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Coláiste na hÉireann Mhánuith

The ‘Suburban Imaginary’: Restructuring the rural village in Ireland and France

Two volumes, Volume I

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LET us go then, you and I,
To lead you to an overwhelming question ...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

And indeed there will be time
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

For I have known them all already, known them all:—
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
So how should I presume?
And how should I begin?

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

.
I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock (edited), by T.S.Eliot

Abstract

The phenomenon of the proliferation of holiday homes, particularly in remote and isolated areas, has provoked widespread concern regarding the fate of the indigenous rural community. The central concern of this thesis is to investigate how the rural community is adapting to the presence of the outsider as both a temporary and permanent resident, by examining the interaction between local and outsider resident in order to get a sense of the dynamics involved in the restructuring of the rural community. The study approached this central problematic, by looking at how rural space is being socially constructed as a result of this interaction, and how rural space is determining the dynamic involved in this interaction.

The two rural villages which were chosen for this study, are located in regions of unique cultural and historical interest: Dúnfarrraig in the Burren region in the west of Ireland, and Gireux in the Cathar region in the south of France. Despite their empirical similarities, these villages have demonstrated quite different responses to the presence of the outsider, which has become apparent through a comparative analysis of the way in which concepts such as 'community membership' are played out in either context.

The central findings of this research, has been to show how the landscapes of Dúnfarrraig and Gireux are being symbolically constructed as 'suburban' through the social practices of its residents, taking an abstract or social form in the French context, and a material form in the Irish context. Further, how these practices are appealing to a vocabulary of 'suburbia', located in the suburban imaginary of residents. These findings of 'suburbia' are premised on the theory that residents are constructing a view of the physical landscape for private consumption in the Irish context, and a view of the social landscape, for private consumption in the French context.

However, the thesis ultimately defends the rural character of these two villages, maintaining that this interpretation of the 'suburban imaginary' is one way of understanding the complexity of these social practices.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Given the proliferation of holiday homes or second homes globally, this research is exploring the type of interaction which is occurring between local and outsider resident in a rural community, Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland and a rural community, Gireux in the south of France, in order to investigate the dynamics involved in the restructuring of these rural communities. In particular, this project is concerned with how rural space¹ is being socially constructed as a result of this interaction; or indeed, with how rural space is affecting the dynamic between local and global.

Empirically, the economic discourse has maintained that the holiday home phenomenon is creating an unaffordability gap for local residents wishing to stay in their home village (Heanue, 1998; Ryan, 1982; Keane and Quinn, 1990). It essentially blames the holiday home for a declining indigenous population in these villages, and addresses the structural effect of the holiday home on these communities in terms of the problem of one-off housing. Social and cultural impact studies have tended to denounce tourism (Smith, 1989; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Doxey, 1976; Butler, 1980; Ryan, 1982; Pearce, 1987), outlining a myriad of models and typologies which delineate the negative effect of tourism on local cultures and communities. These studies take the view that tourism is an aggressive agent of change, which will necessarily dominate the host community and cause its acculturation. However, in problematising the dynamic between the local and outsider resident, this research shows how the rural community is responding to the outsider in quite different ways in the Irish and French contexts, which challenges the quite simplistic and one dimensional arguments presented by these impact studies.

The two rural villages which were chosen for this study, are located in regions of cultural and historic interest and are subject to flows generated by tourism. What is particularly striking about both villages, is the decline of local residents working full-time in agriculture, against the strong presence of a commuting culture. 71% of Gireux's full-time residents commute to work in neighbouring villages, although this

¹ According to Crang and Thrift (2000), in sociology, as in geography, space is a means of questioning materiality. Space can be used to move closer to the notion of 'the embeddedness of action', as it operates in terms of a representational strategy (Pp 1-3).

figure also includes those commuting to work as labourers in vineyards, while 48% of Dúnfarrraig's full-time residents also commute to work². The difference between these figures is explained by increased levels of tourism related work in Dúnfarrraig, such as guesthouses. However, this culture is not merely work related, as it emerges through residents' use of facilities, such as shops, entertainment and school, in neighbouring villages. Dúnfarrraig claims a primary school, two shops (one which is a souvenir shop), a pub, a horse riding stables, two campsites, a church and a café. Gireux used to boast two groceries and a newspaper shop until the 1940s, but these have been closed through a lack of demand. Instead, the village claims a primary school, a church, a bar, a perfumery business and a wine selling business. In order to cater for the infirmed or elderly residents, mobile 'shop' services carrying bread, clothes, meat and groceries, arrives to the village on a daily and/or weekly basis. However, these provisions (by mobile or built shop structure) are not sufficient for the majority of residents in either village, who travel to neighbouring villages or towns to buy larger foodstuffs, or to access secondary schools, cinema and so forth.

This commuter culture has previously been viewed as indicative of the growth of suburban sprawl to rural parts (Peillon, 2000; Corcoran, 2000; Girling and Helphand, 1994; Jackson, 1985), yet these two villages are particularly interesting for the way in which residents espouse their rural character. Simultaneously however, residents are also identifying the social practices of other residents living in the same village, as either characteristic of a suburban attitude (Silverstone, 1997), as in the case of Gireux, or as incurring a symbolic construction of 'suburbia' through social practices, as in the case of Dúnfarrraig. Either way, this perception of the behaviour of fellow residents, indicates that the rural is increasingly being defined in terms of the 'suburban imaginary'. In some cases, this identification of 'suburbia' is also emerging from the residents' frustration of their own use of rural spaces in that village. This is particularly evident in local frustration with outsider decision to send their children to a school in the town of Limoux, rather than support the primary school in Gireux. While in Dúnfarrraig, local and outsider desire to build housing in concentrated lots -

² Statistics provided by local sources. As this figure includes both local and outsider residents, it raises the interesting question as to whether these local residents, are necessarily suburban because they commute?

similar to the idea of an estate of houses - is frustrating other residents' desire for a view of the physical, as opposed to the built, rural landscape.

Thus, this research is attempting to explicate the ways in which both rural villages are being constructed as rural and suburban, through the lens of the interaction between local and global resident.

Chapter 5 shows how, in the Irish context of Dúnfarrraig, the very positive interaction between local and outsider over the past decade has enabled the local residents in particular, to gain in confidence and self-worth. While this attitude is expressed in terms of a more socially energetic community, it has also meant the development of a free market ideology, where the residents are now conscious of the economic value of their village. This last is being articulated through local and outsider reaction to the economic development of the village, and has resulted in local negotiation of what it means to be a member of the 'local' community of Dúnfarrraig. Simultaneously, local awareness of the economic value of their land is creating an economy which favours a 'cash nexus' (Brody, 1973) over community. This perspective shows the economic argument to be simplistic in its understanding of the dynamics attributed to the growth of holiday homes, and misleading.

By contrast, the French context shows how the Gireuxois are actively strategising towards retaining their indigenous community through the provision of social housing apartments and school scheme. The outsider is viewed with suspicion, particularly given his ability to buy a home where the local resident cannot.

These different responses to the problem of local depopulation, stems from how the notion of 'community' is embedded in constructs of what it means to be a 'local' in the French context, and greed in the Irish context. In Gireux, 'community' is constructed through social practices, but more importantly for the local residents, through lineage to the village ancestry. While the issue of lineage poses a problem for the outsider who wishes to become part of the local community of Gireux and cannot, social practices provide a mechanism for meeting with the local residents. However, the quality of this encounter is assessed according to whether it occurs in public or the private space of the family home, and the frequency of that contact. This tiered system

of socialising differs from the Irish context, where most interaction takes place in public spaces of the pub, school, church, shop and so forth. Despite the accessibility of these places to both outsider and local residents, socialising is rationalised according to alliances between groups of individuals, and support for these individuals. So although interaction is easier in Dúnfarrraig, in the sense of being able to physically access the residents in designated public spaces, that interaction has consequences for how the outsider is perceived and subsequently accepted by the local and other outsider residents.

Chapter 6 explains how a culture of 'viewing' has emerged in both villages, but is manifest in different ways. In Dúnfarrraig, this has meant the interaction of the local resident with the structural ideas of the holiday home, while in Gireux (chapter 7), this refers to the process by which the outsider may become accepted by the local community. In the Irish context, the repetition of the construction of the rural landscape according to interchangeable concepts of 'private' and 'public', is creating a structural uniformity which has prompted residents' identification of 'suburbia' in its symbolic form. Whereas in Gireux, outsider inability to access or interact with the local resident is resulting in the symbolic construction of 'suburbia' through the construction of their home as a 'social spatialization' (Shields, 1991). Perversely, outsider residents recognise their own behaviour as unsociable, but argue that the local residents are maintaining a similar isolation through privatising social events.

Thus, the quite different response of each community to the flow of the outsider, has meant the symbolic construction of suburbia particular to either local context. Chapters 7 and 8 develop this idea of how the rural landscape is being rationalised according to a discourse of 'viewing', and explores the way in which this view is being constructed through the internal space of the house structure in Dúnfarrraig and Gireux. Departing from the idea of the landscape as a physical construct in Dúnfarrraig and as a social construct in Gireux, the landscape is being conceptualised in terms of a version of the 'vernacular' in order to examine how a view of the vernacular is rationalising the internal space. In Dúnfarrraig, this has involved orienting the layout of the house towards a view of the coastline, while simultaneously displaying 'totems' of the social history of the house, as a symbolic representation of the 'vernacular' (Slater, 2000). Traditional icons such as the fireplace have been replaced by an

emphasis on the symbolic representation of that practice. In Gireux (chapter 9), the 'vernacular' assumes a more symbolic role as a construct of the local community. Therefore, this is about inhabiting the collective view of family and friends through gatherings. Concurrently, the local resident has resisted outsider changes to the internal and external space of the house structure, seeing structural changes to the vernacular structure of the village as the material representation of a suburban practice in their local setting.

These theories of how 'suburbia' is occurring, and of the 'vernacular' as an ideological construct, are premised on the notion of the resident constructing a view of the *public* landscape, for *private* consumption. Although a culture of 'viewing' is also occurring in the Irish context through the dialectical relationship between the car and resident, this refers to how the *private* landscape of the house and garden is being constructed by the resident, as a view for the *public* gaze. In Gireux (chapter 11), although a similar dialectic is occurring between the car and practice, rather than effecting visual changes to the landscape, it is transforming residents' understanding of spaces within their village as flexible constructs. That is, residents are defining spaces according to the type of activity taking place in that section of the landscape.

What emerges as somewhat ironic, is that these two rural villages were chosen partly for their reliance on neighbouring villages for facilities and work which has incurred a commuter culture. Both the reliance on the car or railway, coupled with this pattern of dependency on other villages rather than on an 'urban' core, displays characteristics of both the classic American model of 'suburbia' (Jackson, 1985), and the way in which suburbia has developed in terms of a 'nucleated development' of suburbs in Ireland (Peillon, 2000). Despite this however, the vast majority of residents in Dúnfarrraig and Gireux, see themselves as living in a rural village. This theory of the symbolic construction of 'suburbia', emerges from the narratives of residents, who are identifying a 'suburban imaginary' in the spatial practices of themselves and other residents who also live in the same village. This way of interpreting 'suburbia' in terms of a set of values, attitude or mindset, concurs with Silverstone et al (1997), who argue that 'suburbia' is embedded in ideological frameworks, rather than in terms of topography.

Chapter 2 Challenges to the rural community: from within or without?

2.1 Introduction

Since the drive towards modernity in Ireland, the evolution of structure, place and people has been of particular interest to sociologists. Conventional sociology, with its emphasis on modernisation¹ and dependency frameworks², provides too limited an understanding of the dynamics underpinning change in rural Ireland and rural France, which are being informed by global processes. Instead, we need to look beyond these frameworks in order to discover how processes are being constituted in their local contexts through social relations³, and how these are leading to the restructuring of the local community.

The drive towards global processes such as economic restructuring, state deregulation, new technologies facilitating greater mobility of persons, goods, capital and symbols, prompted the first wave of globalisation theory, as theorists pondered the fate of the community (Savage et al, 2005). Responding to these developments, Giddens (1990, 1991) stated that “the concept of globalisation is best understood as expressing the fundamental aspects of time-space distanciation” (1991:2), where the local is conceptualised in terms of its opposite, the global. As communication was no longer tied to place, practices had become increasingly detached from their local settings (Savage et al, 2005). Seeing these developments in terms of a loss of security, given the decreased need on face-to-face contact, Giddens argued that new media generated ‘no sense of place’, with people defining their relationships not in terms of face-to-face contacts, but in terms of media characters and celebrities (Meyrowtiz, 1984, cited in Savage, 2005). Harvey took up this point, arguing that social life is most secure in

¹ According to modernisation theorist, Neil Smelser, the economic development of societies would produce technical, economic and ecological effects or processes. These processes in turn, would affect an ‘ideal type structural change’, such as the structural differentiation of units; create integrative structures such as the state, and produce social disturbances, ‘which reflect the uneven’ development of differentiation and integration. Smelser’s theory of modernisation, has received critical acclaim, primarily for his linear and homogenising approach to development across all societies.

² Dependency theory contends that economic activity in peripheral and underdeveloped economies is exclusively geared to the needs of the core capitalist economies. According to Frank, dependency exists principally because economic exchanges between core and periphery result in a transfer of the wealth from underdeveloped countries towards core, developed countries. This economic relationship is an unequal one, and is responsible not only for the lack of development of the peripheral country, but for suppressing its further development, to create a situation of ‘underdevelopment’. Dependency theory has been challenged by the ability of some peripheral economies to initiate economic development, whereupon the notion of ‘dependent development’ has been posited as a response to such a situation.

face-to-face contact, in communal situations, and emphasised the contribution of global flows to cultural change (1993; 1987). Similarly, Jameson (1991) maintained that the elimination of the need for time and place, meant the emergence of a new depthless post-modern culture which was now dependent on signs. Robertson coined general consensus on these developments, conceptualising globalisation as the rise of a 'global awareness' (1992).

However, this view of global changes and their impact on community, changed with the realisation that globalisation was the articulation of transnational and cultural conflicts, rather than the emergence of a new world order. Robertson (1995), Lash and Urry (1994) and Massey (1993, 1994) took a slightly different approach to changes occurring across the world, emphasising new forms of connection and mobility, and their potential to reconstruct social relationships and localism, rather than the erosion of place (Savage, 2005). Savage stresses that these writers tried to show how the local is not transcended by globalisation, but rather how the local is to be understood through the lens of global relationships. Globalisation was thus conceptualised as producing new forms of localisation through a dialectical relationship of local and global. Robertson (1995) coined the term 'glocalisation', to encapsulate how 'globalisation has involved the reconstruction of 'home', 'community' and 'locality' (1995:30). Beck has concurred with this perspective, arguing that 'globalisation is a non-linear, dialectic process in which the global and the local do not exist as cultural polarities but as combined and mutually implicating principles' (2002:17). Similarly, Urry (2002) has agreed that 'the global and local are inextricably and irreversibly bound together through a dynamic relationship', while Smith (2001) has remarked that 'the global and local are not separate containers but mutually constitutive social processes' (P182).

However, Savage (2005) comments that extrapolating a sense of what the 'local' then constitutes, is problematic. Even in accepting the concept that the global and local are mutually implicating, it is unclear what these 'principles' (Beck, 2002) and 'processes' (Smith, 2001) are. Savage advances a number of different ways in which the 'local' has been developed: through the idea of context, of the 'particular' in

³ This uses Massey's conceptualisation of space and time: that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space, but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations (1994:264).

opposition to the 'universal', as historical residue, and as a bounded construction (2005:4). While each of these aspects merit further attention, this research is particularly interested in probing Robertson's (1995) treatment of the terms, the 'particular' and the 'universal', as seemingly dialectical opposites. According to Savage, this way of phrasing the local and global, appeals to conceptions of globalisation as an overarching social process related to epochal social change. He comments that constructing the local as concrete [particular] in opposition to an abstract universal [global], makes it difficult to avoid an infinite regress in which the local becomes the empirical, so that any concrete instance of anything is 'local' (Savage, 2005:4). This means that the 'local' does not hold any analytical power, and therefore contributes little to an understanding of globalisation. Savage comments that this way of conceptualising the local, appears to render the local some significance, but in reality the power of the overarching, universal processes is reaffirmed through the architecture of the conceptual framework (ibid). A similar difficulty could be noted in relation to Castells (1996) work, which defines globalisation in terms of information flows, linked from the local to global markets. The local is seen as separate to these global processes, and is therefore defined as a historical residue, unworthy in its own right, for an analytical account of or contribution to these changes which are presumed to come from some place outside the 'local' similar to the idea of the 'core' and 'periphery' (Frank, 1966).

Instead, Savage points to the work of Appadurai (1996), as 'the most developed and subtle alternative to that of the epochalists' (2005:7). Appadurai essentially argues that localities are not 'given', but are socially produced through processes of boundary definition. 'Neighbourhoods are inherently what they are because they are opposed to something else and derive from other, already produced neighbourhoods' (Appadurai, 1996:183). Global flows provoke the reproduction of the neighbourhood, as people actively seek to differentiate their neighbourhood from others. In so doing, Appadurai insists that the dynamic of change, or impetus for change, comes from within the neighbourhood⁴. While this would appear to be a convincing argument for the restructuring of the community, it is argued here that by treating of 'global flows'

⁴ "As residents go about their daily life, they encounter images, people and technologies from outside their neighbourhood which provide the potential for neighbourhood itself to be redefined" (Appadurai, 1996).

as emanating from outside the locality, albeit flowing through the same, a similar binary of 'local' as the empirical and the global as abstract 'flow', emerges, which continues this problem of conceptualising globalisation as an overarching process where the local is reduced to an instantiation of global powers.

O'Connor (1993) has conceptualised this interpenetration of 'local' Irish with 'global' influences, in terms of the 'hybridisation' of Irish identity. She uses the example of Riverdance to explain how one marker of our Irish identity - Irish dancing - formerly represented as traditional, could combine with other global cultural forms to produce a hybrid. Fintan O'Toole comments that Riverdance was the "confident expression of a culture which can embrace traditional art forms by breaking them apart and reconstructing them in an imaginative and innovative way" (1997:52). However, O'Connor maintains that Irish dancing could assume the status of a global commodity only by mixing with other cultural forms, by becoming a *hybrid*. Costume, dance movement and song, has not only sexualised the dancers, but shown how Ireland - as represented through Riverdance - has transformed her identity, in reconstructing the traditional Irish dance along global lines. O'Connor suggests that these changes have taken place in order for Irish dance to be palatable for global consumption on the international context. She concludes by stating that "it has become a global commodity by adopting the cultural frame of the centre" (1997:60)⁵.

Similarly Casey (2000) notes how in one rural village in the west of Ireland, it has been the *global* 'outsider', rather than the local, who initiated and is currently teaching Irish set-dancing (a 'local' dance) to the local population, with great success.

⁵ However, locating dance as a performance of 'authentic' cultural expression, O'Connor (2003) suggests that the 'hybrid' could also be seen as a necessary aspect of 'consumer pluralism'. She explains that 'concepts such as 'McDonaldisation' have become catch-phrases for the standardization of culture which is perceived to be a consequence of cultural flows – a standardization which is regarded as a prerequisite for success on the global market' (P123). The issue of 'authenticity' (MacCannell, 1976) arises when local forms of cultural identity such as dance, become transformed in order to be more easily disseminated at home and abroad. On the one hand, this commodifies culture for consumption purposes, while on the other, the success of Riverdance showed the liberation of Irish dance from Ireland's own 'cultural climate of narrow nationalism and puritanism' (O'Toole, 1997). However, O'Connor asserts that this treats the concept of culture in terms of content, rather than as a process. She refers to Friedman's (1995) work on globalisation, who argues that to adequately understand globalising processes, we must approach the concept of culture not as a vessel in an essentialist way, but as a process in which social actors are forging new patterns and identification within the 'space of modernity' (2003:124). In line with Robertson's (1996) focus on the particular context, O'Connor comments that 'some writers acknowledge the complexities involved in specific

Further, this cultural form is one of many traditional social activities initiated by the global resident in this village, which is facilitating a cohesive framework for the community.

Slater (1999) also problematises how we have globalised our 'local' – another form of Irish identity, by taking the example of the Irish pub. He examines the Irish pub in its Singapore setting, where the name of the pub, 'Muddy Murphys', "reflects the necessary hybridization of Irish culture with the native culture" through the two name parts (P187). Slater comments that the hybridization of cultural differences is also achieved on a spatial dimension, where upstairs "looks like an old traditional pub" and downstairs "has the appearance of an eighteenth century cottage". Slater remarks that the issue of 'authenticity' on the basis of setting alone, is a redundant one. Instead, a sense of 'Irishness' is constructed through the performative role of the décor and objects, which now become 'totems' of Irish identity (ibid)⁶. Slater notes that the object must fulfil a criteria, with 'Irishism either as a word or image' inscribed on its surface. These images and phrases are significant in so far as they create nostalgia. According to Slater, "a longing is created for an idealized place and time beyond the immediate concerns of modernity" (P192). The effectiveness of these markers of Irish identity, is ensured through their hybridization with the local form of the global setting.

However, this pattern of how the global and local have interacted through various media, does not correspond with the French experience with global forms. In a study of the rural French primary school system (1996), Deborah Reed-Danahay explores how local resistance to the dominant French ideological messages of the school, has meant that the influence of the global 'outsider' is being contested and rejected by the local parents. Reed-Danahay (1996) uses a framework of family strategy (Bourdieu, 1990)⁷, to show how the French primary school system has become a site of conflict through parents' resistance to the ideological teachings of the school, in a case study

cultural milieu', which implies that globalisation debates on a cultural 'consumer pluralism' should treat this issue according to the empirical context (2003:125).

⁷ Bourdieu argues that strategies are used by families "to produce and reproduce themselves, that is, to create and perpetuate their unit, and thus their existence as groups, which is almost always, and in all societies, the condition of the perpetuation of their position in the social space" (1990:74).

of a rural cluster of villages (*commune*) called Laviaille, in the mountain region of Auvergne.

At school, children learn local cultural traditions of childhood at the same time that they learn French culture. Part of their understanding of the former, has been facilitated by parents' interjection into the schooling system. Reed-Danahay explains that group parent teacher meetings were used by parents to challenge and influence the teachers, and work out local political conflict and rivalries (1996:23), while the children use the stories told them by their parents, coupled with their own harsh experiences of the school system, to oppose the authority of the teachers. Thus, she argues that the children faced two hegemonic systems in the classroom, as parents opposed and subverted the messages of the teachers (1996:35).

However, Reed-Danahay emphasises that while the Liviallois resist state power, they do not do so in a calculated manner which would show their understanding of processes of domination. Further, their resistance "does not...reside in a sense of individual agency, but rather in the strength of extended family groups and local cultural identity" (1996:39). As the cultural identity of the Liviallois has been formed in opposition to 'outsiders' and the dominant culture of the school system, resistance adopts a tacit form (*ibid*:40). Reed-Danahay explains that in Laviaille, similar to many other rural French communities, it is the household and kin group, rather than the *commune*, which is most fundamental to social identity (Mendras, 1991; Rogers, 1991). Thus, it is mostly in response to the French dominant culture⁸ that the Liviallois assert their Auvergnat identity⁹ (1996:42).

⁸ Reed-Danahay explains that the dominant culture is not a coherent system, as it encompasses contradictory images of regional identity (1996:43).

⁹ This identity becomes subject to redefinition, according to the social context, but particularly in relation to the two alternating images of the Auvergnat as uncouth and wild on one hand, and sly and cunning on the other. According to Reed-Danahay, Auvergnat identity is most relevant in relation to what is defined as *not* Auvergnat. There are intricate negotiations regarding who is truly Auvergnat for the Liviallois. To be Auvergnat in Laviaille, means belonging to a loose category which includes all of one's family and friends, and which distinguishes one from the rest of the French (*ibid*:47). In an extension of this, there is an attempt to 'hold out' and not embrace the outside world. Certain things are local, and have to do with Laviaille, it is felt; such things are not to be shared with outsiders (P58). The value of 'closing ranks' against outsiders, is strong in Laviaille. However, participation in the social life of the *commune* can, lend limited 'outsider' status in the absence of local kin ties.

“The concept of being Lavallois, including the rights and duties of participation in local social life, is linked primarily to membership in a family with land in Laviaille, rather than to simple residence within its borders. Although a dominant core of people reside and work in the *commune*, one’s affiliation in a kin group in Laviaille is the most important determinant of ‘insider’ status. Social life is deeply marked by social division within the *commune* itself, but also by cultural distance between local and outsiders” (Reed-Danahay, 1996:42-3).

It is suggested that by taking the example of the global outsider as resident within in a locality or neighbourhood, the behavioural practices arising from social relationships between outsider and local, could be seen as constituting processes which then inform change to that context from *within* that context. Applying Beck (2002), Smith (2001), Urry (2002) and Robertson’s (1995) argument then, that the global and local are ‘combined’, ‘mutually implicating’ and ‘mutually constitutive social processes’, it is contended that processes which are noted within the local context of the rural village, are the product of both local and global interaction, rather than some abstract, overarching ‘universal’ which is impacting on the ‘local’. Thus, this research is using the concept of social relations (Massey, 1994, 1995) between local and outsider, as a modality of ‘dialectic interaction’, treating the behavioural practises arising from this interaction as constituting the processes which may come to define or re-construct rural spaces within the two villages of Gireux in the south of France, and Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland.

2.2 Social and cultural impact studies

In this research context, the outsider is being defined as both the temporary resident who has either built or bought a holiday home in Gireux and Dúnfarrraig, and as a permanent resident who is living on a full-time basis in the villages. By definition, the holiday home constitutes an aspect of tourism, as this represents the second home which may be used for retreat or holiday purposes within a locality which is also used as a permanent residence for its other residents.

However, despite a plethora of studies which have attempted to address the social and cultural impact¹⁰ of the temporary resident (either as holiday home owner or as a

¹⁰ Mathieson and Wall (1982:137) define the ‘social impact’ of tourism as referring to the “changes in the quality of life of the residents of the tourist destination”.

visitor to an area) on a community (Leiper 1990; Smith 1989; Sutton 1967), this has merely meant charting or describing an index of attitudinal and behavioural change which, it is assumed, will occur only to the host community through an encounter of tourist and local. These studies fail to address how the encounter can be an interpenetrative one between tourist and local, where *both* actors are affected. Recent studies within anthropology have acknowledged the greater complexities involved in this encounter, and have placed greater emphasis on the active stance of the local resident within the context of this encounter (NicEoin, 2003; Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Briefly, Leiper (1990) suggests that the encounter between the tourist and local resident community must be understood holistically, encompassing place, the type of tourist and the tourism industry. The model adopts a predominantly geographical perspective, in an explanation of the type of impact occurring as a result of the travelling process, focusing quite explicitly on the need for planning and strategic thinking at each stage. While definition of what the 'local' means to each different place remains a static concept, a number of tourist typologies have been proposed which correspond to the different type of holiday experience required (Cohen, 1972, 1974, 1984; Plog, 1977; Smith, 1989). Although these empirically based typologies are central to the planning and marketing decisions within the tourism industry, a sociological and anthropological classification of tourists places greater emphasis on ethnographically derived categorisation of the same in order to understand the practices, changing dynamics and structure of the societal context¹¹.

According to O'Connor, when tourists and locals come into face-to-face contact with each other¹², they will rely on stereotypes to structure their interactions, stereotypes

¹² According to deKadt (1979:50), tourist-host encounters occur in three main contexts:

- 1) Where the tourist is purchasing some good or service from the host.
- 2) Where the tourist and host find themselves side by side.
- 3) Where two parties come face to face with the object of exchanging information and ideas.

Although DeKadt views tourism as an agent of change through effecting a behavioural reaction on the part of the local community, he describes, rather than critically examines this reaction. Very little attention is paid to the different types of practices which could emerge from these varied instances of encounter.

which have been provided by publicity material (1993:76). O'Connor suggests that these stereotypes influence a sense of national identity in two ways; in terms of a general self-image as an ethnic group and relatedly, in terms of local/tourist relationships both at the level of casual encounters and at the more formal level for that section of the population employed in the tourist sector (1993:76). Sutton (1967:220) similarly states that the tourist/host encounter will be framed by these goals and expectations. MacCannell (1976) contends that the relationship will be a subordinated one, while the tourist engages with the landscape. At the extreme, the host community will not only be conceptualised as the "Other", but will become a detached object away from the landscape. Any social relationship which is transitory, superficial and unequal is a primary breeding ground for deceit, exploitation, mistrust, dishonesty and stereotype formations (MacCannell, 1984). Pi-Sunyer summarises this point succinctly; "If tourism commodifies cultures, natives categorise strangers as a resource or as a nuisance rather than as people."¹³ UNESCO (1976:82-105) lists four major features of tourist-host relationships in terms of its transitory nature; temporal and spatial constraints influencing the type of contact; the commercialisation of transactions; and language barrier difficulties. It is argued that while this last may indeed pose as a factor in an ability to establish a pattern of interaction between host and 'local', a language barrier is sometimes used as a mask for more fundamental cultural differences between host and local. However this difficulty is not raised in social and cultural studies of the impact of tourism, despite the increasing occurrence of related or knock-on issues from tourism, such as racism or ethnicity.

Two models are advanced by theorists, Doxey (1976) and Butler (1980) in their depiction of this interaction between tourist and local societies, in terms of the changing local attitude towards the visitor, and the structural evolution of place¹⁴. Both frameworks assume that the level of social impact will change over time. Mathieson and Wall (1982) contend that Doxey's model indicates that change will be unidirectional, whereas Butler's framework presents a multi-faceted approach. They state that Butler's recognition of different attitudes towards tourism within a resort -

¹³ As cited by O'Connor (1993) in "Myths and Mirrors: Tourist images and National Identity".

¹⁴ Doxey's model identifies levels of euphoria, apathy, irritation and antagonism by the local residents, towards tourism (1976:26-7), while Butler's model outlines the exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and subsequent stagnation stages of place.

which may lead to tensions and political pressures between groups - demonstrates the greater complexity of interaction involved, which therefore allows for the possibility of change in a number of directions. While assuredly, Doxey's model presents a highly linear framework for understanding change, it is suggested that this critique can also be applied to Butler's model. This purports to show an index of attitudinal change, but similarly presents a linear, narrow approach. No mention is made of the type of interaction which is assumed to occur between local and tourist, which may provoke such a change of attitude on the part of the local, while Butler also neglects to chart a projection of tourists' attitude towards the host community, an aspect which influences the dynamic of relations between tourist and host.

Jafari (1974:246) has remarked that resentment tends to be highest where tourism supplies the main form of income to the area, as all activity becomes oriented to accommodating tourist demand which may be limited to a short season. Because of this, the summer season is viewed with mixed feelings by the local residents (Jordan, 1980)¹⁵. However, this notion of resentment presupposes a change of attitude towards tourists over a period of time, which is not explored in any great detail by Jafari.

Ryan (1982) summarises the temporality of tourist-host exchange and associated economic characteristics mentioned by the UNESCO report (1976) in terms of a 'tourist culture'. This focuses on a type of behavioural effect termed as the 'demonstration effect', which is caused by the resistance or acceptance by the host community, of the cultural systems of the tourist, which manifests itself in terms of patterns of consumption (P147). This idea has been eagerly adopted by other studies in the field (Keane and Quinn, 1990; Pearce, 1987; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; deKadt, 1979; Andronicou, 1979), as a way of explaining changes in local attitude towards the tourist. While Ryan (1982) comments how local wish to emulate the tourist, is redolent in terms of conspicuous consumption, Mathieson and Wall (1982) argue that the consequences of this effect, is to reinforce locally unattainable socio-economic aspirations, expanding on the earlier arguments of Rivers (1973) and Jafari (1973) – the latter who has asserted that this effect leads to a premature departure to modernisation.

¹⁵ As noted by this author of findings from a different study conducted of a rural village, Ballygannive, in the west of Ireland.

As emphasised by anthropological studies, a central part of this process of 'acculturation' or interaction between cultures, assumes a difference in behavioural practices on the part of the tourist culture (Lickorish, 1991), which poses a psychological challenge to the host population. Anthropological studies have looked at the interaction between host and local cultures in an attempt to find a causation pattern for acculturation (Mathieson and Wall, 1992). The conclusion has been to argue that when contact takes place between a strong culture and a weaker one, it is usually the former which influences the latter (Petit-Skinner, 1977:85). Mathieson and Wall critique these studies, precisely because of their assumption of cultural changes occurring only within the host culture, with the implied inevitable decline and acculturation of the same. They state that while due analysis is given to the negative impact on the traditions, customs and values of the host society, no real consideration is afforded to those of the visiting group. Furthermore, they criticise the assumption that the type of change which occurs through the interaction between cultures, is one which will lead to a gradual homogenisation of cultures in which the local identity is gradually assimilated into the stronger visiting culture.

In agreeing with this critique, it is also argued here that previous studies have tended to treat of the interaction between cultures, in a one-dimensional manner. That is, without reference to external factors imposing on the host culture or visiting culture, or without acknowledgement of problems created by an incomplete or partial change of attitudes on the part of the indigenous community. Andronicou (1979) argues,

“...Is it not possible for some people to hold modern values while others have a completely different set of values? Is it not a false distinction to make a clear-cut division between traditional culture on the one hand, and western or modern culture on the other?”

Thus, the assumption that the impact of tourism is directly linked to the interaction between the nature of the change agent and the inherent strength and ability of the host culture to withstand and absorb that culture (Ryan, 1993:148), is contested. Social and cultural studies have tended to operate according to a narrow understanding of the 'social', overlooking the possibility that tourism may effect

change beyond attitudes and 'culture', neglecting how flows from tourism may incur a structural or spatial change to the landscape.

These studies on the social and cultural impact of tourism, fall into two schools of thought (Smith, 1977): tourism as a corrupting influence, or tourism as providing a strengthening and stimulating effect through economic design, or by reawakening interest in the host society's culture. In an attempt to articulate the issues which beset these approaches, O'Connor (1993) identifies three possible research questions. These include 'feelings or insecurity, servility and resentment on the part of locals', the native 'desire to please tourists', and the manner in which that desire may translate into deference or resentment, anxious self-criticism or outright antipathy to the outsider (Pp79-81). In her study of literary accounts by local residents in West Kerry at the turn of the twentieth century, NicEoin (2003) claims that these accounts show the locals adopting an active, rather than a passive stance in relation to tourism. NicEoin argues that this suggests an overemphasis on the nature and power of the tourist gaze, as one which renders place and people in terms of objects to be gazed upon (Urry, 1990, 1995). Taking excerpts from the works, NicEoin charges the change of local attitude towards the influx of tourists, with the depletion of resources; local perception of class difference; tension between local desire to please, but the need to preserve sense of self-worth; and different expectations between both social groups. NicEoin describes how one writer speaks of changing local attitude towards the tourists, in terms of the 'acquisitive and selfish motives of natives who are happy to milk the gullible visitors dry' (2003:163), and notes this as a less sympathetic portrait of local behaviour as 'host', which presents an interesting departure from previous studies.

Through this literary exploration, NicEoin argues that the native gaze is a critical gaze, capable of discriminating between the positive and negative aspects of tourist activity (ibid:174). She states that the catalyst for local resentment, was the cost to the islanders, of hospitality shown free of charge to the visitors. Not unreasonably, the written accounts show the islanders' belated surprise at the levels of conspicuous consumption displayed in the attire of the visitors, which provoked some indignation.

However, NicEoin does not detail how, where, or why the first visitors came to the island; with whom they stayed, for what purpose; or any other information regarding how the initial relationship with the visitors, developed into a more hostile encounter. Further, the lack of analysis of behavioural or symbolic practices or processes – even within the constraints of the written accounts – disable a more thorough discussion of the wider implications for the community, beyond an attitudinal survey of impact.

According to Reed-Danahay (1996), terms such as ‘persistence’, ‘resistance’ and ‘coexistence’ have been posited by anthropological discourse, as frameworks for looking at regional or ethnic identity in pluralist societies (P206). The terms present different perspectives on cultural identity, and imply the extinction or resilience of an identity. Reed-Danahay comments that the notion of cultural persistence implies that certain minority cultures or indigenous peoples are resilient in the face of pressures from dominant cultures to conform or disappear. She suggests that this concept has been used in impact studies to suggest an essentialist view of cultures as intact and surviving, rather than changing in response to dominant cultures (ibid). Resistance, on the other hand, emphasises the refusal of social groups to change in certain ways. It implies that survival can be a struggle, but that cultural identity must be actively maintained in the face of pressures from the dominant culture to conform. However, Reed-Danahay remarks that the danger of using the idea of resistance exclusively as a way of talking about cultural identity, is that the maintenance of one cultural identity, does not always entail the complete rejection of, or resistance to another. The third concept, coexistence, implies that cultural identity can be multiple (1996:207). This way of conceptualising identity as multi-faceted, queries previous assumptions made by socio-cultural impact studies within tourism (DeKadt, 1979; Doxey, 1976; Butler, 1980), of a generic model of tourism development.

At best, these accounts provide a descriptive account of attitude and behaviour. At worst, their negative accounts have become popularised and informed non-representational understanding of different aspects of tourism, such as the holiday home phenomenon. This generic and vague analysis of a social and cultural impact has pre-empted negated attitudes towards tourism, and more specifically in this instance, the holiday home. Because of this lack of analysis, tourism has become the scapegoat for a number of conditions which now face the local community, such as

the housing issue, and 'acculturation' – a process, which, as Brody (1973) and NicEoin (2003) contend, was occurring regardless of external factors such as tourism.

Instead, what studies of tourism 'impact' need to address is threefold. First, definition of what constitutes the 'global' and 'local', needs to be clarified. Rather than treating these concepts as interchangeable – that is, exploring the possibility that the 'local' resident could conceivably become a tourist in his/her own village, and engage in similar leisured practices, or that the tourist may decide to settle in the village and engage in the same type of activities as the 'local' resident next door – social and cultural impact studies have conceptualised these categories as separate, and dichotomous. Undeniably, these concepts are more complex than is currently being considered.

Secondly, the dynamics which are affecting the type of interaction between local and global, such as the politics of community membership, needs to be addressed. This does not mean the 'encounter', which describes the meeting, rather than the 'interaction' between local and global. Thirdly, a clarification of the forms (of interaction), practices or processes which are emerging as a result of this quite complex interaction between local and global, is required.

The holiday home phenomenon has become the extended tourist experience, according to Ryan (1993), the proliferation of which has had a negative social effect on the local community, as documented by Guest (1988)¹⁶. Ryan speculates about the possible affordability gap which has been created by this phenomenon, for residents in the local community. Implications for the community are detailed in terms of an absent population during the year, a demographic decline in youth and the decline of economic and social structures (Heanue, 1998; Ryan, 1993). It is suggested that the issue of holiday homes, is pertinent particularly to those isolated and scenic rural villages along the coast in Co.Clare in Ireland, and in the south of France, which have experienced a surge of growth of holiday homes in the last decade. The debate surrounding the impact of holiday homes along the west coast of Ireland, is concerned

¹⁶ Guest refers to the structural impact of holiday homes in the town of Seaside in England, as a "rich man's holiday resort", pointing out that only 15% approximately of the 100 houses or so, are completely occupied all year round, with the remaining few being rented out for holiday use.

with the sustainability or continuity of these rural communities which have experienced such growth. An aspect of this issue relates to the sustainability of a community of indigenous residents in these rural villages, with the assumption that the increase of holiday homes in these villages will incur a loss of indigenous population, as those who are unable to compete with house prices, will be forced to leave their home town. Thus the issue of holiday homes in rural and scenic communities has become synonymous with a loss of indigenous population from these areas.

2.3 The Holiday Home Debate

Throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, the increase of 'one-off housing'/holiday homes in parts of rural Ireland, has generated much concern for the sustainability of communities in these areas¹⁷. Traditionally, the remote and isolated nature of rural Ireland, as rural France, which has attracted the holiday home owner, has been cited as the reason for a decline of indigenous population in the same parts (Brody, 1973). The debate on the type of housing which should exist in isolated pockets of rural Ireland, focuses on two models of housing development; cluster dwelling and one-off housing. The strength of the arguments posed on either side, is weighed in ideological concern for the social construction of Ireland's countryside according to urban or rural models of development.

However, the real issue which is framing the debate on the housing development in the west of Ireland and other rural scenic locations, is how holiday homes are dominating the indigenous housing landscape, particularly in coastal areas. Public policy has received widespread criticism for facilitating the development of 'one-off housing' [as holiday home], on the edge of rural communities. Difficulties of spatial and social isolation aside, one of the biggest problems associated with the holiday home is the affordability crisis which it is alleged to have generated for the local resident who also wishes to buy a property in the same village.

¹⁷ On the 31st May 1998, *The Sunday Tribune* dramatically announced that Connemara was facing a housing disaster. The report focused on a recent study completed for the Department of the Environment by CEA Economic Consultant Kevin Heanue. In it, he discussed the problematic impact of tourism on the housing industry in Connemara, as one which is essentially creating a depopulation of local people from their home village in the west of Ireland, due to increasing price bids from Irish and overseas people alike, for houses in these villages. The report engages with economic and social concern on a case study basis, regarding the impact of holiday homes in the west of Ireland.

CEA economist Heanue (1998) argues that the way in which the west of Ireland has been made attractive to tourists has resulted in an increasing amount of holiday-homes which are being used as a second home, or as a retirement home by the coast. This has posed serious problems for young local residents, as continued demand by outsiders for land increases the sale price, in one case, by nearly sixteen times the average income of the local¹⁸. Obviously, at that price, staying in their home village is not an affordable option for many young local married couples, and so they must try elsewhere. While the benefits to the farmer or landowner trying to sell a site are great, the net result is an incoming population of foreign people to the village, with a significant decline in the local population.

“The demand for holiday homes by rich outsiders is threatening to leave the west of Ireland beauty spot of Connemara with just a small local caretaker population and most houses empty for eleven months of the year, an economist has warned”¹⁹.

Not only does the local population suffer socially, according to Heanue, but the service industry of the local economy is brought to a standstill. Therefore, setting-up an enterprise will now be more costly. According to local sources, holiday home owners tend to buy foodstuffs in bulk from a major outlet en route, rather than from the local shop or grocery in the village. Thus the local shop or pub is left in a precarious position, dependent on a dwindling local population. One course of action which has been adopted in the past, has been to let part of the house to tourists for the summer season.

“It is disastrous for local people. Homes are just not affordable for them. It raises all sorts of questions about what will be the anchor to keep these communities together”²⁰.

Heanue states that on one hand it is most likely that the size of the affordability gap for housing in North West Connemara as one example, can explain the low level of mortgaged houses among permanent residents (1998:5). On the other hand, the high

¹⁸As documented by *The Sunday Tribune*, 1998.

¹⁹Extract from article in *The Sunday Tribune*, 31st May 1998, captioned “Connemara faces housing disaster”.

level of occupancy of houses with no loan or mortgage can primarily be explained by traditional family home inheritance patterns still prevalent in many rural areas. The issue, as Heanue points out, that should be of concern, is of what happens to the local people who cannot afford to buy, are not likely to inherit and for whom adequate social housing is not available. However, it is contended here that this argument is simplifying an issue which is more problematic than is currently being considered. Heanue's argument implies a passive local community in relation to this issue of unaffordability, which is a dangerous assumption as it ignores the possible role of capitalist which the local resident may adopt in relation to the holiday home.

Historically, small rural communities have been reputed to operate a dual price scheme, deliberately to favour the economic interests of their neighbours, over that of the tourist. Brody (1973) noted how Michael Ryan, local entrepreneur in Inishkillane, used the dual pricing scheme in accordance with his dealings with tourist and local resident respectively. At the time of his writing, Brody's conclusion was that this scheme was used in a very positive way, to exploit the *tourist* rather than the resident neighbour. It is suggested that in the transition to modernity, in the intervening years since 1973, no attention has been afforded the use of the dual pricing scheme by local communities in areas of particular scenic beauty, in relation to competing demands by resident local and foreign national for sites, or land in those communities. Further, it is also suggested that the *absence* of a dual pricing scheme in these areas of demographic regrowth of outsiders (returning locals and non-local residents living on a permanent basis in that community), indicates a 'competitive' community, willing to sell land to the highest bidder at the risk of alienating their local neighbour. This then, will have serious implications regarding how this issue of unaffordability is being treated by arguments in the debate on rural housing. The increasingly competitive nature of communities indicates a more active role towards the issue of indigenous depopulation in rural areas, than has been implied.

Heanue speaks briefly of the structural implications for peripheral communities from the changing population demographics created by the property transactions. He argues that for rural areas, the predominant change taking place within its population, is that

²⁰Extract from same article in *The Sunday Tribune* of the 31st May 1998.

more and more property owners are non-residential. Crucially, the resulting change in population profile is indicative of a certain form of population interchange which tends to deepen feelings of exclusion, isolation and disadvantage among local residents with wide-ranging implications for depopulation including the sustainability of social services, inequality and the design of development initiatives (Heanue, 1998:6; Tovey, 1992:33). Heanue provides little elaboration on these last, but his concept of 'dual communities', gives token reference to the sociological implications for the housing problem.

Heanue suggests that differences in class perspectives will manifest themselves in the treatment of issues in rural areas such as the environment, agriculture, perceptions of "community", and land use. He contends that these differences assert themselves in socialising practices, recreational activities, values and political outlook, all of which tend to compound the divisions and isolation felt by local residents (1998:7). However, Heanue's assumption of class differences between permanent local resident and temporary resident, is a simplistic one, with no detail given of these 'socialising practices', 'values and political outlook', or even an explanation of the features of these houses which might visually distinguish them from their 'local' neighbour. Further, his assumption of a homogenous permanent local community (in class terms), among which the temporary resident (holiday home owner) now lives, would appear to reiterate the earlier work of Arensberg and Kimball, whose research received much critical appraisal for their depiction of a homogenous and stable rural society.

Heanue's study draws on two particular strands in the debate on the impact of holiday homes along the west coast of Ireland: economic and social. The economic strand as encapsulated by Heanue, which has tended to focus on the increasing affordability gap in the ability of indigenous residents to compete for land locally, against a rising tide of global interest in houses in the same area. Local *inability* to compete against the 'global' outsider has become the main economic issue. In addition to this, it is maintained that the direct economic gain to local communities - measured through the multiplier effect - is much less in areas with a greater ratio of holiday to locally owned

homes. Heanue maintains that the 'buying in bulk' syndrome²¹ has become an indicator of levels of purchased social exclusion, inasmuch as it then perpetuates an economic one. However, it is suggested that if this is to be a criticism of the holiday home, then it applies in equal measure to the permanent local residents and outsider residents living on a full-time basis in Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland, and Gireux in the south of France, who *also* buy their foodstuffs 'in bulk', in large supermarkets in nearby towns of Lismaroon or Ennis (in Ireland), and Ste.Saron (in France), rather than in the local shop²².

Thus, a number of discourses make up the debate on the holiday home issue. The economic strand which has tended to have dominance over other arguments, is divided into the direct and indirect impact of holiday homes, now gaining momentum through renewed focus by the European Union on the issue of 'sustainable development'²³; the social strand which has become attentive to what has been coined as the social exclusion of holiday home owners from the local community, perpetuated through the economic phenomenon of buying food in bulk, and using the

²² On a practical level, neither the mobile services such as the bread van or butcher's van in Gireux, or the local shop in Dúnfarrraig, provide a large enough stock of items to cater for the variety of household requirements. Notwithstanding this limitation, the shop in Dúnfarrraig and services in Gireux, play perhaps a more important role in the provision of a social centre, through which residents meet and exchange news or gossip, while buying additional food during the week.

²³ Recent opposition to a proposed tourist scheme featuring 54 holiday homes, by members of a small rural community in Donegal, argued that "a development of this scale, density and magnitude, situated in a locality that is still without the benefits of sewage, or a properly functioning mains water system," was not in compliance with the principle of sustainable development" (*The Irish Times*, 15 March, 2002). The objection highlights the lack of local infrastructure, made problematic particularly through a spate of tourist housing. Of the 150 houses in the townlands of Rosstown Upper and Lower, most of which have been built over the past 10 years, only about 20 are occupied during the year. A local resident is quoted as saying, "There used to be wide open green spaces, but they are nearly all gone. This site is one of the last open spaces there are". Another objector remarked that "...the experience over recent years was that young people from the area could not afford to buy newly built houses". Significantly, the report states that "Rosstown's appeal in the past was due to 'the simplicity and non-commercial aspect of the area', with the absence of simulated 'water worlds'. The submission argues that the development 'would destroy the ambience that this small resort has enjoyed'. The development would 'impose a sub-urban intervention' on the Rosstown landscape".

The argument that Clare County Council has promoted the depopulation of areas in Co.Clare already in decline, was advanced by rural rights campaigner, Mr Jim Connolly, in a report by the *Irish Times* (March 12, 2003). Conversely, Connolly argued that the Council's refusal to allow one-off housing in these areas, was having a "terrible impact on rural communities". His objection to the Council's stance, arose from figures showing a rise of 33 per cent in refusals for planning permission of one off housing. According to journalist Gordon Deegan, securing planning permission in these areas is made difficult through planning restrictions associated with the Burren and the Clare coastline, all of which are designated 'visually vulnerable' in the Clare County Development Plan. 248 applications for one off housing were refused in 2002, compared to 187 for 2001. Deegan comments that the figures which show houses negatively impacting on areas designated "visually vulnerable", accounted for 25 per cent of refusal reasons.

holiday home for recuperation purposes, away from social interaction; and the cultural strand which is concerned with what it perceives as an acculturating effect to these local communities, whose youth and other residents must leave in order to afford a home elsewhere. The debate is negative in tone.

This assumption of a total negative social and cultural impact, is contested on the basis of very positive findings from a study of the impact of holiday homes on a seaboard village in Co.Clare. Casey (2000) comments that what is so distinctive about the village 'Ballygannive' in Co.Clare, is that a high proportion of its residents are comprised of people from outside the area, and who have built second homes and and/or permanent homes in the outskirts of the village. Both local and global have very successfully interpenetrated in ways that have produced Ballygannive, socially and economically. Casey states that;

"Ballygannive", as other similarly rural and isolated villages in the west of Ireland, "represents a stage in a flow or even...a moment in time. It has become a configuration of people who, from the wider world, are passing through. The place has become a virtual locality, for very little is left when these global flows are abstracted. It acquires its substance, its materiality, through its link with global processes; it is revived and sustained by them. Despite the fact that it now exists mainly through this link, the challenge of this locality...perhaps its survival, hangs on its ability to detain the flows" (2000:268).

However, while Casey attends to the social and cultural transformation of this village through local and outsider interpenetration, she neglects to detail the transformation of the physical landscape as a significant aspect of that place which has been affected by this particular dynamic of interaction, and of the dialectic between the resident and the landscape. This research attempts to address this issue by problematising how the rural landscape of two separate villages in two different countries, is being socially constructed through this dialectic.

'One-off housing' has been criticised on three levels; environmental, social and economic. Socially, the 'one-off house', is problematic due to its physical isolation from the nearby local community and its resources, while economically, it

necessitates the use of cars which is costly. While the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) has remained largely within the remit of academic discourse rather than affecting policy decision regarding housing development, areas such as County Clare have actively encouraged local communities to become part of the decision making process for development in their villages. In Dúnfarrraig, Co.Clare, this 'partnership' has resulted in the articulation of a local power elite interest group, with subsequent division of alliances within the community. Crucially, the formal emergence of this group, is demonstrating how local interest in commercial gain from the land, presents a critical factor in determining the continuation of one-off housing in the countryside. This aspect of the housing issue – the contribution which local landowners make to this increase in house prices and subsequently, to the unaffordability gap for their own community - has been overlooked by the economic discourse which has applied a blanket approach to the issue of holiday homes in rural scenic areas in Ireland.

These issues articulated through the holiday home debate, provide an understanding of a very real tension which is informing the interaction between residents in both rural contexts of Dúnfarrraig and Gireux. In no uncertain terms, the economic discourse has implied the local resident as a passive but negatively affected agent by this empirical problem. Indirectly, current treatment of the proverbial holiday home is constructing a dichotomy between 'outsider' and local 'insider', similar to impact studies' very vague and uncritical use of the terms 'global' and 'local'. This way of discussing the 'local' and 'global' as separate entities, replicates Giddens's (1990) conceptualisation of the same. According to Giddens, the seemingly opposing processes of globalisation and localisation actually imply each other. The 'local' and 'global' form the endpoints of a spatial continuum. However, for Robertson (1992, 1995), this way of theorising concepts of 'local' and 'global' dismisses the complexity of how both interpenetrate in ways to produce processes occurring in both the universal and particular context. Thus, to say that the 'global' and global processes form an integral part of globalisation which is only visible as the end result of the modernising stage of a society, would be to ignore other processes which are occurring alongside modernisation.

“I maintain also that it makes no good sense to define the global as if the global excludes the local...defining the global in such a way suggests that the global lies beyond all localities...” (Robertson, 1995:34).

He asserts that the concept of globalisation has involved “the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the ‘global’ and the ‘local’”, or, as Robertson adds, “the universal and the particular” (1995:31).

“The global is not in and of itself, counterposed to the local. Rather, what is often referred to as the local is essentially included within the global...In this respect, globalisation, defined in its most general sense as the compression of the world as a whole, involves the linking of localities (1995:35).

Thus, rationalising the holiday home phenomenon in terms of a dichotomy of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, has entailed a highly simplistic and linear understanding of the issues central to the debate. Further, not only has it created this dichotomy, but it has effectively pitted one against the other, with the ‘global’ assuming the dominant stance as an entity whose position is clarified only on the basis of its negative, homogenising force in relation to the local vernacular. It is argued that the issue at the core of the holiday home debate is more complex than that of people simply building houses, as local residents – ‘insiders’ – are clearly also building houses.

The implications of the ‘one-off housing’ problem in rural Ireland, was finally recognised by the National Spatial Strategy in 2003, which criticised the Irish model of dispersed settlement, arguing that this model was facilitating suburban sprawl and encouraging the development of one-off housing in the countryside. However, Peillon (2000) suggests that while the aim of the National Spatial Strategy has been to balance urban development away from the Dublin metropolis by supporting the growth of other urban centres in the midlands such as Athlone or Mullingar, the scattering or dispersal of urban growth has actually led to a ‘poly-nucleated conurbation’ (Gottdiener, 1994)²⁴ as the “urban centre of Mullingar is already becoming part of the commuter belt [for Dublin]” (2000:173). The implications of the National Spatial Strategy for centres further west of the midlands such as Ennis in Co.Clare, are easily anticipated. Neighbouring towns and villages such as Dúnfarrraig

²⁴ which refers to how suburban development on the fringes of Dublin, are becoming increasingly reliant on services provided in neighbouring suburbs, rather than on the urban core.

in Co.Clare, claim 48% of residents who either commute to work outside of their home village, or to a neighbouring town.

Yet Peillon (2000) suggests that this pattern of commuting does not follow the classic American model of suburbanisation. Instead, he proposes that a different type of urban development should be considered: that of a diffuse conurbation²⁵. He draws upon findings from his study of Ratoath in Co.Meath, where residents defined the place as country-like, while becoming less and less rural (P173). Their reliance on surrounding 'centres' as an alternative to Dublin, indicates a 'poly-centred' approach. Many Ratoath residents live their lives in a way that does not involve Dublin centre, relying instead on a range of proximate centres (P177).

What the example of Ratoath highlights, is that terms such as 'urban' and 'rural', which were once used to categorize places, have now lost their analytical value (Gottdiener, 1994:8). As a result of this, the 'suburbanite' who lives in an area such as Lucan or Tallaght which was once considered the periphery of Dublin, has now been subsumed by suburban development which continues to extend further out into the countryside in a pattern of 'ex-urbanisation' (Corcoran, 2000). It is suggested therefore, that this occurrence, coupled with investment in road infrastructure, has prompted the resident to seek a rural dwelling further out from the east conurbation, such as a holiday home in Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland. Undeniably, these and other developments are affecting the rural community – not just Dúnfarrraig in Ireland, but also further afield, in villages like Gireux in the south of France.

However, if we treat the emergence of the 'suburbanite' to rural areas to live either on a full-time or part-time basis, in terms of encouraging changes to that community, this partly incurs the criticism of globalisation theorists, where changes – although localised – are conceptualised as emanating from outside, or as a result of the outsider to that community (Savage, 2005). Given the critique offered here of the economic argument of the affordability gap however, it is contended that this way of viewing changes to the community, is too simplistic and misleading. Instead, by viewing the local resident as active in the regeneration of his/her community – by dint of

²⁵ According to Rowe (1998), the label 'suburb' is no longer synonymous with 'bedroom community', as the subregional centres of urban realms are now major employers (P37).

facilitating other local residents to stay in the same community by operating a discretionary price scheme – part of the structural changes which then occur to that community, could in theory, be seen as *locally* driven, rather than necessarily led by some abstract, overarching global force. Thus, changes which occur to the rural community subsequent to the arrival of the ‘suburbanite’, should be interpreted as involving a greater degree of complexity than merely the abstract global impacting on the empirical local.

What emerges of concern then, is the nature of these changes. How they are occurring and the implications of these changes for the rural community. Traditionally, geographers have treated space as the locus of change²⁶. Following the shift in how global and spatial change was understood to be affecting a local sense of place, globalisation theorists sought to emphasise the dynamics involved in how space was being socially constructed through social relations (Massey, 1994, 1995), and global flows (Castells, 1996, 1997), which were enabling new forms of connection to place.

2.4 Space and process

A number of concepts have been advanced towards an understanding of space. Soja (1985) argued that not all space is socially produced, but ‘spatialities’ are, while Shields (1991) has asserted that ‘social spatialisation’ better conceptualises both the symbolic construction of space at the level of the social imaginary as well as its more concrete articulation in the landscape. According to Shields, “this term allows us to name an object of study which encompasses both the cultural logic of the spatial and its expression and elaboration in language and more concrete actions, constructions and institutional arrangements” (1991:31), while Harvey (1989, 2000) argued that

²⁶ According to Hubbard et al (2002), most geographical analyses up until the 1970s adopted an absolute understanding of space, reflecting the work of positivistic and quantitative geographers which conceptualised space as a system of organization of “kind of absolute grid, within which objects are located and events occur” (Curry, 1995:5). This essentialist view has been criticised by humanist geographers, who have argued that “reducing the world to a spaceless abstraction...[has] very limited utility” (Crang and Thrift, 2000:2). They suggest that the essentialist view does not pay sufficient attention to the spatial problematic. A relational view of space has emerged through recent analysis, which seeks to understand how space is constituted and given meaning through human endeavour (Hubbard et al, 2002:13). Space is treated as an entity which is “continuously produced through socio-spatial relations; with analyses showing how the relationship between space, spatial forms and spatial behaviour is not contingent upon ‘natural’ spatial laws, but is a product of cultural, social, political and economic relations. In short, space is now considered in terms of how it is constructed and produced, viewed as a social experience (ibid: 2002:14).

place is constructed through practices and networks, echoing Massey's (1994, 1995) conceptualisation of the same. Harvey advocated that place becomes the focus of a discursive activity which is imbued with symbolic and representational meaning, and a product of power. He explained that the effect of these 'material practices' and so forth, is to understand place as internally heterogeneous, dialectical and dynamic configurations of relative "permanences" (1997:294). Massey (1991, 1994, 1997) added that place is actually mobilised through these 'discursive practices' or processes which have been produced through flows of dynamic objects or social relations in space.

However, Massey argues that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space, but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched out' (1994:2). Thus, these relations give space its dynamic quality, responding to practices of power and signification. Massey comments that such a way of conceptualising the spatial, implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism (P3). Further, within this dynamic simultaneity of space, Massey contends that phenomena may be placed in relation to one another in such a way that new social effects are provoked. The spatial organization of society is integral to the production of the social (1994:4). It is argued that this way of conceptualising phenomena in relation to social relations, transcends the limitations of modernization and dependency frameworks which present a one-dimensional view of development, by approaching processes in terms of the dynamic quality of social relations, rather than in terms of space as a fixed entity.

Lefebvre's (1991) 'unitary theory of space', offers an explanation of how space is produced, based on a dialectic of interaction between seemingly abstract practices such as migration, social upheaval, global networking, and the everyday ordinary behaviour of people²⁷. According to Savage (2005), this way of conceptualising space

²⁷ The process of spatialisation is premised upon three complementary levels: spatial practices, representations about space and spaces of representations (Merrifield, 2000:171). Each of these three levels work together, as one affects the other. Routine spatial behaviours (such as concrete processes, movements and flows that can be perceived in the realm of the everyday, manifest as movements, migrations and other routines (Lefebvre, 1991)) are perceived in relation to understandings of space which order our notion of what is possible and permitted as a behaviour in that space (representations of space), co-exists with spaces that are produced by the body in everyday practices (the lived,

as emerging from a dialectic of interaction between ideas, behaviour and processes such as social movements, has enabled the departure point for globalisation theorists such as Robertson (1992, 1995), to theorise how localities are produced, through focussing on the interaction between local and global as a dialectic or 'interpenetrative' type of relationship. Robertson (1995) has used this concept of the 'glocal' to show how each globalising imperative, such as the 'universal' and the 'international' contains a local, diversifying aspect. However, it is suggested that other dichotomies such as the 'traditional' versus the 'modern', the 'romantic' versus the 'collective', 'urban' versus the 'rural' and so forth, remain empty classifications as entities in their own right. Further, they reduce theory and issues to a dichotomy of opposites.

Instead, this research is taking the notion of social relations (Massey, 1995, 1994), as a departure point to explore how space is being constituted through the social. It is this process, this relationship between the social and the spatial, which will provide these dichotomies such as the 'private' and the 'public', with their analytical value. Therefore, what remains of concern is how this relationship is affecting perception of the landscape. Does it mean that we need to re-evaluate how we interpret the 'rural'?

everyday experience of space). It follows then, that these representations of space (what is allowed), are held in tension with spaces of representation (the lived everyday experience of life), as representations of space essentially describes the various types of ideologies which may contest or support spatial practices. Although Lefebvre maintained that there exists a tension between representations of space and spaces of representation, which produces spatial practices, it is also apparent that spatial practice provides the basis for both representations of space and spatial representations (Soja, 1996).

Chapter 3 Reinterpreting the 'rural'

3.1 Introduction

Concurrent to the holiday home debate, has been concern pertaining to the changing relationship of the Irish people to their landscape. This is more easily understood in terms of a shift in the perception of land as intimately associated with a patriarchal system (Brody, 1973), to the commodification of the same. However, it is argued that changing perception, has affected a change in the spatial behaviour associated with different practices, as although 'land' indicates a working relationship implies through farming, 'landscape' assumes a more visual quality. By applying this conceptual framework of the dialectical interaction between the individual and the landscape, those 'discursive activities' (Harvey, 1996) through which rural space is socially constructed, become apparent.

3.2 How changing perception, has changed practices of the landscape¹

"Land is just land until it is shaped, interpreted, written about or drawn. Then it becomes landscape."

(Jonathan Raban)

In his article, "Picturing the Landscape", Bell (1995) problematises how the ordinary, everyday landscape of Ireland, has been constructed as "an object of the 'romantic gaze' for the German tourist (P42). He considers the relationship between rhetorical discourses such as images and the tourist experience of that landscape through the guided tour, which has constructed the everyday ordinary, into a spectacular landscape. However, it remains to be seen as to whether the proverbial landscape has assumed a different quality through everyday practices, or if this is merely a "rhetorical construction" (Barnes and Duncan, 1992:15). Bell refers to Wilson's (1992:6) treatment of landscape as an integral aspect of culture, and therefore as an experience which is mediated by "rhetorical constructs like photography, industry, advertising and aesthetics, as well as by institutions like religion, tourism and education". Or, to take a different approach, Bell suggests that the landscape is understood not primarily as natural terrain but as the social framing of nature in which

¹ Since the sixteenth century, the word 'landscape' has been used by painters to describe a pictorial representation of the countryside. Barrell explains that the word later came to include both the sense of a countryside represented in a picture, and a piece of countryside considered as a visual phenomenon (1972:1).

aesthetic, commercial and ideological discourses and practices crowd into the picture (1995:45). Thus, the landscape operates in terms of a 'representation of space' (Lefebvre, 1991). The difficulty here, is in the tendency to bundle each of these aspects – aesthetic, commercial and other types of discourses and practices – together, in the social framing of the landscape, instead of seeing how 'discourse' and 'spatial practice' describe different aspects of the same process (Lefebvre, 1991) through which landscape is then framed or represented. However, Bell does not treat of these aspects as separate components, so it is unclear as to how this process of social framing is achieved.

Furthermore, although Bell raises some crucial questions regarding how we have come to see beauty or wilderness in the ordinary², he continues to treat of the landscape in highly generic terms, neglecting to point out that perception of the landscape will vary according to the type of interaction sought by the individual. Quite significantly, Bell does suggest that Urry's (1995:45) work on the tourist experience could be understood "as a modality of social perception and as a terrain for the play of signification" between resident and landscape, but then fails to explore this idea of 'social perception' in relation to the individual tourist, or ways in which this may become manifest through a further social construction of the landscape. Bell doesn't attend to the dynamics of the interaction with the landscape, which might explain the type of modality (ies) that are at play here.

Moreover, Bell's use of the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990) in relation to its conceptual development of a painterly discourse – the picturesque – is a dangerous one, as it assumes a dichotomy of the way in which the landscape is then perceived according to dictates of the 'romantic' or 'collective' experience. It overlooks the idea of a 'middle landscape' (Rowe, 1998), the idea of a landscape whose topography reflects one which is between definitions of 'rural' and 'urban', or 'suburban'.

Commodification of the *landscape* therefore, implies a social transformation of the way in which it is perceived. According to Macnaghten and Urry (1998:191), it implies that the countryside will be increasingly consumed as spectacle, as images

² A reference to the 'picturesque', which socially constructs the landscape in terms of a dichotomy of either 'sublime' or 'beautiful' aspects.

and symbols become transformed into saleable commodities. Shaw and Williams (1994:231) claim that the construction of the landscape as site for visual consumption will bring it into conflict with other spatial requirements, as this requires the deliberate selection and manipulation of features of the rural landscape (Pearce and Butler, 1993). Casey (2000:53) proposes that this process may be understood in terms of different phases³, which involves the demarcation of specific features of the landscape and the creation of a system of controlled access to that landscape (which assumes payment for the same). The implications of this system of privatisation, means the social exclusion of the 'local' from his/her hinterland⁴.

While these frameworks of representation and commodification, attempt to detail the different ways in which the landscape is socially constructed as site for consumption, Slater (1993) problematises how this social construction of the landscape is managed, and why it necessarily requires this exclusion of the native 'local'. He suggests that the answer lies within the framework of the 'picturesque'.

3.3 The picturesque representation of landscape

According to Slater (1993), the picturesque is about a way of consuming views of the landscape. The social vision of the picturesque refers to the idea of restoring the harmony between man and nature, while the pictorial aspect of the picturesque is about combining the 'beautiful' with the 'sublime', in order to similarly restore harmony between man and nature (1993:42). Crucially, this was to be a solitary or individual viewing experience, with the social aspect of the landscape removed from that view, as it presented a source of disharmony. In fact, detachment from the social relations of production were necessary, to create this illusion of harmony between man and nature. The 'picturesque', Slater concurs, is then about the way an outsider wishes to see the landscape, either as a colonising landlord or as a tourist.

The era of landscape painting (during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) is distinctive for the way in which a relationship was constructed between the

³ Such as 1) Seeing the land as an object; 2) Separating it off from other users; 3) Controlling access; 4) charging for access; 5) Signposting the new commodity (P53).

⁴ Similar to the creation of the gardens of the picturesque, as noted by Slater (1993). Bartley and Saris (1998) also note how the lack of an adequate public transport system in the working class suburb of North Clondalkin in Dublin, has meant that the residents are being socially excluded from access to basic public facilities such as medical care and schooling, in the neighbouring suburb.

experience of the viewing 'subject', and the countryside as a desirable 'object' to behold. The transformation or shift in the construction of the 'picturesque' is probably more easily explained by reference to changes to the English landscaped garden; from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with an emphasis on statues, mottos, inscriptions and buildings in the garden, through to the nineteenth century, where gardenists such as Brown emphasised the basic materials of a site, such as the lines, shapes and contours of its ground, waters and trees. Brown's treatment of the forms of nature within landscape parks, drew attention to the natural capabilities of the countryside, that lay beyond the formal estate. Following from Brown, Repton designed his landscapes as a setting for the house itself⁵. However Hadfield (1967) states that unlike Brown, whose designs were rather like a theatrical set to be viewed primarily from the house, Repton's gardens were created in order to affect an appearance of social status and wealth. One wonders if this was to anticipate a version of 'suburbia' (Girling and Helphand, 1994; Peillon and Slater, 2005), with its emphasis on display and status seeking.

However, in a very interesting move, Pugh (1988:6) argues that a working countryside is never a 'landscape', and that a landscape or garden represents a separation from the working countryside and detached observation of that countryside, but through an image of it that bears no relation to its working practice. A garden is a 'machine to see with', like a Claude glass. Pugh remarks that the discourse of the garden which prevailed during the eighteenth century as a paradigm for the representation of 'nature', employed a rhetoric of 'naturalness' which disguised processes that are deterministic, institutional and rational (ibid:7). While the 'modern' garden contributed to the invention of a type of natural beauty, Pugh states that this adopted a different kind of domination, establishing what was, and was not 'natural', from the shape of a lawn to the grouping of trees (ibid:12)⁶. The subtle rhetoric of 'naturalising the natural' is coined by Kant (1928), who stated;

⁵ Which echoes the design of many gardens particularly in Dúnfarrraig. According to Hadfield (1967:128), Repton's contribution to landscape history, was to reclaim gardens for social use and relate them again to the houses which they served. In addition to removing the lawn from immediately outside the house, this was achieved through the reintroduction of the terrace, raised flowerbed, trelliswork and conservatory. He argued that these architectural additions to the frame of the house, enabled the extension of the social space of the same.

⁶ Or the creation of the rockery within the gardens of the suburbanite in Dúnfarrraig.

“...Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature” (Kant, 1928:167).⁷

Hutchinson (1989) states that in the later years of the eighteenth century, there arose in Britain and Ireland a new awareness of the dramatic and awe-inspiring qualities of nature. The ‘sublime’ aspect of a landscape – the more dramatic and rugged features – was now held in opposition to the ‘beautiful’, which represented the calm and serene side of nature (Hutchinson, 1989:50). According to Hutchinson, the concept of the ‘sublime’, which was rooted in eighteenth century aesthetics, was transformed by the development of Romantic landscape painting, in which a human being, rather than the landscape, assumed the emotional pivot of a painting (ibid:51).

During the 1800s, there emerged two ‘socially constructed’ ways to read the Irish landscape: the picturesque and the oral interpretation, which create senses of detachment and attachment respectively to the local terrain (Slater, 1993:23). He explains that although the *picturesque* corresponded to the way in which an outsider wishes to gaze upon a landscape - either as colonizing landlord or as a tourist, where the ideological structure of the ‘beautiful’ aspect of the picturesque required the exclusion of the native people living in the landscape - the native gaze actually created a sense of attachment to the local space (Slater, ibid). Departing from Urry’s concept of the ‘tourist gaze’ (1990), Slater argues that these two ways of gazing upon the landscape - that of the beautiful aspect of the picturesque, and the oral interpretation - provide a better way of conceptualising the quite complex play between processes of colonialism and tourism, which operated in the landed estates of the landlord class in Ireland. He takes the Halls’s (Mr and Mrs S.C.) narrative account of the landscape of Co.Wicklow, particularly the 1853 edition, to show the determining forces of these processes in the construction of ‘natural’ landscapes in these gardens.

First, Slater suggests that the romantic/picturesque framework which they use to interpret the landscape, tended to represent the territory as an empty space. Secondly,

⁷ Similar to how some of the front gardens in Gireux, have used watering cans and other ornaments, in order to display plants or flowers.

not only was this space emptied, no representation of productive work was made. Thirdly, not only did the narrative reveal that the physical location of the picturesque scenes were on the landed estates of the landlord class, but also that the landlord class had changed the physical landscape in order to enhance its picturesque qualities (1993:24). This meant that the Irish landscape now reflected the design of the English landscaped garden. Barrell (1972:6) argues that the contemplation of the Wicklow landscape was not a passive activity as it involved reconstructing the landscape in the imagination according to the principles of composition of the picturesque. This required manipulating objects within the landscape, into new relations with each other within the overall framework of the picturesque. Objects were determined by their ability to fit into or match the picturesque framework (Slater, 1993:30). Slater argues that these changes allowed the ideological structures of the picturesque to become materialised or actualised in these emptied gardens of the colonising class. Thus, ideologically the native was detached from his/her landscape through the discourses of the picturesque, then physically detached from the gardens of the picturesque (1993:25)⁸.

According to Slater, the concepts of the picturesque moved from their ideological frames, into reality, in the form of the English informal style of landscape garden (ibid:32). Slater maintains that Brown's concept of the landscaped garden, affected the movement of the garden away from the house in an attempt to detach itself from the visual sense of formality which the house represented. In so doing, these landowners applied themselves to the task of creating a more 'natural' looking garden, through artificial means (ibid:33). Thus, Slater argues that the creation of picturesque spots or spaces in the landscape, is the result of a set of meanings that are fixed before its construction, as it suggests an intention to create an effect on the viewing person (ibid).

Slater also considers the *social form* of the picturesque, such as the tree. He states that trees played an essential role as screens in hiding estate boundaries from being viewed. These trees not only hid the boundaries between estates, but also blocked out the productive area of the landed estate (1993:36). Slater maintains that a function

⁸ However, Slater asserts that although the visual representation of the native was removed, the voice of the native Irish and their oral interpretation is represented through narration.

which the tree played in the gardens of the picturesque, was that of acting as a theatrical prop to the viewing process itself – a practice of ‘focalisation’ (Ingram, 1991). Significantly, views were manufactured by using trees to close off or open up views of the landscape, thereby framing the view of the picturesque by controlling the fixed viewing points in the foreground of the landscape. The sublime aspect of the picturesque dichotomy could only be visually appropriated into the picturesque framework as the background to the beautiful (Slater, 1993:37). And in so doing, constructed the garden in terms of a series of binary opposites.

In the travelogue, the Halls revealed the social form of the picturesque by reference to its location or presence on private property. According to Somerville and Ross (1990:168), the social form of the picturesque becomes manifest in the identification of ownership of these ‘beautiful spots’, which are the setting of landed estates. Interestingly, Slater contends that it is only by identifying the picturesque parts of the estate, that the Halls are ideologically filtering out the working/productive side of the landed estate. This action fosters the idea of a socially empty space, as they desocialise the peasantry/tenantry from the landscape. Moreover, Slater remarks that when the Halls do refer to the presence of the peasantry in the landscape, they tend to represent them as pictorial images, detached from the actuality of working relationships (1993:41)⁹.

While these strategies engendered a spirit of simplicity, this type of garden created subtle changes in people’s relationship to their landscape (Slater, 1993). Slater refers to Gallagher’s (1989:34) work in suggesting that the ideology informing this perspective was now to see man’s position as being *within* nature itself, rather than as an agent to tame and regulate its forces as in the Dutch and French formal gardens. Slater comments that because the ‘picturesque’ is essentially a visual phenomenon, the Halls as connoisseurs of that genre, did not need to interact with the local population in order to make sense of the landscape. What was required was a cultural capital, or knowledge of the principles of the ‘picturesque’ in order to interpret the

⁹ Further, it is argued that the picturesque introduced a dimension of aesthetic discipline on the Irish peasantry. Defining an area as picturesque removed it from the domain of work. In so doing, Slater suggests that this type of detachment is concerned with colonialism and imperialism.

landscape (1993:44). Similarly, tourists mediate their visited places through the framework of the 'picturesque', thereby detaching themselves from the local sense of place.

These frameworks of the picturesque have informed our understanding of how to 'gaze' upon the landscape, by guiding us in our visual exploration of place. Urry (1990, 2002) argues that 'tourist gaze' has influenced interaction between the 'local' and the 'global', through the negotiation of these frameworks.

3.4 The 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990, 2002)

According to Urry (1995), tourism is fundamentally concerned with visually consuming the physical and built environment, and in many cases, the permanent residents who are its inhabitants. This is to suggest rendering people and the landscape as objects (P192). Central to tourist consumption, is the idea of looking individually or collectively upon aspects of landscape or townscape which are distinctive, which signify an experience which contrasts with everyday experience. It is the gaze which gives a particular heightening to other elements of that experience, particularly to the sensual (1995:132). A number of features characterize the tourist 'gaze'.

First, tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite: regulated and organized work. The tourist gaze arises from a movement of people to, and their stay in various other destinations. Urry states that this necessarily involves some movement through space; places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, which is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices such as film, newspapers, videos and so on. Secondly, the gaze is directed to features of the landscape which separate them off from everyday and routine experiences. Such aspects are viewed, because they are taken to be in some sense, out of the ordinary. Urry comments that this renders greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape, than is normally found in everyday life. Lastly, the gaze is constructed through signs, while tourism involves the collection of these signs. Urry gives the example of two people kissing in Paris, and explains how this scene constructs Paris as timeless and romantic. He cites Culler (1981:127), who asserts that "the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself".

The tourist gaze is conceptualized as adopting two forms, the 'romantic' gaze and the 'collective' gaze. The romantic form involves an emphasis upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze; while the collective form requires the presence of numbers of people in order to lend atmosphere to a place (Pp137-8). Importantly, Urry remarks that those who value solitude and a 'romantic' tourist gaze, do not see this as merely one way of regarding nature. They consider it as 'authentic', as real (P139). Urry cites MacCannell's (1976) argument, which essentially asserts that what tourists seek is the 'authentic', but that this is necessarily unsuccessful since those being gazed upon come to construct artificial sites which keep the inquisitive tourist away. Tourist spaces thus become organized around 'staged authenticity'.

Urry argues that the 'romantic' gaze is concerned more with the elitist and solitary experiences of nature; one which requires considerable cultural capital (1990:123), and which rests upon an inflated sense of the visual involved in the tourist encounter with the landscape (1995:46). However, according to Bell (1995), the romantic gaze can be read as a displacement of painterly discourse, not foreseen by Urry. In particular, that the painterly discourse of late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century picturesque tourism came to inform the romantic gaze of a late twentieth-century tourism, now constructed via the photograph and promotional brochure (Bell, 1995:47). Bell looks to painterly discourse in German popular visual culture, to explain the presence of romantic visual style in tourism promotion of Ireland. He cites Sontag (1979, 1989) who remarked on the role of photographic practices in shaping popular aesthetics, to include the notion of the beautiful landscape.

One of the criticisms of Urry's theory of the tourist 'gaze', is that it overemphasizes the authority of the 'gaze' (NicEoin, 2003; Slater, 1993). In agreeing with this criticism, it is suggested that Urry has neglected the local gaze of the tourist or the outsider. Through his emphasis on the tourist experience, Urry overlooks the ability of the local or the social landscape to determine the quality of this experience.

While the natural landscape is of interest here, the greater locus of change has been in the area of changes to the *built* landscape of the west of Ireland, particularly in

Dúnfarrraig. Since the late 1990s, numbers of holiday homes have been built, some which have adopted a dramatic architectural form. It suggests that there are different types of relationships going on between the home owner and the landscape, from *within* the house as a weather-proof contained unit. If this is the case, then the garden must be examined as a site which exists between the house and the public landscape.

3.5 The garden as the ‘middle landscape’ (Rowe, 1992)

Bhatti and Church (2001) maintain that the domestic home garden is a significant locale for understanding human-nature relations. They argue that debates about the commodification of nature aside, the meanings which people invest in the home and garden provide a crucial insight into the relations between human agency and contemporary human-nature relations (2001:365). Part of what has prompted this interest in the garden, has been the claim made by Gilbert (1992) that there is more bio-diversity in the average suburban garden than in many areas in the countryside, especially where farming has resulted in mono-agriculture. Bhatti and Church explain that the garden poses as an everyday site for considering how human agency through routine practices, connects with the sensory presence of nature, and how these connections are structured through broader economic, social and cultural processes. “Gardens are locales – sites where human agency and social relations can have a considerable influence on the use and meaning of space which may have implications for how nature is known and interpreted” (2001:367).

According to Bhatti and Church, contemporary considerations of the meanings of gardens have often emphasized their links to the social construction of the home: Francis and Hestor (1990) suggest that the garden, like the home, is a semi-private place, a haven from the public world of work and a source of security. Tuan (1990) also discusses the role of the gardens in terms of the construction of a domestic ‘sense of place’ (Bhatti and Church, 2001). The garden is also linked with wider political and social processes (Gold, 1984; Daniels, 1999; Morris, 1996). Despite this, Bhatti and Church remark that the home garden as a physical locale for home-making, has been neglected. In attempting to identify what ‘home-making’ constitutes, they state that the “home, while a physical space...is not a static entity with clear boundaries, but involves dynamic interconnections between inside and outside and private and public” (Wardhaugh, 1996:96) This pre-empts Treib’s (1991) thesis, which refers to the

garden in terms of an extension to the household. He explains that the garden has become similar to an outdoor room suited for domestic activity rather than the requirement of plants. Certain features lend it a roomlike appearance: a predominance of paved surfaces and lawn, outdoor furniture, and others, which convey a strong connection to the interior of the house (Treib, 1991:181). Bhatti and Church finally agree that the garden shares the same type of domestic social practices as the home, and therefore the garden should be treated as fluid in terms of the type of meanings and boundaries. Francis and Hestor (1990:2) maintain that the 'idea' of the garden has changed over time, but is nearly always linked to our relationship with nature. They posit the garden as 'balancing point' between human control on the one hand, and wilderness on the other – similar to the idea of the 'picturesque'. Bhatti and Church (2001) refer to Wilson's (1992) work which suggests that because of the different traditions or approaches to gardening such as the English landscaped gardens, then later the post-war American suburban garden, the garden is often interpreted as a reflection of broader social and cultural processes. However, they comment that in these gardens, human agency is considered in terms of the landscape gardener, rather than in terms of the everyday social practices which constitute the garden.

One way in which the private landscape of the garden is constructed for visual consumption, is through a process of 'focalization' (Ingram, 1991). This technique 'involves the leading of visual observation toward a feature by placement of this feature at the vanishing point between radial or approaching lines. According to Ingram (1991:4), straight radial lines create a strong focalisation when compared to curved lines...as the viewer's eye is quickly forced along straight lines to a focal point'. A number of ways in which this effect of catching the eye, is achieved, is through the careful placement of lanterns or garden lights at strategic places in the garden, so as to illuminate various objects of interest. This practice, enlightens the garden, or constructs the garden as a site for visual consumption.

Although this presents an interesting insight into practices which construct the garden for purposes of display, it is suggested that Ingram takes a somewhat narrow approach to this process. Instead of emphasising the importance of 'straight radial lines' for the focalisation of the eye, it is suggested that perhaps the lines within the garden are an attempt to reflect shapes within the public landscape. In other words, the lines are

being used to continue features within the broader landscape in which the garden is situated, into the private garden space. Indeed, this betrays a 'Brownian' framework of constructing the landscape for visual consumption.

However, according to Williams (1995), the changing use of the garden is also linked to adjustments in work patterns and household structures. With 'dual worker' households, the garden has become an 'outdoor room', a place of leisure and relaxation. Similarly, Madigan and Munro (1996) state that increasingly home owning is a source of personal identity and status. According to Bhatti and Church (2001) this partly explains the display of statues, flowers and other objects in the garden. Further, that 'uses, meaning and practices in gardens are structured by broad processes associated with production and consumption in the garden industry and the social and economic relations of changing housing patterns, with these processes contributing to the consumerist and utilitarian orderings of nature in domestic gardens (2001:379). Simultaneously, gardens express a multitude of meanings: as private retreat, as leisure space, as social space for sharing, as an ecological space (ibid:380).

Interestingly, this quite varied understanding of the garden is at odds with Slater and Peillon's work on the front garden in suburban Dublin. In a working paper, they argue that the front lawn is an important space through which residents of suburbia now negotiate their social relationships with each other. Using Goffman's concept of the 'front region', they reiterate how "front gardens as front regions show be viewed as an act of communication: the projection onto the public domain of an identity, a statement of lifestyle, a construction of a front" (2005:6). However, in modernity the processes which used to shape the spatial entity of the front lawn as 'aesthetic', have come into conflict with the emergence first, of the wheelie bin, and then the motor car.

According to Slater and Peillon, cobble-locking has provided the answer to the conundrum of the commuting family. They consider the transformation of the front garden, from mini piece of domestic landscape, to yard like structure complete with

tarmacadam, concrete or cobble-lock, and comment that these practices¹⁰ indicate the greater symbolic, rather than 'real' nature of the garden¹¹. Although the way in which neighbourhoods have responded to the problem of the unsightly wheelie bin and the car, differ according to the amount of garden available around the house, Slater and Peillon are making the point that these objects have posed a serious challenge to maintaining a sense of aesthetic in the suburban front garden, which was once rationalized according to practices of display and wealth.

Taking this preoccupation with the garden as a space for display purposes, it is suggested that the house could also be seen as an articulation of wealth – but of the home owner's ability to construct a relationship with the surrounding hinterland, through the nexus of the house. Thus, while the display of objects in the garden and size of the house is important, what becomes the determining criterion for the projection of status and lifestyle, is the ability to appropriate a view of the landscape through the architectural features of the house. This then, requires 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), as the house and garden becomes the expression of a structural relationship with the landscape. As such, the success of the house and garden is perceived in terms of its unique architectural value, as one which signifies the relationship between owner and landscape as quite individual and therefore separate from others in the community.

3.6 'Taste' as an articulation of a structural relationship

One of Bourdieu's main theoretical concerns, was to explain how aesthetic judgement is made, by reference to a 'system of transposable dispositions', which he conceptualised as 'habitus' (1977:72). This theory criticises the perception that ways of 'knowing' art, is made through the unconscious, as Bourdieu argued that there exists a strong link between structure (the field, or social class of which we claim a position) and agency (the creativity of the individual). Bourdieu contended that the

¹⁰ Slater and Peillon report how prominence afforded to the car, alters between social classes. While the working class neighbourhood tends to retain the front lawn of the garden, keeping the car parked on the kerb, the more affluent middle class areas have cobble-locked the front garden, to allow space for the increase in cars. "Part of the explanation for this is that these are new suburban estates, with mainly young middle class families in which the two spouses need and possess a second car." (Slater and Peillon, 2005:9). The garden is treated differently in the upper class echelons, who have more space around their property and therefore lose less garden.

¹¹ Where the proverbial blade of grass is now being replaced by the cobble-lock and potted flower.

habitus of a group or class, is apparent in the type of dispositions¹² of individuals. These dispositions are acquired by the individual through various learning processes such as socialisation, and embody the relations and structures that pre-exist the individual, socially constituted within the material conditions of existence pertaining to that group (Codd, 1990:139). Our habitus enables us to recognise possibilities for action, while simultaneously preventing us from recognising others. Thus, according to Bourdieu, habitus both generates practices and limits their possibilities. This means that knowledge is learnt, and the recognition of art forms is an indication of the habitus of class.

Bourdieu argues that the social construction of artistic perception is encoded in the language through which it is conveyed, and then embodied in the aesthetic disposition of the individual (Codd, *ibid*). Although it is suggested here, that this ‘artistic perception’ could also be viewed in terms of the relationship between the individual and the landscape, whereupon this relationship could be ‘embodied’ or become manifest in a variety of different ways which similarly express the ‘aesthetic disposition of the individual’ – such as the house. Thus aesthetic judgement is a form of cultural capital, a learnt set of perceptions, which enables a recognition of ‘good’ form or ‘pure’ taste. Similarly, ‘popular’ taste which is the working-class aesthetic, takes its definition from its opposite – the bourgeois – where the emphasis is on function, rather than on form.

This research is applying the concept of taste to the architecture of house and garden, as one way of expressing this modality of dialectical interaction between the resident and the landscape. However, rather than examine this relationship under the lens of class differences, it is to develop further Urry’s (1990, 2002) critically acclaimed notion of the ‘gaze’ through this framework of the relationship between the individual and the landscape, while accepting that this relationship may also be an expression of social relations (Massey, 1994) between outsider *and* local residents.

¹² Defined as capacities, tendencies to recognise and so forth.

3.7 Construction of place – the dialectic between the individual and the landscape

Departing from the notion of the landscape as framed by ‘discursive practices’ (Harvey, 1996), Urry (1995) explores how the relationship between the tourist and the landscape has been socially constructed in the Lake District in England, first through literature which described certain types of ‘spatial practices’ such as walking, then more recently through images which continue that ‘representation of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991). Both the writings and the ensuing plethora of ‘tourist images’ (O’Connor, 1993) have determined how people see the Lake District as a ‘picturesque’ landscape, in terms of features, objects, or ‘spatial practices’ such as walking, through which one may engage with the landscape.

Urry describes how a wealth of literature, postcards, policies and tourist photographs depicting the region in romantic terms, was responsible for transforming the way in which Nature, as the ‘bleak, empty wilderness’ was viewed. According to Urry, most of the writers to the Lake District, were initially visitors and not locals. Their writing popularised the District and encouraged other visitors. Crucially, this was achieved through developing the terminology by which nature could be characterised (Urry, 1995:200). Thus, what came to be established in the Lake District was a particular way of relating to its presumed ‘nature’ through walking, and this has established a widespread cultural pattern which supposedly exemplified good taste (1995:201)¹³.

Crawshaw (1997) suggests that tourist articulation of the benefits accruing from consumption of the landscape, is a learned effect of the travelling process. “This response to *‘nature’* is something that has to be learnt” (Crawshaw, 1997:11) (this

¹³ Stemming from this, Urry remarks that the nineteenth century showed an increasing appreciation of the landscape, was one of the main readings of why people went walking voluntarily. Urry attributes the growth in walking to the widespread belief that walking as travel had personal and social benefits. As stated, this was a disciplined and organised mode of walking, which meant that the walker did not wander aimlessly or in a socially disruptive fashion. The wanderer returned continually along paths that had already been walked. According to Urry, this routine ensured connection and stability, and in particular, there was the intention to return (1995:202). This spatial practice was noted by their literary counterparts, who walked great distances during their visit to the Lake District. Urry notes that by the middle of the century, ‘the very highest echelon of English society regarded pedestrian touring as a valuable educational experience’ (Wallace, 1993:168). Interestingly, while the intellectuals developed a ‘peripatetic theory’ based upon the way that the pedestrian is re-created with nature, later analysis of the same writers differ as to the degree to which the ‘peripatetic’ necessarily connects people back to local communities, or remains a much more private activity.

author's emphasis). Therefore, this allows for the possibility of differing ways of relating to Nature, as:

- 1) Working with Nature - farming
- 2) Gazing at Nature - tourists
- 3) Living in idealised Nature - suburbanites

According to Crawshaw, finding pleasure in 'dead' or 'ordinary' (Bell, 1995) scenery involves acquiring 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984). Urry (1995) refers to the work of Wallace (1991) to suggest that the writers and artists who frequented places such as the Lake District, provided the language and vocabulary by which places were subsequently appreciated for their visual appeal.

“Lying behind individual perceptions of the Lake District are more systematic discourses of landscape, countryside, scenery and sight which have authorised and legitimated particular activities and ways of seeing, particularly those involving walking and ‘quiet recreation’ in the open air” (Wallace, 1993).

Urry (1995) points out that the Lake District, “was culturally constructed from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards” through the use of Romantic imagery, becoming the “exemplar of certain tourist practices (especially walking and climbing), and of particular kinds of landscape photography” (Crawshaw and Urry, 1997). An example is given of photographs taken of spring flowers at Ullswater, marketed through travel memorabilia such as postcards and calendars¹⁴. However, it is suggested that these images are recognised because those discourses which frame and contextualise the photographs, are already in the public realm.

In his interviews with professional photographers, criteria informing the selection of images to represent the Lake District, necessitated the exclusion of “prominent buildings and especially no local people”, which Urry concurred reproduced the conception of the ‘countryside as landscape, as bereft of most signs of human habitation (except sheep, dry stone walls, distant white-painted farmhouses and so forth). Other items to be excluded from the list were:

¹⁴ Urry states that, “without descriptive text or explanation, these photographs promise the experience of “wandering lonely as a cloud” over the hills, in the traces of one of England’s most celebrated poets” (1995:185).

“vehicles, cars, anything that would date a picture...Anything that is obtrusive and jars. People with bright clothes on, people carrying plastic bags...dead trees, barbed wire...derelict buildings, scaffolding. Road signs, litter, car parks, crowds, traffic jams, low-flying planes, Bermuda shorts” (Crawshaw and Urry, 1995:187).

The Bermuda shorts is perhaps the most interesting item, as this is an image normally associated with developed tourist resorts which attract mass consumption¹⁵. By its exclusion, the photographer is aiming for a specific type of place construction which invokes a sense of difference, where images ‘bereft of human habitation’ enable a more solitary, individualistic experience for the tourist or ‘outsider’. A condition of the ‘romantic gaze’, as stipulated by Urry (1990), requires the absence of people in order to acquire a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with nature. Images of dry stone walls or white-painted farmhouses, appeal to romantic conceptions of peasant life and associated honest labour toiling in harmony with the land.

The use of romantic imagery combined with principles of the picturesque, convey a sense of an arcadia – crucially - of a place undeveloped and therefore unspoilt by urbanization and industrialization. Urry states that the romanticised photographs of the Lake District, constructed a specific way of ‘seeing’ which reinforced tourists’ images of the area as tranquil, timeless and natural’ (Crawshaw and Urry, 1997:189). Urry argues that the Lake District appears to demonstrate the power of a visual discourse organised around a romantic conception of the visual...it is a place...where taking photographs is essential in people’s appropriation of the place (1997:185). He comments that it seems to be a characteristic of modernity that social spaces develop which are wholly or partly dependent on visitors, and that these visitors are attracted by the place-myths that surround and constitute such places (Lash and Urry, 1994: Ch.10). Interestingly, this concurs with Robertson’s (1992, 1995) argument of how ‘globalisation’ is occurring, through the reconstruction of social spaces within the Lake District, which are constituted through the spatial practices of its visitors.

¹⁵ A number of features are worth noting from this particularly interesting assortment of items. The deliberate exclusion of a sense of time through the registration plate of the car, or the image of the car itself; the bright clothes characteristic of the “bright lights of modernity” (Brody, 1973); the elimination of traces of both urbanisation and industrialisation, via plastic bags, derelict buildings, scaffolding, all of which portray a sense of a place unkempt, emptied of people, and more importantly, a dangerous place, as indicated by the barbed wire which is instantly recognisable as a security measure.

One way that such myths can change is through an increase in the flow of visitors, with subsequent negative implications for the particular place-image (Urry, 1995). In the case of the Lake District, various efforts have been made to channel, restrict and focus the flows of visitors, both to preserve aspects of the physical and built environment and to enhance the enjoyment of others (1995:197)¹⁶. The belief that the Lake District is suited to 'quiet recreation' is another feature of the place-myth, that certain types of activities are inappropriate. Crucially, Urry suggests that this shrine to nature is constructed not just visually, but also aurally, that only certain kinds of noise are somehow appropriate to the place. However, Urry gives an example of speed limits on the lake, and comments that this is an objection not only to the noise of the speed boats, but also a distinction of taste against younger men and women who engage in such water sports. Their practices demonstrate that not all visitors to the Lake District do in fact embrace the dominant place-myth organised around the 'romantic' (and quiet) tourist gaze (1995:198).

Thus, the Lake District demonstrates a clash between two forms taken by the tourist gaze, the 'romantic' and the 'collective'; in each case, the gaze is not simply visual since other activities stimulating non-visual senses are also involved. The Lake District remains a 'highly managed landscape', bereft of graffiti or litter, for the purpose of remaining attractive to the visitor, rather than the dweller. As Urry states, "it has been gentrified" (1995:209).

"It is a landscape that could be described as the 'consummate artefact', a place where nature could not be left to its own 'natural' devices" (1995:209).

What is significant from Urry's (1995) accounts of how the Lake District has been constructed as a place, is how *material structures* within the landscape, have been ignored. It has been assumed that the gaze has been directed to features of the 'natural', rather than built landscape, and then subsequently written of in the literary accounts of visiting writers. However, no mention has been made of the built

¹⁶ In Dúnfarrraig, the road has been widened in certain spots, to allow traffic to pass safely in different directions, while double yellow lines have been used on another section of the road, to move on the busy traffic. Efforts to move on the flow of tourists, have been made in Dúnfarrraig through the use of double yellow lines, tyres and other devices. In Gireux, plans are currently underway for the construction of a roundabout at either end of the village on the main road, in order to curb the speed of motorists passing through its environs.

environment¹⁷, either of how structures have facilitated the gaze, or hindered the same. It is suggested that because literature on the development of the ‘picturesque’ has tended to neglect built structures within the landscape, there is a similar tendency in more recent accounts of place, to ignore this relationship of the gaze, to the built environment. This omission is crucial, as it denies the very complex ways in which the tourist experience is now being constructed in the similar rural context of Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland – as a *drive-through experience* which privileges the car over the pedestrian.

Anticipating this change in the way in which we are now experiencing the landscape – through the medium of the car - Miller (2001:2) has remarked that that we should take into account the ‘humanity of the car’, commenting that it makes little sense to focus on the car as a vehicle of destruction without also considering the ways in which it has ‘become an integral part of the cultural environment with which we see ourselves as human’. According to Featherstone (2004:5), this conceptualises the automobile as part of a vast transportation system, but also as part of intimate and personal life, as something subjected to a great variety of cultural uses, practices and coding. He refers to Young’s (2001) study of the Aboriginal people in Pitjantjatjara, South Australia, which showed how the car has been assimilated into the material culture and should be regarded as more of a means to *resist* alienation, than a sign of alienation.

Taking a slightly different approach, Inglis (2004) posits quite an interesting perspective of the car as a contested symbol of modernism, Americanization and consumerism. He states that for theorists such as Lefebvre, Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard, the car was ‘the epitome of objects’ which was colonizing an increasing number of areas in everyday life. This involved the ‘triumph of geometric space’ over the ‘lived spaces of communal association’. For all this however, Inglis points out that theorists such as Michel de Certeau has espoused the unintended consequences of the motor-car, such as subversion and resistance which has countered the colonizing tendencies of urban planners of the ‘automobile system’ of the city. Both Inglis (2004) and Thrift (2004) separately discuss the unofficial practices, habits of

¹⁷ Except for cursory reference to old buildings.

pedestrians and so forth, which have turned these geometric spaces back into lived places.

Laurier (2004) pushes the boundaries further still, when he discusses the car in terms of a platform for multi-tasking – *at speed* – rather than in terms of a vehicle for independent travel. It is argued that Urry's (1999, 2000) treatment of the car is undeniably a dismissive one, describing it in terms of a 'technocratic' 'cocoon' which has determined spatial changes in the organisation of the urban city, at the cost of the pedestrian. His emphasis on its individualistic, privatising quality, as one which dominates over public concern, articulates popular opinion regarding the car, rather than problematising how spatial practices are actually *facilitating* car usage and the busy commuter.

While Dúnfarrraig in Co.Clare boasts many of the attractions of the Lake District in England, the most dramatic change over the past five years, has been the increase in housing development. Concurrent with this change, has been the slow and gradual emergence of a village 'core', aided first through investment in new shop and café units, and secondly, through Clare County Council's decision to make explicit a village 'centre'. Traditionally, the rural village of Dúnfarrraig has taken its emphasis from seven small townlands which are dispersed along the main coast road. It is only within the past thirty years that these townlands have been combined to make up the place name of 'Dúnfarrraig'. At present, there are two sets of terraced houses adjacent to the village 'centre' in Dúnfarrraig, with an application submitted for permission to build thirty more terraced houses in the same area. The terraced design of the current houses lend themselves towards an urban feel, with the surrounding countryside of scattered dwellings, providing the suburban periphery. The dialectical opposite of this development, is Gireux in the south of France, whose sense of village first emerged from a core of terraced houses. Traditionally, these houses were the wall which provided a protective fortress around the castle at the centre of Gireux. Over the years, these were developed into terraced houses, which gradually spread down the mountainside in an arc shape, giving way to larger detached houses at the roadside which now form the periphery or fringe of the village proper. Thus, both rural villages are establishing a core of terraced houses – a familiar feature of the urban house design – with a fringe of detached houses on its periphery. It is suggested that the

concept of 'suburbia' (Jagose et al, 2003) or 'les pavillonnaires' (Haumont, 2000) may provide a useful mechanism for understanding some of the changes which have taken to the rural community and its place, since the arrival of the outsider resident.

3.8 'Suburbia'

Jagose et al (2003), define 'suburbia' as both "a lived and an imagined location of everyday life today". Not only does this encompass the material form of roads, shopping centre, school, domestic homes and so forth, but it "also consists of a powerful and complex cultural imaginary: all of the various and sometimes conflicting ways in which we understand, think about and represent the suburb to ourselves" (2003:68).

A wealth of literature traces the emergence of the American suburban model, from its original rustic ideal which takes its premise from the principles of the 'picturesque', to a peripheralised development on the edge of cities. What is particularly significant from this history of the suburb, is how the car has come to occupy a central position in relation first to the house, as detailed through the various types of suburban house developments.

As charted by Jackson (1985), the development of suburbanisation in post war America had five key characteristics: The typical suburb was located at the periphery of a major urban centre with low density detached dwellings surrounded by garden lots. Houses were given an architectural similarity in order to lower the cost of production and simplify the process of design and construction. Although historically the first proposals of suburban design had a class specific orientation, the later success of suburbia ultimately depended upon its easy availability as relatively inexpensive housing developments which were now affordable to a larger section of the population than before (1985:238-43).

Initially, the idea of suburban development was to provide a home and community for the family at a distance from the problems of city life, but also distinct from the idea of living in the countryside. The 'philosophies' guiding the suburban ideal include the simplicity of a more homogenous community" (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000:12). This ideal was premised upon middle class aspirations to domesticity. In the history of

middle class residential suburbs, the late nineteenth century railroad suburb represents the classic form. Fishman states that it exemplified the central meaning and contradiction of suburbia: combining the natural world of greenery and family life that appeared to be wholly separate from the great city, yet paradoxically, was wholly dependent on it (1946:134). Dominant images of the suburban house have since been informed by “bourgeois values of consumption, display, organized leisure and ‘nice’ taste” (Jagose et al, 2003). Attributes of ‘suburbia’ include an emphasis on ‘whiteness’, straightness and heterosexual coupledness, a political conservatism, a narrow parochial view of the world; materialism, self-satisfaction, social isolation, a subjective alienation and a spiritual impoverishment (ibid). This is the popular conception of suburban culture, or an imagined suburban existence which they claim, “is often heavily freighted with such associations” (2003:70).

In a defence of suburban life, Baxandall and Ewen (2000) argue that it has been a preoccupation with visibility, the display of materialism and wealth, which has negatively disposed judgement against the suburbs. They maintain that the home became iconic of middle class life with the display of house, car and new television. Fundamentally, it was what one consumed, rather than produced, which assumed importance (2000:147). Raising children and managing a household was viewed as a mark of leisure-class status, which placed women at the centre of home life. Suburban culture is essentially a gendered culture, where the home has been built around an ideology and a reality of women’s domestication (Silverman, 1997)¹⁸.

Historians and sociologists have understood the democratisation of the suburban vision as another form of emulation (Cross, ibid). ‘Window to window’ relations in the suburbs has replaced the old ‘face to face’ knowledge of neighbours in the old working class urban districts. Thus, social acts of status seeking and ‘belonging’ have inevitably become entwined with home display and aspiration for consumer goods (Baxandall and Ewen, 2000; Slater and Peillon, 2005)¹⁹.

¹⁸ According to Chambers, liberation from suburban drudge came in two forms, one of which was the Tupperware parties, which provided an outlet for women to share activities beyond childbearing. He states that these changes were framed by the consumerism that makes suburbia a life of style (1997:10).

¹⁹ Girling and Helphand evasively state that “suburbs are more than addresses. They represent in physical form the enactment of cultural ideals, embodying philosophies and images of what constitutes the good life” (1994:8).

Perversely, the concept of 'suburbia' was founded along more utopian and glorified lines. In mid-nineteenth-century America, a member of the Perfectionists²⁰ posited a more romantic view of the suburb as the ideal human environment which enabled a 'perfect existence' (Jackson, 1985:77). This view caught the imagination of developer Llewellyn S.Haskell, whose vision of suburbia included the promise of "a retreat for a man to exercise his own rights and privileges", and whose more idealistic concept of suburban life involved

- family
- community
- neighbourliness
- connection with others
- a clean environment
- peacefulness and safety
- health and 'good living'
- communal activities, such as car pools, dog-walking circles
- public facilities, like recycling programmes, child-minding centres, parks
- local clubs and community associations, such as the scouts, veterans' associations, bridge clubs.

The enactment of these ideals involved a rural, rather than urban setting, while later suburban developments have appropriated this idea of the 'rural' through the creation of winding streets which would construct a visual sense of the countryside. According to Jackson (1985), this was partly a reaction against the urban street pattern²¹ and associated mode of living. Jackson states that the curvilinear road was intended to be picturesque, as the image of the bending road was part and parcel of the suburban ideal (1985:76). The historical perspective develops this notion, emphasising the desire for domestic seclusion as the motivating force for suburbanisation. This was made possible through exploiting this 'rural' ideal, which involved an organic type of lifestyle close to nature, removed from the problems associated with an industrial, urban lifestyle (Cross, 1997:109).

²⁰ The Perfectionists were a religious cult.

²¹ This was of a "series of radial streets superimposed on a gridiron", with its related psychological impression of "clean, efficient and utilitarian grid". According to Drake, the visual effect of the radial line was more suited to the urban design, where "curved lines symbolise the country" (Jackson, 1985).

Jackson states that the earliest suburban developments (Llewellyn Park²², Riversdale²³ and Kellum City²⁴) whose designs were influenced by the romantic tradition, showed how “commercial land development could attract families away from the cities by creating a complete environment...” close to the rural ideal “with urban comforts (1985:86). Each suburban development provides a corollary with the ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry, 1990, 2002), in its determination of a more solitary, individualistic experience with nature; and social vision of ‘community’ represented through the provision of facilities such as the school and medical centre, to provide a collective experience of suburban life. Kellum City clearly embodies this last, privileging the collective, over the individualistic experience.

Archer (1997) takes a case study of the early colonial suburbs in Batavia, Indonesia, to show the difference between their relationship to the city as one of equivalence and equality, rather than the American model of suburban dependence on the city. He states that these suburbs differed from earlier ones, which had emerged outside the city for safety’s sake. The later suburbs established a common form of life, enabling colonial traders to create a separate and homogenous residential environment from the medieval city. However, these same suburbs came to embody and display class and status, similar to current associations of suburbia and consumerism. In fact, Archer remarks that class and cultural homogeneity also came to characterise these suburbs, as the white collar suburbanites tried to stop ‘the potentially socially disruptive attempts of less exalted members of their ranks building residents away from the city’, but only because they feared that the luxury of this distance from the city and its association with work, would encourage idleness (1997). Thus, while the

²² Llewellyn Park²² embodied the suburban ideal of the ‘picturesque’, in drawing upon the aesthetic notion of winding roads in order to preserve the rural character of the landscape. The complete preservation of woodland in this space enabled residents to consider that they were living among nature, rather than in a residential development.

²³ ‘Riverside’, the brainchild of Olmsted, aimed to provide a suburb as a synthesis of town and wilderness, rather than as absolute escape from the city (Fishman, 1946). This meant retaining the idea of detached dwellings with sylvan surroundings, but including urban conveniences such as the shop and school. Fishman comments that in the history of the middle class residential suburb, ‘Riverside’ exemplified the central meaning and contradictions inherent in ‘suburbia’: the natural world of greenery and family life that appeared to be wholly separate from the great city, yet was wholly dependent on it (1946:134). This paradox expresses the existence of the commuter’s life in modernity.

²⁴ Kellum differed from previous designs, particularly in its use of the gridiron street system which represented a dramatic reversal to the urban system.

characteristics of 'suburbia' such as political conservatism, have remained the same, over time (Archer's example is of the emergence of suburbia in 1759) and over space (from Madras, Indonesia and Calcutta, to America, Ireland and England), both 'suburbia' as a concept describing a relationship, and that relationship to the city²⁵, have changed.

In *Bowling Alone*, Putman (2000) uses the concept of 'social capital' (Hanifan, 1916) to refer to how connections among individuals in America's suburbs, maintained through social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness, have broken down²⁶. According to Putman, the cause for the disintegration of social structures such as the church, the state, political parties and so forth, is rooted in how we have valued social networks, as he states that 'we invest more in guns, dogs and locks, than in social capital for crime defence. Particularly in the neighbourhood watch, programmes almost always decay after an initial burst of enthusiasm unless rooted in a neighbourhood organisation of a more competitive sort (2000:107). However, Putman concedes that there are counter trends to this decrease in social capital. There are a plethora of encounter groups, reading groups, support groups and self-help groups, all of which provide important anchors in the emotional and social lives of millions of American suburbanites. Despite the popularity and strength of these groups, their focus is on the individual, rather than fostering a sense of community. Thus, Putman remarks that place-based social capital is being supplanted by function-based social capital (Pp148-184).

Departing from Hanifan's (1916) notion of 'social capital', conclusions from a recent study conducted on civic and social life in four of Dublin's suburbs by Peillon et al, makes the interesting comment that contrary to assumptions of the uniformity of the suburb, these four suburbs indicate the presence of a distinctive dynamic operating in each. This dynamic is explained in terms of a 'personal network of social support', but which is unique to each suburb because of the way in which that suburb has

²⁵ See Peillon's (2000) work on 'poly-nucleated conurbation', and Corcoran's (2000) work on 'ex-urbanisation', for more details on the changing relationship of suburbia to the city in Ireland.

²⁶ 'Social capital' means that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital (P19)

formed. In turn then, the relationship between the formation of the suburb and the social networks of the local residents, have determined the collective life of that locality. Therefore this study indicates a very strong connection between the age of the suburb and the development or types of social relations or 'connectedness' (Putman, 2000), which shows Putman's argument to be somewhat one-dimensional in its approach to the notion of 'social capital', yet also essentially confirms a large part of his thesis.

However, according to Silverstone (1997), 'suburbia' is not only a topographical experience, but is also a state of mind which is constructed in the imagination and desire. Part of this construction stems from television soap operas, which show the ordinariness of suburban life. He states that television shows soap operas which deal with the dilemmas of suburban life. Significantly, Silverstone emphasises that not all settings for these narratives are literally suburban, but the morality that informs and guides the narratives and limits their resolution, is principally one that is grounded in suburban, bourgeois experience, always contained by the structure of the text (1997:9). The structure of these texts then, are fragmented, multi-layered and repetitive, specifically created for suburban life. Discussion of these television programs takes place in the office, over the garden wall, over a cup of tea, and so forth. Silverstone states that there is a tension in television culture, between its capacity to support suburban culture, and yet at the same time, its tendency to undermine it²⁷ (1997, 1994). Moreover, Silverstone suggests that the 'interrelationship

²⁷ Recent television series depicting American suburban life, the "O.C." (Orange County), has received huge acclaim. The intention of the O.C. has been to satirise the ideals of 'suburbia' through subverting the normative practices of suburban everyday life. The program focuses on two families: the Cohens and the Coopers. The first series began with Ryan being rescued from his crime ridden life in working class Chino, to live in the poolhouse of the Cohen family in the affluent suburban neighbourhood of Newport. As the series developed, Ryan fell for, then got together with the most popular and beautiful girl in the school, Marissa - also his next door neighbour - who was dating the rugby captain. Simultaneously, Seth, only child of the Cohen family and school nerd, suddenly found himself facing a choice between two popular and beautiful girls in the school. However, as every fairy tale requires a wicked witch or wicked stepmother, Marissa's mother Julie, was created complete with fiery red hair to accentuate her more demonesque qualities of greed and betrayal. Thus, the suburb of Newport portrayed itself along idealistic lines, where superficially at any rate, it was possible for true love to exist beyond the exigencies of class divisions and where the qualities of the school nerd, which had formerly granted his alienation from decent bourgeois society, was not only charming, but attractive and desirable.

Despite brave attempts to subvert the suburban ideal, the O.C. decidedly confirms it. Julie, the caricatured nasty mother and wife, vacillates between virtue and vice in her genuine wish to protect her daughter Marissa from harm of alcoholic abuse in the first series, convincing us and Marissa's ex-boyfriend, that her harsh actions are motivated by her real love for her daughter. However, in the

between television and suburbia' lies deeper than this, citing Williams (1974) argument that suburbia has depended on developments in media technologies, pre-eminently radio, television and the telephone, to compensate for loneliness and distance, as well as to make mobilization possible (1997:10).

Concurrent with this interpretation of 'suburbia', is Cross's (1997) notion of the weekend retreat where use of the holiday home or second home becomes segmented in terms of time. Silverstone uses this idea to demonstrate how suburbia is more than a matter of location (1997:11). Thus, various ways of constructing 'suburbia', emerge as a built environment; as a social space; and as an ongoing discourse – as three interpretations, regardless of their geographical setting.

Suburbia has also been conceptualised as a 'middle landscape' (Rowe, 1992), partly because it represents a human connection to nature, but also because of how 'suburbia' as an ideal, rectifies the tension between city and wilderness by combining the civilizing forces of urban life, with the purifying capacity of the natural world. Conceptualised as such, suburbia represents a form of living which belongs neither to the city, nor to the country, but rather, as a 'middle landscape'. According to Rowe, suburbia stands between two extremes: the industrial city as the embodiment of social depravity with its imposing physical structures and pollution, and the wilderness which is 'situated in opposition to the city' as both the authentic representation of the wonder of Creation, and simultaneously as savage and unrelenting.

3.9 Suburbia and the car

A characteristic of the American suburban model has been its reliance on a method of transport to core areas. In Ireland, some suburbs on the periphery of Dublin city have become sites of underdevelopment through a lack of adequate public transport. As

second series when Julie witnesses Marissa dancing with the 'yard' boy at a disco, we realise that her love is prompted more by the issue of visibility by the neighbours, represented in this context by a group of sniggering school girls. Political conservatism, one of the characteristics of suburban life, is highlighted here in the tension between class divisions, which essentially satirises the extent to which 'suburbia' is governed by a sense of cultural homogeneity. Yet by the end of the first series, the O.C. was confirming the same 'value', by sending Ryan back to his working class neighbourhood in his original hoodie and tracksuit, to begin life as an expectant father with his old girlfriend from Chino. Encoded in the final episode of the first series, was the reluctant message that the affluent suburb of Newport could only support and protect one culturally heterogeneous individual from his/her disadvantaged roots, at a time.

Wickham (2004) states, the corollary of poor public transport is car dependency, where people use cars because they have no choice of any alternative mode of transport. In a car-dependent city, as in the countryside, it is essential to own a car (or at least have access to one) in order to participate in normal activities – not just employment, but shopping, socialising etc (Pp200-1). In the west of Ireland and the south of France, this sense of reliance on the car is heightened by the geo-spatial spread of rural villages served by an infrequent bus service²⁸. The lack of an adequate public transport system means greater dependency on the car²⁹.

Bartley and Saris (1998) examine how poorer areas in Dublin have become socially isolated through an inadequate public transport system. Poor spatial planning of the suburb has meant that these suburban areas in Dublin have become sites of underdevelopment. In a critical article, they consider the social and economic implications for a working-class suburb in Dublin in Ireland, which has been developed without community facilities or an adequate public transport system which would allow residents to travel to neighbouring suburbs which have these facilities. Their conclusions are sobering, given the extent of social exclusion and poverty which has resulted from neglect and poor spatial planning of this suburb. Bannon (1999) and Horner (1999) argue that in the case of Dublin, there is now evidence of a process of re-urbanisation (gentrification) taking place alongside suburbanisation. According to Bartley (1997) and MacLaren (1999), this has partly been made possible through public policy measures of central government designed to reinvigorate the city centre. Emerging from the transformation of the metropolitan area, has been the creation of a city with 'accessibility-rich' and 'accessibility-poor' spaces.

Referring to findings from their study of Cherry Orchard, which is a local authority housing area situated at the southern edge of an older working class suburb, Bartley and Saris comment that while limited access contributes to a sense of enclosure and eliminates through traffic, it socially and spatially isolates the suburb from

²⁸ Both Dúnfarrraig and Gireux boast a school bus or van, which is driven by a local resident in either village, and which brings the children to the 'local' school – in the case of Gireux, this refers to the school in the nearby village.

²⁹ Arguably the frequency of need, conditions the resident into a pattern of car usage for minor tasks, which evolves into a 'car culture' when structures become spatially organised to adapt to the motorist rather than the pedestrian.

surrounding areas. Although there are factories nearby, Bartley and Saris report that the social poverty of Cherry Orchard is created by a lack of access to facilities and services such as a primary school and post-primary school, shopping centre and so forth. However, due to low levels of car ownership in the area and a limited public transport, residents are restricted in their ability to access other suburban neighbourhoods for the same facilities. This is a problem similarly faced by many rural villages who are geographically isolated from each other. According to Bartley and Saris,

“the perceived deficiencies of the neighbourhood included its location as a ‘suburb at the edge of the suburbs’, catering for those with minimal transport facilities and yet physically isolated from the employment, shopping and leisure opportunities; the absence within the neighbourhood of basic everyday public facilities and services, which underline the area’s deprivation and isolation, thereby contributing to the general marginalisation of the community; the lack of ‘meeting places’ and, therefore, ‘opportunities’ for local people to interact on a meaningful basis, which militates against the establishment of local neighbourhood or friendship networks and community solidarity; and finally, the prevalence of high levels of unemployment, early school leaving and other social problems, which undermines local morale and stigmatises the reputation of the area as a ‘problem zone’ or ‘black spot’” (1998:88-9).

A similar experience of the suburb as socially exclusionary, is echoed by local residents formerly of inner city neighbourhoods, who were offered housing in Tallaght. They spoke of the sense of isolation created by the spatial pattern of the Tallaght suburbs which was markedly different from the inner city suburbs. Punch (2000:65) states that this isolation was exacerbated because the residential estates were low density and designed for car ownership rather than public transport. In this way, new urban problems were imposed on the new communities, who had to contend with isolation as well as other problems of exclusion. According to Punch the most immediate impact of new-town planning saw the disruption of older community networks and the dislocation and sense of isolation that followed resettlement to the periphery. The isolating and atomising peripheral urban environment contrasted with the familiar dense, and close-knit inner-city neighbourhoods. According to one resident:

“Some of them stuck their ground...others just saw – this is it and ended up going to the housing estates, where they were absolutely broken-hearted

because – gone were the neighbours that they had. You see, the inner city is a close-knit community. Everybody knows everybody. But once you went out to the housing estates, it was a shut door...they were just lost”.

Closely linked with the development of the American suburb throughout the twentieth century, has been the motor-car and road investment, which has enabled people to live commuter lives at a distance to the city. The importance of the car was expressed in terms of its incorporation into the spatial fabric of the domestic house. Jackson remarks that the inclusion of the car as part of, rather than separate from the house, meant that “the car had become a virtual member of the family” in the middle class suburban bungalow of the 1920s (1985). Jackson states that the motor vehicle did not create suburbia, but it played a major role in shaping the modern metropolitan area. The vitality of the fringe depended in great part on its accessibility, and the automobile provided that access more quickly and efficiently than its predecessors, the electric trolley and the commuter railroad.

Jackson (1985) maintains that the successful proliferation of the motor car into everyday life and resulting congestion on highway roads, facilitated the emergence of road lobby groups, whose commercial interests encouraged a political shift in emphasis, away from schools, hospitals and welfare, to the building of new roads. This shift was made possible “because the automobile and the suburb have combined to create a drive-in culture that is part of the daily experience of most Americans.” Jackson cites John B.Rae (1971) who wrote: “modern suburbia is a creature of the automobile and could not exist without it”. Dyos (1966) states that [because of this reliance on the car] the suburb is essentially in a dependent relationship to the whole organism of the city. The characteristic features of suburban life are thus dichotomous. The home is divided not only from the workplace, but from the main institutions of culture and entertainment, and the interests and loyalties of those living in the suburbs, tend to branch away from those in the centre (P24).

As usage of the car increased, its spatial relationship to the dwelling changed, from functional object, to an object situated within the spatial fabric of the house³⁰. Jackson

³⁰ With interest, Jackson notes that while the word *garage* is French (meaning storage space) “its transformation into a multi-purpose enclosure internally integrated with the dwelling is distinctively American” (1985:251).

reports that “in California, garages and driveways were often so prominent that the house could almost be described as an accessory to the garage” (P252). The motel, drive-in theatre and mobile home now provide examples of a society adapting to the needs of the car driver, the result of which, Jackson suggests, is the “centreless city”³¹.

Silverstone (1997) remarks that American suburbs are now being built around the mall, spatially defined by a symbolic and material dependence on these cathedrals of our time. Similarly in Ireland, state investment in, and the relocation of a number of major city centre hospitals and schools to the suburbs of Dublin, has paved the way for the ‘ex-urbanisation’ of Dublin, as coined by Corcoran (2000). Definition of the ex-urbanised city now includes suburbs south towards the Wicklow mountains, “extending northward and westward beyond the city boundaries”. Following in America’s footsteps, shopping centres and industrial business parks have formed at the perimeter of the city, prompted by ring roads and motorways (Corcoran, 2000:92). Corcoran postulates that the spatial form a city takes, is shaped fundamentally by endogenous economic forces, and in the Irish context, the state has played a crucial role in this process of urban transformation. She notes the emergence of a mall culture in the suburban outskirts of Dublin as an example of state investment and support for this process of ‘ex-urbanisation’, remarking dryly that while presented as a public good, the mall is only available to a consumer class with spending power and access to a private car (ibid:92).

³¹ Orange County provides an interesting example of the American suburb. Jackson describes how the knock-on effect from Disneyland developments in 1955, facilitated the evolution of Orange County from rural backwater into suburb, into a collection of medium and small towns. Jackson states that it had never had an urban centre, “in large part because its oil-producing sections each spawned independent suburban centres, none of which was particularly dominant over the others”. He records that by 1980, the Orange County comprised 26 cities, which gradually merged to boast two million people. In an interview, one suburbanite remarked.

“I live in garden Grove, work in Irvine, shop in Santa Ana, go to the dentist in Anaheim, my husband works in Long Beach and I used to be the president of the League of Women Voters in Fullerton”.

Even from the late 1920s, the central city was losing some of the functions it had accrued during its heyday in the late nineteenth century (Goldfield, P297). In 1926, one business man closed his doors in Atlanta, explaining that

“traffic got so congested that the only hope was to keep going. Hundreds used to stop; now thousands pass. Five Points has become a thoroughfare, instead of a centre.”

Corcoran investigates the dialectical relationship between the car and the development of the shopping centre in Ireland, as one example of a facility which is built with the car in mind. She states that the success of Tallaght Town Centre (the Square) “resulted in its adoption as a prototype for a series of shopping malls on the perimeter of the city, each located close to a major thoroughfare” (ibid). Corcoran argues that the development of the Square and other more recent shopping centres also located on the perimeter of the city, were made possible through state intervention and the deployment of fiscal policies.³² This provided the conditions conducive to such a development. State investment was expressed through expenditure on infrastructure in road networks (2000:94).

Corcoran remarks that it also indicates that “the relationship between citizens and urban public space is changing”, as people are increasingly heading towards the mall in the suburban periphery which offers free car parking, and away from the shops in the city centre, with expensive parking rates. She recalls the advertising billboard during the construction of the shopping centre at Quarryvale, which located the mall in terms of its proximity to major road networks. Similarly however, it is argued that “if cars are crucial to gain access to the new means of consumption, it follows that those without cars will be to some degree, socially excluded” (P95)

These malls have been materially and symbolically constructed from empty space. Corcoran argues that the “effect of their formulaic construction, is that there is ‘a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities of experience’ (Relph, 1976)³³. Corcoran remarks that the mall is one example of changes occurring in the spatial system at local and national level. It is suggested here that Corcoran’s use of the mall to

³² The Square was developed by a consortium comprised of the Irish-owned Monarch Properties and the British based Guardian Royal Exchange. To facilitate the development, the state granted the Square designated area status under the urban renewal scheme of 1985. This was given despite the fact that as a green site, the development did not conform to the definition of ‘urban renewal’. However, Tallaght was an expanding suburb on Dublin’s periphery and in dire need of infrastructure.

³³ Internally, the public areas are spaces of spectacle, where an aspect of Nature is faithfully reproduced through cascading waterfall, tree or shrubbery. Corcoran maintains that while the marble, steel and plastic are clearly functional, the vegetation is there to enchant (2000:99). Similarly, the shopping mall “offers the consumption equivalent of life in a gated community” (suburbia). This involves an interesting paradox, whereby security measures must be taken for the safety of the shops and customers in the construction of the mall as open public space, yet must not be evident to the customer.

demonstrate the dialectical relationship between the emergence of the shopping centre along major road ways and the car, is crucially important towards an understanding of how the positioning of facilities is being determined by its relationship to major roads.

Not only this, but suburban developments are now taking their cue from this notion of accessibility provided by proximity to major road networks, and now promise the advantage of living in peace in the country while also having direct and speedy access – not only to the urban city such as Dublin, but crucially, to a *major road network* such as the M50. Thus, while Ireland has adopted many of the characteristics of the American suburb and lifestyle in its dependency on the car, the emphasis on the car – but more importantly, access to major routes – is transforming the relationship of the suburbanite to place. Where roads have been constructed to facilitate access from the suburb to the urban centre, now the suburb is being built along the road, in order to tap into existing means of access to a neighbouring suburb or town, to become a ‘poly-nucleated conurbation’ (Peillon, 2000) of suburban development.

However, while suburbia is associated with the car, spatially isolated and remote rural communities are also car reliant. In places like Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland, there is no public transport, so car ownership tends to be quite high. Nevertheless, the classic suburban model with its terraced and dense housing, does not apply to a topographical understanding of Dúnfarrraig as ‘suburban’. Despite this, 48% of the full-time residents commute to work in villages and towns outside of Dúnfarrraig, a characteristic of suburbia. Therefore, to treat of ‘suburbia’ in terms of a type of settlement pattern, which imposes uniformity on its landscape (Jackson, 1985; Girling and Helphand, 1997), is problematic, as Silverstone (1997) argues that;

“Suburbia is no longer to be found simply in the landscapes of tract housing or ribbon development. It is to be found also, and perhaps increasingly, in the suburban imaginary, a virtual space no longer visible...on the margins of cities. Suburbia is a state of mind...constructed...in the everyday lives of those who struggle to maintain hearth and family...” (1997:13).

This way of treating ‘suburbia’ in terms of a construct, instead of describing a fixed tract of land, facilitates a much more flexible and imaginative way of conceptualising changes to both physical and abstract space. Similarly, Dyos (1966:26) stated that the

modern suburb is clearly less of a geographical expression than it is an attitude of mind.

On quite a different note, Miller posits the art historian's perspective of the suburb, which suggests that the architecture of the suburb might be capable, as material production, of the direct representation of a set of dominant ideals and principles of the nature of society (P39). Miller refers to the work of art historian, Panofsky (1957) who demonstrated a relationship between the architecture of the high Gothic, and scholasticism of that time. He showed how scholars attempt to understand the quite structural relations in terms of an understanding of the world, were reflected in the principles of the explicit form of the Gothic cathedral and others (ibid).

According to Miller, literature regarding the representation of modernism as style in architectural design, emphasises the façade of the building, the appearance and 'messages'. He states that the form and appearance of the buildings are themselves effective instruments of ideological control and are therefore to be understood as active interventions, not mere reflection. Miller refers to the ideals and architectural innovation of Le Corbusier among others, showing how modernism as a trend, "has increasingly been able to stand for what our urban environment has become" (P40). Miller states that through architecture, modernism has transcended the barrier from abstract theory, to explicit representation of a principle or ideology (P43). Unfortunately Miller does not explain the type of practices involved in the construction of this representation, nor provide an example of such, which means that this theory remains in the 'abstract', rather than exploring how architecture, in operating as a 'representation of space' (Lefebvre, 1991), interacts with the everyday, lived experience of people (space of representation, (Lefebvre, 1991)). According to Lefebvre (1991), the relations between these are complex, and imbued with tension. Thus, it is suggested that the significance of Miller's argument lies not only in the notion that architecture can operate as a representation of an ideology or principle, but also in the way in which this ideology is constructed through architecture, how this 'representation of space' becomes visible, or indeed, how the ideology only becomes apparent perhaps through particular 'spaces of representation', and why these spaces are necessarily at odds with each other.

However, due to the concentration of estates on the periphery of urban centres, there has been a reluctance in literature, to identify a culture of suburbia occurring in the more *rural* parts of the countryside such as the western seaboard of Ireland³⁴. Instead, the problem of ‘one-off housing’ has been widely discussed in relation to maintaining sustainable indigenous communities in rural parts of the countryside, thereby presenting yet another angle to the rural-urban divide. Suburbia is popularly understood in terms of its generalising and homogenising quality, partly because of the visual effect created by blocks of houses built according to a uniform architectural design, but also because it embodies a particular set of values of community and family, through which the concept of ‘suburbia’ was born (Jackson, 1985; Jagose, 2003; Girling and Helphand, 1997). It is suggested that a parallel may be drawn between the homogenising effect of suburbia, and perceptions of globalisation as an all encompassing force.

3.10 Suburbia as a ‘global’ effect?

Opposing notions of globalisation as a homogenising force, Robertson (1995) contends that globalisation has instead involved the reconstruction of home, community and ‘locality’, whereby the ‘local’ has become an aspect of the global (1995:30). He maintains that this interpretation neglects the extent to which what is called ‘local’, is to a large degree constructed on a trans- or super-local basis. To that extent, Robertson argues that the local should not be viewed as counterpoint or ‘dialectically opposite’ to the global, as suggested by Giddens. Rather, as an integral part of globalisation.

Friedman takes to task this way of conceptualising localising phenomena and the standardisation of locality. Although Robertson expresses the former in relatively concrete terms, where the local is essentially a global product, Friedman queries his

³⁴ Although if Silverstone’s interpretation of ‘suburbia’ as construct is to be applied, then it could be argued that Hugh Brody (1973) did attempt to show the beginnings of privatisation – a characteristic associated with the American model of suburbia – to the rural homestead in the west of Ireland. He briefly explored this notion in relation to house visits, showing the decline in the house as a public social space. However, Brody did not recognise this change as an aspect of suburban culture. Instead, he explained this and other practices, as indicative of a ‘change and decline’ of rural society in the west of Ireland.

treatment of these phenomena as abstract ideas, rather than within a social situation or context. Further, he argues that while Robertson asserts that the 'global' differs according to competing interpretations of 'global circumstances', he provides no alternative to the political-economy models on their own ground (Friedman, 1995:74).

“Awareness of the globe, communication between its regions...are not specific enough, it seems to me, to provide a dynamic understanding of global processes” (Friedman, *ibid*).

In an attempt to 'clarify' the concept of the global system or process, Friedman reiterates the model of the global field as a set of dynamic properties. Where he diverges from Robertson's thesis, is in the return to a world systems approach to describe the restructuring and establishment of hegemony within a core-periphery model. Friedman contends that 'globalisation' refers here to the formation of global institutional structure – that is – structures that organize the already existing global field and global cultural forms (1995:75). However, it is suggested that this provides a limited understanding of how global processes are constituted. Where Friedman describes these ideas as 'abstract', it is their greater complexity and ability to encompass a wide range of meanings – including the esoteric - which he fails to grasp.

Concurring with Robertson's emphasis on locality, Morley and Robins maintain that the particularity of place and culture can never be “absolutely transcended” (1995:116). They comment that globalisation can also be understood in terms of its association with new dynamics of re-localisation, and state that;

“it is about the achievement of a new global-local nexus, about new and intricate relations between global space and local space...globalisation...is a matter of inserting a multiplicity of localities into the overall picture of a new global system” (*ibid*).

However, it is argued that their treatment of globalisation replicates Giddens's metaphor of the same, by conceptualising the local as separate from the global through the use of 'space', and reiterates Hannerz's notion of globalisation as the interconnectedness of local cultures which Robertson had argued veers dangerously towards a homogenisation of localities.

To their credit however, Morley and Robins state that “the global-local nexus is about the relation between globalising and particularising dynamics...and the ‘local’ should be seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in, and through its relation to the global” (P117). Further they suggest that the global-local nexus must not be understood in absolute terms as a renaissance of local cultures. In contrast to Relph (1976), who argues that modernity is characterised by a sense of ‘placelessness’ and ‘inauthenticity’, Morley and Robins argue that it is the process of cultural decentralisation and resurgence of place-bound traditions, which now characteristic of modernity (1995:117). In some instances, the global context is recreating a sense of place and sense of community in very positive terms, whereas in others, local fragmentation may give rise to a sense of nostalgia, where local attachment and understanding of own identity, is informed by a nostalgic, introverted and parochial atmosphere (ibid).

3.11 Summary

This research is interested in how the rural community is restructuring itself in the Irish context of Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland, and in the French context of Gireux in the south of France, given the influx of the outsider to live in these villages on either a temporary (holiday home) or permanent basis (own houses and rented accommodation). This involves problematising the type of social interaction or social relations (Massey, 1994) which is occurring between residents, and between resident and the landscape of that rural village, in order to understand how processes are emerging in their local contexts. This research is attempting to look beyond the notion of the outsider impacting on the local context, as implied within globalisation theory, and seek instead to understand social relations in terms of the ‘interpenetrative’ interaction between outsider and local, and between the resident and the landscape (Robertson, 1995).

Given the strong commuting culture in both Gireux and Dúnfarrraig however, this research is attempting to recognise the different ways in which the landscape can be understood; in terms of a flow of tourists and residents through the nexus of the car, or of houses or built structures in that landscape, and so forth. Conceptualising the landscape in this manner facilitates a more multi-faceted approach towards

understanding the nature of the relationship between the resident and that landscape, where previously the landscape has been presented as a static, physical entity (Urry, 1990, 2002). Departing from Massey's (1994) emphasis on how the spatial is constituted through the social, this research is approaching this notion of the 'social' as constructed through the interaction of the resident with ideas manifest through structures in that landscape, as well as with the social body. This provides a more flexible approach towards understanding how spaces within the landscape are being socially constructed, and subsequently, of how the rural community is restructuring itself. It implies a dialectical relationship, which is being conceptualised here as a modality of 'dialectical interaction'. Thus, it is the activities or processes which are emerging through this interaction between individuals and the landscape, which are of particular interest to how a sense of community is being constructed in the separate rural contexts of Dúnfarrraig in the west of Ireland, and Gireux in the south of France.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 The Research Question

The central issue prompting this research, is the impact of the outsider on the social and physical landscape of the rural community. The research question is addressing this issue from a sociological perspective, by asking how is the rural local community restructuring itself according to its interaction with the resident outsider¹?

From this research question, two sub questions have emerged, problematising the main issue in terms of a dialectic of enquiry: How is the dynamic of interaction between flows of local and global, determining the social construction of rural space? Concurrently, how is the social construction of rural space, determining the dynamic of interaction between flows of local and global? This research is interested in the type of *processes* which are emerging from this dynamic of interaction, which explain how the rural community is restructuring itself, rather than necessarily space as an independent entity (Curry, 1995). This has involved a comparative framework of analysis between an isolated rural village in the west of Ireland (Dúnfarrraig), and a similar village in the south of France (Gireux), in order to investigate the dynamics involved in the restructuring of these rural communities. Notably, this framework has been constructed through comparing the *concepts* which describe these processes and practices, rather than the practices. A key finding of this research involves identifying showing how the process of ‘suburbia’ (Jagose, 2003) is occurring in both of these rural contexts, but in quite different ways. Therefore, this research has attempted to use concepts as an analytical framework, through which these practices might be compared and also contrasted.

The concept of ‘space’ has been problematised in terms of a dichotomy of the internal and external space of two rural communities, in order to assess how these rural villages are being constructed as social spaces. This research is treating the interaction between the outsider and local resident, and between the resident and the car, in terms of a dialectical relationship which is resulting in the social construction of space. A central concern of this research then, is to investigate the type of processes which are

¹ The ‘resident’ outsider is referring here to the outsider who buys or builds a holiday home in order to stay in the area for short periods of time, and the outsider who lives on a full-time basis in the same area.

occurring within these two rural villages as a result of this interpenetration (Robertson, 1992, 1997), and identifying their significance for the restructuring of that local community.

4.2 Why Dúnfarrraig and Gireux?

This study has involved a comparative framework of analysis of two rural villages: one in the west of Ireland, the other in the south of France. Although empirically the two villages are similar, cultural differences expressed through socialisation and spatial practices, have made theoretical comparison quite difficult. Access is a key factor in research, so Dúnfarrraig in the Burren region in Ireland was chosen for this project as a place and community well known by the researcher for over twenty years. Both Dúnfarrraig and Gireux are located in regions of immense cultural and historical importance to either country: the Burren area in County Clare in Ireland, and the Cathar region in the south of France.

However, as Dúnfarrraig is a seaboard village along the west coast of Ireland, and Gireux is a landlocked village, the preferred type of rural village in France for a comparative analysis, was a seaboard village. This researcher travelled along both east and west coasts of the south of France in order to identify such a village. For a number of reasons, this proved quite a difficult task.

First, Ireland's road structure is remarkably different to its French counterpart. Unlike France, one can leisurely drive on national routes which take the tourist through what are marked as 'coast roads' in Ireland, passing through villages en route. If one observes a sign, it is usually only to yield or stop at a junction. In France, the very structured nature of the French road system means that it is impossible to take a national route through a village. Instead, the motorist must leave at specific exits for separate areas in the one village. Further, the presence of large trees flanking the road side, effectively screens off the vista of that village for the passing tourist, encouraging the same to drive on or make a decision regarding a sign for an 'ancient boat' or 'south part of beach', quickly. There is nothing leisurely about this approach to taking the coastal route. Even cyclists must obey a plethora of road signs and road markings. Space is highly structured, with very little scope left to the imagination of the passer-by. Moreover, the advent of tourism to the east and west coasts of France

has ensured rapid development to these seaboard villages. Coupled with sultry climate, each village has become a resort, bereft of visual signs of indigenous existence.

Therefore, the type of tourist which flows through the seaboard villages of France, is quite qualitatively different to that of Ireland. Unlike in Ireland where the issue concerns the ability of the residents to detain the flow of the tourist for business purposes, for the most part, the tourist will have made a decision to leave the national 'coastal' route in France at a specific exit in order to examine an aspect of interest in a part of the village. Even then the flow is highly controlled by the structured nature of the road system providing access to the village.

Gireux, a landlocked rural village in France en route to bigger villages and towns of specific tourism interest, has facilitated a comparative framework of analysis with Dúnfarrraig in Ireland precisely because of its greater geographical distance from the coastal areas of mass tourism. It boasts a population of 196 residents, nearly identical to Dúnfarrraig's 216, and is experiencing a growing influx of holiday homes, generated by the flow of tourism through the village, similar to that of Dúnfarrraig.

Dúnfarrraig is a coastal village in the heart of the Burren, Co.Clare in the west of Ireland. It hosts a population of 216 residents, of which an estimated 60% are permanent local residents². Gireux, in the south of France, is a landlocked rural village in the Cathar region, sporting a population of 196 residents, of which 120 residents are outsiders living on a permanent basis in the village³. Both villages are located on a main route to bigger villages or towns which feature specific items of cultural interest to that region. Dúnfarrraig and Gireux are more typically characterised as transit route villages, which describes a place as a space through which one passes and perhaps stops at briefly before continuing the journey to the destination. It is the location of both villages within this charged space, and their attractiveness to the outsider, which has motivated this research.

² Statistic provided by local residents.

³ Statistic provided by the Mayor's office.

For the purpose of this research four main categories were chosen. These comprised 'local people from Gireux/Dúnfarrraig', 'outsiders living for a period of time in Gireux/Dúnfarrraig'⁴, 'local people dealing with tourism in Gireux/Dúnfarrraig' and those 'tourists who come for a short stay in Gireux/Dúnfarrraig'. While these categories do not comprise the total population resident in both villages, they provide a framework with which to explore how Dúnfarrraig and Gireux are being constructed as social spaces within their rural context.

Preliminary research was conducted through observation of the interaction of residents in both villages. Following from this, a set of core in-depth interviews were conducted with local and outsider residents. At the end of this interview, respondents were asked to take a disposable camera, and take up to ten photographs of what Gireux/Dúnfarrraig meant to them. After these films were developed, a second set of interviews were conducted, which looked more closely at the perspective of the resident in relation to the issues which had emerged from the first interview, and addressing the photographs which the resident had taken. The respondent was then asked to take photographs for a second time, of the internal layout of his/her house. A final interview was conducted with that respondent in order to analyse the content of these visual narratives.

4.3 A qualitative approach

Qualitative research is characterised by its concern with meaning. Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) describe the potential of qualitative methodologies to provide rich and detailed descriptions through integrating multiple perspectives and methods. Qualitative research methods were used for this research, due to the potentially sensitive nature of some of the questions being asked, and as an approach which traditionally has allowed closer inspection of the subject's perspective through the use of interviews and observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:10). This research has used prolonged, multiple and flexible techniques in a comparative case study context, in order seek insights into how the rural community is restructuring itself according to its interaction with flows such as tourism. The methodological framework has

⁴ This category refers in most part to those outsiders who are living on a full-time basis in the rural village, but also allows for exceptions to this definition: in the case where the temporary visitor will either rent a house in the village or live in their second home for a number of months or year (s).

attempted to provide media for the expression of that narrative, through an epistemological approach using visual methods and the in-depth interview.

Critical theorists Kincheloe and McLaren (1998) argue that approaches to research are framed by ideological concerns or conceptual frameworks, which motivates how we understand theory and construct our research design. The highly complex political structure in both rural villages necessitated a more sensitive methodological approach through informal conversations, secondary literature and participant observation, in addition to more formal and structured methods such as the in-depth interview. Therefore, although the in-depth interview was a necessary tool for the examination of visual and verbal narratives, a greater depth of insight was gained through exploratory research methods such as informal conversations and observation.

A visual methods approach was adopted, in an attempt to provide a more multi-faceted methodological response to potentially complex subjective understandings of practices and ideas. Usually triangulation of methods is used in research to verify findings. This technique is premised upon the idea that if a phenomenon is studied from different angles or positions, an accurate reading or measurement is possible. This concept of triangulation (Denzin, 1989) is located within an objectivist epistemology, which implies that this view of the social world is objective and a knowable social reality. However, the critical theorist perspective posits that the concept of triangulation – which is conceived of as multiple methods – should encourage the researcher to approach their research questions from different angles and explore intellectual puzzles in a rounded and multi-faceted way (Mason, 1996:149). For the purpose of this research, a combination of research methods was used to provide greater clarity and depth of data, through which an insight or understanding, rather than scientific verification of local processes, could be gained.

The in-depth interview is a key tool frequently used in qualitative research. According to Kincheloe and McLaren, the ‘dialogic’ interview follows a conversational format wherein the researcher and participant together develop a more complex understanding of the topic. Specifically, it involves “...being sensitive to the feedback needs of the person being interviewed” (Patton, 2002:374). A number of different types of interview format were used in this research: focus groups, the semi-structured

and unstructured interview. Visual methods provided a complementary framework to the interview structure, as it enabled a flow of narratives from the verbal, to the visual. Lastly, detailed participant observation was continuously employed during the length of this study in conjunction with informal interviews in order to assess the validity of behaviours and opinions expressed in the first instance.

While the semi-structured and structured interview is based on a series of questions previously arranged by the researcher, informal conversational interviews - more characteristic of participant observation - become a part of social life. Ideally, observation in interviews, both formal and informal, occurs in order to understand the context; to see patterns which people are unwilling to talk about, and crucially, move beyond the selective perceptions of both the researcher and participant (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998:194). This epistemological approach regards the social system as an ontology of formal and/or informal patterns of interaction, which essentially depicts the way in which people organize themselves in relation to recurring events (ibid).

However, Burawoy (2001) asserts that the interview has become problematic because researchers are adopting a scientific approach in their use of the same, excluding the social context within which the interview is located. He argues that the scientific model has been interpreted in terms of a positivist approach, and suggests that this model should also include a reflexive methodology which not only acknowledges the social context, but emphasises a dialogic approach between theory and narrative. The principle of reflexive science would thus entail the intervention of the researcher into the life of the subject through the interview: a process which presupposes multiple meanings from the stimulus questions and techniques used (2001:13). He recommends moving toward a more "narrative" interview, where the interviewer allows respondents to tell their own story and offer their own "narrative" (Mishler, 1986). In this way, the interviewer proceeds through dialogue, reducing distortion but at the expense of reactivity, reliability, replicability and often representativeness (Burawoy, 2001:13).

Burawoy puts forward a model of the interview: the extended case method which applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the "micro" to the "macro"...all by building on pre-existing

theory (ibid). Theory constitutes situated knowledges into social processes and locates these in the wider context of determination (ibid:21). Buraway remarks that the goal of research is not directed at establishing a definitive 'truth' about an external world, but at the continual improvement of existing theory (ibid).

Due to the exploratory and interpretive nature of this research, a phenomenological, case based approach was adopted in an attempt to understand the complexity of interaction both within the rural community, and by the community with flows of cars, and the type of processes which are emerging as a result of this interaction.

4.4 From the interview to the camera

A total of twenty five people were interviewed in each village over the course of one year. Of the 100% of respondents who completed the core interview, 80% of interviewees were interviewed a second time in relation to the photographs which they had taken, while 40% were interviewed a third time. At the end of each interview in which a good rapport had been established, the respondent was given a task. This task involved taking two sets of photographs, the first which aimed to depict the respondent's understanding of Dúnfarrraig/Gireux. The second required taking pictures within the work context. This second question aimed to recognise a significant part of the daily/weekly routine of the respondent, and how the movement within or away from the village boundaries was affecting their understanding of the place in which they live.

Respondents were given up to two months to complete the task, but similar to questionnaires, would normally take the photographs within the returning week of the researcher, or require reminding through a repeat visit or phonecall. Upon collection of the camera, the resident was offered a second print of developed photographs in recognition of his/her time spent on the task. Although each respondent was asked to take up to ten photographs each time, the quantity varied between respondents⁵.

⁵ Those who took a small number of photographs, stated that they had a specific theme in mind and wanted only to take as many photographs as they could explain in the subsequent interview. It is suggested that this approach indicates the quite intelligent subject who is using the photograph as a device to control and frame the topics of conversation.

Two instances arose where the respondents demurred that it would be impossible to catch a sense of atmosphere, unique to the village, by photograph. When probed on this further, the respondent commented that greetings between neighbours, or interaction between a family at a dinner, were two examples where a visual medium would disable the nuances achieved through a verbal narrative.

“...There’s not only that, but in Gireux, there are things that you can’t...I think there are things you can’t take a picture of. I don’t know...like the connections between people, you can’t take a picture of that” (secretary to the mayor in Gireux).

While accepting the limitations of the photograph, this method aimed to provide a forum through which a story could emerge, based on picking out details in each photograph, or as method of memory elicitation. It was suggested that the respondent could present old or current photographs, instead of taking new photographs, particularly if they felt that these represented a more accurate understanding of their place and work.

Initially the methodological design involved giving each respondent a camera at the end of the interview in the summer and winter times, with the intention of providing a visual narrative of place, at alternating times of the year. When the researcher requested a second set of photographs of one respondent during the winter months however, the respondent queried the value of the photographs which she/he had already taken during that summer. Rather than appear to denigrate the value of each photograph and its accompanying visual narrative, the respondent was asked instead to take photographs of his/her house. This would enable a conceptual link from the inner space of the home environment, flowing out into the public space of the village and community environment. Ironically, the change in methodology directed the narratives more specifically towards an understanding of what concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ space entail on a micro level.

This approach was highly successful in the majority of cases. In a very small number of cases, the unwillingness of the respondent to participate in the core interview, indicated that asking the subject to take a camera would have been inappropriate⁶.

During the interview with the photographs, the manner in which each respondent described their photographs, differed considerably. Some respondents chose to lay out the photographs either sequentially or thematically. For a few respondents, it provided a forum for chat and conversation about the type of photographs taken and their personal stories attached to a particular scene. One or two respondents discarded a photograph which they had taken, when they felt unable to explain their motive for taking it at the time. In each instance, the respondent was offered a copy of the developed photographs, both before and after the interview. While most declined, a small number of respondents accepted, particularly after explaining the significance of the photograph to the researcher during the interview.

This approach provided quite a different type of medium through which respondents' perspective could be expressed, thereby allowing for either a revised opinion of the same or the confirmation of existing opinion. While the methodological basis for distributing cameras was rooted in a qualitative, interpretive paradigm, the difficulty of retrieving cameras from respondents has ironically proven very similar to that of questionnaires, a key method of the quantitative paradigm. Although in each instance a time frame was given, inevitably this was not adhered to, despite follow-up phonecalls and repeat visits. A result of this has been the unforeseen delay of data, and in a very small number of cases, the abandonment of this method.

An aspect of this methodology, aimed to subvert the relationship of the interviewee (normally the object of the tourist 'gaze' [Urry, 1990, 2002]), to the camera lens.

⁶ Sometimes availability of time for taking photographs proved a difficult issue. In some instances, the interview had been postponed at least three times by the respondent, before finally agreeing to do the interview. In one case, the interview had been completed and camera given. The rapport was very friendly and informal and initially, extended beyond the confines of the research through emails and another visit to the subject, during which she grinned and stated that she was just about to take the pictures requested. However, after repeated failure to contact the respondent on two other visits to Dúnfarrraig, it was decided to abandon this avenue of research. This decision was informed by the complex personal situation of the respondent who may not have been in a position to take photographs, and of the increasing business demands on the same.

Anthropologists have taken issue with the repressive uses of photography during the colonial period, describing conventional visual classification systems as objectifying systems, imposed on the weak by the powerful (Rose, 2001:104). She cites Edwards (1992) who discusses the importance of situating colonial photographs of people from other cultures, in relation to the ideologies and intentions of their producers. Edwards asserts that 'the power relations of the colonial situation were not only those of overt oppression, but also of insidious, unequal relationships, which permeated all aspects of cultural confrontation' (1992:4). The power relations regarded colonial photography as symbolic of this power relationship that was 'sustained through a controlling knowledge which appropriated the 'reality' of other culture into an ordered structure' (ibid:6).

Rose comments that this realist approach to cataloguing and ordering images of individuals from 'other cultures' was a means of objectifying and categorizing 'the other', an exercise that implied a type of hierarchy and oppression that was part and parcel of colonialism⁷. The method used in this research, has aimed to counteract this difficulty by providing a camera and asking the interviewee to adopt a critical, reflexive stance in relation to his/her social world. Ironically, this has meant that the resident, normally the subject of the 'gaze' (according to Urry's theory), becomes the person to exercise that 'gaze', seeking to articulate his/her perspective from behind the camera lens.

Stanley and Wise (1993) describe the realist or positivist model (cataloguing and ordering photographs) as a deductivist approach to research which uses theory to arrive at data collection. The naturalist or humanist model also follows a linear movement, but allows theory to *emerge* from research rather than precede it (P151); while Stanley and Wise similarly dismiss the naturalist model as one dimensional, linear, arguing that it implies a structure for the collection and presentation of data. Conceptualising this as 'hygienic research', they maintain that it sanitizes the entire research process (ibid:153). The methodological framework for this research was

⁷ According to Edwards (1992), the colonial system categorized images according to their content and validated their authenticity in terms of the context in which they were produced. She states that a critical analysis of colonial photographs lends them new meaning by reconstructing the social relations and intentions through which they were produced, thereby transforming their symbolic potential. Previously, colonial photographs were seen as scientific evidence of cultural difference and hierarchy: a critical analysis re-situates them as symbols of a 'controlling knowledge', and inequality.

designed in order to allow the analysis to emerge inductively from the fieldwork. However, the issues upon which this research was based, have been raised through the work of theorists, which have provided the theoretical framework against which data from the field have been analysed. It is contended that this method enables a more critical approach to the analysis of perspectives emerging from the field, as the 'micro' is linked back into the macro theoretical questions and issues to be addressed (Burawoy, 2001).

This approach has actively encouraged and sought the perspective of the subject as opposed to that of the researcher, using photography as an extended method to the in-depth interview, as a means through which the researcher might enter the social world of the subject through a visual discourse. However, although the ideological reasoning behind the use of visual methods was partly to readdress the balance of power between the subject and researcher, according to the type of knowledge being appropriated, at no stage has this research claimed to be emancipatory⁸. While undeniably, the aim of using visual methods has been to provide a voice for the subjects of this research, it has not been to emancipate or to affect change.

4.5. Models/Approaches to a Sociology of the Visual

“Anthropology has had no lack of interest in the visual; its problem has always been what to do with it” (MacDougall, 1997:276).

As early as 1942, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson used photographs to support their analysis of culture. Single images were used to construct larger visual statements. Becker describes how they catalogued and sorted hundreds of images to present several perspectives on a single subject, or in sequences to show how a social event evolved through time (1974:26). Berger typifies a similar approach to the illustration of a particular behaviour or action by explaining how he would rapidly take numerous photographs of the subject in order to recreate a sense of the sequence of action or facial expression. Displaying the photographs in sequence almost like a

⁸ This is characterised by a process of critical and reflective inquiry, which is directed at the marginalized and gives voice to those who normally remain silenced. It also intentionally empowers people to analyse their experience as a means of affecting change (Stanley and Wise, 1993).

flick-book, recreated the behaviour of the actor as a series of actions, giving the impression of 'real time'. To treat photographs sociologically, as depictions of behaviour or of social relations between people, Becker asserted that multiple images as multiple proofs were required, just as one would look for a pattern of behaviour (1974:27). The approach adopted in the context of this research, concurs with Becker's treatment of the photograph, where the researcher took photographs throughout this thesis, in order to show changes to the built environment of both villages. However, in a more unusual approach, the *subject* – rather than researcher - was asked to take 'multiple' photographs of their understanding of the place in which they live – both of their house and of their village and community. The subject was asked to adopt the stance of critical photographer, and was told that he/she should prepare a reason for taking an image in advance of the follow-up interview. The respondents subsequently explained their selection of 'multiple images' in terms of a theme, or set of ideas.

Approaches to visual ethnography should not be thought of as specific paradigms with clearly defined attributes and boundaries (Harper, 1987:1). Harper categorises visual ethnographic types as scientific, narrative, reflexive and phenomenological. He suggests that the doing of visual research necessarily addresses two concerns which form the heart of continuing debate: the first involves *what* the researcher photographs, while the second concerns *how* the researcher organizes the photographs to represent the photographed object (1987:2). Harper points out that these issues must be faced with the understanding that photographs are both *constructed* by human action (an interpretation of the world) and *of* the world (an objective record of a specific moment) (*ibid*).

Harper essentially argues that the photograph should be viewed as an independent ethnographic tool, not unlike the survey research method. This involves subjecting the photograph to similar criteria such as reliability and validity, replicability of information. Emmison (2001) concurs with this view, stating that the various approaches within the scientific model are particularly suited to capturing information 'too fleeting or complicated to remember or describe in writing'.

What has become problematic, is how that visual knowledge of the individual, or social world in photographic form, has been used either in its own merit, to represent an argument, or as accompaniment to a text.

Throughout this project, photographs were also taken by the researcher in both villages, of buildings and structures. Within the past five years, a great deal of structural change has taken place in the village of Dúnfarrraig, Ireland. This change has affected the spatial arrangement of the village, and is indicative of how social practices have become manifest on the built, as well as the physical landscape.

The twin uses of visual methodologies, both by the researcher and the researched, enabled a more dialogic framework to emerge from the research, both in terms of the juxtaposition of verbal and visual narratives, and in terms of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The approach was very successfully used in both Irish and French contexts. However, the use of photography within the academic text has raised concern regarding the way in which this type of knowledge is represented and analysed. This debate and its contributors, is outlined here in order to contextualise the photograph as methodological and analytical tool in research.

4.6 Photographic representation

As early as the 1970s, photography as a statement or representation of a social world, has been viewed as problematic. (Becker, 1977:27; Collier, 1979:162). Watson (1995) suggests this mistrust lies with the fallibility of the process of human selectivity, rather than with the camera. Banks (2001) remarks that the problem that social anthropology and sociology have had with the visual image, is in the way that it has represented social knowledge and that insight into society (p14). Banks explains how the conventional use of photographs in the academic context, tied the image to the main body of the text through captions and in-text references. The idea was to number the photographs only, thereby separating the caption from the photograph while a separate page of captions was keyed to a numbered photograph. This implied a linear logic to the photographs, similar to the written text. While this method evolved in a quest to allow the photograph some autonomy, Banks argues that this approach is problematic, purporting that there should be a 'narrative relationship' between the photographs. The images should be placed within the body of the text, rather than in a

separate section. He maintains that this would enable one photograph to follow from the next (2001:145). It is contended that placing the images in a separate section, marginalizes their role towards the argument contained within the main body of text. It suggests a descriptive, rather than discursive or analytical position, in relation to the text.

Morgan and Pritchard (1998) suggest that photographic representations are selective not just in terms of what is portrayed, but also in terms of which images are photographed and the meanings and values which are assigned or conveyed by them (P171). Crucially, representations can also define the parameters within which the representations of peoples and places are constructed. However, they maintain that the power of the photographic image, lies in its ability to seemingly represent reality, yet the active processes which lie behind the image – how the photographer selects, constructs and frames subjects, normally remain obscured. (P171).

The two dominant epistemological streams which are rooted in the positivist and humanist traditions, show a sociology “dependent on information that is represented in words and numbers” (Harper, 1996:69). Rejecting the limitations which these two types of knowledge present, Harper argues for a sociology “based on knowledge represented in imagery rather than words” (ibid). However, Becker implies that the text is also important (1974, 1995). Harper claims that ‘some sociologists take photographs to study the social world, whereas others are content to rely on a bank of photographic data already supplied’ (1989:82). Interestingly, Grady (1991) argues for the photograph-essay in sociology, contending that theory is just one tool of analysis which sociologists have over-emphasised. Responding to this approach, Watson defends the use of ‘textually explicit theory’ in the sociological essay, as an enabling context within which the viewer may understand the image. He highlights Becker’s argument (1975:9), who claimed that “not only can photographs get their meaning from a context made up of what has been written about them, but also from other visual objects, physically present or just present in the viewers’ awareness”. Berger (1975:9) maintains that ‘pictures in a sequence make a statement: a statement which is equal to, but different from, that of the text’. Against this, Inglis (1980) argues that the photograph as an independent entity has no explanatory power. It must be accompanied by a sociological explanation (p4). This implies that the photograph is

invested with meaning, of which many interpretations are possible. In support of this, Berger has asserted that “in the relation between a photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation and the words usually supply it. The photograph, irrefutable as evidence but weak in meaning, is given a meaning by the words” (Berger and Mohr, 1982:92). Grady (1991) urged for the inclusion of the aesthetic in sociology. He argued for imagination and creativity in sociology – for a narrative approach. He claimed that by making their arguments with pictures, sociologists provided a wider context and thereby provided a deeper insight into the social world.

In any case, analysis is not a simple matter of interpreting visual content of photographs and videos, but, according to Rose (2001), involves examining how different producers and viewers of images give subjective meanings to their content and form. Instead, Rose proposes a different approach that begins with the premise that the purpose of analysis is not to translate ‘visual evidence’ into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual and other (including verbal) knowledge (P96). This presupposes an analytical process of making meaningful links between different research experiences and material such as photographs, video, field diaries and other. ‘These different media represent different types of knowledge that may be understood in relation to one another. Images and words contextualized by each other, forming not a ‘complete’ record of the research but a set of different representations and strands of it (ibid). This approach effectively opens a space for visual images in ethnographic fieldwork.

According to Rose, there are two approaches to understanding the production and content of photographs: the scientific-realist approach seeks to regulate the context in which images are produced in order that their content should comprise ‘reliable’ visual evidence of ‘complete’ contexts and processes. In contrast, a reflexive approach maintains that it is impossible to record ‘complete’ processes, activities or sets of relationships visually, focussing instead on the contexts in which the images are produced (2001:96).

Rose states that realist approaches to images in ethnography assumed that the object of analysis would be the image itself or its content. The context of image production

was thought to be important in two ways: first, contextualizing information provided knowledge about the activities, individuals and objects represented in the images' content. Second, by regulating the contexts in which the images were produced, the 'representativeness' of their content would be ensured (2001:97). These procedures were thought to create the conditions for a reliable analysis because, as Collier and Collier assert, "the significance of what we find in analysis is shaped by the context established by systematic recording during fieldwork". The approach requires that, in order to be 'responsibly' analysed, 'visual evidence' must be 'contextually complete and sequentially organised' (Collier and Collier, 1986:163).

Rose's assessment of this approach is succinct. What is rendered problematic is the notion that the context may be a completed and closed one. Secondly, the idea that the sequence determined by a series of photographs or video produced by the ethnographer, represents the relevant narrative of events or the key set of actors (2001:98). She uses Collier and Collier's approach to research using visual methodologies, to illustrate the issue of partiality in claims of 'realist' research. As outlined, they adopted a twin methodological approach by interviewing and photographing, to 'record all the relationships of a technology' in order to 'record one whole view of a culture' (1986:65). Rose takes to task their claim to represent 'a whole view' - supporting Clifford's (1986) argument that 'ethnographic 'truths' are only ever 'partial' and incomplete' - retorting that photographic documentation recording a process represents only one view, and crucially, in isolating this technological process, decontextualises it from other important elements of weaving (2001:98). In this instance, the visual record is a partial one.

Rose argues first, that it is impossible to photograph or document an event or process objectively, and that because of this, the analysis will never be a complete authentic record. Rather than being a place for controlling visual content, the context of image production should be analysed reflexively to examine how visual content is informed by the subjectivities and intentions of the individuals involved. Analysis should focus not only on the content of images, but on the meanings that different individuals give

to those images in different contexts (2001:99)⁹. However, a visual sociology demands debate between methodologies using only pictures, or using pictures and text. The question which is posed: Can we have knowledge based on imagery alone?

It is argued by this researcher, that photographs do require text within the academic context, in order for the image to have an analytical value. The text articulates the meaning of the image, in terms of concepts or ideas of a particular subject area. In the context of this research, each respondent was asked why he/she had taken that photograph, and then asked for an explanation of the same. In most cases, the respondent was able to answer both questions. However, not all of these photographs appear in this thesis, as quite a few of the photographs are duplicates of the same image, or contribute little value to the arguments in each chapter. These photographs tend to feature aspects of the landscape particular to either Dúnfarrraig and Gireux, such as a cow, or a fence, a field or a tree. Each photograph which has been used in this thesis, has been analysed separately to the main body of the argument. This was in order to treat the photograph as an independent epistemology where knowledge has been encoded through the image, rather than through text. The text which accompanies the image, provides a framework for interpreting the image in relation to the issue being discussed in the main body of the chapter.

4.7 Positionality – The researcher as tool

Informal conversational interviews were initially conducted in conjunction with detailed participant observation in Dúnfarrraig in the Burren, Ireland, and in Gireux in the Cathar region, France. Layder (1993) describes participant observation as ‘situated activity’, where emphasis is placed on the social context, towards a concern with the dynamics of interaction within the social group, rather than on the individual actor. This involved the researcher living periodically in both villages during the year of fieldwork.¹⁰ Due to the social climate in Gireux, participant observation or situated observation was restricted to attending the local festivals, the café or pub, the church

⁹ In explanation, Rose outlines her methodology which involved enlisting her interviewees to assign ‘anthropological’ meanings to photographs. She contends that a number of different narratives emerged from this approach, where some interviewees discussed the photographs in terms of their artistic value, while others remarked on its ‘natural’, unconstructed and ‘authentic’ appearance (2001:101).

¹⁰ This researcher did look for a job particularly in the French village context, in order to gain detailed understanding of the social world being studied, through situated activity. Unfortunately, as Gireux is largely a commuter village, and no work was available on the vineyards, this was not possible.

and the houses of friends'. In contrast, attendance and participation in activities in the Irish context was more easily facilitated. This is partly because Dúnfarrraig is a village at a more advanced stage of tourist development than its French counterpart, despite its geographical isolation. More importantly, it is suggested that Dúnfarrraig's ability to interact positively with the outsider, facilitated this method of observation.

In Gireux, participant observation has been much more difficult. This was related to the dual system of socialising patterns, which is differentiated according to the type of position held by the individual in relation to the rural indigenous community of Gireux. To be an 'insider' or local, means unequivocal access to the indigenous community which is comprised of five dominant Gireuxois families. However, this status does not lend automatic access to the other dominant social groups of outsiders living in Gireux, which comprise the Portuguese, Spanish and non-local French. It also means that participation or involvement in the village activities is almost impossible outside of public events held twice a year.

However, this difficulty has highlighted the issue of 'positionality', which refers to the researcher's position in relation to the field being studied. This researcher has been recognised as 'local' or 'part-local' in the Irish context of Dúnfarrraig, and 'outsider' in the French context of Gireux.

According to Botterill (2001), despite claims of value freedom in some quantitative studies, no researcher has acknowledged their position or stance in relation to the field of research¹¹. He explains that while each has a rich stock of subjective experience that has influence their choice of tourism study, none has written explicitly of their experiences, preferring instead to position themselves as 'outside' of, and value neutral to, the phenomena they study (p205). Stanley and Wise also raise concern with experiences of involvement with the research process. In line with the feminist principle that 'the personal is the political', they argue that conceptualisations of involvement should include the presence of the personal *within* the research experience (P157).

¹¹ Botterill is referring here to a select number of research cases where the researcher's position was unstated, but which, he remarks, undoubtedly influence or framed the interpretation of events in the field.

The term 'positionality' refers to the position held by the researcher in relation to the field being examined. In this instance, the position of the researcher assumed great importance in terms of gaining acceptance to two rural, close-knit communities. In the village in the west of Ireland, the researcher's previously known status among members of the indigenous community, enabled greater access to respondents. During visits to Dúnfarrraig, the researcher was pronounced 'local' by various local residents in conversations in the shop, pub and Bed and Breakfast houses, who further supplied that as I was down so often, "you might as well be local". In the village in France however, there was considerable difficulty locating respondents to interview. This was largely based on the way in which the community socialises, which is through family only. At all times conducting research in the French context, the researcher has remained an 'outsider' despite attending the various social centres such as the local pub, local festival and local church.

In two instances, this researcher asked a local resident in Dúnfarrraig, to recommend a friend to interview. This method is called the snowballing technique which is commonly used in research to locate further subjects for interviewing purposes. This technique relies on the knowledge base of the subject, of the community, to advance the name of another individual who will potentially act as interviewee for the researcher. Similarly in Gireux, the respondent asked an outsider to recommend a local resident to interview. However, this proved an impossible task for the outsider, who commented that her knowledge of the community was actively restricted through her inability to actually find *where* the local community socialised, outside of the social context of the two festivals. As this difficulty emerged relatively early in the research, the researcher was able to establish through informal interviews and participant observation, that this was a common difficulty experienced by the small group of outsiders living in Gireux. Gaining access to the wider community of indigenous residents in Gireux, has become an issue of positionality, not only for the researcher, but for those other non-indigenous residents who now live locally.

Through the interviews and particularly through observation, I learned more of the cultural codes pertinent to rural life in the south of France, and of how my position as an enthusiastic female researcher had unintentionally violated these rules of social

conduct. Furthermore, of how I was operating within a culture which celebrates patriarchal codes of conduct. After one of my interviews with an outsider, I was advised to keep a low profile until such time as my presence was accepted by both the Portuguese and Spanish, and local communities.

One French woman who had lived most of her adult life in Gireux, but whose father was born in Italy, called herself an 'outsider' in Gireux. She described how definitions of 'local' were socially and historically constructed by some of the older families living in Gireux, and how this was an inflexible and static understanding. A further instance was provided by another Parisian woman who has been renting a house in the village for a number of years yet who insisted that it was impossible to become a 'local' in the community in Gireux, or in any of the neighbouring villages in the south of France. She maintained that Gireux is not unique in its codes of difference between residents, that this understanding of what it means to be 'local' is embedded in the historical legacy of the south of France.

For each of these respondents, their position as 'outsider' has affected their level of ease with the indigenous residents of Gireux. There is a sense of resignation, but simultaneously a desire to be independent from the complexities of socialisation within the community. Where it has been possible to transcend layers of what it means to be a local or part local in the community in Dúnfarrraig in Ireland, the position of 'outsider' and 'local' is much more rigidly defined and more specific to social, cultural and historical construction in the rural community in Gireux, France. This has similarly affected my position as researcher in Gireux, where access to 'local' opinion has been very difficult.

4.8 Can research be faithful to its question?

According to Botterill, the restrictive character of positivist research has largely disabled the potential of tourism studies to contribute on a theoretical level. He describes as 'unhelpful' the large number of tourism studies which are dictated by positivist epistemologies. Tourism research has been viewed in terms of a relationship between causal variables. Impact studies of tourism development has colonised the field of research, where the position of the researcher is external to the phenomenon being observed. 'Positionality' has become a passive, arbitrary concept. However,

Botterill argues that when problematising social interaction and nature in the tourism setting, studies have acknowledged the need to merge the social and physical science epistemologies (2001:203).

Botterill contends that it is the relationship between what social science creates as knowledge in its discourse and the social reality that it seeks to understand or influence, which distinguishes constructivist and critical realist positions in contemporary disputes (ibid). He criticises the premise of the humanist paradigm which assumes that human nature is meaningful and unified, and states that this has led to a research culture that not only privileges the subjective account of the respondent, but which has become uncritical and relativist in the analysis of these accounts.

Critical theory¹² is posited as a framework which breaks with 'sedentary' uses of both hermeneutic and positivist approaches, and encourages the researcher to engage more critically with the field of tourism (Botterill, 2001). Rather than challenge, tourism research studies have perpetuated and endorsed existing conceptualisations and themes. He states that tourism studies have become introspective, seeking to develop tourism social science as a closed system, an institutional response. Botterill claims that the effect of this has been to look and engage with tourism as an institution, rather than as a phenomenon.

Undeniably, this research has placed much emphasis on a subjective interpretation of place. The perspective of the subject has been viewed not only as valid, but as revealing an important insight into the everyday practices and processes through which place is constructed. Rather than assume a unified account of these processes however, the research design has incorporated a triangulation of participant observation and informal interviews, in-depth interviews and visual methods, in order to engage more critically with the central problematic. In addition, this research has explored and critically examined this researcher's position in both Irish and French contexts, fully acknowledging this aspect as an issue which has affected this research project. What does emerge as problematic for both interpretive and positivist

¹² Which departs from 'dialectical theory' (Horkheimer, 1937), which attempts to find both contradictions and resolutions – a critical approach to knowledge.

approaches, is the way in which knowledge is acquired, then represented. This research has adopted critical theorist Burawoy's model of the extended case method, which provides a framework for the analysis of data.

4.9 Summary

This research adopted a phenomenological, comparative case based approach in its examination of how the rural local community is restructuring itself according to its interaction with the resident outsider. This question is being problematised in terms of a dialectic of enquiry, which seeks to find how the dynamic of interaction between local and outsider, is determining the social construction of space, and how are practices constructing space as social, determining the interaction between local and outsider. Theory has provided the dialogic link at each stage of the research process, informing the method through an interpretive, then critical framework (Burawoy, 2001).

Chapter 5 Community membership

5.1 Introduction

Geertz's famous dictum that "anthropologists don't study villages...they study *in* villages" (1973:22) usefully orients our attention to cultural processes rather than to the administrative or geographic unit which is the "locus of study". Places... are not, however, irrelevant or redundant in social analysis. The important issue is to understand the ways in which villages (or towns or *communes*) are socially constructed, "imagined" (Anderson, 1991), and used by social actors (Reed-Danahay, 1996).

A common difficulty shared by many scenic, remote rural villages in Ireland and France, is of how to prevent indigenous depopulation, and yet remain attractive to tourism as notable income earner. This issue has provided the departure point for examining what happens to a sense of 'community' when maintaining an indigenous population becomes central to the construction of that identity. Similar to both villages in the Irish and French contexts, is their location in culturally/geologically and historically unique rural areas in either country and their attractiveness to flows generated by tourism. However, it is the different way in which both rural villages interact with the flow of the outsider resident, which highlights the very specific ways in which community membership¹, is politically and ideologically bound.

5.2 The different ways of handling flows

A central problem common to both Dúnfarrraig and Gireux, as many other remote rural villages, is how to retain a sense of local community alongside an influx of outsider residents and a migratory flow of local youth². This conundrum becomes more complex for the rural village which claims an economic dependency on tourism, as in order to remain attractive to flows generated by tourism, the residents need to demonstrate the unique value of their village, and establish a sense of difference from other villages and towns. Without doubt however, local residents in Gireux and Dúnfarrraig have spoken of their inability to afford buying or building a house in their home village. This last, is exacerbated by an increasing number of homes which are being built for holiday homes purposes, as in the case of Ireland, or houses which

¹ This is defined here in terms of what it means to belong to, or become a part of a community of people living within that place. Being a resident in a place, does not automatically infer rights of membership to that community. This membership is earned through a ritual of practices: social, economic and/or cultural and so forth.

² Reasons for the migratory flow away from the home-town, range from a lack of employment opportunities, the attraction of city life, education.

have been purchased by outsiders in rural villages in the south of France. According to the economic discourse in the debate on holiday homes, a clear unaffordability gap has arisen between the price being demanded for these homes, and local ability to afford to stay in their home village. It is suggested that this problem, which is now widespread in rural villages of special scenic or cultural appeal in the west and south west of Ireland, and in the south of France, is being handled in very different ways by both countries, as demonstrated through the rural contexts of Dúnfarrraig and Gireux respectively.

In the case of Gireux, there has been an attempt to encourage the local youth to return to the village domain. This is manifest through the mayor's use of monies loaned by the *Conseil Municipal* to Gireux, to buy and convert the dilapidated *presbytere* beside the Church, into two flats to lease to low-income earners. The mayor also bought and currently leases two flats above the school to returning local youth to the village. This move by the mayor, to strategise towards enabling local residents to return to Gireux, is seen, understood and approved of by the Gireuxois local community who continue to support the mayor. This reciprocity of relations is manifest through local support of the partnership system supporting the re-opening of schools in four rural neighbouring villages. The national school is viewed as the heart of the village by most Gireuxois, and the re-opening of the school is highly symbolic of the successful regenerative efforts of the rural community. In one or two of the neighbouring villages, it is the influx of newcomers³ with children which is enabling the school system. In the case of Gireux however, it is more indicative of returning indigenous residents to the village, as newcomers have tended to send their children to the town of Ste.Saron instead. Not only is this viewed as derisive by the indigenous residents, of their local schooling system⁴, but crucially, newcomers' (which also includes those from Paris) perceived indifference to the importance of the national school for the revitalisation of the community, is seen as a fundamental lack of understanding of what it means to live in a rural village.

³ Non-local French people.

⁴ Which will open in September 2007. This situation anticipates the continuation of returning indigenous residents to Gireux, to set up home with their family.

A number of local residents have approached the mayor in Gireux, requesting a site on which they might build a house. This appeal is based on a current lack of either empty or derelict houses which would otherwise be converted. In response, the mayor has used funds to designate a site available for development in a field⁵ on the far side of Gireux, on the other side of the road. This site will contain up to four houses and will be prioritised for local use. The tightly controlled approach to planning at a regional and local level in the rural French context, provides an insight into how the Gireuxois are handling the influx of outsiders to their midst.

Disquiet about the increasing number of English tourists in particular, who are buying houses or structures in the village, relates not only to a structural economic difficulty experienced by those locals unable to afford to return to Gireux due to the increase in house prices, but also to a problem of communication between the English and Gireuxois. Of those English families who have bought properties in the village, nearly none speak French beyond the civil greeting. This problem has exacerbated existing tensions in the community, who regard the inflow of the English as a threat to the stability and sustainability of the indigenous community. The most recent purchase of one of the two old groceries (*epicerie*) by a non French speaking English couple, once regarded as the social centre of Gireux, is viewed by the local residents as an insult to the integrity of their village. What has provoked disquiet among the community, is not the purchase necessarily of the grocery (*epicerie*), which in itself is viewed more as madness given the extent of work involved to restore the same to habitable condition, but rather, the perceived arrogance of the English to assume an ability to live in a country of whose language they know nothing.

Thus, the local residents do not attempt to talk with those English who do not approach them in their own tongue. In a clear effort to address this difficulty, the mayor has asked a woman on the committee in Gireux, who teaches English at a secondary school in Ste.Saron, to give French language lessons to the English residents in the village.

⁵ Which is owned by a local resident of Gireux, and has been sold to the *commune* of Gireux. The *commune* has been able to buy this land, courtesy of borrowed monies from the Department of the Aude.

This reaction clearly demonstrates a societal attitude which requires the new resident to adapt in order to be incorporated into the new community. Access to the community is highly controlled, both through planning and through language. French culture remains dominant, enduring the outsider.

By contrast, the ability of the local residents to embrace the cultural capital provided by the enterprising outsider, has enabled *greater cohesion* and integration of community in Dúnfarrraig, Ireland. Set-dancing, initially started by a Dutch woman in Dúnfarrraig, and now taught in the pub by an English man also living in Dúnfarrraig, is the most popular winter activity in the area. Crucially, it has been local acceptance of both this cultural form which is traditional in its outlook, and deference to the outsider as teacher, which has revived a flagging community spirit. Emulating the success of the set dancing, has been the set up of a choir by English man, Owen, who lives on a full-time basis in Dúnfarrraig. The choir comprises residents from Dúnfarrraig and other villages in North Clare, who meet once a week for rehearsals in Dúnfarrraig church. In the National school, fiddle and drama classes are given by outsiders to the children. Significantly however, children of other nationalities also attend the national school⁶. The school teacher described the different type of talents and capabilities demonstrated by these children and their parents, and commented how this not only enriched the teaching experience, but enabled the indigenous children a broader, more sophisticated learning experience.

Probably the biggest structural change which has very positively affected the community in Dúnfarrraig, has been the café. Managed by an American woman⁷ living in the village, the café has provided a place of contact for the community, outside of the context of the pub. During its operation, the local and outsider residents spoke of how the café gave a sense of centre to Dúnfarrraig, as people would call in on a frequent basis during the day for dinner, coffee or just for a quick chat.

⁶ These vary from year to year, pending the type of accommodation which the outsider is able to get in Dúnfarrraig. At present, a Dutch couple are living in a holiday home owned by a local resident, but on a long-term lease, are sending their child to school. A similar living situation applies to an Ethiopian child, while an English child lives with her parents in their own home in Dúnfarrraig.

⁷ Leased as a café from 2003 to the summer of 2004. The building remained empty for a number of months, until another American woman took out a lease very recently, to start up the café as a bar-café, rather than just restaurant.

The various activities such as set-dancing, fiddle classes, drama classes, even choir, would appear to indicate a rural community which not only has accepted the outsider in its midst, but has provided a space through which local and outsider can integrate. The local residents look forward to the winter months, when the tourists have gone, when they can enjoy having time to reconnect with each other through these activities. Further, the temporary addition of the café to Dúnfarrraig has galvanised local and outsider into a commitment towards further development in the village. Thus, the ability of the Irish rural community to embrace the outsider, has paradoxically enabled the regeneration of community life, both structurally through the café and the national school, and through cultural expression.

It is contended that the combined measure of these activities, has provided the local community with a focus during the winter months and enabled a transformation of attitude from despondency and boredom⁸ to a self-assured and quite confident community, aware of its own self worth and of the unique location of its village – not only in the heart of the Burren region – but beside the sea. However, it is suggested that a different reason for this change of attitude could be attributed to local understanding of the attractiveness of their village with its unique position on the western seaboard of Ireland, to the second home or holiday home market. The financial opportunity available to local residents who sell a plot of land or build on land beside the sea in order to sell to outside interest, has made Dúnfarrraig one of the most expensive villages in which to live, in North Clare. Thus, beneath the cultural aesthetic, there is an economic rationale underpinning this desire to integrate.

On a macro level, the failure of public policy to put in place more rigorous measures for the protection of the rural landscape in Ireland, has initiated an abuse of planning applications⁹. However, according to Clare County Council, this system has been

⁸ As noted by Brody (1973) of the local residents of Inishkillane during the winter months.

⁹ In 1999, the Clare Development Plan was announced against a backdrop of increasing number of applications for homes. The Dúnfarrraig area was treated as open countryside, and applications for houses were permitted without much scrutiny. The Plan included a clause which sought to determine the status of the applicant as local person or not, that is, from the Dúnfarrraig area of radius 2-3 miles. The clause stated that the house must be lived in by the applicant. According to Clare County Council, this system was much abused by applicants, which prompted the Council to review the application procedure. Concurrently, the planning regulations following the Planning and Development Act of 2000, began to be implemented. The new application procedure devised by the Council, on the heels of the Planning and Development Act, included a revised clause which stated that the applicant must be

abused, not by foreign interest, but by *local residents* who have noted an appreciation in land capital through housing development and who have seized the opportunity to benefit from this economically. In an interview with the retired shop owner, now Bed and Breakfast owner, when asked if he would sell his surplus land to local residents, he remarked

“Yes, I would, if one of my lands was zoned for development or I seen, em, a developer that’s seen a number of houses in it and said I’ll give you five hundred euro or a million euro, I’d gladly give it to him”.

When asked if he would reduce his asking price in order to help a local resident afford buy his land, he said

“No, you’d have to get the goin’ rate. You’d have to get what you could for it. Say, development for our field, so many acres...If you keep people out and don’t sell them sites, well then you’re not going to make any progress yourself.”

It is argued that this attitude of market opportunism, coupled with a change in the treatment of land as production zone for farming, to treatment of the land as landscape which must be preserved under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme¹⁰, demonstrates a very market aware and capital conscious local resident, who is responsible for creating this gap of unaffordability for his/her local neighbours. Similar to these local neighbours, an outsider resident living and working with her computer business on a full-time basis in Dúnfarrraig, stated that she “just couldn’t afford to buy anythin’ down at the sea” – the sea which is the focal point of interest for residents living in the village.

“I mean you’re talkin’...well, I know the, the new houses goin’ in there beside the pub which are very small, eh, I think they’re €240, 250 grand. They’re very small. They’d be smaller than, I think this house, y’know. So that’s dear. So you’re talkin’ about anything with a good size, you’re talkin’ €300 grand.”

the occupant of that house for the first five years following construction of the same. According to Clare County Council, this has greatly reduced the number of applications for housing, suggesting that houses were being built, allegedly for local people and then being sold to people from outside the Dúnfarrraig area.

¹⁰ Farmers are paid grant aid for maintaining their land, and making it accessible to tourists, under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS). One local resident works as a liaison officer for the REPS between the County Council and farmers in the area.

This outsider, Cathy, felt aggrieved by the difficult situation caused by the lack of houses even to rent in the village, particularly as her computer business was employing ten people – six local residents from Dúnfarrraig at the time. In her opinion, her ability to provide employment locally for the residents should have meant a greater entitlement to leasing availability within Dúnfarrraig than those who did not contribute to the village. Her frustration is directed at those temporary residents whose financial ability to buy or build a house in Dúnfarrraig, has resulted in an unaffordability gap for her family who want to live there on a full-time basis.

“There’s very few locals that would have holiday homes. But they live here. That’s their living. That’s how they make a living. And d’you know, it’s not like they’re building thirty houses or anything. What I have an issue with, is people who don’t live here and who can come along and because of their heritage, because they grew up here or something, and they still have land here, that they can come along and build houses. Three or four houses or whatever and rent them out or sell them at a profit.”

Cathy makes a distinction between those residents who do not live in Dúnfarrraig yet claim ancestral roots in order to obtain permission to build, and those residents who are local to Dúnfarrraig and live on a full-time basis in the village. In this context, Cathy’s frustration has been provoked by the construction of two houses by a resident who was born and raised in Dúnfarrraig, but who has been living on a permanent basis in America for many years. Although the application for both houses state the owners’ intention of living on a full-time basis in Dúnfarrraig, residents in the community have pointed out that the owners already have a house on the site which remains unoccupied throughout the year. It is a widespread belief, that the houses will be leased or sold for profit. Cathy remarks that;

“The locals that do have holiday homes here, they live here, that’s how they make their living. They, y’know, they respect the environment around them. They keep the houses lookin’ well. Yes, they make money but sure I mean, we all make money doin’ somethin’.”

It is suggested that Cathy’s repeated distinction between residents who live on a full-time, as opposed to temporary basis in Dúnfarrraig, has created a false sense of fairness or means by which she is able to justify her friendships with local residents in the village who seek profit from property development. By explaining the housing situation in terms of a problem which has been generated by outsider interest, or

treating it within the generic remit of the holiday home phenomenon, residents avoid addressing the difficulty as one which has partly been created by their neighbour, *against* the local neighbour. While this is not to assume an intentional injustice by one local resident against the other, it is contended that residents' failure to recognise the residents' part as entrepreneur in the process of selling a site or house, is partly due to situating the problem in highly subjective terms of community and friendship, and partly through internalising economic arguments which are directed at the developer, rather than the local resident.

Cathy's experience locating a house to buy has been a negative one, relieved only by the intervention of the local publican who pointed her towards a local resident in Dúnfarrraig. Happily, Cathy already knew the resident, who was willing to sell his house to the couple. She recalls that "he was quite happy to say, look y'know, if you're gonna live here long term, it'd be nice – rather than building a house and selling it, makin' a profit." She continues by explaining that

"we'd known the guy, and he was quite happy to have us there. He could've got more for it by puttin' it up on the open market, but y'know, he was quite happy to go for a sale. We know this guy very, very well y'know. He'd done some work for us.

Regardless of his intentions however, Cathy and her partner could not afford the asking price for the house. But she highlights this instance as an example of how their claim and desire to become 'local' through full-time residency in Dúnfarrraig, was met by local attempt to facilitate this. She states that this local actually *reduced* his asking price in order to make the house and site more affordable for the couple.

"So there's just no way – you can't buy a site. I mean, we were talking' to somebody about buyin' a site. It would've been three, maybe four years ago now, and I mean, it was just over half an acre and *he was doin' us a favour by givin' it to us for 100 grand*. And that was Irish (pounds) as well" (Italics added).

Instead, Cathy and her partner rented a cottage in Dúnfarrraig, from another non-local couple living on a full-time basis in Ennis. She describes how a friendship blossomed between the couples, through visits to her house in Dúnfarrraig, and how this resulted in Cathy's suggestion of buying the house from the couple.

“So we were livin’ here for about a year, they’d call up every now and again, and we’d have chats, dinner, whatever. And I said – in jesting she said that she was building another house for themselves ‘coz they were renting in Ennis - and I said, well if you’re buildin’ a house, would you be interested in sellin’ this one? And she said, well yeah actually, we’ll talk about it. So I said okay! They called up again and we made them an offer on the house and they agreed to it an’ we took it from there. So we were very lucky there were no auctioneers or anything involved in it or anything.”

Crucially, the sale price was offered by Cathy and her partner, and concluded without the involvement of auctioneer or estate agent. This meant that purchase of the house was made possible through the friendship established between the two couples. Cathy remarks that “if you’re gonna buy a house for a 100 or a site for a 100,000 euro, you’re gonna be wanting to put a house for a 150, 200 thousand euro. We didn’t have that money, y’know?” She states that “we were lucky to get this place now”, implying that the price which was suggested to the couple, was lower than the guide price for the area (prior to the auction) would normally be. What Cathy’s experience indicates, is that it is possible to negotiate a sale price for a house through internal networking with residents, which is lower than the market price, and that a certain level of autonomy rests with the property owner, such as the local or outsider resident.

This has crucial implications regarding the dynamics involved in the process of selling a site or house, and the quite active part of the resident in determining the asking price by neighbour local or outsider resident, or developer. Perhaps the other side of this argument, is the view of the landowner or farmer.

A local farmer who is retired, commented that:

“The farmers that are here now, have got bigger and bigger. All it [Dúnfarrraig] means to them is makin’ a living. All it means to them is how many cows they can put on the place and how many grants they can get and all that like y’know what I mean. It doesn’t matter whether you do any damage to the land or whatever, or they don’t actually...even goin’ back say, say back in Knockree, they would know better than anywhere else in Dúnfarrraig like y’know what I mean. Everybody knew the names of the fields and all that like. Well I mean, as time went by – say in the last twenty or thirty years, the last of the farms have been sold, like y’know what I mean, and the last people that would’ve bought them would never know that there was...field names or that, like y’know what I mean. And eh, I suppose all that’s lost like. And then it’s grand if you go out and there’s some fella with a fork and a rake and he’s makin’ a cock of hay like. He’s turnin’ his hay. And then anytime you see a

person in a field now, he's on a tractor or JCB or whatever. Even y'know...don't see anybody milkin' a cow and y'know what I mean. All that, that's gone like. Most of the herds now are up for harvest and you pass the road and look at them and that's it. A lot of the land, a lot of the barns have been sold to dwellers here. Eh...the young people...I suppose times are different. There's more money about. *They wouldn't be interested in the question of land as the generation before them. Unless it's a site to be sold or something like that.*" (Italics added)

A number of interesting observations have been made here, but probably the comment which merits most attention is Joseph's description of the changing attitude of the new generation of farmers towards the land. Former appreciation of the landscape in terms of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), invested in the social imaginary of childhood memories and historical importance, has been replaced by current understanding of the landscape in terms of its *capital* value. Joseph highlights the loss of field names, to show the transformation of values, the changing relationship to the land and the symbolic loss of a cultural identity¹¹. This new relationship is now expressed in terms of the potential for grants and/or a site to develop.

A local youth in Dúnfarrraig, described the worth of farming land in terms of its value for grant money. He stated that this "is what keeps farmin' alive here", as the land is "worth more by the acreage for REPS and EEC grants. So it's valuable land really." However, this is more than a subsistence earning. According to the youth, "it's fairly lucrative" because "it's sheeted rock"¹². However this definition of value differs according to the type of farmer.

"You've that type of farmer and 90% of farmers in Dúnfarrraig are part-time farmer...worker like. So it suits them 100%. But if you were an everyday farmer, it wouldn't, because the whole thing is progress. I mean, you always want to keep buildin' when you're for progress like."

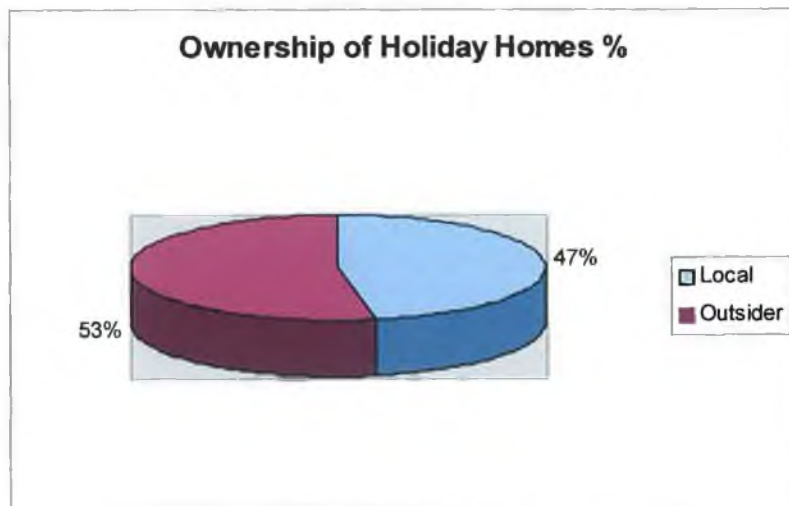
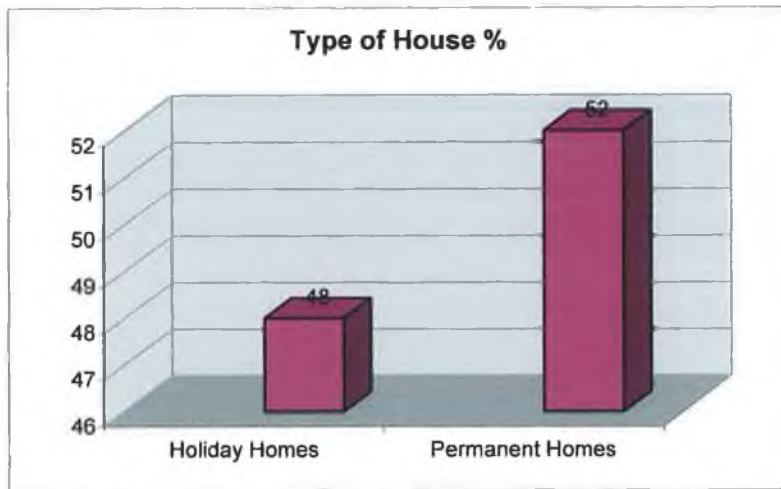
Quite significantly, the category of 'farmer' includes an emphasis on 'progress' which is explicitly stated in terms of *building houses*, rather than tending to animals.

¹¹ One of the practices not mentioned by Joseph, is of how residents now refer to sites, rather than fields, by the name of the owner. The economic value of a field has shifted, from being viewed in terms of its grant potential under the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme, in terms of farming practices, to a potential site for housing development.

¹² Fields which hold varying amounts of the limestone rock, unique to the Burren region in County Clare, Ireland. Farmers are allocated monies from the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) to preserve these fields. Therefore, far from holding a redundant value because cattle grazing is not possible with such large amounts of rock, the fields are quite valuable in terms of their potential for grants aid.

According to this youth's logic, while 90% of part-time farmers enjoy the "lucrative" cash potential of grant aid gleaned from maintaining a fence or shrub on their land, the other 10% are for "progress", which essentially means building further houses on land that is not sheeted by rock. However, according to the earlier logic of Joseph as part-time farmer in Dúnfarrraig, the locals "wouldn't be able to afford" the houses which are currently being built. These remarks are crucial, given their implications for the debate on rural housing. It is suggested that the current and popular focus on the developer as the culprit of unaffordable housing in the rural countryside, has wrongly directed attention away from the farmer or landowner, whose former role as 'custodian' of the landscape, has shifted towards a more economic emphasis according to the changing value of the land; from farming with animals, to farming with bricks.

The change in conditions to grant planning applications in the county instigated by Clare County Council (see footnote 9 for details), suggests strongly that there has been a manipulation of planning applications by indigenous residents in order to drive a more competitive gain from the land through selling to outsiders. This practice would suggest that the economic discourse has *simplified* and even *misrepresented* this issue as a question of purely outsider interest. Instead, it is suggested that this free market ideology articulated by local landowners has made it very difficult for other local residents to buy a house in Dúnfarrraig, as they are competing against the outsider for that house. The outsider who lives on a full-time basis in Dúnfarrraig, accounts for 15% of the total population. This category of resident lives both in a long-term let, and in own homes. Holiday homes account for 48% of the total houses in Dúnfarrraig. Of this, *47% of holiday homes are owned by local residents, with as many as three or four houses owned by one local resident.*



Therefore, Heanue's (1998) argument that "outsiders" are creating an unaffordability gap for local residents' ability to stay in their own village, is not only misleading, but incorrect, as the holiday home phenomenon is actually being generated by local residents for commercial gain. With the exception of four sets of outsiders who rent holiday homes from local owners on a long-term basis, these holiday homes are rented during the summer months as short lets. As each of the local residents live in their own homes, these holiday homes remain empty during the remaining months of the year. This has given rise to the negative perception that Dúnfarrraig is becoming a landscape of "empty houses", a comment made by many local residents who understand this phenomenon as provoked by the outsider, rather than their fellow local resident. Ironically, the holiday home which is owned by the outsider, tends to be occupied on a more *regular* basis, as the owner will come to Dúnfarrraig for weekends or for a week at a time, spread over the course of the year. With the

exception of two houses, none of these homes (outsider owned) are let on a short-term basis.

Although 48% of people travel to work outside of Dúnfarrraig, local businesses still depend on flows of tourists and residents through the village, in order to prosper. The current infrastructure in the village numbers two shops and one pub. Within the past five years, the pub started offering food to passing tourists and residents, in an attempt to attract customers during the day-time, as well as during the evening. Three large wooden garden tables with fixed benches placed in front of the pub facing the sea, are popular resting places for the weary traveller. A similarly large wooden garden table is placed in front of the newsagent and to the side of the parking lot. This is occupied by children and adults alike during fine weather, who sit either by the table or on the nearby boundary walls of the car park, consuming ice-cream or cups of coffee sold in the shop. The advertising of take-away coffee, and other measures have become quite visual signs of attempts made by businesses within the community, to engage the flow of the tourist and/or busy resident. When they are not overwhelmed with a busy trade of tourists in the summer time, the two shop owners take turns to sit outside on the bench with friends and others. Requests have been made to Clare County Council, for more benches to place at various locations at the main cross roads in Dúnfarrraig, and other ideas have also been submitted, regarding measures designed to attract passing trade¹³.

5.3 Struggle to maintain community

It is contended that in their efforts to lure in passing business, the local community has also made itself attractive to potential purchasers of second or holiday homes, who may choose to buy in Dúnfarrraig or Gireux. Thus, a similar conundrum facing both rural villages, is of how to make money by detaining the flow, yet not jeopardise the stability of the local community, by becoming too attractive to outside buyers. In Dúnfarrraig, this concern is directed at the changing built landscape with increasing numbers of holiday homes, despite the fact that almost half of these houses are owned by local residents. For Gireux, this fear is of the changing social landscape in the

¹³ Previous applications for permission to construct petrol pumps by the shop, failed to seek support from some of the local residents and the Council. The applications were rejected due to their possible adverse environmental impact, given the close proximity to Burren rock and the sea.

village which now includes the outsider. Like Dúnfarrraig, this anxiety includes mixed emotions of frustration, as Gireux has a structural need for the outsider. Failed attempts to encourage outsider residents to enrol their children in neighbouring villages in order to facilitate the general move towards re-opening the national school in Gireux, has led to local disapproval of the outsiders' values and critique of their failure to understand that living in an isolated rural village means contributing to the growth or maintenance of the life of that village. Not only does the national school provide a visual affirmation of the continuing life cycle of the village through attendance of the children, it also provides a vital social function for the parents. It is here at the school, where parents meet and chat on a daily basis and through their children, meet at each others houses. The tenacious attempts of the current mayor to re-open the school is thus viewed as crucially important by the local residents, to the social life of the village.

At present the local children are driven each morning by a mini van, to a school in the neighbouring village. Re-opening the school in Gireux would enable the children and parents to stay within its environs. The decision by those outsiders with children, to attend the national school in the nearby town, Ste.Saron, is seen as unsupportive of the values underpinning village life, and as an indifference to meeting the local residents. Ironically, this has added resolve to local solidarity against the outsider, which is compounded by a language difficulty partly created by the outsider.

In Dúnfarrraig, those outsiders who have children, do support the national school both through an active awareness of the need to contribute towards enrolment numbers and through attendance at the meetings and social events organised by teacher and parents. This, in turn, is viewed very positively by the local residents who are aware of their reliance on outsiders' support of the national school. Diversity is therefore encouraged.

However, the outsider is one type of flow to interact with the indigenous community of Dúnfarrraig. A pre-occupation central to the livelihood of the local residents, is of how to detain the generic flow of tourists who pass through the village environs, and thus extract an economic benefit from the same. This concern has forced the idea of acknowledging a centre to the village of Dúnfarrraig, which has proven a contentious

issue amongst residents, particularly indigenous residents. When Clare County Council announced the Clare Development Plan for the area of Dúnfarrraig, it accelerated a political process within the entire community, of representation for a locally drawn plan of development ideas for the village of Dúnfarrraig. Alliances have been articulated within the community and have asserted themselves in political terms of agreement for and against proposals in the Plan. This political process which revolves around local and outsider relationship to Dúnfarrraig as place, has inflamed relations within the community.

A tension has become apparent in both rural contexts of Gireux and Dúnfarrraig, manifest particularly through local interaction with the outsider. Although both groups of residents share a similar fear of loss of local community through outsiders taking control of their village, the way in which the local residents have approached this issue, has been very different, which in itself, is an expression of social and cultural differences. While the Dúnfarrraig local residents demonstrated an acceptance of the outsider very quickly, with quite positive effect, this has developed into quite a complex political process underwritten by a fear of losing control, both economically and spatially over the village of Dúnfarrraig. Whereas the Gireuxois from the beginning, have demonstrated an unwillingness to accept the outsider into their midst, and increasing numbers of outsiders to the village environs have provoked reactive measures for the *incorporation*, as conciliatory measure, rather than the *inclusion* of the outsider, to the fold.

5.4 A political approach¹⁴ to membership of the community

The Irish context

In February 2004, the North Clare Draft Local Area Plan was released by Clare County Council. The Plan is a document detailing the development needs of each village in the north part of Co.Clare. During the initial stages preceding its publication, councillors from the county council met with each community, to listen to the concerns regarding development for that rural village, and discuss the possibility for inclusion of these concerns and wishes, within a plan for each area. The

¹⁴ Defined here in terms of alliances or networks of support between residents in relation to ideas or interpretations on an issue, which then underpins the criteria for inclusion to, or membership of that community.

Draft Plan which has emerged from these consultations with the local communities and within the Council, is viewed as a step towards addressing emerging development issues and difficulties in the rural villages of its remit.

In its description of Dúnfarrraig, the Plan¹⁵ states that while ‘it is served by a pub, shops...’, it ‘does not have a single recognisable centre’(P175). Further, that its ‘significant development...has been seen to serve primarily a market for second homes and holiday homes, as opposed to providing for permanent residents. The anticipated growth over the plan period is for an additional 10 units for permanent residential units...’ while stating that ‘provision be made in such a way that contributes to the consolidation and concentration of a resident population that could assist in defining a clear village centre’ (P175). It refers to a consultation event held in May 2003 in Knockree, neighbouring village to Dúnfarrraig, during which a number of issues were raised by attending locals as listed:

- Houses for permanent occupation for local people not holiday homes.
- Small clusters of residential development rather than one-off single houses.
- Small hotel development/tourism accommodation.
- Licensed restaurant.
- Develop IT business.
- Protect natural beauty and environment – conservation important.
- No development on seaside of coast road.
- Development and maintenance of existing walking routes.
- Provide for horse riding on beach and coastal areas¹⁶.
- Public rights of way to sea and mountains should be identified.
- Seating area and access to it improved opposite O’Donoghue’s Pub.
- Provision of playing pitch/pitch and putt.
- Need adequate and healthy water supply.

¹⁵ In the interests of protecting the anonymity of respondents from Dúnfarrraig, a copy of the Plan will not be included in this thesis.

¹⁶ This is particularly interesting, as the horse riding centre in Dúnfarrraig was forced to close due to rising costs from insurance claims made by tourists. During its operation, the horse riders used a route which included the beach and dunes. A complaint was made by a tourist staying in the caravan site, against the horses, to Clare County Council, who asked the Centre to stop using the route. Some time after this, the Centre closed altogether. The owners have since converted some of the stables into guest rooms for a Bed and Breakfast business, and use the remaining stables for livery.

- Health centre needed.
- Road maintenance.

Specifically, the Plan seeks to address the housing need of Dúnfarrraig by identifying areas zoned for residential development for permanent occupation and in so doing, establish a village centre. The Plan represents a structured approach to housing, which would actively seek to prevent applications for holiday homes. Concurrently, it sets out to implement the revised procedure for applications to build, as stated under the Planning and Development Act 2000. The first of the three areas identified by the Plan, includes a site north of the pub¹⁷; the second is located further north of the first plot, 'just north east of the village centre'; while the third is situated between the main coast road and minor road, to the north of the post office and newsagent. Other areas supplied, are identified as "open space", and others.

The twin emphases of the Plan, is placed on the development of housing units in Dúnfarrraig in clustered fashion for local occupancy, which essentially addresses local complaint regarding the number of applications that have been granted to outsiders for holiday home use only; and on the promotion of a centre or core to the village through the concentration of housing and commercial units. Both emphases have been emphatically rejected by the indigenous residents of Dúnfarrraig, through the authority of the newly formed Dúnfarrraig Development Committee.

Upon publication of the North Clare Draft Local Area Plan in February 2004, the community of Dúnfarrraig gathered at the national school for an emergency public meeting, to discuss a course of action. At this meeting, a committee of 11 members was elected with the express intention of providing a representative body for the community of Dúnfarrraig, to Clare County Council. In the ensuing document sent to the Council, a 'process of consultation' with local views, was outlined in full. Briefly, the stated 'process' included regular meetings open to all locals to attend, an open invitation of membership of the development committee to interested members of the community; and a variety of consultative mechanisms such as suggestion box,

¹⁷ Which has since been sold by the local resident to a developer, who is currently applying for permission to build 21 terraced houses on the land. This will be the third type of development to be built in Dúnfarrraig, which will assume a suburban design (Jagose, 2003) of terraced housing, in this rural setting.

questionnaire, informal discussions with members in the community, synopsis of the draft plan made available to each community member and a further public meeting¹⁸.

Of those views outlined in the document, three aspects merit particular attention:

- a. To call for a plan that presented a growth plan for the whole of the area currently called Dúnfarrraig, i.e. the coastal region.
- b. To specifically reject the limited notion of a 'village' of Dúnfarrraig outlined in the Draft Plan.
- c. To petition the Planning Authority to draw up a Plan that represents the wishes of the majority of the local people and not one that reflects outsiders view of the area¹⁹.

In addition to a clear emphasis on the provision or creation of employment opportunities and urgency of local infrastructure, the committee stated that the community wished to see;

- A mixture of housing types as indicated in the Planning Act 2000 including support for the development of more thatched houses.
- Provision for the development of residential property *whether by local rural persons or not* so that the community can grow to a sustainable level. [Italics added]

Essentially, the document rejects the twin emphases of the North Clare Draft Local Area Plan 2004, which seeks to develop Dúnfarrraig in a more integrated fashion; conceptually, by acknowledgement of a village centre, and practically, through the clustering of housing for local occupation. In its response, the Development Committee have argued that this concept of a 'village' is too limited, and that the Plan presents a very restrictive understanding of 'development', which is inconsistent with Housing Guidelines in the National Spatial Strategy.

This sense of malcontent, is echoed in a private legal document submitted by a couple in Lislough, to Clare County Council, who argue that the Plan of 2004 changes the areas zoned for development in the whole of Dúnfarrraig from that originally stipulated in the Clare County Development Plans, 1999 and 1998. Their land fell within the remit of one of the four identified clusters for development in the original

¹⁸ In the interests of protecting the anonymity of the respondents from Dunfarrraig, a copy of the Consultation Process will not be included in this thesis.

¹⁹ This refers to representatives of Clare County Council who were sent by the Council to consult with local representatives from each village in the north of Co.Clare.

Plans for the Dúnfarrraig area, but the potential for development of their land has now been downgraded through the complete revision and exclusion of these clusters in the new Plan 2004. The couple are now seeking the identification of their land within a townland cluster of Dúnfarrraig, as 'Other Settlement Land'²⁰ in the Plan 2004²¹.

Concurrent with the emergence of the Development Committee, has been the submission and refusal of a number of applications for a hotel by members of the committee in Dúnfarrraig. The significance of these developments for local and outsider residents, was expressed through observations of what it means to live and be a part of the community in Dúnfarrraig. A significant aspect of this clause of membership necessarily includes support for, and involvement in decisions made *by* the local community, *for* the community of Dúnfarrraig. Crucially, this support is couched in political terms of allegiance for certain families in the community; in terms of ideological reasoning for the future development of the Dúnfarrraig area; and in the diplomatic understanding that while the dominant personalities (both outsider and local) in the community wish for the continued development commercially of the area, the issue of 'sustainability' refers largely to local economic control of and financial gain from that development.

This is particularly evident in relation to the Dúnfarrraig Water Committee which claims an entire cohort of local residents. The current water scheme was set up in 1971 to cater for a total of 60 houses. With a total of 160 houses and nearly 400

²⁰ According to the definition provided by the Plan, this type of zoning will 'accommodate development proposals which are in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.' This will include '...amenity space/play areas, commercial, residential, recreational and community facilities...whilst also seeking to support and strengthen the service base'.

²¹ This couple was refused planning permission for an application to build a small 20 bedroomed hotel in Lislough. The application included extensive drawings detailing a car-park suitable for coaches, a hotel and sewage treatment. It also described the type of materials to be used in the construction of the hotel, and illustrated how the spatial layout of the hotel and car-park would compliment the character of the Burren area.

Shortly after this application was submitted to Clare County Council, another application for a small hotel was lodged by the local publican, for outline planning permission of his field beside the pub in Coiscrew. An Taisce objected to the couples's application on the grounds that the land for development included a monument of geological importance to the Burren region. The application was refused, partly based on the predicted approval of application for the hotel beside the pub, which was deemed to be sufficient for the commercial needs of the Dúnfarrraig area. A councillor commented that the difference in the detail of design between both applications was remarkable, and could certainly support an argument of political allegiance or support for the commercial interest of the local publican.

caravans in 2005, the demand is now far greater, exacerbated by a busy tourist season. The Water Committee was a reactive measure to an increasing problem faced by many of the businesses in the village. The committee assumes an important status, exaggerated by its completely local membership which is voluntary.

“It’s totally locals that’s involved in it. ‘Tis a voluntary thing and I’d say if we were to drop out of it, there’d be a long time... We were talkin’ about it. I’d say twill be a whole new one [committee], a whole new team of, of strangers, I’d say that’d be involved in it. I mean... there’s very new blood in it, very, very, very new em... I dunno what you’d call them, hippy style or what. But they’re the one’s that want to be involved and they don’t want to see... It’s nice to see the real locals involved in it, like. I don’t think it would succeed the way it did up to now, only for eh, the locals were up in on it and threw their weight behind it and got it going.”

Perversely however, it is also argued that that this perceived wish for control by members of the local community, could also be seen as a reaction against the perceived overt and ready claim of control posed by one or two outsiders, of ideas and their implementation for the development needs of the whole community. Both aspects of this political struggle for control are articulated by local and outsider accounts of the emergence of the Development Committee, which has been viewed by the community, as a farce of democratic values.

“Even the night of the, of the development meeting, we all attended it, not intending to be part of it other than – I’m not into being part of a committee other than the water. I’m stuck with the water and that’s it. But they did go about selecting a committee that would look after the development and whatever meetings with the Council later. And for whatever ‘twas worth, whatever power they have, say there was ten, well nine of them must have been... eh, proposing and seconding one another. Nine out of the ten of them were the other side of the bridge. They just did this and had planned it goin’ in! Like you could see and you knew that – we knew, even sittin’ in the background, who was goin’... to be selected first; who was goin’ to be selected the second one, then who was goin’ proposing, who was goin’ seconding and then. [In explanation, the local respondent indicated his wife] And when I proposed you, Fiona, and seconded you, you proposed me and someone else seconded me and.. So one or two of them from this side of the parish, the em... told that it was a shambles and that they weren’t interested at all, coz even if the thing went to a vote, I mean, they had it their way. Ellen Doherty, she was trying to build a house over in the – this side of the green road. She said, ‘let’s start selecting the committee. Should first have two from the far

end, two from Dúnfarrraig, two over here and two from beyond'²². A very sensible thing she said, but the, they immediately jumped into this thing they had set up. And what they said to David the next time they had a committee meeting was that, he said that there were people that weren't happy with all the people that was on the other side at all. That it should have been shared equal. And he said tell them, any of them that feel like joining, to come along, and we'll include them. [But] it doesn't make a difference, coz if there is a decision taken, or put to vote, they have got nine or ten and there's not going to be nine or ten more anyway. No committee consists of 16 or 18 people. But em, that weren't even done fair and I wouldn't even go to their meetings now, if they called me."

This sentiment regarding the process through which the committee was elected, was also echoed by a holiday home resident who lives on a full-time basis in Dublin. In a letter to Clare County Council, she described that "the overwhelming majority of its members reside in the Lislough townland of Dúnfarrraig" and how "it is for this area that permission for two large scale developments was sought within the last 12 months by four residents all of whom are represented on the Committee, one of them holding the chair and another being the secretary". By highlighting Lislough as an area whose residents have sought commercial development, this resident is articulating a property determination: that it is not a question of how much land is owned by the resident, but where that land lies.

"This is the reality behind the opening line of the Dúnfarrraig Area Development North Clare Plan 2005 which states that 'After careful review and community consultation, the **Dúnfarrraig Community** [my italics] have endorsed and adopted the following [plan]'." (Emphasis provided by resident)

Her concluding comments on the process of election and consultation with the community state that 'while it can be said that the meeting was open it was not entirely democratic nor was it entirely frank'.

In contrast to the previous legal letter sent to the Council by the couple from the Lislough townland, stating that the current Plan 2005 will downgrade the potential of their land, this holiday home owner sees the Plan seeking to 'accommodate the wishes of landowners and developers to maximise the development potential of their properties'. Further, how

²² This request for representation, makes explicit spatial distinctions in Dúnfarrraig, one of which contains a family of local residents who own vast tracts of undeveloped land.

“it was interesting to observe at the consultation meeting on Friday 7th May how the leading minds behind the Proposals [to submit to Clare County Council] were trying to impress the audience with large scale maps which contrasted the restricted area proposed in the North Clare Draft Development Plan with the almost unrestricted areas envisaged for development in the Dúnfarrraig Area Development North Clare Plan 2005. There was no mention for example of the Neagle Complex Proposed Candidate Special Area of Conservation. When I myself drew attention to this omission I was ruled out of order by the chair even though the SAC is mentioned in the North Clare Draft Development Plan on page 177 and it is that very NCDDP which the Dúnfarrraig Area Development Plan Proposals are meant to discuss and to comment on.”

The feeling expressed in this instance, along with that of the local resident, confirms widespread negative opinion regarding the set up and consultation process of the Development Committee, among the community of Dúnfarrraig. A sense of apathy is also apparent, as is a sense of resignation. However, more outspoken members of the community appear divided both on the issues presented by the Committee for consideration and discussion, and in terms of where their support lies.

At its formation, the Committee comprised eleven members, one of which has since died. Of the ten members, at least four families involved either in the construction industry or with vested interest in property development, are represented on the Committee. Two of the members currently live in the Dooninagh and Coiscrew townlands in the south of Dúnfarrraig, while the remaining eight members live in the Lislough townland to the north of Dúnfarrraig. More significantly however, the Committee includes five local residents, and five outsider residents, both parties of which have either supported or submitted various applications for permission to build commercially, or who have economic interests in residential development in the Dúnfarrraig area. No resident has been elected who does not have a commercial interest in Dúnfarrraig.

Yet a different view of this process of representation is presented by local resident and builder Ollie, who is an elected member of the Dúnfarrraig Development Committee and who refers to this as a very positive example of the Dúnfarrraig local community who have come together in solidarity to plan for its future development. He contrasts the people in Knockree, and their approach towards their village which he

characterises as passive, with the local residents in Dúnfarrraig who have adopted an active collaborative stance towards the development of their village.

“Knockree is a much quieter town now, than it was. Because they never moved with the times as they’d be needin’ things. Y’know, there’s no proper place to launch a boat even, in Knockree. They market themselves as a good inlet on the bay for a boat, but try tow your boat out there like!”

It is the incapability of the Knockree residents, to demonstrate an understanding and will towards “progress”, which differentiates them from the residents in Dúnfarrraig. Ollie explains that while the local residents of Dúnfarrraig acted decisively (to put together a liaison committee), “had a good auwl discussion and put down on paper what we thought the way things should go”, the Knockree residents sitting at the table beside, imitated every request and idea proposed by the Dúnfarrraig group. Ollie states that the Dúnfarrraig residents demonstrated leadership, control and local solidarity in their approach and proposals, the proposals which were then copied by the former rival town, now “much quieter” through their lack of ‘local’ initiative.

“Two weeks ago, there was a Sports Day. So simply organised and was great. The people of Dúnfarrraig are a quiet people. They don’t say much, but when they do something, they put their heart into it.”

However, support for decisions or ideas put forward by the Committee, has resulted in tensions within the community. A significant part of this tension is due to divisions emerging in the community in terms of conflicting desires for the development or non-development²³ of Dúnfarrraig. Ambiguities surround this desire, in a greater understanding of the necessity to remain aesthetically rural while claiming the comforts of urban living in a rural setting. These conflicting wishes for Dúnfarrraig are situated in terms of highly complex political alliances or relationships between local and outsider. One such conflict, is between local landowners whose land falls within the zoned area of development outlined in the Draft Area Plan, and members of the Dúnfarrraig Development Committee²⁴.

²³ Which means reverting to the County Development Plan proposed by Clare County Council.

²⁴ One particular local resident who is not a member of the committee, stated that he was friendly with a representative of the planning department in the county council, who had confided to him that the council were aware of the committee’s various economic interests, but would continue with their plan for a village centre. This local resident was pleased with this news, as he confided in turn that he had a

Responding to a question regarding the future of Dúnfarrraig, an outsider commented

“...other than that, it is developed along here [Dúnfarrraig More and Beg]. But I wouldn't like to see it sprawling everywhere else. So I was quite happy to maybe, not go along to the meeting [public meeting for formation of Development Committee] because I didn't want y'know...I agreed with what they had done. So I wasn't going to sort of putting my name to agreeing to sort of widen this village...em, any further. Their plan, the county development plan is only to...within the area...to the school to the graveyard is, I think, only something like seven houses over the next ten years. Now, I mean, they are going to be allowed, some of them are going to allow planning outside of that, but y'know, I hope they don't allow, sort of, a hotel over there [by bridge and beach, the two places which were refused planning permission for a hotel] – if they were going to let a hotel be developed here, it should have been within the village. Whereas that – is looking for one over at his holiday house there, just beyond the - ...I wouldn't agree with it being there. I mean, - was looking for one there near the - I wouldn't agree with that either, y'know, and I certainly wouldn't agree with development”.

While a local resident stated that

“...the biggest thing we have, here, as regards development...is that people [outsiders] that have come into Dúnfarrraig are objecting to what people [locals] are building at the moment....I think people that bought places years ago here, want to see Dúnfarrraig stay as it is....But I think the people in Dúnfarrraig have to live with what...[the locals want]”

Perversely however, another local resident commented that:

“I'd say a lot of them [outsider residents] would sort of like it [Dúnfarrraig] to be left the way it 'tis, and not tell us that a small hotel would be a help.”

Given the steady influx of outsiders to live in Dúnfarrraig, and their accountability within a total population count for the area, the outsider who resists political involvement is now accorded a large degree of responsibility and blame for the difficulty in passing ideas, but particularly, for the repeated failure of applications for permission to build hotels in Dúnfarrraig.

large piece of land within the area mentioned in the Draft Area Plan as zoned for development, which he wanted to sell to a developer. The land has since been sold to a developer, who plans to build 21 houses in that plot.

Political involvement is viewed in terms of support for the dominant figures, both indirectly through social interaction within the pub environment, and directly, through attendance at meetings. A community within a community becomes apparent through the nexus of political and social interchange. A tiered level of support and disaffection from both social and political life emerges in terms of: local desire and outsider desire for freedom of commercial development throughout the townlands in Dúnfarrraig as manifest through the Development Committee; an implicit understanding that local landowners and local residents wish for greater control of representation and decisions made for both commercial and other development of Dúnfarrraig; local desire versus local unwillingness for further commercial development, particularly of holiday homes; a general understanding that support for ideas of residents is viewed by the rest of the community in terms of support for family networks; and residents perception that the dominant local residents within the Lislough townland are using the Committee as a tool through which spatial separation from the rest of the Dúnfarrraig area, may be achieved in order to gain commercial independence.

This issue of separating the townlands has arisen from a suggestion to put the name of 'Dúnfarrraig' on a granite stone, to mark the beginning and end of that place. Those who are in favour of commercial development throughout the townlands, feel that a separate sign in granite should be made for each townland. They argue that the separation of townlands claims historical roots in both the spatial and social history of the area. Those within the tourism business who are located within the townland of Dúnfarrraig which encompasses the pub, café, shop, two Bed and Breakfast houses and post office, feel that separating the townlands would confuse the tourist, upon whose business they are dependent. However, it is suggested that both arguments have been posed as a smokescreen for deeper conflicts of interest between residents, as not only do residents' descriptions of Dúnfarrraig as place differ, but an expression of support for either argument, means support for the development interests of either group of local and outsider residents who are not members of the committee, and the Dúnfarrraig Development Committee. Separating the townlands would offer residents living within each area, greater autonomy over the decision making process for development in that townland. At present, local and outsider residents living in each townland must consult with the greater cohort of residents living throughout

Dúnfarrraig. The ability of any resident to capitalise on his/her land is viewed with some jealousy by residents who are similarly interested in capitalising on the worth of their land, but are restricted in its building potential.

However, to assume that alliances and networking exists only at the level of the Committee, would be to underestimate the processes of induction to other areas of community life which also entail a membership, although this is based on a *social*, rather than an economic rationale. One such area at the heart of rural village life, is the national school.

The symbolic importance of the school in its role of the regeneration of village life, is articulated by local acknowledgement and ready acceptance of the efforts of the outsider who sends their child to the local school. Through the school, the outsider meets the parents of the other children, and becomes involved in activities and decisions made for the development of the school. This involvement with other parents and teachers, enables the outsider access to a social network of support, and with it, membership of that specific community. These parents have little or no time to socialise in the pub, in contrast to the rest of the resident population, as family needs require their presence at home. Therefore apart from mass and occasionally the shop, there is no other way to meet this cohort of residents. This bears striking similarity to the school 'community' in Gireux, which also comprises a cohort of local parents and their children who tend to socialise together through the nexus of school events and activities, or within the private space of the home. In both Dúnfarrraig and Gireux, parents routinely facilitate the socialisation needs of their children outside of school hours, by leaving their children in the house of another child, where both children play together for a couple of hours under the watchful eye of the parent. This system of support, both for each other as adults who need a break from their children, and for the social needs of their children, could be viewed in terms of a pattern of 'cooring' or 'social capital' (Putman, 2000), whose rationale for help between neighbours, is social, rather than economic.

The children of the Dúnfarrraig national school are socialised through sport, drama, music and art classes, all of which are conducted through the joining of the

Dúnfarrraig school, with its neighbour, Knockree school²⁵. However, it is suggested that this current happy marriage between Dúnfarrraig and Knockree is prompted more by the need to make up numbers of children for sporting and cultural activities, than by a real desire for friendship. Together Dúnfarrraig and Knockree comprise the one parish, competing against other villages which also need to combine children from neighbouring schools in order to make up numbers.

For those local residents outside this 'community' of parents and children, outsider vested support of the national school represents a qualitative difference between people pursuing an economic interest and social exclusion from the local community through the holiday home, and those blow-ins or 'semi-locals' who seek to live and actively integrate with the community, thereby furthering its development. As one local resident who operates a Bed and Breakfast, remarked

“Particularly families or somebody that’ll come in that’ll be of benefit to the area, like havin’ kids for the school or working from the area, but not building it [a house] to leave it there...”

One outsider Deirdre, has recently come to live in Dúnfarrraig with her nine year old son, Oisín, after years of travelling from place of origin in Co.Limerick, to Dublin, then abroad. Her husband continues to live and work abroad, visiting his family in Dúnfarrraig occasionally. Deirdre recounts her experience setting up home in Dúnfarrraig, and the difficulty she had trying to establish contact with the local residents in the community. She describes futile efforts to meet the local residents in the pub, and details her shock encountering only men there.

“And definitely when I started to go to the pub in...in the pub I found mainly men. Just men. It felt very, very traditional. It was just – I remember thinking there’s only two other women in the pub and I thought, well, where did all the women go? And what do they do?”

²⁵ In the past, the place of Dúnfarrraig and Knockree have held a competitive relationship with each other, disliking the type of economic development going on in either village, and the residents responsible for initiating this development. In the case of Knockree, one or two outsiders were elected as representatives on the Community Group some years ago, along with a number of local residents. These outsiders were seen as pushy and too confident, by both a number of Knockree residents and by residents in Dúnfarrraig. Since then, the community of Dúnfarrraig has elected representatives from its own cohort of full-time resident outsiders, who are similarly viewed as pushy and controlling of the development decisions for Dúnfarrraig.

This unease gave way to a sense of alienation from indigenous life, which was then exacerbated by the realisation that the social experience of visiting houses had diminished in importance in Dúnfarrraig. In frustration, Deirdre describes how she attempted set-dancing in the pub with the specific intention of meeting other local residents. Ironically, she remarks that of those who turned up, nearly all were outsiders, also eager to establish contact with the greater community through the dancing. However this depiction of local absence from this social activity, does not concur with other local residents description of their regular involvement in set-dancing. One local described how set-dancers from other villages would routinely come to the pub in Dúnfarrraig, in order to share the lesson with the residents. Separate to these visiting dancers, a group of semi-professional set-dancers visit Dúnfarrraig on occasion, alternating between a different village every week. Unlike the classes in Dúnfarrraig, which deliberately keeps the level low in order to remain attractive to beginners²⁶, competitions are held in the community hall in Ennistymon, where more advanced set-dancers take to the floor. This local described at length, the fun of meeting other residents through these events, both in the pub in Dúnfarrraig and further afield.

In addition to set-dancing, card games and meetings also take place within the pub, as the school has been dismissed as too small for community gatherings²⁷. One outsider resident proudly stated that it was over a drink in the pub one night, when she first thought of the idea of having a parade in Dúnfarrraig, to celebrate St.Patrick's Day. However, a local resident has also claimed credit for this idea, and for its implementation which involves liaising with neighbouring villages for participation ideas; the organisation of categories of floats; the organisation of video equipment for recording purposes²⁸; galvanising the local community of Dúnfarrraig in particular, to take part; organisation of stage and so forth. This plethora of social activity, is at odds with Deirdre's experience of attempting to socialise in the pub in Dúnfarrraig, in order to meet local residents outside of the context of the national school. It has been

²⁶ Large A3 sheets showing various set-dancing movements, are pasted to the walls of the inner room in the pub at the beginning of the term of classes, in early Autumn.

²⁷ This would refer to the total population count of Dúnfarrraig, which numbers 216. The school currently boasts 16 children, a considerably smaller number.

²⁸ The videos are then sold in the shop, with all monies going towards a charity in Dúnfarrraig.

through her child, through the contact with the national school that Deirdre has been able to gain access to the women residents of Dúnfarrraig. This, she describes as a “breakthrough”, as her increasing familiarity with these women has enabled her transition from “the outside” of community life, to become more involved with the families in Dúnfarrraig.

“And y’know, you get to know people through your own...em, children. And em, this has been going back since I sent him to school...” “These are the women, they’re at home. And these are the women who I need to connect with, kind of way. Em so, I think, in order to get involved I suppose, you really definitely need to start, to get into the school and eh...meet the families. You don’t find these families in pubs, y’know.”

‘These families’, for Deirdre, comprise an inner circle of socialisation, where she feels that in time, “I’ll be comin’ to be more accepted.” Notwithstanding this progression of her inclusion, she remarks that:

“...that doesn’t mean to say that I’ll ever be right in the, in the inner circle, because eh...well, here, people are related. Everyone’s related and eh, y’know, there are family. But I have definitely moved on from what I was when I came here first. And havin’ a child has helped. But em, y’know...there’s the inner circle, and then there’s the outer circle. And the outer circle consists of those who are normally here and that’s me [outsider]. And eh, foreigners.”

However, Deirdre describes the process of acceptance by the parents at the school, as somewhat painful initially. She recalls a memory of one particular time when an invitation for a birthday party was sent to all the children in the school, except her son. This, she feels, highlighted not only their status as outsiders, but served to segregate her son from the other local children. Deirdre’s later experience of the integrative ability of the school, mirrors that of Kate’s, also an outsider who has lived in Dúnfarrraig for six months of every year, for the past ten years. Kate owns and manages a hotel in Lismaroon, where the busy flood of tourists require her to live in the town for the duration of the summer months, returning to live in Dúnfarrraig on a full-time basis, at the beginning of the school year. Kate comments that the school

“...brings me in. And I would know a lot of people locally. Again, a lot of that involvement did come through the school, did come through the child, y’know?”

That involvement in the school, has stemmed from Kate's position on the Board of Management for the school, despite her temporal status in the village. The local parish priest approached Kate, with a request to act as the Community Representative between community and the Board of Management, which she accepted. She explains that this move was made in the understanding that her child attended the school on a full-time basis, regardless of her own absence from Dúnfarrraig during the summer months. Her husband is a well known and respected butcher in Lismaroon, whose hobbies include amateur dramatics with the local drama society in that town. Neither Kate or her husband are involved in any aspect of community life in Dúnfarrraig, outside of the school.

The differential treatment of women, both outsiders, by the local parents in the school, would seem to indicate different degrees of '*insiderness*' or '*outsiderness*' (Relph, 1976) in relation to the community of Dúnfarrraig. Kate, who manages her own hotel in Lismaroon during the summer months, describes Dúnfarrraig as a place where she is "completely on holidays", which enables her autonomy over her involvement with the community through her position in the school. Her highly respected status as manager, and reputation as hard-worker has earned her more immediate acknowledgement among the local community of Dúnfarrraig, than that of Deirdre.

While the rural community of Dúnfarrraig embraces its family structure, it tends to be within the public space of the church, pub and school. In general, when families visit each other at home, it is to acknowledge an event, such as a homecoming, and the celebrations usually follow on to the pub in order to take on a more festive and public focus. Birthdays, christenings and marriages are all celebrated in the pub, which makes the event available to the rest of the community. Thus, the home has become a private space for the family, while public spaces provide the meeting ground for the extended family and friends. This provides the biggest contrast with its French counterpart, Gireux, where meetings between family and friends, all take place within the private space of the family home. Crucially, this shows how the spatial pattern of socialising has changed since traditional rural society where the house was a public space at certain times when local people went house visiting.

The French context

Politics plays a more subtle but unmistakably dominant role in community membership of the rural French counterpart, Gireux. In this quite patriarchal society, conservative values are celebrated through a rite of passage to social interaction and economic spatial practices. Family assumes greater importance in the French rural context than in the Irish rural context, so local residents socialise among themselves through family dinners and events in the privacy of their own homes. This is in contrast with socialisation practices in Dúnfarrraig, which tends to take place in public spaces such as the pub, the school, the shop and the church. Outside of the family context, other activities which are available to the community in Gireux, are scrabble, the fete, the gym, mass and the café. However, with the exception of the gym and the café, only elderly local residents participate in these activities. Therefore, a twin system of socialisation emerges, with family based socialising taking place within the home environment on the one hand (covert), and community based activities taking place in public spaces (overt), respectively.

As the local resident population is comprised of a group of different families who claim long lineage to Gireux, these families and their mode of socialising represent the core of that local community. Although the men of these families frequent the café from time to time, and most of these residents would attend the fete at winter and summer time, these residents remain within the privacy of their homes. When they do attend the fete, they remain within their family units, sitting and talking together.

This presents quite a difficult picture for the outsider who wishes to meet the local residents in Gireux. While the outsider in Dúnfarrraig gains access and involvement with the local community through support of the principal social structures such as the national school and pub, socialising at public events such as the St.Patrick's day parade or set-dancing, the same type of interaction in Gireux, represents a very superficial level²⁹ of involvement in rural French society. Participation at the gym, fete, scrabble, even attendance at mass and the café, signify an incomplete measure of

²⁹ This is because no social exchange between local and outsider occurs at the fete, beyond mere pleasantries, making it difficult to engage on any meaningful level with that residents life, on a level other than to talk about generic topics such as the weather or the food being served. Secondly, residents meet each other in the private space of home, rather than in public spaces of the café (or pub), which makes it very difficult to have a conversation with residents.

access to the indigenous community. At best, it satisfies an overt or immediate level of participation and endorsement of local activities and is acknowledged by the local community. A more meaningful way of engaging with the local community would be through family events, which constitutes the private, internal space of that core of residents. For the outsider to gain access to this community of family, would require a tactful, sensitive approach to socialising, in order to demonstrate to the local residents a full acceptance that he/she is not a local, nor has any pretensions that socialising among this community will entitle him/her to that status. Thus, a large part of being accepted as an outsider among the local residents, involves establishing an interest in supporting the activities and life of the village, rather than asserting a presence in the village, which would threaten the security of the local residents' sense of their community. Clumsy interaction includes language difficulties which highlight the status of the individual as outsider of the community, and indicates to the local residents that the outsider will remain isolated from the community through an inability to communicate with the same. Paradoxically therefore, criteria for possible membership requires the outsider to make an effort to talk with the locals, to demonstrate a willingness to acknowledge the community as one which the outsider has come to live within.

Unlike the Irish experience in Dúnfarrraig, where the local residents have welcomed and sought to learn activities such as the fiddle, set-dancing and art, from the outsider, the French environment requires the deference of the outsider to the cultural traditions and norms of the rural society. What it means to be an outsider who is accepted in Gireux, is constructed through socialisation practices such as attendance at these activities, which simultaneously act as a type of induction into village life, as it indicates support for and interest of the same. One French outsider resident contrasts her experience of living within the community of Gireux, which includes commuting to work in a town over half an hour away each morning, with her knowledge of other towns and villages.

“...Compared to Coulet.... a lot of people went there [to the bar, shop and bakery], but didn't enter the village [community]. They stayed outside.”

“Gireux is a little village, people enter it: they come and still manage to enter it. Even if they are far from the village [the local residents], they belong to

Gireux, they come to the party, some of them play Scrabble, they are part of Gireux's life, not outsiders.”

Nadine's comparison with the neighbouring village, Coulet, is intended to show how local residents continue to feel a connection with the community of Gireux, even across the space of another country. Their lineage, which provides this connection with the community, enables them to return on an *ad hoc* basis and still be welcomed as a vital part of that community. This example is given to demonstrate the importance of family connections, to the local residents, and how the network of those families, constitute this very close society and its membership which is rigidly defined in terms of lineage.

This perception is confirmed by another outsider, Laeticia, who originally lived in Paris and came to Gireux three years ago to set up a perfume business with her husband. In an effort to establish new roots in the village, they got married in the small church in Gireux, an event to which the entire community was invited. Despite this, Laeticia compares her status within the community to that of another outsider, also from Paris, who lives nearby in Gireux.

“Y'know em, I've got a friend who say to us, she's lived here for forty years, and she say, we always, we are always foreigner forever. *My child borns here and they are local*, but I'm not local. I'm here for forty years and will always be foreigner.” (Italics added)

She comments how setting up their business would have been very difficult, had it not been for a chance encounter between her husband and a young woman, both whom were attending a course in Carcassonne. The young woman introduced herself as married to a man who belonged to one of the most influential local families in Gireux, and promptly offered to introduce the couple to the other families in the community. Laeticia described how meeting the five important families, played a significant part in the committee's ready support for their request to rezone part of a large stone building on the outskirts of Gireux, from residential, to commercial.

Advertising their business also assumed a procedural relevance to regional and local authority. While erecting signs outside the environs of the village simply involved gaining permission from landowners, the creation and placement of signs within the

village was at the stated wish of the mayor (*mairie*). For Laetitia, this afforded an insight into the greater process of induction or membership, albeit on an economic level, of community life and its spatial practices of social and business, particular to Gireux. She commented that while most people make signs to advertise their businesses by in other villages, “it’s not done here”, so they “went through the *mairie* and he made them”. In return, the mayor asked the couple to prepare small bottles of perfume for each member of the committee, as a way of thanking the committee for their support of their business plans and implementation. She stated that;

“The only thing we do for them, is eh this year, they ask us for em, the fete to put together a bottle of perfume for the committee. It was the fete d’Gireux, and it was, the perfume was of message of base. And the person of Gireux [the mayor], he wanted to come and visit eh, a specified day. And we did that for them”.

Conscious of the local gaze of her business, Laetitia organised a party to which the entire community was invited.

“So a few of them come and see and they understand what we are doing”.

This approach, while more dramatic than most, demonstrates an acute understanding of the subtle politics of the rural community. A criterion crucial to gaining access to membership of the community - which is essential in order for the business to succeed - is local trust of the outsider³⁰. A sense of difference engenders mistrust of the outsider, exacerbated by a language barrier between the English and the French which effectively prevents communication. By presenting their business in a sensual format, with a guided tour enabling understanding through sight and smell, the couple transcended the cultural barrier and demonstrated a willingness to embrace the local community.

This emphasis on providing an explanation of one’s activities is indirectly articulating an awareness of the presentation of self to the community. It also demonstrates Laetitia’s understanding of local suspicion of their intention to work and live within the geographical remit of the community, but spatially separate from village life. The

³⁰ Understood in terms of the ‘other’ (Peace, 1989) in this context.

degree to which this is done, is not required for everyday socialisation among neighbours, but is particularly necessary in this case for the protection of the business interests of Laetitia and her husband. A crucial part of this process of acceptance, involves identifying themselves as hard workers, willing to work strenuous hours in order for the business to become a success. As a large cohort of the community of Gireux comprise Portuguese and Spanish labourers³¹ who work long hours in the vineyards in order to provide food for their family, this is a necessary requisite for their acceptance. Somewhat strategically, the couple have placed pictures on their website, advertising the arduous labour through which they have managed the structural transformation of the then derelict building, into a perfumery business.

Figure 5.4.1 A presentation of self (Goffman, 1959).



The place of the future distillery



The construction of the buildi

³¹ There are 120 outsiders living full-time in Gireux. Of this, about 80% of these are Portuguese and Spanish workers.



Nothing is wasted



The tests are ok, the distillery is ready



The lavender has been crop



This visual history of the structural transformation of the perfumery, has been taken from the website, which includes a social account of how the couple met and their wishes for the business. One of the pictures shows a woman picking stray strands of some herb from the field. This representation of the painstaking work involved in this work, labours the image of the couple as hard workers – down to the portrayal of work clothes embodied through the use of headscarf.

The house, which is the larger structure in the colour picture, is attached to the 'studio', the shop from which they give guided tours of the business and sell fragrances. Notably, the house is oriented towards their fields, which includes crops for perfumes, rather than vines. Two garden benches are laid out in front of the house for relaxation purposes. But as Laeticia makes it quite clear that neither she nor her husband has time to relax, it is maintained that their purpose is decoratively visual. A performative object which represents this space (Lefebvre, 1991) as relaxed, as spatially separate from urban constraints such as work, with its emphasis on non-active practices such as contemplating the surrounding hinterland (Urry, 1990, 2002) while sitting. The suggestion of this practice, is synonymous with images of the south of France and its vineyards (despite the fact that the view is actually of herbs), and therefore constructs this representation in terms of an 'old' aesthetic.

However, her unease of the community is apparent in her description of the same as a "sect", characterised by their affiliation to a code of particular behavioural norms and practices.

Of those local residents interviewed for this study, nearly none had been to the perfumery and were unclear of the type of activities there. However, most local residents knew and spoke warmly of the couple, referring to the extensive restoration work which they had done to the house. This house once belonged to an old family

but was sold as an investment to a French man living in Tahiti, let rest for several years uninhabited, then purchased by Laetitia and her husband. The couple's efforts of renovating the old building has been welcomed by the local residents, who see their presence in Gireux as a structural inclusion to the community, as it represents a transformation from derelict holiday home used on a temporary basis, to a beautifully maintained house, for full-time residency. Their successful integration, albeit still as outsider to the community of Gireux, is manifest in the activities during the time of the fete in June of each summer. Laetitia provides a story-telling session for the local children using a variety of perfumes. This is held in the grounds of the old national school, while the men gather to play boules and drink wine beside the café. Some of the mothers sit and watch with the children, while Laetitia enacts story after story to a captivated audience.

A different story of life in Gireux is told by another Parisian outsider living in the village. In preface, she states that:

“...Coulet, I stayed there...hmmm, at least ten years, so I got to know a lot of people, well...there was a lot of life...I had a great life, it was nice. Plus I had an adaption time of...hmm, six months, maybe nine months, because as I was coming from Paris, hmm, people had to...appreciate me as I was, and not because I was a Parisian woman. And people don't appreciate Parisian people. In villages, they don't like Parisian people too much, because they are very full of themselves. It's very...hmm, they come into a village as if it was a conquered country, okay? But when they arrive, they know everything, everything hmm.. They don't like this, they don't like that. But in the village, they are used to doing it that way. They [the Parisian] don't integrate to the villagers' life. They prefer to pass by with a superior air, that's it. And it's sad, but there are a lot of them like that.”

Despite disparaging this model of Parisian lifestyle, she goes on to describe how she arrived to Gireux with her partner, three months pregnant and made no effort to engage with the community.

“When I arrived, well, I was just keeping to myself, okay, because I was pregnant, just starting the first months, maybe not even three months and I was going on working. So, in fact, hmm, I didn't get any contact with the villagers, simply because I was off the normal timetable. That is to say that I was coming home when they were leaving. So I was off and personally, I didn't really want to have friendships with people because I had a lot to think about,

a lot to do, so I wanted to be done with those things before, hmm, before going somewhere else.”

However, this attitude has displaced her from the local community.

“There’s no communication with the people around here. For example, in Coulet, when people start to, to adopt you, hmm, you always have someone to phone you. And even if you don’t go out very often, you will be told ‘there’s a party tonight, what are your plans? Are you coming?’ But here, we don’t know anything, nothing, and then, hmm, around me, there are only people of a certain age you see, so we can’t, hmm, well, there are things not to do.”

It is argued that Claudine’s very negative perception of the local community is based on a fundamental misconception of the integrative mechanisms of French rural society. Her attitude would appear to reflect the model of Parisian behaviour which she has presented, rather than differ from it. The contrast which she draws between the community of Coulet, developed rural town, and Gireux, undeveloped rural village, is used to highlight what she perceives as very different attitudes of both communities to the outsider, manifest in their behaviour which has been to ignore her. What emerges from her contrast, is a sense of ritual to behavioural patterns. In order to be accepted, or just included in social plans, the individual must have demonstrated a consistent willingness to participate in social activities in Gireux, such as the gym or scrabble. Not unfairly, and following upon the example of Coulet, the local residents in Gireux might then think to include the outsider or individual in activities which take place within the private spaces of the community.

Claudine’s frustration emerges in her description of the highly gendered lifestyle of the local residents in Gireux. While her rejection of a softer, more subtle approach to socialising has led to her marginalized position in relation to the community; frustration and lack of understanding of the values has bred contempt.

“Some people are what? Around hmm, easily sixty. But these are not active sixty year old people, okay? And what happens as well, is that women live in couples, they are married, so, well, they have an old-fashioned lifestyle, that’s to say they don’t feel liberated. They are at home, taking care of their husband and household, but they don’t get the idea of going to other places, living in other places. My mother-in-law, for example, she’s a 72 or 73 year old person, but she’s never at home because she would take her car and go on holidays. And when she’s here, she’s a president of association, so she takes care of it.

She organises barbecues, artists' exhibitions. So, it's true that I'm only attracted to people who live, compared with people who stay quietly at home. But I'm not criticising, okay? It just isn't my cup of tea. What am I going to talk to them [local residents] about? About cleaning the house, folding our children's clothes, disinfecting the house? Personally I don't care. So when one feels like one doesn't have any common points, one doesn't lose time. So, we go to see them, we are civil with them: 'good morning, good evening, do you need any help...', there's no problem for that kind of thing. But full stop then. We don't have dinner at other people's houses, no way. It occurred to me to invite people to home, people from here, and we got bored, because actually, we don't see life in the same way, so it's boring. It's a shame if people [like me] are motivated and want to do things. But if these people are, hmm, well, there's no conversation, nothing! "

Claudine's contempt and frustration with the rural lifestyle of Gireux is further compounded by her dissatisfaction with the infrastructure of the village. The roads are in need of repair and very steep due to the location of Gireux on a hillside. The increasing number of car owners in the village, has meant that road resurfacing or the placing of cobble-stones, has been attributed a low priority status, partly due to the expense that this would have involved³². According to Claudine,

"The quality of a village is not only based on the infrastructures but also on the quality of people living there. It's enough if you have people who are really motivated, interesting and who want to do something about the village. There are a lot of people who think only of their own interest, they don't care about the others. They take care of their little house, their little garden. They go to the mayor to complain about the guy who comes to clean the streets if he's late. With people like that, there wouldn't be common plans. But, in Coulet, there was...a dynamic and people who really wanted to do things and were really involved and love it! They weren't people who were taking part just to be regarded. They loved it. And that's what makes the difference. That is to say that these people were not afraid to do things, to clean up and tidy up. That didn't bother them because they were not doing it in order to be elected or to be acknowledged. They were doing it for the village's well-being. There's a life in Coulet."

This criticism of Gireux and its community, is countered by a different outsider's approach to life in the village. This outsider, Nicole, came to live in Gireux with her three brothers and parents, all Italian, when they were teenagers. Her father worked hard as a labourer in the vineyards, and eventually earned enough money to move from their small house en terrasse in the centre of Gireux, to a much larger, detached

³² This is paid out of monies which each resident pays for tax, and from loans from the Department of the Aude.

house by the roadside. Nicole left the village to study at college, and take up a teaching post, after which she returned to live permanently in Gireux again. She teaches English in the secondary school in Ste.Saron, but holds an important position as counsellor³³ on the committee of Gireux.

For an outsider to hold such a coveted position as a committee member, is an unusual feat in the past and current atmosphere of Gireux. Participation on the committee is on a voluntary basis and is open to local residents of Gireux only. Candidates must first state their willingness to run for counsellor as position preceding direct membership of the committee. An election is held, and counsellors are voted on to the committee. A similar procedure is held for the position of Mayor of Gireux, the most important position in the village. Nicole was approached by members of the committee, who asked her to volunteer for counsellor. Nicole explains this move in political terms as an attempt to assuage tensions relating to the outsider/local dichotomy in Gireux.

Contextualising this rather unusual move on the part of the local residents, requires an understanding of the social structure of Gireux, which in turn illustrates the complexities of community membership.

Socially and economically, Gireux has been led by five large families, whose ancestral roots stem some centuries back. Official records in Gireux show families dating from 1680. These families claim true 'local' status by their extensive lineage to Gireux. Similarly, the families own vast tracts of vineyards which surround the village. When the Portuguese first arrived to Gireux in the earlier part of the twentieth century, they worked as labourers on the vineyards owned by the families. Like their Irish counterpart, the French have witnessed the slow but gradual decrease in popularity of working on the land as a vine grower (*viticultaire*) or farmer (the Irish equivalent in this context), alongside the increasing popularity of professions such as teaching, nursing, law and so forth. Two main catalysts have been responsible for this change. First, many of the non-local residents are not trained as *viticultaires*, and have service jobs, or jobs in industry in neighbouring towns. Secondly, quite a few of the local families have made their wealth through crops from the land, rather than through

³³ This is essentially a liaison position between residents of the community, and the committee.

educational capital. They now desire their children to be educated at university in addition to assuming a role in maintaining the family business of vine growing. Many of these children are still at university, but will return to Gireux as adults trained as nurses, teachers, engineers, builders and so forth. While it is unclear as to what kind of role these returning locals will have in relation to the vineyards, unlike the negative attitude noted by Brody (1973) of the youth towards the family tradition of farming in the west of Ireland, the youth in Gireux are very proud of their family connection to the land and view this land as their own, rather than their parents. Some of these returning locals have built homes for their new families on parts of this land, but many are keen to maintain the land for farming purposes.

These local families operate in terms of a network: economically, through use of taxes collected from the community, to mend fences and pathways to farms, and help of each other at harvest time³⁴; socially, by attending each other's family events; politically, through overt support at election time and during a decision making process; and culturally, through formation of a 'commitè de fete' or the festival committee, which is responsible for organising both local fetes. According to Nicole, the families have used this system of co-operation, both to reproduce the existing network of power, and to exclude other residents from access to this power. This has created a 'community in a community.'

“The network still exists, even if lots of people have disappeared. But it still remains in the village. Four or five families, big. The problem is the grandparents are dead and the sons and the daughters still live there in the village...and you happen to have four generations. Incredible. The problem is that you have the feeling which is true in Gireux, that those families form something like a community. So you were born in Gireux, you have learn in Gireux, which is very important, you were y'know, *someone from Gireux.*”

Nicole identifies the lineage of the Gireux residents as the defining criterion for membership of local status, and comments how this characteristic has also been brandished as a means of difference by the local residents in general, from other nationalities living permanently in the village, which has permeated the social climate

³⁴ Similar to the idea of 'cooring' (Arensberg and Kimball, 1940), where whole families will become involved to help their neighbour and his family. This might involve the use of a few tractors, manual labour or indirect help preparing meals together in the kitchen. Putnam (2000) conceptualises this in terms of 'social capital'.

of Gireux. She draws upon the memory of her father's financial success, to depict an almost tangible atmosphere of jealousy and incomprehension by the local residents, of her family.

“Because my father was Italian and when he came here, and he was really a hard worker, really work hard! [But] They didn't trust him, y'know, saying he won't succeed. Because he was a foreigner and they couldn't understand and that mentality still exists in the village. If you came from outside, you were a foreigner. You are from Gireux, your parents were born here, your grandparents were born here, you are, y'know, a true Gireuxois.”

In an attempt to explicate the type of social atmosphere in Gireux, Nicole uses the example of the meeting place, *foyer*, previously used by her mother in a similar effort to make sense of this feeling of difference generated by the community, and rationalise it in terms of a process of 'othering' of the outsider, by the local resident. According to Nicole, the purpose of the foyer is to provide “a place where people meet for the *fete* and do activities. In Gireux”, however, “there is no foyer”.³⁵

“Because it [the foyer] means something. You do it, have it if the people really want to meet. Because the foyer is a place where you meet and there's no foyer here. Because you get the feeling that people want to stay in their home. They don't want to mix with other people”.

Clearly, Nicole sees the absence of the foyer in the village as a crucial statement of the unwillingness of the local residents to provide an open forum for the integration of all residents, both local and outsider. Moreover, she understands the marked lack of both the *foyer* and a *place*, in political terms, as a profound indicator of the position of the local residents in relation to community membership which remains closed. This is particularly evident in Nicole's recollection of the previous mayor, whose lack of interest in hunting and fishing, two favourite practices of the male local resident, earned him mistrust and disfavour amidst the local community. According to Nicole, he “didn't stay long” despite having done “a lot for the village”.

³⁵ However it is suggested (in chapter 11) that the residents do not see the space in front of the school as a *place*, because the idea of the *place* is a static one, where markets, meetings and concerts take place. The residents' use and understanding of this space is more flexible than they realise, as it is not prescriptively a *place per se*. So while *place* is a fixed concept ordinarily, the residents in Gireux are using the space for different activities, but with a fixed understanding that the *fete* will take place in this space twice a year as usual. It is the practice or discourse occurring there which is constructing that space as *place*, rather than the year round use of the same space.

“But eh, his friends elected him, friends because y’know, everybody knows everybody else here. So you, you’ve got the mayor and counsellors and friends of his. So they were okay with him becoming the mayor, but then they didn’t support him anymore for different reasons”.

Responding to a query as to why one particular local resident who had not been born in Gireux, was regarded so highly by the community, to the point where he had received support in his application for the office of secretary to the mayor, Nicole, commented that in addition to being able to claim lineage or roots within the community through his great-grandmother, Michel had attended the primary school and become part of the network of family of locals through this circle of play mates.

In contrast, Nicole’s brother who sought and subsequently became a counsellor in Gireux, was disliked and eventually shunned for his lack of political tact within a circle of local affiliates. This concurs with Laeticia’s earlier description of the process of acceptance with the Gireux community, whose comment that in order “to be accepted here, you have... not to say that you know a lot of things, you have to be shy, y’know? And to listen then, and to do things quietly and then, they’ll accept you”.

Intimately connected with this highly politicised understanding of what it means to be part of the local community of Gireux, is the committee, which is a locally elected representative power base of citizens from the village. This committee is responsible for allocating funding received from the *Conseil Municipal* in Ste.Saron, which is granted monies by the regional power controlled by the *Department d’Aude*. In addition, each resident must pay a number of taxes to the village, which goes towards social, economic and infrastructural development. The amount of control exercised through the making of these decisions by the committee, is considerable. Greater still, is the position of the mayor, whose status enables him to sit on committees in neighbouring villages and towns.

Nicole explains how this position of mayor has been used by the dominant families in Gireux, to maintain power and control of decisions relating to the future development of the village. A network between the major families, emerges, which serves to

perpetuate a controlled structure of power made possible through membership of the committee.

“It’s a community in a community. They want to be the leaders, y’know, of the village. ‘My son will belong to the community like his father and grandfather’. They don’t want people who haven’t roots in Gireux. They don’t want foreigners, even if they are French, to belong to the community.”

Central to the urgency of this desire to restrict membership of the committee, is a sense of social responsibility to a system of co-operation perpetuated by the dominant families in Gireux. The committee and a tiered approach to socialisation in the community, has had a cyclical effect on the reproduction of a specific social structure in Gireux over the decades.

Equally, socialisation within the community is highly controlled, spatialised and gendered. Nicole recalls tales of the failure of a couple of newcomers to Gireux, to run the café in the 1970s. Their emphasis upon opening the café, was to provide a space through which they (as outsiders) could integrate with the local community. This proved problematic, and was closed down within a few years of opening³⁶.

In recent years, the pair, particularly the woman, Perrine, wanted to join the committee. Nicole remarks that “they didn’t want her, because they didn’t want foreign people to rule the village”. However, the failure of the café through lack of local support, is viewed in political terms, as symptomatic of the process of affiliation to a social system through which the local community have been assured regeneration and stability. Nicole explains her current position as counsellor and member of the committee as a political move by other members of the committee, to block the efforts of Perrine to succeed to membership of the same. During her youth, Nicole became friendly with a local woman, now married to the mayor, whose parents belong to the community. This position of favour and familiarity with local residents of power, complemented by the committee’s decided wish to override the efforts of Perrine, made Nicole a potential candidate.

³⁶ This would be unusual, as the current café has been operating since that closure, over forty years later.

Perversely, this could also be seen as a tactical move by the members, to silence further disquiet from Nicole's family. Given her brother's rather forthright attempts to articulate discrepancies occurring within committee decisions for the village, the approach to include Nicole could be interpreted as an unusual one, certainly given Nicole's prominent lack of ancestral roots in Gireux. Adding to the complexity of these political overtones, is the request by the committee, that Nicole would provide French lessons to those English and other foreign nationalities who have come to live in Gireux on a permanent basis. The move to include Nicole could thus be viewed in terms of her use-value to restore French dominance through language, to the community against the influx of other nationalities to Gireux.

However a less sinister view is postulated by Nicole herself, despite her agreement of its political undertones. In her opinion, the move could quite positively indicate the broadening of the committee, through its very recent inclusion of a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds such as teachers and nurses, rather than solely *viticulteurs*, more reflective of the diverse population in the village. Significantly, she views this increasing diversity as prompted by newcomers or outsiders who now live permanently in Gireux.

Notwithstanding this view, Nicole similarly states that there exists a ritual of induction to the entire community of Gireux. In line with Nadine's comment regarding the need to be seen participating in activities such as the gymnasium, scrabble, the fete and other activities, and supporting Laetitia's insightful remarks on the manner of socialisation in these contexts, Nicole speculates that even this approach could prove problematic given the highly critical nature of the local community.

As if anticipating this view, one local couple remarked:

“...It depends [the welcome given by the local residents]. If the arriving person is boring, it will not fit the same way. But if that person gets on well with the villagers, that will fit. And then, everybody helps one another. If someone has a problem, he/she calls someone else. Everybody helps one another.”

This conditional welcome assumes that the incoming resident will be able to find a venue through which he/she may socialise with the community, thereby portraying an interest in the life of the village. The couple remark that the fete provides the easiest mechanism of integration, where local and outsider can come along and then “everybody knows one another”.

It is suggested that this attitude was not reflected in the behaviour of local and outsider at the summer fete of 2004. While the local residents formed a semi circle around the bar area of the parking lot in front of the school, the outsider residents either sat on benches or stood in a line against the wall of the parking lot. Pleasantries were exchanged by those outsiders who have lived in Gireux for some years, introducing themselves to newcomers and renewing acquaintances with local residents, but the atmosphere remained strained, with the same outsiders leaving the party early.

Commenting on this failure some time later, the local couple admitted that “not a lot of people living here can speak English³⁷, so they are always afraid to go towards other people without being able to be understood, and hmm, same thing for the English people, they are always afraid, hmm, not to be accepted. So it is true that a clan was created between the English and the locals, and they got separated.” However, the couple deny that this is a frequent occurrence in the community, stating that “usually it’s not that way at all. Generally...well, we young people always manage to go towards the people, hmm, to get to know one another, to know about their age, see if we are from the same generation. And then, know more about one another. But this year, it’s true that it hasn’t been done properly. We got a bit separated.” This inability “to go towards the people” has meant that the newcomers to the village have become socially isolated at public events such as the fete. This in turn has been misinterpreted by other local residents, whose pride of their local community and place, has now become an issue of “solidarity” under the ‘gaze’ (Urry, 1990, 2002) of the ‘other’ (Peace, 1989).

³⁷ Which refers mainly to the Spanish and Portuguese residents.

One local resident from the network of dominant families, described the community in terms of 'solidarity'. This solidarity is expressed in terms of a network of families who help each other with work, similar to the idea of 'cooring' (Arensberg and Kimball, 1940) described of rural Ireland.

"It's more solidarity between people. It's a question of solidarity, if you want to do something in your house, you ask your neighbour and they'll come to help. It's also a question of integration, he comes here but he does not mix with people and we respect everyone's freedom, but if you want to come to the feast [local fete], well, no problem."

During the field work, access to the local community beyond attending public events such as the fete, mass and other events, proved a considerable difficulty. Even at these events, interaction with some of the local residents was strained, impossible at times despite communicating in the French language. In explanation, two local residents described a twin system of socialising in the village, which corresponds to use of public (such as the café and church) and private spaces (the home), access to which is determined by lineage and connection to family in Gireux. On a very basic level, is the cursory acknowledgement of neighbour and resident when walking through the village. This enables the community an opportunity to regard and perhaps talk with the stranger. Further compulsory efforts include attending the local fete, held during the summer and winter times; the gymnasium, café³⁸ and mass.

While this provides local residents with a visual understanding of which residents are attending and/or participating at different activities or events, the more prominent and valued type of socialisation, is through family events such as a christening, Sunday dinner, or wedding. One English outsider described her invitation to the afters of a wedding, as a privilege, given the exclusive nature of family events.

"So if you're an outsider, you are incredibly privileged if someone comes round and says well, we're having the entire family in on Saturday, come and join us, even for a coffee after the meal. That's not done. The family do is a family do. And strangers aren't... We've been to a couple where we've been

³⁸ Contradictions emerged in local definition of the bar as gendered or non-gendered, which has affected attendance at the same. A local resident from the network of families, stated how "we regularly meet up to have dinner, have a drink" and supplemented that "the bar is important, it's a shame that there are not more people going there." However, one outsider remarks that "the bar and the petanque court are for the men. Scrabble is for the women".

to desert and coffee at the end of the meal, but not actually for the whole meal. And we've been invited to aperitifs before wedding things like this, but not actually to the family do after the wedding... One family lunch we went to, but em, that was a rarity, and some of the family made us feel welcome and some of the family thought we shouldn't have been there. They weren't unfriendly, they were just reserved and you could tell by the attitude that some of them thought this is wonderful, y'know, us English people coming to our family do and they made us very, very welcome, and others stayed withdrawn and it wasn't quite for them. It was a family event, y'know, we weren't supposed – outsiders shouldn't have been there."

She goes on to state that this difference of attitude reflects the younger and older generations respectively: where the former tend to be welcoming of the holiday home outsider, while the elderly local remains disapproving. This marks an emerging trend in Gireux, where the younger residents appear more interactive and attempt the English language when making cursory greeting to outsiders, particularly at the local festival (*fete*). The reaction of the elderly local resident is indicative of the closed attitude towards membership of that community.

As one local youth remarks:

"Generally...well, we, young people always manage to go towards the people, hmm, to get to know one another. Well, the age, hmm, to know about their age, see if we are from the same generation. But this year, it's true that it hasn't been done properly. We got a bit separated. But...everyone has their family life, children, work, so...hmm...We are still a little group of friends that try to keep in touch, we still see each other, we kept in touch. It's a group of youths who stayed here."

The emphasis on family socialisation practices, is also reflected in the spatial layout of tables at the local *fete*, where according to an outsider;

"If you looked at the tables, they're all family groups. The committee always sits at one table and then the other tables are usually family groups."

This behaviour reinforces outsider perception that "families tend to stick together". Thus, two levels of socialisation emerge in the rural French context, which parallels the twin social circles of the community. Attendance at the *fete*, and other events represents a very visual engagement with the local community, albeit, it is argued here, at a superficial level. Whereas attendance at family functions admits a more

privileged form of socialising, operating at a more covert level behind closed doors to the rest of the community, and assumes greater acceptance or inclusion into that community.

5.5 Summary

While the structures of socialisation are relatively similar in both Irish and French contexts, the *manner of interaction* with the outsider, is substantially different.

First, it has been argued that the concept of 'community' in the French context, and membership thereof, is quite rigidly defined. Unlike the Irish case, where understandings of what it means to be member of a community, are negotiated through interaction, the local residents of Gireux define their membership in terms of their ancestral roots. This heritage is a source of deep pride for the Gireuxois, expressed through family connections and protected through the auspices of the local committee. The 'outsider' resident will never become a 'local' resident, so membership to this community, is closed.

The response by the Gireuxois to the problem of local depopulation, has been to provide limited social housing in apartment units, and retain land for their children to build upon their return from college and travels. However, the increase of outsider residents buying houses in the village³⁹, has been a source of consternation and grievance for the local residents, and has created a sense of resentment of the outsider. The twin patterns of socialisation in Gireux reflect overt and covert codes of participation in private social structures such as the family unit, and public social structures such as the café, the fete, scrabble and so forth. This lends an insight into the quite rigidly defined concept and criterion for community membership.

In contrast, the local residents of Dúnfarrraig appear to have embraced the outsider into their midst. A range of social and cultural activities has provided a forum for the interpenetrative interaction between local and outsider, and have enabled the local community to gain in confidence and self-worth. However, it has been argued that over time, this confidence has developed into a discerning attitude towards the influx

³⁹ There are currently 120 outsiders living in Gireux, out of a total population of 196. 10 of these houses are holiday home owned.

of outsiders. From 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), they have now become a means for economic capital for some local residents. Crucially, this has meant that the local landowners are actually *facilitating* local depopulation from the village, in their eagerness to capitalise on foreign investment through the holiday home or second home. This is in direct contrast to their French counterpart in Gireux, who are strategising towards the retention of the indigenous population.

A large part of local and outsider interaction in Dúnfarrraig has become expressed in political and economic terms, manifest in the formation of the Development Committee. The remaining residents in the community now consider their interaction and involvement with these members and other residents, in terms of support for or against alliances. Both outsider and local residents view the Development Committee with suspicion, as its process of formation and current membership includes those residents – outsider and local – who have a vested economic interest in the development of Dúnfarrraig. In particular, outsider pursuit of development is seen as affecting the desires of the local resident entrepreneurs. An aspect of this quite politicised interaction between local and outsider resident, has resulted in local valorisation and construction of more specific ideas of what it means to be a 'local' resident in Dúnfarrraig.

Categories of membership of the community of Dúnfarrraig, have thus become subject to negotiation, according to levels of involvement in community affairs, and affiliation to decisions made for the community. Usually these categories remain mobile and flexible, but when encroaching on the economic space of the local resident, become more specific to the desires of the local residents.

Thus, what are the consequences of both types of responses for these two villages?