Cover Photograph:
The fish curing station in the East End of Inishbofin Island, Co. Galway. According to historical records, there were 243 fishermen operating on Inishbofin island in 1873 (Concannon, 1997). The fish curing station, which was built in 1897, directly employed seventy inhabitants of the island and a further seventy at sea.

Photograph: Courtesy of Caimin Coyne, Inishbofin.
Barriers to Change: a Sociological study of Rural Development in Ireland

Dr. Áine Macken-Walsh

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Introduction

Teagasc’s Rural Economy Research Centre (RERC) and Rural Development Advisory Unit initiated a research project in 2006 to investigate the ‘Barriers to Change’ experienced by farmers and fishers in adapting to challenges arising from a changed rural development mandate. Economic models developed by the organisation predicted farmers’ exodus over time from non-viable farming enterprises and in response to shifts towards post-productivist policies. A significant proportion of farmers, however, are continuing with what are officially categorised as non-viable farms and are slow to become involved in economic activities in line with the contemporary rural development agenda. In this light, the ‘Barriers to Change’ project was designed to explore the socio-cultural inhibitors to farmers’ engagement. The project also incorporated a case-study analysis of a fishing community whose members are experiencing similar ‘barriers’.

The primary aim of the study was to explore the socio-cultural factors that frame the context of Irish farmers’ and fishers’ poor engagement in contemporary rural development initiatives. Using a case-study approach, the analysis was focussed on the complex interplay between the contemporary rural development agenda on one hand, and the subjective rationales of members of the farming and fishing communities interviewed for this study on the other. An initial step in the analysis was to explore the contemporary rural development agenda and to identify the nature of the development actions and actors it supports. This analysis is presented in Chapter 1, where the contemporary rural development agenda is explored in the context of three main paradigms: post-productivism, globalisation, and governance.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that focuses on the diversity of complex factors at the local level that represent crucial determinants in how contemporary models of rural development operate in practice. The literature that helps to explore subjective rationalities of farmers and fishers is also reviewed, with particular reference to Bourdieu’s (1998) theory of capital as framework. Farming and fishing practices take place within a socially and culturally rich context and focussing on economic rationality alone fails to fully explain associated decision-making processes. The theory of capital as framework identifies three forms of capital: economic capital (material wealth); social capital (benefits that are accrued from membership in social networks); and cultural capital (how prestige is attached to matter and action).

Chapters 3 and 4 present empirical research findings of the socio-cultural factors that frame the livelihoods of fishers and farmers in two Irish case study areas: Iorras Aithneach in Co. Galway and Liscannor in Co. Clare. The chapters explore farmers’ and fishers’ occupational and collective identities and how social networks (social capital) and prestige (cultural capital) are implicated in aspects of their farming and fishing practices. By first understanding the nuances of how the
case-study communities of farmers and fishers ascribe different forms of capital to their occupational practices, it is then possible to explore why barriers arise in the adoption of alternative income-generating practices that are in line with the contemporary rural development agenda. Reflecting variations in the data gathered through field research exercises, the analyses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 are differently focussed. The case-study analysis of Chapter 4 focuses on the antagonisms between farmers’ production activities, as esteemed from their own perspectives, and the culture surrounding ‘alternative’ food production activities that are at the core of the contemporary rural development agenda. Chapter 3, on the other hand, focuses on the value-systems underpinning small-scale fishers’ activities and how these culturally rich activities, as well as other forms of traditional income-generating practices, are failing to link up with a contemporary rural development agenda that is designed to valorise unique local resources for the purposes of cultivating a ‘culture economy’.

Drawing from focus group interviews conducted with rural development practitioners, Chapter 5 grounds a discussion of socio-cultural ‘barriers to change’ in terms of how they can be addressed in policy and practice. Effective techniques and methods for addressing the ‘barriers’ identified in Chapters 3 and 4 are discussed, with particular reference to the importance of processes for ‘choosing appropriate rural development actions and actors’. Examples of ‘socially and culturally adoptable’ forms of rural development for farmers and fishers are identified, reflecting the findings of Chapters 3 and 4 and interviews conducted with rural development practitioners for this study.
Overview

Introduction
The contemporary rural development agenda is representative of a policy model that seeks to focus less on the production of primary commodities and more on innovation and diversification. The model claims to encourage more democratic and effective rural development on the basis that different local stakeholders are involved as decision-makers in the development process, and that the emergent development outcome is more innovative and integrated as a result. Different to ‘top-down’ sectoral programmes, participatory ‘bottom-up’ development models have the capacity to represent a diverse range of local interests for the purposes of developing the rural economy. This capacity is hinged on a number of assumptions, however, among them the broad generalisation that local rural people are “competent actors in the development process” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997). With growing emphasis on the need for innovation and diversification in rural income-generating activity (Future of Rural Society, CEC, 1988; The Lisbon Strategy, CEC, 2005), it is timely to explore the socio-cultural factors that illuminate the context of how different social groups have engaged with the contemporary rural development agenda thus far.

With rural social change, of significance is how different groups of rural inhabitants (for example, commuters, indigenous farming groups, and ‘newcomer’ entrepreneurs) come to see the countryside and how they (differently) perceive potential functions of the rural landscape. With an increasing emphasis on innovation and economic diversification in rural development policy, by necessity there is a shift towards the inclusion of a wider range of development stakeholders. The broadening of policy conceptions of the rural economy and changing economic and market circumstances surrounding the production of primary commodities have inevitably given rise to a challenging of the position of traditional economic activities, such as agriculture and fishing, as the mainstay activity of the rural economy in Ireland and other EU member states. Entrepreneurs who engage in indigenising the local economy (tourism, organic and artisan producers) are the contemporary pioneers, with conventional producers often in the position of having to adapt to new development rules in order to avail of an increasing range of financial supports.

In this light, Teagasc initiated a research project in 2006 to investigate the ‘Barriers to Change’ experienced by farmers and fishers in adapting to challenges and demands arising from a changed rural development mandate. Economic models developed by the organisation predicted farmers’ exodus over time from non-viable farming enterprises and in response to shifts towards post-productivist policies. A significant proportion of farmers, however, are continuing with what are officially categorised as non-viable farms and are slow to adopt economic activities in line with the contemporary rural development agenda (Conway, 1991; Teagasc Rural
Development Commodity Group, 2005). In order to design effective ways of overcoming the ‘barriers’ that farmers are experiencing, it is necessary to understand the complex nature of these barriers in the first instance (Macken-Walsh, 2006). In this light, the ‘Barriers to Change’ project was designed to explore the socio-cultural inhibitors to farmers’ and fishers’ engagement. The ‘Barriers to Change’ project also undertook a case-study analysis of a coastal fishing community whose members are experiencing similar ‘barriers’. The study was financed by Teagasc through the NDP (2000-2006) and received financial support from the ICERTS Beaufort Marine Award (2008-2015).

Rationale and Objectives
While the rules of governance and rural development stipulate that the design of development is in the hands of local stakeholders, thus preventing a universal qualification of ‘rural development’, distinctive forms of rural economic activity have become mainstream in contemporary rural development culture across the EU. Just as intensified forms of agriculture and fishing are synonymous with the productivist model for agriculture and fisheries, certain forms of rural economic activity have become synonymous with contemporary rural development culture. These forms of economic activity, which can be broadly identified as relating to the high value-added production of food and tourism activities and the management and valorisation of natural resources (CORASON, 2009), reflect to a large extent the core activities or ‘products’ promoted by contemporary rural development programmes across the EU.

The paradigmatic shift in rural development policy formulation is not unproblematic at the socio-cultural level and understanding rural inhabitants’ adaptation to a transformed set of income-generating activities is a complex task. One of the principal questions that arise in this context relates to the area of interchange between the characteristics and aims of the post-productivist development agenda and determinants arising from the socio-cultural mileux of localities (and the variety of social groups that exist within them). To answer this question it is necessary in the first instance to objectively analyse the rationale and modus operandi of the contemporary rural development paradigm before analysing the socio-cultural norms and values that frame the context of farmers’ and fishers’ interaction with this paradigm. Through understanding the antagonisms or ‘barriers’ that exist between the contemporary rural development agenda and farmers/fishers, it is possible to identify methods and strategies to address them. Accordingly, this analysis had three main objectives:

1. to explore the contemporary EU rural development agenda in terms of its operational strategy and the type of development actions it gives rise to:
2. to identify the socio-cultural factors that frame the context for farmers’ and fishers’ decision-making with regard to contemporary rural development;
3. to arrive at implications for policy and practice in helping to chart a more socially and culturally acceptable route for rural development.
Methodology

It is acknowledged that the ‘cultural turn’ has been slow to influence studies in agriculture where quantitative methods, positivism and economic rationality tend to dominate analysis of farmer behaviour (see Barnett, 1998). Burton (2004) notes that inflexible models of behavioural analysis employ a simplistic approach to understanding behaviour, while ‘new’ methodological approaches emerging with the ‘cultural turn’ in other areas of social science focus on “the importance of understanding language, meaning, representation, identity, and difference (Barnett, 1998; Valentine, 2001) The approach of this study is broadly informed by theories of existential rather than economic rationality where the focus is on individuals’ subjective experiences of, and agency with, the outside world. Non-economic influences such as collective values, tradition and forms of knowledge underpin how capital is ascribed to the various social and cultural dynamics of income-generating activities and understanding these influences is central to the aims of this research project. The methodological approach used for this study was three-pronged:

1. Policy & literature analysis: secondary data analysis
2. Primary empirical field research: qualitative interviews conducted with members of case-study social groups and participant observation
3. Contextualisation of research findings to have implications for policy and practice: focus-group interviewing with expert practitioners and policy-makers

The Contemporary Rural Development Agenda

The contemporary rural development agenda is oriented by three major paradigmatic shifts. The first arises from a context where there was official policy recognition of the “polluting and unsustainable nature of industrial agriculture” (Kearney et al., 1995) and of the ‘disrupting’ effect of structural interventions in agriculture on the social and economic fabric of family farms (CEC, 1988; Gray, 2000). The second paradigmatic shift is less specific to rural areas and concerns implications arising from globalisation, where not only are external economic, social and cultural influences evident in localities, but localities begin to (re)indigenise themselves in the face of cultural homogenisation — “globalisation not only pulls upwards, it pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy” (Giddens, 1999). The third paradigmatic shift represents a transition from ‘top-down’ sectoral models of development to ‘bottom-up’ participatory governance models, where the design and implementation of development action is handed over to local development stakeholders. The move to a governance and rural development model is rationalised on the premise that “If the endogenous potential of rural regions is to be properly developed, local initiatives must be stimulated and mobilised” (CEC, 1988, p.62).

From these three broad paradigmatic shifts, new objectives for rural development have emerged in line with a ‘post-productivist’, ‘culture economy’, and
‘governance-based’ approach. In terms of how the rural development agenda has actually manifested itself, three main forms of economic activity are at its core: ‘alternative’ food; cultural tourism; and the management and valorisation of local resources (see Tovey, 2006; Lowe et al, 2008; CORASON, 2009). There is a distinctive rhetoric surrounding the contemporary rural development agenda at the level of the EU and member-states which emphasises ‘diversified’, ‘differentiated’, ‘niche’, high value-added enterprises to cater for a “an increasingly discriminating clientele” (Moseley, 2003a, p. 48). It is recognised in the literature that the consumption of contemporary rural development products can be value-laden (Ray, 1997; Dilley, 2009). Referring to cultural “ethno-tourism” specifically, Lowe et al (1998) note that these “are all ‘upmarket’ forms of tourism, having in common the potential for higher added-value than the mass tourism of the ‘bucket and spade’ and ‘Costas’ varieties” (p. 56). Discourses surrounding artisan and local food movements associated with the culture economy make use of similar terms of elitism. Dilley (2009) notes that local food is frequently described and recognised as something of quality, naturalness, freshness and safety and thus becomes linked “with a premium price tag - its consumption signifies one’s good sense and discrimination. In this context, local/high quality food can become ‘yuppie chow’” (Dilley, 2009, p.6). The central ambition of the contemporary rural development agenda can be summarised perhaps as “replacing material and labour value with design value” (Ray, 1999a), representing inevitably a shift in emphasis away from primary production activities.

A wide variety of national and international initiatives support the objectives of the contemporary rural development agenda (CEC, 1988; CEC, 2007; OECD, 2006) and the LEADER programme represents the primary EU model for fostering diversification and innovation in the rural economy. According to the policy literature, LEADER is expected to provide a representative and effective modus for rural development by virtue of local representatives from the community, private and public sectors contributing to the development process. As a result of tapping into local knowledge, the development outcome is expected to be more locally appropriate and effective than ‘top-down’ sectoral policies (LEADER, 1997; Moseley, 2003; Gray, 2000; Ray, 1999a). In Ireland, the funding allocation to the LEADER programme has increased almost tenfold since its inception in 1991 and the current programming period (2007-2013) has funding of €425m.

However, there are operational as well as cultural issues that determine the extent to which local participatory development initiatives can be genuinely representative of local inhabitants (see Chapter 2). The transition from policies that encouraged production of primary commodities towards the cultivation of a designer rural development ‘product’ inevitably requires a rupture of old development contexts (see Pratt, 2004) and this represents one of the central challenges of the contemporary rural development agenda. The transition is complex from a socio-cultural perspective, and because contemporary rural development programmes do not have a conventional agriculture or fisheries ‘tag’ (Scully, 2009), the task of
adopter to new development rules is perhaps most challenging among those engaged in primary production activities.

Understanding the Socio-Cultural context of Human Behaviour
Vanclay (2004, p.213) evaluates farming as a ‘socio-cultural practice’ and a ‘way of life’, and not just a technical or income generating activity. Similarly, McGoodwin’s (2001) research explains small scale fishers’ ‘tenacity’ as rooted in existential rationality where “sustaining the fishing way of life is as highly valued, or even more highly valued, than merely ensuring that fishing is a profitable means of ensuring their livelihoods” (McGoodwin. 2001). Of relevance to the current study is how farmers and fishers attach meaning to different aspects of their occupational practices as a step towards illuminating the disposition of these groups vis-à-vis other types of occupational practices. To this end, Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) theory of capital as framework facilitates the identification of three forms of capital: economic capital (material wealth); social capital (benefits that are accrued from membership in social networks); and cultural capital (how prestige is attached to matter and action). This study focuses in particular on social capital (the importance of community-based networks and conventions that surround small-scale farming and fishing) and cultural capital (how farmers and fishers attach prestige to the aspects of their farming and fishing practices) to explore the central antagonisms that are implicated in ‘barriers’ to engagement in the contemporary rural development agenda.

Barriers to Change: Occupational and Cultural Factors
While many of the opportunities and challenges faced by farmers and fishers in the context of the contemporary rural development agenda are different, the research findings of this study pointed to a central similarity among members of the farming and fishing case-study groups: a strong social and cultural attachment to their occupation. Both farmers and fishers attributed significant importance to the community-based networks, conventions and practices (social capital) that underpinned the livelihoods of their respective occupational groups. Farmers and fishers also gave evidence of comparable forms of cultural capital in how they ascribed prestige to aspects, or indicators, of what it is to be a ‘good’ farmer or fisher (this is also echoed in Burton, 2004b).

Barriers to Change: Occupational Estrangement
High value-added ‘new’ rural enterprises which are in line with the contemporary rural development agenda (see Chapter 1) predominantly involve some form of service and/or processing. The opinion that many of the rural enterprises promoted by contemporary rural development initiatives, such as farmers’ markets and artisan foods, are “not for farmers” and “not suitable for farmers” was very prevalent in the data collected among farmers for this study. Fishers interviewed for the purposes of this study were also disinclined to favour their engagement in service-based income-generating activity, for example in the tourism sector.
Aside from obvious pragmatic considerations and issues of capacity that are implicated in the transition from primary production to services and processing, there are socio-cultural forces impacting on the scenario. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, farmers and fishers engaged in primary fishing and agricultural production activities subscribe to forms of cultural capital that reflect skills that are interactive with nature and territory rather than those which are reflective of the market or service provision (see also Burton 2004; Burton et al 2008). The obscuring of skills that underpin primary production is a central critique of the designer consumption underpinning the ‘culture economy’ approach (see Pratt, 2004). Tovey (2006) notes in her case study of the ‘alternative’ food movement in Ireland that “Some of the most prominent ‘local food’ actors, even if they are farmers or growers, see themselves as part of a consumer movement than a rural producer movement” (Tovey, 2006). Fonte (2008) notes in her theorising of a “reconnection perspective” in relation to local food markets that such markets provide a means for consumers to ‘connect’ with local food and producers (without reference to the reverse relationship) and are “strongly driven by a consumer perspective on food” (Fonte, 2008 p. 207; see Chapter 4). Bureaucratic discourses of ‘cultural tourism’ have been similarly driven by a consumer perspective and less on forms of tourism provision that are culturally and socially appropriate for indigenous social groups (see Chapter 3).

Barriers to Change: Cultural Estrangement
‘Farmers’ Markets’ represent perhaps one of the most obvious routes for diversification of farming enterprises that fall within the remit of contemporary rural development. A conclusive finding that emerged from this study, however, was that ‘Farmers’ Markets’ were perceived as being non-representative of farmers. Farmer interviewees frequently labelled the participants and products involved in such markets as ‘foreign’, a subjective view that reflects the strong presence of different ethnicities and international participants in Irish local food movements (see Share et al, 2006; Tovey, 2006; Tovey and Mooney, 2006; Moore, 2003). One of the common observations reached in research on local food movements in Ireland is that that actors who tend to engage in such movements often “come from a surprising diversity of backgrounds...many are incomers to Ireland and even those who grew up in an Irish farm household, have usually spent part of their lives working abroad or outside farming” (Tovey, 2006, p.16). In her research on the ‘alternative food movement’ in Ireland, Tovey (2006, p.176) says of the participants in her study that “their networks include farm households occupying the same land for several generations, but also settled New Age Travellers from Britain, American, German, Swiss, English, and Irish ex-urbanites, women who had married into farming or fishing families, and returned Irish emigrants”. The ‘alternative’ food movement in Ireland is clearly recognised as having been strongly influenced by ‘outside’ persuasions.

Similarly, Tovey (2006), referring to Moore (2003), notes that although organic farming in Ireland has been engaged in by a “slow but steady trickle of Irish
indigenous converts” (p. 175), it has been pioneered largely by non-indigenous actors “waves of incomers” (Tovey, 2006). Tovey elaborates: “The early period (of organic farming) was dominated by Anglo-Irish landowners, influenced by Steiner’s biodynamic practices and by leaders in the English organic movement (see Reed 2001). A recent Teagasc study on the adoption and abandonment of organic farming in the Irish drystock sector shows that farming experiences impacts negatively on the adoption of organic farming – “Organic farmers have in general less farming experience than conventional farmers” (Läpple and Donnellan, 2008, p.14).

Ireland is noted to be without a ‘strong local food culture’ in the literature (Share et al, 2006; Fonte, 2008). Cheese-making, an emerging icon of the contemporary Irish artisan foods industry, is noted in the historical literature as having gone into “virtual discontinuation” by the 19th century (McCarthy, 1992). Despite research findings that point to farmers’ lack of leadership in farmers’ markets and local food movements, data emerged from this study revealing a depth of local knowledge in the area of rural household food processing. While Irish rural households did not traditionally sell (processed) domestic produce at the market place that is not to suggest that production was not a well established practice. Domestic food processing traditionally represented less an income-generating practice and more a diverse food-source, primarily of pork (domestically preserved by salting); ‘black pudding’; mutton; rabbits (skinned and hung); poultry; eggs; and butter. In addition, rural households traditionally produced ‘brown bread’ (a baked bread of sour milk, flour, bread soda, and bran); ‘griddle cake’ (a white bread alternatively cooked in a griddle pan); salted bacon; rabbit stew; and poultry (traditionally stuffed with potato). The sea was also traditionally recognised as a diverse food source, primarily through harvesting different types of seaweed: sleamhchán; sea grass (dilisk) and carrigeen; as well as shellfish such as bairneachs, periwinkles, sea-urchins, and crab. These domestic food traditions, unique to farming and fishing households, are not currently being engaged with or valorised for the purposes of rural development in either of the case-study areas selected for this study.

A similar disengagement arose with respect to how local socio-cultural traditions and resources are failing to match up with a tourism economy in the case-study coastal community chosen for this study. Cultural tourism has obvious potential in picturesque coastal fishing villages, particularly in Connemara where the case-study for this report was located. It is stated in the literature that Connemara is a representative repository of “intrinsic Irishness” (see Byrne et al 1993, p.236). However, unlike North Connemara, tourism is undeveloped in South Connemara and distinctive income-generating activities and cultural commodities which are underpinned by rich forms of cultural and social capital, such as fishing; the harvesting of seaweed; domestic processing of food; the Irish Language; and sean-

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1 A product traditionally made from intestines stuffed with pork blood and cereal.
nós music & dance, have somehow failed to link up, conceptually and practicably, with rural development initiatives.

Cultural tourism is acknowledged in the literature to give rise to community-based benefits through “locally-tied economic activity…employment opportunities where local people have unique qualifications, such as the ability to speak a local language, in-depth knowledge to act as guides and local craft skills” (Lowe et al, 1998, p.57). Yet it emerged in the data collected for this study that cultural initiatives for the purposes of tourism in Ireland can take on a ‘bogus’ dimension where tourism subjects such as language and artistic commodities can take on exaggerated or indeed false characteristics (see Chapter 3). This, comparable to farmers’ markets, is representative of a culture dominated by the dynamics of consumption rather than production.

Barriers to Change: the problem of Agency
There are problems of agency in how the contemporary rural development agenda is being set. Farmers and fishers interviewed for this study perceived ‘rural development’ as being ‘not for us’ and had a low level of awareness of development and financial supports outside of farming and fishing. The majority of farmers and fishers interviewed for this study were unaware of the participatory approach employed by LEADER partnerships in their areas. They claimed to have little or no interaction with or awareness of the activities of local LEADER programmes in their areas, or with community-based associations in their areas. Rural development workers and representatives of farmers and fishers interest groups alike spoke of the general disassociation between farmers on one hand, and ‘rural development’ activities on the other. It is apparent that certain interest groups and organisations are perceived, and perceive themselves, to have a remit in ‘rural development’ while others do not. Most of these perceptions have arisen in the context of change and transition from forms of sectoral development that are focussed on the production of primary commodities on one hand, to a ‘post productivist’ model where ‘alternative’ forms of rural economic activity are promoted on the other. In the case of Ireland, it has been noted that the rural development debate is prone to being “hi-jacked” by a number of limited conceptions of what the term actually signifies in the broader sense (Boyle, 2008). Similar scenarios are noted in the literature in how the contemporary rural development agenda has taken form across the EU (see Osti, 2000). In this light, it is imperative for development agencies and interest groups representing farmers and fishers to have an active voice in national and local rural development fora.

The persistence of ‘Top-Down’ Barriers
Rural inhabitants and development practitioners interviewed for this study identified ‘top down’ constraints and regulations as representing major hindrances to both the design and implementation of local development projects. As discussed in Chapter 1, decentralised programmes of local development although representing participative models of development can nonetheless be constrained by official ideas
of what these programmes are expected to achieve. It was conceived by rural development workers that in the context of participatory decision-making processes, “Local people are used for justifying the agenda for rural development” rather than setting the agenda for rural development, and “Consultative processes are used as tokenism for the purposes of validating the existing agenda”. Legal regulations were also cited as being a major deterrent to local development, particularly in relation to the sale of locally produced and processed food. All of these issues point to the need for an appraisal and ‘rural proofing’ of the broad policy framework (Health; Safety; Environment; Marine; Agriculture; Food; Local Government) that determines the context for rural entrepreneurship.

Opening up the Rural Development debate: choosing actors and actions
Through identifying and understanding the ‘barriers to change’ that farmers and fishers are subjectively experiencing in the context of the contemporary rural development agenda, it is possible to identify techniques and methods that target these barriers specifically. From the case-studies conducted with fishers and farmers a central overarching ‘barrier’ emerged: estrangement and alienation from the contemporary rural development agenda. A central aim of the governance and rural development model which forms the contemporary blueprint for rural development across the EU, is that local people are involved centrally as decision-makers in the ‘design and implementation of development action’ (Ray, 1999). The farmers and fishers (and members of their families) interviewed for this study, however, had minimal or no engagement in local rural development processes and this represents a key concern both for farmers and fishers, and for the legitimacy of how the agenda for rural development is taking form. Contemporary rural development initiatives remain to be invigorated by the unique forms of knowledge and skills that are held by members of the farming and fishing communities in pursuing a route towards “enabling a better understanding of the area and its living strength” (CEC, 1988). Chapter 5 of this report presents the results of focus group interviews conducted with rural development professionals that highlight strategies and techniques to encourage meaningful participation in the development process. Some of the main strategies and techniques are overviewed here.

Actors
Promoting ‘rural development’ as an inclusive participative process is a significant task for those working within the remit of contemporary rural development programmes. There is a vast literature on the methods (systematic combinations of strategies and concepts) and tools (individual exercises) that can be used for encouraging participation in community-based initiatives (see UNFAO, Field Tools Database, 2009; Chapter 5). It is also important to choose appropriate actors for the purposes of encouraging engagement in contemporary rural development initiatives. Focusing on the farmer or fisher as an isolated individual is often ineffective.

It is crucial for contemporary rural development initiatives to employ a holistic family approach in their strategies to encourage participation. The strong capacity of
women in furthering farm diversification and farm-based enterprises must be recognised by farming and rural development agencies in order to assist the process of rural economic diversification generally. The roles of spouses and offspring in farming and fishing enterprises have traditionally been strong. Spouses, for example, have traditionally held responsibility for market-place selling and domestic food processing, an activity that many conventional farmers and fishers are not keen to engage in. Contemporarily, spouses and offspring in farming and fishing households have taken on additional roles that reflect new bureaucratic and information technological challenges. While there is no counterpart data relating to fishing families, offspring of farm families are highly represented in third-level education institutions (Crowley et al, 2008). Such skills could potentially be targeted towards the creation of high value-added farm and fishing based enterprises and could contribute towards addressing the problem of farm succession.

**Actions**
The need to open up the rural development debate and for rural inhabitants to take active roles in setting the rural development agenda was emphasised by rural development workers interviewed for this study. Strategies employed to improve participation should not only seek to improve methods of communication between rural development agencies and local inhabitants but should also incorporate techniques that help to identify more culturally and socially appropriate forms of local rural development.

Methods and approaches for encouraging local determination of the development process range from face to face interaction in the form of consultations, public meetings and focus groups, as well as technological tools such as audio-visual and web-based communications (see Moseley, 2003b). While such techniques are important as points of contact, it is also important to consider the qualitative aspects of participation and the extent to which participation of local inhabitants in community development leads to a sense of genuine ownership of emergent development outputs and strategies. For the purposes of encouraging genuine participation, ‘public input’ meetings are insufficient. Most crucially, “people need to know fully the development process and how they fit in”; and for this “diverse modes of learning, interpretation, and creative solutions are required” (Stafford, 2005). Where members of the public or a group of local inhabitants come together to discuss a place-based concern or issue, one of the better known tools for encouraging genuine engagement is the ‘Six Thinking Hat’ (de Bono, 1985; see also Heanue, 2009). Using this method, different styles of thinking are used to guide ‘brain-storming’ or decision-making processes in relation to a particular question or problem (see Chapter 5). Other effective examples of such methods are: ‘Citizens’ Jury’: a means for obtaining citizens’ input into policy decisions and feedback on policy impacts; Participatory training: when training arises from identification of the specific training needs of participants as articulated by them; Vulnerable group profiling: focusing specifically on groups of non-participants, identifying their
common factors and attributes with a view to understanding barriers to their participation (UNFAO, Field Tools Database, 2009).

**Appraisal of Local Resources**

Appraising local resources is a critical step towards identifying routes towards rural development that are culturally and socially adoptable. The role of extra-local actors was identified by rural development practioners interviewed for this study as being crucial for assisting local groups in appraising their resources on the basis that “It’s hard for the community to see its own culture”. Techniques of appraisal should seek as a primary objective to tap into existing local knowledge and resources. Some appropriate appraisal techniques identified by Moseley (2003b, pp. 140-141) are: gaming exercises to identify the potential of local resources; local focus groups; creation of parish maps to identify key resources; and formal local democracy.

**Building Confidence**

States of disillusionment, disempowerment and demoralisation evident among farmers and fishers interviewed for this study are inevitably implicated in their unwillingness to adapt to the income-generating practices that are promoted by contemporary policy initiatives: “People from the dominant culture often accuse those remaining in societies whose culture has been eroded or destroyed of lack of initiative and enterprise…The removal from the community of control over their own destiny leaves a depleted community without a belief in its own worth, its own capacity to change things” (Bryden, 1991, p.17 quoted by Ray, 1997b, p. 16).

Strongly rooted occupational identity, underpinned by embedded forms of social and cultural capital, are manifested as what may appear as ‘barriers to change’ in circumstances where local people are faced with leaving their fishing traditions behind. It has been the case that ‘barriers to change’ in income generating activity are often perceived as owing to ‘passiveness’, or worse, ‘backwardness’ on the part of the community (see Duggan, 2004). Such perceptions require confrontation as a first step in the analysis of understanding barriers to engagement and in helping to chart a more socially and culturally acceptable route for rural development.

The disenfranchised farmers and fishers in Ireland and elsewhere in the EU are inevitably experiencing problems relating to self-esteem and confidence. Rural development workers identified methods and approaches for building confidence such as international community exchange groups and facilitating fora for knowledge exchange between different social and occupational groups (see Chapter 5). The role of extra-local actors in contributing to building confidence by appraising local resources was also emphasised.
Culturally and Socially Appropriate forms of Rural Development

Through fostering farmers’ and fishers’ active participation in setting the rural development agenda, it is expected that a more culturally and socially appropriate form of development action will ensue (see Chapter 1). For farmers’ and fishers’ successful engagement, it is essential to ensure that traditional practices of farming and fishing remain central to how the contemporary rural development agenda is conceptualised and operationalised. Rather than focusing on new forms and routes for rural entrepreneurship, it is more appropriate and effective to look at how existing knowledge, skills and culture can provide a launching platform for entrepreneurship. In such a way, routes can be identified to pursue the contemporary rural development agenda in a way that is more culturally and socially adoptable for these social groups.

Referring to what has been recently labelled in the literature as ‘real’ rural development (Marsden, 2003) or ‘new paradigm’ rural development (Van der Ploeg 2000; Tovey, 2006), the findings of this study argue for an appraisal of the cultural and social capital of farming and fishing enterprises as being central to realising the potential of rural development in Ireland for those areas and communities where large-scale farming and fishing is not an option. Central to the ‘new paradigm’ is that it “transforms understandings of the role of agriculture [and fishing] in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173). The cultural and ecological significance of small-scale farming or ‘crofting’ and small-scale fishing has received official policy recognition and is elaborated at length in the literature (see MacGoodwin, 2001; Shucksmith, 2008). Small-scale production in the farming and fishing sectors is underpinned less by economic rationality and more by existential rationality where the focus is on the sustainability of enterprises as an intrinsic part of local socio-cultural fabric. Such values are recognised as being conducive to principles of cultural and social sustainability that are central to rhetoric surrounding the contemporary rural development agenda. Small-scale forms of production are underpinned by valuable forms of knowledge that have accumulated within localities over generations. This knowledge represents intricate practical know-how of the interplay between farming and fishing practices and the local natural environment. For farmers and indeed fishers, the preservation of small-scale fishing and farming based income-generating opportunities represents a ‘true’ operationalisation of the ethos behind the EU rural development model and. arguments in favour of ‘new paradigm’ rural development “restates rights and possibilities of rural inhabitants to generate a livelihood for themselves from a sustainable use of the natural, cultural and social resources specific to their own rural locale” (Tovey, 2006, p.173).
The processes of ‘deepening’, ‘broadening’ and ‘re-grounding’ are essential for the incorporation of small-scale fishing and farming households into the rural development fold and placing them at its core.

- ‘Deepening’ practices seek to add value to the product – “returning to the farm food-processing activities which were historically appropriated from it by the food industry (Goodman et al. 1987)” (Tovey, 2006, p. 176).

- ‘Broadening’ emphasises the need to incorporate additional non-fishing/agricultural and para-fishing/agricultural activities to the central fishing/farming activity in how the household generates income (Tovey, 2006, p. 177).

- ‘Re-grounding’ is necessary to give these economic activities ‘any distinctiveness’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 177) and depends on “strategies to end dependence on financial and industrial capitals and to replace them with inputs of social and ecological capitals” (Tovey, 2006, p. 178).

In addition to examples of potential enterprises that come under the headings above, additional categories of income-generating practices which draw from existing local knowledge and skills were proposed by rural development workers interviewed for this study. These practices grouped under three thematic areas and are elaborated in Chapter 5:

- Tourism and the Culture Economy;
- Valorisation of Natural resources;
- Alternative Food Production.

Recognising the role of local knowledge and capital in its traditional, social and cultural forms as primary resources for these areas of development is perhaps the most effective route for improving the circumstances of farmers’ and fishers’ engagement.

Conclusion
Identifying and understanding socio-cultural barriers to the successful roll out of the contemporary rural development agenda can assist the process by which associated paradigmatic economic and social shifts (i.e. post-productivism; economic differentiation in the context of globalisation; and governance) are met. With the mainstreaming of the primary EU instrument for contemporary rural development (the LEADER programme) in the current (2007-2013) programming period, a significant challenge for all EU member states will be to understand barriers to successful engagement at the micro level. The findings of this study affirm that there is no ‘quick fix’ of broaching the institutional gap between the presentation of ‘best practice’ and the adoption of ‘best practice’, particularly among strongly defined traditional social groups. Change occurs in a rich socio-cultural milieu where, as
Vanclay (2004) has discussed at length, actors are “their own scientists, experimenting and hypothesising to determine what works”.

A holistic approach is required for analysing and strategising community-based farmers’ and fishers’ potential. This resonates with the principles upon which the EU contemporary rural development agenda was formulated in the first instance: to “enable a better understanding of the area and its living strength” (CEC, 1988) and to provide “an innovation and a lever of innovation” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997). The active participation of different social and professional groups in the development process is necessary to uncover local physical, social, cultural and human capital (i.e. ‘ingenuity’; see Chapter 1) to underpin successful innovations. Recognising the role of local knowledge and capital in its traditional, social and cultural forms as primary resources for rural development is perhaps the most crucial requirement for stimulating a viable and differentiated rural economy. Tapping into local knowledge also represents the most effective route for encouraging farmers’ and fishers’ to take ownership of local development initiatives.

For rural development initiatives, such as those pioneered by the LEADER programme and through statutory agencies such as Teagasc, there are a variety of techniques and methods that stand to improve the circumstances of engagement of farmers and fishers with the contemporary rural development rules. The findings of this study could not emphasise further the need for an appraisal of farmers’ and fishers’ existing skills and knowledge for contemporary rural development initiatives. Rich forms of cultural and social capital that underpin traditional fishing and farming practices have been undermined for decades by policies that seek to promote industrial productivism. The contemporary rural development agenda places traditional skills and knowledge in a new light and offers new opportunities to bring small-scale farmers and fishers into its fold as central participants. The examples of culturally and socially adoptable activities identified in the full version of this report represent a platform for availing of Ireland’s €425m. LEADER programme (operational from 2009-2013) which supports individual and group proposals for training, education, knowledge exchange, community initiatives, and enterprise start-up. Although fishers have less support in terms of a targeted advisory, education and research service, Teagasc as an organisation that reaches into and impacts on all types of farming households and rural communities across the country is crucially positioned to provide much of the groundwork towards these ends.

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3 Teagasc’s Rural Development and Innovation Service’s ‘Farm Options Programme’ is available free of charge to all rural inhabitants in Ireland whether or not they are farmers or Teagasc clients.
Chapter 1

The Contemporary Rural Development Agenda

1.1 Introduction

In rural Ireland, a number of problems associated with sectoral productivist policies were reported as having reached “crisis proportions” in the late 1980s: “Rural population decline was acute, particularly so in remote disadvantaged areas; the effects of the polluting, non-sustainable character of heavily capitalised intensive agriculture was becoming evident in the natural environment (CEC, 1988); there were steeply declining numbers at work in agriculture in addition to low agricultural incomes (stemming in part from the high proportion of officially categorised non-viable farms); rural underemployment was rife; and there was a deficiency of outlets for off-farm employment opportunities (Kearney et al, 1995, cited by Curtin & Varley, 1997). These problems were common among many rural regions of the EU and an alternative policy framework for the development of rural areas was put forward to redress some of the core problems instigated by structural interventions in agriculture (CEC, 1988).

The post-productivist agenda in EU rural development policy has accentuated since the late 1980s and this trajectory is set to continue. Contemporary policies demonstrate an increased policy focus away from mainstream commodity productivist models of development towards high value-added and innovation in the rural economy. The contemporary rural development agenda is oriented in the main by three major paradigmatic changes, each of which represents a different set of development challenges. The first set of challenges arises from a context where there was official policy recognition of the “polluting and unsustainable nature of industrial agriculture” (Kearney et al, 1995) and of the ‘disrupting’ effect of structural interventions in agriculture on the social and economic fabric of family farms (CEC, 1988). As such, there was a move away from industrial productivist models of production towards post-productivist rural development programmes that seek to promote environmentally, economically and socially sustainable initiatives. Examples of such post-productivist initiatives are development programmes that aim to foster high value-added within rural communities (e.g. LEADER⁴) and agri-environmental schemes (e.g. the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS). The second paradigmatic change underpinning the contemporary rural development agenda is the move towards a governance and rural development model representing a transition from ‘top-down’ sectoral models of development to ‘bottom-up’

⁴ LEADER is an acronym for ‘Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpment de l’Economie Rurale’ (linkages between development actions in the rural economy).
participatory models, where the design and implementation of development action is delegated to partnerships involving local development stakeholders. The shift towards governance and rural development is rationalised on the basis that “If the endogenous potential of rural regions is to be properly developed, local initiatives must be stimulated and mobilised” (CEC, 1988, p.62). The third paradigmatic shift emerges from globalisation processes, where external market challenges require rural localities to create differentiated and innovative forms of economic activity. In this sense, the challenge is for localities to (re)indigenise themselves to counteract threats associated with economic and cultural homogenisation - “globalisation not only pulls upwards, it pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy” (Giddens, 1999).

With reference to these three broad paradigmatic shifts, this chapter presents a snapshot of how the contemporary EU rural development agenda has manifested itself thus far in terms of the cultural discourses that surround it and the economic activities that are at its core. Attention is drawn in particular to the extra-local factors that govern how the agenda for contemporary rural development is being set, referring in particular to how consumption, rather than production, has emerged as a priority concept in the literature. Despite the effort of contemporary rural development programmes to ‘hand over’ the development process to local inhabitants, this chapter discusses how global networks of marketing and knowledge exchange can lead to the emergence of a ‘status quo’ in rural income-generating activities. The key concepts underpinning ‘real’ rural development (Tovey, 2006), which places traditional income-generating activities such as farming and fishing at the core of rural development is put forward as a possible panacea for the artificial separation of production and consumption identified by Pratt (2004). Finally, this chapter overviews how the contemporary rural development has been operationalised in Ireland thus far, using as an illustrative focus the EC LEADER programme.

1.2 Contemporary Rural Development: a ‘Post-Productivist’ agenda

Post-productivism is discussed as a concept in the rural development literature in a wide variety of contexts, but the problematic nature of industrial productivist food systems is a recurring theme. Problems cited include the environmental consequences of large-scale industrial production; the social and cultural deficits of sectoral policies in agriculture; and the ‘food fear’ and ‘risks’ associated with post-modern society (Tovey, 2006; see also Beck, 1992; Beardsworth and Kiel, 1997). Contemporary programmes for rural development are described as being part of the “post-industrial and post-agricultural” economy (CORASON, 2009) and are manifested in “the emerging policy style of the EU programmes (for example, LEADER, but also the contemporary debate over the latest reform of the CAP); tourism and regional foods promotion initiatives; as well as more radical local economic approaches” (Ray, 1997b, p.1).
Lockie et al (2006) define the characterising features of productivism and post-productivism respectively as “intensification, concentration of production and specialisation (both of farms and regions)”; and “extensification (decreases in external inputs and the use of land); dispersion (access by a variety of stakeholders to the land); and, diversification (heterogeneity in agricultural, and other, pursuits in rural space)” (p. 38). The dualism of productivism and post-productivism has been critiqued at a theoretical level and with reference to the tendency of post-productivist discourses to pay little attention to the continued importance of the production of primary commodities in the rural economy (see for example Wilson, 2001; Evans et al, 2001; Burton 2004b). The productivist to post-productivist transition model often fails to account for how productivism and post-productivism co-exist ‘temporally, sectorally and spatially’ (Wilson, 2001). Nonetheless, the concept of post-productivism remains useful to reference the paradigmatic shift in EU rural development rhetoric away from a post World War II development context where the rural economy was conflated with agriculture, to a policy recognition of broader functions of the rural economy (CEC, 1988; see Gray, 2000).

1.3 The Governance and Rural Development Model: Partnership & Subsidiarity
The EU LEADER programme is emblematic of a shift in emphasis in EC policymaking to include post-productivist development goals but is also representative of a new governance-based approach to development. The argument driving the design of contemporary rural development policy approaches is “If the endogenous potential of rural regions is to be properly developed, local initiatives must be stimulated and mobilised” (CEC, 1988, p.62). Specifically, LEADER was formulated to “provide the European Union’s rural areas with a development method for involving local partners in the future of their areas” (Fischler, 1998). Rather than a programme for economic development, LEADER is described as “a multidimensional process that seeks to integrate, in a sustainable manner, economic, socio-cultural and environmental objectives (Kearney et al., 1994, p. 128, cited by Moseley, 2003a, p. 4) and “a sustained and sustainable process of economic, social, cultural and environmental change designed to enhance the long-term well-being of the whole community” (Moseley, 2003a p.4).

The LEADER approach claimed to “enable a better understanding of the area and its living strength” (CEC, 1988) and is described as “an innovation and a lever of innovation” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997). The main aim of the programme is to find innovative solutions to rural problems on a localised basis by facilitating the creation of links between localities and external organisations in order to “stimulate and support locally based development” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997). The operationalisation of such an approach requires the active participation of local development stakeholders and its central challenge is to “invent new (participatory) institutions which not only can mediate and get beyond conflict by providing representation to a wide span of local interests but can be an effective means of developing local economies” (Curtin & Varley, 1997, p.142).
tangible results of governance and rural development programmes, such as increased employment, are not ends in themselves but are meant to be born from an integrative process that focuses on sustainability, capacity building, community and social inclusion. This process is supposed to become embedded in the institutional character of the locality, adding longevity and sustainability to the tangible goals of development and spurring further development (Moseley, 2003b, p. 9). Referring to this process, an evaluation of the first LEADER programme in Ireland states:

“development is not simply a question of undertaking projects, nor of achieving objectives specified in narrow economic terms. Development is also a process, by which is meant the creation of social products such as upgraded local leadership, a culture of enterprise and innovative action, or the enhanced capacity of people to act in concert, purposefully and effectively so as to cope with the threats and opportunities they face” (Kearney et al, 1995).

The programme operates on the basis of two principles: hierarchical decision-making structures being replaced by mechanisms involving representatives from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental groups (principle of partnership) (Osti, 2000, p. 172); and decision-making taking place as close as possible to the site of implementation (principle of subsidiarity).

It is envisaged that partnership and subsidiarity, by providing a mechanism for the participation of a variety of sectoral stakeholders at the local level, give rise to an ‘integrated’ approach and thus has the capacity to address the rural development problem more broadly. It is claimed that partnership gives rise to more effective rural development because of its usage of different sectoral resources, both human and material. Bryson and Anderson (2000) for example, say that a multi-actor approach allows for “an enhanced amount of information to be brought to bear on a problem, the building of commitment to problem definition and solutions, the fusion of planning and implementation, and shortening the time needed to bring forward policies, programmes, services and projects” (p. 143). Echoing this are the officially perceived benefits of the partnership approach at the EU level according to an EC evaluation:

- Greater effectiveness in programme development and monitoring;
- More effective project selection;
- Greater legitimacy and transparency in decisions and decision-making processes;
- Greater commitment and ownership of programme outputs;
- Opportunities for reinforcing innovation and learning across organisational boundaries; and
- Development of institutional capacity at sectoral and territorial levels.

(CEC, 2001)
Of the participatory aspect of partnership, Hart and Murray (2000) state that not only does it encourage integrated development, but it “is about making a holistic contribution to the alleviation of social exclusion, poverty and deprivation thus helping to build a more inclusive society” (p. 6). By including local stakeholders in the decision-making process, decisions are considered to be more likely to ‘stick’ (Moseley, 2003b, p. 2). Partnership is thus conceived of as a way of addressing locally specific development issues and according to the principle of subsidiarity, the participation of local interest groups is crucial for its operation.

1.4 Globalisation and the ‘Culture Economy’

The contemporary rural development agenda is representative of a movement away from staple development concerns (such as food security and poverty alleviation), towards the valorisation of local resources through high value-added production. One of the main incentives behind the participation of local organisations in EU governance and rural development relates to the benefits of a locally-customised development agenda in an era when diversifying beyond primary commodity production is emphasised. It is claimed that partnership and other governance models are not simply multi-tier versions of centralised policies but represent a chance for localities to focus on their individual attributes, resources, and forms of capital and exploit them (Walsh, 1995, p. 1). The type of development that arises from such a local focus veers away from the productivist sectoral development model and towards a more subjective place-based rural development ideology. This rural development ideology (which has been discussed in the context of post-modernity, see Bryden and Shucksmith, 2000) is closely related to the influence of globalisation on the economies, societies, cultures, and political systems in the EU:

“Globalisation, (thus) is a complex set of processes – not a single one - and these operate in contradictory or oppositional fashion. Most people think of globalisation as simply pulling power and influence away from local communities and nations into the global arena and, indeed, this is one of its consequences; nations do lose some of the economic power they once had. Yet, it also has an opposite effect: globalisation not only pulls upwards, it pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy.” (Giddens, 1999)

Ray (2000) says that these new pressures for local autonomy “manifest themselves at the level of individuals and of territories. They are an outcome of the escalating awareness of, contact with and borrowing from, other cultures and polities as goods, people and ideas circulate on a global scale” (p. 5). Echoing Giddens (1999), Lash and Urry (1994) see this as the paradox of globalisation: “it produces on the one hand, cultural and political cosmopolitanism and, on the other, an increasing awareness of, and wish to preserve, diversity, that is, ‘indigenisation’”. Moseley (2004b) states that the development strategy of ‘adding value to local resources’ requires a positive attitude both to the potential of local resources and to the implications of globalisation. In the latter case it means seeing the opening up of world markets as an opportunity as well as a threat, and seeking not a rejection of globalisation but a judicious positioning within it” (Moseley, 2003a, p. 48)

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Rhetoric surrounding discussion of the ‘culture economy’ (see Ray 1997; 1998; 2000) has obvious linkages with strategies of indigenisation and differentiated production for the purposes of rural development. Lowe et al (1998) define the ‘culture economy’ approach in rural development as “an admixture of: the economic theory of competitive advantage and international trade; the marketing concept of niche markets; and a response to the critique of exogenous development and the notion of modernity as a ‘cultural melting pot’” (p. 53). Ray (1997) articulates that “the term culture economy refers to the definition and exploitation of a territorial identity through local cultural resources” (p. 1), and “cultural symbols, including historical references, and the value systems they represent, are the resources of, and often the rationale for, these territorial initiatives” (Ray, 1997, p. 2). The role of culture in rural development is frequently acknowledged in bureaucratic literature that promotes rural tourism and artisan foods and crafts. Ireland’s White Paper “Ensuring the Future – a Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland (1999), for example, states:

“Rural communities are closely associated with Irish traditions, heritage and culture which have been critical in shaping the national identity. The cultural heritage embraces the language, life-style and traditions, traditional music, song and dance, landscape, unique products, monuments, national games, the arts, etc… In economic terms, culture and the arts, and in the Gaeltacht, the Irish language, contribute directly and indirectly to the creation and retention of employment in rural areas and present an image of an area as a basis for tourism and business investment. Traditional and modern crafts represent a significant and growing sector of the small business economy in many rural areas and provide opportunities for people to generate income from their personal resources and skills. The preservation and enhancement of local culture is also a feature of rural areas which has potential for generating new kinds of economic activity. In recent years the film industry has not only generated local economic activity but has promoted the image and attractions of rural areas for tourism purposes” (Ensuring the Future – a Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland, 1999, p. 53).

Situating the culture economy in the context of development theory, Lowe et al (1998) state that “the approach can be located in the logic of economic growth within consumer capitalism in which a cultural system is seen as a means to create space-specific resources for economic exploitation” (p. 54). Inevitably, however, the culture economy is a manifestation not only of the consumption of locally ‘differentiated’ goods but of the production of such goods.

1.5 Production and Consumption
In terms of how both the consumption and production aspects of the culture economy are addressed in the literature, Pratt (2004) argues that “the analytical pendulum has swung too far in prioritising consumption” and in his paper he seeks to address the ‘artificial’ separation of production and consumption (p. 117). Pratt (2004) emphasises the importance of context and organisation for how creativity is recognised for the purpose of the cultural economy (p. 120). Relatedly, he observes
that within each context or organisational structure the ‘new’ emphasis on creativity implies contextually relative “rupture and periodization and formations”, which he puts forth as being without a solid rationale and influenced by ‘technological determinism’ as well as market-led ‘hype’ (Pratt, 2004, pp. 120-121). One of the premises underpinning his thesis reflects on how the social sciences have traditionally been focussed more on production than consumption and he observes the emergence of a reverse phenomenon with respect to the predominant analysis of consumption in the case of the culture economy (p. 122). Pratt suggests that as a result of the ‘spectacularisation’ of consumption in the context of the culture economy competition occurs not only between products but between places of production (Pratt, 2004, p. 123). He points to the significance of the linkages between production and consumption through internationalised networks and critical mass in the sale, promotion and marketing of the cultural economy –

“…webs and networks that are woven to sustain and support particular styles of consumption, whether it is the ‘exotic’ foods on supermarket shelves or the producers of the brand name sports and fashion… We commonly refer to ‘street fashions’ and ‘learning from the street’ in high fashion production; this is a clear reference to the beneficial co-location of cultural producers and consumers where fashion ideas may be picked up and tested. A more diffuse version of this is the buzz around many cultural producers that makes it attractive for competitors to be close to one another and thus participate in this ‘gossip’” (Pratt, 2004, p.123).

Pratt concludes by commenting that while it once was “fashionable to criticise old Marxists as ‘productivist’, perhaps it is now time to lay a similar, but opposite charge at the door of the new ‘consumptionists’” (2004, p. 124). He calls for in-depth anthropological perspectives on how the cultural economy is taking shape, and posits that “the challenge for anyone seeking to understand the ‘production of culture’ is not to ‘box off’ culture, but to follow its making” (Pratt, 2004, p. 125).

1.6 Characterising the Contemporary EU Rural Development ‘Product’
The rules of governance and rural development programmes stipulate that the design of development is in the hands of local stakeholders, thus preventing an official definition or qualification of ‘rural development’ in the literature. While this is so, similar to how intensified forms of agriculture and fishing were synonymous with the productivist model for agriculture and fisheries, distinctive forms of rural economic activity have become mainstream in contemporary rural development culture. These distinctive forms of economic activity that have emerged with the contemporary rural development agenda are evident across the EU as well as within nation states, and arguably represent a new ‘status quo’ in the rural economy.

The notion of the ‘culture’ economy is manifest in discourses and rural development practices that surround tourism, artisan foods, and the development of linguistic/artistic commodities (Cloke et al, 2006; Lowe et al 1998). Cawley & Gillmor (2008) describe the culture economy approach to rural tourism in Ireland as
“capitalising on the distinctive features of rural areas and cultural practices by commodifying them for commercial purposes rather than seeking to pursue scale economies in production” (p. 145). New rural development perspectives seek to tap into broader rural economic opportunities by focusing on the “indigenisation of the local economy” (Ray, 2000) so as to encourage high value-added production. This ‘indigenisation’ is adopted by enterprises that “are able to attach lifestyle significance or political ideology to their products and services, replacing material and labour value with design value” (Ray, 2000, p. 6). Contemporary rural development products, however, have in common a ‘niche’ and differentiated quality which is seen by Moseley (2003b) as catering for an ‘increasingly discriminating clientele’:

“Increasingly, local producers have to produce and market something a little different – something ‘differentiated’ from the competition - and this requires ingenuity both in appraising the local resource base with a view to exploiting any distinctiveness and adding value to those resources in a way that will please an increasingly discriminating clientele”

Because contemporary programmes for rural development are characterised as being part of the “post-industrial and post-agricultural” economy (CORASON, 2009), the scope of activities funded under the programme are inevitably confined to those which are appropriately oriented. The CORASON EU 6th Framework research project, which employs a cognitive approach to understanding the dynamics of expert and lay knowledge, describes a diversifying, locally-based economy as encompassing:

- New forms of agriculture (including organic and non-organic food production)
- Small-scale food processing
- New forms of rural tourism
- New forms of managing complex natural resources

CORASON (2009)

Of the culture economy and rural development, Lowe et al (1998) state “it is remarkable the extent to which practitioners involved in cultural initiatives are Eurocentric in their thinking” (p. 68). Dilley (2009) in his study of local food movements notes “people are guided to act in certain ways and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public and cultural [discourses]” (Dilley, 2009, p. 4, quoting Somers, 1994, p.614).

Dilley (2009), in the same study, and Ray (1997) coming from a different perspective, each refer to how the consumption of particular rural development products can be value-laden. Dilley (2009) discusses how local food products can symbolise particular eco-political principles, while Ray (1997) points to the patriotic
attributes of forms of cultural tourism initiatives. Referring to cultural “ethno-tourism” specifically, Lowe et al (1998) note that these “are all ‘upmarket’ forms of tourism, having in common the potential for higher added-value than the mass tourism of the ‘bucket and spade’ and ‘Costas’ varieties” (p. 56). Discourses surrounding artisan and local food movements associated with the culture economy make use of similar terms of elitism. Dilley (2009) notes that local food is frequently described and recognised as something of quality, naturalness, freshness and safety and thus becomes linked “with a premium price tag - its consumption signifies one’s good sense and discrimination. In this context, local/high quality food can become ‘yuppie chow’” (Dilley, 2009, p.6).

While these and a larger range of rural development products conceivably offer a guideline blue-print model for a less industrial environmentally sustainable EU future ‘culture economy’, regional differences across Europe and lingering implications of the paradigmatic shifts from pre-productivism to productivism to post-productivism have given rise to a complex interface between rural society today (and its composite social groups) and the contemporary rural development agenda. As an exponent of the post-industrial and post-productivist economy, it is recognised that the LEADER programme does not have a mainstream agriculture (or fisheries) ‘tag’ (Scully, 2009). In the bureaucratic and academic literatures, the ‘newness’ of the knowledge-based culture economy continues to be emphasised, as if in reflection of the persisting challenges in the transition from “labour and material value to design value” (Ray, 2000).

1.7 ‘Real’ Rural Development: bridging the gap between production and consumption?
As discussed above, the contemporary rural development agenda represents a challenge to conform to new post-productivist rules where the predominant emphasis is on a particularly oriented rural development product and its consumption (rather than its production). In this light, ‘real’ rural development offers a panacea for the artificial separation of consumption and production by ‘transforming understandings’ of the roles of primary activities of farming and fishing in rural development “from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173). Tovey (2006, pp. 171-172) contrasts the ‘official policy perspective’ on rural development with ‘real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development as has been articulated by Van der Ploeg et al. (2000), Marsden (2003) and Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004):
‘Real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development can be understood as offering a challenge and an alternative “both to the conventional agricultural modernisation model, in which agriculture is given the part of extracting the primary resources from which others outside the rural economy can create wealth for themselves, and to post-agrarian models of rural development in which a declining agriculture creates space for consumption of the countryside, converting agricultural land into recreational facilities, nature reserves, areas for sub-urbanisation, or sites for factories and hotels” (Tovey, 2006, p. 172).

Central to the ‘new paradigm’ is the re-centralisation of primary production activities in rural development – “Marsden locates the origins of ‘new paradigm’
rural development in state-led ‘bottom-up’ initiatives to empower rural communities, but those involved then undergo a ‘cognitive liberation’ (McAdam, 1992). In the literature, ‘new paradigm’ rural development is described as emerging from “autonomous processes and in spite of official attempts at rural development: small to medium farmers’ experience of the disastrous effects of trying to integrate themselves into the dominant modernisation model, with its goals of continuous expansion of scale, industrialisation of production and integration into increasingly globalised agro-industrial corporations force them to find a range of ways to ‘jump over the boundaries that model prescribes form them’” (Tovey, 2006, p.173 citing Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004, p. 234). The same argument can be applied to the case of small-scale fishers. In this sense, ‘new paradigm’ rural development is understood as a ‘counter-movement’ (Marsden, 2003) and a ‘widespread resistance paysanne’ (Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004; Tovey, 2006). Arguments in favour of ‘new paradigm’ rural development “restates rights and possibilities of rural inhabitants to generate a livelihood for themselves from a sustainable use of the natural, cultural and social resources specific to their own rural locale” (Tovey, 2006, p.173).

There are three key concepts that facilitate how ‘real’ rural development can be understood as a feasible development model: ‘deepening’; ‘broadening’; and ‘re-grounding’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 176; see Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004). These are strategies that assist the viability of small-scale fishing or agricultural production. ‘Deepening’ practices seek to add value to the product – “returning to the farm food-processing activities which were historically appropriated from it by the food industry (Goodman et al. 1987)” (Tovey, 2006, p. 176). The concept of ‘broadening’ emphasises the need to incorporate additional non-fishing/agricultural and para-fishing/agricultural activities the central fishing/farming activity in how the household generates income (Tovey, 2006, p. 177). Re-grounding’ is perceived as necessary to give these economic activities ‘any distinctiveness’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 177) and depends on “strategies to end dependence on financial and industrial capitals and to replace them with inputs of social and ecological capitals” (Tovey, 2006, p. 178). Tovey (2006) notes that the numbers of rural inhabitants engaging in ‘new paradigm’ rural development are difficult to determine but references the estimation of Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) that 50% of all farmers in the EU are engaging in these types of activities and the less optimistic view of Marsden (2003) that “the possibilities of its full realisation are unequally distributed across European rural space and will never become ‘mainstreamed’ unless given strong and appropriate state supports” (Tovey, 2006, p. 192-173). It is evident in the literature that many authors make problematic conflations of manifestations of the contemporary rural development agenda, for example pluri-active income generating activity, with the ‘deepening’; ‘’broadening’ and ‘re-grounding’ activities described above without drawing attention to how these activities are differentiated according to their dependence on indigenous or exogenous resources.
1.8 Rural Development as Change

With the emergence of a newly oriented rural economy, there is a corresponding ‘rupture’ of old development contexts (Pratt (2004). The environment for the operation of the contemporary rural development agenda is one that is characterised by change. Moving away from a productivist sectoral (agriculture and fisheries) to an inter-sectoral (diverse economic) development approach, the contemporary EU rural development agenda relates to a correspondingly broadened range of potential rural development actors. Irish rural social change is heightened by a growing proportion of commuters; the growing attractiveness of rural areas as places in which to live or holiday and the growing incidence of social movements that have a rural significance, for example the strengthening organic and rural health movements that attract newcomers and entrepreneurs to rural areas (Macken-Walsh, 2006). In the context of post-industrialism it is evident that Irish rural areas are becoming increasingly designated as sites for consumption as well as production (see Gray, 2000). Teagasc’s Rural Economy Research Centre (RERC) conducts spatial research on rural conditions, concentrating on demographic change as well as on land-use patterns that provides an interesting portrayal of change (Meredith 2005; Meredith, 2007; Crowley et al., 2008; Meredith & Foley, 2008; Meredith, 2009).

Ireland’s National Development Plan (NDP) makes the following summary points in relation to rural conditions in Ireland:

- Rural Ireland is not a single homogenous area with a single common shared experience. Depending on economic circumstances and geographic location, rural areas can face a diversity of contrasting challenges and experiences.
- Rural areas close to large cities and regional towns are experiencing rapid population growth and can face much pressure for development.
- **Some rural areas, which are more distant from large centres of population, are struggling to find new economic activities to replace those lost as a result of changes in the agriculture sector and other traditional rural-based sectors.**
- Other rural areas, which are geographically remote but which enjoy a strong natural and cultural heritage, have experienced growth in tourism, inward-migration and the development of rurally based micro-enterprises.
- The general expansion of the construction industry in recent years has also provided employment for people living in rural areas.
- Rural areas are now often characterised as being the areas of residence for people who work in nearby cities and large towns.
- Many people who live in rural areas are not directly involved in farming or farm-related activities or other economic sectors which of their nature are situated in rural areas.
- This diversification in the income sources of people living in rural areas is very welcome.
- **There is a challenge to achieve an appropriate balance between supporting farming and other traditionally rural-based economic activity as a continually important source of income in such rural areas and**
simultaneously fostering sustainable economic diversification and development in rural areas.

- Accordingly, policy must address the ongoing changes in rural communities; support their sustainable economic development; and promote regional development.

(NDP, p. 15, emphasis added)

The LEADER programme, arguably the most prominent manifestation of the contemporary rural development agenda, has been implemented in Ireland since 1991 and from 2007-2013 is mainstreamed across all policy axes of the EU CAP (2007-2013). The first phase of the programme, LEADER I (1991-1994), funded 2,980 projects in total, 45% of which sought to develop rural tourism (Kearney, 2009). The LEADER II programme (1995-1999) placed particular emphasis on animation, building community confidence, innovation and on the “preservation and improvement of the environment and living conditions” measure (see Kearney, 2009). LEADER + (2000-2006) had four main objectives: the use of new know-how and technologies; improving the quality of life; adding value to local products and making the best use of cultural and natural resources (Kearney, 2009). For the period 2007-2013, there has been a restructuring of all EU rural development funds (including funds for the development of agriculture and other mainstream sectors). The LEADER programme, comprising the fourth of four axes, is mainstreamed in remaining three axes of rural development policy as a method of introducing and encouraging greater innovation. The Directorate General for Agriculture’s (DG AGRI) identifies three core objectives in line with the new approach: to improve the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sector through support for restructuring, development and innovation; to improve the environment and the countryside through support for land management; and to improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity. The rationalisation behind the now more widespread usage of the LEADER approach reflects a growing policy emphasis on the principles behind the programme’s original conception: partnership (democratic decision-making involving local stakeholders) and subsidiarity (locally-honed development to utilise and valorise local resources). The channelling of funds towards the LEADER approach has consistently increased since 1991:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>EU Funding</th>
<th>Irish Exchequer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEADER I: 1991-1994</td>
<td>€26.4m</td>
<td>€17.6m</td>
<td>€44m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER II: 1995-1999</td>
<td>€68.8m</td>
<td>€29.3m</td>
<td>€98.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER +: 2000-2006</td>
<td>€74.3m</td>
<td>€44.8m</td>
<td>€119.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER: 2007-2013</td>
<td>€233.8m</td>
<td>€191.2m</td>
<td>€425m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kearney (2009)
In the absence of a national rural observatory to monitor economic, social and cultural change under the impetus of rural development policy, the primary sources of information on the activities and actors that LEADER funding has supported over the years are centralised agencies such as The Irish LEADER Network (Comhar LEADER na hÉireann), and the Irish LEADER Support Unit (ILSU) located in the Tipperary Institute of Technology. There are 36 Local Action Groups (LAGS) (or LEADER partnerships) and each of these hold information locally on the particulars of projects funded through their partnership boards. In keeping with the LEADER programme’s explicit efforts to encourage indigenisation of rural economic activities, it is clear overall that the programme has aimed to foster and support the development of many rural-based micro-enterprises in Ireland oriented to rural tourism, rural crafts and artisan foods (Kearney et al 1995; Kearney 2009). It is also apparent that the LEADER programme over its 17 years of implementation in Ireland has also dedicated significant resources to training and education and the enhancement of local, social and cultural amenities. Figure 1 below classifies 4,276 projects funded by the LEADER programme in the 2000-2006 programming period. There are limited personal and environmental data available at the national level on beneficiaries of LEADER funds, and the projects are classified below according to funding measure (see legend):

**Figure 1.1 Sample Classification of 4276 individual LEADER+ funded projects 2000 to 2006**

Source: Compiled from data received from the Irish LEADER Support Unit (ILSU).
It is inevitable that complex and differing socio-cultural and economic factors at the local level determine case-specific peculiarities of how the programme takes form and operates in different operational sites across the EU:

“The LEADER approach is welded to the principle of local participation although the meaning of this is a function of the structure and ethos of each local group and of the implementation style adopted for each plan. Participation, then, varies with context”. (Lowe et al, 1998 p. 79).

Understanding who has engaged in the contemporary rural development agenda, what activities they have engaged in and why requires an almost wholly qualitative approach, which is described in following chapter.

1.9 Summary & Conclusion
The contemporary rural development agenda, although representing an increased focus on the case-specific resources of localities, is nonetheless underpinned by broader paradigmatic shifts at the international and global levels. The concept of post-productivism is useful to reference the paradigmatic shift in EU rural development rhetoric that acknowledges the problems associated with concentrating on mainstream productivism alone and the need to acknowledge the broader cultural, social and economic functions of rural space (CEC, 1988; see Gray, 2000). In order to promote and encourage the development of cultural, social and economic dimensions of rural areas, a ‘bottom-up’ participatory approach is required - “If the endogenous potential of rural regions is to be properly developed, local initiatives must be stimulated and mobilised” (CEC, 1988, p.62). The EC LEADER programme is representative of such an approach, which was formulated to “provide the European Union’s rural areas with a development method for involving local partners in the future of their areas” (Fischler, 1998). The LEADER approach is claimed to “enable a better understanding of the area and its living strength” (CEC, 1988) and is described as “an innovation and a lever of innovation” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997).

New rural development perspectives seek to tap into broader rural economic opportunities by focusing on the “indigenisation of the local economy” (Ray, 2000) and the “championing of local distinctiveness” (Moseley, 2003a) so as to encourage high value-added production. However, Ray (2000) notes that local development initiatives are not only determined by local factors but are “an outcome of the escalating awareness of, contact with and borrowing from, other cultures and polities as goods, people and ideas circulate on a global scale” (Ray, 2000 p. 5). Discourses surrounding the contemporary rural development agenda tend to emphasise the consumption of products arising from income-generating activities rather than their production (see Pratt, 2004). This poses the threat of an ‘artificial separation’ of production and consumption (Pratt, 2004, p. 117) and emphasises the need to reinstate the importance of local context and organisation in the development of the cultural economy (2004, p. 120). Extra-local influences on how the contemporary
rural development movement is taking shape are noted in the literature - “it is remarkable the extent to which practitioners involved in cultural initiatives are Eurocentric in their thinking” (Lowe et al. 2008, p. 68). The challenges and demands posed by the contemporary rural development agenda, therefore, do not amount only to innovation and valorising local distinctiveness but can also require conforming to a prevailing form of rural development culture.

One of the principal questions that arise in this regard relates to the area of interchange between the characteristics and aims of the contemporary rural development agenda on one hand, and the determinants arising from the socio-cultural milieux of individual localities on the other. As an exponent of the post-industrial and post-productivist economy, contemporary rural development programmes such as LEADER not have a mainstream agriculture (or fisheries) ‘tag’ (Scully, 2009). In the bureaucratic and academic literatures, the ‘newness’ of the knowledge-based culture economy continues to be emphasised, as if in reflection of the persisting challenges in the transition from “labour and material value to design value” (Ray, 1999). The following chapter presents a theoretical framework to frame an understanding of how these challenges can be understood from the perspectives of Irish farmers and fishers, who are acknowledged to be experiencing ‘barriers to change’ in the context of the contemporary rural development agenda.
Chapter 2
Theoretical Frames for understanding
‘Barriers’ to Change

2.1 Introduction
At the core of the contemporary rural development agenda is a transition in emphasis from ‘material and labour value to design value’ (Ray, 1999) and this represents a set of new challenges for rural inhabitants (see Chapter 1). The transition from policies that encourage production of mainstream commodities towards the cultivation of newly oriented rural development ‘products’ inevitably causes a rupture of old development contexts (see Pratt, 2004; Chapter 1). Because contemporary rural development programmes do not have a conventional agriculture or fisheries ‘tag’ (Scully, 2009), the task of adopting to new development rules is perhaps most challenging among those engaged in primary production activities.

Inevitably, a diversity of social, cultural and economic factors at the local level represent crucial determinants of how participatory rural development programmes take shape and operate on the ground. Research that seeks to explore how contemporary rural development programmes operate in practice is represented to some extent in the literature (see, for example, Varley, 1991; Curtin and Varley, 1997; Osti, 2000; Esparcia-Perez, 2000; Buller, 2000). Some valuable studies have elaborated how changes in rural development policy have differently enfranchised and disenfranchised various social groups. Kucerová and Kovach (2006), for example, detect the rise of a “project class” that is particularly well suited to new rural development opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. From another perspective, Osti claims in his article on LEADER in Italy that farmers’ organisations are “bewildered by the disappearance of their traditional, privileged channels of influence” (2000, p.176). In Ireland there has been scarce qualitative ethnographic research in recent years on the types of actors that become involved in contemporary rural development programmes and the nature of development activities that such programmes. There are, however, some recent studies on ‘alternative’ food movements and the organic farming sector in Ireland (Tovey, 2002; Moore, 2003; Tovey, 2006; Tovey and Mooney, 2006).

The dynamics of locally-influenced development models are known to be complex and further layers are added to the complexity in the context of such models being used as a policy instrument for achieving broader paradigmatic shifts and particularly oriented rural economic activities (see Chapter 1). This first part of this chapter presents a theoretical frame for exploring the local factors that impact on the operationalisation of locally-led development initiatives generally. The second part of the chapter focuses in particular on theoretical frames and methodologies that underpin the analyses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of ‘barriers to change’
experienced by farmers and fishers in the context of contemporary rural development.

2.2 Representation and the Governance and Rural Development Model
It is claimed that the central challenge of participatory models of development is to form “institutions which not only can mediate and get beyond conflict by providing representation to a wide span of local interests but can be an effective means of developing local economies” (Curtin & Varley, 1997, p.142; see Chapter 1). It is claimed that partnership gives rise to more effective rural development because of its usage of different sectoral resources, both human and material. Bryson and Anderson (2000) for example, say that a multi-actor approach allows for “an enhanced amount of information to be brought to bear on a problem, the building of commitment to problem definition and solutions, the fusion of planning and implementation, and shortening the time needed to bring forward policies, programmes, services and projects” (Bryson and Anderson, 2000 p. 143; see Chapter 1). Hart and Murray (2000) state that not only do governance-based approaches encourage integrated development, but are “about making a holistic contribution to the alleviation of social exclusion, poverty and deprivation thus helping to build a more inclusive society” (p. 6). By including local stakeholders in the decision-making process, decisions are considered to be more likely to ‘stick” (Moseley, 2003b, p. 2).

While the partnership model is symbolic of a procedural method of power devolution, the operation of the model in practice varies from case to case in reflecting the political and economic context in which the model becomes operational as well as a wide range of local social and cultural determinants. It is known that participatory models for decision-making can sometimes amount only to tokenism, placation, even manipulation in practice (see Arnstein, 1969). One of the better known models for analysing different levels of community participation is Arnstein’s (1969) eight-step ladder of degrees of participation.
A compulsory partner in most state-funded networks/partnerships/alliances is the state itself who is seen by some commentators as the ‘coordinator and manager’ of such pseudo-governance mechanisms (Murdoch and Abram 1998, p.41; Varley 1991a). Curtin and Varley (1997) state that in the case of Irish area-based partnerships, “What the Irish state/EU have in mind in the area-based partnerships is not the simple handing over of responsibility to local actors. On the contrary, the expectation is that external actors must be centrally involved in providing resources, deciding what is required to be done, who is to be admitted as legitimate partners and how the partnerships are actually to operate” (p. 142). O’Toole and Burdess (2004) convey a similar view when they say “higher levels of governance “steer” the self-governing processes of (funded) small rural communities, expecting them to “row” for themselves (p.433)”.

Source: Arnstein, 1969
In the establishment and operation of locally-led development there is the risk that only a limited number of local inhabitants will get involved, confining participation to “a very small number of enthusiastic members” (Armstrong quoting Breathnach, 1984). Mannion (1996), for example, points to the danger of local development ending up in the hands of a few. Similarly, Varley (1991b) notes that local community-based development movements “tend to be dominated by a small group of enthusiasts, adept at assembling the illusion of consensus that allows the interests of some to masquerade the interests of all (p.236)”. The stimulants for rural community action differ from case to case according to indigenous tradition and rural communities’ past experiences in engaging with development issues are crucial. In Ireland, for example, charitable and ‘self-help’ community organisations have traditionally been strong, fostered originally by the Catholic Church (see Curtin and Varley, 1997) while in France, the artisan food industry has been a primary stimulant for rural collective action (see Buller, 2000). Shorthall & Shucksmith (1998) draw attention to the need for targeted training to be provided in the ‘pre-partnership’ phase in cases where skills are low. The idea of ‘capacity building’ is crucial here (see Putnam, 1993).

2.3 Subjectivity: understanding engagement in rural development from the perspectives of different social groups

Understanding the circumstances of engagement with the contemporary rural development agenda goes beyond theories based on economic rationale, where actors are expected to indiscriminately adopt profit maximising strategies. It is acknowledged that the ‘cultural turn’ has been slow to influence studies in agriculture where quantitative methods, positivism and economic rationality tend to dominate analysis of farmer behaviour (see Barnett, 1998). Burton (2004) notes that inflexible models of behavioural analysis employ a simplistic approach to understanding behaviour, while ‘new’ methodological approaches emerging with the ‘cultural turn’ in many other areas of social science focus on “the importance of understanding language, meaning, representation, identity, and difference” (p. 360). The approach of this study is broadly informed by theories of existentialism rather than economic rationality where the focus is on the individual’s subjective experiences of, and agency with, the outside world. Understanding existential rationality is instrumental for accounting for individual and social behaviour, where the aim is to understand human subjectivity, i.e. human feelings, perceptions and inclinations which are generated internally by the self and can be influenced by socio-cultural influences such as collective values, tradition and forms of knowledge.

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5 There is a debate in the literature concerning the legitimacy of non-elected actors and non-governmental organisations playing a significant role in governance at local and international (European) levels (see Goodwin, 1998, p. 8).

6 Existentialism is a term that emerged in 19th century historical philosophy, theorised by Kirkegaard and Nietzsche among others.
It is important to represent the ‘local voice’ in rural studies (Crick, 1989, cited in Kneafsey, 1998). Through analysis of subjectivity, it is possible to identify social and cultural ‘scripts’ which ultimately determine identities, attitudes, and behaviour (Canetto, 2005, cited in Feeney, 2008). Agriculture and fisheries research conducted by the UNFAO (2008) states that qualitative research that focuses on subjectivity is necessary to reach “an in-depth understanding of the cultural context and the factors that determine local level outcomes is crucial for the formulation and the success of policies and programmes that are acceptable, appropriate and sustainable”. Figure 2.2 below illustrates that while the empirical focus is on the individual, the analytical aim is to establish the interfaces between the individual and broader social, political, and economic factors. Using such an approach, the UNFAO states that it is possible to examine “a specific question of interest in a holistic fashion; to understand why people behave as they do; to analyse multiple determinants of behaviour in the context in which it takes place; to uncover the rationale for individual behaviour as socially constructed and the reasons for differences in the behaviour of various groups; and to provide insight into the cultural context of the issues that affect agriculture and rural development” (UNFAO, 2000).

**Figure 2.2: Socio-Cultural Research**


The classical sociological text “The Sociological Imagination” by C Wright Mills (1959) provides a prominent theoretical paradigm for understanding the interplay between the individual person and external pressures and forces. Using such a paradigm, external forces (public issues) can cause “contradictions” or “antagonisms” when they are incompatible with individuals’ own world values and/or when the means by which they can realise these values are threatened (private troubles) (Wright-Mills, 1959). Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) theory of capital as framework, where three main forms of capital are elaborated: economic capital (material property); social capital (networks of social connections and mutual obligations); and cultural capital (prestige) is useful for understanding how different
forms of capital are at play in the creation of contradictions or antagonisms which ultimately impacts on decision-making in relation to income-generating practices.

The theory of capital as framework is instrumental to understanding individual behaviour and but also trends in collective behaviour within social groups. Sets of values and worldviews are identified with to greater and lesser extents by individual members of the same social group, but nonetheless provide an effective modus for interpreting attitudes and behaviour which are found to offer more explanatory power than social and demographic variables (Kelly et al, 2004, p.1). Kelly et al (2004) for example in their research on environmental attitudes and behaviours in Ireland arrive at three theoretical explanations that identify different sets of values and worldviews: post-materialism; the new environmental paradigm; and cultural theory/grid group theory (Kelly et al, 2004, pp. 4-6). To elaborate for the purposes of clarification just one of these theoretical perspectives: post-materialism draws from the work of Inglehart (1981) whose basic argument for understanding cultural behaviour is “that there has been a shift away from the materialist concerns of pre-industrial and industrial societies (that is, support for the established order through maintenance of law and order and the preservation of economic gains) towards post-materialist values (that is greater emphasis on individual self-expression, greater participation in decision-making, freedom, and quality of life)” (Kelly et al, 2004, p. 4). The hypothesis underlying this theoretical perspective is a generational theory where “each successively younger post-war cohort is more post-materialist than its predecessor” (Kelly et al, 2004, p. 4).

2.4 Farmers and Fishers: distinctive social groups
Small-scale production in the farming and fishing sectors represent the Chayanovian model where income-generating practices are embedded in an existential system of meaning and inseparable from social and cultural practices (see Chayanov, 1925). Vanclay (2004) evaluates farming as a ‘socio-cultural practice’ and a ‘way of life’, and not just a technical or income generating activity (p. 213). Similarly, in a report compiled for the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO), McGoodwin (2001) emphasises the need to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of fishing communities for effective fisheries management. McGoodwin notes “to a greater degree than seen in large-scale approaches, the fishing occupation is closely tied to the fishers’ personal and cultural identities. Among most small scale fishers, fishing is perceived not merely as a means of assuring one’s livelihood, but more broadly as a way of life, indeed a way of life which is vivified by important occupational values and symbols which in turn underscore core aspects of small-scale fishers’ individual and collective identities” (McGoodwin, 2001).

Burton (2006) takes a social psychology approach to understanding farmer behaviour and decision-making and argues that social scientists should focus on

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7 Page numbers are not specified for quotations and citations drawn from McGoodwin (2001) as the document is published online in html format and lacks page numbers.
social practices rather than on individual experiences or social structures alone (Burton, 2006, p. 96). Applying Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration to his study of farmers, Burton (2006) notes that ‘human ‘agency’ (e.g. farmers in the context of our study) is, thereby, expressed through social sciences (e.g. farming culture), beliefs, attitudes and identities (e.g. occupational or religious identities), while structure is based on rules (e.g. agricultural policy, politics), resources (e.g. farmland) or other exogenous forces (e.g. the wider political economy of farming) influencing farmers’ actions and thought” (p. 96).

Burton (2004b) examines farmers’ engagement with agri-environmental schemes referring to Bourdieu’s (1993, 1996) theory of capital as framework to understand farmer behaviour in relation to agri-environmental schemes. Burton’s analysis goes contrary to explanations in the literature for low levels of voluntary engagement in some agri-environmental schemes as relating to “either economic factors such as anticipated low returns or that the reasons are related to high establishment costs, structural factors such as the location of the farm relative to markets, or a perceived lack of skill on the part of the farmer to adopt the new practices” (2004b, p. 96). Instead, the author points to explanatory factors for resistance to change such as “an anticipated loss of identity or social/cultural rewards traditionally conferred through existing commercial agricultural behaviour” and “challenges to the ‘good farmer’ identity” arising from participation in agri-environmental schemes (Burton, 2004b, p.197).

Vanclay (2004) elaborates a broadly applicable terms of reference for understanding farmers’ decision-making that draws from his objective observations and rationalisation of farmers’ subjectivity. Vanclay (2004) in his construction of a framework for understanding farmer behaviour outlines “key social principles… (that) should augment technical and economic principles relevant to sustainable agriculture” (p. 213). Vanclay’s first principle evaluates farming as a ‘socio-cultural practice’ and a ‘way of life’, and not just a technical or income generating activity (2004, p. 213). As such, Vanclay asserts that decision-making takes place in a socially rich context whereby farmers accrue understandings of appropriate strategies to external issues and normative concepts of ‘good farm management’ (2002, p. 214). Decision-making is dynamic, reflecting a farmer’s own particular circumstances and adapting to the peculiarity of local conditions (Vanclay, 2004, p. 216). Farmers’ reactions to policy stimuli should be seen as strategies that reflect and respond to the reality of farmers’ subjective evaluation of their economic and social circumstances, as well as of the advice and information that is available to them through extension and/or other sources of information such as the media. In this sense, it is understood that there are no “barriers to change”, only logical reasons for continuing with the existing farm enterprise (Vanclay, 2004). In the presence of ‘public issues’ such as changing agricultural policy, farmers should be understood as having the capacity to reject such issues when they are incompatible with their world view – “farmers are their own scientists, theorising, hypothesising, and experimenting to determine what works” (Vanclay, 2004, p.16).
2.5 Knowledge and Subjectivity

Lay knowledge inevitably represents a major factor arising in the decision-making of farmers and fishers whose practices are informed by the local land- and sea-scenes as well as by inter-generational learning processes. The shift away from industrial models of production towards ‘niche’ or ‘differentiated’ forms of income generating activity places the role of lay knowledge in a new light. The ‘culture economy’ which fosters artisan goods that have a place-based significance requires lay forms of knowledge, unlike productivist industrial approaches that rely on codified, scientific knowledge (see CORASON, 2009).

Jorgensen (2006) in a study of knowledge forms in the Irish organic farming movement detects a reversal from codified knowledge to tacit knowledge. She discusses how tacit knowledge that was embedded prior to the industrialisation of agriculture became undermined by forms of codified knowledge preferred by farm modernisation policies and associated extension practices (Jorgensen, 2006). Jorgensen (2006) describes Irish farmers’ tacit knowledge as “developed over generations through the practical experience of working with the soil and animals. Such tacit local knowledge could not be explained through words alone but had to be demonstrated in practice. It applied only to the specific place where it had been developed, and it made sense as part of a wider understanding of one’s relationship to one’s holdings” (Jorgensen, 2006, p. 120-121). The chemical revolution, Jorgensen notes, “rendered methods developed to suit specific locations redundant”, making place for codified knowledge (p. 121). Codified knowledge in the case of Irish farmers is described as “a form of knowledge, developed by scientists, which requires translation into simple instructions for lay people to act upon it” resulting in the replacement (or displacement) of “knowledge developed locally and shared contextually” (Jorgensen, 2006, p.121). Knowledge underpinning organic production, which was pioneered in the first instance by environmentalists, retains a tacit quality due to its relatively late codification through agricultural extension (Jorgensen, 2006, p. 121 referencing Morgan and Murdoch, 2000) In this sense, knowledge transfer should not be understood as a one-way flow, but as a process in which tacit knowledge plays a key role in forming avenues towards change. Jorgensen (2006) notes that the farmers who become involved in organic movement were required to engage in tacit knowledge institutions which reduced their dependence on agricultural instruction “No longer passive receivers of instructions, they become active agents in the process of food production” (Jorgensen, 2006. p. 122, referencing Morgan and Murdoch, 2000). The tapping into forms of lay or tacit knowledge represents a major challenge in garnering farmers’ and fishers’ active participation in the contemporary rural development agenda.

2.6 Barriers to Change: methodology

Normative methodological approaches, using, for example, surveys where interviewees select pre-defined responses, can incompletely portray the range of contextual issues which, as a whole, ultimately guide behaviour and decision-making. Qualitative research methods have the capacity to take a case-specific
approach to understanding comprehensively interviewees’ personal circumstances, and to detecting the inter-dependent nature of experiences and perceptions, which analysed on their own, can be meaningless or misleading (see Wilson, 1997). In this sense, qualitative research involving either un-structured or semi-structured interviewing can deconstruct an individual’s behaviour and decision-making by identifying the complete range of issues and perceptions that combine to explain each interviewee’s rationality, subjectivity, or ‘view of the world’.

Methodologically, analysing development programmes that are implemented locally is different to analysing top-down sectoral development. The former changes its very nature and dimensions once it becomes local making it difficult to apply a consistent and comprehensive analytical framework when conducting comparative or multi-contextual work. Qualitative methodologies, therefore, are highly represented in governance and rural development research where the empirical focus is on individual case-specific processes. Many case-studies have been carried out on rural development partnerships in Ireland and elsewhere in the EU (Curtin and Varley 1991; Ward & Ray, 2000; Osti 2000; Buller, 2000; Bruckmeier, 2000; Perez, 2000; Moseley, 2003). Of such case-study analyses, Doria et al (2003) state that “given the open, magmatic character of the transformation of rural development, such processes continuously offer precious hints which contribute to reshaping the picture” (p. 1). Case-study analysis has the capacity to illuminate dynamics that are represented in other economic, social, and cultural contexts and thus offers complex baseline understandings of the interplay between policy measures and socio-cultural determinants. Underpinning the usage of qualitative methods in the social sciences are the key concepts of ontology (the scenario or ‘social reality’ which is being investigated) and epistemology (‘systems of knowledge’ i.e. what is known in term of applicable theories to understanding the relevant scenario or ‘social reality’). Though the empirical focus is narrow, the research has broader theoretical (epistemological implications) which extends the significance of research findings beyond the empirical focus used for the analysis. Heanue (2009) states: “in contrast to statistical generalisation to a population, qualitative research facilitates analytical generalisation”. In such a sense, case-study research can clarify, improve, and validate our understandings of the theory that explains interactions between farmers and fishers and contemporary rural development programmes (Heanue, 2009).

The Barriers to Change project involved qualitative sociological case-study research of Irish farmers’ and fishers’. The objectives of the analysis were to explore the contemporary EU rural development agenda in terms of its operational form and the type of development it gives rise to; to identify the socio-cultural factors that are present in farmers’ and fishers’ decision-making with regard to engaging in contemporary rural development; and finally to arrive at conclusions on how the circumstances of farmers’ and fishers’ engagement could potentially be improved. In line with these objectives, the methodological approach employed by the ‘Barriers to Change’ project was threefold:

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1. Policy & literature analysis (secondary data analysis)
2. Empirical field research (qualitative empirical research)
3. Contextualisation of research findings in policy environment (focus-group interviewing with expert practitioners and policy makers)

The first stage entailed an analysis of the contemporary EU rural development agenda, framed by three major paradigms: post-productivism, globalisation governance (see Chapter 1). The analysis aimed to articulate the contemporary rural development agenda as a policy framework, an operational model and a socio-cultural movement. This analysis is presented in Chapter 1 and involved secondary data analysis of bureaucratic literature focusing primarily on EC policy instruments, national policy instruments, and data relating to the measures and activities of the LEADER programme nationally. Qualitative interviews conducted with policy-makers and rural development practitioners in the second and third phases of the research also complemented the final analysis.

Informed by contextual findings emerging from the first phase, the second phase of the research involved the design and implementation of primary empirical qualitative field research exercises. Unstructured and semi-structured qualitative interviewing and participant observation methods were used to explore interviewees’ subjective views and the context surrounding their poor engagement participation in the contemporary rural development agenda. Narrative-type accounts were produced by the qualitative interviewing process that sought to portray the diversity of factors influencing interviewees’ world views and associated decision-making processes (see Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; 2004; Wengraf, 2001). There were two main stages to the qualitative in-depth interviewing. The first stage involved an unstructured interview where an open ended question was posed to stimulate the interviewee’s narrative. The second stage of the interview occurred at the end of the unstructured interview and involved posing a series of questions to the interviewee in order to clarify and/or elaborate issues that arose in the unstructured interview. Participant observation was conducted at community-based events and public meetings.

The qualitative research exercises were conducted within two fixed case-study locations, Liscannor in Co. Clare and Iorras Aithneach in Co. Galway, to allow for an in-depth analytical approach in determining the factors that arise from local environmental and institutional (social, cultural and economic) conditions. Each of the case-study locations were within catchment areas of the LEADER rural development programme. Participant observation took place at meetings, conferences and events that took place within the case-study localities and at other events outside of the localities that were relevant to the research questions of the study. There were methodological and empirical issues that guided the selection of case-study areas:
Methodological Issues:
- The author had established professional contacts in each of the case-study areas prior to the commencement of the study and had ease of access to interviewees and local data. Many of the individuals interviewed had trustful relationships with local Teagasc advisors; and some had prior experience of participating in Teagasc surveys. This reduced the hesitancy of interviewees to participate in the research;
- The author’s had non-immediate family connections in each of the case study areas, which although forwent the advantages of having an outsider’s perspective, resulted in the benefit of the research process having “an awareness of local political debates, social conventions, and behavioural norms” which is particularly valuable for qualitative field exercises (Kneafsey, 1998, p.116) and also had the effect of decreasing the likelihood of “tokenistic positionality” arising in the data (see Herr and Anderson, 2005; Jones et al, 2006, pp.101-117).

Empirical Issues
- Both communities are economically vulnerable: Liscannor has a high number of farm households with a high dependence on off-farm work in the diminishing construction industry (see Chapter 4). The peninsula of Iorras Aithneach, representing Carna and Cill Chíáráin, has a diminished local fishing economy, high unemployment rates (see Chapters 3);
- A low incidence of engagement of farmer and fisher communities in contemporary rural development programmes was evident in each of the respective case-study areas. In the last LEADER programming period (2000-2006), one farmer initiated a LEADER-funded rural development project in Liscannor. In Iorras Aithneach, four LEADER-funded projects were initiated in total and none by a local fisher.
- Considering the emphasis within the contemporary rural development agenda on ‘replacing material and labour value with design value’ (Ray, 1999), the abundance of cultural commodities and scenic physical resources in each of the selected case-study areas ruled out development constraints associated with the scarcity of such commodities and resources.

Different types of interviews were conducted within each of the case-study areas. In-depth interviews were conducted with members of each social group under analysis (farmers and fishers) and with local policy makers and rural development practitioners. Additional in-depth interviews were conducted with farmers, fishers, and policy makers/rural development practitioners outside of the case-study areas who were active in representative groups of farming/fishing organisations and these interviewees were classified as ‘key informants’. Shorter qualitative interviews were conducted with inhabitants of the case-study areas for the purposes of validating contextual (social, cultural, economic, institutional) data gathered on each of the case-study areas. All interviews were conducted by the author face-to-face with the
interviewee apart from in cases where validation and follow-up questions were necessary and in such cases supplementary questions were posed by the author using the telephone. The in-depth interviews conducted with members of the case-study social groups and with practitioners and representatives of policy-makers, lasted an average of 2 hours, ranging from 1 hour to 3.5 hours. The interviews with local inhabitants were shorter, ranging from 10 minutes to 50 minutes.

In-depth interviews were in the most part conducted in the interviewees’ home, with a small proportion taking place in a pre-arranged meeting place such as a hotel or a public house. While most of the primary interviewees that represented the farming and fishing communities were male, many of the supplementary interviews conducted were with female members of the community. Interviewees representing members of the farming community attempted to include those who were engaged in ‘viable’ mainstream agriculture; those who were engaged in ‘non-viable’ mainstream agriculture; and those who have left mainstream agricultural production and were now employed off-farm. Interviews with key informants were used to supplement this representation of farmer types. Viability was not confirmed by asking the interviewees for financial data, but rather was affirmed by interviewees themselves. Interviews conducted with representatives of Iorras Aithneach fishing community were not confined to any definitive occupational group because many people engaged in fishing in the area are typically also engaged in other forms of income-generating activity.

Interviewees were identified in adherence to the principles of grounded theory (see Strauss 1987, Strauss & Corbin, 1990), where the author came to interact with individuals in the localities and sourced interviewees through an iterative process. Some of the practitioners and policy-makers were known to the author and others were identified and contacted through the agencies to which they were affiliated. The interviewee sub-groups are set out below in Table 2.1:

**Table 2.1: Composition of Qualitative Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview-type</th>
<th>Coastal case-study</th>
<th>Farming case-study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practitioners &amp; Policy-makers (in-depth)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of case-study social group (in-depth)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Interviews</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informants (in-depth)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Interviews</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In accordance with the principles of grounded theory, the research in each case study locality “adapted to the diversity of social settings and contingencies of research” (Kneafsey, 1998, p. 116). Though situated within the same theoretical framework the case-study analyses transpired to be differently focussed analytically. By employing a qualitative approach that sought to explore interviewees’ subjectivity and place-based trajectories of local life, different phenomena arose to structure each of the case-study analyses differently. The case-study analysis of farmers in Co. Clare presented in Chapter 4 takes a predominant analytical focus on farmers’ occupational and cultural capital and issues pertaining to the indigenous food sector in Ireland. The alternate case-study analysis of fishers in Co. Galway transpired to give rise to themes of resistance, fisheries sustainability, and cultural tourism.

The third phase of the methodology involved exercises that sought to contextualise research findings emerging from the analysis of primary data to have greater practical relevance and policy application for the rural development, farming and fisheries sectors. This was achieved by conducting focus group interviews, which are structured interviewing processes where prompts are used to steer a discussion among a group of expert participants that is relevant to the research questions at hand. For the ‘Barriers to Change’ research project, two focus group interviews were conducted to facilitate discussion of the different sets of policy-related issues that emerged from research findings of the two social groups analysed. Participants in the focus groups represented local institutions and agencies where the research was conducted and national institutions with policy competency and responsibility in the area of rural development, mariculture, and agriculture. The data generated by the focus groups was used to identify strategies and policy actions to respond to key ‘barriers’ identified through the research, and to broaden the discussion beyond the case-study localities in which research was conducted to give greater applicability to research findings generated from the project.

Participants in the focus groups represented a range of statutory, non-statutory and semi-state bodies:

- Teagasc
- Department for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Cumas Teo (Connemara, South)
- FORUM (Connemara, North)
- Comhdháil Oileán na h’Eireann
- National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
- Irish Farmers Association (IFA)
- Macra na Feirme
- Muíntir na Tíre
- Irish Countrywomen’s Association (ICA)
- Department of Law Reform, Equality
2.7 Summary & Conclusion

Rural development as a process that is locally designed and implemented is open to a diversity of complex local influences that play a role in determining the actors who become involved and the types of development activities that are fostered. Despite the policy rhetoric surrounding participatory models of rural development, which claim that representation of local inhabitants leads to more effective and democratic outcomes, the literature reviewed in this chapter points to threats to how this can be realised. The agenda for participatory rural development is often influenced by extra-local policy motivations and broader global paradigmatic shifts. Curtin and Varley (1997) state that in the case of Irish area-based partnerships, “what the Irish state/EU have in mind in the area-based partnerships is not the simple handing over of responsibility to local actors. On the contrary, the expectation is that external actors must be centrally involved in providing resources, deciding what is required to be done, who is to be admitted as legitimate partners and how the partnerships are actually to operate” (p. 142). O’Toole and Burdess (2004) convey a similar view when they say “higher levels of governance ‘steer the self-governing processes of (funded) small rural communities, expecting them to ‘row’ for themselves” (p.433).

Local development processes can be confined to a small number of particularly enthusiastic stakeholders (Varley, 1991b; see above) who often have skill sets and motivations that are well-suited to the agenda of contemporary rural development initiatives. Understanding the circumstances of engagement with the contemporary rural development agenda goes beyond theories based on economic rationale, where actors are expected to indiscriminately adopt profit maximising strategies. It is acknowledged that the ‘cultural turn’ has been slow to influence studies in agriculture where quantitative methods, positivism and economic rationality tend to dominate analysis of farmer behaviour (see Barnett, 1998). Burton (2004) notes that inflexible models of behavioural analysis employ a simplistic approach to understanding behaviour, while ‘new’ methodological approaches emerging with the ‘cultural turn’ in many other areas of social science focus on “the importance of understanding language, meaning, representation, identity, and difference ” (p. 360). Small-scale production in the farming and fishing sectors is known to be underpinned less by economic rationality and more by existential rationality where the focus is on the sustainability of enterprises as an intrinsic part of local socio-cultural fabric rather than on the accumulation of wealth. The cultural significance of small scale farming or ‘crofting’ and small-scale fishing has received official policy recognition and is elaborated at length in the literature (see Shucksmith, 2008; MacGoodwin, 2001). Vanclay (2004) evaluates farming as a ‘socio-cultural practice’ and a ‘way of life’, and not just a technical or income generating activity (p. 213). Therefore, Bourdieu’s (1983, 1998) theory of capital as framework is required to capture the three pronged nature of the capital (economic, social, and cultural) that frames the context for decision-making.
Chapter 3

“To Hell or to Connaught”
Resistance and Rural Development in the West of Ireland

3.1 Introduction

While the effects of the EU agricultural policy trajectory is physically, culturally and economically evident across much of rural Ireland, the features of some rural landscapes have been less suited than others to the productivist development orientation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). More dynamic routes towards rural development outside of agriculture, such as those proposed by contemporary EU governance and rural development models, offer a greater breadth of opportunity for areas like Iorras Aithneach, a peninsula in the West of Ireland, that has seen little prosperity and limited opportunity to benefit from agricultural subsidies comparative to more affluent parts of rural Ireland. Although agricultural land is poor, Iorras Aithneach (and the Connemara region generally) possesses many of the cultural commodities that are distinctive to Ireland and represents therefore an obvious ground for the cultivation of a high value-added ‘culture economy’ that is popularly promoted in the EU bureaucratic literature on rural development (see Chapter 1). Located on the Atlantic shoreline in a relatively unpolluted and scenic natural environment, Iorras Aithneach holds a wide variety of marine resources and has a long tradition of pluri-active income generating practices that are reflective of local land and sea resources.

The contemporary rural development agenda seeks to focus less on the mainstream agricultural and fisheries sectors and more on innovation and diversification (see Chapter 1). It employs a participatory approach the development process, which aims to harness the capacity of local stakeholders in designing and implementing development interventions (Ray, 1999; see Chapter 1). Considering the rationale underpinning the contemporary rural development agenda as presented in the bureaucratic and academic literatures, areas like Iorras Aithneach are potentially valuable sites for enterprises selling local ‘design value’ because they are laden with cultural commodities. However, the types of enterprises that are at the core of the contemporary rural development agenda – artisan food production, cultural tourism, and the valorisation of natural resources – remain peripheral to economic activity in Iorras Aithneach.. The central crux of understanding the socio-cultural factors

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8 A notorious order of English puritan Oliver Cromwell referring to the barren lands of the West of Ireland during the time of Ireland’s ‘Great Rebellion’ (1641). Today, the cultural, political and social connotations of the West of Ireland are described as being “endowed with particular qualities ranging from lawlessness, sensuality and physicality in the writings of Synge, to peasant resilience, Puritanism and courage in the vision of nationalists such as Pearse and MacNeill” (Kneafsey, 1998, p. 113).
inhibiting manifestations of the contemporary rural development agenda in Iorras Aithneach lies at the complex interplay between characteristics of this agenda as it is currently represented in the policy and operational spheres on one hand, and local forms of cultural, social and economic capital on the other (see Chapter 2). In light of the analysis of the contemporary rural development agenda presented in Chapter 1, the current analysis presents local contextual and qualitative data which highlight current and path-dependent socio-cultural factors that influence how local inhabitants think about their income-generating practices.

This chapter begins with a review of some of the main economic, social and cultural characteristics of Iorras Aithneach and presents some illustrative demographic data from the Censuses of Population (2006) and Agriculture (2000). The second part of the chapter focuses on the operational strategies of the main rural development agencies in the area, and the activities in which they are engaged. Local agencies offer two main types of support: information and advocacy services; and practical as well as funding assistance for rural enterprises. The extent to which inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach have availed of supports and funding from these agencies is overviewed. The third part of the paper presents qualitative data that explores the context of poor engagement in ‘rural development’, pointing to a range of pragmatic factors (bureaucratic, economic) and socio-cultural factors (tradition and identity-based) that represent central inhibitors. Understanding inhabitants’ subjective views of traditional income generating practices in the locality and the broader cultural and social significance of these practices is instrumental in constructing a portrayal of the local economy and the norms, values, and forms of capital that underpin it. After identifying and discussing the nature of traditional income generating practices in Iorras Aithneach, this Chapter concludes with a discussion of factors influencing the potential for the contemporary rural development agenda in the area.

3.2 Iorras Aithneach, Connemara, Co. Galway: Overview of initial conditions

Iorras Aithneach is located on the west coast of Ireland in the South Connemara region which is a Gaeltacht area of Ireland, denoting that Irish is a spoken daily language. Similar to other Gaeltacht areas of Ireland, Iorras Aithneach continues to typify much of what is conceived as uniquely traditional in Ireland with respect to language, culture, and landscape. There are two main villages on the peninsula – Carna and Cill Chíaráín. The spatial boundaries of the District Electoral Divisions (DED) classification used by central and local government do not correspond with the boundaries of Iorras Aithneach, Carna, or Cill Chíaráín. For this study An Cnoc Buí, a DED located within the peninsula, is used for the purposes of presenting statistics that are representative of a DED within the peninsula. The 2006 Census of Population records 801 people as living in An Cnoc Buí.
Traditional agriculture and mariculture activities persist in the peninsula. The 2000 Census of Agriculture records that a total of 105 Annual Work Units\(^9\) (AWU), an increase of (37 AWU from 1991) were expended on agriculture, fisheries and forestry in An Cnoc Buí, representing a total of 167 agricultural workers categorised as follows: holder; spouse; other family workers; other non-family workers. The 2000 Census of Agriculture shows that An Cnoc Buí has one of the highest representations of agricultural holdings among all DEDs in Co. Galway. The last Census of Agriculture (2000) recorded an increase in agricultural holdings from 101 in 1991 to 118 in 2000. The DEDs in which there is the highest number of agricultural holdings are: Inishmore (223) (the highest number of holdings in Co. Galway); Gorumna (158); Crumpaun (126); and Rinvyle (126). All of these DEDs are in Connemara and represent the persistence of small-scale agricultural holdings in the area.

In terms of employment, the Galway Socio-Economic Profile (Galway Co. Council, 2008) shows that the Census of Population (2006) records that 19 people in An Cnoc Buí are employed under the category of “Agricultural, Fishery, and Forestry Managers”; while 7 are recorded as unemployed in the same category (8% of the total working population). A further 11 (9 employed, 2 unemployed, totalling at 3%) are recorded under the category of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry workers. As regards other categories of employment, the following percentages of the total population in An Cnoc Buí are recorded: Professional: 15.9%; Building & Construction: 13.8%; Manufacturing: Services: .9%; 7.6%; Sales: 6.5%; Office and Clerical: 6.2% Administrative and Government: 2.6%; Transport: 2.4%; Other: 24.4% (Galway Co. Council, 2008).

\(^9\) An Annual Work Unit (AWU) is calculated as 1800 hours of work per person per annum.
Galway County Council (2008) identifies An Cnoc Buí as one of 6 DEDs in County Galway in 2006 where there is an unemployment ‘blackspot’ (i.e. where the labour force exceeds 200 and the unemployment rate exceeds 20%). The remaining five DEDs were also in the Connemara Gaeltacht: Scainimh; Gorumna, Sillerna, An Turlach and Cill Chuimín. Iorras Aithneach and many of its surrounding areas are affected by poor employment opportunities, with most of the working population commuting to Galway City. While there is an official unemployment rate of 29.1%, the total proportion of people in An Cnoc Buí who are engaged in the labour force is 49.1% (CSO, 2006). Of those who are engaged in the labour force, 47 (13.8% of total workforce, comprising 42 persons employed and 5 persons unemployed) were engaged in the increasingly unviable area of building and construction-related activities in 2006. Sixty three percent of the inhabitants of An Cnoc Buí have no internet access and unlike other areas of Connemara (predominantly areas in North Connemara), there is little tourism infrastructure. The 2006 Census of Population reveals that 13.5% (108) people are involved in voluntary activity. Given that by definition it is located in the Gaeltacht it is unsurprising that 88.6% of people speak Irish, and 79.2% speak it daily.

The population in the area is gradually falling which is attributed by inhabitants interviewed for this study to a lack of employment opportunities but also due to quality of life issues, such as a deficiency of social outlets, facilities and services. The age-profile of the area is quite high and the largest proportion of inhabitants of the area are in the bracket of 55-59 years, representing 9% of the total population, compared to the Galway County average of 5.6%, and the State average of 5.3% for the same age-bracket. Among those who stay and live in the area, there is a high dependency on social welfare allowances and state medical benefits.

Figure 3.2 below presents a Deprivation and Affluence Index developed by Haase and Pratschke in Galway Socio-Economic Profile (2008), which assigns a score in relation to: demographic profile; social class composition; and labour market situation (Galway County Council, 2008). The figure below shows a relative index score representing the position of all DEDs in Galway relative to all other DEDs in 2006.
The following table presents information on population change; employment levels; educational attainment; and the prevalence of the Irish language in the DEDs that are located in Iorras Aithneach (Abhainn Ghabhla; Scainimh; An Cnoc Buí):

**Table 3.1: Population Change, Employment, Education, and Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Change in Pop. as %</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate %</th>
<th>% 3rd Level Education</th>
<th>% Daily Irish Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maynooth</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nua Muintir</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turlough</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>-12.5</td>
<td>+15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cill Culmin</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Cnoc Bui</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Cloch na Rón</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gaeltacht Area Development Plan: 2006-2012, Galway County Council
3.3 ‘Rural Development’ in Iorras Aithneach
Development activity undertaken by local agencies in Iorras Aithneach include services to the public that include advocacy, occupational development, and social welfare assistance; and practical and financial supports for the development of local enterprise. Údarás na Gaeltachta, a nation-wide agency for the economic development of Gaeltacht areas is the single largest development agency operating in Iorras Aithneach. Other rural development institutions are Cumas Teo and Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta (MFG), which in 2007 were consolidated for the purposes of implementing the new LEADER programme in Gaeltacht areas (2007-2013). All three institutions offer services through the Irish language.

Cumas Teo is a partnership company and “aims to enable and strengthen communities through local development programmes”\(^\text{10}\). It undertakes three main functions: a community information service, which provides information about rights, e.g. social welfare, tax and grants and aids local people with the relevant administration and form-filling; the Treóir programme, which offers assistance to the unemployed with training, preparation for interviews; mediation with employers and community development, which offers support for disadvantaged groups. The work of Cumas Teo reflects the high numbers of social welfare recipients and their particular needs by providing its related information and advocacy service. According to staff at Cumas Teo and corroborated by interviews conducted with inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach, these services are highly utilised by the local population. Similarly, under the Treóir programme, the ‘back to work’ schemes offered by Cumas Teo in conjunction with state training and education schemes (for example FÁS\(^\text{11}\)) are in high demand, and such programmes constitute a necessary administrative phase for the retention of social welfare benefits or the transition towards employment. There are two back to work schemes offered by Cumas Teo. One is for those who are in receipt of unemployment benefit and offers short-term employment in improvement, maintenance, and restoration of local public buildings, roads and walls\(^\text{12}\). The second scheme offers educational re-skilling in computing (specifically, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)) and is offered to those who are in receipt of unemployment benefit or assistance in order to encourage recipients back into the workforce. The course is obligatory as without attending the course, eligibility for unemployment benefits is forfeited. Cumas Teo also offers courses in arts and crafts. These are mostly attended by women and, moreover, are popularly conceived as hobby activities rather than as activities that can be used for income-generation.

MFG is a LEADER partnership company and administers the LEADER programme for all Gaeltacht areas nationwide. The main aim of MFG is “to empower

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\(^{10}\) [www.cumas.ie](http://www.cumas.ie)

\(^{11}\) [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)

\(^{12}\) Social welfare benefits of those who are employed by these schemes are not affected.
communities through guidance; by encouraging self-confidence and self-development throughout the community in every aspect of community life, including economic development and development in social, cultural and environmental arenas”\(^13\). MFG classifies the projects that they fund as pertaining to the following strategic areas of development: Enterprise, Crafts & local services; Training; Agricultural and Mariculture products; Rural Tourism; Environment, Culture & Heritage; and Analysis and Feasibility studies; Trans-national; Inter-territorial. As is clear from the table below, over 70% of LEADER funding was administered to support projects relating to Rural Tourism and Environment & Culture and Heritage. This is in line with the LEADER + programme measures (2001 – 2006) and reflects very much the key areas of tourism and natural resources that are at the core of the contemporary rural development agenda (see Chapter 1).

Table 3.2: Total funding categories & allocations administered by MFG in Connemara Gaeltacht in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise, crafts, local services</td>
<td>€29,799.59</td>
<td>4.0685447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>€96,547.67</td>
<td>13.181675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Mariculture products</td>
<td>€1,250</td>
<td>0.1706628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural tourism</td>
<td>€253,018</td>
<td>34.544604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment, culture, heritage</td>
<td>€271,414.61</td>
<td>37.056298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and Feasibility studies</td>
<td>€34,850.43</td>
<td>4.758137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-national</td>
<td>€6,671.56</td>
<td>0.9108696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-territorial</td>
<td>€17,176.13</td>
<td>2.3450609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No category</td>
<td>€21,710.56</td>
<td>2.9641476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>€732,438.55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compiled from data received from MFG*

Table 3.3 below presents the distribution of MFG LEADER funding in the last programming period, highlighting the discrepancy between the funding allocations to some of the areas that have tended not to engage with the programme (e.g. Carna, Cill Chiaráin, Rosmuc) and the area that has engaged with the programme most successfully (Acaill). Only four applications from inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach were submitted to MFG LEADER in the last programming period and two of these were funded. One of the funded projects in Iorras Aithneach was a project relating to ‘Environment, Culture & Heritage’ (€2,000) and the second was a youth project and came under the category of Education (€3,500).

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\(^{13}\) See [www.mfg.ie](http://www.mfg.ie)
Table 3.3: Funding administered by MFG in 2006 in Carna, Cill Chíaráin, Rosmuc & Acaill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. Project Applications</th>
<th>No Projects Funded</th>
<th>Funding allocation</th>
<th>% of total funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carna</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>€5,550.00</td>
<td>0.695978392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cill Chíaráin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>€7,341.00</td>
<td>0.920572501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosmuc</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>€6,940.00</td>
<td>0.870286494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acaill</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>€329,430.58</td>
<td>41.31109287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from data received from MFG

Of the total funding allocation to Acaill, €94,032 was awarded to a local community development organisation, Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla. A total of €114,234 was allocated to tourism projects (including allocations to Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla and Turasóireacht Acla among others). The largest single grants issued were: €100,000 (allocated for the restoration of a school and conversion of the building into offices) and €65,000 (allocated to Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla). Excluding these two sums from the total of MFG funding administered within the area of Acaill, 69% of the remaining projects were rural tourism initiatives. This emphasises further the significant proportion of tourism projects funded by MFG LEADER.

Údarás na Gaeltachta was established in 1980 as “the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht”\(^\text{14}\). The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to protect and promote the Irish language in Gaeltacht regions. Údarás na Gaeltachta has three main strategic areas: economic development, cultural development, and social development. The work of Údarás na Gaeltachta is broad and concentrated mostly on offering financial and practical support to companies, cooperatives, and community organisations and over 12,000 people are employed in client companies of the organisation. Aside from its work in assisting community organisations in providing crucial services such as childcare and administrative assistance to community and enterprise groups (for example the Connemara Hill Lamb Producers’ Group) Údarás offers grant aid to private enterprises in Iorras Aithneach regions. Údarás na Gaeltachta received 131 applications for grant aid from private enterprises in the Carna and Cill Chíaráin areas over the period from 2000 to May 2009. It administered a total of €4,749,089 to successful applicants. Údarás also provided grant aid to community organisations and invested in infrastructure totalling €5,659,243.

\(^{14}\) www.udaras.ie
Table 3.4: Funding categories and allocations administered by Údarás na Gaeltachta in Carna and Cill Chíaráin, January 2000 - May 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource &amp; Marine Enterprises</td>
<td>€3,137,418</td>
<td>66.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food enterprises</td>
<td>€1,128,893</td>
<td>26.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering enterprises</td>
<td>€14,537</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-based enterprises</td>
<td>€1,576,837</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture, Art &amp; Craft Enterprises</td>
<td>€19,168</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>€4,749,089</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Investment (Buildings and Industrial Space)</td>
<td>€5,136,029</td>
<td>90.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development &amp; Community-based Enterprises</td>
<td>€523,214</td>
<td>9.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>€5,659,243</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>€11,536,096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from data received from Údarás na Gaeltachta

As shown in Table 3.4 above, the majority of grants administered by Údarás (66%) in Carna and Cill Chíaráin were awarded for the development of ‘Natural Resource & Marine Enterprises’, which contrasts with the small proportion (.17%) of MFG LEADER administered to applicants in the Connemara gaeltacht in the counterpart category of ‘Mariculture and Agriculture Products’. Of the total funding allocation under the Údarás category of Natural Resource & Marine Enterprises, 93.4% or €2,943,300 was accrued by ten large fish farming and processing companies in the area. Twenty-five smaller grants averaging at €2,521 were administered for the purposes of supporting ‘marine enterprises’ and the majority of these were funded through two schemes that are offered by Údarás to assist small-scale fishers. The first is a scheme to assist inshore fishers, which provides grant aid to purchase a new currach, outboard engine and/or pot hauler. A total of €107,249 was administered to 43 applicants through this scheme from 2000-2003 (the scheme was discontinued in 2003) and the average individual grant was €2,447. The second scheme, which is ongoing, is targeted at supporting seaweed harvesting and provides grant aid for the purchase or repair of currachs and the purchase of outboard engines. A total of €6,751 was granted through this scheme to five applicants in Carna and Cill Chíaráin from 2000 up until May 2009 and the average individual grant was €1,687. Funding administered within the category of natural resource and marine enterprises was also channelled to other marine enterprises such as seaweed growing and a research and development project conducted by the Martin Ryan Institute, NUI Galway.
Two grants were administered to a seaweed processing factory and a fish processing factory under the ‘Food Enterprises’ category, amounting to €1,441,580. Six grants totalling €14,537 were issued under the category of ‘Engineering’ and all to enterprises oriented around the design and building of boats. Under the category of services, the largest grant (€1,182,500) was allocated for the purpose of providing nursing care facilities for the elderly. Tourism enterprises are categorised under the ‘Services’ category and most of the grants awarded for tourism were allocated for the direct purposes of providing accommodation amenities. In addition to the funding categories listed in the table above, Údarás na Gaeltachta administers management grants to local community organisations and allocated a total of €523,214 to three community organisations from January 2000 – May 2009.

It is clear from the figures presented above that Údarás na Gaeltachta is a source of major financial support to Iorras Aithneach, while the funding of MFG LEADER is comparatively small. It is significant to note that the funding allocations of MFG LEADER reflect core economic activities of the contemporary rural development agenda (see Chapter 1) and are concentrated in the categories of Rural Tourism and Environment, Culture and Heritage. Funding allocations of Údarás na Gaeltachta, on the other hand, are concentrated on such activities to a lesser extent and are highly represented within the category of Natural and Marine Resources.

3.4 Pragmatic and Bureaucratic Barriers to Change
In the context of small-scale fishing becoming increasingly unviable due to regulative and other constraints, the contemporary rural development agenda is representative of a policy response to create alternative avenues of enterprise and employment. As evident from the data presented above, while mariculture is continuously popular among inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach, there is low uptake of financial assistance in the area of tourism and other activities that are in line with the contemporary rural development agenda.

Interviews conducted with inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach revealed pragmatic barriers to the take-up of small enterprise grants, primarily in the form of bureaucratic constraints and fears of losing social welfare entitlements. The latter issues are framed in the most part by a socio-economic context where there is a high dependency on social welfare assistance. Primary deterrent cited in the interview data were in relation to financial constraints, echoed in the hesitancy of local people to compromise their eligibility to social welfare entitlements by becoming involved in private enterprise. In this context, many interviewees remarked that their existing income-generating activities, for example fishing and seaweed harvesting, are already being policed and regulated to the extent that they are unviable. Interviewees emphasised their perception of unfair taxation on seaweed harvesting and other

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15 These community organisations are as follows: Comharchumann Sliogéisc Chonamara (Connemara Shellfish Cooperative); Comharchumann Chonamara Thiar (Connemara South Cooperative); Forbai rt Chonamara Láir (Connemara Development).
types of income-generating activities. One interviewee, who had attempted to start a business in the previous year but failed to get planning permission for a small premises remarked “... life is tough enough out here already without being taxed on every little bit we get...A business would probably fail out here anyway. We can’t take that chance”.

A common barrier cited among those interviewed was limited experience of bureaucracy (particularly reporting and formal business planning) coupled with a perception that the bureaucratic procedures in place were excessive to the extent that they rendered the process of gaining and utilising funding inaccessible for most local people. Inhabitants expressed opinions such as “the civil service way of thinking and our way of thinking don’t match up”. A number of interviewees related their own personal experiences of interacting with local bureaucracies, and of their feelings of frustration and powerlessness in relation to the difficulties that arose: “They want us to prove that the business will work before we’ve even started it”.

The main bureaucratic obstacles cited were in relation to obtaining planning permission, business planning and form-filling, and perceived contradictory and unsatisfactory rules governing how funding can be utilised (see Chapter 5 for an elaboration of bureaucratic obstacles identified by rural development practitioners). References were also made to linguistic problems in the application processes, as expressed by one inhabitant: “We’re native Irish speakers yet we come across vocabulary and terminology in the literature and application forms that we don’t understand and have never come across before. It’s like new words are invented for these forms”.

While the information and advocacy service supports of Cumas Teo were identified by interviewees as a key support to local people in the area, negative attitudes were evident in relation to the ‘back to work’ schemes provided by FÁS. It was commonly perceived by interviewees that the course is arbitrary as the target group for these courses are unemployed individuals in older age-brackets who do not identify with technological culture. Interviewees who had participated in the course articulated that the course was unsuitable for them cognitively and culturally and made reference to having experienced feelings of humiliation and frustration. Some interviewees also noted that technology-based employment opportunities in the Connemara area are generally lacking, as noted by one interviewee – “it’s a myth that these class A jobs will become available in our community”.

Overall, interviewees expressed disappointment at the lack of economic and social progress in their area, as well as a lack of confidence in the overall direction of how ‘rural development’ was being progressed in general. Interviewees were of the view that most young people born in the area would leave to have a more successful life elsewhere. A lack of hope prevailed in relation to the likelihood of employment opportunities becoming available into the future.
3.5 Socio-Cultural Barriers to engagement in ‘Rural Development’
The contemporary rural development model is designed to accommodate local resources as well as socio-cultural norms in the development process (see Chapter 1). Through the governance model, local people are expected to be able to take control of local development issues and become ‘empowered’ through income-generating practices that are reflective of local culture and local resources (see Chapter 1). In cases where normative components of the local culture and economy clash with or are estranged from extra-local conceptions of what constitutes rural development, ‘barriers’ to engagement ultimately emerge at the outset (see Chapter 2). Therefore, how the community views its local economy and culture is an important point of departure for exploring such ‘barriers’ and for identifying avenues of rural development for the community that are socially and culturally appropriate.

Bourdieu’s (1993; 1996) theory of capital as framework is instrumental for understanding how capital is ascribed to different skills, practices and actions. To recap from Chapter 1, Bourdieu identifies three forms of capital: cultural capital (sense of prestige); social capital (benefits arising from social networks); and economic capital (material wealth). From the data generated through qualitative interviews conducted in Iorras Aithneach, it was clear that forms of cultural and social capital were predominant in subjective accounts of decision-making in relation to income-generating practices. Fishing, in particular, arose as a main subject in how interviewees articulated what is intrinsic to their local economy. Underpinning this conception of fishing as intrinsic to the local economy were forms of cultural capital that took pride in the skills required to fish knowledgeably and efficiently in the area. Forms of social capital were evident with respect to interviewees’ ascription to collective norms, most of which served the purposes of maintaining numbers of fishers in the area. These forms of capital are discussed below.

Cultural Capital
Fishers interviewed for this study made reference to particularly oriented forms of cultural capital. The predominant way in which prestige was attached to fishing practices related to how fishers managed to effectively interact with their local fishing grounds. Fishers spoke with pride of how their inshore fishing practices have been informed for generations by a deep knowledge of the local seabed and local natural conditions. It was claimed by interviewees that local fishing families have special knowledge of boulders and crevices on the seabed, and of the specific areas where different types of fish, shellfish, and seaweed can be found. It was furthermore explained by interviewees that different types of weather and different times of the day give rise to a set of different variations in knowing what fish can be caught in different parts of the bay and when. As articulated by one interviewee:

“The seabed is made up of seaweed, all different types of weed, gravel, broken ground. It’s deep in some areas, then shallow, there are rocks and breakers.
Currents all over the place, recurring in the same place, but at different strengths. Depending on the wind direction. We know the names of rocks, the common rocks are written down, but the less known rocks, their names are being forgotten about. Lobsters like around the edge of seaweed, crabs are on the sand, it all depends on the ground... Knowledge about where crayfish congregate, would all be based about where you fish, the rocks, the names of the rocks, the behaviour of breaks, at certain weather, in accordance with the swell, at certain tide-heights, you’d know about it, you’d have heard it from someone else. There are places you go for different types of fish, it’s all handed down. In general, no matter where you go, you’ll get a few mackerel. In the evening when the tide is in, you go to one area, when the tide is out, you have to go to another area”.

References were also made to the skills of previous generations:

“No matter how you compare it, they were brilliant fishermen and we were never as good. We have engines now and horsepower and new gadgets but we’re still not fishing as well as they used to. They made their own pots, from rods, if you needed a few hundred you’d get them from a neighbour and give them back again. Back then, everything was made and done specifically to how you’d want it. Everything was done in a way that was suited to how you’d need to do things here, and they knew every bit of the water and beyond”.

The cultural capital of fishers interviewed for this study was clearly rooted in forms of knowledge that are locally innate and peculiar intuitive ability that is seen as necessary for effective fishing.

**Social Capital**

Duggan’s (2004) notes in her research conducted in Carna that while farming is “absent from the local conceptual framework of occupations within the area”, fishing represents a “distinct and coherent collective occupational identity” (p. 10). Duggan (2004, p.11) notes that despite this coherent occupational identity being without “objective validity” (only half of the 400 households at that time in Carna had a full-time or regular fisher).

“The local society…has defined itself as a fishing economy. The interests and well-being of the fishermen are seen as the interests and well being of the entire area. Local people invariably refer to the area in such terms as “this is a fishing area” and “everybody here fishes, it’s all they’ve got” (Duggan, 2004, p.11).

Interviews conducted for this study revealed that indigenous local fishers are bound in a broader network of members of the local community, where embedded conventions and norms are present to govern collective action in response to issues of concern to the local mariculture economy. There is a significant history of how the inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach have mobilised effective and sophisticated campaigns
of collective action in reaction to issues impacting on their local fishing industry. Duggan (2004) documents how the inhabitants of Carna have over time demonstrated a high level of resistance to attempts at undermining their local management of fishing resources. The first incident corresponded to a Gael-Linn scheme for the purchase of fishing boats, when a contract for the supply of parts and engines for the boats was awarded to a prominent local fish buyer. The fish buyer stipulated to local fishermen that the sale and supply of parts was conditional on their sale of their fish catches to him, which would result in his control of the local market. The local fishermen resisted this coercion by organising the purchase of parts directly from the UK, and boycotted the buyer to whom the contract had been awarded. A second example of fishermen’s resistance to external control occurred ten years later, when a US-based company proposed to local fishers to provide large boats and pots for the harvesting of lobster in Cill Chíaráin bay. The proposal was that the fishers would be paid on the basis of their catch. It was claimed by the company that there were €6 million worth of lobster in the bay (Duggan, 2004, p. 7). Local fishers evaluated the proposal as being both exploitative and unsustainable from the perspective of the long-term viability of the lobster beds and refused to cooperate with the company. The fishers publicly opposed the ambitions of the company, until such a time as the company desisted in its efforts and left the area following the bombing of one of its large fishing vessels in Cill Chíaráin bay. A third example occurred less than a decade later, when Gael Linn purchased oyster beds within the area, which although previously in private ownership, had been publicly fished by local fishers for generations. Gael Linn’s strategy was to improve the long-term viability of the beds for the use of local fishers, and this involved the imposition of a two year ban on fishing the beds. While local fishers agreed in principle with this strategy and adhered to it over the two years, when Gael Linn extended the ban to a third year the fishers protested and organised a week-long ‘fish in’ and subscribed the appropriate licences to avoid penalisation (see Duggan, 2004). Gael Linn found itself out-maneuved and abandoned the imposition of a third year of a fishing ban. A further example of the fishers’ affirmation of autonomy was the arrival of the multi-national Carroll’s to the area and the company’s attempt to establish a large salmon farm in Carna Bay. Local people within the area had serious concerns about the environmental impact of such a development, and the associated threats to the sustainability of their existing fishing practices (see Duggan, 2004). The locals’ response to Carroll’s proposed development was orchestrated through a specially formed local cooperative. While questions were being raised by the cooperative about the legitimacy of granting state licences to the Carroll’s multinational were addressed by means of a public enquiry, Carroll’s attempted to ‘ingratiate’ themselves with the local community (Duggan, 2004, p.7). The outcome was that Carroll’s did indeed establish a salmon farm in the bay but only after assisting the cooperative to purchase the oyster beds from Gael Linn. The main stated objective of the cooperative was to secure livelihoods for as many local
fishermen as possible, whereas a capitalist model would have employed only 20\textsuperscript{16} (Duggan, 2004, p.7). Today, according to local reports, the cooperative \textit{Comharchumann Sliogéisc Chonamara} has 80 active members and many of these operate on a seasonal basis.

**Disempowerment**

As far back as the 1930s the local mariculture economy in Iorras Aithneach was undermined in favour of the development of a ‘petty agricultural commodity economy’ despite the former being linked to strong international markets (see Duggan, 2004). It is clear that inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach have been vigorously challenging threats to their local fishing economies over time. As discussed above, fishers’ ‘tenacity’ tends to arise less from economic rationale and more from issues of cultural and social capital. McGoodwin (2001), for example, notes “to a greater degree than seen in large-scale approaches, the fishing occupation is closely tied to the fishers’ personal and cultural identities. Among most small scale fishers, fishing is perceived not merely as a means of assuring one’s livelihood, but more broadly as a way of life, indeed a way of life which is vivified by important occupational values and symbols which in turn underscore core aspects of small-scale fishers’ individual and collective identities” (McGoodwin, 2001).

Contemporaneously, interviews conducted with inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach and particularly those conducted with fishers made frequent references to threats being experienced to sustaining their fishing culture. Rather than the threats arising such as they have traditionally in a way that is visible within the community more recent threats are perceived as arising externally, manifested in the lack of fish stocks in the area and legally enforceable regulations on fishing practices. Threats to the sustainability of community-based fishing were identified by interviewees as stemming from a broad range of policy related issues, and in particular, to the impact that large-scale fishers were having on mariculture resources in the area:

“In a currach, you’d generally have about 100-200 pots for commercial purposes. Other people who are at work, would only have a hundred pots. The weight of lobsters have dropped hugely, they’re all just about the legal weight. Only one in seven pots will have a lobster in it. Out of ten pots, you might get two lobster. A few years ago, 200 pots was a huge number of pots. The problem nowadays is the number of pots that boats are fishing. There are trawlers with a 1000 pots, 6-8 times more than what a currach will have, and that includes two men. People who aren’t from here come in and put pots all over the place. The rest of us haven’t a hope. A bigger boat can fish what it

Local fishermen in Iorras Aithneach claim that there is no financial incentive to fish due to excessive monitoring of fish catches and policies that favour larger fishing vessels. Local inhabitants’ sense of anger and frustration in relation to the diminishment of their fishing livelihoods and their lack of credence in the range of policies that are currently regulating fish stocks were foremost in all of the interviews conducted:

“I saw a boat on TV that can catch 500 tonne of mackerel with one net…it’s not fishing, it’s hoovering. What they throw away, we wouldn’t catch in a year. Around here, all you can catch are six mackerel and two Pollock or else you’re categorised as a commercial fisherman. By law you can’t even catch enough to eat.”

In December 2003, Údarás na Gaeltachta was instructed by the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural resources to cease their Inshore Fishermen Support Scheme (which took the form of grant aid for the purchase/repair of currachs and the purchase of outboard engines and pot haulers) due to the scheme being ‘in breach of EU legislation’ because of issues relating to tonnage; engine power; and increases in the effectiveness of inshore fishers’ fishing equipment. The cessation of the Inshore Fishermen Support Scheme had been popular in the area and caused a great degree of debate and anger in the local community. Dissimilar to the reactionary nature of past campaigns that had been instigated by local inhabitants for the protection of their livelihoods, interviewees claimed that in the face of current threats such as incompatible regulations and noticeably diminished fish stocks, they feel powerless and disenfranchised:

“I’m so angry about what they’ve done to us that I can’t even talk about it. I really don’t know what to do. Nobody does”

There was evidence of anti-EU sentiment in how fishers interviewed for this study attributed blame for the unviability of their livelihoods as fishermen:

“from now on, I will vote no, no, and no again to any treaty that comes my way from the EU”

Frustration at the ‘criminalisation’ of fishing practices breaching regulations and legislation was frequently conveyed in the interviews conducted. This issue has also caused consternation among fishers’ interest groups at the National level:

"We hold no brief for serious offenders in fisheries but the use of this type of language indicating a capital crime should have no place in the lexicon relating to fishing, which is a totally legal activity of great benefit to the
State and is a proud and honourable way of life in our coastal communities. The inclusion of fisheries offences in the Criminal Justice bill is a disgrace and is very regrettable evidence of an effort to mis-place public perception of the sector by people who should know better” Lorcán O Cinnéide, Chairman of the Federation of Irish Fishermen.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to analyse in any depth the impact of the fishing policy framework on fishing communities, feelings of frustration and disempowerment are inevitably implicated in understanding fishers’ engagement in the contemporary rural development agenda. In circumstances where local people are faced with leaving their fishing traditions behind, it has been the case that ‘barriers to change’ are often perceived as owing to ‘passiveness’, or worse, ‘backwardness’ on the part of the community (see Duggan, 2004). According to the governance and rural development literature, such perceptions require confrontation as a first step in the analysis of understanding barriers to engagement and in helping to chart a more socially and culturally acceptable route for rural development.

“People from the dominant culture often accuse those remaining in societies whose culture has been eroded or destroyed of lack of initiative and enterprise… The removal from the community of control over their own destiny leaves a depleted community without a belief in its own worth, its own capacity to change things” (Bryden, 1991, p.17 quoted by Ray, 1997, p. 16).

3.6 The Contemporary Rural Development Agenda and Iorras Aithneach
It is claimed that partnership and other governance models are not simply multi-tier versions of centralised policies but represent a chance for localities to focus on their individual attributes, resources, and forms of capital and exploit them (Walsh, 1995, p. 1; see also Chapter 1). The valorisation of local traditions and customs represents the central aim of the culture economy, representing thus a more conducive development route than heretofore productivist policies for areas like Iorras Aithneach. Lowe et al (1998) note that the culture economy promotes a “further participative rationale…in the empowerment of an historically repressed or marginalised cultural system… such as Gaelic, Breton or Lap” (p. 54) where such cultural commodities can provide a focus for the development of cultural economies. In such a fashion, the culture economy is claimed to have the capacity to “raise local consciousness of territorial identity… and raise confidence in the ability of the area to regenerate itself” (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 54). Rural areas, it is conceived, particularly those that are remote and have been heretofore marginalised by mainstream policies, can often still hold many of the ‘raw’, authentic and increasingly rare cultural commodities such as “speakers of the regional language, traditional foods, remnants of craft skills, important historical and archaeological sites and the native flora and fauna” and therefore are particularly well-positioned to develop a localised culture economy (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 55). In addition, it is
claimed that through the development of the culture economy and the associated valorisation of local custom, tradition, and skill, higher status jobs are created for local people (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 56). In line with principles of governance, the culture economy is claimed to put local inhabitants, as “producers/guardians”, in control of the management of local resources (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 57).

So, what are the unique local resources in Iorras Aithneach that stand to provide a basis for both a vibrant local economy and the reinstatement of local confidence? In light of arguments put forward in the literature on the potential of the culture economy, the following section identifies primary local resources in Iorras Aithneach and observes the extent to which they are currently being valorised or promoted through contemporary rural development initiatives. A summary of these resources is presented in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5 below presents summary information on local resources, and factors influencing the utilisation of these resources.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Resource/Practice</th>
<th>State/Agency Initiative(s)</th>
<th>Local Utilisation/Uptake</th>
<th>Influential Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale Fishing</td>
<td>Údarás na Gaeltachta</td>
<td>Traditionally major, currently ‘illegalised’</td>
<td>Policing; Regulations; Licensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat building / Boating</td>
<td>Údarás na Gaeltachta</td>
<td>Falling numbers engaged in boat building</td>
<td>Grant-aid under threat; fewer young people entering the practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaweed harvesting</td>
<td>Údarás na Gaeltachta</td>
<td>Traditionally major, now diminished</td>
<td>Non-lucrative; unfavourable taxation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production/ Domestic food processing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Traditionally major, now diminished</td>
<td>Regulations, no tradition of or facility for local market-place sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Údarás na Gaeltachta; MFG</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Cultural disinclination towards tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Language</td>
<td>Tax incentives for hosting students of Summer Language Schools</td>
<td>Strong uptake from indigenous population</td>
<td>Tax exempt; recently built new houses facilitate an increased number of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 While Cumas Teo is not listed here, it is important to note that Cumas Teo’s information and advocacy service is instrumental in local knowledge of and access to initiatives and grants.
Iorras Aithneach: a fishing community

Mariculture does not received equal attention to agriculture in the rural development literature, yet arguments in favour of ‘real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development are as much relevant to fishing as they are to farming. ‘Real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development, by placing the role of fishing, and the forms of local knowledge that underpin it at the heart of the local economy, is a development route for Iorras Aithneach that has obvious potential. Contextualising ‘real’ rural development to fishing, it seeks to re-centralise primary production activities in rural development, transforming understandings of “the role of [fishing] in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173). In the literature, ‘new paradigm’ rural development is described as emerging from “cognitive liberation”, “autonomous processes” and “in spite of official attempts at rural development” (Tovey, 2006). It is stated that small to medium [fishers’] experience of the disastrous effects of trying to integrate themselves into the dominant modernisation model, with its goals of continuous expansion of scale, industrialisation of production and integration into increasingly globalised [mari]-industrial corporations force them to find a range of ways to ‘jump over the boundaries that model prescribes for them” (Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004, p. 234). In this sense, ‘new paradigm’ rural development is understood as a ‘counter-movement’ (Marsden, 2003) and a ‘widespread resistance paysanne’ (Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004; Tovey, 2006). Arguments in favour of ‘real’ rural development “restates rights and possibilities of rural inhabitants to generate a livelihood for themselves from a sustainable use of the natural, cultural and social resources specific to their own rural locale” (Tovey, 2006, p.173).

While the engagement of disenfranchised farmers and fishers in ‘real’ rural development does not represent a significant social movement in Ireland, the paradigm offers nonetheless a progressive route for fishers’ involvement in the contemporary rural development agenda using their existing skill sets. Tovey (2006) notes that the numbers of rural inhabitants engaging in ‘new paradigm’ rural
development are difficult to determine but references the estimation of Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) that 50% of all farmers in the EU are engaging in these types of activities and the less optimistic view of Marsden (2003) that “the possibilities of its full realisation are unequally distributed across European rural space and will never become ‘mainstreamed’ unless given strong and appropriate state supports” (Tovey, 2006, p. 192-173).

In Iorras Aithneach, from interviewees’ accounts of their difficulties in sustaining their fishing way of life, the realisation of ‘real’ rural development seems threatened. As discussed above, constraints and challenges to the livelihoods of small-scale fishers’ have given rise to a virtual cessation of their fishing practices. What is more, there does not seem to be any hope of this reversing this trend which in reality would require a drastic overhaul of fishing legislation and the protection of small-scale fishers as a special group under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The previous sections on forms of cultural and social capital elaborate the connection between fishers and local forms of knowledge that have been handed down for generations. Currently, much of this local knowledge is not being transferred to younger generations and is being lost as a result of fewer numbers taking up careers in fishing:

“Only one or two of the young lads know where to go to fish. All of the old things like where the seaweeds are, or where you’d see marine life like seals, is all forgotten about. It’s a pity because there is an enormous resource of folklore and skills that’s trickling away”

Similarly, associated traditions to the strong tradition of mariculture in Iorras Aithneach such as boat-building and seaweed harvesting are in threat of discontinuation.

Traditional Boats
Iorras Aithneach is renowned for the building of Irish traditional boats. While these boats were traditionally used for transport around the islands of South Connemara and further afield, today these boats are used in the most part for sailing and racing. Údarás na Gaeltachta offers grants for the repair and building of traditional fishing boats specifically the Huicéar, Gleoiteóg and Pucán boats. However, local inhabitants referred to the possible discontinuation of such grants and the threat this posed to losing skills required for the building of the boats:

“If the boat building stops now you may as well say that it’s gone forever because not that many have the skills even now”.

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There are currently sixteen festivals that celebrate indigenous boating traditions and all but three of these take place in the Connemara Gaeltacht,\(^\text{18}\) where they are attended in the most part by local people. Local people attach great prestige (cultural capital) to their unique local tradition of boat-building. However, while a significant number of young people participate in these festivals as spectators, it is noted by local inhabitants that comparatively few are involved in boat building and racing:

“Sometimes we have misconceptions of what our local resources are. Údarás put money into local boat racing festivals but there’s also the need to support setting up training for currach racing. Most of the people involved in boat racing are getting old and no young lads are going into it. There’s nothing wrong with promoting festivals, but if we’re not careful we won’t have anyone to sail and race the boats”.

The changing significance of traditional Irish boats from working boats, to recreational boats, to heritage boats was noted by inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach interviewed for this study. Attention was drawn to these changes at the opening address of The Cruinniú na mBád festival in Kinvara (Co. Clare) where the speaker stated that “It is hoped that the destiny of the Galway Hooker is to remain sailing in the sea where it belongs, and not suspended from the ceiling of Galway City Museum” (Breathnach, 2006).

Interviewees in Iorras Aithneach claimed that water safety regulations prevent the usage of a traditional type of boat, the currach, used locally for harvesting both shellfish and seaweed. The boats are small and accommodate two persons on average for fishing purposes. Due to this size constriction, it is reported that the boats are not large enough to carry the safety equipment required by regulation.

**Seaweed Harvesting**

Seaweed is an organic prolific resource in Iorras Aithneach and its harvesting is an indigenous income-generating practice that dates back several hundred years. Historically the seaweed was sold as fertiliser to traders who would transport it to fertile agricultural land in East Galway. Today, there is a seaweed processing plant in Cill Chíaráin, Arramara Teo., that is funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta and utilises local harvests. Údarás offers grants for the purchase and maintenance repair of currachs and engines to be used for collecting seaweed. The harvesting of seaweed as an income-generating practice in Iorras Aithneach has diminished over the past

\(^{18}\) The festivals are: Féile Eanach Mheáin; An Áird Mhóir, Cill Chíaráin; Céibh an Mháimín; Féile na gCurraclach, an Spidéal; Beal a’Daingean; An Patrún, Inis Mór; Féile Bóthar na Trá; Féile Mhic Dara, Carna; Roundstone Festival; Féile Chuigéil, Leitir Mealláin; Féile an Dóilín, An Ceathrú Rua; Cruinniú na mBád, Kinvara; Féile Caladh Thaidg, An Ceathrú Rua; Féile na nOileán, Leitir Mór; Féile na Mara, Cill Chíaráin.
two decades, however, and regularly there is not enough seaweed being harvested to meet the factory’s demand. Though the factory also buys seaweed from seaweed cutters based in other parts of Ireland, such as in Counties Mayo and Donegal, the shortage of seaweed caused the factory to close for several weeks during the summer of 2007, putting employees on mandatory leave of absence. There are no enterprises in Iorras Aithneach that grow seaweed or process local seaweed supplies to create high value-added products, although the lucrative use of seaweed properties for manufacturing pharmaceuticals and food is well documented and practiced elsewhere in Ireland and particularly abroad. The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) is host to the Irish Seaweed Research Centre and its Marine Research Institute has a laboratory based in Carna. The centre receives funding support for research from Údarás na Gaeltachta.

From interviews conducted in Iorras Aithneach, more disadvantages than advantages were cited in relation to the harvesting of seaweed. While seaweed is prolific and widely available on the peninsula, it was claimed by past and present local seaweed cutters interviewed for this study that seaweed cutting is both life endangering and non-lucrative (cutters explained that they received €40 per tonne of (wet) seaweed\(^\text{19}\)). A further disincentive identified by local cutters is that the €40 per tonne is taxed, and that government revenue officials visit the factory regularly to inspect details of seaweed suppliers. It is clear that the harvesting of seaweed has become a devalued practice and very few younger people are taking it up:

> “Anyone who is harvesting seaweed is either too old to do anything else or is unable to do anything else. No one has any respect for it and you get no money out of it. Long ago you could get something out of it, but then you had fishing as well”

It is noted that contemporarily, in light of the collapse of the building and construction sectors, that seaweed harvesting is increasing in South Connemara. According to local reports, the seaweed factory processed approximately 25,000 tonnes from May 2008-May 2009. However, similar to fishing and boat building, the skills of seaweed harvesting are not being transferred to younger generations. It is noted furthermore that there is a demise of local knowledge of different seaweed types and where they grow. In recent years complications are arising in relation ‘seaweed rights’ which are claimed by individuals from generation to generation:

> “people have completely lost touch with the tradition of their area. The link was broken two or three generations ago. They don’t go to the bog, don’t go fishing, cutting seaweed or fishing, or picking winkles, they don’t know how to sow a spud. In Brussels they might think that people in coastal areas of Connemara know how to cut seaweed to supply it to

\(^{19}\) The factory dries and packages seaweed but is not currently producing additional high value-added products.
the factory in Cill Chiaráin, but they don’t. If you went into the local school and asked the kids to bring you down to the shore and show you some dilisk, they wouldn’t be able to recognise it”

Subsistence Farming and Household Processing
Although Iorras Aithneach, due to its poor soil and weather conditions, has never been conducive to large-scale intensive farming, the small household farm has been a dominant characteristic of the landscape. The farm household has traditionally functioned less as an income-generating practice and more as a diverse food-source, primarily of pork (domestically preserved by salting); ‘black pudding’; mutton; chicken; eggs; butter and other dairy produce; and cáca baile/caiscín (“home bread” - a light wheaten bread). The consumption of raw dairy products is discouraged by health regulations contemporarily, as well as the domestic production of butter; salted pork (bacon); and associated pork products (such as ‘black pudding’). Today, the domestic processing of dairy and pork products has become rare in Iorras Aithneach, as well as throughout Ireland, and it is illegal to produce for private consumption or sell such domestic produce without conforming to the relevant regulations and licensing procedures.

Similar farm household processing is ongoing outside of Ireland in other EU member states where they are acknowledged to be at the heart of the artisan food industry (see Fonte 2008). However indigenous household food processing in Ireland, similar to the usage of seaweed as a food and food ingredient, has gone into virtual discontinuation. This was presented as an accepted fact among interviewees in Iorras Aithneach and as stated by one interviewee:

“We don’t produce any of that food anymore. It became extinct with regulations and because we could buy it in the shops. There are a few still around that can make pudding, usually the sheep’s pudding, but the young people don’t know. They wouldn’t know what even it tastes like, let alone make it”

Cultural Tourism
One of the main vehicles identified in the literature for the valorisation and exploitation of local resources is the tourism industry, or more specific to contemporary rural development initiatives, ‘cultural tourism’. The West of Ireland is recognised in the literature as a site possessing unique cultural commodities. Kneafsey (1998, p.113) citing Nash (1993, p. 86) writes that “Images of the western landscape function in promotional publications as a shorthand notation for the landscape of Ireland in general”. Kneafsey (1998) furthermore identifies the broader cultural, political and social connotations of the West of Ireland as being “endowed with particular qualities ranging from lawlessness, sensuality and physicality in the writings of Synge, to peasant resilience, Puritanism and courage in the vision of nationalists such as Pearse and MacNeill” (Kneafsey, 1998, p. 113). Kneafsey notes

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A product made from pork blood and cereal.
how these political and cultural connotations are “sustained in contemporary tourism images and texts. For instance, Uris (1978, p. 60) writes of the West as “the Irish conscience” describing its people as “the gentle beauty of Ireland, soft and unsophisticated yet so full of wisdom and so dogged”; “the last great peasantry of Europe”; and “the backbone of the race”” (Kneafsey, 1998, p.113). Byrne et al (1993) state that despite different constructions of how, and the extent to which, Connemara is perceived as an ‘authentic’ tourism experience, “Connemara has been seen as a magical peripheral area, a paradigmatic contrast to urbanised industrial life, or else as the repository of intrinsic Irishness…” (p. 236). Similarly, Fáilte Ireland West in its Regional Tourism Development Plan (2008-2012) states “Ireland West is arguably an iconic region of Ireland due to the perception of the rugged Atlantic Coast, the wilds of Conmemara, the culture and heritage of the islands, and the attractions of Galway. It is in many the ways the essence of the Irish tourism product” (p.12).

Despite this cultural and political romanticism, tourism in Connemara tends to be mostly concentrated in the North of the region. Tourism in Iorras Aithneach was identified in the current study as being an aspect of the local economy that is undeveloped. Many of the inhabitants and development workers interviewed for this study noted the virtual absence of a tourism industry in the area and stated that there is little on offer for tourists in terms of organised activities and amenities such as quality restaurants. One rural development professional remarked:

“If we see a group of tourists passing our window, we wait to see how long it takes them to turn back. They have probably taken the wrong route on the way to Clifden…”

“What is there for tourists around here? Nothing”

Inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach interviewed for this study showed an overall disinclination towards tourism. In discussing the potential for tourism in Iorras Aithneach, many interviewees were disdainful of the image of Connemara that is portrayed in the tourism industry. Interviewees were reluctant to speak about how the cultural uniqueness of Connemara is commonly articulated (e.g. as a place of ‘intrinsic Irishness’ or as the culture being ‘the backbone of the race’) and gave the impression of being uncomfortable with or embarrassed by “such talk”.

“The tourists rave about things around here, the scenery and that. I don’t listen to that kind of talk. I love Connemara, it’s where I’m from. Tourists see it in a different way”

The attitudes of interviewees in Iorras Aithneach were reminiscent of a quotation presented in a 1979 report on the arts and culture in the North and South of Ireland:
“to an Irishman who has a social conscience, the conception of Ireland as a romantic picture, in which the background is formed by the lakes of Killarney by moonlight, and a round tower or so, whilst every male figure is a ‘broth of a bhoys’ and every female one is a colleen in a crimson Connemara cloak, is as exasperating as the conception of Italy as a huge garden and art museum inhabited by picturesque artists’ models is to a sensible Italian”. GB Shaw (1896) cited in A Sense of Ireland, (1979, p.39).

Inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach were of the perception that tourism is “full of fanciful notions” and not based on the realities that frame living in Connemara:

“the music and dancing that’s put on for tourists is fake carry on”

“There’s nothing here for tourists, only the wind and the rain. Hardship is what we have here – would the tourists like that? Some of them come through cycling. I don’t know what they’re looking for”.

Compared to how practices such as fishing and boating were spoken about with genuine passion, the majority of inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach interviewed for this study were unenthusiastic overall about tourism. Such attitudes are associated with the ‘artificial separation between production and consumption’ (Pratt, 2004; see Chapter 1) that often arises in the culture economy, where consumption and the desires of consumers are the main drivers. Despite the emphasis of the culture economy on promoting authentic place-based branding, is noted in the literature that a type of ‘bogus’ culture can emanate in the context of cultural economies. Ireland’s tourism economy is susceptible to bogus cultural portrayals:

“…critics of the rapidly developed heritage industry in Ireland have accused it, among other things, of creating ‘twee’ (McDonald, Irish Times, 22/09/1992), ‘jumbled’, ‘folksy’ (Busteed, 1992), ‘stereotypical’, ‘nostalgic’, and ‘biased’ (Mullane, 1994) images of Ireland and the Irish. An overarching theme of these criticisms is the idea that heritage centres contribute to the ‘trinketisation’, commercialisation, and trivialisation of culture” (Kneafsey, p.113).

The lack of a developed tourism industry, according to the literature, makes the cultural commodities in South Connemara all the more ‘untouched’ and authentic on the premise that: “[W]hen indigenous inhabitants of places like the West of Ireland gradually abandon local criteria regulating forms of reasonable thought and feeling, they will have become much more similar to people everywhere else” (Byrne et al, 1993, p. 253, cited by Kneafsey, 1998, p. 113). In this light, the threats of cultural tourism (see Lowe et al, 1998; Ray, 2001; Chapter 1) ought to be considered in the development of the industry in Iorras Aithneach.
The Irish Language

In the context of a dominant a national language in the public and private sectors, it is noted in the literature that regional languages can often be perceived as “inferior, and lacking utility in modern life” (Ray, 1998, p.62). It is claimed that contemporary rural development initiatives, however, can position that minority languages can be a driver of local economic development (see MacKinnon, 1991; Ray, 1999; Ray, 1997). Lowe et al (1998) note that in the context of contemporary cultural economy approaches “regions where there is a regional language issue can respond in two ways: they may argue that a regional language should be maintained for its function as a cultural marker; and they may promote the language as an agent for territorial economic development” (p. 62).

Both these ways of positioning the Irish language in the context of contemporary rural development are evident in the case of Iorras Aithneach. The cultural significance of the Irish language is becoming stronger as an industry in reflection of Ireland’s growing social movement relating to the preservation and consolidation of Irish culture and heritage. This movement has been promoted by national agencies such as Gael Linn and Údarás na Gaeltachta. Alongside this wider cultural movement where the Irish language is attaining a cosmopolitan status, consumers from a diversity of sectors are coming to South Connemara to learn the language. There are a number of schools operating in South Connemara that cater for school-going and adult learners and the schools have tended to adopt an immersion approach to the learning process, where students typically live with an Irish-speaking family for the duration of their language course.

Many households in Iorras Aithneach are hosts to Irish language students and earnings from the provision of domestic accommodation and food for Irish language students are tax-exempt. This is claimed to be a major incentive locally. Many of the inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach interviewed for the purposes of this study had a positive attitude towards the Irish language summer schools, yet problematic issues were identified with regard to the extent to which the attending students were genuinely integrating with the local community. The vast majority of students attending language summer schools in South Connemara are of secondary school-going age and it was noted that these students were “cordoned off” from the local community, causing some dissatisfaction among local youngsters:

“The local kids can be very disgruntled about the special treatment that the summer school students get. They’re not encouraged to speak to them, they’re not allowed to participate in any of their activities, they’re not allowed to go to the discos”

It was claimed by several interviewees that adults visiting the area for the purposes of attending language schools:

“...get the same treatment as the youngsters. Every evening, they go to an art class or some activity in the school and there’s no way of getting them to find out
about the area or meet the locals. The only people who speak to the students are the local shopkeepers”.

It is argued in the literature that the linkages between tourism and place-based identities are best understood by analysing the social relations that are constructed between the two. Kneafsey (1998) in her research on tourism and place identity in the rural town of Foxford, Co. Mayo, differentiates between categories of visitors to the area in terms of how (and the extent to which) they interact with local people and local institutions. In this sense, Irish language students in Iorras Aithneach can be understood as representing less the type of tourist who “are incorporated into the rhythms and routines of the place” (Kneafsey, 1998, p.116) and moreover as “the swallows who return ever summer” (Kneafsey, 1998, p.116). As distinct from Kneafsey’s analysis of angler visitors to Foxford who return annually and have ‘become part of the extended community’, however, the language student visitors to Iorras Aithneach are different each year and therefore do not typically form lasting social relations in the area. In the findings of a Teagasc study of Gorumna, a neighbouring DED to Iorras Aithneach, it is interesting that only 1% of inhabitants identified the value of the Irish spoken language as being of advantage to tourism (Frawley et al., 2005). It is also recorded in this survey that 18% of respondents associated “no advantage” with the Irish language while the majority of total respondents to the survey (55%) attributed the benefit to a subjective cultural value - “it’s our culture” (Frawley et al, 2005).

**Irish Music and Dance**

Irish music has a particular tradition in Iorras Aithneach and surrounding areas of South Connemara. The unique tradition in the area is sean-nós singing and dance, and Iorras Aithneach is where many of the primary exponents of the sean-nós tradition have originated. Music and dance legendaries such as Muíntir Uí Íarnáin and the Devane family are native to Iorras Aithneach. The main arts festival to celebrate local music and dance tradition is *Féile Joe Éinniú*, a renowned but small festival that celebrates the life of Joe Éinniú (Joe Heaney) and attracts enthusiasts of the sean-nós tradition. Attendance at the festival is dominated in the most part by local people and *gaelgóirs*\(^\text{21}\). The festival showcases local talent in Irish traditional music generally as well as the sean-nós traditions combined with guest musicians and performers.

Iorras Aithneach also has another tradition of music, which is popular among local inhabitants in public houses and other venues for social interaction. This is branded Connemara Country and Western or *Ceól Tíre*, and demonstrates the significant influence American culture has had on South Connemara, in the most part mediated by returning and visiting emigrants from the region. The music and lyrics that have

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\(^{21}\) People who can speak the Irish language.
been composed within this genre, all using the medium of the Irish language, has been vast. There is, however, no festival or initiative that focuses on this tradition.

‘Connemara Ponies’; ‘Connemara Lamb’; ‘Connemara Marble’
Additional local resources that are associated with the Connemara area are high value added products that are widely marketed, such as ‘Connemara Ponies’; ‘Connemara Lamb’; and ‘Connemara Marble’.

The breeding of horses and Connemara ponies is the most prevalent of these three forms of economic activity, and Caladh Mhaínse (an area within Iorras Aithneach) is one of the breeding strongholds. Connemara Ponies, however, are mostly fêted elsewhere at national and international events and there are no tourism activities in Iorras Aithneach that valorise the tradition of Connemara ponies. The main body that represents pony breeders is the Connemara Pony Breeders’ Association, which is an international association with a comprehensive business mandate. This association operates on a global basis and clearly represents a high-end lucrative industry. Connemara ponies are sold by Iorras Aithneach breeders in the most part at local markets in nearby areas of Clifden and Maam Cross or through direct sales ‘from the field’. Inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach interviewed for this study claimed that individual farmers receive low prices for their ponies, which are then sold on by dealers at a profit. One interviewee claimed that a pony sold by his father to a dealer for less than €500 was sold on at a profit of several hundred percent six months afterwards. Similar stories were related by other interviewees. It is notable that there is no agency or cooperative in South Connemara representing the breeders who in the most part are individual farmers. Inhabitants claimed that the Connemara Pony industry is centred in Clifden, and that local breeders based in Iorras Aithneach do not have roles in vetting ponies or judging competitions.

Connemara marble, although the subject of a lucrative industry nationally and internationally, is not utilised for the purposes of high value added in the region. It is quarried in Recess, but is crafted elsewhere. While this is so, the quarrying of marble in Recess was supported by Údarás and represents a successful enterprise, employing six people at the end of 2008.

Connemara lamb is another high-end product that is associated with the region yet there have been few local cooperatives established to valorise the unique way in which lamb is reared on local mountains. Recently, however, a producer group ‘Connemara Hill Lamb’ or ‘Úain Sleibhte Conamara’ has emerged and in March 2007 and the group’s product was listed as a protected foodstuff by the EU (Protected Geographical Indication Status), which recognises the lamb as unique to Connemara and prevents it being produced and marketed as Connemara lamb

22 There was a past attempt to process marble tiles which was hindered by technical and financial difficulties.
elsewhere. Announcing this development, Ireland’s then Minister for Agriculture emphasised the place-based value added of the project: “I am particularly delighted to announce the registration of this product, unique to the far-famed Connemara region. In protecting the traditional origins of our regional foodstuffs we strengthen our regional identities” (Sheehan, 2007). The formation of this producer group was assisted by Teagasc and the group currently receives administrative support from Údarás na Gaeltachta. Currently there are six producers involved in the group and of these none are located in Iorras Aithneach23. However, with advances made by the Connemara Hill Lamb Producers’ Group, the production of lamb may represent a key area for growth into the future.

### 3.7 Operationalising ‘Real’ Rural Development in Iorras Aithneach

Of course there are ‘barriers’ arising from how local governance and rural development initiatives are operationalised and from how local participation is fostered in the design and implementation of local development. Local inhabitants interviewed for this study were critical of some existing organisations and community organisations that have strong local support are notably lacking in Iorras Aithneach. However, there are broader socio-cultural issues that are hindering the realisation of the contemporary rural development agenda. The agenda, which is said to give rise to new opportunities for developing unique cultural and physical resources in local communities, has borne little or no evidence in Iorras Aithneach. According to contemporary rural development rhetoric, local knowledge and resources have the status of key drivers for local development initiatives yet it is evident from this study that many unique forms of knowledge and resources in Iorras Aithneach are continuingly marginalised.

Traditional income-generating practices such as fishing and seaweed harvesting draw from existing knowledge and culture and therefore represent obvious routes for development in Iorras Aithneach. Other development avenues utilising the place-based value-added of Connemara (i.e. ponies, lamb; cultural commodities such as the Irish Language and sean-nós dance; and tourism projects) also represent significant potential. Some fundamental adjustments are required, however, in how the contemporary rural development agenda for Iorras Aithneach is conceptualised and in identifying initiatives that represent a feasible, as well as socially and culturally acceptable route for rural development.

In order to realise the objectives associated with the rhetoric of governance and rural development, fishing as a central feature of local cultural and occupational identity must be re-instated into the core of local development initiatives. Much of the literature, although relatively recently acknowledging the importance of farming culture and agriculture as a central activity in achieving food security as well as socio-cultural sustainability (Marsden, 2003; Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004; Tovey, 2006), is lacking in references to mariculture in how the contemporary rural

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23 The producers are located in Cornamona and Recess.
development agenda is described and theorised. That is not to say that arguments in favour of “transforming understandings of the role of agriculture in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173) cannot be applied to fishing.

In their elaboration of ‘real’ rural development Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) and Tovey (2006) emphasise the importance of: ‘deepening’; ‘broadening’ and ‘re-grounding’ processes in relation to the production of local food (Tovey, 2006, p. 176; see Chapter 1) where value is added to food products (i.e. fish) within the locality in which it is produced. Annexed income-generating practices to the core fishing enterprise are crucial for achieving sustainability. Income-generating activities that surround fishing culture such as sea-weed harvesting and boat-building are also crucial for realising ‘real’ rural development. Additional examples of ‘deepening’, ‘broadening’ and ‘re-grounding’ are selling fish to local restaurants, establishing fish markets for direct sale, processing local mariculture resources, and fishing tourism activities (further examples are presented in Chapter 5). It should be noted, however, that fishers themselves may not be inclined towards service-based and processing income generating activities, such as market-based sale and tourist services. As such, a holistic family approach in appraising available skill-sets and occupational preferences is requirement from rural development practitioners.

Surrounding the core income-generating activity of fishing, households in Iorras Aithneach have traditionally been engaged subsistence agriculture and domestic food processing (the latter was undertaken predominantly by women). Connemara lamb, as discussed above, is a potentially high value-added product, yet no farmer from Iorras Aithneach is involved in the Connemara Hill Lamb Producers’ group. As Connemara Lamb is now a protected food stuff (see above) there is existing potential for Iorras Aithneach farmers to become involved in a marketing scheme to sell their lamb at a higher profit. Associated by-products, such as sheep’s pudding, hold potential in the artisan foods industry (see Chapter 5). For pony farmers in Iorras Aithneach, there is a clear need for stronger agency in how they are represented in sales and judging arenas. Local concerted efforts are required bring recognition to the area as a breeding stronghold and to take control of the means by which profits are generated through the sale of locally-reared and bred ponies in order to retain a more significant proportion of these profits within the community.

While the ‘cultural homogenisation’ threat of tourism is acknowledged in the literature (see Byrne et al, 1993), Lowe et al (1998) identify opportunities associated with new forms of cultural tourism as a primary vehicle for the valorisation of unique cultural and physical resources: “Until comparatively recently, the view of cultural theorists and regionalists was that tourism represented a threat to the viability of local cultural systems, bringing with it international consumerism and the threat of cultural homogenisation – what Ritzer (1993) defined as McDonaldisation. However, the new approach argues that this may no longer automatically be the case and that a tourism sector and an indigenous culture are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, tourism, as an explicit recognition of the worth of a local culture, can play a role in building
community self-confidence which, in turn, can drive its rejuvenation” Lowe et al (1998, p. 57)

Avoiding, then, the ‘spectacularisation’ of consumption associated with the culture economy (Pratt, 2004; see Chapter 1), cultural tourism (if managed appropriately) redresses the “artificial separation of production and consumption” (see Pratt, 2004) by placing local culture as the driver of the local economy. In this sense, cultural tourism can be understood less as conventional tourism where services and goods are produced in reflection of what tourists visiting an area want and more as a means of attracting consumers to a rural locality to pay for services and goods that are attached to cultural commodities and income generating activities that exist, in the cultural sense, independently of tourism.

In Iorras Aithneach, unique local knowledge underpinning boat building, fishing, local marine navigation, local folklore, the Irish language, Irish music and sean-nós singing and dance is in abundant supply for the purposes of establishing a critical mass of high-value added enterprises (see Chapter 5). Recognising “the particular role of cultural tourism in raising local self-confidence and socio-cultural vibrancy”, Lowe et al (1998, p.175) note “the argument used by Comunn na Gaidhlig in support of their approach to Gaelic development in Scotland is that cultural tourism can generate higher status jobs for local people”. Given the almost endemic problems of disempowerment and demoralisation experienced by disenfranchised fishers in Iorras Aithneach, cultural tourism may represent a positive aspect of what tourism could achieve as one part of the community economy in Iorras Aithneach into the future.

3.8 Conclusion
Reflecting on Bourdieu’s (1993; 1998) theory of capital as framework, it is clear that fishers interviewed for this study ascribe cultural capital (prestige) to the skill and local knowledge that underpins local fishing practices; and social capital to norms governing equitable and sustainable usage of fishing resources among members of the local community. These forms of cultural and social capital shed light on how fishers in Iorras Aithneach contemplate their income-generating practices, while illuminating the context of their non-participation in rural development programmes that are without a fishing ‘tag’.

While the evaluation of policies that have impacted on the viability of the fishing industry is beyond the scope of this study (for a valuable contextual study on small-scale fishing communities see Meredith, 1999), how local knowledge has become devalued within a changing policy context has crucial implications for the current discussion of principles underpinning the contemporary rural development agenda. In contrast to ‘top-down’ approaches, one of the claims of the governance model is that it has the capacity to hone in on the peculiarity of local conditions and circumstances. In Iorras Aithneach, external factors have given rise to a decay of income-generating practices that utilise unique resources and knowledge and local development initiatives have no remit to challenge these factors. Antagonisms between development initiatives
that have a mandate to respond to local culture and ‘top-down’ sectoral policies represent serious questions about how ‘bottom up’ the contemporary rural development agenda can aspire to be. In this study, such antagonisms were most apparent in the cessation of Údarás na Gaeltachta’s Inshore Fishermen Support Scheme, the most popular scheme among inhabitants of Iorras Aithneach, as a result of its breach of EC legislation. Though governance and rural development models are purported to promote a ‘power to’ rather than a ‘power over’ approach, local governance agencies can be powerless in the face of greater economic national and supranational forces. As such, governance and rural development initiatives are faced with the significant challenge of having to address problems of disempowerment (which are often manifested as ‘barriers’ to engagement) that are generated outside of their control.

A central obstacle to operationalising and realising the contemporary rural development agenda in Iorras Aithneach is that distinctive income-generating activities that are underpinned by local forms of cultural and social capital (i.e. fishing; the harvesting of seaweed; domestic processing of agricultural produce; the Irish Language; and sean-nós music & dance) have somehow failed to link up, conceptually and practicably, with rural development initiatives. High value-added products which are renowned on the basis of their ‘Connemara’ place-based significance (tourism, for example) are least embedded in local income-generating practices. The legitimacy of contemporary participatory development models that claim to generate the culture economy is called into question in cases where associations between localities and cultural products are dubious.

The ‘deepening’; ‘broadening’; and ‘re-grounding’ processes of ‘real’ rural development aim to “transform understandings of the role of agriculture [and fishing] in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173) and represents an opportunity to bring fishers into the fold of rural development while also redressing the ‘artificial separation between production and consumption’ that is known to arise in the culture economy (Pratt, 2004). Identifying techniques to improve engagement in rural development as well as activities that are in line with ‘real’ rural development that are culturally and socially adoptable is the focus of Chapter 5.
Chapter 4

Farmers and the Contemporary Rural Development Agenda:
“To be or not to be?”

4.1 Introduction
The Lisbon Strategy recognises the contemporary rural development agenda, and the LEADER programme specifically, as a key instrument in the “restructuring of the agriculture sector” and in “encouraging diversification and innovation in rural areas” (CEC, 2005). The integrated approach to rural development espoused by the LEADER model is recognised as being capable of pursuing a route towards “a higher value-added, more flexible economy” (CEC, 2007). The environment for the operation of the contemporary rural development agenda is one that is characterised by change. Moving away from a sectoral to an inter-sectoral approach, rural development relates to a diverse range of potential rural development actors. Irish social and economic change is heightened by a growing proportion of commuters living in rural areas; the growing attractiveness of rural areas as places in which to live or holiday; and the growing incidence of social movements that have a rural significance, for example the strengthening organic and rural health movements, attracting new dwellers and entrepreneurs to rural areas. As the rural economy develops broader facets, there is an inevitable challenging of the position of traditional agriculture (and agricultural producers) as the mainstay of the rural economy in Ireland and in other EU member states. In the context of the contemporary rural development agenda, entrepreneurs who engage in ‘indigenising’ the local economy (tourism; organic and artisan producers) are the new pioneers, with traditional agricultural producers often in the position of having to adapt to new development rules in order to avail of an increasing range of rural development funds. In this light, and also in mind of the principles of partnership and subsidiarity which underpin the governance and rural development model, it is important to pay attention to the dynamics of different social groups’ roles in determining local development agenda.

There is a paucity of qualitative research in recent years on the implementation of governance and rural development programmes in Ireland to determine the types of actors that typically become involved and the nature of development activities that such programmes support. Problematic assumptions and generalisations are often made in the bureaucratic literature about how adoptable diverse rural economic activities actually are. Research has shown elsewhere that the skills, economic status, and socio-cultural orientation of certain social groups make them particularly

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well suited to participating in contemporary rural development programmes (Kovach & Kucerová, 2006), while more traditional social groups such as farmers can become ‘bewildered’ by new sets of networks and challenges (Osti, 2000; see Chapter 1).

Farmers, though traditionally a primary rural social group in Ireland, are showing resistance to engaging in ‘alternative’ routes towards income generation outside of farming (Conway, 1992; Teagasc Rural Development Commodity Group, 2005). Economic models developed by the organisation predicted farmers’ exodus over time from non-viable farming enterprises in response to changing economic circumstances. Many farmers, however, are continuing with what are officially categorised as non-viable farms, and in this light the current research project aimed to explore the broader socio-cultural factors that come into play in farmers’ decision-making processes.

4.2 Rural Development: an agent of Rural Social Change?
In rural Ireland, a number of problems associated with sectoral productivist policies were reported as having reached “crisis proportions” in the late 1980s: “Rural population decline was acute, particularly so in remote disadvantaged areas; the effects of the polluting, non-sustainable character of heavily capitalised intensive agriculture was becoming evident in the natural environment (CEC, 1988); there were steeply declining numbers at work in agriculture in addition to low agricultural incomes (stemming in part from the high proportion of officially categorised non-viable farms); rural underemployment was rife; and there was a deficiency of outlets for off-farm employment opportunities (Kearney et al, 1995, cited by Curtin & Varley, 1997).

Today, two decades on from The Future of Rural Society (CEC, 1988) comparable economic and social problems in the agricultural sector, albeit with some altered dynamics, are persisting. Despite the growth in rural development programmes that promote and support diversification of mainstream farming enterprises and broader rural economic diversification, Teagasc’s annual National Farm Survey (NFS) continues to show the persistence of a high number of non-viable farms. It is becoming increasingly evident that a high proportion of farms in Ireland are dependent on off-farm income (Figure 4.1). Recently published data show that 30% of farms are viable in Ireland, and without off-farm employment, 70% of farms would be in a vulnerable position (O’Brien & Hennessy, 2008). While it is so that farmers are engaging on off-farm work, they are primarily engaged in work in the construction and services industries rather than engaging in on or off farm rural enterprises (Figure 4.1).

Dillon et al (2008) citing Hennessy (2004) define an economically viable farm as “having a) the capacity to remunerate family labour at the average agricultural wage, and b) the capacity to provide an additional 5% return on non-land assets” (p. 15).
These national-level statistics are also represented in the DED of Liscannor, West Co. Clare, where qualitative research was conducted among the farming community for the purposes of this study. Liscannor has an area of 1355 hectares, and the Census of Population records a total population of 282 in the area (decreased from 352 in 2002).

Although Liscannor is on the West coast, the locality has a low economic dependency on mariculture. Most fishing vessels are located in other Co. Clare DEDs of Carrigaholt and Kilrush. Employment in the fishing and aquaculture sector is low for the county overall, at 7 full-time jobs, 18 part-time jobs and 28 casual jobs (Clare Co. Library, 2000). Co. Clare has a relatively high dependence on agriculture,
however, and the amalgamate value of agriculture, forestry and fishing as a percentage of the total Gross Value Added (GVA) in Clare is almost twice that of counterpart percentages for the Mid-West and in Ireland as a whole (Clare Co. Library, 2000). As illustrated in the figure below, farmers remain marginally the largest socio-economic group (15%) in Co. Clare.

**Figure 4.3: Population by Socio-Economic Group in 1996**

1. Employers and Managers
2. Higher Professionals
3. Lower Professionals
5. Manual Skilled
6. Semi Skilled
7. Unskilled
8. Own Account Workers
9. Farmers
10. All others gainfully occupied and unknown

*Source: CSO, 1996*

*Source: Clare County Library, 2000*

Bogue’s (2006) Co. Clare study notes the high dependence of farm families’ income on the increasingly unviable construction sector, illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 4.4: Types of off-farm employment for farm operators in Co. Clare (2005)**

*Source: Bogue, 2006, p.7.*
According to the 2000 Census of Agriculture undertaken by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), there were 41 agricultural holdings in Liscannor and a total of 56 Annual Work Units (AWU)\textsuperscript{26} were expended on farm work in 2000 (CSO, 2000). There are three main development support agencies that interact with on farm households within the Liscannor area: Teagasc; the Smallholders’ Initiative, and Rural Resource Development (RRD) Ltd, which has implemented the LEADER programme in Co. Clare since its inception in 1992. Teagasc offers a comprehensive range of farm advisory and education supports to farm families in the Liscannor area. These concentrate in the main on business and technology, good farm practice, rural development, and adult training. In addition to its range of personalised agricultural advisory services, Teagasc also offers the relatively new “Farm Options Programme”, which is designed to assist farm families to take practical and entrepreneurial action for the improved viability of their farm enterprise. Of the 41 farmers in Liscannor, 36 are Teagasc clients and eight of these have participated in the Farm Options Programme.

The mission statement of the smallholders’ initiative is as follows: “to work with small scale agricultural producers and their families to improve the economic potential and social conditions of the household. To empower those most excluded and endeavour to transform their social, economic and educational prospects by working in partnership with other stakeholders to devise and implement practical solutions specific to smallholder households” (Pobal, 2009). 13 people (farmers) from Liscannor DED have used the Farm Family Support Service to date. Each of these has used the service at least once and the majority of the assistance provided related to the provision of information on Farm Schemes and assistance with Farm Assist and State Pension Applications).

In Co. Clare, Rural Resource Development (RRD) Ltd. has administered the LEADER programme since its inception in 1992. Between 2001 and 2008, the company administered a total of €3,204,991m to LEADER project beneficiaries. The company engages in a wide range of rural development supports to assist capacity building in the community and voluntary sector, the development of natural resources, and the creation of innovative rural social and economic solutions\textsuperscript{27}. RRD is actively engaged in addressing issues that are of particular relevance to the farming community in Co. Clare. RRD’s activities have included the commissioning of a valuable study to understanding farmers’ perceptions in relation to the single farm payment scheme (Bogue, 2006) and in conjunction with Teagasc and the Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA), a project that promotes ecologically sensitive farming. The figure below presents details on RRD’s allocation of LEADER funding in the last programming period. Funding allocations are categorised according to the following activities: Training (sector 3); Analysis & Development (sector 4); Innovative rural enterprises, craft enterprises and local services/facilities (sector 5);

\textsuperscript{26} An annual work unit is the equivalent of 1800 hours of work per year.
\textsuperscript{27} See www.rrd.ie
Exploitation of agriculture, forestry & fisheries products (sector 6); Enhancement of natural/ built/ social/ cultural environment (sector 7); Environmentally Friendly Initiatives (sector 8); Animation & capacity building (sector 10); Trans-national co-operation (sector 12); Rural Tourism (sector 20); and Agri-Tourism (sector 21).

Figure 4.5: Number of LEADER projects funded by sector in Co. Clare.

Source: RRD Ltd, April 2008.

As evident from Figure 4.6 below, RRD’s allocation of LEADER resources is equitably proportioned among the geographical areas of the County. 17% of the total funding was allocated to recipients in West Clare, where the Liscannor DED is located. While this is so, in the last programming period (2000-2006) only one farm family initiated a LEADER-funded project in the Liscannor area.
4.3 Understanding “Barriers to Change” among members of the Farming Community

On the cusp of the next LEADER programming period (2007-2013), which has significantly expanded in terms of resources, it is timely to attempt to understand the circumstances of farmers’ poor engagement in rural economic diversification. Farming, understood as a socio-cultural practice, has its own unique forms of capital. Burton’s (2004a, 2004b) research on farmers’ cultural capital and their participation in agri-environmental schemes illuminates the broader context of why this may be the case. Burton’s research (2004a) emphasises the particularly strong role of cultural capital in farm management, examining the different indicators of ‘good farming’ as perceived in the subjective sense by farmers themselves (Burton et al, 2008, p.22). Burton (2004b) emphasises the importance of understanding the concepts of ‘productivism’ and ‘post-productivism’ by analysing the social symbolism and indicators of performance that are ascribed to by farmers themselves, rather than focusing on the policy discourses that surround them.

A primary component of the qualitative interviewing process undertaken for this study focussed on farmers’ subjective interpretations of ‘rural development’. Farmers identified the objectives they believed should guide rural development generally. A common view was that the objective of rural development should be to “keep rural people on the landscape and make a living from what they can... either on or off the farm, and to “sustain people in their own area”’. From a related perspective, it was stated “What is the opposite of rural development? Rural Ireland being deserted”. It was apparent from the qualitative data that ‘rural development’ is
perceived as a very ambiguous and elusive term by the farmers interviewed. It was observed that “for farmers, farming is rural development” and from another point of view “rural development has by-pas sed farmers, people think it has to do with everything but farming”. Combined, these perceptions represent a central antagonism in the interchange between farming and rural development: on one hand, there is a degree of commonality among farmers’ understanding of their farm enterprises as being a major component of the rural economy and on the other, there is a prevailing conception that farming enterprises are somehow estranged from ‘rural development’ culture. Farmers’ sense of occupational and cultural estrangement from the contemporary rural development agenda is explored further on in this chapter. First, farmers’ negative experiences of past and current policy initiatives are discussed.

4.4 Path-dependency: Farmers’ experiences of current and past policy measures

Farmers interviewed for this study expressed feelings of disillusionment because of the ‘unsustainable’ changes they had incurred in their farming enterprises over the years. Such disillusionment is inevitably implicated in farmers’ unwillingness to indiscriminately adapt to contemporary policy initiatives. Significant disappointment was evident among farmers in relation to the changed nature of farming, and featuring prominently in interviews conducted were references to farmers’ sense of decreased autonomy in the management of their own farming practices:

“I really don’t think there’s any future in any of the new farm options. Like dairying, there will be new regulations and changes every day and that will cause the end of it”.

Farmers expressed difficulty in accepting that circumstances surrounding the viability of their current farming practices have changed. Considerable emotional upset was evident, particularly in relation to growing difficulties in making ends meet financially on the farm. Farmers interviewed spoke of their perceived ‘redundancy’ of what they had inherited from their forebears; their disillusionment with past policy measures; and their scepticism in relation to value of farm modernisation measures they had implemented on their farms:

“all the investments I’ve made in the farm in the past are now obsolete. Now we’re expected to make more investments, and to change everything. But I’m not going to do that as I’m finished with it, I’m retiring now”

Many farmers expressed the view that similar to past investments and adaptations they had made in agricultural production, it was likely that returns from investment in a change in economic practice would not bring long-term returns or benefits. The prevailing view among farmers interviewed was that many agricultural policy measures of the past had caused farm management practices that had been ineffective, illogical, and in many cases socially and environmentally damaging:
“look at the policy around sheep: throw them up on the mountain, wreck the mountains, now take them off, bring them down into slatted houses, the slatted houses are in a wet landscape and cause pollution”

“From the top down, we took all the flack down through the years...as a general public, in the local communities... we were led to believe that this was the way to go, but it wasn’t the way to go. We should have kept it in the community, all the abattoirs and the services we need”

Many farmers pointed to lack of certainty regarding the future direction of farming and the future orientation of the rural economy. Scepticism was prevalent particularly in relation to the sustainability and long-term viability of farm diversification options and rural enterprises, and reflecting on this, farmers expressed a lack of willingness to invest and commit. Aside from considering their own involvement, farmers interviewed expressed generalised opinions about the viability of diverse rural economic businesses and services:

“we’re unsure about the future of farming, but we are more unsure about the future of other ventures that are being promoted, for example organic farming”

“It’s hard to take a lot of these new ventures seriously. At the end of the day, how much money can be made from a B&B?”

In cases, where the farmer interviewed had offspring, these offspring more often than not had either attained or were in third-level education. Rather than adapting production to a more viable and sustainable form, interviewees claimed that they were encouraging their offspring not to disengage from the farm, as the prevalent opinion among the conventional farmers interviewed was that “if things continue as they are, farming is gone”.

While farmers were encouraging their offspring to have a future outside of the farm, many expressed associated regrets in relation to the absence of an heir/ess in the most part due to the loss of sentimental family heritage that is bound up in ownership and farming of the land. In how farmers spoke about the ‘loss of farming’ two main issues emerged: loss of the familial and social benefits of farming (Social Capital); and loss of the prestige of farming (Cultural Capital).

4.5 Social Capital
The farmers included in this study gave their (reminiscent) portrayals of farming practices in the past and emphasised the social aspect of farming. Collective

Bourdieu (1983; 1998), (see Chapter 1).
experiences (for example, at ‘creameries’) or collective methods of work (‘meitheal’) were identified as crucial social aspects of rural social fabric and central to life satisfaction.

“Those were the best parts of the day, the parts you’d live for... but, then again, there were lots of people there then”

Farmers expressed regret that farming as a socially-rich activity had decayed and that their offspring would not have the opportunity to have this experience. The research of Almas (2005) discusses how modernisation and intensification in agriculture have contributed to anomie and isolation through the redundancy of collective farming arrangements (see also Kirbal et al, 2005). Where farmers’ social support institutions are disintegrating, individual farmers are in an increasingly vulnerable position in coping with increasing demands on their time (such as off-farm employment) as well as unavoidable constraints on their time (such as illness). The situation is exacerbated by the changing nature of the farm family, where members of the extended farm family are typically engaged in off-farm work or education and are contributing less time to farm work. In addition, changes in traditional gendered roles within the family unit have occurred with the effect that fathers have a more prominent role in contributing to household work and the rearing of children, putting increased time constraints on the ‘one-man-farm’ unit (Almas, 2005). Time constraints emerged prominently in the interviews as a major inhibitor on farmers’ engagement in diversification (see also Egil Flo, 2008).

4.6 Cultural Capital
Farmers were regretful of the lack of an heir/ess due to their sense of personal and cultural pride as farmers, and the fact they could not pass this on to their offspring. Echoing Burton’s research in the UK (2004a, 2004b, 2006) that explores farmers’ valued forms of cultural capital, farmers interviewed for the ‘Barriers to Change’ project gave their perceptions of what it is to be a ‘good farmer’. Economic capital did not emerge as influential in the qualitative data on how farmers evaluated their own or other farmers’ performance:

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30 ‘Creameries’ are local dairies where farmers would regularly deliver milk.
31 ‘Meitheal’ is an Irish word and is translated as ‘team’ or ‘band of workers’. The term is used to describe collective efforts of members of farming communities to carry out agricultural work.
33 As altered conditions for the viability of conventional agriculture creates new pressures on farmers to engage in diversification and ‘alternative’ rural enterprises, shared farming arrangements are a potential solution. The pooling of competencies also stands to enhance innovation and entrepreneurship among groups of farmers, where there is a sharing of knowledge as well as risk in initial stages of diversified farming enterprises (see Egil Flo, B. 2008). Teagasc (RERC) has recently initiated a research project to explore the economic, policy-related and sociological issues that can determine farmers’ engagement in shared farming arrangements (2008-2011).
“Farmers don’t even know what their income is. They maintain the stance that “we have always done this” and are resistant to change in order to keep doing what they have always done”

Reflecting the specific circumstances of farmers interviewed in the West of Ireland, where there are often adverse production conditions, a primary indicator of a ‘good farmer’ was articulated by the means by which s/he could ‘master’ the local environment by knowing what to grow and cultivate in diverse local conditions. It was explained by farmers interviewed that even within localities there are varying soil-types and degrees of exposure to the elements, and that it takes a vast amount of local knowledge to come to understand what crops will grow where:

“See that hill yonder. Well, if you were to put fruit trees there like... told me to do, they’d go fine for about six months, and then give them two weeks more and they’d be gone. The only thing that will grow on that hill is the briar. It can be used for mountainy sheep, nothing else”.

Farmers commented on harsh weather conditions in coastal areas of the West of Ireland, and how they knew the exact date that a particular crop needs to be sown, or else it would “come up too early and be burnt black by the wind”. Regional differences were referred to also:

“Education was never a load for anyone to carry, but if someone from Mayo goes to agricultural college in Co. Meath, he’ll learn very little about how to farm the black sod of Mayo! But, if a father is teaching his son or daughter how to take over the farm – they’ll get to know the land and the relationship between the land and the animals. They’ll know what breed of animal will thrive on the type of land they have.. If they’re told that farmers should use four-wheel drives, and this vehicle is driven on our soft black ground, the natural irrigation system formed by the movement of worms in the soil will be destroyed and we’d be flooded”

References were frequent to the loss of local indigenous knowledge over the past 30 years:

“Because farmers gave up mixed farming, young people being reared on the farm weren’t exposed to all the different ways that land can be farmed. Bit by bit, young people knew less and less of the full spectrum of farming and the way it can be done successfully here. I’m 41 yrs. old and I know nothing about pig farming or killing the pig as I was only 12 yrs. when we last had pigs”

In sharp contrast to the sense of prestige farmers’ associated with their occupation, a primary inhibitor arising from the body of interview data the extent to which they, as farmers, felt alienated and estranged from the post-productivist policy agenda that seeks to encourage alternative rural entrepreneurship. Expressions of alienation and
estrangement were present in the farmers’ narratives in relation to two issues: skills and occupational divergences between ‘farmers’ per se, and what is required for other types of rural enterprise; and cultural divergences between ‘farmers’ per se and the orientation of other types of rural enterprises.

4.7 Occupational Estrangement
Echoing Burton’s (2004a, 2004b) and Burton and Wilson’s (2006) research in the UK that explores farmers’ ascription of prestige to different farming practices, farmers interviewed for the ‘Barriers to Change’ project gave their perceptions of what it is to be a ‘good farmer’ as strongly rooted in agricultural production practices. Dissimilar to the prestige that was associated by farmers interviewed for this study with production practices a predominant opinion prevailed that non-productivist agricultural and subsidiary activities such as processing and service provision were “not for farmers”:

“Farmers are not salesmen or production managers. They only know farming and don’t have marketing skills to sell and develop their products”

“all of that is a different ball game to what I’ve been doing all my life. In my opinion it’s mickey-mouse carry on… I’m not going to go and stand down there is the square and sell. It’s a joke. Not a hope!”

It emerged furthermore from the data that farmers were disinclined towards forms of farming-related activities in line with the contemporary rural development agenda, such as organic production and direct sale at farmers’ markets. A recent Teagasc quantitative study on the adoption and abandonment of organic farming in the drystock sector in Ireland shows that farming experiences impacts negatively on the adoption of farming – “Organic farmers have in general less farming experience than conventional farmers” (Läpple and Donnellan, 2008, p.14). Inevitably influenced by a trajectory of productivist policies, farmers interviewed for this study did not see how their farm management practices and productivist skills linked up with organics or direct sale:

“Serious group of farmers don’t identify with organics”.

“There is a cultural divide. Farmers see farmers markets as a retrograde step”

“We farmed more or less organically years ago, now they want us to go back to it!”

Many farmers put forward the view that their various agricultural production skills were not suitable for high value-added processing and retail activities. Of the skills required for rural enterprises outside of farming, such as the processing of raw farm produce to create high-value added and the actual selling of farm produce, farmers expressed that these were not activities they were used to, or activities they wished
to engage in. However, in this regard they commonly made a distinction between themselves and their wives. In Ireland, women have traditionally undertaken marketplace selling (Clear, 2008).

“my wife maybe could go down that road, she’s good at cooking and all, but I’m afraid it’s not for me”

“Mary or one of the girls would be great at that. They’d love it. But me, no way. I could do anything but standing there would be one of the one things I wouldn’t do”.

It is apparent at the local level that women have garnered far more agency in ‘alternative’ food production and rural economic diversification than they have heretofore in farming. In recently published research on farm-based tourism enterprises, Haugen and Vik (2008) note that women have a higher motivation to engage in such enterprises in comparison to their male counterparts (see also Garcia-Ramon et al., 1995; Forde, 2004; Sharpley and Vaas, 2006; Girauld, 1999). Comparative to interest groups and organisations associated with mainstream agriculture, it is apparent at the local level that women have garnered far more agency and prominence in organisations associated with ‘alternative’ food production. While there has never been a female president of the main farming organisations in Ireland, for example the Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA); the Irish Creameries and Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA); and Macra na Feirme; the current chairperson of the Irish Organic Producers’ Association (IOFGA) is a woman.

Socio-cultural analyses of farmers’ and local food markets in the literature point to evidence that such markets are representative moreover of a culture of consumption rather than production (see Fonte, 2008; Tovey, 2006). Tovey (2006) notes that her Irish case study of the ‘alternative’ food movement that “Some of the most prominent ‘local food’ actors, even if they are farmers or growers, see themselves as part of a consumer movement than a rural producer movement” (Tovey, 2006). Fonte (2008) using the concept of the “reconnection perspective” sees farmers’ markets as serving primarily a social function by creating a space where consumers can meet with each other and with the producers of the food they are purchasing. Places of sale are seen to be arenas for social interaction, where the central attraction (differing from supermarkets) is the opportunity for customers to interact with producers, for example by discussing the origins and potential culinary uses for the food products on sale (see Tovey, 2006). The ‘reconnection perspective’ is understood as providing a means for the consumer to feel an increased sense of reconnection to, and increased control of, the quality of what they buy, where they buy it from, and from whom. With whom or what the producer or grower is reconnecting, on the other hand, seems less certain. It stands that most producers engaged in the direct sale of food are themselves advocates of the ‘reconnection thesis’ and that they value the same kinds of values and cultural capital that are intrinsic to the food culture that they are engaged in. A central critique of the culture
economy approach in general is that as a result of the ‘spectacularisation’ of consumption, the role the producer has been obscured (Pratt, 2004). This represents a conundrum for those engaged in primary fishing and agricultural production activities. As discussed above, those engaged in conventional primary production subscribe to different forms of cultural capital (prestige), which reflect production practices rather than consumption practices (Burton 2004; et al 2008).

In terms of how both the consumption and production aspects of the culture economy are addressed in the literature, Pratt (2004) argues that “the analytical pendulum has swung too far in prioritising consumption” and in his paper he seeks to address the ‘artificial’ separation of production and consumption (p. 117). Pratt (2004) emphasises the importance of context and organisation for how creativity is recognised for the purpose of the cultural economy (p. 120). Relatedly, he observes that within each context or organisational structure the ‘new’ emphasis on creativity implies a contextually relative “rupture and periodization and formations”, which he puts forth as being without a locally determinable rationale and influenced by ‘technological determinism’ as well as market-led ‘hype’ (Pratt, 2004, pp. 120-121). Echoing the ‘Eurocentricism’ of the culture economy noted by Lowe et al (1998), Pratt suggests that as a result of the ‘spectacularisation’ of consumption in the context of the culture economy competition occurs not only between products but between places of production (Pratt, 2004, p. 123). He points to the significance of the linkages between production and consumption through internationalised networks and critical mass in the promotion, marketing and sale of the cultural economy.

4.8 Cultural Estrangement
‘Alternative’ food production is at the core of the contemporary rural development agenda and is identified as being centred on areas of activity: farmers’ markets; local food markets; and organic and artisan food production (Tovey 2002; 2006). Expressions of alienation and estrangement were present in the narratives of Irish farmers interviewed for the ‘Barriers to Change’ project in relation to cultural divergences between ‘farmers’ per se and those prominently involved in the production and sale of high value-added food production:

“most of the people down at the market are hippies... They’re not from here...”

And, of farmers markets:

“foreign food and foreign people”

It is acknowledged that Irish sociologists have tended to neglect the sociology of food (Share et al, 2006), yet recent studies have been valuable in shedding light on the socio-cultural undercurrents to food production in Ireland (Tovey, 2006; Moore, 2003; Fonte, 2008). One of the common observations reached in research on ‘alternative’ food movements in Ireland, for example farmers’ markets; local food
markets; and organic and artisan food production, is that that individuals who tend to engage in such movements often have ‘varied pasts’. Tovey (2006) notes in relation to traders at a local rural market in Cahir, Tipperary, that,

“…such actors come from a surprising diversity of backgrounds. In West Cork, for example, many are incomers to Ireland, and even those who grew up in an Irish farm family household, have usually spent part of their lives working abroad or outside farming. They also tend to be active in local and community development generally, and not just in relation to food. The stallholders in Cahir include a number of incomers or migrants returning to Ireland, who have managed to acquire a small parcel of land or built up a small food business from which they want to construct an ‘alternative’ livelihood” (Tovey, 2006, p.16).

In her research on the ‘alternative food movement’ in Ireland, Tovey (2006) says of the participants in her study that “their networks include farm households occupying the same land for several generations, but also settled New Age Travellers from Britain, American, German, Swiss, English, and Irish ex-urbanites, women who had married into farming or fishing families, and returned Irish emigrants”.

Similarly, the organic food movement in Ireland is recognised as having been strongly influenced by ‘outside’ persuasions. Tovey (2006), referring to Moore (2003), notes that although organic farming in Ireland has been engaged in by a “slow but steady trickle of Irish indigenous converts” (p. 175), it has been pioneered largely by non-indigenous actors “waves of incomers” (Tovey, 2006). Tovey elaborates:

“The early period (of organic farming) was dominated by Anglo-Irish landowners, influenced by Steiner’s biodynamic practices and by leaders in the English organic movement (see Reed 2001). In the 1970s a new wave of activists joined their ranks, many from continental Europe or Britain; in flight from industrial and urban life, they saw rural Ireland as a place of cheap land and relatively unspoilt nature where they could experiment with alternative forms of living (see Willis and Campbell, 2004)” (Tovey, 2006, p. 175).

It is noted in the literature that Ireland is without a strong local food culture (Fonte, 2008). In Fonte’s (2008) study of the role of expert and local knowledge in food production, she presents a case study data in relation to ten countries, many of which have a strong local food culture where indigenous products such as Barrancos Cured Ham (Portugal); Utiel Requena Wine (Spain); and Osyczpek Cheese (Poland) continue in widespread production, albeit in marginalised small family farms (Fonte, 2008, p. 8). Four of the case study countries, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden and Germany are found to be “characterised by an export-oriented agriculture, food provision organised by large supermarkets, and the lack of a strong local food culture”. In relation to the Irish case, Fonte notes that “since the colonial period, beef and butter production have been organised as export industries. Farms are large by
European standards (36 to 60 hectares), and productivity oriented. A local food culture is not at all diffused and most Irish people regard food as fuel” (Fonte, 2008). Share et al (2006) observe a similar food culture in Ireland: “regardless of the massive changes that have taken place over the last fourteen centuries, the Irish diet is still to a significant extent based on milk, grain, legumes and meat” (p. 379). Artisan cheese production, which is a one of the most highly represented foodstuffs at contemporary ‘farmers’ and country markets has a ruptured past in Irish history. While eight types of cheese are noted in the literature to have been in production in Ireland in 12th Century Ireland, it is acknowledged that these cheeses “disappeared” in the following century. The decline of cheese-making in Ireland at this time is associated with the economic and social circumstances of Ireland’s colonial past (McCarthy, 1992, p. 1 citing O Sé, 1948). It is noted that by the early 19th century, “the decline in cheesemaking had gone so far that agricultural writers of the time state that little or none was made” (McCarthy, 1992).

While Irish rural households did not traditionally sell domestic produce at the market place that is not to suggest that production was not a well established practice. Domestic food processing traditionally represented less an income-generating practice and more a diverse food-source, primarily of pork (domestically preserved by salting); ‘black pudding’; mutton; rabbits (skinned and hung); poultry; eggs; and butter. In addition, farm households in the Liscannor area traditionally produced ‘brown bread’ (a baked bread of sour milk, flour, bread soda, and bran); ‘griddle cake’ (a white bread alternative cooked in a griddle pan); salted bacon; rabbit stew; and poultry (traditionally stuffed with potato). The traditional method of cooking poultry was in large cast iron pots which were placed on and covered with hot coals the ground. One household in the area continues this traditional cooking practice, mostly on holiday occasions such as Christmas day, and all interviewees in the Liscannor remembered this practice first hand. The sea was also traditionally recognised as a diverse food source, primarily through harvesting different types of seaweed: sleamhchán; sea grass (dilisk) and carrigeen; as well as shellfish such as bairneachs, periwinkles, sea-urchins, and crab. In one of the Liscannor kitchens where an interview took place, a pot of ‘sleamhchán’ was simmering and it was claimed that

“one time when you’d go into a house visiting, there would often be a pot of sleamhchán, and that is what you’d get”

The consumption of unprocessed dairy products is contempory discouraged by health regulations, as well as the domestic production of salted pork (bacon); and associated pork products (such as ‘black pudding’). Today, the domestic processing of dairy products is reportedly discontinued in Liscannor, while the killing of pigs

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34 Cais; Tanach; Grus; Faiscre Grotha; Gruth; Tath; Millsen; Maothal; Mulchan (see McCarthy (1992) and O Se (1948).
35 A product traditionally made from intestines stuffed with pork blood and cereal.
and sheep is undertaken occasionally. In Ireland, it is illegal to slaughter animals and produce associated food products for private consumption or sell such domestic produce without conforming to stringent regulations and licensing procedures.

Similar farm household processing is ongoing outside of Ireland in other EU member states where they are acknowledged to be at the heart of the artisan food industry (see Fonte 2008). However indigenous household food processing in Ireland, similar to the usage of seaweed as a food and food ingredient, has gone into virtual discontinuation. Local food movements, ‘slow food’ movements, and organic movements (many of which are supported by the LEADER programme) are succeeding to stimulate new forms of artisan food production, which have become highly visible in both urban and rural areas. Extra-local influences have been crucial in the development of these movements, in terms of agency and organisation but also in terms of the orientation of products.

4.9 ‘Real’ Rural Development: issues of tacit and codified knowledge

Referring to what has been recently labelled in the literature as ‘real’ rural development (Marsden, 2003), or ‘new paradigm rural development’ (Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2000; Tovey, 2006), this study argues for appraisal of small-scale farming and fishing enterprises as being central to realising the potential of rural development in Ireland. ‘Real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development is described as offering a challenge and an alternative “both to the conventional agricultural modernisation model, in which agriculture is given the part of extracting the primary resources from which others outside the rural economy can create wealth for themselves, and to post-agrarian models of rural development in which a declining agriculture creates space for consumption of the countryside, converting agricultural land into recreational facilities, nature reserves, areas for suburbanisation, or sites for factories and hotels” (Tovey, 2006, p. 172).

Tovey (2006) notes that the numbers of rural inhabitants engaging in ‘new paradigm’ rural development is difficult to determine but references the estimation of Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) that 50% of all farmers in EU are engaging in these types of activities and the less optimistic view of Marsden (2003) that “the possibilities of its full realisation are unequally distributed across European rural space and will never become ‘mainstreamed’ unless given strong and appropriate state supports” (Tovey, 2006, p. 192-173). Central to the ‘new paradigm’ is the re-centralisation of primary production activities in rural development – “Marsden locates the origins of new paradigm rural development in state-led ‘bottom-up’ initiatives to empower rural communities, but those involved then undergo a ‘cognitive liberation’ (McAdam, 1992) which transforms their understandings of the role of agriculture in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173).

In the literature, ‘new paradigm’ rural development is described as emerging from “autonomous processes and in spite of official attempts at rural development: small
to medium farmers’ experience of the disastrous effects of trying to integrate themselves into the dominant modernisation model, with its goals of continuous expansion of scale, industrialisation of production and integration into increasingly globalised agro-industrial corporations force them to find a range of ways to ‘jump over the boundaries that model prescribes for them’ (Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004, p. 234). While the engagement of disenfranchised farmers in ‘new paradigm’ rural development does not represent a significant social movement in Ireland, the paradigm offers nonetheless a route for their involvement in the contemporary rural development agenda. Farmers’ skills for production are informed by generations of farming knowledge as well as by a deep understanding local ecological conditions i.e. “what will grow where and when” (see above). As such, farmers’ existing practical, lay or ‘tacit’ knowledge gives them the status of experts in local food production. The worth of farmers’ tacit knowledge, as discussed by Jorgensen (2006) has been differently recognised in light of policy phases of pre-productivism, productivism, and post-productivism.

Jorgensen (2006) in a study of knowledge forms in the Irish organic farming movement detects a reversal from codified knowledge to tacit knowledge with the transition from productivism (i.e. mainstream industrial agriculture) to post-productivism (ecologically sensitive high value-added production). Jorgensen (2006) describes Irish farmers’ tacit knowledge as “developed over generations through the practical experience of working with the soil and animals. Such tacit local knowledge could not be explained through words alone but had to be demonstrated in practice. It applied only to the specific place where it had been developed, and it made sense as part of a wider understanding of one’s relationship to one’s holdings” (Jorgensen, 2006, p. 120-121). Jorgensen’s description of Irish farmers’ tacit knowledge echoes with the type of knowledge and skill that farmers interviewed for this study identified as being a most prestigious aspect to farming culture. Jorgensen discusses how tacit knowledge came to be undermined by forms of codified knowledge with the industrialisation of agriculture (Jorgensen, 2006). The chemical revolution, Jorgensen notes, “rendered methods developed to suit specific locations redundant” (p. 121). Codified knowledge is described as “a form of knowledge, developed by scientists, which requires translation into simple instructions for lay people to act upon it” and its introduction in the Irish case had the effect of replacement (or displacement) of “knowledge developed locally and shared contextually” (Jorgensen, 2006, p.121). Knowledge underpinning organic production, which was pioneered in the first instance by environmentalists, has retained a tacit quality due to its relatively late codification in agricultural extension (Jorgensen, 2006, p. 121 referencing Morgan and Murdoch, 2000). The farmers who become involved in the Irish organic movement had to engage in tacit knowledge institutions which reduced dependence on agricultural instruction - “No longer passive receivers of instructions, they become active agents in the process of food production” (Jorgensen, 2006. p. 122 referencing Morgan and Murdoch, 2000).
The practical local knowledge described by Jorgensen as tacit knowledge above has accumulated within farming communities for generations and is arguably the single most valuable resource in Irish rural areas for the production of local food. While farmers interviewed for this study gave evidence of being occupationally and culturally estranged from income-generating practices such as direct sale of artisan/ethnic foods at farmers markets, that is not to say that the same farmers do not attach cultural prestige and social value to actual production practices that are involved in local food movements. Farmers in Liscannor spoke of how they took general interest in watching farmers’ markets on television and of the great pride they took in growing and eating their own food:

“I watch a farmers market programme there on tv. It comes from Dorset or somewhere in England. The food they have there is just fabulous and all the farmers and people selling it. We’ve lost a lot of that tradition now. Only a few farmers have a garden nowadays. Women don’t have much interest anymore”

“I take up veg out of my own garden and it’s like nothing you’d get anywhere else. The carrots are real carrots, you know. The onions, you’d be crying cutting them. There’s nothing better than to pull up your own spuds and veg and [to] have grown them yourself”

While a number of households had mixed vegetable gardens and were slaughtering pigs as well as processing associated pork products, local inhabitants and rural development practitioners alike reported that no farming household in Liscannor was participating in any form of direct sale. The absence of farmers in local farmers’ markets was noted in the interviews conducted for this study:

“there are generally no real farmers at the farmers markets I’ve been to, and if there are, it’s only one or two. In the market... there’s only one Clare farmer in it and I would know”

“At the market the veg. they sell is imported organic – and that’s supposed to be local and from farmers!”

Arguments in favour of ‘new paradigm’ rural development “restates rights and possibilities of rural inhabitants to generate a livelihood for themselves from a sustainable use of the natural, cultural and social resources specific to their own rural locale” (Tovey, 2006, p.173). This can be understood as an opportunity for farmers to being back into the fold forms of cultural and social capital to which their occupational identities are inextricably tied. There are three key concepts that facilitate how ‘real’ rural development can be understood as a feasible development

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36 Associated with this subjective view is a debate on what is ‘local’? This debate is beyond the scope of this study, which aims to focus on farmers’ subjectivity and the socio-cultural context of their lack of engagement in the contemporary rural development initiatives.
model: ‘deepening’; ‘broadening’; and ‘re-grounding’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 176; see Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004). These concepts represent strategies that assist the viability of small-scale fishing or agricultural production. ‘Deepening’ practices seek to add value to the product – “returning to the farm food-processing activities which were historically appropriated from it by the food industry (Goodman et al. 1987)” (Tovey, 2006, p. 176). Tovey (2006) cites examples such as converting raw milk into butter or cheese, processing pork, and smoking fish and also notes that direct selling through food markets and box schemes are part of the ‘deepening’ process (Tovey, 2006, p. 177). ‘Broadening’ emphasises the need to incorporate additional non-fishing/agricultural and para-fishing/agricultural activities the central fishing/farming activity in how the household generates income (Tovey, 2006, p. 177). Tovey (2006) identifies examples of ‘broadening’: the establishment of a local slaughterhouse and the selling-on of grain and other goods to farmers in the area (Tovey, 2006, p.177). Tovey (2006) also notes that an important aspect of ‘deepening’ is to recognise the roles of women in the household and the skills they can bring to the development of a new enterprise (p. 177). ‘Re-grounding’ is perceived as necessary to give these economic activities ‘any distinctiveness’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 177) and depends on “strategies to end dependence on financial and industrial capitals and to replace them with inputs of social and ecological capitals” (Tovey, 2006, p. 178) A more detailed discussion of ‘broadening’, ‘deepening’ and ‘re-grounding’ in the agriculture and mariculture sectors is presented in Chapter 5.

4.10 Conclusion
The governance and rural development model is intended to represent a shift towards more a democratic form of local development, where the facilitation of local people having key roles in the ‘design and implementation of development interventions’ is emphasised (Ray, 1999). Through local inhabitants’ active participation, the development process is expected to have the capacity to uncover localities’ unique resources and strengths for the purposes of creating high value-added and innovative rural economies (CEC, 1988; 2007). Cultural commodities such as ‘ethno-tourism’ and the artisan food industry depend in particular on the value-added that arises from local distinctiveness.

As explored in this study, however, the culture economy (a central aspect of the contemporary rural development paradigm) is driven by a distinctive ‘status quo’ in terms of the development products that are at its core. The culture economy favours a high-end product for a ‘discriminating’ clientele (Moseley, 2003b). It is said to be driven by the forces of consumption rather than production, with the effect that the role of the producer becomes obscured (Pratt, 2004). The emergence of the culture economy signifies a rupturing of old development contexts and the need for rural economic actors to adapt to a changed set of development rules.

Processes of change and adaptation inevitably present challenges for all rural actors and the findings of this study points to evidence that members of the traditional
farming community have not become prominently involved in local food movements that are in line with the contemporary rural development agenda. While many farm households have not traditionally engaged in market-place selling, that is not to signify that Ireland is “without a strong local food culture” (Fonte, 2008). Irish farm (and fishing) households traditionally engaged in domestic processing and represented a diverse family food source. In Ireland, members of the farming community have historically been the main landholders and hold unique forms of local agricultural knowledge that has generated in tune with the natural environment over time. The cultural and ecological significance of small-scale farming or ‘crofting’ and small-scale fishing has received official policy recognition and is elaborated at length in the literature (see MacGoodwin, 2001; Shucksmith, 2008). Small-scale production in the farming and fishing sectors is underpinned less by economic rationality and more by existential rationality where the focus is on the sustainability of enterprises as an intrinsic part of local socio-cultural fabric. Such values are recognised as being conducive to principles of cultural and social sustainability that are central to rhetoric surrounding the contemporary rural development agenda.

As it gains prominence with mainstreaming and increased funding, the contemporary rural development agenda holds opportunities for all social groups in rural areas. Going forth, it is important that traditional social groups, such as the farming community, are represented in the partnership processes that govern the development outcome in terms of the orientation and beneficiaries of local development initiatives. At this important time of restructuring of rural development funds, and 17 years after the EU LEADER programme was initialised in 1992, it is important for member states to review on one hand the nature of the change contemporary rural development initiatives have effected to date (and among whom); and how the future benefits of the programme can be conceived in this light.
Chapter 5
Implications for Policy and Practice

5.1 Introduction
The aim of this study was to explore the socio-cultural factors that frame the context of Irish farmers’ and fishers’ poor engagement in contemporary rural development initiatives. The analysis focussed on the complex interplay between the contemporary rural development agenda on one hand, and the subjective rationales of members of the farming and fishing communities on the other. The first step in the analysis explored the contemporary rural development agenda, which is influenced to a significant extent by the EU governance model (LEADER). This analysis is presented in Chapter 1, where the contemporary rural development agenda is explored in the context of three main paradigms: post-productivism, globalisation, and governance. The contemporary rural development ‘product’ is characterised as being ‘Eurocentric’ in nature (see Chapter 1) and is centred on three main forms of economic activity: cultural tourism; alternative food; and the management and valorisation of natural resources (CORASON, 2009).

The second step in the analysis reviewed Bourdieu’s (1993; 1996) theory of capital as framework, where three forms of capital are identified: economic capital (material wealth); social capital (benefits from membership in social networks); and cultural capital (how prestige is attached to matter and action). This review is presented in Chapter 2 and provides a framework for explaining the rationale of conventional farmers and fishers in their engagement with the contemporary rural development ‘product’. It was found that while economic rationality fails to explain the rationale behind the decision-making and behaviour of farmers and fishers, social and cultural capital helps to illuminate the social groups’ terms of reference or their ‘view of the world’ (see Chapter 2). Chapters 3 and 4 present case-study analyses of the socio-cultural factors underpinning the livelihoods of fishers and farmers respectively, exploring the backdrop to their occupational identities and how prestige (cultural capital) is subjectively ascribed to different aspects of their farming and fishing practices. The importance of the collective (social capital) is also discussed with reference to unique social networks that are known to exist around small-scale production households as distinct from large-scale capitalist production entities. The analyses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 are somewhat different in focus, reflecting corresponding differences that emerged in the field research data. The analysis of Chapter 4 focuses in the main on the antagonisms between farmers’ production activities, as esteemed from their own perspectives, and the culture surrounding ‘alternative’ food production activities that are at the core of the contemporary rural development agenda. Chapter 3, on the other hand, focuses on the value-system underpinning small-scale fishers’ activities and how these culturally rich activities, as well as other forms of traditional income-generating practices, are failing to link up with a contemporary rural development agenda for the area.
This chapter draws from interviews and focus group interviews conducted with rural development practitioners, with a view to grounding a discussion of these ‘barriers’ in terms of policy and practice. ‘Agency barriers’ are discussed in light of farmers’ and fishers’ estrangement from the contemporary rural development process with reference to how rural development has become associated with particular types of rural income-generating activities, and disassociated from others. The importance of fishers’ and farmers’ interest groups and associations taking an active role in contributing to rural development decision-making processes is emphasised accordingly. The ‘bureaucratic barriers’ that emerge in the design and implementation of local development projects are then overviewed, focusing on the stifling effects of ‘over-consultation’ in decision-making processes at the local level and the persistence of ‘top-down’ regulations in how development projects are identified and operationalised in practice. Following on from this, effective techniques and methods for ‘choosing rural development actions and actors’ are discussed and strategies are identified for the purposes of achieving advocacy and balanced representation, appraising local resources, building local confidence, and taking a holistic household approach. Finally, ‘socially and culturally adoptable’ forms of rural development for farmers and fishers are identified, reflecting the findings of Chapters 3 and 4 and also the views put forward of rural development professionals who were interviewed for this study.

5.2 Agency Barriers

It is acknowledged in the literature that there are problematic issues of representation and agency in how the contemporary rural development agenda has taken form in Ireland and elsewhere in the EU. It is apparent that certain interest groups and organisations are perceived, and perceive themselves, to have a remit in ‘rural development’ while others do not. Most of these perceptions have arisen in the context of change and transition from forms of sectoral development that are focussed on the production of primary commodities on one hand, to a ‘post productivist’ model where ‘alternative’ forms of rural economic activity are promoted on the other. However, the way in which different rural economic activities are normatively ascribed associations with certain types of organisations and not with other organisations, has consequences for how members of organisations are represented in the development process. In Italy, Osti (2000, p.176) notes that the main interest groups influencing LEADER rural development partnerships are tourism operators and shopkeepers’ association while farming organisations are often “bewildered from losing their privileged channels of influence” (see Chapter 2). In the case of Ireland, it has been noted that rural development debate is prone to being “hi-jacked” by a number of limited conceptions of what the term actually signifies in the broader sense (Boyle, 2008).

The majority of farmers and fishers interviewed for this study were unaware of the participatory approach employed by governance and rural development programmes in their areas. They claimed to have little or no interaction with or awareness of the
activities of local governance and rural development programmes in their areas.\textsuperscript{37} Rural development workers and representatives of farmers and fishers interest groups alike spoke of the general disassociation between farmers on one hand, and ‘rural development’ activities on the other:

“*Farmers don’t think rural development is for them*”

“If you ask farmers if they know what LEADER is would they know?”

Aside from the sectoral imbalance in representation arising from mainstream farmers’ and fishers’ insufficient agency in rural development, there are also threats to equitable representation arising from established norms that privilege certain actors becoming involved in rural development. In the establishment and operation of locally-led development there is the inevitable risk that only a limited number of local inhabitants will get involved, confining participation to “a very small number of enthusiastic members”\textsuperscript{38} (Armstrong quoting Breathnach, 1984). Rural development workers interviewed for this study emphasised the prevalence of this problem in the context of their own work:

“There’s an absence of debate and dialogue that’s worrying. People of a particular ilk are involved on boards that manage everything from schools to rural development companies”

“The predictables are always involved in rural development, the local teacher, businessman and priest... Younger people should be involved”

As emphasised in the bureaucratic literature, for achieving balanced and representative local development, it is imperative for development agencies and interest groups representing different social and occupational groups to have an active voice in local decision-making processes. Otherwise, the ‘hi-jacking’ of rural development agenda by non-representative limited interests is inevitable.

“With all the rural development and structures in the world, it still matters who is involved. Who are the locals? Who gives? Who takes? It’s not just about structures, but it’s about knowing people and what they want, and what their resources are”

\textsuperscript{37} While this was so, a number farmers and fishers claimed that their wives were involved in community work.

\textsuperscript{38} There is a debate in the literature concerning the legitimacy of non-elected actors and non-governmental organisations playing a significant role in governance at local and international (European) levels (see Goodwin, 1998, p. 8).
5.3 Bureaucratic Barriers

Rural development workers interviewed for this study identified bureaucratic obstacles as being a major deterrent to local inhabitants’ participation in rural development and their drawing down of development funds for the establishment of enterprises:

“The responsibilities, legally and economically, for people involved in rural development are huge. There are application procedures, training courses in corporate governance, and health and safety. People are running away, they’re not interested in these procedures, they just want to get the project done”

“We’re gone accountability mad in one sense, so many reports and accounting procedures. On one scheme, an applicant went along and bought great value second hand buses, and they were penalised for this as the regulations governed that they should buy new buses”.

“We should be asking serious questions about how the [regulative] frame is being laid down. There needs to be a space where communities are trusted, particularly those with good track records. These barriers result in people dropping out of community development and looking after their own lot at home. People went to the first meeting, then the system bludgeoned them, then very positive energy is transformed into negative energy”

“People are terrified by regulations, they’re regulated to death”

It was also observed by rural development workers that there is a certain mismatch between the procedural and consultative methods of community-based development on one hand and the driving forces behind successful entrepreneurship on the other:

“We’re ‘partnershiped ad nauseum’. Full representation doesn’t work, it can kill creativity, it can kill entrepreneurship. Enterprises are usually driven by one person”

“The nature of community development is that it’s over cautious, over ratifies, over consultation, over rationalises, over economises, over analyses, thinks about how it won’t work before how it will work”

“Entrepreneurial spirit has been bled from the civil service. If I come to a table with a conservative attitude, what will happen? The conservative attitude of the civil service and the entrepreneurial spirit of someone looking for support don’t match up very well”.

Overall, bureaucracy was identified in this study as being a significantly pervasive barrier (see also Chapters 3 and 4) to encouraging the resourcefulness, imagination
and ‘ingenuity’ that is required for innovative, differentiated and financial successful rural entrepreneurship (see Moseley 2003b).

5.4 Barriers coming from the ‘Top-down’
Aside from the bureaucratic constraints, rural inhabitants and development workers interviewed for this study identified ‘top down’ constraints and regulations as representing major hindrances to both the design and implementation of local development projects. As discussed in Chapter 1, decentralised programmes of local development although representing participative models of development can nonetheless be constrained by official ideas of what these programmes are expected to achieve. For example, Curtin and Varley (1997) state that in the case of Irish area-based partnerships, “what the Irish state/EU have in mind in the area-based partnerships is not the simple handing over of responsibility to local actors. On the contrary, the expectation is that external actors must be centrally involved in providing resources, deciding what is required to be done, who is to be admitted as legitimate partners and how the partnerships are actually to operate” (p. 142). Such a scenario is echoed in the research of O’Toole and Burdess (2004) who state “Higher levels of governance ‘steer’ the self-governing processes of small rural communities, expecting them to ‘row’ for themselves” (p.433):

“Local people are used for justifying the agenda for rural development. You can put certain things in the development plan, but not other things. There’s a culture of not looking outside the box. Once the agenda is set, it’s set for years. Consultative processes are used as tokenism for the purposes of validating the existing agenda.”

“The agenda is already set for rural development. You’re boxed within a prescribed frame. We need to start challenging the frame we’re given. It’s said that everything comes from Europe, Europe is blamed for everything, but that’s rubbish, we need to start challenging policies.”

“We’re being bred into a certain way of thinking and a certain way of doing things”

Many of the rural development workers interviewed for this study made references to the ‘top-down’ determination of local development programmes in practice:

“We want what we want, they want what they think we should want”

“They give us money alright, but they give us plenty of instructions with it on how to spend it. Everything is centralised and every decision has to go back to Dublin to be rubber stamped. This is eroding community’s sense of power and I think other European countries are better at holding onto local power than we are”

“I think the experience is a frustrating one. We do carry out all of these consultative processes, and we come up with our overall strategy and series of objectives, and then we are strangled by eligibility rules. People become frustrated when they see
that what they have developed in terms of a strategy can’t be pursued. In cases where everyone participates in the development of a project, for example renewable energy, and then we find out that we can’t do it, because, for example, parts of it come under another government department, the board is angry and people often feel cheated. The perception is, while we engage people all along in the formulation process, then we can’t implement it”

“A good example of this is when you can get capital assistance to build a mausoleum, and to put all the equipment into it, but you can’t get a penny to hire someone to work with the young people. Usually we have to go back to Údarás to help us out with this. This can be very frustrating”

“Another example is the health centre. The community had an idea of having a one-stop shop: child care, an elderly drop in centre, and the health centre. We were told that we can’t have all of these in one building, we have to have stand alone facilities in individual buildings. This is ridiculous in a community of 200 people, and creates additional blights on the landscape. Now, when it’s too late, they have come around to promoting integrated services”.

Regulations were identified as being particularly stringent in the food industry:

“In our government, I always think it’s a post-colonial thing...To the European thing, the French carry on, they still have their markets and local butchers without having to wear three pairs of plastic gloves!”

“What comes from Brussels and what is adopted here are two different things...Even the local abattoirs, [they said] everything was wrong with how they were doing things until eventually they were closed down. All them abattoirs were buying local animals and killing them in their own environment, now all we have are meat factories”.

“Food certificates are given to take-aways selling fast food, and not to us making quality natural food. No certificate will make a bad thing into a good thing”.

While members of farming and fishing households interviewed for this study have a significant tradition of household food processing, this tradition and is not being valorised by contemporary rural development initiatives (see Chapter 3 and 4).

5.6 Promoting Rural Development: Choosing Actors and Actions
Promoting ‘rural development’ as an inclusive participative process is a significant task for those working within the remit of governance and rural development programmes. With regard to rural development, participation is described as including “people’s involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes” (Cohen and Uphoff 1977, cited
by UNDP, 1999). For the purposes of encouraging genuine participation, ‘public input’ or consultation meetings are insufficient (Moseley, 2003b).

There is a vast literature on the methods (systematic combinations of tools and strategies/concepts) and tools (individual exercises) that can be used for encouraging participation in community-based initiatives and the effectiveness of these initiatives (see UNFAO, Field Tools Database, 2009). Methods and approaches to encouraging presentation range from face to face interaction in the form of consultations, public meetings and focus groups, as well as technological tools such as audio-visual and web-based communications. The following techniques are identified by Moseley (2003b) as being effective for encouraging meaningful popular participation: implementation of questionnaires for village appraisals; gaming exercises to identify threats and buffers to local sustainability; local focus groups; parish maps to identify key resources; public meetings; and formal local democracy by Moseley (2003b, pp. 140-141).

While such techniques are important as initial points of contact, it is also important to consider the qualitative aspects of participation and the extent to which participation of local inhabitants in community development leads to a sense of genuine ownership of emergent development outputs and strategies. Most crucially, “people need to know fully the development process and how they fit in”; and for this “diverse modes of learning, interpretation, and creative solutions are required” (Stafford, 2005). Where members of the public or a group of local inhabitants come together to discuss a place-based concern or issue, one of the most well known tools for encouraging genuine engagement and ‘opening up’ is the ‘Six Thinking Hat’ (de Bono, 1985; see also Heanue, 2009). Using this method, different styles of thinking are used to guide ‘brain-storming’ or decision-making processes in relation to a particular question or problem:

White hat: Positivist analysis of the data available
- Red hat: Intuition, reaction and emotion
- Black hat: Cautiousness and pessimism
- Yellow hat: Optimism
- Green hat: Creativity and ‘freewheeling’
- Blue hat: Process control and chairing of the meeting

Effective examples of methods to improve public ownership are: ‘Citizens’ Jury’: a means for obtaining citizens’ input into policy decisions and feedback on policy impacts; participatory training: when training arises from identification of the specific training needs of participants as articulated by them; vulnerable group profiling: focusing specifically on groups of non-participants, identifying their common factors and attributes, with a view to understanding barriers to their participation (UNFAO, Field Tools Database, 2009).
Issues of advocacy and how different social groups are represented (through the interest groups and organisations that represent them) are critical in for achieving representative rural development (see section on Agency Barriers above). However, broader cultural concerns of passivity and participants’ failure to take active roles in rural development emerged in interviews conducted with rural development practitioners. The need to open up the rural development debate and for rural inhabitants to take active roles in setting the rural development agenda was emphasised:

“A system of patronage has developed in conjunction with rural development. We are looking for guidance and handouts more and more, instead at looking at the nature of our problems and solutions to them”

“I’d say that the kind of democracies we live in have very few spaces for expression, I mean free expression where people can think independently without being ostracised. There are very few open spaces where you encourage open participation. One of the challenges ahead is to figure out how we can put in place workable democracies”

“We live in times where people are afraid to play. Many great social changes come out of that creative space where people have time to think”

The failure of local people to lead and take ownership of rural development hinders the extent to which local initiatives are stimulated and reinvigorated by local knowledge and culture. Poor local determination of rural development initiatives also hinders the extent to which socially and culturally acceptable solutions to local problems can conceivably be found. Where local development solutions emerge externally, the result can often be inappropriate or unworkable types of initiatives. For example, single universal solutions are often sought for development problems that require an alternative or dynamic solution

“The main training available here is in IT, to prepare people for mythical class A jobs coming into our community. It’s a fantasy that this will happen”

“The people who are successful out our way are able to do a variety of things, changing with the season, doing farming, tourism services etcetera. All of these activities should be supported by rural development”

“There’s a questionable project in relation to an airstrip, this is a nonsense project that people came up with in Dublin and it’s costing millions. If you were to use any yardstick to judge it with, it fails. There isn’t even the capacity to fill the planes. If you’re taking food into the island, there isn’t even cold storage on the boat, yet they are building airstrips”

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5.7 Appraising Local Resources
By including local stakeholders in the decision-making process, rural development initiatives are considered to be more likely to ‘stick’ (Moseley, 2003b, p. 2). In this regard, techniques for appraising the local spectrum of development potential are foremost. The role of extra-local actors was identified by rural development workers as being crucial for assisting local groups in appraising the potential of local cultural and physical resources:

“Des Bishop is a good example, he didn’t rely on any grant, his greatest asset is that he wasn’t a committee. He is a communicator and he was famous. People felt proud of their language”.

“It’s hard for the community to see its own culture”

“I think in some rural communities there’s a need for a set of prompters that show the menu of possibilities...Internationally as well as nationally. Sometimes we don’t realise what we have ourselves, we need other people’s eyes”

“We would benefit from a targeted working group – people who have different perspectives. Otherwise it’s usually the same people coming together, same ideas, same dynamic, same outcomes. It becomes stale and predictable”

“There’s a group of 20 people who are involved in everything, we should reach outside into the European community and get people to come and see what we have. The people should come through an agency. A leader in another community would be able to bring fresh stuff to the table. Sometimes there’s a lot of good will but not enough imagination.”

“The challenge should be for us is to build something different. We need a reassessment, a period of adjustment. Around rural development we need to think about the bigger aspirational picture and to idealise about it. Then, we can think about the steps to achieving it”

“A confident nation won’t go along an homogenised path”

The Irish Rural Tourism Federation (IRTF) has published a series of place-based tourism guides that elaborate the uniqueness of individual areas (currently there are guides for Offaly, East-Clare, Meath and Ballyhoura). These guides represent a break away from the uniform depiction of Irish tourism and focus more on ‘real’ and

39 Des Bishop, an Irish-American comedian, featured in Irish television series “In the name of the Fada” produced by Pat Comer (2008). The series traced Des Bishop’s ‘immersion’ experience in Ceantar na n’Oileán where he lived to learn the Irish language.
alternative aspects of local culture and heritage that could ideally provide a basis for tourism. On the front of the Offaly guide for example are references to “castles and monasteries” while the counterpart guide for East-Clare emphasises “islands and literature”. “Dinosaurs and dancing” are highlighted on the guide for Ballyhoura; while “battles and archaeology” are identified as attractions in Meath. These IRTF guides are illustrative of a fresh approach to defining cultural resources at the local level.

5.8 Building Confidence
The problems of poor confidence and low self- as well as collective-esteem were identified by rural development workers as representing a major inhibitor to vibrant local economies and communities:

“It’s a post-colonial thing”

“In terms of capacity, what is it? How do we get to a stage where we actually able to say we are, clearly, that we can say that we can do certain things instead of understating it or throwing it aside”

“It always upsets me when I look up at people on the mountain doing activities, and they’re not Connemara kids. People don’t understand their own place anymore, and they need to learn their own localities to enjoy them. As the philosopher John Moriarty used to say, people are being educated out of their place instead of into their place. They don’t understand the dynamics and relevance of their place”

“There’s a thing out there... I remember being out on the hills with a past pupil. He said, Jesus, isn’t this a great place for tourists? No! It’s a great place for us, if tourists like it that’s great but it’s ours...”

Rural development workers identified methods and approaches for building confidence:

“Critical ‘Meas’ is what we need. Forums for people to feel able to critique their own community in terms of good as well as bad”

“We could set up exchanges for groups of kids to go to other rural areas to see what they have, and they could come to ours to identify what we have”

“It’s important to hold young people in their own culture. One of the ways to build capacity is you get young people to dance the sean nós again, to sing sean nós, you get them playing instruments, at a very young age. You get them to the stage that they can stand up themselves and say who they are. You can have special guests like

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40 Irish for respect.
Sean Tyrell, Sharon Shannon, but get the young people and local adults to perform alongside these people”

“To bring a group of young people abroad to somewhere like Scotland, and the people abroad thought they were brilliant and said to them “so you can speak Irish... do you speak it all the time?”. It’s only through other people’s reaction that our young people thought they were really special being able to speak another language get all proud and puffed up about it. They could be speaking it to their parents ’til the cows come home but that’s not how they come to realise how special it is.”

“If you’re going to develop the critical mass, you have to develop the cultural landscape. Young people mightn’t have too many in their own age group in the community, but if there are exciting things going on, they will have confidence and interest”

“It’s about giving young lads the voice, they can do it”

“Considering our age profile & disappearing skills, a particular challenge for us is to get older people involved. On one level they value their skills, but they don’t see a role for themselves in passing these skills on to the next generation. Setting up events for exchanging these skills give confidence to older people, and to younger people”

The need to employ a collective approach is crucial for instilling confidence in disempowered groups. Bringing together groups of farmers or farmers who are experiencing similar problems to discuss these common problems can be productive in itself. Indeed, ‘discussion groups’ can give rise to members’ collective strategising of ways of overcoming challenges. The progression of members of the group can also positively influence other members of the group.

5.9 The need for a Holistic Family Approach
Engaging with the contemporary rural development agenda requires not only the active participation and entrepreneurial creativity of farmers and fishers themselves, but of members of the farming and fishing households. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, farming and fishing households have traditionally taken a pluri-active approach to their income-generating activities. Unlike many other sectors of employment, contributions of spouses and offspring have been central to the operation of farm and fishing enterprises. In Ireland the female spouses of farmers and fishers have traditionally held responsibility for market-place selling. Spouses and offspring on farms have also undertaken a wide range of farming tasks, particularly during busy times seasonally but also with consistent functions all year round. The growing of vegetables and the rearing of hens is traditionally associated specifically with farm women (see Clear, 2008). The domestic processing of farming
and fishing produce (e.g. butter, salted fish, cured bacon) was also undertaken in the most part by women.

Contemporarily, spouses and offspring have taken on additional and new roles that reflect new bureaucratic and information technological challenges. With the bureaucratisation of farming, women have assumed central roles in undertaking the wide array of administrative tasks that have come hand in hand with farm modernisation and EC regulations. It is noted in the literature that women are more motivated than men in confronting challenges to diversify mainstream farming and fishing enterprises (see Haugen and Vik, 2008). Women are more highly represented in interest groups and organisations representing rural tourism and ‘alternative’ food movements than they have been heretofore in mainstream farming and fishing organisations (see Chapter 4). A study conducted by Cunningham (2008) states that “the recent explosion of interest in artisan food production – often led by women – is further proof that the gender imbalance is now finally correcting itself” (Cunningham, 2008).

While there is no counterpart data relating to fishing families, offspring of farm families are highly represented in third-level education institutions (see Crowley et al, 2008). Offspring, as exponents of the technological age, are highly skilled in information technology and web-based applications. While the data show that educational attainment among farmers tends to be quite low, skills acquired by offspring through third level educational programmes could potentially be targeted towards the creation of high value-added farm and fishing based enterprises.

It is appropriate for education and training schemes that have mandates to encourage rural economic diversification to target women and offspring specifically for the purposes of encouraging diversification and addressing the problem of farm succession. Diverse cultural tourism enterprises ranging from artisan foods to the valorisation of natural resources and amenities are becoming popular avenues of employment among highly educated cosmopolitan younger generations in rural areas (see Blekesaune et al, 2007). Farm succession is acknowledged to be a critical problem and the value of existing farming and fishing enterprises as providing a base for diverse high value-added enterprises must be recognised to a greater degree than heretofore. Appraisal of existing traditional forms of knowledge that have been cultivated for generations within farming and fishing households provide a crucial route for identifying enterprises that are socially and culturally adoptable among members of the farming and fishing communities. Traditional knowledge

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41 In 2008 Teagasc commenced a study to explore women’s changing identities in rural Ireland and their roles in rural economic diversification. This is a PhD study funded through Teagasc’s Walsh Fellowship scheme and is being undertaken by Ms. Tanya Watson (Teagasc Rural Economy Research Centre) and supervised by Dr. Anne Byrne (NUIG); Dr. Nata Duvvury (NUIG); and Dr. Áine Macken-Walsh (Teagasc).
underpinning the domestic processing of food holds significant potential for establishing household artisan food enterprises.

5.10 Culturally and Socially Adoptable Rural Development
As well as being disenfranchised, disillusioned and disempowered in the context of their traditional income generating activities, farmers and fishers are showing evidence of being estranged and alienated from current opportunities that come under the rural development agenda (see Chapters 3 and 4). Due to changing policy and market circumstances surrounding the viability of their enterprises, the majority of farmers and fishers in Ireland are in critical need of support from rural development initiatives. In the rural development literature, it is claimed that by fostering local inhabitants’ active participation in setting the rural development agenda (including indigenous groups of farmers and fishers) it is expected that a more culturally and socially appropriate form of development action will ensue (see Hart and Murray, 2001; Chapter 1).

Techniques and methods for encouraging popular participation and the need for a holistic family approach in deciding routes towards alternative income-generating activities are discussed above. Notwithstanding the various techniques and approaches used for encouraging participation, findings presented in Chapters 3 and 4 suggest that it remains essential for traditional practices of farming and fishing to retain a central position in the framework of how alternative income-generating activities are conceptualised and operationalised. Rather than focussing on new forms and routes for rural entrepreneurship, it is appropriate and effective to look in the first instance at how existing knowledge, skills and culture can provide a launching platform for new forms of entrepreneurship. In such a way, routes can be identified to pursue the contemporary rural development agenda in a way that is more culturally and socially adoptable for farming and fishing groups.

5.11 Small-Scale Farming and Fishing & ‘Real’ Rural Development
Aside from the obvious advantages of a having a diverse local food supply, there are two main attributes of small-scale farming and fishing that are especially valued in the contemporary rural development literature. These are: the recognised social sustainability and cultural significance of small-scale farming and fishing; and the ecologically unique local knowledge systems that underpin small-scale farming and fishing.

The cultural significance of small-scale fishing and farming or ‘crofting’ has received official policy recognition and is elaborated at length in the literature (see Shucksmith, 2008; MacGoodwin, 2001). Small-scale production in the farming and fishing sectors is underpinned less by economic rationality and more by existential rationality where the focus is on the sustainability of enterprises as an intrinsic part of local socio-cultural fabric (see Chapter 2). Small-scale fishing and farming prioritise socially sustainable practices and represent the ‘Chayanovian’ model, where economic, social and cultural objectives are mutually entwined and
inseparable (Chayanov, 1925; McGoodwin, 2001; Shucksmith, 2008; see Chapter 2). Despite decades of productivist policies under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and similar policies under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) that are underpinned by economic rationale, many small-scale farms and fishing enterprises in Ireland today remain motivated by a three-pronged rationality (economic, social and cultural) in their farm management practices (see Chapter 2; Crowley, 2003).

Aside from the cultural and social inclinations of small-scale farming and fishing practices towards sustainability, it is acknowledged in the literature that small-scale fishing and farming have the capacity to be ‘greener’ than large-scale intensive forms of production. The valuable forms of knowledge that have accumulated within localities over generations represent intricate practical know-how of the interplay between farming and fishing practices and the local natural environment. Although inevitably under threat due to fewer successors of traditional farming and fishing enterprises, this knowledge is continually present in most rural communities in Ireland, albeit among older generations. Over the past number of decades, much of this local knowledge has been rendered redundant by productivist agricultural policies that are driven by intensification and the application of ‘new’ technologies (see Crowley, 2003; Jorgensen, 2006). Local embedded knowledge, although holding the status as a primary resource in the contemporary rural development literature, is now failing to match up with ‘alternative’ routes towards rural entrepreneurship in the Irish case (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Referring to what has been recently labelled in the literature as ‘real’ rural development (Marsden, 2003), or the ‘new paradigm’ rural development (Van der Ploeg 2000; Tovey, 2006), this study argues for an appraisal of small-scale farming and fishing enterprises as being central to realising the potential of rural development in Ireland. ‘Real’ or ‘new paradigm’ rural development is described as offering a challenge and an alternative “both to the conventional agricultural modernisation model, in which agriculture is given the part of extracting the primary resources from which others outside the rural economy can create wealth for themselves, and to post-agrarian models of rural development in which a declining agriculture creates space for consumption of the countryside, converting agricultural land into recreational facilities, nature reserves, areas for sub-urbanisation, or sites for factories and hotels” (Tovey, 2006, p. 172). Central to the ‘new paradigm’ is the re-centralisation of primary production activities in rural development – “transforming understandings of the role of agriculture in rural development, moving it from a peripheral and dying to a central activity in rural places” (Tovey, 2006, p.173).

Tovey (2006) notes that the numbers of rural inhabitants engaging in ‘new paradigm’ rural development are difficult to determine but references the estimation of Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) that 50% of all farmers in the EU are engaging in these types of activities and the less optimistic view of Marsden (2003) that “the
possibilities of its full realisation are unequally distributed across European rural space and will never become ‘mainstreamed’ unless given strong and appropriate state supports” (Tovey, 2006, p. 192-173). While it is evident that the engagement of disenfranchised farmers and fishers in ‘new paradigm’ rural development does not represent a significant social movement in Ireland, the paradigm offers nonetheless a progressive route for their involvement in the contemporary rural development agenda using their existing skill sets.

There are three key concepts that articulate how ‘real’ rural development can be understood as a feasible development model: ‘deepening’; ‘broadening’; and ‘re-grounding’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 176; see Van der Ploeg and Renting, 2004). The concepts represent three umbrella strategies that assist the viability of small-scale fishing or agricultural production through identifying ways of adding value to the core fishing or farming activity.

Deepening
‘Deepening’ practices seek to add value to the product – “returning to the farm food-processing activities which were historically appropriated from it by the food industry (Goodman et al. 1987)” (Tovey, 2006, p. 176). Tovey (2006) cites examples such as converting raw milk into butter or cheese, processing pork, and smoking fish and also notes that direct selling through food markets and box schemes are part of the ‘deepening’ process (Tovey, 2006, p. 177). Young & McCarthy (2008) in their guide to ‘101 rural business ideas’ include income-generating activities that reflect ‘deepening’ or adding high value-added: ‘farm fresh’ turkey production; free range eggs; free range poultry and game production; outdoor/free-range pig rearing. Other opportunities for coastal communities lie in the provision of ‘fresh’ local seafood ‘from tide to table’ including fish, shellfish and seaweeds. Examples of service-based ‘deepening’ practices are farm and harbour shops; establishing local agriculture and fishing markets; box schemes to homes and businesses e.g. restaurants (see Young and McCarthy, 2008).

Broadening
The concept of ‘broadening’ emphasises the need to incorporate additional fishing/agricultural and para-fishing/agricultural activities to the central fishing/farming activity in how the household generates income (Tovey, 2006, p. 177). Tovey (2006) identifies examples of ‘broadening’: the establishment of an organic slaughterhouse and the selling-on of grain and other goods to farmers in the area (Tovey, 2006, p.177). Young and McCarthy (2008) include examples of ‘broadening’ activities in their guide: services such as farmyard maintenance; farm animal husbandry services; contract rearing; landscaping/gardening services. Additional activities identified in line with ‘broadening’ include the production of alternative primary goods such as turf-grass; floristry; honey; harvesting of rainwater and wind energy; hardy nursery; and outdoor cut foliage (Young & McCarthy, 2008). Herbs and botanics (e.g. hawthorn; thistle, dandelion) also represent an area of potential, given the increasing consumer attention to natural
alternatives in healthcare and cosmetics\textsuperscript{42}. Seaweed holds significant potential in this area also.

**Re-grounding**

‘Re-grounding’ is perceived as necessary to give these economic activities ‘any distinctiveness’ (Tovey, 2006, p. 177) and depends on “strategies to end dependence on financial and industrial capitals and to replace them with inputs of social and ecological capitals” (Tovey, 2006, p. 178). Examples of ‘re-grounding’ activities that are listed in Young & McCarthy (2008) are school/farm tours; heritage farms; rural nature tours; making/selling crafts; self-catering accommodation; farmhouse bed and breakfast; camping facilities; riding schools/arenas; cross country courses; adventure horse rides; horse drawn caravan holiday; boating and boat tours; fishing and fishing tours; allotments. Social-farming, which involves providing farming facilities as a social/health service, hold significant potential in this regard and has demonstrated significant success elsewhere in the EU. Social farming is defined as “farming practices aimed at promoting disadvantaged people’s rehabilitation and care and/or towards the integration of people with low contractual capacity (i.e. psychophysical disabilities; convicts; drug addicts; minors; emigrants)” (SOFAR, 2009; see McGloin, 2009)\textsuperscript{43}.

A national blue-print for deepening, broadening and re-grounding activities is impossible, given the requirement to take a local approach to appraising resources, skills and culture. The concepts are useful for the purposes of identifying development actions that are rooted in existing farming and fishing practices and as a result are more likely to be socially and culturally adoptable. The following sections present the results of focus groups interviews conducted for this study, identifying examples of socially and culturally adoptable income-generating practices under the themes of: tourism and the culture economy; valorisation of natural resources; and artisan foods.

5.12 Tourism and the Culture Economy

For areas like Iorras Aithneach, Lowe et al (1998) note that the culture economy also promotes a “further participative rationale…in the empowerment of an historically repressed or marginalised cultural system…such as Gaelic, Breton or Lap” to “raise local consciousness of territorial identity…and raise confidence in the ability of the area to regenerate itself” (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 54). Rural areas, it is conceived, particularly those that are remote and have been heretofore marginalised by mainstream policies, can often still hold many of the ‘raw’, authentic and increasingly rare cultural commodities such as “speakers of the regional language, traditional foods, remnants of craft skills, important historical and archaeological sties and the native flora and fauna” and therefore are particularly well-positioned to

\textsuperscript{42} Currently, many botanics and associated tinctures are unavailable to the retail sector in Ireland.

\textsuperscript{43} Teagasc funded a PhD study on the potential of Social Farming through its Walsh Fellowship Scheme (2006-2009), see www.sofar.ie

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develop a localised culture economy (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 55). In addition, it is claimed that through the development of the culture economy and the associated valorisation of local custom, tradition, and skill, higher status jobs are created for local people (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 56) and, in line with principles of governance, puts the locality as the “producers/guardians” in control of the management of local resources (Lowe et al, 1998, p. 57).

Chapter 3 identifies main cultural commodities present in Iorras Aithneach that are ideal for the type of cultural economy but which are not valorised to their full potential. The potential of these and other unique traditions in Iorras Aithneach for the development of a culture economy were identified in focus group interviews conducted for this study:

“Cultural tourism should be about the artistic, literary and archaeological tradition, the flora and fauna. In South Connemara there are lots of different islands where hermits went to, like Mac Dara Island. There’s lots of pagan and religious tradition and a huge number of holy wells. A story needs to be built up around this”

Of contemporary and traditional Irish music, literature and dance in Iorras Aithneach and elsewhere in Ireland, it was stated:

“Festivals like Pléaráca and the Bog Week are fantastic for bringing people together”.

“The traditional festivals are great but in most places in Connemara, there is country in the pubs, ‘sean-nós country’ music. This is part of the genuine music scene and particular to the Galway Gaeltacht. It’s not seen to be valid nonetheless and there’s no festival around it”

“Young people need an outlet for other genres of music, using the Irish language. Like the Ballyfermot. A rock school where there are so many rocks! There are loads of musicians in the area to teach, plenty of venues to play in local pubs”

“We have TG4, RnaG, and Connemara Community Radio in the area. We could offer a really stylish course on media. It would be a perfect way for groups of visitors to learn about another culture. There are lots of poets, painters, musicians, traditional trades in Connemara”

International interest in traditional Irish boating, and the associated ‘spirit’ of Irish people, was observed by a rural development practitioner:

“I was at a boat festival in France, and the Connemara boats were over there. There were four-masted schooners and very sophisticated boats, and ours were small in comparison. There were two and a half thousand boats there and everyone was looking for these six boats from Connemara. The pub where the Connemara
gang were was the pub where everyone wanted to be, for the wildness and the craic. We have a great energy that should be seen as a resource”.

Issues emerged in the focus groups interviews in relation to the Irish tourism industry generally:

“This is why the tourism industry is defined outside of our areas? Holiday homes evaluated in accordance with whether you have certain gadgets in the accommodation. The linguistic or cultural product doesn’t feature in the list of qualities. What’s the point in changing one house in suburbia for another?”

“The brochures don’t say that they’ll give you some turf, some eggs, maybe some fish”

“For tourism, there are plenty of opportunities around walking, just like the Sliabh Bloom walks and cycling routes. They’re doing a thing in the North - they make canoe maps, showing and building up the cultural landscape around beautifully illustrated maps. You can rent a cottage to stay on the islands on the lakes. We can do that”

“The B&B must redefine itself and provide good food, local produce. This competes with a hotel”

It is interesting to note that rural development practitioners emphasised cultural tourism initiatives, for example food, festivals, and music, rather than the mainstream globalised tourism product. Overall, the local and differentiated appeal of tourism products was emphasised by rural development practitioners. This correspond with the thesis of Lowe et al. (2008) that cultural tourism initiatives can be more empowering and desirable for local people (see Chapters 1 and 3).

5.13 Valorising Natural Resources
Ideas were put forth by rural development professionals on the use of natural resources unique to their area:

“Most rural areas have resources, whether a mountain or a river, they need to be used, even to go for a climb or to go and feed the swans or ducks”

“We’ve so many lakes in Connemara that aren’t even recognised. We don’t know about our lakes but the French have written a song about them. French people ask me to talk about our beautiful lakes in Connemara. There’s a beautiful lake in the middle of Carraroe village, but you can’t walk around it, it would be great to have a walkway around it. There’s very poor access to most of the lakes in Connemara.”
“If you go to a coastal community in Europe, you know you’re in a coastal community. They use the sea, they have sailing, they have all the facilities etc. We have the best boats but no activities for tourists”

“There are lots of opportunities for marine leisure tourism: dolphin watching, mini-cruises”

“There are 198 piers in Galway. We should see boats available at piers and restaurants beside them”

Local resources of folklore and archaeology were identified as having potential for development:

“Many archaeological sites are on land owned by farmers. We had an idea to go to photograph the site, and the family with their site. A brilliant professional photo. Then we’d have an exhibition, the community would be invited. We’d create an atmosphere and get an archaeologist to speak about the sites. We then would have a presentation of certificates to show the archaeological value of the site.... This does two things – it gives the farmer and his family status and the resources in the community are built up. You also stop people destroying the site”

“Farmers have a lot of folklore themselves. Who ever asked them? Did anyone ever ask “Paddy, what do you know about that?” Schools sometimes do as you hear children going home asking their grandparents about things. Archaeologists’ information could be coupled with local folklore”.

“Even if it isn’t a trendy place to go, each little village has their own story. Sean-fhocail, music, folklore. With digital enterprise, this can go all on the web”

“There are lots of stories. Mass rocks, the grave of the lone soldier. Children should have that as they grow older... We all have regrets that we didn’t take enough in from our parents and grandparents, but younger people will take much less”

Wind and sea energy were also identified as having potential:

“We’ll be fish farming more into the future, in more sophisticated ways. We’ll have to produce more from the sea than heretofore”

“We’ll have to look at energy from the ocean and wind. We need to change our mentality. Pylons are more unsightly than windmills”

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A recently established enterprise in Co. Galway is one example of a cultural tourism initiative that utilises local folklore and tradition www.cnocsuain.ie.
5.14 Alternative Food production

Ireland, particularly compared to Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European counterparts, is “without a strong local food culture” (Fonte, 2008), and that primarily the Irish eat “staples” (Share et al 2006). It must be recognised, nonetheless, that although Irish rural households did not traditionally sell processed food at the market place that is not to suggest that production and processing was not a widespread and established practice. Traditionally, domestic food processing represented less an income-generating practice and more a diverse food-source, primarily of pork (domestically preserved by salting); ‘black pudding’; mutton; rabbits (skinned and hung); poultry; eggs; and butter. In addition, rural (as well as many urban) Irish households traditionally produced ‘brown bread’ (a baked bread of sour milk, flour, bread soda, and bran); ‘griddle cake’ (a white bread alternative cooked in a griddle pan); salted bacon; rabbit stew; and poultry (traditionally stuffed with potato). In Co. Clare, the traditional method of cooking poultry was in large cast iron pots, which were placed on the ground and covered with hot coals. The sea was also traditionally recognised as a diverse food source, primarily through harvesting different types of seaweed: sleamhchan; sea grass (dilisk) and carrigeen; as well as shellfish such as bairneachs, periwinkles, sea-urchins, and crab.

Ireland’s Slow Food Movement’s ‘Presidia’ are “the Slow Food International Instruments which gather in support of endangered artisan foods” 46. They exist to “determine interventions which will preserve the food, the species/habitats which form the basis of the food and the micro-economy of the community which produces the food”47. Presidia and Ireland Slow Food ‘Ark’ supports and promotes foods which are attributed genuine local uniqueness. Currently, there are four food categories accepted into the Ark:

- Fresh blood puddings
- Seaweeds/Sea Vegetables (Dulse, Laver, Carrageen)
- Boxy
- Kiln-toasted Oatmeal.

A report on local food culture in the EU notes that “a wide diversity of food has been identified as traditionally Irish. They range from buttered eggs to soda bread, blaa, simnel cake, boxy, Connemara and Wicklow lamb, mutton pie, salted ling, eels, clove rock, spiced beef, smoked salmon, kippers, apple tarts, bacon and ham, cabbage, fruit slice (gurcake), red lemonade, brawn, yellowman, oatcake, pin-head oatmeal, buttermilk potatoes, carrageen, stout and tea” (Intermediate Technology Food Chain, p. 25).

45 A product traditionally made from intestines stuffed with pork blood and cereal.
46 www.slowfoodireland.com/presidia--ark-page.html
Despite such examples and Ireland’s broader food heritage, rural development practitioners interviewed for the purpose of this study remarked on the lack of local food and local food enterprises:

“All the food comes in lorries for our tourists”.

“Connemara lamb is a great product and we sell it cheap, we’re making nothing out of it, no value added.”

“When you go to an island, you think you’d get a fresh fish, but you can’t get it! It’s easier to get it in Galway city”.

“I went into an island, there was foie gras on the menu. No winkles, no mussels, no seaweed. Foie gras has nothing to do with our islands. The chef should be able to make seaweed products. It’s to do with our lack of confidence that we’re not using the seaweed. We need to try and analyse the value of what we have, what it is to come to our locality, and reorientate what we’re doing.

They noted the following in relation to the potential for a local food culture:

“We’ve a sea week festival and a bog week festival. For our seaweek festival, for years I’ve been saying why are we selling our mussels in bags to France? Why are they not in every pub in Connemara instead of imported dishes? When you go to Cornwall you can buy a Cornish pastie in the pub. Why in Connemara can’t you buy a mussel pie? We’ve introduced a mussel pie for our sea week, and we’re also going to introduce a lamb pie”.

“Artisan foods come from mostly outside influences, but there are good cheese producers in West Clare and West Cork. From a national perspective, to develop small food producers may seem tiny, but a few jobs in a rural community you can build other things around that will attract other enterprises and more jobs. The system needs to encourage this type of thing”

“There’s a big market there eventually for seaweed. The Asian people recognise it as being of huge nutritional value”

“South Connemara is a blackspot for gourmet, but there’s great potential there. We could have cookery schools, go down to claddach, gather ingredients, and meet the chef to show you how to cook natural produce”

“We need cookery courses focusing on winkles, mussels, barnacles. We could have gourmet weekends including walking tours of the shoreline”
“Many people running B&Bs need to learn how to cook. People expect much higher standards now. We could attract third level modules to our area for cooking using local produce”

For appraising the local skills and knowledge base with respect to domestic food processing, an effective technique is to hold information sharing sessions between younger members of the community and older members of the community who remember these processes first-hand.

5.15 Conclusion
The majority of rural development policy rhetoric is seeking to ‘indigenise’ the rural economy by including local representatives in the development process. The LEADER programme envisaged that local development actors’ “design and implementation of development interventions” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997) would result in more representative and effective development. Local actors are seen as “competent actors in the development process” (CEC, 1988) and it was conceived that through encompassing ‘bottom-up’ forces and dynamics that new, diverse, and innovative rural development solutions would come forth in an economy where productivist agriculture was no longer prioritised.

There are problems of agency in how the rural development agenda is taking form. Farmers and fishers interviewed for the purposes of this study perceived ‘rural development’ as being not for them and had a low level of awareness of rural development supports outside of farming and fishing. In this light, it is imperative for development agencies and interest groups representing farmers and fishers to have an active voice in national and local rural development fora. Rural development workers, however, pointed to bureaucratic barriers in the rural development process which they perceived as owing to regulations and procedures that are outside their control. The administrative tasks and legal implications of individuals applying for financial assistance were perceived as central hindrances to engagement. ‘Top-down’ influences are persisting in how local development initiatives are being designed and implemented by local groups and are found to have the effect of undermining local decision-making processes. Regulations in the food processing industry were identified as overly-stringent and prohibitive to the development of the sector in general.

There is a need for strategies to open up the rural development debate and to encourage the participation of social groups such as farmers and fishers who are slow to engage. Strategies should not only seek to improve methods of communication between rural development agencies and local inhabitants but should also incorporate techniques that help to identify and instil more culturally and socially appropriate forms of rural development. Appraising local resources is a critical step towards achieving this and the role of extra-local actors in identifying areas of potential is crucial. Strategic efforts to build confidence are also required,
and here, the importance of joining up the local with the extra-local is again emphasised.

It is crucial for contemporary rural development initiatives to employ a holistic family approach in their strategies to encourage participation. The strong capacity of women in furthering farm diversification and farm-based enterprises must be recognised by farming and rural development agencies in order to assist the process of rural economic diversification generally. The roles of spouses and offspring in farming and fishing enterprises had traditionally been strong. Spouses, for example, have traditionally held responsibility for market-place selling and domestic food processing, activities that many farmers and fishers are not inclined towards. Contemporarily, spouses and offspring in farming and fishing households have taken on additional roles that reflect new bureaucratic and information technological challenges. Such skills could potentially be targeted towards the creation of high value-added farm and fishing based enterprises and could help towards solving the problem of farm succession.

In identifying culturally and appropriate forms of rural development actions (i.e. economic activities) for rural areas and the social groups that exist within them, it is important to account for the role of tacit knowledge. Appraising existing tacit knowledge is important not only for the purposes of creating the type of high value-added local economy that is associated with the contemporary rural development agenda but also for identifying routes of development that are more likely to be successfully pursued by local inhabitants. The cultural and social significance of small-scale farming and fishing enterprises is essentially valuable to what is called ‘new paradigm’ rural development (see Chapter 1). The processes of ‘deepening’; ‘broadening; and ‘re-grounding’ are instrumental for the incorporation of small-scale fishing and farming households into the rural development fold and placing them at its core. Forms of income generating practices that are culturally and socially appropriate while being in line with the contemporary rural development agenda were proposed by rural development workers interviewed for the purposes of this study. Recognising the role of tacit knowledge as the primary resource for these processes is perhaps the most important task of rural development workers.

Through a holistic approach to analysing and strategising small-scale farmers’ and fishers’ potential, it is possible to chart a more adoptable development route. This resonates with the principles upon which the EU contemporary rural development agenda was formulated in the first instance: to “enable a better understanding of the area and its living strength” (CEC, 1988) and to provide “an innovation and a lever of innovation” (LEADER European Observatory, 1997). The active participation of different social and professional groups in the development process is necessary to uncover the local physical, social, cultural and human capital (i.e. ‘ingenuity’) that underpin successful innovations. LEADER-based and other partnership structures are designed to achieve the representation of different social and occupational groups in the development process and it is hoped that farmers and fishers will
success in availing of the €425m. programme (operational 2009-2013) in financial support that is available for training, education, knowledge exchange, community initiatives, and enterprise start-up. This study provides insights and context to how farmers’ and fishers’ leveraging of these funds may be best achieved. Given the firm entrenchment of farmers and fishers in strong place- and community-based occupational identities, the barrier to using economic rationality alone to encourage their adoption of alternative income-generating practices represents perhaps the most serious inhibitor to successful development initiatives. Within contemporary rural development policy-making and academic spheres, the emphasis on active participation in decision-making in ‘the design and implementation of interventions’ has long been central (see Chapter 1). Pro-active rather than passive participation in rural development programmes is a crucial and recognised indicator for success in this regard.

Further research on farmers’ and fishers’ engagement with the contemporary rural development agenda is required. In particular, analyses of farmers’ and fishers’ agency and representation in rural development, and case-study investigations of how ‘real’ rural development can become operationalised are needed. Practicable means of ‘deepening’, ‘broadening’ and ‘re-grounding’ small-scale farming and fishing enterprises must be researched in order to promote and instil new understandings of how ‘rural development’ is relevant to farmers in fishers. While some authors estimate that approximately 50% of all farmers in Europe are engaged in ‘real’ rural development currently, this figure represents a gross overestimation in the Irish case. Marsden (2003) notes of real rural development that “the possibilities of its full realisation are unequally distributed across European rural space and will never become ‘mainstreamed’ unless given strong and appropriate state supports” (Marsden 2003, cited by Tovey, 2006, p. 192-173). Although fishers have less support in terms of a targeted advisory, education and research service, Teagasc as an organisation that reaches into all types of farming households and rural communities across the country is crucial in achieving progress towards these ends.

48 Teagasc’s Rural Development and Innovation Service’s ‘Farm Options Programme’ is available free of charge to all rural inhabitants in Ireland whether or not they are farmers or Teagasc clients.
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Cover Photograph:
The fish curing station in the East End of Inishbofin Island, Co. Galway. According to historical records, there were 243 fishermen operating on Inishbofin island in 1873 (Concannon, 1997). The fish curing station, which was built in 1897, directly employed seventy inhabitants of the island and a further seventy at sea.

Photograph: Courtesy of Caimin Coyne, Inishbofin.