

'WHAT KEEPS ME HERE':
GENDERED AND GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
ON RURAL LIFE AND LEAVING IN AN IRISH FISHING LOCALE

by

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Abstract

At the most fundamental level, this dissertation aims to promote a better understanding of rural youth emigration through consideration of the importance of ‘place’ in young people’s lives and life choices. Within this over-arching aim, I draw important linkages between the gendered dimensions of rural youth experience and gender disparities in patterns of rural youth out-migration.

The out-migration of young people from rural regions is a selective and highly gendered process suggesting considerable differentiation in the way young men and women identify with and experience rural life. Based in the coastal community of Killybegs in the southwest corner of County Donegal, Ireland, this study examines gender differences in the ways in which local youth perceive, experience, and cope with life at home. This includes decisions to emigrate. Central to this endeavor is a theory of social positioning and recognition of the ways in which (social, cultural and symbolic) capital is embodied, gendered and context specific. An underlying objective of this research is to confront discourse which locates ‘stayers’ as a homogenous group of underachievers. To do this I demonstrate the importance of situating young people’s migration decisions in the context of their social groups and locations. I situate young people’s life-paths, not against a standardized set of push-pull factors, but within the everyday encounters and contexts of their own subjective experiences of place. I pay particular attention to the ways in which young people’s migration (and education) choices are differentially shaped by factors such as family norms, resources and values.

Grounded in a conceptual framework informed by political economy, gender studies, migration studies and rural studies, this study addresses key questions regarding:

1) gender differences in young people's perceptions and experiences of 'staying on' and leaving, 2) how 'place' influences migration decisions differently for young men and women, 3) how and why the social characteristics of migrants and non-migrants, including educational qualifications and social-class background, differ, and 4) how decisions to migrate are made, including weight of parental expectation and how youth emigration, and its local implications, are perceived by the sending community of teachers, parents and peers.

Preface

A version of chapter three has been published. See Donkersloot, R. 2010. "Now Hold On, My Attachment to this Place is Home. That's it.": The Politics of Place and Identity in an Irish Fishing Locale. *Journal of Maritime Studies (MAST)* 9(2):31-52.

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List of Acronyms

BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara (Irish Sea Fisheries Board)
CAP	Community Agricultural Policy
CDB	Congested Districts Board
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ED	Electoral District
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
KTC	Killybegs Tourism College
NI	Northern Ireland
RSW	Refrigerated Sea Water
SFA	Sea Fisheries Association
SFPA	Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TD	Teachta Dála
TPFR	Total Period Fertility Rate
UK	United Kingdom

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Dedication

*For my parents,
John and Sara Donkersloot,
who thought it best to raise us where they did*

and

*In memory of Mr. James McLeod,
esteemed fisherman, gentleman, friend*

Gender, Place and Migration

It was while walking past the pier that a grandfather, holding the small hand of his granddaughter, stopped and said to the child, “Now look to the sky and tell me what you see.” The child looked upwards. “Nothing grandpa, there’s nothing there.” “Look again, he said, are you sure?” The child again looked to the sky. “No, there’s nothing there.” “That’s right, he said, even the fuckin’ birds have left us”.

It was during my first trip to Killybegs, ‘Ireland’s Premier Fishing Port’, that the above story was told to me in good humor. By the end of my second stay in the small town I had garnered a robust collection of similar accounts, factual and fictionalized, often provoked by mention of my dissertation topic: rural youth emigration. Such stories were always accompanied by reference to recent volatility within the fishing industry and a corresponding, and much lamented, ‘quietness’ about town. A Killybegs travel agent, featured in a regional newspaper, the *Donegal Democrat*, bemoaned the increasing number of local youth booked and bound for Australia, the ‘new America’.¹ Headlined – ‘Emigration only option for young people in Killybegs’ – the article likened the recent exodus to the economic turmoil and emigration of the 1980s. I was told that further proof of the problem could be found at the *Bus Eireann* stop on Shore Road, where every Sunday evening a lion’s share of the town’s youth board a bus bound for another week away at college in the cities of Galway, Dublin, Belfast and beyond. Though anecdotal, this string of stories provides a fitting prologue to my dissertation which intends to promote a better understanding of rural youth emigration through consideration of the importance of ‘place’ in young people’s lives and life choices.

¹ Roughly 15,000 young people travel from Ireland to Australia annually on year-long work visas (Inglis 2008:92)

Location, Location, Location

Youth emigration is an important topic in the study of fishing communities (Corbett 2007; Hamilton and Otterstad 1998; Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994; Faris 1972; Bjarnason and Thorlindsson 2006) and rural studies in general (Hannan 1970; Ni Laoire 1999; Jentsch and Shucksmith 2004; Cobb, McIntire and Phillips 1989). Studies of rural youth emigration tend to situate leaving against a uniform backdrop of push-pull factors, particularly the limited employment and educational opportunities of home and the ‘lure of city lights’ (Stockdale 2002:46; see also Brettell 2000:102). This study builds upon the argument that studies of rural youth life-paths must also be attentive to young people’s *sense of place* in rural locales (see for example Howley et al. 1996). Central to this endeavor is a theory of social positioning (Skeggs 2004) and recognition of both economic and non-economic factors influencing migration behavior (see Gmelch 1985; Corcoran 2002; Richling 1985; Shuttleworth 1997; see also Machold et al. 2002:106).

Sociologist Andrew Abbott (1997:1152) stresses the point that “social facts are located”. Abbott (1997:1152) continues:

One can not easily understand social life without understanding the arrangements of particular social actors in particular social times and places... no social fact makes any sense abstracted from its context in social (and often geographic) space and social time.

Located in the social and economic landscape of a contemporary fishing community in northwest Ireland, this study situates young people’s life-paths, not against a standardized set of push-pull factors, but within the everyday encounters and contexts of their own subjective experiences of place. Here I pay particular attention to the gendered dimensions of rural youth experience and how place influences migration decisions differently for rural young men and women.

The out-migration of young people from rural regions is a selective and highly gendered process suggesting considerable differentiation in the way young men and women identify with and experience rural life (see Ni Laoire 1999; Dahlstrom 1996; Dunkley 2004; Bock and Shortall 2006). Based in the coastal community of Killybegs in southwest Donegal County – the poorest and most rural region of the Republic of Ireland – this study examines gender differences in the ways in which local youth perceive, experience, and cope with life at home. This includes decisions to emigrate. As part of this effort, I highlight the ways in which subjectivities of social-class cross-cut gender and shape young people’s experience of place. Prior to discussing key conceptual and methodological concerns, the following section briefly situates this study within the context of wider political-economic and demographic processes significant to the so-called ‘Irish’ context.

The ‘Irish’ Context

So entrenched in images of Irish identity and the political and economic geography of the state, both historically and contemporary, emigration from Ireland has been referred to as a regular ‘rite of passage’ (Kane 1969); one “affecting the very ‘bone and sinew’ of the nation” (Mac Laughlin 1997:134). In short, contemporary rural Irish youth inherit a history and identity that is often refracted through the lens of leaving (see for example O’Toole 1997).

Ireland’s ‘anomalous past’ (Ruane 1994:135) and well-worn emigrant trail can not be understood without reference to the colonization of Ireland by Britain. Equally so, the modernization of Irish agriculture (and with it, rise of rural capitalism and bourgeois values in rural Ireland) as well as the changing class structure and land ownership pattern

in post-Famine Ireland can not go unmentioned. Allied to these (historical) processes and powers is the dominant role of the Catholic Church in Irish society, particularly the Church's role in the construction of a national identity (O'Dowd 1987; Ferguson 2001; Kennedy 2001; Nash 1997; Walter 1995; Messenger 1969). Linking the former (political-economic) point to the latter (religious/cultural) one, Irish sociologist Tom Inglis (1998:222) identifies the Catholic Church as integral to Ireland's (delayed) modernization given its opposition to "materialism, consumerism and individualism". These processes and power structures are part and parcel to Ireland's long-time affair with emigration and apparent 'culture of leaving' (Brettell 2000:101; see Mac Laughlin 1994; King 1991). As the historical hallmarks of Irish society, they continue to inspire a tendency to view the Irish context as 'exceptional' (see Kennedy 2001:1) and Irish emigration as 'peculiar' (Mac Laughlin 1994:75; see also O'Toole 1997:169). In this dissertation I argue that the Irish context requires careful qualification, but that it is not a context so *peculiar* as to render studies of Irish youth experience and emigration irrelevant to the wider literature on rurality and youth emigration.

In recent years, Ireland's infamous emigrant trail has been overshadowed by shifting migration flows. Ireland's economic boom of the 1990s, coined the 'Celtic Tiger' phenomenon, coincided with a mobility transition from emigration to immigration. National efforts (e.g. capital grants, tax incentives) to attract foreign manufacturing companies onto Irish soil facilitated a turn around whereby the small island nation experienced net immigration for the first time in its history (excluding a brief stint in the early 1970s following Ireland's membership to the European Economic Community (EEC)).

In short, Ireland's recent mobility transition is emblematic of the broader transformation of Ireland from the largely agrarian society that it was up until the 1960s to the 'haven for multi-national corporations' (Mac Laughlin 1994:28) that it has become. Irish historian Diarmaid Ferriter (2005:674) notes that by 1999 only 8 percent of the Irish workforce was involved in agriculture compared to 37 percent in 1960.² At the dawn of the 21st century, the small island nation, once described as England's potential 'sheep walk and cattle pasture' (Marx 1906:782), was featured in the *Economist* magazine as 'Europe's shining light' (cited in Ferriter 2005:4). Ireland was on the verge of becoming the most open (i.e. global) economy in the world (Inglis 2008:16).³ By 2006, Ireland's population – the fastest growing population in the EU at the time – hit just over 4.2 million people, the highest level since 1861 (when the recorded population was 4.4 million) (CSO 2006a).

Ireland's economic renaissance coupled with its earlier accession to the European Union (EU) in 1973 (and importantly, the influx of EU Structural Funds) helped to reinvent 'old' Ireland, oft characterized as backwards, insular and disconnected (Messenger 1969; Scheper-Hughes 2001) into 'new' Ireland: sophisticated, entrepreneurial, and global (Inglis 2008). But recent economic upswing has not granted the country full license to shed its status of 'emigrant nursery' (Mac Laughlin 1994). Studies show that urban centres, particularly in Britain, the United States and Australia, remain attractive destinations for Ireland's 'new wave' emigrants (Shuttleworth 1997; Mac Laughlin 1997; Mac Einri 1997). Furthermore, Ireland's economic renaissance did

² Ferriter (2005:674) further notes that between 1986 and 2000, 513,000 new jobs were created in Ireland, an increase of 47 percent.

³ *Foreign Policy* magazine ranked Ireland as the most globalized country in the world between 2002 and 2004 (cited in Inglis 2008:16).

not spread across the small island evenly. This is evidenced anecdotally in the near universal viewpoint I encountered during fieldwork in southwest Donegal: “The Celtic Tiger? I had to go to Dublin to see it!” ... “Donegal didn’t see any Celtic Tiger”. More concretely, it is seen in the unprecedented rates of suburbanization and internal migration marking the period (Walsh 1996). Between 1996 and 2002 the population of Dublin city and its suburbs increased from 519,222 to 1,004,614, exceeding a population of 1 million for the first time in the State’s history (CSO 2002). Additionally, although all counties experienced population growth between 2002 and 2006, the fastest growing counties during this period were found in the suburbs of Dublin city (CSO 2006a). Three of these counties (Fingal, Meath and Kildare) comprised nearly 29 percent of the 609,000 growth in population experienced at State level between 1996 and 2006 (CSO 2006a). Looking specifically at County Donegal, the population increased by 6.8 percent between 2002 and 2006 (just below the State average of 8.1 percent). It is worth noting however that this growth did not occur along Donegal’s coastline. Of the top ten communities in County Donegal to experience the greatest rates of population decline between 2002 and 2006, nine were along the coast. These include the fishing communities of Burtonport (-22 percent), Rathmullen (-8.8 percent) and Greencastle (-7 percent), as well as Killybegs (-8.3 percent) and the nearby communities of Kilcar (-11.5 percent) and Glencolumbkille (-6.3 percent) (CSO 2006b).⁴

Factors contributing to the depopulation of Donegal’s coastal communities, particularly Killybegs, will be elaborated on in the following chapter which more

⁴ These figures reflect population change at the level of Census Town. I think it is more accurate to view Killybegs at the level of the Electoral Division (ED) and I do so from this point forward. Killybegs as an ED reflects the population living within as well as just beyond the limits of the designated Census Town. Between 2002 and 2006, the population of Killybegs (ED) declined by 4 percent (from 2,428 to 2,325).

thoroughly locates this study in time and place. For now I want to discuss the ways in which population decline ‘demoralizes’ (Brody 1982) rural places, in part by selectively draining communities of young people, especially females, and the better educated and skilled (see McDonagh 2001:32). Gender disparities in the migration trends of rural youth raise important questions about the different ways in which rural space and place entwines with the identities and life choices of rural young men and women. It is at the theoretical intersection of gender, place and migration which I approach such questions.

‘Female Flight’

Female out-migration, or ‘female flight’ (Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994), is a well-documented rural problem in and beyond the Celtic Fringe which encompasses significant gender differences in educational attainment (Corbett 2007; Hamilton et al. 1996), social and spatial mobility (Ni Laoire 1999:228; Scheper-Hughes 2001:100; Hektner 1995) and preference to leave home (Dunkley 2004; Ni Laoire 2001; Hamilton and Seyfrit 1993, 1994). These differences contribute to a perceived growing ‘cultural gap’ between rural young men and women with young men pegged as the potential ‘losers left behind’ (Dahlstrom 1996). Walkerdine et al. (2001), along with others, aptly expose the tendency to let gender differences shroud social-class divisions in young people’s educational experiences and achievements (see also Reay 1998, 2003). In particular, the authors lay bear the error in academic and popular debates which suggest that *all* girls are doing well, particularly when compared to their underperforming, crisis-ridden male counterparts – another key theme in contemporary youth literature (see also Nayak 2003, Nayak and Kehily 2008; McRobbie 2000; Rye 2006:412). Here I argue that focusing on gender at the expense of social-class risks glossing over important intra-

gender subjectivities of class and class culture. In chapter seven in particular, I discuss differences in the educational and career trajectories of working-class and middle-class young men and women, as well as how attitudes towards (and opportunities of) migration and education relate to social-class. Studies point to the problem of using middle-class family practices and values as the norm against which to judge the working-class (Walkerdine et. al 2001:115; see also Skeggs 2004; Willis 1981), but this has yet to fully penetrate the literature on rural youth emigration. The topical nature of this study provides an opportunity to cultivate greater connectivity between these separate but similar strands of research.

Research Objectives

Grounded in a conceptual framework informed by political economy, gender studies, migration studies and rural studies, this study addresses four key questions regarding: 1) gender differences in young people's perceptions and experiences of 'staying on' and leaving, 2) how 'place' influences migration decisions differently for young men and women, 3) how and why the social characteristics of migrants and non-migrants, including educational qualifications and social-class background, differ, and 4) how decisions to migrate are made, including weight of parental expectation and how youth emigration, and its local implications, are perceived by the sending community of teachers, parents and peers. Before attending to these questions and the empirical realities unearthed through them, the remainder of this chapter clarifies the conceptual framework (particularly the key conceptual categories of place, rurality, and migration) and methods supporting this ethnographic research. My intention here is to more explicitly outline the assumptions underpinning this study which ultimately aims to

contextualize individuals without localizing individual lives, and ‘locate’ social facts (Abbott 1997) without ‘fixating’ on place (Silverman and Gulliver 1992).

Gendered Nature of Rural Space and Place

Fundamental to this project is ‘place’, particularly the ways in which rural space and place is gendered, and how place shapes identity, values and life-paths. Mac Laughlin (1997:136) argues that “place matters to the study of emigration because they are the contexts within which decisions to emigrate are structured”. Here I define place not as a closed community, but as the socially constructed context in which local and extralocal factors intersect and influence young people’s social worlds. This parallels Massey’s (1994:155-56) contention that places:

should not be seen as static entities but rather as fluid processes; that they should not be seen as bounded in the traditional sense but rather as intersections of social relations and understandings which trace out into global networks; and finally, and most importantly, that they should not be seen as homogenous in construction and interpretation but rather as a melee of conflicting interpretations, but still retaining a distinct uniqueness.

In this study, it is the fishery, rather than rural Ireland in general, which provides the critical social context of place. The sphere of the fishery as a highly significant space in the construction of identity is well-documented within anthropology (Taylor 1981). Choosing a rural fishing locale as the place to address issues of gender and migration is significant because rural identities (much like rural industries such as commercial fishing and farming) tend to be male-dominated. In the following chapters I demonstrate the significance of space and place in the construction of youth identities. Specifically, I interrogate the different ways in which local young men and women construct their (individual and collective) identities in relation to place, paying particular attention to the spheres and sites of family, school, work, leisure and locality. As part of this effort, I

emphasize the significance of power in the production of identities, and in affecting the interplay between gender, place and identity in the rural Irish landscape.

Dahlstrom (1996) uses the term ‘male periphery’ – a term I will refer to in subsequent chapters – to describe rural life in the ‘periphery’ region of northern Scandinavia. In short, Dahlstrom suggests that because male perspectives and activities (both work and leisure) typically define rural life, the perceived constraints of rural life and desire to leave are felt more strongly by young women (see also Dunkley 2004). In a study set in northern rural Scotland, Glendinning et al. (2003) report that girls are more likely than boys to feel they do not fit in, and that the linkage between rural life as constraining and low self-esteem are more marked among young women. The authors further note that young women who said it was likely they would stay in their home community reported lower self-esteem scores, while young men who said they would stay reported higher self-esteem (see also Hektner 1995; Elder, Conger and King 1996). Jamieson (2000) reports similar trends among non-migrants in the Scottish Borders where young women were more likely than young men to be ‘disaffected stayers,’ expressing detachment from their home community (see also Hannan 1970). All of these studies suggest that place is a critical component to understanding the gendered nature of rural youth emigration.

Moving from ‘place’ to the more specific conceptual domain of rurality, I follow in the footsteps of a considerable amount of earlier research and endorse Philo’s (1992:433) call to “pluralize the rural: to speak of many different rurals”. Couched in social constructionist frameworks stemming from the ‘cultural turn’ in rural geography, this conceptualization problematizes the rural as a ‘singular object of discourse’

(Halfacree 1993:31; see also Murdoch and Pratt 1993; Cloke et al. 1994). Here I conceptualize rurality, not as a ‘thing or territorial unit’ (Halfacree 1993) but as subjective and socially constructed phenomena – as “derived from the social production of meaning” (Mormont 1990:36 cited in Rye 2006:409). In this way, I am less concerned with how Killybegs measures up against a checklist of criteria designed to objectively demarcate ‘the rural’ from ‘the urban’ (e.g. population density, land use, etc.) (see Halfacree 1993 for debate on defining ‘the rural’; see also Redfield 1941; Pahl 1966; Cloke 1977, Cloke and Edwards 1986). I am more concerned with how youth socially and subjectively construct their rurality (and their identity in relation to said rurality) (see also Harper 1987). As well, I am concerned with how these constructions are specific to subjectivities of gender and class.

As part of this effort, I call into question the somewhat mechanical tendency of pitting ‘the rural’ against ‘the urban’. As will become clear in subsequent chapters (particularly chapter three), Killybegs might best be thought of as an *in between* kind of place, the proverbial poster child of the increasingly “porous boundary between ‘the rural’ and ‘the urban’” (Murdoch and Pratt 1993:424-25). Throughout fieldwork Killybegs was described to me as everything from an ‘industrial centre’ to ‘only a wee village’ – as both ‘a town that people liked to call a village’ and a ‘village that people liked to call a town’. It is my aim that this dissertation contributes to the literature on rurality, and particularly rural youth, through recognition of the multiple realities (and ruralities) comprising rural youth experience. Here I challenge studies which set a seemingly homogenous category of ‘rural youth’ against their urban and suburban counterparts. More specifically, in chapters five, six and seven, I challenge studies which

promote a universal or essentialist female or male experience of the rural. In the next section, I problematize conventional migration theories which tend to cling to a linear line and conceptualize migration as a one-dimensional and one-directional process.

'Situating' Migration

For a long time migration researchers have perceived migration along the push-pull paradigm by which people move from one place [to] another place. This process was seen as linear, one-directional, with a beginning in one culture and an end in another. ... Rather than perceiving migration in a linear perspective with the occasional return migration, we are beginning to see people as multiple movers in more than one direction, being part of larger and more complex structural relationships than the push-pull paradigm implies (Harzig 1998:16).

It has been argued that conventional approaches to migration may be missing their empirical mark due to inadequate conceptualizations (see Halfacree and Boyle 1993; see also Creese et al. 2008). Too often, migration research conceptualizes the subject too narrowly: as an individualized one-dimensional and one-directional process which begins at a clear point of origin and ends upon arrival at a destination – Point A to Point B. From this perspective, migration is an ahistorical and isolated event; one which does not accurately reflect the unruly social realities of rural youth life-paths, including such non-linear complexities as interruptions, backtracks, false starts, detours, do-overs and other 'extended' and/or 'fractured' transitions (Gayle et al. 2009; Couppie and Mansuy 2003; Looker and Dwyer 1998). Neither does this conceptualization leave room for serious investigation of the life-paths of young non-migrants.

More recent efforts to re-theorize migration focuses on the 'situatedness' of migration in everyday life (Halfacree and Boyle 1993:334). The biographical approach in migration research, pioneered by population geographers Paul Boyle, Keith Halfacree and Vaughn Robinson, emphasizes the actions of contextualized individuals through attention to the "narratives of everyday life with in which migration [and I add, non-

migration] is situated” (Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson 1998:81; see also Ni Laoire 2000). Gutting (1996:482) correctly pinpoints the merit in migration theories which foreground ‘situatedness’ by noting that the contextualization of individual action “allows migration to be viewed as a social event without decentering the subject”. This is a particularly valuable approach to the project at hand not only because it recognizes human beings as socially embedded, but also because it makes room for analysis of ‘non-events’ (Halfacree and Boyle 1993) in migration research. This widening of aperture in approaches to migration is germane here for although the trail leaving rural Ireland is certainly well traveled, it is not universally taken to.

The Stigma of Staying

Migration studies tend to privilege the perspective of the migrant. Non-migrants are an under-researched group and merit more attention given the stigma attached to staying (Ni Laoire 2001), and increasing body of literature documenting young people’s accounts of the pressures, stresses and dissatisfaction with rural life (NiLaoire 2001). Discourses of migration devalue staying (see Gray 1997:216). Staying is often presented as the ‘unintended consequence of failure to leave’ (Ni Laoire 1999). An underlying objective of this research is to confront discourse which locates ‘stayers’ as a homogenous group of underachievers through consideration of the ways in which young people’s migration choices are differentially shaped by factors such as family norms, resources and values, and peer influence. Important here is consideration of the gendered and classed forms of ‘capital’ (Bourdieu 1986) in and beyond the local economy of value, including how differential access to social, cultural and economic resources shapes young people’s subjectivities and sensibilities. In short, I am interested in the ways in which

access to specific resources and ‘embodied capitals’ shape young people’s sense of self, experience of place and plans to leave.

Taking into account the perceptions and experiences of non-migrants is critical given the moral subtexts underwriting the dominant meaning of out-migration. It is the ‘best and the brightest’ that ‘get out’. It is the ‘losers left behind’ (Dahlstrom 1996) which do not (see also Looker and Dwyer 1998). If theoretical developments in migration research recognize multiple (and social) factors behind migration, surely we must also afford the same level of analytical scrutiny to non-migration (see Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson 1998). Few studies of rural youth emigration have done little more than nod at the complexity surrounding decisions to stay which includes barriers and motivations such as family obligations and loyalties (see for example Ni Laoire 2001, 2005).

Studies suggest community and parent attitudes towards opportunities at home and migration are powerful predictors of the eventual decision to migrate (O’Grada 1986); see also Seyfrit et al. 1998; Ni Laoire 2000; Stockdale 2002; Jones 1999). Few studies explicitly address the importance of parental choice, or the ‘pull of the parents’, particularly the gendered and classed nature of parental expectations. In chapter seven I draw attention to the inter-dependent nature of young people’s migration decision-making processes in order to demonstrate how young people are differentially expected and encouraged to stay and/or leave. Attention to the social and cultural expectations underlying young people’s migration decisions reveals the different structures and agencies shaping the life trajectories of local young men and women. To understand what factors facilitate and constrain emigration, the importance of social capital, social

networks, and ‘social gravity’, which works through love, guilt, economic need, etc (see Jones 2003:164) must be taken into account (Looker and Dwyer 1998). Consideration of social-class locations and identities, particularly class-related material and cultural capitals, are central to this endeavor (Crompton 2006).

Methods

This is an empirical case study of youth out-migration from the perspective of both migrants (leavers) and non-migrants (stayers). Although I take this as my starting point, throughout this dissertation I raise questions concerning the theoretical and practical utility of assigning rural youth to the rigid categories of ‘stayer’ and ‘leaver’. This system of categorization, though convenient, tends to overemphasize permanency. As will be discussed momentarily, rural youth life-paths rarely fit into such inflexible containers of facticity.

The empirical data drawn on here comes from eleven months of fieldwork, September 2007 through July 2008, in the fishing community of Killybegs, County Donegal, Ireland. Primary research methods include participant observation complemented by semi-structured (individual and group) interviews and a school-based survey of local youth. Guided by Pilkington’s (2007:381) methodological approach to understanding decision-making processes among Russian youths, it was my intention that the integration of survey, interview and ethnographic elements would illuminate some of the dynamics of rural youth experience and allow individual migration decisions to be viewed in their social context.

Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey

The school-based survey was carried out in the only secondary school in Killybegs, St. Catherine's Vocational School. The 'Youth and Lifestyles' survey targets 15 to 17 year olds and focuses on young people's attitudes towards their home community, peers, education and migration (see Appendix C for final draft of school survey). The survey focuses on individual and family background and migration history, education and work experience, ties to fishing industry, perceptions and experience of life in Killybegs, leisure activities, and expectations for the future, particularly migration plans, including what youth deem parent expectations to be.

Specific survey questions were developed in conjunction with key faculty members. As a starting point, I provided faculty members with a tentative survey outline based on a modified version of the 'Lifestyles, Health and Health Concerns of Rural Youths, 1996-1998' survey employed by Glendinning et al. (2003). From here we worked together to adapt and/or add survey questions more pertinent to the local context. Topical questions borrowed from the 'Lifestyles, Health and Health Concerns of Rural Youths, 1996-1998' survey center on young people's relationship to place and address themes such as quality of life, community satisfaction, and the future. For example, survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements such as: 'There's nothing for young people like me to do here'; 'There's too little freedom to be the way you want'; and 'It would be hard to find a job that suits me here'. Students were also asked to respond to three open-ended questions at the end of the survey: 1) Describe how you spend a typical Friday night. 2) What do you think are the best aspects of living

here? What do you think are the most difficult? And 3) Ideally, where do you see yourself in five to ten years?

School surveys were administered by myself, often in the company of a faculty member, during the school day. In total, 110 surveys were completed and turned in. Students absent on the day of the initial survey were given the opportunity to complete the survey the following week. This number (110) represents the vast majority of 15 to 17 year olds attending school in the locality. Survey results were analyzed using a chi-square test in the statistical computing software, R Project. Findings with a p-value (i.e. probability) of less than 0.05 are identified as statistically significant. Findings with a p-value of less than 0.1 (but greater than 0.05) are identified as marginally significant.

Survey results are introduced and discussed intermittently in chapters five, six and seven. Rather than dedicating an entire chapter to school survey findings, I have decided to selectively and thematically introduce sets of survey results as they relate to the key discussion points in each chapter. This way, survey findings are understood in the context of both the literature most meaningful to the specific subject matter (e.g. migration intentions; attitudes towards education; parental expectation) and the more ethnographically rich data drawn from interview materials. Survey data are integrated/embedded throughout the following chapters, however data tables are located in Appendix D for further reference.

The Interview

The interview process reveals subtleties and subjectivities often lost to survey techniques. Following Dorothy Smith's (1987) call to 'problematize the everyday', young people's narratives of life at home and leaving are analyzed from their own

perspective and include not only the narratives but also the spatial and temporal structures that help to shape their daily lives. That is, from the accounts of their everyday experience I will move to “explor[e] from that perspective the generalizing and generalized relations in which each individual’s everyday world is embedded” (Smith 1987:185). Employing this form of analysis attempts to ‘decenter’ the imposed narrative form of the researcher through listening to not just the form, but (also and more importantly) the content and textuality of young people’s narratives of place. Interviews were semi-structured in that they covered a range of predetermined topics but each took its own direction depending on the perspectives and experiences of the participant.

Over the course of 11 months, I conducted 67 formal (individual and group) interviews, bringing the total number of project participants to over 80. Nearly half (38) of the formal project participants are identified as ‘youth’. From the outset of fieldwork I intended to target young people between the ages of 19 and 28. Of the 38 young people interviewed for this project, all but four were within this age range. The remaining four participants were in their early 30s. Jones (2009:11) defines youth as “associated with leaving school and becoming adult in socio-economic terms and thus currently cover[ing] the period in most countries between around 15 years and the mid-twenties though both these age boundaries are constantly rising...” Tyyskä (2005:3) further notes an increasing “preference to define youth as ‘not a particular age range’ but as a ‘social status’ (Marquardt 1998:7)”, characterized by a period of life in which a person is either partly or fully dependent on others, usually adults and members of one’s family, for material support” (see also Schneider 2000). As will be made clear below and in the

following chapters, this dissertation project both endorses and demonstrates the ‘elasticity’ (Jones 2009) of the category of ‘youth’.

Youth interview participants included 21 males and 17 females. Of the 21 males, 16 were living in the community at the time of fieldwork, however only one male participant might be considered a *true* ‘stayer’ (i.e. having never moved away). Some participants were identified by their peers as neither ‘stayer’ nor ‘leaver’, but rather along the less fixed lines of ‘half in, half out’. (This was a designation offered up by one participant as he tried to come to grips with the position of some of his friends within the local landscape). At the time of interviews, one male participant (in his early 20s) was preparing to (temporarily) leave Killybegs to work overseas. Another had just returned from a working holiday abroad (which lasted several months), and yet another had recently returned home (albeit temporarily) to help run a family-owned business. Of the 17 females to be interviewed, nine were living in the community at the time of fieldwork. One female participant had recently (and temporarily) returned home to complete an internship required of college course work. Another female participant had returned home (somewhat unexpectedly and also temporarily) to work and save money for an upcoming holiday. Another, who had been living in Killybegs for several years, moved away shortly after our interview. Of the nine female participants living in Killybegs at the time of fieldwork, there are three that might be considered true ‘stayers’ (i.e. having never moved away).

This brief sketch reveals the complex realities of young people’s life-paths and the trouble one runs into when relying on the fixed categories of ‘stayer’ and ‘leaver’. It is my hope that this research will push debates surrounding the theoretical limits of

dichotomized binaries such as ‘stayer versus leaver’ and ‘rural versus urban’ in new directions, perhaps towards more complex, though less tidy, understandings which more accurately make sense out of young people’s life transitions and trajectories.

Below I continue this descriptive account and highlight additional characteristics of project participants. Six male participants had earned degrees from Universities and/or colleges at the time of fieldwork and two were currently attending University and/or college. One male participant had an advanced degree. Ten male participants had little (less than a year) to no University and/or college education. Two had completed courses in nearby IT colleges and another two were currently enrolled (as part-time mature students) in IT courses. Three of the 21 male participants were active fishermen and spent a significant amount of time at sea (and away from the community). Another three had fished in the past but had since left the industry. Five male participants were working permanently in their family’s business in Killybegs. Nine were currently living in their parents’ home in Killybegs. An additional two males made the transition out of their parents’ home and into their own residence over the course fieldwork. One male participant was married with children and another was living with his partner.

Six female participants had earned University and/or college degrees, and another four were currently enrolled at University and/or college at the time of fieldwork. One female participant was working towards an advanced degree. Six females had no University and/or college education but had completed secretarial and/or hair and beauty therapy courses offered in or near the locality. Two females were working in family-owned businesses. Five female participants were living in their parents’ home at the time of fieldwork. An additional two had just moved out of their parents’ home over the

course of fieldwork. No female participants were married, though two were living with long-term partners. None had children.

Research participants also include parents, teachers, community members/leaders, and retired and active fishermen and industry workers (e.g. fish factory workers, net makers, engineers, boat builders, representatives of Fishermen's Organizations, etc.). Excluding two unintended instances, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interviews were carried out in various locations according to participants' preference. Often times, potential interview locations were identified by myself, and then decided upon by research participants. Interview locations include people's homes (including my own in Killybegs), hotel bars and lounges, as well as participants' place of work. Another primary interview location was office space made available by the Southwest Donegal Community Partnership Ltd. (an organization based in Killybegs which provides important services in the area (e.g. rural transport scheme; citizens information centre)).

Interviews with young people concentrate on questions related to interests and goals, economic and leisure activities, and attitudes towards home, migration and peers, fishing as an occupation and a lifestyle, and rural life in general. These questions serve to explore more hidden themes such as values and identities, social networks and relations, attachment to locality and gender relations. The primary purpose of these interviews is to collect local narratives of staying and leaving in order to identify how young people view the world and their place in it. Interviews with other community members (e.g. parents, teachers) focus on parental expectation, family needs and values, attitudes towards the EU (including the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)), 'incomers,' and local/regional

development, and how emigration and staying, local opportunities, and involvement in the fishing industry are perceived by the sending community.

The majority of interviews were carried out in one-on-one situations, with only myself and the participant present. Some participants were interviewed in small group settings, comprised of two or three individuals. In these cases, it was the participants who formed the groups which were comprised of siblings, partners, friends and/or co-workers. Most project participants were contacted by phone or in person to inquire about setting up an interview. These initial encounters were followed up with additional phone calls and/or text messages in order to arrange interviews. Opportunities to interview emigrants, or 'leavers', included individuals who had returned home to settle down, or during weekend visits home or winter and summer holidays. Two research participants who did not return home during the year but who had heard of the research project through friends took part in the project through a series of Question and Answer surveys conducted through email correspondence. In all cases confidentiality was assured and the names of all participants have been changed to preserve anonymity. In the following chapters 'youth' participants are identified by first name only while 'adult' participants (e.g. parents, teachers) are identified more formally by their appropriate title (e.g. Mr. and/or Ms.) and (fictitious) surname. It should be noted that I have not altered the name of the place in which this research was carried out. Killybegs is the real name of the community in which I lived in 2007-2008. My reasons for not renaming Killybegs are moored to the underlying question of who is actually and effectively protected through the use of a pseudonym.⁵

⁵ To take this discussion further, if I rename Killybegs in this work, shall I also alter its location on the Irish coastline? Or keep hidden the fact that it boasts the title of 'Ireland's Premier Fishing Port'? Or that its'

Ethnographic Elements

In addition to surveys and interviews, fieldwork further entailed volunteering weekly as an adult chaperone at the Youth Drop-In Centre in Killybegs. This provided opportunities to observe and engage with local youth in structured (e.g. team building exercises, hill climbing ventures, canoe trips, pancake feeds, quiz nights, discos) and unstructured activities and settings (e.g. typical Friday nights at the Centre). Over the course of fieldwork I also attended and participated in local festivals (e.g. a Lantern Festival in Belfast with youth from the Killybegs Drop-In Centre), as well as parades (e.g. community Carnival parades in Killybegs and Ballina), and sporting events (e.g. Killybegs' Women's Basketball Team (as participant), Gaelic Football matches (as spectator)). I also attended various fisheries seminars, conferences and expos around the country, including a Fisheries Seminar in Kilkeel, County Down (Northern Ireland) and the Irish Skipper Expo in Galway.

Contributions and Significance of Research

This research contributes to the field of anthropology in three distinct ways. Firstly, Philip (2001) suggests there is surprising little research that includes rural youth's own viewpoints (cited in Glendinning et al. 2003). In a multi-sited study, Shucksmith (2000) notes that young people feel they lack a 'voice' in their home communities. It can

known as a 'millionaire's town' in the poorest and most rural county in the country? I pose these questions here because I feel that if I don't also rework these details, the worth in writing about Killybegs under a fake name is rather futile. And these details are in part the particularities of place that are significant to the questions I confront through my research. To alter the history, geography and political economy of this place beyond detection would be to distort the social and economic realities and inequalities that I am trying to make sense of. Yet to simply replace the name of Killybegs with a pseudonym would be, I think, meaningless. I do not believe that changing the name of Killybegs in this manuscript is in any way more ethically responsible than not changing the name. That said, I recognize the incredible difficulty we are faced with in finding balance between the ethical responsibilities we have to the people we write about and our commitment to honest ethnography (Scheper-Hughes 2001). I want to be careful not conflate the quick replacement of a real place-name with these responsibilities.

be argued that the ‘voice’ of young people has been neglected or taken for granted in both community and scholarly spheres (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). Anthropology’s grasp of youth emigration and culture, must include the accounts of young people themselves. The theoretical implications for refracting this research through the lens of young people and placing their accounts at the center of analysis makes the important distinction between what young people say about their lives and communities and what is said on behalf of them.

Secondly, it is my hope that this study will also contribute to scholarship and applied work focusing on rural transformation and development through attention to the ways in which rural decline and development can be a source of exclusion and marginalization for young people in rural areas. Glendinning et al. (2003:152) argue, “In the same way young women may experience rural life as a ‘male periphery’, young males may experience declining fisheries or new development in rural areas (e.g. telecommunications - which require different skills, education, training that challenge rural identities and values) as a periphery of another kind.” Local, regional and state organizations, including Ireland’s Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the National Spatial Strategy Group, whose purpose is to counteract the population drift to the Greater Dublin Area by promoting employment opportunities in other parts of the country (Jones 2003:155), need to be aware of the non-economic implications of rural development in order to apply effective development strategies and improve the quality of rural life in satisfactory ways (see also McDonagh 2001:35; McGrath and Canavan 2002:34).

Finally, the linkages between Irish rural youth emigration and migration literature based in other North Atlantic and North Pacific fisheries-dependent regions are impressive, but rarely do these parallel dialogues intersect despite similarities in the social characteristics of emigrants, and ‘rurality’ as a geographical and social context. In part due to the prevalence of farming as an occupation and lifestyle in rural Ireland, and the privileged position agriculture has held in national and EU agendas, few migration/gender studies have focused on the particular social and economic landscape of Ireland’s fishing communities. This is surprising given the incredible changes (be they ecological, economic and/or policy-driven) currently impacting life and work in the fisheries-dependent regions of Europe and beyond (Sinclair 1985; Donkersloot 2005; Nadel-Klein 2003; Byron 1986). For whatever reason, youth from Ireland’s fishing communities are virtually invisible in contemporary scholarship on fisherfolk, migration, gender and rurality. This study makes a step towards locating contemporary Irish fishing communities and youth in the wider fisheries-based literature. Through this particular focus I hope to shed light on the significance of the sea to a society that for so long has been characterized in its entirety as ‘land conscious.’ More broadly, this dissertation hopefully provides for the opportunity to think about key themes in Irish studies – notably community, identity and migration – in new ways. For a long time the anthropology of Ireland remained rooted in the West and destined to deliver comment on the exceptional, unique, and peculiar case that rural Ireland and the rural Irish were/are. Though I too headed towards Ireland’s western seaboard (though I will show in chapters two and three the ways in which County Donegal is ‘different’ from the west) I did so not in search of the ‘other’, that is, to set Irish youth *apart*, as some how *different* from their

counterparts across Europe, North America and beyond, but rather to contribute to the chipping away of exceptionalism that prevents the anthropology of Ireland from speaking to ‘anthropologies elsewhere’ (Wilson and Donnan 2006:164). It is my intent to make certain that this “anthropology of Ireland... be useful beyond Ireland” (Wilson and Donnan 2006:164). Reckoning with processes of rural transformation and issues of gender, migration, place and identity, in the Irish landscape can and should be relevant to work going on in other rural regions across the globe.

Beyond anthropology, it is my hope that this research will contribute to interdisciplinary and feminist efforts in two key ways. For one, this research aims to reveal the ways in which space both affects and reflects social relations and gender identities. What follows is an ethnographic account of the gendered significance of space and place in the production of youth identities, social relations and migration decisions. For two, this research aims to re-inscribe gender analyses with the critical chisel of multiple subjectivities. Here I pay particular attention to the significance of social-class, yet this should not take away from the significance of other social categories including sexuality, ability and race. More generally, the following chapters will demonstrate the trouble with binary categories, not only male/female, but also rural/urban, stayer/leaver and winner/loser. I reach well beyond the annals of anthropology in this effort to include feminist studies from the fields of sociology, geography, education, and psychosocial studies. Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:14) contend that “we ought to think about interdisciplinarity as a knowledge production process that flexibly adopts approaches and tools as a consequence of the questions being asked, not as a consequence of the methodological constraints dictated by the history or current hegemony within a given

discipline.” This dissertation is an exercise in interdisciplinary flexibility. A more thorough review of the substantive, theoretical and methodological contributions it makes in and beyond the field of anthropology will be discussed in chapter eight.

Organization of Chapters

A constant tension felt throughout this research and writing is how to highlight the importance of the local dimensions and social relations of place without eclipsing larger processes integral to and impinging on local processes, positions and perceptions. Chapter two aims to reconcile this tension with a look at the ways in which larger political-economic processes and power structures shape and shift with the local landscape. Said differently, chapter two locates this study in time and place. As part of this effort, this chapter provides a historical and contemporary profile of Irish fisheries development and policy, paying particular attention to the Killybegs context. Chapter three explores linkages between place and identity through consideration of the ways in which young people’s narratives of place become articulations of identity. This chapter builds on chapter two by providing an important sketch of the social architecture of the community of Killybegs from the perspective of local youth.

Chapter four addresses the changing nature of gendered aspects of work and family in Irish society. In doing so, this chapter identifies historical and contemporary linkages between the patriarchal nature of rural Irish society and gendered patterns of rural out-migration. Chapters five and six investigate the gendered dimensions of the rural social and spatial environment, notably rural Ireland’s dominant ‘pub and football’ culture. More specifically, these chapters focus on the ways in which young men and women experience ‘the rural’ as masculine and feminine subjects. Chapter five focuses

predominantly on rural gender and power relations. Special attention is given to the ways in which relations of power in 'the rural' are articulated, contested and accommodated in the everyday lives of local young men and women. Chapter six considers the gendered significance of sport in young people's experience of place. In addition to drawing attention to the gendered role of sport in the development of young people's socio-spatial relations and identities, I pay particular attention to the ways in which capital is embodied. Both chapters highlight the male-dominated nature of rural society while also drawing attention to the intra-gender dimensions of rural and power gender relations. Chapter seven discusses the social influences shaping young people's migration decisions. In this chapter I highlight linkages between gender, migration and education, and focus on the gendered and classed significance of family norms, resources and values in young people's migration decision-making processes. Finally, following a summarization of key findings, chapter eight revisits the importance of locating the subject in place and time in social research. Additionally, this chapter outlines key contributions this research makes in and beyond Ireland and anthropology.

A 'Millionaires Town' in a 'Forgotten' County

Often referred to as the 'forgotten' County or the 'poor relation', County Donegal is the most rural region of the Republic. Seventy-five percent of Donegal's total population lives in Aggregate Rural Areas (CSO 2006). The Central Statistics Office (CSO) defines Aggregate Rural Areas as areas in which the residing population is less than 1,500 inhabitants. Situated in the northwest corner of the island, County Donegal's land border is shared primarily with Northern Ireland (see Figure A.1 in Appendix A). The county shares only a sliver of six miles (9.6 kilometers) of land border with the rest of the Republic of Ireland. Donegal is one of the nine counties comprising the traditional northern province of Ulster and one of the three (along with the County Cavan and County Monaghan) kept in the Free State when Ireland was partitioned in 1922 thereby establishing the present day organization of Northern Ireland (six counties) and the Republic (twenty-six counties).⁶ It was the making of Ireland's internal borders which alienated Donegal from the North while peripheralizing it in the South (Wilson and Donnan 2006:159).

County Donegal's marginalized position on the political map has improved in recent decades due largely to the EU's overall project of integration (i.e. Europeanization of borders) and the onset of a 'new culture of development' (e.g. social partnerships and bottom-up development planning). Although peace in the North and increased cross-border cooperation have allayed some of the economic obstacles associated with geographic isolation (see Wilson and Donnan 2006), County Donegal remains the most

⁶ Prior to Ireland's present system of counties (which emerged following Norman occupation in the 12th century), Ireland was divided into four provinces: the Northern Province of Ulster, the Western Province of Connaught, the Eastern Province of Leinster and the Southern Province of Munster.

disadvantaged region of the Republic (Donegal Baseline Study 2007). The county's narrow mooring to the Republic continues to carry with it important political-economic connotations that remain palpable in the current economic climate as well as in contemporary identities and attitudes (see chapter three).⁷

Far removed from both 'centres' (i.e. Dublin in the South and Belfast in the North), Donegal struggles with the highest unemployment and age dependency rate in the country (Donegal Baseline Study 2007). Between 1991 and 2006, Ireland's male unemployment rates fell from 18.4 percent to 8.8 percent. Although Donegal male unemployment rates also fell drastically during this period, from 29.3 percent in 1991 to 14.4 percent in 2006, county figures continue to remain well above the national average. During this same period, female unemployment rates in County Donegal fell from 17.2 percent to 10.8 percent, hovering just above the national rates of 14.1 percent in 1991 and 8.1 percent in 2006.

County Donegal also has the lowest level of disposable income in the Republic and the least educated adult population (i.e. County Donegal has the highest proportion of adult population with primary education only in the country). Similarly, 30.5 percent of the national adult population, compared to 22.6 percent of Donegal's adult population, has completed third-level education qualifications (Donegal Baseline Study 2007). All of this works to saturate Donegal social consciousness in sentiments of marginality and being 'left behind'. It also instills in the public imagination the widespread sense that Donegal is 'different'. I first became aware of the social distance (and difference)

⁷ During a visit to Donegal in 2008, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern identified a Donegal-Derry gateway as the key to Donegal's future economic development. After announcing the government had committed over €80 million to the development of cross border investment, the Prime Minister contended, 'I done the best that I could for Donegal, I'm a realist and you can't do everything' (see *Donegal News*, Monday, April 28, 2008).

between County Donegal and the rest of the Republic in 2006 while meeting with researchers at the National University of Ireland in Maynooth to discuss my dissertation project. “Donegal”, a faculty member contended, “it’s like a different country up there”. This ‘difference’ serves as a source of pride and collective identity among Donegal people and will be elaborated on in chapter three.

My interest in Donegal lies along the county’s western border of 400 miles of rugged Atlantic coastline. It is here where a small but significant stretch of shoreline in the southwest corner forms the finest, natural deepwater harbor in the country. Formed by an inlet three miles long, and from a quarter to half mile wide, the harbor shelters and shapes the small fishing town of Killybegs, the industrial centre of southwest Donegal (Haughton 1963).

The Industrial Centre of Southwest Donegal

Depending on the time of year, one’s arrival to Killybegs may well be signaled by the smell of the working fishmeal plant on Shore Road – the primary source behind the town’s moniker of “Smellybegs”. Aside from St. Mary’s Chapel on the hillside, finished on the eve of the Great Famine in 1843-44, the town’s two larger hotels sit conspicuously in the built environment. From their windows one looks out across the harbor at the ‘old’ pier, built in 1897. Several fishing vessels, ranging from less than 20 to more than 200 feet (6 meters to 60 meters), are moored in the harbor and depending on the season, the hour, and the weather, one can witness a range of work and social activities unfold, though it will be discussed below that these are becoming increasingly less familiar sights in the town.

Tucked away on the far side of town sits the ‘new’ pier completed in 2005 at a price tag of €50 million. Considered by some to be the town’s ‘white elephant’, the new pier was built atop the ‘old’ village of Killybegs. Located near the gates of the new pier one finds the path to St. Catherine’s Holy Well and the remnants of a Franciscan friary and castle which, as Haughton (1963:390) notes, speak to the significance of Killybegs in mediaeval times. J.P Haughton (1963:360), a geographer interested in the prosperity of Killybegs in the 1960s, references a 1622 map which identifies “two distinct settlements, one on the south shore of the bay where the castle was already marked ‘old’ and the other on the site of the modern town and marked on the map as ‘The Towne’ with all the appearance of a colonial English plantation settlement”.

Killybegs is located just outside the eastern border of the Donegal Gaeltacht, the largest Irish speaking district in Ireland. It is the crossing of Fintra Bridge which marks the boundary between the parish of Killybegs and the neighboring parish of Kilcar, and in order of proximity, the Gaeltacht communities of Kilcar, Carrick, Teelin and Glencolumkille, collectively and colloquially referred to as ‘In Through’.

A common complaint among Killybegs people is lack of local amenities. Nevertheless, the town provides important services for itself and the surrounding communities. With a population of 2,325 (CSO 2006), Killybegs is not without a chemist, florist, post office, small library, hospital, and hardware store.⁸ A small tourism college is also located in Killybegs but the college and its students remain socially

⁸ All population statistics regarding Killybegs reflect the Electoral Division boundary rather than the Census Town boundary. The population of the town of Killybegs in 2006 was 1,280 but this excludes the roughly 1,000 people that live just beyond the town boundary but still consider themselves to be from Killybegs.

separate from the town itself.⁹ Established in 1969, the Killybegs Tourism College (KTC) was one of the first tourism colleges in the country but enrollment numbers have been steadily declining in recent years due in part to the mushrooming of tourism programs offered elsewhere in the country. Between 1996 and 2006 the number of full-time students enrolled at KTC declined from 332 to 157. The KTC is considered to be somewhat of an unappealing option for local youth. Generally speaking, it is considered to be the route taken by those youth who didn't get enough points (with regards to the Leaving Certificate) to qualify for their preferred college and course. For instance, it was while staying in a Bed and Breakfast in the city of Galway, in the west of Ireland, that I had the following conversation (taken from fieldnotes).

The owner asks me how I find Killybegs. "It's a bit dead, isn't it?" she asks. "It's not so bad", I say. She goes on, "There is a tourism college up there, right?... All I know is that when the kids have to go to that one, well, they always hope that they will go to a different one in the country; no one wants to go to that one".

In addition to the above, there are also three banks, three butchers, seven pubs/bars (two are in hotels), five hairdressers, and three grocers in Killybegs. Despite this, it is not uncommon for local residents to travel to the larger towns of Letterkenny (47 mi / 75 km) and Donegal Town (17 mi / 27 km) to do their weekly shopping in larger and less expensive supermarkets. Some go even further into Northern Ireland to take advantage of favorable Euro/Sterling exchange rates.¹⁰ Paired with the recent opening of

⁹ Students at KTC typically attend classes Monday through Thursday. They rent accommodation in the town for these days and typically return home on weekends.

¹⁰ This is evidently not a new phenomenon. Haughton (1963:392) describes local shops being hit by the onset of vehicle ownership in the early 1960s, which allowed some people the option to buy 'certain articles' in Sligo, Northern Ireland and Dublin. Bolger (2002:671) also mentions the impact of 'cross-border shopping and price differentials' on Donegal shops as early as the 1920s.

a small supermarket just outside of town, local shops are currently struggling with the realization of some local residents: “There’s barely a reason to go to town anymore!”

The majority of shops and businesses are located on and around a single street, long and narrow, that constitutes ‘the town’ of Killybegs. The town is flanked and framed by a dozen fish factories (though only ten are currently in operation) as well as a considerable assortment of ancillary industries (e.g. engineering, electrical and net-making firms; boat yard; shipping agent; etc.).¹¹ Similar to the string of shops along Main Street, fisheries-related industries, particularly seafood processing factories, are currently contending with a ‘quietness’ in town. Not all local businesses are suffering though. A local shipping agent for example has handled the rapidly changing local economy fairly successfully due in part to its ability to diversify thereby decreasing its dependence on Irish fishing vessels. At the time of fieldwork, the local shipping agent represented 500 vessels, 90 percent of which I was told were foreign fishing vessels from Spain, France, Portugal, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Russia.¹² The agent also and increasingly provides services to non-fishing vessels such as oil and gas industry vessels.

More generally though, the town is beset with a quietness which stems in large part from the recent surfacing of allegations that Killybegs pelagic fishermen were involved in widespread practices of illegal fishing. The allegations, brought forward in June 2004 have, among other things to be discussed below, incited an intense wave of

¹¹ Previously there were two net-making factories in Killybegs: Bridport-Gundry (est. 1967) and Swan Net (est. 1974). The companies merged in 2002 to form Swan Net – Gundry. Fifty-one percent of the company is currently owned by the Icelandic fishing gear manufacturing company, Hampiðjan.

¹² The rising price of fuel has worked to this company’s advantage in that it has forced foreign vessels to look for services locally because they can no longer afford to travel back to their home ports for services and goods (e.g. parts, repairs, goods, etc).

fisheries regulations and restrictions. Among these are the insertion of fisheries offenses in the 2007 Criminal Justice Bill and the establishment of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) in 2006. The primary role of the SFPA is to ensure that the Irish fleet complies with EU quota restrictions/conservation measures. Its inception was in part the Irish state's response to being embarrassingly 'called out' at the level of the EU to reign in its unruly fleet. Specifically, the European Union threatened Ireland with a €40 million fine if it was not seen to clamp down on illegal fishing.

This was not the first time that the Irish pelagic fleet's fishing practices had been called into question. A 1998 *Irish Times* article suggests that one of the reasons underlying Ireland's failure to secure a favorable quota for horse mackerel (also referred to as skad) in the late 1990s was due to looming EU investigations into Irish mackerel catches. It was agreed during the annual negotiations over EU quota allocations (held in Brussels every December) that the EU Commission investigations would be dropped if Ireland accepted a skad deal which favored the Dutch fleet (despite stocks being primarily found in Irish waters).¹³ The Irish fleets' ability to cope with increasing restrictions and declining quotas in domestic waters has not been uniform, and depends largely on species targeted/sector (i.e. pelagic versus whitefish sector, to be discussed below) and vessel size.

Generally speaking, tighter restrictions paired with increasing operating costs (e.g. fuel) translate into fewer days at sea. Interviews with active and retired pelagic and whitefish fishermen describe a dramatic decline in days at sea for the Irish fleet, between the 'old' high of more than 200 days at sea (one fisherman recalled a peak year of 300 days at sea) and the 'new' high of 60 to 90 fishing days. One response to this 'crisis' in

¹³ See *Irish Times*, January 30, 1998

domestic waters is the increasing exploitation of more distant waters through ‘EU – Third Country Fishery Agreements’ (e.g. EU/Mauritania Fisheries Protocol; EU Fisheries Treaty with Morocco). These more distant opportunities however are only available to the larger pelagic vessels. In addition to the above agreements, four Killybegs pelagic trawlers have recently been granted licenses to fish in international waters just beyond Chile’s 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the South Pacific. The decline and delocalization of the Irish fishing industry are symptomatic of more widespread and long-term problems in the industry and will be discussed below. In the next section I outline key historical and contemporary processes significant to the under and overdevelopment of the Irish fishing industry, paying particular attention to its manifestation in Killybegs.

‘Ireland’s Premier Fishing Port’

Killybegs, particularly throughout the 1950 and 1960s, was predominantly a herring and whitefish port targeting species such as cod, hake, haddock, whiting, monkfish, and ling. Beginning in the late 1970s, Killybegs experienced rapid industrialization due to the development of an offshore mid-water trawler fleet targeting pelagic species, primarily mackerel, but also herring, horse mackerel (i.e. skad) and more recently, blue whiting.

The development of the Irish mackerel fishery had been neglected since the exclusion of Irish ports from the United States market in the late 1920s (Gilmore 1987:169). Today mackerel is the most important species landed in Killybegs in terms of earnings, exports (primary markets include Russia, Japan, Nigeria and Egypt) and onshore employment (e.g. processing sector). The pelagic season, though condensed in number of actual days at sea in recent years, is divided into a fall fishery and a spring

fishery, which respectively run from October through December and January through March/April. The larger trawlers in the fleet typically spend a significant portion of the fall fishery (October-November) fishing for mackerel in Norwegian waters, where the mackerel are fatter (i.e. better quality) and of higher value. During this period, Irish vessels land their catches into Norwegian and Scottish ports. Herring and horse mackerel are typically caught closer to home in Irish waters.

Although the burgeoning northwest mackerel fishery of the 1980s ultimately put Killybegs on the pelagic map, eventually earning the small town the title of ‘Ireland’s Premier Fishing Port’, it was preceded, and in many ways facilitated, by a very lucrative herring fishery. Writing on Irish fisheries development, Gilmore (1987:169) notes that “initial fishery expansion was based on herring, the catch increased from 3,400 tons in 1950 to 47,800 tons in 1972. Herring landings accounted for 45 percent of the value of the catch at Irish ports in 1974 but only 10 percent in 1984”.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, ‘big money’ (Molloy 2004) was made in the northwest herring fishery due largely to herring closures in the North and Celtic Seas. These closures caused herring prices in the northwest fishery to spike thereby attracting to Killybegs fishermen from around (and beyond) Ireland (Molloy 2006:103). Herring prices in the northwest plummeted (from £20 a box of herring to £5) with the reopening of herring fisheries in adjacent waters in the early 1980s, thus inspiring an interest in establishing a mackerel fishery.

Such was the flood of fishermen to Killybegs between 1971 and 1981 that the population increased by 39.7 percent (from 1,634 to 2,282) (CSO 1981).¹⁴ A story

¹⁴ The population of Killybegs as a Census Town increased by 42.9 percent between 1971 and 1981 (from 1,099 to 1,570). This influx helps to explain why County Donegal has the highest proportion of fishermen

recounted to me by a Killybegs woman speaks to the significance of incomers, often referred to as ‘blow-ins’, in the area. She told me that during dinner the night before, she and her guests tried to list couples living in Killybegs whose parents (both sets) were also from Killybegs. “And do you know, she said, that after an hour, we were only able to come up with four families”. This influx is significant to the cultural identity and ‘community-ness’ of Killybegs, particularly when set within the ‘Irish’ context, and will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

Historical records note the significance of Killybegs (as well as nearby Teelin) as an important fishery as far back as the 15th century (Conaghan 1979; Molloy 2004; Tucker 1999:87; Taylor 1980:177, 1981:786). Conaghan (1979:87) notes that prior to the English colonial Plantation of Ulster in 1598, the O’Donnell’s, the princes of Tír Chonaill (as Donegal was earlier known), were involved in extensive trade links which made them known on mainland Europe as the ‘Kings of Fish’ (see also Mac Eiteagáin 2002).

Despite this heritage, it is not uncommon to be told in Killybegs today that “fishing didn’t really pick up around here until the 1980s”. This viewpoint epitomizes the chronic underdevelopment of Irish fisheries following the colonization of Ireland by Britain. It was during one of my first interviews in Killybegs that a local man, in comparing the development of Ireland’s fisheries to its European counterparts, contended:

I’ll never understand it. How can it be that we live on an island, that no matter where one stands in this country they’re never really too far from the sea, but yet we’ve never valued our marine resources? We’ve never looked off the land. It must be the eighth wonder of the world. It’s incredible.

per total population in the State. Between 1996 and 1998, the proportion of fishermen in County Donegal as a percentage of the total population figured at 0.52 percent (compared to the State figure of 0.08 percent) (Donnchadha et. al 2000:10).

I do not think he was aware of it at the time, but his concern echoes remarks made by Irish nationalist leader, Arthur Griffith, in 1911: “We dare say the number of public men in Ireland who realise that the sea fisheries of this country could be an industry second only to agriculture might be counted on one hand” (cited in Donnchadha et al. 2000).

The following section historically situates Ireland’s disinclination to ‘look off the land’. Tracing the trajectory of Irish fisheries development through famine, colonization, independence and EU integration, I evidence the ways in which the Irish fishing industry has been repeatedly undermined through intricate and hierarchical integration into larger political-economic processes and powers linked inextricably to Ireland’s colonial encounter with Britain. As part of this effort, I pay particular attention to the role of the Congested Districts Board (CDB) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in fisheries development in southwest Donegal.

Irish Fisheries: From the CDB to the CFP

In the year 1556 an arrangement was entered into between Philip of Spain and Queen Elizabeth of England whereby Philip was to pay Elizabeth a thousand pounds per annum for permission to fish in Irish waters. [...] Louis XIV of France is said to have paid 10,000 for a like privilege and the Dutch and the Swedes also paid the English monarch large sums for permission to fish in our waters (Conaghan 1979:87).

Under Britain’s authority, the development of Irish fisheries was at times discouraged, expended and sacrificed to serve colonial interests (see Molloy 2004:50-1 for example of how the Irish industry was ‘allowed’ to collapse to appease ‘English and Scottish jealousy’; see Conaghan 1979:90-1 and Tucker 1999:109 for examples of oppressions in trade; see also Conaghan 2003). This was of course not unique to the fisheries sector but part of wider colonial processes in Ireland.

Tucker (1999:91) argues that the underdevelopment of southwest Donegal is not due to lack of integration but rather “the manner in which they were integrated into the

colonial state and economy” which entailed severing the regions pre-colonial links and restructuring it as a peripheral part of the British Empire. Tucker does not fully unravel the relationship between Irish fisheries and processes of underdevelopment but elsewhere it has been demonstrated that Ireland’s marine resources were first and foremost ‘a commodity of the Queen’ (Molloy 2004:31; see also Conaghan 1979 excerpt above).

Tom Nairn (1977:11) refers to a “development gap” between Ireland and Scotland and Wales whereas the latter two were “firmly placed amongst developed industrial nations, most of Ireland shared the experience of Britain’s colonies” (cited in Walter 1995:45). Throughout the 19th century in particular, the development of Irish fisheries was stunted by an apathetic British administration. This is illustrated most succinctly in James Johnstone’s (1905) book, *British Fisheries, Their Administration and Their Problems*, which references an 1863 report in which an Inspecting Commissioner has difficulty describing the details of fisheries administration duties. He eventually succumbs: “to do as little as possible, but to preserve peace if possible” (cited in Molloy 2004:51).

The effects of maladministration throughout the 1800s were exacerbated by famine and ensuing emigration from coastal areas (see for example Molloy 2006:24). Killybegs author Pat Conaghan (2003:31) contends that marine resources spared coastal Donegal from the worst effects of famine (at least compared to settlements further inland), but famine thwarted development of a viable fishing industry (see Tucker 1999; see also Conaghan 1979:97). Famine had a disastrous effect on Irish fisheries. Molloy

(2004:51) notes that the number of Irish boats and fishermen decreased by more than 50 percent immediately following the Great Famine of 1845-51.¹⁵

Throughout the 19th century and on into 20th, it was “rare to find a fisherman only” in Donegal (Conaghan 2003:31; see also Bolger 2002:653). Fishing was, at best, a supplement to farming in southwest Donegal. Several factors contribute to the tendency to favor farming over fishing including not only the importance of land in post-Famine Ireland but also the risky venture that fishing is. This risk was exacerbated by a lack of adequate fishing equipment (e.g. boats, nets) and most importantly, a lack of markets (see Molloy 2004:49; Bolger 2002:650). A 1902 report reveals dismayed Commissioners unable to coax Donegal ‘fishermen’ down from their fields.

It was surprising no effort was made to fish during the past week because one night’s fishing by a fisherman’s family would buy the whole value of those same crops... still these people will spend months laboring their little plots of land (cited in Conaghan 2003:108).

The first organized effort at ‘regional development’ (Ferriter 2005:38) in Ireland, and more particularly, the establishment of an Irish fishing industry, came in 1891 under the newly formed Congested Districts Board (CDB) (see Bolger 2002; Tucker 1999:108-9 for review of CDB in Donegal). The primary purpose of the Congested District Board was to alleviate poverty in the West of Ireland. As part of this effort, the Board assisted emigration from designated ‘congested’ districts and became involved in various economic activities including fisheries, forestry, agriculture, weaving and spinning (Bolger 2002).

Contrary to the term ‘congested’, the poverty in these districts was not a product of overpopulation but rather uneconomic land holdings. The density of Congested

¹⁵ Famine relief schemes focused on developing infrastructure to improve access to marine resources (e.g. piers, road works), but the effects of starvation often drove fishermen to sell what they could (e.g. boats/gear) to buy food or simply left them too weak to go to sea (Molloy 2004:34; see also Bolger 2002).

Districts was 89 persons per square mile compared to the Irish average of 134 (Breathnach 1986:80-1). A region was deemed 'congested' if the total rateable valuation when divided by the total population gave a sum of less than one pound ten shillings for each individual (Bolger 2002:652). Killybegs was one of the 20 Congested Districts in County Donegal.

George Russell (1912:13-4) (who often wrote under the penname AE) describes congested Ireland as places where "swollen gombeen men straddle right across whole parishes, sucking up like a sponge all the wealth in the district, ruling everything". He continues:

In fact round the gombeen system reels the whole drunken congested world, and underneath this revelry and jobbery the unfortunate peasant labours and gets no return for his labour. ... He is a slave almost as much as if he were an indentured native or had been sold into the slave market (cited in Bolger 2002:660-1).

One of the primary tasks undertaken by the Board was to end people's dependency on 'gombeen men', known 'contemptuously' for their 'usuriously' high interest rates (Tucker 1999:88; see also Taylor 1981a; Breathnach 1986; Conaghan 1979:97; Conaghan 2003). One of the ways in which the Congested District Board mitigated the West's dependency on the mercy of middlemen was through the establishment of rural credit banks and cooperatives (Bolger 2002).

In the case of fisheries, the CDB resolved lack of markets by buying fish directly from the fishermen at guaranteed prices and improving access to markets by improving roads in congested districts and installing railways into ports (Molloy 2004:45). The rail came to Killybegs, the terminus of the County Donegal Railway, in 1893 but was closed in 1960 (Haughton 1963). The CDB also made improvements to the catching and processing sectors, including pier construction, including the pier in Killybegs, and the

establishment of curing stations and training and quality schemes (e.g. the Board sent Donegal girls to Scottish curing stations for training) (Bolger 2002:660).

Despite these improvements, the greatest fishing effort to occur in Irish waters throughout the Boards tenure was done by foreign fleets (Conaghan 2003; Bolger 2002:669). Foreign fleets have played an ambivalent and intricate role in the development of Irish fisheries. Often cursed as unwanted ‘outsiders’ they are also recognized as integral to the development and direction of the Irish fishing industry through the dissemination of fishing technologies, techniques and knowledge (e.g. vessel/net size/design) (Molloy 2004; Mac Cuinneagáin 2002:206; Conaghan 2003:250-2).

The CDB dissolved in 1923 following Irish Independence and left a half-developed industry in the hands of a young nation that was not only destined to fixate on farming but beset by civil war, recession, poverty and emigration (Bolger 2002:670). In 1931 the establishment of the Sea Fisheries Association (SFA) further improved markets and safeguarded fishermen from the greedy ‘gombeen men’, a point emphasized by long-time Killybegs fisherman, James McLeod. Described by other community members as the ‘father of fishing’ and a ‘pioneer of the industry’ in Killybegs, James McLeod contended during an interview in 2007 that “had it not been for the SFA [in the 1930s] I would not have been able to be a fisherman. You’ve heard of gombeen men? Fish buyers here, if you gave it to them for free, they’d want it for half”.

Although the “level of [fisheries] technology in the 1950s was compared with that of biblical times” (Gilmore 1987:170), the decade served to be an important turning point in the regional development of Irish fisheries.

The leading fishing ports had been on the east coast in the late 1940s but with the subsequent rise in the importance of pelagic and shellfish landings, there was a pronounced westward shift in the distribution of fishing activity. Three-quarters of the national catch and employment are now in western counties from west Cork to Donegal, growth in the latter isolated northwestern county having been particularly significant. Thus the employment and income generated through expansion of the fishing industry has played a major role in regional development in the disadvantaged western areas (Gilmore 1987:172).

The Irish Sea Fisheries Board (Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) in Gaelic) was established in 1952 (BIM replaced the SFA). In addition to four boatyards, including one in Killybegs, BIM controlled fisheries loans (i.e. loan approval) and vessel size and design. It was during this period that some of the boat slips in Irish boatyards were lengthened to accommodate vessels up to 90 feet in length. It was in part due to this extension that BIM set the upper limit in grant and loan schemes at 90 feet. This meant that vessels over 90 feet in length would not be financed through BIM's loan and grant schemes. The decision marked a meaningful moment for the future of Irish fisheries and will be addressed further on in the chapter. The 1950s also saw increased landings and earnings, market improvements, vessel upgrades and major advancements in fishing technology, particularly in net-making and trawling techniques (notably the advent of mid-water trawling in Donegal). Gilmore (1987:167) notes "a seven fold growth in landings occurred in the period 1950-72". Of course 1972, the year Ireland joined the European Union, ushered in a whole new set of challenges for the developing industry, notably the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Common Fisheries Policy

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was first agreed on in 1970 by the EEC-6 (Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg).¹⁶ Coincidentally, the day's business also included beginning accession negotiations with Ireland, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom. By 1976, as tiny Iceland made the 'big move' and extended its offshore Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) from twelve to two hundred miles, it became clear that the original CFP was no longer tenable. Ireland, along with the rest of the world, quickly followed Iceland's lead and declared their 200-mile EEZ. But, as a bonafide member of the European Economic Community since 1972 (along with Denmark and the UK), Ireland's extension established the outer limits of Community waters rather than Irish waters.

The extension of the EU Fishery Zone to 200 hundred miles pushed non-EU fishing fleets (e.g. Eastern European fleets) out of 'Irish' waters but raised questions and controversies over who within the European Community should be allowed in (Molloy 2004:72). Already in this chapter we have seen how (under colonial rule) Irish waters have been the 'traditional' fishing grounds of Spain for at least five hundred years. Under the CFP, this historical record earns Spain (which joined the EU in 1985 and has the largest fishing fleet in the world) the right to have a fixed number of Spanish vessels fish within six miles of the Irish coast.¹⁷ The Irish government tried to implement a unilateral conversation measure during this period which banned all vessels over 34 meters from within 50 miles of the Irish coastline. This exclusive zone was deemed discriminatory by EU powers (because Ireland lacked vessels of that size) and was

¹⁶ The original CFP was a component of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and focused predominantly on common organization of the market (though member states did have access to each other's waters).

¹⁷ The Dutch, French and Norwegians are also allocated quota in the waters off the west coast of Ireland.

subsequently dropped by the Irish government in 1978 (Gilmore 1987). The extension of Community waters from 12 to 200 miles served as the impetus for a 'new generation CFP'.

The Common Fisheries Policy underwent six years of fervent renovation, to put it mildly, before it was finally agreed on by member states in 1983. Gilmore (1987:174) identifies the lengthy process of negotiations as "a disincentive to invest in the fishery due to uncertainty over extent of access to resource and what would be granted to other member states." The CFP is based on a system of 'relative stability' whereby each member state is allocated a fixed share (i.e. quota) of the EUs Total Allowable Catch (TAC) based on the historic proportion to which it is entitled (i.e. historical catch record). Relative stability means that each member state's share of Community quota remains constant over time.

A 2009 Green Paper detailing the specifics of CFP reform identifies serious shortcomings with the principle of relative stability. These include quota swapping between member states, out flagging ('flags of convenience', i.e. vessels flying under another member states flag to fish under their quota (see 'British Flag May Be Backdoor to Ireland' in *The Skipper* July 1980:5), and an increase in discards at sea (see also Siggins 2003). The paper also identifies the principle of relative stability as an impetus for inflationary pressure on TACs because a member state that wants a higher quota has no other option but to seek an increase of the whole Community TAC. That is, the only way a member state stands to increase its quota is to increase the overall TAC.

Ireland's share of the EU TAC is fixed at 23 percent for pelagic species, 16 percent for demersal species and 23 percent of shellfish (Cawley 2006). In the years

leading up to the revised CFP, Ireland's poor historical catch record was recognized as a clear disadvantage and measures were taken to improve Ireland's marginal position. Due in part to the high level of fisheries dependence found in coastal regions of Ireland and the UK, the Hague Agreement of 1976 (also known as the Hague Preferences) allows Ireland and the UK access to a better share of stocks when quotas are low. In a now 'famous commitment' (Molloy 2004:64), the Hague Agreement also allowed Ireland to double its catch from 1975 to 1979, an increase which would be taken into account in determining Ireland's share of the TAC. It was in this way that the Irish pelagic fleet was built in 'self-defense'.

Size Matters in Self-Defense

The development of the Irish pelagic fleet throughout the late 1970s and 1980s was in part an effort not to miss the proverbial boat this time around. Mackerel was not historically targeted (by foreign fleets) in Irish waters to the same extent as herring and demersal species. This served to be the industry's 'golden opportunity' in that it allowed the Irish industry to secure their 'fair share' of mackerel quota as the market developed. Typified by the formidable arrival of five 120-foot 'super trawlers' to the Irish fleet in 1979/1980 (the first of their kind for the small island nation), the mackerel fishery marked the beginning of a new era in the Irish fishing industry (Molloy 2004:69).¹⁸

These five vessels continue to form a formidable component of the Irish pelagic fleet but have undergone a series of considerable upgrades and are to a large extent, same in name only (see Molloy 2004:82). The earlier dry holed 'tank' vessels have since been outfitted with Refrigerated Sea Water (RSW) tanks. Some of the vessels are nearly twice

¹⁸ See also, 'New Supertrawler Leads Our Ocean Challenge' in *The Irish Independent* (October 3, 1980).

the length as their earliest counterparts. The largest trawlers in the fleet, known as the ‘Big Five’, are 60 to 62 meters (197 to 203 feet) in length. To look at it differently, the nets (purse seines) of the vessels in the 1980s had a mouth opening of 240 meters (787 feet) compared to 1,600 meters (5,249 feet) today (Molloy 2004:65). Gilmore (1987:167) describes both the “unusually short time span” in which the Irish fishing industry developed, and the low value, high volume nature of the mackerel fishery, by noting that the “total catch increased abruptly in the period 1979-82 by 127 percent in weight but by only 7 percent in real value terms.”

Today’s Irish pelagic fleet of twenty-two (RSW) trawlers (plus one factory vessel) range in value from €9 million to €19 million and in length from 27 to 71 meters (roughly 89 to 233 feet). The pelagic fleet comprises one percent of the overall Irish fleet, and forty percent of the capacity (Cawley 2006). The last round of upgrades in the northern fleet was as recent as 2003/2004 when seven ‘new’ vessels rejoined the fleet (Molloy 2004:83) although there were signs of overcapacity in the fleet as early as the 1990s (see Supertrawler Sale a Sign of the Times in Killybegs in *The Irish Times*, January 20, 1998).

The pinnacle of development in Irish pelagic fisheries came in 2001 with the arrival of the Atlantic Dawn, the largest super trawler in the world, owned by famed Irishman, Kevin McHugh.¹⁹ The Atlantic Dawn was controversial from the outset. The fact that the Irish domestic fleet was over-capacity prior to the Atlantic Dawn being built is only one example of the controversy surrounding the vessel. At 144 meters (472 feet)

¹⁹ The story of the Atlantic Dawn is impressive in its own right but can not be thoroughly discussed here. Kevin McHugh was well known in Ireland before the Atlantic Dawn made him legendary. In 1977, at the age of 30, he launched the most expensive boat ever built for an Irishman (the Albacore, a purse seiner built in Holland for 1.2 million Pounds). Three years later he spent 2 million Pounds to have his first supertrawler (one of the first five ‘super trawlers’ previously mentioned in the text) built in Norway.

in length and 24 meters (78.7 feet) in breadth, the vessel has the ability to catch, process and hold 7,000 tonnes of fish (over 15 million pounds!). At the time of its launching, owner Kevin McHugh was quoted in a local news source saying that “he wanted to bring fishing in Ireland on to a par with the rest of the world” (Killybegs Online News 2009). In the case of today’s fisheries, ‘on par’ is highly problematic, particularly for third world coastal communities.²⁰

Over 75 percent of the fish stocks in the waters around Ireland are below safe biological limits (Cawley 2006:69) and the European fishing fleet (including the Irish fleet) is over capacity. This imbalance has resulted in a crisis that is ‘spilling over’ into the waters of less developed nations, largely through EU – Third Country Agreements (see O’Riordan 2002). The Atlantic Dawn certainly contributes to this problem, but is by no means unique in its overseas efforts.²¹

Other Irish and European vessels (e.g. Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese) look to EU - Third Country Agreements to sidestep increasing fishing restrictions at home. A Killybegs pelagic vessel owner described the Irish fleets’ exploitation of foreign waters as a survival strategy: “If we are to survive we have to go out and fight for it” (Killybegs Online News May 2, 2009). The pelagic fleets’ exploitation of foreign waters stems in part from anxiety and anger over the lack of national interest and leadership in the fisheries sector. Moving into foreign waters only reinforces rather than resolves animosity over the ‘raw deal’ Irish fishermen received when Ireland joined the European

²⁰ See ‘Irish Government Signs Up to Robbery of African Fishing Nations’ in *An Phoblacht* (June 1, 2006)

²¹ While waiting for the Irish and EU government to figure out how to include the Atlantic Dawn on fully-flexed national and EU fishing vessel registries (it was initially added to the Irish vessel registry as a troop carrier!), the vessel spent its first two years fishing off the coast of Mauritania under a private agreement with the Mauritanian government (see for example ‘Monster Ships are Fast, Huge-and Irish’ by Roddy 2002)

Union and the Irish government ‘sold out’ fishing for gains in agriculture.²² Ferriter (2005:682) notes that the “Common Agricultural Policy ensured an increase in the output and incomes of one third of Irish farmers”. The direction (and delocalization) of the pelagic sector engenders an ethos of individualism and self-reliance due in part to the State’s seemingly standardized message of ‘fend for yourself’ in fisheries. What is clear is that Irish fishermen are no longer content being the underdeveloped underdog in European fisheries. This ensures that despite Ireland’s late start, it is gaining ground in the race to the bottom of global fisheries.

The Atlantic Dawn has since been sold to a Dutch company but around a dozen southwest Donegal fishermen continue to work aboard (and abroad) under Dutch ownership. A favorite story circulating through town while I was living in Killybegs had to do with ‘local lads’ coming ashore Easter Island on a container ship as part of an Atlantic Dawn crew change. The crew was subsequently picked up by the fishing vessel and continued on to the fishing grounds in the South Pacific.²³ Two points need to be re-emphasized here. Firstly, due to the 90 foot upper limit restriction on loan/grant schemes put into effect by BIM in the 1950s, the modern Irish pelagic fleet (comprised of vessels well over 90 feet in length) was built without any government aid or grant assistance. Irish vessels were originally financed through Norwegian and Dutch banks (the majority of the Irish pelagic fleet was built in the shipyards of Norway and Holland). Irish banks began financing the Irish fleet in the 1990s and today the entire Irish fleet is financed

²² These gains however were not necessarily equitable among Irish farmers. The CAP was the death knell of the small family farm in rural Ireland, which was deemed ‘unmodern’, inefficient and in need of ‘restructuring’ (see for example Scheper-Hughes 2001:106)

²³ I was told by a crewmember of the Atlantic Dawn that the trip from Holland to the waters off Chile takes 28 days and costs nearly 1 million dollars in fuel one-way.

from within the country.²⁴ Secondly, many, if not most of the pelagic vessel owners in Killybegs are ‘blow-ins’, that is, they are not *true* Killybegs people. This will be discussed further in chapter three.

The Bonanza, the Bust

The development of the pelagic sector earned the small town of Killybegs the impressive title of ‘Ireland’s Premier Fishing Port’. It also earned a small number of big boat owners the unwanted title of ‘mackerel millionaires’ (see ‘Netting the Millions’ in *Ireland on Sunday*, June 14, 1998).²⁵ Few in numbers but formidable in size, the development of the pelagic fleet transformed Killybegs into an oasis of wealth and work in a region of the Republic often characterized as an employment ‘black spot’.

Offshore employment opportunities in the pelagic sector are limited to the number of berths available in the fleet of 22 trawlers. Positions onboard pelagic vessels are in short supply but well paid. So sought after are jobs aboard a pelagic trawler (throughout the 1980s-90s in particular) that it was not unheard of for a man called to fill one vacant berth to be pulled from a waiting list of up to 70 interested men. Twice during fieldwork I heard stories of men who could not wait for a dead man to be buried before calling to inquire about the berth he left behind. This is in sharp contrast to the working conditions onboard an Irish whitefish vessel, work that is increasingly done by

²⁴ Central Bank records suggest that Irish Banks have lent over 400 million Euro to the fishing industry (Kavanagh 2007).

²⁵ The title of ‘mackerel millionaires’ is widely resented among pelagic vessel owners. Commenting on the risks and rising costs associated with such success one vessel owner revealed how “you could be bankrupt before you knew it... I mean if you take our vessel, the cost of running that, we’re looking at almost €20,000 a day in fuel, €18 to €20,000 if you’re fishing a full day. In 2000, it was less than €5,000 a day in fuel to run the boat. Our insurance has gone from what should be €50,000 or €60,000 a year, or about €1,000 a week in insurance, we’re at €200,000 now because everything has gotten so expensive.”

foreign agency workers from Eastern European and Southeast Asian countries (ITF Report 2008).

The Irish whitefish sector has experienced considerable decline since around the 1990s, due primarily to significant cuts to an already meager national quota. The Irish polyvalent (whitefish) segment is comprised of 1,573 vessels (compared to the pelagic segment of 22 vessels!). The whitefish fleet represents 85 percent of the vessels in the Irish fleet and 48 percent of the capacity (Cawley 2006:58). The majority (1,360) of these vessels are under 12 meters (39.3 feet) in length. Approximately 300 more vessels in the fleet are between 12 and 24 meters (78.7 feet). This means that, contrary to the global maneuvering that the Irish pelagic fleet is capable of, the whitefish sector is essentially ‘stuck’ at home. Primary markets include Spain, France, the UK, Italy and Germany (Cawley 2006:51). There are currently less than a dozen whitefish boats (all under 24 meters) fishing out of Killybegs.

Increasing onshore employment opportunities throughout the late 1990s, particularly in the construction industry brought on by the Celtic Tiger economy, coincided with significant decline in the whitefish sector prompting many whitefish vessel crewmen to opt for life and work onshore.²⁶ Few, if any, young people today are willing, able or encouraged to work aboard an Irish whitefish vessel.

Employment onshore is most frequently found in the fish factories of Killybegs. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s employment in the Killybegs processing sector grew to comprise 83 percent of all employment in the local shore-based fishery sector (Donnchadha et al. 2000:30). A study of socio-economic factors in Irish fishing

²⁶ It is worth pointing out that in 2007 14.3 percent of County Donegal’s total workforce was employed in the construction sector.

communities carried out by the Donnchadha et al. (2000:30) identifies the number of people employed directly in the fish processing sector in Killybegs in 1998 as 1,533 (with 659 of these full-time and permanent). This means that Killybegs fish factories employed 4.4 percent of persons at work in Donegal (and 24.6 percent of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sector in Donegal) (Donnchadha et al. 2000).

The fishing industry brought a measure of prosperity to Killybegs unheard of in the region, but the ‘booming’ or ‘feverish’ local economy of Killybegs came to a dramatic bust in 2004 with the allegations of fraud against Killybegs pelagic fishermen (e.g. falsified log books, under reported catches, and ignored quota restrictions and closed fishing areas). The allegations and ensuing investigations have left the fishing industry and the communities dependent on it in a state of formidable flux and fixed what seems to be a stationary black cloud over Killybegs.²⁷ The allegations spurred raids of Killybegs fishing vessels, factories and homes (spanning three years) by Gardai from the National Bureau of Criminal Investigations. Stories circulate of Gardai breaking down front doors and taking as evidence the Communion money of young children in household. The debacle continues to play out in courtrooms and newspapers. Throughout fieldwork the ‘crisis’ was more closely felt through passing comments regarding the wear of a man’s face or the weight a woman’s shoulders seemed to be carrying down the lane. The number of houses currently being repossessed in and around Killybegs (numbers range between 20 and 40) is another indication of ‘how bad it really is’.

²⁷ See for example: ‘Killybegs Under Scrutiny, Again!’ (*Donegal Post*, July 7, 2007); ‘Killybegs Fishermen to Face Fraud Charges’ (*Irish Mail*, October 29, 2006); ‘Fishery Officers Get Court Order to Inspect Killybegs Plant’ (*Irish Times*); ‘Gardai Raid Fishermen’s Homes Whilst Drug Smugglers Run Rampant’ (*Marine Times* August 2007).

Alternative Industries and Emigration

Given the outstanding success of the fishing industry in Killybegs, little effort has been made to develop alternative industries in the locality. In previous decades, the fishing industry rendered southwest Donegal largely immune to the economic turmoil and emigration that afflicted the rest of Ireland, particularly throughout the ‘tumultuous 1980s’. It is the particular trajectory of fisheries development and decline that I have outlined here that has kept Killybegs (until very recently) impervious to Ireland’s long-time affair with emigration. Unfortunately, when the Celtic Tiger economy began to stagger in 2007 the fishing industry in Killybegs was ill posed to shelter the region from the wider political-economic problems of the national and global economy. The declining population of Killybegs in 2006 is significant as it marks the first time since the inception of the Free State that Killybegs has experienced population decline (i.e. the population of Killybegs has increased steadily since 1926). In 2006, the unemployment rate in Killybegs reached 18 percent (17 percent female unemployment rate and 25 percent male unemployment rate).

Killybegs has few alternative resources to supplant the role of the fishing industry in the local economy. The new pier offers opportunity for economic growth as a commercial harbor but is hindered by onshore infrastructure. Donegal roads are some of the worst in the country and pose a ‘bottleneck’ problem in the flow of cargo to/from the pier.²⁸ Oil and gas exploration is currently touted as the next ‘big thing’ for southwest Donegal and is responsible for increased activity at the new pier. In recent years, oil and gas exploration companies (e.g. Shell Exploration and Statoil Hydro Projects) drilling in

²⁸ There is also talk within Killybegs that the local power elites, which are heavily invested in fisheries, are opposed to re-designating the new pier as a Commercial Harbor as this may interfere with the ‘authority’ they currently have over pier matters (the new pier is currently designated a Fisheries Harbor).

the Corrib gas field off the northwest coast have utilized the pier. Contrary to the fierce opposition voiced further down in the country (e.g. “Shell to Sea” campaign), southwest Donegal anxiously awaits (with fingers tightly crossed) word of potential work in the oil and gas industry.

A long-time and recently displaced Killybegs fisherman recently took the initiative to establish an oil rig safety training centre in Killybegs. (Prior to this, individuals had to travel to Aberdeen, Scotland for training). According to the director of the course, over 100 Donegal men have been trained in Killybegs; 98 percent of which, he reports, had previously left (willingly or unwillingly) the fishing industry. A Killybegs pelagic trawler owner interviewed for this project described the oil industry as the ‘biggest threat’ to the Irish pelagic fleet in that the industry entices qualified engineers onto oil rigs and out of fishing boats.

Our engineers, who we need to run those modern vessels here, you need good engineers. They’re being offered big money, because the oil industry at the moment is in such a boom. They’re crying out for people... and those guys can almost name their price you know.

Some engineers aboard fishing vessels are able to make use of extended time off in the pelagic fishery (due to the increasingly limited number of days at sea currently shaping the pelagic fishery season) to work in the oil industry. Many, if not most, of the Killybegs fishermen I spoke with (under the age of 40) had either already completed or were planning to complete training necessary for employment in the offshore oil industry.

That said, other key players in the local economy echoed the concerns voiced above about the scarcity of qualified labor in the locality. One man explained the difference in work (safety) cultures aboard a fishing vessel versus an oil rig as follows:

It’s a difficult transition to make. Fishing and working on oil rigs, both might be based on working at sea, but both approach that work very different. Fishing is a ‘can do’ attitude, whereas on those oil rigs there is a certain way of doing everything that you have to adhere to. For

example, a fisherman might look at a rope and say, “Don’t stand under that rope, it might break”. A person working in the oil industry would never say that. It wouldn’t occur to them to say that. Because that rope has been tested, they know what it can handle. Everything has been certified. The fisherman half expects the rope to break, then he’ll fix it. I’m not saying there aren’t accidents and deaths in the oil industry. It’s just they each approach and understand their work at sea differently. ... A fisherman will come in looking for a job and they’ll ask for his CV and he’ll say, “What’s a CV?” They don’t understand that employers, especially within the oil industry, where rules and regulations are strictly adhered to, want to see past employment.

Regardless of readiness or the strength of one’s CV, the extent of (predominantly male) employment opportunities in the locality afforded by the oil and gas industry remains largely unrealized. At the time of fieldwork the oil industry was still only in its infancy. I was told that only two out of 150 wells were producing in the oil fields off of the Irish coastline. At the moment then, the situation for southwest Donegal is one of ‘ready and waiting’.

Unlike the oil fields, Ireland’s tourism industry is already producing. Inglis (2008:104) notes that “between 1988 and 1998, one in three new jobs in Ireland was in tourism”. Although Killybegs is late to join in, efforts are being made to develop the local tourism industry in Killybegs. Although County Donegal has the highest number of unoccupied holiday homes (8,275) in the country (11.7 percent of the total housing stock in County Donegal is comprised of unoccupied holiday homes versus 2.81 percent in the State as a whole (CSO 2006)), Killybegs seems to suffer from a ‘passing through’ complex in that most tourists only pass *through* Killybegs on their way to Gaeltacht destinations where one can admire local knitwear, climb Slieve League (the highest sea cliffs in Europe) and visit the Glencolumbkille Folk Village Museum.

Cruise ships have been calling to port in Killybegs for the past several years and numbers are steadily increasing. There are nine cruise ships scheduled to dock in Killybegs in 2009. Although efforts are being made to lure passengers into the town for

the day, more often than not they are whisked away by waiting buses which take them into the Gaeltacht for the day. Aside from roaming cruise ship passengers, Killybegs is a popular destination for visitors from Northern Ireland who come for sport fishing adventures and, though now not as often, spirited drinking sessions. While tourism might help mediate some of the economic hardships stemming from decline in the fishing sector, it is important to keep in mind that of all the new jobs tourism created in Ireland between 1988 and 1998, “half are seasonal, part-time and low paid and, increasingly, are being taken up by migrants from eastern countries of the European Union” (Inglis 2008:104).

At present, neither the tourism nor oil industry are in a position to offer any measure of substantive relief to the dramatically declining economic and employment opportunities in the region. Killybegs continues to be mired in an extended period of rupture and uncertainty. All of these factors come together in a collective concern that emigration is the ‘only option’ for the young people of Killybegs.²⁹ The following chapter focuses on the current economic and moral climate of Killybegs from the perspective of local youth. In doing so, it refracts some of the key aspects of place discussed here through the critical lens of local youth and highlights the ways in which ‘place’ influences young people’s articulations of identity.

²⁹ See ‘Emigration Only Option for Young People in Killybegs’ in *Donegal Democrat*, January 18, 2007.

Not Too Rural, Not Too Rich: The Politics of Place and Identity³⁰

Located in the shifting and unstable topography of place outlined in chapter two, this chapter focuses on the ways in which young people's narratives of place become part of articulations of identity. I pay attention to the ways in which the development and transformation of the 'local' fishing industry contributes to key, and at times contradictory, themes in local youth identities. In doing so, I argue for the sustained importance of place in studies of identity and migration despite claims that we are living in the placeless times of 'late modernity' (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991).

This chapter does not directly situate young people's sense of place along the axis of gender. Attention to young people's subjective expressions and experiences of place revealed linkages between place and identity that cut through the category of gender emphasizing instead themes redolent of broader social and economic processes and inequalities connected to the development and transformation of the local fishery. Subjectivities of gender and class will be discussed in-depth in later chapters. Rather, refracted through the critical lens of local youth, this chapter builds on the previous and puts us in a better position to understand the specificities of space and place, including youth perspectives on the contemporary social architecture and local cultural milieu of Killybegs.

Here I demonstrate the ways in which young people self-consciously situate themselves (individually, collectively and hierarchically) within, against and through the

³⁰ A version of this chapter has been published. See Donkersloot, R. 2010. "Now Hold On, My Attachment to this Place is Home. That's it.": The Politics of Place and Identity in an Irish Fishing Locale. *Journal of Maritime Studies (MAST)* 9(2):31-52.

cultural, social and moral landscapes of a fishing community in flux. Drawing primarily on youth discourse of ‘community’ and ‘consumption’, I pay particular attention to the ways in which young people construct and maintain social and symbolic boundaries between themselves and others, and how through these boundary-making processes articulations of identity and morality emerge. Fundamental to this is consideration of the ways in which the development, organization and practices of the ‘local’ fishing industry shape, both negatively and positively, the symbolic and structural dimensions of young people’s sense of place. This needs to be approached and contextualized with an eye to both the current political-economic and cultural climate of Killybegs and more broadly, Ireland.

‘Irishness’ and Individualism

Ferriter (2005:4) reminds us that Eamon de Valera’s 1943 ‘Ireland that we dreamed of’ speech was an articulation of traditional, non-material, rural values. Irish sociologist Tom Inglis (2008:37) suggests that “the particular type of social bonds and sense of belonging that developed in families and communities around Ireland during the 19th and 20th centuries stifled individualism”. Inglis (2008:5) describes ‘Irishness’ as “a way of being in the world that shuns and shows disdain for ambition, selfishness, and materialism” – a ‘way of being’ it seems at ostensible odds with the ‘mad materialism and neo-capitalist swagger’ characteristic of Ireland’s ‘new golden age’ (Doyle 2007:303). Although the Celtic Tiger economy, and its twin forces of consumerism and cosmopolitanism, no doubt foster new notions of what it means to be ‘Irish’, Wilson and Donnan (2006:70) remind us (along with participants of this project below) that there are

many “who do not see themselves as part of it, who are excluded from it, or do not buy into it, either as an economic miracle or as the basis of a new Irish personality”.

Calum, age 26: To be honest with you, the Celtic Tiger is something that is really only known in certain parts. Like the eastern coast. Like Dublin. They only got the benefit. Donegal didn't see any Celtic Tiger.

Ben, age 23: I didn't experience it at all, all I heard was that the Celtic Tiger was going to change Ireland for the better and it's actually made it worse, it made it a hell of a lot worse.

Paul, age 25: I remember hearing about it [the Celtic Tiger] or reading about it and listening to the news. But it never reached here. At all.

This contemporary clash of cultural values, or collision of the local with the global, was reiterated by Dr. Garret Fitzgerald when he posed the question: “What does it mean that Gaelic identity can only survive in poverty?”³¹ Earlier ethnographic accounts of Ireland give added weight to the pervasiveness of particular ‘Irish’ qualities that seem to run counter to the impressive displays of individualism encountered in Killybegs, and perhaps fishing communities in general (Byron 1986:148; see for example Peace 2001; Scheper-Hughes 2001). The cultural tension between the manner in which Killybegs realized its most recent *raison d’être* and long-standing (albeit idealized) notions of what it means to be ‘Irish’ raises intriguing questions concerning how Killybegs youth come to grips with the contradictions, ambiguities and complexities of local (and national) socio-political realities. This chapter addresses some of these tensions through consideration of the meanings and values local youth attach to the processes, politics and powers implicated therein.

³¹ This question was posed by Dr. Garret Fitzgerald during a debate in Rathmullan, County Donegal (on September 14, 2007) in honor of the 400th anniversary of the Flight of the Earls.

To be clear, the narratives of place and articulations of identity presented here should not be understood as permanent or fixed in any way, but rather as always and only partial and provisional. Central here is Falk and Pinhey's (1978) contention that the "social world must be regarded as an ongoing accomplishment, not a taken for granted facticity" (cited in Halfacree 1993:30). For instance, the most flattering review of Killybegs I recorded during fieldwork was given by a young man who, I was later told by a family member, had only recently started to "enjoy it more... He seemed to have a wee bit of a chip on his shoulder about Killybegs for awhile, you know, nothing but uninteresting people or whatever. He didn't like it at all."

What I am concerned with here is the ways in which Killybegs is 'actively sensed' (Feld and Basso 1996) by its youth. This requires being attentive to the ways in which the past – distant and near, remembered and imagined – permeates the present, leaving a palpable 'imprint of time' on present meanings of place (Findlay and Li 1997:34). Young people's expressions and experiences of place and community presented here are heavily influenced by what Killybegs *used to be*. This demonstrates the significance of time in studies of place, identity and migration and is evidenced in the following dialogue between two participants, Diana and William, ages 26 and 30.

Diana: Fishing is so quiet and everything is doom and gloom around this town like. It's all bad news, bad feelings between fishing people. Nothing good seems to be happening. At all. Some times I do think to myself, why am I still here like?

William: Yeah, I'm sure you've heard of the whole [fishing investigations] situation. Since that thing it's just turned into a sort of cultural, sort of a community, like everybody is thriving on fuckin' doom and gloom. Bad news. ... Yeah, people's spirits are down, it just seems to have sank with the fishing industry.

With these temporal dimensions in mind, the following section begins to investigate the ways in which the local fishing industry is referenced by youth as both a

divisive and unifying force in the locality. Here I highlight a key trope in discourse of community – the lack of ‘community’ in Killybegs, particularly as it relates to organization of the fishing industry. I then turn attention towards discourse of consumption and reveal how local youth figure industrialization as the basis for a collective and unifying experience, one which sets them apart from surrounding communities.

Symbolic, Spatial and Social Divisions: Us and Them

Laura, age 23: I think because Killybegs is such a big kind of business town that they’re kind of lax a little bit in like culture, like community kind of, because business has kind of built it into what it is.

Eric, age 27: You know, the community spirit, there is no community spirit here. ... See, this is it, money breeds mistrust and then gossip and then, okay, money, mistrust and gossip, they’re all intertwined.

Laura and Eric are not alone in their failure to find ‘community’ in Killybegs. Although some participants (five) felt that there was definitely a strong sense of community in Killybegs (evidenced predominantly by community festivals and football matches), the dominant impression put forward by young (as well as older) participants was marked by a degree of ambivalence if not pessimism. I was walking along Shore Road one day when I stopped to say hello to an acquaintance, when looking towards the town, she rather abruptly remarked:

I’ve never lived in a worse town, have you ever seen an uglier town? ... All the money that was made in this town and not one penny was put back into the town. It went right into their pocket and never came out. You’ve been here, you know. Of course I wouldn’t want to put anything into this community either, I’d rather contribute to one of the smaller communities around here, they’re closer, more tight-knit.

Similar to the above, interview questions related to the sense of community in Killybegs prompted several participants to reference nearby communities (i.e. ‘In

Through') as *the real thing* in terms of 'community'.³² Reciprocally, it was during visits 'In Through' that Killybegs was described to me as 'culturally barren' and a 'bit of a garrison town.' In the excerpts below participants compare 'community' in Killybegs to nearby localities.

Tony, age 19: If you look at the other parishes around Donegal, their sense of community is way stronger. Do you know Ardara, like that's got a really big sense of community, so does Kilcar and Carrick, they do like.

Katie, age 24: Now you can definitely see that, even in Kilcar there's far more of a sense of community than there ever was here, or even now.

Michael, age 26: It's not normal community, this town... I wouldn't say it's a very close-knit community, like Kilcar would be, or Ardara. There's definitely something different in this town, whether it's all the blow-ins, it's just not the same.

Chris, age 31: In Killybegs there's nothing. ... Whereas I was down driving through Ardara seven o'clock [in the] evening and... there was music on the street so there was. I just don't know what it is about Killybegs. ... I think it's begrudgery more than anything.

Lack of cooperation or 'togetherness' was a key theme in youth interviews and highlights tension within the community of Killybegs that will be addressed later on. For now, I want to focus attention on the ways in which Killybegs youth compare and contrast their own position in the local landscape to their closest counterparts 'In Through' through discourse of consumption. Below, Killybegs youth, in drawing from the same local reservoir of resources which denies them strong community spirit, assert a

³² It is not uncommon for Killybegs people to speak of 'In Through' as one community, however Karen's more careful assessment – "*Well, I wouldn't see a difference between Carrick or Kilcar but they probably would*" – is exactly right (see for example Taylor 1981, 1987). Also, the tendency for Killybegs youth to turn towards 'In Through' in discourse of community needs to be reference framed with a variable range of familiarity in mind. Although all Killybegs youth are acquainted with the nearby communities, this is to varying degrees of intimacy, depending in part on family ties and friendships which extend 'In Through'. Here I am not questioning the sense of community in surrounding towns and villages, only drawing attention to a potential lack of familiarity which may be critical in the perceptions Killybegs youth have.

collective identity which hierarchically positions ‘us’ (Killybegs) against ‘them’ (In Through).

Laura, age 23: I’d hate to be stuck in somewhere like Glen or somewhere just so remote, there’s probably even less things to do than there is here.

Being ‘stuck’ somewhere ‘just so remote’ reveals how the ‘idyllic’ is often plain ‘dull’ for rural youth (Haugen and Villa 2006; Rye 2006; Dunkley 2004). Two project participants (who had left Killybegs to attend college) contended that they would consider moving back to the Killybegs area in the future, but would not live on the side of town bordering ‘In Through’ as it would be ‘too far away’. Shields (1991:29) contends, “spatial metaphors, or even simple descriptive spatial divisions, frequently recode geographic space to signify certain social divisions, cultural classifications or particular values, events or feelings”. The social and symbolic ‘coding’ of spatiality is evidenced below in Karen’s (age 26) account of the differences between the “Killybegs corner” and the “farmers’ corner” in a nearby nightclub (The Limelight).

Karen: Like we have a Killybegs corner. It’s just silly. I don’t know maybe other towns do it too. Oh yeah, like Studio 2 is more Carrick, Kilcar, Glen based.

RD: Where is Studio 2?

Karen: It’s in the Limelight. There’s two studios, two dance floors. Studio 1 would be more dance music and we’d have the Killybegs corner up there and Studio 2 is more what we call farmers. Because my cousin was there and she’s from Kilcar, and she said, “Oh we were at the Limelight.” And I said, “So was I, didn’t see you.” I said, “I suppose you were in Studio 2.” Ha ha, she’d laugh, you know, but she was.

Karen’s socio-spatial mapping of the nightclub is redolent of not only boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, but a perceived hierarchy according to degrees of ‘ruralness’ (e.g. ‘farmers’ corner). Dunkley and Panelli (2007:12) write:

Spaces and practices come to be associated with the identities of those groups who lay claim to them, and the various degrees of ‘ruralness’ accorded to specific places and activities influence

their desirability for differing groups. Processes of inclusion and exclusion are expressions of power.

One of the ways in which Killybegs youth stress the difference between themselves and ‘others’ is through use of the negatively loaded concept ‘culchie’. The term ‘culchie’ carries pejorative connotations associated with ‘backwardness’ and being ‘too rural’.

Pete, age 19: People down there [in Dublin] would call us culchies... but you see, us in Killybegs, we call them [In Through] culchies.

Laura, age 23: I think because quite a lot of kids, when I was growing up, had quite a lot of money ... because their parents were involved in the fishing industry. I think there was that kind of looking down on everyone else kind of thing, especially from like people from Carrick and Teelin, who would be considered culchies and stuff like that.

Haugen and Villa (2006:190) encountered similar concepts (‘harry’ and ‘raner’) used by rural and urban Norwegian youth to describe male rural culture and rural people as the ‘peculiar other’. The authors conclude, “some rural youth protest and some agree with the above images, but it is always the other and not they themselves representing the peculiar rural ‘harry’ culture. No one likes to identify themselves with a culture defined as inferior and peculiar” (Haugen and Villa 2006:191; see also Dunkley and Panelli 2007). This interpretation fits well with the ways in which Killybegs youth self-consciously resist and rationalize their own and others’ perceptions of who gets counted as a ‘culchie’. Contrary to romanticized notions of the ‘rural (Irish) fishing village’, it is the fishing industry which serves as the source of sophistication, if not urbanism, in youth experience and identity.

The prosperity of northwest pelagic fisheries is not necessarily confined to Killybegs, but symbolically it remains closely bound to the community and engenders a key difference between the town and those surrounding it. The towns’ industriousness and wealth enables local youth to shore up their identity as more ‘urbane’ and

sophisticated than others in the area (see Kjeldgaard 2003; see also Dunkley and Panelli 2007). From the perspective of Killybegs youth, one of the ways in which difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is expressed is in relation to consumption habits/opportunities/preferences (e.g. preferred styles of music and clothes) but also and more generally in terms of a perceived cosmopolitanism or worldliness (see also Matthews et al. 1998).

Andrew, age 22: We used to belittle other towns as well like if they hadn’t got this or they hadn’t got that. ... We thought we were unique because of the fishing industry I suppose, we were always, within southwest Donegal, Killybegs is just that bit bigger than the other towns like Kilcar, or Ardara or Glenties.

Karen, age 26: I don’t know you just can tell, you can spot them [In Through people] off. Yeah. Not that anybody is better than anybody. You just can tell, but then you’d hear things like ones [In Through] are involved in drugs and stuff and you’re like, in there? Like, they can get it? You know, that sort of way. Or these ones come out and they’re looking trendy.

Karen’s knack for ‘spotting them off’ paired with her expressed surprise in hearing that they can get drugs ‘in there’ or ‘come out looking trendy’ engenders a common notion that ‘In Through’ people are more innocent or ‘less knowing’ than their Killybegs counterparts (see also Rye 2006:411). It is another marker of one’s ‘ruralness’ and despite emphases on equality (‘not that anyone’s better than anyone else’), such utterances connote a complexity of inferiority and admiration. These again speak more to the social and symbolic distance felt between the localities as the road distance between Killybegs and Glencolumbkille (the furthest village from Killybegs) is 27 kilometers.

Thus far I have discussed some of the ways in which aspects of fisheries industrialization are expressed as a source of collective identity and difference, of being ‘better than’. I have done this by drawing attention to the ways in which Killybegs youth create and maintain boundaries to situate themselves on the ‘right’ side of ‘too rural’.

Additionally, I have briefly highlighted the ways in which youth perceive aspects of industrialization as integral to the undermining of ‘community’ in Killybegs. In the next section, while maintaining focus on discourse of community and consumption, I bring to the foreground evidence of additional ‘others’ which suggest that the social and symbolic significance of the wealth in Killybegs, inextricably linked to the fishing industry, is not as straightforward as this section portends.

More Millionaires Than...

From the outset of fieldwork, I was well informed of the double-edged nature of the wealth in Killybegs. It was put to me on several occasions: Do you know there are more millionaires in Killybegs per square mile than Beverly Hills/Texas/Paris/Dublin/all of Europe? One such occasion came a few months into fieldwork when I ran into an acquaintance in a local pub. After chatting briefly, the young man turned to me and said, “The guy who owns this place is a millionaire, but we still drink here.”

Killybegs is known through out the rest of Ireland as ‘a millionaires’ town’ and this reputation is significant to both young people’s sense of place and identity. Nadel-Klein (2003) reminds us that the way people refer to themselves as belonging to a group is produced in part by the ways in which others see them (see also Nadel-Klein 1991). Studies on rural youth identities in particular emphasize the importance of not just how young people perceive their community, but how young people perceive *others* to perceive their community (Kjeldgaard 2003). Below I evidence the ways in which local youth talk about a prevailing perception others have of Killybegs. I do this to lay the necessary groundwork for a subsequent discussion on the ways in which particular values

have become imbued in young people's narratives of Killybegs, and how these values intersect and influence articulations of individual identities.

Eric, age 27: Fine, there's more millionaires per square mile in Killybegs than there is in Beverly Hills. .. But not everyone in the bloody town is a millionaire.

Caitriona, age 26: A lot of people would say, "Oh, you're from Killybegs, youse are all loaded in Killybegs." It's like, "What do you mean by that?"

Ben, age 23: If people say to you, "Where you from?" and you say Killybegs, they say, "Well, that's a millionaires town." That's the way they look at it, but it's nothing like that at all. ... but half of them haven't even been here, but then the people that have been here say, "No, the Killybegs people are very nice."

Discourse surrounding 'the money in Killybegs' engenders an undeserving aspect stemming in part from the 'morally suspect' and widely-publicized practices of the Killybegs fleet. Ben's above qualification, 'No, Killybegs people are very nice' speaks volumes about the negative values currently infesting the dominant narrative of Killybegs. It implies that the categories of 'millionaire' and 'nice people' are mutually exclusive. Paired with Patrick's comments below about 'people from around here' we begin to feel a formidable tension which shapes and is shaped by the communities *within* the community of Killybegs.

Patrick, age 26: But even people from around here that wouldn't be from direct fishing families, they'd be at the same craic, like "Youse have plenty [of money] made."

The more succinct remark of a long-time fisherman further evidences the constituent fragments and frictions which make up the community as a whole. When asked if he felt there was a sense of community in Killybegs, he responded: "There are two communities in Killybegs: the wealthy one and the ordinary one."

Such remarks were not uncommon and reveal the heterogeneity of an ostensibly homogenous community (in that Killybegs is predominantly Irish, white and Catholic).

In the next section I point to some of the ways in which socio-historical and political-economic processes are implicated in the veritable lack of ‘community-ness’ in Killybegs. While mindful not to overstate its significance, there is a marked lack of social and economic integration in Killybegs. Interviews with community members (young and old) reveal a tendency to distinguish between the ‘fishing community’, largely though not entirely composed of wealthy vessel and fish factory owners, and the community in general.

Immediate ‘Others’ and the ‘Communities’ of Killybegs

Mr. Byrne: Killybegs was always like that, a port town. Things come and go. People come and go. So you never have this situation of being considered a blow-in, everybody blew in, you know. There’s no feeling of strangeness.

The above, put to me by a community leader, is at best a half-truth. Certainly not everyone blew in. For example, Mr. Byrne didn’t ‘blow in’, a point that was made during the interview: “I’m the last local left!” And despite the contention that ‘there is no feeling of strangeness’, one does at times have to contend with ‘being considered a blow-in’ (although this is not a matter of equal import to everyone in the community). It was not long after landing in Killybegs that I shared in a sidewalk conversation which turned spontaneously towards the topic: “They call us ‘blow-ins’ but sure, we built this town.” Though expressed in a non-serious manner, the seminal role of ‘blow-ins’ in the rise and success of Killybegs as a fishing port is undisputable. Perhaps ‘strangeness’ is not the best word to describe community dynamics, but where one does and does not come from matters. Below, Mr. McIntyre, a school teacher in the area, discusses the impact of ‘newcomers’ on the community and subsequently laments the waning potential of the fishing industry to become a ‘community thing’.

Mr. McIntyre: Killybegs never had a great community. The reason being that too many people came into Killybegs who had no affiliation with Killybegs whatsoever, they just came in to earn money... Those people never really regarded themselves as Killybegs people. They still regard themselves as from Mayo or from Galway or from Dublin and so on. But given another generation that would have ended. The next generation would have been local. But now that the fishing industry has collapsed almost, their offspring are inclined to look back towards going out again. So it never lasted long enough. If we could have gotten another generation out of it, it probably would have become a community thing, but it never even got a chance to happen.

As previously discussed, the vast majority of pelagic trawler owners (the so-called ‘mackerel millionaires’) are not from Killybegs, and according to Mr. McIntyre (and he is not alone on this accord): ‘never really regarded themselves as Killybegs people’. This particular configuration of *who does not belong* and *who has money* means that extreme individualism – already identified as a common characteristic of fishing communities (Byron 1986) – may be (or at the very least perceived to be) *more* extreme in Killybegs.

Rye (2006:411) contends that “strong social ties foster not only caring communities in the good sense but also a culture of strict social control.” He writes:

There is less tolerance for those who succeed, in particular if they brag about their achievements, or if their behavior deviates in other ways. Besides this the local community has more means to force the deviants into line.

Examples of this are not uncommon in rural and Irish studies (see for example Peace 2001). In this case study they are evidenced in part in Tony’s discontented remarks below.

Tony, age 19: There’s always people saying... “Oh, you’d think they would do this or you’d think they would do that”, but who is they? ... And then if someone did [do something], then they were criticized for it, then they didn’t do it right. I think there’s a lot of negativity.

RD: Where do you think that stems from, that attitude, is it recent?

Tony, age 19: I think it might be because the people that might be doing that might be not from Killybegs. They’re living in Killybegs but they might not be from Killybegs. So it might be the old Killybegs people talking, “Who’s he, who’s she”, doing that like.

Tony's tentative suggestion that it might be those not from Killybegs who are more actively involved in organizing community events was echoed by other participants, including Michael below.

Michael, age 26: There's kind of a wee kind of group that are really community orientated and it probably is largely the fishing gang... more the higher up fishing group... that seemed to be involved in everything all the time.

Efforts aside, the ability to 'control' members of a community is contingent on notions of belonging which 'blow-ins' may not buy into (see Inglis 2008; Peace 2001). Young (1971:39) reminds us that "a society can only control effectively those who perceive themselves to be members of it" (cited in McRobbie 2000:182). In this way the twin forces of industrialization and individualism in Killybegs may be particularly inimical to community interests. As outsiders, the individuals at the helm of the fishing industry are well insulated against informal social constraints (for example gossip, see Inglis 2008:66). This likely assisted some in realizing their ambitions in the locality relatively unrestrained but continues to invite accusations of greed, selfishness, and being 'uncommitted' to Killybegs.

Karen, age 26: See, there's a whole thing too that people will mention about blow-ins coming into the town ... how they had money, and how they didn't invest it into the town. And then people will say, well, that's because they're not really local.

Nathan, age 25: I love Killybegs as it's my own town... but it's just the fact that the, if you want to call them the big people of the town, just don't want nothing really to happen. Because they're happy. Their wallets are full and that's the way it is.

Michael, age 26: I don't think you can fix it [Killybegs], it's too many uneducated kind of greedy men that are running it and they're not going to change. They're still doing the exact same thing, so it doesn't make any difference.

The simmering resentment evident in the above accounts surfaces through both discourse of community and consumption, including comments on the pervasive ‘spending spree’ and excessive consumption habits of Killybegs. Several participants expressed disillusionment with what was described as an “obsession with property... a huge mortgage, a nice car, things” and the widespread tendency of ‘jealousy to creep in’. Killybegs, I was told, “is way too materialistic”. Although consumption trends in Killybegs need to be situated within the larger context of the Celtic Tiger economy and Ireland’s new found freedom to spend, it is important to note that local trends, though now subsumed in national trends, are considered by many youth to be somewhat distinct from trends associated with Ireland’s economic renaissance of the late 1990s. Similar to youth evaluations of ‘culchies’ remarked on earlier, no one identified themselves as being caught up in the materialism of ‘keeping up with the Jones’ or ‘living beyond their means’.

By and large, youth discourse of community and consumption engendered a disappointed if not depressed air due largely to recent volatility in the fishing industry (for example ‘nothing good seems to be happening’; ‘people’s spirits are down’; ‘people are scared of their own opinions’). This however should not be taken to mean that local youth, including those who convey less favorable depictions of community, are unhappy, discontent or disaffected. Here is where we begin to see a complex geography of values and belonging emerge through expressions of commonality and difference. Most respondents, regardless of where their views fell on the spectrum of community spirit, articulated a fondness for and attachment to home, it is, after all, ‘home’. Questions concerning if and how participants saw their sense of self/identity as linked to Killybegs

elicited two primary responses. Firstly, several participants expressed a strong attachment to the sea, particularly the aesthetic seaside.

Thomas, age 22: I've always said where ever I go, where ever I settle down, I'd like it to be beside the sea, so that would be a big influence on my life, I love being near the sea.

Beth, age 25: Well, I would always say, like, definitely, the fishing is in my blood or the ocean is in my blood. ... I'd always say I'm a coastal person and it will always be in my blood.

Eric, age 27: You know, I grew up by the sea and you can't help it...

Tony, age 19: I don't know, I couldn't see myself living in a Midland area. I would have to be around the sea... sounds strange, but...

Secondly, questions concerning linkages between locality and identity elicited carefully conveyed distinctions between the nature and identity of one's self and family, and of the community as a broader collectivity. Central here is Herzfeld's (1987:43) contention that the "language of identity is a language of morality". In the next section, I focus on the ways in which local youth situate themselves within, but mostly against, the cultural and moral landscape of Killybegs. Important here is Kjeldgaard's (2003:293) reminder that it is "often it is a matter of explaining that to which one does not belong that gives meaning to one's own position in the landscape".

Belongings, Attachments, Dissociations and Dis-Identifications

Bourdieu (1984:479) reminds us that "social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat". The most poignant example of this is evidenced in Eric's rather abrupt amendment to a follow-up question which implied he felt 'attached' to Killybegs: "Now hold on, he said, my attachment to this place is home. That's it." His interviewee finished as follows:

Eric, age 27: You know something, if I didn't have family here, family is very important, to me it is. Trust is more important than money. That's the way I choose my

friends. If you mistrust your friends then what's the point. My friends are loyal friends.

Implicit in this assessment of values is the intimation that these values are not found in the community at large. Despite being born and raised, having immediate family in the locality, and expressing a strong attachment to the sea, Eric described Killybegs 'as only a place of work for me'. Antagonistic and apathetic articulations of one's individual identity in relation to Killybegs were not uncommon and highlight a tendency towards dis-identification with Killybegs (though still elaborating an identity in relation to a specific geographic locality). Below, participants respond to the question: How do you see your sense of self/identity as linked to Killybegs?

- Katie, age 24: I don't know, that's a funny question because when I'm away, when I'm off in Dublin, people say, "Are you from Donegal?" and I say, yeah, but I never automatically mention Killybegs. ... Donegal is the first thing I say. ... It's somewhere to be proud of. ... So that's why I always mention it first. ... It's hard to be away from Donegal.
- Erin, age 22: Well... I would say Donegal, but not Killybegs, I don't know.
- Michael, age 26: Yeah, I would say I'm from Donegal, not really Killybegs, but people do kind of identify you as a Killybegs man.
- Thomas, age 22: You take pride in being from Donegal.

Certainly the recent and very localized 'blow up' in the pelagic fleet needs to be taken into account in the tendency towards dissociation with Killybegs.

- Katie, age 24: And the fishing isn't that good anymore so is it anything to be boasting about?
- Ruth, age 31: Well, I would always say I'm from Killybegs, whenever anybody says, "Oh, where you from?" And I would be very proud of where I'm from. I'd be very proud. ... There's nothing to be ashamed of in Killybegs, like alright, it has changed... there was a lot of people outside Killybegs that were making their money inside Killybegs, but they would never say that now, if you know what I mean.

William, age 30: It was a proud thing to be, you know, a Killybegs man, a Killybegs fisherman, but that's kind of gone out the window now. ... I've kind of lost my identity with Killybegs a bit. ... Yeah, I don't know if it's a bit of... is it embarrassment? There's something there and I can't put my finger on it because every fishermen knows that he shot himself in the foot.

Though differing in outlook, Ruth and Williams' word choice (ashamed, embarrassed) is illustrative of an uneasiness and uncertainty currently shaping the moral and cultural landscape of Killybegs. Ruth further suggests that it is more than local youth who are 'distancing' themselves from the dominant narrative of Killybegs.

The success of Killybegs was astounding, the pride deserving, because it was 'self-made' – particularly in contrast to the Celtic Tiger's dependence on multi-national corporations. Not only that, it was self-made during a period of widespread economic turmoil (1980s) in a 'forgotten' county on an island in the North Atlantic. But recent ruin and rupture in the industry also bears the stamp of 'self-made' and this contributes to a sense of place redolent of dissonance, disenchantment and detachment.

Eric, age 27: Fishing is finished. There was a great sense of pride in the town because it was the number one fishing port in Europe. ... Take this onboard and use it as a life philosophy: greed fucks everything. That's what happened here.

Lisa: age 24: There's a very poor community spirit in Killybegs. There's more of a sense of bitterness since the fishing collapsed. But if there was dishonesty in the industry, then what do they expect? It's all sob stories about people who were earning a lot of money and now can't take their boats out.

An older community member compared the current situation in Killybegs to that of the farming, logging and coal mining towns of the United States. "The difference is, he said, we did it to ourselves. Everybody wants to blame somebody else, but it's our fault too".

The morally untenable tone of the current cultural climate in Killybegs is clearly a critical facet of young people's sense of place. It can not however fully explain the significance or meaning of the Donegal badge of distinction in the above articulations of identity. Matthews et al. (1998:196) remind us that "places become imbued with cultural values and meanings, affording not only a sense of identity, but also generating a sense of difference and of being special". Below, participants describe how the Donegal identity hinges on notions of isolation, peripherality and pride and is in part constructed in relation to larger and historical political-economic processes.

Ben, age 23: At the end of the day the people in government don't really care about the people up at this end of the country. ... We're so far out in a peripheral region. We're out on the edge.

Alexis, age 28: You know, Donegal people tend to be quite proud of being from Donegal. Not necessarily proud, but tied to their county maybe more so than other places in Ireland. Like even in college, people used to say that Donegal people, like you would know Donegal people because they'd often stick together like. You could just tell a Donegal person from other people. There was a unique sort of culture or attitude or something ... I think its because we're out on a limb, you know. We're sort of cut off from the rest of the Republic of Ireland.

In a study on social exclusion, MacDonald and Marsh (2005:876) encountered similar expressions whereby youth in socially and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods were "united by a common experience of economic marginality" and 'remained tied to locally-rooted, social networks" (see also MacDonald and Marsh 2001; Kjeldgaard 2003). Similar sentiments were expressed by participants of this project ('Donegal people tend to stick together'). It was not uncommon for youth currently living away from Killybegs to identify Donegal ties in social groups formed outside of the county.

Further to this, it is worth pointing out the striking similarity between Alexis' above remark: 'you could just tell a Donegal person from other people' and Karen's earlier description of 'In Through' people: 'you can just tell, you can spot them off'. The (hierarchically figured) lines of difference between the 'us' and 'them' of earlier are now it seems superseded in collective expressions and experiences grounded in part in a perceived sense of shared peripherality. It is through the diversity of dialogue presented here that we begin to see the permeability of social boundaries and the multiplicity and multi-layeredness of narratives of place in constructions of both collective and individual identities (see Kjeldgaard 2003:300).

Cohen (1982) argues that difference and distinction of identity is stressed more intensely when made cognizant of one's increasingly 'peripheral' position in relation to the outside world. He further argues that expressions of culture, locality and ethnicity become more meaningful at boundaries. We can see these processes at play in articulations of a Donegal identity in relation to North-South politics in Ireland. In addition to 'difference' stemming from closeness to yet another 'other' as well as sentiments of being marginalized/peripheralized, the Donegal identity is bound up in a constant threat of mis-recognition.

Erin, age 22: But you do, you get a lot of attention down there [in the South] because of your accent like. You see, a lot of people first of all think you're from Northern Ireland, then you get abuse, like some comment that you're a Protestant or whatever, and you're like, "No, actually I'm from Donegal." And they look at you as if they don't have a clue. They're like, "Yeah, we know", and you're like, "No, it's not in Northern Ireland, it's situated but it's not actually part of Northern Ireland." ... I always go mad like when I hear it.

Caitriona, age 26: Well I think there would always be a regional kind of identity because you always wanted to distinguish yourself as "I'm from Donegal." Because say you go to Dublin and I be speaking and people say, "Oh, you're from the North," so straight away, "No I'm from Donegal." ... We're in the Republic but people down in Cork just here our accent and

just assume you're from the North, so you'd very much stand you're ground and tell them where you're from...

These accounts suggest that the Donegal identity is in many ways meaningful, and not simply a convenient proxy for the presently unflattering local identity of Killybegs.

Writing on the politics of identity, anthropologists Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (2006:179) contend:

Identity has become the veritable stuff of politics and power in the local, national and global societies and culture precisely because it is so meaningful, malleable and adaptable. 'Identity' and 'culture' are idioms in the expression of community, place, history, politics, economics, sexuality, class, nation and state, both within formal institutions and across multiple social fields and on potentially countless social occasions.

In the following and final section of this chapter, I bring together the above points and conclude that young people's articulated identity is intimately entwined with one's perceptions and experiences of processes of place-based politics and power as they play out across and through the multi-layered levels of local, national and global 'scapes' (Appadurai 1996).

Conclusion and Discussion: The Politics of Place and Identity

At the surface the dominant narratives of Killybegs and County Donegal contradict each other. As the industrial centre of southwest Donegal, Killybegs is (or was, until very recently) perceived to be an economic oasis but culturally barren. County Donegal, on the other hand, is geographically and economically peripheralized but a champion of Irish culture, tradition and language.³³ Both narratives, both imaginings, are imbued and invested with a complexity of values, meanings and morals that transmute opportunities for celebration and stigma.

³³ County Donegal is home to the largest Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) district in Ireland.

Killybegs boasts a heroic, hard-working narrative of self-made success but now struggles with the reputation of being ‘too rich’, a wealth now tinged with contemptible connotations. In contrast, the cultural identity of County Donegal capitalizes on ‘idyllic’ assets of tradition, tranquility and remoteness but risks being seen as ‘backwards’ or ‘too rural’. What is intriguing is the way in which the fishing industry, the flagship of Killybegs, symbolizes both modernity and marginality, progress and peripherality, for I can think of no better example of Ireland’s ‘subservient’ integration into the European Union than the sphere of fisheries.

The Irish fishing industry has been chronically under-developed, under-valued, under-represented and until very recently, under-regulated. The peripheral position of fisheries in state politics engenders policies and practices redolent of a ‘fend for yourself’ ethos. This is precisely how Killybegs became a “millionaires’ town” and why even ‘mackerel millionaires’ at times articulate a consciousness characteristic of alienation and powerlessness. In this way young people’s articulations of modernity and ‘urban sophistication’ in Killybegs are intimately and paradoxically complimentary, rather than contradictory, to their articulations of peripherality: both stem from a sense of powerlessness and alienation from the national and supranational political and economic order.

It is outstanding and ironic that one of the finest fleets of supertrawlers in the world is part and parcel of a peripheral industry in a peripheral county in a semi-peripheral country. Killybegs youth are inundated with sometimes subtle, sometimes striking reminders of their peripheral position in relation to the rest of the Republic and also the European Union, despite Ireland’s status as the ‘darling of the EU’. This is due

primarily to the unforgettably ‘raw deal’ Ireland received under the Common Fisheries Policy (Molloy 2004; Cawley 2006). In the case of fisheries, this is further confirmed in the changing nature and gradual disappearance of the fishing industry from the local landscape – most notably the Europeanizing and globalizing processes currently shaping and shaped by the Irish fishing industry. These include, as evidenced below, the vanishing visibility of the local whitefish fleet, the delocalization of the pelagic fleet, and by implication, dramatically declining employment opportunities in the locality.

Chris, age 31: You’d be unloading, you’re actually standing on the pier, working nets. ... You used to get the gang gathered there [at the town pier] every morning but you never see it now.

Nathan, age 25: There was auctions, they were selling the fish off right in front of you.

Andrew, age 22: You’d see fish being loaded and unloaded constantly in huge amounts and that really doesn’t happen anymore so you don’t actually see the industry actively going on as much. ... The streets used to be covered in fish, they were falling out of lorries they were so full...

It is troubling to know that the fish served in the fish-and-chip shop in ‘Ireland’s Premier Fishing Port’ comes from Iceland, not Ireland. Opportunities for youth to live and work locally, particularly in the fishing industry, are severely and increasingly limited, often to only the ‘privileged’ sons and daughters of pelagic vessel owners who can *afford* to stay in the locality.

Karen, age 26: Well, people always say it’s who you know, but I think that means if your daddy owns a big boat than you’ll get a job.

Heather, age 32: But [he] only got on to where he is because his father has a boat.

The direction of Irish and European fisheries, particularly the increasing importance of EU – Third Country Agreements, suggests that is unlikely that the fishing industry in Killybegs will ever become a ‘community thing’ (to borrow Mr. McIntyre’s above phrase). In a very troubling way, Killybegs has been ‘left behind’ by its economic

mainstay, the pelagic fishing fleet (see chapter two; see also Menzies 2003, 2007). Given the importance, instability, exclusivity and increasing absence of the industry in the local landscape, it is not surprising that Killybegs often fails to measure up to young people's (albeit idealized) notions of what a 'community' *should be*. Interestingly, it is often through young people's contested tropes of 'no community' in Killybegs that we see evidence of 'community-ness' including, as Adrian Peace (2001:123) notes, the centrality of family, a combination of intimacy and rivalry, and a proliferation of gossip, disputes and social control tactics.

Of course I can not close this discussion on local youth identities without recognizing contemporary youth as the vanguard of global consumer culture. Contemporary youth are held up as the 'new global generation' whose identities are increasingly linked more to homogenizing consumption trends in the global cultural economy than localities (see Tully 1994; see also Matthews et al. 1998). Killybegs youth are no exception and my intention here is not to argue against the influential role of transnational and technological flows in contemporary youth identities. Rather, I am suggesting, as others before me have, that the influx of mobile phones, MTV, iPods, the worldwide web, and other novelties of 'late modernity's' placeless times (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991) have not rendered place meaningless in young people's lives and identities (see Kjeldgaard 2003). Whether felt and figured positively or negatively, as centre or periphery, local or global, urban or rural, rich or poor, place remains meaningful. Place matters.

Rob Shields (1991:199) contends that "places or regions mean something only in relation to other places as a constellation of meanings". In this chapter I have highlighted

some of the ways in which local youth sense and situate themselves as individuals and members of social groups, subjectively and self-consciously within and against the shifting and multi-layered landscapes of place, “selectively drawing on values associated with places to construct meanings of the self” (Ruddick 1998:345). As a ‘constellation meanings’ (Shields 1991); a constellation of, in the words of Massey (1994), ‘conflicting interpretations’, places, like identities, are always relational, always ever-shifting, always ‘in the make’.

All the Single Ladies: Women, Work and the Rural (Irish) Idyll

This chapter provides some historical perspective and draws primarily from secondary resources (e.g. census materials, state and EU reports) to discuss the changing nature of gendered aspects of work and family life in rural Irish society. I begin by taking issue with one of the most powerful images of the rural – the so-called ‘rural idyll’. In addition to secondary resources, I pull from interview materials to highlight the ways in which this image of the rural works to both shape and sustain patriarchal gender relations (Little 1987; Little and Austin 1996). As part of this effort, I consider key political-economic processes, from the post-Famine era onwards, which have contributed to the changing roles of women in rural Irish society. I conclude by drawing linkages between the patriarchal nature of rural Irish society and rural Ireland’s enduring female-dominated emigration pattern (see O’Hara 1987, 1997; Shortall 1992; Gray 1997).

Deconstructing the Rural Idyll: Work and Relations

Mr. Murrin: Good question, I mean, you can say, well, what is there for a young girl?

Patricia, age 24: Yeah, because the whole fishing industry, that’s... all men that work in the industry. ... One woman, the secretary. That’s it.

Parallel to the above remarks, school survey results reflect both the limited and gendered nature of employment opportunities in Killybegs. More than three-quarters (76 percent, 84 out of 110) of survey respondents agreed with the statement: It would be hard to find a job that suits me here (see Table D.1 in Appendix D). This includes 82.7 percent of all females (48 out of 58) and 62.9 percent of all males (36 out of 52). Looking more specifically at employment in the fisheries sector, only 29 percent of survey respondents (32 out of 110) identified themselves as having worked in a fishery-

related industry (see Table D.2 in Appendix D). The majority of these respondents (71.8 percent or 23 out of 32) were male (see Table D.2 in Appendix D). Less than half that, only 13.6 percent of respondents, or 15 out of 110 respondents, agreed with the statement: I would consider a job in a fisheries-related industry. Of the 15 respondents to agree, 12 are male (see Table D.3 in Appendix D).

Although labor markets in rural, fisheries-dependent communities such as Killybegs tend to be male-dominated, feminist geographer Jo Little (1996, 1997) emphasizes the role that dominant ideologies and values play in shaping women's employment experiences and opportunities in rural areas. Little (1994:26) convincingly argues that "women's participation in employment in rural areas is bound up, not only in the availability of, and access to jobs in such areas, but also in the operation of gender relations within the household and community" (see also Little 1986, 1987, 1996, 1997).

Little looks beneath the 'rural idyll' to expose a bedrock of 'domestic idyll' cemented in place by a particular and patriarchal configuration of gender roles and relations (see also Hughes 1997).

[T]he rural idyll has traditionally included very conventional images and expectations of women's place in rural society: at the heart of the family, the centre of the community. There can be no doubt that the woman of the rural idyll is the wife and mother, not the high-flying professional, the single childless business entrepreneur (Little and Austin 1996:106).

In Killybegs, the gendered organization of family and community life is accentuated by an industry which demands its predominantly male workforce to spend a significant time offshore (see also Massey 1994:81). Below, a faculty member at St. Catherine's school describes 'one parent families' as the norm in Killybegs. The following excerpt demonstrates not only dominant gender roles and responsibilities in home and locality but also the values attached to these roles.

Mr. McIntyre: Well, one of the things we [teachers] always remarked on was we never got to know the fathers. ... The father was out fishing, gone for months at a time during the year and especially gone during the school year. ... And the mother and children were at home, she sort of ran the show. ... So it was all pretty much one-parent families we were talking to. ... And we remarked, even yet, how many men we didn't know. We knew all the women because they came in to talk about the students. Men were gone and as a result of that the... the boys... had them glamorized. You know... they came back with money... they were sort of like Santa Claus arriving every six weeks, you know, there was sort of a glamorized view of them... that was a view that was sort of held by the youngsters, it was, 'Daddy is in Norway and when Daddy comes home everything will be great.'

This portrayal resonates with depictions of family life put forward by youth project participants, including Melissa (below) and Heather, whose curt summary of her own upbringing alongside five siblings entailed: 'It was my mother who reared us'.

Melissa, age 23: I remember him coming home with teddy bears. Daddy was always the good one, you know what I mean. Mom was always the giver-outer. Dad was always the one giving presents. And I think that is the way with loads of moms in town. They're more strict. Because they're here all the time, they're the ones that have to do all of the disciplining, the harder parts, because the dads aren't here. And then the dad comes home and he gets all the hugs and attention or whatever because he's been away or whatever.

These accounts of home life fit well with Little's above imagery of women's role in rural society. As well, they highlight clearly the gendered nature of work and relations within the public and private spheres of local life. But if evidence of the 'rural idyll' is to be found anywhere in Killybegs, it is most certainly found in the community's 'golden past' (Nayak and Kehily 2008). In the following excerpts, young participants retell gilded stories of yesteryear ('when the pubs were full and the *craic* was brilliant').³⁴ In

³⁴ Peace (2001:98), I think correctly, describes *craic* as "those public occasions on which an intensity of shared emotion and well-being is generated in specific places already endowed with a strong sense of belonging". More generally, *craic* can be understood as an 'index of community well-being' that is unpredictably and collectively produced and experienced (Peace 2001). Note this is markedly different from Dunne's (1970) earlier definition of *craic* as a "form of psychological castration or mutilation" used to ridicule or 'cut someone down to size' (cited in Scheper-Hughes 2001:293).

doing so, they implicitly reveal the ways in which local public life tends to be defined by male perspectives and activities, both work and leisure.

Katie, age 24: Really drinking has had a big part in everything it seems. When we were children, like, my father will sometimes say things like, 'Oh, you should have, oh, the times were, the pubs would be full on Friday after work, people would be in,' he would be playing the guitar till six in the morning and again on Saturday night, you never see that now. Never. You wouldn't see it. That's the difference.

Alexis, age 28: My father tells me stories, during the late 1970s when he came back to Ireland from America, the money they were making was just crazy. You could buy a new car on one weeks' wages. Crazy. ... You know, he says, you'd come in maybe on a Friday evening, you'd sail in and he says, you wouldn't even bother washing your dirty clothes, you'd just throw them overboard and buy new ones. There would be no point. That's the kind of money.

Caitriona, age 26: It was booming like, even my mom, when she was younger, she had six brothers and I think only three of them finished secondary school because there was too much money to be made on the pier, like they would go to school and then leave school and go down to the pier and be filling fish boxes with fish. And my mom... she was married, and they were her younger brothers and one of her brothers in particular used to come and give her money because he couldn't take the money home because my granny would know he wasn't at school. Because he was working, he didn't know what to do with the money like.

Whether recounting the early 'fight' (against nature, against the market, against state and supranational powers), the ensuing success, or the more recent 'scandal' (see chapters two and three), the dominant narrative of Killybegs embodies the experiences and perspectives of men (Liepens 2000:614). More often than not, women are absent from this narrative except in reference to their roles as wives and mothers. It is because of this tendency that this and subsequent chapters go some way towards addressing a question raised by Little (1997:155) more than a decade ago. That is, how single childless women fit into the idyllic rural environment.

“Her Natural Vocation”

It can not go unmentioned that a woman’s primary place in the idyllic Irish household and community is explicitly affirmed in the Irish Constitution of 1937.

In particular, the State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved (Article 41.2).

The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home (Article 41.2.2).

Although it has been suggested that then President Eamon de Valera “was influenced by the accounts of the ill-health of women and children as a result of industrialization” (see Ferriter 2005:420), the Catholic Church’s contribution to the ideological naturalization of women’s place in the family – and the “family’s place in the moral economy of rurality and nation” (Whatmore et al. 1994:3) – deserves attention here (see Nash 1993, 1997; Walter 1995; Gray 1997). Clarifying the role of the Church in state matters (in this case, censorship legislation) in the early years of the Free State, Irish historian Diarmaid Ferriter (2005:337) writes:

But the idea that this was a simple case of Church controlling state overlooks the popular culture of Catholicism and the fact that legislators and civil servants did not make much of a distinction between Church and state. In other words they did not separate the job of governing from their own Catholic consciences. Governments of the 1920s did not need to aggressively secure Church support through such legislation; it was already part of their identity.

Regardless of impetus, the state sanctioned role of women in Irish society throughout the first three-quarters of the twentieth century was limited largely to “duties in the home” (Article 41.2.2). Ferriter (2005:329) notes that:

in 1926, only 5.6 percent of married women in the Free State (8,000 women) had professional occupations, compared with 14.5 percent in Northern Ireland. Less than 50 percent of single women aged over 14 were in employment, compared with 87 percent of men.

Ferguson (2001:121) refers the introduction of the ‘marriage bar’ in 1932 as evidence of how enshrined the assumption of the male breadwinner was in Irish society (see also

McDowell 1999 for more discussion on the relationship between gender and the nation-state beyond Irish context). The ‘marriage bar’ legally required married women to retire from their jobs in public service employment, including primary teaching and the civil service, irrespective of whether or not they had children.³⁵ The ban on primary teachers was repealed in 1958 however the ban on civil service employees remained intact until 1973. Commenting on the female-dominated emigration from Ireland throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Ferriter (2005:473) writes:

It was no surprise so many women were leaving; according to the 1946 census one third of all ‘occupied girls’ under the age of 20 and one quarter of all occupied women were employed as domestic servants, indicating a severe lack of career options. This was reinforced by the report of a Commission on Youth Unemployment of 1951, which suggested that ‘domestic service helps to train a girl for her natural vocation – the care and management of home and children’.

This is not to say that Irish women have not challenged the ‘naturalness’ of their place in the home. Kennedy (2001:83) notes that a campaign formed by more than a dozen women’s groups in 1937 is what eventually compelled de Valera to drop from an early draft of the Constitution the phrase: ‘the inadequate strength of women’. Ferriter’s (2005) recent work, *The Transformation of Ireland*, chronicles more extensively the active role of women in Irish public life throughout the 20th century, highlighting in particular women’s contribution to politics, social welfare issues, education, theater, literature, and language and culture revitalization. Nevertheless, given the emphasis on women’s place in the home in both political discourse and Catholic social thought, it is perhaps surprising that in the decades leading up to the inception of the Free State in 1922, women were identified as the primary breadwinners in congested districts in the

³⁵ It is worthwhile to mention here that T.J. O’Connell, then General Secretary of Irish National Teacher’s Organization, pointed to another motive behind the implementation of the marriage bar which “was to gain the rural vote as, in rural areas, where two teachers were married to each other, their relative affluence was the cause of envy in those hungry times” (Kennedy 2001:90).

West of Ireland (see Rhodes 1992; see also Mac Cuinneagain 2002:206; Breathnach 1986).

Women, Poverty and Paid Labor in Post-Famine Ireland

Rhodes (1992:188-9) identifies ‘management of the household’ as the major source of women’s power in post-Famine Ireland. In addition to decisions concerning family consumption and children’s education, rural women, in contrast to their urban counterparts, also controlled the family budget (Breathnach 1986). The role of women in the poverty-stricken congested economies of the West included management of household as well as main earner. The excerpt below, taken from a Congested District Board report of Donegal districts in the late 1800s (including the Glenties District in which Killybegs is located), highlights the importance of female enterprise (e.g. dairying, weaving, spinning, embroidery) to rural households.

The women are the sole support of the families, the men do little or nothing beyond setting the crop and taking in the harvest... in the western districts of the county the family is almost entirely supported by the female proportion of it (cited in Rhodes 1992:159-61).

The vital role of women’s labor contribution in congested districts convinced the CDB to focus its efforts on enhancing women’s role as breadwinner however it is important to point out that poverty was the propeller of women’s economic role in congested districts. Breathnach (1986:82) notes that “female inclination to engage in paid labor was a sensitive barometer of poverty” throughout the Victorian era. Because of this, Breathnach (1986) argues, an unintended consequence of the Board’s efforts to raise the standard of living in the West was the economic disempowerment of rural women. It was in part improved living standards which pushed women back into the private sphere of domesticity. Another key factor behind the declining position of

women in the West of Ireland was the increasing modernization, commercialization and de-feminization of Irish agriculture (Rhodes 1992; see also Hall 1992 cited in McDowell 1999:77 for similar examples in British context).

Cooperative creameries paid male heads of household in most cases... Consequently dealing with this new institution shifted control of family budgets from female to male hands. [The CDB and other reform agencies] did not intentionally displace the role of women in the rural economy, it was a combination of modernization and the increasing opposition of the clergy to paid female employment that enforced housewifery on Irish females. ... When the Board dissolved in 1923 it was not replaced by any subsequent measure. The rigors of modernization thereafter had demoralizing effects on the social as well as economic role of rural Irish females in the first years of the Free State (Breathnach 1986:89-90).

Regardless of the work undertaken by women in the West of Ireland, marriage and motherhood remained the most important source of power for women. Unmarried daughters, described by Irish socialist leader, James Connolly, as “the cheapest slaves in existence” were by far the least powerful group in Irish society. Connolly continues:

... slaves to their own family, who were, in turn, slaves to all social parasites of a landlord and gombeen-ridden community. The peasant, in whom centuries of servitude and hunger had bred a fierce craving for money, usually regarded his daughters as beings sent by God to lighten his burden through life (cited in Rhodes 1992:194).

Further elaborating on the precarious position of rural young women throughout this period, Rhodes (1992:90) notes:

Patrilocal residence made it difficult for unmarried daughters to be as fully integrated into their own families as were their brothers, for their marriage should it occur would mean a transference of loyalty to another family. The inability to identify with familial interests as completely as sons relegated daughters to a lesser position within the family hierarchy.

The silver lining of the cloud constituting the peripheral status of daughters in rural Ireland is unquestionably young women's increased access to education and, related to this, greater emigration potential (see Rhodes 1992:195; Delaney 1998:217).³⁶

The peripheral position of rural females, particularly 'non-inheriting' daughters, worked to their educational advantage and meant that they were both more prepared and more likely to emigrate than their rural male or urban female counterparts (Hannan 1970; Delaney 1998; Rhodes 1992). For example, unlike the limited local labor markets of rural areas, Rhodes (1992:201) notes that "cities provided female employment which often occurred at the expense of schooling". As well, the favoring of sons over daughters in rural Ireland denied young women the opportunities available to their brothers at home. Because of this, young women were 'excused' from certain family obligations such as the expectation that they would leave school once old and/or able enough to work (Rhodes 1992:207).

The subservient but well-schooled status of rural females is important to understanding the high proportion of single females to emigrate from Ireland (compared to other European countries) throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries (Delaney 1998:209; Rhodes 1992:210). But this needs to be understood in relation to Ireland's semi-peripheral position in the broader European landscape. Britain was the most industrialized country in Europe in the early decades of the 20th century, yet Ireland was still primarily an agrarian society. Economist Finola Kennedy (2001:5) explains that:

Because of the dominance of agriculture in the Irish economy until after 1960, choices open to men and women for at least the first half of the century were heavily influenced by the pattern of agriculture. Family farms were maintained intact through a combination of high celibacy rates,

³⁶ Rhodes (1992:205) notes that "additional schooling for girls did not represent a financial hardship for the family by virtue of an act passed in 1892, most Irish schools were eventually free of fees; by 1900, over 95 percent of the national schools were without school fees".

high emigration rates and high fertility amongst those who did marry, thus ensuring a pool of family labor to work on the farm.

It was in part Ireland's semi-peripheral position in the global economy which compelled young women to emigrate to the urban centres of *other* countries, notably Britain and the United States. Rural Irish female emigration is thus a gendered aspect of urbanization, albeit urbanization that required the crossing of national borders (Delaney 1998:210). High rates of rural Irish female emigration throughout this period also reflect a rural social environment (i.e. public houses) which catered predominantly, if not exclusively, to males, regardless of marital status.

The social positions of sons who had to await their inheritance was supported by the community which tolerated the creation of a new bachelor society. Sons were able to adapt to their enforced dependency because of the existence of other sons in the same position and social circle. ... The bachelor group also enforced the values of this landed society and bound sons more tightly to the rural community. Irish sons had found a refuge from the constraints of a patriarchal society. ... The popularity of the public houses which catered to males and a bachelor clientele in particular, was not counterbalanced by the existence of other institutions that could provide social outlets for their sisters (Rhodes 1992:185).

This is the social and economic backdrop against which to view Ireland's female-dominated emigration pattern, a pattern which held throughout the late 1800s and on into the 20th century. Walter (1995:39) notes that more than one-third of all women in Ireland emigrated between 1941 and 1971. Looking at female labor participation rates in the early 1960s, Ferriter (2005:569) notes:

There was still only a tiny fraction of married women working: 5.2 percent, compared to 20.6 percent in England and Wales and 20 percent in Finland. Overall, in 1961, women accounted for 29 percent of the workforce and sex segregation continued to the extent that, in 1962, 77 percent of women were in occupations where women accounted for 90 percent of the workforce.

Of course things change, and women's role in the Irish economy and family are no exception. Questioning the 'exceptionalism' often entrenched in accounts of Irish

society, Kennedy (2001:2) prefers to think of Ireland as a ‘late starter’ – “the pacing and timing of modernization in Ireland differed, but the pathway traveled was similar”.

Linking changes in economic development, government policies (e.g. removal of prohibition against contraceptives) and demographic factors such as marriage, fertility and labor participation rates, Kennedy (2001:2) argues:

Until the 1960s, Irish patterns might be described as conservative; on the other hand from around 1980, the pace of modernisation was more rapid than elsewhere, so that changes in demographic indicators which occurred in Ireland within a decade, occurred over a longer time span elsewhere.

Economic development in the last quarter of the 20th century, and fundamental to this, membership to the EEC in 1973, helped push Ireland into a new era which improved women’s lives as independent workers and citizens through increased employment and educational opportunities, equality legislation (e.g. equal pay) and entitlements to deserted wives, unmarried mothers and widows (see Kennedy 2001). In 1971, female workers received 59 percent of the male pay rate, up from 53 percent in 1960 (Ferriter 2005:570).

Kennedy (2001:6) suggests that “the demise of the small family farm, finally sealed by the transformation of Irish agriculture following entry into the EEC in 1973, was the catalyst leading to the modernization of family patterns since the 1970s” (see also Scheper-Hughes 2001:106). The significance of EEC membership in the social, economic and demographic transformation of Ireland however should not dilute the unremitting energy of various women’s organizations in Ireland throughout these years which fervently pushed back against discriminatory legislation. Feminist June Levine makes this point more palpably in her contention that “No government of the seventies spontaneously passed a law which improved women’s lives” (cited in Ferriter 2005:721).

Women at Work

Between 1971 and 1996, the proportion of women in the Irish labor force increased from 28 percent to 36 percent while the labor force participation rate of men fell from 81 percent to 69 percent (see also Creese and Beagan 2009; McDowell 1999 for further discussion beyond Irish context).³⁷ Throughout roughly the same period (1975 to 1995), the probability of marriage for women declined by one-third, from 90 to 60 percent (cited in Ferriter 2005:666). In 1996, 47 percent of all women in the labor force were married, compared with 58 percent for men. By 2006 the proportion of women in the Irish labor force increased to 52.8 percent with more than half (53 percent) being married. The 2006 labor force participation rate of men was 72.3 percent. Roughly 77 percent of these males were married (CSO 2006). Here it is worthwhile to point out that the EU target rate for women in employment is 60 percent. Ireland achieved this target in 2007 and 2008 but not in 2009 when the employment rate for women dipped to 57.8 percent (CSO 2009a). Labor force participation rates in 2006 in County Donegal are slightly below national rates. The labor force participation rate of women in 2006 in County Donegal was 46.8 percent, compared to a male labor force participation rate of 67.5 percent. These figures reflect not only the feminization of the Irish economy (particularly a decline in male-dominated sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and construction) and the increasingly shared role of ‘breadwinner’, but also the changing nature of the Irish family.

³⁷ The labor force participation is calculated by expressing the labor force (i.e. those at work, looking for first regular job, and unemployed) as a percentage of the total population (CSO 2006).

Cohabiting couples are now the fastest-growing type of family unit in the Irish state (CSO 2009b).³⁸ In recent years, Ireland has also seen a rise in the age of bride at first marriage, children had out of wedlock, divorce and civil ceremony marriages (CSO 2009b).³⁹ Between 1980 and 2006, the average age of mother at first birth (outside of marriage) increased from 22.2 years to 27.1 years. Within marriage, the average age increased from 29.2 years to 32.9 years. Additionally, the total period fertility rate (TPFR) for 2008 was 2.1, up from 2.03 in 2007. The TPFR estimates the number of children who would be born to each female over her lifetime on the basis of current birth patterns (CSO 2009b). Prior to 2008, the last time the TPFR reached the replacement level of 2.1 was 1990. The TPFR was 3.76 in 1960, 3.87 in 1970, and 3.23 in 1980 (CSO 2009b). In short, Irish women are getting married later and bearing fewer children later than their foremothers. These shifts are visible in my own research. None of the young women interviewed for this project were married or had children.

Certainly young women today are living very different lives from their mothers, and certainly the gender role assumptions and divisions embedded in the social organization of rural Irish households and communities are not unchanging or unchallenged. Yet this does not mean that young women living in rural Ireland today are necessarily free to unproblematically move into work spaces and roles traditionally assigned to men (see O'Connor 2000). Commenting on the lack of women employees in his place of work, Ryan, age 27, revealed the gendered nature of the factory floor when he said: "Besides, it wasn't the place you'd want to put a woman anyways, big cold

³⁸ Cohabiting couples accounted for 11.6 percent of all family units in 2006 compared with 8.4 percent in 2002 (CSO 2009b).

³⁹ The number of divorced persons in Ireland increased by 70 percent between 2002 and 2006 (from 35,100 to 59,500). This increase is due largely to the legalization of divorce in Ireland in 1997.

factory, winter time”. Below, Chris more carefully recalls the attitudes encountered by some local females who attempted to enter a traditionally male workplace, the fishing boat (see also Creese and Beagan 2009)

Chris, age 31: I’d say [women going fishing] would be more or less frowned upon. Male chauvinist, it would be more that way. They wouldn’t be encouraged at school either. I remember even in the Tec there, there was a couple ones [girls] that wanted to do woodworking and metalwork and more or less they were told they weren’t allowed to do it. Home Ec and cooking is the woman’s thing, not that stuff... go and get an office job. ... So there’s a few [interested] but they wouldn’t really be encouraged. Especially a lot of the older men wouldn’t agree to it at all. Because I remember when [Orla] went [fishing]... A couple of the older boys didn’t want her on at all. She more or less had to work twice as long and twice as hard to prove herself. They wouldn’t let her near anything at all, ‘You can’t do that, that’s a man’s job’. This, that, and the other, so it was.

Chris’ recounting of a moment at school when his female peers were ‘more or less told to go and get an office job’ is perhaps rather unremarkable when one considers the fact that over one-fifth of women in Ireland are employed in clerical and secretarial occupations (CSO 2009a). Other project participants provided similar accounts to that above. Norah, age 24, described her experience at school as ‘sexist’ due to the gendered nature of courses offered: “We could take home economics but not mechanical engineering or woodworking”. The daughter of a pelagic vessel owner encountered similar attitudes as those described above when pursuing a career in fishing. After completing the necessary classroom training at the Fisheries College in Greencastle, she prepared for a compulsory six week stint of experience at sea. At the request of her father, her six weeks at sea were spent aboard a local whitefish boat rather than her father’s pelagic vessel. (The differences between these vessels can be succinctly summarized as bunk bed and bucket versus private berth with en suite bathroom). It was explained to me by a fellow fisherman that the girl’s father “wanted her to know what it

was like to *really* go fishing”. She finished her six weeks at sea aboard the whitefish vessel and subsequently ended her fishing career. It is worth noting that no similar request was made when her brother came of working age. He currently fishes aboard his father’s trawler and regrettably still doesn’t know what it’s like ‘to *really* go fishing’.

The role of women in Irish society has changed dramatically over the last few decades in particular, but gender divisions persist. There is a “men’s corner” in the faculty lounge at the secondary school in Killybegs. Visitors may only become aware of this if they happen to sit at the wrong end of the table during lunch hour. More broadly, women continue to be underrepresented in the political and economic spheres of public life in Ireland (e.g. senior level positions and decision-making structures at national, regional and local levels; business owners; board members; and entrepreneurs) (see Fitzsimons and O’Gorman 2008; CSO 2009a). A recent article in the *Irish Times* entitled, ‘Ireland has made no progress over women’s roles in politics’, notes there are six men to every one woman in Dáil Eireann (the Irish House of Representatives).⁴⁰ In 2009 women comprised 14 percent of TDs (i.e. a member of the Dáil) in Dáil Eireann, well below the average representation (24 percent) of women in national parliaments for EU 27 countries (CSO 2009a). Focusing on female-dominated sectors of the Irish economy, women comprise 80 percent of employees in the health sector and 84 percent of employees in primary education (CSO 2009a; see also Creese and Beagan 2009; McDowell 1999 for discussion on occupational segregation beyond Irish context).

⁴⁰ See ‘Ireland has made no progress over women’s role in politics’ by Mary Minihan in the *Irish Times* (April 28, 2010).

Concluding Remarks

Early on in this chapter I made reference to a question once posed by Jo Little (1997) regarding how single childless women fit into the 'idyllic' rural environment. Judging by the gender imbalance in the ratio of single males to females, aged 25 to 54, in County Donegal, and Killybegs in particular, one might be compelled to argue quite simply that despite the changing nature of gendered aspects of work and family life in Irish society, they don't. In 1996, the ratio of single females to males, aged 25 to 54, in County Donegal was 0.62 (62 females for every 100 males). The State ratio in 1996 was 0.75 (CSO 1996). By 2006, the gender imbalance had improved in County Donegal to 0.79 with the State ratio achieving greater balance at 0.82 (CSO 2006). In Killybegs in 2006, the single female to male ratio for this age group was 0.67 (CSO 2006).

Looking more broadly at how the sex ratio (i.e. males per 1,000 females) shapes and is shaped by the contemporary Irish social and economic landscape, it is worth pointing out that the more urban province of Leinster (in the east) is the only province in which females exceeded males between 1926 and 2006 (989 males per 1000 females in 2006) (see also Scheper-Hughes 2001:101). In 2006, the rural province of Ulster (part of) in the north bears the highest male excess (1,027 males per 1,000 females) (CSO 2006). Although this gender imbalance has been in slow decline over the last six decades, the province of Ulster (part of) has had the highest male excess of the four provinces since 1979 (when it was 1,076 males per 1,000 females).

In this chapter I have highlighted the changing nature of women's roles in work and family life in Irish society. As part of this effort, I have argued that rural public life tends to be dominated by the perspectives and experiences of men, with women often relegated to the domestic sphere. In the next two chapters I delve deeper into the

abovementioned over-arching question and consider more carefully the gendered dimensions of the rural social environment, notably rural Ireland's dominant 'pub and football' culture. I take as my starting point a place Tom Inglis (1998) describes as "a type of perpetual secondary school for males" (cited in Ferriter 2005:508). In other words, I begin by examining the gendered politics of rural pub culture.

Gender, Power and Place

Theoretically grounded in the conceptual triad of gender, power and place, this chapter considers how young men and women experience contemporary rural life as masculine and feminine subjects. From labor markets to local politics and policy development (Whatmore et al. 1994; Little and Jones 2000; Liepins 2000) to public life in general and places of leisure in particular (Campbell 2000; Ni Laoire 1999; Prosser 1995; Dahlstrom 1996), rural society has been identified as male-dominated in all spheres but the domestic (Little and Austin 1996; Little 1987; Hughes 1997). In the last two decades in particular, feminist researchers have drawn increasing attention to linkages between the patriarchal nature of rural society and gender imbalances in rural youth out-migration. Dahlstrom (1996) for example, among others, suggests that because male perspectives and activities (both work and leisure) typically define rural life, the perceived constraints of rural life and desire to leave are felt more strongly by young women (see also Dunkley 2004; Ni Laoire 2001; Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994; Glendinning et al. 2003). Linkages between patriarchy and rural female out-migration are particularly salient in studies on rural Irish society (Ni Laoire 1999, 2000; Delaney 1998; Hannan 1970; Rhodes 1992; see also chapter four).

In this chapter I argue that contemporary rural gender and power relations are more complex than a binary framework of male-dominated/female-discontented allows for. I aim for a more nuanced, multi-dimensional and anti-essentialist understanding of the ways in which relations of power are articulated, contested and accommodated in the everyday lives of local young men and women. To do this, I highlight the ways in which

expressions of power (and powerlessness) emerge from young people's narratives of place. I begin by focusing on the ways in which local young women perceive, experience and cope with a male-dominated rural social environment. Here I pay particular attention to the ways in which young women are excluded from being full participants in rural pub culture. I then move to explore the intra-gender dimensions of rural gender and power relations, focusing especially on the "effectivity of girls as conduits of power" (Hey 1997) in the rural landscape. To conclude, I problematize male power in the rural through consideration of the ways in which other axes of power (e.g. generation, social-class) influence young men's perceptions and experiences of place (and what is possible in that place).

I start from the assumption that gender is performative (Butler 1990).

To view gender as performative is to recognize that doing Selfhood gives our presence only provisional meaning within any immediate social context... the performativity of gender is found in 'unthought' displays that are inherited from the specific historical configuration of social relations (Currie et al. 2009:11-12).

In this way I understand masculinities and femininities to be a configuration of practices that are dynamic, embodied, socially constructed and socially embedded (see Paechter 2003a, 2003b). Following Currie et al. (2009:185), I employ a definition of agency as "capacity for action" and a definition of power "as those processes that shape... agency in historically and culturally specific ways". "Power refers to what makes... saying and doing possible" (Currie et al. 2009:103). In this sense power is not "an external relation taking place between two pre-constituted identities but rather [conceptualized] as constituting identities themselves" (Mouffe 1996:247 cited in Punch et al. 2007). To be clear, while I recognize that patriarchal structures, values and practices are clearly embedded in rurality, I treat gender and power relations as fluid and unfolding rather than

static and unchanging. I conceptualize gender and rurality as “unstable and interactive reference points” (Whatmore et al. 1994:4) rather than fixed categories or frozen landscapes. Guided by these underlying assumptions, this chapter situates young people’s gendered lives in a contemporary rural context textured by traits particular to both ‘Irish’ rurality and the added instabilities of a fishing community in flux. To begin, I highlight the prominent role of the pub in the rural social environment.

Positioning the Pub: “The Only Thing You Can Do Is Drink.”

Even when set within the broader cultural context of Irish drinking practices and sites (see for example Bales 1962; O’Carroll 2005), Killybegs (like so many other fishing communities that have laid claim to the slogan: *a nice drinking town with a fishing problem*) is well known throughout the region for its drinking culture. It was while traveling outside of Killybegs that I first heard the joke about tourists wanting to know what time the pubs close in the town. The answer: October. Several young project participants emphasized and criticized the prominence of the pub in the local social landscape. These criticisms were often juxtaposed with reference to a lack of alternative leisure opportunities in the locality (particularly cinema and bowling) (see also Jentsch and Shucksmith 2004:84).

Melissa, age 23: There’s nothing to do in Killybegs, which is why I think, and I’m sure other people have said it, there’s a huge drink problem. I mean, how big is this town and how many pubs does it have?

Ben, age 23: There’s nothing to do, the only thing you can do is drink. There’s so many pubs in the town. They have no cinema or bowling alley, the nearest ones are an hour away. You have nothing.

Beth, age 25: To be honest, there’s just like a little bit of pub culture in Killybegs. So there is really nothing to do when you think about it.

Ruth, age 31: The hardest part [about living here] is there really wasn't much to do if you weren't involved in sport. You were kind of attached to going to the pub and that.

My interest in the prominence of the pub in young people's accounts of the rural social environment centers on the different ways in which young men and women participate in local pub culture, or use the pub as a place of leisure.

Studies in and beyond the Irish context identify important gender differences in drinking behavior and use of pub space (Hunt and Satterlee 1987; Hunt et al. 2005:227; Peace 1992; Wilson 2005; see also Rhodes 1992:185). Drinking has been identified as a key practice in the public performance of masculinity (Hey 1986; Nayak 2003; Nayak and Kehily 2008) and the pub as a space wherein male power is constructed and legitimated (Campbell 2000). Hunt et al. (2005:228) identify alcohol as an instrument used in asserting male togetherness and as a convenient symbolic tool for separating men from women (see also Gough and Edwards 1998). The authors argue that "a sense of belonging within a particular drinking arena is the result of an individual becoming an accepted member of a particular group. Members can expect a certain type of treatment which differs from non-members" (Hunt et al. 2005:228). At the same time, recent studies suggest that "alongside the changing patterns of employment and traditional roles... young women are now much more visible in public spaces (including pubs), which were traditionally perceived as male leisure arenas" (Lyons et al. 2006:230; see also Sweeting and West 2003). Here I draw primarily on interviews with Norah and Karen in order to demonstrate how young women reconcile with tensions that arise from their visibility in rural 'pub(lic) life' (Campbell 2000). As part of this effort, I highlight

the ways in which young women are excluded from being full participants in local pub culture.

Gendering Pub Space: "It's The Same For Anyone"?

Pete, age 19: It's the same for anyone, the main thing in this town is the pubs.

Despite the implied parity in Pete's above contention, it is not surprising that important gender differences can be gleaned from young people's experiences of local pub culture. One key difference is evidenced by Norah in her delineation between who men and women are able to 'chat to' in pubs.

Norah, age 24: I think guys can just go to bars and just sit and chat to whoever and go out at night on their own and end up with a big gang of people. You know it doesn't really matter. Whereas you couldn't really do that if you were a girl here. I don't think you could do that any way.

Norah's remarks allude to important differences in the ways in which young men and women feel they 'belong' or 'fit in' to local pub culture as individuals. Below, Karen (age 26) reiterates and then elaborates on them.

Karen: And girls don't really walk into a pub by themselves, you know that sort of way. For boys, they just walk into a bar, sit down, people chat to them, their mates might come in but sure, they'll just talk to who ever is there. ...

RD: Why is that girls wouldn't just go out on their own?

Karen: A) probably because they'd think she was an alcoholic and B) because they'd probably think she was out looking for a man I suppose. I mean if it's Saturday night, or if there is a reason to be out during the week or if you're with two or three [friends]. I mean, it's just, well men will chat about anything really.

In these excerpts, Norah and Karen begin to touch on the different meanings attached to male and female visibility in the pub. As part of this effort, they define pub space in terms of social relations (and who one is and isn't able to 'chat to') (see Massey 1994). More specifically, they speak to the ways in which young women feel restricted

in terms of when (e.g. weekend nights) and how (e.g. as a member of a group) it is acceptable for young women to frequent the primary place of leisure in the community.

Beth, age 25: I don't really go to the pub during the week. I'll go out on the weekend, but that's it. You can't go to the pub all the time.

This sense of restricted access was virtually absent from interviews with young men. Karen's account in particular speaks to the socially marginalizing risks (e.g. ruined reputation) associated with stepping over the inexact line between acceptable and excessive (female) agency (Currie et al. 2009:427). What emerges from these accounts is the positioning of females, particularly the 'lone female' (Hunt and Satterlee 1987:590) as outsiders.

Karen, age 26: Like if I go into [the pub] to collect my [family member] for dinner or if we have a drink while we're in town picking up Chinese [food] or a video, I'd be the only girl. But I hate it. I hate it being that way.

As well, Norah went on to describe a friend who would not enter a pub alone: "Even if she knows we're inside, she wouldn't come in. She'd text you from outside, she'd wait. Someone would have to go outside and get her, walk in with her."

Evident in both girls' comments is a tendency to naturalize, normalize and legitimize male practices and/or visibility in the pub, while problematizing their own. Here it is worth noting that this tendency parallels findings from recent media studies attentive to the ways in which drinking is differentially represented in magazines which target young males versus young females. Recent research by Atkinson and Sumnall (2010) suggests that magazines targeted at young males tend to emphasize the pub as male domain (for example, through the portrayal of drinking as a single-sex activity) (see also Day et al. 2004; Lyons et al. 2006). In contrast, representations of drinking in magazines targeted at young females tend to present drinking as not only a group activity

(with both men and women represented), but as a glamorous, and I would argue urbane if not urban-based, activity – what Atkinson and Sumnall (2010) refer to as ‘celebrity drinking’. Regardless of target audience, all of these representations share in common the tendency towards shoring up the notion of girls’ ‘unbelongingness’ in the (rural) pub.

Norah, age 24: At the end of the day everyone is up to the same thing, you know. But I don’t know. There’s a completely different mentality of the two. There’s like men you would just think are just happy with what they do -- go to work, earn their money, go down to the town, spend it. Happy. I do think girls want more, more clubs, going out, they want a social scene.

In addition to locating female drinking preferences and practices in a more urban(e) environment, Norah makes sense out of boys’ ‘natural’ contentment with local pub culture by relating it to other traditionally masculine spheres and symbols (e.g. work and one’s breadwinning status). Karen demonstrates a similar tendency below as she attempts to explain why boys are able to chat to ‘whoever is there’. Karen highlights ostensibly single-sex social relations and networks spanning leisure, work and family-based relations as explicitly affording males greater ease and opportunity in participating in local pub culture.

Karen, age 26: For boys, they just walk into a bar, sit down, people chat to them, their mates might come in but sure, they’ll just talk to whoever is there. A lot of the boys are all, like sure you have your boys that play soccer that are all friends, and the guys that work together in the factories and stuff, there’s the boys that are in the boats and then you’ve got cousins or relations or in-laws...

Again, Karen defines pub space in terms of social relations. Karen’s explanation strikes a chord with previous studies on male occupational drinking groups and the extent to which group solidarity at work (and I would argue, on the football field and/or sports team) is further established by drinking together (see for example Mars 1987 cited in Hunt et al. 2005; see also Peace 1992). This is an important frame of reference for

understanding and challenging the gender essentialism implicit in excerpts regarding boys' contentment with local pub culture and/or ability to chat to 'anyone' (who is undoubtedly also male) about 'anything'. More importantly however, Karen makes sense out of the male-dominated nature of rural pub life by linking it to larger social and power networks in the community. For both Norah and Karen, the male-dominated nature of rural pub life is embedded clearly in the wider and more general male-dominated milieu of rural 'pub(lic) life' (Campbell 2000) (e.g. including a male-dominated industry and sport culture). Karen's reference to sport is particularly relevant here. The ways in which sport differentially links young men and women into the "networks of power and signification that make up one's culture" (Braidotti 1992:7) will be discussed in depth in the following chapter. For now I want to highlight one of the ways in which local young women cope with a male-dominated social environment.

Resistance or Compliance?: The Out-Migration of Girls' Leisure Lives

Interview questions which asked explicitly about girls leisure opportunities reveal a disconnect between 'what girls do' and 'where they live'. The difference between the ways in which young men and women are visible and valued in the rural landscape is perhaps best seen in young women's greater penchant for circumnavigating the local pub scene altogether and frequenting the larger discos in the nearby towns of Donegal and Glenties instead.

Ryan, age 27: You see it when you go out, the pubs, there are more men. In my age group, there's not a lot of single women about. ... The girls don't stay around Killybegs, they move out, or go to [the discos in] Glenties or Donegal or somewhere.

Alexis, age 28: Like I would often go out in Donegal Town, I don't really go out in Killybegs that often.

Michael, age 26: There is a lot of women in the town but they don't go out. ... I don't know, probably because they're not interested in the men about. They do go to Glenties and Donegal, like they kind of save their night out for getting out of the town. They don't really go out in the town, like not many women go down for a pint during the week.

Young women's preference for larger discos located outside of the community is as much an exercise of power as it is an expression of power relations in the rural. It is at once an act of resistance and compliance which works to reinforce the pub as male domain in particular and the patriarchal nature of rural society in general.

Although more females than males live their leisure lives outside of the community, it is important to keep in mind that geographic mobility is a resource that is not equally available to all girls (Hunt and Satterlee 1987:586). Compare for example the 'local' social geographies of Sara and Beth. Sara comes from a working-class family background and is currently employed in the service sector. Beth comes from an upper/middle-class family background and works in her family's business. In the excerpts below, both girls respond to the question: 'What do you do for fun in Killybegs?'

Sara, age 20: Like I'm not finished [working] till ten or eleven o'clock. It's too late for me to head off to go bowling or something like that, just to go away like. So really I would just go out [in Killybegs] ... Or just go to [a friends'] house because there's nothing for you to actually do like. You don't have any choices for what you want to do. You sit in or you go out.

Sara summarizes her social life as restricted largely to 'sitting in or going out'. In contrast, Beth below focuses more on travel destinations and leisure opportunities found outside of the community (e.g. cinema in Bundoran, shopping in Derry, etc.).

Beth, age 25: We usually tend to go to the pubs at the weekends. Do a bit of traveling ... I'd be over and back to England a good bit. And over to the States as well... We go to the cinema a lot. You go through phases, like you

could be up there every week for like eight or nine weeks and then you'd just stop because you'd get sick of it. Shopping in Derry, go up on a Saturday if you're not working. ... Letterkenny, used to have a lot of friends there, we'd go up there, you know, just for a change of scenery.

The degree of difference, if not distance, in the above social geographies reveals the ways in which one's access to (social) resources in the rural is both gendered and classed. The veritable absence of reference to local leisure opportunities in both accounts speaks in part to the gendering of public space in the local social environment. Meanwhile the difference in reference to opportunities available beyond the locality (i.e. access to the resource of mobility) highlights social divisions more reflective of one's lived class location. The differential access to social resources evident in the above responses is illustrative of the variable limits of female agency in the rural and demonstrates the dangers in promoting a universal rural female experience.

In short, the exodus of young women's leisure lives is selective and reflects more the relative freedom of middle-class young women who have a greater degree of flexibility, mobility and family resources than their working-class counterparts. The cost of a night 'out' often includes taxi fare (roughly 50 kilometers roundtrip) and a cover charge in addition to the price of drinks. It is a prohibitive price tag for those with less disposable income. Kitzinger (1995:17) raises the additional point that the importance of a "girls' sexual reputation may vary according to one's social-class position, academic achievement and geographic mobility". In this way, young women with the least opportunities or resources to escape the constraining dimensions of rural life may be the same one's to "attach greater importance to their sexual reputation in part because it is harder for them to escape its damaging effects" (Currie et al. 2009:97; see also Jackson 2006).

Although I argue that the discos of larger towns afford local young women a degree of anonymity unfound in the pubs of home, the idea that girls do not drink alcohol or go out and have a good time in and beyond the pubs of Killybegs is totally inaccurate. We need to be careful not to let the well-documented linkages between drinking and masculinity eclipse the meanings young women also attach to drinking practices in constructions and expressions of identity. I was for example assured by at least one young woman that it was a 'tradition' that she get really drunk every Christmas. Another local young woman introduced herself to me through a series of vignettes showcasing the intoxicated misadventures of her and her best friend. "And this is when we have kids, she concluded, imagine what it was like before!" Here I provide two more examples which highlight the ways in which local young women draw on their drinking practices to express who they were as individuals and groups. Emily for example relayed a story (adapted from fieldnotes) about a weekend spent in London with a group of friends as a teenager:

It became clear as the evening passed that one of her friends had had something slipped into her drink. As they carried her down the street, the group approached a guard for assistance who shrugged: "Sure girls, looks like she's had too much to drink, better get her home and have her sleep it off." The response compelled Emily to clarify, "No, you don't understand. We're Irish."

In another instance, it was my own drinking practices (and belongingness) that were called into question. Around Christmas time I was invited out to dinner and drinks with a group of girls from the town, all in their 20s. The following day, I was surprised to hear one of the girls recount the evening to a mutual friend: "Everyone really liked Rachel, everyone was a little worried when she ordered water with dinner but then they found out she drank whiskey and they're like, 'No, she's cool'." My point here is that femininities (as well as masculinities) are not placeless and need to be situated within and

against wider expressions of local and national identities, particularly in ‘drinking cultures’ (Wilson 2005; see also Inglis 2008:99 for discussion on Irish drinking culture). Linkages between alcohol and gender identities, particularly the ways in which young women draw on their drinking practices to express who they are, remain under-addressed in the literature but remains beyond the scope of this study (see Jackson 2006 for exception).

What I want to stress here is the difference between young female’s individual (versus collective) sense of belonging or ‘fitting in’ in local pub culture. I would argue that young women are quite capable of appropriating space for themselves in the pub *collectively*. Thus it is not the absolute exclusion of young women from rural pub life that is the issue. Rather, the issue at hand is the more subtle ways in which young women’s participation in rural pub culture in particular, and pursuit of leisure in general, is shaped by conventional strictures founded on notions of sexuality, respectability and other accepted ideas of what constitutes white femininity (Skeggs 1997; see also McRobbie 2000). Karen’s aforementioned explanation in particular, regarding what might be thought of the female who goes into a pub alone, is illustrative of the ways in which female visibility in the rural social environment is shaped in part by the ‘invisible’ constraints of rumors and gossip (Haugen and Villa 2006). Attention to these constraints raises intriguing questions regarding the intra-gender dimensions of rural gender and power relations. These will be discussed below.

Girl Power?: Girls, Gossip and “The Most Difficult Thing...”

Nathan, age 25: As I was saying, like, when you're in a city, you wouldn't do things in a city that you can get away with here.

Nathan's stance on the freedoms rural life affords doesn't hold water in the micro-social worlds of young rural women (see also Dunkley 2004). Take for example the following conversation between Erin and Theresa (ages 22 and 21). Erin and Theresa identify gossip, rumors and lack of privacy as the most difficult aspect of life in Killybegs. In doing so, they couch their discontent with rural life in the double-edged idyllic trope of 'everyone knowing everyone' (Dax and Machold 2002:107).

Erin: The most difficult is definitely everyone knowing everything about you... You know, like if you fall out with one person you fall out with the gang because they...

Theresa: Yeah, you can't fall out with just one person, it's the whole circle they're in.

Erin: So that's my main difficult I don't like everyone knowing everything about me. ... Like, I'm not saying that you're falling out with people all the time. I'm just saying that everyone knows everyone's business like, and you are in no way anonymous at all, that's what I like about [the city]. You can walk downtown and no one looks at you twice. I mean if I walked downtown [in Killybegs] and I had a white face and I was feeling really sick, I'd probably be called pregnant or something really stupid like that.

Theresa: Or if you're seen going to the doctor on a Monday morning... Or if you're out and you're drinking orange juice instead of vodka. That means you're pregnant. Or if you're seen chatting to this fella, then you're with him like... And it's always ten times worse than it actually is.

Erin: Yeah, and it's always exaggerated. And you can't say we don't gossip because we're just as bad but like you know.

What comes through crystal clear in the above dialogue is the way in which young women feel the recoil of the gossip gun most tenderly in their reputation, particularly their sexual reputation. Here I am not arguing that young males are immune to the proverbial 'talk of the town'. Over 80 percent (81.8 percent, 90 out of 110) of school survey respondents agreed with the statement: Everyone here knows everyone

else's business. This includes 94.8 percent (55 out of 58) of female respondents and 67.3 percent (35 out of 52) of male respondents (see Table D.4 in Appendix D). But male interview participants rarely, if ever, identified or elaborated on gossip and/or rumors as a significant source of discontent or constraint in their locally-lived lives. This is in part because "heterosexuality is gendered through a double standard of sexual conduct that authorizes male agency" (Currie et al. 2009:97).

Dominant constructions of femininity remain wedded to a moral condition that needs to be protected and policed (by parents, peers, and so on).⁴¹ This is in contrast to dominant constructions of masculinity, particularly working-class and 'rural masculinities' (Campbell and Bell 2000), which are traditionally ensconced in the symbols of harsh environments, hard work and provider (see Campbell and Bell 2000:535; Liepins 2000; Woodward 2000). It is this double standard of sexual conduct which allows young females to wind up in the moral margins of the very 'coming of age' stories which turn boys into men (see Dunkley 2004:571; Hunt et al. 2005:227; Canaan 1990). As Nayak (2003:24) contends, "the very actions that may be read as a positive assertion of masculinity and 'growing up' for young men may have negative consequences for the social and sexual lives and reputations of young women". What Erin and Theresa (and others below) make clear is a formidable lack of privacy and the feeling that they have little control over the gossip and rumors about them (see Kitzinger 1995:189).

⁴¹ Looking specifically at the classed dimensions of lived femininities, Walkerdine (1997) notes that historically it is middle-class girls that have been seen as in need of protection, while their working-class counterparts have been viewed as a threat (cited Currie et al. 2009:51).

- Sara, age 20: But it's such a small town as well, people do get fed up with it. Everybody knows you and your business, where you been, what you're doing, and it is really annoying some times because people love to talk, which makes people want to go away where nobody knows you, you can start fresh. Just make new friends, mates... There's piles of people watching over me all of the time.
- Norah, age 24: There's a lot of like, if something went wrong in your life the whole town is going to know.
- Katie, age 24: I don't know if I could live here... I don't know, it's kind of a funny town to live in as well. Like, everyone knows your business. Gossip goes around a lot. It would be better to live somewhere bigger, like we're very anonymous at the minute, in Dublin, so coming back to everyone knowing everything about you would be tough.

Haugen and Villa (2006) suggest that rural gossip is defined by and about women. Here it is worth pointing out that, in the end, Erin and Theresa implicate themselves in the production process of social constraints. The role women play in policing femininity through rumors and gossip is well documented (Hey 1997; Currie et al. 2009; McRobbie 2000:124). (That said, the role that men play is less clear and deserves closer attention). In *The Company She Keeps*, Valerie Hey (1997:53) suggests that "girls' use of personal knowledge about each other constituted key cultural resources of power". Recent research on girls' agency and empowerment by Currie et al. (2006, 2009) further emphasizes the power associated with 'naming', particularly with labels such as 'slut' or 'slag' but also 'popular' or 'geek' (see also Kitzinger 1995). Currie et al. (2006:423) argue that "positioning occurs through identity labels that are used to designate the social locations of both Self and other".

These studies evidence the "effectivity of girls as conduits of power" (Hey 1997) and the ways in which "power is distributed in the form of different types of capital" (Walkerdine et al. 2001:38). Given the many ways in which rural society is male-dominated, studies on rural youth experience and emigration too often fail to critically

consider the significance of intra-gender power relations in shaping young women's agency and experiences of rural space and place. If we are to understand the gendered dimensions of rural youth emigration, we need to effectively contextualize rural youth experience in wider webs of social power reflective of both inter and intra-gender relations. Intra-gender relations are power-laden and integral to young people's subjective sense of place (and what is possible in that place). Attention to intra-gender relations is particularly important given the different ways in which young men and women 'do' (O'Connor 1992) friendship. This will be discussed further in chapter six.

In the meantime, it is important to note that despite Bertrand Russell's warning that "no one gossips about other people's secret virtues", the constraining dimensions of intra-gender power relations do not always carry malicious or mean-spirited connotations. This is seen anecdotally in a conversation between a group of teenage girls at the local youth centre in Killybegs. It was, I believe, in a protective manner that upon one of the girls' expressed interest in a particular boy at school, another quickly warned: "If you go out with him, you'll ruin your reputation". Equally so, rural intra-gender power relations need to be approached and understood in relation to the patriarchal space within which they operate (Hey 1997:14). As Fine (1988) notes, "while it may indeed be girls themselves who police the boundaries of femininity through assessment of each other's appearance and sexual agency, they do so from the standpoint of male desire" (cited in Currie et al. 2009:98).

In the final section of this chapter, I problematize male power in the rural. In doing so, I return to Dahlstrom's (1996) idea of rural life as a 'male periphery'. Glendinning et al. (2003:152) contend: "In the same way young females may experience

rural life as a ‘male periphery’, young males may experience declining fisheries or new development [as] a periphery of another kind”. The gendered nature of recent decline in the local economy is central to understanding contemporary rural gender and power relations.

Discussion and Conclusion: New Peripheries?

Pete, age 19: There’s nothing going in the town now, ever since the fishing fucked up. There’s no money going in the town, the pubs are quiet.

Charles, age 30: It’s very different now, when you go out in Killybegs, you’d want something planned. You’d nearly want to call somebody just to make sure that people are about.

From the accounts above paired with Michael’s (age 26) more succinct concern that “you can’t trust any night of the week now” we are perhaps able to make out the faint contours of a new ‘periphery’ in the rural. The quietness percolating in local pubs is due to multiple factors including the increasing enforcement of drink driving laws, a smoking ban, and recent volatility in the local economy. Recent instability in the local economy is contributing to new pressures at home, particularly it seems for young males, who must now reckon with the rapid erasure of traditional work opportunities as well as the more widespread de-valuing of manual work.

Mr. Murrin: I mean you see up in the quarry up here, I think they have a few Poles working up there. That’s the men they hire to do the manual work. There is a little bit of, ‘Um, we don’t do manual [work] in Ireland much more’.

Jimmy, age 23: The money started getting really bad and it just wasn’t worth our while to go fishing... So that’s kind of why everyone got out of the fishing, all them boys from the town and that. They started working in Dublin and Australia and America and all that. ... You see it’s wild hard to get a full-time job around this place. It’s nearly impossible like.

Studies on masculinities in the context of rural change address important questions regarding the ways in processes of rural transformation upset ‘old’ hierarchies

in rural gender relations (Brandth 1995; Nayak 2003; Ni Laoire 2002, 2005). Brandth (1995) and Nayak (2003) in particular demonstrate the ways in which expressions of masculinity are being reworked through the integration of new symbols (be they work, leisure or consumption-based) to ensure male dominance in the gender system during times of rupture (see also Nayak and Kehily 2008; Connell 1995; Ferguson 2001; see also Fine et al. 1997). A good example of this can be seen below in an interview with Eric, age 27.

Eric: I would find, and I know a lot of guys around here would say the same thing, a lot of the women here... they're very pretentious. I guess when it comes down to it, when there's more millionaires per square mile than Beverly Hills, there's more Beverly Hills bitches per square mile...

RD: If there are more Beverly Hills girls, are there also more Beverly Hills boys?

Eric: But there is a vast difference between here and Beverly Hills, everyone here that has the money had to work hard for their money. So all the blokes around here, they work. Fine, there's blokes that could be in the pub five, six days a week that don't work. ... But they are going to be different. Like the women want to be treated like the women of Beverly Hills and they want the blokes that are in Beverly Hills but the blokes in Beverly Hills generally don't work that hard and still have an easy life and make money. ... It's the attitude. The blokes here don't have the attitude. They know that they have to go out and work. Whereas the girls here, they want everything handed to them.

RD: So even if they are both from the same wealthy family, you think the guy would be more inclined to go out and work?

Eric: Yeah, he'd be more inclined. You could meet him in a suit tomorrow night and the next day you could see him at eight in the evening and he'd covered head to toe in shit. In grease and dirt and muck and everything. And that's it.

Eric maintains male dominance in the gender order by locating masculinity in the ability and *willingness* to undertake both manual and mental labor. In doing so, he identifies males as hard-working, deserving 'breadwinners' that are both tough and business-minded (e.g. in a suit one day and covered in dirt the next). In contrast, young women are implicitly and explicitly identified as a threat to the moral order of community

life; as undeserving, unappreciative and idle. It was an assessment reiterated by others like Joey, age 30, who said, quite seriously: “Killybegs girls, in my opinion, and I quote, think they’re something special”.

In the above passage Eric identifies both women and Beverly Hills men (i.e. alternative masculine identities) as ‘the other’, positioning them as inferior to his articulation of masculinity and ‘real’ work (see also Fine et al. 1997). Eric’s mention of women’s ‘attitude’ and increasing expectations of (and dis-satisfaction) with local men (e.g. ‘they want to be treated like the women of Beverly Hills’, ‘they want the blokes that are in Beverly Hills’) taps into a tension surrounding contemporary constructions of masculinity and femininity and the “reconfiguration of labor patterns, consumption practices and gender roles” (Nayak and Kehily 2008:52). Eric’s reference to ‘Beverly Hills bitches’ in particular evinces a highly gendered class-consciousness.

As made clear in earlier chapters, this is a place and time marked not only by increasing unemployment and economic insecurity but the rapid erosion of traditional male roles and identities. Here I argue that Eric’s above portrayal of young women as undeserving signifies a struggle over power (and perhaps space) in a rapidly changing local landscape. I argue that it is in part because of the increasing encroachment of women in the public sphere (e.g. work place, drinking arena, etc.) that Eric draws such a disparaging line between men’s and women’s work practices and ‘deservingness’. As Massey (1994:23) notes, “social change and spatial change are integral to each other”.

There is a perceived sense of entitlement and displacement evident in Eric’s account. It is critical that such expressions of power (and powerlessness) be understood in a broader landscape of power reflective of both inter-generational and class difference.

Later on in the interview Eric (along with others below) referenced local male power elites, including but not limited to the so-called ‘mackerel millionaires’, as restricting opportunities at home: “But because these boys hold all the cards there is no room for development out of the fishing...”

Nathan, age 25: I love Killybegs as it’s my own town... but it’s just the fact that the, if you want to call them the big people of the town, just don’t want nothing really to happen. Because they’re happy. Their wallets are full and that’s the way it is.

Michael, age 26: I don’t think you can fix it [Killybegs], it’s too many uneducated kind of greedy men that are running it and they’re not going to change. They’re still doing the exact same thing, so it doesn’t make any difference.

Paul, age 25: They’re millionaires and they’re quite happy to sit on their millions. While the rest of the community just struggles on.

Through these expressions of resentment towards the ‘big people of the town’ these young men are articulating both a sense of power and powerlessness. These excerpts further illustrate the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of rural gender identities and relations. They further make the point that rural gender and power relations are more complicated than a binary framework of male-dominated/female-discontented allows for. Whether resenting one’s greed, naturalizing one’s belongingness, protecting one’s reputation, or de-legitimizing one’s deservingness, all of these articulations operate as moral evaluations, which as Skeggs’ (2004:14) persuasively contends “is central to the workings and transmission of power”.

Located at the theoretical intersection of gender, place and power, this chapter covers a lot of empirical terrain. This suggests that it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of this intersection in the plural and recognize that individuals (and groups) can be located within this intersection in many different ways. Moving through the multiple and shifting realities and relations of rural youth experience, here I have worked to destabilize

the notion of a universal female or male experience of the rural. In short, gender is a critical dimension of rural youth experience but it is by no means a static, stable or isolated dimension.

Constructions of masculinity and femininity are never fixed and the rural landscape is not frozen. This chapter works to widen the aperture on analyses of gender, power and place to include not only the layers of relations between men and women, but also between men and between women. I argue that the intra-gender dimensions of rural gender and power relations are no less meaningful in the lives of rural youth than inter-gender relations. Drawing attention to the ways in which young men and women position themselves with and against other men and women in the local landscape reminds the reader that the feminist project should be as concerned with the (shifting) subjectivities, sensibilities and spatialities of men as it is with women. This will be explored further in chapter six which focuses on the gendered significance of sport in young locally-lived lives.

More generally though, within and beyond the rural context, this chapter emphasizes that subjectivity is “in process, unstable and interpellated by diverse and sometimes contradictory subject positions” (Hanson and Pratt 1995:19). Approaching subjectivity in this sense means engaging (rural) gender and power relations not so much as a fixed intersection in the neat streets of patriarchy but rather as ever-shifting, unfinished, and unfettered by dualistic thinking. Through young people’s embodied expressions and experiences of place and power, we see that gender clearly matters in rural youth experience, but its import should not eclipse the significance of other social categories (e.g. social-class, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.) in shaping young people’s

experience of place. To work uncritically within gendered parameters is to risk neglecting other dimensions of young people's discursively constructed subjectivities.

6

Gendering Sports, Social Resources and Relations in the Rural

Paul, age 25: Throughout the community, football is pretty much everything, for a fella anyway.

Ruth, age 31: If you're not involved in sport, you have nothing.

In this chapter I examine the gendered significance of sport in young people's sense of place in the rural Irish landscape. My aim here is twofold. Firstly, I reveal the centrality of sport in dominant constructions of masculinity in the rural Irish context (see also Nayak 2003; Renold 1997; Swain 2000; Skeleton 2000). I argue that sport, and particularly *gaelic* football and involvement in the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), is an embodied and highly gendered form of social, cultural and symbolic capital which espouses claims to both status and space in the community. Although I approach this point predominantly through the perspectives and experiences of local young men and women, I also draw attention to the myriad ways in which the topic of sport surfaced during interviews with parents, teachers and other community members over the course of fieldwork. As part of this effort, I contribute to recent debates in cultural geography and rural studies attentive to the relationship between the body and space (see Little and Leyshon 2003). More specifically, I argue that it is through embodied performances and practices that young men and women perceive and experience rural space and place.

Secondly, I focus on the different ways in which local young men and women identify the development and nature of their friendship groups and wider socio-spatial networks in relation to the dominant sport culture. I take this as a starting point to consider more carefully the different ways in which young men and women 'do' (O'Connor 1992) friendship. Here again I consider the relevance of space and spatiality

in relation to the performance and performativity of rural gender identities and social relations. To be clear, I differentiate between performance and performativity along the same lines as Gregson and Rose (2000:441) who, following Butler (1990), contend that “performativity involves the saturation of performances and performers with power, with particular subject positions”.

Performance – what individuals do, say, ‘act out’ – is subsumed within, and must always be connected to, performativity, to the citational practices which reproduce and subvert discourse, and which at the same time enable and discipline subjects and their performances (Gregson and Rose 2000:441).

With this in mind, I begin by engaging with the performative nature of gender in the rural Irish context through attention to important linkages between gender, place and identity left unexamined in chapter three.

Identity, Belonging and the GAA

Mr. Murrin: The vast majority [of students] are quite proud of where they come from. I think it comes from, some people might say too much so, but in the football and in their games.

Mr. Murrin illustrates nicely the ways in which young people’s sense of place, and in turn, sense of identity and pride in place, interlace eminently with football and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). His remarks strike a chord with those of Irish sociologist Tom Inglis (2008:136) who contends that “participation in the GAA is about identity and belonging” (see also Ni Laoire 1999). Inglis (2008:136-7) continues:

Most people in Ireland see and understand themselves as being from a particular county, and this sense of identity and belonging is often sustained and developed more through the GAA than anything else. ... Participation in the GAA has not only become a major source of local identity and pride, it has also become a source of local cultural capital. There is enormous value in being involved with and playing for the local parish or, better still, the county.

I do not dispute the veracity of Inglis’ claim here, I do however find it necessary to acknowledge the ways in which this particular identity, and sense of belonging and

attachment to place, is produced through a particular body, or an embodied social practice and (highly gendered) form of capital.

Interviews with young males, like Nathan, Paul and Danny (and young females, to be discussed later), speak to the significance, if not singular significance, of football in young (male) locally-lived lives.

Nathan, age 25: Football. That's all I had in my mind. Football, athletics, and that was it. I had no other ambition in life than just to play football.

Paul, age 25: Well I would be football crazy so that was all we did really. Me self, me brother and the neighboring boys. Every day we'd be down in that field there or up in another field. It was football all the time.

Danny, age 27: Leisure activities included football, football, and more football. And angling.

Much more than a mere leisure activity, participation in football enables young men to become recognized as valuable members of the community, county and country. To put it somewhat differently, it is largely through football that 'the lads' become the 'local heroes' (Mac Laughlin 1995) in a cultural narrative which circulates at the national level but implies allegiance to specific localities (see Dunkley and Panelli 2007:11).⁴² Inglis (2008:66) describes "the hero [as] the person who achieves adulation either intentionally or unintentionally because he or she has brought rewards or distinction to the community..." A 'local hero' was pointed out to me on a trip 'In Through' when a community member mentioned that one of the boys at the local school was the Donegal All-Star in Athletics. They went on to say that "there's not jealousy in the school about that, there's pride in that; that a wee [place like this] is producing people like that".

Another compelling illustration of the status and value associated with playing for the local football club is found in the tendency among community members in Killybegs to

⁴² The organization of the Gaelic Athletic Association is based around Catholic parishes (Inglis 2008:134).

reference the roster and record of the local football club when asked to comment on the ways in which rural youth emigration is a ‘problem’ for Killybegs.

Mr. Connell: Killybegs football team relegated on Sunday. I mean, a couple of years ago when Donegal won the All-Ireland there were four in Killybegs on the team... Now you can’t get one on the County Panel. Last year James and Danny went to Australia, Darren and John went to America. The young people coming up have all gone... But you know, there is a great crew coming up... But by the time they’re eighteen, they’ll be gone.

Implicit and explicit in Mr. Connell’s lament is recognition that young male football players are highly valued and visible members of the community and county. Theirs is an “absence real as presence” is how poet John Montague might have put it (cited in O’Toole 1997). Indeed, the significance of sport in the local landscape surfaced in myriad ways throughout fieldwork. Community members are able to tell you exactly where they were when Donegal won the All-Ireland Football Championship. Some still regret having been out of the country on holiday during the Championship: “Had we known...” Others are able to tell you when the first television, and later VCR and VHS tapes, arrived in the town by what particular (national or international) match or sporting event they were able to watch and record at home. As well, and referencing the role that fisheries played in sheltering Killybegs from emigration and unemployment throughout the 1980s, Mr. McIntyre emphasizes the exception that Killybegs was through the number of football teams afforded the town. In doing so, he (like Mr. Connell above) uses the size and strength of the local football club as a measure of community well-being.

Mr. McIntyre: As a matter of fact, we used to hear the rest of the country talking about how they were affected [by the recession]. Football teams ceased to exist in Mayo. Yet every team around here had two or three teams. There was a first team, a reserve

team, and there may have been a third team, which was unheard of anywhere else in the country in the 1980s.

The value attached to the ability to play football well in rural Ireland is worth pointing out here. In the following excerpt, Paul identifies some of the place-based privileges and preferential treatments that come with playing football.

RD: What do you think are some of the most difficult aspects of growing up here?

Paul, age 25: I didn't have any real difficulties. But then again, in secondary school I just had a cushy life. Because around here it's very sport-orientated and I was fairly talented... so the teachers would just give me complete leeway, as regards to homework and that.

Paul identifies the ways in which ability in sport operates as a key social resource providing for a 'cushy life', and in some cases, 'complete leeway'. Crucial here is Connell's (1995:74) concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' defined as "the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations". Hegemony is, importantly, "an idea that embeds certain notions of consent and participation by the subaltern groups" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:841). Equally important is Gavin Smith's (1999) explication that "hegemony is not something people consume, rather it is a process in which they are active participants in creating and reproducing" (cited in Gordillo 2004:231).

Hegemonic Masculinities: 'Our Men – The Fittest and Strongest...'

Tom Inglis recently described sport in Ireland as the "language of the community" having "replaced institutional religion as the main form of identity and social bonding".⁴³ Whether or not sport has supplanted religion in rural Ireland is open to debate but the two

⁴³ See 'GAA has tapped into growth of sport as substitute for religion' by Tom Inglis in *Irish Times*, August 8, 2009

(patriarchal) spheres of rural Irish life are certainly entwined. It was not by chance that the Catholic Church in Killybegs scheduled rosary at half-time of the televised 2008 Champion League Finals. As well, it was on a return trip to Killybegs in April 2010 that a community member made mention of the “Falling of the Holy Trinity” while I was away. She was of course referring to the collective downfall of the Catholic Church, the Irish government (particularly the Fianna Fail political party), and the Arsenal Football Club. “And it is true, she said, they’re all the same fuckin’ thing”.⁴⁴

Ni Laoire (2001:223) identifies hegemonic masculinities in rural Ireland as associated with “the power of farming and perhaps, in some places, the Church and the GAA”. Ferguson (2001:120) similarly describes “traditional masculinity in Ireland [as] essentially rural” with sport playing “a key role in the production of the disciplined, Catholic, self-reliant Irish male body”. Finally, and most recently, GAA President Christy Cooney describes GAA games as providing “our men – the fittest and strongest in our communities – with a properly organized vehicle to assert their masculinity and competitive streak in a sporting setting”.⁴⁵ What all of these definitions and descriptions make clear is that within the rural Irish landscape hegemonic masculinity is embodied, performed and produced in part through participation in sport, and particularly the GAA. This is significant, for as Little and Leyshon (2003:269) write: “The relationship between the rural body and the acceptance of certain dominant and traditional forms of gender

⁴⁴ It is worth mentioning here that the Arsenal Football Club is an English football (i.e. soccer) team. I was told by a young man in Killybegs that “Ireland’s football team isn’t that good because all the good players play rugby or gaelic football”. This highlights, importantly, the significance of not only the local but also the national and international dimensions of rural Ireland’s dominant sport culture. In this way, rural Ireland’s dominant sport is defined crucially but not exclusively through participation in GAA.

⁴⁵ See “Sense of ‘Pride and Identity’ sets GAA Apart” by Tim O’Brien in *The Irish Times*, August 13, 2009.

identity implies a power relation... the body (or at least particular forms of the body) gains power within a rural context. The body that is valued [is] thus powerful..."

Inglis (2008:134) describes the Gaelic Athletic Association from its inception in 1884 as an organization which "represented a celebration of simple rural life [and] eulogized a form of manliness and "muscular" Christianity". What I want to emphasize here is the importance of understanding one's sense of place in the rural Irish landscape as a matter of embodied perceptions, experiences, and to some extent, 'entitlements' (Skeggs 2004; see also McDowell 1999). Gaston Gordillo (2004:8) (with the help of Lefebvre) persuasively contends that "embodiment is critical to place-making, for as pointed out by Lefebvre (1991:162) "it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived and produced"". I engage with young people's embodied experience of place here to highlight the ways in which the centrality of sport in dominant constructions of masculinity in rural Ireland – and especially the emphasis placed on the "Catholic, self-reliant Irish male body" (Ferguson 2001:120) – works to not only exclude females from key social and cultural scripts and spaces but to marginalize some males as well.

Skeggs' (2004:12) defines 'inscription' as the processes through which "value is transferred onto bodies and read off them". She writes:

Different bodies carry unequal values depending on their position in space (and the capitals they embody). Inscribed bodies embody entitlements. They move in space 'as if they own it'... Those who really belong have to display and embody the right characteristics and dispositions (Skeggs 2004:17-9).

Following Paul's discussion on the benefits of being good at football (see above), he went onto say: "But then again, there was an awful lot of people who weren't treated that way. Like it was nearly a two-tiered system where some of us were treated with leniency and some other of us were treated as second-class students". Paul's closing reference to

‘second-class students’ reminds us to be careful not to collapse or conceal the myriad experiences, interests, abilities and identities of young rural males into dominant or idyllic constructions of masculinity (see also Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).⁴⁶ In the context of rural Ireland, this means being attentive to the ways in which the “dominance of a ‘pub, football and Church’ culture excludes those who do not fit in with its image or ethos” (Ni Laoire 2000:239). As feminist researchers we need to be mindful of a “range of relationally empowered masculinities” in the rural (Connell 1995; see also Kehily and Nayak 2001; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

The marginalization of some men and masculinities in the rural Irish landscape is linked most markedly “to inequalities connected to class, sexuality, ability and ethnicity” (Ferguson 2001:129). In particular, among the marginalized are ‘foreigners’, particularly Eastern Europeans (but also, to some extent, Irish Travelers), gay men, as well as those lacking ability (and/or interest) in the dominant sport culture. In all of these cases, their marginalization, their ‘value’, is ‘marked on the body’ (Skeggs 2004) and made visible through appearance (e.g. dress, style, speech, manner) and physical characteristics and (dis)abilities. I am reminded of a story told to me in the field about a young man in the community whose marginalization was figured (and felt) along the interlacing lines of both ethnicity and social-class. It was during a weekend football match that the young man surprised even himself it seems and scored a goal. I was told that after his goal, with the game still in play, he ran to the sideline and said to the coach, “Do you know who I am? I’m Dennis O Donnell”. The story-teller explained: “You see, he’s not one that would; you see, it was a wild big deal for someone like him, it’s like he was saying, I

⁴⁶ Equally so, I want to be careful not to overstate the privileged position that football players occupy in the local landscape. After all, many of these males lack third-level educational qualifications and are now faced with an increasingly precarious work environment. This will be discussed more in chapter seven.

shouldn't have made that..." That young Dennis O Donnell was compelled to (re)introduce himself to those on the sideline following his feat on the field is a nice illustration of how much football successes matter in the everyday lives of local young men. Moreover, it is perhaps a nice illustration of how a young male who did not (and could not) embody "the right characteristics" (Skeggs 2004:17) responded to an accomplishment, a social practice, that he did not quite feel entitled to performing so competently.

Of course the football field is not the only performative space in which men and masculinities are 'made' or marginalized. Eric, age 27, for example, talked about a classmate "that had no friends whatsoever until he went to college". When I asked why he had no friends, Eric responded: "Because he probably studied so much that he never went out and he was considered by all of his classmates a nerd". He continued:

Eric, age 27: I guarantee he nailed all of his exams on his Leaving Cert and went to college. ... That's what he had in common with them people on that course. They all scored the same as him to get that course. And that's why he made friends at college and not at school.

Though Robert, age 23, certainly did not see himself as marginalized in any way, he also hinted at the difference between his own sense of identity and interests and those valued by the wider community.

Robert, age 23: I don't think there is really anything about Killybegs that would define me. ... I mean, I'd be into doing the complete opposite things that people from Killybegs would be into. Like I'd be into all technology and everything like that there, and there wouldn't be as many people around here that would be into that.

Be it test scores or technology, Eric and Robert's reference to education and mental (versus manual) labor brings to light a key concern among education researchers

regarding the ways in which academic achievement (and classroom learning) is often perceived as a threat to dominant constructions of young, working-class masculinities (see for example Willis 1981). I deal with this issue in much more depth in chapter seven. For now, I want to make clear that it is not necessarily educational success (or being perceived as clever or bright) that is the issue. Rather, the issue is being perceived as *stressing* over school, or perhaps taking it too seriously. For instance, Paul pointed out that although he scored well on his exams at school he “had a fairly relaxed attitude to the whole thing”.

Paul, age 25: I didn't find it [the Leaving Cert] all that bad to be honest. There was a bit of pressure alright but it's only as much pressure as you put on yourself. Like I was reasonably confident going into them because I knew what I had learned, I knew what I could do. So it didn't really matter to me. I was fairly comfortable going into it... I had a fairly relaxed attitude to the whole thing.

Generally speaking, and noted by Ryan below, educational ambitions and anxieties are a stress assigned to females, or more appropriately, femininity.

Ryan age 27: Girls put more stress on themselves than the fellas. Girls really stress out over exams. But the boys that I went to school with, we didn't.

It is within the context of academic achievement that I suggest we make sense out of student responses to the survey question: I think stress is a serious problem for young people here. Nearly 60 percent of female respondents (59.184 percent, or 29 out of 49) agreed with this statement compared to only 31 percent of male respondents (15 out of 47) (see Table D.5 in Appendix D). Said differently, females comprised 65 percent of those to agree (or 29 out of 44) (see Table D.5). Reference to school-related stresses (or perhaps *lack* of reference to school-related stress) in young men's accounts (see Eric, Paul and Ryan above) reminds us that “gender is always relational, and patterns of

masculinity are socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imagined) of femininity” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:848). Again, the relationship between gender and education will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter. The impression I want to leave you with here is that all (cultural, social, symbolic, etc.) capitals, be they in the form of athletic or academic ability, are context specific.

In drawing this discussion on hegemonic and marginalized masculinities to a close, it is worth pointing out that roughly one-third of all female (31.5 percent or 18 out of 57) and male (32.6 percent or 17 out of 52) school survey respondents agreed with the statement: There is too little freedom to be the way you want to be here (see Table D.6 in Appendix D). Similarly, roughly one-third of all female (31.5 percent or 18 out of 57) and male (30.7 percent or 16 out 52) respondents agreed with the statement: It’s hard to be yourself here, people have fixed ideas (see Table D.7 in Appendix D). In short, not all masculine identities can be deployed as a resource in the male-dominated rural (Campbell and Bell 2000:537; see also Kehily and Nayak 2001). As Ferguson (2001:129) reminds us, “not all men are equally privileged by patriarchy”. Too often, research on rural gender relations passes over the plight of marginalized males on its way to reckoning with the kingpin of patriarchy. It is our job to develop research programs which address this neglected dimension of rural youth experience.

Girls and Sport

It is totally wrong to suggest that sport falls beyond the interest or ability of young females. That said, survey and interview materials show that sport, and particularly competitive sport, is a leisure activity that girls are less likely than boys to participate in, and more likely than boys to ‘grow out of’ by their early teens. These findings fit well

with existing literature on youth, sport, and gender (Hendry et al. 1993; see also Jackson 2006:353). Below, Erin, age 22, discusses girls' waning interest in sport throughout secondary school.

RD: So you played on two different [football] teams?

Erin: Yeah.

RD: Did you do that your whole way through school?

Erin: Oh no, just through National School. And then when I was a teenager then I just really hung about the town. That was all. There was nothing else.

RD: Were there girls' teams for your teenage years?

Erin: Yeah.

RD: Would many girls play?

Erin: Oh, they would until they were about 15 and then they start losing interest like.

The tendency for girls to lose interest in sport is also evidenced in school survey results. More than half of male respondents (52 percent; 27 out of 52), compared to only 26 percent of females (15 out of 57), identified themselves as 'playing sport for a club/team' at least once a week or more (see Table D.8 in Appendix D). Looking specifically at 'non-participants', females comprised more than two-thirds (68 percent or 31 out of 45) of survey respondents who indicated that they 'never play sport for a club or team' (see Table D.8). Below, Nathan reaffirms this trend and suggests that local women's participation in sport is located largely along the sidelines.

Nathan, age 25: There's younger teams. I think there's Under 12s and Under 14s. ... They [girls] don't really do a lot. There doesn't be a lot of wild interest for girls playing football. They go watch the football maybe. But leisure, in Killybegs, for girls, they don't really get into it a lot.

Nathan's contention that female participation in football is limited to that of spectator speaks to the different ways in which local young men and women are "visible

through bodily performance in public space” (Little and Leyshon 2003:267). Nathan’s comments also resonate with Prosser’s (1995) study on the ways in which rural young women negotiate their own use of public and private space. In short, Prosser (1995:86) found that “outside of the home girls are observers of boys’ activities and boys are observers of girls’ passivity”. Additional school survey results further suggest that male teenagers may be more visible in the local leisure landscape than their female counterparts.

Males were more likely than females to indicate that they go to a sports club and a youth club weekly or more often. Forty-six percent of males (24 out of 52), but only 17 percent (10 out of 58) of females, indicated that they go to a sports club weekly or more often (see Table D.9 in Appendix D). Looking at non-participants, 60 percent of female respondents (35 out of 58), compared to 28 percent of males (15 out of 52), indicated that they ‘never go to a sports club’ (see Table D.9 in Appendix D). Similarly, roughly half (51 percent or 30 out of 58) of female respondents indicated that they ‘never go to a youth club’ (see Table D.10 in Appendix D). In fact, only 12 percent (7 out of 58) of female respondents indicated that they go to a youth club weekly or more often, compared to 48 percent (25 out of 52) of males (see Table D.10 in Appendix D). These findings reveal the gendered nature of local youth leisure culture and suggest that cultural resources, including the allocation and ‘ownership’ of public space (e.g. football fields, sport clubs, youth clubs), may be unequally distributed in the rural youth landscape. Other youth leisure activities dealt with in the school survey, including ‘visiting a friend’s house’, ‘hanging outside with friends’, ‘going to the cinema’ and ‘going to a dance, disco’ reveal no significance gender differences (see Appendix C for list of activities in

Section D of Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey). Of the fourteen leisure activities listed in the survey, the three listed above (i.e. playing sport for a team/competitively; going to a sports clubs; going to a youth club) were the only youth activities to reveal statistically significant gender differences. Importantly, these three activities are also the only ones that are performed in public space within the community.

This does not mean that local young women do not enjoy the banter that comes with rivalry among local sport teams. One female participant for instance, commenting on Gaelic rivalry between Killybegs and Kilcar, described how on a night out in Kilcar she went into a pub and found a Killybegs flag lying on the ground. She recalled: “And I wouldn’t walk over it. Somebody had to carry me because I would not walk over it. See they did it out of pure badness because they knew Killybegs people were in the pub... [and] I stood there going, ‘I’m not doing it, I’m not doing it’. It’s just silliness I suppose, its banter, the craic”.

On the other hand, not everyone within the community attaches the same sense of venerated import and admiration to local males’ commitment to and competency in sport. Patrick, age 26, who himself ‘was never any good at [Gaelic] and just didn’t like it’ alluded to the parochial ‘mindset’ of some of his male peers who attach what he considers to be too much importance to football: “I’ve seen guys quit talking to each other for a year over a football match”. (This was said in the context of identifying differences between ‘stayers’ and ‘leavers’ and will be discussed further in chapter seven). More acutely, it was with no small sense of irritation that Sarah disclosed the details of a local wedding. The groom, who played Gaelic, was not drinking on his

wedding day because he had a match the following day. I recorded Sarah's opinion of his voluntary abstinence in my fieldnotes as follows:

“Get this, he scheduled his honeymoon around the match. I don't think his wife knew, I heard him telling some of the guys. He waited to book [the honeymoon] until he knew when the game was... Can you believe that? Isn't that just sad? And I'm sure all of his friends just think he is something for not drinking on his wedding day. It would be one thing if it weren't such a cult thing, I mean we'd probably have some really great athletes but they won't cross over into any other sport, it's just Gaelic. And they don't even get paid for it. They're not even professional athletes, and they take it that seriously”.

One can't help but be reminded of the infamous 'GAA widow' here “whose husband spends every spare hour in pursuit of glory for club or county”.⁴⁷ More importantly however, Sarah's account is a worthy example of the ways in which hegemonic constructions of gender identities are not only actively lived and produced, but also contested and challenged. Sarah's contestation of the groom's commitment to the football club can be read as an example of the increasing 'cultural gap' between rural young men and women. While she recognizes talent in this context she also deems it 'unmodern'. Here Sarah confronts and subverts the 'local hero' narrative and suggests that there is a perceived sense of insularity or ignorance underpinning his sacrifice to club and community. Here is where we begin to see an intriguing tension emerge between dominant constructions of masculinity in rural Ireland and the negatively loaded concept 'culchie' (which refers to 'country people'). The Irish term 'culchie' carries pejorative connotations associated with 'backwardness', 'unknowingness' and being 'too rural' (see also chapter three). In the following chapter I argue that understanding this tension (as well as the differential embodiment of values, investments and access to resources underpinning this tension) is part and parcel to understanding contemporary rural gender

⁴⁷ See 'Croke Park offers venue for ultimate match: the wedding' by Ronan McGreevy in *The Irish Times* (January 27, 2010).

relations as well as gender disparities in the social and spatial mobility of rural young women and men (see also chapter five).

At present there is no women's community football team in Killybegs. There is however a women's basketball team. Although membership is currently low and largely, though not entirely, limited to women from a single, extended family, basketball – not football – was identified as the preferred sport among local females: “the girls play basketball, the boys play football” (Ben, age 23). Laura, 23 years old, similarly recalled the popularity of the sport among her peers in secondary school: “Everyone was on the basketball team. They had to make two teams”. Some male participants did mention to me that they played basketball in secondary school but in most of these cases their participation in basketball was due to an injury which prevented them from playing gaelic football. There is not a men's community basketball team in Killybegs, neither is basketball offered as a sport for males at the secondary school (though I was told it has been in the past).

Regardless of one's ability at basketball however, female athletic efforts pale in comparison to the significance of male athletic events which continue to be the main social and cultural event of school, community and county life (see also Eder and Kinney 1995:304). So while there are certainly females in the community who have excelled athletically, their achievements often fail to carry the cultural currency which football affords (see Jackson 2006:353; see also Thorpe 2009). This will be discussed further below but it is evidenced here anecdotally in comments made by a community member about a teenage girl excelling in sport: “The poor thing, she's had no time to be a wee girl” (see also Anderson 2010).

The above remark alludes to the fact that athletic prowess is not on the list of conventional ideals surrounding normative femininity (see also Anderson 2010). Further to this, it resonates with research by Eder and Kinney (1995) which suggests that young females do not show the consistent gains in status that males experience through participation in (extra-curricular) athletic activities (see also Jackson 2006; Caudwell 2004). Recent research by Thorpe (2009:502) demonstrates the ways in which the gender identities of female athletes (in this case, female snowboarders), and more specifically, their ability to accumulate (social and symbolic) capital, “remains limited and determined by a male valuation system” and what constitutes legitimate forms of femininity (see also Anderson 2010). Citing Kane (1988), Eder and Kinney’s (1995:300) findings further reinforce this argument: “girls who participated in certain sports such as tennis, volleyball and golf were found to have higher status than girls who participated in sports that have traditionally been associated with males...”

Specifically, Eder and Kinney (1995:317) identify male popularity in middle-school as based primarily on involvement in athletic activities and one’s performance in those activities (see also Dunkley 2004). The role that athletic activities play in female popularity was less straightforward (see also Jackson 2006). The authors suggest that this is in part due to girls’ ability to gain status through establishing social relationships with girls already in the most popular group (Eder and Kinney 1995:307). This speaks not only to the gendered nature of sport-related social capital, but also to the different ways in which young men and women ‘do’ (O’Connor 1992) friendship (see also Frith 2004).

Thus far, I have focused predominantly on the male-dominated nature of rural Ireland’s sport culture. Focusing only on the ways in which the rural social environment

is male-dominated however is problematic for it keeps hidden the activities, interests and experiences of local young women. After all, the vast majority of young women I spoke with had little interest in becoming football heroes or more frequent patrons of local pubs (see also Hey 1997:16). In the next section, I foreground examples put forth by young females regarding girls' local leisure practices and friendship groups. I situate this discussion on girls' sociability and socio-spatial networks in relation to the spatial aspects of power relations in the rural in order to better understand the tendency whereby so many girls claim they have 'no one to call' in a town where 'everyone knows everyone'.

Norah, age 24: I don't know. Maybe about a year ago when I came home, it's funny just like going through who can I phone to go out tonight. Nobody.

Patricia, age 24: Like I really am the last girl [left]. When any of [my friends] come home, they're ringing me, they're like, 'please tell me you're at home this weekend', do you know, they're like... 'Don't leave me stranded in Killybegs on my own'.

As a point of departure, research on rural youth suggests that young males are more successful than their female peers in building socio-spatial networks within and beyond their home communities (Dunkley 2004:569). Involvement in sport has been cited as central to these processes of differential development. Inglis (2008) for example notes that "involvement in the local [GAA] club not only connects people within the local parish, it links people to other parishes" (see also Dunkley 2004). Excerpts below build on this argument and emphasize the role that sport plays in young males' friendship groups, and ability to build and maintain socio-spatial networks within and beyond the locality.

Paul, age 25: From around that age [teenage years] I would have been playing county football so I would have known different lads from all over the county. So you were sort of meeting by association, you'd meet their friends...

Michael, age 26: I've got a good group of friends to be honest, but that's me playing football and stuff like that, so you're making new friends every year.

But if you're just kind of stuck to your own little group that you've grown up with, which a lot of people are, and a lot of them are gone, which means that Killybegs is lonely for a lot of them.

Other male participants made mention of drawing on social contacts made through “footballing circles” (stretching beyond the locality) when considering opportunities, both employment and educational, within and beyond the town. Certainly local young women (like local young men) mentioned family members, friends, neighbors and work colleagues as part of their social networks, particularly with regards to considering migration, education and work possibilities. Here I am suggesting that the significance of sport in the rural Irish landscape provides young men with supplementary social capital, that is a highly gendered social means and space – a ‘properly organized vehicle’ – through which to not only ‘assert their masculinity’ but develop social resources, including socio-spatial networks.⁴⁸ The social landscape of rural Ireland offers up no equivalent for their female counterparts.

Girls' Sociability in Rural Space and Place

In their recent book, *Girl Power*, Currie et al. (2009:83) remind us that “while historically boys have been expected to perform masculinity through competitive activities such as athletics, femininity has been associated with competence in social relationships” (see also McRobbie 2000; Hey 1997). This strikes a chord with research by O’Niell and Gidengil’s (2006:140) who argue that “girls explicitly recognize friendship as a source of emotional support while boys appear to value their friendship for shared activities and sport”. Angela McRobbie’s (2000) seminal research on girls’ cultural practices further highlights a tendency among girls to *focus on each other rather than an activity*. McRobbie’s work is particularly valuable here as she identifies this

⁴⁸ See ‘Sense of ‘Pride and Identity’ sets GAA apart’ in *The Irish Times*, August 8, 2009

tendency as a strategy for negotiating limited access to public space (see also McRobbie and Garber 1976):

They were trapped in the safe, secure environment of the home, the club and the school, and they compensated for this lack of space by creating a culture based on each other, rather than on doing things together (McRobbie 2000:46).

In the following excerpt, Theresa and Erin (ages 21 and 22) identify gender differences in friendship groups at school. In doing so, they shore up McRobbie's (2000) notion of a 'culture based on each other'.

Theresa: But a lot of the boys in our year were either into football or cars or farming, it was something like that there...

Erin: Girls didn't really have any groups. Make up. ... No, our girls were the snobs, no, there was us, no offense, the freaks, not the freaks but the quiet ones. And then I don't know, people that just didn't fall into a category. So you know, they didn't really have an interest, that's just the type of people they were like.

RD: So it's not like girl groups were based on activities or interests?

Erin: No, just personality.

RD: So would you say with your core group of friends, like who are your friends, like when you go out on the weekend who do you go out with?

In Unison: Just us.

Although it is difficult to decipher what Erin means when she speaks of social divisions based on what 'type of people they were', her initial reference to 'make-up' is worth noting here and will be discussed below. The inclination for female friendship groups to revolve less around a shared activity is further evidenced below in an excerpt taken from an interview with Sara and Melissa. In the following account, the girls (ages 20 and 23) consider the limited nature of local leisure opportunities for females. Here it should be noted that interview questions which asked explicitly about 'female leisure opportunities' were provoked by a tendency among female participants to identify male-

dominated activities (such as going to the pub, playing football, and also a burgeoning ‘car culture’) while simultaneously suggesting that they themselves were not actively involved in such activities.

RD: Well, what is there for girls to do?

Melissa: For girls, they do each others hair. [Laughter]

Sara: Well, with girls our age, you just visit your friends.

Melissa: Or just go out for drinks. But that’s at night. During the day, there’s no shopping around here.

Sara: You could go away for the day.

Melissa: But you *have* to go away for the day...

Sara: I mean, there’s nothing you would do except maybe have a drink, maybe. Stay at home, visit family.

Again, Sara twice cites ‘visiting’ as a local leisure activity, further alluding to a ‘culture based on each other’. More importantly though, in Melissa and Erin’s reference to both hair and make-up, these excerpts remind us that the body functions as a site for the reproduction of femininity (see also Caudwell 2004:142). That young women are often judged by their physical appearance is well documented (see Skeggs 2001; Walkerdine et al. 2001; Currie et al. 2009). When Erin and Theresa speak of different social groups at school (e.g. snobs, freaks) they are, I argue, referring to the ways in which specific characteristics, styles and appearances, that is, specific bodies, are differentially valued. Here again we get a glimpse of the ways in which ‘value’ is ‘read off the body’ (Skeggs 2004), in this case, the feminine body, for it would be wrong to understand these ‘personality types’ as disembodied social subjects.

Although Erin’s reference to the ‘freaks, or quiet ones’ is illustrative of marginalized femininities in the rural, I would also add that the ‘unfeminine’ physicality

of the female ‘sporting’ body, such as the way she looks or walks in a dress, may draw disparaging comment. More often however it is the embodiment of ‘feminine excess’ (Skeggs 2004), including the amount of make-up or style of clothing one prefers, that warrants remarks such as who looks/is ‘trashy’, ‘tacky’ or ‘desperate’. Skeggs’ (2004) argument that femininity is a class-based property is relevant here for often times remarks regarding whether one is ‘rough’ or ‘lovely’ can be read along the lines of social-class. A discussion on middle and working-class femininities will be returned to in chapter seven. For now, I want to focus on girls’ local leisure lives and friendship groups.

Melissa and Sara were not the only young women to express difficulty in identifying what it was that ‘girls do around here’. Similar to Sara’s response above, Beth (age 25) cited ‘traveling’ and ‘visiting friends’. Patricia also mentioned travel plans and went so far as to identify ‘working late’ as a retreat from the boredom of home.

RD: How do you find being at home?

Patricia, age 24: Um, really boring. ... Like I’m glad I work till ten o’clock at night because I hate being at home. All I’m thinking about now is where I can go now, for holidays or just to get away.

Here again we see a tendency towards locating leisure opportunities for girls outside of the community (e.g. travel/holidays, shopping, night clubs) (see also chapter five). This reinforces arguments made earlier regarding important differences in the ways in which the interests, identities and activities of young men and women are linked to the locality (e.g. distant discos versus local pubs; basketball versus football). Excerpts drawn on here reveal the ways in which feminine bodies and identities are lived and produced in relation to rural space and place. More often, young women locate their social practices and relations *outside* of the social space and public sphere of the locality.

In a special issue of *Feminism & Psychology* dedicated to the politics of girls' friendships, Hannah Frith (2004:357) notes:

Girls have uniquely different friendships than boys do: they have smaller groups of friends, more exclusive friendships, and more intimate, close and self-disclosing relationships than boys... Girls attach greater importance to their friendships, and report intense emotional attachments to one another...

Frith (2004:357) is careful not to over-romanticize the tight-knit nature of the female friendship group, noting also that "hierarchical cliques plagued by ever shifting and re-negotiated processes of inclusion and exclusion and battles over power and status, highlight the complexities of these relationships" (see also Hey 1997). Below, Karen provides a discursive account of her own hierarchical web of social relationships. Her account centers especially on the strength and strain of the tight-knit female friendship group.

RD: You were talking about groups in Killybegs, could you describe that a little better?

Karen, age 26: I think a lot of it is that girls are very cliquish. You have your same friends that you grew up with at school and although I don't see them all week, they're the girls that I would go out with... I would feel obliged to sit with them. ... So it seems that the school girls, the ones I went to school with, are the little clique of friends that you, well, it's sort of hard to get out of then. ... Like two of my friends are boys from out the next town, so they're sort of with that group that might come in, so you're sort of torn between two. ... But like, well, [a show] was one recently, and I knew none of my friends really wanted to go so I rang [another] girl I know... because I knew she would go. But I wouldn't go out with her, I would just sit and chat to her for awhile and then move on.

Karen uses some pretty powerful language to describe the ways in which she manages tension between loyalty to her immediate friendship group and those who fall outside the closed circle (e.g. friends she feels 'obliged to sit with'; a clique that is 'hard to get out of'; 'torn between two groups'). Rather than chalking these examples up to Karen's initial assertion that 'girls are just more cliquish', I argue that the development

and nature of such friendships needs to be approached and understood in relation to the “specific micro and macro-political contexts which give them meaning and emotional intensity” (Frith 2004:358). In the rural context in particular, this requires being attentive the ways in which the broader social and cultural landscape (i.e. a dominant pub and football culture) impacts on one’s ability to develop and maintain friendships and socio-spatial networks. Amid Karen’s account, we hear that it is precisely *because* she never gets to see her friends – “because they only come home on the weekend or because they don’t go out, maybe only on the weekend” – that she ‘feels obliged to sit with them’.

In the ethnographic account below, anthropologist Adrian Peace (1992:176) links the lack of public space available to women in a rural fishing village in the west of Ireland to the female tendency towards establishing ‘confidantes’.

But while their husbands are able to engage in varied avoidance and distancing strategies under such circumstances, either by going out to sea or retiring to a village bar, women with their many responsibilities are unable to do so. Put simply, women have no extra-household milieu to which they can turn if they wish to put distance between themselves and the accumulating tensions of the pier. Instead, their characteristic response is to forge, and then to rely heavily upon, close friendships with one or two fellow pier residents. Whilst it is rarely the case for fishermen to exhibit special dyadic associations ... – their wives form special enduring attachments which effectively become relations between confidantes. Whether based on friendships from school days, developed specifically in Clontarf, or rooted in siblingship or cousinhood, it is in such bonds that fishermen’s wives find the resources to negotiate with the intensity of their micro-social world (Peace 1992:176).

Peace identifies the tight-knit female friendship group as a key social resource for women in the rural. Placing female friendship groups and social relations and interactions within the spatial aspects of local and larger power relations and structures challenges taken for granted assumptions concerning the ‘naturalness’ of girls’ ‘cliquishness’, and demonstrates instead perhaps a strategy for negotiating with the patriarchal nature of rural space and place.

In this way, social relations and networks are a key cultural resource for both young men and women, but their production, maintenance and meaning differ due to the ways in which they are (spatially) enabled and impacted upon in the rural landscape. A critical point to take from this is that space and place are fundamentally constructed out of social relations. Doreen Massey (1994:179) contends that “spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood”. Thus spaces affect and are affected by social relations. What is at play here then is the co-constitution of both spatialities and (gender) identities and relations (McDowell 1999). Here I have demonstrated not only how space is socially constructed, but also how the social is, crucially, spatially constructed (see Massey 1994:254; see also chapter five). As part of this effort, I have demonstrated the significance of sport, as a highly gendered social practice, in both the construction of space and place and local gender identities and social relations in the rural Irish landscape. And since, as Massey (1994:22) makes clear, “social relations are bearers of power what is at issue is a geography of power relations in which spatial form is an important element in the constitution of power itself”. Young people’s sense of place in rural society depends in part on the different ways in which their social relations and practices are not only situated (i.e. visible) in the local landscape, but also recognized as valuable in the local landscape. Fundamental to understanding gender differences in young people’s sense of place in the rural Irish landscape is understanding the values and capitals they embody as gendered and classed subjects. In concluding this chapter, I return once more to the significance of sport in shaping young people’s experience of place, and by implication, desire and decision to leave.

Concluding Remarks

In the article, *'The Same People in the Same Places?: Socio-Spatial Identities and Migration in Youth*, Gill Jones (1999) examines how young people define themselves in relation to the communities in which they live, and how this definition affects migration behavior. Jones (1999:19) contends that “belonging is not just a matter of individual choice, but also of community acceptance”. In this chapter I have argued that our understanding of rural gender identities, and feelings of belonging, acceptance and exclusion in rural space and place, can be enriched through closer attention to the relationship between the body, performativity and spatiality.

As part of this effort, I have demonstrated the ways in which participation in sport is an embodied and highly gendered form of capital. I have done this to show how young men and women are differentially positioned in relation to claims to status and space in the local landscape. Yet I have done so without essentializing male or female experience of the rural. As part of this effort, I have argued that young people’s friendship groups, notably the tight-knit female friendship group, should not be approached or understood outside of their social, cultural or spatial context. This includes being mindful of the spatial aspects of power and social relations in the rural landscape.

In closing, I return to the role of the GAA in rural Ireland. In a recent *Irish Times* article, O’Brien (2009) notes that “good members of the GAA... have honour, dignity and respect”. Below, Jimmy adds to this list a more substantive capital associated with finding employment in a shifting economic landscape where work opportunities are in short supply.

Jimmy, age 23: The [football] clubs look after the teams very well. Like if you play Gaelic and if you’re any good and you can’t find work, they’ll get you

work somewhere, to try and get you to stay about. They try a wild lot to do that, to get the younger people to stay about.

Jimmy highlights the ways in which being good at football can act as a social, cultural and economic resource while also acting as a barrier to migration. Here we begin to bridge the gap between a discussion on gender, power and place – particularly the different ways in which young men and women are visible and valued in the local landscape – and gender, place and migration. This is the focus of chapter seven which discusses the social influences, expectations and constraints shaping young people's migration choices.

'What Keeps Me Here': Gender, Capital and Constraint

Ms. Gallagher: I think it's just an automatic thing when you leave school, "Where are you going?" you know. ... "Where are you going?" You have to go somewhere.

Rural youth studies identify migration as a necessary "strategy for self-betterment" (Elder et al. 1996:41), one linked closely to academic advancement and social mobility. Social mobility, posits Icelandic youth researchers Bjarnason and Thorlindsson (2006), may presuppose geographic mobility. To 'get on', you 'get out' (Green 1999:43) or so the saying goes. Summarizing the moral judgments underpinning dominant discourse on migration and mobility, Morley (2000) contends that "immobility increasingly acquires the connotation of defeat, of failure, or of being left behind, of being fixed in place" (cited in Skeggs 2004:112). Skeggs (2004:112) similarly notes that a "way to signify unmodernity is through spatial fixity, through not being mobile". You have to go *somewhere*, is how Ms. Gallagher put it above. Where is somewhere, one might ask? According to at least one young man from the locality, it's "anywhere but here, really".

What all of the above evaluations and axioms share in common is the tendency to lump non-migrants (or 'stayers') together into a homogenized group of 'underachievers'. Thomas, age 22, made this point well when he acknowledged that "it's not really fair to say, but the people that have stayed, they're not going no where, they're working in dead end jobs... a few of them are on the dole even".

Given widespread and well-documented gender disparities in the social and spatial mobility of rural youth (see Hamilton and Seyfrit 1994; Hamilton et al. 1996; Bjarnason and Thorlindsson 2006; Bock 2006; Corbett 2007; Glendinning et al. 2003;

Haugen and Villa 2006; Ni Laoire 1999), it is often the boys that are flagged as ‘failures’ by way of fixity. This is evidenced in part in Sara’s (age 20) assessment of ‘sameness’ which relies on metaphors of direction and hints at the entanglement of fixity and failure: “I wouldn’t say there’s a shortage of [guys] or anything around here, but they’re all the same... They are really all the same, there’s no real difference... They’re all kind of going the same way”.

More generally, local males were identified as more fond of staying than their female counterparts. This attachment to home however was often enveloped in the inference that males were more parochial than females, even a bit ‘unknowing’. As Norah (age 24) surmised: “I think at that age girls know there’s a lot more out there than there is here, and guys will just make do with whatever is here”. One school teacher described it as ‘shyness’: “Funny, I think it’s the girls that are more compelled to leave. I think for some reason some of the guys would be shy or something”. Patricia put it somewhat differently.

Patricia, age 24: I think a lot of the boys, the problem is they’ve never left so they don’t actually realize what’s out there. Because even when a couple of the boys would come up to me the odd time at college...they’re like, ‘This is the best thing ever!’ and I’m kind of like, ‘Boys if youse just went to college you’d have this every day of the week’... They’d be... going, ‘Oh my god, you don’t get this anywhere else in the world’ and I’m like, ‘You get this in every bloody town that there’s a college’. ... They don’t seem to realize, you know.

For Patricia (as well as Norah above), it’s not simply a matter of her male peers not “realiz[ing] what’s out there”. It’s that they don’t seem to want to. Patricia continued: “Like even when I talk about traveling with the boys, they’re kind of like, ‘No, I would have no interest’. In seeing the world. They’re happy to stay at home”.

This rather ‘naïve’ or ‘unknowing’ contentment with life at home further works to locate young males, to fix them in place. Paired with Norah’s comments above, these responses also, I argue, elucidate the privileges afforded young males in the rural Irish landscape. I will return to this argument later on in the chapter.

Chapter Objectives and Arguments

October 3, 2007 (excerpt from fieldnotes)

‘Something Fishy’ was a competition held between primary schools in the region. Organized jointly by the Northern Regional Fisheries Board and the Donegal Education Centre, it was designed to teach students about the importance of fishing to their communities. Three out of the six schools to participate in the competition showed up to present their projects in Donegal Town today and thankfully one of those in attendance snatched the first place prize... Killybegs prevails! Most of the presentations focused on what the kids had learned during field trips to fish farms, fish factories and fishing vessels. Some of the students wrote poems and songs about fish and fishing. Steven, a young boy from Killybegs, reported on a trip aboard his uncles’ fishing vessel. After their presentation I went over to congratulate the students from Killybegs and asked: “Well, do any of you want to be fishermen when you get older?” The girls of the group, smiling, shook their heads no. Straight faced, young Steven quickly answered, “Well, I suppose I don’t really have a choice in the matter”.

In this chapter I interrogate the stigma of staying through a gendered and classed analysis of the opportunities, commitments and constraints underpinning young people’s migration decisions. My fundamental aim in this chapter is to promote a better understanding of gender disparities in the social and spatial mobility of rural youth through consideration of how resources and responsibilities in rural households and communities are gendered (and classed), and by implication, unequally distributed and differentially valued. In short, this chapter highlights the ways in which young people’s perceptions and experiences of staying on and leaving are shaped by subjectivities of gender and social-class. As part of this effort, I demonstrate how discourse on migration

which devalues staying represents at best “partial perspectives and particular interests” (Skeggs 2004:44).

Within this over-arching agenda, I move through two distinct though inter-related arguments. For one, I argue that local youth, like young Steven in the story above, are differentially oriented towards staying and leaving due in part to gendered patterns of family (and community) obligation and opportunity. Here I confront individualization theories which suggest that individuals in ‘late modernity’ are ‘freed’ from traditional commitments and constraints (related to family and community ties) (Beck 1992). Beck (1992:203) argues that, although once a ‘community of need’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002:85), within the family there is no longer a “given set of obligations and opportunities”. More generally, individualization theories propose that in these ‘new times’ the family has become an ‘elective relationship’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002:97) and the self a ‘reflexive project’ for which the individual is responsible (Giddens 1991:75). We are, Beck (1992) contends, ‘forced to choose’.

Each person’s biography is removed from given determinations and placed in his or her own hands. ... Decisions on education, profession, job, place of residence... must be made (Beck 1992:135).

Throughout this chapter I comment on themes and theories of individualization through careful consideration of the social and cultural contexts of young people’s migration decision-making processes. Put simply, I take issue with the circumstance of choice.

The word *choice*, argues Currie et al. (2009:xvii), tends to be equated with entirely self-generated and intentional actions. The authors continue:

The common understanding of the word *choice* tends to mask the circumstances under which people make decisions; particular material conditions, cultural practices and social networks influence individuals and shape their decision-making. The word *choice* does not draw attention to the fact that the most powerful and privileged people command a broader range of choices than those less advantaged.

Here I contextualize choice and demonstrate the inter-dependent nature of young people's migration decision-making processes. I argue that youth and migration studies need to approach young people as members of social groups rather than 'atomized individuals' (Pilkington 2007:378; see for example Willis 1981).

Secondly, and related to the above, I argue that rural researchers can not fully understand gender disparities in rural youth emigration without reference to young people's educational choices and experiences. Important to this point is a call for the careful and crucial inscription of subjectivities of social-class onto discussions of gender and education (see Reay 2001, 2005). My aim here is to build upon arguments which problematize polarizing debates surrounding boys' seemingly universal underperformance in school, and by contrast, girls' unequivocal success (Walkerdine et al. 2001; see also Lucey and Walkerdine 1999). This will be dealt with in more detail below.

Gender, Academic Achievement and Out-Migration

Erin, age 22: You know, I honestly think the reason people stay around here is the education thing. You know, anybody of our age group that stays around here, they just have no interest in education. So it was [their] choice to stay.

Ryan age 27: When my Leaving Cert was on the World Cup was on... And I would run into the school, do my test, and run home to watch the football on the TV. That's how interested I was in my Leaving Cert.

Erin is right... sort of. Many so-called 'stayers', like Ryan above, 'have no interest in education' in that they have neither acquired, nor attempted to acquire, third-level education qualifications. But Erin's understanding of 'choice' denies or obscures the 'limits of choice' (Reay and Lucey 2003). The enduring significance of class-related

family norms, values and resources in shaping young people's education and migration opportunities and choices is well-documented (Reay 1998, 2005; Stockdale 2002; Crompton 2006; Green and White 2007). Below, Tony elaborates on the importance of perceived family obligations among his peers at school. In doing so, he offers up a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which local youth are differentially positioned in relation to education, migration and work opportunities.

Tony, age 19: I think any of the lads that are out fishing, I think their fathers have fished, so they feel like they have to as well. ... It's actually kind of sad you know because I know some lads that [went fishing], and they were so clever like, so intelligent. They just weren't given the opportunity. They kind of knew [what] they were going to do so there was no point in doing anything at school. ... They kind of already knew what they were going to do.

Tony identifies gender roles and responsibilities within the context of the family as not only limiting the perceived opportunities of his peers at school, but also reducing their ambitions (see Green and White 2007). His reference to there being 'no point' in academic achievement for some of his male peers speaks to the ways in which young people's choices are refracted (and constrained) through family expectations and other forms of encouragement. This invites a more in-depth discussion on the ways in which young people's migration choices and trajectories are differentially shaped by family patterns of obligation and responsibility. This will be returned to later on in the chapter. For now, I want to use this example to open up discussion on the relationship between gender and education.

The relationship between femininity and education is well-documented and has been cited as a key factor in female-dominated rural out-migration as well as debates surrounding boys' underachievement in school. Mac an Ghail (1994) for example notes that boys' underperformance in school is typically understood in the context of the

effeminate nature of school learning, which can be seen as a threat to masculinity (see also Jackson 1998; Willis 1981). Walkerdine (2003) raises another intriguing point germane to the above debate. That is, the relative position of working-class men and women in the new economy. Perhaps young men are going ‘no where’ (to borrow Thomas’ words from earlier) because there is no where for them to go in an “economy that values flexibility, keyboard proficiency, telephone communication skills and personal presentation” (Nayak 2000:41). The effeminate nature of school learning, paired with the feminization of work and work skills (notably the widespread replacement of a ‘masculine’ manufacturing base with a ‘feminine’ service sector (Nayak 2008; Mahoney 1998:49; Skeggs 2004:74; Walkerdine et al. 2001), gives rise to the feminization of upward mobility. “Upward mobility, argues Walkerdine (2003:238), is defined through qualities ascribed to femininity”.

At the same time, what must also be remembered is the ways in which the rural social and economic environment affords males, and particularly working-class males, greater opportunities and advantages than their female counterparts to ‘become somebody’, to ‘make something of themselves’ and be recognized as ‘valuable’ (see also chapter six). Steph Lawler (1999:12) reminds us that there is “no female equivalent of the heroic tale of the working-class boy made good”. This is evidenced anecdotally in a faculty members’ explication that “boys could stay on and do apprenticeships while the majority of girls who stay on would be the underachievers”.

School survey results suggest that males are more likely than females to feel that ‘moving away from here is not important’ (see Table D.11 in Appendix D). Nearly 40 percent of males (20 out of 51) but only 25 percent of females (15 out of 58) chose ‘Not

Important’ (versus ‘Important’ or ‘Very Important’) in response to the survey question: ‘I think moving away from here is...’ (see Table D.11). Regarding the survey question which began with: ‘I would prefer to...’ young people were presented with the choices of ‘stay here’ – ‘leave but eventually return’ – and ‘leave and not come back’. Sixty percent of respondents (67 out of 110) chose ‘leave but eventually return’ (see Table D.12 in Appendix D). Only 11 respondents (10 percent) chose ‘stay here’ and all were male (see Table D.12).

Females were also more likely than males to indicate that ‘going to University is very important to me’ (see Table D.13 in Appendix D). Roughly 90 percent of females (52 out of 58) and 70 percent of males (36 out of 52) agreed with the survey statement: ‘Going to University is very important to me’ (see Table D.13). This parallels results from the survey question: ‘My parents encourage me to attend University’ and will be discussed below (see Table D.14 in Appendix D). In short, the gendered (though shifting) nature of work opportunities in the local landscape acts as a sort of ‘safety net’ for young men, making educational qualifications (and emigration) more of a ‘necessity’ for females.

Mr. Murrin: I definitely think girls take [school] more seriously... The girls tend to be more ambitious when it comes to the Leaving Cert. And that may go back to what they perceive is available to them here. It may be a necessity, to be more ambitious.

Erin, age 22: Well, like in our year anyway, girls were more interested in college than boys were... I know that might sound biased, but seriously, they were.

Ryan age 27: Girls put more stress on themselves than the fellas. Girls really stress out over exams. But the boys that I went to school with, we didn’t. There might have been five or six of them that might have been really tuned in and got their points and knew what they wanted to do, but the rest of us, it’s like everything, when you’re doing your Leaving Cert you want to just get it done and get away to college and see the college life. It didn’t stress me out.

To be clear, Ryan's interest in getting away to 'see the college life' lasted less than a week. He 'just didn't like it' and like many of his male peers, including Thomas and his friends below, subsequently returned home to resume work in a local factory.

Thomas, age 22: Five of us went at the one time, four of us were gone by Christmas time. There wasn't much work done. ... And then I came home and went back into the factory.

From racing home to see the World Cup during exam week to his short stint at college, Ryan's life story embodies recent debates on boys' underachievement in school. More generally though, the above examples remind us that young people's individual motivations, experiences and decisions surrounding higher education and migration are by no means uniform or necessarily goal-oriented or career-based. Further to this, they upset the notion that young people are "perfectly rational decision-making atoms" (Moch 1992:16), emphasizing instead the import of situating young people's experiences and decisions socially, particularly within the peer group. Mr. McIntyre speaks more to this below.

Mr. McIntyre: There is a huge number of people going off because everybody else is going, and then they're dropping out very, very early. They seem to drop off right after Christmas of the first year. ... You'll find that, for example, groups of footballers will go one direction. ... You'll find the same is true of the schools' musicians... They get into a group and they are inclined to go off as a group to a particular college because... probably the strongest personality of the group decided on it, and then they all followed suit. ... Especially the people that are in anyway undecided about their careers, you'll find they'll be dragged along by what somebody else is doing in the group. ... I'd say they just don't want to be left behind. ... So they go, but sure, invariably they're back in a few months.

Mr. McIntyre locates the peer group at the heart of young people's migration perspectives and plans. In doing so, he as well as others below, highlights the inter-dependent nature of young people's migration and education decision-making processes. Karen for

instance, seems to be one of the undecided students Mr. McIntyre pinpoints as ‘following suit’.

Karen, age 26: See that’s the other thing, I only picked the same subject as what my friends picked. I mean I love [history] and I never even picked it. ... [W]e were always together so we just picked the same subjects, we took what was supposed to be easy, like Home Economics.

Eric (age 27) also stressed the friendship group as a key factor in his perspectives and experiences of life at home: “I think it doesn’t really matter where you are in the world, it’s the friends you have around you. That makes all the difference. It’s a fundamental thing”. Below, Diane further emphasizes the import of the peer group in shaping her perspectives on life at home and leaving.

Diana, age 26: I never really thought about going away too much... a lot of my friends were always around so that’s why I kind of stayed around. ... I wouldn’t see the point in moving to Galway or Dublin or any of them places. Because you wouldn’t know anybody.

Although Diana and Karen are not among them, within Ireland, women are more likely than men to have third-level educational qualifications (see also McGrath and Canavan 2002). In 2007, 51 percent of women aged 25 to 34 had a third-level qualification compared to 38.7 percent of men in the same age group (CSO 2009). Men are also more likely to be early school leavers. The early school leavers rate among women aged 18 to 24 in 2007 was 8.7 percent, compared to a male rate of 14.2 percent (CSO 2009). What remains hidden within these numbers however is the significance of social-class in the migration and educational choices and trajectories of young women and men in Ireland. Several project participants talked around the subject of social-class divisions through the careful qualification that it was not simply males who were more

likely to stay on (and as a result, not pursue higher education qualifications), but rather a particular *type* of young male.

It's 'the Lads' Who Stay

Patricia, age 24: A lot of the boys that stay would have been like 'the lads' at school. And they wouldn't have been encouraged by teachers or that. I think a lot of the boys would see themselves as not being that intelligent in the sense that they would be fit for University or college...because a lot of the boys that do stay are the boys of the town like. ... They sort of weren't encouraged at school.

Patricia is right as well... sort of. Focusing on the ways in which the school is an institution far removed from the values of working-class life, Diane Reay (2005:914) describes the workings of class within the educational system as central to the "fixing of failure in the working classes" (see also Ball 2003; Willis 1981; Walkerdine et al. 2001). In particular, Reay (2005:923) demonstrates the ways in which working-class youth lack 'emotional capital' (e.g. the emotional assets of confidence, security and entitlement) in relation to the field of higher education (see also Reay 1998, 2000). Reay's argument is reiterated by Patricia above in her account of 'the lads' at school, whom she describes as lacking in both encouragement and confidence.

Another key example of these processes at play is found in the expressed concern of the mother of a teenage boy (who was preparing to leave school, but was, in her words, "not for college"). It was in part-frustration that she recalled finding him wandering around town during the school day. When she called the school to inquire as to why her son was allowed to wander around the town when he should be in school, she was met with the straightforward response (which I suggest alludes to the variable expectations demanded of students which range from academic excellence to not making trouble):

“Sure, we know where he’s going. He’s doing no harm”. “They must think I’m a terrible mother”, she concluded.

Although 80 percent (89 out of 110) of school survey respondents agreed with the statement: My parents encourage me to attend University – including 88 percent (51 out of 58) of females and 73 percent (38 out of 52) of males (see Table D.13 in Appendix D) – interview materials indicate that parental support/encouragement in relation to young people’s educational choices requires a wide berth. In the excerpts below Nathan and Diana, both from working-class family backgrounds, respond to interview questions regarding whether their parents encouraged them to attend college.

Nathan, age 25: No, [my mother] never, it was like, ‘it’s up to yourself like. If you thought you could go to college and do it then do it but if not then it’s alright to drop out’, that’s kind of the way it was. We were never pushed to do anything like.

Diana, age 26: My parents never really, if they thought I was happy doing something, they would have been happy at that, like they would have encouraged me but they wouldn’t have pushed me too hard or anything.

Nathan and Diana both emphasize ‘not being pushed too hard’. Both further suggest that their parents prioritized ‘happiness’ over academic achievement (see Walkerdine et al. 2001). This is in contrast to Norah’s response to the same question.

Norah, age 24: You know, [college] was a done thing, I didn’t know any different to finish school and go to college. I didn’t even know that you have a choice not to. It was always, you go to school and you go to college.

Norah, who is from a middle-class family background, went onto describe her mother’s response to hearing that she was considering dropping out of college.

Norah, age 24: When I decided I was leaving [college] because I wanted to go work mom was like, ‘No bloody way, not a chance are you going off earning full wages because you’ll never go back’. So she made me [stay].

Walkerdine et al. (2001:134-5) argue that ‘happiness’ and ‘success’ are constituted differently for middle and working-class families; with middle-class definitions of happiness “incontrovertibly fused academic success” and working-class definitions “freed from worry and expectation” (see also Lucey and Walkerdine 1999:38; Willis 1981). This is an important point of reference for understanding the complex ways in which young people’s educational choices and trajectories are differentially shaped by parental expectation and support. For Norah, *not* going to college was not even a choice. It was assumed, it was certain. (It was also well funded through financial support from her parents).

In contrast, Nathan went onto describe his transition to and time at college in much less certain terms. His account below features feelings redolent of not being good enough and an overall lack of confidence, ability and direction in the field of higher education.

Nathan, age 25: It wasn’t for me. I wanted to go in and do [a subject] but I hadn’t the points, so [I did] the next one that was handy to get into... I suppose I just went because the rest of the lads were going. I should have never stayed there... I suppose I hadn’t the concentration at the time. It was more than that though. My head didn’t want to be in books like. I just knew it wasn’t for me.

Reay (2005:919) contends that “there is less risk for middle-class youth in the [educational] choice process... their resources of cultural, social and economic capital [alleviate] feelings of risk, fear, shame and guilt”. Crompton (2006:661) similarly argues that, in addition to economic resources, “class differentials in educational and occupational attainment [are] maintained via the unequal endowments of ‘cultural capital’ possessed by individuals in different classes, and largely acquired within the family”. Crompton’s (2006:661) attention to the ways in which “‘cultural capital’ is

transformed into ‘consecrated’ educational capital (Bourdieu 1977)” brings to light how some forms of capital (acquired within the family) engender social and spatial mobility, particularly in a rural context where academic advancement demands out-migration. But here we must also consider the ways in which capital is context-specific and how more localized currencies can work to spatially ensnare rural youth.

‘What Keeps Me Here’: Capital, Constraint and Choice

Paul, age 25: It was a given that I was leaving to go to college... And it was pretty much a given that I’d come home every weekend and play football.

As an excellent student and talented football player, Paul possesses a considerable amount of ‘conflicting’ cultural capital. From the excerpt above, it appears that Paul has successfully negotiated his educational goals with his commitment to the local football club, but his remarks highlight the need to consider how “community oriented values, investments and identities may militate against social and geographic mobility”

(Thomson et al. 2003:38). Thomson et al. (2003:37) convincingly argue that:

It is through the experience of competence in particular fields, and the recognition of this competence by others, that young people make investments of time, energy and identity that have significance for their trajectories... It is possible that young people who experience themselves as having little competence in education may invest more heavily in work, leisure and/or the domestic sphere.

The ‘investment’ young men make in the field of sport operates as a key resource in the local economy of value, but it is a socio-cultural competency that is “in tension with a more individualized project of social mobility” (Thomson et al. 2003:41). It is a positively figured and highly gendered barrier to spatial and social mobility.

Jimmy, age 23: The [football] clubs look after the teams very well. Like if you play Gaelic and if you’re any good and you can’t find work, they’ll get you work somewhere, to try and get you to stay about. They try a wild lot to do that, to get the younger people to stay about.

This is the kind of capital that ‘looks after you’ but it is also the kind of capital that can “act against processes of social mobility” (Thomson et al. 2002:36; see also Willis 1981; Connolly 1998; Green and White 2007). Excerpts below highlight the spatial and gendered dimensions of a key form of social and cultural capital in rural Ireland.

- Michael, age 26: I don’t know, there is a certain group of fellas, like the boys that like to play their football or Gaelic or whatever, [that’s] the kind of group that seems to want to stay.
- Ryan, age 27: I’m Killybegs. What keeps me here? Family for starters. And I am heavily involved in [sport] as well. So that’s one of the things that would keep me in the town, and make me not move away, because I am so involved in it.
- Caitriona, age 26: And then [my] brother ... He likes being about home because he’s involved heavily in sport... so I’d say he doesn’t really mind where he works as long as he’s close enough to home, as long as it’s not too far of a commute, because he still has a lot of ties in the area.

These excerpts help us to understand Sara’s earlier assessment of ‘sameness’ evident in the socio-spatial identities of her male peers. Parallel to the distinction Sara implicitly draws between quantity and quality, a common distinction made by young males in the community is not that there is a lack of young women in the community, but rather a lack of *available* young women.

- Ryan, age 27: It’s not a good town for dating as you say... In my age group there’s not a lot of single women about. A lot of the girls that I went to school with are married.
- Paul, age 25: It could be a lack of women my age. Sorry, a lack of available women my age. That would be a better way of putting it.

As I will argue below, it was not by sheer coincidence that of the fourteen young women I joined for a night of dinner and drinking around the holiday season, only four had stayed on in the community. The rest were home only for the holidays. Three out of these four so-called ‘stayers’ were settled with partners and young children at home.

They were the only mothers of the lot. Indeed, a key difference between the ‘type’ of guy who stays and his female counterpart – who Patricia describes as the ‘regular Killybegs girl’ – can be found in differential reference to ‘settling down’.

Patricia, age 24: The regular Killybegs girl that doesn’t leave, to go to another country or go to college or whatever, ends up marrying the kind of fella she’s been with since she was sixteen or seventeen.

The topic of relationship status and ‘settling down’ rarely if ever surfaced in interviews with or about the life-paths or migration decisions of young males. For young female participants however, settling down and starting a family early on served to be a salient factor in descriptions of female ‘stayers’.

‘Getting Stuck’ or Settling Down?

So crucial is ‘getting out’ that some female participants suggested they would not consider dating locally for fear of ‘getting stuck’ in the town. Below, Norah (from a middle-class family background) responds to the question: Do you think it would be difficult to date or find a marriage partner here?

Norah, age 24: I don’t know because I’m not necessarily looking for anything. I wouldn’t try because I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to settle here. I don’t want to find somebody here because I’m going away and I’m not going to be living here and that would just make it all the more complicated. ... That’s why I’ve never even thought about looking for a guy here, because I know I’m going away again. There’s no point.

Additionally, Norah was certainly referring to her child-bearing capabilities when she said: “Well, I know that my mom told me, and I know Bridget’s mom told her the same, ‘Don’t do anything in your twenties that you can do in your thirties’”. In stark contrast to her own mothers’ advice, Norah went onto describe the importance of marriage and motherhood to a female co-worker.

Norah, age 24: She's kicking herself, she's eighteen, she was engaged and they split up... and she was heart broken. And I was like, "You're eighteen". And she was like, "I know, what am I going to do, you know, I should be having my first baby already". That's her goal in life, to get married and have children. That's what her parents push for, you know.

The difference in the age at which working and middle-class women begin to bear children is well-documented (see Lee et al. 2004; Crompton 2006; Aria 2003; McRobbie 2000; see also Kelly 1994). Class-related material and cultural factors have been identified as central to this age gap (Duncan and Edwards 1999 cited in Crompton 2006; see also Aria 2003; Kelly 1994). In her seminal research with working-class girls in England, McRobbie (2000:163) describes pregnancy as "recognized as a sign of maturity – indeed it was the only sign of maturity to which they could legitimately aspire" (see also Kelly 1994). McRobbie (2000:168) continues:

Most working class women and black women have their first baby in their early 20s. It is anomalous and atypical to put off motherhood in the way white middle class women are now doing, often well into their late 30s. It is their class privilege which allows them this prevarication since, for most women, having a baby relatively young is a test and a sign of their adult femininity. For white working class women, fertility is part of the marriage bargain.

Commenting on the 'unproductive' nature of class privilege in *Growing Up Girl*, Walkerdine et al. (2001:195) argue that "the regulation of feminine sexuality for middle-class girls has to be understood as part of a wider regulation of their achievement and academic success. Nothing is allowed to obstruct the academic path – certainly not motherhood, which is seen as the ultimate failure, to be avoided at all costs". Melissa's comments below reinforce this argument through her tendency to relate pregnancy to 'getting stuck' in the town.

Melissa, age 23: Well, I suppose the other thing you can't really ignore is girls get pregnant and fellas don't. ... I think that is a big thing with girls my age that I grew up with. You really didn't want to get caught by that you

know. If you get pregnant around that age and you're in Killybegs, that's you stuck, in situ, for I don't know how many years.

As a recent college graduate who currently lives in an urban centre, Melissa makes clear how disruptive early pregnancy would be to her life-path. In contrast to Melissa's sentiments of getting 'stuck' (and the central part that early pregnancy plays in this entrapment), research by Reay (2005), Walkerdine et al. (2001) and others evidences the emotional turmoil felt by young working-class women as a result of academic success which can entail "identity rupture, the transformation of self and a move away from family and community" (Nayak 2000:60). Drawing largely on the work of Walkerdine et al. (2001), Nayak (2000:60) recaps:

Working class girls bear the emotional cost of becoming bourgeois subjects in the form of pain, loss and fragmentation. From the perspective of working class young women, early pregnancy may be an attempt to resolve some of the contradictions involved in the transition to adult womanhood. Becoming a mother disrupts the educational process while affording young women a particular role and status in the community

Attentive to the 'costs' of 'success', Thomson et al. (2002:41) argue that for some young people 'more limited horizons' may be understood in terms of more 'happiness'. This is an important frame of reference for understanding Norah's comments below on 'two completely different wants'.

Norah, age 24: The likes of my friends that never left Killybegs, even for anything, in my mind it was that they failed to leave. But now I'm like, no, that's what they wanted. As much as I wanted to leave, they wanted to stay. But I just couldn't see why. Why? You know. But now you look at them and they're still happy, they got what they wanted, they're settled, they're done. It's just two completely different wants. I want to go travel, live, party and not even think about babies for at least fifteen years...

Norah's above commentary may do little to reveal the unequal and often unseen structural underpinnings of such 'two completely different wants', but her account does

speak to the differential regulation of adult femininity by working and middle class young women. Norah's biography (e.g. 'to travel, live, party') affects a cosmopolitanism and consumerism emblematic of the emergence of 'new femininities', notably the 'new girl order' identified by Nayak (2000:183) as a "Western neo-liberal construct designed around individual opportunity, personal makeovers and the reflexive production of self". Meanwhile, Norah's understanding of her peers' desire to not only stay on but be 'settled', paired with Ryan and Paul's above quips on a lack of available young women in town, signifies perhaps the investment that some young women make in 'respectable' femininity (McRobbie 2000:163; see also Kelly 1994).

Thus far I have tried to show how the dominant discourse on migration, the so-called 'stigma of staying', might best be understood as a moral evaluation of the working-class, specifically those whose interests, opportunities and access to resources deviate from a standard set by middle-class practices, values and norms (Walkerdine et. al 2001:115; see Skeggs 2004; McRobbie 2000:171; Willis 1981). But I am not suggesting that all working-class young females stay on and settle down early on or that all working-class males prioritize football over education. Nor am I implying that all middle-class youth emigrate and enjoy educational success. What I am arguing instead is that studies on rural youth emigration be mindful of the ways in which young people's migration and education decisions are influenced by class 'cultures of family' (Crompton 2006). This includes being mindful of the ways in which resources in the rural are gendered and classed and therefore unequally distributed and differentially valued.

For example, it was during the early stages of fieldwork when a social contact offered up a list of at least a dozen potential research participants; all of which were

young people currently living and working in Killybegs, ostensible ‘stayers’. When I inquired more about the particular backgrounds and work situations of the potential participants I was even more surprised to learn that the majority of those listed were the sons and daughters of the wealthiest families in Killybegs. My subsequent questioning as to why those with the greatest economic resources were still living in the locality ‘when they could go anywhere’ was countered with: “But sure, these guys live in big fancy houses and drive BMWs and Mercs, what do they need college for?”

That ‘stayers’ comprise the sons and daughters of the wealthiest families in the locality gives added weight to Beverly Skeggs’ (2004:50) critical suggestion that perhaps it is more a “matter of access to resources and resourcefulness than mobility that is the issue”. These young people are the select few who find in staying the guarantee of a good job and certain standard of living. That some stand to inherit ‘empires’ does not go unmentioned by the wider community. For those insulated by family income staying comprises an entirely different set of experiences and opportunities; including a ‘worry-free’ work life and frequent holidays.

Ryan, age 27: You see they’re financially secure so they have no worries. They can sit about home and go on their holidays when they want and see the world whenever they want. They don’t have to move away just for work.

Patrick, age 26: It’s grand for me because I have a good job. I have loads of time off... I have a house built... I’m away nearly every weekend. I can go on holidays wherever I want... But see somebody that’s here like Monday through Friday, 9 to 5, I don’t think, I know that if I wasn’t [where I am] I wouldn’t be here.

Although their privileged position in the community renders them largely immune to the standard stigma of staying, it would be wrong to assume that these ‘stayers’ are not also being judged by their peers, albeit by a different set of valuations redolent of class antagonisms (see Skeggs 2004:40).

Ruth, age 31: Some of the families that have a lot of money... would like to keep a close eye on them. ... Like they don't have their own independence. But... they don't have to worry about their own independence because they know they'll always have money there. They'll always have somebody. Like if they fall, their mom and dad is coming up behind them to pick them up.

My point here is that stayers, be they well-off 'heirs', self-proclaimed 'homebirds' or so-called 'underachievers' have myriad motivations for and experiences of staying on, as well as their own definitions and values of what it *means* to stay on, and these are not always represented in dominant discourse.

Certainly all project participants spoke the language of individual choice, but interview questions related to young people's migration decisions revealed the inter-dependent nature of what is too often understood to be a wholly individual decision. Although the multi-layered contexts of the peer group, school and wider community are central to a discussion on the social nature of young people's migration decisions, here I want to focus on the family, particularly the ways in which relationships and variable forms of family dependency, reciprocity, obligation and expectation influence young individuals and shape migration choices, patterns and experiences.

Gendered Geographies of Responsibility and Reciprocity

In addition to football examples mentioned above, young males emphasized socio-cultural aspects related to the importance of family patterns of obligation and responsibility. Males were more likely than females to describe instances of being asked, encouraged or implicitly expected to stay on and/or return.

Frank, age 30: I had a job actually lined up [elsewhere], and [my father] asked me, 'Well, would you try it out at home for awhile first?' So that's what I did. And I'm kind of here ever since.

Like Frank above, Eric also works in his family's business. He described it as something he always knew he would do. A given. As a teenager Eric chose his school subjects and subsequent college courses to complement an older family members' qualifications so that "it's more rounded for the family business". Although this ultimately meant repeating a year in school (in order to sit exams in different subjects), Eric maintained: "That was my decision. I would have instigated that. I would have thought that was necessary".

Eric, age 27: I was doing [subjects] which would be ideal for the work I'm doing, the only thing is [he] done that already. So it wasn't beneficial for the two of us to be doing the exact same thing.

Neither Frank nor Eric expressed any degree of difficulty or regret in the decision to return home to take on the responsibility of the family business. Frank described being asked by his father to return home as a situation which "suits me... and I'm sure it suits my father". As well, there is a sense of family loyalty underpinning Eric's emphasis on the independent nature of his decision. Additionally, although Beth initially suggested that her parents encouraged her and her siblings to "go off and do your own thing... don't be worrying about what's happening at home". Upon further questioning as to whether her brothers might have been encouraged to take over the family business (compelled by the fact that they had done so), Beth clarified:

Beth, age 25: Well, I would say, yeah, kind of, because they [my parents] would have built that place up and they would have wanted the boys to carry it on and keep the thing running. But I would say to be honest, they [my brothers] were happy enough to do it because they're obviously making a nice life out of it, right.

This is not to say that local young women do not also work in their respective family businesses. Daughters of some of the wealthiest families in the locality have

stayed on and are considered by many to be well-positioned in the local labor market:

“Well, people always say its who you know, but I think that means if your daddy owns a big boat then you’ll get a job”. Some of these young women have taken up work in the (onshore) side of the family business, often clerical or administrative work. Others, backed by family capital, have started and/or bought other businesses in the locality (e.g. bars, restaurants, shops). What I want to emphasize here is the fact that young women’s accounts of working in and for the family business did not engender comment on being asked, encouraged or expected to return and/or stay.

Alexis, age 28: I never really made a conscious decision to come back and work here. It’s something that just sort of happened... I knew I could walk into a job and make pretty good money straight away and then I just sort of never left, so it wasn’t a conscious decision. It just happened.

One of Alexis’ parents actually mentioned to me that they were surprised (quite pleasantly) when she decided to return home to work in the business. In short, there is an absence of examples of young women staying on and/or returning due to parental expectation or encouragement related to their role or responsibility in the family business. As Mr. Murrin indicates below, “You hand on the place to the boy” (see also Beth’s comments above).

Mr. Murrin: There’s also the thing of handing on the farm. Somebody is going to be left it. And I don’t know how you define this, but you know, this is my home, this is where I grew up, this is where I worked, so I think more boys would be inclined to wait, or would feel that, maybe I might go away for awhile but I’ll come back. Than the girls. And maybe that’s because of the traditional you hand on the place to the boy, to the son.

Mr. Murrin’s account implies not only a highly gendered geography of identity and attachment to place. It elucidates the ways in which gendered aspects of responsibility and obligation within the family shape youth migration expectations and

patterns in rural Ireland (see also Ni Laoire, 2001; 2002; 2005). Said differently, perceived family obligations and commitments can be identified as an important factor which differentially influences the migration choices of rural young men and women.

This is not to say that some young men and women did not cite family pulls felt beyond the parameters of one's place in the family business. Steven and Hughie both cited their place in the family as the youngest child as one factor influencing their migration decisions.

Jimmy, age 23: That's kind of mainly why I didn't really go [away], because I was the only one left. I was the last one. I mean my siblings are all married and moved away and [my parents] were kind of just humming and hawing over it... but then I decided to stay because I got [a] job here like. You see its wild hard to get a full-time job around this place. It's nearly impossible like.

Pete, age 19: You see, because I'm the youngest of the family, if I go off somewhere, they're very cautious, you know... so they want me to go but at the same time they don't because I'm the youngest of the family. Because I'm all they have left now at home, if I leave now, they'll have nobody.

Others also cited the pull of the family as a factor influencing their migration decisions.

Ruth for instance expressed a sense of obligation to an aging parent as one factor (along with having a car and a 'good enough' job) influencing her decision to stay on in the community.

Ruth, age 31: I would love to go [away] for a year but I can't see it happening, not now. Like my mom is [getting older] now... Not that she's holding me back, but now, you know, I have a car, a good enough job, do you know what I mean. ... It's companionship too for mom. And she's very good to me, it's not just that I'm good to her. She would do a lot for me as well.

In another case, a local young woman was described to me as being 'pressured' by family members to return home to care for her parents. The young woman was from a large family and the only member of her family currently living away from the community. It

was her schoolmate who relayed the story to me. I recorded her account in my field notes as follows:

Aisling was feeling all sorts of guilt and pressure from her siblings to come home and take care of her [parents]. Aisling is the only one that isn't married or settled so they figured, 'You're not doing anything anyways, you should be home taking care of them'... But eventually it really started getting to her, so she came home...

Never mind the implicit assumption that Aisling's status as unsettled meant that she wasn't 'doing anything anyways', it is worth noting that in the case of both her and Ruth above, the family situation and/or pressure underlying their decision to stay and/or return is couched more in the realm of 'caring responsibilities' associated with the private sphere and unpaid work. This particular family pull or felt responsibility was absent in accounts put forth by young men, including both Jimmy and Pete above. Though partial, this evidence raises the broader question of how family and household responsibilities and obligations within the public and private sphere (i.e. of paid and unpaid work) are divided along the lines of gender. This is of particular interest given the increasing tendency among contemporary youth to remain in the parental home, sometimes on into their late twenties. Eighteen of the young people (aged 19 to 31) interviewed for this study were living in their parental home at the time of fieldwork (four moved out over the course of fieldwork).

Beth actually drew on the example of domestic tasks to demonstrate the ways in which local young men were less 'independent' than their female peers: "I don't know, maybe it's just my perception but I just think women are more independent and know how to look after themselves, you know, like use a dishwasher, washing machine, you know what I mean, but maybe that's a bit biased". Beth made this comment during a conversation about the number of young people in the locality living with their parents on

into their late twenties and thirties. (She suggested that more men than women fell into this category for the above reasons). The assumption underlying this statement is that someone else is caring for these young men, rather than vice versa. This brings us back to the topic of women's roles in the home (see chapter four), albeit in a slightly different context, that is, not as wives and mothers, but as daughters and sisters who, like their brothers, also work outside the home. Gender role assumptions and expectations surrounding the division of household labor deserves more attention than can be given here. This is particularly so given how the unequal distribution of domestic tasks differentially burdens and/or benefits (working and middle-class) sons and daughters and in turn, influences their decisions to migrate. This gendered distribution of work within the private sphere is less visible though no less significant to understanding gender disparities in young people's decisions and desires to leave rural life behind, idyllic or otherwise. More generally though, these excerpts illustrate the myriad ways in which young people can feel compelled to stay and/or return. Equally so, they reveal the multiple factors underlying young people's migration decisions.

Migration: Exile, Opportunity, Identity?

Although it is difficult if not impossible to unravel parental preference from personal choice in some of the above excerpts, Eric's attitude towards home and migration is clear.

Eric, age 27: Number one. I think nobody wants to leave. Nobody ever wants to leave. ... If there was work for everyone here, they would like to stay.

Eric's sentiments were reinforced by other male participants as well. Patrick (age 26) subscribed to a 'migration-as-exile' discourse (see Ni Laoire 1999) when he chatted

youth emigration up to “employment, it’s 100 percent employment”. Danny also framed his friends’ recent travels to Australia in similar fashion.

Danny, age 27: Half the town has left. My best friend is gone. He went to Australia. He’s gone over a year and a half now. [Others] followed him... I hadn’t seen my best friend since June, it was June since I had seen him. And it was Christmas then before I seen him again.

Finally, Ryan (age 27) conveyed a sense of reluctance in the new and seemingly imposed opportunity to travel.

Ryan, age 27: There’s nothing in Killybegs at the minute to keep us here. ... Eventually Killybegs will come back around, it will get strong again... but it will take years. So I’ve told all them young boys that play football, I said, if youse have any ideas of traveling, do it now because there is nothing here to hold you now. That’s the way I’m starting to see it as well, there’s not a lot here to keep us anymore.

Even though Ryan’s comments suggest that young men are now becoming more interested in ‘seeing what’s out there’ (several young men (and a few young women) from the community recently headed off to Australia (as a group) for a year-long working holiday), the opportunity or interest in doing so seems to hinge on what’s happening at home. Implicit and explicit in his advice to young footballers is a willingness if not desire to return home once local conditions improve.

What is important to note here is Eric’s subsequent qualification of the aforementioned ‘migration-as-exile’ discourse (see Ni Laoire 1999). For instance, Eric noted that, of the girls that stay on: “They’re just staying because they have to”. Indeed, several young women suggested that “they would live in Killybegs, just not now” (Erin, age 22). For many female participants, returning was simply out of the question until they were ‘ready to settle’ and/or retire. Young females tended to emphasize “seeing

what's out there" as an important factor influencing whether or not they would eventually (want to) settle down in Killybegs.

Alexis age 28: I went traveling after my studies as well... so I sort of got it out of my system. If I hadn't have done that I don't think I would have settled in Killybegs. It's important to see what's out there.

Erin, age 22: Like if I wanted to move back to Killybegs I'd want to live in the city first for awhile to make sure that I'm not making a mistake living in Killybegs. ... I would want to see other places, I just wouldn't say, yes I'm going to live in Killybegs

Theresa, age 21: I would want to be traveling and see other places. ... I think you need to leave to know if you want to come back and live here.

From these accounts, migration, whether permanent or provisional, is a subjective source of 'empowerment' (Ni Laoire 1999) which enables them to make the 'right' decision. Migration for these young women is about 'knowing'. It is about transformation. It is about identity (see also Ni Laoire 1999). Michael's comments below further suggest a tendency whereby leaving transforms if not modernizes local young women's identities, which can be problematic if and when they decide to return to Killybegs.

Michael, age 26: I do think that some times when women go away they come back as totally different people and seem to struggle more to blend in again in Killybegs. Whereas I don't think fellas change a whole lot.

Michael's comments in particular hint not only at the transformation, or 'reinvention of self', often invoked in processes of migration and upward mobility. They also, I argue, speak to a patriarchal privilege which allows young men to more easily fit back into rural life upon return. Perhaps young men fit more easily back into life at home because their identities and desires are not in tension with dominant ideologies and the (patriarchal) operation of gender roles and relations within the household and community.

Conclusion: Moral Frameworks, Mobility and the (Un)Modern

In this chapter I have promoted a better understanding of gender differences in the social and spatial mobility of rural youth through consideration of how resources and constraints in the rural are gendered and classed. In particular, I have drawn attention to the ways in which family resources and responsibilities in the rural are gendered, differentially valued and unequally distributed. Young people's individual migration decisions, and the meanings they attach to them, need to be set within larger "social and moral frameworks that are themselves shaped by the particularities of class and locality, as well as the opportunities that are seen to be available" (Crompton 2006:671). Young people's educational attitudes, experiences and choices are a crucial feature of this framework.

Rural youth are not isolated individuals uniformly 'freed' (Beck 1992) from family and community constraints and commitments in these 'new times'. Rather, rural young men and women are socially embedded agents who are differentially oriented towards staying and leaving due in part to (gendered and classed) patterns of family and community obligation and opportunity. Theoretical and methodological approaches to rural youth emigration which extract or isolate young people from their social groups and locations keep hidden the meaningful ways in which the gendered and classed dimensions of local forms of capital, community values and socio-cultural practices influence young individuals and differentially shape migration choices and patterns.

Young people's migration decisions reflect a process of negotiation between a melee of capitals, desires, expectations and (inter)dependencies. These are the particularities of place. Structural inequalities, social expectations and the variable appeal of and access to gendered roles and responsibilities, and classed forms of capital,

comprise the social scaffolding of young people's individual decision-making processes. To disregard this underlying social infrastructure as nothing more than scenery in the everyday life stories and agencies of local youth is to not only deny the importance of place in young people's lives. It is to perpetuate the myth of late modernity whereby choice is rendered as solely self-generated and non-mobility the embarrassing and backward relation who refuses to 'go somewhere' with these 'new times'.

The Incomplete Project

Andrew Abbott (1997:1152) contends that “no social fact makes any sense abstracted from its context in social (and often geographic) space and social time”. My dissertation research – which works to ‘locate’ processes of rural youth emigration in the social space and time of a contemporary rural Irish fishing community – is a clear endorsement of Abbott’s claim. This chapter begins with a summary of key findings. Following brief review of what this dissertation accomplishes, I then move to acknowledge its fated incompleteness. I then take issue with subjective and situational ‘ways of knowing’ with regards to my role as a researcher in Killybegs. As part of this effort, I emphasize the value in long-term, participatory ethnographic fieldwork. To conclude, I highlight the contributions that this dissertation project makes in and beyond Ireland and the discipline of anthropology.

Summary of Key Findings

This dissertation project developed from two over-arching but inter-related research questions. At the most fundamental level, this dissertation considers, and makes a case for, the continued significance of place in young people’s lives and life choices. In an effort to build on the argument that “place matters in studies of migration” (Mac Laughlin 1994), I demonstrate the ways in which rural space and place dynamically and differentially shapes (i.e. facilitates and/or constrains) processes of rural youth out-migration. Secondly and more specifically, this dissertation identifies and discusses important linkages between the gendered dimensions of rural youth experience and gender disparities in patterns of rural youth out-migration.

Within the rural Irish landscape, key social and cultural resources, such as space, social networks, and the ability to be recognized as ‘valuable’ are highly gendered. The gendered nature, and thus unequal distribution, of these resources works to differentially cajole and constrain feelings of belonging, obligation, entitlement and opportunity which ultimately underpin young people’s experience of place and influence their decision and desire to leave.

A key argument underpinning the objectives of each chapter in this dissertation is found in the contention that any attempt to reckon with issues of gender, place and migration must include a reckoning with relations of power. Both historically and contemporarily, important linkages can be drawn between the patriarchal nature of rural Irish society and female-dominated patterns of rural out-migration. The social and gendered organization of work, leisure and family life in contemporary rural Irish society plays a significant role in shaping young people’s migration (and education) perspectives, experiences and decisions. That being said, one of the most important contributions that this research makes lies in its anti-essentialist commitment to push past a binary framework of male-dominated/female-discontented. Such an assertion works against the feminist project, which should, after all, be as concerned with the myriad subjectivities and sensibilities of young men as it is with young women. Gendered subjectivities cross-cut subjectivities of class, race, generation, sexuality, and so on. Just as this study argues for a theory of social positioning in order to upset attempts to sustain a singular definition of ‘the rural’, it refuses to sustain assumptions which suggest that there is a universal male or female experience of the rural. This dissertation emphasizes the importance of situating rural youth experience in wider webs of social power, including not only

relations of power (and the everyday forms of resistance and accommodation they engender) between women and men but also between men and between women. In chapters five and six in particular, I demonstrate how intra-gender power and social relations are critical to understanding gender differences in young people's perspectives and experiences of rural life.

Another key finding of this research can be found in the conceptualization of rural gender and power relations as not simply the stable invention or unchanging artifact of a closed community or 'static entity' (Massey 1994) but rather as fully bound up in wider and ever-shifting political-economic processes and power structures and networks. These include not only the changing nature of the local and larger political-economic landscape, but also organizations and institutions such as the Gaelic Athletic Association and Catholic Church.

Moreover, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of situating young people's migration decisions in the context of their social groups and locations. Rural youth emigration is not simply a matter of the best and the brightest 'getting out'. Contemporary youth are not isolated individuals uniformly 'freed' (Beck 1992) from family and community constraints, commitments and obligations. Structural inequalities and social influences and expectations comprise the social infrastructure of individual choice. Academic and public discourse and debate which locates immobility as failure and 'stayers' as 'losers' denies the inter-dependent nature of young people's migration decision-making processes. Class 'cultures of family' (Crompton 2006) as well as the gendered nature of embodied capitals, community values and socio-cultural practices work to differentially shape the migration and education perspectives and decisions of

young men and women in the rural Irish landscape. Key research findings will continue to be discussed throughout the following pages. For now, I want to shift gears and remind the reader that the ‘social facts’ discussed in this dissertation are better understood as *unfolding* rather than fixed or finished in any way.

The Incomplete Project

“You should have come five years ago”. That’s exactly how Angela Cunningham, an adult community member, responded to my dissertation research. Five years ago there was more work, more money. Five years ago there was more fish. More fun. “There’s a great saying”, Mrs. Boyle remarked during our interview, “no fish, no fun”. Five years ago, the factories were full and the *craic* was brilliant. Five years ago the young people here, Angela Cunningham insisted, could’ve cared less about school. Referring largely to work in local fish factories, she went on to parody a young lad tossing his homework into the air: “What the fuck do I need this test for? I can walk straight into employment”. Ten years ago it seems local youth cared even less about exams because, according to Mr. McIntyre, “pressure didn’t exist”.

Mr. McIntyre: Young people in Killybegs, say a decade [to] fifteen years ago, pressure sort of didn’t exist. They didn’t need to go to school. There were so many opportunities in town, it didn’t matter. ... Exam pressure comes on them now... now they are under pressure. They definitely are.

What is perhaps true is that I would have likely encountered sentiments of a similar sort whether fieldwork occurred five, ten, or fifteen years ago. Throughout the 1990s the Irish whitefish fleet, stymied by stock decline and quota cuts, was losing its (male) workforce to burgeoning employment opportunities onshore courtesy of the Celtic Tiger economy. At the same time, the overall tightening of EU fisheries restrictions was forcing some Irish pelagic vessel owners to seriously reckon with issues of over-capacity.

There was, at the very least, talk of vessel sales and down-sizing among pelagic vessel owners. Some pelagic vessel owners turned their entrepreneurial interests towards developing transatlantic business connections and other overseas opportunities.⁴⁹ From that moment in time, the ‘Klondyke Days’ of the 1980s (as the development of the mackerel fishery in Killybegs is sometimes likened to) must have looked pretty damn good; particularly so when situated within the wider context of recession that was consuming the rest of the country.

Mr. McIntyre: In the 1980s we had emigration from practically the whole of the country. And especially sort of young people moving out, and there was a scourge of emigration. Killybegs was the exception. Killybegs provided employment for the whole area, not just for Killybegs... employment was booming. [E]migration didn’t really affect this area at all.

Of course the early 1980s marked the inception of the EU’s revised Common Fisheries Policy, perceived as the virtual death knell of any Irish fisherman’s hope of making a living in home waters. The CFP was surely enough to leave anyone longing for the good old days of the 1970s when ‘big money’ (Molloy 2004) was made in the northwest herring fishery. Then again, the Irish fishing industry throughout the 1970s was mired with uncertainty over what Ireland’s membership to the EEC actually meant for Irish fisheries. It goes on, each historical moment a process, a shifting tangle of setback and sanguinity, of hard times and big breaks. And then there’s the ‘here and now’ encapsulated in the current common mantra of the town: “Killybegs is dead and gone”. The crisis-ridden chorus-line suggests that we have finally arrived at ‘the end’ of the story. Though grim, one can’t help but think that it makes a nice and easy finish to

⁴⁹ Among these was the establishment of a Swan Net depot in Seattle, Washington. At the time, Swan Net was a locally owned and operated net-making company in Killybegs. The Seattle depot was intended to allow Swan Net to better break into and serve the Alaska Pollock fishery in the Bering Sea. More recently, some pelagic vessel owners in Killybegs have established a fishing company on the east coast of the United States comprised of four fishing trawlers and an onshore fish factory.

fieldwork and ethnography; the scandalous climax, the cheerless closing scene of an empty town, an absent generation. Indeed, this ending is not all that uncommon in Irish ethnography (see Scheper-Hughes 2001; Brody 1982; Hannan 1970). The problem is of course that the ending keeps getting interrupted by the everyday and the ordinariness of ‘getting along with it’.

Ryan, age 27: Well the best part [of living here] was when the fishing was good here, there was plenty of money and the craic was good. You take it for granted when you live somewhere you know, it’s just part of life and that’s it... If something changes you give out about it for awhile and then you just learn to live with that as well. Just like the fishing now is kind of on the downward spiral and you’re just kind of going, well, the town is bad, but you know, we’ll get along with it.

There is an aspect of ‘improvisation’ (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007) in Ryan’s account that I will discuss momentarily. For now it is worth noting how Ryan himself is ‘getting along with it’. After an early departure from college, Ryan returned home to work in a factory. He was made redundant in 2005 along with several of his co-workers. For the next year, Ryan worked ‘odd jobs’ and “fittered about at different bits and pieces”. He recently enrolled in a course at a nearby IT college. He continues to live at home with his parents and travels roughly 50 miles (one-way) three times a week to attend classes. Although at one point during our interview Ryan described himself as “I’m Killybegs” – accentuating the strength of both family ties and football in fostering his attachment to home (see chapter seven) – he also indicated that he’s gradually opening up to the idea of leaving, at least for a little while.

RD: Would you like to stay here?

Ryan, age 27: Um, it’s hard to know now. I don’t know. I traveled last year... for a month, and I thought being away from home would kind of daunt on me, but it hasn’t. It’s kind of opened my eyes up a wee bit more.

At the time of our interview in January 2008, Ryan ‘had it in his head’ to go traveling overseas for the summer. When I left Killybegs in late July, he had yet to formalize any plans, but the fluid, flexible and unfinished nature of his narrative reminds us that young people’s life-paths are a lot like ethnography in that, in the persuasive words of Art Farmer, “nothing is ever fully realized... you never say, ‘Well, this is it’. You’re always on your way somewhere” (cited in Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:185). Interviews with many if not most young people (such as Pete, age 19, here) are littered with utterances of *unfolding* social facts: “At the moment, I’m just trying to figure out what I’m going to do”. Charles was considering a training scheme at the time of our interview. William had just started a new job. Michael was looking for one. Nathan was “doing nothing at the minute”. Beth knew she was going to move but was unclear about what type of work she would find. At the time of my interview with Norah she had “been deciding this past week to go back to University... to do something, anything”. As well, Jimmy was planning an ‘open-ended’ overseas holiday with a group of friends: “We’re planning to go for ten days but sure, you [could] end up staying for three months... it’s not definite that we’re coming home in ten days”.

From these brief clips we see how rural youth life-paths are further akin to ethnography in that both are projects that “lack a definite point of arrival” (Jentsch and Shucksmith 2004:236). Methodologically, a key contribution of this research can be found in its focus on the accounts and experiences of twenty-somethings (versus teenagers). A growing number of youth studies recognize the increasing ‘elasticity’ (Jones 2009) of the category of youth, but studies of rural youth tend to stop short of looking beyond the teenage years. My attention to an older age group demonstrates the

ways in which the stresses and satisfactions of rural life are navigated by young men and women during a period of increasing independence (i.e. a period of waning parental authority, increasing socio-economic independence). Many if not most project participants fell within the vague ranks of no longer a dependent teen but not yet fully independent in socio-economic terms. (Several participants still lived with their parents at the time of fieldwork). Rather than focusing on teenagers about to embark on the rest of their lives, that is, young people ‘on the verge’ of something (most often emigration); (and here I am not suggesting that there is not merit in approaches attentive to the lives of rural teenagers); I speak to the swings, spells and shifts of life plans and paths ‘in the make’. I move the methodological focus from the relatively clean linear lines of first intention to the multi-dimensional messiness of ongoing embedded action. It was this element of my methodological approach which helped to untidy the relatively neat categories of ‘stayer’ and ‘leaver’ which persist in the literature on rural youth.

In many ways, ethnographic fieldwork can look and *feel* like the various training schemes, odd jobs, apprenticeships, college courses and working holidays that have come to characterize the ‘fractured’ or ‘extended’ transitions of today’s youth. Like the subject matter of youth life-paths, there’s an inevitable incompleteness about my dissertation project. Reckoning with the empirical realities of contemporary rural youth life-paths or ‘projects’, means also recognizing that my finished work is at best processual, provisional, partial. Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:6) describe ethnography as a “necessarily improvisational practice”. They may well be referring to young rural lives. Norah moved to England on an apparent whim with friends in tow: “It was random. I woke up one morning and said, ‘I’m moving’ ...”

Norah, age 24: There was one weekend me and Katie went to [England to visit friends] and we just kind of looked at each other and said, ‘We’re moving here’. ... I went home, put in my notice, packed my bags and left.

Similarly, after an early departure from college, Thomas, age 22, worked for several months in a local factory without a day off: “It was nine to half eight, Monday through Friday, and then nine to six on Saturday and Sunday”. Despite the unrelieved work schedule, Thomas managed to make it “down town every night of the week”. Not only that, Thomas “never saved a penny...”

Thomas, age 22: I went down there [to the factory] for five months and I blew every penny of it. I was flat out working but I never saved a penny.

While I might draw on these examples to marvel at the spontaneous and perhaps short-sighted side of youth life plans and paths, I cite them here to highlight the ways in which rural youth life-paths are at times *improvised*. Moreover, I cite them to remind the reader that young people’s choices are informed by ‘situated’ (Haraway 1991) rather than universal or expert knowledges. Examining neo-liberal discourse on the *rational choice actor*, Hilary Pilkington (2007:377) warns of “resorting to a simple notion of the autonomous, rational (albeit reflexive) individual” because, as she argues, it fails to consider the social and cultural contexts of young people’s decisions. Rosemary Crompton (2006:670), drawing on Barlow et al. (2002), similarly contends that we are at risk of committing a ‘rationality mistake’ if we assume that people do not make decisions that run counter to their own economic interests. What I have argued in previous chapters and reiterate here is the importance of situating the migration and education decisions of rural young men and women within “social and moral frameworks that are themselves shaped by the particularities of class and locality” (Crompton 2006:671).

Whether musing over the improvisational aspects of young rural lives or my own ethnographic endeavors, migration is an important part of the project. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated the importance of locating gender differences in rural youth out-migration within the multi-layered contexts of family, friendship, school, and community. Further to this, I have demonstrated that young people's individual migration decisions need to be *situated* in relation to the social and subjective context of one's own embodied perceptions and experiences of rural life and leaving. In the next section, I shed some light on the social and subjective *situated-ness* of the anthropological project at hand, especially my role as researcher in Killybegs.

The Embodied Ethnographer and 'False Readings'

In *Improvising Theory*, Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:176) ask: "If we accept that fieldwork is an embodied, and embodying, form of knowledge production, why should we leave a considered awareness of the senses out of the project of creating ethnographic understanding?" Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:177) continue with a description of the temporal process of ethnographic fieldwork and "the critical theoretical practice of ethnography" noting that:

That process is typically long, often meandering, inescapably social, and temporally situated... That you as an ethnographer work with what you are given – even as you make new things – means also that your gender, age, race, nationality, class, temperament, imagination, subjectivity, histories and your whole social personhood are in some degree constitutive in the fieldwork process. In your field sites, you can not be transparent, nor a fly. You take up social space as a person, and you've got to 'play it as it lays' (Didion 1970). Gender matters in unexpected ways in all social research, and especially in the processes and relationships of ethnographic fieldwork (Butler 1993).

Given my position as a young, 'Yank' (as some enjoyed declaiming), female researcher, certain ways of 'knowing' my research subject in Killybegs were more easily achieved while others remained out of empirical reach. It was, for example, with regard

to my gender that a young man in Killybegs warned me, in my third week of fieldwork, of the risk of ‘false reading’ I might be prone to. I recorded the exchange in my field notes:

September 29, 2007

Last night at Hughies pub I met James O’Leary who tells me in jest that he ‘never left because his country needs him’... After figuring out who I was and why I’m here, he offered up some perspective on local pub culture: “You see, most people who come here [Hughies], they’re middle-class. Actually, this is one place where you can see a mix of all types. But the people who drink at the Fleet [another local pub], they never drink anywhere else. And when you go in there, they’ll look at you, they might even ask you to leave”. And then, unexpectedly, James turned to me and said: “But you know, I think you’re going to get a false reading [of this place]. He won’t, he said, pointing to [my then partner who joined me during the initial months of fieldwork], but you will”. When I asked what he meant, he didn’t respond.

James O’Leary was not alone in his caveat. Several community members bore comparable cautionary counsel. I was told to “be careful, people will tell you what they think you want to hear” and that “people will tell you about other people, but not themselves”. My favorite piece of local insight came in the form of a story told to me during an interview. The story had to do with an unnamed American psychologist who had told a retired priest in Donegal Town that he “reckoned the reason the Irish have such high rates of mental illness is because of their *ambiguity*. That is, they have made it customary to say one thing and feel another” (see also Scheper-Hughes 2001:71). At this point, the man’s wife interjected with a laugh: “What’s the saying, our wars are merry and our songs are sad”.

My interview with Beth for example occurred on the cusp of her moving away after having lived in Killybegs for some time. During our interview, Beth said she never intended to stay in Killybegs as long as she had and cited a general lack of local leisure activities as inciting her desire to leave. She ultimately chalked her motivations for

moving away up to 'itchy feet' rather than discontent with life at home. I was surprised then, when sitting in a pub shortly after our interview, a mutual friend returned from the bar after a lengthy chat with Beth with a somewhat more dramatic account of Beth's perceptions of life at home: "That is *not* the girl that I know. Can you *imagine*, she's been here for [so long], she's about to slit her wrists. She's cracking up". This was not the only instance whereby I was indirectly made aware of someone's discontent with life at home. In a few cases, community members suggested to me potential youth participants (in these cases, females) *because* they knew how unhappy they were with life at home. Yet rarely did these participants refer to, let alone elaborate on, their discontent to the same degree that others in the community did. Certainly I didn't expect project participants to reveal their more melancholy moments of life in the locality with an outsider such as myself, but these instances are worth mentioning here because they in part and implicitly speak to the merit of long-term ethnographic fieldwork. A central advantage of long-term, ethnographic, participatory fieldwork is the acquired ability to identify and work through not only conflicting perspectives and accounts, but also the differences, ambiguities and contradictions in what people say (or don't say) and what they do.

Much more than a means to simply *overhear* myriad contradictions and inconsistencies, long-term ethnographic fieldwork is the critical process and practice through which we build the relationships that ultimately underpin our 'expertise'. Indeed, I would argue that it was the "embodied, situational [and] relational" (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:6) aspects of my ethnographic encounters in Killybegs which compelled James O'Leary to warn of 'false readings'. I eventually came to the

conclusion that James' reference to my propensity for 'false readings' hinged on his perception that my perception of life in Killybegs would be skewed given my status as the 'new girl' in a town that didn't have many. Encounters and experiences in the field which gave way to this interpretation include not only instances of being approached by some of James' peers, always in a pub and always at closing time, who offered to be interviewed for my research. But also, by the dismissive, I would suggest set-the-record-straight type of comments made by a few of these male participants near the end of the interview process (often following 'thank you for your time and participation'): "Well, you're lucky you're not half bad looking". Although James' warning alludes to notions of defect and misconception, I consider subjectivity an asset and agree with Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:6) that "subjectivity's many forms – embodiment, affect and so on – should complement and enrich, rather than replace, critical reason as a mode of analysis". In short, I suggest that although one's 'way of knowing' in social research must be understood as *situated*, I consider subjectivity a strength rather than shortcoming of the project at hand.

To return once more to this notion of Irish *ambiguity*. The above referenced story speaks to a wider tendency within Irish studies. That is, the tendency to set the Irish *apart*, as special, as some how *different* from their European counterparts. From the 'sacred texts' of anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball (1968), the Irish have been labeled as one of anthropology's first "homegrown Western other" (Wilson and Donnan 2006). The history and anthropology of Ireland is rife with reference to exceptionalism. Irish demography is described as 'peculiar' (see Mac Laughlin 1994), the Irish experience as 'unique' (Fahey and FitzGerald 1997 cited in Kennedy 2001:2). "Ireland,

writes John Ardagh (1995:1), has always been a special case” (cited in Kennedy 2001:1). I couch this study of Irish society and culture in the camp of Wilson and Donnan (2006:128) who contend that “Ireland should not be objectified in ways that make it different or special”. In the final section of this dissertation, I consider the significance of this research through review of the theoretical and substantive contributions it makes in and beyond Ireland and the discipline of anthropology.

Contributions: Beyond Ireland, Beyond Anthropology

We ought to think about interdisciplinarity as a knowledge production process that flexibly adopts approaches and tools as a consequence of the questions being asked, not as a consequence of the methodological constraints dictated by the history or current hegemony within a given discipline (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:14).

To quote Wilson and Donnan (2006:164) once more, it has been my intent throughout this dissertation to make certain that this “anthropology of Ireland speak to anthropologies elsewhere... [and] be useful beyond Ireland”. Moreover, it has been my intent that this anthropology of Ireland beyond useful beyond anthropology. In this dissertation I have drawn on and developed arguments in and beyond anthropology, engaging especially with the disciplines of geography and sociology, but also education, history and social-psychology. I have carefully sifted through these various literatures, concentrating especially on studies attentive to contemporary rural youth identities and life-paths in order to locate Irish rural youth experience and emigration in with the wider literature on rural youth. From the outset, I have contended that the Irish context requires qualification (as all contexts do), but that it is not a context so *peculiar* as to render studies of Irish youth experience and emigration irrelevant to the wider literature on rurality and youth emigration. I reiterate the point here. I do think that there are more similarities than differences to be found in the identities, values, practices and life-paths

of young people living in rural Ireland and young people living in rural regions of other North Atlantic and North Pacific countries.

While here I refer to this ethnographic endeavor as an anthropology of Ireland, it is also, most certainly an exercise in interdisciplinarity, and might just as easily be identified as a geography of gender; one enriched no doubt by a sociology of class. At the same time, as a study on migration, this research is informed by theories of social positioning and, crucially, research from within the field of education. Through these various literatures, we become cognizant of the myriad ways in which the workings and relations of power come to shape young people's sense of place in rural society. And not just along the lines of gender. Gender clearly matters in rural youth experience and emigration but we should not allow its import to eclipse the significance of other social categories (e.g. social-class, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, etc.) in shaping young people's sense of place. Although gender operates as the fundamental focal point of this project, gender alone can not fully explain Ryan's account of 'what keeps me here' (see chapter seven).

Fascinating research questions have emerged through this particular research program, several of which require further exploration. These include well-defined questions about the ways in which young men and young women today construct their identities in relation to drinking and alcohol (see chapter five). Intriguing questions also remain about the role that men play in rural gossip. Is it fair to define the 'talk of the town' as a wholly female enterprise? How are men involved and affected by rumors and gossip? Finally, how might we as researchers improve our understandings of and approaches to the (less visible) ways in which marginalized youth identities 'make space'

in the rural landscape. These are exciting research directions to pursue in the context of rural Ireland in particular because for a long time, the anthropology of Ireland remained trapped in a research template created in the 1930s through Arensberg and Kimball's (1968) landmark (community-based) study of family and social structure in County Clare (Wilson 1984).

Until quite recently, the anthropology of Ireland seemed preoccupied with themes of kinship and community and refused to stray from the rural agricultural context. For a small island surrounded by the North Atlantic and its many resources, it is somewhat surprising how little anthropological attention has been given to Ireland's fishing heritage (see Taylor 1981, 1987 for exception). This research sheds light on one of Ireland's hidden histories. It is a history of Ireland that has for a long time remained in the shadowy margins of the dominant narrative of this 'land-conscious' society. Drawing attention to the ways in which 'Ireland's Premier Fishing Port' was created, transformed, and some would say destroyed through local and global, historical and contemporary forces of capital and power (see Nadel-Klein 2003) not only makes a contribution to the scholarship on Ireland. It locates Ireland, somewhat problematically, in the wider fisheries-based literature. Given the current (and not all too uncommon) direction (i.e. delocalization/globalization) of Ireland's offshore pelagic fleet, what role can large-scale fisheries really play in shoring up the often times single resource dependent communities that they are literally leaving behind (see Menzies 2003, 2007)? Nevermind the transnational and global fanfare surrounding Ireland's (once) mighty 'Celtic Tiger'. No where does Ireland appear more globalized than at sea. As Irish fishing vessels leave their home ports for the fishing grounds off of Africa and South America, they no doubt

pass by an international assembly of foreign vessels, including Spanish, French, Portuguese and Dutch (just to name a few), that have for a long time thought of Ireland's waters as their own. Local fish factory workers may find themselves processing seafood imported from the UK and bound for markets on the mainland and Japan. Better yet, in Killybegs, fish factory workers may now find themselves loading boxes of Irish seafood, perhaps caught in Scottish waters, onto a Panamanian vessel bound for the Egyptian market. This is the local fishing industry.

In earlier anthropological accounts of rural Ireland, particularly throughout the 20th century, themes of community, identity and migration were pervasive and increasingly approached in relation to the 'demoralizing' (Brody 1982) throes of modernization, change and decline. When the Irish countryside was not captured as 'timeless' in form (see Arensberg 1937; Arensberg and Kimball 1968), it was often cast as dying, devitalized or suffering from a severe bout of 'anomie' (see Scheper-Hughes 2001:50). While themes of change and decline are certainly dealt with in this dissertation, this study hopefully provides for an opportunity to think about Irish identity, family, community and rurality, in new, perhaps less '*quintessentially Irish*' (Scheper-Hughes 2001), ways. This is not to say that older community members did not sometimes insist, "*There's no such thing as rural Ireland anymore*". Speaking on the matter, one Killybegs man contended, "Pubs used to be the center of community life". Lamenting the rising price of a pint paired with the rise of budget air travel ("One weekend 'in' can pay for a flight to Barcelona these days!"), he went on to reveal the dubious quality of rural Ireland's so-called death. "And they [pubs] still are, he said, but *it's not the same*". While a daughter might draw on the difference between her life at

home in Killybegs and that of her mother, her mother might do the same with regards to a sibling, who though only a few years older, ‘grew up in a very *different* Ireland’.

What I have hoped to accomplish through this work is the placement of appropriate emphasis on the unfixed and unstable nature of place and identity in the context of rural Ireland. There is no still moment in Ireland’s past. No closed and stable community harboring unchanging tradition, anchoring uncontested identity (see also Nadel-Klein 1991:501). There is not a moment which can be identified whereby poor old Eire became ‘new’ Ireland, whereby the local was finally lost to the cruel and encroaching placeless-ness of the global. The local is the global. The global is the local. In and beyond the rural Irish landscape, spaces, places and identities are constructed from multiple and ever-shifting intersections and interactions, not internalized histories, not contained cultures (Massey 1994). Places are not simply the backdrops which stay still in the stories of migration. Places, like migration, are processes. Places shape migration and in return, migration shapes places. And the rural Irish landscape, like everywhere, like always, is in motion.

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Appendix A

Figure A.1
County Map of Ireland (Wilson and Donnan 2006:16)



Appendix B

List of Youth Project Participants (pseudonyms)

Male Project Participants (21)

Michael, age 26

Patrick, age 26

Frank, age 29

Thomas, age 22

Danny, age 27

Ryan, age 27

Andrew, age 22

Paul, age 25

Jimmy, age 23

Nathan, age 25

Robert, age 24

Jeff, age 20

Charles, age 30

Ben, age 23

Tony, age 19

Chris, age 31

Calum, age 26

Pete, age 19

Joey, age 30

Eric, age 27

William, age 30

Female Project Participants (17)

Sara, age 20

Beth, age 25

Karen, age 26

Melissa, age 23

Katie, age 24

Patricia, age 24

Heather, age 32

Laura, age 23

Bridget, age 25

Diana, age 26

Alexis, age 28

Lisa, age 24

Theresa, age 21

Caitriona, age 26

Erin, age 22

Ruth, age 31

Norah, age 24

Appendix C

Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey

Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey

You are being asked to participate in a research project which explores youth lifestyles and migration intentions in the context of rural fisheries-dependent communities.

The purpose of this survey is to gain a ‘young person-centered’ view of life and work in a contemporary rural fishing community, and how these influence migration decisions differently for young men and women.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this project if you do not want to.

This survey is entirely confidential.

Please do not put your name anywhere on this survey.

Please fill in or circle the answer that best suits you.

This survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

When you have finished the survey, please hand it to the researcher.

Once you have turned in the survey, please fill out a raffle ticket with your name and phone number.

Every survey participant will be entered to win a gift voucher worth 25 Euro at Melody Makers in Donegal Town. Drawings will be held after all surveys are completed and turned in.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey or research project, please feel free to contact the researcher below.

Thank you for your time.

Rachel Donkersloot

Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey

Section A – Background Information

Please circle or fill in the most appropriate answer...

1. Age... _____
2. Year in School... _____
3. Gender... male female
4. I have lived here for all or most of my life... yes no
5. I am new to the area or have lived here for a few years... yes no

6. My father is from here... yes no
7. Fathers' occupation(s)... _____
8. Is your fathers' employment linked to fishery-related industry... yes no
9. Fathers' education... **circle highest level obtained**
primary cert. junior cert. leaving cert. some college/university college/univ.
degree other

10. My mother is from here... yes no
11. Mothers' occupation(s)... _____
12. Is your mothers' employment linked to fishery-related industry... yes no
13. Mothers' education... **circle highest level obtained**
primary cert. junior cert. leaving cert. some college/university college/univ.
degree other

14. My family owns a computer... yes no

15. I have internet access at home... yes no

16. Have you ever worked in a fishery-related industry... yes no

17. Would you consider a career in a fishery-related industry... yes no

18. How important do you think income and/or employment from fishery-related industry is to your family...

Very Important Important Not Important Used to be Important, but not anymore

19. How important do you think income and/or employment from tourism-related industry is to your family...

Very Important Important Not Important Used to be Important, but not anymore

**Section B –
Thinking about the place where you live...**

Please circle the appropriate answer...

20. I think of myself as living in a... town village the country

21. This is a good place for children to grow up... agree disagree

22. This is a good place for young people like me to live... agree disagree

23. There is nothing for young people like me to do here... agree disagree

24. I am not able to go out at night safely here... agree disagree

25. It's hard for me to be myself here... agree disagree

26. I don't fit in here... agree disagree

27. There's no transport to go places/do things I want... agree disagree

28. Where I live feels far away from everything... agree disagree

29. There are people here outside my family who really care about me...agree
disagree
30. There are people here outside my family who I could go to if I need advice or
someone to talk to... agree disagree
31. There is too little freedom to be the way you want to be here...agree
disagree
32. It's hard to be yourself here, people have fixed ideas... agree
disagree
33. It's hard to find privacy here... agree
disagree
34. Everyone here knows everyone else's business... agree
disagree
35. I think depression is a serious problem for young people here... agree
disagree
36. I think drugs are a serious problem for young people here... agree
disagree
37. I think alcohol is a serious problem for young people here... agree
disagree
38. I think stress is a serious problem for young people here... agree
disagree

**Section C –
Thinking about the future...**

39. The future looks good for young people to who stay here... agree
disagree
40. It would be hard to find a job that suits me here... agree
disagree
41. If I knew I could find a good job, I would like to stay here... agree
disagree
42. It would be hard for me to find a marriage partner here... agree
disagree

43. I would prefer to...

Stay here back	Leave, but eventually return to settle down	Leave, and not come
-------------------	---	---------------------

44. I think moving away from here is... Important	Very Important	Important	Not
--	----------------	-----------	-----

45. Going to University is very important to me...	agree	disagree
--	-------	----------

46. My parents/family would prefer if I stayed here...	agree	disagree
--	-------	----------

47. My parents/family encourage me to leave...	agree	disagree
--	-------	----------

48. My parents/family encourage me to go to University...	agree	disagree
---	-------	----------

**Section D –
Leisure Activities...**

Please indicate how often you participate in the following activities...

Visiting a friend's house... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
---------------------------------------	--------	------------	------------

Hanging outside with friends... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
--	--------	------------	------------

Talking to a friend on the telephone... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
--	--------	------------	------------

Doing sport just for fun, e.g. swimming, football... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
---	--------	------------	------------

Playing sport for a club or team, in competitions... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
---	--------	------------	------------

Doing a hobby... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
---------------------------	--------	------------	------------

Reading books, magazines, newspapers... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Spending time on a computer... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Hanging around at home alone doing nothing much.. Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go into town, to the shops... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go to cafes, fast food... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go into the cinema, a gig, a concert... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go to a dance, disco... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go to a pub... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Go to a sports club... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
Hobby clubs, groups... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
A music group, drama, art... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
A youth club at a community centre... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often
A youth group, e.g. Guides, Scouts... Never	Weekly	More Often	Less Often

**Section E –
Open-ended questions...**

1. Describe how you spend a typical Friday night.
2. What do you think are the best aspects of living here? What do you think are the most difficult?
3. Ideally, where do you see yourself in five to ten years?

Appendix D

Youth Lifestyles and Migration Survey Results (Data Tables)

Please note that findings with a p-value (i.e. probability) of less than 0.05 are identified as statistically significant relationships and findings with a p-value of less than 0.1 but greater than 0.05 are identified as marginally significant relationships.

Please also note that each data should be read as follows. The first number in each data column (i.e. the number in parentheses) reflects real numbers (e.g. $n = 10$). The second and third numbers (i.e. the percentage in plain text and the percentage in italics) reflect responses within and between genders. For example, in Table D.1 below, 17.241% of females disagreed with the statement while 38.462% of all those to disagree were female (i.e. percentages in plain text should be read across in rows and percentages in italics should be read down in columns).

Table D.1
It would be hard to find a job that suits me here...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(10) 38.462% <i>17.241%</i>	(16) 61.538% <i>30.769%</i>	(26) 23.636%
Agree	(48) 57.143% <i>82.759%</i>	(36) 42.857% <i>69.231%</i>	(84) 76.364%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.09545418)

Table D.2
Have you ever worked in a fishery-related industry...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(49) 62.821% <i>84.483%</i>	(29) 37.179% <i>55.769%</i>	(78) 70.909%
Agree	(9) 28.125% <i>15.517%</i>	(23) 71.875% <i>44.231%</i>	(32) 29.091%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.0009317339)

Table D.3**Would you consider a career in a fishery related industry...**

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
No	(55) 57.895% 94.828%	(40) 42.105% 76.923%	(95) 86.364%
Yes	(3) 20% 5.172%	(12) 80% 23.077%	(15) 13.636%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.00629676)

Table D.4**Everyone here knows everyone else's business...**

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(3) 15% 5.172%	(17) 85% 32.692%	(20) 18.182%
Agree	(55) 61.111% 94.828%	(35) 38.889% 67.308%	(90) 81.818%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.0001868707)

Table D.5**I think stress is a serious problem for young people here...**

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(20) 38.462% <i>40.816%</i>	(32) 61.538% <i>68.085%</i>	(52) 54.167%
Agree	(29) 65.909% <i>59.184%</i>	(15) 34.091% <i>31.915%</i>	(44) 45.833%
Total	(49)	(47)	(96) (p = 0.00735062)

Table D.6**There is too little freedom to be the way you want to be here...**

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(39) 52.703% <i>68.421%</i>	(35) 47.297% <i>67.308%</i>	(74) 67.890%
Agree	(18) 51.429% <i>31.579%</i>	(17) 48.571% <i>32.692%</i>	(35) 32.110%
Total	(57)	(52)	(109) (p = 0.9010399)

Table D.7
Its' hard to be yourself here, people have fixed ideas...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(39) 52% 68.421%	(36) 48% 69.231%	(75) 68.807%
Agree	(18) 52.941% 31.579%	(16) 47.059% 30.769%	(34) 31.193%
Total	(57)	(52)	(109) (p = 0.9273803)

Table D.8
Please indicate how often you play sport for a club or team, in competitions...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Never	(31) 68.889% 54.386%	(14) 31.111% 26.923%	(45) 41.284%
Less Often	(11) 50% 19.298%	(11) 50% 21.154%	(22) 20.183%
More Often	(5) 25% 8.772%	(15) 75% 28.846%	(20) 18.349%
Weekly	(10) 45.455% 17.544%	(12) 54.545% 23.077%	(22) 20.183%
Total	(57)	(52)	(109) (p = 0.009754373)

Table D.9
Please indicate how often you go to a sports club...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Never	(35) 70% 60.345%	(15) 30% 28.846%	(50) 45.455%
Less Often	(13) 50% 22.414%	(13) 50% 25%	(26) 23.636%
More Often	(5) 29.412% 8.621%	(12) 70.588% 23.077%	(17) 15.455%
Weekly	(5) 29.412% 8.621%	(12) 70.588% 23.077%	(17) 15.455%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.003709895)

Table D.10
Please indicate how often you go to a youth club...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Never	(30) 62.500% <i>51.724%</i>	(18) 37.500% <i>34.615%</i>	(48) 43.636%
Less Often	(21) 70% <i>36.207%</i>	(9) 30% <i>17.308%</i>	(30) 27.273%
More Often	(4) 30.769% <i>6.897%</i>	(9) 69.231% <i>17.308%</i>	(13) 11.818%
Weekly	(3) 15.789% <i>5.172%</i>	(16) 84.211% <i>30.769%</i>	(19) 17.273%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.0003733305)

Table D.11
I think moving away from here is...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Not Important	(15) 42.857% 25.862%	(20) 57.143% 39.216%	(35) 32.110%
Important	(31) 58.491% 53.448%	(22) 41.509% 43.137%	(53) 48.624%
Very Important	(12) 57.143% 20.690%	(9) 42.857% 17.647%	(21) 19.266%
Total	(58)	(51)	(109) (p = 0.3277812)

Table D.12
I would prefer to...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Stay Here	(0) 0.000% 0.000%	(11) 100.000% 21.154%	(11) 10.000%
Leave but eventually return	(37) 55.224% 63.793%	(30) 44.776% 57.692%	(67) 60.909%
Leave and not come back	(21) 65.625% 36.207%	(11) 34.375% 21.154%	(32) 29.091%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.0006849167)

Table D.13
Going to University is very important to me...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(6) 27.273% 10.345%	(16) 72.727% 30.769%	(22) 20%
Agree	(52) 59.091% 89.655%	(36) 40.909% 69.231%	(88) 80%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.007502499)

Table D.14
My parents/family encourage(s) me to go to University...

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Disagree	(7) 33.333% 12.069%	(14) 66.667% 26.923%	(21) 19.091%
Agree	(51) 57.303% 87.931%	(38) 42.697% 73.077%	(89) 80.909%
Total	(58)	(52)	(110) (p = 0.04781178)