, but also as an extensive archaeological complex. In 1992, Newman carried out a detailed survey of the hill and also a ten kilometre squared area surrounding the hill and found the area surrounding it to be just as archaeologically significant. He describes Tara

as “ a special place in the Irish psyche”(Newman: 1997: pp xi). It is clear that there has been a huge archaeological legacy left behind in the landscape of Tara, which can tell us a great deal about the history of our country.

Tara is not the only issue at stake here; the Hill of Skryne is also regarded as an important prehistoric and historic site. It was home to the Anglo Norman de Feipo family and the ruins of their castle are still present on the Hill of Skryne today. (Bhreatnach, Fenwick, Newman: 2004).

Since test trenching has been carried out by the National Roads Authority (N.R.A) in August 2004, even more sites have been discovered, bringing the total to thirty eight potential sites, and there is potential for many more to be found. (Donohoe: 2004a)

## 1.2. The current conflict between the development of infrastructure and the protection of heritage.

The current debate regarding the proposed M3 motorway route has been ongoing since August 2003, when An Bord Pleanála announced its approval for the motorway to go through the Tara /Skryne valley. A chronology of events leading up to the announcement of approval of the scheme and events following this approval can be seen in figure 1.2. The proposed scheme consists of a fifty kilometre, four lane, tolled motorway from Clonee to Kells in Co. Meath, and a thirty-seven acre interchange less than one mile north of the Hill of Tara at Blundelstown. The motorway will be funded with the aid of a Public Private Partnership (PPP). The plan of the M3 scheme can be viewed in figure 1.3 and also in figure 1.4. As aforementioned, the Tara complex is regarded as a highly significant archaeological site both nationally and internationally. However, the existing national route way, the N3, linking Cavan and Meath to Dublin, can no longer cope with the increasing volumes of traffic due to a large extent to the growing number of people from Cavan and Meath commuting to Dublin each day to work.

A major improvement needs to be made to the transport infrastructure in Co. Meath in order to alleviate this congestion problem. (National Roads Needs Study: 1998).

Protesters say that this motorway and especially the thirty seven acre interchange will ruin the Tara landscape, and would also encourage development of shopping centres and industrial units, while those who are in favour of the M3 say that another solution simply would not work, and that the M3 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country with a very high rate of accidents occurring on it, therefore believing that a motorway is the only way of solving this problem.

In 1999, approval was given for bypasses for the towns of Dunshaughlin and Navan. However the National Development Plan made changes to this strategy, and the bypasses were included as part of the motorway scheme. (Meath County Council 2002a)

Protesters maintain that another route could have been chosen, as several other routes were outlined in the Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.) that would not go through the Tara/Skryne valley. The route selection process identified five sections, one route was identified as the preferred route in each section, and these combined became the blue route, which is the proposed route of the M3. A list of alternative routes can be seen in figure 1.5. Those who agree with the proposed route such as the National Roads Authority and Meath County Council believe that this was the best option.

### Chronology of events surrounding the M3/Tara debate.

2000	First geophysical survey.
March 2002	Environmental Impact Statement published.
August 2003	Permission to build M3 announced by An Bord Pleanála.
August 2003 – present	Petitions, letters to national newspapers, setting up of protest groups.
August 2004	Surveying, geophysical, aerial photography and test trenching. New sites discovered.
October 2004	Celebrities and academics re-enact ancient feis on the Hill of Tara.
November 2004	Protest from the Garden of Remembrance to Wood Quay.
January 2005	Joint Oireachas Committee on the Environment – Hearing on the M3 and its impact on the Tara landscape.
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2005	Statement issued by 85 academics appealing to the government.
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2005	Ministers' final decision – not changing route.
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2005	Application for a judicial review of the Ministers decision made to the High Court by Vincent Salafia, Member of the Save the Tara/Skryne valley group.

Figure 1.2

### 1.3. Meath Commuters - Need for infrastructure.

Meath is a county which in recent years has become home to the commuter generation. As evident in figure 1.6, there are a large number of people commuting fifteen miles or more to work. The District Electoral Divisions (D.E.D.s) of Dunshaughlin and Navan Rural, which the N3 goes through, have a particularly high proportion of commuters, with 1,394 to 4,161 people commuting daily. With approximately 22,000 people commuting to Dublin daily in Meath as a whole, and with no rail service from any of its main towns to Dublin, the N3 is a very busy, congested and dangerous stretch of road. It is clear that many commuters would prefer to work in Co. Meath. Adrienne Bowen of Meath Chamber of Commerce recently remarked in a radio interview with Louth/Meath Radio, that 1,200 Meath commuters from all parts of Meath had signed a petition on the Chambers' website stating that they do not want to work in Dublin, they would prefer to work in Meath.

It is also clear that commuters are in favour of a motorway or railway to enhance their quality of live by reducing the amount of time they spend in traffic.

It is felt among Meath County Council that the traffic problem leads to a loss in opportunities for Co. Meath. Navan was considered to be the home of a third level Institute of Technology, but lost out to Blanchardstown because of its traffic problems (Meath Chronicle: 2004a)

The effect of traffic congestion in an area can also have implications for its economy. Companies seem to have been put off locating in County Meath due to traffic problems on the N3. A world-renowned company considered locating a branch in Navan, which would have created five hundred jobs, but decided against it due to the traffic problems. It is a vicious circle, with fewer jobs in Meath; more people are likely to commute to work. (Meath Chronicle: 2004b)

In the National Spatial Strategy (N.S.S), the town of Navan is classified as a primary development centre. In the country as a whole, car ownership was 1,300,000 in the year 2000 and is projected to reach 2,100,000 by 2016. This will have massive implications

for the infrastructure, as traffic volumes will increase dramatically, especially in a primary development centre such as Navan. (National Spatial Strategy: 2002)

Car ownership has also risen dramatically in County Meath, with more and more households owning two or three cars. In the D.E.D. of Navan Rural, just north of Tara, car ownership has risen by 94 to 170 per cent, as illustrated in figure 1.7.

There has also been a decrease between 1986 and 1996 in the amount of people using public transport, cycling or walking as a regular form of transport. In the state as a whole, it decreased from 30 per cent of the population to 25 per cent. In towns, it dropped from 48 per cent to 36 per cent. (National Spatial Strategy: 2002: pp25) This has contributed to the worsening of the traffic situation.

Population in Meath has risen rapidly in recent years. In 1986, the population of Meath was 103,881 people, by 1991, this had risen to 105,370 and by 1996, it had reached 109,732. It was estimated in the 2001 County Development Plan, that migration from Dublin was set to increase. Population in Meath had the highest percentage change in the whole country for the years 1996 to 2002, an increase of 22.1 per cent, an actual increase of 24,273 persons, which is very high for such a short period. (Central Statistics Office: Census 2002). This is illustrated in figure 1.8. It can be seen that there has been a large increase in population, with eight D.E.D.s having an increase of 40 – 82 per cent, one of these being Navan Rural, just north of Tara. The number of houses has increased dramatically also. In 1997, 1,318 units were completed, whereas in 1994, only 670 were completed, an increase of almost 50 per cent in three years. (County Development Plan: 2001) A recent plan for Dunshaughlin means that nine hundred new houses will be built in the small town. With housing development increasing in Meath, the traffic congestion can certainly be forecasted to worsen. (Donohoe: 2004b).

The Draft County Development Plan (1999) had ambitious strategies for infrastructure. It planned to keep check on commuter patterns and try to provide public transport alternatives, as promoted in the Dublin Transport Initiative. There was huge enthusiasm to provide a rail link from Navan to Dublin. It was also in the plan to have bypasses at

Dunshaughlin, Navan, Kells, to extend Clonee bypass and to realign the N3 from Dunshaughlin to Navan and from Navan to Kells.

Meath County Council is not solely concerned with development, however.

The Meath County Development Plan (2001) Volume three is completely dedicated to the conservation of heritage sites. The Hill of Tara is listed as an important view or prospect. It is also considered to be a natural recreation area, as is the Hill of Skryne. It is part of the Sustainable Recreational Use of Natural Assets (SRUNA) scheme, under the E.U. programme Terra. It seems that both development and heritage are both important items on the agenda for Meath County Council.

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the importance of development and heritage in the planning process, and to investigate how decisions are made. To achieve this objective, there are a number of lesser aims.

One of these aims is to investigate the debate and issues surrounding the debate. Another is to examine the planning process and the Environmental Impact Assessment (E.I.A) system. An additional aim is to obtain the views of local people living in the Tara area, in order to gather their opinions on outsiders getting involved in the campaign to save Tara and also to find out whether they want the M3 to be built or not. This data will be obtained through use of questionnaires and interviews.

The next chapter, chapter two, is a review of literature relating to the Hill of Tara/M3 debate. Chapter three is an outline of the methodology employed to obtain primary data. An analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaire on local people will be given in chapter four. Chapter five is an analysis of results gathered through use of interviews with key stakeholders. In chapter six, the main findings are summarised and discussed. Furthermore, conclusions are reached and recommendations are made for the future.

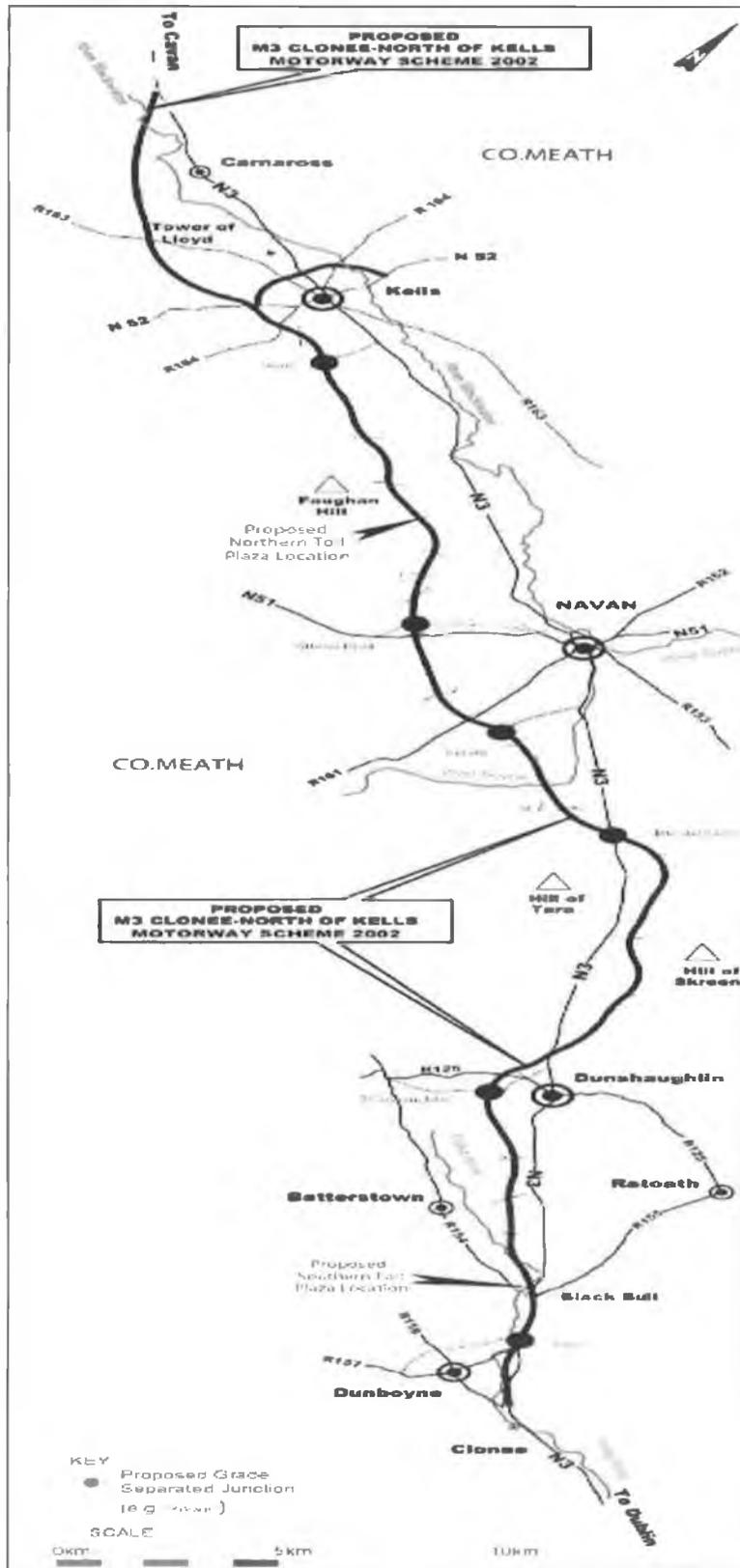


Figure 1.3  
 The proposed scheme for the M3 motorway.  
 Source N.R.A. (2002).

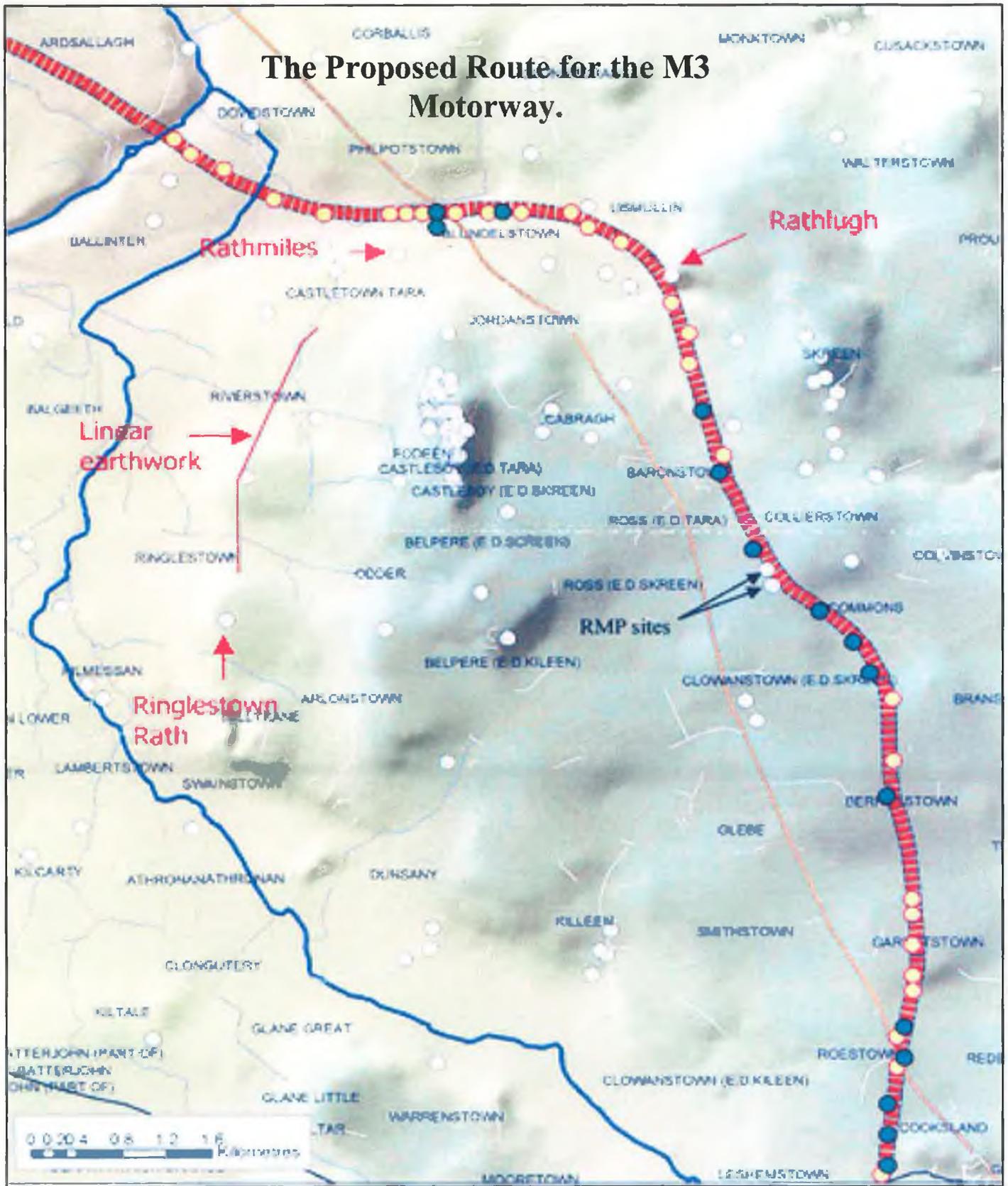


Figure 1.4 Source: National University of Ireland, Galway. March 2005.  
 Archaeological sites are marked with yellow, green and white dots. The proposed route is marked in red.

### Alternative Routes

<b>Section</b>	<b>Routes</b>	<b>Route Chosen and reason for choice</b>
Clonee to Dunshaughlin	1, 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 4, 5,6	2 – impacts the least number of residential buildings
Dunshaughlin to Navan Bypass	A, B, C, D, E, F.	E- impacts least amount of residential buildings.
Navan Bypass	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H.	A- impacts no Natural Heritage Areas, archaeological or heritage sites directly.
Navan- Kells	1,2,3,4,X, Y	3- minimal impact on ecology
Kells – North of Kells	A, B, C, D, E.	E – safest route.

Figure 1.5

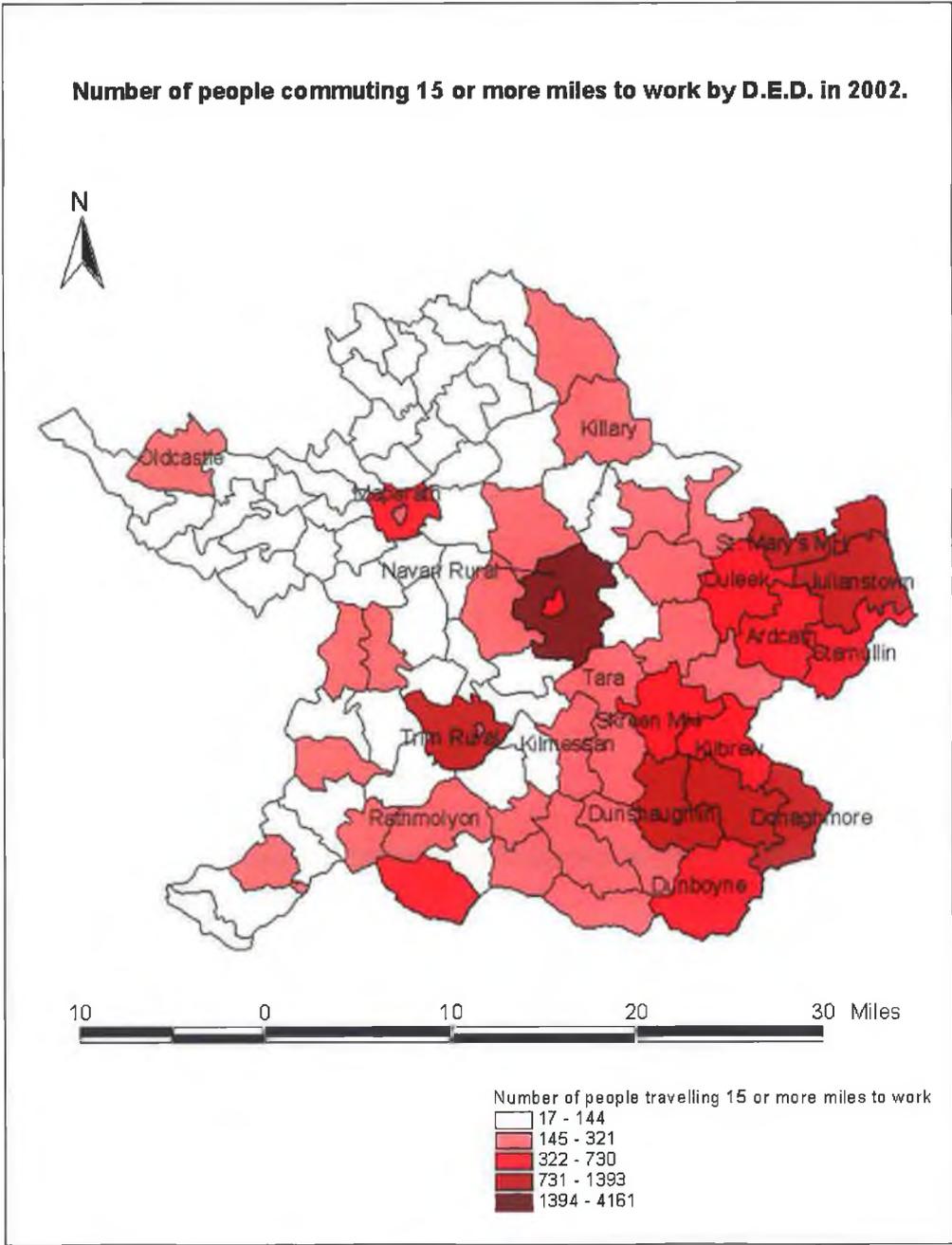


Figure 1.6.

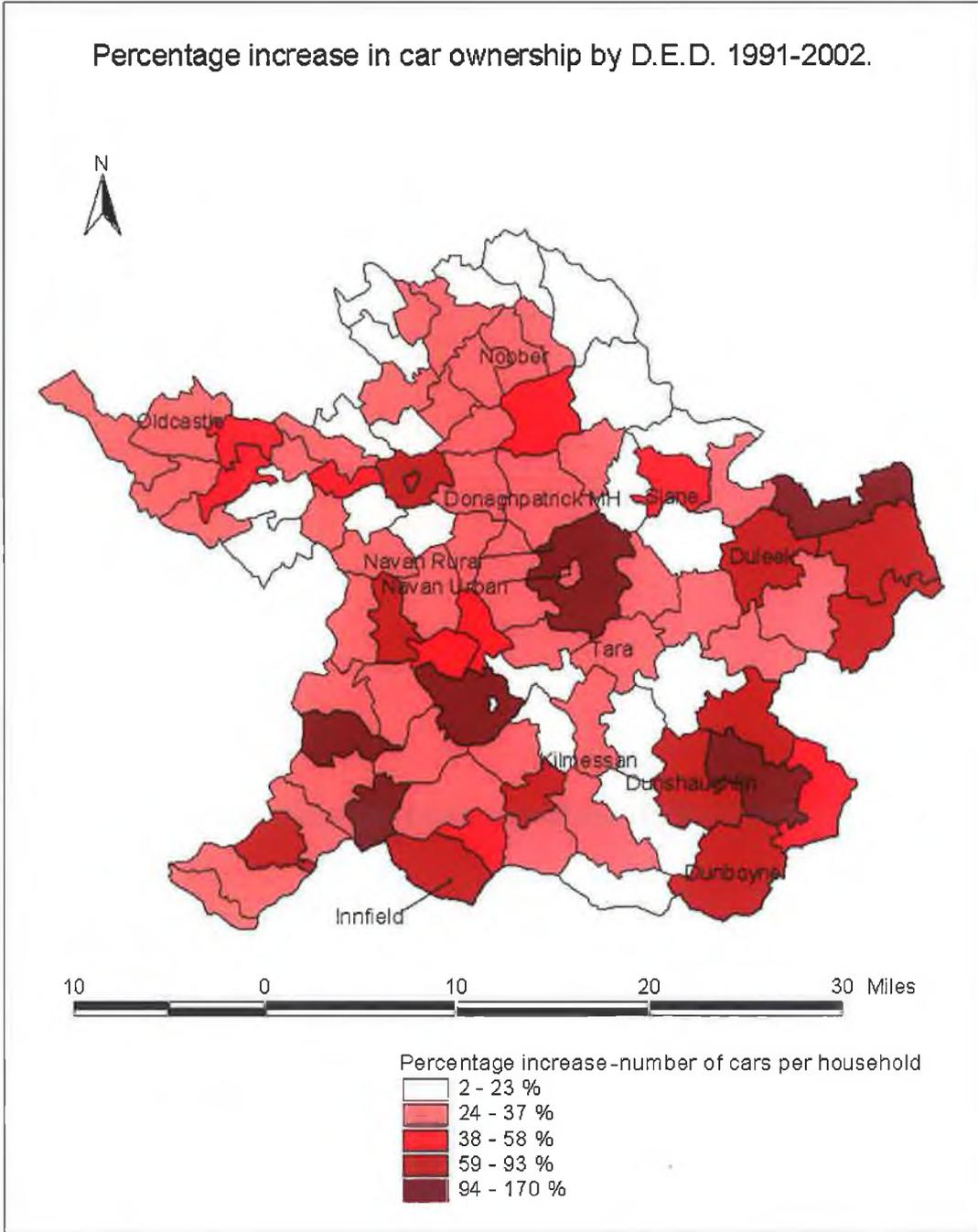


Figure 1.7

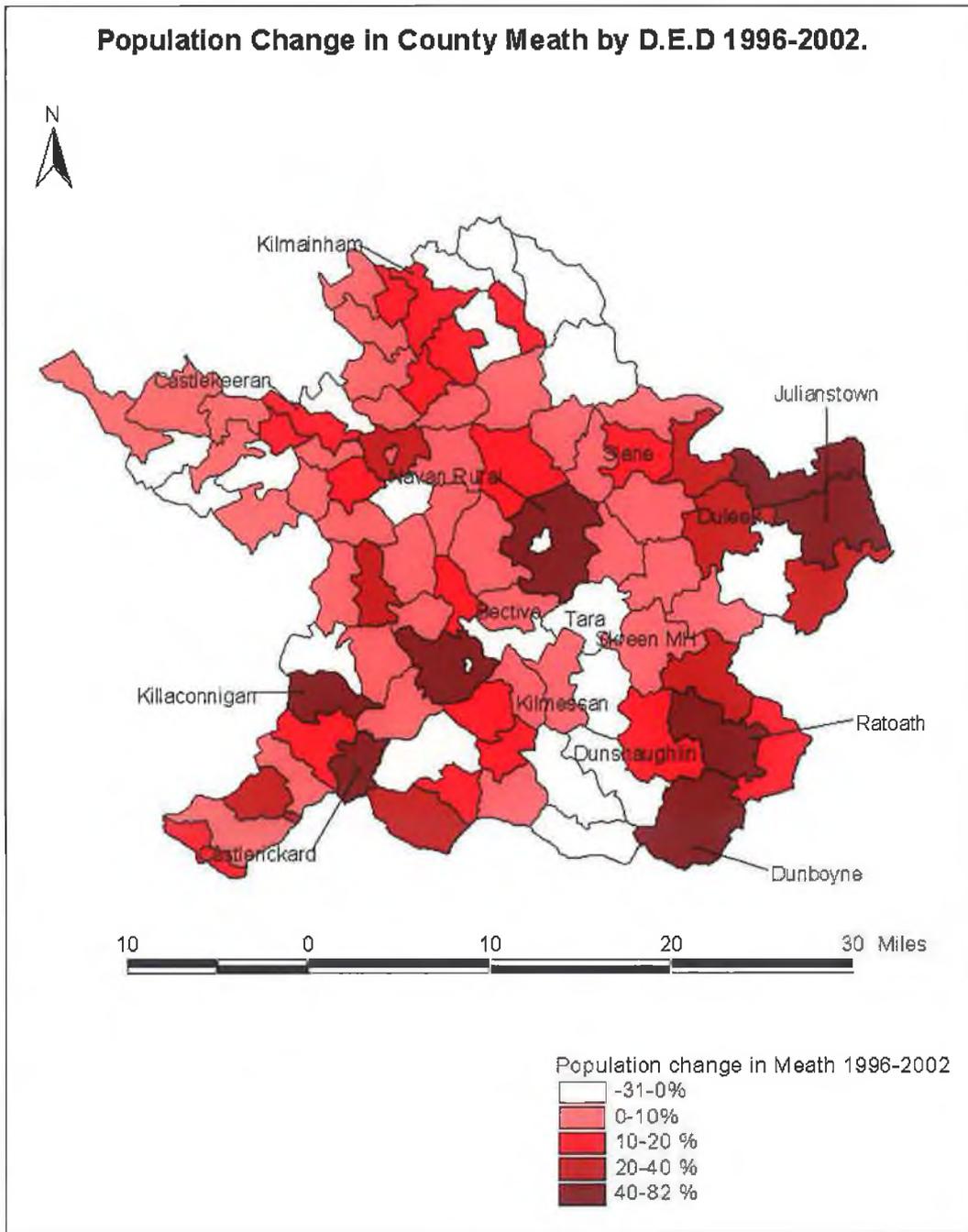


Figure 1.8

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter will focus on a review of the literature relevant to the Tara/M3 debate. Similar conflicts in the past will be looked at, such as Wood Quay, Carrickmines, Twyford Down and Stonehenge, to establish how these situations have been dealt with and to see if any preventative measures have been put in place. The planning process in Ireland will also be reviewed, to determine the type of system in operation in Ireland and to see if any flaws can be identified in it. Literature relating to environmental protest will be reviewed in order to investigate the theory behind protests and the nature of protests. Insiders and outsiders will also be discussed with regard to literature published on this topic.

### 2.1 Conflicts between heritage and development.

The Tara/M3 debate is nothing new to society today. There has been, especially in recent years, a large number of conflicts over the preservation of heritage and the development of infrastructure in both Ireland and abroad. Some notable examples of this which will be explored are Wood Quay in Co Dublin, Stonehenge in Salisbury in England and Twyford Downs in Winchester in England. The planning process in Ireland will be examined through the use of some of this literature to try and establish why these issues keep recurring. While it is true that this type of problem can happen anywhere in the world, it seems that some countries have managed to protect their heritage and develop infrastructure harmoniously, for example, Adrienne Bowen of Meath Chamber of Commerce, stated in a recent interview with Louth Meath Radio (LMFM) that “Italy, which has a very rich heritage, manages to protect it [heritage] and develop infrastructure harmoniously without generating the amount of conflict and debate so common in Ireland”.

Wood Quay is a famous example of a debate concerning a heritage/development issue in Ireland. Wood Quay has been described as “one of the major European archaeological discoveries of our century.”(Heffernan: 1988:pp1.) A Viking site was found at Wood Quay, along the River Liffey in Dublin city centre in a remarkable state of preservation. However, it was on this site that Dublin Corporation proposed to build their Civic offices in 1978. There was public outcry over this proposal. On one occasion, over 20,000 people marched through the streets of Dublin to show their opposition to the plan.

These protesters occupied the site, they delayed the building of the offices for many years, but they did not win, the offices were built despite huge opposition, and apparently, other alternative locations for the buildings. (Heffernan: 1988).

The public blamed Dublin Corporation, the Commissioners of Public Works, and the National Museum for this. It seemed that the government regretted its actions when in 1980, Haughey’s government presented two bills to the Oireachtas, a National Heritage Bill and an Urban Areas Development Bill. It was hoped that these would prevent an incident such as that of Wood Quay to happen again.

Bradley comments on the Wood Quay incident as being “ a grim reminder of what is to be avoided in the future”(Bradley: 1984: pp 67). However, as apparent from the situation regarding Tara at present, this type of situation could happen again.

The controversy over Stonehenge is very similar to the situation in Tara. This debate has been ongoing since 1991. Proposals to build a road tunnel for the A303 route were met by enormous opposition by those in environmental and archaeological circles. (Kennedy: 1999) The Highways Agency say that the tunnel would help restore the landscape. Webster (2002) predicts that the tunnel would begin work in 2005, by the same standards, if the Tara debate continues for this long the M3 may not be ready until 2015 or 2020, as the A202 tunnel had been in planning since 1991.

Twyford Down is an area in Southern England where a similar predicament occurred. Plans were presented for the M3 motorway to complete the link from London to Southampton. Environmentalists brought the case to court but failed. The European Minister for the Environment ordered the project to stop, as it violated British and

European laws, but the British Minister of Transport ignored this advice. In 1994 the link was completed cutting only five minutes off the London to Southampton journey time. (Kingsnorth: 1998).

The debate regarding the building of a motorway at the ruins of the medieval Carrickmines Castle in South County Dublin continued for a number of years. Construction of the motorway had to be halted three times in the space of two years as protesters took legal action on the N.R.A. (Reid: 2004).

In January 2004, the High Court made the decision to dismiss the legal challenge to stop the demolition of Carrickmines Castle. The N.R.A. said that building of a section of the M50 motorway was delayed for a year, and cost ten million euro extra due to the legal action. (Healy: 2004).

Although it seems that development seems to win over heritage, this is not always the case. In 2004, a 1,200 year old Viking fortress was discovered at Woodstown, near Waterford City, It is thought by leading historians to be the most significant new find in Viking studies in a century. John Maas, a PhD researcher said (in Humphries 2004) that it is "Ireland's equivalent of Pompeii" and that it is "the most significant piece of Viking history in Europe. It is estimated that the site, if dealt with properly, will be a tourist attraction and will be worth two hundred million euro annually to the local economy. (Humphries: 2004). There was a plan to build N25 Waterford bypass on this site, however, after inspection, the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, issued a preservation order deciding that the bypass should follow an alternative route in order to avoid disrupting the site. (Reid: 2005)

It seems clear from looking at the above cases that there is something missing within the planning process. It seems that decisions are only very rarely changed, as in the case of Woodstown. It seems that there is a failure to protect heritage sites both in Ireland and abroad.

## 2.2 The planning process in Ireland

The planning process is a crucially important in order to maintain the vitality of a country. Planning needs to be conducted to cater for change so that infrastructure and services are available when and where they are needed. Ireland is placed within the British dual politics system, in that it has no statutory third tier of government (Bartley and Waddington: 2000). The State is responsible for the decision making process. The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963 was the beginning of the modern Irish planning system. Local Authorities became planning authorities. They were given three main functions. The first was to prepare and adopt a development plan for their area. This was a statement of aims and objectives for the following five years. The second function was development control. This meant that planning applications needed to be made so as to protect the landscape from too much change. The third function was to enforce these procedures.

However, there are many more organisations involved in the planning process than those which Bartley and Waddington have mentioned. An Bord Pleanála has a vital role to play, especially with regard to the Tara/Skryne Valley case. It is with this independent body that the final decision to grant or refuse planning permission lies. Prior to 2000, this body did not have as much power, however, when the Planning and Development Act (2000) was passed, this organisation took on a variety of extra functions, including responsibility of the appeals of permission regarding both motorway schemes and Environmental Impact Assessments, which previously were the responsibilities of the Minister of the Environment and the Minister for the Marine and Natural resources. (An Bord Pleanála, 2002). It was An Bord Pleanála that granted permission for the M3 Clonee- Kells Motorway in August 2003.

The Heritage Council also has an important role to play. It has a range of statutory functions in the planning process. “Key to the role of the Heritage Council in the planning process is the recognition of the close links between heritage conservation and

sustainable development”(The Heritage Council: 1999) Local Authorities must send planning applications and Environmental Impact Statements to the Heritage Council. The Heritage Council has the power to obstruct any plans that they feel would affect heritage adversely. The Council also has the role of advising government and local authorities on spatial planning policy as it relates to national heritage. (The Heritage Council: 1999).

An important instrument within the planning process is the Environmental Impact Assessment (E.I.A), where an assessment is carried out in order to determine the potential effects of a development on the environment of a particular locality.

An E.I.A. is carried out before any proposed development can be built. Developments are judged under a variety of criteria, such as size, use of natural resources, production of waste, location and environmental sensitivity of the geographic area. (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: 2003). There are also guidelines for the E.I.A. to follow in terms of landscape conservation. The landscape is valued under two types of factors; aesthetic - visual and physiographic. Its effect on the aesthetic visual aspect of the heritage site is deemed to be very important, with value given to criteria such as enclosure, form, continuity and context, diversity, colour, texture, detractors, eyesores, and views in and out of the site. The importance of the landscape is also judged under physiographic criteria, such as geology, soil, relief, landform, vegetation, ecology, natural history, wildlife, archaeology, artefacts and land use. (O’Sullivan: 1990).

However, many are of the belief that this E.I.A. system is not adequate.

Fenwick (2005) believes that E.I.As are often simply a case of “window dressing”.

Fenwick states that the permission to build the motorway is a bad planning decision that can be reversed. Consultants Halcrow and Barry published the route selection report for the M3 in 2001. “The report does not recommend the route ultimately chosen by the N.R.A and Meath County Council and remarkably, its findings are entirely omitted from the EIS.” Fenwick continues to criticise E.I.S., when he says that “only some of the geophysical report is contained in the E.I.S. and the geophysical images are wholly omitted” (Fenwick: 2005 pp12).

It is interesting to point out that the E.I.S. does state that “ Tara is one of the richest and best known archaeological landscapes in Europe, therefore it does not entirely disregard the archaeological significance of Tara”.

Julitta Clancy of the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society too maintains that the planning system is fundamentally flawed. She also claims that the M3 is not in the interests of Meath commuters but in the interests of protecting a Public Private Partnership contract.(Clancy: 2005)

Newman (2005) suggests that An Bord Pleanala’s statement that the M3 will not affect Tara is flawed and ignorant.

Gabriel Cooney states that “You do not need to be a rocket scientist to wonder about the coherency of national forward planning policy when the details of the motorway system, and the National Development Plan, were already in place long before the National Spatial Strategy was published” (Cooney: 2004 pp8)

These statements about flaws in the planning process and E.I.A system merit further investigation and will be explored through interviews and questionnaires.

### 2.3 Environmental protest

There have been many theories developed about the operation of protests.

Peillon (1998) conducted a research project on the structure of protest in Ireland, comparing the 1970s with the 1990s. He found that local people are more willing to voice their opinions now than in the past when a development had potential to have an effect on their locality. Between the time periods 1970 –1973 and 1995 –1997, there was an increase in local participation in protest from 10.3 per cent to 29.6 per cent. This would suggest therefore, that by 2005, people are more willing to challenge decisions made by government and state bodies. Although public consultation is already part of the planning process, it appears that people want to have more of an input into decisions concerning planning and infrastructure than in the past.

Milton (1996) has also carried out research on the topic of environmentalism. Although the Tara debate is more a heritage issue than an environmental one, the writer believes

that the campaign groups established to try and stop the motorway going ahead have similar traits to environmental protest groups. Milton has found that over the last thirty years, environmentalism has moved from being a minority interest to being a more significant one, however, it is still far from the stage of being able to influence political decisions in a significant way at both a national and international level. Milton describes environmentalists as being of various types. Some are simply anti development. They are against roads, against the construction of large-scale shopping malls, and various other developments. It is an aim of this thesis to clarify as to whether campaigners in the Hill of Tara debate are simply anti roads or if they have legitimate reasons for their outcry. Della Porta echoes Milton's sentiments when she states that it is difficult to dent a centralised power. Although in recent years, protest groups are beginning to be more successful than they have been in the past. (Della Porto and Diani 1999).

Gurlach (1999) states that environmental activists usually follow a particular model of organisation in their campaign, organisations are usually segmentary, polycentric and reticulate. They are segmentary in that they are formed of diverse groups of people. They are polycentric in that they have multiple and perhaps temporary leaders and are reticulate in that they form loose and integrated network of linkages.

This seems to be true of the campaign to save Tara, in that the protesters are a segmented and reticulate group. They join together when challenging the Minister for the Environment.

The voices that can be heard the loudest are those of academies such as Fenwick, Bhrolcháin, Bhreathnach and Newman. Only one of these is an official member of the Save the Tara Skryne Valley Group. There is another group, The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, who are involved. The Meath Archaeological and Historical Association, at a local level, are also active; this group appears frequently in the Meath Chronicle. There are also foreign groups, such as the Protect Tara Group, based in Germany, and the Landmarks Foundation in New York and The Druid Network, who also promote the opposition of the motorway. There are also many individuals worldwide who are not members of protest groups, but have signed letters to the Taoiseach and Minister for the Environment.

Luebke (1993) describes how a protest group can manage to overturn a government decision. Such was the case in Durham, North Carolina, where there were plans made to build an expressway. It was thought that this expressway was absolutely essential to relieve traffic in West Durham, and that the destruction of the Black neighbourhood that would have to be relocated was a sacrifice for the greater good of Durham. The protesters managed to change this decision through obtaining thousands of signatures to its city wide petition, conducting protests in the form of demonstrations and writing a sixty page letter to the City Council outlining that the plan to built the expressway was in fact illegal. Luebke refers to this kind of campaign as the “resource mobilisation approach” which carries out research before the movement is launched. This is a contrast with the traditional collective behaviour method that the Chicago School sociologists describe as “mushrooming discontent”, leading to popular excitement. (Luebke in Curtis and Aguirre: 1993). He also says that protesters can be divided into two categories; beneficiary and conscience constituents. Beneficiary protesters are those to which the development will have a direct impact on their life. Conscience are ones to which the development will not have an effect on their life but they wish to support it. This is very relevant to the Tara debate, as the views of local people, (insiders) are often different to the opinions of campaigners (many of whom are outsiders).

## 2.4 Insider vs. Outsider.

On reading newspaper articles in relation to the debate, a letter to the editor of the Meath Chronicle from a local resident was found. Her thoughts are that celebrities have no right to try and change a decision that would improve her, and her neighbours' lives. Hughes continues to say that the M3 needs to be built as soon as possible, as the numbers of people commuting are increasing. She goes on to say that “meanwhile, we have the Hollywood actress Charlize Theron from South Africa and Stuart Townsend from Dublin, who reside in California objecting to the M3, who are they to tell the people of Meath what is right or wrong for their county?”(Hughes: 2004). It seems that many locals would agree with Hughes, as a pro M3 group has been set up in Meath (Meath Citizens for the M3), consisting of locals who want the M3 to be built as soon as possible (Fox:

2005). Many foreigners believe that they have every right to voice their opinions on the topic. Sam Green (2005), director of the Landmarks Foundation in New York states that “This is not just an Irish issue. The world is in awe of Tara. The world reveres Tara. The world is watching in disbelief” It is also interesting to note that a large proportion of the academics who signed the letter to the Taoiseach and the letter to the Minister for the Environment are foreigners, living in places such as America, Australia and other parts of Europe. In the interviews, some of these academics will be asked questions to determine how much they actually know about the traffic situation in Meath.

It is now evident that the dilemma concerning Tara at present is similar to ones that have happened in many other places in the past. The literature has also suggested that there are flaws in the planning process in Ireland. This issue will be examined further in order to establish the reason why these dilemmas keep recurring and why policies or legislation have not been put in place to prevent such incidences. It is also now apparent that there may be a difference of opinion between insiders and outsiders in relation to Tara. One of the purposes of the questionnaire is to acquire information on this matter. The topic of different models and types of protester has arisen from reviewing literature. Types of protester, campaigners trying to stop the building of the M3 will be assessed to see whether or not they follow a particular model.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Choice of Study area

The issue of the debate concerning the M3 route was chosen for a number of reasons. First of all, when deciding what to base the thesis on, the issue was, and still is, very topical. It featured frequently in newspapers and on the television news, as well as current affairs television programmes such as Primetime and Questions and Answers. The author was interested to investigate why such a problem could not have been avoided considering similar incidences have happened in the past in this country, such as the cases of Wood Quay in County Dublin and Carrickmines Castle County Dublin. The author was curious to find out why the parties involved had not put measures in place to prevent such an incident from happening again, as these delays waste a huge amount of time, and if these delays were avoided, infrastructure could be in place years earlier. Another reason is, as a geography student, the author is interested in spatial planning, and having studied subjects such as regional development in Europe and history of urban planning, was interested in studying a specific case to examine the planning process in greater detail.

This topic was also chosen because the author is interested in the culture and history of this country and thought that this was a good opportunity both to learn more about a specific heritage site and find out how important the general public rate heritage in this country. It was also hoped to find out how close to the actual truth the medias depiction of the debate was and to find out how people from the Tara area felt about the situation.

## 3.2 Sources of information

Two main primary sources were used when gathering information on the thesis topic, and these were used to answer the research questions of the thesis.

Quantitative, by means of a questionnaire survey on the local people, and qualitative, by means of interviewing key stakeholders involved in the debate. Some qualitative data was also obtained from open-ended questions in the survey of local people. One of the main research questions is to find out whether the opinion of the residents of Meath, whose lives are affected by the decision to re route or not re route the M3 on a daily basis, match the impression that is projected by the media. Over one hundred and fifty newspaper articles from local, national and international newspapers were read when researching this topic and it is clear that the media seem to favour the anti M3 lobby.

### 3.2.1 Questionnaires

It was decided to carry out a survey of residents in Meath and Cavan to acquire views and opinions. Four towns situated along the proposed route were strategically chosen, namely, Cavan, Kells, Dunshaughlin and Clonee. It was decided to sample thirty people in each town, as this is recommended as a statistically sound number (Kitchin: 2000). Thirty people would most likely be representative of the whole population. It was decided to use a random sample, so that any results would be free of bias. This was done by stopping pedestrians on the streets in these towns.

Respondents were asked fifteen questions, both structured and open-ended. A sample of this questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix One. Firstly, a pilot survey was conducted on some volunteers in order to figure out if the questions were appropriate or not, and whether they would actually answer the research questions. Slight changes were made to the wording of two of the questions. For example, one question asked, "Do you think that academics and celebrities have the right to influence a decision on your locality?" The answer to this was always "no" in the pilot survey, so it was thought that a more beneficial question to ask would be "Do you regard this issue to be local, national or international?" This question would show more clearly whether people thought outsiders from Ireland and abroad should be involved or not.

There were three types of question in the questionnaire. Some were about the background of the person. These included questions on age and gender, to see if opinion differed with each of these characteristics. The following was asked; “Do you live in the locality?”, to ascertain whether in fact the person was a member of the target population.

The respondents were then asked “how long have you lived here?” in order to find out if they were a recent resident who may have moved from Dublin as the commuter belt widened. It was suspected that this might influence their decision as to whether the heritage of County Meath was important or not.

Next, the person was asked whether or not they commuted to work, and if so the distance and the time which it took, to establish how slow the traffic movement was along the N3.

Next, some questions were asked on the persons opinion of the current situation, some general and some specifically about Tara. The simple question was asked, “ Do you agree with the proposed building of the M3 motorway near to the Hill of Tara?” This would reveal whether the opinion portrayed in the media by campaigners was the same as what the locals wanted. Consequently, respondents were asked for three reasons either if they agreed or did not agree, to clarify the main issues of contention among people.

A list of alternatives was then given that were proposed by campaigners, as follows, ‘Reopen railway’, ‘build Navan bypass’, ‘build Dunshaughlin bypass’, ‘upgrade the N3’, and ‘other’. This would show if the locals, who would have experienced the traffic situation personally, thought any of these would work.

Next, respondents were asked a general question, “ In general which do you think is the most important, development or heritage, and why?”

Subsequently, they were asked, “ At a local level which is more important?” It would be interesting to find out whether their opinion changed when it was their locality that was under threat.

It was then enquired as to who they thought had the most influence on the decision to build the M3. A list was given, as follows, local authorities, National Roads Authority, Government, lobby groups or private companies. They were asked “Who do you think the major power players in the planning process are?” and it was stated that they could circle more than one if they wanted to do so, and number their responses in order of importance, ranging from one to five.

A general question was then asked about archaeology, respondents were asked if they thought archaeology was important or not. Five were given; not at all important, slightly important, important, quite important or very important.

This was asked, as it was hoped that it would reflect how the locals felt in general about the importance of archaeology. If they regarded it to be very important and they wanted the M3 built this would reveal that although they value heritage, they feel that the need for the M3 is greater.

Respondents were then asked the question “Do you think the majority of locals are for or against the road?” Although a slightly inexact question, as the question wasn’t asking something that could be regarded as the exact truth, as there is no way of exactly measuring what the majority want, and it was unlikely that each respondent even knew the majority, it was felt that it would be useful. As the sample size was only thirty in each town, it was thought that it would be useful to get a general feeling, and considering that the issue is so topical at the moment, there is at least one article about it in the local newspaper; “The Meath Chronicle” every week, it was felt that it would be a frequent topic of conversation among people.

A similarly broad question was the next query, “Are local people interested in Tara?” So as to see if interest differed according to distance from Tara, for example, if people from Cavan are as interested as people from Dunshaughlin. This could in turn affect their opinion on the construction of the M3.

Next, respondents were asked whether they thought the issue was local, national or international. It was hoped that this question would find out whether local people valued the inputs of the academic and celebrity worlds, or if they felt they had no right to influence any decision made on Tara.

The next question was enquiring as to where they heard about the debate, to see the extent of media coverage of the issue, whether it be national television/radio/newspaper coverage or local radio or newspaper coverage or if it was by word of mouth. This would ascertain the main influences on the persons decision either to support or be opposed to the plan.

The final question asked if they had any additional comments. This would reveal anything which may have been left out in the previous questions, such as an opinion that the questions might not have been able to capture, or a new idea or view that may not have been discovered before.

### **3.2.2 Interviews**

The second part of the research was more directly qualitative, through conducting a number of interviews with those involved in the planning of the M3, those opposed to the plan and those who support the plan.

The intention was to have interviews with representatives from each of the main stakeholder groups, namely, The National Roads Authority, members of Meath County Council, academics in the fields of Archaeology, History and Celtic studies, and also local people.

Four of my interviews were carried out in person, while the rest were carried out by use of a telephone and a dictaphone, with the exception of three interviews which were carried out by email, as it was unfeasible to telephone these, as these interviewees are from America and Wales. All of the face-to-face and telephone interviews were later transcribed, as that would allow them to be analysed easier.

Key people were identified and selected from all of the groups that are mentioned above. Following Creswells (1998) recommendations, a “purposeful sampling strategy” was employed. The strategy that was followed was a combination of four strategies; these were; maximum variation, typical case, opportunistic, and combination or mixed. Having such a variety of interviewees would ensure a balanced view of the situation. The selected persons were then contacted by email. Quite a high number of responses were received, mostly from those opposed to the route. Although some replies were received from people supporting the plan, it was more difficult to arrange interviews with these people. Creswell (1998) explains the importance of a “politically important case”. He explains that it is often more convenient to interview those who want to “attract desired attention”. He believes that those who are in opposition to a particular plan are more likely to make themselves available for interview than those “politically important cases” who want to avoid attracting attention. This has been seen to be true when trying to interview people for this thesis. It was found that those opposing the M3 were more likely to agree to an interview.

Firstly, academics against the proposed route were contacted. These were quite easy to contact, as their names were frequently mentioned in newspaper articles. The university base of each of them was discovered and through searching on the university websites, their email addresses and telephone numbers were obtained. Interviews were arranged with Dr. Edel Bhreathnach, Department of History in The Michael O Cléirigh Institute in U.C.D, Dr. Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin, Department of Celtic Studies and Irish, National University of Ireland Maynooth and member of the Save Tara-Skryne Valley Group, and Dr. Joe Fenwick, Department of Archaeology, National University of Ireland, Galway. These were all Irish academics. It was decided that it would be interesting to investigate the opinions of some foreign academics who had signed the letter sent to the Minister of the Environment in opposition to the route. Dr. Raimund Karl, Department of History and Welsh History, University of Bangor in Wales, Dr. Nancy Stenson, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis and Dr. Joseph Nagy, Department of English, UCLA, were contacted. These three people were interviewed through email.

Twenty-nine county councillors in County Meath were contacted by email. Those who had voiced opinion on the M3 issue in the local newspaper in Meath, “the Meath Chronicle”, were identified and their email addresses were obtained from the Meath County Council website. Four replied and an interview was arranged with each of them. They included, Councillor Peter Higgins, Fine Gael, an elected member in the Trim District, Councillor Charles Bobbett, Fine Gael, an elected member in the Dunshaughlin District, Councillor Dominic Hannigan, (Non Party), an elected member in the Slane district, and Seamus Murray, Fianna Fail, a Trim elected member.

The National Roads Authority (N.R.A) was then contacted. The request was forwarded to Daire O’Rourke, Senior archaeologist, with whom an interview was arranged and Maurice Leahy, Corporate Affairs Officer, with whom an interview was also arranged.

While reading through the letters to the editor in the Meath Chronicle newspaper, a letter was found written by a resident of Kells, Mrs Tracey Hughes, strongly supporting the proposal to build the M3, it was thought that it would be useful to capture her opinions, as a resident. A letter was posted to her requesting an interview and a telephone interview was subsequently arranged.

Unfortunately, a number of other involved parties were contacted, but they did not respond. These include Frank Cosgrove, Chairman of the Meath Citizens for the M3 group, Adrienne Bowen of the Meath Chamber of Commerce, Julitta Clancy, Secretary of the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, Tom Dowling, Meath County Manager, Mary Deevy, Meath County Council Project Archaeologist, Archaeology Consultancy Limited, An Bord Pleanála and the Department of the Environment. It should be noted that the majority of refusals were by those pro M3, which supports Creswells predictions.

All of the people who were interviewed are considered to be reliable sources. Most of the interviewees are accredited academics, who know their subject area in great detail, elected county councillors, members of the N.R.A., one local resident and members of a

recognised lobby group. The only limitations would be that some of these interviewees are very biased; consequently, only one viewpoint could be captured.

All interviewees were asked similar questions. These can be viewed in Appendix Two. They were asked; whether they viewed heritage, Tara and archaeology to be important, what they thought of the planning process, and what solutions they would suggest to ease the traffic problem. The questions varied slightly as the trial of conversion flowed, and as time went on, more questions were thought of which could be asked, which were not asked in the earlier interviews.

It was found that it was beneficial to use both quantitative and qualitative data, as this allowed a wider spectrum of opinion on the situation to be captured. The quantitative research allowed data to be seen at a glance, for example; the percentages of people who thought that the M3 issue was a local issue, while the qualitative data, allowed much more in-depth ideas and opinions of particular people to be obtained.

The transcriptions of a sample of interviews can be viewed in appendices three, four, five and six.

### 3.3 Methods used to analyse data.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 11.0 (SPSS) was used to analyse the quantitative data. A codebook was devised for the responses and they were inputted into the software programme. Facilities were then used such as frequencies and cross tabulations in order to obtain meaningful results. The codebook used to categorise the responses can be viewed in Appendix One.

The programme QSR- N6 (formally Nudist) was considered for interview analysis, however this idea was rejected, as it would be unfeasible for a small amount of interviews, therefore the interviews were analysed manually. They were sifted through slowly to identify specific themes, issues and topics. These will be discussed in chapters four and five.

## Chapter Four: Analysis of Questionnaire

A questionnaire was carried out on local people with a number of aims, the main one being to determine whether local people wanted the M3 to be built or not. Another was to ascertain whether it is only commuters who want the road. A further aim was to investigate as to whether people viewed heritage or development to be important. It was also an objective to try and gather locals' views on the role of outsiders in this debate, campaigners trying to prevent the M3 from going ahead, especially academics and celebrities from abroad. It was also an aim to find out where people heard about the debate, and whether this source had influenced their decision.

### 4.1 Profile of respondents.

There were one hundred and twenty persons questioned in the street survey, thirty in each of the towns of Cavan, Kells, Dunshaughlin and Clonee. People were chosen randomly. Of the total number of respondents, 63 were male and 57 were female. An age profile of persons surveyed can be viewed in Table 4.1. It should be noted that almost half of the respondents, 48.3 per cent were in the 18-40 age group, many of whom would therefore be part of the commuter generation.

**Age of Respondent**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-12 years	1	.8	.8	.8
12-18 years	11	9.2	9.2	10.0
18-40 years	58	48.3	48.3	58.3
40-60 years	36	30.0	30.0	88.3
60-75 years	11	9.2	9.2	97.5
75+	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1

92.5 per cent of respondents lived locally. This question was asked to determine whether or not the person would be affected by the motorway.

Only 7.5 per cent were not local, however, they too would be affected, as most commuted to the town that they were surveyed in.

53.3 per cent of respondents were commuters, as can be seen in table 4.2 which meant that they would be directly affected by the decision to build or not build the M3.

**Commute**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	64	53.3	53.3	53.3
No	56	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.

#### 4.2 Opinion of respondents in relation to the M3.

There was a marked difference in opinion between those who commute to work and those who do not. It seems that people who do not commute themselves are more likely to disagree with the building of the M3, with 36 per cent of non-commuters agreeing with the construction of the M3 compared to 53 per cent of commuters, as displayed in table 4.3. It could be the case that if these non-commuters commuted, there would be an even higher percentage of people agreeing with the building of the road.

**Commute/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Commute	Yes	Count	53	11	64
		% within Commute	82.8%	17.2%	100.0%
		% within Agree	59.6%	35.5%	53.3%
		% of Total	44.2%	9.2%	53.3%
	No	Count	36	20	56
		% within Commute	64.3%	35.7%	100.0%
		% within Agree	40.4%	64.5%	46.7%
		% of Total	30.0%	16.7%	46.7%
Total		Count	89	31	120
		% within Commute	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%

Table 4.3.

Gender also seems to have had an impact on a persons' decision. 36.8 per cent of females disagree with the road being built compared to only 15.9 per cent of males, as depicted in table 4.4. This could be because more men commute as seen in Table 4.5, as 59.4 per cent of commuters are men as opposed to 40.6 per cent of the women, or it could be that men are not as interested in heritage as women are.

**Gender/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Gender	Male	Count	53	10	63
		% within Gender	84.1%	15.9%	100.0%
		% within Agree	59.6%	32.3%	52.5%
		% of Total	44.2%	8.3%	52.5%
	Female	Count	36	21	57
		% within Gender	63.2%	36.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	40.4%	67.7%	47.5%
		% of Total	30.0%	17.5%	47.5%
Total		Count	89	31	120
		% within Gender	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%

Table 4.4

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Commute	Yes	Count	38	26	64
		% within Commute	59.4%	40.6%	100.0%
		% within Gender	60.3%	45.6%	53.3%
		% of Total	31.7%	21.7%	53.3%
	No	Count	25	31	56
		% within Commute	44.6%	55.4%	100.0%
		% within Gender	39.7%	54.4%	46.7%
		% of Total	20.8%	25.8%	46.7%
Total	Count	63	57	120	
	% within Commute	52.5%	47.5%	100.0%	
	% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	52.5%	47.5%	100.0%	

Table 4.5

One of the questions was if the person thought the majority of local people agreed or disagreed. It was interesting to find that even of the people that disagreed with the motorway being built, most of them thought that the majority agreed with the road, as can be seen in table 4.6. Out of the 19 persons who did not want the road to be built, 12 of these stated that they felt that most people in their locality wanted the road. Whereas out of the 88 who want the road, only 1 person thinks that the majority are against the road. This leads to the conclusion that the majority of people do want the road, contrary to what campaigners would have us believe.

**Opinion of Majority/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Are the majority for or against the building of the M3?	For	Count	88	19	107
		% within Are the majority for or against the building of the M3?	82.2%	17.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	98.9%	61.3%	89.2%
		% of Total	73.3%	15.8%	89.2%
	Against	Count	1	12	13
		% within Are the majority for or against the building of the M3?	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
		% within Agree	1.1%	38.7%	10.8%
		% of Total	.8%	10.0%	10.8%
Total	Count	89	31	120	
	% within Are the majority for or against the building of the M3?	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%	
	% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%	

Table 4.6.

Age was another factor to consider when looking at whether people agreed with the building of the motorway. Although only 3 respondents were 75 or over, it was interesting to find out that all of them were opposed to the motorway. Heritage was not the only reason for their opposition. These people seemed to be opposed to motorways in general. Very young people too, seemed to be more opposed to the M3. 6 out of the 12 aged 0 to 18, that's 50 per cent, were opposed, which is very much below the average of 74.2. This could be influenced by the way the debate is portrayed in schools. People in the labour force are most in favour, with 75.9 per cent of 18 to 40 year olds and 86.1 per cent of those aged 40 to 60 in favour, as shown in table 4.7. These are most likely to be commuters who spend hours in traffic every day.

**Age of Respondent/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Age of Respondent	0-12 years	Count	0	1	1
		% within Age of Respondent	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Agree	.0%	3.2%	.8%
		% of Total	.0%	.8%	.8%
	12-18 years	Count	6	5	11
		% within Age of Respondent	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
		% within Agree	6.7%	16.1%	9.2%
		% of Total	5.0%	4.2%	9.2%
	18-40 years	Count	44	14	58
		% within Age of Respondent	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%
		% within Agree	49.4%	45.2%	48.3%
		% of Total	36.7%	11.7%	48.3%
	40-60 years	Count	31	5	36
		% within Age of Respondent	86.1%	13.9%	100.0%
		% within Agree	34.8%	16.1%	30.0%
		% of Total	25.8%	4.2%	30.0%
	60-75 years	Count	8	3	11
		% within Age of Respondent	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
		% within Agree	9.0%	9.7%	9.2%
		% of Total	6.7%	2.5%	9.2%
	75+	Count	0	3	3
		% within Age of Respondent	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Agree	.0%	9.7%	2.5%
		% of Total	.0%	2.5%	2.5%
Total		Count	89	31	120
		% within Age of Respondent	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%

Table 4.7.

### 4.3 Geographical influence on opinion

On investigation of the effect the town surveyed had on the persons opinion, it was found that people from Kells and Dunshaughlin, the towns most proximate to the Hill of the Tara, had a slightly higher proportion of people in favour of the road. People in Clonee had the least, as shown in table 4.8. This could be because most people in Clonee work in either Blanchardstown or Dublin City Centre, therefore it would not really affect them. Many people in Clonee are also of the belief that the M3 would not solve the problem of traffic congestion, as they believe that the problem is at Blanchardstown. People from Cavan are also less in favour of the M3. This could be because they would not be using it themselves on a daily basis, as many of the respondents do not commute.

**Town Name/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Town Name	Cavan	Count	22	8	30
		% within Town Name	73.3%	26.7%	100.0%
		% within Agree	24.7%	25.8%	25.0%
		% of Total	18.3%	6.7%	25.0%
	Kells	Count	24	6	30
		% within Town Name	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Agree	27.0%	19.4%	25.0%
		% of Total	20.0%	5.0%	25.0%
	Dunshaughlin	Count	23	7	30
		% within Town Name	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Agree	25.8%	22.6%	25.0%
		% of Total	19.2%	5.8%	25.0%
	Clonee	Count	20	10	30
		% within Town Name	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Agree	22.5%	32.3%	25.0%
		% of Total	16.7%	8.3%	25.0%
Total		Count	89	31	120
		% within Town Name	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%

Table 4.8

As can be seen in Table 4.9, it appears that people only living locally for a relatively short period of time are more in favour of the road, with 100 per cent of people living there 1-3 years in favour, 78.9 per cent of people living there 2-4 years and 88.2 per cent of people living there 4- 6 years, which is significantly above the average. While people who live there longer, are less in favour, they may be more attached to the heritage of their home county, with a marginally, but nevertheless, below average 68.4 per cent of people who live there for 20 years or more in favour of the motorway.

**Length of Residence/Agree with building of M3**

			Agree		Total
			yes	no	
Length of time lived locally	0-1 year	Count	3	0	3
		% within Length of time lived locally	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Agree	3.4%	.0%	2.5%
		% of Total	2.5%	.0%	2.5%
	2-4 years	Count	15	4	19
		% within Length of time lived locally	78.9%	21.1%	100.0%
		% within Agree	16.9%	12.9%	15.8%
		% of Total	12.5%	3.3%	15.8%
	4-6 years	Count	15	2	17
		% within Length of time lived locally	88.2%	11.8%	100.0%
		% within Agree	16.9%	6.5%	14.2%
		% of Total	12.5%	1.7%	14.2%
	6-10 years	Count	11	4	15
		% within Length of time lived locally	73.3%	26.7%	100.0%
		% within Agree	12.4%	12.9%	12.5%
		% of Total	9.2%	3.3%	12.5%
	10- 20 years	Count	14	7	21
		% within Length of time lived locally	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Agree	15.7%	22.6%	17.5%
		% of Total	11.7%	5.8%	17.5%
20 + years	Count	26	12	38	
	% within Length of time lived locally	68.4%	31.6%	100.0%	
	% within Agree	29.2%	38.7%	31.7%	
	% of Total	21.7%	10.0%	31.7%	
inapplicable	Count	5	2	7	
	% within Length of time lived locally	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%	
	% within Agree	5.6%	6.5%	5.8%	
	% of Total	4.2%	1.7%	5.8%	
Total	Count	89	31	120	
	% within Length of time lived locally	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%	
	% within Agree	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%	

Table 4.9.

#### 4.4 Reasons for opinion

The results were investigated to establish what reasons people gave for either agreeing or disagreeing with the building of the motorway. It was interesting to find that 25.7 per cent of those who were not in favour of the road, said that it was because the M3 would “go through the Hill of Tara, and destroy it”, as evident in Table 4.10. This simply isn’t true. The M3 will not go through the hill. It will go through the valley between the Hill of Tara and the Hill of Skryne. It seems that a substantial proportion of people have been the victims of misinformation. This may be a result of inaccurate media representation or gossip. The fact is that if these 25 per cent of people knew the truth, they might not be opposed to the road. The largest proportion was opposed due to destruction of heritage, 31.4 per cent. Another issue arising from the findings was the issue of tolls, 14.3 per cent of the persons opposed were opposed due to expensive tolls. One man, who is living in Cavan but commuting to Dunshaughlin, told the writer that it would cost him over eleven euro daily to commute to work. A small proportion of people believed that the M3 shouldn’t go ahead because alternatives would work, on further investigation, it seems that many believe that a rail link would help solve the problem, with 89.2 per cent of all respondents believing that a rail link would be a viable alternative, as illustrated in table 4.11

**Reason One for not agreeing with the building of the M3**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	go through the Hill of Tara - destroy it.	9	7.5	25.7	25.7
	Too many motorway-need to protect countryside	5	4.2	14.3	40.0
	Destroy heritage	11	9.2	31.4	71.4
	tolls-massise cost to tax payers to a private company	5	4.2	14.3	85.7
	motorway wont work	1	.8	2.9	88.6
	No need, there are alternatives	2	1.7	5.7	94.3
	not applicable	2	1.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	35	29.2	100.0	
Missing	System	85	70.8		
Total		120	100.0		

Table 4.10

**Alternative - Reopen Railway(Dublin-Navan)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	107	89.2	89.2	89.2
	No	13	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.11.

The main reason why people are in favour of the M3 is due to the fact that it will improve traffic flow, with 91.2 per cent of people giving this as their first reason, as illustrated in Table 4.12. Other reasons included improving accessibility for businesses and another being that they did not want Meath to fall behind the rest of the country or Ireland to fall behind Europe. These reasons also featured dominantly in the reason 2 category, as can be viewed in table 4.13.

**Reason One for agreeing with the building of the M3**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	improve traffic flow	83	69.2	91.2	91.2
	accessibility	1	.8	1.1	92.3
	we cant fall behind in EU	3	2.5	3.3	95.6
	inapplicable	4	3.3	4.4	100.0
	Total	91	75.8	100.0	
Missing	System	29	24.2		
Total		120	100.0		

Table 4.12.

**Reason Two for agreeing with the building of the M3**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	missing	2	1.7	9.5	9.5
	improve traffic flow	3	2.5	14.3	23.8
	accessibility	7	5.8	33.3	57.1
	destroy Tara is hype	1	.8	4.8	61.9
	we cant fall behind in EU	4	3.3	19.0	81.0
	inapplicable	4	3.3	19.0	100.0
	Total	21	17.5	100.0	
Missing	System	99	82.5		
Total		120	100.0		

Table 4.13

### 4.5 Media representation

The media seems to influence the individuals' opinion of whether the M3 should be built or not. Local radio appears to give both sides of the argument similar air play, as 5 people are opposed and 10 are in favour. Local newspapers on the other hand, seem to be broadcasting a biased view, as 5 people who heard about the debate there are opposed, while 23 are in favour, which is quite a substantial difference. The Television news seems to side with those opposed to the route with 20 out of the 26 people who heard about the debate on the Television news opposed to it. These results can be viewed in Table 4.14

On the subject of media representation, many people who were in favour of the road said, when asked for an additional comment, that there was a lot of hype surrounding the issue. They believed that the media had “blown things out of proportion”, when in fact the new M3 would be in fact further away from the Hill of Tara than the existing N3 road is.

**Agree with building of M3/where the debate was heard about.**

			Where the debate was heard about						Total	
			Television News	Local radio	Local Newspapers	National Radio	National Newspapers	Word of Mouth		Television Primetime
Agree with building of M3?	yes	Count	20	10	23	8	12	7	9	89
		% within Agree with building of M3?	22.5%	11.2%	25.8%	9.0%	13.5%	7.9%	10.1%	100.0%
		% within Where the debate was heard about	76.9%	66.7%	82.1%	80.0%	70.6%	63.6%	69.2%	74.2%
		% of Total	16.7%	8.3%	19.2%	6.7%	10.0%	5.8%	7.5%	74.2%
no		Count	6	5	5	2	5	4	4	31
		% within Agree with building of M3?	19.4%	16.1%	16.1%	6.5%	16.1%	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
		% within Where the debate was heard about	23.1%	33.3%	17.9%	20.0%	29.4%	36.4%	30.8%	25.8%
		% of Total	5.0%	4.2%	4.2%	1.7%	4.2%	3.3%	3.3%	25.8%
Total		Count	26	15	28	10	17	11	13	120
		% within Agree with building of M3?	21.7%	12.5%	23.3%	8.3%	14.2%	9.2%	10.8%	100.0%
		% within Where the debate was heard about	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.7%	12.5%	23.3%	8.3%	14.2%	9.2%	10.8%	100.0%

Table 4.14.

#### 4.6 Insider vs. Outsider

An aim of the survey was to find out what locals thought of academic and celebrity involvement in the debate. Only 2 people out of the 120 questioned believed that this was an international issue. A large proportion (47.5 per cent) believed that it was a local issue, with a massive 83.3 per cent of people from Dunshaughlin regarding it to be a local issue. This is interesting as Dunshaughlin is the closest to the Hill of Tara. The pattern holds that the issue becomes less local and more national the further you move away from the Hill, as can be gathered from table 4.15, with only 23.3 per cent of people in Cavan thinking that it is a local issue. The majority think this is a national issue (50.8 per cent). When asked for any other comments, 7 people commented that “ professors and

celebrities had no right to intrude in a decision that affected their [the locals] lives”, as can be seen in table 4.16.

It is also interesting to note that people believe that the M3 will improve the quality of life for commuters. “A better quality of life for people” is one of the main objectives of the National Spatial Strategy.

**Place/Local/National Issue**

			Local/National/Issue			Total
			Local	National	International	
Town Name	Cavan	Count	7	22	1	30
		% within Town Name	23.3%	73.3%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Local/National/Issue	12.3%	36.1%	50.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	5.8%	18.3%	.8%	25.0%
	Kells	Count	14	15	1	30
		% within Town Name	46.7%	50.0%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Local/National/Issue	24.6%	24.6%	50.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	11.7%	12.5%	.8%	25.0%
	Dunshaughlin	Count	25	5	0	30
		% within Town Name	83.3%	16.7%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Local/National/Issue	43.9%	8.2%	.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	20.8%	4.2%	.0%	25.0%
Clonee	Count	11	19	0	30	
	% within Town Name	36.7%	63.3%	.0%	100.0%	
	% within Local/National/Issue	19.3%	31.1%	.0%	25.0%	
	% of Total	9.2%	15.8%	.0%	25.0%	
Total	Count	57	61	2	120	
	% within Town Name	47.5%	50.8%	1.7%	100.0%	
	% within Local/National/Issue	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	47.5%	50.8%	1.7%	100.0%	

Table 4.15.

**Additional Comments**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	missing	12	10.0	16.9	16.9
	Motorway should be built as soon as possible	6	5.0	8.5	25.4
	toll roads disgrace-by passes would be built by now	4	3.3	5.6	31.0
	professors/celebrities-interfering	7	5.8	9.9	40.8
	hype N3 nearer to Tara	11	9.2	15.5	56.3
	Blanchardstown is the problem	5	4.2	7.0	63.4
	People weren't interested in Tara until now	7	5.8	9.9	73.2
	toll roads, millions profit, unfair	5	4.2	7.0	80.3
	too many motorways/Celtic tiger greed	3	2.5	4.2	84.5
	Meath needs a rail link, very important	6	5.0	8.5	93.0
	Less traffic would improve quality of life	5	4.2	7.0	100.0
	Total	71	59.2	100.0	
Missing	System	49	40.8		
Total		120	100.0		

Table 4.16.

### 4.7 Value given to heritage

Another aim of the survey was to find out how Irish people rated heritage, both in general and at a local level. It was found that no one at all regarded archaeology to be “not at all important”. Only 15 per cent thought of archaeology as being slightly important, while the remaining 85 per cent regarded it to be important, quite important or very important. Even those who are in favour of the road think archaeology is important, with 22.7 per cent of them thinking that archaeology is very important, and 80.9 per cent of people in favour of the M3 regarding archaeology to be quite important, as shown in Table 4.17.

**Agree with building of M3/Archaeology**

			How important is archaeology?				Total
			Slightly	Important	Quite	Very Important	
Agree	yes	Count	15	31	38	5	89
		% within Agree	16.9%	34.8%	42.7%	5.6%	100.0%
		% within How important is archaeology?	100.0%	86.1%	80.9%	22.7%	74.2%
		% of Total	12.5%	25.8%	31.7%	4.2%	74.2%
no		Count	0	5	9	17	31
		% within Agree	.0%	16.1%	29.0%	54.8%	100.0%
		% within How important is archaeology?	.0%	13.9%	19.1%	77.3%	25.8%
		% of Total	.0%	4.2%	7.5%	14.2%	25.8%
Total		Count	15	36	47	22	120
		% within Agree	12.5%	30.0%	39.2%	18.3%	100.0%
		% within How important is archaeology?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	12.5%	30.0%	39.2%	18.3%	100.0%

Table 4.17

As displayed in table 4.18, it seems that the majority of people think that both the development of infrastructure and the preservation of heritage are important, with 55 percent of people thinking that both are equally important in general and 52 per cent thinking so at a local level. At a local level, as portrayed by table 4.19, slightly more people think development is more important.

**In general - heritage or development**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Development	25	20.8	20.8	20.8
	Heritage	28	23.3	23.3	44.2
	Both	67	55.8	55.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.18

**Local scale - heritage or development**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Development	32	26.7	26.9	26.9
	Heritage	25	20.8	21.0	47.9
	Both	62	51.7	52.1	100.0
	Total	119	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.8		
Total		120	100.0		

Table 4.19

It was found that people living in Dunshaughlin are the most interested in the Hill of Tara, with none of them answering “no” to the question “ Are local people interested in Tara?” Cavan, the furthest away from the Hill, had a high proportion, 73.3 percent of people who answered “ no” or “not really” to the same question. This can be interpreted from table 4.20. It seems that although regarded as a tourist sight, many Irish people who do not live very near to the Hill, do not seem to be interested in it. This finding is reinforced, as people suggested in the additional comments question that people were not interested in Tara until the motorway proposal was presented. The additional comments question was open ended, therefore, it is quite significant that seven people suggested it separately.

**Town/Local interest in Tara**

			Are local people interested inTara?				Total
			Yes	No	not really	somewhat	
Town Name	Cavan	Count	4	13	9	4	30
		% within Town Name	13.3%	43.3%	30.0%	13.3%	100.0%
		% within Are local people interested inTara?	7.8%	92.9%	45.0%	11.4%	25.0%
		% of Total	3.3%	10.8%	7.5%	3.3%	25.0%
	Kells	Count	9	1	4	16	30
		% within Town Name	30.0%	3.3%	13.3%	53.3%	100.0%
		% within Are local people interested inTara?	17.6%	7.1%	20.0%	45.7%	25.0%
		% of Total	7.5%	.8%	3.3%	13.3%	25.0%
	Dunshaughlin	Count	23	0	1	6	30
		% within Town Name	76.7%	.0%	3.3%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Are local people interested inTara?	45.1%	.0%	5.0%	17.1%	25.0%
		% of Total	19.2%	.0%	.8%	5.0%	25.0%
Clonee	Count	15	0	6	9	30	
	% within Town Name	50.0%	.0%	20.0%	30.0%	100.0%	
	% within Are local people interested inTara?	29.4%	.0%	30.0%	25.7%	25.0%	
	% of Total	12.5%	.0%	5.0%	7.5%	25.0%	
Total	Count	51	14	20	35	120	
	% within Town Name	42.5%	11.7%	16.7%	29.2%	100.0%	
	% within Are local people interested inTara?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	42.5%	11.7%	16.7%	29.2%	100.0%	

Table 4.20

## 4.8 Power players

Another aim was to find out who the public perceived to be the most influential power players within the planning process in Ireland. It was discovered that most people think that the Government is the most influential, with 49.2 per cent of people thinking so, and the National Roads Authority is a close second, with 47.5 per cent of people thinking it is the most influential. This is shown in table 4.21. It is surprising to find that only 2.5 per cent of people think that the Local Authorities are the most influential, considering that it is Meath County Council together with the National Roads Authority who are the major players in this scheme. Central Government is not really directly involved. It could be the case that Meath County Council is keeping a low profile on the topic and could be placing the blame on Central Government. Lobby groups are perceived to have virtually no power, being either not mentioned at all or coming in in last place, which is interesting, as they will probably delay the building of the M3 for many years, as they plan to carry out legal action.

**The most influential power player**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Local Authorities	3	2.5	2.5	2.5
National Roads Authority	54	45.0	45.0	47.5
Government	59	49.2	49.2	96.7
Private Companies	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.21

This survey has acquired a great deal of information concerning the opinions of local people regarding the M3. It has enabled the author to obtain results and see at a glance the proportions of people who agree and disagree with different opinions.

## Chapter Five: Analysis of Interviews.

A total of thirteen interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in the debate regarding the construction of the M3. Interviewees were selected from the following groups, the National Roads Authority, Meath County Council, archaeologists, academics opposed to the M3, local residents and campaigners trying to stop the construction of the M3. Interviewees included; Daire O'Rourke (Senior archaeologist with the N.R.A), Maurice Leahy (Corporate Affairs Officer with the N.R.A), Joe Fenwick (Professor of archaeology in NUI Galway), Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin (Doctor of Celtic Studies in NUI Maynooth), Edel Bhreathnach (Doctor of History in U.C.D), Joseph Nagy (Doctor of English in UCLA). Nancy Stenson (Doctor of Linguistics in University of Minneapolis), Raimund Karl (Doctor of History in University of Bangor, Wales), Meath County Councillors; Peter Higgins (a Trim elected member), Charles Bobbett, (elected member in the Dunshaughlin district), Dominic Hannigan, (an elected member in the Slane district), and Seamus Murray, (a Trim elected member), and Tracey Hughes, (a resident of Kells and pro M3 campaigner).

A sample of these interviews can be seen in appendices three to six, and the list of questions asked can be viewed in appendix two.

Interviews were analysed manually, and the following themes were identified; the importance of the Tara/Skryne valley, whether or not there is a need for the M3, archaeology, alternatives, the planning process and the E.I.S. system, insiders and outsiders and protesters. A mixture of comments, views and opinions were obtained, which will be discussed in this chapter.

### 5.1 Importance of Tara/Skryne Valley

All interviewees were asked whether they regarded the Tara/Skryne Valley to be important, on a national scale and on a worldwide scale and if so, why they thought so. All interviewees thought that it was, even those who were pro M3. Some people gave very descriptive answers to this question. Joe Fenwick says that it is "unique"

and that it is not only the Hill of Tara that is important. He says that “The hill is but the central focus of a wider and clearly defined cultural landscape”.

This clarifies the argument that the N3 is closer to the Hill of Tara, as it doesn’t matter how near the M3 is to the hill if it is the whole valley that is important.

Raimund Karl stated that it is “absolutely” important on a worldwide scale,

“as it is one of the few, if not only, reasonably well preserved north-western European royal/ritual complexes which has been used in various different ways from the Neolithic to the early Middle Ages”.

He thinks that it is on the same level as the pyramids in Giza or the Acropolis in Athens. He continues to say “no one in their right mind would blow up the pyramids or the Acropolis to make way for a better access road to Cairo or Athens respectively”. Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin says that it is “one of the most important sites in the world”.

Others feel that Tara is very important due to its tourist attraction potential. Meath County Councillor Seamus Murray who is pro M3, believes that “Tara is very important because of its history, heritage, and tourism value in Co. Meath”, while local resident Tracey Hughes believes that Tara is “a tourist attraction in Meath, and will continue to be even if the motorway goes ahead”.

Edel Bhreathnach believes that Tara is highly significant. She says that Tara was the setting for “a very exceptional kingship”, comparing it to the ceremonies for the death of the Pope and the inauguration of the new Pope. She believes that being the King of Tara was akin to being the King of the world. On a worldwide scale, she believes that Tara is important because, in the wider world, many sites have disappeared, such as in Germany and Italy. This is in contrast to what was stated earlier by Adrienne Bowen when she says that the Italians have managed to preserve heritage and develop infrastructure in harmony. Breathnach states;

“I mean I was kind of chuckling to myself when I saw in the newspaper saying ‘O, but we could learn from Europe’, because they have straight roads and all the rest, but in Germany and Italy those roads were built by one Adolph Hitler and one Benito Mussolini. I mean, Mussolini just drove through the heart of Rome, and destroyed a vast amount of archaeology in doing that. So they are no example to be emulating at all”.

Daire O Rourke, of the N.R.A., believes that Tara is “an incredibly important place”. She believes both Tara and Skryne to be important because they are attached to Irish

culture and culturalism and the Irish psyche. Maurice Leahy of the N.R.A., simply answers “Yes” to the question asking whether the valley is important.

On the other hand, Peter Higgins, County Councillor, says that

“I wouldn’t have said so up until lately, and I am a person who would be interested in history and heritage. I wouldn’t have thought that it had particular significance.”

He believes that the Hill of Tara and the Hill of Skryne are significant, but has “yet to be convinced as to whether the valley is significant.”

This echoes finding from the locals questionnaire, where 9.9 per of people when asked for an additional comment said that “People weren’t interested in Tara until now”, as displayed in table 4.16.

## 5.2. The M3- is there a need for it or not?

There are contrasting opinions in connection with the need for the M3. When asked why there was a need for the motorway, many replied that there was not in fact a need for it at all. Pro M3 interviewees were of the opinion that a motorway was the only way to solve the traffic congestion problem. Councillor Seamus Murray says that “There is an urgent need for the M3 because of the gridlock on the current N3”, and that commuters spend “between three and five hours per day in their cars”. Tracey Hughes, who is a commuter herself, thinks that there is a need for the M3 because of “Dunshaughlin, Navan and Kells being choked with traffic and deadly fumes”, while Councillor Dominic Hannigan says that “the M3 is needed full stop”. Daire O’Rourke too believes that the M3 is the only viable option. She declares that the M3 is part of the National Development Plan. The Roads Needs study identified that there was a need for this motorway to be built. She thinks that although people want bypasses for Navan and Dunshaughlin, that that is “a kind of another issue, because the reason is that this is the main route to the North West”. Having a better route to Donegal is the N.R.A.s primary focus. This is the aim of the National Spatial Strategy, in which the National Transport Framework outlines the main routes that need improvement in the country as a whole. A map illustrating this framework can be viewed in Figure 5.1.

Councillor Peter Higgins thinks that the need for a motorway is questionable. He feels that what are really needed are bypasses.

Edel Bhreathnach maintains that there is no need for the M3. She is of the belief that there are both alternatives to the motorway, such as a rail link to Dublin and bypasses, and that there are alternative routes for the motorway, which would not affect the integrity of the Tara landscape. Although she believes that there is a need for a better route way to Donegal, the stretch of the motorway through the Valley could be rerouted. Dr. Raimund Karl believes that “pressing through with the current route is stubborn and stupid”.

It was found that interviewees from foreign countries did not have very accurate knowledge of the traffic problems in Meath. Joseph Nagy, who signed the letter to the Taoiseach, said that there was a need for a motorway to “facilitate people commuting to and from Dublin, I suppose”

An issue that became apparent through the interviews was the fact that the M3 being a Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme may have had an influence on the decision to persevere with this route.

It seems that the fact that the M3 is a PPP scheme may have influenced An Bord Pleanála decision to approve the scheme. Councillor Peter Higgins as aforementioned, believes that what is really needed in Meath are bypasses for towns in Meath. He says that the original plan, which was put forward in 1999, was to build bypasses for Dunshaughlin and Navan, and he believes that this would have worked. If the plans had been implemented, these bypasses would be built by now. The authorities had a chance to build these bypasses and didn't because they got the offer of participation in a PPP scheme.

Edel Bhreathnach agrees with Higgins. She believes that there may be an ulterior motive for sticking to the M3 plan. “So what we really need to find out is well, what is the pressure, what is the reason that they are so insistent on bringing it through [the valley].I don't know whether its land speculation or the toll companies, I don't know”

Joe Fenwick also feels that the toll companies have had a role to play, he says that

“The commercial sector seems to have a particularly strong influence in the governments decision to forge ahead with the project. The commercial and development sector seems to be the main driving force behind it and

An Bord Pleanála and the government acquiesced to this demand. Greed is good!”

Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin is also of the opinion that the toll companies have had a major influence on the decision to go ahead with this route.

“The only reason that there is going to be a motorway is because its going to be a tolled motorway. It’s a private company, they are lined up to make something like thirty billion euro out of this, huge money. And it would appear that the reason for the upgrade to a motorway was simply because there was E.U. funding available. And literally overnight, from 1999 to the year 2000 it became a motorway and then it became a tolled motorway”.

Peter Higgins says that the M3 is a “vanity project”.

“The country is doing well, so the government want to put motorways everywhere. I don’t think we need a motorway of this size, I think the bypasses would have worked. They would have been built by now if the plans had not been changed”.

Higgins feels strongly about the fact that it is a PPP scheme. He says;

“I think the reason why its going ahead is because it’s a public private partnership project. This is why it’s a road rather than a railway. The profits to be made by the toll companies are unbelievable, as can be seen by the profits made at the M50 Bridge”.

Seamus Murray says “It seems it would have had some influence on the Ministers decision but I would not accept that is the sole reason for the decision”

Maurice Leahy, of the N.R.A., said, quite expectedly that PPP had “none what so ever” bearing on the Ministers decision not to change the route.

Dominic Hannigan says “I am pro M3. PPP is a way of paying for it. Whether we use PPP or not is a separate issue to the alignment through Tara. Don’t confuse the issue”.

It appears not only from this response, but to almost all of his responses that Councillor Hannigan is very defensive. This would imply that he is trying to disguise the real issue or underplay the influence of the Public Private Partnership.

### 5.3. Archaeology

When making an interim presentation of the thesis, there were a variety of questions raised concerning the topic of archaeology. One of the questions was as follows, “Is the M3 not doing archaeology a favour, as it is bringing artefacts to the surface?”

It was decided to ask leading academics this question. It seems that archaeology is not about digging to find artefacts, but is about keeping a landscape intact.

Joe Fenwick states “archaeology is not a treasure hunting exercise or a means of providing the museum with artefacts”. He continues to say that “particularly sensitive landscapes such as Tara, should only be subject to small-scale invasive investigations as part of a carefully considered research programme”. Similarly, Dr. Raimund Karl states that “Its one of the most common misconceptions that archaeology is about digging up artefacts”. He describes excavation as being “destruction of subsoil contexts and features”. Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin believes that the M3 certainly isn’t doing archaeology a favour. She says “this type of archaeology is what they call rescue archaeology. Its being done with bulldozers behind them literally telling them to hurry up.....that is not archaeology”. Joseph Nagy agrees with Muireanns sentiments. He says that “archaeological sites of this complexity and scope should be preserved, not “dug up” and then ploughed over. All of the above answers the question asked during the thesis presentation quite clearly. It seems the common understanding of what archaeology is, is not true at all.

Interestingly, all those in favour of the M3 also regarded archaeology as being important. Tracey Hughes believes it is important for the next generation, while Seamus Murray says “it gives us an insight to our ancestors and history”. Peter Higgins however, though agreeing that archaeology is important, is not fully convinced of the significance of each site. He speaks of the potential sites; “Some of them are only of minor interest, like a site where someone lit a fire six thousand years ago, and I’m sure there are thousands of them scattered throughout the country”.

## 5.4 Alternatives – Was this the best option?

Peter Higgins believes that bypasses for Dunshaughlin and Navan would alleviate quite a large amount of traffic congestion.

Maurice Leahy maintains that this was the best option. He says

“individual bypasses of towns such as Dunshaughlin and Navan will not eliminate the serious safety issues being posed by having side roads and other entrances accessing onto the single carriageway road between these towns that is already carrying traffic volumes substantially in excess of the N3s design and capacity.”

He also says that,

“Individual bypasses will not solve the overall congestion and capacity problems and will leave a deficient sequence of sections of high quality motorways linked by and funnelling onto, short stretches of substandard roads with dangerous over capacity levels”

Seamus Murray believes that this was the best option also. He says, “It was the subject of the most extensive oral hearing in the planning process and I am satisfied that all aspects and objections were taken into consideration”.

Tracey Hughes agrees that this is the best option. However, she thinks that a rail link is needed, not as an alternative but in conjunction with the M3. Daire O’ Rourke, who is an archaeologist, believes that this route was the best choice. She thinks that the other routes that were considered would actually have a much greater impact archaeologically than the chosen route. The route to the west of Tara would have too much of a visual impact, as when you look west from the hill, you can see a vast plain, so if this route was chosen, it would have spoiled the view. The route to the east of Skryne also wouldn’t be suitable, as it would go through a medieval settlement. O’ Rourke stated that with the chosen route, the visual impact “will be virtually nil because it will be embedded into the landscape, because its in a valley, so you won’t really see it.” Daire believes that alternatives don’t have to be alternatives. She thinks both the rail link and the M3 are needed.

## 5.5 The planning process and the E.I.A.

Edel Bhreathnach does not believe that the planning process is adequate.

“They are very blinkered in their thinking, I think they get a plan and they just seem .... And they say that they are going through a process but I mean the process is utterly flawed, utterly flawed. An Bord Pleanála does not go against anything, roads, decisions, or doesn't overturn them. They just plough ahead. There's no imagination there really, no flexibility.”

Edel Bhreathnach spoke of her colleague who was giving evidence about archaeology at the oral hearing “He was very upset.....He said the man that was chairing it virtually fell asleep when he gave evidence. He just wasn't listening at all!”

Bhreathnach also believes that the E.I.A. system is “utterly flawed”, and that the consultants work in many cases is “utterly shoddy and basic”. She thinks that these consultants “are not equipped to do their job, they are not trained to do it, at least not from a historical perspective”. She also says that she is amazed that An Bord Pleanálas actual decision does not give much weight to archaeology.

“In the An Bord Pleanála decision, there wasn't one single reference to archaeology, not a single reference. They mentioned collecting folklore and placenames, which is amazing. They don't mention archaeology at all!”

Edel Bhreathnach also says that she thinks if they had the choice again, the N.R.A. would not choose this route. She says that she had an interview with the chief executive of the N.R.A., “and he [CEO of the N.R.A.] admitted that if they were starting the process again, it wouldn't go through the valley. So effectively the N.R.A. in the words of their CEO, accept that it was a wrong decision”

Joe Fenwick is of a similar mind to Breathnach. He says that “If expert advice and warning had been listened to from the very beginning this issue would not have arisen”. Fenwick also says that “the system of heritage protection has failed and those charged with its protection have failed.”

Maurice Leahy of the N.R.A., says that “ The Authority is constantly looking at ways to assist the overall planning process by providing guidelines on archaeology, the

environment, and so on. The N.R.A., while having bought into the process, is always looking for means of improving it.”

On the contrary, Peter Higgins stated

“To be honest with you, I don’t think it [the planning process] is adequate. First of all, plans are put before councillors who don’t really have a lot of expertise, they are guided by officials, they don’t really have qualifications or expertise in planning, or the ability to criticise plans, you know?”

Higgins admits that;

“In An Bord Pleanála, they have an inspector who approves the routes and I don’t want to say it, but it can be a bit of a rubber stamping exercise. Very little change is made to routes at any of those oral hearings”.

Seamus Murray believes that the E.I.A.system is adequate.

Tracey Hughes believes that the planning process is “open to criticism, mainly because of time delays”. She feels that a proper planning system could avoid such instances as the M3 debate. It appears that people both for and against the M3 think that there is plenty of scope for improvement in both the planning process and the E.I.A. system. Public consultation does not seem to have any effect on the final decision made by An Bord Pleanála.

## 5.6. Insider vs. Outsider

Many responses from foreign campaigners showed that they knew very little about the scheme or why it was needed, who the main decision makers are or of the traffic situation in county Meath. Many responses by Nagy and Stenson were “I’m not sure”, “I don’t know” “Again , I don’t Know” and “I don’t have enough knowledge of the issue” It seems that they signed the letter sent to The Taoiseach and the Minister for the Environment without investigating the facts at all.

Daire O’Rourke speaks of Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin, one of the main campaigners ;

“Well you see Muireann has galvanised you know, all of these foreign people who do Celtic Studies and all that kind of stuff, and they just sign

and most of them know a lot about Tara, but nothing about the Ireland of today, about the congestion.”

O’ Rourke is of the opinion that Irish people are indifferent to the Tara situation. She says, “The majority of Irish people, between you and me, don’t give a fiddlers [about Tara and the M3].”

Edel Breathnach is under the illusion that Meath people don’t want the M3. She says that “I think they [the N.R.A.] think that they can get through, that people in general don’t care, which I don’t think is true, well I hope is not true, you know that they can get away with it.”

Tracey Hughes declares, “As a resident of Meath, I truly believe that we are being held to ransom by “do-gooders” from LA, and other far flung places, claiming that they care about Tara. I am losing at least 25 hours a week being stuck in traffic because of congestion. I mean, why should we have to put up with this? I pay taxes, I work long hours, and I want to spend more time at home, instead of on the N3!”

It seems clear now that most people are in favour of the M3 and that campaigners are a small group who make a large media presence.

Daire O’ Rourke thinks that it is a David and Goliath situation.

“From the medias point of view, we’re Goliath and the likes of Muireann and the protesters are David. And we can never win in the medias eyes. And we’re used to it at this stage. We will always be seen as the machine of the state. We kind of laugh in here, you think of the N.R.A. as if it were some big scary monster and actually its not, its ninety men and women trying to do our job.”

## 5.7. Protesters

It appears that many people have a negative impression of protesters.

Seamus Murray says that “I do think that conflict could have been avoided if particular objectors, who seem to have nothing better to do but move from county to county objecting to every development and infrastructure project, found something more productive to do with their time”.

Daire too believes that a lot of protesters are “disingenuous”. She says that “Unfortunately, archaeology has been highlighted as well by some people who aren’t

archaeologists but are using archaeology for their own benefits, who basically, I don't know, want to cause chaos, bring the national roads programme to a standstill, you know."

Daire also says that

"there's been the anti roads campaigners who are involved in the M3 and they are involved in all of our schemes, the same exact people. The same ones over and over again, so they are anti globalisation, anti road, anti PPP schemes, they have a whole agenda".

She goes on to say that there are legitimate people like Conor Newman and Joe Fenwick who are "not going to be jumping on the bandwagon in relation to another scheme, but some people will be".

It seems that protesters are in two groups. As Daire pointed out, there seems to be a large number of people protesting to the M3 that are anti roads. However, It seems the most proactive protesters, and the ones who are seen in the media the most, Edel Bhreathnach, Joe Fenwick and Conor Newman, are not anti roads but only anti M3 for archaeological reasons. They seem to still want development in the county. As Joe Fenwick says "It was always possible to preserve this area for the benefit of future generations to study and enjoy and also provide the infrastructure necessary for our continued economic progress and development of the nation". Contrastingly, Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin believes that there are too many motorways in this country. Therefore, the protest group follows suit with Gurlachs descriptions, in that it is segmentary, in that, it is made up of a diverse group of people who are opposed to the motorway for sometimes very different reasons. They are polycentric in that they have multiple leaders and are also reticulate in that they have a loose network of connections. It seems that almost all protesters are conscience protesters in that they are opposed to something which has no direct relevance to them, as stated by Luebke. There seems to be only very few protesters who are beneficiary, as only 25.8 per cent of those directly affected, in other words, those who live in the Tara area, are in favour of the scheme, and many of these would not be campaigners.

As evident from the above, through interviews with key stakeholders a vast amount of information, views and opinions on the matter of Tara and the M3 motorway have been gathered. A number of interesting and significant issues arose from the responses, with regard to Public Private Partnership, perceptions of protesters and

adequacy of the planning process. These topics will be discussed further in chapter six.



## Chapter Six: Summary of Findings and Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary and Discussion of Results

#### 6.2 Conclusion

This chapter will summarise and discuss the main findings concluded from the data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews and will offer some conclusions and recommendations.

### 6.1 Summary and Discussion of Results

#### 6.1.1 The Planning Process

One of the main findings was that many believe that there are flaws in the planning system. As aforementioned, the planning process has been described as being “blinkered”, “utterly flawed”, “having no flexibility” and “inadequate”. Some people are of the belief that the government, N.R.A. and Meath County Council have failed to do their duty of protecting the heritage of Meath and are only going ahead with this scheme because it is a Public Private Partnership. It seems that alternatives to the motorway and alternatives to the route of the motorway could have worked, as 89.2 per cent of respondents thought that opening a rail link from Dublin to Navan could work as an alternative to building the motorway. Peter Higgins, County Councillor, believes that building bypasses for Navan and Dunshaughlin would have worked instead of the motorway. The only people who were adamant that the motorway should definitely go ahead on the planned route were members of the N.R.A. and one County Councillor, Dominic Hannigan, who both believe that “the M3 is necessary full stop”. It seems that alternatives actually could have worked. Although there was public consultation in the process, it seems that it is not very effective. It appears from the interviews that once a plan has been made, public consultation afterwards and oral hearings are just a formality and really do not have any power to change a decision. Seamus Murray thinks that the

oral hearings are “a bit of a rubber-stamping exercise”. Even though the hearing lasted for twenty-eight days, the longest in the history of the State, there were no changes made to the plans at all. Joe Fenwick says that “evidence given in oral hearings falls on deaf ears”. This leads to the conclusion that a more effective system for planning appeals is needed in Ireland, especially with regard to oral hearings. They do not seem to result in any changes being made to plans at all.

### 6.1.2 Public Private Partnership.

Many people are not happy with the fact that the M3 is a PPP scheme. When asked for an additional comment, 7 per cent of local people said that “it was unfair that toll companies would make millions of profit out of the scheme”, while 5.6 per cent said that “ toll roads were a disgrace, that the bypasses would be built by now if the plan had not been changed. Protesters think that the only reason why the M3 is being built is because it’s a PPP and that the N.R.A. does not want to break its contract with the toll company. Fenwick is convinced that the PPP is the reason for the N.R.A. persisting with the M3 plan. He says “It appears, as the motorway is a PPP funded project, that “cost benefit return” may have played a key factor in the choice of the route”. It seems that the N.R.A. and Meath County Council are being too inflexible with their approach. Although it is true that an improved route way is needed to the northwest, and although it is part of the strategy in both the N.D.P and N.S.S, it is not necessarily the case that a motorway is the only solution to the traffic congestion problem. A combination of a rail line, bypasses, upgrading of the N3, would more than likely resolve the traffic problem.

### 6.1.3 National vs. Local

The M3 is part of a wider national infrastructure framework as outlined in the NDP and NSS. It is the plan to have a better route from Dublin to Donegal. The Tara area is only a very small locality and it is felt by the N.R.A. that the M3 would benefit the nation as a whole more than it would be a hindrance to the landscape of Tara. O'Rourke supports this idea when she says "We are looking at the bigger picture as opposed to bringing it down to local levels". Some of those opposed believe that there still could be a motorway to Donegal, by making the compromise of rerouting the short stretch of it that will bisect the Tara/Skryne Valley.

In compliance with the fact that the M3 scheme is intended to fit into a wider scheme for the whole country, as portrayed in figure 5.1, 50.8 per cent of local people believe that the debate is was a national issue, 47.5 believe that it is a local issue and only 1.7 believe that it is an international issue as illustrated in figure 4.15.

Also, a slightly higher proportion of local people believe that development is more important in a local level, with 20.8 per cent of people believing development to be more important than heritage in general and 26.9 per cent of people thinking that development is more important on a local level as can be seen in figure 4.18 and 4.19.

On a more local level, there seems to be a distance decay effect, in relation to whether people agree with the M3 plan or not. People living in Dunshaughlin and Kells are more in favour of the motorway and people further away in Clonee and Cavan are less in favour. 66.7 per cent of people living on Clonee are in favour which is significantly below that average of 74.2 per cent while 80 per cent of people from Kells are in favour which is significantly above average, as can be seen in figure 4.8. It seems that those that are not directly affected by the motorway are more interested in heritage. This could be because it is easy for them to be "do-gooders" when the decision will not really affect them anyway.

Meath County Council were one of the main power players in this endeavour, however local people do not perceive them to be, with the majority thinking that central

government had a more important role to play in this case, whereas in reality, they did not. Local authorities have quite an influential role in decision-making relating to the M3. It could be that central government are quite happy to transfer responsibility for such endeavours to local authorities and likewise, local authorities are happy to pass on the blame to Central Government if problematic debates arise, such in the case of Tara and the M3.

#### 6.1.4 Insider vs. Outsider

It has been found that local people do not value the opinions of outsiders campaigning to try and prevent the construction of the motorway. From analysing data gathered through questionnaires, it has been found that 74.2 per cent of people living in the Meath area are actually in favour of the motorway being built on the proposed route. Many of the campaigners are from all over Ireland and also from foreign countries. As aforementioned, only 1.7 per cent of people classified it as an international issue. From qualitative data gathered through the questionnaire, a substantial amount of people – 9.9 per cent believed that “professors and celebrities should not be interfering”, when asked for an additional comment. It seems that insiders feel that the M3 issue does not concern outsiders as the decision to build the road will not affect their daily lives, and that these outsiders do not have the right to influence a decision that will affect insiders lives on a daily basis.

### 6.1.5 Development vs. Heritage.

It seems that the vast majority of people believe that both development and heritage are important, with 55.8 per cent thinking both to be equally important in general and 52.1 thinking both were important on a local level.

The problem seems to be the planning. If the traffic problem was dealt with properly and advice was listened to at the oral hearing, a better solution to the problem could have been planned and this whole situation could have been avoided. The main protesters have stated that they are not anti roads or anti development. They want roads and development. Joe Fenwick believes that “the transport and heritage issues were in fact separate issues, the Tara/Skryne Valley could have easily been avoided and the motorway built without courting any potential conflict”, and that “it was always possible to preserve this area for the benefit of future generations to study and enjoy and also provide the infrastructure necessary for our continued economic progress and development of the nation”.

## 6.2 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to investigate the role of heritage and development within the planning process. This has been investigated through sub aims, such as evaluating the adequacy of the planning process and the E.I.A. system and examining the opinions of local people with regard to outsiders.

All of the above topics have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

With regard to existing theory on issues connected with the Hill of Tara and M3 debate, the campaign group trying to prevent the construction of the M3 follow the models put forward earlier by Gurlach in that they are segmentary, reticulate and polycentric. They also follow Luebkes' theory in that they employ a "resource mobilisation approach". They have carefully planned their tactics in advance and have already delayed the construction of the motorway.

It has also been found that many of the protesters are conscience protesters, in that they are campaigning to stop a development that will have no direct effect on their lives. Although some of the protesters are simply anti development, it seems that the most influential ones, Bhreathnach, Fenwick and Newman are not anti road or anti development; they are only against this particular development. This contrasts with Miltons' view of protesters being anti roads and anti development.

The issue of misinformation and media representation has also been illustrated through this thesis. The general consensus given out by the media was that the majority of people were opposed to the motorway, when in fact, this research has concluded that the majority of people are in fact in favour of the M3, with 74.2 per cent of local respondents in favour of the route.

It seems that there is inadequacies within both the planning process and E.I.A. system in Ireland. One salient point is that a better system of public consultation is needed. More public consultation at earlier stages could reduce the amount of conflicts arising. Wood

(1995) reviews the E.I.A. systems in the U.S.A and the Netherlands. He says that it is mandatory in these places to have public consultation and participation both prior to and after the E.I.A is published. It has been proven that this kind of a system is beneficial as it decreases the amount of conflicts concerning planning decisions. Public consultation prior to plans being made would certainly lead to an improvement in planning decisions in Ireland. Also, a better monitoring system of E.I.A.'s is needed. In the Netherlands, the E.I.A system is reviewed and assessed every five years. Methods are evaluated and changed if necessary. If this were the case in Ireland, perhaps there would not be as many disputes occurring. More preventative measures could be made in the future. Legislation could be put in place that would protect any further heritage sites from coming under threat.

With an application made to the High Court for a judicial review by Vincent Salafia, a leading member of the Save the Tara Skryne valley group, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2005, just three weeks ago, it seems that this debate could continue for some years. Raimund Karl aptly puts it "So more congestion, no solution, and needless quarrelling for the next few years".

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# Appendix One

MA Thesis NUI Maynooth 2005: The Hill of Tara/M3 Motorway.



Locals Questionnaire.

No.

Town:

## Codebook

**Town**  
0= Missing  
1 = Cavan  
2=Kells  
3=Dunshaughlin  
4=Clonee

1.Age: (circle)

0-12 12-18 18-40 40-60 60-75 75+

**Question 1**  
0=Missing  
1 = 0-12 years  
2 = 12-18 years  
3 = 18 - 40 years  
4 = 40 - 60 years  
5 = 60 - 65 years  
6 = 75+ years

2.Gender: Male

Female

**Question 2**  
0 = Missing  
1 = Male

3. (a) Do you live in the locality?

Yes No

**Question 3(a)**  
0 = Missing  
1 = Yes  
2 = No

(b) How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

**Question 3(b)**  
0 = Missing  
1 = 0-1 year  
2 = 2-4 years  
3 = 4 - 6 years  
4 = 6 -10 years  
5 = 10 - 20 years  
6 = 20 + years  
9 = inapplicable

4. (a). Do you commute to work?  
Yes No

**Question 4 (a)**

0 = Missing  
1 = Yes  
2 = No  
9 = inapplicable

(b) If so, where do you work?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 4(b)**

0 = Missing  
1 = Navan  
2 = Clonee  
3 = Blanchardstown  
4 = Dublin City Centre  
5 = Drumcondra  
6 = Dunshaughlin  
7 = Cavan  
8 = Kells  
9 = Longford  
10 = Virginia  
99 = inapplicable

(c) What distance do you travel? (circle)

0-5 miles 5-10 miles 10-20 miles 20-30 miles  
30 miles+

**Question 4 (c)**

0 = Missing  
1 = 0-5 miles  
2 = 5-10 miles  
3 = 10 - 20 miles  
4 = 20 - 30 miles  
5 = 30+ miles  
9 = inapplicable

5. How long does this take? (circle)

>30 minutes  
30-60 minutes  
1hr-1hr30 minutes  
1hr 30 minutes+

**Question 5**

0 = Missing  
1 = > 30 minutes  
2 = 30 - 60 minutes  
3 = 1 hr - 1 hr 30 minutes  
4 = 1 hr 30 minutes+  
9 = inapplicable

6.(a) Do you agree with the proposed building of the M3 motorway near to the Hill of Tara? Yes No

**Question 6 (a)**

0 = Missing  
1 = Yes  
2 = No

(b) If not, why.

Reason 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 6(b)**

0 = Missing  
1 = M3 will go through Hill of Tara and destroy it.  
2 = Too many motorways, need to protect countryside  
3 = Destroy heritage  
4 = Tolls- massive cost to commuters, profits to a private company  
5 = Motorway won't work  
6 = No need for M3- there are alternatives.  
99 = inapplicable

(c) If so why

Reason 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Reason 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Reason 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 6 (c)**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Improve traffic flow
- 2 = accessibility
- 3 = Tara-Hyde , M3 will not destroy it
- 4 = We cant fall behind the rest of Ireland and the E.U.
- 99 = inapplicable

7. Do you think any of these alternatives would work?

	Y/N
Reopen railway	
Build Navan by pass	
Build Dunshaughlin by pass	
Upgrade the N3.	
Other?	

**Question 7**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

**Question 8 (a)**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Development
- 2 = Heritage
- 3 = Both

8. (a) In general which do you think is the most important, development of infrastructure or heritage? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 8(b)**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Roads like the N3 have a high rate of accidents
- 2 = Far too many motorways being built-destroying countryside
- 3 = We need to strike a balance between development and heritage
- 4 = If there are no road improvements, the economy would fall behind.
- 5 = Important to maintain Irelands distinct culture

(c) At a local level which is more important? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 8 (c)**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Development
- 2 = Heritage
- 3 = Both

9. Who do you think the major power players in the planning process are? (You can circle more than one if desired, put 1 beside 1<sup>st</sup> choice, 2 beside 2<sup>nd</sup> choice etc)

Local Authorities

National Roads Authority

Government

Lobby Groups

Private Companies

**Question 9**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Local Authorities
- 2 = National Roads Authority
- 3 = Government
- 4 = Lobby Groups
- 5 = Private Companies
- 6 = Inapplicable

10. Do you think archaeology is important? (circle)

Not at all ~ Slightly Important~ Important ~  
Quite Important~ Very Important.

**Question 10**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Slightly
- 3 = Important
- 4 = Quite important
- 5 = Very important

11. Do you think the majority of locals are for or against the road?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 11**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = For
- 2 = Against

12. Are local people interested in Tara?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 12**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No
- 3 = Not really
- 4 = Somewhat

13. Do you regard this to be a local, national or international issue?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 13**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Local
- 2 = National
- 3 = International

14. Where did you hear about the debate?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 14**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Television News
- 2 = Local Radio
- 3 = Local Newspaper
- 4 = National Radio
- 5 = National Newspaper
- 6 = Word of Mouth
- 7 = Television programme – Primetime

15. Any additional comments?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Question 15**

- 0 = Missing
- 1 = Motorway should be build as soon as possible
- 2 = Toll roads a disgrace-by passes would have been built by now.
- 3 = Motorway will be a white elephant.
- 4 = Professors/Celebrities are interfering.
- 5 = Hype – N3 is nearer to Tara.
- 6 = Blanchardstown is the problem
- 7 = People weren't interested in Tara until now.
- 8 = Toll roads – Millions of Euro profit – unfair.
- 9 = Too many motorways-Celtic Tiger greed.
- 10 = Meath needs a rail link – very important.
- 11 = less traffic would improve quality of life.

Thank you for your  
cooperation.

## Appendix Two

### Interview questions on Tara/M3.

1. Do you consider the Tara/Skryne Valley to be important and why?
2. Do you think archaeology and heritage are important?
3. Why is there a need to build the M3?
4. There were several other routes preferred. Do you think that this is the best option?
5. What alternatives do you think could solve the traffic congestion problem?
6. Who do you think is the major power player in the decision to construct the road?
7. Do you think that the fact that this is a PPP project had any bearing on the Ministers decision?
8. Do you think this conflict could have been avoided?
9. Do you think the planning process/Environmental Impact Assessment system is adequate?

## Appendix Three

Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin  
Department of Irish and Celtic Studies  
NUI Maynooth.  
Member of the Save the Tara/Skryne Valley Group  
15/April/2005.

### **Do you consider the Tara /Skryne valley to be important and why?**

I do consider it to be one of the most important areas in Ireland. To me it represents six thousand years of history, archaeology, and indeed to me it would be one of the most sacred valleys and most sacred areas in the country. It was certainly sacred to our ancestors six thousand years ago.....and St.Patrick is supposed to have reputedly visited there. That makes it part of our Christian, religious heritage, ritual heritage as well, so yes, I consider it to be important.

### **On a worldwide scale, is it considered to be important?**

Oh it is absolutely, anybody doing archaeology... anthropology ...abroad apparently, all over America, they've all heard of Tara and it is seen as being one of the most important sites in the world. That's coming from Conor Newman and Conor's the expert. Everybody's heard of it.

### **Why is there a need for the M3?**

Well is there a need to build the M3 would be the first question! And there are a lot of different opinions on it because, in 1999 when this whole thing started, it started with a bypass for the town of Dunshaughlin, which is really badly congested. And then the plan was to upgrade the N3 and there are a lot of people saying that that would be sufficient, that would be enough because there is also a disused railway line that really should be reopened. Even today in the Irish Independent, the Taoiseach is reported that they are looking at reopening that line, which is very good news the problem is, is that they are planning on building the new road over the railway line.

### **And where does that railway line go from?**

It goes from Dublin to Navan, all the way to Navan.

### **And that would be cheaper?**

It would be an awful lot cheaper to open the railway line and upgrade the existing N3. And the other solution as well is what they call a 2 for 1 system where you change the lanes and have two lanes going the one direction and one lane going the other. Then in the evening when the traffic is going the other way, you move, you change the 2 to 1 the other way around. So on a personal basis I would say the railway would suffice there is no need for a motorway and the only reason that there is a motorway is because it's going to be a tolled motorway. It's a private company; they are lined up to make something like thirty billion euro out of this. Huge money and it would appear

that the reason for the upgrade to a motorway was simply because there was E.U. funding available. And literally overnight, from 1999 to the year 2000 it became a motorway and then it became a tolled motorway. And now the developers are buying the land in the valley along where the motorway is supposed to be routed to build shopping centres, and developments and industrial units.

**The interchange will be a problem?**

Yes, it will be a huge interchange within a mile of the top of the hill , at a place called Blundelstown. And the proposed route as well is going to go right through Dalgan park, which is a great amenity up there, it belongs to the Columbian Fathers but they have let it open to the public. It's a public park; the road would cut right through the middle.

**There were several other routes available why was one of those not chosen?**

That's the question we are all asking why did they chose this route when everybody wanted other ones. From the very, very beginning, from the first advice they got, they were told not to choose this particular route. That it was the most archeologically sensitive area in the country and not to go down the valley, but apparently its cheaper to go down the valley from the point of view of journey times and that there are less houses on it. Of course there are less houses on Tara, they weren't allowed to be built there. Every single time, if the road goes ahead, every single time they put a spade in the ground, they are going to find more archaeology. And that's the scary thing about it. It will delay them forever; I don't think they have any concept at all of that. Because Mary Deevey was the archaeologist for the N.R.A. and the N.R.A. has maintained that the digging can be done within a year. Now that's absolutely impossible. It has taken them years to build at Carrickmines, which is just one site. It could take years. It could take a year and a half to dig one site. –

There's something like thirty to forty of them. Some of them will be tiny but apparently, some of them will be huge. Joe Fenwick who did the geophysical survey, He said some of them are the size of four football pitches. That's just one site. So when they call them sites, they are not sites, they are complexes.

.....probably all ritual sites. You can't pick them up and but them in a museum. You can't put a couple of football pitches in a museum!

So they are not artefacts in the sense that they found in Woodstown in that they found silver and chains and all that sort of thing, this is quite, quite different. They're sites. Old ritual sites, you can't put them in a museum. You can hardly take photographs of these things, because they are so big I mean the best shots you get of Tara are the aerial ones, where you can see the outline of the mountain. Even when you are walking it, it is difficult to imagine those mounds, but when you see it from the sky in the aerial photographs, then you see them and these are going to be exactly the same, they'll be huge.

**Is building the road not doing archaeology a favour because they'll bring up artefacts from beneath the ground?**

There is that argument; there is certainly that argument. And in certain cases that's probably true. But the problem is this type of archaeology's what they call rescue archaeology. It's being done with bulldozers behind them literally telling them to

hurry up. The problem is as well they dig the stuff out of the ground, they destroy the sites, and then they build a road over it, that is not archaeology. Archaeology is slow pace, with the little trowels, going through it very, very slowly. In the case of Woodstown, planning to put the road where they put it, unearthed that site, but they've moved that road.

### **Why did they move that one?**

Because the National Roads Authority said that they could do it. It's a bit of a contradiction because that's a Viking site. The Vikings aren't Irish. I can't understand myself personally why the Minister is so concerned about the Vikings. And that he's not concerned about the Irish. It doesn't make sense. In the case of Tara, that's not what's going to happen. I mean I've seen the graves of children they will have to dig up and move so they can build a road over where they were buried. A bit younger than you are. They are there four thousand years and they found them last year. Those graves of children will have to be moved. And it just seems incredible that if those graves were only say, ten years old or one hundred years old, we would say that it was terrible. But it seems alright to dig up people that have been there 4000 years, I think that is a disgrace, I'm going to make sure I'm cremated I don't want people digging me up! That's the sort of sites that they are going to find. And it is the valley of the dead and it was the sacred valley and people didn't live on the hill that is where they had their ceremonies, and buried the dead.

### **How is Skryne linked to Tara?**

Skryne would have been linked to Tara originally Achall which is supposed to be a woman's name she died there apparently, the story is that she gave her name to that particular hill, where she died mourning the death of her brother, Bitacall, and Tara would be connected ... The King of Tara lost the sight of one eye so he wasn't allowed to live there so he built Skryne, to sleep there and he could look over and he could see Tara. And it's a landscape, that's what we have been arguing all along. The hill is just the hill, but it's the hill of Tara and the landscape around there since the beginning of time...

### **Do you have any other alternatives?**

Me personally? I'd rather not have a motorway and this is a very small country and we are going to have far too many motorways. I think it would be far better to upgrade the roads that we have. The N3 is one of the straightest roads in Ireland. There is hardly a bend in it. The area in fact that they are talking about, the Tara area, is probably the less congested area of all, in the sense that there is no town there, There is the alternative of putting it either to the east of Skryne or to the west of Tara, they were the alternatives that were recommended by the road selection company; Harclow and Barry company so if there is to be a motorway, there the other options. And they were the options recommended.

### **They won't affect Tara at all?**

Well it certainly looks like it's about saving money in the building of the road and the journey time and saving money from the point of view of the route being shorter. They have no idea what the archaeology is going to cost. They could spend fifty million on it. But that fifty million needn't be spent on that archaeology, just leave the place alone. The National Roads Authority will be spending it. They will be giving it to an archaeological company. What happens if it costs one hundred million, you know? Surely it would be cheaper to go with the alternative route or to upgrade the existing road. The people say, well the existing road that goes through the valley, but that was made by picks and shovels, they don't do a lot of damage these huge road builders, they will wipe away sites. And because it's rescue archaeology, I would be worried certainly about the amount of archaeology that may simply disappear. That they will not want to stop at every site and look at it because it is costing money.

### **When the N3 was built did it affect Tara?**

It did. There's no doubt about it. But it's nearly two hundred years old. It was built by the British, at a time when the archaeology of Tara would not be top of their list. So it's one thing for the British to build a road through there but in the name of God, this is the Irish government. And maybe what we should be doing is taking the road out of Tara and covering it over. And leaving the valley intact. The valley is under attack from our own supposedly native government.

### **Would upgrading the N3 disrupt any other sites?**

It will disrupt the sites that would have been disrupted already it would be nothing compared to the impact of the M3. A four to six lane motorway with these huge interchanges. The interchange is a real problem. It's going to be floodlit, ... the noise you can imagine, interchanges are there to draw business. Petrol stations and McDonalds and shopping centres and all sorts of development. The whole valley will be destroyed.

### **Do you think now that the Minister will review his decision?**

So far he's saying he hasn't made a decision and he's still saying that he hasn't made a decision. He is aware of the fact of the great opposition that there is out there towards this road. My friend and colleague Edel Bhreathnach who has also worked on Tara, we are in the process at the moment of collecting as many names as we can from academics, we have one hundred and ninety five names worldwide. We should have two hundred by the end of the day. We will be presenting that to the Minister.

## Appendix Four

Edel Breathnach

Professor of History, U.C.D.

Member of the Discovery Programme Research Initiative on Tara.

14/May/2005.

**Do you consider the Tara/Skryne to be important and if so why?**

Well of course I do!

**I know!**

Well, the reason is because as a historian, I've been working on the Hill of Tara with a team of archaeologists, since 1991. We are working on a project and what we have found out about Tara is that is a centre, or was a centre of a very exceptional kingship.

**Right...**

And you have these types of kingships throughout the world, which are as much religious as they are political. ...and em what goes with that type of kingship is a very exceptional ceremony. Eh where an area is, is regarded as kind of what they call an axis mundi of it. Its a smaller version of the world, you know it's the world really,

**O I see..... I didn't know that,**

Yes it is really; they recreate their world in that landscape. Because they are in fact during ceremonies, when they make a King of Tara or a similar type of king, they inaugurate the King of the World, so we have, every civilisation had a version of that and this was the one in Ireland. And so the hill itself is just the central focus of the ceremonial landscape that was associated with that special kingship. So that's why its so important. And I suppose the closest that we can get to that type of kingship and ceremony is in fact the Papal Ceremony in the Vatican. It's the same idea to a certain extent, in that the Pope is called the Pontifex Maximus, you know, as was the Roman Emperor, so the King of the World was the greatest of great ones, therefore ....you know, we've all seen the amazing ceremony that went with the death of the Pope and the inauguration of the new Pope. Well, Tara too, to the people of prehistoric Ireland, that was the same, you know, that's how important it was. And then when Christianity came, obviously, they had to, the Christians, came to Ireland, were very clever in their Christianising the country, in that unlike the Church elsewhere, on the continent, for example, actually Christianised the landscape, so that's why we have holy wells all over the place, you know, because they took over the sites of their religious practice. Em that were already there and they Christianised them. With Tara it was a little bit different, because, em, it was so much associated with this religious kingship. They took the good bits of the kingship, which in its sort of philosophy was just the same as

a Christian kingship, you know the king had to be peaceful and just and truthful. Well if nothing, you know that is core to Christianity as well, but they put an end to the great ceremony, the ceremony was full of symbolism which was not Christian and it was associated particularly with Protestant, in effect, they ended the ceremony which was known, it continued to happen until around 550 AD. That was when the feast of Tara happened.

**So then on a worldwide scale, would Tara be considered to be important ?**

O absolutely and all the more important, because in so many developed countries, a lot of these sites have disappeared or their landscapes have disappeared, because of the type of progress which we are now undergoing. I mean I was kind of chuckling to myself when I saw in the newspaper saying that 'O but we could learn from Europe.' Because they have straight roads and all the rest. But in Germany and Italy those roads were built by one Adolph Hitler and one Benito Mussolini, I mean Mussolini just drove, cut right through the heart of you know of Rome, and destroyed a vast amount of Archaeology, in doing that. So they are no example to be emulating at all.

**Exactly, yes...**

Yeah and in North America there, there has been a huge controversy because some of the trades of the Indian people of the centre of the U.S. , they had similar kinds of sites and you know they have been ploughed away by motorways and shopping malls and so on, they are called the Mound Indians, you know they have huge mounds, and there has been huge controversy since the 1960s, about the destruction of the Mound. In and around the Dakota area, in and around there,

**I see.....**

So we are not alone but we should be learning!

**Why do you think is there a need for the M3 to be built?**

Well, I think, my view of that is, is there a need? Fair enough there's a need for a better route way to Donegal, you know, fundamentally. But then, it is not necessary that one little stretch should go through the Tara/Skryne Valley. It could take another route, or another alignment. I think really what this controversy also brings to our attention is so much, you know what kind of philosophy of planning do we have in this country. You know, building houses out in Kells and Cavan for people who want to commute to Dublin, then this necessitates a motorway. Instead of bringing industry to those towns themselves, and also the public transport system is not getting the same investment at all, not nearly as much as the roads system is. And as usual, we will be behind, we always have a time lag in everything in Ireland and other countries are beginning to realise that oil reserves, are going to reduce dramatically you know in forty or fifty years and motorways will just be perhaps you know not as necessary as they are now, there we are going wild around the county building motorways. I think the whole controversy should but in fact does not bring great information about our spatial planning, our public transport system, to the point of asking you know do we need it? The other thing of course is that there's huge pressure not only from speculators who ultimately I presume would want, you know, there's pressure coming

north from Dunshaughlin, and south from Navan and east from Trim, and ultimately it will just become the Greater Dublin area, like so many other places are. And also the tolling issue is one reason why they're pushing ahead with it. That's daft; I mean there's another toll road in the M1 so people have to pay their way no matter where they go. So I imagine that there is a lot of pressure coming from that quarter.

**Do you think one of the other alternatives would work?**

Absolutely, yes, and just get on with that. There's always these vague acknowledgments by politicians, but they're not exactly doing anything, they're not as swift in opening the rail line as they are in pushing the road through, the thing is that they're very blinkered in their thinking, I think, and they get a plan and they just seem to and they say that they are going through a process and I mean the process is utterly flawed, utterly flawed. And Frank Mc Donald showed that An Bord Pleanála does not go against anything, roads, decisions, or doesn't overturn them. They just plough ahead. There's no imagination there, really, no flexibility, what they perceive to be the quickest option.

**It will probably be the slowest now with all the legal battles ahead?**

Absolutely yes, and the whole point, just its one short stretch, not the whole thing, because ultimately the whole thing is going to Donegal, you know! And I put it last week to the chief executive of the N.R.A. and I asked him what if the politicians decided not to put it through the valley, what would you say? And he said, we would just live with it and find an alternative route. That's the only way of dealing with it! And he also admitted that if they were starting the process again, it wouldn't go through the valley. So effectively the N.R.A. in the words of their chief executive accept that it was a wrong decision and accept that it could go elsewhere.

**So why did the N.R.A. choose that route in the first place?**

Well that is a good question! Because there were alternatives and there wasn't sufficient evidence from the very beginning or if there was emphasis it was ignored, about the archaeology, To my mind, the most important consideration if you were to put a road in that area, was archaeology, not noise, pollution or whatever. That was the most important criteria. And it was emphasised and amazingly, if you can get your hands on the An Bord Pleanála Decision, there wasn't one single reference to archaeology in that decision, not a single reference. They mentioned collecting folklore and place names, which is just amazing. They don't mention archaeology at all!

**And what about the Environmental Impact Statement?**

O well you know, the E.I.S. absolutely underplays, from the very beginning for whatever reason, We were trying to speak out from the very beginning, there was a downplaying of the archaeological importance of the area and a hope, I presume, that it would sieve through very easily, and my colleague who gave evidence at the Bord Pleanála hearing who was really, I mean I remember him being really upset because I

was in Dublin, he was in Drogheda, he was phoning me down giving me reports and so on, and he said you know your man who was chairing it virtually fell asleep when he gave evidence. He just ..... the man was not listening at all!

And the other amazing thing which the N.R.A. took on board was that, they in the initial process siad, don't go near this place, and then halfway through the Bord Pleanála hearing changed interests, saying that actually you could mitigate, you know. For whatever reason was behind that. So what we need really to find out is well what is the pressure, what is the reason that they are so insistent on getting on bringing it through, I don't know whether its land speculation or the toll companies. I don't know.

**Who has the most power in making the decision?**

Well I think it was Dick Roach and the cabinet. It was a political decision. And what's more is that it was a political decision where they knew full well what they were doing. I met Dick Roach, my colleague Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin, we met Dick Roach and Bertie Ahern and we gave them everything ever we wrote, so they know full well what they are doing they are not that stupid at all.

I mean, why are they causing such controversy? I think they think they can get through, that people in general don't care, which I don't really, well I hope is not so, you know, that they can get away with it and argue O, well the commuters of Meath are delighted you know, and the people of Meath are delighted.

**Why did Dick Roach change his mind in the recent Woodstown case and not the Tara case?**

Well Woodstown wasn't a problem at all, because as the N.R.A. man said to me, you know, Woodstown resolved itself. They had the alternative; they weren't so aggressive about Woodstown, because they had an alternative all the time so it wasn't, that's no big deal at all, at all. That was an easy one and I think he thought he would buy everyone off by saving Woodstown. No that wasn't a problem at all. That wasn't a big decision.

**Do you think it will cost a lot more to built the road now?**

Well it depends you see, it depends on legal action, and how the courts regard the whole issue. And also, to be quite honest, I am very worried about the standard of archaeology, I mean I already see the N.R.A. saying that they can get through the archaeology in six to twelve months, I mean if the archaeology is anything that we already have seen it to be, they can only do that by doing a very substandard excavation, and just ploughing their way through it, which is what they did with the test trenching, they did the test trenching between Easter and June last year, they just whammed their way through it. There was no serious, do you see, with an area like that, you should be doing excavation which is what we would call, part of a research project, so it should be a very careful excavation, on the basis of certain questions, which have come from the information we already have about the area. Now, unfortunately, the people who are going to do the excavation, they may be good at their trowelling and their drawing and so on, well, one would hope they would be, but they are not exactly people who would know in detail, or what it was, or what they should be expecting, or how to interpret the things they get. I mean they haven't gone

and spoken to me at all, I mean they have shouted across the room at me on many occasions! But none of them have come to me and said, listen, what are we to see and find, you know,

**So they would just be general archaeologists, they wouldn't be specialists of that era?**

O not at all, and its not part of a research, there's no research strategy there, and I certainly don't get the impression from what I've heard of them, that they understand the landscape they are going through, and what the monuments they might find, or expect to find, I mean they say horrendous things, like well, most of the archaeology that they will find is medieval and therefore irrelevant to the hill. I mean that is a completely outrageous thing to say. Tara remained really important right down to the late medieval period, so it didn't lose its symbolic importance, so everything that was done in that area was done with care and deliberately, nobody reckoned that area hell for leather and to say that for example the medieval material is irrelevant is an absolute outrage and it shows their depth of ignorance, so that is why I have become very annoyed on the academic side of things, you know, that I'm dealing with people who just don't understand at all, I mean how could they, they don't have all the Irish, they haven't read all the papers I've read, nor have they surveyed the area like my colleagues have. How could they, I mean, its like me taking a trowel to my hand and excavating happily away, not having the wherewithal to do it, you know. I get very cross about it!

**What do you think of Dick Roaches' statement in the Irish Independent yesterday, (13/05/05), when he said that he slightly altered the route?**

That makes no difference at all, I mean the conditions were the standard conditions you would lay down for any route and there's nothing special in them at all! And altering the route by saying you have less lights simply won't work, because the place is one of those places where you have a natural misty place, you know? So they have to have fairly strong lighting. And saying that a few extra trees are going to mitigate it, you put in a motorway and an intersection and its there for good, they can't do anything about it then! They can't cover it over again, you know! I take that all as just window dressing to be quite honest!

**What do you think of the planning process?**

One thing I would say and this is something I've said to all of them, politicians and the whole lot, is the E.I.A. system is utterly flawed! I mean Tara, for example, they knew that we were working on Tara since 1991, it's a very small community, you know, us historians, and not one single one of them came and discussed it with us. They never came near us, and yet, they went off spending large amounts of money on consultants writing up reports, which you know, they just didn't know the stuff, no more than the archaeologists, who are excavating it, They are consultants. First of all they don't put a proper store in historical knowledge, which to my mind, if they had done that both in the cases of Carrickmines and Tara, they would have avoided those controversies or at least you know, the importance of the place would have been highlighted, from the very beginning, that if people would wish to listen. And I feel that a vast amount of money has gone into the coffers of consultants who are ill-

equipped really from what I've seen of some of the E.I.A.s from my perspective, from the historical perspective, to do the work, you know, and to report, some of the work I've seen is utterly shoddy and basic. They're not trained to do it you know! Certainly not on the historic side. They're not trained to do it. It's a very particular specialised type of work, you have to be able to negotiate your way around place name studies and so on. And those people are not at all. And the worst thing you know is that the State itself has a place names office, which is never used. They have a vast archive and there's no need for consultants, I just think its outrageous, if they gave a few more staff to the place names office to have a certain person in it that would deal with you know, spatial infrastructure, to check out all the places. They would get top class, certainly from the historical and literary point of view, very good material, given to them by experts, instead of pouring money into these consultants who are not equipped to do it at all, so that where I see, certainly in the archaeological and historical aspect of the E.I.A. I was also involved in the Durrow case in Co. Offaly, where the monastic site was threatened there about four years ago, and the E.I.A. was the flaw. Because again, they didn't appreciate the importance of a site until it was very late. And the E.I.A., there was a gapping whole in it, from the historical aspect. Well that's something that I would emphasise anyway. And the amount of public money that is spent on them is phenomenal. If they had a network of experts in the Universities or the State bodies that could be called upon, when there was an infrastructure, certainly state funded, whatever about private development, that they would call upon them and you know, if there was a system there, and they would likely get far better value for money, and avoid problems. But that sounds too organised for this country!

**I have yes,**

Right, so you'll know that when you're standing on the Hill of Tara you're gaze is drawn westward, not to the east, its not towards Skryne, so basically, from archaeological, well predominantly historic times, ok? The High King, he looked out over to the west because to the west, its flat, so you can see the plains of Ireland and you can see as far up as the Shannon, ok? Over to the west, your back is to the east, because to the east it's a valley, and there's Skryne, which is a medieval hilltop, a medieval town, right? Well town is much too broad a word for it, it's a church really, and environs of the church is over to the east. Ok, so a lot of people said no absolutely, you couldn't put a road to the west, that would be absolutely dreadful from an archaeological viewpoint. You know because it would spoil the view. So and then there is, I mean we are looking at it from the archaeological viewpoint, so then there is a road to the east of Skryne, ok, and the archaeologists who did the E.I.S. said that the road to the east of Skryne would be much better because its further away from Tara, but if you can't go the east, that this road, the blue route, the route that we are going, right, is the second best from an archaeological viewpoint ok, so that's our archaeology, now there's also peoples homes, peoples homes are a major issue on relation to, impact on where people live , do their houses have to be demolished, does there have to be severance of communities, and severance of peoples lands, when all of the environmental factors were taken into account, including economic ones, it was felt that this route, the blue route, which is the one going through the valley, was the best route, you know when you weigh everything up, and it was a process that took years, its not somebody in an office a grey man with a grey suit and a grey face in office saying, eh I'm going to put my road here, it takes years, there's public consultation, there's teams of environmentalists and engineers that we have involved in the whole process, the upshot was that this route was the best route, was deemed the best route and then it goes to An Bord Pleanála, and their an independent body and An Bord Pleanála said it was the best route.

**So if the choice were to be made again, would the same route be chosen?**

Well... Yeah I mean it's a very difficult one, I mean I'm an archaeologist, I wasn't involved in the planning side of things; because we are only in the N.R.A. four years and this all happened in the late nineties and I have looked at it long and hard and thought well you know, what would I think as an archaeologist, what would be the best route and I still think the route we are going; the blue route, is the best route, right? And I'll tell you why, obviously, the argument which is that the one to the west of Tara, you couldn't do that because of the huge visual impact and if you are going to the east of Skryne, as an archaeologist, I feel that there wasn't enough weight given to the pink route in the E.I.S., I mean from an archaeological viewpoint, because there are first of all, it's a medieval settlement, and there would be I think a huge impact on the archaeology belonging to the medieval settlement but also on its proximity to Skryne, because its actually on top of Skryne, so when your standing up on the Church in Skryne, It's a lovely little church, a lovely carving over the door, so you would look east of that church and it would be practically right on top of it. So very close to it, very close to Skryne and so, as an archaeologist, I think that this route is the best because from a visual impact, it will be

virtually nil, because it will be embedded into the landscape, because its in a valley, so you wont really see it.

**And would you hear it?**

Well its further away from Tara than the existing road, so it's whatever you hear from Tara now, well this is going to be further away from it.

**And what about the floodlit interchange at Blundelstown?**

Well they have changed it now and it's not going to be lit. Well I suppose well, who would, if it was floodlit, well its not going to be floodlit, but it would only be presumably at night time if you were up on the Hill of Tara, you know whatever and who would be?

**Druids maybe?**

Yeah!

But I think a lot of the protesters are being slightly disingenuous, they're talking about ; it's a real concern it's a genuine concern its not the road and the Blundelstown interchange it's that there will be associated development and I think that's the big issue, more so than the road per se ok? Shopping centres and all that kind of stuff absolutely. I think that would be horrendous. But what those protesters should be doing is campaigning with the local authorities with their local councillors, local T.D.s with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local government Dick Roache, and saying, sterilise this land from development, we don't want it developed. And that's what needs to be done. Do something that would limit or negate development, in that area. Because I've actually said it to the protesters, The Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland had a one-day forum for members in relation to all of this. And people were saying this is a genuine concern, you know this development, and I said its incredibly naïve to think that if we don't build a road you will never have development. That's naïve. Ok the chances if we go with the road, the chances that you will have development is higher, absolutely, but it doesn't mean that you'll never .... If that road doesn't get built, it doesn't mean that that land will never be developed. Land can be rezoned, and I just think its kind of, you see there's been the anti roads campaigners who are involved in the M3 and they are involved in all our schemes the exact same people. The same ones over and over again, so they have an anti globalisation, anti road, anti PPP scheme, ok? So they have kind of a whole agenda. You have people who are legitimate, like Conor Newman, or whoever, in NUI Galway who used this as a study area, and they just don't want a road, they want no development there for archaeological reasons. Now Conor isn't going to be jumping on a bandwagon in relation to another road scheme but some of the other people will be, ok? So you've got to ... its not a black and white issue, there are total subtleties, other issues have been raised by all of this, one of them is landscape, landscape characterisation, of how we look at landscape, as archaeologists, right? I know Muireann Ni Bhrolcháin goes on about literary landscapes, ok? I could look out that window there and I can see.... A Victorian landscape, a medieval landscape, a Georgian landscape, ok? A 21<sup>st</sup> century landscape ok? It's a layering of landscapes. Ok? By saying you have a certain type of

landscape, if we as archaeologists, and I've just written a paper on this which is going to be published in September, a monograph thing we're doing. If we as archaeologists are talking about landscape and I've no problem with that, and I actually embrace that I think it's a really, really interesting concept. If we step out of the classroom, and out of the university halls and into the real world, I don't mean that to sound sort of patronising, but I mean the working world, then, we as archaeologists or historians or Celtic Studies people, whatever we are, em, geographers! We're going to have to say ok, our concepts, if we don't want them just to be academic, or intellectual concepts, we want them to be real practical concepts, then we are actually going to have to embrace that and say that right, what do we mean by an archaeological or historical landscape? How do we define it? What are we saying? Are we then negating everything else that's in that landscape are we saying, we are opposed to one hundred per cent development in that landscape, and if we are, then we are talking about Mrs. Murphy's house down the road, she can't put an extension onto it. But I mean if that's what we (by we I mean the archaeological profession I suppose), want to do, you know, what I'm saying is that they are either intellectual concepts, that are good for our study areas, in some instances they are intellectual concepts that need practical parameters, so that we can actually look after and protect these landscapes, or else we are going to have to live with them and allow development, ok? And the other thing is that if you are going to go down that road in relation to Tara and the landscape around Tara, that's not a medieval or prehistoric landscape, it's a 21<sup>st</sup> century landscape, there's houses, the field patterns, there's roads, there's schools, there's pubs! You know, its not a landscape that has been untouched, and I think you know I really think the Emperor has no clothes. You know, that it's kind of easy people can stand up and say Oh this great landscape and its like you know the Emperor has no clothes right? People say Oh yeah absolutely it is it is If you actually say well, show me, indicate to me the parameters of what is that landscape and people can't because I've done this I've had this discussion with people. And it's all very kind of hyperbole and purple prose or whatever but when you actually get down to trying to stick to parameters, but also, and I know I'm probably going on a bit here! But we're, you're familiar with the RMPs, Records of Monuments and Places are you?

**Yes, the register?**

Yes from the D.O.E. The D.O.E. hold a sites monuments records and there is a RMP area around Tara, ok? So there's Tara the Hill of Tara, and the RMP goes something like that right?[O'Rourke draws a map of Tara]. And there is the Hill of Skryne ok? As an Agency, and as a body, we have to look at that area, that's the statutory area around the Hill of Tara.

**That you can't go near?**

That we can't go near and we don't want to go near it anyway, that's you know, that's the statutory area. If its to be that well then the D.O.E. need to make that landscape, or there needs to be representations from these people who seem to be so concerned about the landscape of Tara so I don't know I'm just .... I'll wait and see what happens, as

archaeologists, we need to embrace the debate about landscape, and what we mean by them.

**So it's more about conserving landscapes than digging up artefacts?**

It's more the landscape in this instance and where the individual sites fit into the landscape and are they a part of the landscape of what's known as the Hill of Tara. The other thing is and what people don't know, ok and any of the work that say Conor Newman has carried out or Joe Fenwick, has all been through use of geophysics. They don't dig, they don't actually know what date any of these sites and monuments are nobody knows.

**So they can just sense that there's something there?**

Yes basically its just like x-raying the soil. That's what it is so you could see something like that in the soil, which could be say a semi penanular enclosure, areas of burning, its receptivity, its all these different types of geophysics that are used, ok which is fine but geophysics in itself is only a tool, because we use it all the time on our road schemes, thanks to people like Conor who pioneered it in the use if the academic sphere, we have taken it out of kind of pure research and use it now for all our road schemes. I'm sceptical of the use of geophysics, everybody who knows me knows that I'm sceptical we use it where we can as a tool, not on its own, but people in Galway have taken this information and extrapolated on and on and on when they don't know what the date of these sites are, they don't actually know what they contain, do they contain anything, you know, there's a lot of I suppose archaeological issues there and again I think people don't want , you know people want to be seen to be on the side of what they perceive to be you know the good guys. You know, which is fair enough.

**Do you think that the majority of people are for or against the road?**

The majority of Irish people between you and me don't give a fiddlers!  
Yes, the majority of people in the country don't give a fiddlers, its pertinent to people in the Clonee to Kells area. But that's it.

**So do you think any of the alternatives would work?**

Oh well, why does it have to be an alternative? Why can't the railway be built anyway? You see, and people talk about public transport ok? But most public transport, most people that use public transport in this country use buses, buses travel on roads. Ok? The trains. Absolutely, why can't we have both, why does it have to be an argument over one against the other and absolutely we need a train to Donegal. There's no such thing as a train to Donegal. They're not mutually exclusive. That's why I would love to get into a debate with somebody like Muireann or whoever, that come out with very sort of emotive kind of language and all these statements about the train. You know fine, but how does the hauler get all his stuff from the factory in Donegal how do they get them to Dublin to the port to go out? They're not going to put all that kind of stuff on trains are they? I

don't know, but you know what I mean? There's all those little practicalities and what do you do when you get to Dublin are there supposed to be lorries there to bring them off to wherever they are going to in Europe or Britain or wherever. Again I think that is a disingenuous argument. We should have both.

**There's another argument that all the traffic will get congested at Blanchardstown anyway? That the M3 will just let the traffic move faster but will hit a bottleneck at Blanchardstown anyway.**

But I don't understand that argument because it's blocked up now, right? And so how is it going to be any more blocked up by having a new road, and absolutely something has to be done with the inner orbital, or an outer orbital I suppose around Dublin. And there are talks for some plans in the future to build an outer orbital but the, like I don't see that as an argument, for why you wouldn't its like, I won't get out of bed this morning because I'm going to be in a queue for a bus ok? So If I get out of bed quicker, will I still be in a queue for a bus or will I be if I get out of bed later, so I would see that, to me that's not an argument! You know? Absolutely something has to be done about Blanchardstown, or the Mad Cow roundabout and places like that, everybody knows that they are problems, because of you know the volumes of traffic, but I don't see how dramatically its going to change, and its probably only going to get worse, I mean I believe the percentage of deaths on the N3 is higher than any other national road in the country.

**So the M3 is needed very badly?**

Absolutely, it's a very dangerous stretch of road. And unfortunately archaeology has been highlighted as well by people who aren't archaeologists but are using archaeology for their own benefits, who basically I don't know, want to cause chaos, bring the National roads programme to a standstill, you know.

**So there are only a very small number of people against it?**

Well you see Muireann has galvanised you know foreign, you know all these people who do Celtic Studies and all of that kind of stuff?

**Yes I've interviewed some of them from America and Wales.**

So they just sign and most of them know a lot about Tara but nothing about the Ireland of today, about the congestion....

A senior Irish archaeological academic said to me, its like if we heard that Maccu Picchu was being destroyed, you'd sign a petition, to save Maccu Picchu?

You wouldn't actually know anything about it or what was happening or whatever, it's the other side of the world and we all know it's a famous place, and he said, he's an archaeologist and he said the same thing about Tara. That's why I kind of feel the Emperor has no clothes. When all these people stand up and say its terrible terrible terrible and you have to say well what is, and they actually really don't know. But

unfortunately the media pick up on ..... from the medias point of view, we're Goliath and the likes of Muireann and the protesters are David. And we can never win in the medias eyes. And we're used to that at this stage. We will always be seen as the machine of the State. We kind of laugh in here, You think of the N.R.A. as if it was some big scary monster and actually its not, its ninty men and women, trying to do our job. But anyway sure that's another story you know!

Its not as one sided as the media make it out to be. We don't get a fair... it's a David and Goliath situation. We don't get a fair crack of the whip. But anyway, that's the way!

## Appendix Six

Councillor Peter Higgins.  
Trim elected member of Meath County Council.  
22/June/2005.

### **Do you consider the Tara/Skryne Valley to be important and why?**

Well I wouldn't have said so up until lately, and I am a person who would be interested in history and heritage. I wouldn't have thought that it had a particular significance. The Hill of Tara would be significant and the Hill of Skryne would be of minor significance, but I remain to be convinced as to whether the valley is significant. Initially I was told that the area of Kilmessan was far more archaeologically significant than the valley.

### **Do you think archaeology and heritage is important?**

Of course I do, yes.

### **Why is there a need to build the M3?**

Well that is questionable. What we really need are bypasses. That was the original plan, and I think that that is still adequate. Down in Waterford and Cork, there are plans to build a motorway where approximately 20,000 cars a day would use it, but it would need 80,000 cars a day to use it in order for it to be economical. The government are providing the money for this so it is hard to argue with the government. I think that this is a vanity project; the country is doing well so the government want to put motorways everywhere. I don't think we need a motorway of this size, I think the bypasses would have worked. They would have been built by now if the plans had not been changed.

### **There were several other potential routes; do you think that the proposed one is the best option?**

Well, it might well have been, others were considered but ruled out, north of Skryne and south of Tara were ruled out because of their archaeological potential. North of Skryne was ruled out because it would make the road too long and had a larger number of dwellings that would have had to be disrupted. There are ten to twelve considerations to take into account; archaeology is only one of those. Conor Newman and the likes say there are thirty eight sites of archaeological importance on the route, but I have yet to be convinced of the importance of those sites. Some of them are only of minor interest, like a site where someone lit a fire six thousand years ago, and I'm sure there are thousands of them scattered throughout the country. The Route only takes up five per cent of the valley so there are possibly many more of these throughout the valley.

**What alternatives do you think could solve the traffic congestion problem?**

Build bypasses for Navan and Dunshaughlin. That would ease the congestion. The problem with the motorway is that the bulk of the congestion is at the M50, around Blanchardstown shopping centre. The M3 won't do anything to relieve this congestion. I'm not convinced that it will work at all.

**Who do you think is the major power player in the decision to build the road?**

I think the reason why it's going ahead is because it's a Public Private Partnership project. This is why it's a road rather than a railway. The profits to be made by the toll companies are unbelievable, as can be seen by the profits made at the M50 bridge. The government is spending too much money on pensions; this should be going into improving infrastructure I think anyway.

**Do you think that this conflict could have been avoided?**

I don't think so, no matter what route it might have taken there would have been conflict, maybe not from an archaeological point of view, but there probably would be houses which would have to be knocked down.

**Do you think the planning process/ Environmental Impacts Assessment system is adequate?**

To tell you the truth, no I don't think it is. The first thing is that the planning process is put before councillors who don't really have a lot of expertise, they are guided by the officials, they don't really have qualifications or expertise in planning, or the ability to criticise plans, you know? They are dependent on the professional planners and people in An Bord Pleanála. In An Bord Pleanála, they have an inspector who approves the routes and I don't want to say it, but it can be a bit of a rubber-stamping exercise, very little change was made to routes at any of those oral hearings. In the future the government need to make things more transparent. They could argue that they do, but putting public notices in the newspapers, it doesn't really get to the people who need to know. Once the decision is made, it is very hard to overturn it. Any submissions should be made before the decision is made, and I know people like Conor Newman have, but that is the time to be drumming up support, before the decision is made, rather than afterwards.