Practice Bold as Love: ‘Professing’ Community Work

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. I have not submitted this thesis in part or whole for any other degree.

I certify that the content of this thesis results from my own work, that all help received in its completion and all sources used have been acknowledged.

David Donovan

For Fela for urging me to get it finished.

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ABSTRACT

Community work is a values driven occupation committed to social transformation, human rights, equality, anti-discrimination, social and environmental justice through the processes of collective empowerment, and participation (Ledwith 2005; AIEB 2016). The story of community work in Ireland sees a shift from a once relatively independent practice towards a situation where it is increasingly becoming part of the State's apparatus of service delivery (Harvey 2012, 2015). These two stories are at odds with each other. I was curious to find out if this situation was impacting on community workers' 'professing', that is their way of being in and seeing the world. Story is an essential aspect of community work (Ledwith 2005; Born 2014; Kelly and Westoby 2018). I chose narrative inquiry as a way of researching community workers stories. Narrative inquiry accepts that the world is storied and that through collecting and analysing stories it is possible to gain an understanding of how another 'professes' their world to be (Andrews, et al., 2013; Clandinin 2013). I gathered the stories of six leading community workers and from these I fashioned a collective narrative of 'professing'. This illustrates community workers' 'profession' as an intermeshing of three commitments to, social justice, community, and reflexive practice.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIEB	All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Training and Education
AISCW	All Ireland Standards for Community Work
CDP	Community Development Programme
CPA	Combat Poverty Agency
CWC	Community Workers Co-operative
CWI	Community Work Ireland
DAPPSS	Department of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University
KCAT	Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent
PIRC	Public Interest Research Centre
Maynooth	Maynooth University
SICAP	Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme
TA	Thematic Analysis
VCRM	Voice Centred Relational Method
WfC	Working for Change: The Irish Journal of Community Work

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: A QUESTION POPS INTO MY HEAD

> In antiquity, Irish scholars were known…for their practice of '*navigatio*'… a journey undertaken by boat…a circular itinerary of exodus and return…the odyssey could be literal or figural the aim was to undergo an apprenticeship to signs of strangeness with a view to becoming more attentive to the meanings of one's own time and place – geographical, spiritual and intellectual. (Kearney, 2006, p.x)

1.1 Introduction

Before setting out on this particular *navigatio*, and in keeping with the journey metaphor in subsequent chapters, I replace the heading Introduction with the term Road Map. At the end of each chapter I use the term Fingerpost as a pointer towards the route plotted in the following chapter.

I outline the current context of community work in Ireland in 1.2, (throughout this journey I use the terms community development and community work interchangeably in keeping with usage in Ireland). My research curiosity is the subject of 1.3. In 1.4, I place myself in the story indicating what drove me to undertake this particular *navigatio*. A road map to this thesis is offered in 1.5. And finally in 1.6 we come to a fingerpost to chapter 2.

1.2 Current context of community work

The community and voluntary sector was one of the areas singled out for cuts as part of the austerity programme followed by Ireland following the crash of 2008 (Harvey, 2012; Bissett, 2015). Funding cuts averaged 35% across the sector (Bissett, 2015) with some groups e.g. Travellers, experiencing particularly harsh reductions (Harvey, 2013). This marked an end point to a course plotted by the state since 2002 when "a sharp authoritarian turn in the state's position vis-à-vis the community sector" was initiated, this showcased the:

> relentless narrowing and circumscribing of the scope of the community sector's advocacy and political role since that time and…the "erratic nature, volatility, and unpredictability of state reactions" (Bissett, 2015 p.174). (Embedded quote Harvey, 2014).

Bissett (2015, p.174-175) concludes:

> Taken together, the economic policies of austerity and the censorial politics of the state are ways of maintaining the power and privilege of some while extending and deepening the suffering of others.

Looking at these developments from a global perspective Petrella (2008 p.2) writes:

> The defining mark of the current global context is the spread of zones of social abandonment…where those for whom the reigning social order finds no use are left to die.

The current crises of homelessness, in work poverty, child and adolescent mental health services, to name but three, serve as illustrations of the collateral damage of wrought by austerity measures targeting a sector:

> Primarily involved in…immaterial or affective labour [dealing with] human relationships and the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities (Bissett 2015, p.173).

In tandem with the austerity programme there has been a steady drift in the values underlying government policies from intrinsic values, "associated with pro-social, pro-environment attitudes and behaviour that 'bigger than self' problems require" (Hoff-Elimari, 2014, p.1), towards extrinsic values, "centred on external approval or rewards" (Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC), 2011, p.20). More worryingly was the finding that "public opinion…had moved in the same direction as…government" (Hoff-Elimari, 2014, p.5). The state and public opinion are thus guided by values "associated with higher levels of prejudice…weak concern about human rights…and less helpfulness" (PIRC, 2011, p.24), rather than social solidarity, human rights, freedom and creativity, and values are highly influential in guiding behaviour (PIRC, 2011).

The International Association for Community Development (IACD) adopted the following definition of community development at its 2016 conference in Minnesota:

> *Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes human rights, equality and social justice, participative democracy and sustainable development, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban or rural settings* (IACD, 2016)(italics in original).

However community work in Ireland is being reshaped, via restrictive policies, procedures and funding guidelines (Bissett 2015), into a practice that little resembled the one mapped out

by (IACD 2016) or in *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work* (Community Workers Co-operative (CWC) 2008):

> Community work is not a process that takes place in a short timeframe as it seeks to address deeply rooted inequalities and forms of disadvantage. It is recognised that it takes varying lengths of time to achieve tangible results depending on the community involved (CWC, 2008, p.10).

Central to this process are the values of participation, empowerment, social justice, collectivity, equality and anti-discrimination (CWC, 2008). *Towards Standards* was the result of a wide-ranging process of consultation involving practitioners, agencies, educators and others (CWC, 2008) thus the community work envisaged in that document and its successor *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* (AISCW) (All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training, (AIEB), 2016), was not only widely accepted but also practiced. However, such a practice represented a bold and direct challenge to the policy thrust of the State. This challenge resulted in a process of reining in and disciplining of such bold practice (see for example; Harvey, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Bissett, 2015; Doyle, 2016).

New programmes, such as the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), while mentioning the adoption of community development approaches (POBAL, 2017 via Community Work Ireland, (CWI), 2017) accept as given the current social and economic structure. Community development is now seen as a way of bringing people back into the fold (as economic actors) via employment activation. No longer was community development to be seen as personal stories, becoming collective stories leading to collective analysis and collective action for social change in the direction of social and environmental justice, human rights and equality.

1.3 From Research Curiosity to Research Question

Community workers are conscious of this change and seek ways to challenge and resist these changes. Challenge and resistance comes in many forms e.g. a re-affirmation of the values of community work (CWI, 2015; AIEB, 2016), foregrounding those values in their work (Gormally, 2012; Smith, S, 2012), building alliances with others seeking to challenge and resist (O'Keeffe, 2010; Bissett, 2015). My growing awareness of these changes and the challenges faced by community work and community workers coupled with my own

troublings as regards my practice grew into a curiosity, which no matter how much I tried to ignore it called me to go in search of an answer. This curiosity finally expressed itself as a research question:

> What do community workers 'profess?

In my 'apprenticeship to signs of strangeness' through this *navigatio* of my research question I draw on 30 years of storytelling experience through my involvement with Macnas (a street arts and spectacle company). Stories are made up of events which "are selected and privileged over other events" (Afuape, 2011, p.81). They act as a way of "externalising conversations" (White 2007 in Mazza, 2017, p.15). These externalised conversations can be used as ways of both expressing, and reflection upon identity (Lago, 2004). Stories allow us to:

> Extract depth from life around us…transform fragility into resilience…forge community bonds and a sense of belonging (Adnam Jones, 2018, p.290).

I conduct this research via story collecting and storytelling. I do this using narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry understands it is possible to hear and know people's view of the world through experiencing the stories they tell of themselves and of their world(s); "stories lived and told" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.20). I invite specific community workers into conversation about their practice and through processes of reflection, repeated listenings, transcription; I gain access to their ways of being in and seeing the world. Through experiences of hearing, holding, construction and re-construction of their stories I braid a narrative that speaks to my research question.

1.4 Placing myself in the story

I tell my story as my voice is very much part of this research. It is important for you the reader to know something of my story in order to gain an understanding of what led me to my research question. As with any story there are numerous potential starting points. Mine begins with a bicycle ride in July 2012 in which several influences converged in my mind as I cycled along.

I returned to community work in 2011 to undertake the Masters in Applied Social Studies in Maynooth University. For the previous 18 years, since my original time in Maynooth, when

in 1991-1992 I undertook the Diploma in Community Work, I had worked with Macnas. My role there was as community arts worker. I was made redundant in early 2012. This was somewhat funny as I had only recently become happy describing myself as artist, an appellation I would not have used previously. This title, having been bestowed on me by others, was one I had finally become comfortable with, and now it too was gone.

My Masters dissertation was based on a collaborative project between Macnas and Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (KCAT). It probed arts work as an avenue for community development. One thing that struck me about the people I interviewed was how they spoke of their motivations for engaging in their work:

> It's a kind of radical personal alternative…beyond a career view of life (Informant 3 in Donovan, 2012, p.60).

KCAT grew out of Camphill, intentional communities with people with intellectual disabilities. Here people are not viewed from a deficit perspective but rather each person is valued as having unique talents and abilities that are realised though sharing in community (KCAT, 2009). Theirs was the practice of a "revolutionary professional" (Andrews, 2001):

> whose members…break through barriers…fight against the biases which discriminate against the disadvantaged in our society (Chambers, 1983 in Andrews, 2001, p. 26).

Informant 3 (in Donovan, 2012 p.61) spoke of their work as a:

> process of recognising the essential virtue of the individual which might be eccentric and in itself individual…Who is that person? What do they want to be doing with their life? How can we live with them in a way that is helpful for them to become themselves in a harmonious…in a way that is not destructive?

These questions are similar to those posed by community work. How does it become possible for people to work together in ways that are not destructive but life-enhancing?

These questions reminded me of the Rubric of Regeneration and Cycle of Belonging (McIntosh 2008b), (see Appendix 6). Community for him is understood as a tripartite relationship between:

- soil, the living planet upon which we stand and depend,
- society, a sense of belonging based on inclusiveness,
- soul, a relationship with what is beyond us such that we become more keenly present and alive in the moment (McIntosh 2002).

This relationship nurtures the flourishing of intrinsic values championing belonging, and inclusiveness:

> This tripartite understanding of community is the root, trunk and branch of right relationship. It is how love becomes incarnate (McIntosh, 2002, p.280).

Several years ago, at a meeting on urban regeneration organised by Fatima Groups United (FGU), I had been introduced to the work of Mike Bell from the Canadian Arctic. FGU and the community through a struggle for recognition and participation became a key player in the regeneration of their community. They insisted regeneration be not just physical but also social, cultural and economic. Mike Bell introduced into the mix his idea of two contrasting paradigms for community development. He characterises these as the Power and Spirit paradigms (Bell, 1999), (see appendix 5). The paradigms represent two very different worldviews and thus two very different approaches to community development and two very different endpoints for community.

A final influence was a talk at a Youthwork conference in the 1990s in Malahide in Co. Dublin. The topic for the conference was partnership. The Sunday morning started with Jim Lawlor of the Rialto Youth Project asking people to close their eyes and pay attention to where they were in themselves, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. He then spoke about partnership in his practice and in his life.

All of these encounters have troubled me. They have caused me to stop and ask myself questions I might rather avoid. Questions that have to do with my own practice; what paradigm I might be following, does my practice embrace more than the career view, where and what are the soil, soul and society that I draw on and aspire towards, how am I spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally with my practice?

So I find myself troubled that July as I cycled to the Macnas workshop to volunteer in helping build the 2012 Galway Arts Festival Parade, *This Thunderous Heart*. These troublings began to formulate as a question concerning the connection between community work and spirituality. Initially I chose to ignore that question as I had decided that for my doctorate I was going to research community gardens as sites of community work. However this question did not go away and stayed with me in one form or another before finally crystallising into my research question noted earlier.

In Macnas that day I worked with another artist. Our task was to attach a tree, of twisted and plaited from willow, to a boat, also of woven willow. This we achieved by hoisting the tree into the boat and then intertwining the roots through the boat's structure, down a supporting pillar, to bury them in the body of the float upon which they sat. As we worked I thought of Odin, of Norse mythology, pierced with his spear and then hung upside down from the *Yggdrasil,* or world tree, in order to learn the secrets of the runes (McCoy, 2014). The runes were both a script and a divinatory tool. Thus they could be used both to influence or foretell events in the world, and to record the world through words that could be fashioned into stories. Stories as we shall see are central to community work (Ledwith 2005; Born 2014) and to this research.

1.5 Roadmap

In chapter 2, I look at both the context and practice of community work. Community work in Ireland has a long history (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). The current practice of community work can be traced to the Kilkenny conferences of the 1970s and 1980s and the naming of poverty as a structural problem that required structural change (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). However recently there has been a move to align community work more with service delivery, aimed at the alleviation of the effects, rather than the structural causes, of poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion, and thus move it away from a more radical critique and practice (Doyle, 2016; CWI, 2017). How might community workers navigate such shifting tides?

Community work finds itself grouped along with a number of other occupations into the category the social professions (Banks, 2004a). The term profession has been in use for several centuries. The labelling of community work as a social profession, calls for an examination of how professions are theorised and how such theorisations have developed over time. There remains much debate as to what exactly is meant by that term and what occupations fit the label profession, and indeed what is the journey from occupation to profession (Banks, 2004a; Muzio and Kirkpatrick, 2011; Evetts, 2013; Švarc, 2016). Of this journey Evetts (2006, p.138) has remarked:

> It is an appealing prospect for an occupation to be identified as a profession and for occupational workers to be labelled professionals.

In chapter 3 I look at issues to do with profession and 'professing' and the associated discourses of professionalism and process of professionalization. In that chapter I use the term profession to refer to certain categories of occupation, while 'professing' I define as a way of being in and seeing the world.

Chapters 4 and 5 detail my research methodology. The methodology I use is narrative inquiry:

> a field characterized by tensions and connections, differences and similarities, and contrasts and disparity (Smith, B, 2007, p.392).

We are ourselves made up of stories or rather we are made up of the different stories we tell of ourselves and are told of us (Bruner, 2002a, 2002b; Kearney, 2002). Sunstein (2000, p. ix-x) reflects:

> Storytelling is an act in which we take control, and from which we make meaning out of disparate chunks of our lives…Our personal narratives make us unique.

Sunstein (2000, p. xi) continues:

> We can turn [stories] over and inspect them, understand them in light of who we've become and work hard…to recast their meanings. When we take time to do that, we theorise our stories (and hence ourselves) into our pedagogy, our politics, and our practical lives.

We are, living, unfolding stories. Thus collecting and working with the stories of community workers becomes a way of exploring my research question.

The story of community workers' 'professing' is the subject of chapter 6. Here I speak of three different commitments that underpin the narrative of 'professing' I construct from the stories of individual community workers. These commitments braided together make up the narrative of 'professing'.

How then does this narrative relate to other stories of community work? In chapter 7 I bring these various voices into conversation. Here writers from community work and other fields are drawn upon to elucidate, comment on and consolidate this narrative of 'professing'.

Finally Chapter 8 sets out what it is I have found through following my curiosity. This I place in relation to the ongoing story of community work. I then re-cap this *navigatio*, through community work, profession, narrative inquiry, and narrative of 'professing'. I say something of my own journey before finally letting go of this work.

1.6 Fingerpost

In the next chapter I briefly note some of the differing ways in which both the concept of community and development are understood. I characterise community work as a value-based and relational practice. Finally I explore the current context of community work in Ireland.

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY WORK: 'MAKE NO GUARANTEES REGARDING OUTCOME'

We came on this trek
To find our life
(Ramon Medina Silva)

2.1Roadmap

Taylor (2011, p.20), describes hospitality as "a task, a wager rather than a given", the outcome not fixed in advance, where possibilities for exchange, change, translation, conflict, and dialogue, are honoured and welcomed. I thought this quotation fitting as in the current context of community work in Ireland outcomes are set in advance, and not necessarily by those involved in the processes of encounter, debate, dialogue, translation, 'professing', and articulation that take place in the communities in which community work happens. It is with such thoughts in mind I set out to answer my research question:

What do community workers 'profess'?

In 2.2 I briefly introduce community work as a value driven boundary-crossing occupation. I proffer, in 2.3, a brief note on concepts of community, development and community development. This is followed in 2.4 by an examination of community work practice. The context of community work is the topic for 2.5. Community work in 2.6 becomes a process of asymmetrical engagement and resistance. In the conclusion, 2.7, I draw together the main points of this chapter before 2.8 where I fingerpost chapter 3.

2.2 Boundary-crossing

In a second-hand bookshop I buy an oldie from 1980, *The Boundaries of Change in Community Work* by Henderson, Jones and Thomas. I had read this book during my initial period in Maynooth in the early 1990s. In the introduction, community work is presented as a boundary discipline, one that exists at and crosses many different boundaries, such as geographical, class, ethnicity, disability and gender. It belongs to no particular camp. This is not to say it is neutral; it is highly political in its stated aim of social transformation (Ledwith, 2005; Shaw, 2006, 2013). Its location at the boundary is both real and symbolic. Real in that

the community worker is a skilled boundary-crosser or boundary transgressor, based in a particular community, at a particular time, with ties that stretch both into and beyond that particular community. Symbolic in that its location at the boundary serves to remind all parties involved in community work that the issues addressed are often ones that themselves cross boundaries, and so solutions need to be similarly cross-boundary in nature. Symbolic also in that the boundaries of communities can be fluid and not necessarily fixed, e.g. particular streets, walls or other markers that symbolically bound the community in the minds of those inside the community and also those outside the community, boundaries which community workers transgress in the course of their work.

The cross-boundary aspect of community work is, in an all-Ireland context, explicitly embraced in the publication *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* (AISCW), (All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Training and Education (AIEB), 2016). There community work is openly cross-border and cross-community in its intentions and implications. It envisages crossing borders and boundaries to include "communities, community workers, programme implementers, employers, policy makers, funders, organisations, groups and community work educators" (AIEB, 2016 p.3). Community work can thus be likened to a 'fifth province':

> An imagined place where different interests came together and discoursed. Relationships between one-and-other became possible. Realities were deconstructed and constructed. Facts and image were sundered, and reunited. It was a province of imagination, a province of possibilities (McCarthy, 2010, p.8).

The values of community work are an integrated cycle (fig 2.1). This cycle relates not just to community work and community workers. Community work values are founded on and grounded in boundary-crossing, be that between individuals, groups, organisations, movements or societies. They reflect the interdependent nature of people, collectives, societies and ecosystems. This interdependence is particularly evident and relevant in our highly globalised world where boundaries and borders are both dissolved, e.g. trans-national corporations trading across borders, and reinforced, e.g. the rise of nationalism, and the far right in Europe. Though in the context in which globalisation is most often spoken about - that is neoliberalism- community work values would be peripheral to the main concerns of globalisation, which are largely economic.

Fig. 2.1. Community Work Values (adapted from AIEB, 2016).

AISCW was built on the foundations laid in the publication *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work* (CWC, 2008). This move to establish standards for practice is not unique to the island of Ireland. It reflected an international trend in the development of standards for practice and the associated development of codes of ethics (Banks, 2019).

Towards Standards had developed over a number of years, a process that involved extensive consultations North and South with community members, workers, funders, educational institutions, employers and government (CWC 2008). This arose out of concerns to set:

> Standards to govern and safeguard community work as a profession, and to inform and guide the training and education of community workers (CWC 2008 p.8).

The consultation process also involved looking outside of Ireland towards developments elsewhere e.g. "Lifelong Learning UK…and the Training Agencies Group" (CWC, 2008, p.7). Through this process CWC was able to draw on the work of other community work associations that had existed prior to the founding of CWC in 1981 e.g. "IACD founded in 1953, Association of Community Workers…UK in 1968…Australian Community Workers Association in 1969" (Banks, 2019, p.19). In broadening its search CWC was acknowledging the work on standards that already existed and placing itself into a wider international network of associations e.g. International Association for Community Development (IACD),

and declarations e.g. *The Budapest Declaration: Building European Civil Society through Community Development* (Craig, Gorman and Vercseg, 2004), concerned with both practice on the ground and the formation of future practitioners. Indeed such conversations went on to influence the *Maynooth Declaration on Community Development* (IACD, 2018).

In many ways these conversations reflected and built on conversations that have been ongoing within the field since at least the 1970s see for example *Community Work One* (Jones and Mayo, 1974), *Political Issues in Community Work* (Curno, 1978), *The Boundaries of Change in Community Work* (Henderson, Jones and Thomas, 1980), *The Making of Community Work* (Thomas, 1983). These conversations drew on the rich tradition of debate and contestation that is a feature of community work, as it seeks to navigate its way through the varied sites and situations of practice, always with an eye towards the development and realisation of new social realities based on the values that underpin practice. These debates continue to-day, for example Policy Press has recently launched its Rethinking Community Development series with the aim of providing:

> a critical re-evaluation of community development in theory and practice, in the light of new challenges posed by the complex interplay of emancipatory democratic, self-help and managerial imperatives in different parts of the world (Shaw, Meade and Banks, 2019).

Here practitioners from all parts of the world explore many of the complexities and contradictions of practice in the current globalised reality.

The above shows community work in Ireland while always aware of the particulars of practice on this island sees itself not as isolated but rather as part of and contributing to a much wider field of practice.

2.3 A note on terminology: Community Development and Community Work

Readings of 'community' range from noun to verb (Hallahan, 2004), as place or process, its etymology includes references to defensive walls, duties, obligations, (Esposito, 2009) and shared giftings (Lietaer, 1998). There are also movements to exclude and to immunise oneself from such duty and obligation (Esposito, 2009). It is what we long for but can never achieve (Bauman, 2001). It always has a positive weighting (Williams, 1976). This weighting

has an element of 'mission creep' when attached to words that might not have such a positive connotation (Kershaw, 1992) e.g. community service, community policing, the intelligence community, the security community. No wonder Mayo (1994, p.48) described current usage of community as being "notorious for its shiftiness".

Meanwhile of development Chambers (2005, p.184) says:

> development [means] different things at different times, in different places, and by different people in different professions and organisations.

When the concepts 'community' and 'development' are merged into 'community development' a number of potential effects reveal themselves. This, Chambers (2005, p.188) sees as happening in three ways:

> they can focus and present radical concepts in a technical guise…expand disciplinary views and provide bridges between disciplines…be formative, starting largely undefined and presenting a challenge and opportunity to provide a meaning.

As a concept that combines two slippery and contested concepts, community development offers many possibilities of challenge, bridging, technical cloaking, boundary-crossing, and narrative shifting or change. Indeed Popple (1995 in Mayo, 2002, p.168) has described community work as "both imprecise and unclear". Similarly Thomas (1983, p.117) describes community work as a "fluid field", necessarily so as "it is an activity that has to be sensitive to the opportunities of the moment and the varying needs of people and organisations."

Ife (2013, p.9), aware of the slipperiness of and debates surrounding the concepts of community and development, defines the latter as:

> the process of establishing, or re-establishing, structures of human community within which new, or sometimes old but forgotten, ways of relating, organising social life and meeting human need become possible.

He continues describing community development as being the:

> practice of a person who seeks to facilitate that process of community development…Community-based services are seen as structures and processes for meeting human need, drawing on the resources, the expertise and wisdom of the community itself.

These definitions bring clarity to the debate. Development is conceived as the building of structures of human community that work towards meeting human need and the upholding of human rights. Community development is an activity undertaken to bring that situation into being, and this process recognises and draws upon the resources already present in the community, be that a community of interest, location, ideology or a virtual community. These ideas chime with the 'ecology of the spirit' and the 'spirit paradigm' in the work of Bell (1998, 1999) noted earlier.

AIEB (2016, p.5) have a more explicit and directional definition of community development:

> A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

These definitions provide a good starting point from which to enter into an exploration of community work practice and context.

Before moving on I should note that throughout this thesis I use community development and community work interchangeably. Others have argued that community work is one aspect of the "community development continuum" (Jackson, et al., 1989, p.66). Here many people of differing occupations and none can place themselves along a continuum that runs from individual casework through to social movements. What unites them is a philosophical understanding that "people are entitled to have control over their own lives" (Jackson, et al., 1989, p.66). IACD (2016) states:

> Community development skills…are to be used wherever community development work is practised and organised and by people engaged in other occupations doing community development work and/or using a community development approach in the promotion of social change.

Community work can be seen as one of many occupations using community development skills. These other occupations range from social workers, to adult educators, health workers, environmental educators, local economic development professionals to urban planners and architects and more who may at times adopt a community development approach… community development professionals come from a wide range of backgrounds and work a

range of levels. They may be subject specialists [academics], agency managers, [policy workers], or generic community organiser/educators, [community workers] (IACD 2016).

I keep with the practice of using the terms interchangeably not least because it echoes how Irish community workers (including my co-inquirers) speak of community development and community work. This follows the practice of AIEB whose definition above applies equally to community work or community development or as it is written in AIEB (2016, p.5) "community work/community development".

2.4 Community Work Practice

Community work values as set out by AIEB (2016) are seen as interdependent and interpenetrative, each one building on and reinforcing the others. These values imply a particular stance towards the world. The current way in which society is organised deliberately discriminates against many, places them on the outside, beyond the boundary (Slessarev-Jamir, 2011; Social Justice Ireland, 2018). The task of community work is to work with those experiencing such exile, to effect social transformation such that equality, human rights, social and environmental justice become the basis for a new and transformed society (Ledwith, 2005; Butcher et al., 2008; Lynch, 2010; Westoby and Dowling, 2013; Ife, 2013; Westoby, 2015; AIEB, 2016). These values, like community itself, only gain purchase through their enactment, that is they are understood as verbs -active doing words- rather than nouns, and abstract ones at that (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008).

Community work is a political practice, in its concern with social transformation and redistribution. This places it squarely in opposition to the current hegemony of neo-liberalism (Ledwith, 2005; Lowry, 2010; Gormally, 2012; Forde and Lynch, 2015), a model "associated with growing inequality and instability" (Hearne and McMahon, 2016, p.19), and "the negation of subjectivity (the quality of being a subject)" (Sung, 2011, p.9). The political dimension of community work involves an engagement with power both external to the community and internal within the community through processes aimed at:

> increasing the power of the community as a whole in its relation to the wider society, and of individuals and groups within the community to contribute to community processes, activities and decisions (Ife, 2013, p.231-232).

Relational practice

In line with this view Westoby and Morris (2010) conceptualise community work as, dialogical, a relational practice involving relationships multiple levels:

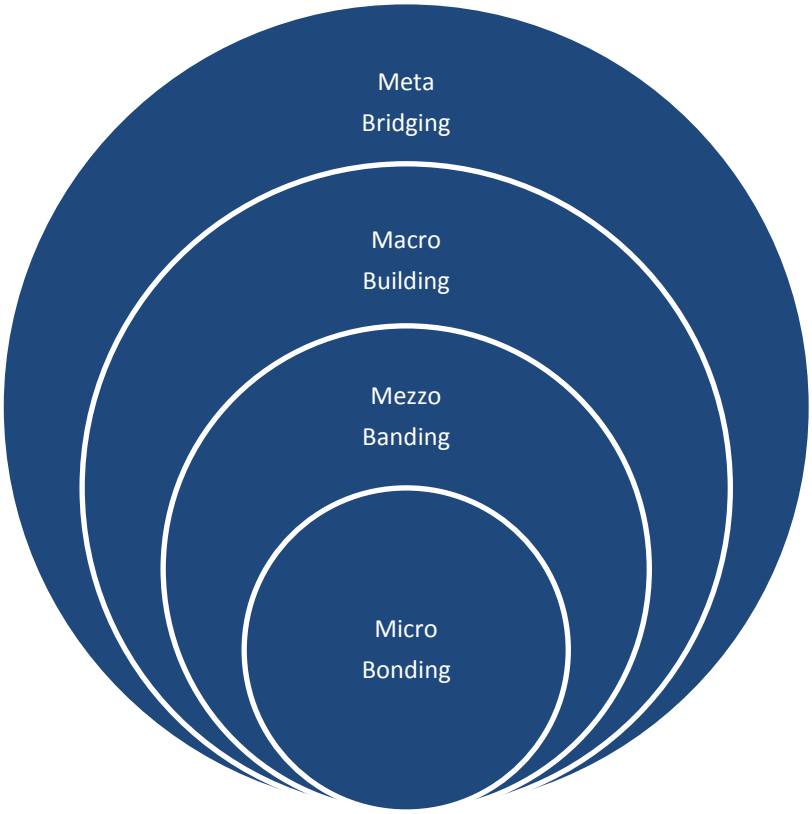

Fig. 2.2 Relationships in Community Development (Westoby and Morris 2010)

At the micro level are face to face interactions of "bonding…forging *purposeful developmental relationships*" (Westoby and Morris (2010 p.146) (italics in original). This is a process of listening and hearing the story of the other, of trying to understand the world from their perspective, with the aim of "forging of an agreement" to work together. At the mezzo level they are group interactions, relationships of:

> banding…works *with*…accompanies…to find others who share the same concern…brings all these people together into…a *participatory action group"* Westoby and Morris (2010 p.146). (Italics in original).

On the macro level are "building" relationships involving, networks, coalitions, alliances at local, regional or national level, the development of "a *sustainable organisational form…or* some other form of structural work…organisational partnerships" (Westoby and Morris 2010 p. 147) (italics in original). Finally at the meta level are "bridging" relationships between larger entities, states, global networks:

> work moves *beyond one locality…beyond one…site*…[to] build linkages…[get] formalised into networks…[recognising that] many concerns cannot be (re)solved at one site or locality (Westoby and Morris 2010 p. 147). (Italics in original).

Despite the relational distance increasing with each level, the core values remain as the bedrock for them all.

A profession "*is defined not by a set of practices but by a relationship*" (Sercombe, 2010, p.11) (italics in original). This relationship is "a relationship of service. It is in its nature other directed" (Sercombe, 2010, p.12). Service "is primarily a verb, something we do, not a noun, a product we deliver" (Sercombe, 2010, p.11). Community work has a focus on working with those marginalised, disadvantaged, excluded, exiled, casualties of structural violence, ("physical, psychological and spiritual harm that certain groups of people experience as a result of unequal distribution of power and privilege" (Moe-Lobeda, 2013, p.72)). Community workers engage in processes of bringing "humanising attention to the kinds of relationships that enable creative transformation" (Westoby and Dowling, 2013, p.4). Practice thus becomes:

> a discipline of extending our boundary to take into consideration another's needs, interests, experience and perspective which will lead to clearer understanding of ourselves and others, fuller description of the issue at hand and possibly a newly negotiated boundary of the community to which we belong (Law, 2000 in Shevellar and Barringham, 2016 p.191).

These 'creative transformations' and 'negotiated boundaries' seek structural change in the direction of social and environmental justice (Ledwith, 2005).

Community work is a process in which the community worker is active at most, if not all of the levels depicted in Fig 2.2, a process of continual crossing and re-crossing of boundaries, navigating back and forth between the various layers:

> Their structural position is always one of interjacence, carrying out their work on the boundaries of groups and organisations in community. Community workers have to be with the people, whilst not of them, and have to develop the additional skill of being able to equilibrate…between the various demands upon them…an interjacent activity, lying between other components of society, and in relation to which it has some function (Henderson, et al., 1980, p.2).

Ledwith (2005, p.68-69) describes a similar process where:

> The initial challenge for community workers is to make contact with people wherever they happen to be…identifying issues and interests that are relevant to people's everyday experience, coming together becomes less threatening…The basic skill is *dialogue*, a mutual reciprocal form of communication in which the act of listening in a holistic way is valuing and therefore liberating. (Italics in original)

Dialogue involves:

> relationships…that both incorporate genuine connectedness (*I-Thou*) and consciousness (conscious of the social forces that shape the work) and address the systematic issues (Westoby and Morris, 2010, p.147). (Italics in original).

Dialogue is a key aspect of relationships in community work (Ledwith, 2005; Ife, 2013).

Freire (1972 p.62) states that dialogue:

> is not possible if not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself…love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men (*sic*). No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause – the cause of liberation.

Freire (2004 in Leistyna, 2004 p.18) adds:

> dialogue presupposes curiosity; it doesn't exist without epistemological curiosity, without the desire to understand the world around us. That is what differentiates dialogue from simple conversation. Such curiosity embodies the conscious willingness to engage in a search for the meaning of an object, to clarify or apprehend the full meaning.

Through this process of dialogue, the world is named; private problems become common concerns, and through collective and focused action, lead to collective outcomes (Ledwith, 2005; Born, 2014).

Praxis

Community work is a practice of reflection in and on action. A process in which:

> [action and thought] are…understood as *mutually constitutive*, as in a process of interaction which is a continual reconstruction of thought and action in the living historical process which evidences itself in every social situation. Neither thought nor action is pre-eminent (Carr and Kemmis, 1986 in Smith, 2011). (Italics in original).

This process is understood as praxis-"as action and reflection upon the world in order to change it or simply as intentional action" (Anglás Grande, 2009). Ellacuía (1990 in Burke, 2000, p. 106) sees praxis as aimed at transformation:

> The transformation that would define praxis would be the intromission of human activity, as the creation of capacities and appropriation of possibilities, into the dynamic course of history.

Transformation here relates to a change in direction to one that supports the values enunciated in AIEB (2016).

Praxis in the context of community work practice, as with dialogue, is relational:

> the process must be grounded in the lived experience of the oppressed and should arise out of their own experience of reflection and action (praxis)…Liberation is a necessarily *relational and collective* enterprise that involves relationships or relatedness (Moane, 2011) (italics in original).

Once again here we can see how personal stories become collective stories, become critiques of the system and lead to actions to change that system. Ellacuría (2001 in Lee, 2009 p. 48-49) describes this process as:

- *El hacerse cargo de le realidad* (realising the weight of reality
- *El cargar con la realidad* (shouldering the weight of reality
- *El encargarse de la realidad* (taking charge of the weight of reality)

Smith (2011) notes of this process:

> In praxis the ideas which guide action are just as subject to change as action is. The only 'fixed' element is the disposition to act for the good, that is to say, to act truly and rightly.

There is therefore a continual process of reflection on action and in action both, internal, checking one's own practice, and external, with the community, ensuring that actions being taken are informed by an intention to act truly and rightly.

For Freire praxis implies and works towards "the possibility of love" (Kirkwood and Kirkwood, 1990 p.35) realised in the world. Love was to underpin practice:

> Generated from political grace and born of collective consciousness that emerges from our shared curiosity,

> creativity, and imagination, giving meaning to both our resistance and counterhegemonic practice (Darder, 2015 p.50).

Community work is a counterhegemonic practice in its endeavour to build relationships, through dialogue, aimed at the realisation of community work values in the world. This set of values argues for a radical societal transformation.

2.5 Community Work Context

Harvey (2015 p.11) dates community development in Ireland as starting on the "5th of August 1891" with the establishment of the Congested Districts Board (CDB). This initiative was aimed at the development of the massively impoverished counties in the west of Ireland (Matthews, 1986). The CDB "sparked" groups to come together across a range of interests e.g. women, and housing, (Harvey 2015). This initiative had by the early 1910s resulted in improvements to the homes of a substantial number of people (Ferriter, 2005). It was replaced in 1923 by the Land Commission. Two other movements aimed at rural development are also of significance to the story of community development Muintir na Tire and the agricultural co-operatives set up by Plunkett in 1899 (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh, 1990).

Muintir na Tíre (MnT) founded in 1937 sought "to revitalise rural life through community action, self-help schemes and…encouraging farmers to embrace modern farming methods" (Ferriter, 2005, p.375). It also had an agenda of seeking to heal divisions caused by both the Civil War of 1922-23 and of simmering rural class conflict (Varley and Ó'Cearbhaill, 2002). MnT organised on the basis of the Catholic parish, thus tying itself to a particular tradition (Varley and Curtain, 2002). Initially MnT had a somewhat "defenderist desire" to protect rural Ireland from the influences of "the destructive power of large-scale forces of modernity" (Varley and Curtain, 2002). A position it was later to abandon in its embrace of the "UN 1955 definition of community development [as] *a partnership of the people and government officials for the common good*" (Crickley and Devlin, 1990, p.54). MnT never embraced the more radical idea of structural change adopted by some groups that were to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s e.g. the Dublin Housing Action Group (Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Varley and Curtin, 2002). Plunkett's agricultural co-operatives organised under the "slogan of " Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living" (Kennelly, 2008, p.63) sought to revitalise Irish agriculture and develop the "self-help ethos that characterised many of the movements that collectively constituted the Irish Revival" (Kennelly, 2008, p.64). Despite the influence of Plunket's co-operative movement on the shaping of the Irish State in its early

days (Doyle, 2013), had along with MnT, by the 1960s "largely run their course" (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh 1990). Other organisations active during the period (1891-1970) sought to address issues as diverse as rural decline, the demise of the Irish language, housing, domestic violence, and mass emigration to name but a few (Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Powell and Guerin, 1997; Varley, 1998; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Forde, et al., 2009; O'Byrne, 2012; Watson, 2016).

The starting point for the development of modern community work in Ireland is usually dated as the Kilkenny conferences of the 1970s and 1980s (Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Bane, 2009). The statistics on poverty presented at the first conference shattered the "illusion, widely held, that ours was an egalitarian and a just society or becoming one" (O'Cinnéide 1972 in Ferriter 2013 p.463). Again the statistics illustrated how the belief in the "dignity of poverty" was "in the sphere of romantic mythology" (O'Mahoney 1972 in Ferriter 2013 p.464).

Evident in these conferences were differing views as to the nature and causes of poverty. One view was that of 'blaming the victim'. The solution from this perspective is for the 'poor' to pull themselves together with some help from the 'overspill' of benefits that accrue to the rich (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Bauman, 2005; Ledwith, 2005; Payne, 2005; Ife, 2013). The social conditions that give rise to poverty are addressed as peripheral.

Another view saw poverty as a structural issue, requiring fundamental change of the social structure if poverty was to be significantly reduced if not eliminated. This second view requires:

> *working for social justice through empowering disadvantaged, excluded and oppressed communities to take more control over the conditions of their lives"* (Butcher, 2007, p.17). (Italics in original).

Mayo (1994 in Mayo, 2002, p.164) characterises these two approaches as a 'technicist' approach of managing your poverty better on the one hand and a 'transformational' perspective, emphasising empowerment and social transformation on the other hand. Bakker and Montessori (2016, p.4) note that:

> It is never just a matter of applying and implementing prescriptive and standardizing protocols… [a worker has to instead] find the right balance between an instrumental

> [(technicist)] and normative [(transformative)] fulfilment of the profession. He needs to decide when and how to intervene or 'to let go'…the balance between instrumental and normative and professionalization requires a certain measure of intersubjectivity. (Gendered language in original).

This requires a balancing of both the poetry and prose of the situation from the viewpoint of the common good of the community. The AIEB (2016) definition cited earlier clearly leans in towards 'transformational perspective' given its emphasis on empowerment, equality, human rights, and social transformation.

Community Development in Ireland historical snapshot

Harvey (2015, p.6) writes of community work during the period 1980-2000:

> What was done in Ireland from the 1980s to 1990s was advertised, rightly, as the leading, cutting edge of community development and anti-poverty work throughout the European Union.

Community development had travelled a long way since the early 1970s where an estimated "fifth of the population could be classed as poor" (Ferriter, 2013, p.463-464). The structural nature of this inequality was noted by Kent and Sexton (1973 in Ferriter, 2013, p.463), "the pressures of living in present-day society bear hardest on those least able to withstand them." In 1975 the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (Poverty 1), an EU funded initiative to tackle poverty and marginalisation was established (Combat Poverty Agency (CPA), 2000). This project ran from 1975-1980 (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004). Projects funded under this initiative:

> linked a structural analysis of poverty with community development principles arguing that to tackle poverty there was a need to address the 'powerlessness of poor communities' (CPA, 2000, p.6).

Community development initiatives expanded, somewhat slowly initially, throughout the 1980s, with much of the groundwork for what was to develop later being laid (Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Frazer, 1990; Whelan, 1990). By the end of the 1980s the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) (1986) (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004), St. Patrick's College Maynooth professional formation programme for community and youth work (1981) (DPASS website 2018) and the CWC (1981) had all been established (Frazer 1990). The 1980s also saw the EU funded Poverty 2 (1985-1989) (Cullen 1989) and Poverty 3 (1989-1994) (Harvey, 1994). Towards the end of the decade (1987) the first of a series of Social Partnership agreements,

set within "an integrationist model of development based upon co-operation between government, market [and latterly] civil society" (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004), was negotiated. Partnership was to have a profound impact on the trajectory of community development into the 1990s and beyond (CWC, 1996, 2003; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Meade, 2005, 2012; Lee, 2006; Larragy, 2006; Gaynor, 2009, 2011; O'Byrne, 2012; Harvey, 2015).

By the end of the 1980s as Ireland was in recession, - reports began to appear noting:

> [despite] the stated policy objectives of these massive expenditures [in health and education for example] to effect a massive redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, in fact they, at least, fail to achieve that and, arguably, do the reverse (*Sunday Tribune* 25th September 1988 in Powell and Geoghegan, 2004, p.79).

Social Partnership and the national agreements that resulted from those were one way in which this situation was addressed. Another was through community development. The Community Development Programme, established in 1990 with 15 projects, had by the end of the decade, expanded to over 90 (CPA 2000). Other initiatives, some of which adopted community development methods in aspects of their work, included Family Resource Centres (Department of Social Protection website 2017) and the Local Development Programme (CPA, 2000). These were area-based partnerships tasked with addressing "long term unemployment, economic marginalisation and social exclusion" (CPA, 2000, p.7). Funding was also coming in from the EU through a variety of initiatives e.g. LEADER, HORIZON, INTEGRA, NOW (Conroy, 1996), and these too were used to fund community development initiatives. They also had the effect of expanding connections for community development in Ireland into Europe e.g. European Anti-Poverty Network (Powell and Geoghegan 2004).
By 2000 Ireland had established a large community development infrastructure that comprised locally based projects in both communities of location and interest (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Motherway, 2006). These were backed by a layer of support agencies, and linked into various government departments, through which they were funded. Community development was now firmly located within local partnership structures and by the end of the decade had been invited into the Social Partnership process at a national level (Larragy 2006).There had also been an expansion in the routes into community development roles and in the number of educational institutions and providers offering accreditation/certification in community development (CPA, 1989). It should be noted that not all educational providers

offered a professional formation programme similar to that on offer in Maynooth but there was a noticeable increase in the number of universities offering community development programmes e.g. Galway, Cork, and Belfast. Ireland was no longer isolated from developments elsewhere in Europe and beyond with links being established with and contributions being made to networks in Europe (Burke, 2004), and globally (Storey, 2003).

The Department of Social Community and Family Affairs (DFCSA) published a *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector* [*White Paper*] in 2000 - contained in this document were statements that:

> clearly recognised and articulated the right of people in poverty and those who represent them to be consulted with regard to policy, particularly in relation to decisions that directly affect them (CPA, 2009, p.30).

It went further:

> The Government is strongly committed to building an inclusive society in which community and voluntary groups can play a vital role…The main features of [the *White Paper*] include formal recognition of the role of the Community and Voluntary sector in contributing to the creation of a vibrant, participative democratic and civil society (DFCSA, 2000 in Powell and Geogheagn, 2004, p.149).

Baker, Lynch and Walsh (2015, p.191) note the political context of partnership fostered a climate which was "deeply consensualist and at times strongly anti-intellectual [which] foreclosed dissent". The country emerged from the recession of the 1980s and by the mid-1990s "Ireland [repeatedly] registered annual economic growth [rates] without parallel anywhere in the western world" (Coulter, 2015, p.5) thus giving rise to the soubriquet of 'Celtic Tiger'… reference to the previous phenomenal growth rates in Asian economies.

In common with international trends the government's policy as regards the economy was the embrace of neo-liberalism. One result of this was the heralding of:

> A type of public culture and governance that was antithetical to equality in subtle organisational ways, especially through the promotion of 'new managerialism' (Baker, Lynch and Walsh, 2015, p.191).

One of the main drivers of this type of approach was the Progressive Democrats (PDs) (Baker, et al., 2015). The PDs, (formed in the 1985), held the balance of power in the coalition governments during the period 1997-2009. They embraced a neo-liberal view of the economy (one which most mainstream parties would be in agreement with by the mid-late 2000s (Ferritter, 2005)). One PD minister Michael McDowell (2004 in Baker, Lynch and Walsh, 2015, p.192) stated:

> A dynamic liberal economy like ours demands flexibility and inequality in some respects to function. It is inequality that provides incentives.

In this reading inequality is a given and to be accepted as the way things are. Social justice and social inclusion are made possible "through the mechanisms of the market [rather] than through any redistributionary measures" (Moran, 2006, p.184). This perspective fails to take into account the inequalities built into the labour market and their "generation and reproduction of material, social and political inequalities" (Moran, 2006, p.184). Byrne (1999 in Moran, 2006, p.186) highlights the inherent contradictions of such policies aimed at achieving inclusion in a neo-liberal economy such as Ireland's:

> If social exclusion is inherent in market-oriented flexible post-industrial capitalism then it is impossible to eliminate it by any set of social policies directed at the excluded alone.

There was growing unease about the influence of the various partnership structures on the focus and direction of community development (Crowley, 1996; Crickley, 1996, 2003; Meade, 2005, 2012; Gaynor, 2009, 2011; O'Byrne, 2012). While the participation of the community and voluntary sector in Social Partnership did keep inequality on the agenda and did have significant wins Lee (2006, p. 12) reminds us that:

> Positions of importance are not, however, necessarily positions of power. The place of community development in Ireland could be viewed as close to that of the President – important, influential but not powerful!

Social Partnership was often a case of:

> Giving business virtually anything they asked for – low corporation taxes, low capital taxes, low social insurance contributions and a virtually unregulated labour market (Begg, 2005 in Kirby and Murphy, 2011, p.36).

This important but not powerful experience evinced itself at the local level:

> When community development activists were asked about where decision making power lay, if not with them, they argued

> that local partnership arrangements have tended to reinforce and extend the power of State officials....to the detriment of both elected representatives and the community and voluntary sector (Powell and Geogheagn, 2004, in Lee, 2006, p.12).

Dissatisfaction with this state of affairs led to the CWC walking away from Social Partnership in 2003. Kirby (2006) asserts that the CWC quickly became a pariah to state officials and had its funding withdrawn as punishment in 2005. Kirby and Murphy (2011) contend that social partnership silenced rather than facilitated the emergence of critical voices advocating for radical policy change and articulating alternative visions.

This lack of power is seen in the steady and cumulative claw back of the autonomy of community development by state agencies (Harvey 2015). Beginning in 2002 a series of different programmes of cohesion, and integration, were introduced that brought community development increasingly into the orbit of the local authorities and thus the State. Following the financial crash of 2008 and the removal or neutering of 'veto players' in the policy process (e.g. social partnership, parliamentary opposition) there was a centralising of power, a closing of key equality bodies, and closing of community development projects (Murphy, 2016). Ireland quickly moved into a prolonged period of austerity and recession and community development was entered the period of 'alignment'. In its wake community development was "re-signified" as a provider of labour activation services (Meade, 2018). Murphy (2016, p.439) asserts "these losses mitigated resistance to activation reforms"

Austerity, recession and alignment

Austerity refers to the programmes initiated by a combination of European Union, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund (the *Troika*), negotiated with the Irish State in response to the global financial crash of 2008. This 'structural adjustment programme' saw:

> €28 billion removed from the Irish economy…one fifth of the country's GDP…the greatest economic adjustment ever experienced in a developing country outside of wartime (Coulter, 2015, p.9).

The ramifications of austerity amounted to "a calculated and systemic assault on the least well off in Irish society" (Spillane, 2015, p.167; see also Harvey, 2012, 2014b). The effects of the cutbacks were felt most acutely by groups "that face significant challenges in mobilising resistance" (Spillane, 2015, p.167).

Recession is what came after the crash. It was exacerbated by the *Troika's* austerity programme. Alignment refers to a process where according to Environment Minister Hogan (2012 in CWC, 2014):

> local government will be the main vehicle of governance and public services at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably.

Under this process much of community development was to be brought under the remit of the local authorities. Here community development is in third place after economic and social development and is relegated to the role of 'delivering efficient services' 'effectively' and 'accountably'. This is a very different conceptualisation from that which had appeared earlier in the *White Paper*:

> Community development is described as an interactive process of knowledge and action designed to change conditions which marginalise communities and groups and is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance. The challenge to the Community and Voluntary sector and State agencies is to foster local leadership and self-governing structures (DSCFA, 2000, p.74-75).

This view of community development acknowledges structural disadvantage and the need for it to be addressed and altered. In Minister Hogan's (2012) vision neither acknowledgement of nor aspiration for structural change appears.

Alignment is seen by community workers as another, further reduction in their autonomy, continuing a process that had been taking place over recent years (*Working for Change: The Irish Journal of Community Work* (WfC), 2010, 2012; Harvey, 2015; Lloyd, 2016). The introduction of SICAP in 2015, "a game changer in relations between the Irish state and the Community Sector" (Murphy 2014, in Meagher, 2014, p.10), saw a move towards competitive tendering with the possible involvement of private companies delivering services under this programme.

The landscape of community work changed significantly in this period, privatisation of community work was potentially coming down the line, the government through their control

of funding made dissent a risky strategy, and workers felt their values and practice threatened (Harkin 2015):

> SICAP is a targeted activation programme that does not enable effective community work to take place especially at a time when the impact of austerity policies are manifesting themselves for those most affected by poverty in our community and civil society (Doyle 2016).

Goal 3 of SICAP aims:

> To engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision, or who are referred to SICAP, to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities (POBAL, 2017).

While no one is arguing that increasing an individual's capacity and opportunity to access employment is not a proper goal for government policy none of goals of SICAP mention structural inequality as a cause of inequality or marginalisation. The goals are:

- strengthening of local communities
- promoting lifelong learning
- helping people become more job ready (Darmody and Smyth, 2018 p.ix).

Practitioners would dispute whether the first goal reflected their understanding of community development. CWI (2017, p.14) says of participants in a review of SCIAP:

> They struggled to identify any positive elements of SICAP in relation to its facilitation of or support for community development.

Similar comments were noted by Darmody and Smyth (2018, p.50):

> The interviewees argued that in order to tackle social exclusion effectively joined up thinking and policymaking that addresses structural inequality and different policy domains is necessary.

The changes and impacts outlined above are the latest manifestation of a process the Fianna Fáil, Progressive Democrat government began in the early 2000s, and which has continued under successive governments. In this context, despite a growing economy, funding for community development was cut drastically, work deemed too political discouraged (Harvey, 2014a; Bissett, 2015) and many support bodies for community development closed (Harvey,

2015). The financial crash, recession and austerity presented a further opportunity to control if not stifle the voice of the community sector (O'Byrne, 2012). Harvey (2014a, p. 66) quotes a civil servant as saying:

> Voluntary and community organizations…were a disruptive force. Career progression in the public service requires keeping your copybook clean and being criticized by a voluntary organization might jeopardise that, especially in a policy-sensitive area.

Critique of the state or departments of the state was not countenanced as it reflected badly on those responsible. Harvey (2015, p.11) sees push back from State agencies and institutions citing:

> the emergence of the 'services-only paradigm', that it was the role of voluntary organisations to provide services, but not to argue.

Minister McDowell (2002 in Harvey, 2015, p.13) stated of the presence of the Community and Voluntary Pillar in Social Partnership:

> There is hardly a major voluntary organisation in the country that didn't have its hand out for cash. This is because former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern brought dissent into the semi-state world.

The Community and Voluntary Pillar was seen as a disruptive force challenging the market project and needed to be brought to heel (Crowley, 2012; Visser, 2015). Threats to or loss of funding was a powerful tool that the state was prepared to use e.g. in 2005 CWC lost its funding when it left the Social Partnership process. The power of the disciplining nature of such threats, and actions, is evident in the fact that the majority of funding for community development comes from the state (Lloyd and Lloyd-Hughes, 2009; McInerney, 2009a; Fitzsimons, 2012, 2015; Zagato, 2012).

As a boundary-crossing occupation, focused on "social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights" AIEB (2016, p.5), community work would be expected to be a 'disruptive force' in "a way which highlights that…institutions do not always function to promote wellbeing and equality among all citizens" (McInerney, 2009b). The boundaries being crossed here are not just those at the interface between the community, and the state institutions, but also the multiple invisible barriers alluded to by the civil servant quoted earlier (Harvey, 2014). This disruptive stance draws on the long tradition of community development as 'difficultator' (Jackson, 1995, p.xix), a standpoint that highlights the complex

intersections involved in processes of exclusion and inequality and refuses easy off the shelf solutions. Given the impact funding cuts, under the austerity reforms, continue to have on communities (Bissett, 2015; Fagin, 2015; Harvey, 2012; O'Regan, 2010) and also in the restructuring and/ or closing of such bodies as the Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission, Combat Poverty Agency (Harvey, 2015; Lynch, 2013), community work should become increasingly important. However the situation of community work now is one where "the hard fought gains in relation to those experiencing poverty, social exclusion, and inequality are now severely undermined" (Editorial WfC, 2010, p.8).

Assuming command and taking control – the State responds

With SICAP and alignment the State did some boundary setting of its own. Doyle (2016) says alignment:

> represents a determined shift away from the promotion of autonomous critical community development, towards more centralised control in programme and policy planning and implementation.

Not only that but it is also setting stricter parameters as to what can now be counted or measured as evidence of community work outcomes (McGrath, 2015). Azzopardi (2012, p.11) comments:

> Individual progression does not necessarily correlate to community development and the creation of more vibrant, sustainable, inclusive communities…There's a layer of work happening underneath the programme goals called community development work that's not being measured…You can measure it…If we were, I believe we could double the Programme's [LCDP] recorded impact.

Craig (2002, p.141-143) outlined several conditions necessary for effective evaluation that would meet these concerns:

> *participation* (which is not tokenistic)…privilege qualitative indicators…that complement and illuminate quantitative ones…awareness of the importance of process goals alongside output and outcome goals…[engagement] in continuous organisational learning [empowerment]…[use of] multi-method approach[es] that can incorporate a range of perspectives on the desirability and effectiveness of local change. (Italics in original).

This type of approach is far more time-consuming than filling in KPIs, (Key Performance Indicators) but does yield far richer data that is owned by and has direct relevance to the

communities involved. Such approaches remain undervalued in the demand for evidence-based practice where "practice-based knowledge and qualitative research [is viewed as] too weak a knowledge base for practice" (Hanssen et al., 2015 p.118).

Not measuring means not being seen, means not being deemed important. If appropriate evidence is not collected, if different outcomes (see Azzopardi 2012 quoted earlier) are not measured or recorded it becomes possible for review bodies looking at the available evidence to conclude as did McCarthy et al., (2009 in Bissett, 2015, p.187 n.2):

> *there is little evidence of positive outcomes for these initiatives*…current delivery structure for these programmes is not optimal…the Group targets total savings of [€]44m attributable to a re-structuring of delivery mechanisms and a reduction in the number of funded projects. (Italics in original).

Outcomes and their definition, measurement and recording are critical to the field (Craig, 2002; Azzopardi, 2012; Bradley and McArdle, 2013; McGrath, 2015) for the field can become defined by the permissible actions and by the evidence collected. Evidence can easily become interventions, prescribed under the rubric of evidence-based practice.

Crickley (2013, p.1) says of this situation:

> At this point as the language of outputs, outcomes and impact gain dominance, it is important that their requirements do not undervalue or ignore the community development processes which make real collective impact possible. Community work is a process – not a straight line from A to Z – but it is a process which demands outcomes for and with communities.

There is a danger of community development becoming 'exactly what it says on the tin', a container and description of someone else's making, rather than the creative, adaptive boundary-crossing activity that it needs to be if it is to 'make real collective impacts possible'. Kam (2012 in Hanssen et al., 2015, p.117) draws attention to how such 'exactly as it says on the tin' thinking and practice results in a situation where:

> Social welfare has changed from promoting the spirit of care and love to the advocacy of the value of individual responsibility and the achievement of the objective of 'welfare to work'.

Crickley (2013, p.4) states:

> The community work/community development…focus is on collective participation in a process mindful of discrimination,

> gender oppression and environmental sustainability. Those experiencing the issues must be involved at all levels, in defining the problems to be addressed, working to address them, benefiting from any outcomes, and designing and implementing evaluation and impact measurements.

Here it can be seen that the values of community work (AIEB, 2016) are central to how programmes that have the stated aim of addressing the issues above are to be designed, implemented and evaluated. Not to have 'those experiencing the issues' included exposes:

> the shadow side of the increasing emphasis of service delivery as the lifeblood in community organizations is the prominence of deficit thinking and paternalism in relation to what is best for 'people in poverty' (Burkett, 2011, p.123).

Such thinking keeps community work within what Whelan and Ryan (2016, p.3) call a "salvage paradigm" where the worker is given the task of "improving the implicitly flawed subject."

This is a paradigm in which the 'implicitly flawed subject' is denied subjectivity or agency and becomes locked into discourses of power, related to concepts of normalisation and inclusion. Kuppers (2003, p.5-6) speaking about such discourses in relation to disability sees this process operating via the convergence of:

> surveilling science disciplines create data about 'normal' (evidence gathering) and " individuals 'discipline' themselves or give attention to being 'normal'...Together, these two mechanisms, at the micro- and macro-level, articulate an embodied *and* scientific vision of what it means to be a member of this specific, historic society." (Italics in the original)

This process Cooper (2003, p.134) labels as "It-ification" the removal the others subjectivity, demoting them to "sub-things…analysed…reduced…broken down into essences" (Cooper, 2003, p. 135), denying "more contemplative and relational possibility" (Cooper, 2003, p. 140). Thus the categories of the excluded and the included come into being along with internalised oppression, loss of dreams and ontological insecurity (Martín-Baró, 1994; Memmi, 2003; Ruth, 2006; Duran, et al., 2008; Watkins and Shulman, 2008; Moane, 2011; Afuape and Hughes, 2016). These boundaries are maintained via the gathering of specific kinds of evidence and through this the promulgation of categories and behaviours deemed necessary for inclusion. Whelan and Ryan (2016, p.3) looking at this process in an Irish context write that exclusion is seen as unintended, as a "by-product of growing prosperity". The solution to this exclusion is to "enable the excluded to make a transition from 'outside' to

'inside' the structure of opportunities- from exclusion to inclusion" (Whelan and Ryan, 2016, p.3).

It is those already in the category of included who decide the shape of the interventions deemed appropriate and necessary. Those 'outside' are to be activated through:

> a menu of training and back to work schemes [or other initiatives where] empowerment became analogous to activation…to activate latent…capacities as a way of enabling disadvantaged individuals/communities to 'take control of their lives'. Activation and empowerment converge on a disadvantaged subject who is acted on by others (Whelan and Ryan, 2015, p. 3).

The larger power structure that disadvantages individuals and communities is not questioned. Within this framing the 'implicitly flawed subject' remains so. And:

> if clients [sic] have needs and expectations that are in conflict with institutional solutions, they are perceived and portrayed as 'difficult', 'weak', 'lacking self-awareness', and 'wishing to remain in a client position' (Hanssen et al., 2015, p.120).

The underlying ideology of positioning and labelling people included or excluded remains unacknowledged and unchallenged (Afuape, 2011; Moe-Lobeda, 2013; Lynch, 2013).

2.6 *The War of the Flea*: Community Work as Guerrilla Warfare

I borrow the above title from another oldie, Robert Taber's 1965 book *The War of the Flea: Guerrilla Warfare in Theory*, this is not to cast community work as a martial occupation but to allow metaphor which "works with the legerdemain of the psyche, the lightest of touches to shift the mindscape, transforming one thing into another, leading to new ways of seeing", (Griffiths 2012 p.7), to highlight the unequal relationship between communities, community work and the State.

There has been a steady and continual growth in this unequal relationship since the early 2000s (Harvey, 2015; Lloyd, 2016). The economic crash and the ensuing austerity project exacerbated this unequal relationship. This project has had a devastating impact on community development (Lloyd and Lloyd-Hughes, 2009; Lloyd, 2010, 2016; Harvey, 2012, 2015; Bissett, 2015). With alignment and SICAP this imbalance is further increased (Doyle, 2016). Community work now could be seen as engaged in an "onto-political struggle" (Whelan and Ryan, 2016, p.8) for its soul.

Taber (1965 in White, 2009) writes of guerrilla insurgency:

> Whether the primary cause of revolution is nationalism or social justice, or the anticipation of material progress, the decision to fight and to sacrifice is a social and a moral decision. Insurgency is thus a matter not of manipulation but of inspiration.

Here can be found echoes of Crickley (2013) noted earlier, of the social and moral commitment to social justice encoded in community work values. In the boundary-crossing nature of the work, implicit in the definition, and in the values set out for community work, there is no space for manipulation, but plenty of space for inspiration. This inspiration flows from the community to the worker and vice-versa.

Tauber (1965 in White, 2009) continues:

> to try to suppress popular resistance movements by force is futile. If inadequate force is applied, the resistance grows. If the overwhelming force necessary to accomplish the task is applied, its object is destroyed. It is a case of shooting the horse because he (*sic*) refuses to pull the cart.

Is the force being applied on community work inadequate or too much? There are still many who define themselves as community workers, committed to working in the field (see for example Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Lloyd, 2010; Lowery, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2010; Slevin, 2010; Azzopardi, 2012; Gormally, 2012; McGinley, 2012; Smith, A, 2012; Smith, S, 2012; Fagin, 2015). That leaves the other option, the force not being enough, leading to an opening of spaces for resistance.

Growing the resistance

Power (2014, p.212) states:

> community workers agree that resistance has a definite role in community work, workers are evolving new understandings and practices of resistance in response to their new environment, especially the rise of the managerialist State. Resistances are provisional and partial, and community workers are currently struggling to articulate new resistances collectively.

O'Keeffe (2010, p.116-117) sees community development at a choice point with three possible directions presenting themselves in the post-Tiger world:

- Neoliberal…whereby civil society is seen as subservient to the needs of economic development;
- A partnership between the state, the market, and civil society…'integrated dependency';
- Community development is also understood in activist terms…as a social movement it resists neoliberalism at local, national and global level.

Looking at O'Keeffe's typology, the AIEB (2016) definition of community development would fall very much into the third category above. That is, it is a practice of resistance. The third options links back to earlier texts, of which *The Boundaries of Change in Community Work* is one, in which the possibilities of a link between community work and social movements is mooted. This linkage has been returned to from various angles, by different people both inside and outside the field of community work (Smith, T, 1980; Whelan, 1989; Crowther, 1999; Gilchrist, 2009; Lloyd, 2010; Meade, 2012; Power, 2014; Bissett, 2015; Geddes, 2016; Somerville, 2016). The arguments put forward range from whether community work is a profession or a social movement (Smith, T, 1980; Whelan, 1989; Gilchrist, 2009) to how the coming together of different civil society actors, of which community work is one element, can develop new ways of critique and potentially re-ignite passion (Crowther, 1999; Kirby and Murphy, 2011; Bissett, 2016). Williams (1983 in Crowther, 1999 p.23) writes of journeys of hope that such comings together may inspire:

> It is only in the shared belief and insistence that there are practical alternatives that the balance of forces and chances begin to alter. Once the inevitabilities are challenged, we begin gathering our resources for a journey of hope. If there are no easy answers, there are still available and discoverable hard answers, and it is these we can now learn to make and share.

Bissett (2015, p.178) describes the choice of the words 'defiance and hope' for the overarching theme and name of one such coming together in Dublin:

> participants argued that 'defiance' and 'hope' expressed two themes that were, for them, at the heart of the struggle against the forceful imposition of austerity and its potential transcendence.

Community workers, and people participating in community projects, were central to this initial coming together and in its continuing existence. Fitzsimons (2015, p.45) describes the work of *The Spectacle of Defiance and Hope* as resulting in:

> the mobilisation of 2,000-3,000 community members and workers, in colourful street protests but [also] in a Freirean influenced process of conscientisation initiated through a

> programme of community education to raise political awareness.

This sense of resistance, 'defiance and hope', can also be found in the writings of community workers. This despite the challenges faced in how community work is defined by the state bodies and other actors. Many of the articles, in the three issues of WfC published between 2009 and 2012 contain a reiteration of a definition of community work that corresponds to that contained in AIEB (2016) and its earlier iteration *Towards Standards* (CWC, 2008) (specifically Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Lloyd, 2010; Lowry, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2010; Slevin, 2010; Gormally, 2012; McGinley, 2012; Smith, A, 2012; Smith, S, 2012). This indicates that the definition and view of community work as a transformational practice committed to the values of participation, collective empowerment, social justice and sustainable development, human rights, equality and anti-discrimination is actively embraced and embodied by contemporary practitioners as they continue to gather, assemble, and fashion with others 'resources for a journey of hope'. Power (2014, p.223) speaks of the need to search for alternative, safe spaces, like those offered by *The Spectacle of Defiance and Hope* as:

> such spaces, public and hidden, have become marginalised and that dissent/resistance is hardly tolerated let alone encouraged as part of community work practice.

Prior and Barnes (2011, p.277) remind us, that despite the apparent closure of spaces for resistance, workers have and do exercise their agency in acts of resistance:

> It is thus precisely in the fact that agencies of resistance and their potentially subversive consequences are part of the routine everyday processes of service delivery that their significance lies.

Community workers, even in the highly prescribed places of practice that currently exist, can and do find places to resist (Power, 2014). The community worker as boundary-crosser engages in reflexive and reflective practice based in ongoing, overlapping dialogues with themselves, those they work with and the wider context in which the work is situated, constantly checking as to whether their practice "challenge[s] traditional power relations or simply reinforce[s] them" Lister (2007 in Shaw, 2013 p.8).

2.7 Conclusion

This was a journey involving the 'slippery' and contested concepts of community, development and community development. The meanings and usage of these terms have shifted and altered many times (Partridge, 1959; Turner, 1969, 1974; Onions, 1996; Lietaer, 1997; Andrews, 2001; Hallahan, 2004; Watkins and Shulman, 2008; Esposito, 2009; Gilchrist, 2009; Somerville, 2016). Being in common usage such concepts have multiple understandings and readings mapped onto them (Williams, 1976; Bauman, 2001; Buckler, 2007; Wallace, 2010; Ife, 2013). This fuzziness, messiness, enables both precision, and imprecision, and facilitates multiple 'ideological deployments' (N'Dione et al., 1997; Chambers, 2005; Moyers, 2011; Westoby and Shevellar, 2012; Esteva, et al., 2013). It also reflects the nature of both their usage and the socially-constructed nature of the realities to which they are applied (Rose, 1997; Hustedde and King, 2002; Kenny, 2016; Newman and Clarke, 2016).

I outlined community development as a relational and boundary-crossing practice (Henderson, et al., 1980; Westoby and Morris, 2010). The boundaries crossed are many; face-to-face, group, organisational, local, national and international. Boundaries can be literal, metaphorical, political, ideological, related to issues of power, recognition, redistribution and rights. Community work is a contested space with different views as to both its nature and practice (Mayo, 2002; Kenny, 2016; Newman and Clarke, 2016).

Irish community work has a long history (McInerney, 2009a; Harvey, 2015). In this study I concentrate on the contemporary context of community work, framed by narratives of recession, austerity and alignment. The sector has been devastated by the effects of austerity and recession used as a means of introducing severe cut backs to community work programmes (Harvey, 2012; Bissett, 2015). These cut backs hit those most in need, who were also those least able or likely to resist these cut backs as they now would be focused on survival (Spillane 2015).

This curtailment of community work began in the early 2000s (Bissett, 2015; Harvey, 2015; Lloyd, 2016) and proposes a very narrow band definition and practice, particularly for projects in receipt of state funding (Azzopardi, 2012). The focus is largely on individualised labour force activation, disallowing advocacy and critique (Bissett, 2015; Harvey, 2015).

This ‘re-signification’ of community work is at odds with how the sector itself would define community work (Meade, 2012; CWI, 2015, 2017).

However there are shoots of resistance emerging that represent a coming together of various civil society actors to both develop and articulate a critique of the narratives of austerity and recession (Power, 2014; Bissett, 2015; Fitzsimons, 2015). Community workers, through engagement with these developments, and in their writings, show that despite the situations they are presented with, their passion for, and commitment to, the communities that they work with, and for the work itself remain undiminished (see for example Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Lloyd, 2010; O‘Keeffe, 2010; Slevin, 2010; Gormally, 2012; McGinley, 2012). Community work remains, on the road, on the journey towards finding our life. A life based in equality, human rights, social and environmental justice.

2.8 Fingerpost

In all the above I have been telling a story, delineating a narrative of community work. Story is a very powerful tool in community work, one that is returned to again and again, to build relationships, to draw strength, to acknowledge difficulties encountered, to explore and announce new possibilities for the future. Arendt (1958 in Andrews, 2014, p.354) says of narrative “it is the bridge by which we transform ourselves into that which is public, and in this capacity, it is one of the key components of public life.”

In the next chapter I shall be plotting narratives of profession and ‘professing’. These are themselves impacted by and impact upon other narratives of e.g. globalisation, marketization, new-managerialism. Community development as one of the ‘social professions’ is itself caught in the warp and weft as these differing stories that weave the world of practice.

CHAPTER 3

PROFESSION/ 'PROFESSING': 'ACHIEVING A GOOD ACT'

Open the window
There are angels and old souls
Come to lend a hand
(Haiku by Little John Nee 2016)

3.1 Roadmap

In a workshop exercise, community arts workers adopt a pose which encapsulates for them the essence of their role. The most common pose depicted:

> reminds one of the Jesus of Rio, high over the city, arms inviting the populace to come and to be saved (Hussey, 2000, p.44).

Hussey sees this as an expression, conscious or unconscious, of the desire to save. He ponders whose version of salvation is privileged here, the worker's or those with whom they work? Does what is being 'professed', match the enactment of that 'professing'?

Section 3.2 serves as a brief introduction to the terms profession and 'professing'. Profession and the associated concepts of professionalisation, professionalism and professionality are the subjects of 3.3. The occupational category Social Professions (Banks, 2004a), is the focus of 3.4. 'Professing' takes centre stage in 3.5 with an examination of community workers as 'professors' (McIntosh, 2008b; Sercombe, 2012). Section 3.6 looks at the formation of community workers as regards both practice and 'professing'. I end up in 3.7 once more alongside Hussey (2000). In 3.8 I present a summary of this chapter. Finally 3.9 we find a fingerpost for the path to be followed in chapter 4.

3.2 Profession/'Professing'

Profession's etymology contains the idea of speaking out publicly in favour of something (Hoad, 1996). Its earliest use has a specifically religious connotation, relating to vows taken on entering a religious order or the occasion of the taking of such a vow (*Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), 2007). Initially, profession encompassed occupations of law, medicine and religious (*OED*, 2007). Gradually over time profession expands to include other occupations, especially ones that involve specialised training and a formal qualification (*OED*, 2007).

Profession is seen as answering a calling or following a vocation, a summons from something beyond the self which steers or directs the individual towards a particular path (Hillman, 1996; Levoy, 1997; Dick and Duffy, 2009). Palmer (2000 in Kovan and Dirkx, 2003, p.101) states:

> Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live-but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.

Dewey (1916 in Kroth and Boverie, 2000, p.137) perceives calling as a critical organising process for both self-identity and work:

> *A calling is also of necessity an organising principle for information and ideas: for knowledge and intellectual growth*. It provides an axis which runs through an immense diversity of detail; it causes different experiences, facts, items of information to fall into order with one another. (Italics Kroth and Boverie, 2000)

Having a sense of calling or vocation contributes to satisfaction and durability in one's work (Hall and Chandler, 2005). Markow (2007, p.86) notes that struggle can also be a feature of following one's calling:

> having a calling does not necessarily mean the absence of problems or struggles with identity…struggles may in fact be the evidence of a calling…the called go through various stages of calledness and…will experience relational and identity conflict…these will serve to further validate and strengthen their call.

The repositioning of community development seen in chapter 2 is an example of such a struggle.

There is an interesting distinction made between calling and vocation where calling refers to a sense of a "transcendent summons" (Dick and Duffy, 2009, p.427), originating outside or beyond the self, while vocation refers "an approach to a particular life role" (Dick and Duffy, 2009, p.428). However, both calling and vocation include a sense of:

> purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation (Dick and Duffy, 2009 p.428).

Calling and vocation involve commitment to working for the common good. This concerns questions as to:

> whether we believe that our humanity is constituted most profoundly by our relationships, such that our personal wellbeing includes reference to the fact of our sharing a common life together (Bradstock, 2015, p. 27).

Calling and vocation involve a deep and ongoing conversation, where "your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (Beuchner, 1993 in Kovan and Dirkx, 2003, p.101). This exchange, lifelong, and life enhancing, facilitates us in building and sustaining meaning in our lives, and work (Kroth and Boverie, 2000; Kovan and Dirkx, 2003; Dick and Duffy, 2009). Calling and vocation, together with ongoing conversations with self and others, contribute to the development, and maintenance, of career or practice narratives (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000; Schultz and Ravitch, 2013; Lanas and Kelchtermans, 2015).

In this research I define 'Professing' as a public statement answering one's calling, usually made after a process of acquiring particular knowledge and/or skills, acknowledging a specific way of seeing and being in the world. A public ceremony often marks entry into a profession which usually requires an act of 'professing' in public e.g. religious ordination, university conferring, doctors taking the Hippocratic Oath (which is no longer the case; see Reville, 2010), of acceptance of and belief in a particular set of values/principles. With such ceremonies it could be argued there is a conflation of 'professing' and profession.

3.3 Profession

Concepts

There are a number of concepts relating to profession that need explication at this point:

- Profession: a distinct and generic category of occupational work (Evetts, 2003)
- Professionalisation: the process to achieve the status of profession (Harris and White, 2013).
- Professionalism: seen as two discourses, organisational and occupational (Evetts, 2013)
- Professionality: the stance an individual adopts vis-a-vis the enactment of their profession (Evans, 2008).

Profession as an occupational category

Despite profession having a usage that dates back several centuries, there is still debate as to what constitutes a profession (Banks, 2004a; Evetts, 2006, 2013; Muzio and Kirkpatrick,

2011; Švarc, 2016). This debate is fuelled by a number of factors, e.g. changes in the economy from knowledge to service, growth of new occupations, globalisation, financialisation, and technological advancement. These are seen to "threaten [the] social and economic role" of profession in society (Švarc, 2016, p.392). Profession, is thus "a fluid and ephemeral concept" (Švarc, 2016, p.392), marking research into professions as a dynamic and evolving field of inquiry.

Questions as to what occupational groups may or may not use the term profession, the related discussions of power and prestige and the influences of discourses of professionalism, are to be found within professional journals, books, policy documents and conference reports. Within community work the following lists some of the places where such questioning and debate may be found: Cox and Derricourt, 1975; Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Whelan, 1990; Banks, 2004a; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Butcher et al., 2007; Pitchford and Henderson, 2008; Bane, 2009; Banks and Gallagher, 2009; Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Welbourne, 2009; Andrews, 2012a, 2012b; Irwin, 2012; Meade, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2012; Sercombe, 2012; Crickley, 2013; Ife, 2013; Westoby and Shevellar, 2014; Forde and Lynch, 2015.

Professionalisation

The 'trait model' of professions proffers a list of traits as the defining characteristics of a profession. It maintains that if an occupation has the following it is a profession:

- Licenced
- Have a code of ethics/ standards
- Hold particular knowledge
- Have autonomy over their work
- Have made a public pledge to perform for the public good (Banks, 2004a)

However, such a model does not offer a definition of profession outside of the traits, so while a useful starting point this model is a tautology rather than a definition (Banks 2004a).

The power or "strategic approach" (Banks 2004a, p.20) is another way of looking at professions and professionalisation. Here occupations, through acts of closure, strive to keep others out and in doing so ascribe advantage and status to those on the inside. Professions also aim to control the market conditions in which they operate through for example professional associations using their influence and prestige to do so (Banks, 2004a). Professions often have a series of social markers or rituals that distinguish them, for example,

wigs and gowns in courts, white coats and stethoscopes in hospitals. These markers are further backed by codes of conduct, oaths, and prolonged periods of education. Freidson (2001 in Beddoe, et al., 2013, p. 42) describes professions as:

> Institutions set apart from everyday life. Special groups of intellectual workers embody the authority of those disciplines, their work being to create, preserve, transmit, debate and revise disciplinary content. The formal knowledge of particular disciplines is taught to those aspiring to enter specialized occupations with professional standing.

This model of professionalisation has been challenged, as occupational groups outside of those labelled professions also operate exclusionary practices as a means of occupational closure (Banks, 2004a) e.g. 'closed shop' practices among dock workers. Taking a wider view of professions, through historical time and geographical locations, it can be seen that development has not been the same in all countries and across time. Professionalisation, therefore, is advanced through a wide variety of practices and historical situations (Banks, 2004a).

Freidson (2001 in Banks, 2004a, p. 24) argues:

> one does not attempt to determine what profession is in an absolute sense, so much as how people in a society determine who is a professional and who is not, how they 'make' or 'accomplish' professions by their activities and what the consequences are for the way they see themselves and their work.

This approach is labelled 'phenomenological' (Banks, 2004a). It seeks to understand the concept of profession as it is understood and made meaningful through social interaction. Here profession is socially constructed, through a process of reflection and meaning making. This is achieved largely unconsciously. A phenomenological approach requires a 'bracketting' of such unconscious processes so they can then be examined so as to discover how meaning is ascribed (May, 2013). Using this phenomenological lens Freidson (2001 in Banks, 2004a, p.24) lists the following series of interlocking elements as characterising an 'ideal type' of profession:

- a body of knowledge and skill officially recognised as based on abstract concepts and theories and requiring the exercise of considerable discretion;
- an occupationally controlled division of labour;

- an occupationally controlled labour market requiring training credentials for entry and career mobility;
- an occupationally controlled training programme which produces those credentials, schooling that is associated with 'higher learning' separated from the ordinary labour market and provides an opportunity for the development of new knowledge;
- an ideology serving some transcendent value and asserting greater devotion to doing good work than to economic reward.

This 'ideal type' model is suited to explaining how professions rise and fall over time. Professions are impacted by a range of influences and contexts e.g. social policies, state agencies, inquiries into practice failures, influence of the media and public opinion, e.g. the post-crash revision in public thinking regarding bankers, economists, and statisticians (Banks, 2004a; Duyvendak, et al., 2006; Ruch, 2010; Pierson and Thomas, 2013). Just as there is a process of professionalisation there are also processes of de-professionalisation and re-professionalisation.

Professionalism

"The problem is that despite the increasing interest in professionalism there is no agreement on how to define professionalism" (Arnold 2002 in Van de Camp et al., 2004, p.696). Evetts, (2013, p.787-8) suggests that in contemporary societies there are two discourses of professionalism that are "different and in many ways contrasting. She names these discourses as occupational and organisational. Their key features are summarised in table 3.1

Organisational Professionalism	**Occupational Professionalism**
Discourse of control used increasingly by managers in work organisations	Discourse constructed from within professional groups
Rational-legal forms of authority	Collegial authority
Standardised procedures	Discretion and occupational control of work
Hierarchical structures of authority and decision-making	Practitioner trust by both client (*sic*) and employers
Managerialism	Controls operationalised by practitioners
Accountability and externalised forms of regulation, target setting and performance review	Professional ethics monitored by institutions and associations
Linked to Weberian models of organisation	Linked to Durkheim's models of occupations as moral communities

Table. 3.1. Discourses of Professionalism (Evetts, 2013 p.788).

Somewhat related to the development of these discourses, Duyvendak, Knijin and Kremer (2006, p. 7) see a disconnection between front-line workers and those who decide policies:

> Technicians, bureaucrats, and policymakers have no clue about the work of those who actually implement public policy…as a consequence knowledge of what is really going on in society is not shared with decision makers, who in turn do not acknowledge the specific character of socio-professional work.

And with "(N)ew models of governance…intentionally [limiting] the discretionary space of professionals", professions are now questioned as to:

> the status of their knowledge , their authority, their orientation towards the public good, and the trust between professionals and their clients" (Kremer and Tonkens, 2006, p. 123).

Along with 'new models of governance' "marketization tendering and contracting" (Tonkens and Newman, 2011, p.209) also help drive the discourse of organisational professionalisation. Marketisation proposes opening:

> the market to all who wish to offer their services. [Here it is assumed] consumers will separate the wheat from the chaff…so that the best services and products will emerge at the lowest cost (Freidson, 2001 in Knijin and Selten, 2006, p. 21).

This process assumes the market will supply the best "solutions to all economic and social problems" (Heywood, 2012, p. 49). This is not always the case. Choice is often limited, due to the small number of providers and/or competitors being bought up by each other. Profit and price now become the drivers of the market rather than quality of service or consumer demand (Kremer and Tonkens, 2006). Thus there is a potential and often unacknowledged and unstated move away from the 'common good' as a basis for practice (Duyvendak, et al., 2006; CWI, 2015).

Marketisation, the belief that market style arrangements are "more economical, efficient, and effective than the public sector in the delivery of services" (Harris and White, 2013, p.376), drives a discourse of organisational professionalism (Evetts, 2010) where:

> surveillance and governmentality serve to construct an image of 'the authentic' [professional]. They suggest that by universalising the definition of the professional and inflating its importance, the practices of the profession, a 'collective individual' emerges: no longer ['a professional'], but ['The Professional'] someone who does not just act professionally, but is a Professional (Callaghan, 2014, p.1513).

Here the space for the discourse of occupational professionalism is much reduced (Evetts, 2012).

Trust is lost, everyone is assumed to be guided by self-interest not the public good, knowledge production is reduced, with practice-based knowledge deemed neither measureable nor evidence-based , and therefore discounted (Ruch, 2010; Ife, 2013). Professional discretion is now subject to increased monitoring in the name of accountability and transparency (organisational professionalism). This situation serves neither the people with whom the professions engage with nor the professions themselves (CWI, 2015; Cummins, 2018; Ferguson, et al., 2018). This is a far cry from the situation envisaged by Freidson (2001 in Kremer and Tonkens, 2006, p. 131) where:

> Professionals have a duty to balance public good against the needs and demands of clients and employers. Transcendent values add moral substance to the technical content of disciplines. Professionals are obliged to be 'moral custodians' of their disciplines.

Community development as envisaged by AIEB (2016) favours a discourse of occupational professionalism:

> used to promote and facilitate occupational change (rationalization) and a disciplinary mechanism of autonomous subjects exercising appropriate conduct (Evetts, 2013, p.783),

However, Somerville (2016, p. 92) describes a situation emerging where governments rule:

> through community. [Here a] new mode of governance…appears to involve mobilisation from below but does so in an extremely circumscribed and biased way (Mayer, 2003 in Somerville, 2016, p. 92).

The state steps back and through new arrangements in the field (e.g. SICAP), a situation of "roll back [of the welfare system and] roll out [of] performance and audit culture" becomes the norm (Craig et al., 2011, p.194). Here community development is repositioned "in new, interesting and deeply problematic ways" (Craig et al., 2011, p.194; see also CWI, 2015; Emejulu, 2016; Meade, 2018).

In chapter 2 we saw how community development in Ireland became increasingly part of an elaborate governance infrastructure. The story details, a once relatively autonomous practice, being gradually brought under outside control (Harvey, 2015; Bissett, 2015; Lloyd, 2016), and through a complicated intermeshing with other imposed narratives, recession, austerity and alignment, severe cut backs in funding and the introduction of competitive tendering,

leading to decreased community development activity, loss of skilled personnel, massive and devastating consequences for communities who could least bear such depredations (Editorial WfC, 2012; Harvey, 2012; Spillane, 2015; Bissett, 2015). Community work and community workers, in this new scenario, are sabotaged (Doyle, 2016).

Professionality

Professionality refers to:

> an *ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-*, and *epistemologically*-based stance on the part of an individual, in relation to the practice of [their] profession…and which influences her/his professional practice (Evans, 2008, p.6) (Italics in original).

Van Veen et al., (2003, p.54) see professionality as socially constructed:

> referring to a constellation of assumptions about how [professionals] should work in terms of what they must master, what they must do and what they must aim for.

AISCW (AIEB, 2016) were:

> produced in collaboration with people involved in, or associated with community development work (AIEB, 2016, p.25).

Thus the professionality of each individual community worker choosing to use the Standards to guide their practice is socially constructed through the dialogue that informed their production. This dialogue is on-going with:

> All stakeholders [having] a collective responsibility to create the circumstances where the Standards are discussed, evaluated and upheld, and to determine how they are maintained into the future (AIEB, 2016, p.25).

Further in their professional formation, a time to hone and develop their professionality, workers are similarly involved in a process of social construction via numerous dialogues, e.g. with tutors, classmates, practice supervisors, reading materials, and reflection, dialogues which inform and form both practice and 'professing'. Professionality and professional identity are further developed and honed through practice (Benadé, 2011). Evans (2008, p.27) says of the relationship between professionality and professionalism:

> Professionalism…may…best be described as…the 'plural' of individuals' professionality orientation: the amalgam of multiple 'professionalities' – professionality writ large

(In this reading I think she is referring to what Evetts (2013) termed occupational professionalism rather than organisational professionalism, though individual professionality would include reflection on influences from outside their profession including discourses of organisational professionalism).

The professionality of individual community workers and the 'parochial professionalism' (Harris and White, 2013, p.369), of community workers as a collective, (chapter 2 and the section on professionalism above), are now subjected to a questioning at a very fundamental level as regards, epistemology, attitude, and ideology, and is now faced with what Whelan and Ryan (2016, p.8) refer to as an "onto-political struggle". What is at stake is the very soul of community development as practice and 'professing' (Westoby, 2015).

Bakker and Montessori (2016, p.4), state, "life is difficult and full of unexpected events." Recession, austerity and alignment are examples of such 'difficult' and 'unexpected events'. The system itself is likely to respond in either of two ways:

1. apply the rules of the system to this new situation, and if that does not work then
2. tweak the system somewhat to take account of this new situation (Bakker, 2016).

In neither is the system itself seriously questioned or critiqued or indeed a new system imagined.

How are practitioners to respond when "the higher grounds do not offer the certainty that would be comfortable when you are struggling in the swampy lowlands" (Bakker, 2016, p.28)? Here the concepts of 'instrumental professionality and 'normative professionality' (Bakker, 2016) prove useful. Professionality implies training that is ongoing, involving the generation of new knowledge through reflection on experience, the autonomy to act professionally, and in some cases a somewhat elastic definition as to the boundaries between in-group and out-group (Bakker, 2016). This is consistent with how AIEB (2016) and indeed others (e.g. Lathouras, 2017) conceptualise community work.

Instrumental professionality echoes Mayo's (2002) 'technicist' approach to community development and fits with Evetts (2013) discourse of organisational professionalism. The professional as an instrument of the system is tasked with putting the system into practice

(Bakker, 2016). This approach, while fine in some cases, does not go far enough and often falters when confronted with 'difficult' and 'unexpected' events that lie outside of the prescriptions of the system or where the 'good' clashes with the prescriptions of the system (Bakker, 2016). Biesta (2013 in Bakker, 2016, p.14) writes;

> the question of good…is a normative question that requires value judgements, it can never be answered by outcomes measurement, by research evidence or through managerial forms of accountability.

That is not to say that such elements do not have a place rather they cannot become the sole arbiter upon which decisions as to the 'good' are made (Bradley and McArdle, 2013; Crickley, 2013; Fenton, 2016). Other elements need to be brought to bear in order to make such judgements, to ensure a good act in the face of complexity, chaos and uncertainty; "subjectivity and normativity" (Bakker, 2016, p.14).

Normative professionality requires of the practitioner:

> that he recognises the uniqueness of the appeal made on him by the other…He tries, while recognising the uniqueness of his own self and that of the other for whom he is responsible, to achieve a good act (Bakker, 2016, p.18-19). (Gendered language in original)

In this scenario the professional steps outside of the system and thinks creatively with "care, compassion and critical consciousness" (Kemmis and Smyth, 2008, p.5), and works dialogically with the other towards the enablement and enactment of "creative transformation" (Westoby and Dowling, 2013, p.154). 'Normative professionality' mirrors the 'transformative' approach to community development of Mayo (2002) and echoes Evetts (2013) discourse of occupational professionalism. A way of working that:

> requires on the one hand a need to slow down to 'see' these multiple stories within and without; and on the other hand, speeding up social innovations that shine the light on vulnerabilities, fissures, and soft spots within 'resistance regimes' of powerful interest groups that often want to maintain the status quo (Westoby, 2015, p.35) .

Chaos, complexity and uncertainty are a feature of the post 2008 crash landscape, a landscape in which the social professions are increasingly enfolded.

3.4 Social Professions

Social professions, a term "little used as yet in English", relates European concerns for "transferability of qualifications" and the development of common understandings, of the different national flavourings and appreciations, of work in the field of social welfare Banks (2004a, p.26). These occupations, meet some but not all of the criteria of a profession and exhibit an "ambivalence towards professionalisation" (Banks 2004a, p.36) see also (Healy, 2009; Harington and Beddoe, 2014). This ambivalence is fuelled from within through concerns expressed regarding professional elitism, implied in the 'strategic' or 'power' perspectives (Banks, 2004a). In community work this elitism is seen as "potentially undermining community activism and autonomous community movements" (Mayo, 2002, p. 163) (Ife, 2013; Lathouras, 2017). There are also questions from the outside concerning, for example, the necessity and role of these occupations (Duyvendak, Knijin and Kremer, 2006), reflecting a "societal ambivalence" towards these occupations (Banks, 2004a, p.37) see also (Healy, 2009).

The social professions include social work, youth work, social care, and community work:

> related but still distinct, occupational groups involved in care, social control, informal education and advocacy with a range of troublesome or 'disadvantaged' user/client groups" (Banks, 2004a, p.2).

(Note here the implied role of the social professions in systems of governance concerning the 'implicitly flawed subject'). Looking at how these particular occupational groups are defined, or self-define, it can be seen that while there are very broad areas of agreement there are also distinct differences along the lines of history, training, philosophies, and visibility (Banks, 2004a; Christie, 2005; Hamilton, 2011; Lalor and Sherry, 2013; Howard and Lyons, 2014; Popple, 2015).

In Ireland two of the social professions (social work and social care) are required to register with CORU, the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005). The registration process for social work is already in place; for social care it is still in development (CORU website December 2016). The establishment of CORU has been welcomed (Byrne, 2013) as a means of providing clarity and direction on issues of professional boundaries and cross over (Share, 2013). Others urge caution as regards this process (Kirwan and Melaugh, 2015; McLaughlin, 2016). A fuller

discussion of debates in both social work and social care regarding professionalism is beyond the scope of this study. (See for example: Banks, 2004b; Christie, 2005; Staub-Bernasconi, 2009; Baxter, 2011; Lalor and Share, 2013; Kirwan and Melaugh, 2015; McLaughlin, 2016).

The definition of youth work (Youth Work Act 2001), while explicit as to youth work as an activity "provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations" (Irish Statute Book website May 2017), has little to say of youth work as either practice or profession. Debates continue within youth work regarding professionalism and professionalisation, (see for example Jenkinson 2000; Spence, 2008; Bane, 2009; Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Devlin, 2012; Nichols, 2012).

Community Work

Community work is, neither required to register with CORU nor is it defined in legislation. It has been recognized by the state as part of the community and voluntary sector and as a "legitimate social partner" (Government of Ireland, 2000, p.31):

> promoting positive social change in society in favour of those who benefit least from national and global social and economic developments…[it] seeks to challenge the causes of poverty and disadvantage and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007 in POBAL, 2011, p.13).

There are questions, already looked at in chapter 2, as to whether the state actively supports such a programme of work based on 'challenge', 'choice', 'new opportunities', and redistribution (Bissett, 2015; Harvey, 2015; Lloyd, 2016).

AIEB (2016, p.25) states:

> The question of how standards are applied and ensured is challenging for communities, practitioners, funders, policy makers, programme implementers and community work educators.

The standards can only achieve their intended aim when fused with the values and become enacted in an integrated practice. Given the consultation process involved in bringing this document to fruition, it is expected that those same values continue to underpin the work of all those involved in the consultation process.

AIEB (2016) views on practice echo those of Freidson (2001) above as to the role of practitioners as moral custodians of their practice, and the balancing of an array of competing voices as to community development's role now and into the future. Community workers are obliged to engage in an ongoing discourse of occupational professionalism while balancing that against a discourse of organisational professionalism.

As noted earlier within community work the debate on profession has a long history. Perhaps the debate is not so much about whether community work is a profession but about what type of profession it is (Crickley, 2016). That is, is it a profession defined by others from the outside or defined from within by practitioners with reference to the contexts in which practitioners operate and the diverse nature of other groupings, e.g. educators, policy makers, community groups, and participants, with whom community work and community workers interact? For its part AIEB (2016), is unambiguous in its definition community work as focused on social change, human rights, social and environmental justice.

Calling to care

Community work is a relational practice, (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008; Westoby and Dowling, 2008, 2013; Gilchrist, 2009; Westoby and Morris, 2010; Ife, 2013; Westoby, 2015). This is evident in the value base outlined in AIEB (2016). Its concern for the enactment of social justice and human rights achieved via relational processes of participation, empowerment and collectivity (Westoby and Dowling, 2008, 2013; Westoby and Morris, 2010), situates community work as a political practice (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016, Minnite and Piven, 2016). Community work happens in a thought-through manner that links action and reflection (Ledwith, 2005, 2016; Butcher et al., 2007; Westoby and Dowling, 2008, 2013; Ledwith and Springett, 2010; Ife, 2013; Popple, 2015; Westoby, 2015).

The 'calling to care' (Banks, 2004a, p.35) is a central feature of community work. Tronto (1993 in Barnes, 2012, p.1) defines care as:

> A species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web.

Care here is based in both an 'ethic of care' and an 'ethic of justice' Banks (2012, p.78) tabulates these two ethics as follows:

	Justice	Care
Key Value	Justice –reinforces separation of Persons	Care –represents connectedness
Appeal to	Principles	Relationships
Focus on	Social contracts, ranked order of values, duty, individual freedom	Co-operation, communication, caring relationships between persons

Table 3:2 Ethic of Justice, Ethic of Care (after Banks, 2012).

The origins of "care ethics" lie in the work of Gilligan (1982) who emphasises "situated judgements which highlighted the importance of maintaining connections with others" (Barnes, 2012, p.25) set against justice ethics based in "abstract moral reasoning" (Barnes et al., 2015, p.5) and "formal rules of conduct" (Barnes, 2012, p.25). Both ethics (care and justice) are essential for social justice (Watkins, 1988; Balas, 2006; Barnes, 2012; Sercombe, 2012; Barnes et al., 2015).

Noddings (2002, in Smith, 2004, p. 6) points to how an ethic of care links to an ethic of justice;

> Those who care-about others in the justice sense must keep in mind the objective is to ensure that caring actually occurs. Caring-about is empty if it does not culminate in caring relations.

The two ethics have an interdependent relationship:

> We first learn what it means to be cared for, then to care for intimate others, and finally to care about those we cannot care for directly (Noddings, 2002, in Smith, 2004, p. 7).

They are two sides of the same coin; an ethic of care needs an ethic of justice to support it; similarly, an ethic of justice is based in, and grows out of, experiences of being cared for, an experience where:

> interconnectedness is found alongside a modified individualism…where an appreciation of an abstract ethic of justice would be wedded to an ethic and action of care (Watkins, 1988, p.12).

This conceptualisation encapsulates community development's layered or nested structure of relationships with its movement from relationships of bonding, through banding, to building and finally to bridging (Westoby and Morris, 2010; Whelan and Macleod, 2016).

3.5 'Professing'

Calling

Sercombe (2010, p. 10) says profession implies a commitment:

> to serve some sort of constituency, typically people in some state of vulnerability, with a particular focus to their service…this is essentially a moral position, an ethical commitment to serve.

Here Sercombe merges profession and 'professing' similar to McIntosh (2008a, p.11-12) who asks, "What does it mean to be a "professor" but to "profess one's vocation". Service here is "something we do", a relationship, not a "product we deliver" (Sercombe, 2012, p.12). Profession/'professing' becomes an ethical stance towards the world, an answer to a calling to serve the vulnerable other.

'Professing' as noted earlier is a public espousal of a particular way of being in and seeing the world. Banks' (2004a) observation of the "'social professions' as characterised by a vocation or 'calling to care'" is supported by Robson (2015, p.220):

> [for] 88% [of] participants [in this study], it was evident that their political, ideological and/ or religious beliefs had motivated them towards community development work and sustained their commitment over time.

Robson (2015, p. 220-221) continues:

> Although all [social professions] are generally concerned with people 'developing in society'…the strongest emancipatory and democratic strand is in community development work.

Community workers' 'calling', their drive towards the 'emancipatory and democratic', is rooted in and grows out of experiences that clearly marked the world as unfair and in need of change (O'Regan, 2008; Robson, 2015). Their identities as community worker grow out of their experience such that personal and professional identity merge, profession becomes the embodiment and enactment of 'professing' (O'Regan, 2008; Robson, 2015). Watkins (1988, p.12-13) describes this process as one where;

> eyes turn both inward and outward, where one's experience of one's identity is largely one of interconnectedness, and thus that one's daily life is called upon to address the imperfections of human life, which cause such suffering, as well as to celebrate life's joys and beauty.

Mode of Having versus Mode of Being

Martín-Baró (1996 in Afuape, 2011, p. 202) draws attention to:

> An exclusive focus on those things that have been demonstrated by psychological science – with all its omissions and prejudices – ignores possibilities that have not been thus demonstrated, and thereby consecrates the existing order as natural.

Afuape (2011, p.203) continues:

> This focus on the technical is also seen in service frameworks. While there is usually a statement somewhere in all our policy documents about values and respect, the central focus is technical, to do with team organisation, structures, protocols and service models.

Services based on such models have:

> A significant impact on the degree to which we can centralise peoples voices if they differ from…dominant [voices]…[this unhearing has] implications for what is taught [during training] in order to fit the 'mould' of what is required to be…'competent' (Afonou et al., 2016, p.189).

This situation encodes a discourse of organisational professionalism. This way of working "relying heavily on procedures, rather than working proactively or creatively" (McDonald, et al., 2007, p.1375; see also Fenton, 2016), can lead to "defensive practice" (Thompson, 2010, p.249; see also Fenton, 2016). Such a "restricted professional" practice:

> [relies] upon experience and intuition and…guided by a narrow, perspective which values that which is related to the day-to-day practicalities of [their work] (Evans, 2008, p. 27).

This is contrasted with the "extended" professional who adopts a:

> much wider vision of what [their work] involves, valuing of the [theoretical] underpinning, and the adoption of a generally intellectual and rationally-based approach to the job (Evans, 2008, p.27).

Similar pressures exist in community work. The sense of manic activity that pervades the 24 hour 7 day week culture of contemporary society such that:

> it's almost impossible to even see the crises, let alone be intimate with the world's manifestations and consider new ways of being (Westoby, 2015, p.80).

This situation was foreseen by Fromm (1980, p.13) who noted the industrial system was built on:

> Two main psychological premises: (1) that the aim of life is happiness, that is, maximum pleasure, defined as the satisfaction of any desire or subjective need a person may feel (radical hedonism); (2) that egotism, selfishness, and greed, as the system needs to generate them in order to function, lead to harmony and peace (Italics in original).

This he called "the mode of having" (Fromm, 1980, p.20) which he contrasts to "the mode of being" (Fromm, 1980, p.20):

> In the *having mode* of existence my relationship to the world is one of possessing and owning, one in which I want to make everybody and everything, including myself, my property… the *being mode* of existence…means aliveness and authentic relatedness to the world…refers to its true nature, the true reality, of a person or a thing (Fromm 1980 p.33). (Italics mine).

One way of keeping people within the having mode is constant distraction, not allowing for time to pause and attend:

> to the subtle and latent energies that need care…to become sensitised to the symptoms and stay with them (Westoby, 2015, p.81).

Dialogue

In community development dialogue is critical (Ledwith, 2005, 2016; Butcher et al., 2007; Westoby and Dowling, 2009, 2013; Landvogt, 2012; Westoby and Shevellar, 2012; Ife, 2013; Forde and Lynch, 2015). Dialogue is a process of co-construction, of naming the world, of recognition of the other, of opening one's self out towards the other, of embrace.

Dialogue for Freire (1976 in Mayo, 1999, p.64) is a situation where all:

> become learners assuming the same attitude as cognitive subjects discovering knowledge through one another and through the objects they try to know. It is not a situation where one knows and the other does not; it is rather the search, by all, at the same time to discover something by the act of knowing which cannot exhaust all the possibilities in the relation between object and subject.

Dialogue is never complete it is always partial, contextual, and provisional:

> A form of communication that involves continuous struggle to radically change our way of knowing and being (Newman, 2006, p.111).

It involves moving across "the border that demarcates one's social location in order to understand and act in solidarity with [those] perceived as 'Other'" (Mayo, 1999, p.66). This encounter, this 'border crossing' is one of non-judgemental open listening, aimed at understanding, of seeking to enter the world of the 'Other' such that "I am changed by my encounter with you, and I begin to recognizing the commonalities we share" (Keating 2002 in Doetsch-Kidder, 2012, p.110).

Allowing oneself to be open to such an encounter requires "an armed love" (Freire, 2005, p.74):

> rooted in a committed willingness to struggle persistently with purpose in our life and to intimately connect that purpose with what [Freire] called our "true vocation"- to be human (Darder, 2009, p.567).

This reflects the "mode of being" (Fromm 1980) which is only realised through interdependence with others. Only through relationships based in dialogue and deep connection is it possible to imagine and work towards potential other worlds (Kipnis, 2000; Mearns and Cooper, 2005; Darder, 2009; Tarulli and Sales, 2009; Westoby, 2015). This stance requires a way of working that acknowledges our vulnerabilities, our fears, boldness, humility, and not-knowing (Jewett, 2017). Freire (1998 in Darder, 2009, p.575) puts it much more eloquently:

> We must dare to learn how to dare in order to say no to the bureaucratization of the mind to which we are exposed every day. We must dare so that we can continue to do so even when it is so much more materially advantageous to stop daring.

We must continue 'to be' when the temptation of 'to have' is ever present. Kemmis (2005, p.421) sees this as a form of practice that requires practitioners to:

> develop a kind of meta-reflexivity that understands that their practice is not only shaped by their rational action and guided by their prior professional knowledge but also alert to (and engaged with) the material, social, discursive and historical conditions that shape their practice in any particular case at any particular time.

This references an 'extended' professionality' (Evans, 2008) which moves beyond the immediate situation to include a wider perspective. Here the concept of 'normative professionality' proves useful:

> an articulation of what constitutes good professional conduct, of what might possibly be done better, but also what ought to be judged as 'bad practice' and is in that sense undesirable (Bakker, 2016, p.23).

Practice here requires the worker remain "conscious of the fundamental and existential aspects of [their] work" (Bakker, 2016 p.18).

'Professing' arises from deep within, grows out of the community worker's own experiences of the world as an unfair place and being called to address this reality, a reality where the 'mode of having' is triumphant. The 'mode of having' seeks to keep the worker, through constant busyness, oblivious to that other way of experiencing the world, the 'mode of being'. The 'mode of being' awakens us to our interconnectedness and the need for dialogue as a means of learning about and creating the world together. Practice in this way involves workers in 'meta-reflexivity', of how, and where in the world their practice is situated and seeking to work from there towards the common good.

'Sayings', 'Doings', 'Relatings'

'Professing' is enacted through practice, the actual doing of the work. Practice is constituted of:

- "Sayings": ways of thinking about what the practice is and means…what kind of issues and problems [it] addresses
- "Doings": activities [of] professional practitioners…(and consequences) for others involved in and affected by [such activities]
- 'Relatings": complexes of relationships…that are made and remade through the living connections that surround the practice (Kemmis, 2009, p.26).

In professional practice these "form compound structures…making [practice] comprehensible" and giving practice its "teleoaffective structure" as "tasks" and "projects" for those involved (Kemmis, 2009, p.26).

Community work is defined as:

> A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way (AIEB, 2016, p.5).

And through both task and process:

> Communities [are] facilitated to identify needs and organisations develop strategies to identify needs supported by funding by the State (CWI, 2015, p.2).

Here "doings" include facilitation, identification of needs, 'strategising', 'organising', 'supporting' 'structured and co-ordinated'. "Sayings" appear in the words 'empowerment' 'identify needs' 'develop strategies' behind these are other "sayings" including 'empowerment', 'social justice and human rights' and 'participation'. "Relatings" are evident in 'participation' 'collective decision making' 'communities', 'organisations', 'the State' 'social justice and human rights'.

Kemmis and Smyth (2008, p.3) exhort us to constantly ask:

> what *should* we do?" in relation to our practice…[another] equally important question is "in whose interests are we acting?" (italics in original).

Professional practice is not neutral the practitioner is always standing somewhere, looking in a particular direction, and working towards particular goals. Practice from this perspective is *praxis*, where the practitioner is:

> conscious of themselves as acting in history, as making a world, a history, through their actions…[and having] a critical consciousness in terms of history can help us find ways of thinking, that at least partially, allow us to escape the constraints that tradition has placed upon our thought, interpretations, and perspectives and imagine our futures (Kemmis and Smyth, 2008, p.8).

Constraints include the prevailing 'regimes of truth' within a particular society:

1. the types of discourse [society] harbours and causes to function as true;
2. the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements;
3. the way in which each is sanctioned;
4. the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth;
5. the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1976 in Lorenzini, 2013).

The State's 'regimes of truth' regarding community development in times of austerity, recession and alignment seek to control and shift its focus:

> discretion around funding [and] budgets…[ensures] state agencies continue to dominate the resourcing of community development. The discursive shifts and technical reforms currently being operationalised [e.g. 'alignment' and SICAP] have practical consequences for how communities experience and how workers enact state-funded programmes (Meade, 2018, p. 239).

Community development's focus is now directed towards an individualised "results driven work activation agenda", with its role of "structural critique, democratisation, community participation and responsibilisation of the state" removed from the agenda (Meade, 2018, p.236).

This shift in focus coupled with competitive tendering is seen by community workers as moving community development away from the value based practice outlined in AIEB (2016):

> Community Work Ireland members have repeatedly reported significant loss to their autonomy and their ability to respond to the needs of their communities as they are 'contracted' to deliver a set of centrally prescribed number and range of targets [where] 'front-line service delivery' is being prioritised over policy work and collective action to affect collective change and that their work is becoming increasingly individualised (CWI, 2015, p.28).

This situation of "loss of autonomy and ability to respond", and "value conflicts" (Van Heugten (2011, p, 39) is one that is also felt in other social professions. Fenton (2016, p. 12) speaks of social workers experiencing "ethical stress":

> a conflict between what a person thinks is the *right* thing to do (in terms of social work values and one's own conscience) and the constraints/priorities/rules of the workplace (Italics in original).

Community workers are thus faced with the problem of 'how to achieve a good act' in situations where the values of community work clash with the demands of new programmes and structures. This process of change in both the definition (by the State) and practice (implied in new programme demands) Fairclough (2003 in Garrett, 2018 p.4) describes as being a strategy which serves to induct:

> employees into new ways of working and new identities corresponding to them, partly through attempts to get them to 'own' new discourses.

Garrett (2018, p.4) elaborates on this process of induction:

> Such discourses are apt to focus on and promote a certain idea of how…a 'modern' service should be assembled and what core competencies compliant staff should possess and exhibit.

It is not only in the field of practice where contracts for individualised service delivery are making their presence felt. The sites of professional formation e.g. the universities, are also subject to values change with neoliberal values increasingly driving the sector. Questions then are to be asked about whether professional formation in such sites promote practice as the active imagining of and striving for different i.e. socially just futures or function as a means of producing 'compliant staff'?

3.6 Professional formation/ 'professing'

Ife (2013, p.81) states "the real world is complex, chaotic, and untidy [with community work needing] to be flexible and adaptable". He cautions against the development of a "cookbook approach" to education that is purely skill focused. Such an approach would not do justice to the nature of the work for:

> the community worker needs to be able to analyse, to think creatively, and strategically, to think effectively, and constantly be able to relate the personal to the political (Ife, 2013, p.380).

Ward (2012, p.184) sees the value of applying the 'matching principle' during the process of professional formation /'professing':

> The model of training should reflect the mode of practice; more precisely…we should aim for the 'felt experience' of the learning situation to correspond in certain key ways with core elements of the professional practice in question.

This model is based on the idea that the medium is the message with the values and practice of community work embedded in the medium but also embodied by the messenger (Westoby and Shevellar, 2012; Ward, 2012). The emphasis here is on both the process and the content of learning. Working in this manner allows for:

> the emergence within the learning context of some of the less conscious but nevertheless essential dynamics of the relevant field of practice (Ward, 2012, p.184).

This allows for the extra-individual features of practice (Kemmis, 2010) to emerge and be explored in the learning situation i.e.:

> cultures, discourses, social and political structures, and material conditions in which a practice is situated" (Boud and Brew, 2013, p.215).

Professional formation involves learning and becoming conscious of how practice is "socially-, discursively-, culturally-, and historically-formed" (Kemmis, 2010, p.141). A point also noted by Westoby and Sokhela (2012, p.2012):

> the craft of facilitating transformational training is difficult to learn and not easily transmitted...the cultural and pedagogical pressure is towards informational transfer…this pressure becomes even more pronounced when compounded by the need to achieve scale…trade-offs between quality and quantity abound…recognising the trade-offs, and therefore at times having to make tough pragmatic choices, needs to be accompanied by a deep commitment to ensuring facilitators [and students]…are supported to learn the craft of transformational training [and practice]. Philosophy and technique is not enough. It is the craft which is crucial.

Community work here is professional in the sense of "skilled craftspeople" (Nicholls, 2012, p. 110) who bring their knowledge and skills to bear on an issue, backing away from the model of professional as 'the expert' towards a dialogical model involving:

> A willingness to be open about their ignorance as well as their knowledge, and about their difficulties as well as their strengths; a willingness to take risks and live with uncertainty within the learning and teaching relationships; and the ability nevertheless to stay within the role of educator and not to break boundaries by pretending to be a friend or an equal (Ward, 2012, p.190).

Ward (2012) above is writing in the context of teaching relationship-based social work. While not community work there are cross-overs between the two not least in that community work is a relational practice.

Gardner (2011, p.89) observes one of the characteristics of:

> Western culture [is] we tend to want definite answers…This reflects a desire in professional practice generally to reduce risk and uncertainty.

She continues as to how practitioners often want "to be able to give clear answers to meaning of life questions and not feeling able to" (Gardner, 2011, p.89). However:

> such a search for certainty and truth can apply only to discrete components of professional activity, the remainder of which is characterized by uncertainty and complex qualitative judgements (Taylor and White, 2000, p.5).

Gardner (2011, p.90) continues:

> Not everybody is at a point of clarity and some need simply to have you there while they explore where they are. For others, it is important to be in a place of 'not knowing', allowed to be uncertain and waiting for clarity…being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.

Ife and Tesoriero note (2006 in Westoby and Ingamells, 2012, p.2):

> To seek to impose a single framework on all community workers is to fall into the positivist and modernist trap of assuming there is only one "right" or "best" way to do community work. This would be contrary to the principle of diversity and the need to establish "bottom-up" constructions of wisdom. It is important to develop one's own framework.

An essential component of education and practice is the holding and balancing the tensions of knowing and not knowing, certainty and doubt, educator and equal, (Westoby and Shevellar, 2012). This models the holding and balancing of the multiple tensions that exist in the complex field that is 'professing'/ professional practice (Beddoe, et al., 2013; Ife, 2013; Fors, 2016).

In Ireland it is the university that is the main site for the professional formation of community workers. Neoliberal values are increasingly driving the educational aims of the university sector (Lynch and Ivancheva, 2015). Further the *habitus* of the university remains largely middle class (Finnegan, 2012) thus compounding the experiences of many non-traditional students, in particular those from marginalised communities (Flemming et al., 2010; Finnegan, 2012). Community work values and the methodologies of practice formation represent a direct challenge to values of the neoliberal project (Ledwith, 2005; Popple, 2015; Westoby and Ingamells, 2012; AIEB, 2016), and so sit not unproblematically in the university setting (e.g. hooks, 1994).

3.7 Standing at the feet of Jesus of Rio

If the heroic pose seen at the beginning of this chapter is not the model being proposed for the community worker, where a rather more humble posture is called for what might be learned from re-visiting the 'Jesus of Rio Syndrome'? The statue can be viewed as a snapshot, capturing a particular movement in the process of embracing. Embrace is a fourfold movement "opening the arms, waiting, closing the arms, and opening them again" (Volf,

1996, p.140), a process of welcome and letting go. The pose described by Hussey (2000) could be stage one or stage four in this process.

Another option is to adopt the perspective of the statue. The vista embraced by its gaze on a hill looking over Rio de Janeiro, encompasses the sea, the jungle, the citadels of the haves and the favelas of the have-nots. The 'historical reality' (Ellacuría, 1975), shows the statue as waiting to embrace the poor. The statue becomes a symbol for the embrace of the 'epistemologies of the south' (Santos, 2014), the voices of those "sacrificed to the infinite voracity of capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy" (Santos, 2014, p.2). These epistemologies question Western 'regimes of truth' (Bortoluci, 2015). They include, amongst others, feminism, liberation theology, liberation psychology, critical pedagogy, and post-colonial studies, perspectives which challenge the structural violence embedded within the dominant neo-liberal paradigm, epistemologies which inform the theoretical infrastructure of community work. These show historical reality as:

> a *tragic* reality…[a] *conflictive* [reality]…[involving] a *state of human alienation*…[from] its own being, [and] the life and behaviour of all who compose it…[where] truth…can only be found in the *future*…and in the other…we need memory…in order to precisely perceive all that has blocked, oppressed and crushed our people (Matín-Baró, 1974, p.221-222). (Italics in original)

These epistemologies are carriers of 'dangerous memory' representing:

> a declaration, a hope, a discursive reminder that people do not only suffer under the mechanisms of domination; they also resist; and, moreover, such resistance is always linked to forms of knowledge and understanding that are the preconditions for saying both 'no' to repression and 'yes' to the dynamics of struggle and the practical possibilities to which it addresses itself—in short, to a better way of life (Giroux, 1986, p.194-195).

Community work says yes to both the struggle for and the possibilities inherent in societal transformation towards social justice. This saying yes to both struggle and possibility wells up from within fusing personal calling and professional identity, practice becoming an enactment of 'professing' (O'Regan, 2008; Robson, 2015).

3.8 Conclusion

We began and ended with Jesus of Rio. This prompted questions as to the nature of profession, and 'professing'. Profession refers to occupational categories. 'Professing' refers to a public declaration of adherence to a particular way of seeing and being in the world.

Profession as an occupational category has been theorised from a number of perspectives and models. Trait theory holds that if an occupation displays particular traits, these define that particular occupation as a profession. In the 'strategic' view of professions various occupations work to achieve dominance in a particular field, and status in society, through a variety of means e.g. labour market control, lengthy periods of training, closed shop practices. Both of these approaches have been critiqued and found to be lacking. The 'ideal type' model adopts a phenomenological view of professions which explores what people see as constituting a profession (Banks, 2004a).

There are a number of concepts associated with profession; professionalisation, professionalism and professionality. Professionalisation refers to the process through which an occupation becomes a profession (Banks, 2004a). Professionalism can be viewed as two discourses. Organisational in which the profession and the work of professionals are regulated from without as a means of surveillance and control. Occupational professionalism refers to processes of the internal dialogue within a profession as to standards, ethics, good and bad practice (Evetts, 2013). Professionality is the stance adopted by a practitioner vis-à-vis how they practice their profession (Evans, 2008).

A particular category of occupations in the field of welfare has been labelled the social professions (Banks, 2004a). These are social work, youth work, social care and community work. Community work, unlike the other social professions, is neither defined in legislation nor required to be registered. However this does not mean it has escaped the gaze of organisational professionalism (Lloyd, 2016).

It seeks to counter this with its own narrative of occupational professionalism. The value base for this is outlined in AIEB (2016), which also sets out a definition for community work. Community work is not seen as working in isolation but has relationships with a variety of other groups e.g. funders, education providers, community participants and policy makers

and each of these groups has its own view of community work. Community work itself is clear that practice is embedded in and embodies a particular value base (AIEB 2016). Research indicates this embedment and embodiment of the value base is true for community workers in both their personal and 'professing'/ professional identities (O'Regan, 2008; Robson, 2015).

Professional formation aims to develop the practitioners grounding in the values and practices of community work. This is achieved through an educative process that acknowledges the complexity and uncertainty of the practice (Ife, 2013). In such a process educators embody and enact in their educative role the skills, values and practices of community work. Formation is not neutral and exists within an arena of competing discourses (Martín-Baró, 1974; Fleming et al., 2010; Finnegan, 2012; Lynch and Ivancheva, 2015). Community work in its embrace of values based in social justice, human rights and solidarity stands in stark contrast to the dominant values of neo-liberalism.

Boal (2000), replaces the term facilitator with 'joker'. The joker works by "directly [challenging] deadening, ritualized behaviour and everyday perceptions of reality" (Schutzman, 1994, p.148). Jackson (1995, p. xix) describes the role of the joker as:

> 'difficultator' undermining easy judgements, reinforcing our grasp of the complexity of a situation, but not letting that complexity get in the way of action or frighten us into submission or inactivity.

Community workers adopting the 'transformative' stance are *passeur*, joker, difficultator and border-crosser. They refuse the easy routes of certainty and always heed the advice of what;

> Yogi Berra suggests you do in moments of uncertainty: When you come to a fork in the road, take it (Schutzman, 2006, p.144).

This stance has real world impacts for practice and professionality. In its commitment to the common good, its calling to care, community work requires the practitioner be ever aware of the "fundamental and existential aspects" of practice (Bakker, 2016, p.18), which highlight questions of how to achieve a good act and whose interests you serve.

We return to the Jesus of Rio statue and contemplate the vista it encompasses. Here can be seen and heard a different range of values and stories. Practice from this perspective is emboldened through the embrace of different epistemologies that challenge dominant

regimes of truth (Santos, 2014). These epistemologies, these 'dangerous memories' (Giroux, 1986; Welch, 2000; Grey, 2007) alert practitioners to possibilities for transformation that exist for communities whom they serve in the sense of Sercombe (2012).

3.9 Fingerpost

John Berger (2016 in Kellaway, 2016) says "(I)f I'm a storyteller it's because I listen. For me a storyteller is like a *passeur* who gets contraband across the frontier." Contemplation of such contraband as has been smuggled across borders fuels the creation of new stories and the inspiration for working towards social transformation. This is similar to how Westoby (2015, p.17) sees community work with soul: "(S)oul invites disruption of conventional wisdom."

Storytelling is an essential part of community development. Stories of personal troubles become linked to collective struggles. These build a collective analysis and work towards social change. Personal stories become linked to and involved in larger political stories. Story too is a mode of research, a way of making sense of the world. In the next two chapters I explore narrative inquiry as a way of research. Using this approach I gather stories from individual community workers from which I braid a collective narrative which explores my research question:

What do community workers 'profess'?

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY THEORY: NOT OF ATOMS

The world is made up of stories
not of atoms
Rukeyser (1968)

4.1 Roadmap

In this research I explore the question:

What do community workers 'profess'?

I do this through storytelling, itself a key component of community work. Narrative inquiry is the method I use to do this. This places my research in the qualitative tradition of research, which implies certain epistemological and ontological standpoints. These standpoints I see as in line with those of community work therefore I see narrative inquiry as a research method that sits well with community work.

I begin in 4.2 with a look at narrative and story. These are two words that recur throughout this and the following chapters. Indeed they recur frequently in everyday conversation and in writing in community work. In 4.3 I posit the role of story in both our lives in general and community work in particular. 4.4 explores story as essential in community work practice. Narrative inquiry as a research method is the focus of 4.5. Here I examine the theory of research in the qualitative tradition, which in turn raises questions as to how the world is structured and what are acceptable ways of investigating the world.

4.6 explores the relational ethic of narrative inquiry, an ethic that fits well with community work's relational values (AIEB, 2016). Here I look at issues related to consent in narrative inquiry, the positioning of narrative inquiry as a practice of co-research and the implications this has for the relationship between researcher and co-inquirers. The relationship in this particular piece of research is placed within the field of community work and its particular ethical framing as regards the values and practice of community work.

In 4.7 I focus in more detail on particular issues in this research those are;

1. the balancing of co-inquirers voices and my own voice as researcher,
2. the methods of analysis that influence my re-storying, Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM), Thematic Analysis (TA),

3. issues of credibility and trustworthiness in narrative inquiry

The conclusion 4.8 is followed by a fingerpost 4.9 to the next chapter which details my research design and process.

4.2 A note on story and narrative

Are narrative and story the same thing? If not, then how do they differ? Squire et al., (2014, p.6-7) say of the difference, stories are "recounted sequences of events" and narratives are "plotted, interpreted accounts of events". Many researchers use the two interchangeably (McAdams, 2008; Squire et al., 2014). Both story and narrative are described as partial, contextual, and socially constructed (Parton and O'Byrne, 2000).

For some researchers narrative is viewed as story + (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000; Squire et al., 2014), or as Speedy (2008, p.4) says "multi-storied texts". In a similar way concepts of community can also be read as 'multi-storied texts' with their "long history of mobility and mutability of meanings" (Newman and Clarke, 2016, p.33), as can community work, an occupation that is "both imprecise and unclear" (Popple, 1995 in Mayo, 2002, p.168).

Narrative has also been described as referring to larger stories, e.g. at a societal level, and story to smaller groupings organizational, familial, and personal. Other researchers see story as narrative +; story being a more developed narrative which seeks to illustrate a "point or offer a moral" (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p.97).

It seems to me that both of the above ways of separating narrative and story apply to community work, in its enmeshment in both large narratives and small stories, and with community work itself as a fluid and dynamic occupation being involved in meaning making out of multi-storied texts in a complex and chaotic world. In this research I shall use story to refer to the stories told to me by individual co-inquirers, I re-story these into a braided collective narrative of 'profession'.

4.3 Story/narrative: the making of self, the making of meaning

Ortiz (1985 in Mattingly, 1989, p.27) states:

> Very simply we human beings seem to have a basic need to be understood by others and offering one's life story to another is a way to do this.

While we may have some agency in how we construct the stories of our lives, we do not do so independent of the historical and other contexts in which our lives are lived (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000; Goldie, 2011). Rather we do so in an interdependent dialogical manner with our fellow social actors (Bensen, 2001; Kearney, 2002; Bruner, 2010; Clandinin, 2013), and the contexts of both our and their lives'. Through telling stories we strive, to make meaning linking events that stretch from where you were, to where you are now and forward to where you will be, in an as yet unknown future (Mattingly, 1998; Bruner, 2002a, 2002b; Kearney, 2002; Goldie, 2011). The making of stories is "an indispensable ingredient of any meaningful society" (Kearney, 2002 p.4), and has become particularly acute in contemporary times with its post-modernist framing, which emphasises "multiple truths in any situation" and "its stressing of the validity of many different types and sources of knowledge" (Harris and White, 2013, p.359; see also Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This collapse of a sense of over-arching meta-narratives makes the shaping of a personal story all the more vital, and this shaping takes place through relationship.

We are born with the ability to recognize and tell stories and this is accomplished chiefly through interaction with others and reflection on our lives (Mearns and Cooper, 2005; McAdams, 2008). Indeed language is structured to facilitate this and story is something we learn early on (Bruner, 2002a).This process is lifelong weaving experience into story, building our sense of self and self in relation to others and in relation to the world (Bannister and Fransella, 1980; McAdams, 2008; Burbank, 2011). The collection of stories becomes how we make sense of the world, how we navigate our way and how we construct a stable sense of identity or self-story. Without a capacity for meaning making through storying and re-storying of experiences we run the risk of serious impairment in not only how we navigate our lives as individuals (Polkinghorne, 1991; Phillips, 2003; Waldergrave et al., 2003; Bruner, 2002a, 2002b; Crossley, 2002; Speedy, 2008; Salmon and Riessman, 2013) but also in how we experience the world as a shared space of meaningful exchanges, from which we construct not just ourselves but co-construct and shape the world we inhabit (Kearney, 1997).

Narrative also plays an important role in the formation of professional identity:

> The interplay of multiple and often conflicting narratives of professional and personal history…provides a catalyst for reflection, critique, and "re-vision" that initiate and sustain [and build our] capacity to resist confining cultural narratives…thus [allowing for] recomposing [ourselves] as [professionals] and individuals (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000, p.7).

These processes of interaction between the individual, their occupational environment and other contexts, leading to the ongoing formation and re-formation of professional identities and thinking about professional practice, have been shown to operate in many occupations (Mattingly, 1998; O'Regan, 2008; Middleton, et al., 2009; Clandinin, 2013; Kierstead and Abner, 2013; Dutt and Grabe, 2014; Murray and Ziegler, 2015; Robson, 2015), facilitating the negotiation of an ongoing professionality, an unfolding dialogue with calling and vocation (chapter 3).

4.4 Narrative and community work

Community work relies on stories, the articulation and interpretation of stories, the re-fashioning of stories into possibilities leading to transformed worlds (Ingamells et al., 2010; Ledwith and Springett, 2010; Rawsthorne and Howard, 2011; Lane, 2013; Born 2014; Kelly and Westoby, 2018):

> Storytelling offers one way to make sense of what happened and this makes stories essential to practice (Mattingly, 1998, p.6).

Freire (1998, p.77) sees possibilities for narrative transformation in how through questioning the stories which we are told as to how the world works:

> people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (Italics in original).

Stories link the personal to the political with a view towards the transformational through processes of:

> denunciation and annunciation' [in which we] analyse a dehumanising reality, denounce it, while announcing its transformation…this narrative approach…locating the personal

> as political [whereby] little stories make the vital connection between the deeply personal and the profoundly political (Ledwith, 2005, p.3-4).

What is hegemony, if not the dominance of one particular narrative? The way in which a dominant class seeks to:

> organise, persuade and maintain the consent of the subjugated [such that] its own ideas constitute the core perceptions and 'common sense' within a particular society (Garrett, 2018, p.22).

Hegemony is challenged via counter narrative:

> stories of everyday life not only transmit culture and maintain the status quo, but by telling our stories, retelling them, then rewriting them we find we can create counter-narratives that steer a course to transformation (Ledwith and Springett, 2010, p.103).

Regan (2010, p.102) states that this "telling otherwise"…can move us from past to future". This "telling otherwise" is initially a 'rehearsal for revolution' (Ganguly, 2010; Boal, 2006), but further telling and re-telling, experiencing and re-structuring, lead to action and transformation (Born, 2014). More than that stories have a relational quality bonding, banding, and bridging, across difference (Prentki, 2006; Arvanitakis, 2008; Lederach, 2010; Westoby and Morris, 2010; Whelan and Macleod, 2016). Community work is a process of co-creation with others of:

> [making] more human, the social fabric which surrounds and nurtures us like the membrane of a womb (Kaplan, 2002, p.178).

The process of community work is the braiding of stories of actually existing worlds into collective narratives that propose and work towards radically different worlds.

4.5 Narrative inquiry and the qualitative tradition of research.

This research project is based within the qualitative research tradition in general and narrative research in particular. Qualitative research seeks to examine what lies beneath people's behaviour in terms of meanings and motivations. This it does through seeking to understand the "meanings people have of the world around them because these meanings tend to govern behaviour" (Henn, Weinstein and Foard, 2006, p.150). Denscombe (2010, p.237-239) lists the following as characteristic of this tradition:

- Uses *words* or *visual images* as the units of analysis
  (I collect and work with community workers' stories)
- Associated with researcher *involvement*
  (My position as community worker and my embrace of community work values is very much part of how I go about conducting this research)
- Associated with *small-scale studies*
  (I work with six co-inquirers)
- Associated with a *holistic perspective*
  (My research question cannot be investigated separate to the contexts in which both co-inquirers and I are located)
- Associated with data analysis *during* data collection
  (I begin re-storying e.g. searching for patterns, as I hear the stories). (Italics in original).

The stories I gather represent both the individual and the collective voice of significant figures in community work, at this particular time, in the ongoing story of community work. Chapters 2 and 3, detailed how community work, as profession and 'professing', faces challenges from among other things the value system of the market, globalisation, and new systems of governance. Consequently, co-inquirers' stories become a way of commenting on and speaking back into both the field and the context of community work.

The world of community development is "complex, chaotic and untidy" (Ife, 2013). Cox (2008 p.31) says of research that accepts this point of view:

> Researching without certainty and in pursuit of social change is a challenge for qualitative research in the twenty-first century. 'Like Columbus, we have to take the chance that the mapmakers were wrong' (Summit, 1988, p.52) and acknowledge that we are experiencing a possible Kuhnian shift in inquiry, one in which relationships and outcomes can never be fully anticipated and one which comprises both challenges and opportunities for a renewed critical engagement with the social world. (Embedded quote in original).

This 'taking a chance' and lack of certainty is very much part of both, narrative inquiry, and community work.

This does not mean that such research is not trustworthy or that it does not reflect understandings and meanings that are of value to people in how they negotiate the world and/or engage in practices, like community development, that question and challenge dominant narratives and seek to develop and enact new imagined narratives of social transformation. Narrative is rooted in an ontology and epistemology related to the socially constructed nature of the world. 'Reality' is not out there waiting to be discovered (Burr, 1995; Parton and O'Byrne, 2000; Kaplan, 2002; Cox, 2008) but rather in narrative research we seek to uncover how someone makes sense of their world and it is these meaning-makings that are 'the real' (Parker, 2005 p.82). As Connelly and Clandinin, (2006, p. 375) state:

> Story…is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.

We make our world and ourselves meaningful through story. Story also allows us to enter the world of another and understand the meanings they make through their stories.

Narrative inquiry

Stories, connect teller and listener, they are relational (Gersie and King, 1990; Gersie, 1997; Cleveland, 2010). They not only describe current reality but also point to new possible futures (Ryan and McKay, 1999; Kearney, 2003). This process of description and analysis of current or historical reality with a view towards the creation of new possible futures is central to community work. Therefore I choose narrative inquiry as a way researching community workers 'professing'. That is community workers stories of their enactment of 'professing'.

The narrative approach in qualitative research:

> treats interview data as accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their world…[where] interviewer and interviewees, in concert generate plausible accounts of the world (Silverman, 2000 in Henn, Weinstein and Foard, 2006, p.161).

Narrative inquiry is an approach that "focuses on experience and the meaning of experience from the perspective of people living it in reality or imagination" (Daiute, 2014, p.8), it seeks out stories, and aims to understand the meaning such stories hold for those telling them (Clandinin, 2013). Connelly and Clandinin, (1990, p.2) describe narrative in narrative inquiry as:

> both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study**.**

Squire et al., (2014, p. 5) describe narratives as:

> a set of signs…movement between the signs generates meaning…it not only expounds but also explains…it is therefore distinct from description.

Narrative inquiry can be viewed as a form of three dimensional chess with moves on one plane mirrored by simultaneous moves on another, fluid and dynamic, moving between the "three commonplaces of narrative inquiry-temporality, sociality and place" in its "simultaneous exploration of all three" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006 in Clandinin, Pushor and Orr, 2007, p. 23).

Narrative does not exist independent of context or contexts. It nestles within histories, big and small, personal, local, national and international. It curls up within and between people, researcher, participants, wider community, and communities. It requires aspects, both intra and inter personal, to be taken into account. It huddles in different settings: the place of its telling, the situation of that place within larger spaces, and the movement between those spaces (Bensen, 2001; Kearney, 2002; Baldwin, 2013; Clandinin, 2013).

Brockmeier (2012, p.269) states:

> As there will never be a final and definitive conceptual model for how to do narrative…there will never be such a model for how to do narrative research.

There are however fingerposts that may be followed. Huber et al., (2013, p.213), describe narrative inquiry as a process of:

> attending to and acting on experience by co-inquiring with people…into living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories of experience.

Narrative inquiry begins with a curiosity about experience. This experience is acted upon - that is, it is converted into story in an effort to understand its meaning. The experience and the story of that experience are then attended to through a process of re-storying. This time though, the story-telling is an act of co-inquiry involving the researcher and co-inquirers, the re-storying leading to new stories which can then be looked at in terms of themes and

contexts. This results in a final (for now) narrative, co-constructed between researcher and co-inquirers, being re-presented as a (for now) understanding of the original curiosity.

Narrative ways of knowing

As a qualitative researcher I seek to understand the "subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman, 2008, p.712). Knowledge is derived from an exploration aimed at understanding the particular perspectives, of particular people, at a particular time and in particular places (Edwards and Holland, 2013; Hammersley, 2013). It is the stories of particular community workers as told to me that are the data for my research. Co-inquirers stories emerge from their reflections on their experience. 'Reality' is the stories told to me by my co-inquirers, and knowledge about their 'reality' is garnered through my seeking to understand these stories from the point of view of the teller. This is an epistemological position of 'interpretivism' where:

> social reality has meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful [and] it is the job of the social scientist to gain access to people's 'common-sense thinking' and hence interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view (Bryman, 2008, p. 30).

Context can and does place limits on our stories (Murray and Ziegler, 2015), however, through the process of becoming conscious of contexts it becomes possible to change them (Freire, 1998; Ledwith 2005; Ledwith and Springett, 2010; Cleveland, 2010). Thus, my research, with its intention of speaking back into both the field and context of community work, merges interpretivist and critical epistemologies -"an emancipatory knowledge, knowledge in the context of action, and the search for freedom" (Crotty, 2013, p.159).

This placement of my research in the narrative branch of the qualitative tradition is not a neutral act. It involves very conscious and deliberate choices as regards epistemology the "theory of knowledge" and "stance on what should pass as acceptable knowledge" (Bryman, 2008, p. 710), and ontology "the study of being…'what is'…the nature of existence…the structure of reality" (Crotty, 2013, p.10). In accepting narrative as a way of researching the world I am accepting that narrative is a way of knowing, an 'acceptable form of knowledge' and that the 'structure of reality' is storied, co-created by people through the stories they construct in order to make their experiences meaningful (Kaplan 2002; Speedy 2008; Squire et al, 2014; Whelan, 2015).

Narrative is not a definitive description of reality but always partial, contextual, and socially constructed (Parton and O'Byrne, 2000). Narrative is not:

> representing reality - narratives should be seen as productive, narratives do things, they constitute realities, the social and the subject herself (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013, p.29).

Narrative accepts that there is not one 'reality' out there waiting to be known, positivist, empiricist epistemology, objectivist ontology (Bryman, 2008), but rather there are multiple 'realities' negotiated over, dialogued with, fought over, revised and re-visited, through which we navigate and make sense of experience, interpretivist epistemology, constructivist ontology (Bryman, 2008).

We construct our worlds through social interactions out of which we make meaning, build the world and operate as if those meanings had a 'reality' independent of us as social actors:

> We arrive at shared views of reality by sharing our knowledge through various social processes which organise it and make it objective…we institutionalise these conventions…[and]…integrate these ideas about reality into an organised and plausible system (Payne, 2005, p. 6).

These shared meanings are capable of changing and do change over time thus it is possible to transform the world, a process of re-storying in which "narratives emerge and evolve as stories of becoming" (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2011, p.28).

4.6 Ethics in narrative research

We are our stories therefore "ethical considerations permeate narrative inquiries from start to finish" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006 in Clandinin, 2013, p.198). Clandinin and Murphy (2009, p.599) state "narrative research is relational research". The ethical stance requires a "relational ontological" commitment (Clandinin and Murphy, 2009, p.600). Of narrative research Clandinin and Connelly (1988 in Clandinin, 2013, p.197) note:

> In everyday life, the idea of friendship implies a sharing, an interpenetration of two or more persons' spheres of experience…The same may be said of collaborative research, which requires a close relationship akin to friendship. Relationships are joined as MacIntyre implies, by the narrative unities of our lives.

As researcher, collecting stories, the lives of co-inquirers' and my own are deeply intertwined as we co-construct meanings out of their stories of practice. This mirrors the ethical commitments inherent in community work values (AIEB, 2016).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 81) state narrative inquirers:

> must "fall in love" with their participants, yet they must also step back and see their own stories in the inquiry, the stories of the participants, as well as the larger landscapes on which they all live.

Freire (2004 in Leistyna, 2004, p.27) describes teaching as:

> an act of love…an expression of good care, a need to love first what you do…Second in loving the very teaching process I cannot exclude those I work with when teaching and those whom I teach.

This idea of love is beginning to be found in writings on community work (e.g. Westoby and Dowling, 2013; Godden, 2016). Love as described here includes the ethic of care and the ethic of justice which infuse community work values (chapter 3).

Sercombe (2012, p.11) says relationship as service, aims to "create a kind of sacred circle in which to meet…in order to create possibilities of transformation". This holds the space for the other. Holding has two functions to ensure:

> [the inner integrity whereby] the intimacy developed within the circle stays within its purpose…[and] the outer integrity, the practice of confidentiality [which] makes sure that the safety of the professional relationship is not betrayed by exposure to the outside world (Sercombe, 2012, p.11).

The "possibilities of transformation" include the actual telling of the story, that is the calling of something into being, the naming of something in the world, the speaking back into the field and into the context of community work. Within this circle, the only obligation on the other (co-inquirers) is the exercise of their "own ethical agency" (Sercombe, 2012, p.12). This relationship is also framed within an ethic of care and an ethic of justice (chapter 3). Such a framing, grounded in the values laid out in AIEB (2016), is the basis of relationship in community work. This relationship is a caring relationship, requiring an emotional engagement with co-inquirers, that is sustainable (life enhancing) and recognizes the partial, provisional, shifting, malleable nature of the world (Watkins, n.d; Béres, 2014). I as community worker and researcher am never a neutral observer. I must seek to remain true to

the values laid out in AIEB (2016), the ethical relational stance, and the ethics of, care, and justice.

4.7 Voice, analysis, credibility and trustworthiness

Voice

In how I present and re-present co-inquirers' stories I adopt various voices. Voice is important as Clandinin (2013, p.207) notes:

> In selecting forms of representation it is important to attend to forms that fit the lives of participants and the narrative inquirers who are being represented.

Story is a form with which co-inquirers are familiar and indeed their interviews are replete with stories from practice. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.177) remind me in telling and writing sub-themes and themes from co-inquirers' stories there is still a "relational responsibility" on my part towards my co-inquirers in how I present them and re-present their stories. This raises the question of how present I should be in the text as I braid co-inquirer's stories into a collective narrative:

> Too vivid a signature runs the risk of obscuring the field and its participants; too subtle a signature runs the risk of the deception that the research text speaks from the point of view of the participant (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.148).

As a way of acknowledging and managing this dilemma of balance I use different fonts for each co-inquirer, through this practice co-inquirers become individually present in the text This use of different fonts follows paths previously trodden by and noted by others as a way of keeping, and honouring, the relational responsibilities explicit in narrative research (Ely et al., 1999; Osatuke., et al. 2004; Szabo, 2005; Dembouski, 2010; Reynolds, 2010; O'Riordan, 2014). In doing so I am mindful of the ethical responsibility of representation in the text:

> How we represent the voices of research participants (ourselves as co-researchers and others) will have consequences for us personally and professionally (Etherington, 2004, p. 83).

I am undertaking research in an occupation that has a relatively small number of practitioners, many of whom are known to each other. I therefore have an obligation to my research co-inquirers to ensure that they are represented truthfully, honestly and respectfully. I also have the same obligation towards the wider occupation and to myself (Etherington, 2004). Josselson (1996 in Etherington, 2004, p.226) urges the researcher to become

uncomfortable with their power to tell the story of the other, this uncomfortableness she sees as:

> Protect[ing] us from going too far. It is with our anxiety, dread, guilt, and shame that we honour our participants. To do this work we must contain these feelings rather than deny, supress or rationalize them. We must at least try to be as aware as possible of what we are doing.

What is it that I am doing? I elicit stories from co-inquirers; in this I am given privileged access to aspects of co-inquirers' selves. These I carry with me throughout the research process to work with in a way that holds them nestled within an ethic of care and an ethic of justice.

I offer commentary in plain text to differentiate me from co-inquirers. I must at times adopt different voices in this commentary and in doing so I follow the typology of voice offered by Chase (2005, p.664-666):

Researcher's Voice	**Characteristics**
Authoritative	Interpretation and summation - connect and intermingle my voice with that of co-inquirers, make visible/audible taken-for-granted processes and structural and cultural features of our everyday social worlds.
Supportive	Pushes narrator's voice into the limelight - create self-reflective and respectful distance between my voice and the voices of co-inquirers.
Interactive	Displays the intersubjectivity of co-inquirers voices and my voice, allows space for my becoming vulnerable to the text-via, for example, the initial storying of co-inquirers interviews and my response to this and my sending this out to them for comment. There is another aspect to this interactive voice in chapters 6, 7, and 8, when that intersubjectivity is extended to include the voices of others from the field.

Table 4.1 Researcher's Voice (after Chase 2005).

In the combination of differing fonts, an awareness of the need to use different voices at different times and of the need for a balance of signature I seek to fulfil my 'relational responsibilities' towards co-inquirers, future readers, the field of community work and myself.

Analysis

In how I conduct my analysis I adopt the role of *bricoleur*:

> Assembling whatever ideas, tools and techniques to get a job done…qualitative research is never a matter of following a manual; it requires flexibility and ingenuity in adapting methodologies to fit the requirements of a specific research question being pursued at a specific time and place by a researcher who has his or her own style of working (McLeod, 2011, p.166).

The role of the *bricoleur* is one I am familiar with in my work as an artist building props, masks and puppets for street performances. In this research I draw on two methods of analysis to look at co-inquirers stories both, vertically within each story using the Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM), and horizontally between stories via Thematic Analysis (TA).

Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM) background

Each person has a unique and distinct voice and this voice will carry within it echoes of the multiple contexts in which they live and which impact upon them (Hyde, 2012). VCRM is a process of listening to "the voices within each narrative" (Chase, 2005, p.663), seeking to retrace the psychic footprints of their history through listening for dominant voices, muted voices, contrapuntal voices, and even silenced voices in their narratives. VCRM recognises the other as "authorities about their own experience" (Gilligan, 2009, p. 6). This approach sees:

> the inner world [of participants] as multilayered and connected to culture and relationships [and that their voice will bear] the traces of being embodied in culture and relationships" (Loots, Coopens and Sermijn, 2013, p.114; see also Moen, 2006).

Thus the person in VCRM, as with narrative inquiry, and community development, is emplotted and emplaced within a narrative framing of "multiplicity and connectedness" (Loots, Coopens and Smerijn, 2013, p.114).

VCRM process

VCRM is a four step process involving several readings of, or 'listenings' to interview transcripts and on each reading, listening in a different way (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008). Balan (2005, p. 66) outlines the four steps as:

1. listening for the plot,

2. I-Poems,
3. listening for contrapuntal voices, and
4. composing an analysis.

VCRM Process	
Listening for plot	Attention is focused on the overall story being told. Notice is taken of recurring phrases, images, metaphors and themes (Balan, 2005; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Edwards and Weller, 2012). "This reading can be captured in the question "who is telling the story?" (Edwards and Weller, 2012, p.205). In the next step the researcher documents their response to this story. "This process is the 'who is listening'" (Edwards and Weller, 2012, p. 205) "The researcher reads the narrative in her/his own terms locating themselves theoretically and documenting these processes for themselves and others" (Byrne, Canavan and Millar, 2009, p.69). This also assists the researcher to notice how their response to the story could have an influence on the analysis (Edwards and Weller, 2012).
Composing I-poems	Identifying "those places where the respondent shifts between 'I', 'we', 'you' or 'it', which can signal varied meanings in the respondent's perceptions of self" (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008, p. 406). Pronouns "enable us to constitute ourselves as subjects capable of self-placement within the ongoing conversation of our world, especially within situations that call for the location and allocation of responsibility" (Bensen, 2001, p.132) Pronoun use is locative and points to differential placings of the self in relation to both itself and the world. This process facilitates conversations both internal and external.
Listening for contrapuntal voices	Contrapuntal voices that is the social, cultural, economic and political milieu in which the stories were placed.
Composing an analysis	Here I-poems were read vertically and horizontally to draw out and explore common themes which are braided into the final narrative.

Table 4.2 VCRM process

In keeping with the relational ethics of narrative research at all stages of the process co-inquirers are sent copies of materials for comment.

Thematic analysis

To analyse horizontally between stories I draw on thematic analysis (TA) -"the search for and identification of common threads that extend across an entire interview or set of interviews" (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p.400). In the following table I depict Braun and Clarke's (2013, p.121) outline of the phases of thematic analysis:

Stage	Description
Familiarisation with the data	"The researcher must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data." (Multiple listenings, and transcription)
Coding	"Coding is not simply a method of data reduction, it is also an analytic process [and], so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data." (Composing I-poems)
Searching for themes	"This 'searching' is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes." (Naming the voices in the I-poems)
Reviewing themes	"The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes." (Sending I-poems, initial storying and my response to co-inquirers for comment)
Defining and naming themes	Identification of "the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme". (Naming of 3 Commitments)
Writing up	"Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualising it in relation to existing literature"

Table. 4.3. Phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.121)

Joffe (2012, p.210) defines a theme as "a specific pattern of meaning found in the data…patterns of explicit and implicit content." Themes relate both to what the researcher brings to the research through their own reading and to what emerge from the raw data gathered by the researcher (Joffe, 2012). Clarke and Braun (2014, p.6628) describe TA as a means of providing a:

> rich *description* of a dataset…at the surface (semantic level); it can also be used to interrogate 'hidden' or latent meanings in a dataset, the assumptions underpinning and the implications of particular patterns of meaning, and provide an interpretative and conceptual analysis of a dataset. (Italics in original).

I had a curiosity I was researching. I did not approach my research with a blank mind, I had already engaged in extensive reading and thinking before I interviewed co-inquirers, see chapters 2 and 3. Indeed my previous formation as a community worker had sensitised me to

particular themes e.g. community work values, practice, and principles. These accompanied me as I immersed myself in co-inquirers' stories. Listening to co-inquirers' stories and in particular composing and naming the I-poems in their stories provided space for new themes to emerge. The emergent themes "reflect what the narrator considers relevant…themes [which] represent his or her relevance structure" (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000, p. 3). However as Hiles and Čermák (2007, p.4) note "a story cannot simply be reduced to a set of themes". These must be related together across all co-inquirers stories to construct a narrative of profession. I was then able to read, and listen, across all co-inquirers' stories in order to both "describe, [and] summarise, key patterns [and to tell] an interpretative story about the data in relation to the research question" (Clarke and Braun, 2014, p.6626). This interpretative narrative is the subject of chapter 6, while in chapter 7 it is brought into conversation with both my own and other writers' stories concerning my research question.

Credibility and trustworthiness in narrative inquiry

Narrative research texts are critiqued on the basis that they "cannot be judged by the usual tests of positivist research data – reliability, validity and replicability", rather they are to be judged on "their aesthetic standard, their emotive force, their verisimilitude, and criteria of authenticity or integrity to the people they portray" (Bold, 2012, p.144). She continues, we need to "reconceptualise validity, reliability and replicability within a narrative framework" (Bold 2012, p.145) sooner than abandoning them. Elliot (2005, p.26) takes up the point on validity, in particular internal validity:

> A narrative will not capture a simple record of the past in the way we hope that a video camera might. However, if the research focus is more on the meanings attached to individuals' experiences and/or on the way that those experiences are communicated to others then narratives provide an ideal medium for researching and understanding individuals' lives in social context.

My research question concerns community workers' 'professing', 'the meanings attached to [co-inquirers'] experiences' and the communication 'of those experiences', thus their stories are an 'ideal medium' for narrative inquiry.

The question of external validity that is, how representative of a larger population are the stories of the relatively small samples typical of narrative research:

> Life stories themselves embody what we need to study: the relation between this instanciation (this particular life story) and the social world the narrator shares with others; the ways in

> which culture marks and/or constrains this narrative; and the ways in which this narrator makes use of cultural resources and struggles with cultural constraints (Chase, 1995 in Elliot, 2005, p.28).

A person tells their story of a particular event, at a particular time, in a particular place, involving particular people. This does not happen cut off from the culture and/or historical context in which that person is located. Stories sit in a web of relationships with other stories and can and do speak to and about those other stories. Hence a relatively small sample can have a lot to say as to the wider population, not just in terms of dominant narratives, but also to "ask provocative questions about the regimes of truth that pervade particular cultural formations" (Hicks and Taylor, 2008, p.53).

Replicability in this context has less to do with being able to repeat the research and arrive at the same or similar conclusions. Rather replicability refers to "the comparisons that readers make with the lived stories that they know" (Bold, 2012, p.145). Do the stories told and read have resonances for others encountering those stories and bringing them into conversation with their own narratives?

4.8 Conclusion

Storytelling represents the human desire to make meaning, to live a meaningful life:

> The story or stories of myself that I tell , that I hear others tell of me, that I am unable or unwilling to tell are not independent of the self that I am: they are constitutive of me (Bensen, 2001, p. 45).

Stories link events connecting past into present and onwards into the future (Mattingly, 1998; Bruner, 2002a, 2002b; Kearney, 2002; Goldie, 2011). Stories are essentially social and communal: "narrative…gives shape to the real world and often bestows on them a title to reality" (Bruner, 2002b, p.8), thus there is a "dialectical relation between the structural realities and the human enterprise of constructing reality- in history" (Berger and Luckmann, 1991, p.208). It is therefore possible to know the worldview of another through hearing their stories. This is how I propose to explore my research question:

> What do community workers profess?

My choice of a qualitative research methodology and narrative inquiry as research method implies particular choices as regards epistemology and ontology. I accept that the world is

storied and that it is possible to know the world through stories. As the stories I intend to collect are not just stories but aspects of co-inquirers selves this places the research within a relational ethical framing, a framing consistent with the ethical framing of community work.

In how I collect, analyse and present my findings I am conscious of needing to balance my voice with those of my co-inquirers. I therefore move between various voices, supportive, authoritative, and interactive. To inquire into the stories I am told, in both a vertical and horizontal fashion, I am influenced by VCRM (vertical) and TA (horizontal). Stories are not neutral but active and it is therefore important that the stories I tell are deemed trustworthy and credible.

4.9 Fingerpost

In the next chapter I outline the process of this research. I look at how and why I chose my co-inquirers. I follow this with a detailed focus on all the stages of the research, interview, transcription, and analysis. I end by pointing to possible future avenues of research in this area.

CHAPTER 5

I COLLECT STORIES: METHODOLOGY 2: PROCESS

It's what I do
I collect stories
It's what I do
I collect stories
Stories, songs and poems
Phillips, Difranco (1997)

5.1 Roadmap

Bruner (2002a, p.16) reminds us that for a story to work "there needs to be a narrator, a teller, and there needs to be a listener, a reader." He adds:

> great narrative is an invitation to problem finding, not a lesson in problem solving. It is deeply about plight, about the road rather than about the inn to which it leads (Bruner, 2002a, p.20).

In this research there is a plight, the changing landscape of community work. The 'invitation to problem finding' is my research question.

In 5.2 I outline my research design through which I explore my research question. For 5.3 I examine the process of eliciting stories with co-inquirers. I look at how co-inquirers were selected and introduce them in 5.4. Section 5.5 follows the process of analysis. In 5.6 I return to narrative truth. Future research is the subject of 5.7. This is followed by 5.8, conclusion and 5.9 fingerpost.

5.2 Research Design; Turning to Analysis/Re-storying and Re-presenting Narratives

Narrative inquiry sees stories as both phenomenon and method (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). We swim in a sea of stories, indeed we ourselves are made up of stories (Kearney, 1997, 2002; Bensen 2001). Narrative inquiry uses stories as a way of exploring our worlds (Daiute, 2014). This is achieved through the collection of stories, their re-storying and re-presenting these new stories to the world (Huber et al., 2013).

Narrative Inquiry	Theory	Application in this research
Nature of research	"Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it". Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.18).	Narrative is central to community work. Personal stories are linked into collective stories such that new stories can be imagined and enacted. My research question seeks to elicit stories of "What do community workers profess?"
Nature of knowledge	Situated, contextual, partial, provisional, constructed, paradoxical, ambiguous, a process of becoming, dialogic, storied. (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Ritchie and Wilson, 2000; Clandinin, 2013).	Dialogue as a method of practice in community work attempts to "discover something by the act of knowing which cannot exhaust all the possibilities in the relation between object and subject" (Freire, 1976 in Mayo, 1999, p.64). Knowledge is embedded and emplotted in the narratives of co-inquirers. Their stories link them into their past through their current position and on into an as yet unknown future.
Purpose of research	To explore how "knowledge is constructed in everyday life through ordinary communicative action". (Riessman and Quinney, 2005, p.395).	The stories co-inquirers tell detail their various journeys into community work, their current practice, and the current positioning of community work within various other narratives which impact on their practice. All of these have a bearing on my research question: What do community workers 'profess'?
Nature of research design	"Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories of life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p. 55) "Narrative inquiries are always composed around a particular wonder" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.124). We are our stories (Kearney, 2002; Bensen, 2001). "Through hearing stories" [of 'professing' I am able to] "create a research text" [to illuminate] "the experiences not only of and for" [community workers] "but also of …the discourse of social and theoretical contexts" in which community workers narratives of 'professing' are framed	My study concerns the narratives of six long practicing community workers regarding their 'professing'. I work from an ontology that accepts reality as subjective, co-constructed, partial, provisional and contextual. I do not present myself as neutral. Research is co-constructed in the relationship between co-inquirers and me. Research is thus value laden. I am explicit throughout as regard my value base as a community worker, in whose practice the values of AIEB (2016) have an on-going living presence. I am present throughout the process of research, interviews, transcriptions, re-storying, inviting comment, presentation of findings. The research is situated in particular

	(Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.124).	contexts – the particular practice of co-inquirers, community work in Ireland in the early 21st century – narratives that nestle within and are impacted by other narratives and discourses in the field and beyond. The research seeks to cast light on the experiences of particular community workers but also to speak back into the field of community work in the various contexts outlined above and to bring the stories of co-inquirers into conversation with others writing in the field, locally, nationally and internationally.
Nature of research process **Engagement** **Eliciting stories** **Re-storying**	"The researcher is trying to discover meaning throughout the inquiry process" (Agee, 2009, p.443) Re-presenting stories. "Stories are a way of researching, a way of writing, and a way for readers to respond to the research—a process of storying stories" (McCormack, 2000, p.285).	Co-inquirers are invited to participate. Consent is an ongoing negotiation throughout the entire process. The stories I hear are aspects of co-inquirers self, thus they are cared for and cared about in a relational ethic frame. Stories are collected via interview, transcribed, checked by researcher and co-inquirers, research texts are interpreted, re-storied, responded to by researcher, responded to by co-inquirers, re-presented as I-Poems, responded to by co-inquirers, storied into research text, responded to by co-inquirers, brought into conversation with literature from the field, responded to by co-inquirers, and finally inserted into the field. (This third column draws heavily on Creswell, 2007, p.17)

Table 5.1 Elements of research framework (after McCormack, 2000).

5.3 Eliciting stories

To elicit stories I used unstructured open ended interviews. Spradley (1979 in Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.124) says of interviewing:

> I want to know the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way that you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me to understand?

I begin the initial interview with the question:

What motivates you in your practice?

I then followed where co-inquirers' answers led me. For Chase (2005, p. 662) "narrative interviewing":

> involves a paradox [and the] researcher needs to be well prepared with good questions that will invite the other's particular story; on the other hand the very idea of a particular story is that it cannot be known, predicted or prepared in advance.

I had prepared through my reading of relevant literature in community development and profession. I did have areas I was interested, however for the most part I chose to let the co-inquirers lead.

This improvisational nature allows for the eliciting and emergence of "fugitive stories" (Cleveland, 2010, p.416) which might be missed in a more structured setting. Reissman (2008 in Duque, 2010, p.3) sees interviews as "narrative occasions" and as such are different from less fluid forms of interview. Here, "two active participants…jointly construct narrative and meaning" (Reissman, 2008, p.23), rather than the provision of "brief answers to general statements" (Reissman, 2008, p.23).

Elliot (2005, p.31) notes that a key skill in hearing narrative is for the interviewer to "be a good listener":

> When we learn to listen in an emotionally attentive and engaged way, we expose ourselves and enter the unknown with "new possibilities and frameworks of meaning". It is "hard work demanding as it does an abandonment of the self in a quest to enter the world of another; and it takes time" Reissman (2008, p.26-27). (Embedded quotes (Andrews, 2007) in the original).

My role is an act of attentive listening (Bloor and Wood, 2006; Bryman, 2008; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), following the story. When that story is finished for the present, I ask another question. This can follow from the story I have just heard or I can choose from my script and ask again…"What happened? What happened next?" (Bensen, 2001 p.45)

Through co-inquirers' stories it is possible to build a provisional map of the landscape we traverse. Layering their stories it becomes possible to enter into conversation with different readings and arrive at a more nuanced picture of the landscape.

Ethics in this research

Co-inquirers relate not just any old story; but rather tell of aspects of their selves (Bensen, 2001; Kearney, 2002), stories of "the living, loving, suffering and dying human being" (Freeman, 1997 in Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2011, p.16). Thus narrative research by its very nature is likely to surface sensitive information/topics. These potential risks become part of the on-going negotiation concerning the "*fields of uncertainty*" [that are] "addressed and reflected upon throughout an interview inquiry" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.69) (Italics in original). Therefore, spending time establishing trust and reciprocity with the co-inquirers is critical if they are to have a positive experience.

I as researcher hold the space for the telling of co-inquirers' tales, witness this story-telling, accompany co-inquirers as they follow their tale. As I attend I note co-inquirers' emotional state as they build their story. I listen with a third ear and watch with a third eye, both attuned to the subtleties of the atmosphere as it unfolds (Bold, 2012). It is possible using various techniques (e.g. body language and other non-verbal cues) to alert the co-inquirers to what is happening and allow them space to choose how to respond. My own training in psychotherapy and counselling, homoeopathy, youth and community work and experience of working with vulnerable groups have sensitised me to such 'third ear' and 'third eye' practice.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe collaborative research, such as narrative inquiry, as involving shifting roles on the part of participant and researcher e.g. interviewee, reader, commentator, co-author. Narrative inquiry, as a collaborative process, requires continual negotiation between researcher and co-inquirers. Consent is an on-going negotiation throughout the research, where our "relationship is the locus of knowledge" (Gregen, 1994 in Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.53).

Ethical approval for this research was granted following a thorough interview by the ethics committee of Department of Applied Social Studies. Co-inquirers consented to this thesis being credited to me, with co-inquirers being credited as co-authors in any subsequent outputs if they so wish (see appendix 1). I am aware that this presents a social risk for co-inquirers as they would be publically named. This risk of potential exposure will be discussed with co-inquirers prior to the submission of any outputs based on this thesis.

5.4 Co-inquirers

Narrative Inquiry is best suited to "capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of… a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2007, p.55). I therefore interview co-inquirers, six community workers in leadership positions within the field, "with a specific purpose in mind and that purpose [reflected] the particular qualities of the people…and their relevance to [my research question]" (Denscombe, 2010, p.35).

Co-inquirers were to be interviewed once individually and then collectively in a group context. However, due to timing and other issues, it proved impossible to gather all co-inquirers for the group interview. I therefore sought their permission for a second individual interview. I interviewed three twice in a face-to-face context. Two others responded to a series of questions via e-mail. One, due to personal circumstances, could not participate in this second round. I conducted face-to-face interviews in either participants' workplaces, or a space of their choosing with which they were familiar and felt comfortable in. All face-to-face interviews I recorded using a digital audio recording device. I transcribed the recordings and sent these to co-inquirers for comment. Transcriptions and recordings were stored on computer and password protected.

The selection of co-inquirers has to overcome contestations surrounding what community workers do, and who it is that calls themselves community workers (chapters 2 and 3). Co-inquirers are selected on the basis that they:

- Have come through professional formation in Maynooth,
- Are working in the field for a minimum of ten years,
- Are recognised by others in the field as making an ongoing contribution to the development of the field e.g. supervision of students on work placements, teaching community work, being a present or past member of the co-ordinating body of CWI, research/writing about the field.

The criteria above, along with discussions with colleagues more experienced in the field than I, led to a list of names- I contacted ten, six replied and agreed participate.

Engaging with co-inquirers

Maynooth began educating community workers in 1981; making it the longest established such course on the island. Therefore, it has considerable influence in the shaping of the field in Ireland -for example CWI has, since its establishment in 1981, always had a significant

presence of Maynooth graduates on its central group. Maynooth University has always had an emphasis on widening participation of non-traditional students (Maynooth University website August 2016), so while the process of formation might be the same, the range of experiences and backgrounds represented by those in the room alongside co-inquirers would be varied, fecund and at times challenging (Popple, 2015). Even before the publication of the AISCW (AIEB, 2016), the values, and principles outlined there were core to the formation of community workers in Maynooth (see for example Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Whelan, 1990). Thus having all come through the same formation there would be significant shared understandings as to the definition, practice, and value base, of good community work.

Their formation in Maynooth in the 1980s and 1990s would have exposed them to very particular readings as regards community work, these include particular texts (e.g. the community work series published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, early publications by the Combat Poverty Agency, the writings of Paulo Freire, Saul Alinsky, Alan Twelvetrees, and others, journals such as the *Community Development Journal* and *Critical Social Policy*), and through practice placements often supervised by other Maynooth alumni. Some would have participated in the 1989 Kilkenny conference that resulted in the 1990 publication *Community Work in Ireland*, the first critical overview of the history and development of community work in Ireland, which itself became a significant text throughout the 1990s and remains a useful touchstone to-day.

All co-inquirers grew up through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when significant changes were taking place in Irish society (see for example Brown, 1990; O'Brien, 1994; Kenny, 1997; Twomey, 2003; Fuller, et al., 2006; Share, et al., 2007; Hederman, 2010; Ferriter, 2013, 2005). They have participated in community work in both the pre and post 'Celtic Tiger' eras, giving them a good overview of different developments and manifestations of practice in Ireland. There is a gender balance with three being female and three male. Co-inquirers represent a good cross section of sites in which community workers are employed: national organisations, locally based projects, rural and urban contexts, and educational institutions. Their backgrounds included periods of employment in a range of other contexts, e.g. youth work, working with local authorities, working abroad, and free-lance.

The Importance of Naming

Community work begins with names. Naming calls someone or something into being; making-them-present (Rothenberg, 1968). It situates who or what is named within the three commonplaces of sociality, temporality, and locality (Clandinin, 2013). Naming, in-places, emplots, and emplaces us within multiple networks of other namings and relationships, in which "we are dynamically linked to other voices across time and space through language and its dialogical nature" (Bakhtin, 1991 in Eide, 2012, p.152). Being named is fundamental to the process of establishing one's self as subject in one's own reality as opposed to an object in a reality constructed by another (Freire, 1998).

I asked each co-inquirer to choose their own pseudonym in order to keep a direct connection through self-naming, from the initial extending of an invitation to co-inquire, through their becoming co-inquirers and into the final (for now) rendering of this text. Most of them opted to do so. For those that did not, I chose a pseudonym for them, and offered the reasons why I chose it and asked for their permission to use it. It can be seen here how consent is an on-going part of the process, with co-inquirers' involvement throughout as critical. Pseudonyms link co-inquirers into commonplaces with which they are familiar and have resonance for them, and serve to locate their particular narrative within a series of other narratives in which they are emplaced and emplotted. Through this co-inquirers "retain ownership of their stories as much as possible" (Maple and Edwards, 2010, p.43). Hence they remain as real presences, even if physically absent (Whelan, 2015); in every story I collect and work with. The reasons for the choice of pseudonym relate to the person, their work, my relationship with them and interview data. As noted in chapter 4, I adopt the practice of using different fonts when directly quoting co-inquirers.

'Dramatis personae'

- Maidie appears in Comic Sans Ms
- Dynamo appears in Batang
- James appears in Arial
- Cathal O'hUigin appears in DejaVu Serif
- Carmen appears in Segoe UI Semibold
- Clara Cleere appears in Lucida Fax

As well as meeting my selection criteria co-inquirers make a myriad of other contributions to the ongoing shaping and critique of the field, e.g. speaking at events, membership of and participation in the CWI steering group. Co-inquirers work in their specific contexts, at

particular points in time (time here having several senses: project, professional, and personal life spans). These sit within larger contexts e.g. narratives of austerity, recession, and alignment.

5.5 Process of analysis

I begin with an outline of the course I followed from making contact with co-inquirers to writing the narrative of 'professing':

- Composing a list of potential co-inquirers
- E-mail contact seeking participation
- Initial interview and signing of consent form
- Repeated listening and process of transcribing and send out of transcription
- E-mail seeking permission for second interview. This I saw as needed given how it proved impossible to gather all co-inquirers together for a focus group.
- Second interview either face-to-face or via e-mail.
- Repeated listening and process of transcribing and send out of transcription
- Story, My response, send out of these (VCRM)
- Composition of I-Poems and send out (VCRM)
- Reading across individual stories (TA) honing of voices into commitments
- Composition of collective narrative (this involved several iterations) and send out these
- Composition of final collective narrative

I bullet point these stages rather than number them so as to better reflect the process which involved much going back to go forward with simultaneous movement occasionally taking place on a number of fronts.

Transcription

Transcription is a political and ethical act. The stories I have been entrusted with, are part of the co-inquirers' self, it is constitutive of them. Thus the ethical stance mentioned earlier, applies to transcripts; they are equally subject to an ethic of care and an ethic of justice (Whelan, 2015).

White (1976, in Reissman, 2008, p.50) attunes us as to language not being "a perfectly transparent medium of representation." Thus "any transcription of speech must therefore be understood as a compromise" (Elliot, 2005 p.51). Transcription presents both a representational and an interpretative problem. Attention has to be given both to, "*what* is

transcribed" (interpretative level) and "*how* it is transcribed" (representational level) (Bucholtz, 2000, p.1441) (Italics in original). Kvale and Brinkmann, (2009, p.192) describe transcripts as:

> a bastard, a hybrid between an oral discourse unfolding over time, face to face, in a lived situation-where what is said is addressed to a specific listener present-and a written text created for a general distant public.

They also remind me to "treat its passages as stepping stones toward a continuous unfolding of the meaning of what was said" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 193). Analysis of the transcripts becomes part of an ongoing conversation that stretches from the interview into the encounter between the finished (for now) document and future readers (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The 'politics of transcription' covers both issues of representation and interpretation. For example, rendering text in non-standardised spellings, while an accurate rendition of what was said, can "call up a negative image of the speaker" (Bucholtz, 2000, p.1454). Bucholtz (2000, p.1461) continues "the more a text reflects the oralness of speech the less transparent it becomes for readers unaccustomed to encountering oral features in written discourse." The reader is discombobulated by distance from both the text and the original speaker. To further complicate matters, Richardson (1979 in McCormack, 2000, p.286) writes, language plays a vital role in "our sense of selves, our subjectivity" therefore the language we use is an aspect of our self, our identity.

I wrote versions in both the co-inquirers original speech and in standardised spelling. In supervision it was pointed out that, given the relatively small size of population from which the co-inquirers were selected, it might be possible to identify particular co-inquirers through rendering extracts in non-standardised spellings. I therefore adopted standardised spelling to avoid identification. My rendering of text in standardised rather than the non-standardised spelling of the original speakers could be viewed as a denial of co-inquirers' subjectivity. However, the use of different fonts mentioned earlier, is a way of ensuring that their subjectivities are supported.

Politics are present in the act of interpretation. This process influences how the transcripts might be "arranged [so as to] support the researcher's thinking about the meaning of the

interview" (Bold, 2012, p.121). Particular parts of the text are foregrounded over and above others. Part of this relates to my research question as this is what I am seeking to unearth but also it relates to the idea of standpoint. I have a stance as a community worker, also formed through Maynooth, and working from the value base in AIEB (2016). My positioning, interpretivist and critical, places me in a particular relationship to the interpretation of the transcripts, I see the transcripts as co-constructed with my co-inquirers, and with the aim of speaking back to the field and context of community work.

Interpretation from this perspective becomes a dialogue between co-inquirers and me with differing iterations e.g. initial listening (which also involved a process of note taking looking for patterns, common words, ideas etc.), transcription, I-Poems, initial storying, sent to co-inquirers for comment and clarification. In this manner they remain part of an on-going negotiation around consent, validity, reliability and replicability. Similarly they are present in conversations as to the re-presentation of their own story as it is re-told, the forging of a collective narrative braided from their individual stories, and on into how this narrative speaks to the wider stories of community workers and community work.

Sitting with the data

> Organising and collating the information from the research field takes much time…in the process of organising it the researcher is finding answers to questions, deciding on the significance of specific pieces of data…beginning to shape the analysis (Bold, 2012, p.121).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.135) advise:

> The move from field texts to research texts is layered in complexity…There is no smooth transition, no one gathering of field texts, sorting through them, and analysing them. We return to them again and again…In addition to doubt, there is panic.

2015 involved me in the process of 1st and 2nd interviews, listenings, readings, transcribing, and e-mailing transcriptions to co-inquirers for comment. By year's end it was an experience of "not waving but drowning", in a sea of data (Smith, 1957 in Shapcott and Sweeney, 1996, p.219-220). At a class seminar, feedback provided to another classmate, suggested that they look at VCRM, as a way of getting inside stories. I decided to take a look in that direction myself.

Negotiating and crafting stories of 'professing'

VCRM

In table 4.2 chapter 4 I detailed the four stage process of VCRM. Stage 1 listening for plot involves paying attention to the overall story being told (Balan, 2005; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Edwards and Weller, 2012). Here I was seeking to know "who is telling the story?" (Edwards and Weller, 2012, p. 205). In the next step I documented my response to this story. "This process is the 'who is listening?' partner to the 'who is telling the story'" (Edwards and Weller, 2012, p. 205). In this I was setting out my relationship to the story (Balan, 2005; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008: Byrne, et al., 2009), and co-inquirers who were invited to comment on both the initial story and my response. This process also assisted me to notice how my response to the story could have an influence on the analysis (Edwards and Weller, 2012).

The composition of I-Poems followed next. This involved identifying places in the narratives where co-inquirers shift between pronouns "which can signal varied meanings in the [co-inquirers'] perceptions of self" (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008, p. 406). Pronoun use is locative and points to differential placings of the self in relation to both itself and the world (Bensen, 2001). For example the use of 'You' could be a distancing technique or a way of admonishing self, 'They' can be used as the voice of authority, or the voice of the other, 'We' could be speaking about self and others familiar to us e.g. co-workers, family, friends, and 'Us' could include co-inquirer and researcher. VCRM is a technique for exploring such internal conversations (see Appendix 2 for examples of I-Poems).

Initially, I read (listened) and composed the I-Poems. I then re-read the transcripts, alongside the I-Poems, and noted what and where the dominant themes in the story are. For example the line "I am professional in my work" can also be read as "I am *'*professional*'* in my work." This gives two very different voices. I noticed too how it is possible to hear (read) a piece of text in different ways giving it different voices. At this point I decided to acknowledge and mark this so I named the different voices that I saw emerging in the I-Poems:

Voice of the Community
Voice of Connection and Relationship
Voice of Spirituality
Voice of the Powers

These voices appear in all the narratives. Other voices that appear are:

> Voice of Vulnerability (appears in 5)
> Voice of Anger, Voice of Women, and Voice of Creativity (appear in 2)
> Voice of Struggle (appears in 1).

The I-Poems were then extracted from the interview transcripts. Reading through the I-Poems I was able to identify particular themes. These I then colour coded and named according to the themes I identified. The naming of I-Poems in this way was not something I had seen in the literature I had consulted on VCRM, however, for me doing so allowed me to acknowledge and meet co-inquirers in their complex subjectivity. In this I am reminded of Whitman's poem Song to Myself (1892) in which he states "I am large. I contain multitudes." Those multitudes signal "changes in how the respondent perceives and experiences herself" (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003 in Millar, Canavan, and Byrne, 2004, p.25) (gendered language in original). Naming the voice also provided me with a way of reading across all co-inquirers stories to look for common themes see the section on thematic analysis below.

This act of naming was not approached lightly for naming calls something into being (Rothenberg, 1968) and names can often come with histories attached (Drewery and Kecskemeti, 2010). Naming can influence how we view and approach what is named. Naming is inherently relational (Benson, 2001). Naming is also political (Weiler, 1991). Kimmerer (2013, p.208) reminds me that "names are the way we humans build relationships, not only with each other but with the living world." In naming the voices of the various I-Poems I was conscious of my ethical relational obligations to my co-inquirers stories (Whelan, 2015) and chose the names for the voices care-fully.

In naming the various voices I was naming aspects of co-inquirers' selves and placing these in relationship with each other, I was naming footprints left on their brains by the relationships they have had and continue to have with their world (Carroll and Shaw2013). This process facilitated a vertical journey into each of the co-inquirers' stories. In reading, and listening across co-inquirers' stories I was placing these named voices into a wider horizontal relational circle. Again this was approached with due care and respect.

The I-Poems thus provided me with a way of approaching thematic analysis –an iterative unfolding involving, repeated readings, and active listenings to transcripts, stories and I-

Poems, through several recursive cycles (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This focuses "on the content of a text, "what" is said more than "how" it is said, the "told" rather than the "telling" (Riessman, 2005, p.2). This facilitated a horizontal reading across co-inquirers narratives.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is "the search for and identification of common threads that extend across an entire interview or set of interviews" (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p.400), (see Table 4.3 chapter 4). This process "goes inside the stories of our informants rather than recording what they do" (Alleyene, 2015, p.71). My naming of the particular voices (I-Poems) is an instance of this going inside.

I envisaged this process as laying all the co-inquirers stories on the ground and placing my eye at ground level. I-Poems I pictured as markers that jut vertically upwards out of the text. These I had coded, each voice in a different colour. So looking across the stories was like looking across a field with coloured markers stuck into it. This enabled me to see which voices appeared in each story and how often they appeared in each story. If I then walked into this field of coloured markers I was able to stop at each one and compare it with ones of a similar colour I had stopped at earlier. In doing this I could trace similarities and differences across the co-inquirers' stories.

I had wondered about the Voice of Spirituality and whether to keep it as a theme. Some had spoken of it directly others obliquely and still others saw it as having no place in their thinking. I decided to do some more reading (e.g. Schreurs, 2002; White, 2006; Robinson, 2008; Culliford, 2011; Sheldrake, 2012, 2014; Ulluwishewa, 2014). Sheldrake, (2014, p.85) remarks that spirituality:

> Stands for lifestyles and practices that embody a vision of how the human spirit [however conceptualised] can achieve its full potential… [spirituality]…embraces an aspirational approach to the meaning and conduct of life – we are driven by goals beyond purely material success or physical satisfaction.

Sheldrake (2014, p.86) continues:

> Spirituality involves a search for 'meaning' – the purpose in life. It also concerns what is 'holistic' – that is, an integrating factor, 'life seen as a whole'.

Fernandes (2003 in Doetsch-Kidder, 2012, p.9) says:

> Spirituality can be as much about practices of compassion, love, ethics and truth defined in non-religious terms as it can be related to the mystical reinterpretations of existing religious traditions.

White (2006) offers this way of thinking of spirituality:

> A sense of connection – with people, with the Earth or with a higher power – may act as an alternative way of understanding spirituality. When described in such terms as these, spirituality becomes an integral part of many aspects of life, perhaps not really so distant from activities such as gardening and sport.

It seemed to me that spirituality as described in these offerings was present in many of the voices I delineated from co-inquirers stories. I chose to position that voice as manifesting across and within the voices of community, connection and relationship, vulnerability and creativity. This positioning I saw as true across co-inquirers' stories. Other voices i.e. power, women, creativity, and struggle I saw as being possible to place under community, connection and relationship.

After several readings and re-readings of the I-Poems horizontally across co-inquirers stories I distilled the voices down to four major commitments:

- Values
- Relationship
- Community
- Practice

On further reading, listenings and analysis I came to understand relationship as a constant across all commitments and so reduced them to three. I designated social justice as a *nom de guerre* for values as this term was more in keeping with how co-inquirers saw the enactment of their values. Practice I now relabelled as Reflexive Practice as this better describes how co-inquirers spoke about practice. These themes I now described as commitments:

- Social Justice
- Community
- Reflexive Practice

Each commitment contains a number of stories. These are incidents I chose from co-inquirers' individual stories illuminating salient features of the commitments within the overall narrative of 'professing'. These echo themes and topics which appear frequently in the work of others writing on community development (e.g. Ledwith, 2005; Westoby and

Morris, 2010; Ife, 2013; Westoby and Dowling, 2013; Popple, 2015; Westoby, 2015; Emejulu, 2016). Sensitivity as to commitments was further influenced by a number of factors, my research question, my formation and practice as a community worker, reading in the fields of community work, and profession, listening, hearing, transcribing, reading, re-reading co-inquirers' interviews, discussions with classmates and my supervisors. Therefore I did not approach the data blind.

I outline the process in a linear fashion, as if each stage blocked off from the others. The actual execution of the process was a much messier affair, similar to the practice of community work (Crickley 2013), with repeated blurring, crossings and re-crossings of boundaries, or in this case listenings, readings, and re-readings of stories and I-Poems. As happened with each stage of the process co-inquirers were sent copies of the findings chapter for comment, this gave space for co-inquirers to alter, critique, question the stories I composed, and how I related these to my research question. Here we see again the ongoing negotiation around consent. This also shows the relational shifting that occurred throughout this process as power shifted over to co-inquirers to accept or reject the stories and my placing of myself in relation to their stories. Where there was doubt on my part about using particular quotes from co-inquirers' transcripts, this too was discussed with co-inquirers.

5.6 Narrative truth

Narrare (Latin) to know (Hoad, 1996), thus the etymological root of narrative, "lies in knowing not telling" (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013, p.13). Narrative can be seen as relating to a process of meaning-making, not mere description. This meaning-making is situated very much in the particular, that is the experience and knowing of the person telling the story, and that this particular is very much located within the universal. This is not to say that the particular is equal to the universal or generalizable to it but that they sit in relation to each other and the one can and does influence the other (Andrews, et al., 2013). McLeod (2011, p.265) remarks of qualitative research:

> The 'findings' of a qualitative study are generated through the active personal engagement of the investigator with the phenomenon of interest, then it is inevitable that what is produced will, to greater or lesser extent bear the mark of the investigator's 'approach'…How then can the results of a qualitative study be deemed 'reliable' if reliability is defined as the possibility of obtaining the same results on two different occasions with different researchers?

Qualitative research often has small sample sizes (Denscombe, 2010). How representative individual stories and the collective narrative of six practitioners out of a field that numbers several hundred? And what truths attach to these six stories? Narrative 'truth' is based in:

> A relational ontology [which] posits the notion of "selves in-relation" (Ruddick 1989 p.211) and a "different understanding of human nature and human interaction" so that people are viewed as "interdependent rather than independent" (Tronto, 1995, p.142), (Doucet, 1998, p.54). (Embedded quotes in original).

However questions of 'truth' haunt qualitative research in general and narrative research in particular (Bloor and Wood 2006,). Lee (2013 drawing on Webster and Mertova, 2007) states of issues of reliability and validity in narrative research:

> Validity is more concerned with the research being well grounded and supportable by the data.
>
> Reliability usually refers to the dependability of the data. Reliability is achieved not by the stability of the measurement [but] rather by the trustworthiness of the notes or transcripts.

Webster and Mertova (2007 in Alleyene, 2015, p.52-53) offer a list for checking reliability and validity in narrative research:

Quality	**Method of checking**
Access-can others access the recordings, field notes etc.	Consent from co-inquirers would be needed regarding access to transcripts, and recordings, as to my own journals and notes they are available for scrutiny.
Honesty-on the part of the researcher	I believe in the above I have given an accurate and honest account as to my research framework.
Verisimilitude- does it resonate with the experiences of others	Co-inquirers have been sent copies for checking and comments. There have also been conversations with various parties involved in the supervision process for this thesis and where appropriate re-thinking and re-storying, also literature relating to the central findings has been revisited to ensure accuracy.
Authenticity-is it convincing	This in the eye of the beholder but again in the supervision process this has been discussed.
Familiarity-does it contain critical elements which can throw light on the familiar	Stories from my co-inquirers can and have been related to and brought into conversation with others in the field and beyond in a way that I believe throws light on the familiar.

Economy	I believe I have faithfully recorded and re-presented the most pertinent elements of co-inquirers narratives as they relate to my research question. I have tried diligently to keep within the word count!

Table 5.2 Reliability and validity checklist (adapted from Webster and Mertova, 2007 in Alleyene, 2015, p. 52-53).

Stories can be read in multiple ways. Any one of the research texts I produced could be read by another person and they could arrive at entirely different conclusions. What can be offered as a reliability check is the account of the decisions I made in relation to my research. This is provided in this chapter, and is further detailed in my research journals. What my research question is, how co-inquirers were chosen, what is my positioning as regards interviews, how were the transcripts worked with and why -this has all been outlined above.

Research was an iterative process between my co-inquirers and me. Transcripts, stories, and findings were sent to co-inquirers as a respondent validity check (Denscombe, 2010). Did they believe I rendered their voices or voices accurately, were my description and depiction of their story accurate, and did it square with the interview transcripts? Each time I invited comment and suggestions. The stories themselves were cross checked against each other (Alleyene, 2015): as they were all stories told by community workers at a particular juncture in the history of community work, they shared significant reference points which could be triangulated (Stake, 2010) with writings of others in the field, thus providing further reliability and validity checks.

I am not aiming to produce the definitive statement on 'professing' rather I am exploring a curiosity about how this manifests among a particular group of practitioners, from a particular tradition and at a particular time. I do believe I have given an accurate account of how I went about achieving this. The results of this are to be seen in the next two chapters.

With narrative inquiry it is more a case of transferability rather than generalisability (Denscombe, 2010; Maynes et al., 2008). That is, could someone reading this document see how my findings might have relevance in other situations, might stimulate further thinking about the topic of *'professing'* in community work or other occupations. I cannot answer that but I believe I make a strong argument in this research that that would be the case.

5.7 Research at some future time

I would at some future time like to bring co-inquirers and/or other community workers together in a focus group to discuss the findings of this research. The focus group is a method that encourages "a variety of viewpoints on the topic in focus for the group" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.151). They continue focus groups are:

> well suited to exploratory studies…since the lively collective interaction may bring forth more spontaneous expressive and emotional views than in individual, often more cognitive, interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.151).

From knowing the co-inquirers I can only imagine the spontaneous expressiveness that would have ensued if the focus group had taken place.

As part of the focus group I would use art exercises as a way of moving thinking out of the head thus allowing for narrative in a different medium to be present and augment the stories collected in verbal form and thereby expand the "range of forms that personal experience narratives can take" (Patterson, 2008 in Bell, 2013, p.143). Artwork enables people to "make statements…that cannot be fully made with words or quantified by numbers (Bell, 2013, p.144).

Both the focus group and the artwork involve the same ethical standpoint outlined earlier. As both would be translated into transcripts bringing forth the same issues regarding the politics of representation and interpretation, issues once more to be dialogued over with co-inquirers.

I am aware that my collapsing of all the voices present in co-inquirers' stories would have left some voices more muted than others. The re-visiting of those voices is something I could consider in the future.

5.8 Conclusion

I chose narrative inquiry as a research method. Narrative has been described as "the best method for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p.55). I was curious as to the role of 'professing' in how community workers make their experience as community workers meaningful.

I purposely invited particular community workers, who meet specific criteria, to become co-inquirers (Denscombe, 2010; Creswell, 2007):

- professional formation in Maynooth;
- working in the field for a minimum of ten years;
- recognised by others in the field as making an ongoing contribution to the development of the field.

In short co-inquirers are recognised elders in the field.

I collected their stories by means of interviews, face-to-face and via e-mail. As stories are central to how we construct ourselves, there is, in the collection of stories, the possibility of violation of the self of the other. The relational ethic required is one of "reciprocal affirmation" (Dyson, 1983, p.25), a 'vocation of solidarity' (Westoby and Dowling, 2008, p.211) seeking to create a "safe and hospitable setting where people can tell their stories" (Hustedde, 1998, p.153).

In order to allow space to hear the multiple voices and characters that inhabit our self-narratives (Bruner, 2002a), I was influenced by both TA and VCRM. Gilligan et al., (2003 in Balan, 2005, p.68) say of the rationale behind this method:

> (T)he need for a series of listenings arises from the assumption that the psyche, like voice, is contrapuntal (not monotonic) so that simultaneous voices are co-occurring.

Transcripts were read/listened to in a number of different ways and the 'voices' present are surfaced. Transcripts are read/listened to vertically drawing on VCRM and horizontally influenced by TA. Through a series of steps, involving repeated checking with co-inquirers, and different iterations in the re-storying process, a fully nuanced rendition of the voices within the narratives emerge. These voices I then used as a means of investigating and naming commitments that illustrate the complex narrative of community workers' 'professing'. The checking and re-checking with co-inquirers, while serving as a means of maintaining ownership, and ongoing negotiation of consent, also functioned as reliability and validity checks (Denscombe, 2010; Alleyene, 2015).

Finally, I looked at routes for future research, as I believe there are further conversations to be had regarding 'professing' within the field.

5.9 Fingerpost

The next chapter, "The Work of Love and Humanity", presents the co-inquirers' narrative of 'professing', focusing on commitments to social justice, community and reflexive practice. The following diagram illustrates how I conceptualise the flow for that chapter 6:

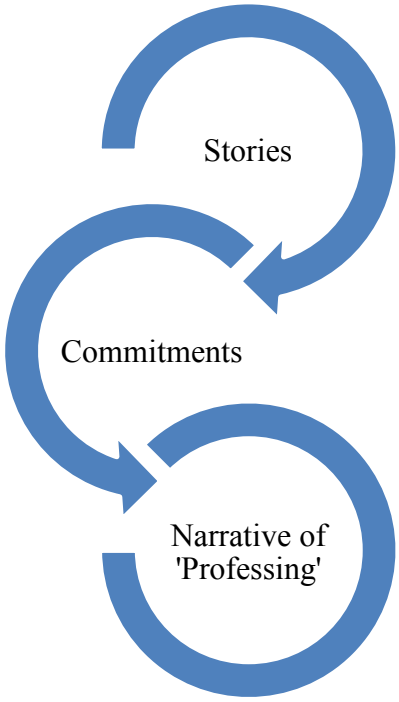

Fig. 5.1 Relationship of stories, commitments and 'professing'.

The above diagram reminds me of the organic flow forms of biodynamic architecture. Here water is circulated through a series of "organically shaped vessels" (Coates, 1997, p.38) becoming aerated and activated along the way. At the end of this journey once opaque waters are clear enough to drink. Likewise co-inquirers' stories, flow and intertwine together inviting us as readers drink in their narrative of 'professing'.

CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS: 'THE WORK OF LOVE AND HUMANITY'

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star
(William Stafford 1977 A Ritual to Read to Each Other)

6.1 Roadmap

Co-inquirers' stories unfolded from my initial question as to what motivated them in their work. Each constructed a unique story of 'professing', their public declaration of adherence to a particular way of seeing and being in the world. Co-inquirers' 'professions' see them face a particular direction, practice relationally, espouse particular values, dialogue with and privilege particular voices, forge links others, and work towards social transformation. In this chapter I re-present, and braid, their individual stories into a collective narrative of 'professing' using their own words with some commentary from myself.

"Like a fern in spring" (Martyn 1973), co-inquirers' stories curl around each other flowing in and out of each other to form and inform a collective narrative of 'professing'. I present this here in the form of stories from co-inquirers that illustrate the three commitments that make up their collective narrative of professing.

As noted in chapter 5 co-inquirers are present in the text through the use of different fonts:

- Maidie in Comic Sans Ms
- Dynamo in Batang
- James in Arial
- Cathal O'hUigin in DejaVu Serif
- Carmen in Segoe UI Semibold
- Clara Cleere in Lucida Fax

Maidie

Maidie manages a project in a rural town. Her route into community work was through social science with initial thoughts of social work. She was disillusioned by social work. Out of this disillusion her path into community work "just evolved from a vague interest around stuff or a vague way of looking at things." However as she:

> Saw and experienced what it meant, and means, and the impact it can have, and the change it can create…it just made more and more sense for me.

She has previously worked in youth work, with homeless people, people with disabilities and freelance. Community work is rooted in "equality, happiness, respect"

Her pseudonym, Maidie, links to a female relative who has "wonderful mental and physical stability and has been a constant in my life".

Dynamo

Dynamo came into community work after time as a student for the priesthood, spent working in "the desert". There he noted the "extent to which people…rely… depend and…connect" in order to survive and make a living. This affirmed his own experience, from living in a rural context, and from conversations with and observation of his father at work, regarding "the strength of community".

Community work aims:

> To create a society that is there for all and all have an equal share around, and everyone being treated equally.

The rationale for his choice of Dynamo as a pseudonym "is a lot of energy and focus to generate some light or heat", illumination, warmth, and courage.

James

James manages an urban based project. Prior to going to Maynooth he worked in youth work. On leaving Maynooth he worked in projects around the city. Community work rests on:

> a value system that's based on respect on…equality… things that are right in a caring world.

I chose James as his pseudonym. It relates to a programme his project ran with young men. This connects his story into narratives of regeneration, the economic crash, and struggles now emerging between different and competing paradigms around the future of the community.

Cathal O'hUigin

Cathal O'hUigin manages an urban based project. Pre-Maynooth he spent time working in Africa, while studying for the missionary priesthood, and in youth work. Post-Maynooth, he worked in the Community Development Programme. His practice is rooted in a place within himself where:

> deep down in there is that notion of fairness, of justice, treat people the way you would like to be treated yourself...the world's not a fair place and maybe there's a way of trying to make it fairer.

His pseudonym Cathal O'hUigin maintains a connection with an older relative, tying him into the GAA, and its '*matryoshka*' of expanding narratives, a holographic configuration, where each and every part contains and is contained by the whole.

Carmen

Carmen manages an urban based project. She says of herself:

> **I get up every morning to struggle and...to resist and that gives me energy.**

Resistance is against a system where there are "**roads picked for us and there are roads picked for others**".

Practice involves:

> **Working out of the heart. It's having the capacity to reach out daily to those who are 'worthless' and support and inspire them to hold on and keep on struggling to stay sane and survive. Poverty is not only material. It is mental and physical disempowerment; it is hopelessness...the work of love.**

Working in this manner:

> **takes particular skill and trust that is not learnt in university but in the everyday nature of the work at a grassroots level, an experience gained by walking the walk.**

Her pseudonym, **Carmen**, I chose as during the course of our interview she sang snatches of a song, laden with stories of struggle, relationship, women, class, Liberation Theology, creativity and spirituality, which all inform and influence her practice and her life.

Clara Cleere

Clara Cleere is a freelance community worker and educator. She originally studied psychology. It was through a friend that she heard of community work. This suggested to her a deeper and more transformational way of working.

Community work is:

> about making some kind of fundamental change...getting to the root cause...not solve the problem on the surface but get to the root cause, get to its origin, get to the source and...make real fundamental change.

Her pseudonym Clara Cleere came to her as she reflected on our interview: "That discussion with you brought me back to my roots!" The name roots her in places of significance, places which have served as points of departure and return throughout her life.

The narrative of 'professing' I present consists of three commitments:

- A commitment to Social Justice (6.2)
- A commitment to Community (6.3)
- A commitment to Reflexive Practice (6.4)

Each Commitment is illustrated by a number of elements:

Narrative	**'Professing'**		
Commitments	**Social Justice**	**Community**	**Reflexive Practice**
Stories	Sources of commitment	Community/community work as relationship	Possibilities of practice
	Social justice as motivator	Community spirit	Formation as community worker
	Love in practice	Diversity in community	Undisciplined practice
	Values as touchstones	Creativity in community	Practice as strategic engagement
		Accepting people as they are	Power 'with' not power 'over' in practice

			Embracing vulnerability in practice
			Support for reflexive practice

Table 6.1 Narrative, Commitments and Stories

Section 6.5 offers a restatement of this narrative of 'professing'. Finally 6.6 fingerposts the next and penultimate chapter, Discussion: The Story of Union.

6.2 Commitment to Social Justice

I use social justice as a *nom de guerre* used to cover the values espoused by co-inquirers. These values, while not necessarily phrased in the same way, coincide with those of AIEB (2016) and are explicitly referenced by co-inquirers:

> I always try to go back to my values…and that's a challenge…that's a challenge (James).

James is speaking here in the context of a meeting he had with a local resident, who was facing eviction. The council wanted them gone. Their family was engaged in anti-social behaviour. James himself was wondering if he too wanted them gone. Many problems would have been solved by such a course of action. But what of the person in front of him, what would eviction solve for them? In this meeting a myriad of competing values and voices echoed about the room advocating for various courses of action. Sticking with his values "caring' and supporting' people and being there for people neighbourliness" was difficult. He opted to support them to stay and thereby choosing to engage those other voices in further dialogue as to how to support both that particular family and the wider community.

'Value', 'values' or their cognates 'beliefs', 'principles', and 'ethics', are words used by co-inquirers in their interviews. Co-inquirers' values form the foundations upon which their 'professings' are made and their practice based. Where do these values come from? How were these values instilled in them? Co-inquirers describe their values as having a number of different sources, familial influences, their own thinking about the world, questioning of traditional narratives as to how the world is structured and seeking other narratives by which they could navigate the world. As evidenced in their stories, all had made some degree of 'professing' prior to going to Maynooth. Indeed some form of 'professing' would have been necessary as admittance had a restricted entry by age, experience and interview.

Sources of Commitment

Dynamo, Cathal O'hUigin, **Carmen**, and Clara Cleere are explicit as to the influence of family members instilling in them a sense "that life was beyond the domestic beyond the home and into the community" (Clara Cleere), and that better "opportunities [were offered] in a community setting… than in" individualised settings (Dynamo). Community was seen as providing something more and in that setting it was possible to work for a better life for all.

The four co-inquirers mentioned above reference the belief specific family members held as to community as the site in which actions for social justice took place:

> [my mother] **has…a great sense of…justice she knows when things are wrong…she'd fight very hard for people… her core influence rubbed off on me** (**Carmen**).

> my mother would be one of the people to be called [to help neighbours in times of need]…I gained a sense of looking out for others rather than it…being…what can you do for yourself (Cathal O'hUigin).

> my mother and my father were both very kindly socially aware…conscious of their neighbours…in that…communal rural way…their values were…the consideration of others…you lived…a good life of a decent upright…person…decency…is part of it…I had older brothers who…would have talked to me about the civil rights [Northern Ireland and the USA] and made me aware of…civil rights issues and human rights issues (Clara Cleere)

> my father [worked in] institutional care…he said [of the people in his care]…they weren't being afforded a full kind of quality of life experience with all that that entails…he saw…the opportunity there was to shift from…an extremely individualised…to a situation of…the opportunities…within a community setting (Dynamo)

Theirs are stories of an intergenerational handing on of the torch. Life was "beyond the domestic" and was focused on working for justice for the wider collective. On this James says:

> Maybe it's my own…family my own life experiences of growing up when things weren't great I just want to fix it.

The Catholic Church was an extra-familial influence referenced by all co-inquirers. All were raised Catholic. Cathal O'hUigin, Dynamo, and **Carmen** and to a lesser extent James acknowledge this influence on their practice, albeit with a critical eye. Dynamo reflecting on his upbringing in the Church and his time spent training to be a missionary priest notes how the Church had a dual role in society acting as social glue but with a very narrow and conservative focus.

Maidie and Clara Cleere rejected Catholicism. Maidie saw all religions as having a focus on deferral; things will change at some distant point in the future. This she sees as letting people off the hook as regards working to change things in the here and now. Clara Cleere rejected Catholicism on the basis of its patriarchy and oppression of women.

Carmen, Dynamo and Cathal O'hUigin in their stories make reference to influences that began to emerge with Vatican II, in particular Liberation Theology. This sought to introduce a different theology that saw salvation as needing to take place in the here and now. The Kingdom was not coming but is to be struggled for in the 'historical reality' manifest in the world.

Social justice as motivator

The values absorbed and inculcated through those earlier experiences serve as motivators for practice and for 'professing'. All co-inquirers articulate very clearly how social justice is a motivating factor in their practice, all make bold 'professions' as to the values that motivate their practice:

> Equality happiness, respect (Maidie)
>
> Equality, respect (Dynamo)
>
> Respect…equality…justice…community…love… friendship…solidarity…love all things that are important from a human…caring and supporting people…being there for people neighbourliness…at the heart is…goodliness…respect and caring (James)
>
> Social justice…justice or fairness (Cathal O'hUigin)

> **Community work is the work of people and the work of justice…it is about…peace making…challenge and…care (Carmen)**
>
> A sense of fairness…fair play…equality (Clara Cleere).

Justice, equality, respect, peace, fairness, care and neighbourliness as active, lived values as both drivers and end goals of their practice.

Love in practice

From my own reading, thinking, (and upbringing?), I was curious as to the role of love in practice and so I asked co-inquirers about this. They spoke of a love very different from the romantic love of Mills and Boon or Hollywood blockbusters.

> I think people who really love who…put themselves out there…there is at its essence a certain level with which we should have that sense of care and concern and empathy which is informed by love even if you don't use the word (Cathal O'hUigin).

Love, even if unacknowledged, nestles at the heart of and impels him in his practice.

'Even if you don't use the word', is love taboo in practice discourse? It would appear that this is the case at least in the context of where Dynamo works:

> This is probably unfair but there is an acceptable language that is used around community work…there's probably an uncomfortableness on one level with that and yet on another level that is probably one of the things that drives [my practice].

Love is 'difficultator', disrupter, and disturber. In Dynamo's situation mention of love does not melt, but rather hardens hearts in his view. Yet it is "probably one of the things that drives" his practice. Love, while taboo in the context of his work situation does find space in "talk around our kitchen table", in that situation, his home, (or perhaps community work's wider community of practice?), use of the word love is 'acceptable [and understood] language' with which to characterise practice.

Carmen's practice is infused with love. In describing love in action, she draws on, the writings of the Simon Community's founder Anton Wallich-Clifford, Liberation Theology, her own lived practice, and her earlier experience of watching both her mother and grandmother at work in their community:

> **working with people…is the work of love, you wouldn't do it if you didn't love people…love can be hard, and love can be…soft…sometimes you have to be very hard in your love…you have to challenge things that are wrong…but that doesn't mean you don't love…the person…surely the essence of it all is love…would you get up in the morning if you didn't love it?**

Love occurs eight times in that extract, 'repetition making-things-present'. Contained in her idea of love are practices of accompaniment, witness, and action. All of which are found in the influences upon which she draws. Her practice is based in connection which:

> **Takes in nature, deep humanity, activism and caring. All of these strands give me meaning in my life and add purpose and wonder to my lived activism** (**Carmen** e-mail 13/8/2015).

Maidie when asked about love in the way that Freire speaks of the teacher needing to have love for their students replied:

> I suppose for me what I would…see as…something similar…is around relationships…the cornerstone of everything…is…relationships creating relationships developing relationships…maintaining relationships looking after them…ensuring that they are actually real relationships…takin' away anything tokenistic.

Similar to **Carmen** and Cathal O'hUigin love is seen as a working towards the maintenance, continuance and repair of relationships. Relationships of this nature are critical in developing the:

> Interdependency [needed]…in order to maintain our world…within our relationships…between people …between systems and ecosystems.

Love as it appears in co-inquirers stories describes profoundly different relationships than those that spring from neo-liberalism:

> individualized property's God...superficial I'm alright kind of...fuck the poor screw anybody who gets in your way (Clara Cleere).

In co-inquirers alternative way of relating, way of seeing and being in the world, the other already has prior claim on your attention, even before you meet them. Practice here is envisaged as openness, hospitality, welcome, embrace, and resistance, always a risk, always a gamble, but not shied away from.

Values as touchstones

Co-inquirers' values serve as touchstones for not only their own practice but also as means by which to judge the programmes and policies for community development that are rolled out by local, national and international bodies:

> They can all say…community work is about empowerment and participation but what's their practice like what does that mean how does that translate (James)

Dynamo speaking of the contemporary context of community work hemmed in by narratives of recession, austerity and alignment notes:

> You do need something that actually sits with you both analysing what's going on but also something to say you can't stop here because…it's a fairly massive avalanche that comes our way.

In his work he sees up close the lack of respect or recognition on the part of the state for community development as practice and process. His work therefore involves:

> Challenging…to put on the table a perspective that reflects the community side of things as against,

the neoliberal perspective embraced by the State. This latter 'pattern that others made' ensures that many 'miss our star' thus the "**roads picked for us"**, lead towards narrowed possibilities, stunted dreams, "**mental and physical disempowerment**" (**Carmen**).

James observes of this clash in values:

> I was at a meeting there recently and I said to…the chairperson or the manager…this is a community centre it's not the fucking convention centre.

The community in which his project is based fought throughout the re-generation process for a community centre. Now a new management structure challenges the project's commitment to the "indigenous community" who James sees as in danger of being pushed aside once more in the changing dynamic of the area. The "convention centre" approach is very much at odds with the values which undergirded the struggle for the "community centre".

In his practice Dynamo's values hold him fast to a course where, despite opposition and other difficulties, he seeks to:

> Bring [name of organisation] back to a place…where it is seen and is a support to communities as distinct to being an obstacle to community development.

His values are for him a *sólarsteinn*, (a navigational device reputedly used by Vikings capable of locating the sun even on overcast days); enabling him to chart his organisation's course, ensuring it is working for "equality and respect". Here, as with James above, their values are sources of strength, from which to counter the negative view of community from the civil service and others. Co-inquirers' values support them in their enunciation and annunciation of a different view of community and community development. Indeed these values only make senses and become realisable in and through community.

6.3 Commitment to Community

For co-inquirers, community, community work, and community worker are ways of being and seeing that for them have lived saliences. These are places, practices and identities in which they choose to locate themselves as part of an ongoing dialogue with their calling.

Community often refers to a community of location. However, within those sites there are also communities of interest e.g. women, young people, migrants. Co-inquirers would see themselves as being part of and relating to a number of communities, e.g. where they work, where they live, other communities in which they have worked, networks and associations to which they belong. All of these various communities are present in their stories and like the Greek chorus offer commentary on their actions.

Community has truth for those who live there. James's calling attention to a "community centre [as opposed to a] convention centre" honours and upholds the community's

struggle, during the re-development process, to have a community centre built that would be run by and for the community, a building where community would be centred, celebrated, held, and built upon. The community here elects to see itself as such. The project maintains a deep commitment to that "indigenous community" who drove that struggle. This can be seen in the project's continued negotiations for housing for new young families locally to ensure intergenerational continuity:

> I think there are many individuals who could have…went on different pathways there are many individuals who wouldn't be living or housed in here.

Community work is a relational practice:

> If you're actually going to engage with people, be they your co-workers…the people that come in and use the space every day…you need to have a very real engagement with those people…on an individual…or…on a collective basis (Maidie).

Maidie relates to the other not from a deficit perspective but from a perspective of equals in all their subjectivity and agency. Here those who were 'othered' are now welcomed into community. Community becomes a place of the '**care, justice, peace-making and challenge**' (**Carmen**).

Community for Cathal O'hUigin enables:

> real connections [to] get made, real trust [to get] built [a space where] real empathy changes…the way we are, who we are with people…[changes] how we think, [and] allows us to take…risks.

Such a space, through the creation of "real connections" "**real relationships**", sets out new "**roads**" and new possibilities for the enactment of the "**social**" "revolution" articulated in the stories of **Carmen** and Clara Cleere.

Community/community work as relationship

Maidie speaking of her rejection of traditional ways of belonging i.e. the Church or the GAA sees her involvement in community work as an alternative structure of belonging:

> Community work for me…that's kind of where it came from that…whole other structure…how you create that…sense of togetherness or support for each other.

Relationships provide the glue for such a structure. The search for mutuality, respect, engagement became foregrounded for Maidie when she chose to reject religious worldviews, and doing this in a rural setting had ramifications, "a lot of fall out", it placed her outside many traditional structures of togetherness. Clara Cleere's rejection of Catholicism had consequences too, the loss of "ritualistic communal experience with your neighbours". Community work provides space for such connections and relationships:

> In community work...I feel I'm part of something that's much bigger than me that I can play my role in...there is a common goal.

Community work connects her to something beyond self, in which she can play a role in working towards a common goal. This goal is rooted in the values of "fairness...fair play ...equality". Relationship is the principal building block of community. It's where the values co-inquirers espouse are realised. It is impossible to have a community of just one. So while the values are the 'professing' of an individual, they only make sense when realised in a communal setting.

Dynamo outlines the potential of relationship as:

> Being connected, and making connections…so that you can…seek…to create something that's for the benefit of all.

Community through the making of connections works towards a vision of:

> A society that is there for all and all have an equal share around…everyone…being treated equally.

Relationships are firmly rooted in a rich soil of values he names as "equality, respect, [and] empowerment" where all involved are present as subjects in their own right. James agrees "all I say to my work and life is relationship is key". No relationship, no community, no life.

For Cathal O'hUigin relationships root deep, unite head, hand, and heart:

> Somewhere deep down in there is that notion of fairness, justice, treat people the way you would like to be treated yourself.

From there Cathal O'hUigin seeks to connect and co-construct a world based in fairness and justice. New ways of imagining and being in the world based on those values only becomes possible in and through relationship. Treating people fairly and justly requires an active engagement with the world in which others are present as subjects in and of themselves.

Community consists of networks of relationships that bind people together. Community work is based on relationships that bind, band, build and bridge, constantly about strengthening and forging relationship. Sometimes it is work with individuals but this work is based in and works towards the forging of collectivity and community:

> **the essence of our work is relationship...we work individually...we work collectively but if you work collectively usually from the collective you get individual work because you're working with people that have multi-problems...they won't work well in a group unless you work with them individually...you have to do that piece of work even though...the principle is...collective participatory...you can't do this work unless you have relationships** (**Carmen**)

> [people have said of aspects of my practice]…that's individualisation well I don't give a bollocks as far as I'm concerned we put…a resident on a road that's a very difficult road who will survive on that road who will make that road better so for me that's community…that's really what's at the heart...that's what makes me do this work (James).

Here James teases out the balancing act that is part of practice. Like **Carmen** he works sometimes with individuals but always their focus is on building community. Placing a family in long-term accommodation within the community allows that family to explore and realise other possibilities that might otherwise have been blocked to them.

Community spirit

Cathal O'hUigin notes:

> One of the things that's completely…ignored…in new programmes [is]…community spirit…what happens in a collective…when a group of people come together, [what]…happens when people are…brought to…look at things in a different way creates…an energy, creates a courage…inspires them to do something which on their own they wouldn't have thought at all possible or…even considered.

Community provides something more, something above, beyond and inclusive of those who choose to come together and form themselves into community. Community is *gestalt*, the whole being more than the sum of the parts.

Co-inquirers mention events from their experience where they noticed this extra dimension called community. In their stories, there is an inter-generational handing on of the torch, connecting their stories of community in their early life to their being community workers to-day. Each of them grasped in those early experiences something of the obligation, hospitality, duty, and gift, implied in the etymology of community. An obligation towards the other, in which the gift that is the other and the gifts that co-inquirers are themselves get realised and named, a process of 'making-things-present'. Community spirit with its explicit embrace of solidarity rather than individualism, therefore presents as a 'dangerous memory' challenging neo-liberalism.

Diversity in community

Co-inquirers do not see community as equating with sameness but rather as diversity. For both James and Carmen this is most evident in the changing social mix of their areas. In James's case this occurred through the process of re-generation which saw the building of new housing for those he describes as the 'indigenous community" (i.e. the original residents of the area) and a range of other developments such that:

> the mixture of tenure is a lot more healthy then probably what it would have been envisaged…and it's a different community…people who use the centre there's such a diversity of people and I think that's particularly good (James).

He illustrated this with a story of the local Imam looking to use the centre to hold celebrations to mark the end of Ramadan. We later took coffee in the canteen that looked out onto the outside play area of the crèche, the children, several of whom are the children of recent migrants, were playing together, another example of the growing diversity of this community.

Carmen too is very conscious of the presence of new migrants in the community:

> **there's private apartments up there…they're all very poor migrants that live…there…when you go into their blocks you can smell the poverty of the world the different kinds of food…they go in behind their doors they've no sense of a community because you could have Indians and Africans and you've also people taking drugs living up in it.**

This calls for ways of working which reach out to these new groups to include them in community:

> **Community work can't only be about providing service it has to be about challenging the structures that keep people in spaces that are horrible** (**Carmen**).

This represents a gauntlet thrown down not just for community work but for the entire population. How do we go from viewing ourselves largely as a mono-cultural block to opening ourselves out to and the welcoming of others?

Co-inquirers note that layered on top of the strictures of Catholicism, noted earlier, were equally oppressive structures of patriarchy and class:

> discrimination against women the inequalities that women experience in society the experience of patriarchy (Clara Cleere).

> **There were roads picked for us and there are roads picked for others that they just go on to Trinity College or UCD…well naturally for us we go to the factory**

> **They never unionised the women workers** [in the factory] **they never thought to include the women workers (Carmen).**

These too became issues around which community work had to develop a voice and strategies such that these communities of interest and the diversity of experience and knowledge embedded and embodied there could be recognised, voiced and change demanded. Awareness of the on-going impact of these structures of oppression and the need to collectively name and challenge them continues to drive co-inquirers' practice.

Creativity in community

Arts working is one way in which this diversity of silenced voices have been making themselves heard. For **Carmen** this approach links back to her reading of Saul Alinsky:

> **Stay within the experience of your people give them something that they enjoy let the others think that there is more of you.**

In Ireland creativity and the arts have a long history within community development. James spoke of the festivals that his community held to mark significant stages in the re-generation process. These started initially within the 'indigenous community' and gradually grew to embrace more and more others as the area changed and new people came to live there:

> You couldn't not say it was a bit of craic it was exciting it was challenging it was political it was…everything that you'd want to be…in a changing situation (James)

These were not just random events, a bit of face painting and a couple of jugglers hired in for the day. They were thought through planned events part of a bigger picture, a larger strategy encompassing a vision of a better world. More than that, they facilitated the emergence into public view of the visions and physicality of those pushed to the margins and for those involved it's "a powerful…experience" (Clara Cleere):

> **you could just see how the art linked to people… people mightn't be able to speak but they have words and they're able to make things…it does have an energy** (**Carmen**).

Creativity was also needed in working methodologies and practices such that previously excluded groups could empower themselves, imagine, and work towards different futures. This called for a:

> **different model about how you could work with the women…that crèche isn't about childcare that crèche is to enable women to take part in education…to go back**

> to formal education…to have a break if you're experiencing violence (Carmen).

Accepting people as they are

Carmen's practice, "**accepting people as they are, with all their warts, with their dogs, with their bottles**", is influenced by Liberation Theology and experience of working in the Simon Community:

> it's no good just giving people soup, unless you change the structure that has them where they are…it's not just charity work, it's work that cares about the human being…work…that challenges the injustices (Carmen).

It's not good enough to help carry the cross, questions must be asked as to why, and by whom, this person is being crucified in the first place, and action taken to change that situation.

James sees community and his role as community worker as providing a space where those who are absent can still have a presence. The project where he works and others around the city have seen "the whole thing around gangs, violence, and drugs" having a big impact on the communities in which they are based. He accepts that for many with limited options taking this path:

> Is really simple it's economics…it's…black and white if you need to get a job and participate in society.

If the possibility of a job is gone then gangs provide a means of access to money in order to survive:

> With the economy collapsed…families that we were making real progress with and suddenly they drifted [into that world]. [However recently] some of those lads who've been involved in the drugs business criminality gangs have now re-entered here…through my relationship with them some of them have gone off…on various courses and…there's a dialogue opened…that wouldn't have happened if it wasn't [for] the values that…that govern the work.

Community is held open, not closed off, even to those who it could be argued are working against community they are not turned away or forgotten. The space is held open and

dialogue undertaken. Dialogue that is framed by the values embedded in projects and embodied by co-inquirers.

Dialogue is central to the third commitment made by co-inquirers that is a commitment to reflexive practice. Dialogue is present in their stories as part of an ongoing response to their calling, not just in their practice but also in their everyday lives, in a fusion of personal and 'professional' identities.

6.4 Commitment to Reflexive Practice

Community worker, is a very significant part of who co-inquirers are, who they 'profess' themselves to be. "It's not just how I do my work it's about how I live my life" (Maidie). Clara Cleere described her discovery of community:

> I had found my calling...working in solidarity with people who had a lot of issues to deal with...being an advocate...being an organiser, being a facilitator, these were roles I loved...I felt I had found myself...I found something I was good at...I found...a context in which I could make a contribution...they valued me...I valued them...that...feeling.

The words she uses are all active and relational: boundary-crossing activities, facilitator, advocate, organiser, working in solidarity with others, where people - herself included - are valued. In the final sentence she captures how this work is based on the plane, of welcome, of belonging, of 'solidarity and significance', of having value as a person. Once again we meet the obligation, duty, hospitality, and gift exchange of community. The relational roles she enumerates are not a doing for, or on behalf of, but working with, in a way that diffuses power among many.

The possibilities of practice

> I finished in Maynooth and the Community Development Programme was being expanded...the programme basically said...the best people to come up with a solution to a problem are the people who experience the problem...we'll resource communities to come up with their own plans and their own solutions...they can take on workers to assist

> them…I just thought that this was genius (Cathal O'hUigin).

> If you think back to…the 80s and 90s when…government [was] funding projects and…their [the projects] role and job…is to critique and challenge and change government (Maidie).

Formation as community worker/Professional formation

Co-inquirers did not end up as community workers by accident. Rather they chose community work as a way of answering and dialoguing with their 'calling'. Their stories contain that sense of something beyond (Levoy 1997; Hillman 1996), steering them towards community work:

> it's something beyond...it transcends the idea of just getting paid for your time you're giving something of yourself...something...your reason for being...your values...your objectives in your life (Clara Cleere).

Co-inquirers talk of how community work arrived at a choice point in their lives and they were steered towards making that choice through suggestions from friends or acquaintances (**Carmen**, **Maidie**, Clara Cleere), working with people who had studied in Maynooth (Cathal O'hUigin), being carefully guided towards Maynooth (James), returning from overseas (Dynamo).

Maynooth was a place of confirmation, of challenge, it was and it wasn't an easy place to be. James and **Carmen** in particular state that going to Maynooth placed them in unfamiliar spaces where class differences in particular were highlighted:

> When we all went out there…we were all…angry fucking bastards…you [were] thinking…all the middle class bastards (James).

James in his story describes his work with the youth project prior to his going to Maynooth as a process of:

> Becoming politicized…in relation to the fact that in areas where I grew up…drugs…inequality…justice…to getting on and, doing something about it.

Thus those that went out to Maynooth from the youth project were socialised as regards '**political thinking**' and there was a degree of '**anger**' motivating them as a result of this politicisation. Inequality and injustice were not abstract but were his lived, felt experience.

A similar process, though with a different routing, had taken place for **Carmen**. Her journey to Maynooth took in factory work, where she experienced both, solidarity with fellow workers but also dissonances as regards the unequal place of women and the huge power differential between the owners and the workers,

> **The union…he was a man…he said you have to give me a psychological reason why the machines** [in a particular configuration]**…affect you.**

This statement indicating to her that the owners had the power and the union would take the position of the owners unless she could argue otherwise. Her pathway also included working in Simon and exposure to Liberation Theology both as a lived practice and as a way of working with those who are marginalised. Thus she came to Maynooth '**really about the injustices**'. However she was to encounter a situation where she found '**other people weren't**'. So as with **James** there was a clash with the *habitus* of the university.

Clara Cleere, **Cathal O'hUigin**, **Dynamo**, and **Maidie** came to Maynooth as graduates. They had been, if not socialised into, then were at least familiar with the *habitus* of the university. Hence they do not describe their experiences in the DAPPSS as involving the same degree of discombobulation.

All agree that the experience of being in Maynooth contributed to and clarified their analysis of societal structures and inequalities. Several co-inquirers make reference to the importance of their fieldwork placements and their on-site supervisors as critical in their formation as community workers:

> My placement supervisor….created the conditions and opportunities to push my boundaries and work outside my comfort zone in a real work setting (Maidie).

> An exceptional woman…exceptionally welcoming…exceptionally reassuring…there was

> safety about being around her and her project because the context was so strange to me (Clara Cleere).

Co-inquirers continue to have a relationship with Maynooth e.g. hosting and supervision of students on placement, teaching on courses:

> what I'm trying to do is...communicate with students the value the principles the sort of practices...of good community work...what the purpose is...the objective...of good community work what are we trying to achieve...forming their professional discipline (Clara Cleere).

This is not to say that this relationship is uncritical of Maynooth:

> Maynooth has become…it was the Diploma now it's the degree…Masters and the PhD…that's a challenge for Maynooth and they'd be the first to admit that in relation to the volumes of people that come through to do the community/youth work course…you wonder is it becoming a pathway to employment which is fair enough but is it a pathway to change (James).

> **We can all go to Maynooth and become very political but...there is a lot of skills needed to be able to sustain the length of time that you're in the space (Carmen)**

> [there are] **particular skill**[s] **and trust not learnt in university but in the everyday nature of the work at grassroots level, an experience gained by walking the walk (Carmen).**

Thus co-inquirers raise questions as to discourses of professionalism, processes of professionalisation, and their own professionality. These questions apply equally to the context and practice of work in the field as to processes and methodologies of formation.

Undisciplined practice

The CDP was growing exponentially from the 1980s into the 2000s. The view from the field was that community work involved not only working with communities to develop solutions to their problems but also to challenging and critique the government as to failings regarding policy implementation and development. The government in the early 2000s began the

process of focusing community development away from (radical) social change and towards individualised service provision:

> The object of these changes was to deter people from what we would call community work into more service provision...as a result community workers...have been deflected away from the core work (Clara Cleere).

These new structures also have disciplining effect on practitioners leading to a questioning and modifying their practice:

> [the] Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme…it's…very rigorous in relation to procedures the…dots on the i's…you probably did things years ago…you wouldn't get away with it today…that…can lead you to be in some ways [to be] more…not conservative…more cautious…over cautious…and if you're over cautious I don't think it's good (James).

This disciplining plays on a critical weakness of community development, its dependence on the state for funding. It is therefore possible to corral community work through strictures that are applied via funding criteria, evidence gathering, audits, and tendering processes:

> if you don't have your own money you have to be careful what you say about the people who are giving you the money...if you're not careful then slowly but surely...they'll move things in such a way as to make sure...you become careful and that has happened (Cathal O'hUigin).

> last summer we had the auditors in…it was really challenging…all our books and accounts…you become paralysed…we had to go back over…ten years of accounting…we got through it…the sheer stress and frustration and concern…that vulnerable space (James).

This pressure influences practice:

> I'm here managing a project and I spend more time worrying about...what people are paid than...the big kind of changes that we're going to do (Cathal O'hUigin).

Practice is subtly and not so subtly steered towards conservative or risk adverse ways of working away from more confrontational/improvisational approaches. One result of this can mean that conversations that need to be had within organisations are not held:

> we had a conversation about decriminalizing drugs…the drugs education workers were meaning to put in a submission around and I'm there thinking we should…the problem is we haven't had a conversation as an organization…so while the drugs workers are quite clear about what their position on decriminalizing drugs is Laurencetown Community Project isn't (Cathal O'hUigin).

Dynamo's characterises the role increasingly adopted by the state as:

> We're the funder you're the community and work is to be framed around a 'tick box' exercise [consisting of] outputs and evidence.

Maidie concurs with Dynamo but goes further when she notes how the very language used to describe the people who engage with the projects casts them in a passive subservient role:

> People aren't being described as people they're customers or they're clients or service users…that's completely dehumanising…it's removing the opportunity to start creating relationships…where people can actually begin to work together people can begin to…share stuff…become more interdependent.

People are re-named as client, customer, service user, each one of those terms carries with it an implied relational stance and way of being, that of supplicant. **Carmen** puts it much more forcefully when describing interactions people have with some state agencies "**they see people on welfare…as takers not givers**" rather than as people suffering under already intolerable burdens exacerbated by austerity.

Cathal O'hUigin's project has experienced the impact of new tendering processes under SICAP which replaced the CDP. In this new programme projects are aligned with the local Partnership structures under the stewardship of the Local Authority. Under SICAP projects bid against each other in the tendering process. It also involved the amalgamation of different projects which resulted in redundancies. Both processes had the effect of undermining solidarity in the field:

> Some people were not in the redundancy mix and others were…it created a real sense of I'm ok and

> I'm not ok…people turned on each other…it was very unedifying to see ourselves in action.

The tendering process involved bidding for lots. These lots are new geographical areas delineated by shifting existing community, psycho-geographic, and socio-economic boundaries between different areas on the ground. This has the effect of undermining existing conceptions of community on the ground. **Carmen** notes:

> **over in** [affluent neighbouring area] **people have steps up to their houses and they haven't seen austerity…austerity hasn't hit a lot of them…we're supposed to work with all of that now.**

The effect of this merger with a much more affluent area is to lower the 'deprivation index' for this 'lot' resulting in less funding only now it's to be being shared among more people:

> Our funding is cut by 13½% because the deprivation index has gone down by that kind of number…Bunloughry…who lost all these places to us…their funding stays the same even though they've got less people in their catchment area…their deprivation index has risen slightly because they don't have all these wealthy estates (Cathal O'hUigin).

Other changes with new programmes see goals and priorities being set nationally, not regionally or locally. Cathal O'hUigin remarks of SICAP:

> If I pre-determine the outcome of a process then that's not community development…it's social manipulation.

This shifts the nature of the work which used to happen locally where projects:

> Work alongside people…work with people…to make change…to bring about change…over a fairly long term period (Maidie).

These are actions and strategies that only work on the local level as each community will have their own unique set of problems. James describes the complexities of finding solutions locally:

> [In our work we] navigate round the priests, the nuns,…drug dealers, the community 'activists', the community worker, the youth worker (James).

Co-inquirers argue that solutions need to be worked out locally with outside agencies acting in a supportive role.

Dynamo working within the system of SICAP support agencies, that interact directly with the government and civil service, sees little support for, little understanding of, and indeed, downright hostility towards community development:

> [There is a] fairly negative understanding government have of community…you'd be horrified…in terms of some of the things that people [civil servants] the perceptions and the thinking that goes on (Dynamo).

The sense is of a mismatch between how programmes are structured at a national level and the realities for projects at a local level. There is also a sense in particular from Dynamo's story that community development as a practice is poorly understood in some government departments that have an input into programme development.

Co-inquirers respond to such disciplining through a practice that acknowledges such imposed discipline while at the same time seeking to work in ways that remain true to their commitments. Cathal O'hUigin says of his practice:

> we're doing activation stuff and it feels…like the anathema to community work but we're here and …we're doing something and…the way people experience what we do…they have that sense of being respected of being wanted in a way that they're not getting in other situations…the honesty.

The honesty is in the relationship formed with that particular person where they feel welcomed, understood and seen as the person they are rather than as someone who has to be activated. They are seen and experienced as more than just a 'tick box' exercise. This echoes **Carmen**'s "**accepting people as they are**" and working from there with them to plot a course for their future:

> **it's not just charity kind of work it's work that cares about the human being…it's also work…that challenges the injustices that…are happening in the world (Carmen).**

> we work with people and there's a spirit…[an] effort to get people on the journey whatever way they fell off it to get

> them on it and that's what drives it… people care there's a caring environment in here (James).

Co-inquirers are aware of the challenges they face in their work as new programmes and demands are placed upon them. They all argue that this disciplining is counter to the commitments they have made in their 'professing' and therefore seek to remain true to these despite demands that they practice otherwise. One way in which they seek to do this is through building relations with those in positions of power and influence.

Practice as strategic engagement

> Community work is great for blaming the baddies [but] you've got to work with people whatever side…people say to me how do you deal with the council…I have to …that's my job there's a bigger picture (James).

> **I have great relationships with them at the top…I'd say to them will you do this for me but I'll still be fighting them…good community work has to be able to mind all the relationships that you have…you won't change anything if you keep going at them (Carmen).**

If that strategy does not work there are other allies that can be called upon for support:

> **I'm going to call everybody that owes me a favour…RTE…everybody (Carmen)**

Community work is about relationships. Relationships have to be built and maintained with those in positions of power and influence. It is those in positions of power and/or influence who need to be on-side if things are to change.

For **Carmen** poverty is a "**result of** [the] **structural violence of the state**". Here, two processes converge: commission and omission (Moe-Lobeda 2013). Commission through laws passed, stories constructed, habitual ways of doing things, and a host of other actions large and small, such that a structure emerges in which particular groups of people are discounted.

> I [was] working…in the local authority…what was clear was [that] racism and prejudice and discrimination [were] evident but oftentimes…hidden…services were delivered on the basis…of prejudice and discrimination…hatred and hostility…it was very

> difficult to challenge them because…people would not admit to it…it's so much bigger than any individual it was very difficult to fight…the strategy that I would have seen employed by a lot of officials was…they played along (Clara Cleere).

Thus habitual practices within the local authority had the effect of:

> sabotaging [the plan for Traveller accommodation] from the start but in a very subtle way [such that it] was never going to yield any kind of [outcome satisfactory to Travellers].

This process goes largely unchallenged and so over time it results in unquestioned situations where "**naturally for us we go to the factory" (Carmen),** and others of different class positioning follow different paths. Omission is when things are not enacted or put in place to support a more just society, e.g. living wage, cultural rights.

Taking James' point as to 'baddies' Cathal O'hUigin stresses that it is important to see beyond 'baddies' and search out those within the system who could be potential allies while at the same time reflecting on the logs in our own eyes:

> I don't like the…notion…four legs good two legs bad… community sector pure…because we're not
>
> there is an elite there that sort of feel you know there's a right way and we're right and anybody else who says they're community development…[they're not]
>
> Some of the stuff we do is really good, some of the stuff we do isn't really good at all…I see other people in statutory organisations…and I think they have a really good handle on it [community development practice and process] while they can't espouse it in the same way they actually deliver it much better in some of the things they are able to do.

Community development it would appear from what is being said here is a practice that is embraced by different people some of whom can be found in the most unlikely of places. At the same time there seems be an element of elitism coming from certain community development practitioners that misses or dismisses those others. The calling out of such attitudes and practices is particularly important now as there is a sense from some of the co-

inquirers that people who are committed to the values of "good community work" are being deflected from "the core work" and therefore allies become important particularly those within the system.

In trying to balance the pressure towards working in the way demanded by SICAP and keeping true to the values and methodologies of community work practice there is a real danger that workers will end up burnt out and walk away:

> I think there's such a cynicism there from government…it's putting stuff in place that's going to compromise people…the workers and volunteers…the ones that are principled…that might be making the noises…questioning…challenging…are going to be so exhausted by the whole thing they're going to step away (Maidie).

Cathal O'hUigin suggested that walking away could hold possibilities. This does not mean leaving the field. Rather, it means a re-configuration and re-calibration of the project such that it could exist on its own, independent of government funding. Thus it could set its own agenda in conjunction with the people:

> Laurencetown CDP could honourably fold up its tent…move off-stage in the format we're in currently…maybe Laurencetown CDP would become far more dynamic as a voluntary organisation without a whole host of staff delivering a government programme who could talk about issues of real importance for the people that we…purport to work for.

This may be an attractive option. However, as his project won their bid, it is not one he feels he is in a position to take as he has made a commitment to the people he works with and will stay there and work on the gaps within SICAP that offer the possibility of practicing "good community work"

Both James and Carmen outline in their stories how strategic alliances they have nurtured over the years are utilised in their practice. Carmen uses a meeting with the Bishop to challenge the church on its stance in relation to action in support of the communities with whom she works. James recalls how an argument with someone senior in the local council

provided the opportunity to build relationships. This has been critical in how the project along with the community negotiated a path through the re-generation process.
Allies are there to be found, sometimes in the most unlikely of places, e.g. the 'baddies'. Allies are to be nurtured so that points of agreement and working relations developed:

> I think in…community work when you take your finger off the relationship that power has to everything you do then you are in trouble…there's too much…to let the type of work and the values of this…work go (James).

Carmen's story of her alliance with the Bishop is one grounded in a common class background. Thus there are points of common experience that can be used to both inform and push the Bishop to get his church more active. Cathal O'hUigin, while aware of the problems within the civil service as regards respect and understanding of community development noted by Dynamo, is appreciative of those within the system who can and do deliver. Cathal O'hUigin, James and **Carmen** caution against the binary goodie/baddie categorisation as this can blind one not only to potential allies but also to failings on the part of community development itself.

Power 'with' not power 'over' in practice

Community work practices draws on a different conceptualisation of power than that described in the preceding section. Practitioners are committed to sharing power *with* not exercising power *over* people.

Dynamo outlines his view as to what his work is about within his organisation:

> I have tried to bring [name of organisation] to a place…where it is seen and is a support to communities as distinct to being an obstacle.

Dynamo's work connects him to both the field and government i.e. the civil service. His view of community development from the government side has been outlined earlier. Dynamo senses the view the field holds of his organisation is that it's part of a larger bureaucracy, one part among a "range of other quite negative things". He works towards having his organisation accepted as an ally to the field where power can be shared and thus the position of both the field and his organisation strengthened in negotiations around particular programmes:

> the challenges that are associated with that are very different challenges to that that I would have engaged with [when I was a] community worker [in the field] but the end goal from my point of view…is to both energise and to…get the team that are going to be working with communities in a place where they recognise the centrality of a [community work] value system.

This seeking to build a value system as the basis for practice that all buy into is common across all co-inquirers. That is a value system based in equality, participation, collectivity, human rights, and empowerment.

Achieving this means dealing with power issues as they arise within the project. James notes:

> I think the ultimate testament of people who've got power is how they…communicate and behave to the people around them…how does that person treat [others]…how do you truly engage with them…in here…people often comment Jesus is there no one the boss…I am the boss but I don't go round with…a stick…it's about how you treat people.

Power is a relational concept it has to do with how you view and treat those with whom you work. It's about how the exercise of power is infused with the values of community work.

Participation is a central value in community work practice. Participation and collective empowerment involve the sharing of power:

> you have to have…a culture within an organization that everyone buys into first of all that…everyone believes in and everybody…has the same vision and the same goal for the organisation (Maidie).

Developing such an organisational culture does not involve "go[ing] round with a bleeding stick" (James) rather it is the care-full process of enacting the values of community work internally within the organisation as well as externally in how the organisation relates to the world. Practice becomes:

> a strategy whereby you gather people together to look at what's happening why it's happening how do you change it what would be the solution and

> how would you go about making that solution (Cathal O'hUigin).

For both Cathal O'hUigin and Maidie, such a strategy involves a letting go of certainty, of being the expert. This involves a stepping back and acknowledgement of both not knowing and their vulnerability:

> I'm trusting that as a worker or as a practitioner that I…allow myself to be vulnerable and open and questioned…for me in my work…anybody that I engage with through my work is a potential person that can be part of here in terms of driving the work in terms of being part of the decision making around the kind of work we do or how we do that work (Maidie).

> I don't think that I've all the answers…it's much more liberating for me to know that I have good people who…in a whole range of…spheres are better than I am…they can help me grow in my understanding or skills around a particular thing [through] spending time with them asking them questions (Cathal O'hUigin).

This is an acknowledgement and a working through of a belief in the strength of the collective, that each brings something to the table, each has something to contribute. Reliance on experts and hierarchies gets in the way of dialogue. It is through dialogue that we can come to a more nuanced understanding of the world, an understanding that includes multiple perspectives and respects diversity.

Embracing vulnerability in practice

Maidie states of her practice:

> if you really want to have a real relationship with people, then you have to expose something of yourself…anytime you expose something of yourself you're creating a certain vulnerability, you're leaving yourself open to being…accepted or rejected or neither, and that does create a vulnerability.

Real relationship, as Maidie describes it, reaching out to the other with no expectation of a response or even acknowledgement, is a gamble, is a risk. It is saying I am here, I am fully

present to you in this space, at this time, and will be into the future. Like the warts and all description by **Carmen** earlier, for a worker choosing to practice from a base of love, they too are there with '**warts, and dogs and bottles**' of their own. If not, then it is not a '**real relationship**' as envisaged by **Maidie**, **Carmen**, and **James**. A relationship, which **Cathal O'hUigin** states, tells the other "**you're wanted, you're, loved, you're special**".

Letting go of certainty, committing to sharing power, practising from real relationship and embracing the vulnerability that comes with it is demanding and takes a toll.

Support for reflexive practice

James talks of "**an inner conflict that's been tearing at me for the last couple of years**". This conflict clusters around clashes in value systems, power, and management styles. "**I feel the weight and…the tiredness is beginning to kick in.**" Things can slip away, not get done, and be added to the pile that is already pressing down on him. It can be a lonely place being the person, with whom the buck stops, seeking to balance different and often competing demands. Who and what do co-inquirers draw on for sustenance?

Support is sought from a variety of sources, **Dynamo's** "**talk around our kitchen table**", for **Maidie** it's her class from Maynooth "**still friends…25 odd years later.**" There is a strong community of practice, embedded within that friendship She has carefully developed a network of others in the work who she:

> **Can ring…and say listen we need to do this…I need to run this by you…we need to sit down and talk about this…there's no big preamble…you know how they work they know how you work.**

For **Clara Cleere,** it's involvement:

> **in a women's group in Liffeybridge…it's all about visual art and sculpture…drama…music…these are not bread and butter things these are beyond that**

Carmen's Thursday night strategy session:

> **Geoffrey…he's a great influencer…he would challenge you and we challenge him…he has a different way of thinking and when somebody gives you the key to thinking…Geoffrey would make you think differently…he has a way of imparting knowledge…pushing you…forward…it's about friends and all of that.**

Cathal O'hUigin draws on GAA matches:

> I think that actually sports people…real sports fans…know how to stick with something even though all rational will…will tell you it's a waste of time energy…money but you've got a connection there that's deeper than the rational bits…Seatown Wanderers are going to get relegated at the end of the season…yet Seatown will still be there to welcome Seatown home.

Music for James: "I'm a big U2 fan …I've gone to gigs since …1981".

The support drawn from spirituality imbues the stories of **Carmen**, Dynamo and Cathal O'hUigin:

> **a spirituality** [that] **takes in nature, deep humanity, activism and caring. All of these strands give me meaning in my life and add purpose and wonder to my lived activism** (**Carmen**).

> Jesus Christ would be kind of a role model for me…a radical thinker…about social justice…who took people who were outcasts…validated them…he picked 12 right gobshites…to…follow him…it isn't about the biggest…the best…the bravest it's about the…weakest…poorest…trying to…get them to speak up for themselves and not being prepared to have to do it by violent means (Cathal O'hUigin)

> you do need something that actually sits with you both analysing what's going on but also…to say you can't stop here because…it's a fairly massive avalanche that comes our way (Dynamo).

Other sources of support are family, friends, CWI, other project managers (CWI and project managers also have the sense of communities of practice), nature, the arts, Maynooth and outside supervision:

> My interaction with this person made real the importance of…time and space to reflect on work and practice and the importance of being proactive rather than reactive (Maidie).

> external supervision is important…I'm feeling the pressure…I…feel the need to have…me own head space (James).

All mention support and inspiration from the people with whom they work, and the communities that they serve. What all of these have in common is that sense of deep connection with something, someone, or a group of others that link back into the self and a wider collective, and through this nurturing the self, the soul, and the spirit. It places co-inquirers back into themselves and into a way of being in the world, the "interdependence" of which Maidie speaks.

6.5 Restatement of Commitments: A Narrative of 'Professing'

. Co-inquirers' 'professings' are the intertwined commitments, social justice, community, and involves their practice, the context of their work, their life histories, personal and 'professional'. All of these exchanges feed into the unfolding of their 'professions'. 'Profession' is thus a work in progress partial, provisional, and contextual. In this way 'profession' is improvisational. That is not to say it is re-made up on the spot each day but rather it is the accumulation of reflections on/and hours of practice. Co-inquirers attest to how their values have an inter-generational reach. All co-inquirers continue this inter-generational reach in seeking to pass their 'professing' to the students that they both host on placement and teach in Maynooth.

'Professing' involves reflexive practice rooted on and in social justice, realised in community. Community is not a homogenous or indeed finished space. Multiple and often competing discourses make themselves present in that space. Co-inquirers seek to navigate these with social justice as both their map and end goal. Participation, collective empowerment, human rights, social and environmental justice, equality and anti-discrimination are given short shrift in the climate of neo-liberal individualism, and the

collateral damage wrought by austerity and recession. Thus engagement with power is a daily reality of practice. Power manifests itself in two ways power *over* and power *with*.

Power *over* is what maintains "**the structural violence of the state**" (**Carmen**). It is manifest in the new community work programmes through the setting out of lots, the tendering process, the control of goals and objectives and most nakedly in funding arrangements. More subtly it can be seen in "**the language that's being imposed**" (**Maidie**).This language of "**client, customer, service-user**":

> Remove[s] that opportunity to start creating relationships…where people can actually begin to work together…to share stuff…become more interdependent (Maidie).

Achievement of such relationships sees co-inquirers carefully cultivating and nurturing relations with those in positions of power and/or influence. This involves "**being able to cross that space and build a relationship no matter how hard it is to keep the relationship" (Carmen).** A sometimes difficult and lonely place to be this seeing beyond the goodie/baddie binary towards a more collaborative dialogic relationship:

> you have to go back because that's the nature of this type of work and the relationships you have in this work whether it's with the city council other organisations it's the nature of it…it's about being respectful it's about not being fascist pure naked power (James).

To counter the above co-inquirers practice a strategy of power *with*. This is achieved through a variety of means, e.g. nurturing creativity, education and training via schemes like Community Employment, reaching out to those on the margins. These strategies aim to strengthen capacities to resist, connect, uphold and build, the "community centre" nurturing "real connections" and "interdependency". This involves stepping back from hierarchies and job titles, the role of expert, but not a denial of expertise. Thus expert knowledge is shared, agency is supported, and ownership of the project is claimed:

> we built on the residents' capacity we built on the leadership through there…that's probably why this project works so well…

> it's a team of workers it's a team of volunteers who hold very clearly that strong community bond (James).

It is not an individual effort it is rather through team work and effort put into building and maintaining the team that grows the ability to hold fast under pressure, to reach out and engage with the community and with the powers. Given the precarious nature of community development, under current state initiated disciplining strategies, such work is crucial and stressful.

Connection and support become vital in sustaining their 'professing'. Family, friends, work colleagues, the communities in which they work, other practitioners, supervision, sport, creativity, the arts, celebration, and spirituality are for co-inquirers sources of support, places of refuge, nurturance and safety.

It is their commitment to social justice that serves to anchor them in reflexive practice and community. Such a commitment on its own will not change anything they need to be coupled to action realised in community through **connection** and **interdependency**:

> [your] values and your objectives in your life go beyond...I could never have worked in something I didn't care about and sometimes it makes the job very difficult that you actually care too much...you do need to care...about...what's going on what needs to change... how you can...change it for the better for the people...who are affected by the situation...that's the calling bit (Clara Cleere).

Throughout their 'professing' there is a striving for **connection**, for **interdependency**. Community is the site where change is articulated and worked for. Strategies are developed there and these through relationships that band, bond, build and bridge, these are enacted across multiple arenas, local, national and international. Such practices involve risk, gamble and vulnerability. 'Professing' is a way of being in and seeing the world that strives for equality and fairness, respect, caring and neighbourliness. A practice ultimately based in love "even if you don't use the word", a practice of the unacceptable language of social justice, embodied by co-inquirers, an enacted in reflexive practice, through community.

6.6 Fingerpost

We have heard the stories told by co-inquirers. It is now time to bring their collective narrative into conversation with others writing in the field. This is I do in the discussion chapter. Here, along with other writers, the co-inquirers discuss their narrative. This will include both writers we have encountered in the initial chapters plus some new ones. These new writers/voices are called on to add comment on new material that emerged through the interviews.

I liken this process to travelling from one place to another through what one presumes to be familiar territory. Along the way one notices changes that have occurred in the landscape, a new housing development, a roundabout, crop patterns in the field that change with the seasons or a forest clear cut. I have a choice to make. Do I turnaround and head back to my starting point and redraw my map and head out again? Or do I continue my journey updating my map as I go. I have opted for the latter course of action, this is in keeping with emergence as an aspect of narrative research that is stories are only ever provisional, partial and contextual, and so I add new voices into the on-going narrative of 'professing'.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION: STORIES OF UNION

Those who could not know union
Kept writing the story of separation
(Noshi Gillani 2014. Kept Compromising on Life)

7.1 Road Map

In this chapter I bring the narrative of 'profession' from chapter 6 into conversation with others writing in the field of community work and beyond. This is a conversation involving the three braided commitments of social justice, realised in community, embodied and enacted in reflexive practice. Like a rope in which many strands are intertwined it is possible to follow each particular strand on its own. But the strength of the rope is built from the many strands braided together. For this particular chapter I will follow conversations relating to each commitment separately; social justice in 7.2, community in 7.3, and reflexive practice in 7.4. In 7.5 I bring them all together for a re-cap. With 7.6 I briefly summarise what do community workers 'profess'. This is followed by a fingerpost the next chapter in 7.7.

As with previous chapters co-inquirers are individually present through the use of the following fonts:

Maidie - Comic Sans MS,
Dynamo – Batang,
James - Arial,
Cathal O'hUigin - Déjà Vu Serif,
Carmen - Segoe UI Semibold,
Clara Cleere - Lucinda Fax.

7.2 Social Justice

In this section I keep social justice as a *nom de guerre* for the totality of interrelated community work values outlined in AIEB (2016). In the narrative of 'profession' I have crafted from co-inquirers' stories it is clear that social justice is an essential part of their calling, deeply embedded in their being and practice. Social justice in their stories has an intergenerational aspect passed down from parents and significant others. This is something noted by other writers (see for example Ledwith, 2005; O'Regan, 2008). This intergenerational handing on of the torch coupled with personal reflection and experience meld to form "belief and meaning systems" (O'Regan, 2008 p.219). He observes

commonalities across the 'belief and meaning systems' of people who "engage in behaviour ostensibly for the benefit of others" (O'Regan, 2008 p.15) (e.g. the social professions):

> a radical perspective on social structure…moral criteria as a guide for individual choice…self and individual responsibility for actions…love as the central human capacity and the prime mode of engagement with others…life as a development process…the individual in communion (O'Regan, 2008, p.219).

The 'belief and meaning systems' above show an 'intersection between [one's] inner self and the outer world" (Palmer, 2007, p.31), there is a relationship here with the idea of calling (Hillman, 1996; Levoy, 1997). Hillman (1996, p.8) says of one's calling:

> A calling may be postponed, avoided, intermittently missed. It may also possess you completely. Whatever; eventually it will out. It makes its claim.

Social justice staked its claim on co-inquirers. It became part of their 'belief and meaning systems' their 'profession', part of an ongoing "life-giving conversation of the soul" (Palmer 2007 p.33).

Community work became a way for them to answer this 'calling', to challenge structural injustice, champion social justice, asking how we:

> might sustain and replace the common stock of human and natural ecology instead of drawing from it as if there was no tomorrow (Angus, 2001, p.84).

How might we restructure the world such that care as envisaged by Tronto (1993) and community as envisaged by Bell (1998) are realised.

Social justice the *non de guerre* I have chosen for community work values. These values form an integral part of how community workers navigate their world. Their espousal of social justice grew out of ongoing conversation with their calling. This conversation also takes into account the influence of significant others in their lives who were engaged in work for the common. Thus workers saw themselves as drawn to or pointed towards, community work as a way of working in the world that was congruent with their commitment to social justice.

Social structure

Kitchen et al., (2012, p.1306) state that:

> Ireland was characterised over the Celtic Tiger period by a range of practices which bear important similarities discursively and materially with key processes of neoliberalisation.

Rieger and Kwok (2013, p.13) point to the mission creep of neo-liberalism in which its:

> logic does not govern the economic sphere alone; it increasingly penetrates politics, culture, the media and even arenas that have been traditionally considered private, such as dating, sex and religion. The tendrils of the market economy reach deep and wide not only affecting consumption patterns but also shaping basic values of society impacting peoples' mindsets and psyches transforming the tenor of our relationships.

The world is an unfair place. This is not a random feature but a consciously constructed and maintained ordering of society (Byrne, 2005; Moe-Lobeda, 2013; Bradstock, 2015). Crowley (2012, p.9) argues that the dominance of the market in this system serves to deepen "inequality and the segregation of society on the basis of wealth and income". Ireland in recession and under austerity saw the economy stagnate, alternative views discouraged, and in the plan for recovery, "a path-dependant intensification of the neo-liberal model" (Murphy, 2016b, p.34), the post-crisis prognosis was for a "harsher society" (Crowley, 2012, p.9), now evident in "poor progress in addressing many forms of social and economic exclusion and spatial inequalities" (Murphy, 2016b, p.34-35)

Community work in Ireland is practiced in this landscape of structured inequality (Crowley, 2012; Hearne and McMahon, 2016). Co-inquirers in their embrace of social justice make a moral choice to challenge this paradigm and work towards the transformation of its structuring:

> **Community work can't only be about providing service it has to be about challenging the structures that keep people in spaces that are horrible** (**Carmen**).

This not something that can be achieved alone it needs collective action. Group collective action is something that:

> inspires [people] to do something which on their own they wouldn't have thought at all possible or…even considered (Cathal O'hUigin).

Community work in its seeking of social justice is thus a practice of "working in communion" (O'Regan 2008, p.209). Co-inquirers accept:

> The primordial nature of being human is one of being-with-others in a relational co-existence that is essential to the world we share with others (Giles, 2011, p.89).

True 'relational co-existence' finds its expression in social justice. Some co-inquirers are explicit as to love being central to such relationship.

Community workers see the current social structure as unjust. Not only that but it is deliberately constructed and maintained as such. Under the current hegemony of neo-liberalism certain world views are privileged and others discounted. This world view seeks to promote a view of humanity based on the idea of the independent individual and the ability of the market to meet all human needs. This view ignores other views of humanity as interdependent. Community work seeks to transform this unjust structure through collective action to arrive at a more just structure.

Love

hooks (2001, p.xvii) laments that "there are not many public discussions of love in our culture right now". Love in community work has been described by Westoby and Dowling (2013, p.32) as a "not…fashionable idea" in the "acceptable language" (Dynamo) of community development. It is one among several occupations (e.g. social work) that "do not actively engage with love as a process for sustainable structural change" (Godden, 2016, p.78). This despite love being a critical concept in the writings of many arguing for structural change (Godden, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). McIntosh and Carmichael (2016, p.74) state:

> In asking how the deepest structural problems of our times can be addressed, working with the psychology and spirituality of love would appear to be a core part of the answer.

Doetsch-Kidder (2012, p.155) concludes:

> Love leads us to bring old knowledges into our work and to find common ground with those whom we protest and criticise. Focusing on love helps us produce knowledge that nourishes people who suffer and encourages understanding and compassion. Love helps us find alternatives to oppositional thinking and violence so that we can create deep, lasting change.

Martin Luther King Jr. dreamt of the "beloved community" a place in which the brokenness of the world (structural and environmental injustice) was brought "into a harmonious whole"

(King, 1958 in Alsup, 2009, p.38). César Chávez (n.d. in Slessarev-Jamir, 2011, p.108) too saw love as an essential in building a just society:

> love is the most important ingredient in nonviolent work…If we're full of hatred, we can't really do our work.

Heeding and following their calling and commitment to social justice involves co-inquirers in such a struggle to let go of hate and allow for love to be present. Rieger and Kwok (2012, p.80-81) echo **Carmen**'s description of love in practice where love:

> tempered by justice can take the form of tough love, which is not coercion or violence but rather a form of love that enables us to draw clear lines when it comes to oppressive relationships.

Love is understood here as a verb, an action, a decision a choice:

> Love is an act of will-namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love (Peck, 1978 in hooks, 2001 p.4-5).

Love is difficultator, trickster, joker, *passeur de contrebande*, unsettling common ways of thinking, doing, and being, troubling the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of neo-liberalism. Love demands the embrace and presence of dangerous memories, of epistemologies of the south, emboldens connectedness and intersubjectivity. Love is the basis of real relationship as envisaged by **Maidie**, and real relationship is at the heart of community.

Love while a critical aspect of the work for social justice is currently not part of the language of practice, this despite love being a crucial aspect of the struggle for social justice and social transformation. Practice needs to be grounded in love. That is love as a choice to remain with to bear witness and to accompany others in the collective struggle for social justice. Love is what enables us to see beyond ourselves to see the other in all their difference and subjectivity, to engage with them in creative dialogue, to imagine and work together towards social justice.

7.3 Community

Co-inquirers do not offer a definition of community. They speak about it in ways that capture both its manifestation in their own particular context and in the wider more inclusive and elusive sense of Bell (1999). Community for co-inquirers is conceptualised and articulated as verb rather than noun. It is a place of becoming rather than an end point:

> I don't believe I'm goin' to change to world but in this small little area we've done great…things we've still a long way to go (James).

James, along with the other co-inquirers recognises the long term nature of both community work, and of community as process (Hallahan, 2004). The work James describes is far removed from the "spray on additive" (Bryson and Mowbray, 1981 in Craig, 2007, p.336), where community is appended to programmes and projects in order to seemingly include, but in reality the:

> community [is] jollied along [offering] useful intelligence…[with] no strategic role [in] implementation [or] determination of overall…objectives (Byrne, 2005, p.163).

This process excludes communities from "effective control of the programmes" (Craig, 2007, p.337; see also CWI, 2017). Co-inquirers argue that SICAP is an example of both 'spray on' and exclusion. What is missing in these programmes is:

> "Depth participation" where people do the work of community development imaginatively, taking the trouble to care and look for creative options together, [allowing] "the depth" or 'soul' of community be invoked (Andrews, 2012a, p.35). (Embedded quotes Westoby, 2001, in original).

For co-inquirers SICAP is "social manipulation" (Cathal O'hUigin), "removing the opportunity to start creating relationships" (Maidie), disallowing the long term, committed engagements needed to bring about social justice.

Community workers speak, think and work to build, community in ways that capture the complexity and elusiveness of that particular concept. Community is spoken about in ways that refer to a particular locality, groups sharing particular interests or characteristics but also as something aspirational. Community is not something fixed, tied down or final. It is a journey rather than a destination. It is something supple, subtle, elusive and ephemeral. Current programmes and policies ignore the subtleties and complexities of community choosing instead to view community as something static and unitary. This ignores the vitality of diversity necessary for community to develop, flourish, and survive.

Community/community work as relationship

For Bell (1999, p.37) it is relationship that lies at the heart of a healthy community:

> A healthy community is one in which residents have a strong sense of their identity and culture. The vitality and strength of community members is reflected in their primary relationships…Individuals have a strong sense of their personal identity through their culture and heritage—and they have confidence in their ability to grow and develop. Community residents are strongly committed to their organisations and institutions and work to maintain positive working relations within them.

Community is in essence relational a linking of 'Soil', 'Soul' and 'Society', what McIntosh (2008b, p.48) names "The Triune Basis of Community". That is:

- *Community with nature*
- *Community with the divine* ("our relationship within ourselves through psychology, spirituality and what might be called "the sacred"" McIntosh and Carmichael (2016, p.14))
- *Community with one another* (McIntosh, 2008b, p.49) (italics in original).

He continues (McIntosh, 2008b, p.53) "the breaking of any one of these ruptures the fabric of reality". This belief in the significance of relationship is at the heart of the debate in James' community:

> This is a community centre it's not the fucking convention centre (James).

The community centre provides the 'soil' that enables the nurturing of 'soul' and building 'society'. Similarly the crèche in Carmen's story, the project's building in Maidie's, the classroom for Clara Cleere, Cathal O'hUigin's stance of not-knowing and even Dynamo's engagement with the state, become sites where the potential for nurturing community are cultivated.

James above encapsulates beautifully the difference between community as 'spray on' and community as centred in relationships of "solidarity and significance" (Andrews, 2006, p.x). Community viewed as a place in which people have can sense they're "loved" "wanted" and "special" (Cathal O'hUigin). This is not to say that co-inquirers see the world through rose tinted spectacles. They are aware that community is often a difficult space to work in, to be in, a space in which diverse voices and visions clamour to be heard. They choose to be in that space whose "historic reality" (Ellacuría, 1975) has been described as

"tragic", "conflictive", where alienation rules and whose possibilities can only be realised in the future (Martín- Baró, 1974).

Knowing this does not deter co-inquirers from their belief in the centrality of community for the building of a transformed future. A future where social justice is realised. The essential part of community work is building community (Bell, 1999). This works through building a much ignored aspect of community, "community spirit" (Cathal O'hUigin), people come together and achieve more as a group than what is possible for an individual.

> It is the 'ability to respond'-to be empowered, to be actively engaged in life, to be an 'activist' in the deepest meaning of that word" (McIntosh, 2012, p.245).

'Professing' champions this deeper sense of 'community spirit' an understanding that meshes well with Bell's (1998, p.10) "Ecology of the Spirit";

> that complex set of relationships and systems, infused with an inner life-force (or Spirit), that links the land and its creatures, to individuals, people, communities, organizations, and to the entire universe.

This is apparent in **Carmen**'s description of her spirituality of connection underlying her work:

> **my spirituality takes in nature, deep humanity, activism and caring. All of these strands give me meaning in my life and add purpose and wonder to my lived activism.**

In Maidie's belief in the importance of interconnection:

> we need that kind of interdependency in order to maintain our world we need it within our relationships we need it between people as well as between systems and ecosystems.

It is in Clara Cleere's espousal of feminist and green politics. It is seen too in the intimate conversations of Dynamo articulating the unacceptable language of community work "love…it's one we probably talk around our kitchen table".

These resonate with Noddings (2002 in Smith, 2004) ethic of care and ethic of justice, with Tronto's (1993) centrality of building, repair and maintenance of relationship as necessary for the flourishing of all, and of Hudson's (2006) call to widen our conceptions of justice,

tolerance and hospitality to one where our common human predicament is foregrounded as we spiral through space on this finite planet; Earth. A position that calls for "action within political and institutional systems as well as within interpersonal caring relationships" (Barnes, et al., 2015 p.12), the personal becoming once more political. The achievement of this requires work "that explores the way that the intersectional experiences of identity are constructed" (Barnes, et al., 2015, p.242). It begins in noticing and being with the other.

Community is always relational. It is not a site of imagined homogeneity. Rather community is a place of diversity, an ecosystem of multiple diverse and interlinked parts. It is beyond and at the same time inclusive of the individual as part of a larger collective. It is through community that we experience ourselves as loved, significant as an active agent engaged in work for the common good and the good of the commons.

Accepting people as they are

Palmer (1977, p.252) points to how "the popular image of community is distressingly pastoral and sentimental". Bauman (2001, p.4) elaborates on this theme:

> What spells trouble for the cloudless image is another difference between the community of our imagination and the 'really existing community': a collectivity that pretends to be community incarnate, the dream fulfilled, and (in the name of all the goodness such community is assumed to offer) demands unconditional loyalty and treats everything short of such loyalty as an act of unforgivable treason.

This demanded loyalty lies behind Isis, the War on Terror, Trump's Wall, Brexit and Direct Provision. Those who think otherwise, who do not line up to salute the flag, are traitors, unpatriotic, fifth columnists, the enemy within. Community in the above conceptualisation can also be found in policy discourse (e.g. MacLeavy 2008; Wallace 2010)

Palmer (1977, p.252) classes this as 'false community' which finds its ultimate expression in the totalitarian state, but which can be seen in appeals to community which focus on homogeneity, exclusiveness and divisiveness. 'True community' will:

> Require the destruction of certain romantic myths common in contemporary thought – myths which have replaced the reality of community (Palmer, 1977, p.252).

One myth is that community is a noun, a thing, rather than as Hallahan (2004) notes, a verb, a process. Palmer (1977, p.252) says of community as verb "community is one of those strange

things that will evade you if you aim at it directly", the faint light of distant stars only visible out of the corner of your eye, looked at it directly it vanishes, "mysterious, unpredictable, leaves no forwarding address" (Meade, 1992, p.287). It is this spirit that drives Carmen to develop ways of working with the new immigrants she describes in her story, or how Clara Cleere's affirmation of street arts and performance as a way of forging community.

In Bell's (1998) 'Ecology of Spirit' diversity and inclusiveness are essential to the process of community. Palmer (1977, p.252) notes how community "might be defined as that place where the person we least want to live with always lives!" McIntosh (2008b, p.68) says much the same:

> true community in the company of others is always intense because it is the crucible in which psychological 'shit' comes up from the basement.

James makes us aware of this in several of the incidents he describes in his story. His meeting with the woman the council wants to remove from the community, his story of the young men who became involved in the world of drugs and gangs. It appears too in Cathal O'hUigin's retelling of the in-house difficulties encountered in the redundancy process surrounding the winning of their SICAP bid. Dynamo discerns such basement reek in his encounters with the state and in his struggle to embed community work values in his own organisation. Such malodorousness is detected in Maidie's exposition of how the markers client, customer, infuse current thinking in social welfare and elsewhere, revealing particular disturbing discourses as to the It-ification of the troubling other.

Maidie and Clara Cleere grapple with this too in their choice to seek other forms of community to the ones offered by Catholicism and other religions. There is fall out for both of them:

> I missed that kind of ritualistic communal experience with your neighbours (Clara Cleere).

> There was a lot of fall out as a result of that…and it's still…a struggle a lot of the time…it's gotten a lot easier over the years (Maidie).

Here it can be seen how community emerges as a:

> by-product of commitment and struggle. It comes when we step forward to right some wrong, to heal some hurt, to give some service. Then we discover each other as allies in resisting the diminishments of life (Palmer, 1977, p.252).

So the crèche becomes more than just the provision of childcare, street protests become programmes of conscientisation, CE Schemes become ways of community empowerment, meetings with the power, the suits, **the bishop** become ways of seeking allies within the systems.

Community and community work becomes a practice in which we seek to:

> **build a relationship no matter how hard it is to keep the relationship…you don't judge them…you keep walking with them…until you get them into a space that at least they've sorted something out but you don't…leave them just because they don't do the thing that you wanted them to do…you still care about them and love them…I think that's…the essence of our work…relationship (Carmen).**

What is being proposed here is deeply counter-cultural, counter hegemonic to neo-liberalism's individualism and it politics of disposability (Ledwith and Springett, 2010; Ledwith, 2016). The enactment of such a counter-cultural politics brings us to an examination of co-inquirers' third commitment, reflexive practice.

The reality of community is its diversity, its complexity. Community work involves working with diversity, working across differences, working with those who society has rejected. Community and community work involves acceptance of the other however they choose to make themselves known. This is the starting point for the building of relationships, of dialogue, of imagining together towards a different ordering of the world, of transforming the social structure from one steeped in injustice to one predicated on social justice.

7.4 Reflexive Practice

The relational plane (plain) of community work covers a vast area. In its linking of the personal, to the collective, to the political, it fuses small stories with larger stories in the articulation, and enactment, of social justice. New narratives emerge to critique and challenge the dominant hegemony, in all its various guises and disguises (Ledwith, 2005; Westoby and

Morris, 2010; Whelan and Macleod, 2016; Kelly and Westoby, 2018). Practice is political. In its role as 'difficultator' (Jackson, 1995, p.xix) it exposes inequalities, truths, which those who benefit from such inequality and power imbalances would rather not know about.

Community work is a practice of story-telling and story-making. Individual stories are connected into collective stories. These stories reveal the unjust nature of the world. Collective re-storying and imagination birth new stories into the world. These new stories form the basis for collective action to achieve social transformation. Community work is therefore a practice of challenging stories that dismiss, discount, and deny the stories of the many in favour of the stories of the few. It is therefore a practice that is both personal and political, a practice that is constantly aware of power and how it is manifest in society and of how the expression other forms of power might be made possible.

Power 'with' not power 'over' in practice

Community work is by its very nature involved with power – "*asymmetrically structured agency*" (Stirling, 2014 in Stirling, 2015, p. 15). (Italics in original). Here power is a manifestation of how:

> Different social actors experience differing patterns of enablement and constraint in the ways they exercise their agency (Stirling, 2015, p.15).

Community work is a practice which engages in the struggle for:

> *access by the least powerful, to the capacities for challenging power* (Stirling, 2014 in Stirling, 2015, p.15). (Italics in original).

Butcher (2010 drawing on Mills, 2000) distinguishes between two different types of power, power *over* and power *with*. Power *over* is:

> about…decision making and…*non-decision making*, about how the powerful can use their power to ensure that potentially 'difficult' issues do not get onto decision-making agendas Butcher (2010, p.23). (Italics in original).

Power over incorporates processes of 'commission' and 'omission' (Moe-Lobeda 2013), seen in how, for instance, advocacy work is judged too political and forbidden in funding arrangements for new programmes (Harvey, 2014a). This seeks to counter community work's role in holding the State to account for its failings towards particular communities of location

and/or interest (McInerney, 2009b). Community work has a powerful "*diagnostic*" role an essential component in the "*process* of democracy":

> If democracy means the responsibility of government to the people, its most important component is the expression of the needs desires and demands of the people (Angus 2001, p.59). (Italics in original).

The current context of community work in Ireland (see chapters 2, 3 and 6) is a situation where the State takes a power over approach and in doing so mutes this diagnostic voice. It refuses to hear let alone listen to the unacceptable language of community work:

> there's a balancing act…that I play between the understanding of government and the fairly negative understanding government have of community…and the ambition that we would have in terms of improving the quality of life for people now…but I don't hear that from government (Dynamo)

> the message around social inclusion...they're not listening and they're not hearing it...the marginalisation of the work has thrown me a little bit in the sense that it's...it is the road less travelled so it's harder to find a place to put yourself...whether it's professionally or politically or whatever...without being vilified...what are you talking about that's a load of rubbish...hippie talk (Clara Cleere).

Workers in the field perceive:

> a shift in the relationship with state…We are no longer viewed as partners in addressing issues or as equal partners. Instead we are viewed as subservient. This makes it more difficult when trying to organise initiatives or gain support (CWI, 2017, p.18).

Power over is a zero-sum game with definite winners and losers where the losers are rewarded with "ailments of austerity":

- Humiliation and shame
- Fear and distrust
- Instability and insecurity
- Isolation and loneliness
- Being trapped and powerless

(Psychologists Against Austerity, 2015).

Butcher (2010, p.26) describes integrative power with as:

> The capacity to achieve goals *with* others, not *at the expense* of others. It involves working: together as a collective entity in a common cause…this kind of power is dispersed, and with this widening comes a cumulative widening and an increased involvement of people exercising power. It is in this sense…non-zero sum. (Italics in original).

This catches the flavour of Cathal O'hUigin's description of "community spirit".

'Community spirit', as envisaged and articulated by co-inquirers challenges the ways in which that concept and others e.g. active citizenship, community development and indeed community itself have been appropriated and mutated to fit entirely different agendas (see for example Fermeaux, 2005; Fleming, 2007; Thompson, 2007; Bunyan, 2013; Dillon and Fanning, 2015; Walsh, 2016; Emejulu, 2016). Co-inquirers' articulation of community spirit embraces "our ability to dare, to do, and to dream [differently]; our [collective] creativity" (Starhawk, 2002 in Doetsch-Kidder, 2012, p.188, n28), it therefore surfaces the unspoken and un-thought about bringing them to consciousness and from there developing collective action. Sifry (2011 in Rieger and Kwok, 2012, p.41) uses the phrase 'leaderFULL movements' to describe the potential of such action:

> leaderFULL movements…in their best manifestations…creates equitable space to raise up all voices, create mechanisms for group decision making and accountability, and to catalyse self-responsibility and empowerment (emphasis in original).

'Community spirit' is more than the sum of its parts, is a collective energy mobilised towards the articulation and realisation of social justice and equality.

Co-inquirers practice of strengthening community is a way of creating:

> *power from within*…A sense of personal agency or efficacy…about having the confidence and ability to act on the basis of a recognition that it *is* possible to mobilise…and exercise power in an effective way (Butcher, 2010, p.27). (Italics in original).

Power from within appears in **Carmen**'s story detaining how the arts were used as ways of highlighting domestic violence, the state's slash and burn approach to community development after 2008 and initiating and maintaining conversations and actions around those issues. Community in the community centre/convention centre debate is another example of how such 'power from within' was built and mobilised in the community James

serves. The debate is an example not only of the 'diagnostic' role taken on by co-inquirers and of community work but also of how 'power over' constantly seeks to reassert itself. 'Power over' is also felt by workers in how the demands of the new programmes function as a means of disciplining practice.

Power is a fundamental aspect of community work. Community work in its work towards social justice troubles the powerful. Those in positions of power dislike such troubling. They seek to control such troublings through the exercise of power 'over'. This is most apparent in for example the control the State exercises over funding and the shaping of the new programmes e.g. SCIAP. Community workers seek to build power differently that is to work with communities to develop their own power. That is to develop power from within power that is shared throughout the group. This is developed through working together to realise a common goal. Power in this second conceptualisation can be referred to as community spirit. This is the realisation of the possibility of and the possibilities within working together not only to achieve a common goal but to build collective empowerment and agency.

Undisciplined practice

Discipline has been defined by Foucault (1979 in Carlson, 2005, p.143) as:

> a type of power, a modality, for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, technologies, procedures, levels of application, targets.

He continues noting how "discipline produces subjected and practical bodies, docile bodies" (Foucault, 1979 in Carlson, 2005, p.143). Thus discipline not only specifies particular behaviours and practices it also calls particular categories of people into being e.g. the disabled, the marginalised, the social worker, the community worker. These people or roles are then expected to behave in particular ways. Discipline in this sense seeks to "conduct conduct" (Miller and Rose, 2008 in Meade 2012, p.819).

Community work is easily subjected to such discipline through its near total dependence on the state for its funding. (Lloyd and Lloyd-Hughes, 2009; McInerney, 2009a; Azzopardi, 2012, 2014; Zagato, 2012; Harvey, 2012, 2014b; Collins, 2014; Deeley, 2014; Bissett, 2015; Fitzsimons, 2015; Harkin, 2015). This was amply demonstrated in the funding cuts instituted under the austerity measures following the 2008 crash (Harvey, 2014). The disciplining nature of power over was also conspicuous in the alignment process and in the new SICAP

programmes (Crickley, 2012; Irwin, 2012; Doyle, 2016; CWI, 2017). The guidelines for SICAP, through for example how information is collected from projects seek to , not only control practice, but also to create new knowledge and meanings that further function to discipline practice (Meade, Shaw and Banks, 2016, Adhikari and Taylor, 2016). The danger is that such discipline:

> Becomes internalised in people as they learn to self-censor and surveil themselves rendering them as 'docile bodies'. If organisers fail to attend to attend to these elements organising is perhaps just perpetuating the status quo and organisers arguably unsuccessful in actualising their ethical mandate (Pyles, 2019, p.174).

Co-inquirers are acutely aware of the precariousness of the field and the power the State has over it. James tells of the stress of being subjected to an audit. Cathal O'hUigin relates the damage wrought by redundancies and amalgamation as part of SICAP induced restructuring. **Clare Cleere** tells of the disillusionment and disempowerment engendered by her experience of working within the local authority system. Dynamo sees up close the unwillingness of members of the civil service to countenance community development practice based on community work values, and principles as an acceptable way of working with communities. Maidie notes how changes in language seek to brand those engaging with her project in particular ways so as to remove their subjectivity and agency. **Carmen** aware of the potential threat to her position under SICAP vows to continue to practice and not to yield without a fight. I label co-inquirers' practice as 'undisciplined' in that their awareness of the disciplining power of new discourses around how practice is expected to be conducted compels them to refuse the discipline that these seek to impose. Their undisciplined practice seeks instead to focus on the:

> relational processes [that lie at the] heart of the liberatory practice of transformative organising serving to prefigure the kind of people organisers want to become and the kind of world organisers want to live in (Pyles, 2019, p. 175).

Undisciplined practice involves swimming against the tide. This choice places them at odds with new programme demands. These demands they see as involving a move away from core principles, practices, and values of community work.

Fenton (2016, p.12) describes how workers experience "ethical stress…when [they] feel they cannot base their practice on their values". Two types of internal conflict contribute to ethical stress:

> Disjuncture, a feeling of conflict experienced when practitioners cannot base their practice upon social work values and thus cannot put those values into action (usually due to workplace restrictions or demands) [and] ontological guilt…the negative feelings experienced when a person cannot base his or her practice on what he or she feels is right or in-line with his or her conscience (Fenton, 2016, p.12).

Ethical stress is influenced by:

> The managerial culture…risk aversion, heavy workloads, and a changing 'ethical climate'. The changing ethical climate may be illustrated by the erosion of welfare and 'helping' approaches…and a greater concern with risk management, defensive practice and gate-keeping resources…a shift in a neo-liberal direction (Fenton, 2016, p.12).

(It is worth noting that ethical stress was lower in "newer and younger workers" i.e. "Thatcher's children" (Fenton, 2016, p.13). This could potentially be a useful area for future research but pressures of space mean I will not pursue that line of inquiry here except to say that James did allude to this in his story).

There is a clear awareness of 'ethical stress' in co-inquirers' stories. James mentions

> the strain of the conflict of the relationship and the power dynamic here was wearing me down and I was struggling and when you're tired you'll struggle and struggle.

Earlier he had wondered:

> I get too frustrated about the big picture and maybe it's as you get older you get cynical…I often wonder about the motivation as you get older I often wonder am I going so far…I sometimes feel I'm turning right wing.

His project sits at a nexus point where several influencing factors mentioned above are at play via the change in community work programmes alongside the effects of recession and austerity.

A similar sense of tiredness is experienced by Cathal O'hUigin as his project, having come through redundancies, takes on SICAP:

> I sit before you now I'm highly de-motivated…because it is hard to keep it going because even in terms of our own organisation the effect of having to make a number of people redundant

Fenton (2016, p. 13-14) states that ethical stress can serve as a barometer indicating that things are heading in the wrong direction:

> Explicit recognition of ethical stress, and using it as a guide for moral questioning or action, is a necessity in social work if we are to avoid blind, rule-bound procedural work, which carries the potential for uncaring and oppressive practice, discrimination, and the ignorance of justice.

Co-inquirers' stories are explicit in both their recognition of ethical stress and in their refusal of such "defensive practice" ("working in a way that avoids risk as far as possible" (Harris and White, 2013, p.134; see also Whittaker and Havard, 2016). In their 'professing' co-inquirers make a commitment to community, which they embody and enact in their commitments to reflexive practice and social justice. Their 'professing', leaves no space for 'defensive practice'. In their refusal of 'defensive practice' co-inquirers choose instead a practice that embraces vulnerability.

There are forces seeking to discipline community work that is to mould it in a particular way. Workers are unhappy with this situation. Such discipline seeks to move community work away from its core values and aim of social transformation towards less ambitious practice. The stress that is felt by community workers in this situation serves as a useful indicator that something is wrong. This stress serves as a barometer for their practice seeing them use such stress as an indicator of the need to question and change practice. Community workers are choosing instead to adopt a more undisciplined form of practice. This sees them searching out spaces and places in which they can practice in a way that is true to their commitment to social justice.

Embracing vulnerability in practice

Let us return to the statue of Jesus of Rio rooted to the mountaintop outside of Rio de Janerio. The statue stands rigid, unmoving, its arms forever locked open never able to fulfil the fourfold action of embrace "opening the arms, waiting, closing the arms, and opening them again" (Volf, 1996, p.141). I am conscious that this posture was the one adopted by

participants (community arts workers), in Hussey's (2000) workshop. Is its promise then forever empty?

In co-inquirers' stories, their 'professing', embrace is central. Identity as community worker is embraced and they too are embraced by that identity, similarly community is embraced and is itself all-embracing. Their practice is one of embrace, indeed radical social justice is impossible without embrace (Volf, 1996). Practice is recognition that "the Soul should always stand ajar" (Emily Dickinson, n.d.), open towards the other, daring:

> *the risk of embrace*…I open my arms, make a movement toward the other, the enemy, and do not know whether I will be misunderstood, despised, even violated or whether my action will be appreciated, supported and reciprocated. I can become saviour or victim-possibly both. Embrace is grace and "grace is gamble always" (Volf, 1996, p.147) (italics in original).

Embrace is a practice which opens us to soul: "the largest conversation you're capable of having with the world" (Whyte 2002 in Plotkin, 2013, p.13). Such practice "questions what we allow to animate us" (Westoby 2017 p.21), and calls for a slowing down and an inspection of "the assumptions [we] bring to community work" (Westoby 2017 p.22), with a focus on the "quality of", "experience of" and "receptivity to that experience" and "being within the work" (Westoby, 2017, p.22), questions and reflection that takes place "in the tiger's mouth" of practice (Shields, 1993), rather than being a retreat away from practice, it is a practice of soul-full thinking and doing.

Maidie states of such a practice of vulnerability:

> if you're talking about work…but also in your personal [life] if you want to have real relationships with people you need to be able to have that kind of exposure and vulnerability there as part of it.
>
> love in that unconditional love somehow or other has to have a certain level of risk…because otherwise what is it…it's a safe…it's a sure bet…if it's a sure bet then there's no risk (Cathal O'hUigin).

Cathal O'hUigin embraces the unfashionable the uncomfortable -love as undergirding practice-"even if you don't use the word". Similarly Maidie sees risk and

vulnerability as being part of practice. Vulnerability is there too in Dynamo's practice in how he seeks to remain true to his 'professing' even in unhospitable territories. It is vulnerability too that alerts Clara Cleere to the:

> invisible people living in small cottages multi-generational unemployment and you had a community centre...not serving them at all because they just weren't seen to be a priority.

It is vulnerability that allows and supports Maidie and Cathal O'hUigin to embrace a more humble practice than that of playing 'The Professional' (Callaghan, 2014), a letting go of:

> the latest theories…norms and standards…tools and techniques [aimed at gaining] control over and [domination of], the systems into which we intervene…[vulnerability facilitates one to] remain centred in the midst of conflicting flows and processes (Kaplan, 2002, p.190).

A practice in which they, and the other co-inquirers, let go of the certainty of the expert, hold their expertise lightly and embrace the knowledge embodied in those they work with. Their practice enfolds them into a relationship of other directed service (Sercombe, 2010) in which the only obligation of the other is the exercise of "their own ethical agency" (Sercombe, 2010, p.12).

There is also in their narrative the sense of community work as a broken hearted practice, the heart is broken open. In this they are made vulnerable and make themselves vulnerable. This broken heartedness is not "the anguish that comes with the end of an amorous relationship" (Afuape, 2011, p.14). Rather it is an opening of the heart to the other allowing their story in. "The metaphor of the broken heart [reminding us] of the importance of being moved both to feel and act" (Afuape, 2011, p.15). A room in an exhibition space becomes a place of grieving (Carmen), a woman is not asked to hand in her keys (James), and rules are stepped around so a different relationship becomes possible (Cathal O'hUigin). Practice with a broken heart seeks to avoid the quick fix "helps us resist the risk of colluding with potentially oppressive practices and institutional structures" (Afonu et al., 2016, p.190).

Practice aimed at social transformation based in and on social justice requires community workers to broken heartedly relate to the world. That is they allow the world in and have their

hearts broken open. This makes them vulnerable. Indeed such vulnerability is essential to practice from a position informed by love. Vulnerability is essential in the building of relational community. Community work is the practice of embrace of opening one's arms and in doing so exposing one's heart. There is risk involved here the risk of rejection, of injury, but such risk, such vulnerability, such not-knowing, is necessary for dialogue, for re-storying, for sitting with uncomfortableness, for practice that is there for the long haul.

Support for reflexive practice

The truth co-inquirers seek to tell in their practice is inconvenient. Of such truths Volf (1996, p.220) states the:

> Groans of the powerless should disturb the serenity of their [the powerful] comforting ideologies.

This can come at a cost. James speaks of his tiredness, Cathal O'hUigin of his disillusionment, Clara Cleere of caring too much. Maidie is aware of the way current programmes have the potential to drive committed people out of the field, Carmen speaks of those who might want her gone from her project, and Dynamo finds himself caught between two worlds. The world seeks to intervene, to shift their bearings, to silence them from speaking truths which question:

> established certainties, breaking open brittle protective boundaries, disrupting defensive and often entrenched patterns of thought and action (Watkins, 2008, p.1).

Watkins (2008, p.1) continues:

> [Such a practice] require[s] processes of re-conceiving ourselves, our understandings, and the commitments that undergird the basic decisions and paths of action in our lives.

McNicol (n.d. in Shields, 1991, p.104) remarks of practice in this manner:

> Without a support network, I find I get further away from social change things and more into conventional society. Without the direct personal support for the things I am about, it is hard for me to maintain my truth.

For co-inquirers following their vocation, in speaking their truth, in following the star chart their calling plots, support is vital:

> To engage the inconvenient truths of our century we need to nourish our relationships with one another, so that we can

> support each other in taking on work that is unfamiliar and difficult (Watkins, 2008, p.14).

This support is drawn from the communities in which they serve, their families, friends, communities of practice, sport, music, the arts, and spirituality. These are sources of solidarity and hospitality. The "kitchen table" round which co-inquirers and others gather to draw nourishment, nurturance and significance.

The telling of inconvenient truths, of carrying dangerous memories is often not an easy space to be in. There are many who would sooner such memories and truths be silenced. However given community workers commitments to social justice, community and reflexive practice silence is not an option. Community work can place the worker outside of the pale, a lonely place to be. Support for the worker engaged in this work is critical. Workers get support from a wide variety of sources, family, friends, other workers and the communities in which they work. Support is also drawn from music, sport, the arts, and spirituality. Thus support can be gained equally in an arena with other fans or supporters or in more intimate conversation over the kitchen table. Whatever the source, support nurtures the worker enabling them to sustain both themselves and their practice.

7.5 Re-cap

The narrative of professing offered here is braided from the stories of elders and leaders in community work, workers who have been in the field for a considerable period of time. They hold between them substantial practice wisdom:

> The wisdom or a quality characterised by courtesy, kindness, consideration, compassion and benevolence. It is uniquely *uncommonsensical*. It refers to a particular bodily, practical and moral sense that cannot only be known but must be felt by the practitioner. Embodiment is the core component in social work practice wisdom. Practice wisdom in social work refers to the embodied *phronesis* of a reflective social worker. It lies deeply in the heart but not in the mind (Cheung, 2017, p.626-627). (Italics in original).

This they apply not just to their own practice but also in how they speak back to the wider field, asking questions, of themselves, the practice, the formation processes of workers, and the context in which practice is currently situated. In this they are mindful of the words of Camus (2018, p.53):

> Freedom is not a gift received from a State or a leader but a possession to be won every day by the effort of each and the union of all.

Their 'professing' avows this stance. In this they espouse a 'normative professionality' (Bakker, 2016) a way of practicing that sees the fate of both themselves and the other as intertwined in a 'transformative practice' focused on social justice realised in community through reflexive practice. A practice that is intentional, boundary-crossing, reflective, and reflexive. A praxis based in resistance, defiance, and hope.

This is not an easy undertaking for the forces of neo-liberalism, as outlined by Rieger and Kwok (2012) above, are like micro-plastics in the ocean, or pollutants in the air, absorbed and incorporated into our systems, altering the very structures of our cells, changing the nature of our relationship to ourselves and our world. Co-inquirers in their professing seek to disrupt this cycle through the telling of inconvenient truths, recounting dangerous memories, daring to "create dangerously" (Camus, 2018, p.3) fully aware of what is ranged against them. Afuape (2011, p.204) reminds us that "creativity [is] (knowledge in the making) rather than creation (completed knowledge)." Practice like so many other aspects of community work is a verb, always a process always a becoming, always a journey, never an arrival.

Co-inquirers' stories reveal, how their saying yes to their calling, is an undertaking:

> [pleasing to the] gods and goddesses. It is as if [they become their] very arms and legs, and when [they] act with enthusiasm, [they] set them to dancing (Levoy, 1997, p.328).

Luxembourg (n.d. in Civallero, 2016, p.11), reminds us of the importance of dancing, "those who do not move, don't notice their chains." There are chains everywhere, the discipline imposed by the state, the temptations of defensive practice, and the ever present hegemony of neo-liberalism.

Johnson (1993 in Kaplan, 1996b, p.2), alerts us to the dangers of ignoring our calling:

> The refused and unacceptable characteristics do not go away; they only collect in the dark corners of our personality. When they have hidden long enough, they take on a life of their own - the shadow life.

It is convenient for those who benefit from neo-liberalism to have inconvenient truths silenced or unvoiced. However it benefits neither co-inquirers nor the communities with

whom they work. Silence allows for the shadow life of individualism, separation, and inequality to fester and grow. The above quote highlights how saying yes involves co-inquirers in a 'shadow dance' (Richo, 1999) with their own, 'refused and unacceptable characteristics'. James wonders as to whether he is turning right wing. Cathal O'hUigin, in questioning community development dogmatism turns the spotlight on his own practice:

> Some of the stuff we do is really good, some of the stuff we do isn't really good at all.

Dynamo struggles with what he sees as a lack of space for unacceptable language of community work in his practice. Clara Cleere is aware of caring too much and the impact this can have on her practice.

Following one's calling is not always an easy option (Markow, 2007). Calling when perceived and followed as "work that a person perceives as her or his purpose in life" (Hall and Chandler, 2005 in Hirschi, 2011, p.19), can facilitate one in dealing with challenges and setbacks that one meets along the way (Duffy and Dick, 2013). James describes how his journey to work confirms his calling:

> you drive into work when you're feeling…down…when I get down to King Street…I always look left to right and think would you like to be walking' along that tramline picking up rubbish something that you'd hate doing or would you rather be at work in a job…the bad days are the bad days but ultimately you're in something that's very rewarding and that's the difference.

I mentioned several times the boundary-crossing nature of community work. There is another boundary that the social professions cross. In following their "calling to care" (Banks, 2004a, p.35) co-inquirers choose a very counter-cultural occupation. Care implies recognition of interdependency and dependency. In a world in which those "considered dependent are deviant" (Fraser and Gordon, 1994, p.332), responding to, caring for and about others, those marginalised, disadvantaged, discounted, silenced and unheard, locates co-inquirers as deviant:

> the feminization of care in a phallocentric culture makes participants [both those receiving and those giving care] in the caring relationship– regardless of gender identity – necessarily subordinate (Hughes et al., 2005, p.260).

Dynamo's referencing as to how the civil service views community can be seen as a reminder of his and community work's subordination. The changes in programme structures, and language as regards those with whom the programme is to engage are also examples of such subordination.

Independence as it is construed and lauded in neoliberalism (i.e. self-reliance), is closely linked to individualism, both of which lead to an "increasingly atomised society that so many people find alienating" (Ife, 2010, p.32). Kittay (2001, p.570) argues that we should jettison "the myth of independence" and with it:

> the pernicious effects of this fiction [through which] we hide the ways in which our needs are met in relations of dependencies (Kittay, 2001, p.570).

Following on from this Ife (2012, p.311) cautions us to be:

> wary of any programme or policy aimed at establishing 'independence' for individual clients (*sic*), families or communities.

Co-inquirers wariness around SICAP is thus well founded e.g. Cathal O'hUigin noting how to him it is "not community development [but more akin to] social manipulation."

'Professing' is an embrace of interdependence and its paradoxical nature of "freedom within the bounds of [very] real constraint" (Kaplan, 1996a, p.20). Interdependence acknowledges:

> uncertainty, ambiguity, and doubt…demands an ability to see the other's point of view, and to recognise that there is more than one answer – one perspective – to an issue (Kaplan, 1996a, p.20).

We meet this stance in Maidie's refusal of the role of the professional in Cathal O'hUigin's refusal to be the expert, in Carmen's spirituality of connection, in James' repeated entry of the "lift", Clara Cleere's work as a community work educator and Dynamo continuing to remain in negotiation with both the civil service and the field of practice.

Kaplan (1996a) acknowledges that practitioners can often lose sight of this interdependence. Cathal O'hUigin notes, that even now when he might not be inspired by the way the field is being re-shaped, he will endeavour to resist and seek to create spaces to practice in an interdependent way. And as with Beckettian tramps practice is a matter of falling and

standing up, of trying again. What is it that breaks their fall? It is their values. These provide a footing enabling them to once more take to the dance floor, albeit "with bruised knees" (McGarrigle and McGarrigle, 1977).

Co-inquirers, in their 'professing' construct a narrative of union, through their commitments to social justice, realised in community, through reflexive practice. In this narrative we see how they align themselves:

> *ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically* [one could also add, emotionally and spiritually]*...in relation to the practice of* [their occupation] *...and* [how this alignment] *influences* [their]*...practice* (Evans, 2008, p.6). (Italics in original).

Their practice sees them link with others, drawing on the collective wisdom and experience of those with whom they work, to expose the fallacy and falsehood of the promises of neo-liberalism, and to working collectively to bring about change. They are not content with small changes, with technicist practice, tinkering and tweaking things to bring about some slight relief, though they will take such relief when it is offered. This internal alignment provides co-inquirers with an ethical compass with which to locate their true north. It serves to remind them that:

> The personal and the professional [(occupational)] are integral, so professional integrity is bound with personal integrity, set in a political context…At core public and professional service is the will to act against one's personal convenience [a service based in a] knowing (not naïve) trust and a considered care…It is crucial…to discover your own wise professionals: your inner wisdom; a supportive peer group; a good supervisor-most likely a combination of these can provide your own ethical reference group (Doel, 2016, p.182).

"Profession" announces and enacts a bold praxis, of love, hospitality and embrace focused on radical social justice realised in community through reflexive practice. Co-inquirers' stories are the voices of wise 'professionals' in field who allowed me access to the knowledge of their experiences from which to braid this narrative of 'profession'.

At the outset of this thesis I noted how community work was a boundary-crossing occupation. However there is one boundary that co-inquirers refuse to cross. They are aware of the temptation of crossing this boundary. It would make their practice easier. It would fit in line with the strictures of the new programme structures. But to cross that boundary would be

for them a betrayal. It would mean the abandonment of the values by which they set their course, values which for them have a lived and embodied salience. To step over that boundary is to walk a path they view as unethical. In not crossing that boundary they may make life difficult for themselves regarding the demands of the new programmes. But to do so would be to them a betrayal of not only themselves but also of the communities which they serve and of the practice itself.

7.6 Back splice and whipping*

Community work is a values driven practice. Changes introduced by new programmes and policies since the early 2000s challenge these values. These changes include an increasing alignment between community work and the local authority, competitive tendering, disallowing of political or advocacy work. Community work is now being reshaped as individualised service delivery subsumed into a form of local development driven from the top. And funding comes with strings attached.

The situation is all the more pointed given the reliance of community work on state funding for the vast bulk of its income. The effects of such an over reliance on State funding was seen most starkly in the devastation of the field caused by funding cuts in the wake of the 2008 crash. Projects were closed, staff laid off, communities cut adrift. Workers are challenged by these developments.

This situation is not unique to Ireland it is repeated in many other jurisdictions. Indeed the development of the practice in Ireland has involved conversations with practices across the globe. For example the *All Irelands Standards for Community Work* (AIEB, 2016) resulted from such conversations with other bodies globally. These conversations were part of a process that included consultations locally involving many stakeholders. Thus the standards embodied the core values of the practice. Many practitioners embraced these as central to their practice. That is not to say that prior to 2016 there were no agreed standards of practice. There were always principles and values that guided practice this is evident in the writings of practitioners over the years, in the values and principle that underpinned the education and training of practitioners and it is these that were codified in 2016.

The question of how is it possible to practice in ways that remain true to the core values, principles and process of the work given the shifts in focus demanded in new programmes is one that many workers are now asking. Community workers in their 'professing' make commitments to social justice, community and reflexive practice, all three are currently under attack. Social justice accepts that the current system is grossly unequal and that it must be radically transformed. Community is now little more than a flag of convenience invoked for its positive resonances but with little actual power being handed over to the community. Practice is being moved away from core values of care into the more troubling space of control.

I set out in this research to answer the question what do community workers 'profess'? I took 'profession' to mean a way of being in and seeing the world. This question I asked of six elder community workers. Workers who had been in the practice for ten years or more, who were actively, engaged in the ongoing development of the practice, through for example teaching, supervision of students, and participation on the central group of CWI. They were all graduates of Maynooth University. Their stories reveal a picture of a practice that is under assault. They neither like nor ascribe to the ways in which the practice is being reshaped. They remain firm in their commitments to social justice, community and reflexive practice.

For them these commitments were not something abstract but rather were central not just to their practice but were core to how they lived their lives. Their commitments, their 'professions' were embodied enmeshed into their vey being. Rather than abandon their 'profession' they sought out spaces in which, despite the strictures being imposed, they could practice in ways that remained true to their 'profession'.

7.7 Fingerpost

In the next and ultimate chapter we reach a, for now, stopping point. There I will look back and briefly outline the steps of this journey. A journey that sought to explore my research question:

What do community workers 'profess'?

What is practice bold as love?

*Back splicing and whipping refer to processes employed in rope making to stop the rope ends from fraying. In back splicing the strands at the end of the rope are woven back through

the rope. This makes the end of the rope slightly thicker. This will stop it slipping through blocks or sheaves. Whipping is the binding of the end of the rope with thread to stop the ends from fraying. To fasten the thread to the rope the ends are woven back into the rope. A combination of the two gives a neat finish and ensure that any loose strands are held in place.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: CIRCUTIOUS ROUTES OF CHANGE

People look into the future and expect the forces of the present will unfold in a coherent and predictable way, but any examination of the past reveals the circuitous routes of change are unimaginably strange (Rebecca Solnit, 2006, p.122).

8.1 Road Map

Kimmerer (2013, p.386) says of stories:

> Stories are living beings, they grow, they develop, they remember, they change not in their essence, but sometimes in their dress. They are shared and shaped by the land and the culture and the teller, so that one story may be told widely and differently. Sometimes only a fragment is shared, showing just one face of a many faceted story, depending on its purpose. So it is with the stories shared here.

My purpose was to explore the question; What do community workers 'profess'? The narrative of I have constructed here is but 'one face' of the' many faceted' narrative of community work in Ireland, I could have constructed from the stories told to me. Six community workers, all graduates on Maynooth, with many years of practice, who were and are still actively involved in the shaping of the field, told me their individual story of 'profession'. I then braided these stories into a collective narrative of 'profession'. This narrative sees 'profession' as the intertwining of three commitments to, social justice, community and reflective practice. This is the narrative I have shared in the previous two chapters.

In this chapter I re-state what I have found in relation to my research question in 8.2. I then place co-inquirers' 'professings' in relation to the ongoing story of community work in Ireland and beyond in 8.3. "Practice bold as love" is the subject of 8.4. In 8.5 I look at the process of this research and possible future directions for research in this area. My own *navigatio* with this research is the substance of 8.6. In 8.7 I summarise my findings and state my contribution to the field. Finally, in 8.8 I say goodbye and step out of the frame as this narrative begins its own *navigatio*.

8.2 What do community workers 'profess'?

This study set out to explore my research question:

What do community workers profess?

I chose to investigate this question through inviting six leading community workers to tell their stories. These workers were chosen as they had been practicing for ten years or more, were in leadership positions in the field e.g. project managers, educators, membership of the steering group of Community Work Ireland. They had all come through their professional formation in Maynooth University and as such would have had a thorough grounding in the values, principles and practices of community work, in their 'profession'.

In chapter 3 I defined 'profession' as a way of being in and seeing the world. 'Profession' is not merely the static enumeration, a checklist of the particulars of one's stance. It involves the active living out of that conviction in the world. I chose to investigate my question through the medium of story. Story is an integral part of how we understand ourselves, our world and our practice (Mattingly, 1998; Bensen, 2001; Bruner, 2002a, 2002b, 2010; Kearney, 2002; Moon, 2010). Story, the naming of the world, is an essential aspect of community work practice (Ledwith, 2005; Born, 2014; Kelly and Westoby, 2018). I was accompanied on this journey by six co-inquirers, community workers of long standing and in leadership positions in the field. Their stories as told to me are the strands I braided into this narrative of 'profession'.

'Profession' named the world as deliberately structured in an unequal and unjust way. This structure begot clear winners and losers. Standing by and allowing this situation to continue was not an option co-inquirers chose. They saw themselves as called to take action to change this structure, to bring about social justice.

Change was not about change on the individual level only, though individual change was part of the story, and at times they did work at an individual level. Change if it was to have a real impact on the structure had to happen in the context of community. Community they saw as being the space in which people came together in relationships of "solidarity and significance" (Andrews, 2006, p.x), to undertake action collectively rather than individually. Community does not just happen, it has to be built. They sought to accomplish this through a particular practice; community work.

Practice flowed from community work values articulated in AIEB (2016). However, their stories revealed that their espousal of those values long predates that publication. Their

practice has deep roots. These stretch back into their pasts and in several cases tie them into struggles that have an intergenerational lineage. Their practice was border-crossing, for the realisation of social justice requires action on many fronts both inside and outside of the community. Border-crossing often placed them in inhospitable spaces, in which their commitments called them to voice unacceptable and inconvenient truths, truths others in those spaces sought to keep hidden, unvoiced and if possible silenced.

Theirs is a practice of vulnerability. It involved choosing to be open and remain open to those unacceptable voices and inconvenient truths. Practice involved working with people who were labelled and positioned, as marginal, disposable and unacceptable, never losing sight of the others' humanness and subjectivity. Their practice was one of hospitality and welcome, of humility, of letting go, of care-fullness, and of love.

Co-inquirers' 'professing' involved looking at themselves and their practice with a critical eye. There too they embraced vulnerability, as they acknowledged and spoke about their doubts, failings, and struggles both within themselves and with the increasingly inhospitable nature of new programme structures. Their 'professing' acknowledged their need for ongoing support. Building and connecting with communities of support in relationships of solidarity and significance was a vital part of their practice. They named these sources of support: the communities where they worked, fellow practitioners, friends, family, music, sport, and the arts.

Co-inquirers 'professing' expressed their disquiet as to the current landscape of practice. They voiced concerns as to the routes of formation, the motivations of new entrants, new qualifications and degree programmes, the need to keep the field as open as possible and not to close it off with assumptions as to the 'right' way to do things, or who has the 'right' credentials. On their own formation most spoke of the opportunities this provided for confirmation and challenge of both themselves and being challenged by those with whom they studied. An extra challenge for some was being in a space whose *habitus* was not reflective of, or hospitable to, their experience.

Co-inquirers' narrative of 'profession' offers a unique view into the lived stories of wise and leading practitioners of community work. This is not to say that aspects of their stories have not been the subject of investigation and comment by others. In their stories co-inquirers

demonstrated how their 'professing' emplaced and emplotted them into unfolding discourses as to community development both in Ireland and beyond.

8.3 'Professing' and the ongoing story of community work

Earlier chapters have shown how co-inquirers' 'professings' are made up of three commitments:

- A commitment to social justice,
- A commitment to community,
- A commitment to reflexive practice.

Social justice

In their embrace of social justice co-inquirers aligned themselves with the principle that community work is a values driven practice (Butcher et al., 2007; Pitchford and Henderson, 2008; Crickley, 2010; Gormally, 2012; McGinley, 2012; Smith A, 2012; Smith, S, 2012; Ife, 2013; Forde and Lynch, 2015; Popple, 2015). Community work values are envisaged as core, in facilitating collective analysis and action (Smith, A, 2012), building programmes to address inequality through both recognition and redistribution (Gormally, 2012), shaping responses (McGinley, 2012), framing collective action (Smith, S, 2012) and in sustaining practice over the long haul (O'Donoghue, 2009). All of those practitioners are echoed by **Carmen** when she stated how "**challenging the structures that keep people in spaces that are horrible**" is pivotal to community work.

All of the above practitioners note in their writings how social structure impacted different groups differently. Some groups were placed in structurally disadvantageous positions. For example the "experience of patriarchy" is a cause of the "inequalities that women experience" or more chillingly as **Carmen** stated in relation to class "**there were roads picked for us and there are roads picked for others**". Community work values and a practice based on such values become ever more vital as community development becomes:

> …increasingly absorbed into a 'local' version of community development as opposed to focusing on poverty, social exclusion and inequality (Editorial, WfC, 2012 p.9).

Community work in this absorption is subject to externally imposed discipline (CWI, 2015, 2017). This came in the form of a move to shift the focus of the work away from the collective and onto the individual (Gaynor, 2009). This shift in focus challenged community work's value base. Co-inquirers decision to hold to those values saw them stay true to their calling. Community work is therefore "ethics work…the doing of ethics" (Banks, 2016 p.37):

> The effort that people put into becoming and being certain kinds of people in ethical terms and accomplishing various responsibilities and actions of ethical import (Banks, 2016, p.37).

Ethics work in the context of co-inquirers commitment to social justice saw them as concerned with:

> fundamental change...getting to the root cause... get to its origin, get to the source and...make real fundamental change (Clara Cleere).

Social justice was the co-inquirers' touchstone from which to draw strength to continue to fight for the vindication of:

> solidarity, community, democracy, justice, freedom and equality…values which can be achieved by giving them practical expression in a new theory of citizenship (O'Higgins, 2011 in Powell, 2013, p.169).

It is those values which drive the work (Crickley and McArdle, 2009, AIEB 2016). Community and practice function as sites of 'practical expression'.

Community

Co-inquirers' commitment to community operates on two levels a commitment to the specific community which they serve (in the sense of Sercombe, 2010), and the broader more abstract sense of community (Palmer, 1977; Bell, 1998; McIntosh, 2008a, 2008b; McIntosh and Carmichael, 2016). Their commitment understands that:

- Community is where life comes to pass.
- Human being is relational not individual.
- Our ultimate fulfilment lies in our deepest commitment.
- Many of our outer material problems can only be solved by working on the inner basis of human relationships. (McIntosh and Carmichael, 2016 p.13).

Commitment to community implies a care-full stance towards the world (Tronto, 1993). This commitment, this "calling to care" (Banks, 2004a, p.35) infuses an" ethic of care" with an "ethic of justice" and vice versa (Noddings, 2002 in Smith, 2004; see also Banks, 2012).

In their commitment to community co-inquirers were placed in the vanguard of community workers arguing for a reinstatement of love as essential for practice and community. In this they aligned themselves with a tradition of activists inspired by love (Freire, 1972; Slessarev-Jamir, 2011; Doetsch-Kidder, 2012; Westoby and Dowling, 2013; Godden, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Their conceptualisation, and practice of love…"**working with people…is the work of love**" (**Carmen**), was enfolded into community work values and was enacted as "love tempered by justice [which forms] the basis of the common life of the multitude" (Rieger and Kwok, 2012, p.80-81)…"even if you do not use the word" (Cathal O'hUigin). Community is a place of acceptance, of diversity, a process, always becoming never arriving (Hallahan, 2004)… we've still a long way to go (James).

Both Chambers (1983) and Andrews (2011) describe a type of worker who seeks to put the 'last first'. A similar impetus was found in co-inquirers stories. Their calling labelled the world as not being a fair place. This impelled them to action and reflection on action:

> challenging the kind of structures and status quo…wanting to see a better quality of life…for people (Dynamo).

This work of "**love and humanity**" (**Carmen**), saw co-inquirers choosing to work with those pushed to the margins, dispossessed, disposable, those stigmatised as 'hard to reach' (Duvnjak and Fraser, 2013). In this they placed themselves in an "historical reality" (Ellacuría, 1975), that put them at odds with the dominant hegemony.

Co-inquirers saw their work as community worker as one of "**accepting people as they are, with all their warts, with their dogs, with their bottles**" letting:

> the stranger-and things we find strange-be who and what they are, allowing them to open us to the vexing and enlivening mysteries we find within and around us (Palmer, 2011 p.150).

Community is a process of walking with people, 'wasting time with people', of "lurking with intent" (Westoby and Dowling, 2013, p.67), of waiting for an invitation, to the building of

relationship. This was a process of letting go of certainties, of being in spaces and places of unknowing, trusting, being open to:

> that 'part' of us where we can be touched-by the world and other people. Letting ourselves be touched in the heart gives rise to expansive feelings of appreciation for others…in all their humanness…Awakening the heart, then, involves a double movement: both letting others into us…and going out to meet them more fully (Welwood, 1983 p.viii-ix).

And in the unfolding process enabling participants:

> …to be more intuitive, to use their 'gut instincts' when making judgements and to tolerate a higher level of 'fuzziness' or uncertainty in whose beliefs to follow or when to go forward (Gilchrist, 2016, p.67).

This approach applied equally to work within projects as it did to work with people with whom their project engaged. This position acknowledged that knowledge, wisdom, experience and expertise are embodied by all involved and that through dialogue and conversation these are shared and the collective strengthened. James saw this as not happening in some contemporary protest movements and therefore questioned the wisdom of some "singular solidarity type[s] of approach".

Reflexive Practice

Debate as to disciplining, de-politicisation professionalisation, professionalism and partnership have been on-going in community development (see for example Crickley and Devlin, 1990; Whelan, 1990; Crickley, 1996, 2003, 2012; Crowley, 1996; Rafferty, 1996; Murphy, 2002; Meade, 2005, 2012; Geoghegan and Powell, 2006; Larragy, 2006; Lee, 2006; Bane, 2009; Gaynor, 2009; McInerney, 2009a; O'Keeffe, 2010; O'Byrne, 2012). What these authors show is that the field and practice of community work/community development is very much one of debate, discussion, contestation, and at times dialogue.

What is significant in the present study is that these issues are tackled not as separate and discrete events but rather as a conglomerate of issues that interact with each other and they impact on those working in the field in ways that are detailed in co-inquirers' stories. Their practice like that of others in the field sits at a nexus point where these issues collide and rub against not only each other but with multiple other narratives big and small which impact practice, e.g. recession, alignment, austerity, recovery (see for example Harvey, 2012, 2015, Lynch, 2013; Bissett, 2015; Spillane, 2015; CWI, 2015, 2017), narratives in which multiple

groups function as scapegoats for "fictitious capital and of the ideological means through which its oppressive ends are currently facilitated" (O'Flynn, Monaghan and Power, 2014 p.933).

Co-inquirers' stories illustrate the complexity of practice and the ways in which they navigate this complex and convoluted world. The 'profession' narrative gave us a picture of the internal conversations, of not only individual community workers, but also of larger, exchanges occurring in the field. That is not to say that concerns raised have not been voiced by others (see for example Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Lloyd, 2010a; Lloyd-Hughes, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2010; Azzopardi, 2014; Collins, 2014; Deely,2014; CWI, 2015, 2017, 2018; Fagin, 2015). What emerged is a picture of practitioners keenly aware of complexity of the contexts in which they practiced, alert to the new and challenging situation in which community work sits. While this did add extra layers of stress - frequently what Fenton (2016) calls ethical stress - they remained deeply aligned to ethical practice - one pursuing structural change in the direction of social justice.

8.4 Practice bold as love

The dictionary definition of bold includes, "confidently assertive, adventurous, courageous…vivid, distinct, well-marked (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1995, p.144). Courageous stems from the word courage "the heart as the seat of feeling, spirt" (Hoad, 1996, p.101). Heart for McIntosh (2008b) is the seat of our values, the location of soul. To enable courageous practice the heart must be open to the world.

Palmer (2011, p.18) observes how the vicissitudes of life sometimes result in a broken heart:

> If [your heart] breaks *apart*...the result may be anger, depression, and disengagement. If it breaks *open* into greater capacity to hold the complexities and contradictions of human experience the result may be new life…hearts…broken open…[enable] us [to] hold our differences creatively and use power courageously for the sake of a more equitable, just, and compassionate world. (Italics in original).

Co-inquirers stories reveal their hearts as broken open. The narrative of 'profession' presented here is similarly broken hearted.

‘Profession’ in the narrative I have constructed, depicts community work as a practice of, resistance, hope, defiance, and boundary-crossing. It draws strength from community work values which serve as taproots, anchoring and nurturing co-inquirers in their practice. But that is not enough. Social justice can only be realised in communion and solidarity with others. The site of such realisation is community. It is here in community that the ‘complexities and contradictions of human experience’ make themselves known.

In the crucible of community the artistry of their practice- awareness, attentiveness, practice wisdom, expertise, reflection and action informed by theory –is brought to the service of others (in the sense of Sercombe 2010). ‘Profession’ nurtures the ability to swim against rather than be carried along by the current. It is an active engagement with the world and the word:

> Speaking the word is not a true act if it is not at the same time associated with the right of self-expression and word-expression, of creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in society’s historical process (Freire, 1970, p.30).

Through naming processes and experiences of inequality for what they are-instances of dehumanisation and degradation, ‘professors’ are called to action for structural justice and change.

In undertaking this work ‘professors’ are wary of “how truth-telling takes place” (Moyers, 2011, p.187). Rushing in and pronouncing the truth on someone’s behalf can be both “violent and often counter-productive” (Moyers, 2011, p.187). ‘Profession’ as heard in co-inquirers’ stories of is a care-full approach of “humility [remembering] that we can never be sure we understand the truth about others or their situation” (Moyers, 2011, p.187).

‘Profession’, as a way of being in and seeing the world unites head, hand and heart, in an act of love:

> Manifested by the endeavour to make things develop, grow and come forward, whether love falls on other people, art, science, ideas, or nature…Love as emotion and action creates hope and boldness (Määttä and Uusiautti, 2013, p.xi).

A practice emboldened by love.

8.5 Research process

This thesis is positioned in the qualitative research tradition. I sought to gain an understanding of the meanings and motivations that underlie people's behaviours (Bryman, 2008). This choice brings with it certain epistemological and ontological positioning (Bryman, 2008). I adopt as a theory of knowledge (epistemology) the view that 'reality' is "formed through interaction with others…and through historical and cultural norms that operate in people's lives" (Creswell, 2007, p.21). There is also with this research a speaking back to the field through an exploration of my research question. My epistemological stance is therefore interpretivist and critical working from the premise that:

> knowledge is structured by existing sets of social relations. The aim of a critical [epistemology] is to provide knowledge which engages the prevailing social structures. These social structures are seen by critical social researchers, in one way or another as oppressive (Harvey, 2009 in May, 2011, p.39).

Following from my epistemological position, my ontological stance, what is the structure or nature of the world, is constructivist, "social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2008, p.710).

I define 'professing' as a way of being in and seeing the world. It is a way in which people make their world meaningful and act on those meanings. I investigate this through looking at how co-inquirers make and act on the meanings they construct of their world. I do this through gathering the stories they tell me of their practice. Story is a way we understand and construct the world and ourselves (Bruner, 2002a, 2002b, 2010). Story is also a way in which communities construct and understand their world (Ledwith, 2005; Born, 2014).

I chose narrative inquiry as my research method. Narrative inquiry is a method of "capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of… a small number of individuals" (Creswell, 2007 p.55). It acknowledges the world as storied and it is possible to research the world through engaging with story (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Narrative inquiry is based in a "relational ontology" (Doucet, 1998 p.54) which recognises us as embedded in nests of interdependent relationships. This ontology nestles well with community work values which celebrate interdependence.

I collected stories from six long standing community workers "with a specific purpose in mind and that purpose [reflected] the particular qualities of the people…and their relevance to [my research question]" (Denscombe, 2010, p.35). Co-inquirers were interviewed twice either face-to-face or via email. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. They were analysed vertically drawing on VCRM, a technique for exploring internal conversation (Chase, 2005), and horizontally influenced by thematic analysis, a method of searching for commonalities across interviews (Vaismoradi, et al., 2013). In keeping with the relational ethics of narrative inquiry co-inquirers were sent transcripts for comment at all stages of the analysis, as indeed they were sent drafts of the thesis as they unfolded.

The findings from this research manifest co-inquirers' 'professing' as a braiding of commitments to social justice, community and reflexive practice. These findings show them to be engaged in an array of conversations both with their own practice, place and space of practice and with the wider field. Their 'professing' guides them in their practice and enables them to stay true to their calling in this particularly straitened time for community development.

Limitations and future directions

There are questions asked as to the reliability and validity of qualitative research in general and narrative inquiry in particular (Bloor and Wood, 2006; Lee, 2013). I have sought throughout my fieldwork and analysis to keep checking for both. This I did through reading widely in the field and parallel fields and thus I was able to relate co-inquirers' narratives with conversations and concerns in the field. I was also able to read across co-inquirers stories, all of whom were working in what is in Ireland a relatively small field. This provided me with a way of checking for constancy between their stories, and with conversations and concerns in the field. The chapters on methodology lay out my choices and actions in fieldwork and analysis indicating a paper trail that can be followed. I also sent co-inquirers copies to read in order for them to comment on my storying, re-storying and interpretations. My supervisors were also critical in that they did not hold back from asking difficult questions as to how my research was unfolding.

This narrative of 'profession' is braided from the stories of six leading community workers in Ireland. It is the result of interviews which I conducted with each one separately. There were two face-to-face interviews with three co-inquirers, two responded to a series of questions by

email and one took part in only one face-to-face interview. The email interviews consisted of co-inquirers responding to a series of questions which I sent to them. This is not the same as a live interview as it is not possible to follow the story as it is unfolding in front of you and so in a way limits the possibilities inherent in the situation.

I would have liked to have gathered them for a collective conversation as to 'professing'. This did not happen and I am sure much rich data was missed. My plan for the focus group was to have included some art exercises as a way of stepping out of the verbal and into the visual thereby opening up different channels of communication and representation.

There are aspects of co-inquirers stories that suggest possible routes for further exploration. They were all people who were practicing for a long time. Would the stories of younger practitioners, and indeed practitioners in formation, be different and if so in what ways? James alluded to such a possibility in his narrative where he wondered about the motivations of some of the young people from the community in which he worked who were going out to Maynooth to study. This would fit with observations of Fenton (2016, p.13) who noted that "newer and younger" social workers - "Thatcher's children" - experienced less ethical stress than older social workers and they questioned less the "neoliberal ethos permeating social work". Could this possibly be another reason for the concerns expressed as to the de-politicisation of community work (Gaynor, 2009; O'Byrne, 2012; Zagato, 2012; Power 2014; Fitzsimons, 2015; Meade 2018), this sense that neoliberal conceptions of self-reliance and individualism may have moved younger workers away from a more structural perspective?

Cathal O'hUigin, James and **Carmen** make reference to the need for allies in practice. In some cases these allies are to found within the system. What might allies' stories reveal as to the nature of that relationship? Might not their stories too speak back to the field looking at ways in which such relationships are built, maintained and repaired?

Cathal O'hUigin asks questions as to how others, not necessarily community workers, adopt community work principles and practices in their work. In this he questions the 'one right way' school of thought. He also places himself into conversations within the field as to

definitions of community worker, community work, and community development (see for example Crickley and McArdle, 2009; Lathouras, 2017 and Kenny, 2018).

Several co-inquirers made reference to Maynooth and its role in the formation of practitioners. James wonders about the development of the qualifications structure, from undergraduate to PhD, what effect might this have on the shaping of the field? There is also the question of the *habitus* of Maynooth as an educational institution. While Maynooth University as an institution, and the Department of Applied Social Studies, therein, both have an admirable record on the inclusion of non-traditional students (Popple, 2015) its *habitus*, as with that of other third level institutions, remains middle class (Finnegan, 2012; Fleming and Finnegan, 2011). James, as a student from a working class background, commented on how this impacted upon him during his initial period in Maynooth. What is the situation for the non-traditional student to-day both in the department and the wider university?

8.6 My own journey with this research

It has been a long journey from my cycle along the Headford Rd. A journey that has reached a (for now) stopping place. I must now let this story of 'professing' go; let it begin its own journey. Up to now I have been recounting a narrative of 'professing'. Another story unfolded alongside that and that is my own story.

Re-reading my research journals I was struck by a number of things. Firstly how early in the journey some of the subjects that expressed themselves in the stories of the commitments made themselves known. Very early on there was a conversation over dinner with a classmate from the Masters group as to spirituality in community work. They questioned the label spirituality but did say that there were grey areas of practice and being comfortable in those spaces involved ethics, risk and vulnerability (O'Donoghue, 2012).

Secondly many of my dreams throughout this period have been of holding and taking care, nourishment, shamanism and rites (rights) to balance the world. I noted the following in an article in *The Guardian*, Laird (2013 in Wroe, 2013):

> People are looking for a way of dealing with the other. I don't want to term it spiritual exactly but certainly the numinous aspects of existence aren't dealt with much in our culture.

If community work was about relationships building, collectivity, empowerment, and possibility, then the numinous would be very much part of that - but we don't talk about it. Why?

If we don't talk about this directly how do we talk about it? What words do we use to describe it? The one I fixated upon was spirituality. Community work as a form of "prophetic activism":

> A religious understanding of politics defined by its inclusiveness, its concern for the *other*, for those who are marginalised (Slessarev-Jamir, 2011, p.4) (italics in original).

Or community work as a:

> Power which enables people to speak boldly in the face of brickbats and bludgeons and fire hoses. It empowers them to tell new stories and build new communities. Because interpersonal encounters are the source of this power, their place within radicalism is analogous to the role of divine revelation within traditional Christianity, Judaism or Islam. For this reason, I describe them as *prophetic* encounters (McKanan, 2011, p.3) (italics in original).

Re-reading these now I think of how religion in Ireland has been divisive, how the Church has been highly conservative, and politically influential, and covered up abuse on an industrial scale. As spirituality and religion are often mixed and confused, is it not surprising that many I talked to about this idea were put off by the term spirituality? Nevertheless my fixation remained or I remained stubbornly fixated.

Thirdly I had the beginnings of a research question (research journal 1, 7/10/2013):

> What and how do workers talk about their work and their motivation for doing it?

However, I ignored it and continued trying to work out a research question based on the relationship between spirituality and community work.

This fuelled my reading in particular Bell (1998, 1999), and McIntosh (2001, 2008a) and their referencing the spiritual in community. Pursuing this track led me to Liberation Theology, specifically the writings of Ignacio Ellacuría and Ignacio Martín-Baró, two of the six Jesuits who along with their housekeeper and her daughter were murdered by the military in El Salvador (16/11/1989). I was drawn to their writings about historical reality and where

that was to be found, in the world of the poor. As they both had significant roles in the University of Central America in San Salvador they also had and still have much to say as to the function of the university both in its educative and societal roles.

I began to re-focus my question following the interviews. On listening to and transcribing them I noticed how little direct references were made to spirituality. This I realised was because I chose not to really pursue it during their interviews, on the basis that doing so would unduly influence their stories. I had assumed that spirituality would emerge during our conversations as it was mentioned in the letter of consent and indeed my introduction at the start of the interviews. What co-inquirers spoke about were their motivations, inspirations, calling and vocation, their 'profession'.

For a long time in 2015-2016 I was lost in a world, of notes, transcriptions, half-storied stories, mind-maps and stalled chapters. At this point I began to doubt my data, would I have enough to go on with? My abilities as researcher, was this thesis beyond me? It was at this point that several events occurred that enabled me to see a way forward. Someone mentioned VCRM in a seminar and I thought to have a look at that. I was asked to give an input to the BSoc Sc. third years on the social professions this introduced me to the work of Sarah Banks and that provided a way thinking about 'profession'. Over several supervision sessions topics like motivation, profession, calling to care, were discussed. There was also an experience I had while giving an input to the MSocSc. group on community work when suddenly my own sense of 'profession' leapt into my mind. These became moments when the work "turns away from the researcher…and re-turns to itself" (Romanyshyn, 2013, p.74). Finally I arrived at a question that would help me see my way through the mess:

What do community workers profess?

This question provided me with a way of entering into their stories and from there to crafting the final narrative. And as for my initial fixation… that is a story for another time…

8.7 Conclusion and contribution

This study sees community workers' 'professions' as a braided narrative of three commitments; social justice, community, and reflexive practice. The study drew on the stories of six community workers. While this may be considered a relatively small sample it does have much to say of and to the practice.

Community work is currently in a weakened state as a result of the cumulative effect of the changes begun in the early 2000s. The crash of 2008, the subsequent recession and the austerity programme that followed further weakened both the State's equality infrastructure and saw community development projects downsized or closed altogether. New programmes such as SICAP emerged that aligned community development with the local authority and saw a shift from community to local development.

SICAP shifted the focus of the work away from collective solidarity towards individualised service provision. Competitive tendering processes were also introduced during this period. Projects now bid to deliver on targets that were set from above rather than at a community level. Monitoring systems were put in place that sought information along a narrow band (largely quantitative) thus ignoring other (largely qualitative) information. The information collected becomes the accepted evidence base for practice.

All of the above challenges the value base of community work. These values emphasising solidarity, human rights, equality, collective action, participation, become squeezed in this new scenario. Workers feel themselves under pressure to both deliver on the outcomes laid down by the programmes and at the same time remain true to the values, principles, and process of the practice.

The narrative of 'profession' in this study sees community workers engaged in practices that seek to resist the strictures now imposed on the field. They seek out ways of working through which they remain true to their commitments. They look for allies within the system with whom they can work. They are involved in projects that seek to build wider alliances among those struggling for social justice arguing for social change rather than a continuance of business as usual.

This narrative of 'profession' is one that is not often voiced. Therefore this study is significant in that it gives voice to that narrative. It tells a story of a practice and practitioners who believe passionately in social justice, in participation, solidarity, and collective action. The narrative laid out here details the complexities of practice at this particular time in the story of community work. It shows practitioners to be keenly aware of the strictures imposed upon their practice and the care-full negotiations and navigations they involve themselves in so as to practice in a manner that is true to their 'professions'; 'professions' which are

informed and emboldened by love. And in doing so it opens space to place the idea of 'profession' into of conversations as to developments regarding definitions of the field, professionalism and professionalisation. It also contributes to conversations beginning to emerge in the field as to love in practice.

8.8 *Terra Incognita*

I do not have fingerpost to the future. This research leaves my head, my computer, my room, and sets off on a *navigatio* of its own. It contains an exploration of my research question as to what do community workers 'profess'?

Six stories are analysed and braided into a narrative of 'professing'. This narrative of 'profession' is composed of and contains aspects of my co-inquirers' selves. They told me their stories, allowed me to hear and work with those stories. This work is, therefore, not mine alone, but rather a collaboration between seven people. In any future life this research might have beyond this thesis the names Maidie, Dynamo, James, Cathal O'hUigin, Carmen and Clara Cleere will be added, as was agreed in the letters of consent we all signed.

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APPENDIX 1
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dave Donovan

DsocSc. Dept. Of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University

What do community workers profess?

Introduction

My name is Dave Donovan I am a student on the professional doctorate (DSocSc.) programme in the Department of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University. I have previously completed a Masters in Applied Social Studies (2012) and a Diploma in Community Work (1992) both with the Department of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University. My original degree is a BA. (hons.) in Psychology (1980) from NUI Galway.

Currently I work part-time with The Galway Traveller Movement and part-time as a tutor with the Blue Teapot Theatre Company, a theatre company of adults with an intellectual disability. I am also an associate artist with Macnas a street theatre and spectacle company also based in Galway.

This current piece of research is carried out under the supervision of Dr. Hilary Tierney Department of Applied Social Studied Maynooth University.

What is the Study?

The research seeks to explore Community Worker's professions. Profession is defined here as a public declaration of adherence to a particular way of seeing and/or being in the world. The research will be carried out through inquiring into the practice narratives of community workers. That is though the stories they tell of their practice.

I have chosen to undertake this exploration as community work in Ireland has been subject to significant changes in recent times e.g. alignment SICAP these have had enormous impact upon the field. These changes occur at a time of austerity and recession which have seen the resources for community development being severely cut back.

Community work has a strong equality and human rights value base. Both of these are challenged in the new landscape that is unfolding. My research question concerns whether these challenges are impacting on the professions of community worker's, are those values changing or are they still the bedrock upon which workers build their practice.

What Would You Have to Do?

Participants are asked be interviewed. Each interview will last one hour. After the interview participants are asked to read and comment upon their interview transcript.

You would also take part in a focus group involving all the other participants as a de-briefing session. The focus group would last 90 minutes. Again after the focus group you will be asked to read and comment on the transcript.

You will also be asked to comment on the development of the final written piece as it takes shape. This is so you can see if what is being written pays respect to, and is truthful to your contribution.

Participation in this research is entirely your own decision and you are free to withdraw at any time. Similarly you are free to ask that your contribution to the research in part or whole be removed from the final thesis should you so desire.

What Will Happen to the Information?

The information from the interviews will be used in the preparation of my thesis for the DSocSc. My thesis seeks to explore the relationship between Spirituality and Community Work.

If the information is to be used subsequently in reports, articles, essays, or public presentations I shall inform you of this and once again you shall be free to withdraw your consent to having your contribution used in this way.

As the nature of the research is co-authored any use of the material subsequent to the thesis you shall be asked if you wish to be credited as a co-author.

Should you have any queries regarding participation, the nature and type of research please do not hesitate to contact me at

dabhaiodonnabhain@gmail.com

085 241 6971

Consent

My Consent

I consent to participate in the research study What do community workers profess?

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Name of researcher: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

I-POEMS

Voice of Vulnerability

you have to give something

make you vulnerable

put yourself in that vulnerable position

if you're talkin' about being real

you put yourself in a vulnerable position

putting yourself out there

allow ourselves to be vulnerable

you can put yourself

you kinda think whoa

I think that people kind've trust you

I suppose they trust

you're meeting them as another parent

I'm trusting that as a worker

I become…allow myself to be vulnerable and open

leaving yourself open to question

leaving yourself open

I believe you have to

you want to do it

you try and make decisions

you live in a rural community

you have to expose something of yourself

you expose something of yourself

you're leaving yourself open

I suppose accepted or rejected

you do expose something of yourself

you're putting it out there

for me that's what the vulnerability

you're leaving yourself open

I suppose to be able

we're interdependent

we have to be interdependent

we need that kind of interdependency

we need it between people

we need it within our relationships

we need it between people

I'm making choices

I am making a choice

what else am I choosing

what am I leaving

what am I choosing

you're leaving all that behind

for me it's about change

you can't do it any other way

you have to be there in there yourself

you're out and about

you're always thinking about your work

also thinking about what you're doing

(Maidie)

Voice of Relationship

Seeing the value of working together

There's certainly something that motivates me

I mean rural

the connections that you have

you need to have

You know being connected making connections

You can seek create something that's for

the benefit of all

I spent a number of years in the desert

You know

You rely

You depend

You do all of that

the potential my father saw in the people he was with in institutional care

We have to be given that freedom

To be who we need to be

When I would go to town with my father he would be able to tell me the stories about them

you don't want to be treating people differently

One we probably talk around our kitchen table

I would have a fairly interesting relationship to the department

Person that I would want to end up engaging with

Is in my view to be treated the same way

I do not want to differentiate

The poor will always be with us

My fundamental belief that this is totally off the wall

The poor should always be with us

We need to create a society that is there for all

The poor will always be with us

Relationship that I'm in

Conversations we have

(Dynamo)

Voice of Spirituality

I came along this journey

I often wonder

I went over to St. Anthony's

I went on a kinda journey

I often wonder

How did I get from that fella

I try to appeal to people's goodness

Trying to do good I know that sounds very Holy Mary

I often wonder about the motivation

All I talk about now are values

I always try to go back to my values

You're vulnerable your values shift

I say to my work and life relationship is key

We treat people

We work with people and there's a spirit and an effort

Journey I'm on

Journey I always think I'm on

Brings you into that vulnerable space

I always feel there's someone lookin' out for me

It's too big for me

I always find about meself

I'm here with all this…something always seems to happen

Closest I've got to spirituality in terms of head space you know a guardian

I was there you know and the journey happens

Where am I goin' what am I doin' feelin' completely overwhelmed

I just started getting' upset

I couldn't understand it

I felt really weird

To this day I go what the hell happened there

You're kinda goin' what's it all about

I don't know where he's gone

I think the whole what you're sayin' is a good thing

I think the ultimate test of people who got power is how they communicate and behave to the people around them

It's about how you treat people

You're kinda beginnin' to realise your mortality

How long you're goin' to be on this earth

You become much more conscious of it

Have you ever been out on that whole thing about growin' old bein' afraid

How many years you got left

kinda tough you go fuck what's it all about

Brought me into uncomfortable spaces

I feel as if there's some of those principles that I hold dear

You try as best you can to ensure that what all those values

I just have a deep concern at the moment in relation to the power politics that's emerged here

You know it's about being respectful it's not about being fascist

I don’t think that would’ve happened if it wasn’t for the values that govern the work here

I still hold the project dear

It was a journey everyone was on

If that’s your fuckin’ spiritual givin’

That’s something in me that drives me to do that sense of feelin’ good

For me that’s community

That’s probably at the essence of what I do

That’s what makes me do this work

But ultimately you’re in something that very rewarding

If I said the last time Holy Mary

I just don’t call it Holy Mary

I’m too cynical for world peace

My big strengths is relationship

He kind of left me for a while

I haven’t got any major travesties

I don’t have any

I’m thankful of that grateful of that

When you know something’s goin’ to happen there’s something that creates an insecurity

I don’t know if that’s beginin’ to impact on where I am in my life

I was just there

I was just there

I was just there

I don’t know what that was all about

I was there that connection with the fuckin’ the bleedin’ grave

I don’t know death graveyards do weird things

(James)

Voice of Power

I was vilified by my peers

You attack the bully you become the bully once you get into power yourself

I must invalidate yours to validate my own

I mean there is the very negative going to hell

A lot of people in the work that we do are made to feel worse than others

A lot of your work was filling out forms

you're gaining I have to be losing

If you're getting more cake then I must be loosing

there aren't times when I obviously look forward to the thing I don't need

Very individualised which Celtic Tiger was for all of us

I think SICAP is the exact same

I thought LCDP was bad SICAP is way worse

I am not at all motivated currently

We thought when the rhetoric first came out

we won the tender

we have got what we wished for

it's not what we wanted

we're wastin' our time

why are we spending so much

it's not what we're being asked to do

I sit before you now I'm highly de-motivated

I think it created I'm ok or well you're ok

I'm not I'm going to fight

how do I best make myself safe

unedifying to see ourselves in action

I will lose

All of our basest instincts came out

I've been disenfranchised

I've been excluded

I've been oppressed

I've been discriminated

If I can get into a position

Where I can discriminate

I'm not motivated currently

if I sounded bad

wouldn't want to hear me talking about it now

we are so far out of the wrong programme

A dog with a hammer up its hole will tell you you wouldn't hit those targets

we can't do that

we were granted monies

we actually tendered

we didn't realise the extent to which it is unreasonable

if you don’t have your own money

you have to be careful

what you say about the people who are giving you the money

if you’re not careful

you become careful

I hate people who have faith who are so dogmatic

if I’m one hundred percent totally sure

I have somehow or other control over you

I have the power to do it

if I can only be the best because other people are worse

I don’t like the kinda’ notion four legs good two legs bad

I feel we’ve taken the king’s shilling

we’re as compromised as anybody else

difficult for us to do other things

I should be somewhere else

if you’re a speck and there’s no meaning or purpose

I don’t want to lose

I don’t like the virtual togetherness

I’m right and you’re wrong

I’m right on this

your worldview says

there’s no problem for you

you call this community work

if I’m so self-righteous

you’re an absolutist

I’m here managing a project

I spend more time worrying about what people are paid than I do about the big changes that we’re going to do

you look at us as men

we’re the perpetrators

we’re the perpetrators

we’re the oppressor

we are the top dog

(Cathal O’hUigin)

Voice of Community

I get up every mornin'

I get up every mornin' to struggle

I get up every mornin' to resist

That gives me energy

I think someone handed me a thing about the Simon Community

I went down to the Simon

It entered me into a whole other world

What I'd do I'd organise the factory

I loved the work of Simon

I loved the work with people

it was all I think work of the heart

out of the spirit I think that it cared

I hate to see it go so far away from where it came from

not that we knew what Liberation Theology was

that really had effects on meself and Lucy

we're here in this world

you have to fight for the justice

we were livin' in communities

we were trying to live the liberation theology

I always was landed in the leadership

I was the trade union

I called in the union

I went to live full-time in Simon

I loved livin' with the people

I loved

I just loved it a lot

you lived

I really loved that kinda' work

I wasn't able to work so I got involved in CDB

I liked that

I liked goin' around and welcomin' people

I didn't have two pennies to be goin' to Maynooth

I also think there was a belief that you could do it

I went to the course

I was really about the injustices

I went on a placement

question about that's not right

I think it is still under the belly

I don't think it's gone yet

I don't think it's gone yet

I did a great placement

I think me next placement

I was the first student

The next placement I came on

I came into Cork Flats

I did me placement

I went back to the college

I didn't have to do an interview

I came back

my role was to develop the resource centre

I wouldn't work with the women the way they were

They had rights and we had to work

I had got that from Newtown

I'm twenty seven years here

I've seen everything

I've buried the dead

I have a very good team

we work principally from the Simon model

we're there as human beings

do what we can

we can all go to Maynooth and become very political

I think there is a lot of skills needed

for me in my work it's people that keep me goin'

that you could say is the sense of me purpose

the struggle keeps me goin'

I get loads of energy out of fightin' back

it's something' you have to do

we did with the Parade

we'd been on our knees

we've been on our knees

we were just doin' our community work

work we were doin'

we were tryin' to see

could we make it different

we came up with the idea of spectacle

we came out on the town

we took to the streets

we hung all the hearts

we've been tryin' to sustain that

we have a history of challenge

you have to go down and challenge

we've managed to

we did the books

we made the books

we're kind've our creativity

we're using

we brought a great energy

we brought great energy

I thought

we brought great energy

we got involved in violence against women

we had to do something

we have our own outreach

you could just see how the art linked to people

we had to contact the Women's Aid

we were in there

we had it for ten days

we changed it

we're the vanguard

gives us energy

sustains you

the parade sustains me

you just have to fight back

we're fightin'

I'm going to tie meself to the railings

I'm goin' to call everybody

I'm not goin' outta here

if we could only build it more

if we could only get communities to

we'd a great

we'd a great

we'll help ya

we're supposed to be able to reach out to

we're supposed to work with all

I don't mind workin' with people

we work with people

I won't be taken outta here

I went on the brigades

I went on five

you lived there in the co-ops

you picked the beans

you lived in the sheds with the people

I took the idea of picket

I developed a picket

I put a picket on the American embassy

we did it the first Saturday of every month

we can't only see the poor here

we had set up a small study group on Liberation Theology

you can't just talk about it

you have to do it

we still haven't given that up

we meet every Thursday

we challenge him

would make you think differently

if you're workin' with people it is the work of love

you wouldn't do it

if you didn't love people

you have to be very hard in your love

you have to challenge things

you have to

would you get up in the mornin'

if you didn't love it

you speak the languages to the different people

I'm writin' to the church

I'd put in every kind of word

I goin' to pull in the one around me

I'd take money from Arabs

I had to do work

I always keep him up to date

I went out to meet him

you'd have thought he would be able to cross the space between people

I won't be silenced

I'll never be silenced

let me tell you now a few stories

I was tellin' him all these little stories

I could link into loads of communities

I just said do you know how hard it is

I was challengin' him

it's not for me

it's to do the work in the community

I think that it should be invested in

It's relationship I think the essence

any student I work with they need to know that

you don't judge them

you keep walkin' with them

you keep walkin' with them you don't either leave them

essence of our work is relationship

we work individually

we work collectively

you work collectively

you get individual work

you're workin' with people

you work with them

you have to do that piece of work

you can't do this work unless you have relationships

I might fight with Oxtown Corporation

I'll still be fightn' them

I'm not changin' me spots

mind all the relationships that you have

you won't change anything if you keep goin' at them

we're goin' out on the sixth

we had to fight the system

great to inspire I think

you're linked into that capitalist system

we didn't have the money for education

it's not we that weren't brainy

it didn't mean any of that

the first thing I do is connect

my day is spent between caring, activism, living my values

Liberation Theology is still very important in my life

I have sat in my work with people

I believe is the work of love and humanity, it is the heart of community (Carmen)

Voice of Creativity

I am the type of person I like the idea of shaking things up

I re-connected with Maynooth

did my masters

re-focused me in relation to what the work was about

what I was about

where I needed to be

I rebelled against the status quo

I think there's a bit of the educator there's always been that bit of an educator in me

challenging others was kind of exciting to me

you'd challenge them

you feel like shaking people to revolt

I knew it would make a difference

I knew life would be better

it would give me a better life

art and literature would have formed a big part of my upbringing we would have been coming to the theatre

The milieu of the arts was always expected attractive to me

I did get involved in theatre

I was involved in amateur drama and music

I'm quite interested in communal experiences

I like ritual

I like communal ritual

I missed that kind of ritualistic communal experience

I love things that take me out of myself

I love music

I see these are things that are beyond that

you see community coming together with arts

I find theatre

moves me

impacts me

makes me think

(Clara Cleere)

APPENDIX 3
E-MAIL EXAMPLES

Copy of email requesting initial interview

24/2/2015

Dear

My name is Dave Donovan. I am a doctoral student in the Dept. of Applied Social Studies in Maynooth. My research topic is Community Workers perspectives on Spirituality. I would very much like to interview you as part of this research.

I have attached an information sheet on the research. Should you require any further information I can be contacted at;

dabhaiodonnabhain@gmail.com

085-241 6971

Yours,

Dave Donovan

Copy of e-mail with initial interview transcript.

23/7/2015

Attached is the transcript. It is written as it was spoken so it includes ahms...and breaks. Names have been changed. It is encrypted and the password is...

Any comments greatly appreciated

Thanks,

Dave

Copy of e-mail sent to one co-inquirer requesting second interview.

22/6/2015

Dear

While I am aware that the consent form you signed was for one interview and a focus group I do have a number of further questions relating to your interview I would like to ask you. Would it be possible to meet again in the next couple of weeks? If not would it be ok to send you the questions by e-mail and have you respond to them.

Yours

Dave Donovan

Copy of e-mail with initial storying, my response and I-Poems.

8/3/2016

Dear,

Attached are a couple of documents that give an indication of how things are going. I was at a bit of a loss for a while on how to approach the analysis of the interviews. A comment from Ciara [Bradley Lecturer in DAPPSS Maynooth] in which she mentioned a method undid that particular knot.

She mentioned the Voice Centred Relational Method. This aims to draw out from the transcripts the various voices that can be hear within it. Through a series of reading different aspects of the transcript are focused on and gradually different voices emerge.

Part of the process involves the construction of I-poems. I have attached your particular I-poem with the different voices colour coded and named. Also attached is a storying of your interview and my response to that story which is also framed within the context of the relationship between you as co-researcher/participant and me as researcher. This includes not only the face to face interviews but also the prior history of my relationship with you as I thought about it throughout the interview process.

As with all previous documents I have sent I would appreciate any comments, clarifications, queries or alterations.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Donovan

The following is an extract from the beginning and end of my response sent to one co-inquirer regarding placing myself in relation to their interview:

My feeling with this particular interview was of the difficult second album…I knew this person from college…I had in fact met them once or twice before studying with them in Maynooth. I had…visited them in their house with a mutual friend…I was very much aware of all of this as I sat opposite them and after the preliminaries of signing the consent forms and an explanation as to the purpose of the research I leaned forward and turned on the recorder…I am left with more questions than answers on re-reading this story and the interview. Much of this I put down to my own reticence in the interview to ask questions. Maybe I could have relaxed more as I recall being tense and in a way out to prove something in this interview. Also I knew I was asking people for their help with my thesis by asking

them to allow me to interview them. I hate having to ask for help and have avoided it as much as possible all of my life (e-mail to co-inquirer 8/3/2016).

Examples of co-inquirers' responses include:

What you have sent me does raise a number of questions for me. I did self-censor on some things (I see that now). I perhaps was hesitant of saying some very particular things of my story. There was a certain element of smokescreen which we both created (even though I know you are undertaking the conversation). Maybe that is ok on the basis we choose to say what we want to say. (e-mail from co-inquirer 9/3/2016).

I enjoyed reading it and [it] reflects much better the content of what I was trying to say than the completely literal transcription. (e-mail from co-inquirer 22/3/2016).

I love the synopsis of our conversation it seems very faithful to the material I gave you. The poem is fascinating, and very nice to read my story in that format. (e-mail from co-inquirer 10/4/2016).

Copy of e-mail informing co-inquirers of progress regarding shift in focus.

10/4/2016

Dear,

There has been a change in the focus of the research. From re-reading and looking at the voices I came to the conclusion that what was emerging was more a story of 'profession' in the sense of a publicly made statement of commitment to a particular path. And so as a general working title it is now ***'What do community workers profess?'*** This new title while it includes spirituality it also allows for the other voices that emerged in the interviews to be present.

Dave

Extracts from 2 of e-mails informing co-inquirers of my choice of their pseudonyms.

I have been using the pseudonym James for you. I wanted to choose one that kept your place of work in the frame without naming it directly (e-mail 14/4/2016).

I…use Carmen as a pseudonym for you…That name also allows {redacted} to be present in the story as you mentioned it had a profound impact on you and your practice (e-mail 14/4/2016).

Copy of e-mail containing the first draft of findings chapter.

2/5/2016

Dear,

Attached is the first draft of the findings chapter. In it I have tried to tell the story of what community workers profess. The resulting piece is an amalgam of all the stories form all participants. Any comments, criticisms, observations are welcome.

If you have any queries as to how your voice was represented please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks.

Extract from e-mail expressing concern about possible identification risk.

I was working with…{redacted}…They were wondering about your pseudonym and whether it might be possible to identify you from it…I thought it best to ask you if you were still happy to go with it. (e-mail to co-inquirer18/5/2016)

I'm ok with the pseudonym though I reckon anybody in community work circles might be able to identify me from the biographical and detail and professional context described. (e-mail from co-inquirer 18/5/2016)

Copy of e-mail sent in reply to getting feedback on initial finding chapter.

9/5/2016

Dear,

Thanks for that. It only arrived at that point because of the contributions of those who took part. I am now working on a second draft. That should be more focused with the themes in that first one made more explicit. I will send it on when it is complete.

Dave

Copy of e-mail sent to co-inquirer requesting inclusion of particular material for interview.

9/6/2016

Dear,

D-day is the end of June. In the discussion section I have been working on a piece about community work in the academies how it is taught, who gets in, what is taught, that kind of stuff. In your second interview you mentioned about an elite who see community development in a particular way which is the right and correct way. I wholeheartedly agree with your views on this. You asked me not to include it.

I am writing now to ask you if it would be ok to include it. Others who I have interviewed have made some pretty strong statements in that regard also and have named particular institutions.

The questions raised have pertinence as to the professionalization project and to one of the things both you and one or two others mentioned about community development happening in many different areas and many different people (not all of them trained) operating out of a community development ethos and where do these fit in.

I had a conversation with Maurice [Devlin DAPPSS Maynooth] about including material that was critical. I mentioned that there had a reluctance from some of the interviewees to having that put into the public realm. His answer was that such material could form part of the thesis submitted for the viva, which is a rough copy, and omitted from the final copy, which will have amendments and corrections from the viva. This is the one that goes to the library.

Look forward to your reply

Dave

Extract from an e-mail sent to co-inquirer requesting inclusion of particular material for interview.

I have been working on…community work in the academies…In your second interview you mentioned…an elite who see community development in a particular way…the right and correct way. I wholeheartedly agree with your views on this. You asked me not to include it…I am writing…to ask you if it would be ok to include it… such material could form part of the thesis submitted for the viva…and omitted from the final copy…the one that goes to the library. (e-mail to co-inquirer 9/6/2016)

Extract from co-inquirer's reply

My reluctance to include the comments about an elitism in community development or maybe what I might see as a puritanical approach…is because I have no wish to disrespect people... However if you feel it would be helpful to include and is part of a broader perspective then I am happy to give you permission to do so. (e-mail from co-inquirer 9/6/2016)

Copy of e-mail requesting permission to change wording of letter of consent

30/1/2017

Dear

Hope things are good with you as we venture into the uncharted waters of a new year. I am now hopefully on the final lap of the thesis and aim to have it in by the end of May 2017.

As part of the appendices I wish to include the letter of consent which you signed. I am aware that in that letter consent was given for a thesis that was exploring spirituality and community work. However as is the way with things I ended up writing about profession that is values and motivations ways of being and seeing the world.

I am writing to get your permission to change the wording of the letter of consent from spirituality and community work to what do community workers profess.

Yours,

Dave Donovan

Copy of e-mail containing first full draft of thesis.

26/2/2017

Dear,

Almost at the end of the road. Attached is the first full draft of the thesis. The final submission date is at the end of May. Any comments, suggestions, queries welcome.

Again thank you for participating.

Dave

APPENDIX 4

VCRM and Thematic Analysis

Stage	Thematic Analysis	VCRM
Familiarisation with the data	"The researcher must immerse themselves in, and become intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data."	Multiple listenings, sitting with the data. Listening for plot-"what is happening, when, where, with whom and why" (Loots, Coopens and Smerijn 2013 p.114).
Coding	"Coding is not simply a method of data reduction, it is also an analytic process [and], so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data."	Initial storying, my response and sending these out to co-inquirers for comment "Dominant themes, repeated images, and metaphors…storylines, contradictions, emotional expressions…social and cultural contexts" (Loots, Coopens and Smerijn 2013 p.114).
Searching for themes	"This 'searching' is an active process; themes are not hidden in the data waiting to be discovered by the intrepid researcher, rather the researcher constructs themes."	Initial I-Poems "Paying of detailed attention to the use of personal pronouns "to identify different subjectivities from which the participant speaks" (Edwards and Weller 2012 p.205)
Reviewing themes	"The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes."	Sending I-Poems to co-inquirers for comment. This step again emphases the relational nature of the research and the on-going conversation around consent. It also allows for an external reviewer i.e. the co-inquirers to comment and

		check the coherence between the I-Poems and their sense of their own story.
Defining and naming themes	Identification of "the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme".	Repeated listenings to transcripts, initial storying and my response, responses from co-inquirers and I-Poems lead to a re-naming of I-Poems as voices, Collapsing some I-Poems into particular voices Here there is a process of "visualisation of the multitude or polyphony of different voices, which move simultaneously throughout the interviews and express the variety, interplay and dynamics" (Loots, Coopens and Smerijn 2013 p.114), in co-inquirers stories of 'professing'.
Writing up	"Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data, and contextualising it in relation to existing literature"	Delineation of elements in chapters in a story of 'professing'. Bringing these chapters and stories into conversation with others writing in the field. Co-inquirers sent copies of the various iterations of the findings and discussion chapters as well as different impressions of the overall thesis.

Appendix 4 Table 1 VCRM and Thematic Analysis

APPENDIX 5

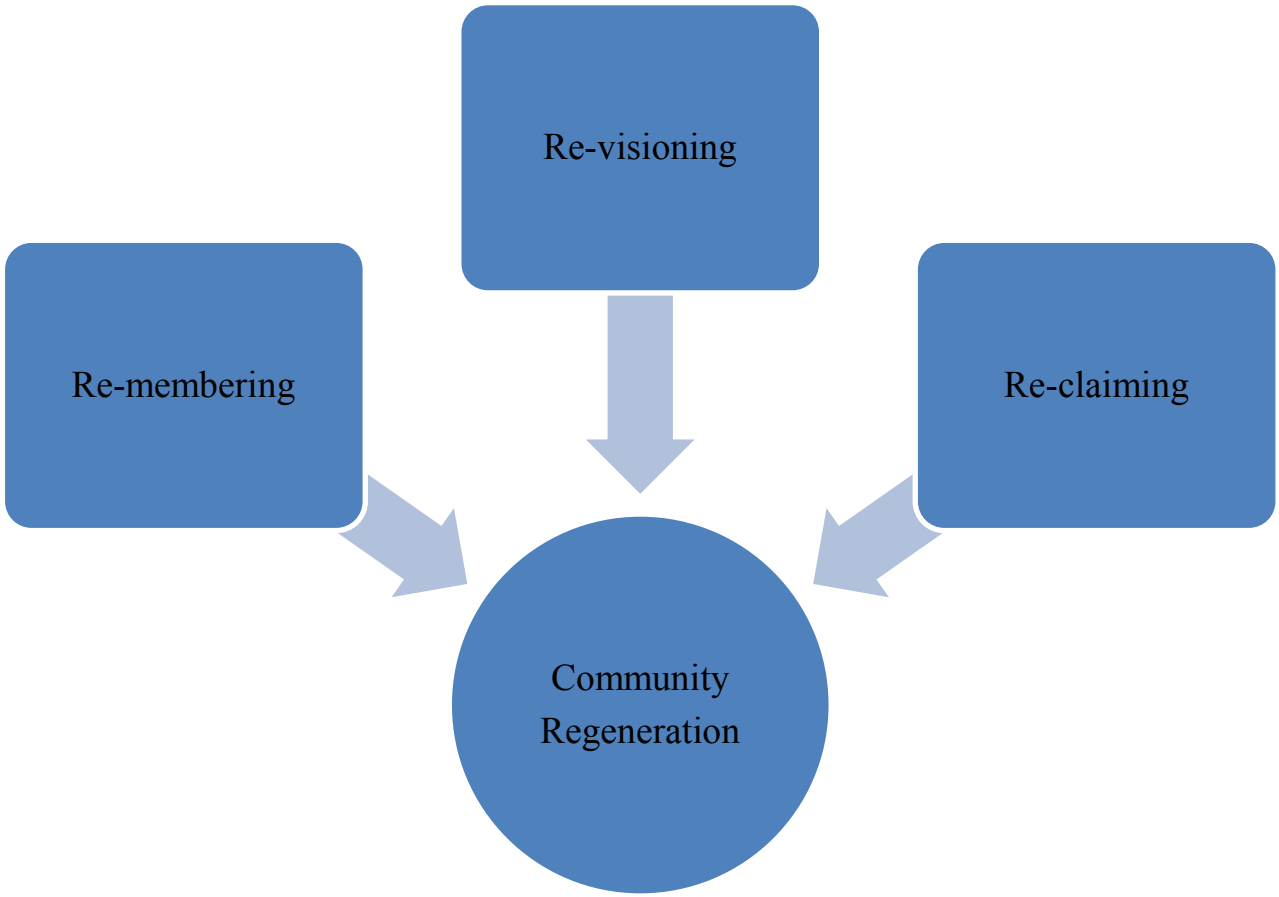
Power Paradigm and Spirit Paradigm

Category	Power Paradigm	Spirit Paradigm
Community	A place	A relationship
A developed community	An economically developed community	A healthy community
Characteristics of a developed community	Jobs, businesses, infrastructure, services, control of services, economic opportunities	Strong primary relationships in balance: relations with the land, one's individual Spirit, the family and extended family, organizations (including workplaces)
Obstacles to development	Lack of resources and control over resources	Social conflict, illness, addictions, loss of identity, loss of culture and spirituality, inadequate knowledge and learning
Objectives	Acquire power and resources to develop jobs and businesses; control of service sector	Renew Spirit and strengthen primary relationships through healing, learning and personal development
Strategy	Identify problems and work out solutions	Identify assets and build capacity
Organisational structures	Determined by the requirements of government or corporate systems--Form follows Function	Ideally, determined or at least strongly influenced by the requirements of culture and tradition --Form follows Spirit
Prerequisites for success	Education and Training	Knowledge and Learning

Appendix 5 Table 1 Power and Spirit Paradigms (Bell, 1999)

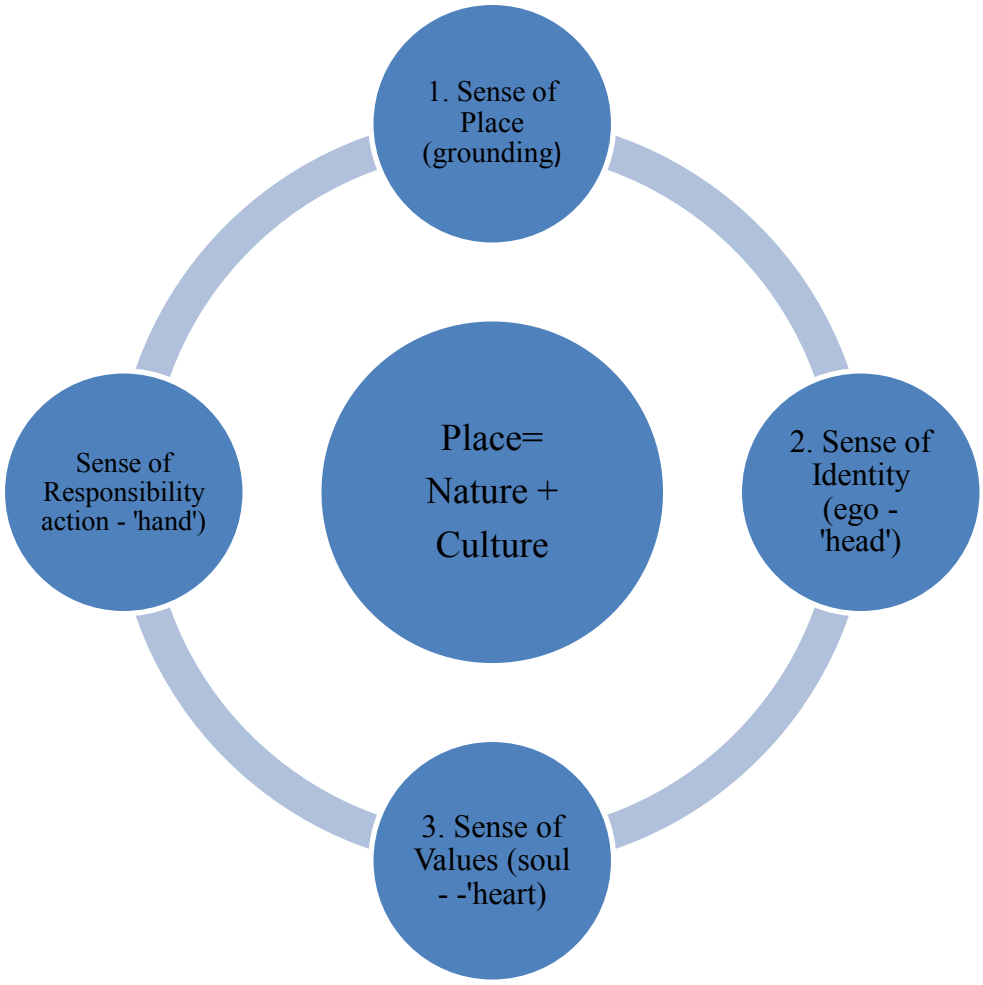
APPENDIX 6

Rubric of Regeneration, Cycle of Belonging



Appendix 6. Fig.1 Rubric of Regeneration (after McIntosh, 2008b)

Re-membering that which has been dismembered
Re-visioning what the future could be
Re-claiming what is needed to bring this about
(McIntosh, 2008b)



Appendix 6. Fig. 2 Cycle of Belonging (after McIntosh, 2008b)