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(Net)working out poverty and social exclusion in rural Ireland and Russia

Sergei Vitalyevich Shubin

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Science, School of Geographical Sciences.

September 2003

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CONTAINS A PULLOUT
Abstract

This thesis uncovers complexity of poverty experiences and mechanisms contributing to social exclusion of people living in rural Ireland and Russia, as well as explores the relationship between rural poverty and policies which are supposed to deal with it. It uses networked approach to understanding rural social malaise. The emphasis is given to the explanation of network processes through which poverty and otherness are constructed within a multiplicity of spheres, including social, cultural and political domains. Drawing on empirical research presenting comparative narratives of rural poverty in three villages in Ireland and Russia this research goes beyond an examination of specific “poor” and “excluded” people, in order to consider the processes of impoverishment and marginalisation.

At the same time, the thesis investigates the ways in which different knowledge and power, which are enacted in rural policies, transform and translate experiential meanings of poverty. Interpretation and critiques of current rural policy-making, which fails to address poverty-related issues, promote the need to move away from rational and logical policies which produce oversimplified, trivialised and de-sensitised constructions of poverty and otherness. Instead, the thesis refers to different postmodern and poststructural approaches to poverty and otherness which allow a more hybrid and complex understanding of these phenomena. It argues that fluid, sensuous and poetic politics of difference could broaden and deepen understanding of poverty and contribute to the alleviation of poverty-related problems.

In conclusion, this thesis suggests the ways in which this research can be incorporated in existing policy practices. It demonstrates that in different countries with contrasting situation vis-à-vis poverty (in terms of scale and seriousness of problems) and anti-poverty policies (in terms of attention paid and funding allocated to rural development) the adoption of alternative approaches to dealing with poverty can alleviate rural social malaise.
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This research was funded by the Universities UK and the School of Geographical Sciences at Bristol University.
Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed: ..........................................................

Date: 13/04/2004
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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Preface

*With this formal, soulless attitude to human personality the only thing which is needed to deprive an innocent man of all rights is time... You may look in vain for justice and protection in this dirty, wretched little village a hundred and fifty miles away from a railway station! And, indeed, isn't it absurd even to think of justice when every kind of violence is accepted by society as a rational and consistent necessity...?* (Chekhov (1984 [1892]), p.285, my translation)

This thesis is about rural poverty. “Aww...”, a disappointed reader would say, “this is not interesting” (“but I have to read it anyway”). Let me tell you the truth – I know this feeling. There were moments in my life when I felt a bit inferior to my other colleagues at the geography department at Bristol who have been researching “cool” topics like non-human (food) geographies, haptic geographies and even children’s readings of Harry Potter. The word “poverty” brings about powerful images of “dirt and wretchedness”, gloom and inevitability, so what can I find interesting in all that?

Now, let me start again, assuming I failed to grab your attention at the first attempt. So, this thesis is about rural life and different things happening in the countryside: rural festivals and protests, marriages and funerals, pantomimes and dramas “behind-the-scene”. Does it all look different now? But where is “poverty”? Well, it is there, I just did not emphasise it this time. Poverty is a part of all of the living experiences mentioned above. It is in those little moments, dynamic links and connections, which create the exciting unpredictable and potentially problematic sociality of rural life. The multiplicity of rural life, peculiarity of everyday practices, and unusual combinations of ordinary and strange in daily experiences are the topic of this thesis. I open up a heterogeneous countryside, illustrate different realities behind the traditional visions of rurality and hear different voices coming out from the areas which have long been associated solely with farmers and agriculture (for new approaches to rural studies see also Milbourne, 1997; Phillips and Mighall, 2000; Little, 2002; Murdoch *et al.*, 2003; Cloke, 2003). Following Simmel (1980), I map the equivocality of rural everyday life, and in so doing bring to the fore rural poverty as an essential part of it. Poverty in its context, as a part of complexity of the rural everyday, is the object of my study. My research uncovers different fields of rural poverty, which are often overlooked in mainly urban-focused poverty research.
On the other hand, I don’t want to allow the exciting heterogeneity of the everyday to overshadow the troubles brought about by poverty. It is a negative thing and one of the tasks of this thesis is to understand what is specifically problematic about rural poverty experiences. The work studies the “troubles” and “unease” instigated by poverty, feelings of stigma attached to it, and the depreciation of values and diminishing self-belief resulting from living in the conditions of poverty. In so doing, this analysis goes beyond oversimplified representations of rural poverty as “dirt and wretchedness” of (material) rural life in order to deal with the complexity of the poverty phenomenon.

I am not happy, however, with the task of just understanding rural poverty. Poverty experiences are evocative and powerful, and they simply cannot be left unanswered in this thesis. It is this acceptance of injustice (taking poverty for granted), as Chekhov insists in the quote above, which makes our society less caring and humane. This work therefore goes on to investigate the measures to alleviate rural poverty. The focus here is both on rural policies, which are designed and implemented to deal with what are seen as rural problems, and on the shortcomings of these policies. The striving for new understanding of rural policy making is born out of my uneasiness with what Chekhov called the “formal, soulless attitude to human personality” persistent in many current anti-poverty programmes. The task of this thesis is to go beyond this attitude and think about new less rational and more “human” ways of addressing poverty issues which could change the situation for the better.

In so doing, however, I do not want to produce yet another “handbook for rural development”, which explains general strategies and mechanisms to tackle rural poverty. The aim of this thesis is to understand the interrelations between current policy programmes and poverty experiences in specific contexts, and to discover how processes underlying the composition of particular rural areas promote/restrict the reproduction of poverty. In order to achieve this, I had to choose specific case study areas for analysis of the dynamics and complexities of rural poverty. For this purpose my research was conducted in different rural communities in two countries – Ireland and Russia, which has added to the complexity of my work and to the variation in subject-matter (see also discussion on the selection process in Chapter 2). The next section explains how the changing subject of my research was mediated through a mutable research design. Specifically, it reflects on different research experiences related to access and positionality and the ways they provided different readings of various policy studies and rural settings.
My personal involvement

Some key social scientists have argued that it is imperative to consider the research process and its outcomes in relation to the positionality of researchers, taking into account the "situatedness" of knowledge (Haraway, 1991; McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1997; see also Hannam and Shurmer-Smith, 1994). Importantly, I understand that the interaction between the researcher and the researched is dynamic and complex, so it does not end with the specific concessions to positionality in the beginning of the thesis. I am aware of the fact that factors such as personality, gender and nationality define "research situatedness" (Katz, 1992) for the whole period of my study. This section, therefore, only represents a snapshot of the continuous and dialectic process of interaction between my own agency and my research subjects/material.

I came to start this research project being a Russian Christian male with the set of different experiences of and connections to rural poverty. Although I have spent most of my life living in Moscow, both sets of my grandparents were born and bred in Russian villages. Before moving out of the countryside, they experienced the worst sides of coercive "collectivisation" and the infamous famine of the 1930s, when some of my relatives had to beg around their villages because they had nothing to eat. Unsurprisingly, my knowledge of rural poverty is really personal. It is based on my grandparents' stories, my childhood experiences of living in the countryside with my relatives, my visits to the countryside every summer to the "young pioneer" camps¹, and temporary working experiences at the collective farms helping with the harvest². Thus, I came to do this research on rural poverty because of the feeling of general unease with the way people live in rural Russia.

Irish rural poverty has a different (although important) place in my heart. My choice of Ireland for my undergraduate research project at the geography department at Moscow State University was justified on several counts. Firstly, the Irish countryside was visibly similar to the Russian one – not in terms of size, but in terms of population density, settlement patterns and community structures (at least it appeared similar to me at that time). Secondly, Irish peasant histories reminded me of the Russian ones: similar experiences of famine, troubled experiences of independence and civil war in 1920s and the following waves of out-migration to big cities. Thirdly, I knew the language of this country which gave me a chance to understand rural voices and communicate with my

¹ "The Young Pioneers" was a scouting movement used to promote communist ideology to the young people. Traditionally, summer camps were organised in the countryside for the period up to three months, where "young pioneers" were involved in scouting, sporting and leisure activities.

² In the Soviet period it was common to bring urban dwellers to work in the countryside, especially in the harvest period. This help was considered as a duty (rota system was in place) and moral responsibility towards the rural people.
colleagues in Ireland. Thus, I started my PhD research in Bristol with a knowledge (although only academic) of the Irish countryside, academic links in Ireland and reasonable understanding of the language.

My Russianness in terms of nationality and language has certainly affected the very process of my research. Writing a thesis for me as a Russian student in a British university was a process of linguistic development. Firstly, for me the language issues have been important in themselves as I had to think about words more carefully than native English speakers. I have been interested in the essential meanings of words, trying to go beyond commonsense and discover classifications which remain unarticulated. Secondly, my research has provided a space for a deeper understanding of concepts and experiences through dialectical interaction between the two languages. Thus specific Russian formulations of terms have suggested additional meanings and alternative interpretations in English. Thirdly, my preoccupation with linguistic issues has contributed towards complex understanding of processes constructing rural poverty. My understanding of language as not just a transmitter, but as an inseparable part of the everyday experiences and academic concepts which links them together, has encouraged my search for fluid and heterogeneous interpretations of rural social malaise.

At the same time, writing an academic work in a second language was not an easy experience. Inevitably, fluidity of expression of my ideas was impaired by my limited vocabulary, particularly when I was trying to articulate vernacular languages of rural people. Moreover, Russian cultural symbols did not translate comfortably into British and Irish context so that I had to rely on the assistance of my friends to explain me the wider cultural meanings of specific notions and expressions (for which I am very grateful to them).

Moreover, my background and nationality have enriched this project with different cultural inputs. My knowledge of Russian techniques and methodology of researching rural poverty (considered in more detail in Chapter 2), together with my different theoretical background have brought different cultural equipment into this study. The need to bring together two cultures in a comparative analysis has added to the complexity of my research, but it has also provided me with variegated cultural insights on the nature of rural poverty. It has allowed me to balance the strengths and weaknesses of insider/outsider positions while doing my research.

3 Being an insider in Russia meant easy access, the ability to have a feel for situation through reading non-verbal clues, and closer understanding of culture. At the same time, it was difficult to see a bigger picture (have a strategic vision) and disassociate myself from specific “traditions” of doing research. The advantages of my outsider’s position in Ireland were curiosity with the unfamiliar, the ability to raise provocative questions, and being seen as not-belonging to any local interest groups. The weaknesses were the obvious lack of personal knowledge of the context and lack of “haptic” feeling of local processes. My comparative
Next, my maleness played an important part in the development of this research project. From the onset I was aware of the potential problems of research which privileged specific experiences of rural life and failed to recognise gender as a meaningful cleavage in the organisation of rural society. My uneasiness with stereotyping the rural poor as rural women has encouraged my research to go beyond these traditional classifications and to challenge appropriation of women's voices and experiences in the male-dominant rural policy making. Firstly, I felt that emphasising analytic concerns with the interrelations between maleness and poverty lessens the exclusivity of the research subject and broadens the agenda of research on rural problematics. In the process of my study it became increasingly clear that a singular focus on the poverty experiences of women, especially one that fails to examine how these experiences articulate with those of men and with encompassing structures of power – runs the risk of essentialising “woman” and therefore hindering the realization of just and equal anti-poverty strategies. Secondly, I was uneasy with the specific focus on the key components of the systems of prestige/stigma and moral evaluation (the concepts of “reason” and “passion”) deployed in male-dominated policy making. I felt unhappy about implicitly ascribing male values and qualities such as “rationality”, “logic” and “purposefulness” to the decision-making process. This has encouraged my search for alternative, less rational and more sensuous ways of interpreting complex (not exclusively male) poverty experiences.

Lastly, my Christian understanding of the world was an integral part of this research. My concern with internally dissonant ways of dealing with “material” rural poverty has brought into especially sharp focus the merits of analysing different forms of rural social malaise without segregation and the privileging of certain “poor” groups (deserving/non deserving). Moreover, my faith and beliefs have encouraged me to look for more ethical and moral ways of dealing with sensitive poverty-related problems. Thus, my personality and reflexivity provide specific understandings of the subject of my research and define my position within rural poverty debates. This position is identified through the following discussion on the meanings of the words “rural” and “poverty” as they have been constructed in rural studies.

**Rurality/community**

This section considers the context of my research and provides a critical overview of the reformulation of the meanings of rurality and rural community encouraged by the recent cross-cultural study has helped to bring these “positional” and “strategic” knowledges of different contexts together.

4 See extended discussion on ethics of research in Chapter 2.
changes in social thought beyond the rural studies. It also studies the ways general shifts in understanding rurality/community have contributed to the evolution of these concepts in Ireland and Russia.

Generally speaking, there have been two major discursive strands describing these concepts in the previous social studies (see also Liepins, 2000 for a detailed review). The first group of approaches sought to extract precise and narrowly defined variables from these concepts, defining “community” and “rurality” on the basis of functions and observable characteristics. From this standpoint rural spaces were attributed specific features reproduced by “rural” processes (see Halfacree, 1993). This functional approach considered rurality as a space of stability and rigid stratification, consisting of established and discrete spatial configurations. From this perspective (rural) “community” was represented as a spatial and social arrangement specific to “material” understanding of rurality. In this functionalist discourse concepts of “rurality” and “community” were treated as homogeneous and uncontested, reducible to specific structures/functions.

In the earlier Irish rural studies “rurality” was described as a traditional space of “traditional culture” (Brown, 1985), “healthy” (because of different way of life), but isolated (backward) space (Bull et al., 1984; Cuddy, 1991). Russian rural studies provided similar functionalist definition of “rurality” as “agropromyshlennaya sreda”, i.e. agrindustrial, productivist space inscribed through the predominance of particular “traditional” (agricultural) practices (Zaslavskaya and Muchnik, 1980). In both countries the imagery of “rurality” as exclusively agricultural was based not only on its productive element but also on its moralistic expressions (farmers were seen as custodians of rural traditions, see McDonagh, 2001 and Vishnevsky, 1998 for an overview). These understandings of “rurality” entailed discrete and homogeneous definitions of “community” as a “refuge from modernity” (Brody, 1973; Valeev, 1986) and as a gluing together of simple society based on local proximity and mental connection (as opposed to a complex urban society, the other part of this rigid dichotomy). In this context, rural change meant gradual (from one discrete category to another) “urban-style modernisation” (Nikiforov, 1979; Fuks, 1982; Breathnach and Kelly, 1988; see also Wright, 1992).

The second group of approaches considered “rurality” as a specifically visual or “symbolic” construct produced in the process of “social representation of space” (Halfacree, 1993; 1995; Jones, 1995). From this standpoint “rurality” is seen as dematerialised, that is practices and processes which compose the fabric of rural everyday life are subjugated to analytic and cognitive representations, including academic and lay discourses of the countryside (see Halfacree 1993 and Day, 1998 for an overview). In this context “community” is also attributed specific “symbolic” meanings existing alongside its
material representations (Cohen, 1985; Wright, 1992). This approach suggested the existence of static and homogeneous meanings of the "community" based on timeless common values (see Day, 1998 for an overview).

In this context, earlier Irish rural studies, which focused exclusively on the symbolism of "rurality", ignored the role of material practices in the construction of meanings. Moreover, the imagery of the "ideal" countryside of the rustic idyll (O'Connor and Cronin, 1993, p.8) presented rurality as a unified, coherent and abstract structure, a product rather than a becoming entity (Boylan, 1992; Greer and Murray, 1993). In Russian studies, mythologies about "rurality" considered it as a "natural" and "open", a non-contested space of "better feeling and atmosphere" (Nikol'sky, 1996), which was subject to urban colonisation. In this context unifying images of "rurality" were translated into symbolically exclusive definitions of "communities" where actors shared common values and experiences (Lopatina and Nazarevsky, 1972; Raitviyr, 1979). The diversity of these symbolic discourses and power relations lurking behind specific representations (what actors were excluded/included in their formulation) were not explored.

The recent developments in social thought have questioned these limited conceptualisations of "rurality" and "community". First, the understanding of space as a heterogeneous construct continuously recreated through the interaction of socio-spatial practices (Peet, 1998; Whatmore, 1999; Crang and Thrift, 2000) challenged the homogeneous/functionalist definition of the "rural"/"community". A reductionist view of "rurality" as based on specific (authentic) social and spatial characteristics was also undermined by the emerging poststructuralist discourses interpreting rural space as a multiplicity of interrelated temporal and symbolic/spatial constructs5 (Lefebvre, 1991b; Massey, 1991). In a similar vein, the changing understanding of space has challenged any specifically contextualised and fixed vision of "community". The latter is now seen as a heterogeneous locality, where social activities and symbolic meanings are not necessarily limited to specific geographical locations (although in some rural studies the boundaries of many communities are still conveniently identified through their coincidence the physical limits of particular places).

In Russia Alexeev (1990) first challenged the homogeneous construction of "rurality" with his vision of "mnogolikaya derevnya" 6, followed by Zaslavskaya's (1999) conceptualisation of "rurality" as a multiple space embracing "geographical territory, social relations and general [cultural] links ... a space, rather than a dot in the map" [ibid.,

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5 As Mormont (1990) highlights, there is "no longer one single space, but a multiplicity of social spaces for one and the same geographical area" (p.34).

6"Mnogolikaya derevnya" (многоликая деревня) means different, multiple, multifaceted village (Alexeev, 1990).
In Ireland, Ó Cinnéide (1992a) and O'Hara and Commins (1998) have taken on board the ideas of “the post-productivist transition” of the countryside thus recognising it as a heterogeneous entity. In a similar vein, Vinogradsky (1996) has brought together material and imaginative communities in his work on the heterogeneous construction of countryside.

Second, new developments in cultural thought have challenged the isolated “symbolic” visions of “rurality” and “community”. Space is no longer considered as simply a product (be it “material” or “symbolic” construct), but also as a means of production. Taking on board Lefebvre’s (1991b) ideas about the production of space, “rurality” is now seen as being reproduced through the interaction of social practices and different representations of space. This has challenged the understatement of material practices in the production of meaning (“symbols” of “rurality”/”community”) and the uncontested construction of this meaning. “Rurality” is therefore seen as a complex space, where formal “representations of space”, developed in academic discourses reflecting dominant power, conflict with the “representational spaces” (everyday life’s constructs), both of which are reproduced through specific sets of social practices. “Rurality” is thus contested and practiced; its specific “localised” manifestations in the form of “communities” are also constructed through dynamic interaction between material practices and symbolic discourses.

The challenges to idyllistic visions of “rurality” in Irish studies were provided by the works of Smyth (1997) and Cawley and Keane (1999), who suggested new ways of knowing and understanding countryside as complex spaces. In Russia Alexeev and Simagin (1996) and Rodoman (1998) questioned the idealist visions of “rurality” providing the link between the imaginings and the processes which grounded them in specific social, economic and political spaces. Similarly, Nikulin (1999) reasserted the importance of practices in the reproduction of lived experiences (representational spaces) and representations of rural communities in Russia.

Third, a relational vision of “rurality” was further developed in recent works on collective interaction (Callon, 1986; Latour, 1986; Law, 1991), which conceptualised space as being reproduced within networks of flows of materials and meanings. New networked approaches provided opportunities for a re-assessment of multiplicity, hybridity and difference. Actors’ simultaneous participation in different localised and “stretched-out” (Silk, 1999) networks (“communities”) contribute to the construction of decentralised multiple “ruralities”, where social/cultural borders and differences were continuously (re)negotiated. From this standpoint “community” is seen as a relational setting for network interaction (Massey, 1991) providing alternative political possibilities (relevant developments in the Russian and the Irish rural studies are discussed in detail in chapter 5).
Fourth, contemporary understandings of change in social science have shifted attention to the *dynamics* of “rurality”/”community”. Changing visions of temporality of space, where it is seen as being a “process and in process” (Crang and Thrift, 2000), and different understandings of time-space compression (Le Heron, 1993; Swyngedouw, 2000) have brought about a conceptualisation of rurality as a fluid category, which is continuously materially and culturally restructured. From this standpoint, fixed definitions of “rurality”/”community” (as authentic and “traditional”) no longer fit within new complex understanding of progress and change, that is they are not limited exclusively to material modernisation. Moreover, recognition of increasing role of rural places in consumption (Cloke, 2003) has also questioned “traditionalist” character of rural practices.

Following this theoretical turn, there have been recent attempts of fluid reformulation of “rurality” and community in both Russian and Irish rural studies (Connolly, 1997; Duffy, 1997; Vinogradsky, 2002; Fadeeva, 2003b), which are understood through their internal diversities which aggregate rather than eradicate divergent experiences.

My work on rural poverty takes on board these recent reformulations of rurality. It is energised by the visions of “rurality” as a heterogeneous and dynamic space co-constructed by the actors within the networks of spatial practices and competing social and cultural symbols. The dynamics and fluidity of rural space involve a disappearance of rigid borders in the creation of “stretched-out” communities, and continuous re-articulation of differences as they are no longer stable and defined in relation to an imagined core or centre. Informed by this fluid/networked approach to defining “rurality”/”community”, my analysis opens up “invisible” spaces of contestation within these seemingly unified concepts and provides opportunities for previously unnoticed transgressive practices to be articulated. In so doing, “hidden” problems such as poverty and social exclusion are brought to the fore and new visions of rural problematic are constructed. Taking on board these reformulations of “rurality”/”community” the next section provides re-evaluation of social problems in the countryside.

**Rural problematic**

This section extends previous discussion on conceptualisations of rurality and critically analyses what “problems” are associated with these specific visions of countryside. It considers how poverty is discursively placed within rural context in the wide body of writing which provides theoretical ideas concerning both rural “problematic” and “non-problematic”. It starts with the brief overview of the analysis of social problematics in the Anglo-American rural literatures emphasising the ways in which wider debates on poverty,
deprivation and exclusion were registered in recent rural studies. The section later develops to demonstrate how these approaches affected development of rural poverty studies in Russia and Ireland. The overview of recent debates on rural problematic reveals theoretical sources of inspiration for my analysis of rural poverty and indicates specific conceptual energies which provided the motivation for my work. In the following discussion these energies are brought together in several strands which present an analytical framework for understanding "problems" in rural societies.

An initial theme in recent studies of rural poverty has resulted from the interest in relations between socio-economic change in the 1970s, policy-making and the living conditions of rural people. In Britain consideration of these themes has led to acknowledgement of the existence of poverty and recognition of its complexity. The works of Walker (1978) and Shaw (1979) have demonstrated that poverty and deprivation had different dimensions related to the inequality of opportunities in the countryside. Drawing on this vision of poverty as a combination of different components (in Shaw's terms, "household", "opportunity" and mobility" deprivation), later studies have developed specific indicators to measure different aspects of problems associated with the impoverishment of rural people. The major research work on poverty conducted by McLaughlin (1986; 1988) has led to the establishment of a complex deprivation index, which allowed publicising the scope and the magnitude of the problems experienced by rural people.

In a similar vein, several studies in the USA have illustrated the importance of poverty and social composition of the rural poor with recourse to the indicators explaining limited opportunity structure in the countryside (Rungeling et al., 1977; Ross and Morrissey, 1987; Sawhill, 1988; Deavers, 1989; Rodgers and Weiher, 1989). Poor people were thought to be isolated in specific poor places which were defined on the basis of several variables exposing the lack of mobility and employment opportunities, limited diversity of social structure, and low investment in rural communities (see Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990a for a detailed review)\footnote{As Cloke (1993) argues, these normative definitions of rural problematic were situated in particular historical context, so the establishment of measurable poverty indicators was tied into loosely managerialist policy-making of that time.}. Despite bringing "rurality" and "poverty" together these early studies overemphasised material "problems" facing rural people and failed to address non-material considerations about the nature of rural problematic. Questions emerged over the ability of approaches overemphasising structuring of opportunity in specific places to interpret particular living experiences associated with poverty.

These experiential issues were explored in the second set of debates surrounding the interconnections between poverty and cultural knowledge of rural life. Several writings challenged social and cultural constructions of rurality which concealed the existence of
poverty in the countryside. In Britain several authors have exposed the rejection of poverty in the imagined geographies of the idyll-ised countryside (see Cloke et al., 1995 for a detailed review). Some indication of the links between poverty and rurality was presented by Bradley et al. (1986), who emphasised the existence of the “pervasive image” of the “non-problematic” countryside in the dominant ideology. Fabes et al. (1983) also challenged the idyllic constructions of the countryside which created a “problem-free” and “community-like” vision of “rurality”, cleansed from any negative images of poor or excluded people. Importantly, this study stressed the multifaceted nature of poverty experiences and revealed different responses to the problems of the poor and their immediate community. Later Scott et al. (1991) in the study of “hidden” deprivation in the countryside revealed the ways poverty is discursively and operationally excluded from rural policy making. The series of rural lifestyles’ studies (Cloke and Davies, 1992; Cloke and Milbourne, 1992; Cloke et. al., 1995; Cloke et. al., 1997; Cloke et al., 1998) provided further connections between rurality and poverty stressing the need to recognise the latter as a part of rural problematic. This research has drawn attention to the cultural aspect of rural poverty and stressed the need to reassess the notions of “problems” constructed in the minds of both rural residents and decision makers responsible for rural policies.

In the USA several authors have challenged the imagined geographies of rurality which naturalised poverty as an acceptable way of living in the “backward” countryside (Billings, 1974; Fitchen, 1981; 1991; O’Hare, 1988; Brown and Warner, 1991; RSSTFPRP, 1993). As Tickamyer and Duncan (1990a) summarise, these works have exposed the “neglect of complex rural poverty” in earlier research which attributed rural culture with little significance in the construction of rural problems. Moreover, these investigations of the cultural dimension of rural problems have questioned discursive constructions of rural poverty where it was captured as a means of normative differentiation between deserving and undeserving poor (see Cloke, 1995 for review). The uncovering of complex interrelationships between local cultures, opportunities and rural lifestyles dismissed the ideological myths about a “cycle” and “culture” of poverty (Townsend, 1993) where the latter was explained in clear-cut moral and individualistic terms (Duncan and Tickamyer, 1988; Tickamyer and Bokemeier, 1989; Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990b). As Cloke (1995) stresses, these studies underlined the specificity of poverty experiences hidden behind the ethnocentricity of idyllic constructions of rurality, highlighted the importance of prorural factors in the imagined rural geographies, and revealed the interconnections between the construction of cultural symbols of countryside and the production of difference in the form of gender, class and race.
This discussion on different representations of countryside has encouraged the development of a third main theme in the rural poverty studies, which comprises of the issue of diversity in rural life and the heterogeneity of problems experienced by rural people. The multiplicity of experiences of rural poverty and social exclusion in Britain was recognised in the series of rural development studies by Shucksmith and Chapman (1998), Philip and Shucksmith (1999), and Shucksmith (1999; 2001). These works emphasised the difference within rural population and analysed the effects of structural changes in rural economy and society on the lives of rural people. Here attention was drawn to the relational character of rural problems such as inadequate participation and powerlessness which were conceptualised as social exclusion. In a similar vein, Kempson and White (1998; 2003) have investigated the driving forces behind the multi-dimensional and dynamic process of social exclusion in the countryside. Moreover, the above-mentioned studies within the rural lifestyles project in the UK have brought together ideas developed in earlier rural research by means of recognising both the importance of material and non-material experiences in the construction of different poverty experiences. Importantly, these writings have highlighted the significance of studying the “messiness” of cultural poverty experiences, which cannot be neatly categorised in a tangible form. Different cross-cuts on rural poverty were also provided in the collection of works edited by Milbourne (1997), where researchers gave voice to the variety of “hidden” rural others who experienced poverty-related problems.

In the USA, several authors have stressed heterogeneity of poverty and considered its multiple constructions in policy and lay discourses. Sandefur and Tienda (1988) provided different accounts of powerlessness and marginalisation linking the issues of gender and race with the “problems” associated with rural poverty. Similarly, Palerm (1988) looked beyond the all-embracing structural factors in the analysis of different categories of “new rural poor”. In her two fundamental studies of poverty in rural America Duncan (1992; 1999) has provided a comprehensive analysis of heterogeneous poverty experiences. Importantly, she associated the power of income with the power of status, linking evident material problems of rural living with “hidden” and chaotic experiences of cultural marginalisation. As Cloke (1997) insists, these debates on heterogeneity of poverty look beyond monolithic construction of “poor rural people” and open up “other” poverties which are produced through a chaotic mixture of material and cultural experiences. Moreover, these works stressed the relational character of rural problems constructed within webs of the social and power relations in the countryside. These theoretical ideas, which drew attention to the dynamic, heterogeneous and relational character of rural problems, have provided opportunities for re-articulation of the rural
problematic in Irish and Russian academic discourses. First, increasing awareness of the importance of rural practices in the construction of “rurality” has de-materialised definitions of rural poverty. In the social exclusion discourse rural problems are being seen as non-material, and they are defined in terms of the extent to which individuals are able to participate in society life (Atkinson, 1997; Pringle, 1997; Silverman and Yanovitch, 2000; Borodkin, 2000; Patsiorkovsky, 2003). Second, new relational theories in Russian and Irish rural studies have encouraged development of more dynamic and fluid understandings of rural problems. New formulations of the rural problematic in terms of social exclusion referred to a dynamic process of being disengaged from the social, economic, political or cultural systems (Room, 1995; Walsh, 1999; Gordon, 2001). In discourses of problematics poverty as a non-relational concept (linked to the distribution of resources) has become subordinated to the definition of social exclusion, which is concerned with social relations (Lynch, 1996; Storey, 1999a; Muzdybaev, 2001). Third, recognition of the heterogeneity of the countryside has encouraged heterogeneity of rural poverty research in Russia and Ireland. The apparent similarities between poverty experiences, which were somehow conditioned by the overwhelming social and political structures, are challenged. Rural people were acknowledged to have different poverty experiences and constructions of “problematic” circumstances (Cook et al., 2000; Yaroshenko, 2001). Fourth, a networked understanding of rural space and relational vision of poverty has challenged previously existed hierarchies of important/non-important (non/“deserving”) poor, and power structures which neglected specific poverty experiences (Gradosel’skaya, 1999; Rodionova, 2000; Storey, 2001). This has highlighted the previous “exclusion of the excluded” whose living experiences were marginalised within dominant discourses of rural problematics.

Working from this combined heritage of poverty studies and broader ideas about different understanding of space in contemporary social thought my study of rural social breakdown develops multidimensional view of the rural problematics. Inspired by previous research on relational and complex poverty my work emphasises the need to go beyond merely material understanding of poverty and exclusion, and considers the latter as processes and product of different actors’ connections (networks) involving cultural, material and political dimensions. The ideas about “messiness” and “everydayness” of poverty developed in the previous studies have encouraged my search for “different” rural poor whose problematic experiences can not be neatly categorised. Informed by previous research that deconstructs dominant images of rural poverty, my approach transcends the dichotomy between material and symbolic visions of rural problematic, and brings together outside (political) structures and inside (everyday) experiences.
In my work I do not draw rigid boundaries between the notions of poverty and social exclusion. It is not the clear definition of these concepts, but rather their internal (heterogeneous, dynamic, networked) character which is important for my analysis of rural social breakdown. First, the boundaries between “poverty” and “social exclusion” are not clearly defined in academic and policy discourses. Levitas (1996; 1998) insists that social exclusion debate is just a “currently fashionable” way to talk about poverty or even simply a subset of poverty. Pierson (2001) and Barry (2002) suggest that social exclusion discourse is favoured by the policy makers because it downplays the reality of poverty and absolves their responsibilities of having to do something about it. In this context, the prioritisation of social exclusion over poverty in discourses of the rural problematics seems rather controversial.

Second, a fluid understanding of the rural social malaise allows interpretation of the latter as an ongoing and developing process, a product in the state of becoming. Actors are linked together in networks in which their connections identify their positions and define their exclusion or inclusion. The dynamic poverty experiences of actors, which construct representational spaces of poverty, are therefore interconnected in the wider networks, where together with other symbols and meanings (spaces of representation) they construct exclusionary trends. The separation of the two concepts suggests ossification and materialisation which denies their relational character.

Third, lay experiences of people living in the conditions of poverty do not necessarily fit within the definitions of “poverty” and “social exclusion” constructed in the academic and policy discourses (see Halfacree, 2001 on the problems of categorisation). Attempts to create clear boundaries for vernacular spaces of poverty pose a threat of them being dominated and controlled by well-defined academic representations. Rigid classification of “messy” lay rural discourses also excludes those people whose experiences do not fall into the pre-defined categories of “poverty” and “social exclusion”.

My analysis therefore focuses on the meaning of poverty and social exclusion rather than on different external definitions of rural social malaise. I want to examine cultural constructions of poverty as well as to grasp people’s own understanding of their problems. In so doing, the object of my study – “poor (excluded) people in the countryside” – is identified. Moreover, the task is to understand the link between poverty and exclusion, that is why and how people who are “poor” are also marginalised (or feel excluded) in terms of access to power and ability to exercise their choice. The next section considers the rural problematic in terms of otherness and marginalisation. It studies the ways society or community marginalises certain individuals as “other” in attempt to repress or exclude them.
Rural others/rural poor

This section discusses the interplay of power relations in the construction of difference and otherness in the countryside and the ways this differentiation of rural spaces leads to the reproduction of poverty. It develops earlier discussion in this chapter on “rurality” and “poverty” touching upon the relations between “poverty” and “otherness” of the rural poor. In so doing it follows the path indicated in the previous section: to look out for “hidden” poverty experiences and to listen to the voices of “other” rural poor marginalised within dominant discourses of rural problematics.

The idea of the “other” is based on the assumption that human existence is made meaningful only by its recognition of the other. For example, Lacan (1978) views the “other” as everything (person or a group) which makes the subject meaningful and determines its position in the world. It is a fictional image of the subject (self) which has to be separated from in order to become independent. This fictional image is constructed on the basis of different ideologies and laws which regulate socialisation of the subject. On the basis of specific ideologies (sets of meanings, norms and cultural codes) certain groups can be identified as “normal” and dominant in relation to a subordinated “other”. Difference therefore can be harnessed to the construction of social identities and related power structures, which legitimise exploitation, repression and exclusion of the “other” (different strands of “otherness” are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2).

It is this particular interpretation of otherness and its relation to (rural) exclusion I consider in this section. It emphasises the complexity of poverty experiences which include stigmatisation of the “poor” as a marginal, dependent group who are perceived to be a danger to the stability (because of different moral values) and a burden for the viability (because of inability to contribute to common good) of rural communities. This section therefore analyses different approaches to the categorisation of “other” rurals which are not only seen as poor but also as inferior in cultural and social terms to the dominant rural groups.

As Cloke and Little (1997) note, development of rural research was marked by the shift from studying regularity and sameness inherent in the structuring of opportunities to the theorising of differences and otherness in cultural geographies. The neglected facets of rural research were highlighted in the debates on otherness between Philo (1992; 1993) and Murdoch and Pratt (1993; 1994) where discriminating mechanisms and powers of exclusion were linked with the cultural constructions of the countryside. By means of encouraging alternative rural studies these writings challenged the ways in which “other”
rural worlds were comprehended and sounded warnings against fixing and stereotyping "othered" identities. Later several works have offered different cuts on rural "otherness", uncovering the relations which produced "messy" and less categorised "other" identities (Bell and Valentine, 1995; Halfacree, 1996; Milbourne, 1997; Sibley, 1997; Cloke and Little, 1997; Little and Jones, 2000; Cloke et al., 2002; Little, 2002; Murdoch, 2003; Sibley, 2003). As Cloke (2002) summarises, these recent works have studied complex domains of difference and hybrid "otherness" produced by the intersections of various rural practices, symbols and lifestyles. Recent research on "other" groups and "other" experiences in rural areas looked at the spaces "in between" commonly acknowledged categories of interpretation such as gender, race, and sexuality. These studies of processes involving renegotiation of self/other identities in the countryside emphasised difference rather than sameness, discussed difference of "other" experiences (marginalisation of marginalised) and suggested the ways to broaden understanding of links between self and other.

There are two major discursive strands on otherness which provide different reference frames for the studies of rural exclusion. The first is based on Foucault's (1980) discourse on power and resistance, which views the other as a discrete and well-defined category. In line with this discourse, creation of any kind of self involves domination in the sense that any description of self immediately posits nonself, the other of the self, which is excluded from the self by definition. According to Foucault, self-construction implies "normalisation", that is restriction of multiplicity of forms of practice and identity to specific forms which are labelled normal and abnormal (in Foucault's view modern self is constructed as autonomous, unified, moral and rational). This rigid understanding of difference implies construction of well-defined exclusionary spaces with the fixed and visible boundaries controlled through the mechanisms of domination and repression.

This theoretical background chimes with the essentialist studies of social exclusion in Ireland and Russia, which misrepresented the diversity of "other" experiences (Cawley and Keane, 1999; Collins and Kennelly, 1999; Deineko et al., 1999; Korobeinikov, 2000; Ellis, 2003; McCashin et al., 2003). While looking at the rural worlds through various "other" windows the difference of the "other" rural people was assumed as fixed and timeless. The essentialising of others takes away alternatives as choice; rather they are simply portrayed as the attributes of other social groups different from ourselves. Rural people are seen as backward, because it is a part of their "traditional" culture; they are considered poor because their "traditional" working practices are vestiges of (economically unsuccessful) pre-industrial existence (Zaslavskaya, 1975; Zaslavskaya and Muchnik, 1980; Tovey et al.,
1996; Sullivan, 2003). Otherness, therefore, is clearly linked with poverty and is seen as a part of rural problematic.

These studies, with some significant and notable exceptions, gave excess privilege to the minority which was identified as “poor”, while often omitting other exclusionary experiences. For example, both Russian and Irish discourses on rural social exclusion have tended to ignore identities of sexuality (Harris, 1972; Leyton, 1975; Commins, 2000; Ryvkina, 1979; Kalugina, 1996) and homelessness (Kane, 1997; Patsiorkovsky et al., 1998; Patsiorkovsky, 2003) within the countryside as well as experiences of the young people (Patsiorkovsky et al., 1991; but see Bradley and Valiulis, 1997 and Ryvkina, 1998 for introduction to some “forgotten” items for the rural research agenda). Material poverty was put in the centre of the unified and rigid exclusionary space so that other transgressive experiences were considered from the poverty standpoint (Tovey et al., 1996). The others which did not belong to this “poor” space of exclusion were therefore seen as “foreigners” or “generalised others”. This entailed an “exclusion of excluded” or purification of discourses on otherness.

Although this understanding of self/other relations explains the mechanism of exclusion, it fails to address the heterogeneity and dynamics of this process. First, this understanding of difference does not explain the dynamics of cultures which do not involve timeless essences. Those who are considered as others in one time-space of exclusion may be included into other time-spaces. Second, cultures are never pure in form but contain contradictions and conflicts. The others which are created within these different cultures are therefore also internally different. Third, cultures are not separate from each other, but involve an interchange of ideas and symbols, and this exchange involves transformation and hybridization of others.

An alternative discursive strand, which is based on works of Marcuse (1955) and Deleuze and Guattari (1987), attempts to resolve the problems of static and fixed definitions of otherness. It emphasises the need to take “more of the self out the sphere of social control” and to consider the other as a more fluid category (Connolly, 1984, p.242). Abolition of the permanent boundaries between self and other unifies the former and gives way to a more plural self, able to tolerate a high degree of autonomy and inconsistency of its component parts, aspects, subidentities or subpersonalities. This fluid understanding of difference implies construction of transformative spaces of otherness, where constant transgression of the limits of power imposed by some individuals causes the others constantly to reinvent themselves. Transgression becomes a process of continuous self-transcendence, so that exclusionary spaces become inclusionary at the same time.
This fluid approach to understanding difference has inspired a series of studies on rural social exclusion, which moved beyond the rigid self/other dualism and concentrated on the cases where norms overlap and cross-over, boundaries are blurred, and interactions recreate hybrid groups of actors (in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), assemblages). It is this context it is possible to consider recent shift in Russian and Irish rural studies which turned to investigating complex transformation of places of otherness (Varley, 1991; Connolly, 1997; Vinogradsky, 1999; Fadeeva 2002; 2003a; 2003b). For example, Russian studies of migration into the countryside reflect on the fluid transformation of identities of “self” and “other” in this process. The positions of incomers in rural communities change depending on their qualities: originally poor rural in-migrants are included because of their shared histories, but excluded on the basis of their ethnic difference and status (Fadeeva, 2003b). Later assimilation into communities creates links between poor people and others with the similar ethnic roots, so that original exclusive spaces become inclusive. At the same time, rich elderly people who come into the village are initially included but later become othered by infirmity. In Ireland, the in-migration of travellers, who settle in the rural areas, also changes visions of the rural “other” (the settled travellers are no longer feared as unfaithful and invasive “genuine Gypsies”, but they are excluded because of their poverty, that is their supposed inability to contribute to the local community) (see MacLaughlin, 1995 for a detailed review of this issue).

Thus, instead of giving value to the poor as an entity, the fluid approach to (rural) otherness attempts to deconstruct the poor-wealthy binary itself. The aim of these studies is to destabilise existing differentiations; to consider how different experiences of people living in poverty construct different “poor” identities. These works form a part of the wider poststructuralist framework of reasoning, which originates in Derrida’s (1978) discussion on deconstruction of binaries and argues against essentialising “poverty” and “wealth” as coherent, bound and stable entities. Reproduction of such dualisms of thinking entrenches “the poor” in a position of the “other” in social research, because in this case the inner logic and values of “poor” people are placed in the isolated and subjugated position within the dominant normative framework of “wealthy” society. The logic of many poverty studies, as Yapa (2002) argues, is based on creation of the “less developed other”, which conceals the identity of the poor people and makes poverty something it is NOT – exclusively economic and material “problem” considered outside of the context of indigenous knowledge and local cultures. Binary thinking about poverty/wealth and problem/non-problem categories therefore denies multiple understanding of innumerable social troubles and marginalises different ways in which social malaise can be addressed outside the dominant framework of economic-centred poverty studies. Poststructuralist
approaches to studying poverty problematise the assumptions about poverty as a problem which is exclusively rooted in material scarcity and go beyond the realm of simplistic economic poverty (as opposed to wealth) to identify numerous agents constructing this phenomenon.

It is the heritage of these studies which is taken on board in my research on rural social exclusion. In my work I argue for creative reformulation of poverty as a complex of different discursive aggregations of a large number of things, which are considered within multiple (rather than isolated and simplified) systems of signification. Using the energies of poststructuralist discourses on poverty and fluid and transformative approach in particular, I consider the effects of rural social breakdown on changes in the sense of the self: in terms not only of those who retain dominant positions in rural society, but also of those whose identities are undervalued. I also reconsider the effects of recent rural development policies in Ireland and Russia from the perspective of multiple and fluid otherness. The idea is to question the inclusive character of these policies which, although providing relief ("benefits") for unemployed, unskilled and low-paid villagers, also mark out a section of rural population as different and liable to stigmatization as the "poor". I want to see how the lines of "otherness" are redrawn by these policies and why "others" show a resistance to join in and be "included". In order to provide the context for this discussion the next section considers policy approaches to tackling social exclusion in Russia and Ireland.

Policy responses to rural problematic

This section studies the long heritage of policy responses to the rural problematic identified above, and it considers the ways rural policies have evolved in Russia and Ireland. It is important to stress from the onset that any attempt to represent evolving discourses and practices in rural policy making in Ireland and Russia over the past half-century risks oversimplification. While it is convenient to describe the 1960s as economic modernisation in both Ireland and Russia, the 1970s as "integrated" social and economic development, the 1980s as industrial development in Ireland and market liberalisation in Russia, and the 1990s as multifunctional "grassroots" development in Ireland and the absence of development in Russia, development ideas and their effects on rural policies did not undergo these transitions in such an organised and uncluttered manner. The interpretation of the evolution of rural policies needs to be mindful of their hybridity, different temporality and spatiality by means of accounting for gaps and connections, but it
nevertheless needs to identify the main themes that have had major impacts on
development practice since the 1960s.

Table 1 attempts to put major rural policy themes and narratives on a timeline, highlighting
mainstream rural development narratives rather than explaining their definitive structure
and interrelations. It is evident that some ideas only become influential after a certain
period of time since their formulation, while the others nearly immediately gain strength.
This is true, for example, of the development gateways approach in Ireland (Cawley and
Keane, 1999) which was widely deployed as a guiding principle for rural development
practice in the 1990s. This approach, however, originates from the strands of growth
centres policy of the 1960s (Cuddy, 1991).

In explaining the development of policy ideas portrayed in Table 1, it is important to
distinguish majority discourses from minority ones, as well as general development
narratives from the ones focusing specifically on dealing with rural poverty and
deprivation. Economic modernisation in the 1960s and its adjuncts in the form of structural
adjustments (Ireland) and market liberalisation (Russia) in the 1980s were multi-sectoral in
intent, as also were their extensions into the areas of state-market relations in the 1990s
(Ireland). However, these macro policy processes did not have anything intrinsically rural
at their root, and were simply implemented in rural settings. Although two consecutive
Irish Programmes for Economic expansion (1964-1972) contained separate chapters on
rural development, they just reflected the wider strive for improvement of productivity and
competitiveness of the country's economy (Commins, 1993). In a similar vein, the first 7-
year development plan in Soviet Union/Russia (1959-1966) has concentrated on economic
expansion without specific “rural” proofing (Zaslavskaya and Muchnik, 1980). In both
countries rural was associated with agriculture, so that policy makers were mainly
concerned with the problems of incomes and equality between farmers. Despite the
acknowledgement of rural poverty in Ireland there was no specific emphasis on anti-
poverty initiatives, while in the USSR poverty has never been officially recognised.

The flirtation in the 1970s with the “integrated” rural policies engendered mainly
economy-based approach, with the “social” programmes of rural development
complementing urban-style economic modernisation. Ireland’s joining the EEC meant
structural adjustment of the country’s rural policies in order to be accommodated within
broader and not solely economic-based European programmes (Keane, 1992).

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8 “Rural proofing” adopted by the British and Irish rural development agencies in the 1990s meant that during
development and implementation of policies decision makers were expected to systematically think about the
impacts in rural areas and make adjustments to their initiatives if appropriate.
Table 1. Major themes and narratives in Russian (Soviet) and Irish rural policies, 1960s-2000s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Economic (industrial) development</td>
<td>Job creation</td>
<td>Rural as mostly agricultural</td>
<td>Multifunctional development</td>
<td>“Holistic” development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rise of NGOs</td>
<td>Endogeneous/homogeneous</td>
<td>Area-based development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RD as process not product</td>
<td>Rural = homogeneous</td>
<td>Rural governance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women in development</td>
<td>“Grassroots” (actor-oriented)</td>
<td>Heterogeneous rurality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty alleviation</td>
<td>Development gateways</td>
<td>Local cultures</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Poor” small farmers</td>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Social inclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender and development</td>
<td>Poverty eradication</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty reduction</td>
<td>“Hidden” poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic modernisation</td>
<td>“Integrated” rural development</td>
<td>“Physical” planning</td>
<td>“Poor” communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Elderly/Migrants/Homeless)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensification of agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Backward” countryside</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth centres</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Poor” farmers</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Russia</strong></td>
<td>Multifunctional development</td>
<td>Virtual development</td>
<td>Economic/ social development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth linkages</td>
<td>Retreat of the state</td>
<td>Centralisation and control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market liberalisation</td>
<td>Limited agricultural support</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural as mostly agricultural</td>
<td>Sustainable livelihoods</td>
<td>Complex rurality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegation and deregulation</td>
<td>Rural as absent (agricultural)</td>
<td>Sustainable livelihoods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>Recognised polarisation</td>
<td>Women in development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridging the country/city gap</td>
<td>Abject poverty prevention</td>
<td>Poverty alleviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underdeveloped communities</td>
<td>Rural = “poor” (poor areas)</td>
<td>“Poor” communities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Russia/USSR, a new emphasis on “rationalisation” of development instigated village consolidation (so-called sseleniye) programmes aimed at designating rural growth poles in order to use economies of scale and to concentrate investments in infrastructure and social services (“social” development; Alexeev, 1990). Although these programmes might have contributed to the pursuit of specifically rural policies, this has more to do with the identification of “rurality” with “poverty” than with anything specifically rural in their formulation as development theories. Non-“rural” practices (such as subsistence agriculture and brewing) were excluded from development discourses.

After the 1970s there was a division in the ways rural policies evolved in the two countries. In Russia/USSR a wider adoption of social programmes of rural development was encouraged by the ideas of rural “growth linkages”, which recognised the links between farm and non-farm economy and rural society. A critical attribute of these rural policies was that both growth and equity goals were pursued simultaneously via the emphasis on multifunctional community development (Strongina, 1986). At the same time, market liberalisation which marked the beginning of transition from the communist regime has brought some innovations to the rural planning. Most of them were related to deregulation of agriculture and appearance of semi-private farmers, who were expected to play a key role in overall economic growth and provide employment opportunities for the landless poor (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997). Small-farm agriculture therefore formed the central focus of the rural development strategies, which rested on the assumption that the rural poor were poor and powerless members of the unviable collective farms. With the small-farm agriculture considered to be the very engine of growth and rural development the state planning system was torn apart with internal conflicts. On the one hand, multifunctional rural planning implied support of development initiatives involving all members of rural community with the overwhelming majority employed at the collective farms. On the other hand, the small-farm-first narrative in development programmes entailed empowerment of selected people involved in agriculture-related businesses who were willing to take initiative and to explore opportunities provided by market liberalisation. This internal conflict has had two major consequences, which were manifest in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. First, the majority of rural people felt disenfranchised from the rural policy-making and were therefore unwilling to take part in “multifaceted” rural development initiatives, so the latter began to degenerate into more top-down formal campaigns (Alexeev, 1990; Nefedova and Ioffe, 1997). On the other hand, privileging of small farmers in rural planning has led to their alienation in rural communities thus significantly undermining their abilities to spearhead rural growth and development (Kolganov, 1999).
In Ireland, there was a paradigm shift from the top-down economic or industrial policy focus in the early 1980s\(^9\) to the bottom up or “process” approach in the late 1980s, which envisaged rural development as a more integrated and participatory process (including the “poor” themselves; O’Hara and Commins, 1991). These ideas gained strength in the next decade, when narratives of participatory learning in action and actor-oriented development became major part of rural policies (Commins, 1993). Endogeneous development approaches (such as LEADER programmes, for a detailed review see Storey, 1999b and Ray, 2000), however, considered “rural areas” as potentially homogeneous and glossed over internal social and cultural inequality (Cawley and Keane, 1999). Nevertheless, the energetic pursuit of participatory poverty assessments (Nolan and Callan, 1994; Curtin et al., 1996; Callan et al., 1996; Nolan et al., 1998; Nolan and Whelan, 1999) and the empowerment of the “poor” was indicative of a policy switch towards the social problems of countryside. Rural problematics, however, were identified with material (measurable) poverty, so that the “hidden” poor were excluded from the jurisdiction of rural policies.

In Russia the breakdown of the welfare state in the early 1990s has created a policy vacuum with no specific programmes of rural development in place. The 5-year Federal programme on “Russian rural revival” adopted in 1991 worked only for a year, while implementation of the programme on “Rural social development” adopted by the former Soviet parliament in 1990 stopped due to legal inconsistencies (Kolganov, 1999). Limited government support of viable agricultural enterprises and the \textit{laissez-faire} approach towards once strongly regulated personal farming (sustainable livelihoods) were the only signs of Russian rural development in the 1990s (Serova \textit{et al.}, 2001). Rural development in Russia took the form of implementation of series of short-term rural initiatives in Ireland which McDonagh (2001) calls a “development spectacle” (p.108). The Russian government’s aim was “to deal with the abject poverty” without considering its heterogeneous manifestations (Zaslavskaya, 1999), so inconsistent policy interventions were meant to pacify any possible rural social unrest (thus identifying “rurality” with “poverty”).

Current rural policies in Ireland and Russia take more cross- and multi-sectoral view of the possibilities of poverty reduction. In Russia, the newly adopted Federal Programme for Rural Social Development (Government of the Russian Federation, 2003) sets up amongst its priorities provision of environment for start-up of non-farm activities, removing barriers to trade and mobility, and other potential non-farm means by which the options and opportunities for the rural poor can be expanded in variety and range. The heterogeneity of the countryside, although recognised in this programme, is seen as a problem for

\(^9\) McDonagh (2001) stresses the “absence of rural development” in early 1980s (p.90).
controlling and regulatory of rural policies\textsuperscript{10}. In Ireland, the multiple realities of rural poverty are more readily recognised in policy documents (Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999; Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 1999; Inter-Departmental Policy Committee, 2000; Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2001). A new emphasis on rural social inclusion rejecting overarching theories as guides to action (recognition of uniqueness of individual experiences of poverty), the rise of gender as a concern in rural development is a part of new poverty reduction bias in rural policies. The shift away from "farm first" thinking in Irish rural policy making provides possibilities for re-evaluation of the assets and diverse strategies of "poor" households and opens up spaces of "hidden" poor\textsuperscript{11}.

The analysis of Irish and Russian rural policies undertaken in this section sets out a context for my study of rural poverty. It explains the specific categorisations of rurality and rural problematics incorporated into decision making process in the two countries. This analysis has also demonstrated that despite some notable positive developments aimed at improving living conditions in the countryside rural policies have often suffered from inconsistency and inflexibility in addressing the issues related to rural poverty. This understanding of successes and failures of previous attempts to deal with rural problems sets the general course for development of my study and identifies my research questions, which are considered in the next section.

\textbf{Research objectives and outline of the thesis}

The main objective of this research project is to look into new ways of doing rural policy making which account for and work with the heterogeneity of poverty experiences. From the general research themes introduced above I want to pursue rather more specific research objectives:

- to discover the mechanisms producing poverty and social exclusion in the Irish and Russian countrysides
- to investigate the multiplicity of poverty (exclusionary) experiences
- to examine exclusionary mechanisms within different networks which construct and differentiate rural spaces
- to determine the role of interactions in social networks in the production and alleviation of poverty

\textsuperscript{10} The programme mentions "highly heterogeneous rural areas" as a source of potential instability (ibid., no pagination).
\textsuperscript{11} O'Hara and Commins (1998) provide examples of new anti-poverty programmes aimed at the elderly and disabled people.
• to study the workings of policy networks and to identify the influences of specific contextualised policy initiatives on rural social malaise
• to understand the reasons of failure of previous attempts to deal with rural poverty
• to reveal the ways different symbolic constructions of rurality shape localised social and political interactions and differentiate specific rural societies
• to explore the relationships between social and policy actors within the networks constructing specific rural localities in the two countries, and to understand the combined affect of these interrelations on rural poverty
• to suggest new ways of understanding poverty and dealing with rural social malaise

The structure of this thesis reflects changing emphases and evolution of the specific concerns discussed above. Chapter 2 provides an overview of methodological approaches which reflect ways of addressing the theoretical concerns discussed in the introduction. Apart from outlining the means and tools which were used to construct and obtain information for this study, the chapter also underlines important theoretical issues which shaped the research process. In so doing it both grounds my empirical study within the wider theoretical framework and critically evaluates the specific strengths and weaknesses of these theoretical inputs into my research.

Chapter 3 begins with the premise that the countryside is hybrid and complex, thus identifying ways of researching the processes which produce different ruralities. It introduces the concepts of social and policy networks and discusses different mechanisms of network organisation. Emphasis is given to the explanation of network processes through which rural spaces become differentiated and their constituent elements are separated. The chapter continues with the analysis of theoretical constructs that underpin anti-poverty policy making. The failure of policy networks to respond adequately to rural problems fuels the critique of this concept and opens up a discussion on mechanisms of power and their use in policy making for interpreting poverty experiences and articulating anti-poverty actions. This chapter re-discovers power as a productive, creative and not repressive force shaping relational arrangements of actors within multiple networks. With this vision of power as fluid and creative comes a different understanding of difference as mobile and changing; difference which does not imply otherness and exclusion. This chapter searches for new ways of policy making which uses power in a fluid and non-restrictive ways.
The previous theoretical discussion on plurality of countrysides is contextualised in Chapter 4. It outlines different constructions of ruralities both within lay and academic discourses in Russia and Ireland. First, it studies the ways in which these symbolic constructions shape interactions between social actors within specific rural localities in the two countries. Second, it explores the ways in which multiple constructions of rurality are manipulated in rural policies and translated into context-specific political actions. The chapter focuses on the ways different readings of ruralities implicated in social and policy actions construct criteria of exclusion of specific actors from localised networks.

In the following Chapters 5, 6 and 7 interactions within social networks and policy structures, and their effect on difference and exclusion are empirically grounded within particular rural contexts. Chapter 5 analyses the reality of mixed and messy connections within social networks which produce specific rural settings. It considers the links between place, identity and connectedness within social webs of communication, with an emphasis on the ability of social actors to differentiate specific rural contexts in their everyday interactions. Spatial and temporal gaps, and unstable and fake (mis)connections between different networks identify the areas of poverty and exclusion of actors, which are studied in Chapter 6. My study follows the actors in their everyday lives and explores the "messiness" of their poverty experiences. In so doing, it explores the ways in which fluid poverty is constructed and analyses how it fits within social and policy networks. This chapter also considers the affect specific contextualised confluences of the networks have on alleviation of rural social malaise. Chapter 7 pushes the boundaries of my research beyond the field of "social" interactions. It considers different connections between multiple networks producing complex rural spaces and studies the ways specific social contexts restrict or promote policy actions. The chapter reveals the areas of cohesion or non-cohesion of social and policy networks in specific rural contexts.

The final chapter draws conclusions on the ways poverty-related problems are addressed in Irish and Russian rural policies. It questions the notions of "success" and "progress" in rural development and suggests different ways of addressing rural problems.
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCHING RURAL POVERTY: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS
CHAPTER 2. RESEARCHING RURAL POVERTY: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter aims to link the theoretical material covered so far with an empirical framework of my study. In so doing, it provides an overview of methodological considerations, which are central to this work. The main purpose is not just to find out what strategies can be implemented to tackle my research questions, but also to consider what means can be used to obtain and construct the information necessary to answer those questions.

This chapter begins with the analysis of methodological approaches which reflect ways of addressing the theoretical concerns related to studying complex and networked constructions of poverty and otherness. The chapter continues discussion on the complexities of studies of "other" rurals started in the Introduction. It attempts to find an appropriate balance between restricting research on particular subjects of poverty and otherness and encouraging research which broadens understanding of poverty and unfolds the links between self and other. In so doing it both grounds my empirical study within the wider theoretical framework and critically evaluates the specific strengths and weaknesses of these theoretical inputs into my research. The chapter focuses on several important issues which shaped the research process, including ethics and morality of doing participatory study. Finally, it provides analysis of specific research techniques, explains selection of the study areas and reflects on the problems experienced during my fieldwork.

Understanding the networks

Having determined that this thesis uses networked approach to understanding rural space and poverty, it seems reasonable to use the mode of inquiry commonly known as "network analysis". It is not quite a formal theory but rather a broad strategy, "a loose federation of approaches" (Burt, 1980) to investigating social structure, which I intend to implement in my study of social networks. What these approaches have in common is that they subject human behaviour to anti-categorical analysis, rejecting the idea that social behaviour totally results from individuals' common possession of attributes and norms (Bott, 1971; Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982). Network theory, when trying to explain why people behave the way they do, derives its justifications from patterns of relations, concentrating its attention on the structure of network ties.

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12 It focuses on methodological vehicles which explain constructions of poverty in the social networks.
Network analysis (in the way it is described earlier), however, focuses predominantly on social interactions within networks, while my research unravels heterogeneous forms of poverty produced within different networks. Nevertheless, network analysis is still useful for my work as it studies relational nature of processes which construct networks and allows bringing together the individual ("micro") and the group ("macro") levels. Moreover, this thesis attempts to understand different constructions of poverty by means of unfolding connections of social actors who practice and experience poverty. The task of my work is to help people to improve their living conditions by means of better understanding of poverty and the ways to deal with it. My work studies poverty as a heterogeneous construct produced in different networks. At the same time, poverty affects different people in different ways and in order to understand it is necessary to engage in the dialogue with the actors living in the conditions of poverty. To this end, at the first stage of my work I selected methodological vehicles which allow concentrating on social interactions of actors within the wider context constructed through interrelations of multiple and heterogeneous networks. Importantly, in this case importance of social networks of interactions in construction of poverty is not prioritised over other connections. My initial focus on social links is justified only on methodological grounds as it provides an easy entry point for heterogeneous study of poverty (but see also Chapters 5, 6 and 7 for analysis of moral, cultural and policy networks in production of poverty).

My approach, based on network analysis perspective, focuses on studying patterned and structured interrelationships of social actors as well as their feelings, visions of poverty, intrinsic characteristics and goals. This approach not just allows understanding interaction of different networks, but it also "investigates the constraining and enabling dimensions of patterned relationships among social actors within a system" (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994, p.1418). While doing network analysis two conceptual strategies were jointly implemented. On the one hand, relational or "social cohesion" approach was used to discover direct and indirect connections between actors (Durkheim, 1984; Burt, 1987). On the other hand, positional or structural equivalence strategy is used to trace relations shared by two or more actors vis-à-vis a third actor. These two approaches, which are used to provide greater understanding of networks rather than directly implemented into strategies, complement each other in the way that they provide for each other's deficiencies. A positional approach, due to its explicit structuralist nature, is suitable for analysing policy-networks, revealing all of the relational data pertaining to a given key actor (decision-maker), "the relations in which he [sic] is involved as well as the relations in which he is involved through membership of the groups and actors within group (their membership of the groups) and groups within actors (through actors' group affiliations)."
not involved" (Burt, 1980, p.131). Moreover, this structural equivalence approach allows "blockmodelling" of social structure through partitioning of society into sets of structurally equivalent actors, where these blocks can represent social groups of actors involved in decision-making. Put together, they provide wider perspective of both relationships between actors and another external actors (third parties) and direct relations between actors themselves.

Next logical step is to take analysis of relationships within networks a bit further, trying to uncover different (not only social) links between entities (actors, networks) and the contexts where their actions take place. Some ideas incorporated in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) could be effectively taken on board in my analysis of (mainly social) networks and heterogeneous construction of poverty. ANT looks into the ways in which heterogeneous world is constructed through interactions of its components and erodes dualisms and superimposed categories (like society/nature, poor/wealthy) and it is these qualities of this theory which provide a general inspiration for my work (more on ANT see in Callon, 1986; 1991; Latour; 1987; 1991; see also Law, 1999). ANT’s acknowledgement of our varied and changing embeddedness in the material properties and presences of diverse others (Murdoch, 1998; Whatmore, 1999) encourages my research on hybrid and heterogeneous rural others. However, my research project, which focuses on studying the interplay of different networks in particular localities, is different from ANT. Responding to the boundary concerns, I stress that in this study ANT techniques are adopted to work in socially bounded places. My direct interest at this point is concentrated on locally bounded social networks, which in the case of “lay” networks are quite close to the boundaries of local communities.

In the same vein I am grappling with the problem of circumscribing policy-networks (see Chapter 3) to particular local contexts. Here I use an idea of policy networks as a network with a bounded area of jurisdiction: while remaining spatially unlimited, it is in the same time spatially bounded to cover the specific territory. In this case area of jurisdiction may well fit into the limits of local community, so the latter are transformed into the boundaries of the “local state”. This provides an opportunity to study policy-networks within these (jurisdiction-bounded) conditions, considering self-organisation of these networks within particular rural areas.

Understanding the “others”

One of the virtues of network analysis approach, as I mentioned before, is that it concentrates on relations between actors (or actants – ANT) within different networks. The use of this approach in the way it was discussed in the previous section is very instrumental
in understanding poverty and exclusion as these phenomena are relational in their essence. In case of inclusion/exclusion the person or group are defined (codified) in relation to the "mainstream" society on the basis of dominant ideologies. These different groups of people have their own interpretations of reality, and these worldviews of countless other people interact with and redefine our own feelings about the world and about ourselves. It is these other people who help us to build our self-image and to understand ourselves (Lacan, 1978). The concept of the "other" which I will discuss in this section incorporates this everything which we conceive as separate from ourselves and which we tend to identify with the fictional image (mirror image) of ourselves.

Before I continue, I want to consider several major caveats about treating the issues related to the "other" and the "otherness". First, the concept of the "other" entails recognition of the existence of an outside someone who does not belong to our practice and whose world is beyond our control. This assumption contains internal danger of making this outside world to conform to the same (being similar to our world). Second, even if one moves beyond the sameness of the self, one may still realise that our willingness to recognise and celebrate difference may not exactly free the "other" from the trap of sameness. "Others", which are recognised as different from ourselves, may eventually become a shapeless group of "different from the self" so that they become similar (same) to each other. This is what Doel (1994) warns about, when he insists that each theory and practice (he calls it theoretical-practice) is striving to consider the "other" to be its "other" attempting to appropriate the difference for itself. In order not to miss the otherness of the "other" there is a need to be careful about not to conflate "the alterity of the "other" with a deviation from the same" (Doel, 1994, p. 1046). "Other" transcends all structures and all attempts to categorise it, to give it definite place in our world and to colonise its intrinsic alterity. It is at this point where previously mentioned ANT-inspired networking approach could help to grasp the way other beings/things feel and function. With ANT in mind, the study of embeddedness of actors into networks of different others could prevent marginalisation of these "others" and avoid treating their feelings and thoughts as not merely different but essentially inferior.

Another warning about differential treatment of the "other" is provided by Augé (1998), who distinguishes between what he calls "sense of the other" and "sense for the other". In the first case listening to "other" voices and understanding "other" experiences does not imply intellectual transformation and moving into the unfamiliar territory of "the other of the other". Marginalised and excluded people are therefore discursively isolated within their "other" living environments and their "otherness" is analysed without a sustained commitment to their problems (see also Cloke, 2002 on this issue). In the second case,
emotional long-term attachment to the “other” people means venturing into the unexplainable spaces of “otherness” and understanding of their issues within the wide range of “other” geographies. Developing the “sense for the other” entails recognition of “otherness” in its alterity and within the context where it is experienced. In my work I am trying to recognise difference and otherness without attempts to normalise it and standardise possible an-other deviations. This means tackling the issue of exclusion from within, questioning our position in the networks of normalisation and standardisation, and subjecting to inquiry the very norms that define our identity in the wider network (society). Following on from this discussion I have to find out how to position my work in relation to the same/other system. The task is to shift focus of my research from the domain of knowledge which is deemed “objective” and “scientific” to subjective and personal realms, where the othering is experienced. It is what Lyotard (1993) called “giving voice to the intractable”, listening to the people who could not speak the dominant language of political and social elites. In essence, I understand it as not just giving voice to “others” and understanding it in its marginality (being ready to listen), but accepting and supporting (legitimising) these expressions and signs as practices which make sense for and structure the life of the whole community. My inspiration for the analysis of others in all their otherness comes from Kristeva (1991), who was among the first to suggest putting marginalized people to the subject position at the centre of culture, thus doing away with normalisation of difference and marginalization itself. Taking this on board and putting the “other” in the place of the subject, I intend to consider the “others” as never stable and ever-changing, as the “subjects-in-process”, involved in the development of the also changeable networks.

In this search for an alternative meaning of things articulated by the others I adhere to Bataille’s (2001) understanding of knowledge and of what he called “non-knowledge”, a condition when the lack of knowledge may itself contain knowledge. I am trying to look for the truth on the margins (grey areas) between knowledge and “non-knowledge”, elucidating the meaning of the actions and intentions of the others in constructing their “in-between” knowledge.

**Ethnology of the “others”**

To achieve better understanding of the other’s knowledge I am using Augé’s (1998) conception of inverted ethnology, when the researcher is encouraged to think back about the other’s experience of him or her rather than other way around. Traditional understanding of ethnographic work involves getting the knowledge of researched subjects through close interaction with them, building up fuller and more meaningful knowledge
about other people based on experience of living with them. In so doing, researcher's life is embedded within their field experiences in such a way that ethnographer does “not depend merely on asking questions, but knowledge of the people gradually [sinks] in until it is a part of [herself]”. (Lee, 1995, cited in Tedlock, 2000, p. 458). In contrast with traditional ethnography, Augé (1998) suggests that asking others questions about ourselves could shed more light on our understanding of meaning of their words and actions than using the questions asked about others just for enriching our experience of them. This means studying “individuals or groups close to, rather than remote from, the anthropologist’s own cultural and/or social origins” [ibid., p.34].

This differentiation between “others as foreigners”, as complete and forever exotic strangers, and others as not simply ourselves (“socially others” as Augé (1998) calls them) suggests changes in the attitude of my research. I share the criteria and references with the “others” I am trying to study, and this enables both of us to be actively involved in (be the objects of) study, both of us projecting our observations on each other. My position on the research site therefore corresponds with the place assigned to me by the others.

In so doing, I don’t want to confuse the questions of method with the question of the subject. Knowing my position in the research site/society and acknowledging co-presence of the other in different levels of my identity (personal ego, formative agency) does not bring me to the point of putting myself in place of the others speaking for them; instead I am engaged in a dialogue with the other’s culture. Although discovering the “other” in me through listening to people’s experiences of othering, participatory ethnology allows drawing the line between the language of local stories and my interpretation of them, despite bringing them closer together. Doing this ethnology “from within” staying, at the same time, “outside” the local society allows studying both particular and general, the order of things and the place people occupy in it (and in the networks constructing that space). This is what Augé (1998) calls doing a “generalised anthropology”, a combination of ethnology “at home” (chez soi) and ethnology of the “others” (chez les autres).

Doing anthropology free of this exoticism (free of that “forever other” stereotype) requires me to proceed to a third part of my research that is reconsideration of the position of place in my analysis (see also the section on positionality in the Introduction). Generalised anthropology suggests that particular processes (singular life stories) are supposed to be studied fully before any possible connections or generalisations. This means that studies, first of all, are “well-grounded” in the local contexts. According to Augé (1998), who is touching here on a point fundamental to my understanding of research methods, the need to understand a social fact is in its totality, and it is possible only through experience of “a society localised in space and time” [p.23]. This “localised approach”, as Bromberger
(1987, cited in Augé, 1998) suggests, helps to understand both the meaning of power relations in the functioning of institutions and ensemble of representations created by ordinary people. It seems reasonable, therefore, for me to settle upon this strategy in my study of policy networks (embodying institutionalised power relations) and lay networks (working through reproduction of representational spaces).

The task of my study is therefore to understand the singular living processes and behaviour of particular actors, be it individuals or agencies, at the level of particular localities. It is only then individual or collective practices can be analysed and comparison between highly differentiated societies can be made. What I actually compare is not specific rural contexts themselves, but the ways these contexts enable or constrain functioning of different networks and the ways they forge specific mechanisms of network interrelations. Marginality or centrality of actors in specific networks is juxtaposed with their positions in other networks\(^{14}\), and comparison is made between different constellations of networks in various localities on the basis of their exclusionary/inclusionary character. This provides a basis for comparison of societies as wider networks, embracing both policy-networks and social networks. This comparative approach is a part of my research strategy as societies and cultures “can only be understood if they can be compared” (Augé, 1998, p.58).

It should be said right from the outset, however, that the parts of research outlined above mean rather free-flowing blocks of my research than fixed stages I am set to follow. Following Thrift (1999a), I understand research process as fluid, as an act of becoming. One can never prescribe what is going to happen with a research plan, because there is always an element of spontaneity in it (Bauman, 1993). This fluidity does not necessarily mean a complete rejection of planning in my anthropological work, however. Following Irigaray’s (1985) understanding of fluidity, research can be seen as a flexible process made up of blocks of different research elements rather than revolving around one rigid schema. These elements are not standardised, not already prescribed, because they are meant to deal with the “real” world, which rejects standardisation and symbolisation. Doing “fluid” research seems to be an appropriate way of tackling my research questions, as it incorporates procedures able to pick up “fluidity” of policy and lay networks, able to shed more light on the nature of becoming of these different networks.

This attention to difference requires different writing\(^{15}\) and different thinking, when the reference to existing norms and values does not necessarily mean coercively “normalising” abnormal things. On the contrary, reference to the norm invokes questions about ethical

\(^{14}\) they can be central in one network and marginal in the other.

\(^{15}\) For example, Deleuze (1988) considers writing as a becoming thing.
treatment of otherness and ethical obligations to recognise an-other (as the “other” of the “other”), which I am going to consider in more detail in the next section.

Research ethics

Even before starting my research, I was aware of the ethical issues about studying poor and marginalized people in rural areas, and, not to forget, those who were responsible for delivering policy measures in order to tackle rural social malaise. Some ideas have also emerged during the research process itself, when the purpose and value of my work was put under scrutiny as the reaction to my encounters with the rural people. In this section I discuss some of the generalised ethical issues I confronted while undertaking my research. There exist a number of different and sometimes contradictory ways in which research problems can be resolved ethically. Before considering specific issue of ethics of our relations with others, a brief overview of ethical theory is provided in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Different dimensions of ethics.

The very existence of these different approaches to defining ethical behaviour suggests that no inflexible code of ethics could be adopted. Acceptance of rigid ethical rules makes it difficult, or even impossible, to resolve research dilemmas. The argument drawn from this table is that academic work needs to have what Hay (1998) calls “moral imaginations” which allow flexible research ethics strategy.
The practice of ethics of doing geographical research usually concerns with the issues of consent, confidentiality, minimizing harm, avoiding exploitation of participants, as well as cultural and gender sensitivity. This list of issues identified by many authors elsewhere (Jorgensen, 1971, p.33; Cloke et al., 2000, p.135) represents some sort of a "standard" programme for ethical behaviour, which, however, is not fully applicable to real (situated) research practice due to its variability and unpredictability. As Hay (1998) argues, an account of contextuality of research and related ethical concerns, as well as changing identities of researcher and researched, could be given by recourse to the flexible responses sensitive to ethical issues.

The "fluidity" of research that I proposed earlier in this chapter, then, is also vital for bringing my study in line with the principles of ethical behaviour. Reflexive awareness of the changing research environment and ethical grounds brings back the discussion on researcher's self and his/her relation to the other. As I discussed earlier, negotiation of questions of "distance" and "strangeness" in the field in my case is done in the form of the dialogue between the researcher and the other, where the two are acting as co-researchers. In so doing, I did not want to reinforce the artificial hierarchy separating seemingly powerless marginalized people and relatively powerful policy-makers. I rejected the assumption about superiority of knowledge of "expert" professionals over the rural people and, following De Certeau (1988), celebrated the "ordinary" language, knowledge, and, eventually, different sort of power possessed by "ordinary" people16. Recognition of the fact that those people who are often considered as powerless are not, pushes research beyond the patronising attitude to them and suggests more reflexive ethical agenda.

The moves towards reversing the roles of researcher and researched could also bring together their different moralities. Living with the "others" entails learning their morality of care or their understanding of justice, as well as mixing it with the "standard" ethical approaches of researchers and policy-makers. Changing self of the researcher (and her identity as a moral construction) during the whole research process is just one manifestation of this reciprocal moral relationship. The task is, however, not just to take (benefit) from this co-researching practice, but "to give something back" (Cloke et al., 2000), to listen to the voice of people studied in an effort to avoid research tourism. In the next section I produce an account of how I tried to do this during my research and what practical ethical dilemmas I confronted.

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16 As Rahnema (1992, p. 123) comments on this "networked" power of ordinary people, "there is a different power, which is not always perceived as such and ... is constituted by the thousands of centres and networks of resistance which ordinary people put up". This network account of power is further discussed in Chapter 3.
Thinking about my fieldwork

Obtaining information

The following section deals with the ways of translating my visions of research as fluid, equally participative, reciprocal dialogue with the others' cultures in different (comparative) contexts into specific ways of constructing/obtaining information. It discusses general considerations which were taken into account during preliminary stages of my research when the field sites were selected. I also reflect on the changing position of (my)self in relation to the others during the time of the research using commentaries from the field diaries.

Choosing the site

Before thinking about techniques to be applied, I chose my field sites. Generally speaking, I wanted to conduct international, comparative research into the impacts of social exclusion in different types of rural localities across Europe within contrasting market and non-market economies, in the countries peripheral and central both in terms of development of rural policy discourse and their geographical position. To this end, I analysed the causes, experiences and consequences of poverty in Russia and Ireland.

Selection of Ireland as my research area stemmed from my long-term involvement in studying this country. After completing my Master’s dissertation on rural change in Ireland, I continued exploring whether its highly centralized political system dominated by sectoral interests and supported by considerable funding from the EU can handle flexibly the problems of rural poor. This previous research involvement provided methodological advantages in using the links with Irish geographers and having knowledge of the cultural history of the place.

The choice of Russia was based on a number of inter-related factors. One major reason was that I came from that country and I had invaluable insights into the lifestyles of some people living there. I was interested to find out how poverty is differently constructed within the country with controlling and centralized policy structure which functioning is currently hampered by the lack of funding. Familiarity with the area and easier access to

Moreover, during my studies at Moscow State University (MSU) I was involved in a series of research projects on rural issues, traveling extensively within the European part of Russia. This practical knowledge and first-hand experience of some aspects of rural life were considered as strong arguments for doing my research in Russia.
local academic, government and lay networks, as well as some other practical advantages\textsuperscript{18} made Russia an obvious choice for my study. Within these countries the selection of particular places to do my fieldwork was quite pragmatic. The major issue was the availability of academic infrastructure and facilities to use in my study. My investigation into the way people are linked within social and policy networks in particular places has started from re-establishing academic networks and strengthening the links between different institutions. This produced a situation when my fellow researchers in the two countries were my first "gatekeepers" to the field sites\textsuperscript{19}. The criteria of choice of particular locales were different, however, for two countries mentioned. Within Ireland, the work was carried out in the community located in the region traditionally associated with social malaise\textsuperscript{20}. When doing my research in the West of Ireland, a region with its identification with national identity, its use as a representation of true "Irishness" and its association with poverty and deprivation\textsuperscript{21}, I wanted to see the role of these local circumstances and histories in alleviating/aggravating poverty. In Russia the study was conducted in the border region between Moscow and Ryazan oblast (regions), a sort of "borderland" in the Central part of European Russia\textsuperscript{22}. This region was generally considered as "problematic" and closely associated with rural social malaise.

**Locating the field**

**Russia**

In Russia I did my research in Zhilkontsy and Khlopovo villages in the Zarajsk district of the Moscow region (see the maps in Appendix 3, 4 and 5). Several pragmatic reasons were taken into account during the selection process. First, I wanted to avoid working in the "showcase" communities backed and supported by the local authorities, and Zhilkontsy or Khlopovo were hardly ever mentioned during the interviews with policy-makers. Second, the aim was to find two locations that were relatively distant from the central town of the district in order to diminish its influence on local social life. Both villages are located

\textsuperscript{18} For instance, ability to speak fluent Russian was important in gaining informants' trust.

\textsuperscript{19} In both case studies I referred to some extent to the local expertise of my fellow researchers in finding out particular field sites. Their knowledge of the local scene and familiarity with the local institutions provided invaluable links for making contacts with potential research communities and getting in touch with local governing bodies.

\textsuperscript{20} For more detailed discussion on this issue see section on traditionality in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{21} These stereotypes of the West of Ireland as "poor" area refer to predominance of subsistence farming and wretchedness of local rural life. For more detailed discussion on cultural constructions of poverty see Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{22} It was challenging to discover what lies behind the "border district" stereotype where responsibilities of local authorities for social service provision (and rural development) were believed to be somewhat blurred. I wanted to see how poverty was experienced differently in that sort of place and what coping (networking) strategies were employed by rural people living in a supposedly "administrative vacuum".

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within 20-25 km from Zarajsk\textsuperscript{23}, although they are located closely to main roads. Third, with 79 people in Zhilkontsy village and 86 people in Khlopovo, these communities were large enough to contain some social networks (tiny and nearly abandoned villages do not have enough residents to form networks). Lastly, a priority was given to villages with rural club and/or library, as these facilities could provide a place to conduct focus groups.

\textbf{Plate 1. Main street in Zhilkontsy}

There were additional features to add power to the choice of Zhilkontsy as a field site such as coverage of social security service. Regular inspections by the social security worker in the village, who is by definition set to deal with the problems of the most deprived people, alluded on the existence of rural poor as they are officially defined. This provided an opportunity to compare how poverty is perceived by the local authorities and lived by rural people themselves. In Khlopovo, opposite to Zhilkontsy, there was no social worker on duty, and the sources of local government assistance were indeterminate.

\textit{Ireland}

In Ireland after a series of interviews with the officials of local development agencies in Galway county I selected Ros Muc village as my field site, for several reasons (see the map in Appendix 1). One reason was that it was the area where several rural development

\textsuperscript{23} According to Zarajsk District Statistics Committee (2002) population of Zarajsk in 2001 accounted for 25,400 people.
programmes were under way. Local government officials referred to Ros Muc as the place, where people recently worked together effectively to sort out local problems. At the same time, existence of development infrastructure presumed availability of supporting facilities, therefore providing for some technicalities of my work. As I wrote in my research diaries at that time, “people in Galway refer to Ros Muc is a ‘truly Irish’ village in the middle of the Gaeltacht”. The relative isolation of the village and small number of its inhabitants (in the core of the village there are only 200 inhabitants) made it a good location for my study: it was possible to get to know people and their histories reasonably well in a limited period of time.

Research methods

Having decided on general methodological strategies for my work, I then had to select a set of methods to deal with research problems. Remembering that in all research circumstances the “only inevitability [is] unreliability and unpredictability” (England, 1994, p.81), it was obvious that flexible research methodology was required. From the outset, I decided to do a study based on primary and secondary data analysis while combining different research techniques. Although a combination of methods was employed, when quantitative methods were used for the purposes of providing broader information on my research subject and qualitative for still retaining the richness of the data, I essentially relied on the use of the latter.

Interviews

The interviews, or “conversation with a purpose” (Berg, 1989), can be structured, unstructured, and open-ended (semi-structured), depending on the role of a priori categorisation of experiences of respondents; and one-to-one or group interviews,

24 As I mentioned in the Introduction, rural planning initiatives in Russia during transition period took shape of chaotic and uncoordinated activities, so it was difficult to trace the effects of modern-day rural development programs in the two selected villages. On the contrary, in Ireland, where development programmes continue to change the situation in the countryside, it was interesting to find out how rural restructuring affected network construction in a particular affected village.
25 This gave some indication that this case could be potentially interesting as it implicated social networking and mutual help.
26 Working in the office of two local development companies provided an access to computing, printing, photocopying etc. This office also was a “neutral” space within the village to bring people together for focus groups.
27 The Gaeltacht is the officially recognised group of the areas where Irish is spoken on daily basis. Galway county has the biggest number of native Irish-speakers in the Gaeltacht. Ros Muc is located in the middle of this area. This distinctively Irish character of place suggested one of the points for people to get organised around in their networking (or otherwise) activities.
28 It is located in the peninsula, 60 km away from Galway city.
29 I have already discussed general issues related to ethnographic work such as problems of choosing settings ("generalised ethnography"), problems of interactions between observer and observed (dialectical "subjects-in-process") in the previous sections of this chapter.
depending on the number of people involved. Structured interviews mostly deal with the “data of codable nature in order to explain behaviour within pre-established categories” (Fontana and Frey, 2000), while unstructured interviews deal with less tangible information which is constructed as the interview proceeds through close interaction of researcher and the researched. The latter involves more active interviewer-respondent interaction, the aspiration to get understanding of the meanings of respondent’s experiences rather than explanations of respondents’ worlds (Cloke, 2003). The meaning in unstructured interview is thus constructed intersubjectively, both interviewer and interviewee are active subjects developing in a particular context, which is as important for the interview as the very process of knowledge production. It is imperative not just to follow the interview, but think through how it might and should go (Cloke, 2003). Unstructured interview is usually informal and exploratory, it provides a greater breadth of data than other types of interviews. It was therefore considered the most useful tool for my in-depth qualitative research.

The group interview, which often carries the label of focus group, is a moderated discussion with several individuals in a formal or informal setting. It is different from unstructured interview not only in terms of number of people involved, but also in terms of specific group dynamics and collaboration. At the same time, focus groups do not allow the same depth of discussion which is achieved in the individual interview, the emerging group culture can interfere with individual expression and sensitive topics can not be easily approached (Merton et al., 1956). Moreover, group interviewing requires more careful planning and conducting than one-to-one interviews. Importantly, group interviews often produce very rich cumulative data, they are flexible and exploratory. I used these

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30 During these interactions researcher is attempting to see the situation from their respondent’s viewpoint, distinguishing between intuitive meanings (what is expected to hear from people) and counterintuitive ones (important things coming out that are not anticipated).

31 Unstructured interview is still structured to some extent in a way that it is conducted in a specific setting and it involves identified informants. This type of interview usually consists of different elements, including accessing the setting, understanding the culture of respondents, deciding on how to present oneself, listening to and establishing rapport with an informant, collecting materials (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

32 Thus group dynamics stimulates individuals to make comparisons between their experiences which provides prospective on the discussed subject completely different from that which could be elucidated from a one-to-one interview.

33 Two important phases of group interviewing are planning groups, when individuals are recruited and their level of involvement is envisaged (balancing dominant and quiet personalities), and conducting groups, when site, content of the interview and the role of the moderator are considered (Cloke, 2003). It is usually suggested to have more or less homogeneous group (in terms of personalities) of 6 to 10 participants (7 is considered as an “ideal” number) who are relatively highly moderated (Burgess, 1992). The latter usually involves setting discussion rules, honest introduction of the subject, inclusive discussion, and conclusion clearly indicating further involvement of participants with the transcripts produced (Cloke, 2003).

34 I was also aware of the drawbacks of this approach such as possible confusion of participants because of sudden changes of topics and interruptions caused by other contributors. Taking into account this downside effect, focus groups were organised in a way to control these spontaneous disruptions, so that, on the one hand, each participant’s opinion was heard and respected and, on the other hand, free flow of conversation was maintained.
techniques in combination with other methods to achieve broader understanding of complex and changing experiences and meanings of such sensitive subjects as poverty and otherness.

From focus groups to interviews

The primary task of my qualitative fieldwork was to define the activities of different members of rural society and their interrelationships. The ethnographic work was conducted through first-hand interactions with members of the selected rural communities. In order to provide insights into the way in which rural dwellers view, interpret and respond to their world and problems, I utilised combination of qualitative techniques such as participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups. This research was anonymous, I made a clear statement to the participants about the fact that research data was not going to be disclosed to anyone else and their names would not be mentioned (see the list of anonymous participants in Appendix 13). In line with general ethical recommendations to my work, all participants were given an opportunity to read transcripts of their interviews and make necessary changes, which related to personal information they provided.

Seven focus groups were formed, following Burgess et al.’s (1988) recommendations that several focus groups should be held “when it is clear that the interpretation of individual experiences and collective values is deep and strongly felt” (ibid., p.457). Focus groups practice provided for six to eight people from different parts of the village to be brought together, thereby literally organising social networks within a particular place. This method provided unique opportunity to “force the memories” of the people interviewed encouraging them to recall the details and episodes, which undoubtedly better contextualised understandings of poverty.

In attempting to find the rural poor through a series of interviews and to test their involvement in local social life, “pyramidal” interviewing tactics were used. At first, in every research place two broad focus groups were organised in local clubs or libraries with people of different age categories (middle aged and elderly). In Russia, I tried to make these focus groups as informal as possible. As I wrote in my research diary at that time, “rural people are not used to the idea of focus groups. They think it is a Soviet-period communist party meeting!”. As a retired milkmaid from Zhilkontsy village said, in reply to my invitation to partake in the focus group: “I will definitely turn up. We are so used to

35 Unless they specifically stated that they don’t mind their names to be mentioned in my work.
speaking at the official meetings" (Nadezhda Guseva, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy). The idea to make group interview less formal, with tea and cookies, was appreciated by rural people: "We came here and enjoyed ourselves... It is nice that we can meet and talk over a cup of tea", a lady in Khlopovo village said (Orina Tonkova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo).

In the Irish case, 3 focus groups were held, although it turned out to be very difficult to bring people together for a conversation in a local day centre. As I wrote in my research diary, "I am faced with a "hit and miss" situation, when some people won't be bothered to come if they have no financial incentives".

These initial group conversations were set to identify how poverty and otherness was understood locally. Coming down from a broad stratum of rural people involved in the first series of focus groups I ended up with a limited number of rural dwellers involved in the second series of individual interviews. At this stage it was important not to slide into the situation when I could refer to normative judgements in selecting my interviewees. Taking this into account, I was trying to select people for the interviews who in terms of the information available to me had a problematic position vis-à-vis money. Interviews were selected as a method which allowed exploring issues in depth, to gather the sensitive (non-quantitative) information about "otherness" which would otherwise be omitted.

During the fieldwork 18 interviews were conducted in Ireland and 29 interviews were held in Russia. Most of them were tape-recorded, also in couple of cases (interviews with local authorities) permission to record was not given and notes were taken. Taking into account the above-stated aim to make my research "fluid" and following Burgess’s (1992) recommendations on doing qualitative research “flexible” format for the interviews was adopted. A checklist for the interviews (also used for the focus groups) was created (see Appendix 15) in order to identify potential areas of discussion with the respondents rather than to confine the interviews to these topics.

During these interviews it was important to reflect on intersubjectivity of research in order to be constantly aware of dialectical nature of the process and its inverted power structure (doing “inverted ethnology”). Rural people often provided examples of the words or expressions in the way they understood them, therefore expanding the meaning of the usual

36 Hereafter FG stands for Focus Group.
37 Still, conversations with rural people in Russia were very much politicised despite the informal setting. Rural people treated me as a person who could solve their problems, so they were really conscious about what I can learn from “our chat” as they called their focus group experience.
38 Funny enough, I found it easier to talk to people in the village and persuade them to take part in my interviews if it was raining. As an Irish shop assistant admitted: “I feel bad if I keep you outside in such a miserable weather. I would talk to you anyway, and invite you to come in, and I would make an effort to come to your thing because you made a real effort to cycle here in the rain” (Máire Mag Samhradhán, 31/07/2001, Ros Muc).
words and bringing in new connotations. As a housewife in Galway told me: “The Irish version of Alzheimer’s disease is that you forget everything except your grudges. Do you understand what is grudge? Grudge is, you know... When you were twelve, you kicked me and now you are sixty and I never gonna forget it. Once more, my children are never gonna speak to your children. It breaks relations between families. Grudge is a historic thing in Ireland” (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway). This explanation brings out more than meaning of grudge, it also links it with social exclusion. Importantly, it incorporates local knowledge, puts it into the local context, and gives a personalised picture with local norms and values embedded into a word or an expression.

Budget questionnaires

One of the strategies I used in my first case study, which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches, was the budget methodology technique. There is a long-established tradition of using this methodological vehicle in Russian social studies, originally developed by Scherbina in 1900 and then re-invented by Shanin (Shanin, 1999) and his colleagues from the Moscow School of Social Sciences (Fadeeva, 1999; Yarygina, 1999). In line with this methodology, I collected quantitative data on earnings and expenses of several rural households (input/output data in budgetary balance) coupled with qualitative information about barter and other types of non-monetary exchange between them, as well as strategies of their economic behaviour.

The questionnaires for so called “budgetary interviews” were organised in the form of tables handed out to several households, and budgetary information in these forms was recorded daily by rural dwellers themselves during the period of one month (see Appendix 14). The central place in these forms was allocated for providing the evidence of help and assistance to the others within the community, both in material and immaterial form. At the end of the month the expenses and revenues were married up with regard to the amount of money available in the beginning of the month.

In Russia, the total number of 11 forms were handed out in one village and I managed to get back eight of these forms completed, although I deliberately targeted different categories of rural people. However, these budget interviews were quite representative, because they covered each 10th member of the community. In Ireland, 10 forms were

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39 As I explain in the Introduction, being a foreigner in a specific context implied learning local cultures from local people, combining my experience of living in the community (ethnology “chez soi”), and having an outsider’s view on things (ethnology “chez les autres”).

40 Prices for foodstuffs, other agricultural products, fertilisers and insecticides were monitored during the month in order to estimate household’s expenses incurred or revenues received from buying/selling these items.

41 I tried to hand in these questioners to people who had problematic position vis-à-vis money.
handed out and 9 of them were returned to me completed. All forms were handed out to the best possible approximation of the right people for my research, based on recommendations of gatekeepers and my own observations made during conversations with the villagers. The selection of people was essentially a matter of their responsibility, basic literacy, and ability to sustain significant periods of sobriety in order to allow them to maintain records.

Doing research

This section describes the very process of fieldwork research, dwelling on the issues of entering the community, choosing the participants, and interacting with the people. In the very beginning of each of my case studies it proved to be very important to take some time off and to have a look around. I followed advice of my Irish gatekeeper, who told me: “Go on top of the mountain. Have a look around. And then come to the village and talk to “key people” first. This would give you a feeling about the community” (Moirin Uí Neill, 15/07/2001, Ros Muc).

This introduction to the environment was conducted through visualising the territory both by means of immediate physical encounters and in the process of more distant (“scientific”) overview of the area and its problems. In Russia, I developed that “feeling of community” by taking part in one-week quantitative research project conducted by the team of MSU researchers in the district where I was doing my fieldwork. In Ireland, I took part in an all-Ireland conference on rural poverty organised within the framework of Ireland’s anti-poverty programme.

This overview helped to put my study in the context. However, the choice of two field sites and adoption of comparative study approach has evidently added to a pressure on the research, as it left limited time to use the complex qualitative/quantitative techniques to answer the research questions. I spent three months in Russia and three months in Ireland doing my fieldwork, which was not comparable to the 12 months of fieldwork of the anthropologist. Therefore, I had to make an excessive use of the time I spent in particular locality and maximize the data collected. In my study the problem of time-constraint was alleviated by the help of gatekeepers.

42 Moscow State University, where I did my undergraduate and MSc degrees.
43 Participating in a survey on the changing social environment in rural Russia and in quantitative interpretation of the results provided a general knowledge of the territory, as well as facilitated contacts with the local administration.
44 I was delegated to this conference as a representative of the community development organisation working in my research area. This gave me an opportunity to see how members of community development organisations understand poverty and what is their experience of dealing with poverty-related problems.
Gatekeepers are the people who live or work (or both) in the community and have an invaluable internal knowledge of people and context. They are people who can provide a researcher with smooth introduction to the local life. These key people tend to be well educated and they can understand the importance of rural social research (Corra and Willer, 2002). In this case they can help researcher to explain the aims and details of the project, and provide necessary references for a researcher. At the same time, I was aware of the potential dangers of using gatekeepers in my research. From the outset, I recognised the possibility of existence of gatekeepers' discourse linked to power, which produced specific meanings of poverty and otherness (see also Szmatka and Willer, 1995 on this issue). I realised that key people in the village who provide introduction to local context could hold powerful positions in the local networks, so I followed their advice with caution and considered their visions of poverty within the wider local context.

As I did my research in three different locations, I had a chance to compare how different gatekeepers eased my integration into local communities. Surprisingly, in Russia the best gatekeeper turned out to be the one who was half-insider/half-outsider to that community.

45 Thus, gatekeepers' discourse is linked to power.
46 I did not prioritise constructions of poverty reflected in gatekeepers' discourse over those constructed by other rural people.
where he or she lived (say, a doctor or librarian who works in the village and represents certain policy network). In Ireland the situation was not quite the same. Key people vested with power within the policy networks (local policeman, local doctor) were not accorded with trust and confidence of the locals to be “their people” in lay networks. The only person who deserved that moral right to negotiate his way within the community were the local clerics, who were therefore selected as gatekeepers for my fieldwork.

Choosing the participants

A complex approach to recruiting interviewees was utilised, including formal interviews and informal recommendations. First, a brief recruitment questionnaire was used to get a general idea about people’s involvement into and their position in local networks, as well as their material well-being. Second, it was gatekeeper’s information on the same issues that helped me to select the respondents. “Snowballing” techniques were also used, when people interviewed first provided references for the following interviews. Third, in Ireland I also used the hand-drawn maps of the village (see Appendix 2) based on the information collected from people living in the village (neighbours, relatives, colleagues).

In Russia the major criteria for finding people was basic literacy. For instance, a former milkmaid in a Russian village warned me that finding literate people there would be difficult because “very few people are literate” (Ksenia Rodimova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy). In the Irish case, I had to find participants who were able to speak English to me because the majority of people were native Irish-speakers.

It should be stated, however, that the above-mentioned criteria were not rigorously applied. I followed the advice of both my Russian and Irish gatekeepers, whose ways of saying it were surprisingly very similar (although spoken out in different languages): “You need to trust people. Some of them are more responsible than you might think of them” (Moirin Ó Neill, 15/07/2001, Ros Muc; Tamara Zakutina, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy). The gatekeeper’s

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47 In Russia a local official, who is endowed with power, is often seen by rural people as the leader who can (and has a moral right to) organise and manage people in his or her constituency (for detailed discussion see Steinberg, 1996). However, the locals always treat an outsider with a certain degree of suspicion, and a gatekeeper, who is by definition a person involved in local community life and social networks, cannot be just “an official from outside”.

48 These included the members of community who experienced all sort problems, including financial ones.

49 Strong position of the church in Irish society (although undermined a little in the recent decade) and close internal connection between faith (foundation of the church) and trust (basis of social networks) provided that moral ground for clergy to have an access to most of the people within a rural community. For more detailed discussion on this issue see Chapter 4.

50 In these maps I brought together visual information about the houses and their position in the village, as well as personal (qualitative) information about people living in those houses (including their age, profession, involvement into “informal” economy, relative “poverty”, judged from the point of view of my respondents). These maps produced an ideal guide for me when I was choosing seemingly deprived people from particular age category to take part in my research.

51 Use of translator to interpret some questions proved ineffective and was therefore rejected.
knowledge of local people helped them to persuade some of the villagers to take part in my research. As one of the Russian participants stated, talking to my gatekeeper: “If it was not you who talked to me, I would not be bothered doing it”.

Learning-in-process and getting a feel for various details and subtleties were important parts of my research. In the Irish case, conversations with the villagers have suggested different visions of poverty and broadened my understanding of this phenomenon. As I wrote in my research diary at that time, “the locals suggested me to look for what they called “truly unemployed” people in the local pub in the middle of the day. They say those people don’t work and therefore they can come to the pub early”. In the Russian case, learning-in-process involved following a social security worker on her regular visits to the “officially poor” people in the village. It was therefore a strange modification of the participant observation technique, when following policy actors helped to find people considered “poor” in policy networks.

When choosing policy-makers for interviewing the priority was given to those involved in rural development. My research involved conversations both with current and former bosses of different development organisations, operating on both national (Irish-speaking/non-Irish-speaking), regional and local level. As I wrote in my research diary, “Interviewing of retired officials is especially interesting. These people have a great deal of experience of working in a rural organisation, they have time to reflect on the past problems and they are talk more openly about things than the acting officials”52.

Research problems

Getting around: doing research in isolated and scattered settlements

Both in Russia and in Ireland it proved to be very difficult to get in and around the villages where I was doing my fieldwork. There were no buses linking Ros Muc with the major neighbouring city, and the transport link with the villages in Russia was quite unreliable53. As I wrote in my research diaries about Ros Muc, “my research is fluid, because as the locals say, “everything around here travels”. Both in Ireland and in Russia my gatekeepers kindly lent me their bikes. Still, however, difficulties of cycling around scattered villages, especially in a bad weather, have limited my ability to communicate with people and imposed certain time restrictions on my research.

52 In the Russia case, local official included collective farm managers because rural people consider them as authority in the countryside. For detailed discussion on this issue see Chapter 4.
53 In most cases I had to resort on hitchhiking and getting a lift from people I vaguely knew.
Strangers in our midst (alien in my own country and abroad)

Doing comparative studies in two different countries involved some problems of legitimising both myself as a researcher and my research. In the beginning of my research in Russia I realised that my research status as a student of Bristol University did not necessarily fit into local context. For a researcher affiliated with the British university it turned out to be more difficult to get an access to local information than for a person representing a local institution\(^}\text{54}\). As a senior member of the Russian regional authority told me (and this warning was reverberated many times): “You don’t want to be asked any strange questions, do you? People are still a bit weary, you know... They might think you are a spy or something, and it would not do any good for your research” (Inga Khomyakova, 06/06/2000, Zarajsk). In this case, I managed to get an official letter from my former university confirming my research status as “a postgraduate affiliated with geography department in MSU” (which was true). Sacrificing this part of my identity, however, has affected my research process. It limited flexibility of my approaches\(^}\text{55}\) and posed some serious ethical problems (such as unhappiness about not telling the truth).

\(^{54}\) Despite ten years of transition after the breakdown of the Communist system, people in the position of power are still a bit weary about disclosing some information to foreigners or people from abroad. I was strongly advised both by my fellow researchers from MSU and by some policy-makers not to mention my affiliation with Bristol, which could jeopardise my research.

\(^{55}\) For instance, I could not mention that I was doing comparative study of Russia and Ireland, because MSU researchers would not have money for this project.
In Ireland I had some problems with talking about my research objectives. In the community where I was working a lot of people were heavily relying on the dole, although some of them were involved into informal economy doing “odd jobs” on the side at the same time. They were unwilling to talk about poverty, because they thought it could change their welfare payments. Therefore, I was dissuaded from talking about poverty in the first two weeks of my research. As my gatekeeper told me: “You’d rather not say that you are doing a study on rural poverty. You’d better explain that you are trying to understand rural life instead. In this case it would be easier to approach people. People will want to talk to you about rural life, but they would not talk to you about poverty, especially if they are in a condition of poverty” (Moirin Úi Neill, 15/07/2001, Ros Muc). This inability to talk openly about the aims of my research was frustrating in the beginning, but it helped me to establish better long-term contacts with the locals.

Making things work: problems of trust

The dole-related issue caused difficulties during the later stages of my research in Ireland, when I was trying to get financial information for my budgetary interviews. Initially local people were unwilling to co-operate on this issue. As an Irish development officer told me: “They think: “If we lose the dole we are gonna die”. They think about the dole in the same way as they thought about potatoes during the Famine. They will be reserved to themselves even if you are trying to help them. Believe me, we have this experience” (Gair Mannin, 03/07/2001, Casla). This obstacle slowed down my research although I have eventually managed to get these budgetary interviews done. In Russia, people did not worry that much about disclosing this sort of information, but they were generally more apathetic about participating in budget interviewing. In this case, I had to provide money incentives for people who agreed to take part in the research, although the money was not really considerable. I was aware that this approach could potentially cause tensions between the villagers which I tried to avoid.

Living with the other: problems with the community’s reactions

In Ireland, people were much more aware of the ways research might be conducted and consequences it could bring, than people in Russia. Some Irish people were anxious about

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56 I could not blame people for such an attitude, also it should be stated, that it is not common in Russian sociological research to provide monetary incentives (for example, see Fadeeva, 2002).
57 Some of the people rejected being paid for partaking in my research, but the majority willingly accepted the payment. This could have created a disproportionate situation within the village: some of the people were paid and some were not for the similar sort of job. To avoid the rumours about these differences to be spread threatening stability of relations between the researcher and the researched I ended up bringing presents to the people who did not accept money for their co-operation.
my research causing a split in the community⁵⁸. Thus I was faced with a problem of modification of my direct impact on the community and moderation of the impact of community on me. I had to reassure local people that my research is conducted ethically and does not intend to cause harm⁵⁹.

Another negative unexpected community reaction was the one triggered by my interviews and conversations about poverty. As I mentioned earlier, there was a certain conspiracy about money-related issues in the Irish village where I was doing my research. Nearly at the end of my Irish field study I realised that there were the rumours about me being “a spy for the Department of Social Welfare”⁶⁰. Hopefully, I managed to establish good relationships with some people by that stage so I was able to continue my fieldwork as planned.

Conclusion

These problems emphasised the becoming nature of my research and highlighted the fact that information collected during my field study was not “perfect”. First, time constraints did not allow me to conduct a long-term research on such sensitive issues like poverty and otherness. I did not have time to establish long-term relations of trust which could have helped me to obtain broader information about these phenomena. Second, selectivity of participants for my research meant that some people in potentially problematic living conditions⁶¹ were excluded from my research. The information I collected also does not reflect positions of ethnically marginalised⁶² people and their constructions of poverty and otherness, which limits the scope of my research. Third, my use of gatekeeper’s help with getting access to the local contexts entailed that some information about rural poverty was filtered and simplified because of the selectivity of connections within local community negotiated by gatekeepers. Hopefully, my awareness of this issue and use of alternative

⁵⁸ In the Irish village there was a lady who referred to a story about American researchers coming to another part of Ireland, conducting their research and then publishing a book, which described the situation in the community they worked. This led to a split within rural community, as people were not happy to know the truth about themselves and the others. The lady was worrying that the same thing might happen because of my research in Ros Muc. She was very suspicious about talking to me, and, although we managed to conduct an interview, she was very anxious about getting the tape as soon as possible.

⁵⁹ I had to provide a copy of the tape and do transcripts of the interview very quickly in order to reassure my interviewees that they did not say anything wrong during our recorded conversation and there would be no negative repercussions on community life because of that.

⁶⁰ Because people were so scared about losing their dole, they did not take into account that I was a foreigner (I spoke with an obvious accent), a student (I showed them my student ID) and that I was introduced to the villagers by the local priest (who was a very respectable person in the village). Having talked to the priest and few other people about their experience of coming into the village, I found out that all of them had at some stage problems with invalid rumours, which were impossible to overrule.

⁶¹ For example, those without basic literacy skills or those who experienced sustained periods of drunkenness.

⁶² People who were not able to speak English or Russian.
links within rural communities helped me to avoid privileging particular forms of poverty and otherness constructed within gatekeepers discourse.

As I mentioned earlier, several approaches were used in attempt to counter these problems. They have also encouraged me to think once again about the ethical issues discussed earlier in this chapter. I agree with Scott et al. (1991), that researcher should be very careful about his/her impact on the research process and monitor any relative changes. It is necessary to reflect on the information obtained during fieldwork so that to avoid unwitting representation of the data people want to conceal, standing for the contacts made by researcher and by respondents themselves. As it happened to my research, this extra sensitivity paid off later. Respondents, who saw researcher's commitment to a conscious and careful action, were more likely to continue fruitful relationships and co-operation. Otherwise, my research in the very delicate area of rural poverty and social exclusion could have been completely thwarted by a negative feedback from irritated and non-co-operative respondents.
CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL NETWORKS, POLICY NETWORKS AND DIFFERENCE
CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL NETWORKS, POLICY NETWORKS AND DIFFERENCE

This chapter builds on my previous discussion on complexity and networked character of rural spaces and it focuses on one specific form of networks constructing the countryside. It introduces the concepts of social and policy networks and discusses different mechanisms of network organisation. From the outset, the emphasis is given to the explanation of network processes through which rural spaces become differentiated and their constituent elements are separated. The chapter considers relations between various mechanisms of network organisation and creation of poverty and difference. It continues with the analysis of stratification systems and exclusionary trends, which is conducted with reference to a multiplicity of spheres, including social, cultural and political domains. Apart from connections within networks, the chapter later considers interrelations between different kinds of networks and the ways spaces become fragmented and separated through network interaction. It examines construction of difference in the process of network interactions within different social groupings thus providing "contextualised" analysis of networks. Apart from social networks, the chapter outlines theoretical constructs that underpin policy making and it introduces the concept of policy networks as the mechanism for organising and channelling specific (anti-poverty) policy initiatives and actions. The failure of policy networks to respond adequately to rural problems fuels the critique of this concept. The discussion on this issue starts with re-discovery of power as a productive, creative force, rather than a repressive force, shaping relational arrangements of actors within multiple networks. My study searches for new ways of enacting this different power in politics, which can recognise the heterogeneity of poverty and changeability of difference without implying otherness and exclusion. Finally, it studies how the translation of ideas about fluidity, uncertainty and the creativity of power can fit within existing policy approaches. The task of this chapter is to move towards fluid politics of difference in order to broaden and deepen an understanding of poverty and contribute to the alleviation of poverty-related problems.

Relational agency

The countryside is hybrid and complex. I need to emphasise this complexity from the outset if I want to develop a nuanced account of the processes involved in rural change and its outcomes. As I established in the Introduction, rurality is a concatenation of different spaces "for one and the same geographical area, each of them having its own logic, its own
institutions, as well as *its own networks of actors* (Mormont, 1990, p.34, emphasis added). In a similar vein, Massey (1991) suggests to consider space as "the meeting point, the intersection, of a whole range of *networks of social relations* and communications and movements" (*ibid.*, p.28, emphasis added). This networking approach to structuring of space provides a new perspective for my study. Building upon Lefebvre's argument that "multiple spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another" (Levębvre, 1991, p.86), I assume that the same is true for the networks, which constitute these spaces. In other words, it is networks that bring spaces into existence. Therefore, the fulcrum of analysis of rural spaces (as the sphere of interaction of different forces) is extended to include variety of different networks constituting these spaces. Understanding rurality as a networked space allows considering (social) categories as relational, and differently defined within networks.

I argue, that in essence, agency is relational; it centres around the engagement (or non-engagement) of the different contextual environments that constitute their universes (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). I do not support the followers of the substantialist perspective, who argue that world is composed of static entities, things or beings, which are pre-defined, "preformed" and only then involved in relations which do not affect their "nature", but only add some supplementary modifications (Cassirer, 1953; Durkheim 1995)63. In my understanding of agency, I adopt relational approach and admit to Bachelard's (1929) motto: "In the beginning is the relation" (quoted in Vandenberghe, 1999). I see agency as neither a self-actional notion of "human will", nor as a property of passive, inert entities (individuals, groups), but as a part of the unfolding dynamics of situations64.

Following on from this, I see action as a complex social and interactive phenomenon and I view the actor's self not as a metaphysical entity, but as a dialogical structure, involved in processes resembling internal conversation, or negotiation, when the actor's analytic autonomy is measured against her transpersonal interactions. At the same time, there are external interactions between actors and their context, which go beyond their embedded experiences. Social meanings and values in this case develop out of the actors' capacity to take on the perspectives of different others. Agency, therefore, is constituted by a

63 Society, in this case, is viewed as an unintended interconnecting of self-interested actions, rather than a complex of interrelated processes and links. Relations are seen as given and predicated on the independent existences of actors.

64 As Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define it, agency is a "temporarily constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments... [which] both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (p.970).
combination of intersubjectivity, social interaction and communication. Agency is intrinsically social and relational all the way down (to the self).

Social networks

This relational perspective allows a reshaping of the inquiry into the nature of social world from one concentrating on distinct, isolated objects (entities) to one which considers the continuum from "macro" to "micro" forms. From this point of view, society as the macro-level object is seen as an internally organised, self sustaining system, web of relations between constituent elements. As Mann (1986) stresses, "human beings do not create unitary societies, but a diversity of intersecting networks of social interaction" (p.16). Relations between these networks are dynamic ongoing processes rather than static ties among entities. Society is therefore seen as "relational setting" (Somers, 1994, p.72) or as "constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks" (Mann, 1986, p.1). This vision of society as "network of networks" is the one I take on board in my analysis of comparative study of localities in different national states in my analysis of rural poverty and exclusion. To place my research on exclusionary effects of networks in context, major elements of network theory are first reviewed.

There has been a long tradition in anthropology to study cultural systems of concrete ties (villages, workgroups, ethnic groups) employing the network concept in a way where the latter was considered as a partial description of social structure (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940; Arsenberg and Kimball, 1940; Nadal, 1957). The concept of network was understood as a complex of social ties within "the framework of bounded institutionalised groups or categories" (Barnes, 1969, p.72). Parallel to this, a concept of "action-set" was developed in the exchange theory, which was identified with the set of relations where one particular person is involved. (Kapferer, 1969; Mayer, 1977). Out of this analysis of individual behaviour anthropologists have started to develop the concept of network more systematically, extending its definition to include ties that cut through social categories and bounded groups65.

Later, the network concept was modified to include not only residual ties, which crossed group and category boundaries, but all ties affecting social behaviour. In its wide definition, a network is now seen as a set of actors or nodes, which send and receive relational information to and from the other actors (Wasserman and Faust, 1989). In my research I

65 In contrast to the "action set", which is centred around a single person and bound by specific instrumental transactions, network "denotes a set of linkages which exist simultaneously on the basis of different interests and which persist beyond the duration of any particular transaction... [The network] is more extensive and more durable" (Mitchell, 1969, p.40).
I am interested in both the composition of the network and its forms, studying how the structure and content of ties affect the flow of resources between actors. Networks are temporal and relational contexts, overlapping systems of intersubjective communication whereby actors gather both "contact experience", characterised by immediacy of response to sense and feeling, and "distant experience", characterised by the ability to use imagery in remembrance and anticipation (Emirbayer and Musche, 1998). Different sorts of relationships are constructed within networks; ties are not simply added up as they are different and they provide inconsistent presentations of the self even to the same alter. Moreover, networks are heterogeneous as they connect different entities including humans, discourses, cultures, instruments. Apart from people, roles, statuses and expectations are linked into social networks, so that actual person becomes an "outcome", not a source, of network activity. This heterogeneity of networks makes network analysis a suitable tool for exploring the ways in which multiple and heterogeneous rural spaces are created. Taking on board these principles, the next section considers analytic principles of network organisation, which help to understand how actors relate to each other and how links are created.

Network organisation

First of all, networks are not fully reciprocal, and ties between actors are not necessarily symmetrical. Flows between actors are often "directional" in content and intensity, which means that actors have different access to (network) resources (Emirbayer, 1997). Sahlins (1972) argues that there are two types of reciprocity: balanced reciprocity, when exchange is considered completed only by return of help of similar kind that was previously received (restricted exchange), and generalised reciprocity, which means a general obligation to provide help on demand (unilateral or indirect reciprocity). Balanced reciprocity thus implies the existence of uncertainty in relationships, whereas generalised reciprocity

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66 I will consider later, in the section on cultural capital, how distant experiences shape the contexts of action, in particular how practical competencies predispose actors to feel a fit within some actions/contexts and not others.

67 Apart from relations within networks several studies considered relations between different networks, focusing on the issues of hierarchy, scale and spatiality of these interrelations (Murdoch, 1998; Stoker, 1999). Functions of the networks in this case are seen as dependent on the way they are spatially configured. For example, Stoker (1999) distinguishes between "vertical networks" that cannot sustain local trust and co-operation, and "horizontal networks", which encourage bottom-up collective actions. Relations between vertical networks are based on hierarchical principle: more powerful actors link together and regulate the relationships between the less powerful. Reid (1999) provides another account to the existence of differentially structured social networks, differentiating between "controlling" and "task-focused" networks. The former uses top-down approaches of interest formulation, operating alongside hierarchical layers of the networks. The latter act in a more "horizontal" sense, when participants of the networks commit to act in a more "bottom-up" or "hybridised" sense, combining "bottom-up" and "top-down" approaches to interest formulation.
implies closeness. Network ties which are based on balanced reciprocity are the ones which bring people together in the workgroups. For instance, people who cut hay in Ireland are organised in a small working group on a basis of direct and equal participation. They include “the people you know”, who help each other with a specific task of cutting or collecting the hay and transporting bales, or cutting the turf (Rónán Greilish, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc).

Plate 4. Workgroups in Ros Muc: cutting the turf

As Mewett (1982a) notes, referring to a similar case of workgroup networking in a village in Shetland islands, the organisation of the workgroup formed to streamline peat delivery is thoroughly egalitarian; no one tells another what to do. Every household in the work-group is obliged to provide a helper on demand and at least one member of each household is mobilised each time the work-group is organised, which guarantees their equal participation in the network.

Secondly, networks link their members both directly and indirectly. Indirect ties span across different role systems; they are not restricted to a particular (direct) role relationship between two individuals, which implies some behavioural expectations (Granovetter, 1974). Therefore ties within particular network must be considered within the context of the larger network; several networks overlap in one particular locality. For instance, in the neighbourhood network some ties are formed on the basis of generalised reciprocity,

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68 As Ekeh (1974) stresses, networks based on generalised exchange, as compared to the systems based on restricted exchange, “engender a high degree of social solidarity” (p. 56).

69 Networks thus structure collaborative activities to secure scarce resources.
assuming the solidarity among villagers. At the same time, the nature of the ties between
the neighbours may be different when one of them is treated by another, not just as a
person who lives next door, but as an actor involved in the other wider network structure.
For example, in the Russian village\textsuperscript{70}, a woman who works as a local GP assistant is often
asked by her neighbours to help in dealing with the local administration as she travels to
the central farmstead regularly. She says:

\textit{“In our world, in the countryside, a nurse is not just a nurse. She is, if I could say, a social
worker... In order to get in touch with someone, people come to you and ask: “Please find
out for us when the GP is working in the central village. Please ask the rural
administration how I can get my gas cylinders delivered”. It is more than a medical help,
it is a help as a neighbour. Or as a social worker, actually” (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000,
Khlopovo).}

Plate 5. “Networked” neighbourhoods in Zhilkontsy: sharing gas cylinders

Thirdly, networks link both individuals and groups because “the nodes of a network do not
have to be individual persons... but ties, groups, or other discursive units” (Wellman, 1983,
p.175). The density of groups, their tightness and the patterns of ties between them
structure resource flows. Certain groups therefore, have privileged access to different
resources because they might be centrally positioned in their network, that is some of the

\textsuperscript{70} Hereafter “the Russian village” refers to Khlopovo or Zhikontsy, one of the villages in my case study area
considered in Chapter 2.
people are members of several groups or they have other relations with other parts of the network. Because of unequal access to resources ties within and between groups are getting increasingly assymetrical, so that some people are getting excluded from them.

Another essential phenomenon in network conceptualisation, I would argue, is the absence of connections between the actors. Inquiry into the “absence” of hidden links brings more light into how actors get into and get out of relationships and how networks are formed. Mewett (1982b), when writing about the category of “exiles” in Lewis island community, stressed the importance of absent links, insisting that local social networks “include migrants, whose social presence is retained despite their physical absence” (ibid., p.225).

In a similar way out-migrants from an Irish village play important role in re-shaping local social networks. The absence of people who left is felt very strongly within the village:

“It is a kind of thing – ... they all emigrated to work in England or America. It is really strange to see your neighbours going away, see their empty houses... You knew people, knew they can help you in trouble, and then they are gone”. (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/01, Ros Muc)

Plate 6. One of the uninhabited houses in Ros Muc.

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71 In a similar vein, specific individuals hold privileged positions in social networks because of their priority access to resources. I talk about this issue in more detail in Chapter 7 when I talk about animators and network-makers.

72 Map in Appendix 2 demonstrates how many houses in Ros Muc are uninhabited.
On the other hand, the migrants, who come back home after working and living abroad, link community to the outside world, help to reinforce community links and spirit. People, who have gone away, often keep their own vision of local community as it was when they left, they remember local traditions, so their coming back to the village reinvigorates community life and re-establishes networks. These networks of absence indicate how people still can be connected if they are not linked by direct and explicit links.

Networks, therefore, can be exclusionary - they do not just provide connections and links for the people, but they also define positions of actors and structure resource flows whereby some actors can be put in a privileged position over the others. These positions are defined according to the amount of resources actors possess or can possess utilising their network connections. Bourdieu (1986) in his theory of culture fields suggested that these actual and potential resources, which can be obtained by actors through their network connections, are structured within different socio-spatial fields into different forms of capital. Bourdieu in his concept of “capital” considered it as a generalised resource which can assume monetary and non-monetary, as well as tangible and intangible forms. Bourdieu argues that the amount, value, liquidity and convertability of forms of capital into other forms define why some actors take dominant positions in “topography” of relations while others are restricted and marginalised.

At this point I reach the confluence of ideas of marginalisation (exclusion) and networks. With closer reading of Bourdieu’s concept of capital and detailed study of its different forms, I hope to understand the processes through which social stratification systems are created and maintained.

Difference and network resources

It is clear that exclusion is more than just a process limited only to a social space. Because space is heterogeneous and multiple, consisting of indefinite number of social, cultural and economic spaces, the phenomenon of exclusion as a spatial process should be

73 As Mewett (1982b) stresses, “an individual in the community requires everyone else also of it – including migrants – to sustain a particular social identity” (p.242-243).
74 These absent connections can be important in production of poverty. Exiles often financially support their relatives by sending money home and paying for their travel abroad. Several people in the village thus have additional sort of income and moral support (see also Chapter 4 for discussion on this issue).
75 In my work, as I stated earlier in the Introduction, I am trying to go beyond simple material understanding of resources and consider heterogeneity of relations which construct poverty.
76 There is also a factor of personality which influences interrelations between different actors and specifies their positions within the networks. Some people simply like or dislike each other (see references to grudges in Ireland in Chapter 2) and this might affect network dynamics and exclusion of specific actors.
77 It is important to remember that “marginality has a number of dimensions - economic, social, cultural and political” (Lowe et al., 1995, p.89), although in discussions about rural problems marginality is often narrowed to a metaphor of geographical peripherality and related economic problems. For detailed discussion on this issue see Chapter 4.
examined through the prism of all these spaces. I start my analysis of exclusion in multiple spaces with recourse to Bourdieu (1997), who was among the first suggesting that capital (resources) possessed by actors, which define their positions in networks, can be considered within different cultural spheres. He distinguished between three general types of capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital and social capital, which are responsible for dominance of specific actors in different types of social fields.\(^78\)

In the following sections I will consider different forms of capital and their role in exclusionary processes. As I explained in the Introduction, my work does not reject the existence of money-related issues which lie in the core of poverty and entail policy responses in the form of welfare networks. My research is informed by theoretical ideas that shaped the debates over material poverty and welfare (Townsend, 1993; Becker, 1997; Asen, 2002; Chapman, 2002), integration of the poor in the market economy and economic networks (Findeis and Jensen, 1998; Gibbs, 2001; Howard, 2001; Weber and Duncan, 2002; Danziger and Haveman, 2002; Weber et al., 2002), and connections between welfare policies and economic well-being (Rural Policy Research Institute, 1999; Danziger, 1999; Arrow et al., 2000; Robb, 2002). I consider conditions such as involvement in the job market, economic security\(^79\) and welfare dependence to be very important in construction of poverty. In so doing, I acknowledge the significance of networks of economic capital in creation of inequalities. The path chosen in this thesis, however, is to go beyond exclusively material definition of poverty and specific consideration of welfare networks thus studying heterogeneous construction of rural social malaise.\(^80\) I begin with the analysis of various network resources and their role in (re)creating difference in particular contexts.

**Cultural capital**

The concept of cultural capital assumed different meanings over the period of its development. It ranges from "knowledge of high culture" (Di Maggio and Useem, 1978), to "the capacity to perform tasks in culturally acceptable ways" (Gouldner, 1979) and even "local symbolic practices and competence" (Strathern, 1982). In its original meaning cultural capital was used to describe national cultural supplies (Bourdieu, 1974[1966]) in the following forms: as an informal academic standard, a class attribute, a basis for social...
selection and a resource for power. One of the most important dimensions of Bourdieu's (1984) theory is the use of the idea of cultural capital as a basis for exclusion\textsuperscript{81}.

My understanding of cultural capital is close to Lamont and Lareau's (1988) interpretation of this concept, who see it as “a set of shared status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for... exclusion” (p. 156)\textsuperscript{82}. Bourdieu (1977) in his work identifies cultural capital as co-constructed both by dominant groups and dominated groups. Cultural capital is used by dominant groups to mark cultural distance and proximity, re-establish their privileges and to exclude people who do not match cultural standards. Cultural capital is therefore a classificatory tool, it sets up cultural boundaries as it signals participation in social groups and distance from cultural practices which are “common” or “natural” (Bourdieu, 1984).

The link between different forms of cultural differentiation\textsuperscript{83} and different networks is important to my research. As space is constructed by different networks, cultural separation of spaces is also networked within the webs of humans/non-humans and their organisations, as well as symbols (ideologies as ordered symbols) and discursive frameworks, which contribute to the functioning of these organisational structures. Connectedness to different networks defines the availability of cultural resources and choices. Cultural capital is therefore not only a classificatory, but also a networked resource\textsuperscript{84}. Bourdieu (1974 [1966]) argues that there are four major forms of exclusion which are associated with existence or lack of cultural capital. Each form of exclusion goes with a different set of social networks and social boundaries (differences) supported within those networks (Erickson, 1996).

In the case of exclusion in the form of self-elimination, actors exclude themselves because they feel “out of place” in specific settings with unfamiliar cultural norms, they adjust their aspirations to their perceived chances of success (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). People who feel “out of place”, who are unfamiliar with a cultural environment different from their own, do not have enough confidence to link with the people from different networks as they are not used to the cultural variety this connectedness brings.

The other form of exclusion, overselection, manifests itself when cultural standards are applied equally to the people with different amount of cultural capital. In this case actors with less-valued cultural resources are subjected to the same type of selection as their culturally privileged peers, and they are expected to perform at the same level, which

\textsuperscript{81} Bourdieu (1984) saw cultural capital as a resource giving positions in organisations, defining power relations and being responsible for exclusion of some people from high status groups.

\textsuperscript{82} These cultural signals are defined relationally around structuring binary oppositions such as high/low or pure/impure, so that some practices are attributed social legitimacy and some aren't.

\textsuperscript{83} This differentiation happens because of different endowment with cultural capital.

\textsuperscript{84} As Erickson (1996) puts it, “the most widely useful cultural resource is cultural variety and... cultural variety is closely linked to social network variety” (p.221).
actually means performing more than others (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979). This problem is underlined in the interview with a farm manager in the Russian village of Khlopovo:

“All I can tell you is that all children – both rural and urban – are similar in terms of their abilities... That is why I assert that rural children must have the right to enter universities if they want to. However, what sort of situation do we have here [in the rural district] this year: there are 80 children graduated from the school, and only three of them are going to continue their education. Only three boys are trying to get to the military academy. Because it is all too difficult to enter, say, Timiryazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow, as you need to compete with the children who lived in Moscow, studied there for all their lives and went to preparatory courses administered by the academy itself...” (Elizaveta Avdonina, 16/06/2000, Zhuravna).

Russian rural children are often excluded from the educational networks as they cannot get to the preparatory courses in the cities on a regular basis. Most importantly, both rural and urban children are expected to meet the same standards at the exams, while they have different amount of cultural capital incorporated in the form of education and knowledge. Another form of cultural exclusion is relegation, which Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) see as the situation when lack of cultural capital forces individuals to take up less desirable positions. People in this case are excluded from academic networks, their contacts are limited and so are their cultural resources. Disadvantaged people in this case get less out of their educational and cultural resources, their decisions are often ill-informed and based on limited choice. In the similar vain, this form of exclusion is manifested in rural Ireland:

“I believe, because I came from a small farm personally... for me the education means choice. Two of my brothers are farming... I would have preferred that the two who are presently farming had a higher level of education because if they had a higher level of education, they would be able to take more advantage of various schemes that are out there. You know, the EU schemes, the agri-tourism and whatever, which my brothers are now missing out...” (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc).

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85 In Russia, in order to enter the university one has to pass entrance examinations. There tend to be special preparatory courses, administered by universities, where students have a chance to prepare for the exams being taught by the lecturers of the university they wish to enter. These courses are often held at the university two or three times a week during the year before the entrance exams are held, and they tend to end with the mock exams. In many cases a good mark at the mock exam can be counted as a mark for the final exam.

86 Rural students thus find themselves in a situation of double disadvantage. Firstly, they don’t get the same training for preparatory exams as their urban counterparts. Secondly, urban students, who get the preparatory training, can fall back on their mock exam. If they fail it, they have another chance at the final exam, while for rural children it is a one-off “pass or fail” situation.
Finally, *direct cultural exclusion* is based on similarities in habits, knowledge and behaviour, so that actors who are different in these terms are excluded. Direct exclusion exercised through cultural capital is a power legitimating claims about the superiority of specific cultural norms and practices. This power is accumulated in networks, connectedness of actors into social and cultural webs define their access to resources. Specificities of culture are used to set up and maintain the boundaries around specific groups. The most obvious example is provided in the interview with an Irish housewife:

> "If you work here, in the republic [of Ireland] the best way to communicate in here is to read a message out at mass. Priest on Sunday would say that such and such groups have their meetings. It works if you are Catholic and if you go to mass. If you are not a practising Catholic you won’t hear a notice about the meeting ... So this is sort of half-unintentional exclusion. It does not mean people would not necessarily be welcomed, it means that sometimes they just don’t think. So my son was not able to go to school as it was closed for a day, because they said this at mass... My view would be that they should have said it to parents, you still need to know whether the school is open or closed, whatever you are." (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway).

### Cultural competence

Cultural contexts are therefore significant because they both constrain and enable actors, in much the same way as do networks themselves (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). As well as using cultural signals for marking the boundaries of different groups, actors also differentiate other actors on the basis of more local cultural indicators or “cultural accomplishments” (Philips, 1998), specific to particular cultural contexts. This specific cultural contextuality, or “local culture” (Urry, 1981) is formed by inter-relations between households, local state practices and gender relations lumped together in different forms in various localities. Knowledge and adaptability to particular cultural contexts, which are crucial for inclusion in the local social life, are associated with the notion of cultural competence (Cloke *et al.*, 1997).

Building upon Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of habitus, when he showed how social structures and cognitive structures are recursively linked, cultural competence\(^\text{87}\) can be seen as classificatory schemas that predispose actors to feel a fit within some actions and localities,

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\(^{87}\)Swidler (1986) in his analysis of cultural interactions between people refers to a “cultural toolkit” of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of action.
“in place” or “out of place” in particular contexts (Creswell, 1996; see also Cloke and Davies, 1992 on this issue). The webs of cognitive, affective, and bodily schemas through which actors learnt the ways to behave in particular contexts, influence the boundary work of actors in articulating tastes and aspirations, as well as in distinguishing themselves from others (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Different cultural competences are analysed in my conversation with a farmer’s wife in rural Ireland:

“I am not a Connemara women, I am a Welsh woman... I will always be different. And you accept that. But they... because I am not doing quite the same kind of things as they are doing, they are a little bit suspicious of me. Because one of the things that mapped me out as an absolute red, you know, terrible woman was that I actually used to go to the pub by myself as I did in my home village! ... [They see me as] a scarlet woman, that’s what I was trying to say. (laughing). That kind of local thinking I found absolutely incomprehensible ... It is not that they wanted to put me in trouble really. It is a point of having grown up with the certain kind of life.” (Glynis Uí Luathair, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc).

This separation occurs because there is a separate notion of “Connemara person”, which refers to linguistic distinctiveness and inventiveness, to controlled behaviour and emotion, to the powerful sense of community on which Connemara people explicitly pride themselves. This implies strong attachment to the local area, which produces local consciousness separate from a local culture. Locals in this Irish-speaking part of Galway county call it “the way of leaving you can be proud of” (Rút Ní Mhaoláin), “traditions” (Brianna Ó Hógáin), “local skills and habits” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin). Cultural competence assumes real meaning of locality, based on people’s embodied experiences and reflecting the sense of difference; it is constructed within webs of relations:

 “[There are] nebulous cultural threads that are felt, experienced, understood, but never explicitly expressed. They are substance of belonging. This is what binds members to their culture” (Cohen, 1982, p.11).

Bourdieu (1984) suggests that people with different degrees of cultural capital (intellectuals and everyday people) valorise space differently, placing value either on form

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88 She moved there from abroad and was not fully accepted because of her inability to follow local cultural codes.
89 Another interesting definition of cultural competence I came across is “síthe”, which in Irish means “remembrance, local knowledge” (Moirin Uí Neill) – it is traditional knowledge of the ways to behave in a particular context, embodied practices, based on affinity with place.
60 Local area means something to the locals which it might not mean to others.
(perceived, social space) or on functional aspects of directly experienced everyday space (cultural competence). This is where the distinction between two different types of cultural capital lies: incorporated cultural capital exists in the form of education and knowledge, while symbolic cultural capital identifies the capacity to define and legitimise cultural, moral and artistic values (Bourdieu, 1984).

Following Lefebvre (1991b), I can assume that different types of exclusion are based on different cultural discourses, conceptualised as discourse in space (perceived space), discourse about space (lived space) and discourse adequate to understanding of space (conceived space). Thus, lay discourses (discourses in and about space) in lay networks reproduce a vision of exclusion different from that produced in policy networks as a result of policy discourse (conceptualising space).

Social capital

Integration into the systems of social capital, which represent another aspect of social structures, is another point of my complex analysis of poverty and exclusion. Since its development by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), the concept has been applied in different contexts and meanings to describe community development, civic participation and social change (Flora and Flora, 1993; Evans, 1996; Wall et al., 1998; Lin, 2000; Boggs, 2001; Edwards and Foley, 2001; Edwards et al., 2001; for overview see Anderson and Bell, 2003). Based on work of theorists of social embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985) and social exchange (Ekeh, 1974, Sahlins, 1972) social capital is often conceptualised as a set of resources providing interpersonal integration. Social capital, appearing in the form of trust, obligations, ideology and reciprocal relationships, embraces resources which individuals can effectively mobilise through connections with 'others' (Bourdieu, 1997). It is important to stress that social capital is a network concept as it values social relations and collective resources which can be obtained through interpersonal links.

Re-conceptualisation of social capital as a "capital of social connections" (Bourdieu, 1984), as a network concept suggests that it can be considered the basis for social differentiation and the creation of inequality. Network resources which represent social capital can be accessed differently by different actors, and the availability and the quantity of these resources thus indicate possible integration or exclusion. Different researchers have also

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91 Cultural competence, which represents cultural indicators learnt unconsciously through family socialisation, is based on embodied, experiential cultural knowledge. On the contrary, exclusion through symbolical imposition of (cultural) meanings is conscious and it is executed within ideological (ideologies as ordered symbols) and discursive frameworks.

92 In the Conclusion I also discuss interrelation between social and geographical spaces in terms of exclusion.

93 Bourdieu (1986) insists that it is the "possession of a durable network... which provides each of its members with collectively-owned capital" (p.249).
argued that social capital is differentiated according to its forms and levels as it is constructed within differently aligned networks. 

Social capital is often conceived as a set of mutual support networks, mitigating or aggravating exclusionary effects (Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1997; see Edwards et al., 2001 for an overview). In this case, the density of networks, or "institutional thickness" (Amin, 1994) in combination with socially progressive ideology is the major source producing social capital. The size of network connections, therefore, determines the volume of social capital possessed by specific agents. Connectedness to a lot of networks, a sort of "connection to the whole" means blurring the rigid boundaries of the "other" and lowering the possibility of social exclusion. The networks of social capital facilitate certain actions and thus are important (powerful) elements producing local spaces (contexts). Thus, instead of thinking of social capital as a mechanism providing access to power, it can be re-conceptualised as one of the aspects of power itself. As a dimension of power, social capital should not be considered as the product, but rather as the mechanism, the process, productive force which re-creates and differentiates societies and spaces.

What should now be recognised is that the way social capital is reproduced and the limitations to this process define its potential effect on exclusionary trends. Social capital can be both internalised (subjective beliefs) and externalised (external encouragement of selfless actions). The external component of social capital is reproduced through norms, which both enable and constrain actors. Therefore, ideological (normative) constraints on social capital can be vital for its development and existence. One way or other, social capital tends to be considered by many commentators as a positive thing which brings "ameliorating" effects on social exclusion (Coleman, 1988; Flora and Flora 1993; Lin 2000). Most common definitions of social capital emphasize networks that provide mutual support, build trust and streamline collective action for mutual benefit. A local cleric in the Irish village provides an example of the positive role of social capital in his village:

"If farmer needs to take his sheep 4 or 5 miles along the road up to the commonage, another farmer will help him and vice versa. That's happening... or if [there is] a family who need their children to get employment, say, during the summer months, say, summer..."

Footnotes:
94 Flora and Flora (1993), following Bourdieu's (1984) argument about horizontal and vertical models of capital, stressed different spatial dimensions of social capital, while Burt (1992) distinguished between different structural forms of social resources. He stressed distinction between 'bonding' social capital which links actors together within specific networks, and 'bridging' social capital that connects networks together.
95 Bell and Anderson (2003) confirm this assumption emphasising that "social capital is a context dependent form of power that can be created, accumulated, or destroyed" (p.9).
96 Coleman (1997) emphasises that there are also a number of other factors limiting the amount of social capital, such as individuals' needs for help (level of deprivation), existence of other sources of aid, cultural and spatial aspects of networks (tendency to lend, structure of contacts).
97 Hereafter "the Irish village" refers to Ros Muc, the village in my case study area considered in Chapter 2.
job for their 16-17-year old. You will find that the shop or public house will employ boys and girls whose family already have a person working in the business or have done in the past. Because they know family's background and they don't have to watch and see whether they are taking money out of the till or not. Or they will perhaps recommend [them] to somebody else to employ them." (Tim Ó Caoinleáin, 22/06/01, Ros Muc)

However, the relationship between social capital and exclusion is not straightforward. Because social inequalities may be embedded in social capital, there is a need to find out which forms and networks of social capital can be seen as inclusive or exclusive (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Lin, 2000). Social capital has an ambiguous role in creating/alleviating social exclusion. On the one hand, it promotes local development and cohesion, on the other hand, it can be external to certain groups, in particular to those in condition of poverty.

Therefore, I can conclude that the same strong ties in social networks that provide social capital for its members make it possible to intentionally exclude the “others”. Reproduction of social capital, which depends on delegation of authority to mandated agents, can explain the creation of “key actors”, recognised spokesmen of groups, who are endowed with the power to exclude/include, set within logic of knowledge and acknowledgement. Social capital, representing the rights of control transferred to one person, is thus an exclusionary/inclusionary tool.

Exclusion in multiple spaces

Having discussed the difference and exclusion as being generated within networks which constitute complex spaces, I now want to broaden my analysis to consider inter-relations between different kinds of networks and the ways spaces become fragmented and separated through network interaction and recombination. These combinations reshape and differentiate rural space, uniting or separating (excluding) its elements. As there are many network shapes, so there are many different spatial forms of exclusion constructed within a multitude of socio-material formations.

As Wilson (1997) argues, “productive” social capital generates an “inclusive concept of community”, while “contracting” social capital leads to disruption of community ties (p.747). This argument is echoed by Portes (1998) who identifies 4 negative consequences of social capital, the first of which is the “exclusion of outsiders”.

Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) reiterate this statement: “the same social relations that ... enhance the ease and efficiency of economic exchanges among community members implicitly restrict outsiders” (p.128).

See Chapter 5 for a contextualised account of the ways social exclusion is networked.
Mol and Law (1994) suggest that differentiation (exclusion) as a process is differently organised within various types of space, which they call "social topologies". Spatial categories are multiple, but there are three major forms which frame the performance of difference: regions, networks and fluids.

Firstly, "regions" stand for spaces with more or less fixed boundaries and coordinates, limited in their form and scope by Euclidian restrictions to a standard axial system. Regions are homogeneous as "the differences inside are suppressed... minimized or marginalised" (Mol and Law, 1994, p. 645). Space in its "regional" form is coercively simplified and categorised, there is no space left for difference: "what is different, is elsewhere" (ibid, p.647).

Secondly, "network" space is relational; it is constituted by actors interlinked into the webs of relations. Within this space proximity isn't metric but it is rather a subject of relational similarity or relational closeness – actors are drawn together on the basis of similarity of relations (Mol and Law, 1994). Geographical space is thus folded within cross-cutting networks, which bring together places that are distant from each other on a regional map. In the network space, where various topologies meet in one place through inter-relations between their constituent networks, the difference also becomes a relational matter.

Thirdly, Mol and Law (1994) argue that there exists a type of space, which they call a "fluid" space. This space is also generated by networks, but its elements are linked together in an unstable, indefinite way. "Fluid" space is heterogeneous, it is constituted by interacting networks creating "variations without boundaries and transformation without continuity" (ibid, p.658). Elements of this space are still connected to each other, but each time they get connected they come together in different "viscous" combinations. This means that there is an uncertainty about whether these elements of fluids can be separated into parts (no clear boundaries) or whether they can mix with the components of another fluid (no continuity). In this case elements and actors are just mixtures which constantly change, so that multiple identities become possible. When the elements of fluids are constantly redefined, the boundary between 'normal' and 'not normal' cannot be drawn. Similarity and difference in fluid space take different forms, complement each other as parts of a non-existent "inside" and "outside". "Fluid" entities can transform themselves without creating difference (Mol and Law, 1994). Because things in fluid space are not 'properly' arranged as they are in network space, the loss of one particular component does not mean collapse of the whole system (fluid)\textsuperscript{101}.

\textsuperscript{101} As Mol and Law (1994) stress, "the fluid metaphor suggests that we are dealing with something that is viscous: with things that tend to stick together" (ibid, p.661).
It is this changeability and gluey character of constituent elements which attracts me to fluids. Exclusion in fluids is not constant thing, as there is nothing fixed in this ever-changing kind of space. Fluids as a less familiar idea in the social theory (if compared to networks and regions) require special attention, but this idea should be handled with care. As Mol and Law suggest, the three types of space are not independent of one another and they coexist, "fluid spaces are no "better" than regions or networks... fluid objects absorb all kinds of elements" (p.663).

Mol and Law’s concept attends to the complexity of space and provides insights into how elements of spaces and spaces themselves are joined together. Three typologies may not represent all variety of types of space\(^\text{102}\), but they provide a contextual framework for the consideration of exclusion. Adaptation of this model brings both flexibility and structure into my work. On the one hand, I know that I can study the performance of social difference within different spheres, which can be considered separately, as “marginality has a number of dimensions” (Lowe et al., 1995, p.89). On the other hand, the internal flexibility of this approach allows me to stay as close to reality as possible while preserving complexity and heterogeneity of spaces and their elements\(^\text{103}\).

Bearing this in mind I first consider social relations in the countryside within what is often seen as a “regionalised” context of “community”, then taking on allegedly more “networked” social groupings. Later I attempt to consider how different networks are interrelated within a complex space in a “fluid” way, where relations between actors are loose and unstable. The challenge is to see beyond the above categorisations and tease out the multiple character of communities as networked groups.

Community and links

My analysis of exclusion in different spaces starts with the study of community as a relational setting where differentiation originates. As I emphasised earlier\(^\text{104}\), concept of “community” is quite ambiguous\(^\text{105}\). To avoid this ambiguity, I follow Wright (1992) in the way she sees community as organisational structure situated between the outer boundaries of private space of household and the edge of the rural settlement, where “community” is transformed into the “state”. In my work I am trying to conceptualise the interpersonal life

\(^{102}\) Mol and Law (1994) recognise that “there are other kinds of space too” (ibid., p.643).

\(^{103}\) As Mol and Law suggest, we can talk about something resembling “a little bit of region” or “a little bit of network”, which in their turn can be swallowed into a fluid.

\(^{104}\) See the Introduction for detailed analysis of evolution of the concept of the community.

\(^{105}\) Bauman (2001) refers to it as a “feel”, Cohen (1982) calls it a “meaning”, while Wellman (1979) identifies it as “behaviour and sentiments”.
of rural dwellers both as a membership in a discrete solidarity and as the central node linking together complex network structures. I start my analysis of community by teasing out its meanings as a symbol, as an idea which unites people and gives them a sense of belonging to a particular locale.

**Community as a symbol**

Symbols are lifeless; it is only when they are filled with different meanings they become ideas, visions, feelings. Content of the symbol, unlike its form, is unique for each member of the society. Every rural dweller experiences community differently, and the meanings they construct for this term are rather contrasting. Some might see it as a “natural way of things... much more about social links” (Ailis Ó Cuinn), while the others think about community as “inevitable living with neighbours... while being apart” (Cristín Ó Haodha). Cohen (1982) characterises community as a symbol which simultaneously expresses similarity and difference. People often accord community with the meaning of the place, where only “local people” live, some sort of “ideal” villagers who were born in that place, lived there for a long period of time and married within the village. In this case, different people are generalised under a stereotype of “community person”, “local person”, so that community is conceptualised as a uniform block, a group of people with similar norms and values.

In reality this appearance of uniformity is often false and is used only to oppose community members to ‘others’. Cohen (1982) suggested that ideology of community is in living with the division rather than finding solution to it, showing the visibility of unity. A farmer’s wife in the Irish village explains it in the following way:

“If there is an old row going back maybe 20 years, 50 years sometimes, you know, they still keep it up... It only looks like that they all live together and they are supportive of each other” (Glynis Uí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc).

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106 From this perspective community is seen as solidarity behaviour and shared values. In this case I consider internalised attitudes as determining social relations.
107 In this case community is considered as a set of links, webs or networks. Here I attempt to delineate structures of relationships and flows of activities.
108 Images of communities are often place-based, ranging in scale from neighbourhood to “communities of memory” (Silk, 1999), which comprise groups of actors sharing a normatively significant history.
109 Several commentators (Hoggart, 1957, Dennis et al., 1956) have shown how the image of social homogeneity is underpinned by the sense of mutual interest and common experience, which are deemed important in the development of community.
Community as a symbol is, therefore, an aggregating rather than integrating thing: it puts people together and creates an image of uniformity but does not provide the links which bridge the gaps between different groups of villagers.

The more symbolic community becomes, the more difficult it gets to understand it, to “experience” it and, therefore, harder to breach and get into. Community, when it is imparted with the meaning of solidarity, homogeneity and common behaviour, is transformed into a simple symbol with a fixed boundary, which stands to the intrusions of different others. This symbol embraces different meanings given to it by different people, but it leaves no scope for accommodating the internal differences.

At the same time, different commentators (Webber, 1964, Wellman, 1979) have stated that the image of community as organised around neighbourhood and place-based links has been transformed to represent a wider social system of contacts and networks, not necessarily circumscribed by the boundaries of particular region (see also Liepins, 2000 for critique of this approach). It is this networking perspective, which breaks down “regionalised” vision of community, to which I am now turning in my analysis.

Community as a set of networks

Unlike the symbolic vision of community, its understanding as a set of networks, a web of links and relations suggests more an inclusive and complex approach. From networking perspective community appears as a social system lived and experienced by people, rather than ideology superimposed upon them. Community relations with all their informality are based on a sense of familiarity with others whose personality is relatively well known and not shaped by formal role relations (Brint, 2001). Experiences of living in a place are more than just associations with it, they constitute what Cohen (1982) calls “the sense of belonging...: the use of language, the shared knowledge of genealogy and ecology, joking... the aesthetics of subsistence skills” (p.6). Importantly, these experiences are (re)created within multiple (social, cultural) networks, in which rural dwellers are involved.

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10 The vision of community as a close-knit, place-based structure with strong social bonds of mutuality and cohesion has been changing over the years. The presence or absence of “traditional” community has been contested both by social writers, who asserted that close-knit relationships have been transformed into “impersonal, transitory and segmental links” (Wirth, 1939, cited in Valentine, 2001).

11 Wellman (1979) characterised this changed vision of community as “community liberated”, arguing that this new vision of the concept goes beyond communal solidarities in neighbourhood so that people are connected in multiple social networks.

12 Silk (1999) talks about these networked structures as “place-free” or “stretched-out” communities, which are based on intentional choices rather than the accident of place.

13 This vision of community echoes the features of cultural competence considered before. However, “belonging” is not that strictly confined within one particular place. Local experiences in this case go beyond the boundaries of particular villages; they include associations with wider geographies and/or the shared history of particular region.
Local knowledge is still based on certain living habits and norms which are exclusive. A housewife in rural Ireland describes it in this way:

"If you look on [name of the place] community board all the notices are in Irish. That is a very deliberate policy to say: "this is a language of the community" and this is the official language of this area, if you like. Obviously, you would not know what is happening if you could not read Irish... So this would be a very strong message to get somebody to learn Irish in order to participate and to know what's going on." (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway).

However, ideology of community is only a part of this lived experience. Living in the village is about social links, historicity and culture of the place, or local culture (Cohen, 1982). This experience is also based on the sense of difference, but it is less ideological than in case of symbolic community as people value their traditional "way of doing things" not just because it is traditional, but because it suits them.

While symbolic community implies the existence of a symbolic boundary between "locals" and "others", networks linking people together stretch outside the limits of this symbolic construction. In a networked community people with their experiences of belonging to a particular cultural, political and social milieu escape rigid classification of the villagers; they are linked to a locale through associations with the interests of the people who live there.

Community and morality

As discussed earlier, the concept of community tends to be associated with social ties and interaction within a specific context, but it also has a normative interpretation. Relationships are often based on certain behavioural norms, as Benhabib (1992) states:

"The domain of the moral is so deeply enmeshed with those interactions that constitute our lifeworld that withdraw from moral judgement is tantamount to ceasing to interact, to talk and act in the human community" (p.125-126).

114 The symbol of community is a fixed thing, it is static as within this symbolic construction one's background (localness) is ranked higher than anything else; nothing can supersede the criterion of membership to a particular locality by family connection.

115 See also Mewett's (1982) discussion on relations between belonging and community membership.
In this case networks which are formed through these relationships can be seen as “moral networks”, as they incorporate a code of morality. There are two moral dimensions of community which are most commonly identified: that community is good in itself and that it speaks with moral authority (Smith, 1999). On the one hand, the notion of community is considered as a normative ideal, assuming that its connotations of moral unity, rootedness and kinship create some sort of positive arrangements of human life. Community in this case is associated with benevolence and solidarity which render justice a remedial virtue (Smith, 1999), which comes into play only when community breaks down. This position is exemplified by the case of an Irish village where people were united to defend the viability of their community only when it was under threat:

“The Educational Committee’s boss ... went on the radio and on TV and said the Ros Muc was a dying community. And there was no point setting up any programs there, because in a couple of years there would be nothing left in Ros Muc except “the light of the moon”, he said, that would be shining over Ros Muc (laughing) ... He was trying to downgrade Ros Muc and to belittle it. But what of course he did was he raised the anger ... And the following day [people] ... were planning the strategy... So the community was united on that front, probably, under pressure. Not so much when there is no pressure.” (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc).

Within this framework, understanding of social goods is considered locally specific, so that justice is based on particular community understandings of context-specific moral values. As with any idealised image, moral community in this case is regionalised, bounded within a particular geographical and historical milieu. This image implies partiality favouring members of one particular place-based group and excluding the others. In the ideal moral community, or “community of consensus” (Silk, 1999), there exist various forms of oppression protecting the dominant value systems including moral codes.

At the same time, community can be seen as a structure where individuals’ particular social roles are pitted against their more encompassing community role so that people are held morally responsible for the things and actions which go beyond their immediate social roles. Boundaries of groups are in this case more blurred, “boundaries... just fade into the distance” (Walzer, 1990). This conception of moral community centres around

116 As Etzioni (1995) notices, “communities are social webs of people who know one another as persons and have a moral voice” (p. ix).
117 Opponents of communitarianism, which sees community as a resource for creation of a more balanced democratic society, often support this vision of community as the general “good of society” (Etzioni, 1995).
118 As Young (1990) stresses, “the ideal of community... denies the difference between subjects. The desire for community relies on the same desire for social wholeness and identification that underlies... political sectarianism on the other” (p.303).
responsibility and relationships and it is seen as formed by different (multiple) moral networks, often based on the ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982). In this networked space "moral voices are multiple and relational" (Hekman, 1995, p. 131), so that moral issues are not limited to one particular realm and abandoned, but are resolved within the multitude of cultural/moral spheres. Multiple moral voices do not articulate partiality and prejudice thus encouraging inclusion of others in an increasingly multicultural society.

Strangers (or others) in a networked moral community are no longer strangers as they are incorporated in our community of concern. On the basis of this networked concept, Young (1990) proposes a different provisional and relational form of community, where boundaries are fluid and blurred. Members of different "subcommunities" are flexible and open in establishing relations with each other; they may choose to reconstitute community if it does not comply with the universal moral principles. Relations between community members in this case are based on tolerance of difference and mutual respect, but members are not necessarily closely tied up to each other. The advantage of the "fluid" concept of community is that it sees actors as connected through unstable links and they mix with the others in different ways within various networks, so difference is also unstable and it is judged on the basis of a universal concept of morality.

"Fluid" communities can really exist. Increased personal mobility and the development of new forms of communication mean that people can get involved in multiple social networks stretching over great distances and they are more easily able to maintain these relationships. Mol and Law (1994) provide another example of "real" fluid communities involving doctors coping with anaemia. Actors in this case are linked together, but these links are lose so that position of elements of fluids is not fixed or structured. Doctors trying to cope with this disease appeal to universal meanings of good and bad (save life, help those who are suffering), while moral norms are defined within the multitude of cultural and social networks. Norms in this case are not invariant, "right decisions" on how to deal with anaemia patients are changing depending on the cultural and social environment: "it is more a matter of trying to correct deviance than of striving after some absolute number" (Mol and Law, 1994, p.659). By the analogy with fluid space of anaemia

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119 See also discussion on "affective communities" and Maffesoli's "neo-tribes" in Chapter 6.
120 This poststructuralist vision of community as a "fluid" space was anticipated by Sennett (1970), who suggested that uneasiness about life being too regulated and structured by power relations can beget "subcommunities" of choice, where people start to experience "a sense of dislocation in their lives" (quoted in Silk, 1999). These feelings about being uncomfortable with living in "communities of difference", where inequalities produce a variety of ordered and competing subject positions (Silk, 1999) may promote moral learning.
121 As Bronner (1990) states, a pluralistic or "fluid" concept of community is based on a "discourse of the universal" embodied in the all-inclusive scope of law, rights and freedoms.
122 Connectedness to multiple networks can mean even virtual communication which offers "new liquid and multiple associations between people... new modes and levels of truly interpersonal communication" (Benedikt, 1991, p. 123).
I could talk about the fluid space of poverty, where multiple poverty is continually transformed into different forms, changing from one mixture (different aspects of social problematics) to another as it is reproduced within different and unstable networks. This section, however, is just the first part of topological analysis of difference. The next section considers the other type of networks, that is organisational (policy) networks, whose structure and internal power relations are different to the ones considered above. The task is to embrace the whole multiplicity of networks in my analysis and to consider how their inter-relations re-create similarity and difference.

**Politics and networks**

Everyday poverty constructed within social networks is a set of experiences, artefacts and lifestyles, part of the life-worlds of (rural) people, which is expressed through their living practices. This multiple "messiness" of poverty, however, is not clear, not "visible" in social networks (hence there are talks about "hidden" poverty) that are not easily representable within lay discourses. In this part of the chapter I continue analysis of heterogeneous poverty and consider how it falls out of policy networks and how specific poor groups are neglected in policy making. Importantly, I do not want to separate the discursive and the lived spaces of poverty thus recreating the dichotomy between the political and the everyday. Instead, the task of this part is to provide a theoretical background for understanding political constructions of poverty as a part of the complex analysis of this phenomenon within the multiplicity of spaces and times. I start with the discussion on traditional ways of dealing with poverty in policy making. The next section studies the ways general shifts in understanding politics have contributed to the evolution of mechanisms of political action, specifically focusing on networked policy practices.

**Introducing politics**

There are two major strands within definitions of politics. The first tendency stresses that politics is a specific and limited class of human activities. Following the works of Plato and Aristotle, proponents of this view of politics associate it with the government of a group of actors, where power is used to formally regulate relations between individuals (Strauss, 1953, 1959, Oakeshott, 1962). Politics, as it is understood here, is the "activity of

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123 I return to the analysis of this "fluid" space and its exclusivity in more detail in the next chapter, after I consider another way of linking actors in organisational (policy) networks as a part of their general experience of coming together in the form of viscous ever-changing mixtures.

124 Politics is derived from a Greek word *politeia*, which in this case is translated as regime, or government.
attending to the general arrangements of a set of people whom chance or choice have brought together” (Oakeshott, 1962, p.112). Politics in this case is also associated with identity as certain groups use power to self-define themselves, form organisations and institutions of control and differentiate, set up the rules of interpretation and action. The problem with this discourse theory of politics is that it prescribes the use of power, homogenises the action rules and laws of truth and it eventually overlooks heterogeneity and the diversity of the world. It also perpetuates the artificial division between the political and other realms of action.

The second strand of theories about politics embraces all human activities as political\(^\text{125}\) (Easton, 1953; Nicholson, 1984; Heller, 1991; Mouffe, 1993). Here it is argued that making decisions and putting them into practice could be done outside of the sphere of government. Seen from this standpoint politics is presented as something which is opposed to force and coercion; it uses power to keep arrangements and links between different groups of individuals in balance and maintain existing order of things (Crick, 1964; Heywood, 1994). This vision of politics suggests that it is not a separate realm of life and activity, but that politics embraces “all activities of co-operation and conflict, within and between societies” when people organise use, produce and distribute resources (Leftwich, 1984, p.65). These activities are everywhere and they influence and reflect the distribution of power and patterns of decision-making.

This vision of politics which pushed the boundaries of the political beyond the realm of the government has encouraged the development of networked approaches to policy making. I am specifically interested in these studies of public policy because they go beyond specific subjectivity applied to the use of power in the “traditional” discourse on politics. By assuming the existence of specific networks of actors producing anti-poverty regulations and implementing policy practices these approaches represent a general move towards a heterogeneous understanding of rural space and rural poverty.

**Policy networks**

In the last two decades network perspectives on policy-making have been enjoying increasing popularity in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, France and North America (Richardson and Jordan 1979, Rhodes 1992, Marsh and Rhodes 1992, Coleman and Skogstad, 1990, Hanf and Scharpf 1978, Schneider et al. 1994, Le Galès 1994, Kickert et al. 1997, Kooiman 1993, van Waarden, 1992). Initially, “policy network” approaches were used to analyse increasingly complex relationships between interest groups and the state in

\(^{125}\) It is based on different interpretation of the Greek word *politeia* as a regime with a sense of a regimen, a way of doing things, a way of life.
the forms of "policy communities" and "issue networks" (Heclo 1978, Jordan 1990). These earlier studies suggested that policies were made and implemented through the network of issue skilled policy actors with shared norms and frameworks. From this perspective, policy networks were seen to consist of civil servants from government departments (or units within them), interest groups and certain professionals ("experts" with or without formal training). Importantly, the key features of policy networks were interdependence between different actors, the closeness of policy makers, the distinction between policy insiders and outsiders, and their exclusiveness of new actors seeking to influence policy (Rhodes, 1986).

Changing understanding of politics as a complex and fragmented process, which involves a number of different institutions and organisations (rather than a single government), brought about the vision of networks as sets of relatively stable relationships, which interdependently link various actors sharing interests with regard to a specific policy (for historical review of different policy-network approaches see Borzel, 1998). This suggested a shift from the vision of network as an exclusive community of closely knit political actors to a specific form of governance, a process linking together different actors in joint policy making. The new concept of "policy network", re-articulated by Rhodes (1996), describes it as a relatively stable self-organising (resisting government steering), interorganisational set of links based on resource-exchange between the multiplicity of actors. These new approaches drew on social network analysis and inter-organisational analysis seeking to overcome simplistic boundaries between public and private actors who are treated as wholly independent and between purely hierarchical structures and relations.

In line with Rhodes's (1996) definition, governments and organisations are no longer seen as formal dominating institutions, but as a multiplicity of actors co-operating for the creation of a collective policy, which becomes more than the sum of the decisions by the individual actors. From this perspective, policy network refers to "structures" or certain "structural configurations" which are "located somewhere beyond or between policy markets" and can be seen as integrated hybrid structures of political governance composed of "relatively autonomous action unites" (Sneider, 1992, p.111; Rhodes, 1996, p.50-51).

Closer examination of inter-organisational approaches to analysis of policy making indicates the problems they face. Although they sought to achieve a high degree of rigour, the definitions of policy networks are couched in a very wide terms and are not always consistent. There is a host of conflicting approaches trading under the same "policy network" title, which can be discussed under three different headings (See Table 2). This division is artificial, and I don't intend to draw the clear boundaries between these groupings and create yet another rigid typology. The idea is to see whether different
“policy networks” as they are conceptualised in the different approaches within the field of policy studies can actually be considered as networks in the way they are understood so far, that is as webs of connections between humans and non-humans. The following section provides critical analysis of different mechanisms of “networked” political actions and their ability to understand heterogeneous poverty and to work with the multiplicity of different actors.

The first grouping brings together approaches, which consider policy networks as some sort of centralised mechanism of rational power distribution. Not only does politics take place in a bounded (political) setting, but it is also exclusive to a limited number of actors which exchange resources. These policy network definitions offer isolated categories with clearly identified the dominant actors (Bressers and O'Toole, 1998), encourage disaggregation of the state and interest groups (Hufen and Ringeling, 1990) and of the policy making itself (by means of fragmentation of policy process into different “stages” with “problems” and “goals” clearly identified (Wilks and Wright, 1987). A dynamic network of links and connections in this case is reduced to the static structure with fixed and rigid connections between selected actors.

The second group of approaches still sees policy networks as stable and structural connections, although here both informal links between the multiplicity of (social) actors is re-discovered. The important shift from the earlier policy network models here is that governmental organisations are no longer analysed as the central actor, but as one of the actors in the policy process (Gage and Mandell, 1990; Rhodes, 1992). In this context, power is seen as dominating and controlling, although not directly, different conflicting actors grouped together in the form of various organisations. Networks are considered as “self-organising” political structures (Rhodes, 1997), which both constrain and facilitate policy actors and policy outcomes. They reflect a change in the structure of polity when the governments mobilise political resources in situations in which these resources are widely dispersed between public and private actors (Kenis and Shneider, 1991). Politics, therefore, takes the form of “new governance”, which is seen as alternative to markets and hierarchies.

This governance approach takes up where the interest-based approach leaves off. Networks are conceptualised here as dynamic structures, although limited in their scope and existing only between and within institutions. The scope of policy networks is largely limited to the national level, where the “normative” framework of policy (notably “state traditions”) has been argued to condition the norms and values of actors often separated at the sectoral level (Boase, 1996; Rhodes, 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches/Characteristics</th>
<th>Non-network approaches: Rational/logical organisation, interest-based explanations</th>
<th>Imitating networks: governance, structural, interorganisational approaches</th>
<th>Localised networks: endogenous, policy-learning/community approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Grouped together in (two) clusters, exclusively political</td>
<td>Variety of social actors</td>
<td>Variety of social actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Rational resource exchange</td>
<td>Formal (coercive) and informal, structured</td>
<td>Non-rational, non-strategic, non-intended (&quot;paradoxical&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of links</td>
<td>Durable and stable, mostly one-way (top-down)</td>
<td>Stable, reciprocal</td>
<td>Flexible, multiple (redundant), horizontal connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Centralised, unequally divided, homogenising, controlling, depends on resources within policy sphere</td>
<td>Unequally divided, controlling &quot;at a distance&quot;, depends on integration into institutions</td>
<td>Dispersed, fluid, shifting coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Integrated, institutionalised</td>
<td>Institutionalised, bargaining, governance of interrelated units</td>
<td>Endogenous, learning and innovation, based on consensual knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>&quot;steering&quot; and &quot;targeted&quot; coalitions (Bressers and O'Toole, 1998); policy as &quot;problems&quot; (Hufen and Ringeling, 1990, quoted in Bressers and O'Toole, 1998); outcome of &quot;resource exchange&quot; (Wilks and Wright, 1987); coordination &quot;by plan&quot; and standardization (Kickert et. al, 1997); &quot;binding society&quot; (Coleman and Perl, 1999)</td>
<td>&quot;exclusionary&quot; networks (Knight 1992); &quot;informal relationships&quot; (Kenis and Schneider, 1991); &quot;new form of governance&quot; (Rhodes, 1996); working &quot;despite diversity of interests&quot; (Mayntz, 1993) web of &quot;conscious interrelations&quot; (Hanf, 1978); institutions of &quot;coercion and distribution&quot; (Blom-Hansen, 1997, p.680) &quot;antagonistic cooperation&quot; (Dowding, 1995, p.145)</td>
<td>reduce uncertainty and complexity (Hanf and O'Toole, 1992); deal with differentiation (Bogason and Toonen, 1998); participation for best use of resources (Powell and Smith-Doerr, 1994); &quot;direct or indirect&quot; decision-making (Borzel, 1998); &quot;achieve common goals through policy learning&quot; (Sabatier,Jenkins-Smith, 1993) &quot;non-strategic action&quot; (Scharpf 1991, p.172); &quot;recombining elements&quot; (Burstein, 1991)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The multiplicity of actors, although now recognised, is unequally divided into dominant (government-related) and dominated (other) groups, which are not fully integrated into policy networks (Knight, 1992; Dowding, 1995). In this case a potentially large number of actors drawn from different levels of policy formation are left outside the central decision-making framework, which works to reduce this diversity (Mayntz, 1993; Blom-Hansen, 1997). Policy networks in this case are technological structures which reduce difference and the heterogeneity of different groups of actors to orderly, predictable relationships between specific organisations.

The host of endogenous, policy-learning approaches seem to suggest a different vision of decision-making as a creation of new connections between actors at different levels (including both horizontal and vertical links). The concept of governance here is broadened to include multiple interpenetrating levels and sectors linked together in a multiplicity of unregulated ways. The role of the environment or context of policy networks has been given much greater prominence by means of legitimising actors outside of policy domains and encouraging "policy learning" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993) and "non-strategic action" (Scharpf, 1991). The scope of policy networks is extended to include not only meso-level but also the national and supra-national level of policy-making (for instance, EU institutions). This signalled a change from the governance approach, which considered stable governance networks within one particular country, to more inclusive and complex definition of policy networks, which extend beyond the boundaries of the political and the national and provide alternative venues for groups to re-open matters settled at the local/national level (Burstein, 1991; Borzel, 1998).

Ideas, values and knowledge have constituted another set of environmental factors which have been added to policy network analyses. It was accepted that new ideas could lead to policy change through disrupting existing relations between actors in policy networks (Klijn, 1997). Moreover, changes in values could lead to new unexpected actors and groups entering policy realm and existing groups addressing new policy issues (Dudley and Richardson, 1998; Bogason and Toonen, 1998). In this context, politics is allowed to be not very "rational", although this irrationality is seen as a disturbance to the ordering process. From this standpoint, politics is seen as an "ontology of consent" (Thatcher, 1995), of formulating and achieving common goals by means of reducing the uncertainty and complexity of the world. Policy networks here are treated as heterogeneous, "symbiotic alliances between people, organisations and non-human realm" (Selman, 2000, p.119).
Policy networks and poverty

One of the important concerns with these different networked approaches to policy making is related to their ability to articulate poverty and difference and deal with the poverty-related problems. As I established earlier (see Introduction) I see poverty as heterogeneous, dynamic and networked phenomenon. Not all of the above policy network approaches produce conceptualisations of poverty that resonate with this complex understanding of it.

First, I would argue that rational policy making which is channelled through a limited number of fixed links between “professionals” misses out on the dynamic and transient character of poverty. In this case, policy makers fall into the trap of considering poverty as a product, rather than a process, failing to address continuous changes in the conditions of living of rural people. Rigid policy connections do not accommodate change so logical policy making aggravates the hardship of rural people. Homogenising and controlling policy networks reduce difference to linear regularities and stress the sameness of poverty inherent in the structuring of opportunities. In this case poverty is limited to material problems, while other poverty practices are neglected. In my opinion, rational policy making within “steering” coalitions cannot be put under the heading of “network” approaches as the whole meaning of network (as a set of dynamic relations between heterogeneous actors) is hollowed out.

Second, the danger associated with the governance approach is that it reduces heterogeneity of poverty to predictable and ordered network interactions. In so doing governance approaches fail to accommodate difference and the “messiness” of poverty, and they risk its oversimplification and privileging of specific forms of poverty over the others. In this case, poverty which does not conform to the obvious policy-related headings is overlooked and rural people are left alone with their problems. In my view, governance studies offer only an imitation of true networks as they still imply control and coordination of activities, take little account of sensitive, non-conscious and non-rational poverty practices and experiences. I would argue that governance here represents a different way of still coercive unification of different (although networked) interests which entails exclusion of non-represented actors. Moreover, policy networks in this case are essentially social –

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126 For example, the web of rural co-operatives in Ireland is seen by local policy makers as the way to provide co-ordinated network solution to rural poverty. However, the inability of co-ops to work with the multiplicity of poverty (development work was focused on job creation) and to engage in more responsive development has led to their failure to improve living conditions of rural people. As Kelly (1998) states in reference to the Irish co-ops, “while community sector groups and co-operatives are doing valuable work and are developing the situation is just getting worse for the poor”. (no pagination). See also Chapter 4 for more detailed discussion of this issue.
the proponents of governance approach stress the “interpersonal” character of relationships between actors, which means that ideas, technologies, artefacts are excluded from the policy making process. Complex poverty, reproduced through a series of relations and connections between artefacts, symbols, skills, desires and interests, is therefore dropped out of policy networks of governance.

Third, there is the issue related to dealing with difference and poverty in policy network approaches. Policy-making, conducted through the set of localised networks, accepts difference but does not work through it. In fact, it is imbued with the problem of emphasising sameness rather than difference which I discussed in Chapter 2. In these policy approaches heterogeneity is not seen as the force which recreates networks, but as the obstacle to be removed in the process of “dealing with differentiation”. Inevitably, this leads to exclusion and the othering of those who are different, who do not share “common” goals. Poor people with “unusual” experiences which are difficult to articulate within policy discourses are excluded from policy networks. Thus, these policy networks instead of harnessing heterogeneous links between agents are used to create yet another totality in the form of a localised and exclusive community of actors.

The inability of mechanical policy networks to articulate and address heterogeneous poverty and to work with difference encourages my search for different politics. The search for politics, which works with complex domains of difference without creating otherness and which allows the accommodation of difference without its appropriation, implies a departure from most of the traditional definitions of policy networks and familiar ideas of power.

Here I understand politics as an action, a process, a way of enacting power. Power is a more abstract concept which relates to a relational effect of social interaction (Allen, 2003). The organisation of power is therefore manifest in policy practices, including the series of routinized and repetitive activities “stretched” over policy networks. As I argued throughout this section, the view of administrative power strictly regulating the timing and spacing of social activities, which is reflected in the concepts of policy networks, does not contribute to complex understanding of poverty and difference. Instead, I try to develop an understanding of power which is enacted through politics working with a multiplicity of poverty without being invasive, reductionist and colonising. The next section explores different conceptualisations of power that are not necessarily seen as “stored” and “contained” within specific organisations (policy institutions).

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127 For example, New Age people in rural Ireland do not fit within the anti-poverty policies which provide a different understanding of mobility and sociality, so the needs of these people and their poverty-related problems are not addressed by policy makers. For detailed discussion on this issue see Chapter 6.
Power and space

In modern theoretical writing there have been two dominant concepts of power\textsuperscript{128}. The first concept considers power as a generalised capacity to act (Hindess, 1996), an instrument which is used to obtain leverage over specific actors (Dahl, 1957; Lukes, 1974). In this case power is exercised over individuals constraining them and regulating their activities. Power is seen as held or possessed by people or institutions at the central sources responsible for its distribution within society. A structuralist view of power suggests it is a systems property, a relational thing (Poulantzas, 1979). This conception of power is based on a Marxist class-model and Weberian (1978) asymmetries of power which assume general and organised domination. This vision of power is linear: the success is attributed to distribution and the domination of centralised power as a capacity and a unitary force, while failure is blamed for a resistance of elements which avoid unification and representation. In this case difference is reduced to the set of manageable and controlled combinations of elements (artefacts, practices) and the multiplicity of the everyday is overlooked.

The second concept promotes associational view of power as both capacity and the right to act (Parsons, 1963; Arendt, 1970). This conceptualization of power to individuals is seen as a means of enablement of actors and relies on their consent to exercise power over them (Mann, 1986). Power is seen as a medium which is executed through the mobilisation of collective resources (Allen, 2003). In this case it is neither associated with particular interests, nor linked to the practices of domination and resistance. Power simply enables things to get done; it “makes a difference” and it is produced through networks of association (Giddens, 1977) or social interaction (Mann, 1986). This vision of power, however, assumes that is produced in one part of the network and then transmitted intact through it, so the networks are seen only as carriers of resources mobilised at different locations. This vision of power is enacted through policy networks which are preoccupied with control and eradication of difference.

Towards relational and fluid understanding of power: Foucault

An alternative understanding of power as an immanent force, contrasts with familiar “centred” accounts considered earlier. In this case it is seen as embedded in the effects rather than in individual capacities or possession of power. This view of power is most clearly expressed in the works of Michel Foucault. It is his earlier understanding of power

\textsuperscript{128} Importantly, my study attempts to comprehend connections between power relations, space and spatiality and it therefore provides a limited overview of those concepts of power which possess a sense of space.
as relational and creative (non-oppressive) which is of most interest here. In his earlier works Foucault (1979b; 1980; 1982) considers power as an ability to induce in others appropriate form of conduct. He rejects the vision of power as sovereignty of state and state institutions, general system of domination or “a mode of subjugation, which in contrast of violence has the form of the rule” (1979b, p.92). The latter, he claims, are only particular forms that power takes. To contrast these specific situations (forms), more general notion of power embraces “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation” (ibid., p.92). In Foucault’s view, power is treated as relational and fluid, it is unstable and developing, forming what he calls “a moving substrate of force relations” (ibid., p.93).

This multiplicity, fluidity and becoming of power make it ubiquitous. It is everywhere not because it is all-embracing and dominating, but because its sources are everywhere in those constantly re-arranging patterns of relations. Essentially, Foucault (1979a) talks about networks of power, “unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable” combinations of force relations, which are re-arranged in the manner giving an appearance of central power while still remaining essentially strategies and sets of networks.

This relational vision of power explains the ways networked spaces are produced and indicates a move towards multiple and networked understanding of poverty and difference. From this standpoint, spaces of poverty can be seen as drawn together by the sets of dynamic force relations, which are always developing and “becoming” like spaces themselves. The next section considers theoretical contributions to the theory of power, which see it as both relational and fluid, specifically focusing on the ways these concepts approach difference.

Towards creative and “differenciating” understanding of power: Deleuze

The appeal for Deleuze (1988) to represent power as the interplay of forces which constitute it comes from the earlier works of Foucault on this subject. Importantly, Deleuze sees this interconnection of forces as produced through the relationships within specific contexts and setting. Unlike Foucault, Deleuze extends his analysis of power to consider relations of force beyond the sphere of government and without centralisation on the figure of the state. Deleuze’s (1983) reformulation of Foucault’s analysis of force relations produces different understandings of power as a combination of reactive forces, which

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129 In his later works Foucault (1988; 1991) focused his attention on power as dispersed functioning of neoliberal government and turned to the analysis of asymmetrical relationships of power as a basis for domination. He still considers power as ubiquitous feature of human interaction, but he is more interested in the ways power is enacted in government conduct and creation of hierarchies. In my analysis I am more interested in his earlier ideas about power as unstable, ambiguous and reversible which energise my search for “fluid” understanding of power.

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limit and resist activities of other forces, and active forces, which act on their own accord. Reactive forces of power are associated with a rigid segmentation of space by bureaucratic institutions, while active forces correspond with fluid and overlapping forms of division existing in nomad societies.

This division entails a reformulation of the concept of difference: Deleuze (1983) aligns the neglect of difference with reactive force and the affirmation of difference with active force. In his later works Deleuze (1994) also rejects the link between difference and negativity or negation, and criticises limitation as distortion of difference. Instead of totalising and dominating power it is directive power which gives meaning to a specific assemblage \(^{130}\) or multiplicity. Power here is treated not as the reactive power of incorporation or capture, but as a plastic force, a force of metamorphosis, "a matter of feeling and sensibility" (Deleuze, 1983, p.62). This hostility to images of unity, totality and closure leads to the re-discovery of the field of "free differences" (Deleuze, 1988), a different kind of space where no common measure exists and divisions are not fixed but fluid. In this field difference challenges the primacy of identity and the very idea of existence of some central or privileged position, from where everything else can be considered. In this respect, priority is no longer assigned to property and state apparatus (as proprietary mechanism), but to multiplicity, which is reproduced through difference.

Deleuze's (1994) concept of difference is linked to power in two ways: he sees it as "differentiation" or constitution of a given structure and determination of multiplicity of relations between its elements, and "differenciation" or actualisation of the multiplicity in particular species\(^ {131}\). Power creates two different spaces which Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe as smooth and striated. They see the former as open, mobile and producing continuous variation (differences), while the latter is considered closed, fixed and delimiting in the way it specifies the difference. Smooth space is sensuous and directional, striated is logical, dimensional or metric. Differences in smooth space are stabilised by continuous variation, "they cannot divide without changing in nature each time" (ibid., p.483). On the other hand, differences in striated space are fixed, they are calculable and

\(^{130}\) Deleuze and Guattari (1987) see assemblage as a multiplicity, the complex arrangements of forms of content (interactions of bodies and sensations) and forms of expression (utterances and acts of speech) which are metamorphic and continuously transformed (p.132). These assemblages are constructed of heterogeneous elements, which are constantly reconnected to each other in the way that changes the nature of these multiplicities.

\(^{131}\) In Deleuze's view, differenciation forms a real content of a given structure by introducing "spatio-temporal dynamisms" and material intensity to the system of relations. In so doing, Deleuze challenges the philosophy of representation. Actualisation of these dynamisms and spatio-temporal events (involving bodies, their interactions and passions) produces account of states of affairs and internal relations within structures, which cannot be represented. Actualisation does not congeal and fix these dynamic "assemblages" or complex arrangements of forms of content (interactions of bodies and sensations) and forms of expression (utterances and acts of speech). In this case metamorphic and sensuous elements are not left out as it happens in exclusionary representation.
measurable. Things in smooth space are juxtaposed, but not attached to each other; they are linked through a series of tactile and temporary connections. Another important thing is that “the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space” (ibid., p.474).

This view of power as an active and creative force is invaluable for my analysis of heterogeneous poverty. First, it helps to analyse connections between different mechanisms of power and poverty. It links hierarchies of power and bureaucratic institutions with a reduction of difference, creation of otherness and oversimplification of heterogeneous poverty. At the same time, it challenges this appropriation and subordination of poverty practices and experiences by suggesting the existence of fluid power which works with difference to create new combinations of elements. Second, this view of power allows an embracing variety of specific examples of poverty while avoiding different forms of universalisation of heterogeneous poverty. In so doing, it opens up spaces of other “poor” people that were previously assimilated, denied or simply unknown. Third, it provides a theoretical background for broader and deeper understanding of poverty practices and experiences which cannot be easily represented. Instead of creating a unifying explanation, imposing a structure on a seemingly unstructured field of actions producing poverty, the articulation of the sensuous elements of practices and experiences contributes to a complex analysis of poverty. Fourth, this vision of power as active force encourages recognition of creative potential of different non-hierarchical groups of actors who recombine the elements of poverty and transform it into something different. Thus, poverty practices and experiences are not exclusively associated with the process of becoming-minor (excluded and stigmatised), but a creative process of becoming-different against the normalising power of the majority. The next section considers the ways this power can be enacted in politics of difference.

Fluid “everyday” politics

The previous discussion on power informs my understanding of politics as an instrument and an effect of power, complex and unstable process. Importantly, state-like politics of capture and appropriation, which creates measurable and striated spaces, and fluid politics

132 As Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 state, representation always leaves an “unrepresented singularity”.
133 There have been few attempts made to fuse the politics of conflict with the politics of difference, attempting to account for both domination and ambivalence, marginality and fluidity (Honig, 1993, Connolly, 1991). However, politics in this case was recognised as a process of inevitable creation of differences, which failed to keep it open to diversity. This view of politics is detached from heterogeneity of the world and it provides only incidental tolerance of its diversity. Importantly, there is still a strive for making existing political order subversive, regardless of the experiences and feelings of those within it.
of transmutation and the continuous recreation of smooth space, coexist. Therefore, politics is a mixture of striation and smoothening, it is a part of everyday life and it is the everyday itself. De Certeau (1984) suggests that there is no separation of “politics” and “the everyday”, there is no possibility of transforming the everyday via independent political solutions (see also Lefebvre, 1991a). Politics is as much about “being” as about “doing”. Different forms of politics as an operational practice appear in the form of strategies or tactics, which complement each other and are defined through each other. Strategy in de Certeau’s view means appropriation; it creates rigid and formal links between a particular action and the regulatory operations of a place, which in its turn results in homogenised relations of power. From this standpoint, strategy is a centralised politics, which fixes arrangements of actors and delimits the place of action; it is an external regulatory activity. Conversely, tactics in de Certeau’s view is a decentralised action, which opens up possibilities and uses the ruses of “foreign” power. In so doing, tactics link up polycentric patterns of action together, it creates networks. In fact, tactics is mobile and networked politics, which takes up opportunities and makes use of the irregularities of the proprietary (regulatory) powers. Tactics “creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse” (de Certeau, 1984, p.37). Rather than confronting and opposing a “strategic” form, tactics takes place in its weakest points, in its blindspots. It uses the “weakest links” in the visible networks of power and brings forth “non-visible” nonetheless powerful connections. It therefore exercises fluid, creative and networked power in the ways which allow dealing with “hidden” poverty. As the “tactical” political action of a medical attendant in the Russian village shows, this fluid politics helps to improve living conditions of rural people:

I need to look after old people in this village, you know. It is very difficult to get a place in our local hospital... In order to get to the hospital, one has to get to Zarajsk [central town] twice – first, to take blood and other tests, and then to collect results. It is impossible for the elderly, it is too far. So what we do at times is that I tell them not to take their heart tablets and other medicines and call “03” [the emergency] and... kind of... simulate a heart attack. If they are brought as an emergency they are guaranteed a place in the hospital, and the tests are taken very quickly. I mean, they don’t do a lot – with old folks in the village you won’t be surprised to find all kinds of health problems. You just... let it be shown... to make the system work as it should be. And I am making certain, that they have all the medicines ready before the emergency comes – Good gracious, I don’t want anything bad to happen!

(Alena Darysheva, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)
Strange manoeuvres, techniques and actions of the rural medical practitioner in this particular case still happen within the system of the Russian health service, but these tactical moves conceal the weaknesses of this system. Fluid politics thus complement rigid policy networks and tackles poverty problems which are overlooked by the “strategic” authorities. Importantly, it addresses specific and transient poverty as it manages to transform and change with it. Thus tactics is the politics of a specific situation, the politics of “here-and-now”, which puts it in the ambiguous position of being inside the system but still “other”: it escapes it without leaving it (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii). It is the analysis of this “politics of specific events” I am turning to now.

Politics/poetics

In order to be sensitive towards the multiplicity of arrangements constituting poverty, politics, I would argue, needs to account for the specificity of assemblages and yet still to make sense out of them. Importantly, this means not just tolerating singularity (as it happens with the apparatuses of appropriation), but accommodating specificity of political action and originality of events. It is a kind of “politics of singularity” (similar to de

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134 As I argued earlier, heterogeneous arrangements within networks include not only human actors, but also senses, passions, feelings and symbols
Certeau's (1988) "science of singularity") which brings together a generality of science and the particularity of the actual. Politics as an interpretation of particular circumstances and translation of specific arrangements in this case gives way to a general poetics, which comes from the Greek word *poiein* meaning "to create, invent, generate". As such, poetics in the form of inventive language (poieisis) accounts for the multiplicity of actions and materials which re-create spaces; it is an action-based concept (de Certeau, 1988). It does not recreate the opposition between domination and resistance which separates the domains of politics and the everyday. Resistance and domination fold over each other and complement each other. De Certeau's (1984) sees resistance as similar to the term used in electronics, which hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination and resists representation.\(^{135}\)

Overall, poetics consider circumstances in relation to a series of operations and functions; it attends to formal generalities and differences of heterogeneous and continuously changing arrangements. From this perspective poetics can be seen as a truly networked politics I was looking for, as it gets hold of the here-and-now-ness of transient arrangements and explains them. In so doing, poetics escapes the logic of the existing ways of organising and codifying events and it follows the actors in their actions while they are forging associations marked by difference.

Poetics/politics generates new heterogeneous associations, adds to existing multiplicity and works alongside it. A good example for this kind of politics is the arts project in the Irish village of Ros Muc, which encouraged local development through the medium of arts and Irish language. It was associated with the celebration of traditional rural ways of life, imaginative ways of living, the creation of "make-it-up-as-you-go-along" world, using the ruses in rational reasoning and ordering to bring out the heterogeneity of rural life and rural poverty. This project brought together different people in the village with different backgrounds, who were able to draw, design and teach traditional dancing and singing (see Chapter 6 and conclusion for detailed discussion). In so doing, it addressed much poverty by providing the source of income for unemployed people, boosting local confidence and contributing to the inclusion of different people in social and policy networks. In this context, politics can be seen as working with differences to re-create more differences,

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\(^{135}\) In this context, resistance becomes the ability of contextualised arrangements of agents to generate their own politics, which promotes or hinders the actions of the governing rationale. Resistance from this standpoint is both the preservation of existing arrangements and the creation of something new. Rather than simply maintaining the universe of power it offers a different and pluralized account of power. The usual categories of the subject are changed and extended so that subjectivity is no longer attributed to one dominating rationale or conscious agency; both "the bosses and the bossed" are invested with multiple powers.
rather than othering. In other words, in poetics/politics creative and fluid power is used to legitimise "alternative" practices in all their difference.¹³⁶

Plate 8. The arts project in Ros Muc

Uncertain politics

"Fluid" or mobile politics works without presuming an authority, so it cannot rely on pre-defined and rigid criteria of justice. Moreover, politics is "on the move" as it deals with the mobile patterning of life, which problematizes the fixed, given and static notions of social order. From this perspective politics can be seen as "becoming" as it follows sets of actors which are being constantly re-arranged and re-connected (see Thrift, 1996 on this issue)¹³⁷. It is experimental politics that is exploratory and developing, it uses heterogeneity and the fluidity of everyday life for its own transformation. As Law (1997) describes it, politics is no longer about "trying to find good ways of narrating and describing what was already there. Instead, or in addition, [it is] the business of ontology ... of making realities, and the connections between these realities" (p.9). It follows that fluid politics is about reducing

¹³⁶ To support this argument I refer to the metaphor provided by Lefebvre (1991a), when he suggests that poetics is about symbols rather than signals. In this context it accords the meaning in the way that accommodates multiplicity of heterogeneous forms, provides multiple links between lived experiences and general narrative themes of culture (symbol), rather than reducing meaning to a set of signals and commands through hollowing out heterogeneity and fullness of the world in a kind of "on/off" communication, prohibition and control.

¹³⁷ Fluid politics therefore adopts the principles of complexity sciences as it deals with a complex world (for broader discussion on complexity see Lewin, 1993, Coveney and Highfield, 1995, Thrift, 1999b, Urry 2002)
contingency, although stressing the contingent nature of the world. There are many possibilities open at any point, and this means that politics can no longer be certain.

The accommodation of poieisis and poetic way of understanding the world change the nature of politics as an exclusively linear (logical, straightforward) mechanism of ordering. The emerging politics of aesthetic practices is formed by blocks of sensations, which are constantly regrouped and rearranged. These sensations are deterritorialised, they don’t belong to any specific centralised subject which imposes an order.

Moreover, uncertainty is not only in the process itself. Politics is uncertain not just because it works with heterogeneous and developing networks comprised of arrangements of things. Networked power is symmetrical, that is it neglects distinctions between entities constructing networks. This symmetry implies that unforeseen readers appropriate texts and unlikely actors (such as the poor and excluded rural people) to become policy makers. Uncertain politics allows space for different forms of poverty to appear, to be recognised and to be dealt with. It exercises inventive power which opens new directions in smooth space. Uncertain politics is becoming inasmuch as it is formed by constantly re-arranged blocks of sensations, thus creating new links within heterogeneous space and opening up new possibilities. This happens, as Guattari (1995) insists, “not through representation but through affective contamination. They [blocks of sensations] start to exist in you, in spite of you” (p.92). This means constant reinvention of networks and actors themselves.

Guattari (1995) calls this politics “ontological orality”: existence in the heterogeneous world, being which is marked by transitionality and alterity. He associates this being with the machines, “social machines..., the incorporeal machines of language, theory and aesthetic creation”. This new machinic orality, he stresses, is a basis for different kinds of politics, which allows escaping the erosion of meaning by rationality and “old scriptural linearity”:

“The junction of informatics, telematics, and the audiovisual will perhaps allow a decisive step to be made in the direction of interactivity, towards... an acceleration of the machinic return of orality” (ibid., p.97).

This politics, which develops towards interactivity emphasises bodily drives, sensuous experiences and creativity. It is essentially a networked politics and it is different from

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138 Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialisation as the process whereby something escapes or departs from a given territory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.508). The flows of elements construct a certain territory. However, because these flows are dynamic movements and they compose different assemblages they are getting reconnected in various ways between each other and to the assemblages. In recombining and entering new relations the flows escape the territory (move beyond its limits) and with it, escape fixing and unification.

139 Rose (1996) referring to ANT vision of power concludes that it involves not only changeability of “the forms of being that have been invented for us” but also “invention of ourselves differently” (p.197).
rationalised politics of “political machines” (Barry, 2001). Opposite to a conventional view of politics, interactivity does not harness disciplinary powers, it is not directing and authoritative but rather participative. In my view, interactivity represents a politics of singularity as it is specific and instantaneous, anticipative of activities however different they are (sensitive to differences rather than normalising). Essentially, it conducts and excites bodily senses and gestures, orients its productive capacity. In this sense interactivity is experimental as it means following and mapping visitors’ paths rather than directing them.

In so doing, interactive politics which enacts networked and fluid power, accounts for a multiplicity of spatial forms and temporalities of poverty. It follows actors in their practices and experiences of poverty and tries to understand their troubles rather than imposing different vision of problems upon them. Instead of imposing direct control or judgement of an expert authority on the everyday actions interactive politics encourages participation and the accommodation of social activities however different they are.

In the next section I return to the concept of policy networks which I presented in the beginning of this chapter. It considers how the meaning of networked policy making can change if it takes on board the ideas about fluidity, uncertainty and creativeness of power enacted through politics. I am interested to see how the translation of these ideas can fit in within the existing policy structures. In the following section I tease out the moves and ideas reflected in some policy network approaches, which contribute towards the development of a truly networked politics.

Towards “networked” policy networks

There have been several attempts to develop the logic of policy making to include non-logical experimental activities. Murdoch (2000) suggested the creation of “soft” networked infrastructure with the introduction of “animating” local actors, non-experts (Burstein, 1991). “Animation” or “mediation” (Coleman and Perl, 1999) in this case is the way to make policy networks sensitive to differences, singularity and the specificity of events and contexts. Moreover, the political here is freed of a dominating authority of the administrators and experts.

Another interesting idea is brought up by Rhodes (1992), who suggested the shift in thinking about policy networks as boundless rather than internal (hierarchical) activity. Therefore, networks could be no longer considered as a way to manage (control) internal organisation, but as a set of experimental processes of innovation in terms of the continuous re-arrangement of an assemblages of actors. Policy networks facilitate
interaction and contacts rather than "steer"; network relations are characterized by "mutual adjustment" in the process of continuous change (Rhodes, 1996). These networks are rhizomatic rather than arboreal.

The idea of "becoming" policy networks is taken up by Evans (2001) and Klijn (1997). In this case, the discussions about long-term cohesion of policy networks are irrelevant (Bressers et al., 1994) as actors and their roles are changing in every different networked combination. On these grounds I agree with Klijn (1997) who sees policy networks as a dynamic set of relations of "variable cohesion and... internal complexity" (p.25).

In this context, it is interesting to consider the idea of the "activation of links" within policy networks (Hanf and Sharpf, 1978). Originally, it was suggested to execute "selective activation" of both direct and indirect linkages within the networks to achieve a priori formulated goals. Despite the obvious drawbacks of this concept it suggests a dynamic and self-regulating vision of policy network. However, the danger here is to neglect "non-visible" links or "not yet visible" connections. As Burstein (1991) suggests, politics should be organised in a way "so that "roads not taken" - possibilities not proposed - are... identified" (p.338, original emphasis). I believe that only in combination with probing multiple links (redundant unconscious metaphors, evocative spaces of "non-knowledge") activation can become a part of networked politics.

On another occasion, the participative nature of policy networks and their heterogeneous character have been emphasised by several theorists (see for example Kenis and Schneider, 1991; Marsh and Olsen, 1989). The warning sign here is that often participation is considered as merely a "bottom up" inclusion of the voice of "target groups" in order to generate more support and "make the policy more acceptable" (Bogason and Toonen, 1998, p.208). In my view, truly networked policy should be delivered in a way which implies real polyvocality and the de-centralisation of power, rather than the trimming of centralist and dominating practices.

Policy networks are often seen as sets of actions orchestrated towards sorting out problems (Rhodes, 1996) and achieving specific solutions (Borzel, 1998). Solution, it seems to me, is a controversial term in the networked context as it implies specific subjectivity (judgement), division (something is blamed to be wrong), and is a problematic measure of success. First, I think it is better to substitute staged, "dotted" action (movement between one solution to another) with the continuous vector-like process of a general direction and interim results, which solely reflects the fluidity of policy and the dynamics of policy networks. Second, I agree with Borzel (1998) that policy networks should not directly serve for decision making, but instead provide possibilities for interaction, communication

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140 These drawbacks include imposed selectivity, pre-defined goals rather than a "becoming" process.
and indirectly influence preparation and the taking of decisions. In this case, uncertain politics allows actors to explore opportunities for themselves, firstly, by finding out who or what they can become before they decide what they want\(^{141}\). In so doing, difference is not precluded from the start by means of setting determinate criteria, but it is used to produce new arrangements of actors.

In a search for fluid policy networks I am aware of the problems brought up by several commentators. First, there is a question about the exclusivity of policy networks (Marsh and Smith, 2000; Richardson, 2000). It is argued that certain actors can be in a privileged position because of the mutual support or consensus, specific rules which exist within specific networks. These authors identify policy networks with organisations, and I have already discussed the problems ensuing from organisational approach. The problem of exclusion is wider and deserves further investigation. Actors are connected in a variety of different networks, so their interests and preferences are not defined in terms of one specific membership. For example, they may have contradictory interests as members of another network. This means that some actors can be excluded from one network, while still included in the other. The idea is to see which particular network provides opportunities and constraints for specific actions, and how this puts some actors in privileging positions. Because these positions are not stable, the exclusivity of networks can be overcome through the continuous recombination of actors.

I need to be aware therefore that routinised behaviour and recursive networked patterns recreate exclusionary trends. As Burstein (1991) insists “the longer proposals on a particular subject have been under consideration, the more homogeneous they will become” (p.340). The stability of relations means exclusiveness, and hence my search for fluid politics which can link “messy and unpredictable chains of actors”, who did not have a chance to work out the common language of exclusivity (Richardson, 2000). As Richardson stresses referring to these various actors, “of special importance [for non-exclusivity] is that they may bring quite different “policy frames” to the table, i.e. they have very different policy or cultural frames through which they view the real world” (ibid., p.2008). These policy networks of “large and diverse collections of stakeholders” use their internal heterogeneity to work with difference and to avoid othering.

\(^{141}\) Barry (2002) provides a good example for this case referring to feminist politics. He explains that women wanted to experiment with their lives rather than to evaluate their lives according to criteria provided by a dominant masculinity. They could not say in advance “what they wanted” for they had to find out who they could become as women.
Conclusion

In this chapter I considered differentiation of complex and hybrid rural spaces from a relational perspective. Discussion was therefore centred on the ways actors are linked together and how specific forms of their interrelations frame the performance of difference. It was argued that positions of actors in social networks, and the different character of ties between them, are crucial in the distribution of resources and creating marginality. Specific studies of different types of network resources in the form of capital have shown that availability, ascribed value and liquidity of these resources define why some actors take dominant positions in different social topologies while the others are marginalised. Social, cultural and moral capitals are therefore considered as the mechanisms, the processes, productive forces which re-create societies and spaces.

The hybrid study of regionalised social groupings (communities), which is considered as a region, network and fluid altogether, reveals the ways different elements and actors interrelate with each other, creating links or marking off difference. Boundaries, normality and deviance are differently defined within different types of communities which inhabit multiple topologies.

The logical step towards investigation of how existing policies deal with these multiplicities reveals that they fail to accommodate heterogeneity of rural spaces and to alleviate the hardship of rural people. Poverty as it is formulated within social networks appears much more fluid and unpredictable than it looks from traditional policy network perspectives. In order to address this different and changing poverty this chapter suggests alternative ways of thinking about politics. First, it argues that the complex construction of power as not just repressive, dividing and ruling, but also productive and connecting provides theoretical grounds for understanding multiple poverty. Second, a fluid vision of power which produces continuous variations and difference, encourages thinking about poverty as a creative process of transformation (becoming-different) against the normalising power of the majority and helps to avoid the subordination of the poor and oversimplification of poverty. Third, a networked approach to power provides important insights into the ways spaces and times of poverty are constructed through different processes and relations, which work through and with difference, transforming elements of poverty and continuously reinventing it. This chapter argues that this fluid, creative and networked power is enacted in politics in the ways that help to improve the living conditions of rural people.

This search for alternative politics, however, raised several important concerns. One of the issues is related to the fluidity of policy networks and the quality of policy links. The
chapter argued that fluid politics must include not just the fluidity of policy formulation, but also the fluidity of responses and an ability to provide dynamic connections bringing together actors, rather than static links. Networked policy decisions animate actors, facilitate connections and excite bodily drives and sensuous experiences of actors.

Second, the chapter stressed the importance of introducing poetic and sensuous elements in policy making, arguing that it is the only way to address non-material components of poverty. This poetic development of policy networks transforms them into webs of mutual adjustment, experimentation and interactivity. In this sense, they become creative and inventive, and can be no longer seen as purely technological arboreal mechanisms of dominating power (solving "problems").

Third, my analysis suggested that politics is uncertain and changing ("becoming") because it deals with the mobile patterning of life, and problematized the fixed, given and static notions of social order. Uncertain politics provides space for unexpected actors to participate in policy making and acknowledges their networked and creative powers to deal with poverty. The chapter argued that the introduction of experimentation and interactivity in policy making allows space for different forms of poverty to appear, to be recognised and to be dealt with. In the following empirical chapters I ground these different policy networks in specific contexts. The task is to find out how fluidity, creativity and inventiveness of policy networks (and non-networks within them) work with difference and poverty in particular localities.
CHAPTER 4. PLURALITY OF COUNTRYSIDES:
PLACE, DIFFERENCE AND NETWORKS
CHAPTER 4. PLURALITY OF COUNTRYSIDES: PLACE, DIFFERENCE AND NETWORKS

Having discussed in the previous chapters the ways that social and policy networks are constructed I now want to put these theoretical ideas into context. The idea is to account for reciprocity of links between text (discourse) and context (Whatmore, 1999). Here I want to examine how specific rural spaces are constructed through the interactions of different networks, and how the latter are transformed within multiple constructions of rurality.

Manipulated visions of rurality are political constructions; they are inevitably one-sided and logical (ordered) depictions of the world. Power is based on signs of identity and social codes inscribed into specific symbols of the countryside. My task is to unravel the ways contested visions of the countryside are constructed to the inclusion of some (whose values landscape signifies) and exclusion of others (who do not read rurality in the same way). The idea is to consider this specific (rural) context as a powerful medium in expressing feelings, norms and values, while simultaneously being an arena for political discourse and action.

The chapter addresses different manifestations of the social construction of place and their influence on network construction in rural Ireland and Russia. In the first part of this chapter I unravel the ways that specificities of (social) context are translated into local identities. Here the concern is with the ways particular understandings of rurality, embodied in local identity, shape people's interactions. By means of tracing informal links within a specific context I want to reveal the ways (rural) place and identity are used to construct criteria of exclusion of specific actors from social networks.

The second part of the chapter explores the ways ruralities are contested in the two countries. It considers specific cultural landscapes as multivocal and multicultural texts, implicated in the construction of power within societies. These cultural constructions are made meaningful in a variety of ways by means of different signifying practices (politics). I consider how different constructions of countryside are manipulated in rural policies in the two countries. Thus, I am trying to find out how specific rural landscapes are read and understood, and how vernacular cultural codes are translated into context-specific political actions (policy networks).
Rurality and social networks

This section examines the contrasting roles played by the contested imagery of countryside in promoting or impeding inclusion in social networks. In the beginning I consider how different understanding of rurality in Ireland and Russia structure social networks. In addressing the particular significance of emblematic representation of the countryside to understanding the contested ideology of network construction in Russia and Ireland, this discussion incorporates two major themes. First, relations between idealistic/abstract visions of the countryside and exclusionary trends are considered. I examine how narrative places, literary places and landmarks are embodied in the emblematic constructions of the countryside (whether official or unofficial), and how the meanings attached to these different idealised visions of the rurality exclude certain actors. Second, I unravel the connections between history and place vested in homogeneous symbols of countryside in order to find out how artefacts, traditions and people are brought together in contested rural spaces. Both current geographical imagery and memories/traditions of the countryside are comprised of people and places bound by cultural and social networks. Through understanding validation and legitimation of specific traditions I find the meanings of exclusivity which are embodied in rurality.

Abstract/ideal countryside

This section considers how idealised and abstract visions of countryside acquire contrasting meanings in both official and popular discourses in Ireland and Russia, and how the exclusivity is embedded in these visions and played out in construction of social networks. In Ireland, the abstract vision of countryside is encapsulated in the view of rural idyll, which presents a static and sanitised picture of landscape rather than social relations (Brown, 1985; Greer and Murray, 1993). The traditional images of bucolic countryside full of Irish friendliness, harmony and scenic beauty are complemented with signs of struggle, isolation and heroics (McDonagh, 2001). In this context it is not surprising that the West of Ireland is presented as the cultural heartland of the country. Graham (1997a) argues that reinforced by the Gaelic iconography “the West became an idealised landscape, populated by an idealised people” (p.7). This understanding of the rural as an “ideal” countryside has contributed to categorisation of rurality as an abstract structure, a product rather than a becoming and self-developing thing. This abstract space is static, inevitably homogeneous and exclusive, particularly where its representations have become fused with Catholicism.

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142 Ideology which is central to discourses of inclusion/exclusion.
(Boylan, 1992, Johnson, 1993). Rurality in this case is therefore reduced to a very simple, almost mechanistic construct.

This idealisation of the Irish countryside has two different effects on the formation of social networks. On the one hand, simplistic and sanitised images of rurality suggest the existence of close direct and generalised links between locals. In this case, people are seen as being linked together “like a family” in a social network which presumes closed and unconditional co-operation. On the other hand, with this idealised understanding of the countryside comes claustrophobia and oppressiveness. Purified “idealised” space leaves little room for difference; links between rural people are ossified to become controlling and exclusive. As O’Connor (1993) puts it, “the kindly spot, the friendly [village], where everyone is known... send shudders down my spine” (p.74). Social networks of trust and social support between the “idealised” (closely-knit, “true” rural people) locals therefore become exclusionary for the “others”, who do not fit into this sanitised place.

In a somewhat different way, Russian countryside has also been constructed as an abstract structure in the academic literature. In this case, however, the rural idyll was not the key for this abstraction, rather rural policies in the Soviet period led to creation of a standardised construction of rurality, a sort of totalitarian space. In line with the Soviet ideology, people were supposed to be brought into this abstract space solely to maintain agricultural production (Vishnevsky, 1998). Rural space was constructed as an abstract space and was treated as a material, rather than a set of relations between people and other objects; a product, rather than a means of production (Artemenko, 1991).

This abstract vision of countryside implied an abstraction of social relations between people, which were also seen as “a part of the planning economy” (Zalsavskaya, 1999). Individualism in any social field was not encouraged; initiative and creative thinking were punished because it was perceived to potentially undermine the effectiveness of the communist system. Rural people were treated as abstract “bolts” in a state mechanism working and living collectively as “a one big Soviet family” (Ryvkina, 1998, p.121).

The move towards abstracted and coercive collectivism produced two different outcomes. First, it has created strong collective links between the people and encouraged mutual support. As one of the interviewed rural dwellers commented, “we lived together in one

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143 Duffy (1997) quotes a villager in Conemara, who complains: “There is no space here. No scope. It’s too small” (p.71).

144 It should be noted, however, that the abstract official versions of Irish countryside are challenged by regionalised and multiple conceptions of place (Whelan, 1993, McDonagh, 2001). However, the cannon of Irish geography still does not address ostensibly modernistic concepts of post-colonialism and the idea of cultural difference (Graham, 1997a).

145 As Zaslavskaya and Muchnik (1980) put it “the notion of the rurality has more of a statistical and administrative character, than a socio-economic essence” [p.21].

146 According to this “technological” vision, people were denied initiative and individuality (everyone went to school, them to university, then work placement and a guaranteed job with the standard pay rate).
village... we planted cabbage together and... even drunk together. We used to go to work in one big group, singing. There was a lot of help and support for each other” (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy). The upshot of this is the existence of collective thinking between the villagers, a sort of “collective culture” which encourages interpersonal interaction and communication (Steinberg, 1996). Traditions of mutual help and support, reinforced by the Soviet state politics of collectivism and formalisation (abstraction) of social relationships, have encouraged creation of networks of social capital between rural dwellers (Fadeeva and Kharchenko, 2000). These networks, however, were the subject of rigid political and moral control which led to the exclusion of people with deviant behaviour

Second, formalisation and abstraction of social relations in the Soviet countryside has been challenged by the creation of new informal social networks of *blat*. These informal links have been formed within the controlling system, based on the balanced reciprocity, rather than generalised exchange (Ledeneva, 1999). In the post-Soviet period, “connections” with the right people have helped those involved to overcome bureaucratic problems and to get the best out of the existing service provision. Changing political and economic conditions in Russia, however, undermined the importance and stability of these informal exchanges. During the situation of flux at the beginning of transition, some of the reciprocal links have been broken because general instability did not guarantee the reciprocity of relations (Ledeneva, 1997).

In this section I have argued that abstract representations of ruralities serve to legitimise authority and control over multiple rural spaces in Russia and Ireland. Abstract constructions of the rurality are static, so that dynamic links and connections between different actors are restrained. As a result, social relationships are formalised and networks are reduced to mechanical structures, alien to creativity and innovation. Informal (non-formalised) social networks, if they exist, emerge in the blindspots of controlling and dominating system. Even in this case, however, social networks are exclusive as they function within the regulated rural space. The ultimate corollary of this is an exclusion of any social groups not encompassed within the dominating ideology of collectivism.

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147 Since 1970s public opinion of the kolkhoz (collective farm) members has become a powerful means of defining “rights” and “wrongs” in the village (Steinberg, 1996). At that time even interpersonal relations were subject of the public approval and accord of the local Communist party leaders.

148 Ledeneva (1997) defines *blat* as “a network of personal relations aimed at getting an access to [scarce] social resources... and privileges against the formal procedures, which regulate an access to resources used for personal consumption”.

149 As I discussed in Chapter 3, in case of balanced reciprocity exchange is considered complete only with return of help of similar kind that was previously received.

150 In my interviews, people from one village in Russia admitted that newly constructed road was built in their place because “their village head [starosta] went to school with the head of the regional administration” (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy).
Homogeneity/heterogeneity

In this section I consider the effects of homogenisation of the countryside in rural academic and popular discourse on social network creation. Homogeneity of the Irish and Russian countrysides is often assumed to reflect their association with agriculture. Popular images of Irish rurality are traditional (family-based) and agriculture-centred (even if not agricultural in themselves), but isolated (backward) ways of life have also reverberated in the Irish academic literature since 1930s (Arsenberg and Kimball, 1940). This “absolute rurality” has tended to be automatically projected on most of the island’s rural communities, which were deemed to constitute homogenous and amorphous rural space (Bull et al., 1984; Cuddy, 1991; Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999). Despite the declining importance of agriculture in the countryside and the attempts to add different dimensions to the agri-ruralist debates, agricultural determinism is still central to rural academic and popular discourse (Tovey, 1992; O’Hara and Commins, 1998). Agriculture is still attributed the role of “a major interface between people and the environment” (ECRD, 1996) and rural people are often denied other connections apart from professional links within agriculture (Tovey et al., 1996).

Not surprisingly, community development cooperatives, whose professionalism and exclusivity of connections between actors is almost taken for granted, are often used as a metaphor for describing social networks in the Irish countryside (Varley, 1991; King, 1999; Cawley and Keane, 1999). Despite the intention to pursue “integrated” development, community cooperatives are often agriculture-based and they are seen to “complement large-scale agri-business co-operatives... in agriculturally remote areas” (Commins et al., 1981, my emphasis). At the same time, informal networks of mutual support which could have spanned across the boundaries of exclusive “farming” community, have mostly ceased to exist as standards of living in the Irish countryside have improved. Despite the intention to work “all together” in order “to rebuild a sense of cohesion and hope” (King, 1999, p.46), “community cooperative’s activities are seen to favour some people more than others” (Varley, 1991, p.58). Cohesion in this case means exclusion of people who do not fit into this homogenised version of the social network. Non-farming members of the rural community are often left out of this “professional” network; the ties between them and

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151 As Ó Cinnéide (1992) recognises, the majority of references in literature or policy proposals still tend to use “rural” and “agricultural” interchangeably.

152 As Varley (1991) states, most community cooperatives have found simultaneous pursuit of economic, social and cultural projects nearly impossible, and have been forced to concentrate on farming. The motto of community cooperatives “better farming, better business, better living” makes the link between farming and rural lifestyle explicit.
farmers get increasingly asymmetrical and direct\textsuperscript{153}. As Varley (1991) states, community cooperatives have "the tendency to become management- as against membership-led" turning into centralised and oligarchic structures. In other words, these social networks, based on the simplified understanding of rurality as merely agricultural space do not provide space for difference.

In this "exclusively agricultural" countryside the space for other cooperative mechanisms is rather limited. Despite the existence of self-help networks (in the form of amenity provision and water schemes), their importance is often undermined in policy documents and their success is measured by criteria accepted by policy-makers and other "professionals"\textsuperscript{154} (Varley, 1995). Other community groups such as the branches of political parties and GAA\textsuperscript{155} clubs are centralised as they are managed from Dublin\textsuperscript{156}. Thus, in this rural space people with no or little involvement in agriculture-centred networks may feel out of place.

In Russia, similar identification of the countryside with agriculture has been evident since the Soviet period both in academic works and in public consciousness\textsuperscript{157} (Zaslavskaya, 1980; Strongina, 1986; Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997). The rural has long been considered as a homogenised space, a vestige of pre-industrial existence, "our common bread-giver" (Vishnevsky, 1998).

This homogenisation was reinforced by the state rural policy, whereby only agriculture-related businesses alone were supported in the countryside (Fadeeva, 2003a). Homogenisation in this case provided means for controlling space, regulating everyday practices\textsuperscript{158}. However, as you know from Chapter 3, heterogeneity of rural space escapes the logic of the existing ways of organising and controlling political actions; actors in the ostensibly homogenised countryside forge associations marked by difference rather than similarity (as it could be expected from the dominant ideological perspective).

\textsuperscript{153} However, local professionals (teachers, doctors, priests) are also important in rural development (McDonagh, 2001). See also discussion on key rural actors in Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{154} For example, Breathnach (1986) stresses "sceptical and disparaging attitude on the part of professional technocrats [towards self-help initiatives] regarding what are seen as the enthusiastic but inevitably incompetent efforts of local amateurs" (p.79).

\textsuperscript{155} Gaelic Athletic Association, a sporting organisation founded to preserve and cultivate Irish national games.

\textsuperscript{156} Moreover, as Varley (1991) emphasises, informal networks of mutual support, which could have spanned across the boundaries of an exclusive "farming" community, have mostly ceased to exist as standards of living in the Irish countryside have improved.

\textsuperscript{157} Instead of traditional names of the places rural people widely use the names of the collective farms which were in charge of agricultural use of those areas (Lyudmila Savel'eva, 14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy). As the effect of dominant ideologies and introduction of modern technologies (car, telephone) in the rural life, lived space of a typical Russian village with all its topological signs and marks, paths and ways through it to the "other" spaces has been transformed into an abstract space of agricultural production.

\textsuperscript{158} As Fadeeva (2003a) states, rural authorities in Russia "have greater power to control local businesses than their urban counterparts" (p.77).
As a result, two different trends occurred in the Russian countryside. First, “alternative” tactical networks were formed in the blindspots of the state proprietary and homogenising mechanism. In Russia rural people are involved in a “semi-legal” system of avoiding state control and concealing their profits (Shanin, 1999; Nikulin, 2000). Within this “grey” economy informal links between people are forged, as stealing, illegal employment, and non-taxed sales of equipment and materials are becoming common features of rural life. Involvement in these “marginal” activities engenders social solidarity and closeness; ties between people span across different networks. Fadeeva (1999), for example, talks about milkmaids who work for the collective farm, while at the same time sell “excessive” (not accounted for) milk to dachniki, and, on top of it, steal animal fodder from the farm in order to exchange it for services in the neighbourhood network. In this case one individual

159 See discussion on “alternative” links within the blindspots of the regulating state system in Chapter 7.
160 The system is considered semi-legal as in many cases the unlawful activities of rural dwellers are deliberately overlooked by the local authorities, who are concerned with the political stability in the countryside (Steinberg, 1996).
161 Second (urban) homeowners who often take residence in their rural house.
occupies different positions within various role systems, so that different networks of "informal" relationships overlap within the specific locality.

Plate 10. Non-taxed road-side trading in Khlopovo

Second, agriculture-centred construction of rural space is being overthrown by everyday practices, bringing rural people together in networks which stretch across the superimposed boundaries of homogeneous regions. In situations where opportunities for non-agricultural employment are limited, payments and salaries are often delayed for months and the social support system is crumbling rural people come together in so-called "survival" networks to manage scarce resources (Fadeeva, 1999). These social networks, although seemingly centred on personal subsidiary farms\(^\text{162}\), are not "professional" and are not exclusively agricultural. In Russia, extended kinship networks (including non-working relatives and

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\(^\text{162}\) Subsidiary farms are very common in Russia. Since the 1970s, most of the rural families have been accorded a piece of land to grow vegetables and breed animals. Although before the start of reforms in 1991 personal subsidiary farming was important source of fresh agricultural produce, it is only in the 1990s it has become the “backbone of the rural economy” (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997).
families living in cities) and neighbourhood networks have come to form what Fadeeva (1999) calls “intra-village networks of survival and mutual support”\(^{163}\) (p.450). Rural people pool and exchange resources; collectively use machinery and equipment to work on their subsidiary farms; exchange information and knowledge as well as make use of different skills of the actors involved\(^{164}\). These durable “survival networks” are essentially networks of social capital, where people obtain resources through generalised and non-direct links.

On the one hand, Russian “survival networks” help to “improve community morale and confidence” and use collective action to tackle social exclusion (Fadeeva, 2002). On the other hand, these networks are still exclusive on several counts. First, people who are new in the village cannot join in social networks based on trust (Nikulin, 2000). Second, those rural people who don’t have initial resources to enter exchange networks\(^{165}\) cannot use “survival” strategies (Barsukova, 2000)\(^{166}\). Third, efficiency of economic and social exchanges requires a certain level of skills and knowledge, so that people with limited skills and abilities (such as low-skilled agricultural workers) are excluded (Fadeeva and Kharchenko, 2000).

To summarise, in a countryside which is seen as a homogeneous construct, the tactical use of marginal spaces brings people together in informal networks. In Russia, more rural people tend to be involved in informal networks than in Ireland as they are more deprived (limiting other sources of aid) and are more likely to lend money\(^{167}\). Homogenisation of rural space creates situations of social exclusion either directly (through means of limiting employment opportunities and life choices\(^{168}\)) or indirectly (because of non-involvement in emerging “alternative” networks).

**Traditionalism: the Church**

In this section I consider the interrelationship between ethnicity, religion and traditionalism, emphasising the flexibility of the ways the meaning of the latter is constructed. Moreover,

\(^{163}\) Moreover, in so-called “credit networks” people borrow money from each other (Nikulin, 2000).

\(^{164}\) Fadeeva (1999) provides an example of such networking when a rural family decided to buy a truck to start a small cargo delivery service in Orel region. First, their urban relatives helped to find used vehicle and to finance the purchase. Second, the money was borrowed from a credit network within the village. Third, the truck was repaired in local (rural) garage by former colleagues of the head of the family, and they were paid by homebrew rather than money. Altogether, the rural family has started their own business using the links within different informal networks.

\(^{165}\) For example, families with many small children, lonely disabled people.

\(^{166}\) In this case an unstable financial position undermines trust in people’s ability to honour their obligations, and questions their ability to reciprocate.

\(^{167}\) This happens because of traditions of collectivism. However, often rural people don’t have money to lend.

\(^{168}\) As Fadeeva and Kharchenko (2000) state, many rural people are often limited in their choice to the jobs available in their village, because of deterioration of rural transport and its expensiveness. In Ireland the situation is different as people are generally more affluent and car ownership is higher.
the composition of traditionalism in terms of religious affiliation is studied to reveal different dimensions of social inclusion and differentiation.

In Irish case, traditionalism is often associated with the Catholicism. Religion is often seen as a component of an ethnic national identity, a major part of the monolithic representation of Irish-Ireland imposed on the country’s diversity (Graham, 1997a; Poole, 1997)\textsuperscript{169}. In the country with a large Catholic majority\textsuperscript{170}, religion is not only seen as a sign of traditionalism, but also as an exclusive force legitimating the uniform Catholic ethos (Poole, 1997). The roots of rural conservatism are associated with the Church with its strong bias towards and greater “presence” in the countryside\textsuperscript{171}. The Church reaches out to the most remote parts of the country; creating a well-organised network of relations within rural community. Thus, it tries to be sensitive to the local issues and efficient in addressing local problems. Participation in religious life is considered as natural and traditional, and it does not preclude partaking in activities defined by reference to other associational categories\textsuperscript{172}. The Church therefore engenders inclusive social networks.

Plate 11. Church festival in South Connemara

\textsuperscript{169} This homogeneity is translated into political domain, where the Church is considered as a major power-bloc, and in public consciousness, so that the Church is still seen as one of the most important social institutions (Inglis, 1987; Keogh 1988).

\textsuperscript{170} According to the Census of population (1996), Catholics make up nearly 92\% of the total country’s population.

\textsuperscript{171} As McDonagh (2001) states, “churches and religion have a more organic role to play in rural Ireland than they have in large urban centres” (p.123).

\textsuperscript{172} As Mewett (1982b) asserts, “affectively [religiously] based relationships provide a means of sustaining different associational forms within a population where other social ties can bring people of different behavioural types together” (p. 120).
In the West of Ireland, church-based networks include Irish colleges, organised in the summer time for children willing to learn Irish (Gaelic). The Church plays a central role in this educational system, as students are obliged to attend the church twice a day and teachers are selected with a priest’s approval (Taylor, 1985). Moreover, there exists a network of people lodging the students from these colleges, who are often selected on the basis of their links with the local church. The influence of the Church on rural life therefore goes beyond the ideological and includes the sphere of economics and politics. Different commentators argue that the Church has “a powerful manipulative capacity in the area of politics” (Keogh, 1988, p.154) and significant role in rural development (Tobin, 1984). Moreover, McDonagh (2001) suggests that very often religious leaders not only influence local politics, but also take an active part as “key persons” or change agents in rural development. This helps to develop the culture of collective entrepreneurship, getting other rural people involved by demonstrating tangible accomplishments. On the one hand, the Church encourages selfless action through the reproduction of norms of moral unity and solidarity (creation of externalised social capital), and, on the other hand, creates action-oriented beliefs based on practical experiences which encourage development.

However, these affectionate social networks can also be exclusive. As Poole (1997) notes, traditionalism in Ireland encourages ethnic nationalism, with the tendency to embrace exclusivity by shutting out minorities. The Catholic Church as an institution is subject to strong and authoritative direction from its centre, and in this regard the Church has the rigidity and fixity of the hierarchical structure. Sense of community and sense of place are not just a matter of co-operation and penetration, but they are imposed by the authority and influence of the church elite. Social networks in this case are based upon hierarchical principles of subordination, and “brutal impatience with dissidents” makes church-mediated networks purified and exclusive (Tobin, 1984, p.38). The willingness of religious leaders to impose a uniform Catholic ethos\(^\text{173}\) has tended to alienate non-Catholics from mainstream society (Poole, 1997). As McDonagh (2001) states, the Church’s position in rural development can be elitist and its involvement in rural transformation rather limited. At the same time, the role of the Church in everyday life in the countryside is becoming less pronounced and it is less dominant than previously (Leyland, 1995). Exclusion from the church-mediated networks therefore does not mean exclusion from community life\(^\text{174}\). Moreover, the exclusive ideology of Irish-Ireland expressed in particular through the

\(^{173}\) As Pringle (1989) notes, “Catholic Church doctrine became enshrined within civil legislation on issues such as censorship, divorce, contraception and abortion” (p.42).

\(^{174}\) As a villager in the West of Ireland told me in the interview, “These days no one will point their finger at those ones who don’t go to the church” (Rónán Greilish, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc).
Catholic ethos, is giving way to a more outward-oriented position\textsuperscript{175}, thus prompting a reconsideration of narratives of homogeneity and appreciation of different exogenous influences (not solely religion-based) within dynamic and continuous Irish identity. Neo-traditionalist approaches engender a more inclusive and multiple vision of the Irish countryside and try to accommodate its multicultural and multivocal diversity (Gibbons, 1996; Smyth, 1997). This reading of the Irish countryside addresses the open-ended structure of social networks constructing hybrid rurality, thus transcending the sectarianism and exclusivity of “Catholic Ireland”. Thus, the role of the Church in reproducing multiple ruralities is seen as animating and stimulating not only direct and logical links between the people, but also sensuous connections between them\textsuperscript{176} (Leyland, 1995; McDonagh, 2001). In rural Russia, the role of the church is also changing. The Russian Orthodox Church\textsuperscript{177}, which used to play an important role in rural community life before 1917, has not regained its positions in the 1990s\textsuperscript{178} (Afanasiev, 1996). As Tulskiy (2003) states, “for most Russians the Russian Orthodox Church is a traditional thing inherited from their ancestors, but they don’t think it has any relation to modern life” (p.2). The reason for this, as Shanin (1986) argues, is that traditional and “official” Orthodoxy was forcibly imposed on (rural) people. If in Ireland religion has been changing from “take-it-or-leave-it” to “a la carte” Catholicism (McDonagh, 2001), in rural Russia the direction of the shift is the opposite. The Orthodox Church has been changing into a monolithic, hegemonic institution, which strongly regulates peasants’ participation at grassroots level and considers some of their “practices and beliefs ... somehow inferior or at least “less pure” than those of educated laity and clergy” (Shevzov, 1996, p.586).

The role of the Church in forming social networks in the countryside is rather dubious. On the one hand, the Church has been actively working with rural people encouraging them to take part in the restoration of abandoned church buildings and monasteries (Morozov, 1997). In this case, the Church is not seen as a merely bureaucratic institution, but as a community of the faithful. Thus the Church re-instils moral values, creates links based on

\begin{itemize}
  \item As Graham (1997a) states, the Irish state now looks beyond the Otherness of Britain to inclusion within the EU.
  \item McDonagh (2001) provides an example of community action in Inishkillane (the West of Ireland) spearheaded by Fr. McDyer. McDyer’s campaign was not aimed only at improving rural infrastructure, but also against apathy and inertia in order to empower local people and to help them to participate in community life.
  \item Hereafter the Church is referred to the Russian Orthodox Church. Although there are many different confessions in Russia (including Islam-dominated national republics), Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant religion in the country.
  \item On the one hand, there has been a “revival” of the church after the breakdown of the USSR in 1991 with the majority of Russians “associating themselves with Christianity” (Tulskiy, 2003). People associate the Church with traditions and culture, and it remains one of the most respected institutions in the Russian society. On the other hand, the number of practicing Christians did not grow in the last few years and people’s trust in the Church in the last 8 years has been diminishing (Safronov, 2001). The majority of Russians support the Church, but don’t take part in religious life.
\end{itemize}
faith and trust between community members, and encourages initiative and activism of rural people\textsuperscript{179} (Bellustin, 1985). The Church is also playing an increasingly important role in local development, starting up new business in agriculture, food processing and tourism and therefore creating jobs in the countryside\textsuperscript{180} (Safronov, 2001). As Safronov (2001) states, “new church leaders are first of all entrepreneurs... who are concerned with economic development” (p.85). Church leaders in Russia therefore act as “key actors” in initiating local (mostly parish-based) development initiatives and encouraging local involvement in development networks.

\textbf{Plate 12. Religious revival in Russia: restoration of rural church in Zhuravna\textsuperscript{181}}

On the other hand, these networks are exclusive and sectoral, as they are aimed mainly at supporting the economic activities of the church itself. The scope of church-mediated social networks is often limited to the church-related activities and they do not extend into the other areas of community life (Pospelovskiy, 1995). Most of the church-related activities are focused on an economic aspect of rural development, with little attention paid to social problems. As Tulskiy (2003) states, the Church does not have any specific anti-poverty initiatives and it does not oppose the government’s reforms which aggravate the living conditions of poor people. Furthermore, social networks of co-operation, organised

\textsuperscript{179} Moreover, involvement with the parish church reinforces local identity as community members choose icons to commemorate “sacred” events in the village’s history and organise local religious festivals commemorating “local” saints (Batalden, 1993).

\textsuperscript{180} Krutov (2003), for example, writes about a former collective farm in Ryazan region, which was bought by the Sretensky monastery. The purpose of buying off the insolvent farm was not only to raise funds for reconstruction of the local parish church, but “to improve morale of rural people... and to help them rediscover their roots” (p.56).

\textsuperscript{181} Parish of Khlopovo is in Zhuravna diocese.
on the basis of religious affiliation, tend to be exclusive and centralised\textsuperscript{182}. In the majority of cases rural people are denied leading positions in these networks because the church officials do not consider them to have enough education or organisational skills (Shevzov, 1996). On top of this, the Church is becoming increasingly intolerant to other religions which, in such a multi-confessional country as Russia, excludes many people with other religious affiliations\textsuperscript{183}.

Much of this section has focused on the specific ways in which the Church has been positioned in relation to ideas of traditionalism and exclusivity in the Irish and Russian countrysides. In both countries, curtailment of the role of religious affiliations has impacted upon the ideas of rural politics and identity. In Ireland, the dominating and centralising influence of the Church has been challenged by emerging contextualised and heterogeneous visions of rurality. Affectionate links, instead of structured multivocal community life, provide a basis for multiple indirect links between actors. In the place of oppression and claustrophobia, the legacy of “traditional” constructions of Irish-Catholic countryside, new feelings are tentatively emerging, considering rurality as animating and creative space. This re-discovered hybrid space engenders community and cross-community networks encouraging participation and inclusion.

In Russia, the opposite process is underway. The Church, striving to re-establish its position in the countryside as a “traditional” institution, is becoming increasingly purified and exclusive. The rigid and irreconcilable positions of the Church, which in the Soviet time were seen as a basis for its existence, do not promote compromise and cross-community participation in local development (Kaarnainen and Furman, 2000). Thus, the lack of experience in negotiating between senses of shared experiences, aims and different identities within religious networks are translated into control, domination and exclusivity. Moreover, the role of the Church in community and voluntary development is limited because of its homogenised (economic/agricultural) understanding of the Russian countryside\textsuperscript{184}. Claims to exclusivity in belonging to this homogeneous rurality mostly undermine alternative voices from “minority” groups (such as the rural poor\textsuperscript{185}) and preserve traditional understanding of the marginalised “other”.

\textsuperscript{182} As Batalden (1993) notes, Russia’s Church officials place their trust in larger-scale, institutional organisations of the church rather than in the local church communities, creating an unbalanced and centralised collective church identity.

\textsuperscript{183} The turn to fundamentalist Orthodoxy has become even more apparent with the adoption of the new Federal law on “Freedom of conscience and religious groups” in 1997, which acknowledges the dominant position of the Russian Orthodox Church in multicultural Russia.

\textsuperscript{184} This has led to the situation when people are disillusioned with the Church which becomes increasingly exclusive and does not play important role in solving acute social problems (Nikandrov, 1999).

\textsuperscript{185} Krutov (2003) quotes archimandrite Tikhon from Sretensky monastery who insists that “the poor are those who are drunk... and we don’t want the drinkers in our farm... [they] don’t have the will to live and work, they are not real peasants” (p.57).
Traditionalism and community

This section reveals complex connections between traditionalism and community, addressing the issues of traditionalism and modernisation, uniformity and inclusiveness, language and identity. The idea is to unfold connections within and outside communities in order to find out how these “traditional” forms of social organisation in the countryside can encourage inclusion and local development.

In both Irish and Russian academic and popular discourses the existence of closely-knit communities is commonly accepted as a “traditional” characteristic of rurality (Ó Cinnéide and Cuddy, 1992; Gromyko, 1991). From this perspective, communal trait and not an expression of individualism, is considered a specific characteristic of both Irishness (Shanahan, 1997) and Russianness (Vishnevsky, 1998). A communal logic is considered as embedded in the traditional values of both the Catholic Church and Gaelic society (Watson, 1996). In a similar vein, parallels are built between Orthodoxy and traditional character of Russian rural communities (Afanasiev, 1996).

There are several associations of “tradition” and “community” in Russian and Irish anthropological and sociological writing. First, community is seen as a place-based concept, a symbol of mutuality and cohesion (Ó Cinnéide, 1986; Afanasiev, 1996). From this perspective, community is associated with “meitheal” system of mutual aid and self-support (Ó Cinnéide, 1986) or “mir” system of self-help (Afanasiev, 1996). Communal identity is considered traditional, created over a period of time and it implies considerable homogeneity in social traits and patterns of behaviour. It creates what Cohen (1982) calls “the matrix of kinship and neighbourhood”, networks of moral and material support. In the West of Ireland, “traditional” community traits (such as close-knit relations and similarity of values) are seen to originate in interactions within specific settlement patterns where different households are grouped closely together in clahans (clusters), living next to each other on a family croft (Taylor, 1980). In central Russia, closeness is believed to originate from a compact settlement pattern where most people live alongside one main village (Vinogradsky, 1999).

186 The “communal” picture of rural Ireland is seen as a dominant cultural form and is accepted as a legitimate in that it embodies the aspirations of society (Graham, 1997b). In Russia, the communal imagery of the countryside has been part and parcel of rural policies (and consequently, part of popular mythologies) during the last century (Akhiezer, 1996).

187 In this case behavioural characteristics of particular group are often related to its position within the local community; individuality is subordinated to collective groupings and identity is socially managed. For instance, rural people in Ireland defined their neighbouring village as “Conroy land”, “because Conroys have always been good in fishing” (despite the fact that there are not only Conroy family who lives there, and not all of them are fishermen). In a Russian village people refer in a similar way to the part of the settlement dominated by the descendants from the Ukrainian settlers who are considered “mean and unfriendly”. This happens despite the fact that intermarriages during the last century made such division (and existence of separate collective identity of “khokhly” (nickname for Ukrainians) obsolete.
Second, the “traditional” uniformity of community is seen as false and exclusive. Due to the same traditional settlement pattern the intra-family ties are not as strong as the links between the family-based groups. In Ireland, as Redfield (1960) states, there is no unifying centre in the land of scattered homesteads, “there is no community centering upon town or village; there is only a double network of kinship connection to hold together, loosely, people who dwell separate from one another” (p.6-7). In this case, community is internally cohesive and exclusive towards the “others”, including people from the other neighbouring villages\(^{188}\).

In the Russian case, it is employment rather settlement patterns which is in the centre of the exclusivity of rural community. Because of the lack of job opportunities in the countryside, a collective farm (or its successor under a new name of “joint-stock company”) is often the only local employer\(^{189}\) (note the central position of Maslovo collective farm in the local development network in Appendix 12). People who are not employed on the farm are therefore excluded not only from work-related networks, but from wider social networks\(^{190}\). The collective farm and rural households exist in “symbiosis”\(^{191}\), so that positions and roles within the farm are important for establishing connections within the local community (Nikulin, 2001; Fadeeva, 1999). People who have an access to farm’s equipment and resources take central roles in mutual support networks, while the ones who do not work for the farm are marginalised\(^{192}\). Moreover, in rural Russia collective farms tend to be responsible for rural social services\(^{193}\), provide personal farms of its members with fodder at reduced price, plough their allotments, provide transport and help with burials (often free of charge). In other words, the farm is “not only a commercial enterprise, but a social service”\(^{194}\) (Rodionova, 1998, p.177). Farm managers therefore have moral

\(^{188}\) See detailed discussion on social links and community structure in Chapter 5.

\(^{189}\) Not surprisingly, instead of traditional names of rural places people widely use the names of the collective farms which are in charge of agricultural use of those areas (Vinogradsky, 2002).

\(^{190}\) In a “compact” village where “everyone knows each other” exclusion from the only source of employment is obvious.

\(^{191}\) In the Soviet time collective farms often resorted to the help of personal farms when poor milk yields did not allow them to fulfil the state orders and mobilised retirees free of charge during harvesting campaigns. Nowadays, collective farms support their members (provide credits, foodstuffs, prevent significant redundancies) in exchange for social stability (Rodionova, 1998).

\(^{192}\) In the process of restructuring most of the collective farms have been transformed into agricultural joint-stock companies. Most of the shares in these companies, however, were often acquired by farm managers, chief bookkeepers and agronomists when the real value of property was unknown to ordinary shareholders (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997). Lonely and sick pensioners in isolated settlements were often persuaded to surrender their shares in return for payments in kind such as wood deliveries, an annual supply of hay or the promise of some other service. Newcomers to the village do not have the right to buy shares in a joint stock company (former collective farm) and are therefore excluded from the mechanisms of financial support of its shareholders (See Chapter 6 for discussion on how this exclusion from farm-centred support networks affects poverty of newcomers).

\(^{193}\) Even after social services and infrastructure were transferred to rural administrations as a part of rural administrative reforms.

\(^{194}\) As one of collective farm directors stated, “although we don’t fund these [social] services and facilities, we have a moral responsibility to provide them” (Steinberg, 1996).
authority to identify what is good and bad for local community and to resolve moral issues\textsuperscript{195}. Collective farm in rural Russia therefore bring people in the community together; not only getting the locals involved in agricultural networks, but also reinstating context-specific moral values and moral unity (moral networks). This locally specific system of moral codes, however, favours members of the collective farm and excludes others. In many cases, the scope of these community-based moral networks is limited to the area of operation of the collective farm, which means that the moral community has rigid boundaries and exclusive (context-specific) moral values.

Plate 13. Collective farm in Khlopovo

Third, traditionalism is often linked to language. Different commentators acknowledge the existence of wider “regionalised” community based on linguistic distinctiveness in the West of Ireland (Commins, 1988; Tovey \textit{et al.}, 1989). This community is no less “traditional” than the place-based one\textsuperscript{196}, but it stretches outside of the fixed boundaries of

\textsuperscript{195} Collective farm activity is based on ethic of care, when even some wrongdoings are not severely criticised if they are done “for the good of community”. Thus, stealing from collective farms of anything that one can physically carry away is often overlooked as it allows rural people to survive in the conditions of delayed payments and limited service provision (Nikulin, 2001). As one of kolkhoz administrators told me, “a good kolkhoz director will have more forages and animal food for the winter than kolkhoz livestock actually need” (Elizaveta Avdonina, 16/06/2000, Zhuravna).

\textsuperscript{196} The link between national identity and the Irish language is the cornerstone of the overall Irish independence philosophy. The importance of Gaelic is acknowledged both by the state (the language policy was adopted by the government as early as in 1920s) and by Irish people themselves, to the majority of whom “the mere existence of the Irish language is a sufficient marker of distinctiveness” (Watson, 1996, p.257)
a particular place (Johnson, 1997). Moreover, the fact that the Gaeltacht\(^{197}\) consists of different separated areas allows Irish commentators to speak about community here as a set of networks connecting diverse spaces: “the Gaeltacht is not a place... it is the community of native Irish speakers” (Ó Ciosáin, 1991, p.7). People in this language-based community are linked into informal everyday networks, which recreate cultural (local traditions and knowledge) and social (trust and cohesiveness) capital\(^{198}\).

In Russia, tradition and language came together in a dominating image of “Russian-speaking Orthodox culture”, where language has been considered as a symbol of development and modernity for the “non-traditional” Others (those who do not speak Russian) (Malakhov, 1998). The policy of Russianisation in the Soviet period meant that most administrative posts were allocated to Russian-speaking people only (Pleshakov, 1997). Thus, non-Russian-speaking regions were perceived as culturally poor and underdeveloped\(^{199}\). Additionally, during this language “colonisation” specific social networks were developed between rural people whose first language was not Russian. Joint opposition to the enforced language shift and accommodation to different systems of beliefs (changing meaning of traditionality and progress) has created links of mutual help and support between marginalised “others”\(^{200}\) (Pleshakov, 1997).

Similarly, in rural Connamara community action groups have actively used Irish as a communicative medium to challenge the dominant English-speaking culture and to reinforce local identity\(^{201}\). In Ros Muc itself people came together to establish the illegal local radio station \textit{Saor Raidió Chonamara}\(^{202}\), later acknowledged by the authorities and transformed into \textit{Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG)} (Horgan, 2001). Then, in 1996, the establishment of \textit{TG 4 Teilifís na Gaeilge}, an Irish language TV channel with headquarters in Connemara, has strengthened the determination and solidarity of the Irish speaking community. Supported by the government (the Gaeltacht Agency)\(^{203}\), these language-based networks recreate symbolic capital and cultural resources in the Gaeltacht (Watson, 1996).

\(^{197}\) Although Irish is taught at schools across the country, it is vernacular only in the Gaeltacht areas.

\(^{198}\) Of course, the map of the Gaeltacht would extend beyond the boundaries of the West of Ireland and even beyond the boundaries of the Irish state to include Irish Diaspora overseas. The use of the same language, shared history and traditions recreate social networks (“absent” networks discussed in Chapter 3) between local people and exiles.

\(^{199}\) Vinogradsky (2002) quotes rural people in Central Russia, who considered people from their neighbouring non-Russian speaking village as “second-graded or even third-graded... they are fools, dunces” (p.347).

\(^{200}\) For example, people helped each other to pay for education of their children in the cities, who later returned to their homes/communities.

\(^{201}\) In 1969 the civil rights group Gluaiseacht ar son Certa Sibhialta na Gaeltachta began demonstrations in Galway to fight for rights for people living in the Gaeltacht. The Irish speaking minority wanted the government to get their own radio service without English programs (Horgan, 2001).

\(^{202}\) First Irish language radio station, \textit{Saor Raidió Chonamara}, made its first broadcast from a pub in Ros Muc during Easter 1970 (Ó Croidheagain, 2000)

\(^{203}\) The government links survival of the Gaeltacht with the support of Irish-speaking activities and tries to reinforce Irish language’s position as a core element in national identity. The Ministry for the Gaeltacht has
Availability of these network resources encourages collective action aimed at further unification and homogenisation of the Irish-speaking community. On the one hand, people who cannot speak Irish are excluded because all information is in Irish204 and Irish is the everyday spoken-language. Moreover, many communities in Connemara are involved directly or indirectly in the networks supporting Irish-language colleges (lodging students and teachers, looking after village halls, providing food and other services), where the use of English is prohibited. Local people, knowing that students could be expelled from the college for speaking English, are careful about not even lapsing into English in daily conversations205 (Carroll, 1999). On the other hand, exclusivity of community also means its closeness. Native speakers of Irish who have little or no English often feel inferiority and shame, and are excluded from wider social networks. As Taylor (1980) stresses, some people in Connemara blame their inability to speak English on not benefiting from schooling, which would have opened wider opportunities beyond their small communities. In popular consciousness Gaelic “had become synonymous with poverty and ignorance”206 (Leyland, 1995, p. 64), “it is associated with illiteracy and low social status” (Hindley, 1990, p.16).

Negative associations of community with backwardness and marginalisation go beyond the “naire” (sense of shame) associated with the Irish language itself. Community in this case is perceived as people who are “bonded by language, landscape... and a history of marginalisation... homogenised along an axis of tradition and modernity” (Johnson, 1997, p.188). Similarly, in Russian “public consciousness ... “village” [rural community] is identified with backwardness and unsophisticated taste”, reflecting a somewhat colonialist mindset (Nefedova and Treivish, 1996, p.132)207. From this perspective, people are seen as relying on long-established values and not welcoming new developments. The association of traditionalism with backward communities also brings about thoughts of powerlessness, anti-intellectualism and closeness (self-isolation) of rural space (see also Shubin, forthcoming on this issue).

been promoting local development through the medium of Irish within Gaeltacht Community Development Competition Scheme (Ó Conghaile and Ó Cinnéide, 1991).

204 As an Irish development worker states, “everything is in Irish in here... it is almost a deliberate policy to say it should not be the Irish speakers who have to read in another language, because everywhere else in the country, including the media, everything is in English” (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)

205 As an Irish office worker confesses, “I should not be seen talking English to the foreigner if I want to keep [lodging] the students” (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc). In this case stability of local economy, which is closely involved into a lucrative business of accommodating rich students from different parts of the country, is not jeopardised and homogeneity of community preserved.

206 Association of Irish with poverty is deep-rooted in folk sayings such as “Irish will butter no bread” and “Irish is tied to a donkey’s tail”.

207 In Russian academic discourse, rural space is constructed as traditional but unjust compared to modern and just urban space. Rural community is seen as irrational and strange and rural dwellers are pictured as the “other” (Nikulin, 1999).
However, Russian postcolonial discourse has been developing in the recent years on the basis of a recognition of the ruralisation of society\textsuperscript{208}. This entailed not just a negation of the city and idealisation of traditional social values ingrained in the rural space, but appreciation of rurality as a basis for alternative society\textsuperscript{209}. First, urban households are getting more involved with the rural lifestyle and cultures, as well as agriculture-related activities, thus blurring the boundaries of rural communities and extending the networks of mutual support beyond specific rural settlements\textsuperscript{210} (Fadeeva, 1999). Second, traditional forms of rural governance – \textit{skhod} (meeting) and \textit{starosta} (village elder) – have been reinstated and acknowledged by the country’s regional authorities\textsuperscript{211}. Third, the logic of community living with its element of mutual support in forms of \textit{pomochi} (spontaneous co-operative workgroup based on reciprocation of assistance) and \textit{skladchina} (pooling together of money or other resources) is accepted as innovative and creative (Fadeeva, 2003b). Thus, the traditional character of the Russian rural community is appreciated in all its strangeness and difference; its connectedness into wider social networks and networks of morality\textsuperscript{212} implies its heterogeneity and inclusiveness.

\textbf{Plate 14. Providing connections: village elder (starosta) in Zhilkontsy\textsuperscript{213}}

\textsuperscript{208} Ruralisation in Russia entailed changing attitudes to the countryside and “increasing popularity of rural way of life for urbanities” (Alexeev and Mironenko, 2003, p.4).

\textsuperscript{209} It is close to what Mormont (1987) described as development of pro-rural representations of countryside, where the rurality is seen “not only as a space to be appropriated ... but as a way of life... Peasant autarky, village community and ancient technique are no longer relics, but images which legitimise this social project of a society which would be ruralised” (p.18).

\textsuperscript{210} Fadeeva (1999) provides numerous examples of increasing co-operation between family members living in the countryside and in the city, when financial help and support in other different ways considerably affect family’s living conditions.

\textsuperscript{211} See detailed discussion on how changes in the rural governance affect poverty in Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{212} Where mutual help in emergency complies with universal (not exclusively rural) moral principles.

\textsuperscript{213} Published with permission of the starosta.
In a similar vein, there have been several attempts to rethink traditionalist visions of rurality in Ireland (Smyth, 1997, Cawley and Keane, 1999, Storey, 2000). Reinterpretation of tradition as an "enabling force for the future [rather than] interpretation of the past" (Kockel, 1995, p.244) means doing away with rural/urban and traditional/modern dichotomy. In true Benjaminian style, recognition of tradition as a part of fluid everyday practices rather than a cornerstone of static, conservative imagery, inevitably changes the way connections between actors in the countryside are considered. Tradition, as an emancipating force, creates multiple links between actors and different associations not limited by specific boundaries (Kearney, 1986, quoted in Kockel, 1995). In this case community becomes truly "fluid", pluralistic and inclusive.

To summarise, the dominance of the imagery of the countryside as communal space reflects the political and moral hegemony of specific social groups in Ireland and Russia. The vision of the countryside as comprised of localised regions (communities) suggests the existence of clear boundaries and therefore entails homogenised construction of rurality. Closeness of social networks within these place-bounded communities is a double-edged entity, providing grounds for both inclusion (through kinship and neighbourhood links) and exclusion. In Russia, the hegemonic imagery of the "regionalised" countryside is also reinforced by the insularity of rural communities in terms of employment. In this case, the logic and structure of professional links (often rationalised and direct) within agricultural units is fused with the rationale of community solidarity and moral support to create a "symbiotic" but exclusive and not multiple vision of the countryside.

However, rediscovery of diversity of the countryside in Ireland and Russia makes rural identities no longer dependent on opposition to the different "others" for its defining characteristics. Redefining and reorienting rurality as a multiple, creative and innovative space breaks the exclusivity of the territoriality of community and extends it beyond its regionalised boundaries.

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214 Rejection of binary thinking is incorporated in the "rural mentality" of most urban dwellers in Russia and Ireland, which has been created as a result of migration of rural people into towns with maintenance of strong family links (Alexeev and Simagin, 1996).

215 Benjamin (1977) in his analysis of the historicity of the everyday through trash has drawn attention to the ephemeral and transient aspects of daily practices and now-ness of everyday life. He called for revolutionary nostalgia for the future to overtake the sentimental attitude towards the past – in this case, abandoned practices and traditions are rediscovered and appreciated by themselves in their fullness, strangeness and creativity.

216 "The locals", "the real villagers", do not accept various (multiple) expressions of communal consciousness and traditionalism and thus admit a more exclusive countryside.

217 This happens through denial of external connections – the conflict between the local and newcomer.
Rurality and policy-networks

So far, I have considered the ways that different ruralities are constructed and shown how these different understandings shape social interactions. In the second part of this chapter I concentrate on the ways that countryside is made meaningful in political discourses. Multiple countrysides can be seen as vital texts which are differently read by contesting actors. Endlessly contested in different discourses, ruralities are the subject of continuous modifications of meaning, manipulated in various rural policies. The task of this part of the chapter is to discover how rurality becomes a framework through which political discourses are constructed and political actions are taken. In so doing, I try to understand how symbols, and cultural and social codes embedded in the countryside engender context-specific policy networks.

Centralism/Peripherality

This section considers the different meanings of peripherality in the Russian and Irish contexts, and the effects which varying interpretations of this term have had on the formation of policy networks. Firstly, I go beyond the common assumptions that peripherality always has negative connotations, and that it can be reduced to geographic remoteness (see for example Hamilton, 1995). Rather, attention is focused on interpretation of different meanings attributed to geographical isolation or inclusion in policy making. Secondly, peripherality is considered not merely as an aspect of spatial location, but also an attribute of specific development discourses incapable to assimilate change and continually renegotiate representations of the countryside. Lastly, cultural peripherality is considered as an unduly stereotypical rendition of the complex ruralities. Here, political connotations of closeness and isolation of rural space are linked with the exclusion and marginalisation of specific social groups.

Peripheral/centralised

Both Russia and Ireland are often deemed peripheral countries in Europe in a geographic sense (Commins, 1993; Hamilton, 1995; Ioffe and Nefedova, 2000). Geographical remoteness of the two countries, however, has had different political implications. First, both countries have been trying to make up for the years of political isolation and reliance

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218 The invented peripheral rural geographies are considered to be paralleled with the policy actions structured in a specific form to accommodate peripherality.

219 In a Russian case, I am talking about European part of the country as it was there where my fieldwork was concentrated.
on its own resources by means of closer integration into European structures. In Ireland’s case, this has led to country’s accession to the EU and integration into European structures. Russian rural enterprises and rural people, however, are still pretty much isolated from their European counterparts. Most of rural Russia remains uninvolved in the broader European policy making, so that local development is based on local resources only and involves creation of extensive (excessive) linkages within the state sector (see Appendix 10). Moreover, the high level of dependency upon the state sector (and lack of alternative resources) reinforces centralised structures of policy making.

In Ireland, peripherality has also led to the creation of centralised policy networks (Murphy, 1991). Here, the essential features of a national development programme have been determined by external forces with a limited centralised framework developed to channel this policy. As McDonagh (2001) stresses, the Irish planning structure has been continuously re-designed to maintain “centralised control of EC funds” by the Dublin administration (see Appendix 6). Rural development in Ireland is fully attuned to EU planning initiatives, while Irish peripherality is successfully used as a strong argument in negotiations for European funding (NESC, 1994). In both countries, therefore, peripherality as it is constructed/perceived is translated into greater control and increased state involvement in rural development.

Peripheral/backward

The two countries are peripheral not only in geographical but also in the symbolic sense, as they stay beyond the influence of mainstream European rural development discourses. Rural areas in Ireland and Russia have long been associated with similar sets of problems, so that rural development is traditionally identified with diversification of agricultural activities and improvement of infrastructure (McDonagh, 2001; Nikol’sky, 1996). This conservatism in rural development policies has led to the creation of one-dimensional policy-networks in these countries. Although heterogeneity of rural activities is promoted by the Irish National Development Plan and the White Paper on rural development, effectively agricultural modernisation and urbanisation are still the priorities

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220 In Ireland’s case, it was self-reliance policy promoted by its first Irish Prime Minister de Valera; in Russia – it was isolationist communist regime.
221 Additionally, development policies promoted by the Irish government have encouraged the country’s involvement in the European and world economy, so that many local (rural) markets have become directly linked with business communities overseas.
222 Russia remains outside of the EU and its involvement in the European development programmes is very limited. Moreover, the majority of rural people cannot afford to travel abroad and do not associate themselves with Europe (Zaslavskaya, 1996, Vishnevsy, 1998).
223 Amin (1990) calls this type of development “autocentric”.
224 In Amin’s (1990) terms, “peripheral” development.
225 Rural depopulation, scattered services and ageing infrastructure.
of Irish rural policy making (Munck and Fagan, 1995). In Russia, the newly-adopted Special Federal Programme for Rural Social Development until the year 2010 (Government of the Russian Federation, 2003) still acknowledges that the "current critical situation in rural social development is caused by... a deep crisis in agriculture" (p.7) and sets as its principal objective "an effective agricultural production" (p.10). Thus, policy networks in both countries are still rather homogeneous and sectoral, organised mostly around the same (agricultural) channels of resource distribution (as Appendix 6 and 10 demonstrate, Ministries of Agriculture in both countries are assigned key roles in regional development).

Peripheral/colonised

Apart from conservatism in adapting new development policies, there are also some reservations existing in the two countries in terms of the importance of rural development discourses. In Russia and Ireland rural areas often take peripheral positions in the dominating urban-biased thinking (Commins and Keane, 1994; Alexeev, 1990). Rural development in this case is sidelined to become a part of urban-centred programme to achieve conditions of richness: industrialisation, (agricultural) modernisation and urbanisation (Crush, 1995). Policy formulation is conducted within technical and not locally sensitive networks, which do not account for heterogeneity and difference. Irish rural politics is centralised and proprietary as it implies management and intervention.

In Russia, both in official ideology and in lay discourses rural space has been long constructed as a sort of closed (stagnant or "dead") space, opposite to the open space of the city (Nikiforov, 1979). Generalised and essentially aspatial strategies, which replaced local sensitivities, have encouraged the creation of standardised and centralised policy networks, where specificity of rural life was reduced to the number of "average values of major indicators" (Fuks, 1982, p.33). Rural space and rural policies have been accorded a subordinate position in the planning system, leading to the creation of a somewhat colonialist mindset on the part of academics and policy-makers and a "colonised" feeling.

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226 Rural policy is still inextricably linked with agriculture in government policy circles, clear from the newly-named Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

227 The idea behind rural policy making in both countries is still primarily to reduce the heterogeneity of problems to agriculture-related issues, and to sort out rural social malaise by means of already existing sectoral mechanisms.

228 Regional (rural) planning in Ireland and Russia is still very much reduced to implementation of national development programmes, rather than independent local policy making. Despite the intention to move from a rationalist centralised planning to negotiational local planning, the National Development Plans and other planning measures in Ireland have had a little local input (McDonagh, 2001).
amongst rural people\textsuperscript{229} (Akhiezer, 2002; Rodoman, 2002). In recent years, there has been further centralisation of rural policy making transferring local services from the jurisdiction of rural administrations to district or regional authorities\textsuperscript{230}. As a result, rural issues have been often lost in the broader policy agenda; all resources were centralised at the regional level, while local authorities were still kept responsible for the provision of services to specific rural communities (note the dependant and subjugated position of rural administrations in the regional development network in Appendix 11).

\textbf{Plate 15. Powerless local authorities in Russia: rural administration of Zhuravna district ("the building with a flag", as locals call it)}

This powerlessness and the subordinate position of rural (local) authorities in Russia resembles the situation in Ireland, where there is no "local government... [but] merely local administration... local councillors and officials ... not regarded as capable of making even the most minor decisions" (MacDonald, 1989, p.36). In both countries, therefore, rural areas are put into situation of "double peripherality", when rural matters are subjugated to the ambitions of centralised and hierarchical state (inter-state) planning\textsuperscript{231}.

\textsuperscript{229} Nefedova and Treivish (1996) blame rural colonisation on "specific colonisation stereotypes of thinking, encouraging any expansion and appropriation" [p.38], and rightly so; the sprawl of the urban domain into rural space, the conquering of new territories rather than making effective use of already existing ones were part and parcel of the command system.

\textsuperscript{230} Although the idea was to relieve local authorities of the burden of maintaining rural infrastructure and therefore encourage local development, the move has essentially constrained any rural development initiatives (Vlasov, 2000).

\textsuperscript{231} In Ireland, Conway (1991) stressed that local (rural) authorities "get increased responsibility for economic development of their area without corresponding powers for public action, which... amount to abdication of
Different understandings of peripherality in two countries, therefore, have brought about very similar results in terms of policy making. Planning and development in both Russia and Ireland are structured and delivered within centralised networks, and understood in a very mechanical sense\(^{232}\) (see Appendices 8 and 11). The “Europe of the regions” remains wishful thinking in relation to both Irish and Russian policy making, and consequently complex and variegated rural areas are treated in a homogeneous way (see also Shirlow, 1995). Despite the moves towards regional governance in European planning, policy networks in Ireland and Russia retain their arboreal hierarchical structure and do not function as flexible mechanisms\(^{233}\).

**Economic-centred policy-making**

This section looks at the perceived importance of the economic aspects of rural development. It discusses the role of funding not only in formulation of rural policies, but in transformation of development practices and identities of the actors involved. The underlying premises of this section are provided by the conceptualisation of funding as a basis for rational, short-term policies, defined in contradistinction to “other” actors and policy actions (“amateur” and non-logical), and also by the idea that funding requires bureaucratic control and strict management of fixed distributional networks/channels.

Rural policies in both countries have been significantly influenced by popular thinking about development solely in economic terms (Davis and Shortall, 1999; Valeev, 1986; Denisova, 1995). The predominance of economic rationale has framed policy making in this way, making it more effective in economic terms, but not necessarily open-ended and flexible.

First, policy networks have been structured in a purely rational way to regulate short-term delivery of funds. In Ireland, which relies on EU as the main source of funding for regional planning (see Appendix 6), rural policy-making has been continuously transformed to accommodate changes in EU policies and, therefore, to remain eligible for further subsidies (Boyle, 2000)\(^{234}\). “Subsidy shopping” has been and still is an important characteristic of Irish rural development policy and practice. At the same time, European

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\(^{232}\) For instance, the recent creation of two regions in Ireland within the EU did not devolve power from the centre, but instead created yet another level of bureaucracy (Boyle, 2000).

\(^{233}\) Zamyatina (2002) provides an interesting metaphor of “total’noe Podmoskov’e” (Total Moscow region, or total centromania) to describe centralised thinking and decision-making in Russia.

\(^{234}\) From this perspective local projects have long been considered as simply the “mechanisms for channelling resources and aid to local communities” (McDonagh, 2001, p.88).
funding has become a part of everyday life and its presence is manifested in dozens of road
signs all around rural Ireland proudly indicating the EU’s role in sponsoring specific local
projects. Readily available funding under various state- and EU-sponsored programmes
has contributed towards the creation of a “quick-buck” mentality (Shirlow, 1995), where
short-term (material) gains from rural projects are prioritised to long-term and less tangible
outcomes235. Reliance on externally or internally controlled investments has created a
“dependency culture” based on the expectation of an inflow of subsidies (Higgins, 1982),
where policy making is used as a merely controlling distributional mechanism.

In Russia, policy networks lack this degree of flexibility which exists in Irish rural
development, mainly because they depend on one source of funding: state agricultural
subsidies. After the breakdown of the Soviet welfare state, the power and resources were
retained in the hands of former Communist party leaders, who turned into new farm
managers and local councillors (Afanasiev, 1996). The upshot of this was further
bureaucratisation of mechanisms ensuring rural service provision so that funding channels
through which money was transferred to the countryside became reified236. As a result, no
funding is provided for rural development itself, and people have to manage to live on their
own. Former collective farm managers, local agricultural bosses and local political leaders
are interlinked into a web of commercial, rather than ideological relations (Afanasiev,
1996). They maintain key positions in policy networks, which have become even more
fixed and rigid than in the Soviet period (see Appendix 11 and note the central role of the
head of district administration in regional planning).

Second, the predominance of an economic logic in policy making has changed
development practices and rural identities. In Ireland, the long-term availability of EU
structural funds for rural development projects has not just structured Irish governmental
organisations in a specific way; it has also transformed the ways of thinking about rural
politics. Both policy-makers and rural dwellers have learnt a “new vocabulary” of rural
development; they have become more knowledgeable about the ways to change their living
practices in order to become eligible for various funding opportunities for development of
their communities. This has led to creation of citizens, who acquire a degree of skill and
knowledge about scientific and technological matters related to rural development. In
result, new material and immaterial objects were generated. First, bodies have been turned
into new “technological” objects (Foucault, 1979a), experiential selves, included in the

235 As a result, people in Ireland live with the idea that should something go wrong with specific local
development project, there is always a soft cushion of yet another development initiative which could be
implemented.
236 Philips (2001) characterises Russia’s transition period as “a gradual confinement of planning to
bureaucratic institutional politics and... decision-making generally. To a degree this pattern could be
interpreted as a reconstitution of the political culture of the Soviet Union and its restriction of the sphere of
politics and policy making” (p.61)
wider policy networks under the programmes celebrating “participation”, “empowerment” and “active citizenship”\textsuperscript{237}. Second, in the wake of this “information and awareness change”, ideas about experimentation and interactivity have been incorporated into policy discourse (Edwards, 1998; McDonagh, 2001). This “experimentation” shift, which could have led to abandonment of dichotomy between “experts” and “amateurs” in policy making\textsuperscript{238}, did not have any direct implications on policy actions\textsuperscript{239}. As Cawley and Keane (1999) state, centralised and hierarchical structures still dominate policy making in rural areas. Linear and rational thinking is still at the heart of rural development, which administered almost exclusively by rural development agencies and professional technocrats (McDonagh, 2001).

In Russia, by contrast, it is the lack of funding which encourages experimentation in rural politics. While local governments are unwilling to implement any development initiatives and initiate policy reforms, rural businesses and rural administrations are trying to ensure survival of people\textsuperscript{240}. These contextualised mechanisms of social support use local knowledge and local resources to compensate for the absence of state social policy\textsuperscript{241} (see the example of rural development network in Maslovo/Zhilkontsy area in Appendix 12). These creative activities, however, are not part of wider policy networks, which are organised around funding distribution. Innovation of small-scale development/survival schemes does not challenge the dominance of rational and rigid policy making\textsuperscript{242}.

Economic-centred understanding of rural development, therefore, encourages quantitative, rational and short-term policy initiatives in Ireland and Russia. In this context, the degree of flexibility enjoyed by rural planners in Ireland is not necessarily translated into policy action. Reification of policy networks is encouraged by the availability of funding and the existence of dependency culture. Although the bureaucratisation of policy making is challenged by the manifestations of interactivity and creativeness, it does not necessarily bring about real empowerment of rural people, who are still mostly alienated from rural development\textsuperscript{243}.

\textsuperscript{237} See also discussion on experimental politics in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{238} In this case, actors become equally informed of the policy measures.
\textsuperscript{239} See extended discussion on this point below.
\textsuperscript{240} Rodionova (1998) provides an example of creative manipulation of scarce resources by the local authorities, where foodstuffs are regularly allocated to the local poor, loans and cash advances for low-income rural families are provided, and some of the locals are helped to qualify for limited welfare support.
\textsuperscript{241} As Gontmakher (2001) states, the state social policy lacks consistency and specificity (it does not help the most needy people).
\textsuperscript{242} Philips (2001) states that in Russia planning still “privileges a top-down approach to social change, prodding those subject to it to behave in a “rational manner” that equates with conformity to plan” (p.67).
\textsuperscript{243} In both countries, policy networks remain exclusively under control of professionals, who regulate access to political power and resources.
Homogeneity/heterogeneity

This section considers how policy networks work with the multiplicity of ruralities and how specificity of contexts is accommodated in rural development. I compare two areas of my study (the Gaeltacht in Ireland and Moscow region in Russia) in order to find out the extent to which local distinctiveness and diversity encourages the creation of different (rigid/fluid) policy networks.

In Ireland, the Gaeltacht is often seen as an area with “a particularly vigorous framework of locally-based development” (Breathnach and Kelly, 1988, p.x). Special attentiveness to the distinctiveness of the area is paid by state and voluntary development organisations. First, the state’s commitment to the Gaeltacht is manifested through the activities of a specific government department. Second, there is a special development body – Údarás na Gaeltachta (the Gaeltacht Authority), which preserves “traditional” linguistic, cultural and social characteristics of the area as well as encourages its economic development (Údarás na Gaeltachta, 1998). However, despite the ambition to become an all-embracing local authority as it was originally envisaged, Údarás is perceived by the public as the agency focused solely on industrial development in the area (Ó Cinnéide et al., 1985). The outcome of this is a duplication of existing policy-networks (see Appendix 7).

Additionally, the voluntary co-operative movement had a profound impact on the Gaeltacht in terms of rural development. Co-operatives in the Gaeltacht, unlike their counterparts in the rest of the country, are not just agriculture-based but are also concerned with provision of services and development of tourism and local infrastructure (Duffy and Breathnach, 1983). What is different about co-operatives within the wider network of the Gaeltacht development was that the impetus for their establishment was local (Johnson, 1979). However, as Duffy and Breathnach (1983) stress, “despite the general goodwill towards them, they [co-operatives] have largely failed to transcend their popular image as yet another agency – albeit locally based – which “delivers” development to a client community” (p.63). Despite the original aspiration to work along the local multiplicity and to engage in more responsive and “defiant” (towards statutory structures) development, rural co-operatives have seemingly failed to succeed in delivering heterogeneous policies (Johnson, 1997).

244 The Gaeltacht is defined as those places in which the Irish is still the main spoken language. The Gaeltacht consists of parts of counties Galway (in Connemara), northwest Mayo, and the west coast of Donegal (there are also smaller pockets in the counties Kerry, Cork and Meath). The total population of the Gaeltacht is about 85,000 people (McDonagh, 2001).
245 As Varley (1991) underlines, the Gaeltacht Authority is often seen as simply reinforcing the activities of already existing development organisations – community co-operatives – in trying to achieve similar objectives (i.e. job creation).
The Moscow region in Russia\textsuperscript{247}, in contrast with the Gaeltacht, has never been seen as a culturally homogeneous place. It is seen as a dynamic and multicultural place, a target for different waves of migrants, who are often entrepreneurial and energetic people prepared to start new careers in a new place (Zayonchkovskaya, 1999). On top of that, the inflow of \textit{dachniki}\textsuperscript{248} has added to already existing heterogeneity of the countryside around Moscow (Pallot and Nefedova, 2003). In my study area in Zarajsk district the majority of dachniki are relatively affluent Muscovites, energetic and creative people who are prepared to work on the land and have money and resources to invest in alternative rural development (note the role of dachniki in local development network in Appendix 12). Either individually or grouped in so-called “garden co-operatives”, dachniki contribute to development of local infrastructure and maintenance of existing rural services (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997). In addition, they are liable to special tax payable to the local authorities, which often represents the only financial contribution to local (rural) development. In the absence of any state-led rural development, these alternative \textit{ad hoc} development initiatives are emerging in spaces “in-between” inefficient policy networks. Although not officially

\textsuperscript{246} Údarás na Gaeltachta converted the building of former power electric station in Ros Muc in hope to attract manufacturing companies to move into the area. This development, however, has been unsuccessful and the building is left unoccupied.

\textsuperscript{247} Here I refer to the rural parts of this region.

\textsuperscript{248} Dachniki (дачники) are second homeowners who often take up residence in their rural house.
recognised and not harnessed to work within the state system of rural service provision\textsuperscript{249}, the contribution of dachniki to rural development represents a more entrepreneurial and flexible way of responding to community needs. Emerging alternative policy networks in this case accommodate the existing cultural and social heterogeneity and work with difference, tapping on the creative potential of incomers to the countryside.

Overall, the issues of homogeneity/heterogeneity have had important influence on creation of specific policy networks. In the West of Ireland, the policy for preservation of local distinctiveness\textsuperscript{250} has led to relative exclusivity of policy networks. Rigid control over development policies has contributed to duplication of contextualised policy networks (see Appendix 7). In Central Russia, voluntary development was more successful in harnessing local multiplicity and working with difference. In this case, the cultural and social heterogeneity of the countryside has led to creation of interactive and flexible policy networks.

\textbf{Difference and differentiation}

Earlier on in this chapter I touched upon some issues on exclusivity and otherness of policy making in Russia and Ireland, which emanated from specific perceptions of the countryside and rural problems in particular contexts. This section considers in more detail the ways heterogeneity (homogeneity as it is seen in some discourses) of rural spaces is managed and organised in rural politics. The emphasis here is on the existing mechanisms of differentiation and exclusion in policy making and the emerging signs of new politics of difference.

\textit{Differentiation between the political and the everyday}

Russian and Irish political landscapes are quite similar in the way they create exclusionary trends. First, the very process of creation of the “other” in local politics in these countries is rooted in traditions of certain passivity in policy making and opposition to the state, which leads to alienation and standardisation of the everyday. Different commentators have noticed an apparent resistance by rural people against involvement in politics and development (Kearney \textit{et al.}, 1994; Connolly, 1997; Ioffe and Nefedova, 1997). In Russia, as Ryvkina (1998) stresses, the “pseudo-reforms of the 70s and 80s have caused... people

\textsuperscript{249} This happens in the form of partnerships or co-operatives.

\textsuperscript{250} This preservation policy undoubtedly generated greater awareness of rural problems (more “active” development).
to take part in new [development] programmes with utter disbelief in their results” (p.149).

In a similar way McDonagh (2001) writes about the “Irish culture where there is a resistance to become involved” (p.128). This situation of “intellectual and political passivity” (Chubb, 1992) has reinforced the controlling and dominating powers of political authorities. Unchallenged by the public, policy networks were transformed into rigid bureaucratic structures, which regulate and standardise everyday practices rather than exploit their different creative potential.

As a result, power in policy making is understood as a proprietory, controlling force with inevitable resistance against it, rather than a creative power of production. Development therefore is considered as a struggle, a conflict between the state and “economic and social ills”, which include both conditions of rural malaise and people living in these conditions (Buller and Wright, 1990; Mezhyev, 2000). As a consequence, the state is treated as the enemy and “the other” by rural people and rural people often do not believe in state-led development initiatives. As McDonagh (2001) acknowledges, “recently there have been changes which suggest that the state is perceived and presented as the main obstacle to development” (p.86). In this situation rural development and its alleged “subject” are separated by a chasm of distrust and suspicion, which in no way contribute to the effectiveness of policy making.

This political exclusion breaks up the integrity of policy networks, and separates them into “professional” and “non-professional” elements which do not work together (see Appendix 8, where this separation is shown in the structure of Galway county development board). In essence, networks are transformed into rigid well-defined structures, which fix the development process, and break it into “stop” and “go” phases (Commins and Keane, 1994). Rural development becomes a logical, stage-by-stage process, starting from

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251 As I emphasised earlier in this chapter, policy making is accorded a defining role in shaping the lives of rural people not least because of the existing division between the “experts” and “non-professionals”. It is stated that “rural development belongs to the realm of government agencies and policy-makers” (McDonagh, 2001, p.80) and that “development issues should be tackled by knowledgeable professionals” (Ogarkov, 2000, p.128).

252 Hence the idea of “targets” and “aims” in policy making which need to be achieved (Varley, 1991, Curry, 1993). In Russia, “plans” (with “targets” and “profiles”) have been widely used in the Soviet period (hence the name of the Soviet “planning economy”) and are continued to be a major approach in a post-Soviet decision making (Philips, 2001).

253 Hence stealing of state property or abusing of state benefits. As Mewett (1982b) states, “the impression – in some ways justified – that area is poorly treated also acts as a justification for making the most of the government’s benefits that are provided… Manipulation of subsidies or other gains made at the expense of some authority carries no moral censure in the village. They are gains from the bodies which have done nothing to help the crofting population and, moreover, the gain is not made to the detriment of others in the village” (p.229). In a similar vein, Nikulin (2000) stresses that stealing in rural Russia is often backed by “moral justification”. He quotes a rural dweller, who says: “Why our government does create such conditions, when we have to steal [to survive]? And it does not create conditions for us not to steal!” (p.76).

254 In a similar vein, Nikulin (2000) stresses that “there is a fear of the outside, big, “other” world, which is associated in rural people’s consciousness with the Russian state itself” (p.75).
"initiation", followed by "implementation" and the end-state "achievement" (Department of the Environment and the Local Government, 2002; Government of the Russian Federation, 2003). Development here is seen as something new, and progressive; but it misses out the "here-and-now-ness" of everyday life. In a logical policy structure, where actors are linked together directly and rigidly (they have a pre-defined place), there is limited space left for heterogeneity. Policy making bears a danger of becoming alien to the everyday life, from which it is artificially separated.

Conservatism and reduction/elimination of difference

In opposition to change, the feeling of being "safe in the middle of the pack" (Shirlow, 1995, p.45) has created non-flexible policy networks unable to adapt quickly to changing social and political conditions. In both countries policy making is limited to "reacting" to a crisis rather than anticipating it (McDonagh, 2001; Ryvkina, 1998). Diffuse and fluid power in this case is structured and homogenised, transformed into the power of appropriation and oppression rather than creation and change working through the difference. Not surprisingly, even ostensibly voluntary and fluid community action in these countries is seen as a part of the state proprietary mechanism. In Ireland, Varley (1995, p.84) suggested that communities are considered a "rhetorical device that serves to legitimate and array of new state measures". In a similar vein, Russian policy-makers speak of community action as "an essential part of the state structure" (Serikova, 2000, p.70). Following on from this, rural administrations (local authorities) are treated as simply "bureaucratic institutions, which issue documents, different confirmation certificates and are responsible for distribution of commodities in short supply" (Yastrebinskaya, 1999, p.189).

As a result, policy networks in both countries are often controlling and rigid; there is limited space left for difference and innovation. Space and people are made more manageable by means of reinforcing existing dichotomies between rural and urban, agricultural and non-agricultural, rich and poor. Thus, the White Paper on rural development in Ireland (Department of Agriculture and Food, 1999) clearly states the need for "rural" and "poverty" proofing of rural development policies, which means creating the "others" and visualising the "difference" in the process of policy making. In a similar

255 The idea behind this logical policy-making is clear: "the greater the investment..., the greater the economic growth, and the reduction in isolation" (McDonagh, 2001, p.107).

256 As McDonagh (2001) stresses, Irish development "create[s] abnormalities ("the poor", "the illiterate", "the landless") before treating or reforming them" (p.83).
manner the Department of earnings and standards of life\textsuperscript{257} of the Russian Ministry of labour and social development identifies specific categories of people eligible for state support (disabled, elderly, unemployed and orphans), while the others are clearly excluded (Ministry of labour and social development, 2000, quoted in Borodkin and Puchkov, 2000). Not surprisingly, Russian rural politics “is based on social differentiation... not least by means of preliminary identification of solvable and non-solvable farms, poor and not poor” (Korobeinikov, 2000, p.15).

Emerging politics of difference

However, there are emerging signs of rural politics which work with difference. In Ireland, the new vision of rural governance, which is introduced in the new White Paper on rural development, suggests using more fluid approaches, allowing local authorities to be “more entrepreneurial, flexible and responsive to community needs” (McCafferty and Walsh, 1999, quoted in McDonagh, 2001). The introduction of discussion boards, where local participation is encouraged, adoption of multiple interpretations of development, and the permission of experimentation with different ways of organising societies and economies are seen as the way forward for rural development in Ireland (note the presence of the Community Platform in Irish rural development network in Appendix 7). These steps towards “fluid” rural politics, however, are treated with suspicion and a “minimalist attitude” by the majority of policy makers, and are often used merely for political manoeuvring in obtaining European money (McDonagh, 2001).

In Russia, partnerships between state and voluntary organisations are continuously recombined in their efforts for social service provision when “the social policy does not work and gets limited funding” (Serikova, 2000, p.70). These policy networks are continuously developing as local authorities team up with different voluntary organisations which fund their social service provision, and make available necessary information and resources (note the place of local business in funding local development in Appendix 12). In the situation of uncertainty, the networks (partnerships) have to continuously transform and evolve to accommodate changes\textsuperscript{258}. In both Ireland and Russia, partnerships are characterised by a combination of varied and evolving projects. In this sense, as Sabel

\textsuperscript{257} There is a predilection towards economic (quantitative) approach to identifying poverty and exclusion in Russia, which is clearly seen from the name of the Ministry’s department.

\textsuperscript{258} Serikova (2000) provides an example when local administration worked as a mediator to secure employment in the company, where blind people work (a part of the blind society foundation). Local administration guaranteed supplies to this company, as well as secured a loan for it. When the economic conditions changed due to Russia’s financial crisis, the company was allowed to repay the loan in kind and the period of repayment was extended.
(1996) states, “partnerships are the projects”, they are fluid and becoming in the way they function.

However, there is a limited scope for experimental politics in the existing political structures in Ireland and Russia. As McDonagh (2001) states, in the majority of cases “concrete” short-term projects are favoured, while experimental and innovative ones are dumped because of their uncertain outcome. Uncertainty in Russian rural politics works both ways, encouraging joint state-voluntary initiatives and discouraging state development. As Besprozvannaya (2000) argues, regional governments are not so concerned with further intervention in social policies if there is already something happening in the region in terms of partnership development. The existence of different development projects within a particular locality contributes to “blurring of responsibilities” of local governments when, in situations of uncertainty, local authorities often resort to conservative and proven mechanisms of policy making (McDonagh, 2001).

As a result, rural politics in Ireland and Russia mostly misrepresent multiplicity, and this compromises policy effectiveness. Rural people distrust policy initiatives and they are often excluded from policy making. Organisational networks form a logical all-embracing co-ordinate system, where actors and things (knowledges, technologies) are classified according to their positions in this structure rather than their possible input. In so doing, the “others” are singled out and targeted, the division between the political and the everyday is reinforced. The emerging signs of new fluid and “becoming” rural politics are not specifically welcomed and encouraged; the space for experimentation is rather limited within the policy system which favours concrete and “material” (economic-centred) projects. Policy making, essentially, becomes an exclusive thing for itself which standardises its working environment (eliminates deviations) rather than works along its creative differences.

Absent politics/politics of absence

In this section I consider the implications of differentiation and alienation of the everyday discussed above. The argument here is that politics which does not account for dynamism and heterogeneity of everyday practices is an illusory and virtual thing. Rather than remaining to be a practice, a dynamic process politics is reduced to a static controlling

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259 As Varley (1991) asserts, there is still strong belief amongst Irish policy makers that “local communities cannot proceed very far individually... [and] their activities [have to be] coordinated and “integrated” if they are to make developmental impact” (p.98).

260 In Russia, Rodionova (1998) argues, the idea behind rural development initiatives is to help people to avoid the “outrageous poverty”. If it is achieved, the local authorities tend to concentrate on the other projects.

261 McDonagh (2001) acknowledges that in the partnerships between state and voluntary organisations in Ireland people are appointed to the managing board by virtue of their position in organisation/community, rather than because of their burning desire to help.
structure. Irish commentators call this a “development spectacle” (Murray and Greer, 1993), while Russian sources refer to “primarily rhetorical” (Philips, 2001), “diffuse” or “obscure” policy-making (Steinberg, 1994). There is a clear distinction made between “virtual” and “real” rural development, where the latter is seen as a set of creative “new and effective policies” rather than wasteful “showing off” (Caffrey, 2000, quoted in McDonagh, 2001). Instead of innovation and creativity, rigid policy networks offer the imitation of activity in the situation of “virtuous governance” (Munck and Fagan, 1995). Thus, the Irish government mainly succeeds in appointing new boards for newly established development companies and approving new policy programmes. Irish ad hoc approach to rural development just mimics “fluid” politics, while it is still seen as only a quick-fix solution (Varley, 1991).

In Russia, the practice of development “spectacle” is inherited from the Soviet past and it continues during the transition period. As Deineko et al. (1999) stress, “both the Federal programme on “Russian rural revival” and all the government’s plans to improve rural housing, rural services... and rural infrastructure in the period between 1991 and 1995 were not accomplished. In fact it was... just an appearance of rural development” (p.64).

In this situation of “imitation” of development some of the links between actors in policy networks are assumed rather than created. McDonagh (2001), when he talks about Irish rural development under the Council for the West, stresses that no connections between communities were provided. Instead, it was assumed that “if there were core groups, then there would be unity of purpose” (p.149). While some links might still exist, they are only conjugations rather than active connections – they are not reciprocal, they do not include and do not enable different actors to work together. This conclusion comes from the subjugated position of communities in rural policy making, where voluntary activity is seen as “just a token gesture, or a rubber stamp for policies and strategies already decided at statutory level” (Dillion, 1989, p.41). In Russia, even such tentative links do not exist, and rural politics is limited to dealing merely with the most acute issues (outrageous poverty). As Fadeeva (1999) chillingly acknowledges, “the state’s involvement in rural life... is limited to statistical evaluation of number of families living in poverty. In so

262 As I argued in Chapter 3, following Deleuze (1994), repeated action increases a general state of inertia; repeated movement fixes objects and relations in place before alternatives have a chance to develop (so that everything looks novel, but nothing is actually new and innovative).

263 By the end of the Soviet era popular feeling about development politics was encapsulated into a joke: “What will the government do if a train car derails? They will try to rock it to imitate movement and they will announce stops”. This practice of “imitating movement” is still pretty much in place in modern-day rural development.

264 In a similar vein in the Russian context, Nikulin (2001) states that “having formally dismissed former communist policy making structure and assumed that former rural managers would work together in a new market conditions, the state did not create any new effective local development networks [bodies]” (p.240).
doing the state is not interested in the ways of survival of rural families (as long as they are remotely legal), who have already been “statistically classified” as poor” (p.447). However, the absence of rural politics is compensated by the development activities dealing with the everyday things/problems which remain non-visible (absent) in the sanctified and exclusionary political sphere. Earlier in this chapter I provided several examples of informal (experimental, fluid) policy making based on guiding rather than controlling principles (partnerships, animators, interactive sensuous politics). This is the politics of the issues “absent” in the mainstream policy agenda, which enables the empowerment of the marginalised and excluded groups through the recognition of their “unusual” skills and knowledge (ADM, 1997), and acknowledges long-term development as a part of rural life rather than something “imposed on a landscape” and requiring “management and intervention” (Crush, 1995). Politics of sensations, of experiences, of the intangible are a part of the everyday and cannot be separated from it. Policy networks in this case follow social networks in providing connections between actors and bringing them together.

Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that contested constructions of the countryside both shape interactions within social networks and determine political actions. The critical approaches discussed above critique and confuse simple, traditional, binary understandings of the countryside in order to broaden the definition of the political and to explicitly address different forms of inequality and exclusion. Different understandings of rural identities affect the ways that rurality is constructed within various networks. The chapter argues that dominant abstract and homogeneous constructions of rural space engender direct, mechanical and fixed (static and limited in scope) networks, which legitimise appropriation and control. Oppressive power of construction of this hegemonic space restricts and channels social interactions between people in specific ways, regulated by stereotypical understanding of traditions, community and morality. In Ireland, an officially manipulated geography of homogeneity has succeeded in subordinating locality and rurality, mainly because of the prevailing uniform Catholic and Gaelic ethos of the state, and colonisation stereotypes of thinking linked to peripherality. In Russia, the strong sense of countryside as agricultural space survived the transition, and rurality has re-emerged as loci of backwardness, homogeneity and unity in today’s materialistic and urbanised society.

265 McDonagh (2001) also considers new LEADER + programme as an example of this “fluid” policy making which promoted the idea of participation in rural development, along with a desire for innovative (even experimental) ways of pursuing it. He also criticises this programme for not going far enough in its fluid and experimentation approaches.
Narratives of hegemonic homogeneity are, however, called into question by resonances of diversity implicit in the deconstruction of the rurality. The neat oppositions and single visions are challenged by the coalitions of "others", who promote rural "counter-space" (Lefebvre, 1991b) in opposition to the one embodied in the strategies of power. Alternative forms of creative expressions of the countryside create multiple connections between histories, artefacts and actors thus allowing different "others" to contribute to (social, cultural, political) formation of multiple ruralities. The plurality of incoherent (and often contradictory) ruralities does not fit into traditional socio-political frames of reference; different countryside(s) are expressed through heterogeneous moments and practices rather than "subjects" and static identities. These fluid and tactical actions emerge in the blindspots of controlling and dominating system.

The result has been a marked dissonance between contemporary political structures in the two countries, and their justification and a cultural reading that points towards diversity in rural identity and society, defined by cultural hybridity and syncretism. It was demonstrated that linear political structures failed to deal with rural multiplicity, which undermined effectiveness of development initiatives. The chapter argues that diverse and multiple representations of countryside engender more dynamic and fluid networks, which are working with difference, accommodate changes and are context-specific. Policy making which encourages shared participation, experimentation and animation cuts across different social, religious and ethnic groups and can deal more flexibly with different and conflicting viewpoints (as in this case cultural and political differences are allowed in as a part of policy making). Redefinition of dichotomies between professionals and amateurs, locals and non-locals etc. in this case encourages inclusion, initiative and integration of actors in political networks, where the difference becomes a relative matter, the "spark" which makes these networks work. Deconstruction of the homogeneous countryside allows the simultaneity of difference within the everyday life to be represented, so that entailing rural politics could articulate the interests of those once marginalised and excluded.

This chapter therefore provides a context for my study of networked construction of poverty and otherness. It examines how specific places and identities can be used to construct criteria of exclusion of actors in different networks. The next chapter continues this discussion. It considers interactions within social networks and policy structures, and studies their effect on difference and exclusion in particular rural contexts.

266 In a surrealist tradition, the "spark" is produced by juxtaposition of two heterogeneous materials in an attempt to defamiliarise the everyday, to attend to particularity of events and moments, dynamic links and connections.
CHAPTER 5. SOCIAL NETWORKS IN CONTEXT:

INTERNAL DYNAMICS AND EXCLUSIVITY
CHAPTER 5. SOCIAL NETWORKS IN CONTEXT: INTERNAL DYNAMICS AND EXCLUSIVITY

This chapter is a natural progression of my discussion on policy and social networks developed above. It starts a series of three chapters in which theoretical issues concerning social interactions within networks and policy structures and their effect on difference are empirically grounded within particular contexts. After the inevitably generalised and limited discussion about specific types of networks presented in the previous chapters, I attend to the complexity of the countryside by studying these networks in a "real" context of mixed and messy links, patterns, non-representable communications and invisible connections.

This chapter also extends my previous debate on social constructions of ruralities in Ireland and Russia. Taking on board the ideas about the ways, in which an understanding of rurality transfigures social interactions, this chapter also concentrates on the ways interrelations between actors produce different settings. It provides specific contextualised readings of multivocal cultural and social landscapes, which are produced through particular interrelations between localised actors. This focus on production of specific rural contexts explains my interest not in just mere existence, but in the functioning of social networks – why, how, and in what ways actors actually come together. I probe connections for their very "connectivity", stretch them and examine them in specific contexts – not just where the actors "belong" to a locality, but where they are out of place. My analysis considers this link between place, identity (belonging) and connectedness within social webs of communications. I study the ways links between "out-of-place" actors differ from those who are "in place" and how these symbolic boundaries are reinforced by means of interactions within specific social networks. In essence, my focus is on exclusivity of social networks; how they bring people together and how they make them isolated, and how the difference is handled within specific social interactions.

In so doing, I lay down a background for the following discussion on interrelations between different types of networks. This chapter unravels social networks, and investigates their scope and density, as well as their internal dynamics and exclusivity. In so doing, it demonstrates possible reasons for the confluence of social and policy networks, and it provides a context for this interaction which is discussed later in this thesis (see Chapter 7). It also brings to light possible incoherence in social communications and raises issues about its possible effect on the functioning of policy networks. Importantly, this chapter maps poverty within social networks and studies interrelations between poverty and inclusion in the webs of help and social support.
The study of interrelationships between actors within social networks proceeds in several stages. Firstly, the links between actors and points of their contact are identified. Here I am interested to see what glues people together in a particular village and what are the linking points within social networks. Secondly, the intensity and direction of ties are considered. The question I ask here is whether relations between actors provide connections or they are just functioning as exchange links. This helps to identify actors' positions in the networks and resources they have access to. Thirdly, the chapter questions the ability of social networks to bring actors together. Here the coherence and solidarity of actors is linked with the production of difference within social networks and its effect on exclusion of the "others".

Density of links

In the study areas in both Ireland and Russia people are quite closely connected in different types of social networks. The density of these networks depends on the type of relationships between the actors involved. In the Irish village of Ros Muc kinship networks play the most important part in bringing people together. Long-term traditions of settling on and around family crofts have created dense intra-family connections within a limited area. Moreover, close kin relationships within the Irish village play a significant role in creation of work-based networks as better understanding between distant relatives has helped to establish necessary trust and support for workgroups to develop.

On the contrary, in the two study areas in Russia, relationships between neighbours tend to be prioritised over other links within the community. Despite previous experience of collective living, villagers are disillusioned with the ideas of co-operation and workgroups. From their experience of Soviet times, collective working co-operation implies coercion and control, which they have been trying to escape for years. They see small-scale exchanges within neighbourhood networks as more like a family business, which escapes the controlling influence of the bigger "traditional" workgroups.

The span of networks is also different in Irish and Russian villages. In defining Ros Muc, the locals refer to the "several villages within one village" (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc) which are nevertheless linked together. Despite the absence of a clearly visible main village area, the locals nominate two shops (especially one with the

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267 The density of networks is evaluated on the basis of the strength of ties (tightness) and their directionality (reciprocity, access to resources).
268 The idea is to consider the importance of links and their contents (dynamic action rather than static snapshot) against their visual appearance (or absence).
269 Ros Muc is located in a very isolated peninsula such that majority of newcomers "don't stop here... they pass it by" (Tim Ó Caoinleáin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc).
270 "Why do you want to bring us back to kolkhoz?" - a rural nurse replied to my question about opportunities for local collective action (Orina Tonkova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo).
post office), the community centre, the church and two pubs as “focal areas” of Ros Muc. These are the places where, as a shop worker says, “there is a good interaction between people” (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).

Plate 17. Focal point of social networks: shop in Ros Muc

Plate 18. Focal point of social networks: pub in Ros Muc
In the Russian villages there are very few places where people meet and communicate beyond neighbourhood networks. The focal point of the both of the villages is the central square where the rural clubhouse and rural shop are located and where bread\textsuperscript{271} and pensions are delivered regularly. This is the place where otherwise split and fragmentary “localised” networks come together. In the Irish rural community densely knit connections foster frequent contact even over long distance because of the widespread use of cars and telephones. There is less dependency on neighbours and more flexibility in making and maintaining connections:

\textit{Quite a few people will meet each other in post office area getting their pensions, buying their groceries. [Now] they have... transport of their own. So they can come to the post office. Before that they were quite dependent on their neighbour to buy their groceries for them, now they can come personally and meet the others.... They have telephone to communicate with each other so much.} (Tim Ó Caoinleáin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc)

\textbf{Plate 19. Focal point of social networks: rural shop in Zhilkontsy}

In the Russian villages lack of long-distance (remote) contact\textsuperscript{272} between the villagers promotes face-to-face communications. A similarity of domestic interests encourages greater awareness of each other’s problems and facilitates mutual aid. In this situation,

\textsuperscript{271} There is a mobile shop which delivers bread and other essentials to each of the village usually 3 times a week.

\textsuperscript{272} In the Russian villages of Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy car ownership is minimal and there is only one telephone in each village.
relationships between neighbours became more personal and more important than other community networks. Many villagers associate neighbourhood networks with intimate, family-like, supportive interactions:

_A good neighbour is like a part of the family_ (Anna Makarova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

_A neighbour is a person you trust... the one who will not let you down_ (Boris Dobrov, 25/06/2000, Khlopovo)

Both in Russia and Ireland physical access to network members increases the depth of (possible) support, promotes small and large services. Although emotional aid, companionship and financial aid can be provided over larger distances, people appreciate more the value of physical contact and “action-help” in their relationships. In the eyes of many Russian villagers active neighbourhood ties provide broader support than any other links. Residential proximity fosters frequent contact and dense connections, increases mutual awareness of problems and facilitates aid. It gives the sense of “personal attachment” of people within networks:

_Vera Belova: We are all here quite friendly, the neighbours rarely quarrel. My husband helps people around – to whet a scythe, to kill a sheep._

_Sergei: Do your neighbours help you?_

_Vera Belova: Yeah, they bring bread to us. Our neighbour, Zina, if it starts to rain – she runs here, helps us to cover [the hay]..._

_Artem Belov: Our other neighbour has his tractor. He helps us to plough and to plant potatoes._

_Vera Belova: He already knows himself that if he is to plough his field we need to plough our one as well. He is sort of personally attached to us..._ (The Belovs, 23/06/2000, Khlopovo)

The scope of neighbourhood networks, however, is rather limited as they tend not to stretch beyond the boundaries of a particular part of the village:

_You mostly live with your friends and neighbours in sort of small groups, I would say clusters or nubbins_273, _where we are all brought together somehow._ (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

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273 Here I am trying to translate the word which in Russian means “little clods of earth”.
Neighbourhood networks do not link more than 5-6 families living close to each other. On the whole, people in the Russian villages are not very closely interrelated, but the absence of strong kinship links is compensated by the tradition of collective living and working instilled during the Soviet period. This "collective spirit" is instilled through control and collective management of identity both in workgroups (as a part of collective farms) and in neighbourhood networks. Financial and material aid in this case is recorded so that actor's involvement in the networks of mutual help is "officially" registered:

If someone dies people go around the village and collect money according to a household register. Those who work can pay later when they get their salaries. The ones who don't pay in cash on the spot... help to dig the grave or something else (Orina Tonkova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo).

Public control over the actions of the others creates rather rigid inter-neighbourhood connections, which do not act as real networks. Collective management of identity leads to fixing of social networks as their internal heterogeneity is lost. Interrelations based on control and accountability do not create flexible social networks. The roles of actors within these networks are regulated; people are expected to act in a certain way:

[When] my son came back from the army, he wanted to buy a flat. So I went around the village [collecting money]. Someone gave me 100 rubles, someone 200 rubles. Tonya [a neighbour] gave me a pen to write it down. I went from one house to another and collected 2,500 rubles. Then I gave this money back. As soon as I got money, I paid out the debt. Those who wanted to get it first I gave it first. I have also borrowed from my relatives. So all the village helped me. And where I did not go I said to them: "If I want to get something again, I will come later and get it from you as well" (laughing) (Natalia Belkina, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

On the contrary, different parts of Ros Muc seem to be better interlinked within extended kinship networks. People have more routine contact at work and leisure activities outside the village due to better access and transport. In Ros Muc, links between the actors stretch across the community and straddle diverse spaces of interaction (workspaces, leisure spaces) bringing together the members of the neighbouring hamlets or villages.

274 As a former teacher says: "We are so used to this collective way of life, living together... it is collective spirit" (Ksenia Rodimova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

275 As the locals say, "there is no hiding in each other's village here... it is just one whole village now" (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc).
This creates a very strange combination of links within the “big village” of Ros Muc. On the one hand, people are interlinked in strong and extensive kinship and neighbourhood networks (which are often the same), and they are very much aware of the strength and quality of these bonds. The locals say that “everybody knows who’s related to whom, from miles away” (Glynis Úi Luathairf, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc) and “there is a link between nearly every family in this area” (Tim Ó Caoinleáin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc). People are used to the idea of collective living, they know their ancestors and they know whom they can call upon if in trouble:

*Sergei:* What glues the community together?

*Cristín Ó Haodha:* It is hard to say, but it is there. I don’t know what it is – a charisma or something. It is a draw, drawing. It is community life. It is like magic, really, isn’t it? It is natural, it’s got to be natural. We would not exist if we did not have this. It is roots, really. *It is generations of the same people, families... History, it is like the history of relationships.* (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, Ros Muc)

On the other hand, these links have in some cases become too strong and rigid so they do not allow space for alternative connections to develop because “they know each other too well” (Glynis Úi Luathairf, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc). A factory worker accepts the existence of fixed links which due to their inflexibility make it more difficult to bring people together:

“*Within the community itself, sometimes, you know... it is hard to get people to pull together, you know what I mean? ... it is like families. Families, they are linked by blood, you cannot get much stronger than that. But sometimes families kill each other... people are like magnets: they are not getting closer to each other, but are becoming more separate from each other because of these links. You know, because they know each other THAT well... the links are kind of established*”. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaíre, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Both in Russia and in Ireland the pattern of intra-village interrelationships is composed of different localised networks. Within these networks density of links is high, contact is frequent and relations are supportive. The links between these groups, however, are fragmentary and rigid; interconnections between different groups don’t mobilise larger supportive resources to their members. Kin networks in Ros Muc nevertheless provide better interconnections between the actors than neighbourhood networks within the two
Russian villages I studied. The scope of the latter is limited to immediate neighbours because of accessibility problems, while the former include long-distance connections and sparsely knit networks of kin and friends all across the village and beyond it. Extended kinship networks, however, do not provide flexible connections between their members. The scope of these networks is also limited to the members of specific although extended family. In a similar vein, within neighbourhood networks relations are restricted to people living nearby so that opportunities for other relations are limited. Overall, both kinship and neighbourhood networks in Russian and Irish villages consist of inward oriented ties which limit space for alternative connections to develop. Social networks in this case bring together homogeneous subgroups in a way which may be rigid and exclusive.

In other words, not all of social networks, despite their existence and visible density, facilitate the flow of goods and communication because of their internal dynamics and quality of links. The next section investigates these characteristics of social networks in the study villages in more detail.

Quality of links: real networks?

The question I am now trying to answer is to what extent these links between people in lay networks actually bind them together? In other words, do these links create a network of connections rather than a sporadic web of relations of exchange? To what extent can people rely on these links and is there a chance to talk about social capital being created through these interactions? In order to answer these questions I will consider social exchange mechanisms between villagers in Ros Muc, Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy and analyse the relationships between social networks, interaction, and perceptions of “support” in the event of need. It looks into the ways links of different quality facilitate togetherness and co-operation.

The extent to which social relations actually provide connections between actors varies depending on the type of communication and particular context. In the Russian and Irish villages interconnections which develop on the basis of neighbourhood links and kinship ties beget different links which either encourage collective action or hamper it.

Here I refer to differentiation between “good/bad” links suggested by some rural people (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc). However, I am trying to avoid making normative judgements and non-critically impose morality over social connections. I recognise that this “good/bad” division is constructed in the hegemonic discourse existing in the study areas which normatively defines the qualities of links and the results of

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276 Exclusivity of networks will be discussed in greater detail below.
277 In so doing, I want to examine how specific contexts can facilitate policy actions.
networked actions. This dominant discourses link “good” with traditional\textsuperscript{278}, while “bad” is associated with the loss of traditions and deterioration of moral norms. Importantly, I also acknowledge the existence of “other” (minor\textsuperscript{279}) discourses about “good/bad” links and their relationship with poverty. As emphasised in the Introduction, pointing to the work of Murdoch and Pratt (1993), there is a need to consider different discourses which construct otherness. In my study therefore I take on board this approach by offering different cuts on construction of moral meaning of networks and recognising the existence of different “others” with their different moral thinking\textsuperscript{280}. Here I point to the discourses which uncover connections and identities relating to gender, age, religion and social status, and consider their role in creation of other moral landscapes. In so doing, I provide space for discourses contesting the continual powerful dominance of hegemonic constructions of “good/bad” links.

First, I consider dominant discourses which ascribe moral values to social links. In the language of some locals, good links mean having “an interest in people who live here, your neighbours” (Cristín Ó Haodha), not putting “a distance between yourself and a community” (Noirín Nic Eachrain), being “out and about in the community” (Rónán Greilish), “visiting and helping each other” (Pavel Ignatiev), “relations... spreading out and upside down” (Glynis Ó Luathairf), “involved in things that cut across everybody” (Glynis Ó Luathaír). An Irish pub owner provides an example of how good links work:

"You can rely on it... it is not a financial transaction, you know, it is more a favour... Lots of people would have a regular thing – the neighbour will pick them up [to the post office and shop], they take their pension, they do their shopping and they usually give them 5 pounds... the local taxi company will actually charge less” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).

In other words, good links are those “bonds” and contacts which encourage provision of support by fostering shared values, increasing mutual awareness of needs, mitigating feelings of loneliness, encouraging reciprocal rounds of help and facilitating aid delivery. In summary, it is what local people call “local spirit”. Residents of the Russian villages of Khlopoovo and Zhilkontsy seem to be losing this “collective spirit” of support for each other. Although still acknowledging a certain degree of closeness between villagers\textsuperscript{281} the

\textsuperscript{278} See discussion on localised visions of traditionalism in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{279} Here my vision of “minor” is similar to the one suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), which does not imply marginalisation (see Chapter 3 for discussion on this issue).

\textsuperscript{280} See also Bell’s (1994) discussion on different sorts of moral thinking.

\textsuperscript{281} For example, a housewife in Khlopoovo states: “We all live together. We all have similar outlook” (Natalia Belkina, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopoovo).
majority of residents complain about the disappearance of what they call “common understanding”:

"We used to be very close, the whole village. We used to work together in a collective farm. We had common understanding of village matters. We were happy... And now it's gone. It is different now. Everyone minds their own business" (Galina Chernysheva, 25/06/2000, Khlopovo).

On the contrary, in Ros Muc networks cut across the village bringing together remote actors and building up that “local spirit”. Importantly, it is widely believed that this community spirit creates real connections between the villagers. As a shop worker describes it, “you can rely on these links, people are not left to themselves” (Máire Mag Samhradhan, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc). This is not to say that “good links” between Russian villagers do not exist, but just to re-emphasise their limited scope. As a nurse describes it:

The whole village is composed of clusters. Everyone tries to join in. There are usually four or five families in one cluster, not more than that... I rely on people [in my cluster]. If I need something, I go to them openly. You help someone, and then someone helps you. It is not a cunning trick; it is how life is organised here. (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

“Good links” are the mechanism providing access to power\(^{282}\) which redistributes local resources and enables actors to modify their positions within networks. Individual actors can mobilise some portion of these “good links” not simply in order to get goods and services, but in order to change their role and place within a network\(^{283}\). Trust is the major attribute of these “good links”. Among the people connected within social networks there are different expectations about the ways they can receive help or exchange services. Generalised reciprocity of “good links” between the villagers generates a high level of trust and belief that common investments and goods can be used to benefit the actors within the network. As an office worker in Ireland explains:

\(^{282}\) This normative definition is constructed within the discourse of the powerful.

\(^{283}\) As I established in Chapter 3, networked power is enacted through re-establishing connections and changing positions of the actors within networks (process of translation). Dominant normative evaluations are, therefore, part of this process.
"You can go to some people if you need help or something, you know them, if you need anything done, you can just go to them... Like my father and his friend, he went down to him to cut the lawn and his friend will do something back for him sometime." (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc)

In fact, people's understanding of social networks as providing "good links" between actors matches Bourdieu's (1997) definition of social capital as a "capital of social connections". It is a combination of rational (directly reciprocal) and non-rational (trust-based) ties, which make possible people's commitment to action they would not have done separately (or would have done less effectively):

"You have a network among the farmers- because they deal with each other. Most of them seem to be... they have to help each other out, or buy from each other, you know, that kind of thing. You have another network among the mná tí, as they call them, women who do with the Irish learners, the Irish colleges... Women who are looking after the house, responsible for it. They will tell each other about what's going on, and they will look after each other's houses... another network I forgot is between those people who do with the sea, of course. If it is so. They don't seem to have as much of a bond between them as the farmers. I suppose their work is more self-reliant" (Glynis Úi Luathairf, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

As Chapter 3 establishes, social capital builds from the bottom up via the social practices and relations within residential neighbourhoods. If these relations are not strong or "healthy" this can jeopardize the existence of a rural community. Villages where existing relations of trust and reciprocity are weak lack the qualities which can create and sustain voluntary association and partnership. Inability of people to work together will inevitably create troubles for rural policies to be implemented. As you know from Chapter 3, social capital is both inclusive and exclusive tool. Similarly, the links which are constructed in the hegemonic discourse as "good" are exclusive to the others who do not share the norms and values attached to these connections. For example, in Ireland people with different religious beliefs do not want to get involved in the church-based network of people providing for the students learning Irish. As an Irish cleric admits, "some people would normally stay away [from helping with the students] because I am involved" (Tim Ó Caoinleáin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc). Moreover, New Age people who

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284 At the same time, inability of policy-makers to recognise alternative discourses on community links, where the value is not placed on co-operation, can also hamper development.
came to the Irish village have living philosophy which focuses on self-development and emphasises the importance of emotions and feelings in social communications.\textsuperscript{285} Therefore, they do not share values and norms which emphasise rationalised exchange and reciprocal help. These people construct alternative discourses challenging the dominant visions of “good” links as connections which provide access to local resources and facilitate aid delivery.\textsuperscript{286}

The scope of the dominant “good links” is also affected by the ability and willingness of the villagers to subscribe to the norms which describe this “goodness”. In the Irish village “good links” stretch further than in the Russian villages because people realise the benefits of working together. They feel that they have a place and a stake in the social system; that there is interdependence. They see themselves as a part of a bigger social project which changes their village for the better. In the Russian village of Khlopovo, people at least seem to be uncertain about the benefits of having distant and flexible connections, so that links within networks are mostly localised. With this “localisation” the qualities of ties are changing. They no longer connect people, but just provide a basis for extended exchange relations. Relationships between neighbours become inward, domestically focused, which limits capacity for mutual help:

\textit{Sergei: Can you arrange to hire a tractor to plough fields altogether as a village for the whole day? Instead of doing it in two goes, it can do all the job for you in one day...}

\textit{Orina Tonkova: No, we did not come to such “communism” yet.}

\textit{Valentin Egorychev: No, everyone minds their own business. People became very inert.}

\textit{Ekaterina Kazakova: Our neighbour’s son is a tractor driver. We are therefore independent, separate from others. Khokhly [part of the village] have their own tractor, they link between each other somehow. (20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)}

Second, there is a category of “bad links” constructed within the dominant moral discourse. The majority of people from Ros Muc describe them as “rotten links”, imbued with distrust and jealousy. Contacts within these links are regulated by specific conditions; the flow of materials and services is hampered by the lack of trust. These links are only visible, and they provide assistance which is more fragmented and less consistent. In fact, people might consider help they get through these links completely unnecessary because of the negative side-effects of these interrelations. As an office assistant describes:

\textsuperscript{285} See also detailed discussion on this issue in Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{286} Hereafter I consider construction of “bad/good” links in the dominant discourse, unless it is specified otherwise.

\textsuperscript{287} They are also often disillusioned with the lack of opportunities to improve things at community level.
“There are categories. There is a category of people you can approach and you know you could ask. There is a category of people you can approach and ask for help and you know they will talk about it. There are categories of people, it is what it is like. And there is a category of people who are just gossippers. They are a small one. You just don’t want them to know anything about you and you don’t want to know anything about them.” (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc)

A housewife in a Russian village describes the nature of “bad links” in a similar vein:

I went to a distant neighbour and asked for bread. Could she help me out in trouble? She gave me some bread. But two days later the whole village knew about that. That I don’t have bread and that I came and asked her. How can you do things this way?... There were different people coming to me [and asking for help]. And I would never walk around the village and talk about it in this way. I’ve just helped and forgot about it. But this lady... She came to work and told to the whole farmyard: “Ekaterina came to ask for bread. She does not have enough bread! Why did I give it to her?”. Yes indeed, it would have been better if she did not. (Ekaterina Kazakova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

In the Russian villages, therefore, “bad links” mostly represent inter-group linkages (relationships with distant neighbours), while in Ireland they are a part of extended kinship networks. People help because they are expected to help, but this exchange is more restricted. These are low-intensity linkages which are mostly limited to friendly noddings, greetings, or light pleasantries, but do not involve material or monetary exchange and intangible support in the form of advice or sympathy288. “Bad links” are visible ties, or to put it differently, ties that are observable and give appearance of connections. On the contrary, “good links” often remain invisible or not specifically articulated in a visible form. They engender action, which is often difficult to represent in a tangible way (which builds non-tangible social capital). One has to be able to listen to the unsaid to visualise these “good links”:

Things happen and you don’t talk about them. Say, Golubeva – she was our first teacher. Alexei Belkin was her student. Now, her husband died and her children are away. Alexei is a tractor driver. He does in her garden the same things he does in his own garden. He does not abandon her. And she does not need to go and ask him, it is all unsaid. You will just

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288 As I showed earlier, this quality of links is understood differently in alternative (minor) moral discourse.
see him in her house from time to time doing things. (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

On the contrary, “bad links” just indicate possible contacts within networks. These ties are tentative and unstable; they are generally not reliable.

“They are not so community orientated like to do the good for the community. Like they are fain... or fake, or pretend to be concerned about other people, but they are not... They can say: “Yes, we love the old people”, but they don’t behave to help the old people.”
(Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Because of this “invisibility” of “good links” it is difficult to evaluate their scale in each of the research areas. The importance of real connections between actors in networks can be estimated with the recourse to the information from the budget interviews. In the Irish family of two unemployed housewives non-monetary help from friends and relatives (evaluated at about £530) during one month’s period was nearly equal to their money receipts (£ 782). In terms of frequency of contacts, an Irish farmer living alone reported more than 16 instances of assistance and mutual aid during the period of 1 month between him and his neighbours/relatives, each of these actions taking at least an hour. In fact, the farmer quoted “help in return (in the future)” as the appropriate response to these interactions. A similar pattern of interrelations is recorded by another retired farmer, local artist and an unemployed housewife, who used their links within the village to borrow trailers, getting help with photocopying/computer work and babysitting. The recursive, reciprocal and predominantly non-monetary character of these interactions reveals the links which actually provide flexible connections of different kind between the villagers. In the Russian village of Zhilkontsy respondents acknowledged the heterogeneous character of exchange within neighbourhood links. Thus, an unemployed mother with a baby used her relationships with the neighbours both to find part-time jobs (helping to build a driveway for another neighbour), to borrow money and to exchange vegetables. According to her own estimates, her monthly receipts from non-monetary help by her neighbours (about 450 rubles) amounted to nearly a half of monetary welfare payments (816 rubles). The frequency of these interactions (over 20 dealings recorded during one

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289 See the sample form for the budget interview in Appendix 14.
290 Moreover, continuous help from friends and neighbours (who worked together for over two weeks) enabled this couple to restore the old shed and turn it into a little workshop, which has already started to provide additional income for them.
291 These activities included cutting the grass, fixing pipes, lifting fuel to the house and providing lifts to doctors and church and most of these were not rewarded in monetary terms.
292 These links are seen by the majority of the villagers as “good links.”
month) indicates that these multiple-role relationships are strong and reliable. Budget interview records also show a strong sense of mutuality in these relationships. Multiple-role relationships within neighbourhood networks in this case provide both financial security and opportunities for emotional aid and companionship, which she also acknowledged in the interview:

*Sometimes it gets very hard with a baby. So at least you can go and talk to your neighbours. And they give me little presents, say cottage cheese or milk from time to time. Not for money, but just to cheer me up.* (Lyudmila Savel’eva, 14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

In a similar vein, another unemployed Russian housewife gets most of her social support – of all kinds – through her small number of neighbourhood ties. In her records she notes the reciprocity of these relations\(^{293}\) and their heterogeneity: the same links are used in the workgroups to gather hay, in babysitting for each other and in looking after each other’s house when people are away. These links imply action; they are active links. In fact, in the dominant moral discourse the difference between “good links” and “bad links” seems to be the action which is taken or not taken when these ties are utilised. Despite of their seeming existence, “bad links” do not facilitate joint action; they just indicate a possibility for this action to be taken\(^{294}\). These are virtual links, which essentially impede flow of goods and services between the actors because the latter are unwilling to inflict extra trouble upon themselves.

However, this traditional sense of community linkages is again contested by the others who do not share dominant moral norms. For example, some retired farmers living on their own do not necessarily consider as “bad” those links which do not encourage mutual action\(^{295}\). They put value on independent and self-sufficient existence, which implies connectedness into the community through the number of limited reciprocity links. As a farmer in Ros Muc describes:

*Some people just do not want to get involved... They do not believe in it [community work]. They are more on their own. And people are scared to participate. Because other people can find out that the person who speaks out does not live just on the dole*\(^{296}\). (Rónán Greilish, 24/07/2001, Ros Muc)

\(^{293}\) Future help in return is expected.

\(^{294}\) This might also imply additional baggage of gossip or “remarks passed”.

\(^{295}\) See also discussion on this issue in Chapter 6, which provides a story of poverty of a lonely farmer.

\(^{296}\) As I describe in Chapter 4, it is common in rural Ireland to draw the dole and to do “odd jobs” at the same time.
In the dominant discourse, however, "good links" are associated with co-operation and "bad links" are related to the absence of real action behind the veil of general "friendliness". "Bad links" do not stimulate the flow of materials within social network and its continuous reconfiguration, which makes it more rigid and fragmented. Inevitably this affects network density which is reduced because of those fake "bad" ties. The lack of flexibility of these ties suggests a high degree of social instability and quick turnover of partners involved in the interactions.

In the research areas, however, the presence of "bad links" does not overshadow the existence of vibrant social infrastructure. Although there is a fair amount of limited reciprocity links within all research areas the social fabric of these rural communities is generally quite strong. Weak points exist at the boundaries circumscribing the scope of neighbourhood and kinship networks. In Russia, the strength of links reduces with the distance (see Figures 2 and 3), while in Ireland differences in degree of family relations have an important influence on quality of connections.

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297 Published with permission of the person.
298 I see it as the number of links which could possibly exist between actors.
299 Figures 2 and 3 show so-called "wheel diagrams", which reflect both quality of links and closeness of relations (distance) between actors.
300 See discussion about grudges in Chapter 3.
There are more and more imagined little insults and encroachments on property the further you go down the family line. They come to care about difference in help: "Well we did help them, but they did not help us back as much!" (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

**Figure 2. Interactions of the Larins family**

![Diagram of Larins family interactions]

*He is the only one in the village who can kill the pig, we ask him time and again.*

*Yemel'yanov*

*Sidirova*

*They live on her own, we help her if we can, and she looks after our house.*

*Larina*

*The Bobrovs*

*They're got a tractor, and they help us to plant potatoes. We only pay them in return.*

*The Sadovs*

*We are close neighbours, they help us with the garden and vice versa.*

**Figure 3. Interactions of the Rodimovs family.**

![Diagram of Rodimovs family interactions]

*She is a good neighbour. We can chat about almost everything. We take turns in looking after our sheep.*

*Larina*

*Daughter*

*Daughter*

*The Rodimovs*

*Yemel'yanov*

*She tells us milk, she is "our cow".*

*Samilova*

*Gracheva*

*He can kill a sheep or castrate it, or he repairs our fence. We give him vegetables from time to time.*

*We mostly help her because she is our neighbour, but she has bad health.*
In non-equal family relationships people cannot exert moral pressures on others; connections change into one-way links or interactions of uneven intensity, which encourages actors to take account of the benefits and drawbacks of exchange. These links\textsuperscript{301} question existence of social networks themselves. Limited reciprocal links promote direct exchange rather than network communication. A factory worker describes it in the following way:

“A lot of what you give out is what you get back. I think [it happens] if a person is really insular, like myself. I suppose – I don’t really mix very much with the community, I don’t go to the pubs so I don’t meet the people that I used to meet. I would not expect very much, because people owe me nothing. There is only give and take.” (Eibhlín Ó Luathaíre, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Unlike the indirect reciprocity of “good links”, “give and take” relations assume that actor’s rights will be fulfilled by a specific source in a specific way. These ties are characterised by the high degree of accountability of each actor’s behaviour. The fairness of exchange (or appearance of fairness) becomes more important that the action itself:

*If I take, say, small holdings. I ask someone to plough [my field]. But I don’t have money, don’t have money at all! So I give a tractor driver 50 rubles or so, and someone else gives him 100 rubles. Next time he is not going to come to me because I gave him very little money. And my husband like a fool helps people to transport things in his van for free.* (Polina Zhuravleva, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

This circumscribes the scope of the webs of social relations between individuals to the duration and the limits of specific instrumental transactions. And as the above quotation demonstrates, these ties do not imply solidarity and cohesion\textsuperscript{302}.

**Solidarity and exclusion**

This section places “bad links” and “good links” in a context of specific villages and considers the ways in which social networks come together in these places. First, it reveals the ideas people have about solidarity and cohesiveness within the villages. Here it does not simply unravel connections within social networks, but it concentrates on their

\textsuperscript{301} These links are seen in the dominant moral discourse as “bad”.

\textsuperscript{302} In the way they are commonly understood.
openness and heterogeneity. Second, this section investigates how different forms of solidarity affect acceptance of actors within social networks. Third, it focuses on interconnections/gaps between networks and questions their inclusiveness. The section uncovers the ways village identity is constructed to the inclusion of some and exclusion of the "others".

Cohesion

The majority of people in the Irish and Russian villages see cohesion as based on shared values and norms, which enable people to share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another. Importantly, these shared values enable villagers to identify and support common aims and objectives. This point is crucial for my understanding of the correlation between social and policy-networks. A key implication is that without social cohesion development policies will not take root or be sustainable.

First, most villagers in Russia and Ireland associate a cohesive community with a high degree of social interaction between its members. The above-mentioned descriptions of "good links" as ties that bring people together have implicit connotations of solidarity and cohesion. In Ros Muc the meaning of "being a villager" is based on the ideas of visiting relatives living in the village, reasserting "village" connections. "Being a villager" means acting, moving, floating across different points in the village, re-establishing one's identity through the links to one's relatives, neighbours and friends. For the majority of people in Ros Muc solidarity is about getting by and getting on with their fellow villagers through the everyday interactions. Cohesion is understood in terms of establishing wider links, mixing with people from different localised groups:

That's the community when you go out to the shops and out somewhere and you meet not everybody in one group, but going around the shop you might meet 3 or 4 different people... That's to me, that is your community, because you are going out to the shop, you are mixing. (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, Ros Muc)

In Russia people don't see their village communities as sets of active links. People are much more localised and separated from each other; interrelations between different "circles" are quite patchy. Social cohesion is maintained at a local level, through socialisation processes and mutual support networks mostly within neighbourhood.

But see earlier in this chapter the example of alternative discourses which challenge this view.
Villagers feel much more settled in their place and more isolated in their little “sub-communities”. Within these small groups people mix and help each other:

*We have pensioners living on this side of our village. They deal between each other. It is not worth going there [for help]. And here is our side, our little community. We are not together.* (Ekaterina Kazakova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

Mixing within the Russian villages does not happen as freely as happens in Ireland. Some of the villagers blame problems with solidarity on weakening of kinship networks:

**Ekaterina Kazakova:** There is an out-of-date picture of the village: “everyone is friendly, everyone is like one family”. This does not exist anymore. Everyone lives with their own problems. There are families who will help in trouble. But I should say, there are those, although they are not in the majority, who will even laugh at someone else’s trouble.

**Irina Fedotova:** We used to have big families in the village. These families were all related, so they were friendly almost by definition. There is a saying: “In-laws are brothers against their will”. Now everyone is from separate families, so people are not as closely linked as they used to be. (14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

These small worlds in which people exist are close and closed to outsiders, so that members of different neighbourhood networks do not share values, understandings and commitments with the wider village community. Space for wider inter-village contact is fixed and regulated, mostly from the outside.

Lack of access and mobility within these strongly territorialized groups lead to what Fukuyama (1999) calls a “miniaturisation” of community. Heterogeneous social interaction and collective involvement within neighbourhood networks encourages their isolation and closeness on themselves. Solidarity of people in the Russian villages is therefore not a very obvious thing:

*I could not say that people are 100% united. It is somewhere in between. I cannot say there is such a thing as an all-village friendship and solidarity, but there is no separation or refusal either.* (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

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304 Here the minor feminist discourse emphasises the importance of ethics of care in construction of solidarity. It contests the dominant vision of community as a merely aggregation of individuals stressing the importance of supportive family links.

305 For example, people in the Russian villages state that their inter-village contacts are framed by the bread deliveries, which happen three times a week. Local authorities also tend to deliver pensions on the “bread days” when different people come together at the central square of the village.
Second, cohesion is largely associated with common values and normative frameworks. In Ros Muc this sense of shared values and feeling of belonging to place is apparent in the hegemonic moral discourse:

*Ailis Ó Cuinn:* There are norms which operate more strongly [in Ros Muc]. The norms are: being married, being Catholic, not being homosexual, you know, there are all kinds of things ... There is a norm which says: "you are not working if you are a woman". Leaving your children with others while you are going to work is still not quite normal in a rural community, certainly not around here. Leaving your children in a paid crèche as opposed to leaving them with family and relatives is considered as not quite healthy.

*Sergei:* So you believe these norms somehow bring people together?

*Ailis Ó Cuinn:* Yes. I think, there is a plenty of evidence for it. (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)

This dominant vision of community is challenged by alternative discourses which are not based on the similar normative definitions of gender and religion. For example, women in the Irish village reassert their vision of cohesive community as based on the ethics of care and flexible interpretation of traditional values. Rigid traditional norms are therefore contested, as an Irish farmer's wife asserts:

*Something that I’ve noticed – a lot of young girls since 3 or 4 years ago – are getting themselves pregnant. So there are single girls with a baby or young child. And the families are very, very supportive towards them, even though traditionally it is not seen as appropriate. The mothers would bent over their back looking after the child, when the daughter still goes out to work, that kind of thing.* (Glynis Úi Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Mutually respected moral codes in the Irish village are developed through an almost universal religious upbringing and general encouragement of good citizenship. People’s understanding of community as a set of relations and interactions is complemented with their vision of community as a common ideology. Close correlation between different ideas of community produces local solidarity:

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306 But there is still space for alternative moral codes to develop, as I emphasised earlier.
I know in Ros Muc from what I see is that ... they seem to be ... a homogenous group. This area I would say has good interpersonal links. And people stay by the same values that were in most of rural Ireland 10 or 15 years ago. [This is what forms] good links within community (Nóirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Although it could be expected that frequency of contacts within the Irish village and flexibility of connections contributes towards heterogeneity of relations, in reality it only reasserts close one-dimensional intra-village links. Solidarity of villagers in this community is based on its internal homogeneity.

The Russian villages express greater degree of internal heterogeneity. On the one hand, there is a generational difference in understanding of local values and norms. Older people, who spent most of their lives living according to the collectivist traditions of the communist state do not share the same values as young people, who did not have such a long experience of collective living. This generational gap is clear in Zhilkontsy:

Vitaly Markov: You'd rather gather young people [for a focus group]. They will tell you different things. They have a different outlook, they did not live under communism...

Zoya Karpova: Yeah... And they don't understand us... They don't work like we did. They don't work at all, just cause trouble and abuse us. And we cannot tell anyone, because it is within our village. (09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

Different generations do not quite cohere, but these problems appear at a micro-level and do not result in the major issues of social control. The youngsters with no jobs have no routines and they gain a sense of utility and power through engaging in a localised conflict with others.

On the other hand, these villages have ethnically heterogeneous population, which doesn’t necessarily share the same values. There are at least two major nationalities living alongside Russians in each of the village – Ukrainians in Khlopovo and Mordvinians in Zhilkontsy. While the links within ethnic groups are quite strong, they do not always straddle across different parts of the village. This keeps village communities separated into different parts:

Natalia Belkina: There is a belief that Khokhly\textsuperscript{307} are a bit tight, you know... It is just a stereotype...

Sofia Korneeva: Moreover, these days people became arrogant, they used to be much simpler. Khokhly, for instance... They won't come to our part of the village any more...

\textsuperscript{307} Derogatory nickname for the Ukrainians.
Sergei: Why?

Galina Chernysheva: They consider themselves better than us. They think they live better. If you look closely at Khokhly, they are all interrelated. I would say they are no strangers to each other, they are relatives.

Valentina Golubeva: To tell the truth, in our part of the village we also keep together because we are interrelated to some extent. (25/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

On top of this, there is a general belief among people in the research areas that modern individualism has undermined collective morality and there is less cohesion in rural communities than there used to be. The social cement of a previous era is seen crumbling as the previous rules of interaction and social integration no longer apply. For example, in both villages collectivist traditions of living are undermined by the “power of money” which encourages more independent self-reliant lifestyles\(^\text{308}\). Different interviewees suggest that rural life is becoming more home-centred and private rather than taking place in the public or communal realms. For more affluent sections of society this may be a positive way of asserting status, but it leads to their isolation:

*Once you have become elevated to a [leadership] position... then you become an outsider... It can have something to do with the fact that nearly everybody has whole lot of things to hide and in the line of minor fraud and trickery and things like that. And once you are wearing to any kind of official post, you could be a suspect.* (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

This “money thing” separates people, brings them apart. The moment when personalities in networks are becoming more important than connections the latter inevitably deteriorate. As an Irish education worker states:

*"There is a sort of a class thing coming in to rural areas that was not there. [It's a] money thing. [a] “nouveaux riche” sort of mentality. It is not backed up by education, they are just coming out that “I am better than you”... “you have no dad, my house is bigger than yours, my car is bigger than yours” – this is a new thing... There is nothing to do with the*

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\(^{308}\) Essentially, this question of self-reliance seems to be crucial for the formation of social networks. People who are involved in the jobs which are difficult or labour-intensive are more likely to come together and to form cohesive support networks. As an Irish farmer states, “if you have sheep – it is a hard job. You have to get help” (Rónán Grellish, 24/07/2001, Ros Muc).
People search direct benefits from exchange of services so that value of voluntary and unconditional help is downgraded. This type of relation creates intensely self-interested actors and jeopardises the integrity of links, as well as the cohesiveness of community and eventuall limits possibilities for joint collective work (either voluntary or policy-led). Networks are stretched county-wide, nationally, and they are becoming increasingly virtual:

Sergei: Is it very common to go around and visit each other?
Glynis Ui Luathairí: It is fairly common. Some people do. Apparently, according to our neighbour down there, he lives on his own, and he comes here a lot. Listening to him – he goes visiting people, he has different people for every night. He does the rounds like that. According to him, people don’t go visiting each other as much as they used to. Because he said, long time ago that was what everybody did.
Sergei: Does it mean that people are much more separated now then they used to be?
Glynis Ui Luathairí: I think they are.
Sergei: Are there still some links between them?
Glynis Ui Luathairí: There are some links, but more people are going away... Most people are going away from the area during the day, even if they are coming back at night. And I suppose, if you were going all the way to Galway and back, you are really not really in the mood of coming around and visiting people, are you? (Glynis Ui Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

The inability to maintain connections within social networks lowers their quality. In fact, an inability to act though these links makes them “rotten” and breaks the whole network. As a former brigade-leader from a Russian village describes:

“We grew up together, people knew what to expect and what everyone needed... If I can help someone with something, they will also help me sometimes. And the system was working. Before this system of links was like a ball of wool. And now this ball is like rotten, bitten by moth – you are trying to pull a thread, but it – oops – breaks. That’s it! And before that all threads in this ball were wound together, and a thread was strong and unbroken”. (Vitaly Markov, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

309 Villagers in Russia witness similar changes: “We used to help each other. It was a tradition. But in the last few years this link was broken. Independence! So if you are well-off [it is alright], and you are poor – so then remain poor”. (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)
When connections are transformed into “give-and-take” ties, they no longer keep people together. Deterioration of interpersonal links leads to differentiation of community. A farmer in Ireland talks about isolated “circles”, where weakening of ties leaves people:

“You see, it is like a circle. You are living in it, in a small circle... Say, ones who are well-up, that kind of group. They are group in themselves. And they go as a group. If you see them out in an activity, in a pub or in a place like that, they are kind of grouped up together. They have their own conversation”. (Rónán Greilish, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Lack of action lowers the intensity of interactions, so that villagers are less willing to use their rights implied through their contacts with the other actors and are less prepared to honour their obligations within their set of contacts. Effectively, social networks are becoming more fragmented and social groups within them are more isolated:

“I tell you, it is just declining everyday. The younger people now, they will be working and the older ones were great neighbours. That kind of changes. They are trapped, because the television now is so much taking over their life and they don’t go visiting... The community is weak now.” (Rónán Greilish, 24/07/2001, Ros Muc)

There are at least three important implications of deterioration of links in social networks in terms of community solidarity, difference and opportunities for collective action. First, villagers are becoming more separated and individualistic, less willing to work together. This undermines efficiency of social (support) networks:

“... knowing North Wales, rural North Wales, where there is lots, lots of sheep on the mountains up there, when it comes to this time of the year [autumn] you have to bring in the sheep to shed. Now, the Welsh farmers will all get together and they will clear the mountain, everyone of them, together, all the neighbours, everybody who has sheep on the mountain will clear the whole mountain in one day or a couple of days. And they will sort out the sheep between them then. But here they don’t do that. They just go out individually and get their own few sheep, you know. And spend a day here doing this part of the mountain, get as many as they can there, another day and another part of the mountain. Seems as a lot of work, really (laughing). You know, coming from a different way of doing things, it seems... ineffective. I suppose they are more individualistic or something. It is
more a point of working individually, than in Wales, where everything is much more common in that sort of way.” (Glynis Úí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Second, deterioration of links between villagers leads to poverty and exclusion. Disappearance of reliable connections forces people to adapt self-reliant lifestyles. As an art project worker states:

“It is a very sort of isolated way of thinking, way of mind: "It is my corner and it is my life and it is my income and I protect that as much as possible. And more or less the next man or the next woman can do the same” (Rúit Ní Mhaoláin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Villagers who are not able to give up collective thinking and living are dragged into poverty. Poverty and poor people “fall out” of social networks:

“People can’t get used to it... If they got help or if they went for help, they can perhaps help themselves a bit more. But some people don’t go for help, they are too proud... [they are] ones here who live in poverty” (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Essentially, not only material wellbeing of the actor but also his/her connectedness within local social networks identifies poverty in the Irish village:

There would be a lot of poverty alright mostly among over 50s generation insofar as there might be a man, who never left home. And stayed home to take care of his parents. And all the parents are gone, and now he is on his own. Now, he has money, but he would not be living well... The house would not be in good repair. He would not be a good cook. He might not take care of himself in terms of cleanliness. He would not care about having better clothes. But he has a plenty of money. That's the lifestyle he has. He does not socialise. (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Third, as links deteriorate general connectedness of actors to the outside world decreases; this makes community (set of local networks) more exclusive. People are becoming less tolerable of difference, more eager to categorise “others” and stress their difference. The next section studies these ensuing problems of acceptance and otherness in more detail.

310 In a similar vein, disappearance of connections leads to polarisation in the Russian village of Zhilkontsy: “We've been always living together. That is why it is difficult for an old person to face this new individualist life. Some people are reaching the top of the pack, some people are going down to begging, becoming poor and there is no hope... What do I mean by becoming poor? I think it is when people do not live collectively but separately” (Ksenia Rodimova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)
Acceptance and otherness

Apart from being a positive thing which encourages voluntary action, social cohesiveness can also imply imposition of rules and values of the majority on “others”. In such circumstances social cohesion could lead to withdrawal from and defence against the world outside to the exclusion of the “others”. This section considers the roles different social networks play in creation of local identities and exclusion of the outsiders.

At first glance, the cohesiveness and “community spirit” of Ros Muc presume an equality of being a member of the group which shares similar rules. However, as it became clear from the earlier discussion, integration in the local community depends first of all on the understanding of the unspoken rules of the place, which are constructed in the hegemonic cultural and moral discourse:

[Acceptance] depends on who they are and it depends on what their attitude to local people as well, I suppose. Whether they [incomers] seem to be looking down on them or whether they are just trying to be fair. Whether they want to understand the local way of life. (Glynis Úf Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Newcomers are not simply expected to “fit in” with their habits and lifestyles, but also be ready to contribute to the village. In Russia, where people feel increasingly isolated and left out by the state development policies this contribution to the welfare of the locality is one of the major criteria of acceptance³¹.

Local understanding of place is enacted through particular practices which are seen as acceptable and which form dominant local ideology. In this context the majority of villagers see outsiders as not just those who come from another location, but as those who are existentially removed from their social milieu, people with a different way of living. People who are “out of place” don’t fit within the local pattern of social relations. In the words of the locals, outsiders are those who cannot be “good neighbours”. A shopkeeper in Ireland argues:

The travellers now they have a bad reputation for drinking, and for fight and upsetting. But 30 years ago... They had a lot of skills. And they maybe did a little bit of work for people. They made tin cans, they repaired shoes. They were very honest. They have a reputation now of being dishonest, stealing, they would not be good neighbours. So people don’t like

³¹ As a retired teacher in Zhilkontsy village states, “when we came into the village 30 years ago we were all working... Now they give land to dachniki only for leisure, while they don’t do anything for the village. (Ksenia Rodimova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)
to see them coming. But it was time when people took them better. (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Embeddedness in social contexts (knowledge of local history and culture, cultural competence) constructs a self-image for rural community. In this case people who don't have this competence and do not appear to belong to the village threaten local collective identities, based on common understanding and trust. In Ros Muc relationships involving similar persons (extended families) foster understanding, support, and eventually social cohesion. However, homogeneity of local links makes it difficult for outsiders to break into. Fixity of these networks makes them bounded and not easily permeable:

You have to make an effort [to break into the community] because they won't come readily to you... They are... reserved... They are a bit closed community. That's what I mean – you as a stranger have to make the first step, really. Because if you stand back and wait for them to come to you, you will be waiting an awful long time!" (Glynis Uí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

The Russian villages consisting of disorganised (weakly connected) neighbourhoods lack social capital. Social ties between different parts of the village are restricted mainly to contacts within workgroups. Population of both villages is diminishing and the locals generally encourage the inflow of newcomers of the working age, even though people's attachment to the place is weakened in result of this. They see the farm as the symbol of survival of the village:

Sonia Samoilova: We only have one farm left out of all sources of employment. There are only about 100 cows there though.
Zoya Karpova: And we are only alive as the village because of this farm.
Vitaly Markov: There used to be 1,300 cows!
Ksenia Rodimova: Are there 100 cows there? If they slaughter them all, that'll be the end of the village. (09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

Moreover, traditions and experience of collective work (mostly at the farm during Soviet period) encourage acceptance of newcomers of working age, even though their behaviour may contradict local norms, constructed in the dominant morality discourse:
We have people here, "butyl'tsy". It is a nickname, because they are friendly with the bottle. They are father and son, they came from another village. People who ruined their life with alcohol. They live on their own, work for vodka. They do lots of jobs in the village, people are very friendly to them. (Polina Zhuravleva, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

Furthermore, there is a specific quality about the villages of Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy which makes them more open to outsiders. Both of these villages are effectively satellites of the bigger villages (central farmsteads), where local authorities (rural administration office), education, service facilities and most of the employment opportunities (collective farm offices) are concentrated. Unlike Ros Muc where schools, church, parish council and local development organisations are all located within the village, in Zhilkontsy and Khlopovo networks stretch wider to link up people within the more dispersed infrastructure. Essentially this means that external boundaries of the Russian villages are blurred or moved further to include the residents of these bigger settlements who are linked to the locals in a variety of ways. This encourages more inclusive formulation of the local identity, as this extract from a young people’s focus group in Zhilkontsy demonstrates:

Irina Fedotova: This lamp was broken by the locals, from Maslovo [village].
Sergei: The locals or people from Maslovo? Who do you consider to be local?
Al’bina Ozerova: People from Maslovo are locals.
Viktor Komarov: Because we have one collective farm [managing two villages]. If I come to Zarajsk [regional centre] and I am asked where I came from, I say that I am from Maslovo. I don’t say that I am from Zhilkontsy. Because our village is small and we are linked with Maslovo anyway.
Irina Fedotova: There is no difference, because our school, surgery and rural administration are there. (14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

Heterogeneity of dispersed intra-village links in the Russian villages and weaker village boundaries therefore make it easier for newcomers with very different backgrounds to break into the community. These weak communities suffer from a deficit of effective

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312 "Butyl’tsy" («Бутыльцы») in this case is linked to the Russian word for “bottle” [of vodka]. The locals give this nickname to these people because they work for vodka.
313 Both Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy have dairy farms, which are the branches of bigger collective farms located in the central farmsteads (Zhuravna and Maslovo villages, correspondingly). There is a frequent and durable link between the two settlements as the majority of workers at the local dairy farms are brought by bus 8 times a day from the central farmsteads. Moreover, local nurses are subordinate to the medical attendants in these central settlements, and local communal, post and library services are operated from the centre.
314 Because these villages are not as isolated as Ros Muc.
community norms, such that residents are exposed to cultural socialisation and role modelling that reinforces non-normative attitude and behaviour. The lack of normative reinforcement not only weakens social control, allowing criminal activities and “black” economy (homebrew making, stealing) to flourish within the community, it also encourages the social victimization of outsiders:

Artem Belov: Now there are a lot of newcomers to the village. We don’t see them, they live on the other side of the village. They have stolen my washing basin, they collect scrap metal. Have we seen this happening before? No, all the doors were open... And now we lock everything.

Vera Belova: And what is the point of locking? They have just broken into our neighbour’s house, she is an old woman. They broke the walls of her shed, stole potatoes and jam. (23/06/2000, Khlopovo)

Plate 21. “Keeping doors closed” in Zhilkontsy

Weak intra-village ties provide space for outsiders to enter the community, but closed neighbourhood networks make it difficult for newcomers to be accepted. Collective control at the village level (as it happens in Ros Muc) is superseded with strict control within neighbourhood networks. Trespassing in local terms means breaking the localised networks, changing the existing neighbouring practices\(^{315}\).

\(^{315}\) Like grazing goats together.
In Ireland a concern with order, conformity and social homogeneity strengthens the external boundaries of the village. Cohesion and solidarity, which are reinforced in the dominant moral discourse, inevitably imply normalisation and regulation, which makes this community exclusive to the people who are not involved in the networks of trust and support. The reach of social networks in this community is restricted as they are based on family affiliations and geographical proximity, which limit choice of extra-village contacts. Individual’s evaluation in this case is based on “belonging” rather than on her/his personal characteristics. The village therefore becomes a discrete unit, where most of the newcomers (apart from those with links within kinship networks) are treated as “generalised others”:

"[It depends on] the attitude of people. If they actually did not want you there it will not make any difference what you did...General definition of outsider would be “don’t get married, people who have different religion, travellers, and refugees and just anybody who is not just the same as that community”. (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)"

Immigrants have no way of belonging to the place, so they are “accepted” despite their differences or as a local artist put is “accepted even though”:

"You will always be a stranger, that’s for sure. You know, that’s definite...But at the same time you will be accepted even though, you know what I mean?... They accept me for what I am. I am not a Connemara women, I am Welsh woman. (Glynis Úi Luathairf, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)"

This testifies to the existence of what Sibley (1995) calls “inclusionary control”, relatively benign and liberal form of classification and imposing order when outsiders with the “deviant” behaviour are brought into the community only when their difference is regulated and maintained within certain limits. In this case outsiders are accepted, but before it happens, the majority of the villagers make sure they fit in. In a way, the villagers try to save the uniformity of their community by putting “others” into the “in-between” place of non-accepted otherness, place where others are aggregated into community but not quite included. A local education worker talks in this case about “mental exclusion”:

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316 As an Irish office worker states, “if someone asks for help, I would probably ask them who they are and where they live and if I knew their background and who they are. And if not, I just say: ‘Sorry, I cannot help you’ (Moina Domhnall, 31/07/2001, FG Ros Muc)

317 This also opens issues about gender and acceptance. In Chapter 3 Glynis explains that her inclusion in the local community was especially difficult because she did not follow the local rules which prescribe woman’s behaviour in the pub (one of the focal places in the community). By breaking the norms of “socially accepted” behaviour she challenged the dominant masculine vision of community.
They wanted to be included but they always were different [because they are outsiders]... And we would not have deliberately exclude them. We would have felt that we were including them. They would be on all the same events that we were at, on the same buses, on the same teams, on the same clubs. But there was exclusion that we did not recognise. Kind of “mental exclusion”.

(Noírin Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Essentially, “others” are denied a space in the local networks. The space of otherness is displaced and internalised. To be precise, the “others” are tolerated but not accepted per se; they are not included:

*I am not saying that they would not talk to them. But there will be no acceptance of them or anything. They will always be regarded as someone to whom you might speak but your remarks would be guarded.* (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Although the Irish villagers are more outgoing, this openness is seen as threatening to traditional norms. In result, greater fluidity of outside connections leads to greater closeness of social networks within the village which makes this community more insular. This community is therefore inward looking and defines itself as different from, and often hostile to, the rest of society. Moreover, an outflow of migrants from this Irish village has created a rather purified environment with the heightened conscious of difference:

*This community can not absorb difference... In the past that would not have been a thing that anybody would have admitted to not wanting. It would be considered just socially terrible not to want people who are different, you know, in the way they live, whatever... There is a tendency to live towards that kind of categorising groups and excluding them more overtly now and picking the groups that would be outsided.* (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)

Social networks within the Irish and Russian villages are exclusive but in different ways. Despite the appearance of permeable boundaries and weak community structure, the

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318 In this case, rules for othering are incorporated into local thinking.
319 As a pub waitress admits, tightness of networks makes this community exclusive: “You have a very tight community, where they won’t give anything away, they would be very good for themselves and all their own, but they won’t give a chance to the [other] people” (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, Ros Muc).
Russian villages are composed of isolated and neighbourhood groups which defend their own identities and oppose difference. The absence of durable intra-village connections means that incomers, while accepted within the village, cannot be included into the much more closed and more exclusive localised groups based on kinship and geographical proximity. Similarly, apparent inclusivity of the Irish village is also compromised by the closeness of local social networks. Here, however, there are different degrees of inclusion, some of which do not necessarily mean acceptance in the community. Homogeneous and rigid social networks recreate strong moral framework, so that difference\textsuperscript{320} is mediated through the mechanism of controlled inclusion\textsuperscript{321}.

**Conclusion**

Actors in the villages I studied are interconnected into different social networks, which reproduce specific social contexts. Different social practices construct local experiences of living in the place with special rules applied to interactions between different actors. Moreover, these social interactions reproduce competing ideologies which provide different readings of local contexts. In the Irish and the Russian villages there are mechanisms of control which bind and manage different spaces of interactions. The level of control is however different and context-dependent. In Ireland it is inclusionary control based on transformation of deviant outsiders in line with the strong moral norms and values, reproduced within local social networks. Difference in this case is regulated within the dominant moral landscape, which prescribes the limits of recognisability and permissibility\textsuperscript{322}. Although practices of belonging to this place are similar\textsuperscript{323}, the meanings of these everyday interactions, which construct feelings of belonging, vary between different members of community. In spite of their apparent homogeneity, people in Ros Muc are different. Different “minor” groups (women, non-Catholics, travellers) produce alternative cultural and moral discourses thus contesting hegemonic discourses, which attempt to impose similarity through normalisation and public management of identity. On the other hand, fixed intra-village sets of ties do not function as social networks and despite in-mixing of the villagers they leave very little space for heterogeneous and inclusive connections to develop. Social connections in this case are dense but have very limited scope, which effectively creates a closed community. Closeness of local networks, however, does not create variability in exchange systems between the actors.

\textsuperscript{320} Here difference is treated as “deviance” from the accepted norms.

\textsuperscript{321} Still, newcomers are rarely fully accepted.

\textsuperscript{322} Similar to Cohen’s (1987) observation of the Whalsay island community, local ideology in Ros Muc helps to maintain the discipline of egalitarianism by establishing the boundaries within which difference can be acknowledged and accepted.

\textsuperscript{323} Hence the references to neighbours-like behaviour which is expected from the incomers if they are to fit in.
Predominance of kin ties in relationships between villagers does not encourage them also to use voluntary ties to get assistance and support.²²⁴ In result, there is a close and closed community with strong but rigid ties which hold their members together, but limit interactions between them. Limited functionality of links provides a serious dent on relations of trust and mutual support, which explains limited stock of social capital created within the Irish village (despite strong links between the actors). Instead of bringing actors together rigid ties lead to insulation and self-containment of its members. In this context exclusion of actors happens not just because they do not fit the local patterns of interaction, but also because the links between villagers are too tight and close.

In the Russian villages lack of strong moral framework limits social control at the community level over the interactions between the residents. Heterogeneous relations between actors within local social networks are infrequent and unstable, which does not contribute to the integrity of local identities. This provides space for wider interpretation of "deviance" and acceptance of difference. Blurred external boundaries, however, hide segmentation of these rural communities and strong control within these sub-communities. These segments (kin, neighbourhood) are the media through which individuals belong to their communities and determine their positions within them. Internal boundaries of these segments are rigid and strong because of the threat of mixing with the "others" (ethnically different villagers, dachniki). Closeness of community segments implies intolerance to difference and victimisation of outsiders. These villages are malintegrated places, they are not internally cohesive. This “localisation” of communities leads to deterioration of links between the villagers. Limited interactions between actors imply limited reciprocity and trust, as well as more fragmented social networks. In result, the Russian villages lack social capital and propensity for voluntary work and joint collective action.

This chapter provides the context for the discussion on the central theme of this thesis, that is rural poverty. The next chapter builds upon this detailed account of interactions in these differentially integrated communities and considers how poverty is experienced differently in different places. It explores constructions of poverty through interconnections between rural dwellers within different social and policy networks. Dynamics and quality of connections within social networks, which I analysed in this chapter, are linked with the workings (and alleged "efficiency") of specific policy networks in different localised poverty stories.

²²⁴ Although it can be expected that relatives tap network resources with relative ease and they are relaxed about exchanging, the similarity of links actually restrict communications within kinship or neighbourhood networks and limits potential for joint voluntary action.
CHAPTER 6. STUDIES OF POVERTY EPISODES:
THE AFFECT OF POLICY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS
CHAPTER 6. STUDIES OF POVERTY EPISODES: THE AFFECT OF POLICY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

This chapter is concerned with the movements of actors within different networks producing rural localities. It considers both the fixity and rootedness of these actors' experiences and practices in one particular place, which allows them to construct a feeling of belonging to that locality, and the "reality" of their experiences produced in movement between different places. I want to re-discover the messiness of everyday lives and, specifically, explore how the poverty of rural people is constructed through their interactions within different social networks.

As I described in the Introduction, my analysis of poverty is energised by the earlier research on this subject, which considered it both in material and non-material terms. At the same time, it is important to recognise that for most people poverty is associated with material hardship. Moreover, some quotations in this chapter reflect this materialist side of poverty. However, through chapters 4 and 5 I developed my thesis in a way that demonstrates that material components of rural social malaise do not reflect the fullness of poverty. Throughout the thesis I identify the situations when material conditions of living are clearly important for rural people, but their hardship is also defined by their location within different networks. As I stressed in the Introduction, it is this understanding of poverty as heterogeneous and networked phenomena I am specifically interested in. My work, therefore, connects the essentialist ideas about poverty (which relate poverty to the lack of money) and its networked visions, going beyond material/non-material dichotomy.

It is this framework for studying poverty which is used in this chapter. It is written in a way which attempts to escape the logic of the existing ways of organising and codifying diverse poverty. Instead, it follows the actors in their everyday lives when they forge associations between elements (memories, symbols, artefacts, practices) constituting their poverty. The chapter allows these uncertain connections between the elements of poverty to unfold and to emerge through writing thus weaving the networks of poverty. In so doing, it studies the ways fluid experiences of poverty fit within social networks and policy networks and reveals the affect these networks have on poverty.

While implementing this network approach I also reflect on some conventional ways of thinking about poverty. Some narratives of poverty presented in this chapter reflect classic binaries considered throughout poverty studies, which relate poverty to family status (family/lone parent), employment (working/non-working), and age (elderly/young people). To some extent these stories emphasise vulnerability of well-known segments of

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325 See extended discussion on this issue in the Introduction.
population that have tendency towards poverty. These traditional categorisations recognised by scholars of rural poverty inform my analysis of rural social malaise, which nevertheless draws on different theoretical precepts.

In this chapter I try to accommodate the messiness of the everyday and to challenge homogeneous (exclusively rational) academic interpretations of poverty. At the same time, I am also conscious about the dangers of not representing poverty which need to be registered in the sphere of policy making if any anti-poverty actions are to be taken. To this end, the conclusion of this chapter provides a summary of major discursive themes emerged through the unfolding of poverty stories.

There are four moments I detected from my interviews, which help to make more general conclusions about rural poverty. These poverty episodes are to be read as a collage rather than an organised sequence that composes a plot. They capture number of layers embedded within the process of production of poverty, and which link in with the broader theoretical questions about the invention of tradition, and creation of identity and difference. I begin with an elderly farmer in the Irish village of Ros Muc.

**Episode One: old men (bachelors)**

My story starts at the Nollaig Ó Briain’s house which is situated in one of the remote parts of Ros Muc, which has acquired a special significance within the village as a result of its association with its immediate surroundings. Known as “The Cellar” (An Siléar), this section of the village is associated with the “end of the land”, “bottom of the village” ending up (as any part of Ros Muc) with a pier. It is an isolated place where not too many things happen. “The Cellar” is known both as a rough, poor area where outsiders are less than welcome, and in terms of its associations with the Ó Briain family who lived in the area for the last two centuries. As you know from Chapter 3, stories about local people follow blood-lines connecting past to present through what the locals call “aithre”, linking memories to “real” people. The sense of belonging to this place is based on the images of duration and continuity of behavioural traits collectively ascribed to the Ó Briains. There is a local belief that “Ó Briains are good at fishing”, which is partly

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326 For example, elderly people in the countryside tend to live in a problematic conditions vis-à-vis money.

327 In this chapter I could have analysed poverty stories from the point of view which folds back on the existing categorisations of poverty. Instead, as I described in the Introduction, my thesis uses different theoretical background to understand poverty which allows going beyond these dichotomies. I am aware of the danger of dematerialisation of living experiences in recent cultural studies of rurality (Cloke, 2003). It is exactly the purpose of this chapter to address this issue by providing the account of everyday realities of contextualised poverty, while allowing both its material and non-material elements to emerge in different networks.

328 Remembrance, local knowledge.
attributed to the barrenness of the land where they live and its openness to the sea. This belief also reasserts the existence of close kinship and professional links within this part of the village. “The Cellar” is therefore known as a place of close-knit community life of solidarity and mutual support, which some believe is equally closed for people from other parts of the village.

Put against this background Nollaig Ó Briain’s house looks out of place. It is a small mobile home which does not fit within the context of traditions associated with the historical environment (physical and temporal) of “The Cellar” where most of the houses are built to sustain rough weather. The house, despite being a modern prefabricated metal and chipboard construction, is run down and untidy, and the hedge outside of it is broken. There is a little place for the bicycle just near the entrance and there is no indication that the house owner has a car.

Plate 22. A mobile home in Ros Muc

Nollaig Ó Briain himself is a 52 year-old man, who is a small farmer unlike his ancestors. His clothes are a bit untidy and old, but he does not seem to be very concerned about it. He is single and his close relatives (brothers) immigrated to England many years ago, so his localised kinship connections are substantially eroded. In the village people talk about him as one of the “troubled bachelors” (Glynis Uí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc), or the “old men who live in poverty” (Aoife Ní Chonchúir, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc). So what does
poverty mean for Nollaig Ó Briain and how is his poverty constructed through his daily interactions?

He himself does not believe there is such a thing called poverty in the village:

Sergei (S): Are there any people who are poor?

Nollaig Ó Briain (N): Poor... I don't know poor people here. I don't see anybody poor.

S: What do you mean by poor?

N: That's people who have no money. That's the only way. (Nollaig Ó Briain, 27/07/2001, RosMuc).

He does not see poverty other than in material terms. His other problems are associated with the specific “rural way of life”, centred around his work. Without acknowledging his own troubles he complains about “the poor types of lives, that have only few pounds to depend on to sell off sheep and cattle”. This specific lifestyle involves co-operation in the form of workgroup to work on the field and on the bog, but these interactions are rather limited:

Nollaig Ó Briain (N): If you are busy with some work, I will give you a hand and you will give me a hand back again, that's the way. If you are saving the hay, you know.

Sergei (S): What about people who don’t cut the hay?

N: Maybe if you ask them they will give you help. But I did not ask them.

S: What about any other help. Say, you have cattle. Do you get help with it from your neighbours?

N: If you have a problem, you call the vet. The neighbours could not do anything. Only the vet.

S: Do people help each other a lot?

N: Sometimes, you know. People don’t want anything. Some of them don’t want any of it. I don’t ask for help. (Nollaig Ó Briain, 27/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Most of his fellow farmers live on the other side of the village, so it is difficult for him to keep in touch. Moreover, he does not socialise a lot. He does not go to the pub because he cannot control his drinking.\(^{329}\). Pub is one of the few places in the village where the locals

\(^{329}\) As pub manager states, people know that “Nollaig Ó Briain has no business drinking. Don’t give him any drink”. And there is understanding about it that he did drink, but he went crazy, and he can’t drink anymore” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).
meet, so people who don’t go there are described as “odd balls”\footnote{As a pub owner describes these “odd” people, “they don’t mix, they keep their own company, they are not social” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).}. Despite being “a bit on the outside”, he does consider himself isolated:

\begin{dialog}
S: Are people isolated here?
N: Well, that’s their choice, they are from here. So it does not feel like isolation to me, I was born and raised here. (Nollaig Ó Briain, 27/07/2001, Ros Muc)
\end{dialog}

Nollaig Ó Briain’s poverty is put together as those little things he is “not happy” about. It is regrettable, he says, that he did not have a chance to get a good education because “people who have good education, they are earning good money”. Then, solicitor who helps with farming problems does not come to the Information Centre in the village very often: “if you need a solicitor, you have to wait for a month”. Lastly, he does not have a car and inability to travel adds to his “not-at-all-poverty” experiences:

\begin{quote}
“There is a bus coming to Mico’s, two days a week. People could give you a lift... But I don’t want to ask. Some people who don’t have cars, they are not rich, you now.” (Nollaig Ó Briain, 27/07/2001, Ros Muc)
\end{quote}

Ó Briain’s life emerges as a pattern of “troubles” and “unhappy” things constituted out of his particular everyday experiences. He lives in line with traditions familiar to his ancestors, although he is not involved in the “conventional” Ó Briain’s fishing. His living space is shared with the kin members living nearby (just a few of them as he does not have close relatives living locally), but it is distant from the rest of the community as he is not very sociable. Ó Briain is involved in workgroups, but his links within them are too tentative because of his limited contributions: he does not have a car and he is rather isolated. His living experiences are place-based (he is a part of local-based networks of kin), place-bound (his relations are mostly limited to his neighbours) and ostensibly “out of place”. Although he is taking part in community life, his contrasting experiences cannot be easily explained by the locals without losing some of their meanings.

Ó Briain is seen by the other villagers as being in place in “The Cellar”, which is configured around roughness, austerity and isolation. Ó Briain’s living space is perceived through the masculinised definitions of rural life in “The Cellar” based on tough work,
coping with isolation and struggling against formidable odds. On the other hand, his experiences transgress the boundaries of the local place. In the village Nollaig Ó Briain is seen as one of many old guys living on their own in the condition of poverty. As a farmer’s wife explains:

Glynis Úi Luathairí (G): We’ve got people like Nollaig Ó Briain, people like that. People like him, I suppose, are a bit on the outside in a way.

Sergei (S): What do you mean “outside”?

G: Well, I mean… It is partly that people like that will separate themselves, anyway. They are very people who won’t have a confidence to go into something new, you know… They’ve got a pattern of life, of living, which is maybe if they got a few cattle or sheep, they can do that. Usually, it is bachelors, I think. And they will have that and going to the pub once or twice for a few drinks. That’s their life. If there is anything else, they would not feel confident to join in. Because it is new, it is different and they are not used to it. They would not be confident about how to behave. (Glynis Úi Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Here the identity of poor people is reinforced via individual “traditional” practices within culturally defined spaces of the community, which is seen as a social space of communication. Local traditions are reinvented with new images of mobility and movement coming to replace representations of stability and continuity associated with poverty. As a factory worker states:

They are outside perhaps because of lack of opportunities to change. Maybe when the rest of the family left, they stayed to mind the house, to look after the parents. Maybe they were not given the same opportunities that other members of the family got. Therefore, once their parents have died, they are still left in that kind of rut, if you know what I mean. Things which were OK 20 years ago are not considered to be good enough anymore (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Local understanding of traditions and poverty changes, and people who do not change with them are sidelined as “strange”. These bachelors are “outside” of the community because of their inability to keep up with new changes representing the reinvention of traditional lifestyles. As a pub owner insists, they are therefore excluded:

A lot of guys walking around today started going to school with no shoes. So they are that close to having a suit f..king old… Some of them economically are well-off. But they are
Poverty in the community is constructed as mainly a non-material experience, as a part of a specific lifestyle. It is seen as “the lonely life” (Rónán Greilish), “nerves or mental problems” (Cristín Ó Haodha), “isolation” (Rút Ní Mhaoláin), “lack of experience of going abroad and seeing things” (Proinsias Ó Fearghail). Within this cultural landscape old bachelors with their own understanding of poverty as a “money thing” are out of place. In this case, as Chapter 3 indicates, their exclusion is reproduced through the set of cultural images which they don’t share with the other members of local social networks (direct cultural exclusion). In the minds of the villagers, poverty is a thing which indicates people’s unwillingness to “fit in” and to follow specific cultural rules existing in the community:

There might be an old man living on his own. He would not be living well... The house would not be in good repair. He would not be a good cook. He might not take care of himself in terms of cleanliness. He would not care about having better clothes. But he has a plenty of money. That's the lifestyle he had. He says to himself: “I am OK. Why should I put in a new bathroom? Why should I paint the house? Why should I put a new window or a new door if the one which is there is OK?” Even though he has the money to do it. (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Importantly, this conceptualisation of poverty also legitimizes the exclusion of the people who don’t bother to join in the community. “They have money, they have everything, but they let themselves go. It is their choice”, argues a pub waitress thus drawing the moral boundaries within the community (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, Ros Muc). Rigid normative interpretation of specific experiences, as Chapter 3 argues following Young's (1990) ideas, implies partiality: favouring members of one particular place-based group and excluding the others. According to this moral classification, the poor who don’t have money cannot help themselves and “deserve” the support of the community, while those who have means to cope with their problems are expected to do it on their own. Thus moral exclusion marginalises the bachelors who are already excluded from social interactions within the village.

Moreover, exclusion of elderly single men from community life is a case of self-elimination as it is discussed in Chapter 3. They do not have enough confidence to link
with the people within wider social networks as these connections bring new cultural experiences for them. As one of the elderly farmers describes:

_The ones that are on the low type of wages, working on FÁS schemes and all this crap. They are not confident to join things like football or pantomime, because... people do not want to change anything [in their lives]._ (Rónán Greilish, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

This feeling of being “different” within the local cultural landscape also prevents these old men from taking part in the local policy making. Moreover, people who are unable to help themselves out of poverty do not believe in their abilities to partake in decision-making process. “Poor” people therefore drop out of the policy networks, as a farmer’s wife regretfully admits:

*I think a lot of people are shy. Even when there were, say, meetings, we went to them, to help the farming people. Because there are so many new things now in the farming... I know that everybody would be wanting to know, but most of them, well, a lot of them, were not there... Basically, I think it is shyness, lack of confidence of being in somewhere where there are a lot of official people._ (Glynis Uí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Moreover, cultural stereotypes work against these old men, who are considered as “drinking Guinness only” and being “bogged down with their sheep” (Rónán Greilish). Their non-participation in the mainstream social networks denies their access to power and policy-making within the community:

*People who are not very social, they get rounded off. The government works in the way to leave people alone... No one believes they [poor people] are going to be a part of the community* (Rónán Greilish, 24/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Social space is divided into high and low spheres, where groups involved in policy making are more highly respected than other social groups, such as old bachelors. This implies a hierarchical structure of policy networks, despite the declared desire for the development of horizontal links, and excludes people who are “down and out” from policy making. Marginalisation of these people from centralised policy structures happens in two different ways. First, the poverty of the old bachelors drops out of the framework of logical policy

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331 FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair) is the Training and Employment Authority which seeks to increase the employability, skills and mobility of job seekers and employees and to promote social inclusion.

332 This shows a condescending attitude to the elderly bachelors.
making because of their non-participation and ensuing invisibility. As I argue in Chapter 3 following Foucault (1980), the state apparatus of control and domination fails to accommodate heterogeneity and fluidity of poverty experiences. As a regional development officer describes:

*We don't know how many needy people are there... we use statistics to identify the issues, which direct us to the areas where we should be working in... Our problem is with statistics, it has been collected 5 years ago. There is a group chosen at the most deprived of those areas, single old males, and if things significantly improved they would not be deprived anymore.* (Brianna Ó Hógain, 15/06/2001, Galway)

Second, the fluid poverty of these old bachelors (their everyday “troubles” of not being able to get a solicitor or get a lift) is getting fixed when translated into the rational form of welfare benefits. As Chapter 3 describes, the unifying system of translation of everyday events erases not just singularity of the details, but the vitality of relations between details. Striation of space, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue, implies re-territorialisation of flows of the elements constructing fluid poverty experiences. Under this unifying influence, poverty is allocated a place within the governmental structure where it becomes possible to visualise it and to deal with it. At the same time this categorisation fixes poverty and leaves very limited opportunities to go beyond the boundaries of officially recognised poverty “territory”. This re-territorialisation fixes the assemblages of actors, feelings of poverty (loneliness, stigma), images of poverty (dilapidated house) in a specific construct of “poor old bachelors”. Fixed poverty is difficult to escape from, as an elderly farmer complains, because the government tries to keep “poor” people in their place, “on the line”:

*Rónán Greilish: If you work with the sheep or the cattle, say, you are just dependent on a few pounds to come in once a year. And then the money from the social welfare goes around and they [the authorities] get it out to you. Funny thing, if they get out to you at lump sum, or grant, they cut you out so much more on the social welfare. And you get down like that. You are trying to come up, but they are trying to put you down more. That’s the way poverty is. They are trying to keep you on the line. They are trying to cut you down to one level all the time, to stay down there and never get any richer.*

*Sergei: Is there any chance of getting out of poverty?*

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333 Here I refer to my discussion in Chapter 4 about striation of space when flexible connections between actors are fixed within a geometrical (linear) structure.
As I stated earlier in this chapter, money-related issues are important in the construction of poverty. As the above quote stresses, the material side of poverty is emphasised when rural people attempt to analyse their “troubled” feelings and experiences the framework of rational policy making (welfare state). Poverty is seen as inevitable condition of living elderly bachelors; as the circle from which there is no escape. Logical policy-making draws essentialist and exclusionist borders around this group, which is also excluded from community life. Instead of trying to bring multiple poverty experiences of people like Nollaig Ó Briain into rural policy making, the anti-poverty programmes single these people out and thus exclude them from local social networks. The old bachelors find themselves in the situation of triple exclusion: social, moral and political. In this situation the “troubled” living of these people is just aggravated as they become unable to get help from their neighbours and adequate assistance from policy makers.

Episode Two: OAPs /disabled people

When I first came to visit Igor Stroev it took me good 50 minutes to get to his house from the central square of Zhilkontsy village. He lives in the part of the village called Butyrki, next to only four other houses surrounded by the fields. Butyrki is known in the village as a rough area, a border-land where traditionally inter-village punch-ups were held. The villagers see it as a frontier where most of the newcomers tended to settle before they were “integrated” into the community. The ties between Butyrki and the other parts of the village have always been very tentative: even when major community events were held people from Butyrki were called upon last (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy). Most of the people living there now are dachniki, who found it easier to settle down in this “in-between” territory, where, as they say “the locals don’t feel comfortable about setting up their rules” (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy). Igor Stroev is an old aged pensioner, a war veteran and a double amputee who lives on his own in a two bedroom family house assembled from trunks of coniferous trees with a cattle-shed attached to it. His everyday experiences include the stories of loneliness, self-isolation and lack of help:

Butyrki (Бутырки) in Russian means a house or group of houses standing off at a distance, separately from the other part of the village.
Such as the village festival or skhod.
Second (urban) homeowners who often take residence in their rural house.
Figure 4. Igor Stroev’s story.

Sergei (S): How often do you talk to the people in the village?
Igor Stroev (I): I don't go anywhere. And almost nobody comes here. My neighbours bring me bread from the bus stop [in the centre of the village]. Or dachniki help me from time to time. A friend of mine from Goncharovo337 brings a pension to me.

S: So are there not too many people coming?
I: Yeah, I will soon forget how to talk to people.

S: Do you know, there is starosta338 in the village who might look after you?
I: Oh, yes, I know. Mish’ka [Mikhail]Kuz'min. He came to pick me up with his horse. There were doctors coming to the village from Zarajsk, he gave me a lift to the doctors.

S: What about the rural administration, did you hear about them?
I: Yes, there was a woman who came to see me once. Do you know where she is now?
S: She works as a solicitor for the collective farm. Did she talk to you?
I: Yes, they [the authorities] wanted to give me a little room in the central farmstead, but I rejected it. I've got bees, potatoes here, how can I have all of this in the central village living in a block of flats? I thought I would lose my roots. Now I regret it, I should have gone there. But the room is already taken by someone else. It could have been better in the room where there is running water, and gas, and central heating. Here in the village I need firewood to heat the house. I can buy the firewood for 200 rubles, but then I need to find a way to bring them here. I have to look out for the “walkers” – that's how I call tractor drivers. And I have to give them some wine as well. I catch them when they plough the fields around. And they know I asked them before so they sometimes come forward themselves.

S: Do you have a feeling there is an authority in the village?
I: No, I don't feel the authority. If there was any attention to us pensioners, someone would have come and talked to us.

S: What about a social security worker?
I: It's been two years since social security worker stopped coming to me. It used to be ok, a woman and a young girl used to visit me. They came in the winter, and fell into the snow opposite that house, I though they were drunk. But they came and said that they were very tired, I live too far in the village, so they lay in the snow to have a rest.

S: So what did they do?

337 Goncharovo (Гончарово), another part of the village located within a mile from its central square on the way to Butyrki.
338 Village elder.
I: They did no do anything, just talked. I asked them to install a telephone for me to call ambulance when I don't feel well, because I cannot go to the centre of the village, can I? They seemed to have written it down, promised to do something about it. Just promises!

S: What do you think is more important, material or non-material help?

I: There is no problem with material side now, we get pensions alright. But there are no contacts or links, nothing. Even the dachniki will leave in the end of the summer. It is so dull here.

S: Do you get any newspapers? Does a local postwoman visit you?

I: Yes, she comes here, but very occasionally. I told her that I want to subscribe to a few newspapers. And she told me: “I won't be carrying them all the way!” We've got a veteran's council in Maslovo [central village], they told me: “Write to us, we will compel her to deliver newspapers to you”. I did as they said, the time have passed and I did not receive anything. So I told them: “Don't be bothered. I don't receive my newspapers anyway”.

Igor Stroev's living experiences represent a trail of different temporalities, histories, boundaries and “communities”. Links with the veteran’s council in Maslovo project the “community” beyond the village he lives in. On the other hand, local community for him is too “local” as most of his links are limited to his particular part of the village, where flexibility of norms facilitates contacts with incomers. Dachniki are “temporary” people, but they help in earnest, while “permanent” local authorities give only the “appearance” of help. “Traditional” ways of living on the land (keeping bees, growing potatoes) entail troubles, while more comfortable living in the urban-type flat causes “uprootedness”. Living in Butyrki means living “too far”, beyond the areas of jurisdiction of social security and even post service. As Stroev's story unfolds it traces the confines of the community and reiterates the identity of Butyrki as “out of the way”, “in between” places. Importantly, this exclusion is not only spatial but also social and political. Smirnov is caught in the “in-between” land not only in the village, but also in rural policy-making.

Local authorities have attempted to accommodate him within a specific place in the policy structure. Smirnov, however, with his variegated experiences of rural life cannot be simply categorised under the headings of “war veteran”, “pensioner” or “retired farmer” (See Chapter 7 for extended discussion on this issue). My argument in Chapter 3 demonstrates

339 Most of the mail delivery workers in Russia are female.
340 See also another excerpt from the interview with Smirnov in Chapter 7 where he discusses congestion of policy flows leading to exclusion.
341 For an elderly physically impaired person like Igor Stroev looking after the bees and growing vegetables is not an easy task.
that “taming” of the everyday through translation of daily experiences entails eradication of difference. As de Certeau (1984) states, failure to represent simultaneity of differences means subsuming diversity of the everyday into a homogeneous whole, an abstract space of policy making. Linear policy-making fixes and naturalises Stroev’s experiences: events and images are placed into a seemingly natural order thus suggesting that they cannot be re-articulated in other arrangements. For instance, his attempt to represent his living problems (no telephone) as a combination of different factors (isolation, disability and exclusion from medical service) fails to challenge the authority of the dominant representational mode (he is still seen as simply a pensioner leaving “too far away”). Thus, the multiplicity of his living experiences and problems falls out of the homogeneous and rigid policy structure.

Different experiences of Igor Stroev demonstrate the presence of poverty. For him poverty is not a singular thing, but a fusion of different events at once: feelings of loneliness, powerlessness, uselessness. Poverty unfolds through different connections or misconnections where he is involved or not-involved. Most of his poverty experiences are networked: both material (bread, pension) and non-material things (medical help) are reproduced within the local webs of communication. Igor Stroev as well as many other elderly villagers are excluded from local social networks because of pensioners’ restricted mobility and limited potential to contribute to the community. The situation of “no contacts, no links” is not peculiar for an elderly man living on the edge of the village, but is typical for most of the pensioners, as a retired milkmaid states:

_The youngsters think we are just living our last years, that we are too old to do anything here, even to clean the streets. And it is a shame there is no such a system in the village where we can help each other with money._ (Lidia Larina, 09/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy).

Poverty is therefore seen as not a money thing, but as inability to take part in the social life within the community. For Igor Stroev, as well as the majority of pensioners in the village, poverty is a combination of different events which produce specific lifestyle:

_We don’t have poor people here. All of us get our pensions. Those people who live poorer than others, these scoundrels waste all their money on drinks. The one who drinks would not have money. The drunkard, he does not work, so that’s why he is poor._ (Igor Stroev, 24/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)
My husband is still working although he is 76. He keeps bees. He sells some honey, we’ve got some money. If he smoked or drunk he would not have kept bees. I think poverty is a way of life. My husband works, he is not poor. He tells his neighbour, who is an elderly man as well: “Listen, I will give you a bee hive, I’ll teach you how to do it”. But his neighbour says: “I won’t be bothered. I’d better get my pension and buy honey from you”. People don’t want to work, that’s why they struggle. (Vera Belova, 23/06/2000, Khlopovo)

As I argue in Chapter 3, local cultural competence, or what Bourdieu (1977) called “legitimate culture”, marks participation in social groups within the village community and defines cultural practices which are considered “common” or “traditional”. In Zhilkontsy people who don’t work are culturally excluded from the local community because the countryside is perceived as “the working space for working people” (Ksenia Rodimova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy). Non-working people, or those who prefer consumptive pleasures (drinking, drug abuse) to “traditional” rural activities (such as working on the land) are marginalised. Moreover, an inability to cope with the adversaries of local life and not to have an independent source of income becomes another criterion for exclusion. Elderly pensioners share “traditional” working practices and they are not therefore considered as poor:

Everyone gets paid a pension; most people get around 500-700 rubles, and war veterans up to 1500 rubles. But they deserved it as they worked very hard during their lives. Some of them still work, have some cattle or bees or something like that. They are not rich, but they are not poor either. (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

Shared knowledge of behaviours, attitudes and other cultural signals allows elderly people to remain included in the systems of help and mutual support. For instance, in Stroev’s case, the “walkers” expect him to call upon them and to pay them in specific way342. Reciprocal and open links within the localised networks (friends and neighbours) contribute to alleviation of poverty. As another old pensioner explains:

I bring my [elderly] neighbour some milk from time to time, he gives me honey. It is what keeps us afloat. (Pavel Ignatiev, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

342 “Kalym”, the case of informal networks working in the blindspots of regulatory structures, is considered in Chapter 7
It is not only visible links which affect poverty experiences. As I argue in Chapter 3, there is a need to look for “absent” links which suggest hidden network dynamics. Social networks stretch across the physical boundaries of the local community and include people whose presence is retained despite their physical absence. For elderly people in Zhilkontsy non-visible links with their children who have left the village have an important impact on their living conditions. As a retired farmer describes:

_Say, my neighbour, he is an old pensioner. He gets a pension, and his children don’t forget him, although they live far away. They will come, help him with money and with his personal farming. So he is richer than others. While my other neighbour, he is old, and he does not have children, so there is no one to help him – he can only rely on himself. The poor person is the one who is desolate._ (Lyubov Snegireva, 24/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)
Experiences of loneliness and connections within these “networks of absence” are interlinked. For old pensioners like Igor Stroev, feelings of loneliness and exclusion from community life are more acute because they do not have children. Their poverty experiences are influenced by their marginalised position within local social networks, the tentative and temporal character of localised links, and political exclusion. Russian official criteria of poverty are based on working ethics: working people are expected to earn enough for their living, so that state assistance is granted only to those who cannot physically work (because of disability or old age). As a local social security worker states:

_We help pensioners because they are too old to work. It is difficult to survive on pension alone, especially in the isolated villages._ (Inga Khomyakova, 06/06/2000, Zarajsk)

Physical isolation of elderly people is therefore equated with poverty. From the outset “peripheral” rural pensioners are marginalised within the centralised and rationalised social security system. This categorisation of the elderly people renders them as deviant “others”, whose poverty is threatening to stability of rural social system. As pensioners themselves acknowledge, it is viability of rural settlements which is more important for rural authorities than the well-being of their inhabitants (elderly people) _per se_ (see Inna Gracheva’s discussion on this issue in Chapter 3). Moreover, as a rural administration official in another village acknowledges, there are specific requirements over the existence (density) of poverty which regulate state assistance to “the elderly poor”:

_S: Do you have social security workers in this village?_
_Marina Tomilina: No, we don’t. There are only two of us in the rural administration, me and another lady. We don’t have enough elderly people to justify the existence of social worker._

_S: But the social worker does not only help the elderly people?_
_T: No, in our case it is only pensioners [who we help]. But we don’t have enough elderly people. I don’t quite remember, but there is supposed to be a certain number of people in order to have even a part-time social worker. You won’t look after a single old man, would you? And anyway, we don’t have such people whose health is too bad and there is no one to look after them. Some of them live with their children, some of them manage to live on their own using their welfare benefits._ (Marina Tomilina, 15/06/2000, Zhuravna)

The poverty experiences of the elderly people have, therefore, dropped out of the rural policies, which are limited to generalised and rationalised material assistance. The
multiplicities of poverty and its different manifestations in terms of lack of informal links or absent connections are not accommodated within rural policy making despite the seeming “elderly proofing” of rural policies. The totalising inclusivity of rural policy-making eradicates differences in pensioners’ poverty experiences and forces them to exist within the limits of specific pre-defined category/identity. In so doing the elderly people are “singled out” as “poor” and left isolated in their troubles. On the other hand, their inclusion in local social and cultural networks, as Smirnov’s case demonstrates, can help to alleviate poverty. The next episode considers the situation when these cultural and social links within community are weak or lacking.

**Episode Three: incomers/lone parents**

**Figure 5. Alexandra Podkolzina’s story.**

*Alexandra Podkolzina (P): I came from the village in the Volgograd region [Southern Russia]. I’ve been living here for about a year. First 5 months I stayed at my sister’s, she lives in this village.*

*Sergei (S): Where do you feel it is better to live?*

*P: Here at least I get my salary paid. We did not even see money in my home village. People only survived because they had some cattle. But I don’t have cattle here. I’ve just managed to plant some potatoes. I cannot keep even geese because I don’t have a shed. Again the problem is money.*

*S: I’ve noticed you keep firewood within the house, why is that?*

*P: It is not a living house, it used to be a branch office of the collective farm. There is no place to live otherwise. But this house is too old. We tried to repair it, but I cannot really do it with my two daughters. The farm helped us a bit.*

*S: Did the farm help you with anything else?*

*P: No, they did not. I went to see farm’s director and ask about helping me to get the shed, because the house belongs to the farm. She told me: “You can buy it in credit against your salary and build it yourself”. How can I do it when my salary is 500 rubles and it is not even enough to get us food! And I have to get clothes for my children. Forget about the shed! I hope we’ll get some potatoes to eat in the winter.*

*S: Was it difficult to find a job?*

*P: Job? No, they employed me as a milkmaid to look after calves. It is the most difficult job on the dairy farm. They told me: “We gave you a job, gave you a place to live, helped with house repairs, so you are going to work where you are told”. They did not even ask me.*

*S: Did you try to do anything about it?*
P: They will force me out of the house, end of story. I signed a contract which says if I
don’t work on the farm, I have to vacate the house. Maybe I should have talked to a lawyer
or someone like that, but we don’t have a lawyer here.

S: How do you get on with the locals?

P: People are really difficult here. I don’t even know whom to ask if I am in trouble. It is
very hard to break into the community, especially because I am a stranger from far away.
They are jealous. If I do well, they try to spoil things. Say, last winter I did not have money
to pay for electricity and heating, so I used “kozel”. I used an illegal hand-made facility to bypass the electric meter. It is connected directly to the main
electric wires so the electricity use is not measured and it is therefore free.

A few people in the village use it, and they get away with it. One of my neighbours, she was jealous so she called the
electricity authorities. They came and fined me. Originally, the fine was enormous,
something like 4000 rubles! Luckily, some friends of my sister in Zarajsk [district centre],
they talked to the “right” people. Eventually, I only had to pay 200 rubles.

S: Are there many people unfriendly to you, or is it just one neighbour?

P: There are few people who don’t like the fact that I am a newcomer. They think because
they are locals they should be in charge here. I had a war here with another neighbour. I
tried to plough the land to plant some potatoes, and she tried to persuade me to plough
another field in the place where other villagers plant potatoes. I cannot walk there all the
time, I’ve got children! And, you see, she used to graze her sheep in my back yard. She
treated me like I was the scum of society, I came from nowhere and no one knows me here.
They think so and they tell me so. She shouted: “I am going to drive you away from here!”
She behaved like she was a boss, a landlady here.

S: What did you do?

P: I went crazy. I just ploughed the field. I brought the director of rural administration
here so she explained which field I could plough. Now everyone keeps silent, but it is only
for a while. People say that she will take revenge.

S: Does the rural administration help you?

P: You cannot imagine how long I was chasing this director to make her come and help
me… It took me a month in autumn and a month in spring. And if I ever go and ask for help
again I will be waiting for years!

S: What about the social security service?

P: There is one in Zarajsk. But I cannot get there because I don’t have money for the bus.
But I need to go because I still don’t have local propiska [registration]. Despite the
abolishment of propiska by the Russian Constitutional Court legislatures a propiska-like system is still in
place across many parts of the country. Residence registration is particularly difficult to obtain for Moscow
receive children benefits, my elder daughter cannot go to school. Moreover, they say because this house is a farm office, they cannot register me living in here. It looks like I left the Volgograd region, but did not come here yet. We are still “on the move”.

Most of the troubled experiences of this 40 year-old divorced woman relate to her coming into the village. Problems punctuate the move: an unwanted job, an unfriendly welcome by the locals, uneasy relations with employers, an unsettled life invisible by local authorities. They reoccur until she understands the organisational realities of the village and establishes situational identities. In the local community she is allocated a fixed identity of a “stranger” in which her ethnic identity, gender and social position are not separable from each other. This imposed temporal identity conceals her real experiences and makes them “invisible” within the local community. The reduction of her personality to specific traits (newcomer) invests her experiences with the fixed meanings of difference. As Chapter 3 argues, following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), difference which is fixed assumes and imposes hierarchy and entails exclusion. Fixed representations of Podkolzina’s living experiences therefore exclude her from specific structure of relations which are embedded in the identity of the “local”.

The division between “locals” and “not locals” in the Khlopovo village is based on the images and symbols of “community” embedded in the local everyday practices. As Chapter 5 argues, villagers in Russia see outsiders as people who are removed from their social milieu, who don’t fit within the pattern of local social relations. Most villagers subscribe to the idea that the village is bounded and describe “locals” as “good neighbours”. From the moment Podkolzina came into the village she challenged this “neighbourly” vision of the community and crossed its boundaries. First, she transgressed local moral boundaries by adopting the practices of electricity stealing, which is locally considered as a last resort for people who are really poor. As a farmer comments on one of the “local” deprived families, “they have no money so they don’t pay for electricity” (Valentin Egorychev, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo). Podkolzina did not have time to find her place within this moral landscape of “deserved” poverty and did not establish a necessary degree of trust to act “like a local”. Second, she was put to live in the former branch office of the collective farm, which is clearly associated with power:

and Moscow region because these are the two most prosperous areas in the country. This registration in Russia is restricted by a web of local, regional and national regulations that, among other things, detail the amount of floor space legally required before a propiska can be issued and list who can sponsor newcomers to an area.

345 In the local parlance “don’t pay” means stealing electricity.
"We used to have a branch office here. No water – go to the office, troubles with electricity – ask in the office. And now it is closed, there is no authority here" (Orina Tonkova, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

The move into this house in the very centre of the village entailed specific and clear power claims which were not accepted by the locals. In their minds this was a clear transgression into the very core of the village and the place of “community gathering”\(^{346}\). Inhabiting such a place of authority implies deterritorialisation of a person’s living experiences. Moving into the house which symbolises a collective claim of belonging denied Podkolzina’s right to be a part of the living memories and relations in the village. It is important to remember, however, that it was the local authorities (rural administration and collective farm) who forced her to live in that house and who inevitably contributed to her exclusion from local community.

Plate 24. Former branch office of the collective farm, Khlopovo

Third, Podkolzina’s land claims have challenged local ideological and moral hierarchies. The locals justify their land ownership through appeals to prior order (the given fact that there is “potatoes” land and “sheep” land”) and in reference to their own efforts and achievements (hard work\(^ {347}\), entrepreneurial behaviour). Podkolzina had the right to plough the field (acknowledged by the local administration) and she had no other choice to feed

\(^{346}\) People used to gather in and outside the farm office for official celebrations.

\(^{347}\) During privatization of the kolhoz members of the collective farm were given land shares which size corresponded to their work experience.
her family, but the villagers considered it as a transgression of the local moral rules. Not surprisingly, her allocation to do a difficult job in the dairy farm was taken for granted as it was seen as a way to "deserve" the right to work on the land.

What can be learnt from these very specific experiences? First, newcomers' lack of knowledge of local cultural forms and practices shapes their exclusion and poverty. As Chapter 3 argues developing Bourdieu's (1984) idea of habitus, cultural exclusion is based on actors' inability to share local embodied knowledge (cultural competence) and to translate adequately cultural meanings and symbols incorporated into local ideologies. Newcomers are distinguished as "others" because they do not have incorporated knowledge of the place where they are moving into, and they do not take part in the construction of local ideologies (see also discussion on this issue in Chapter 5). While they acquire appropriate role behaviours and adjust to the work of local norms and values, newcomers do not have a specific place within the local cultural and moral landscapes. This means that the problems and poverty of newcomers remain "invisible" and they cannot use local moral systems of help and support.

Second, newcomers' experiences do not fit within specific representations produced as a result of struggles over cultural capital. The local "ideal" of a newcomer, as Podkolzina's example demonstrates, is coded as a "good neighbour" (Valentin Egorychev), a "good worker" (Artem Belov), a "quiet and pliable person" (Anna Makarova). Moreover, as I argue in Chapter 3, geographical mobility is used as a symbol for social mobility: the move to another place emphasises the abilities of the individual to adopt to a new environment, and signifies a possibility of improving his/her social status. The local stereotype of newcomers is drawn on the basis of dachnki: successful and wealthy Muscovites who can afford the move into the countryside for recreational purposes (having second homes). This "ideal" image of newcomers, although deceptively static, is temporal and thus does not represent the multiplicity of experiences of moving into the village. Thus, any poverty-ridden vision of newcomers does not fit the position discursively allocated to them in local cultural landscape. Poor people who move in the village are therefore culturally excluded.

Third, non-familiarity with local cultural meanings (local ideology) limits opportunities for newcomers' social integration into rural communities. Here I refer to Bourdieu's (1997) idea that social capital, which he conceptualises as network resources of trust, shared ideology and reciprocity, indicates possible integration or exclusion in the community (see Chapter 3 for discussion). Social capital is usually external to the people who recently moved into the village, and their limited access to network resources causes poverty. For instance, Podkolzina insists that lack of local connections entails poverty:
I am poor... I simply acknowledge it. There are times when I don't have food for my children and I don't know whom to ask for help. (Alexandra Podkolzina, 22/06/2000, Khlopovo)

On the other hand, those limited social connections which people establish in the village allow them to mitigate poverty effects. In case of Podkolzina it is local family connections which help her to avoid hefty fines from the electricity company (see the quote above). In the similar vein a young unemployed lady who moved in Zhilkontsy uses local connections to cope with her problems:

If I needed to buy something and I didn't have money, especially when I just came here, I borrowed money from my neighbours. Because they knew my father, they trusted me. (Maria Petrova, 21/06/2000, Khlopovo)

Moreover, newcomers rely on the networks which stretch beyond the physical boundaries of the local community. These networks bring together people from their home villages, places where they stopped on the way to the village and where they used to work. As I argue in Chapter 3, these multiple associations create what Mol and Law (1994) call "fluid" communities where actors' experiences are changing depending on cultural and social environment. As an unemployed lady asserts, multiple links create complex and metamorphic poverty experiences, which are dealt with in a variety of ways (not necessarily "right" or "wrong"):

I am not even sure who helps whom most: me, my friends in another village or my family in town. We all do our bit: I send them vegetables when I have vegetables or meat when I kill the lamb, they send me medicines or lend me money, it depends what I need more. (Matrena Konstantinova, 24/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

"Fluid" poverty experiences of newcomers, however, do not fit within the rigid policy structures. In Podkolzina's case, her different experiences of poverty are not registered within the fixed welfare system and are not flexibly addressed by local authorities. She is "on the move"; her fluid poverty is not confined within the categories of "homeless" (she's got a house but she is not registered), "unemployed" (she's got an unwanted job) or "single mother with many children" (she cannot get children welfare benefits). Linear and rational policy-making leaves many poverty-related problems of newcomers unanswered or even aggravates them. As another newcomer, a young lady with children complains:
Irina Fedotova: The local medical attendant had to give my daughter an anti-flu injection. So in the winter at 20 degrees below zero she wanted me to go to Zarajsk where I used to live [before I came here] in order to get a blood sample. I told her: "My daughter is going to get ill even before she gets an injection. What's the point?".

Matrena Konstantinova: But you know it is beyond her authority. She will be in trouble if she goes against the system.

Irina Fedotova: Yes, but I am just trying to complain that she did not take a blood sample here! Every medical attendant can take a basic blood sample from your finger. (14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

This lady, as well as Podkolzina, might appear to have a stable identity of a "newcomer" but it only happens because the rational translation of their living experiences (in local ideology) conceals or dissimulates their multiplicity. As Chapter 3 argues, "real" identity is not fixedly visible, but it is hybrid and constructed in the process of socialisation. The fact that Podkolzina and other ladies are single and have children makes their poverty experiences very specific and different to other newcomer's stories. First, poverty in the Russian village is associated with single mothers as rural dwellers themselves acknowledge:

Polina Zhuravleva: Poverty is when you don't have a man [husband].
Ekaterina Kazakova: Yes, don't laugh. She is right. You need a man to help you with all this work.
Polina Zhuravleva: You need a man to make hay, to get firewood.
Ekaterina Kazakova: If you don't have a man, you have to find someone and pay for his work, you have to improvise. If you don't have a man you are poor. Ask Alexandra Podkolzina, she will tell you everything about it. He goes to work, and comes back home, and she only can do what she can. But if she had a man living with her, they could have done many things together and she would not be in such a trouble. (20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

The location of "woman" in this context is not a thing of her own, but it is contingent on that of her husband or partner. Single women are seen as the embodiment of difficulty and troubles of rural life. The isolation of these women, who are unable to use social resources through the male-related links in the community (drinking clubs, fishing groups) or to
participate fully in the local material exchange (men take part in the workgroups), becomes the epitome of poverty.

Second, the troubles of the motherhood are also associated with poverty, while the wellbeing of children is used as the indicator of social problems:

Anna Makarova: Poverty is visible on our children. It is reflected in the way they are dressed.

Tsepilova: When we had school uniforms there was at least some feeling of equality. Now one child comes [to school] with golden earrings, while another comes without proper shoes. Because not every child would say: “My mum does not have money”.

Ekaterina Kazakova: They also label people “poor” because of the way children appear. I was told to bring sledges to school, but my sledges were stolen. So I had to run around the village and borrow money to buy new sledges, because I did not want my children to look different [poor].

Orina Tonkova: My daughter gets “2s”\(^{348}\) because she doesn’t have skis. Where can I get them? I’ve got two children and I don’t have money for skis with my salary of 500 rubles.

Polina Zhuravleva: They say you can buy one pair of skis for two children, but children are different!

Ekaterina Kazakova: No one cares about our children if they are poor.

Orina Tonkova: There is a huge gap between the wealthy and the poor just in the way their children look. (20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

Local ideology fixes and stabilises relations between self and other, material and non-material poverty, poor (single) motherhood and “well-off” families. Local norms render poverty “invisible”: if no one is “poor”, everyone is OK. In fact, many rural dwellers would easily admit that they are “average people”, rather than “poor” or “wealthy” (see also Vinogradsky, 2002 on this issue). The power of “averageness” lies not in its representation as superiority, but rather as “normality”. Poverty is therefore assumed as a “non natural” way of living, thus poor people are classified as “others” or “different”. This “self-evident” formulation of poverty in local ideology reduces problems experienced by rural people to specific (static) images. This means that the heterogeneity, temporality and spatiality of processes constructing poverty do not fit within local cultural and moral landscapes. People with “hybrid” and “mixed” poverty experiences (such as newcomers and single mums and homeless) are excluded from the local community and their problems are aggravated.

\(^{348}\)The Russian marking system in schools ranges from “2” (failed) to “5” (excellent).
In a similar vein, poverty flows do not follow well-defined paths of standardised policy networks. Newcomers are isolated in their troubles because policy makers only react to the signs of poverty which they recognise. Moreover, the rigid construction of “difference” in regulatory policy making reinforces the boundaries between the “locals” and “non-locals” thus breaking up links between the two and intensifying the troubled experiences of newcomers.

Flexible policy making, however, provides different interpretations of fluid poverty experiences, which enables the problems of rural people to be addressed. As I argued in Chapter 3, following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), fluid politics accommodates heterogeneity and hybridity of networks where actors, artefacts and events are continuously recombined. Avoidance of measuring and fixing difference allows new arrangements of things to appear, where artefacts, interests and needs are connected in different ways. In so doing, poverty as the combination of people’s experiences of living in the countryside mutates into something different which is not necessarily problematic. Thus fluid politics opens up new opportunities to deal with poverty. For example, Alexandra Podkolzina as well as three other ladies with children in the village were given the opportunity to get financial help from the local collective farm to buy school uniform even though they did not work long enough to qualify for it349. Chapter 7 provides another example of fluid policy making when flexible application of rules allows the local nurse to provide medical services to Podkolzina and other otherwise “invisible” (not registered) actors.

**Episode Four: New Age people**

Newcomers are different and they have very different experiences of living in the rural communities. This section considers the living experiences of newcomers who are often referred to as “New Age” people. It looks at the ways in which specific rural contexts affect their experiences: how they are (not) accepted locally, how they are connected with other people, how they (don’t) fit within localised policy structures. In so doing, this section unfolds the links between troubled (poverty) events in the lives of newcomers and local social and policy networks.

First, I want you to listen to the voice of Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, a 43-year-old single woman, who describes her experiences of coming into and living in the Irish village. She works in the assembly line at the computer-making factory in the nearby village. Her job is tedious

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349 According to collective farm regulations, one has to work for the warm for the period of at least one year to claim social benefits like a one-off school subsidy.
and low-paid, she does it “because there are not many jobs around”. She lives with a dozen cats in a little dilapidated house hidden away in the trees on the very edge of Ros Muc, but on the main road connecting the village to other places. She’s got an old car and she uses it to go to work and friendly gatherings with others whom she calls “real people”: “a little bit different, but very open and trusting”.

As she explains, people also see her being different from the moment she came:

Eibhlín Ó Luathaire: We were working in the community. Because we were on the scheme – that’s how I ended up here. There was a scheme to do with community arts so there would be some people from the area... I think they thought we are a bit crazy maybe at first, I suppose, we started to do things and then it was OK.

Sergei: Did they accept you easily?

Eibhlín Ó Luathaire: They didn’t. I think you get this anywhere in any small community, do you know what I mean, where everybody knows everybody... I would not have expected people to welcome me with the open arms. And this lives you demoralised at times. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

The locals do not easily accommodate strangers into their relatively closed community (see Chapter 5 for discussion). Despite her willingness to believe that things have changed and “it is OK at the moment”, she acknowledges that she is not fully included into local social networks:

Eibhlín Ó Luathaire: I don’t think I had a problem going to [people] if I had trouble. I could go to my landlady...

Sergei: Would people help you? Could you rely on them in trouble?

Eibhlín Ó Luathaire: I have no idea. Generally speaking, people are fine... But I would not expect very much. I would not rely on this. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

The limited reciprocity of her relations with others makes her local connections rather tentative and unstable. Villagers, despite visible acceptance of difference, do not really include newcomers with the different lifestyles in their webs of social relations, as a pub manager admits:

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350 I went with her to the “traditional Celtic” celebration of summer solstice with another 30 people gathered around the fire, meditating and talking. After that my landlady tried to dissuade me from having conversations “with weird people like Eibhlín”.

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People are more accustomed now to a kind of New Age people and things like that. The first time we saw them was when working on the FÁS$^{351}$ scheme for the Pléaráca. Like, there was a guy [name] and he had like 20 earrings. Huge amount of jewellery. And like we hated him, you know... Or it was another woman, Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, and she was that New Age: big Dr. Martens boots and black tights, you know, that sort of thing. But we got used to them after a while, as soon as we realised there is no harm in them. They used to smoke, you know, they probably still do. Nobody saw any harm in them after a while, they were quite accepted, but not totally accepted, you know. (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Eibhlín Ó Luathaire herself echoes this statement:

[We are] not from the community. And look differently, do not dress as the others. You would not see in Ros Muc a lot of earrings, even one. Because it would not be really accepted, you would be really stepping outside the line. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

These comments testify to Cohen’s (1982) idea considered in Chapter 3 that local community is an aggregative rather than an inclusive entity: “different” newcomers are considered as potentially transgressive and harmful “others”, who can be accepted but not integrated. Classification of newcomers’ lifestyles as “New Age” also reflects the existence of important cultural boundaries and spaces of symbolic conflict. First, newcomers associations with New Age spirituality contradict the cultural and religious traditions of the mostly Catholic local community. As I emphasise in Chapter 4, the sense of community and sense of place in the West of Ireland is still very much imposed by the authority of the church. The locals admit that ostensible disassociation from the church implies exclusion from the community:

If you are not going to the church, you would be seen as not going to the church. Then you can be singled out. (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Apart from cultural exclusion, different spirituality and non involvement with the local church also entails social exclusion. As Eibhlín Ó Luathaire admits, many of social

$^{351}$ FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair) is the Training and Employment Authority which seeks to increase the employability, skills and mobility of job seekers and employees and to promote social inclusion.
networks are church-focused and non-participation in the church activities increases her isolation:

*When something happens or there is a meeting called and they are going to pick a new committee that is going to be elected or whatever, people know because they go to mass. Most of the community here would go to mass, they would know that this meeting is going on. They would know it was happening, but I don’t know this.* (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Second, newcomers’ ideology, norms and values do not easily fit within the local cultural landscape. New Age philosophy rejects rationalism and is radically individualistic. As Ó Luathaire admits in the quote in Chapter 4, her lifestyle is largely individualistic and this creates problems with living in the closely-knit community, where people place value on the strength and density of social relations.

Third, the conflict between newcomers’ and local ideologies entail different understanding of local problems. Most villagers see poverty as a social problem emanating from deterioration of people’s connections within the local community. On the contrary, the New Age newcomers tend to explain social problems as the result of the individual psychological problems, so that personal growth and self-transformation are seen as panaceas for the inequalities. As Ó Luathaire states, poverty is a personal trouble, a spiritual thing:

*Poor people... It is somebody who maybe not financially poor but poor in spirit, maybe they have no hope, do you know what I mean? Maybe whatever money they had they drink it. And, you know, that is to me a kind of poverty, lack of hope or whatever.* (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

This different understanding of poverty contributes to self-exclusion of the newcomers with “alternative” lifestyles. It is important to state, however, that New Age people place different values on “bounded” links, which connect people within a particular locality. Their identity is formed around the deregulation of “traditional” forms of cohesiveness and their recomposition into what Hetherington (1994) calls “affectual solidarity”. As Ó Luathaire comments on the recent gathering of solstice celebration:

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352 Maffesoli (1996) calls these new forms of association “neo tribes”, which indicate formation of groups elective and affectual in nature which would not be expected to come together in a traditional “ascriptive” form.
There was a sense of sharing, a sense of unity. Everybody was intuitive, close to Earth, really friendly. They came from all around the place, but we definitely had something in common. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Rational social welfare policies, as Ó Luathaire admits, challenge the fluidity of her connections within the “neo-tribal” networks and fix her in the conditions she is unhappy with:

They [the authorities] wanted me to have a permanent job for a year; otherwise I cannot draw welfare benefits anymore. I am not happy with the job I found, it is boring and low-paid: the only thing I do is putting different leads in computers together. The worst thing is that now they are trying to introduce new pay schemes, where my salary will depend on the number of these leads I put together. It means I am still on minimal wage, but I have to work harder. They tie us up to this job and this place, and I cannot spent time away with people I really like. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Attempts to draw the boundaries across these networks (that is to “visualise” their belonging to a particular “geographical” community) inevitably break down their communications, separate people in these “affective” networks and eventually recreate poverty. For Eibhlín Ó Luathaire poverty is in the meaninglessness and drudgery of her working life, in the fixedness of her social relations which restricts her movements and makes her unable to live in the way she likes.

On the other hand, as Chapter 3 states, multiple connections facilitate inclusion. In this case Young (1990) talks about “subcommunities” which are flexible and open in establishing relations with each other: relations based on toleration of difference and mutual respect, but which don’t imply fixedness and closure. Networks of relations where people like Ó Luathaire are involved are similar to the networks of “subcommunities”. The New Age is not an organized movement with well-defined boundaries, but loosely defined networks of individuals with diverse sets of practices and cultures. In fact, the New Age newcomers are part of what I called in Chapter 3 “fluid” communities, which provide scope for inclusion of difference without regulating it. This entails a transformation of poverty from an ordered set of relations between different actors and artifacts into a series of fluid and changeable experiences which are not necessarily problematic.

Moreover, identities of New Age people are constantly in flux, creatively incorporating elements from different sources, both local and exotic. They draw on local “traditions”, and this brings them together with the people living in specific rural communities. As
Eibhlín admits in the first quote of this section, it is this knowledge of local traditions which helped them to break into the local community while working on the local arts project.

In fact, this is an example of new politics which works with the difference. As I argued in Chapter 5, poetic and sensuous politics does not assume a capacity to legislate for others (leaving them with their troubled experiences), but attends to multiple differences and allows continuous reconfiguration of arrangements (in the ways which change poverty into a non-poverty). Fluid rural policies pursued by Pléaráca (community arts project, pantomime) allowed, on the one hand, the inclusion of the New Age people in community networks and, on the other hand, did not tie them up within the closed intra-community webs of relations. As Eibhlín Ó Luathaire acknowledges, the pantomime helped her to get accepted into the community:

*Sergei: Did you take part in the pantomime?*

**Eibhlín Ó Luathaire:** Yes, of course. It was great fun. And people really loved it. You know, it is a good way to know people and let them to know you. (Eibhlín Ó Luathaire, 28/06/2001, Ros Muc)

**Conclusion**

This concluding section uses the complex Lefebvrian (1991b) model of space (presented in the Introduction) to show how multifaceted poverty comes into being within the context of complex rural space. I have already critically examined the *practices* of poverty which define positions and roles of poor people within different networks. In this concluding discussion I consider the interactions between two other elements, the *representational spaces* of poverty and the *spaces of poverty representations*, in the construction of complex spaces of rural poverty. My case studies in Russia and Ireland considered in this chapter demonstrate that poverty experiences are place-specific and relational, that is they are constructed within networks producing particular rural contexts. This section reveals the ways poverty is positioned within these networks and summarises different effects of this variegated positioning on poverty experiences.

First, I consider poverty in and out of social networks, that is the ways it is constructed through connections and misconnections between rural communities and poor people. This section elucidates major themes from discussion in this chapter on relations between cultural (communal) constructions of poverty and diverse images of poverty produced within the messiness of everyday lives of “poor” people. Second, I summarise different
placements of poverty within policy networks and study the ways inclusion into these networks affects people’s poverty experiences.

**Poverty in/out of social networks**

*Out*

An analysis of poverty stories and experiences in this chapter reveals the existence of several representations of poverty which position it outside social networks:

1. Poverty is constructed as the inability to share fully connections within social networks because of physical isolation of poor people. Social links of poor people in this case are “too local” and poverty is therefore seen as a spatial separation. The stories of poor people allude to the importance of physical context in production of poverty. Living in the areas which are considered as peripheral and marginal, rough and unwelcoming restricts people’s social connections. This physical isolation is especially burdensome for non-mobile elderly people and people with disabilities who are unable fully to participate in local social networks. Moreover, the exclusionary lifestyles of poor people also contribute to social isolation.

2. Poverty is seen as the lack of power in construction of local symbols and identities, and an inability to legitimate cultural claims. Power in this case is considered in the ANT sense, that is as the ability to bind other actors into knowledge-producing networks. Poor people do not have enough power to stake their cultural claims and to uphold their visions of poverty (newcomers do not have cultural competence to participate in construction and translation of locally based symbols). Poverty is reproduced through the set of cultural images which poor people don’t share because they don’t fully participate in the interactions within social networks.

3. Poverty is represented as the totalising inclusion into social networks which means eradication of difference rather than inclusion of others in all their otherness. Poor people are aggregated into the community, but not accepted. This implies fixation of difference and discrimination/othering of poor people. Others are seen as poor (New Age people) and poor people are coded the “others” (pensioners are believed to threaten stability and viability of rural settlements). The multiplicity of poverty is therefore not accommodated within local ideologies.
4. Poverty is coded as the inability to share values and norms produced within social and moral networks. Moral classifications of poverty experiences are constructed through the interactions within social networks. Density and quality of connections in social networks are used as criteria to identify poverty as "good" and "bad" ("good links" seem to exist between people who are "good" neighbours) and to legitimise the creation of moral hierarchies (the division between "deserved"/"non deserved" poor is based on "willingness to join in" the community). This differentiation implies a stigmatisation of poor people and their exclusion from social networks and policy networks.

5. Poverty is represented as the inability to share trust and support within networks of social capital. Poor people are believed to be unable to contribute to the community because they are not fully linked in social networks (newcomers) and they do not have time and resources to invest (lone parents). Even when poor people are included within the social webs of communication their links with the other members are tentative and non-reciprocal (one way help). Exclusion of poor people from moral networks entails their exclusion from policy networks: poor people are not trusted to make decisions on behalf of the others.

Diverse and often incoherent experiences and images of directly lived poverty are also constructed within social networks. In this case the affects of inclusion of poor people in social networks can be summarised as follows:

1. Poverty which is produced within social networks is seen as a collective problem. When poverty is recognised and placed within local moral networks poor people get help and moral support from the villagers. For instance, elderly people in Russia have their place in the local moral landscape and enjoy the moral support of the villagers. Poverty is no longer considered a psychological/medical problem of specific individuals (disabled people) but a social problem of the local community.

2. People no longer see networked poverty as "forever exclusion" but as a changeable and temporary communication breakdown. Problems of newcomers, for example, are understood within the context of their possible integration into local community. Re-inclusion in the local social networks allows poor people to get an access to network...
resources and use social connections to sort out their problems. Connectedness in social networks provides a safety net for people whose resources are limited.

3. A reinvention of belonging through social interaction within the community changes poverty experiences. Inclusion in social networks entails sharing local cultural symbols and threads which produce sense of belonging. The feeling of being “in place” boosts actors’ morale and improves their self-confidence.

4. Poverty is no longer solely associated with troubles. Various social connections bring poor people together in different “communities” of poverty. In this case multiple connections mitigate troubles and transform poverty into something different, which is not necessarily problematic.

5. Poverty can be considered as a happy-not-belonging (self-isolation of elderly bachelors in Ireland). Non-inclusion into local connections can mean staying away from local troubles (rows, grudges) and maintaining a preferred lifestyle.

The stories of poverty unfolded in this chapter demonstrate that inclusion of poor people in social networks (cultural, social and moral inclusion) does not necessarily alleviate their problems. As Chapter 3 argues, links between poverty and inclusion in a particular community must be understood within the framework of ideas which also put a value on not-belonging. As the present chapter reveals, inclusion in social networks implies conformity with the local cultural and moral norms. This conformity entails eradication of difference which is not necessarily welcomed by people whose identity is threatened by this totalising influence. Belonging to the community might not be viewed as a positive thing as it fixes social connections of poor people, restricts their mobility and undermines their self-beliefs. Moreover, inclusion in local networks might also mean deterioration of other connections which go beyond the spatial boundaries of the community. Poor people in this case become more reliant on local links and more vulnerable to changes in quality of these connections.

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353 For example, the affective communities of New Age people.
Poverty in/out of policy networks

Stories of rural people in this chapter reveal conceptualisations of poverty within policy networks, which misrepresent actual poverty experiences. To summarise, there are several cases when poverty falls out of policy networks:

1. Absent (changeable) poverty – policy networks, which fail to accommodate different temporalities of poverty experiences. Poverty is changeable and metamorphic, so it falls out of a fixed policy structure. For example, lone parents (single mothers) have less time for work and training and require more specific and time-efficient approach in anti-poverty initiatives. At the same time, when different time-spaces of poverty are included in policy networks they are allocated specific and fixed places in the hierarchy of representations. This hierarchy is based on moral assumptions: short-term poverty is seen as “respectable” (people temporarily slip into poverty) and “deserving” of help, while long-term reliance on state support is considered “non-respectable”.

2. Invisible poverty (not registered) – the poverty of people who exclude themselves from policy networks. Social welfare systems both in Russia and Ireland are reactive rather than proactive, so unless reported, poverty drops out of policy programmes.

3. Non-translatable poverty (not ordered) – poverty which is interpreted in a material and measurable way is devoid of vitality of relations between elements composing it (see the Instruction for social security workers in Zarajsk district in the Appendix 17). Ordered and logical representations of poverty in this case fail to include real experiences of poor people. As a development worker in Ireland describes, it is poverty as policy makers want to see it: “they decide what elderly people want to do. So they put bingo in the Ionad Lae [day centre] for them because bingo is easy to set up”.

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354 See Noirin Nic Eachrain’s comments in Chapter 7 on this issue.
355 For instance, newcomers and women with children are considered as “deserved” recipients of welfare benefits.
356 As a head of social security service in Zarajsk region acknowledges, “poor people don’t get help until they come and register with us first” (Inga Khomyakova, 06/06/2000, Zarajsk).
357 This Instruction demonstrates that social workers are encouraged to adopt an approach to dealing with material poverty which can be easily assessed. For example, the instruction prescribes washing of the floors to be done once a month, although it does not say anything about how it is supposed to be done (due to regimented/linear nature of such a document). This rational way of tackling rural problems leaves little space for dealing with poverty. As a social worker in Zhilkontsy admits, “One can come to an old aged pensioner, bring in two buckets of water and leave happily once the procedure set out in the document has been followed. Another one comes and really looks after this pensioner as a person. That’s the real social service”. (Inna Gracheva, 09/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

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Importantly, homogenisation of poverty in its political representations entails cultural separation of poor people (as they do not share the same images of poverty) and ensuing exclusion from social networks.

4. Blurred poverty (absent links) – poverty which is not confined to specific spatial boundaries but is networked. Rational policy making fails to follow actors’ connections beyond the areas of its jurisdiction and therefore fails to understand real problems of poor people. For example, the poverty of pensioners who do not have children is overlooked because the absence of children-parent links is not registered in policy structures.

5. Different poverty (wrongly objectified) – poverty is not limited to the discursively constructed boundaries of a specific social group. Objectification of poverty obscures its heterogeneity and misrepresents other poverty experiences. For instance, the Irish Anti-poverty programme (1999, quoted in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (1999)) provides several representations of poverty – unemployment, income adequacy, educational disadvantage, urban disadvantage, and rural poverty – which overlook the issues of gender/disability/religion/marital status. In the similar vein, in Russian rural policies women’s poverty is seen as contingent on men’s problems, so that women’s experiences are overlooked.

6. Neglected ("natural") poverty – poverty of “others” which is taken for granted as a “natural” way of living and is therefore considered impossible to eradicate. Logical policy-making draws essentialist and exclusionist borders around the group classified as “poor”, who live in a permanent and “hopeless” poverty. Fixed definition of poverty in policy making implies stigmatisation of people identified as “poor” and their exclusion from social networks. People in the most troubled state are therefore confined to live in the situation of “double exclusion”, social and political.

7. False poverty (imitation) – poverty of the people who rely on social welfare while not “really” being in trouble. However, the downside of this rigid categorisation of poverty in rational policy making is exclusion of the “boundary” and “in-between” poverty experiences, which might appear “false”. For instance, social mobility of actors is not

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As a regional anti-poverty official in Russia states, “real “poor” families are those where poverty and drinking are transferred from generation to generation” (Olga Smirnova, 28/06/2000, Zarajsk). In a similar vein, an educational worker in Ireland talks about “cycle of disadvantage… where poor people are not going to be actually anything other than their parents were before” (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc).
accommodated within the rigid social welfare system so that single women are treated with suspicion. In result, very often single mothers are sidelined in the social support programmes and their troubles are overlooked. As a Russian social worker comments on a single woman’s behaviour: *She does not have a husband, but she lives with different men. She kills two birds with one stone: gets a man and a helper. And she still pretends to be poor!* (Grishina). Moreover, poor people are scared to participate in policy making because their boundary poverty experiences (for example, unofficial employment) may be interpreted as “false” and they lose their benefits.

In

Lay discourses of poor people provide several examples of poverty being accommodated within policy networks. The affects of policy networks on poverty can be summarised in the following ways:

1. The empowerment of poor people can be the way to address poverty-related problems. This gives poor people an ability to become part of policy network, share their lived knowledge of poverty and make decisions which can change their living conditions. As an Irish elderly bachelor states, “I do a lot in committees myself. And I see a lot of ones, who are working at committees, and they are looking only on their side of the story... I prefer to see there [in committees] ones working on the farm, working with the sheep, the cattle and everything, because they see a lot of what poverty is and know the ways we are living” (Rónán Greilish, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc).

2. Inclusion into policy networks can be the way to improve people’s living standards. Poverty in this case is accepted as a part of the system. As a shopkeeper in Ireland states, “if you are not working, you can get whatever you want from the government” (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc), a comment echoed by a pub owner: “the government gives us more money, and we do less and less” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc). Although the situation is different in Russia as funding is not readily available, inclusion in policy networks also provides additional resources.

3. Fluid policy making allows transformation of poverty into something different, which is not necessarily problematic (see Chapter 7 for examples). Sensuous politics attends to multiple differences and allows continuous reconfiguration of poverty arrangements. In so doing, it creates extra links for poor people within local contexts thus contributing

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to their social inclusion. Inclusion into policy networks also provides additional connections extending beyond specific spatial boundaries. More connections provide more choice, as a single mother in Ireland asserts: “poverty is not as a lack of wealth, but lack of opportunity. Say, if I have a choice to go and find a better job would not I be better off?” (Kaitlin Breathnach, 01/07/2001, Ros Muc).

4. Change of moral standing as a result of inclusion into policy networks. When poor people take part in decision making they can be considered as equally important (not subordinated) policy actors. This avoids stigmatisation and accepts fluid differences, that is the inclusion of the full range of equality issues (gender, disability, religion, marital status etc.) in policy making.

5. A re-discovered sense of purpose and self-esteem as a result of political inclusion. This inclusion also allows using additional resources to sort out local problems. In Russia, for example, inclusion of the elderly people who retire early and still have the willingness to help, boosts local morale. As a Russian retired teacher acknowledges, “I was pleased when people chose me to be their starosta because it means they respect me” (Valentina Golubeva, 25/06/2000, FG Khlopovo). In the similar vein, an Irish shop worker comments on involvement of lone mothers in policy-making: “working in committees have given people a little bit of self confidence” (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).

As this chapter demonstrates, people’s reactions to inclusion in policy networks are ambiguous. On the one hand, their poverty can be overlooked and aggravated if this inclusion means losing their local social connections. On the other hand, sensitive and sensuous interpretations of poverty within fluid policy making might improve the living conditions of poor people. Essentially, it is not just representations of poverty within policy making but also their correspondence with “real” lived poverty experiences which is important for a better understanding of the rural problematic. As this chapter shows, in cases when these representations allow space for fluid poverty experiences to be articulated in different ways/forms there is a chance for poverty alleviation. The affect of policy networks on poverty is therefore dependent on the qualities of these networks.

To be precise, poverty is constructed not in separate social and policy networks, but through their interaction. The next chapter considers positioning of poverty in policy making so that it can suggest the ways to deal with rural social malaise. Moreover, my analysis of difference and its place within social networks develops further to reveal its
influence on policy implementation. The following chapter finally brings these networks together and considers their interactions within specific rural contexts. It considers the affect of interrelations of networks on poverty and discusses possible changes in rural social policies.
CHAPTER 7. INTERRELATIONS IN CONTEXT: GAPS AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN POLICY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS
CHAPTER 7. INTERRELATIONS IN CONTEXT: GAPS AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN POLICY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

This chapter develops the discussion on contextualised social networks started earlier in this thesis. It also searches for connections, not just between actors within one particular kind of network (social networks), but also between agents involved in the multiplicity of networks where complex rural spaces are produced. Here I consider connections in general and between actors in the countryside. The idea is to unravel the webs of communications, ideas and artefacts linked together in specific locales, and to reveal the areas of cohesion or non-cohesion of social and policy networks in rural spaces.

Firstly, the chapter discusses the issue of convergence of different networks. Here I am interested to see whether or not the existence of dense social networks helps to bring together policy and social networks. Secondly, it focuses on the issue of similarity or dissimilarity of actors' positions within different networks and how these make it more or less conducive to establishing and maintaining connections with other actors. I examine in particular how different positioning provides variegated access to diverse resources.

Although interrelations between different networks can take different and complex forms, this chapter elucidates several major patterns of interaction found in the case study areas. To this end, it develops ideas about the restrictive and regulating character of rural governance discussed in the previous chapter to demonstrate how policy networks can regulate the roles of actors in social networks and channel these “lay” networks in a specific way to accommodate particular policy mechanisms.

This chapter continues by restating the need to abandon existing dichotomies of the “political” and the “everyday”, searching instead for signs of a new symbiotic form of policy making, which fully embraces everyday interactions. I discuss different temporalities of the merger of policy and social networks and follow the flows and connections within these networks to the point of their confluence to investigate the conditions allowing this coherence to occur. I conclude with an analysis of the situations when policy and social networks fail to meet. Here the absence of links between different webs of relations raises questions about the functionality of different networks and the ability to articulate connections which are not easily representable.

Introduction: morality and efficiency

Before I proceed to the analysis of the controlling influence of policy networks on everyday interactions there is a need to say more about commonality and difference
between the discourses describing the interrelations between different networks. I feel it is important from the outset to return to the discussion on heterogeneity of policy networks in Chapter 3. It referred to fluid and creative understanding of power by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to dismiss the idea about the homogeneity of policy actions within the spheres of the everyday and the political. As my analysis of the interviews with policy makers and lay people demonstrates, there is no unified and coherent response to policy networks, but two competing discourses to which people tend to adhere. One of these discursive strands concerns the morality of policy actions and the other focuses on the efficiency of policy interventions.

According to the proponents of the “morality” discourse, policy networks are ascribed a unifying role in the community. They are seen as bringing (isolated) people together for their own benefit, introducing some organising influence in a context where social order is lacking. Essentially, policy networking, for all its drawbacks and potential inefficiency, is taken as a positive process which makes things better for lay people. Here policy networks are pictured as a way of doing socially important work for the community and attempting to improve local living conditions. The other discursive strand summons the idea of efficiency as the underlying principle behind the functioning of policy networks. Here policy activities are seen as the way to make things happen, to actually deliver and implement socially important developments to specific communities. The functionality of policy networks in this discourse takes, a priori, the most important position since successful social development is seen as impossible without organising and streamlining messy voluntary activities.

There is no simple combination of these two discourses; they come together in various forms, either denying or complementing the influence of each other. For instance, in the “morality” discourse, regulation and control are generally considered as a negative influence of rigid and homogenising policy making. However, the same regulatory influences of policy networks on segregated and weak communities are seen as positive affects reinforcing collective moral values and improving the social structure of these villages. In this case successful implementation of policy initiatives within the framework of organisation and control breed confidence within local communities, bringing people together and mitigating local conflicts. On the other hand, opposition to the organising influences of policy networks does not necessarily mean a negation of

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359 As a former Russian rural administration official states: “People are lost. When you come and explain them what “skhod” [community meeting] means, they start to get closer together. Before that people were living like on different sides of the river”. (Yulia Sharapova, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)

360 A local shop owner comments on the work of the local development organisations: “They have given people a little bit of self confidence... You have to have a bit of confidence in your own place, you have confidence in people, you get to know them better” (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).
participation in their functioning. Specific individuals or groups might be opposed to the normalising and regulatory practices within policy mechanisms, but they still receive funding and organisational support for their activities which they consider morally important to improve social conditions of living. Different combinations of these discourses crop up throughout this chapter. Instead of prioritising one discourse over another I provide space for both to be voiced, thus elucidating their internal dynamics and conflicts within seemingly homogeneous responses to policy making. It is important to bear this heterogeneity of discourses in mind during the analysis of interrelations between social and policy networks, especially in the section focusing on control and regulation of everyday practices within policy structures.

Regulating the everyday – controlling policy networks

This section considers the correspondence of policy and social networks when the former are reshaped to accommodate the latter. It studies the dynamic nature of policy-making in this context, and its outcomes in terms of regulatory and organising influence on social relations within rural communities. It considers the effects of this confluence of networks on their structure, dynamics and scope, specifically focusing on the potential for excluding both of their constituent elements and of actors. This section also considers the interrelations between policy and social networks when they are treated separately as representing different (and conflicting) realms of the everyday and the political. In this context the need to organise and manage apparently chaotic and messy webs of relations between agents in social networks creates what Murdoch (1998) calls “standardised” networks. Such networks give stability to the changeable groupings of actors and prescribe the ways in which they are connected into groups. Policy networks in this case act to provide a coherent interpretation of everyday events.

As you know from Chapter 3, this rational articulation of everyday practices implies their homogenisation. “Standardised” policy networks are composed of fixed links between clearly distinctive actors, thus leaving limited space for “messy” and unpredictable connections between hybrid agents to be accommodated within their structure. This understanding of policy making entails an imposition of certain structures over everyday networks, which happens differently in the areas of my research in Ireland and Russia.

361 As an Irish pub worker comments: “I don’t belong to anything. There are committees and meetings. I don’t go to them or anything. I don’t think it is the way to get things done... But I think they do believe in their committees... And they’ve done an awful lot for senior citizens. You know they have all these security lights and everything fitted, and alarms... They do good things for them.” (Cristín Ó Haodha, 27/06/2001, RosMuc)

362 As I argued in Chapter 3 with recourse to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) idea about striated/smooth spaces, translation of everyday actions into a logical structure entails formalisation and homogenisation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call this process “a formal connection of decoded flows”.

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In the Irish village, development means "rationalisation" of everyday actions and creation of structures on the basis of local social networks. As a local shop owner, involved in several community development projects, puts it:

_I suppose, there is a history here, before anything gets done there has to be a committee to do it_ (Proinsias Ó Fearghail, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

An area development manager also stresses rationality and logic behind local policy making:

_A part of [the development] process is to make a more logical outlook and how to look at their relations... So they have to organise [themselves] reasonably OK._ (Fergal Connelly, 13/06/2001, Galway)

In the case of the superimposition of policy networks on social networks, local links are re-structured in such a way as to accommodate existing policy mechanisms. In Ros Muc, the local authorities used the pre-existing network of _mna tí -_ women who keep students - in order to gain access to the local community and to work for the reconstruction of the local hall. As a local cleric explains, in order to take part in this project, social networks had to be transformed (become "better" organised):

_Sergei: Who is running the village hall generally?_
_Tim Ó Caoinleáin: A group who is working for the parish council, I am one of them._
_Sergei: Is it like a Board?_
_Tim Ó Caoinleáin: Yes. There are about 6 people in the Board. We've been working for 4 years to put a roof on the hall – the hall was there without a roof for a quite a while and the rain came in and did a lot of damage. So we gathered money by running raffles and so on, the board and the local women who keep the students mostly. Because that hall is used by the students for 3 months. So if we did not have that hall, we would not have the students. So the women raffled tickets and raised money in other ways – about 23,000 pounds and the government supplemented it by giving us 110,000 pounds or £120,000 pounds... So those women were encouraged to organise a committee that had treasurers and so on and they kept on doing that work. They are still doing that. They were helped by the local co-operative... But they had to do a lot of the paperwork to keep that thing going._
_Sergei: So was this a voluntary organisation or a network which has been made more official?
Tim Ó Caoinléain: Well, it is still sort of voluntary, but they are working under this co-op. Because the co-op has specific grants they need to use, and they find it easier to work with already existing groups. (22/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Plate 25. Village hall in Ros Muc, which was repaired with the help of the community

In this case, relations between local people had to be formalised (and made representable) in order to become a part of a policy network. In fact, it is imperative for the informal local groups to be transformed (rationalised, visualised) in order to pursue development initiatives. Effectively, local social networks are absorbed within policy networks and changed to fit in within the existing development framework. The imposition of rigid and rational structure ("becoming a sub-committee") on local social networks is not just a desirable option, but essentially a requirement for local initiatives to be couched in the form of policy actions. An Irish development worker comments on this transformation of social links:

Sergei: How do coisit [committees] and development organisations come together?
Ailis Ó Cuinn: Three of us can sit down here and say: "What about a festival? Let's run a festival next summer, I think we need something". We will still be there if the co-op is there,

Chapter 3, following Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) ideas of power, emphasises that representation always leaves unrepresented singularity. Formalisation of social relations in this case leads to reduction of difference and rejection of creativity (creativity seen by Deleuze and Guattari as inventive reproduction of multiple links and arrangements).
but if we want funding as a group, we have to start formalising and so on. Now, if you have special interest coisti, say you have a good strong rounded community development organisation, co-op, the idea is that they would say: “There are 3 or 4 people interested and they want to run a festival. We support that”. So that coisti can effectively become a sort of sub-committee of the co-op. Now that requires somebody going out and making those links they suggested, using the links which already exist. That’s what Údarás [na Gaeltachta]364 would like to have as their structure. (14/06/2001, Galway)

Meanwhile, in the Irish village this process of “harmonization” of voluntary activities unfolds in a rather homogeneous space constructed through the interactions of similarly constructed social networks of extended kin365. In this case policy connections develop in a striated space, where the action is channelled through the limited (and therefore more controllable) number of rigid and fixed social ties366. The existence of clearly recognisable links within the area facilitates political action. As a local development worker admits:

For us it is easier to find [contacts] amongst the different people out there, so we would know who is in this committee, who is involved in that. So if you want for any particular reason to link in with that particular group, you would know the best person to contact in that area. (Rút Ní Mhaoláin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc)367

In the Russian villages of Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy the links within social networks are weak and do not provide “ready-made” channels for development of policy infrastructure. Here unlike in Ros Muc, policy makers create connections between local actors and impose a certain degree of control in communities which lack social cohesion and order. Recently a new level of governance has been introduced within both Russian villages, enabling them to elect their village leaders (“starosta”) and encouraging regular community meetings (“skhody”). This new policy-making infrastructure is designed to improve the social organisation of the communities, as a former local official admits:

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364 Údarás na Gaeltachta (The Gaeltacht Authority) is an organisation responsible for economic development of the Gaeltacht area, as well as community, cultural and language-development activities, working in partnership with local communities and organisations. With its headquarters at Na Forbacha, County Galway, Údarás na Gaeltachta has regional offices in Donegal, Mayo, Kerry and Cork.

365 See Chapter 5 for discussion on homogeneity of links in the Irish village.

366 Here I refer to the earlier discussion on differentiation/differentiation of space in Chapter 3. It argues, following Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) ideas about striation of space, that the state mechanisms of control are based on the conjugation of distinct flows.

367 In addition, as an Irish development worker notes, social groups within local community are simply transformed into “groups with a manager”: “People are linked with each other anyway, they are already organised... Funding... allows for people who want to get involved in voluntary work at least to be a member of a group, which has a manager” (Fergal Connelly, 13/06/2001, Galway).
You know, before me people were almost completely disorganised... You have to teach people how to do things. You have to organise villagers, you have to give them a sense of control... You know, it should become a habit, a system!.. Now my people are used to it. They know if I said there would be a skhod [community meeting], or if I come to the village, they all come to me. They know that I came there for a reason, to sort out a problem. I accustomed them to this system, to this organisation... Before that people communicated between each other somehow separately, but now they are all pulled together. (Yulia Sharapova, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)

In line with this ideology of new local governance, policy-networks are conceived as mechanisms of control which encourage what Wilson (1997) explains as “mutual learning in action”. The functioning of these policy networks is similar to the principles of lay-network building. In the Russian context, however, control means a rigid regulation of interactions within separated social networks in order to ensure the coherent implementation of policy initiatives. Although policy networks will attempt to use local experiences of collective work within neighbourhood groups, villagers are not really allowed independent thinking. The residents of Zhilkontsy provide an example of this regulated action, when they worked together within the village enhancement programme launched by the local administration:

Lyudmila Savel’eva: We had a skhod [community meeting] when we tidied up our cemetery last year.

Tamara Zakutina: Yes, we did it altogether, the whole village. The fencing was of course made by the professionals. But the cleaning itself, we did it ourselves. Nina[^368] [the head of rural administration] brought the tractor, she organised the skhod. We were asked to bring rakes, our neighbours were told to bring spades. People who were younger were supposed to load the tractor. Starosta [village leader] was supposed to keep the minutes of the skhod and ensure everyone does their job.

Irina Fedotova: We were hacking down the bushes with our neighbours, others raked rubbish, put it in piles, cleaned the cemetery.

Tamara Zakutina: Starosta and Nina also went around the village to make sure people cleaned the spaces in front of their houses. They even made everybody sign that they agreed to do it.

Sergei: How was it all organised?

[^368]: Kept anonymous.
Irina Fedotova: Nina phoned the starosta and he wrote a note on the clubhouse. So then everyone can come. (14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)

Villagers, however, do not accept this newly organised “starosta-skhod” system as a local authority. Weak and messy connections between community members are not captured within this new regulatory mechanism\(^{369}\). The failure to appropriate local social networks within the organisational framework of policy making is recognised by a local authority member:

The starosta does not represent an authority. It is a voluntary job, you know. People elect him to be my helper, not more than that. He’s got a telephone installed in his house and he can call me and say: “Everything is OK in the village today”. He can tell me what’s going on in the village. But he cannot bring people together to do something feasible, something like reconstruction of the well... And people themselves don’t think the starosta can tackle the problems himself. (Svetlana Kamneva, 27/06/2000, Zhuravna)\(^{370}\)

At the same time, local social networks in the Russian villages are manipulated in other ways to bring them together with the existing policy networks. Instead of creating new organisational links, local authorities reinforce and formalise already existing connections, which are traced through one of the key actors in the community. In Khlopovo the imposition of control by the local authorities guarantees the involvement of a local nurse into policy actions which seemingly lie outside of her area of expertise. She explains that her co-operation with the local authorities, when her informal links as a villager are accommodated within a wider policy network, is instigated by the fear of losing her job:

Orina Tonkova: The head of rural administration asks me to help her, say, to collect signatures for petition to open a new hospital. Because she does not want to do it. Although it is not my job, I know local people, I know where to go, they won’t refuse to help me. The same happens before the elections. I also go around the village and distribute election leaflets. I also go and collect taxes from the dachniki. It is not my job, but I cannot refuse it.

\(^{369}\) As a Russian librarian admits, “people do not listen to the starosta. Who is going to listen to him? They help each other in their daily lives, but they don’t do it because of the starosta”. (Tamara Zakutina, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

\(^{370}\) The internal segregation of these communities also discourages the introduction of regulation and control brought about with the development of policy infrastructure. Weak community structure of the villages, lack of social order and blurred intra-village connections do not provide an ideal base for functioning of standardised policy networks. As I argued in Chapter 3, difference (created in this case through multiple disorganised connections) is the hindrance for the mechanisms of appropriation and control.
Sergei: Why do you agree to do it?

Orina Tonkova: How can I refuse it? If I help her, she helps me... She will cover me if I’m in trouble. [If I am not at work] she will say that she sent me somewhere to do something for the rural administration. It is control, but it is also a reliable safety net. (27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

The accommodation of social networks and voluntary groups within rigid development frameworks requires a standardisation of their working practices. Connections between actors are made visible, reliable and more “holistic”, which implies their inevitable unification and separation from “messy” everyday links. As this excerpt from an interview with an Irish development worker testifies, coherence between policy and social networks in this case is achieved by means of the exclusion of unstable informal links:

“There is a local politician, who is on the county council here and he is also on the board in Údarás na Gaeltachta.... He fought bitterly for two years to stop any funding going to any organisation in the Gaeltacht that is not a co-op... Because they were locked into the notion that this was a right kind of organisation... [There are] also what we call coisti in Irish, which means committee... Very voluntary, very informal, group of concerned people form a coisti. And very little grant aid, no paid workers. But the Údarás philosophy would be as we have co-ops, they are core funded, they pay for a manager and they pay for running costs and they have a building somewhere, they would like the co-op to diversify as an organisation and be more democratic, be more holistic, provide social and economic service in the community. And then they would have only one organisation which they core-fund... [They] are so involved in the culture of the co-op so they could not deviate from that.” (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)

In this case policy networks are superimposed on local social networks and the roles of the agents within the latter are manipulated. Embeddedness of policy action within the local community gives the appearance of bottom-up and heterogeneous decision-making, as if initiatives were coming from the villagers themselves. In reality, however, participation of local people in this “heterogeneous” policy making is limited. A perfect match between “regulated” social networks and “organising” policy structures is achieved by means of the hollowing out of heterogeneous links between a limited numbers of actors. The multiplicity of connections between people in local social networks is reduced to a

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371 As I argued in the Introduction, the inability to attend to “messiness” of everyday practices entails otherness and exclusion.
functional (pragmatic) communication regulated within overarching policy structures. Effectively, "good links" of reciprocity and communication within social networks which provide wide opportunities for mutual help and support are superseded by more restricted "give-and-take" ties integrated in the policy mechanism. A host of different social groups (networks) and policy organisations which appear to be involved in local policy making is reduced to a few personalities. This is true for both Russia where villagers personalise policy actors.

"Maria is a one-woman selsovet [rural administration]. She's been working there for the last 15 years" (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

and for Ireland, where a few policy makers "wear different hats at the same time":

Rút Ní Mhaoldáin: ...a lot of the same people would be involved in different organisations. So it is very difficult, it is not so much all different organisations coming together, but maybe two or three people would be members of different organisations.
Sergei: Is it literally two or three people talking to each other on behalf of different bodies?
Rút Ní Mhaoldáin: Yes, it could well be... what I mean is that maybe two or three people would be involved in all different organisations and you know when you are coming together you might be wearing three or four different hats at one time. The organisations would be bigger than that. What I mean is that maybe one or two people may be involved in different committees. (22/06/2001, Ros Muc)

Thus, these somewhat rigidly organised policy networks often have controlling and exclusive influence on localised social networks. This encourages the confluence of the two networks in a regulated way, and also engenders subversive and tactical social actions, which I consider in the following section.

Working "against the grain": inventive and subversive everyday practices

This section considers the peculiar logic of everyday practices within the formal generalities of policy-making mechanisms. It studies the interrelations between social and

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372 As I argued earlier in this Chapter and Chapter 3, referring to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) ideas about construction of space, connection of flows (smoothening of space) implies their mutual acceleration, while conjugation of flows (striation of space) entails blockage of movement and deterioration of quality of connections.
373 I will consider exclusivity of the interrelations between the networks in more detail later in this thesis.
374 Policy actors become symbolical figures because of the very limited number of people involved in local development.
375 Deliberately kept anonymous.
policy networks when the former operate within the blindspots of the overarching policy structures. Everyday connections produce a combination of creative moments of “getting by” within policy networks and “rubbing against” the existing structures of governance. The confluence of the two networks happens when transformatory social interactions complement policy mechanisms or resemble them, changing the energy of domination into a creative force working outside the governing structures. As I argued in Chapter 3, lay (everyday) networks are involved in tactical activities of resistance or, in de Certeau’s (1984) terms, “common and silent, almost sheeplike subversion” [p.200] of the existing order. Opposition to the reductionist (homogenising) influences of rigid policy control in this case involves taking advantage of the “opportunities” arising within policy structures and creative appropriation of materials and connections falling out of policy networks.

In both Russian and Irish villages people are actively involved in the functioning of “informal” economies. Social connections, in this case, develop within the space in policy networks where control is lacking. In the Russian village, a former tractor driver talks about the ways to do unregistered ploughing disguised as work for the collective farm which employs him:

_We call it “kalym”. It is when you plough a field for someone you know in the village on the way to the collective farm field. It is the only way to earn something. You’ve got work, but the salary is only 400 rubles, and they work you out for this money, believe me! It is only when you’ve got “kalym” you can buy some clothes._ (Alexei Shalimov, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

In this case tactical activities within the local social networks (“someone you know”) are seen as a resistance to the efficiency drive within the local collective farm, which is considered by the locals as a local authority. From this standpoint it is similar to what de Certeau (1984) considers as a resistance of the everyday activities to the technological domination, bodily resistance against the (political) machines (see also discussion on this issue in Chapter 3). On the one hand, this escape from domination and control provides opportunities for this actor to continue his work within the local policy making structure and to maintain his place within it. On the other, this tractor driver helps to maintain connections within local social networks based on trust (otherwise he risks being caught) as he helps his fellow villagers. In so doing, this actor becomes the point of connection, the

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376 See discussion on de Certeau’s (1984) vision of resistance, which hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination and resists representation in Chapter 3.
377 See discussion on this point in Chapter 3.
link which brings social and policy networks together (however dubious his moral position).

In the Irish village these links are constructed differently. The development of informal (or illegal) connections between people involved in the “black” economy is encouraged by the existing policy measures:

*Take another example of even the EU: the subsidies for cattle and sheep and things like that. Like, you are not raising cattle and sheep now to have cattle and sheep; you are doing it to get the subsidies. And there is all the fraud that has come up around these subsidies. Because like people say to each other: “Look, we don’t even need the...ing sheep. Just put on the form that you have sheep and you will get the money” (laughing). And because this is a close community, everyone else does it.* (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)

In this context, informal links develop within the structures established by the policy makers. Strengthened local links of informal interaction in this case fit within the system of subsidy allocation.

Secondly, social networks act as a substitute for non-flexible policy mechanisms which do not function properly in a particular locality. The framework of social capital enables individuals to act directly to solve their problems, so that “lay” networks resemble policy networks. This is different from the scenario considered earlier in this chapter, when policy-networks are reconfigured to accommodate “lay” networks through rationalisation and control. Social networks working in spaces “in-between” policy links are not deliberately transformed to incorporate the functions of the latter. It is a confluence of the intentional and unintentional reasons that creates a framework of social capital and transforms “lay” networks into self-organising systems of action, resembling policy-networks.

In the Russian villages of Khlopovo and Zhilkontsy, actors linked within social networks make tactical use of existing rigid and exclusive medical service provision. Social connections within the village, however, provide opportunities for these people to be included. The local nurse at times “forgets” to ask about medical insurance cards, as a shepherd in Khlopovo explain:

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378 People come together because of the lack of state support. They are forced to deal with their problems collectively.

379 Most of the villagers cannot afford the medicines available on sale at the local medical attendant’s house. Moreover, only long-term local residents are entitled to free medical help and they have to produce a medical insurance card to get it. Newcomers and poor villagers are, therefore, excluded from the system of medical service provision.
Alexandra Podkolzina: Although my family, we are newcomers, the local nurse helps us.

Sergei: Doesn’t she ask you about your medical insurance card?

Alexandra Podkolzina: No she does not. Because she knows that I don’t have it (laughs). I was given a temporary card, but only for 3 months. That has already expired and I cannot renew it. Thank God the nurse helps us. I don’t care if I get ill, but if my children are ill we will be in trouble. (22/06/2000, Khlopovo)

In a similar vein, an Irish educational worker describes the way they found a solution to accommodate a deviant child in the community by going against the rules of the educational system:

This child was refusing to be assessed. He needed to be assessed in order to get a councillor assistant from the Department of Education. He was generally distracting the class at school... other parents have threatened to take their children home from school, because of his behaviour in the yard... And the problem was that nobody knew what to do with him, really... So there were suggestions around whether the child should be sent to a detention centre, where people deal with children with psychiatric problems. And this was one option. But I felt this was Draconian. So we brought in a mature mother... We were not sure about the mother of the child, but it worked... It was a mere supposition, not sure we were allowed to do it, risk everything on it... People in the rural area have no homework supports after schools. And even if there was [support], if he was displaying this kind of behaviour, he would be excluded. (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

All these cases exemplify the transformation of social networks into the sets of powerful connections which can be viewed as a part of policy mechanisms. This transformation, however, does not imply a change in the quality of social connections since they are based on trust and reciprocity and remain heterogeneous and fluid. Fluidity of social links allows them to escape the normalising influence of policy networks, while their heterogeneity

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380 In the similar way, people who cannot afford medical help are given medicines in credit, as a Russian nurse confesses: “Just between two of us... I tell them: “I will give the medicine to you now, and you will pay me when you get paid or receive your pension”. I know people in the village, I cannot let them down”. (Orina Tonkova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

381 Deliberately kept anonymous.

382 Another example of tactical political action is provided in the chapter on policy networks, when Darysheva explains the mechanism of “emergency” placement of villagers in the local hospital in breach of existing regulations.

383 As I argued in Chapter 3, networked vision of power (mainly developed by Foucault (1980)) describes it as the ability of actors to mobilise other connections. Power, in case of social networks working “against the grain” of the existing order, is not associated exclusively with domination, but with the strength of social associations and the ability to maintain them.
provides opportunity for symbiotic existence with the links in the policy structures. Social connections complement absent links within policy networks and reinforce already existing ties. The confluence of networks therefore improves both the efficiency of policy mechanisms and their moral importance. On the other hand, alternative connections and access to resources within policy networks ensure the existence of social networks, as well as increasing opportunities to bring people together within rural communities.

**Temporary merger of networks**

The aim of this section is to consider situations in which social and policy networks come together in times of community trouble. These mergers, although temporary, reveal the patterns of interaction between the networks in terms of their organisational adaptation, information and communication dynamics, and formulation of perceptions and goals in cases of crisis. External/internal danger also tests the durability and quality of links within networks and exposes the informal hierarchies and joint ("compromised") mechanisms of decision-making which are created during their merger. The reality of crisis exposes different organisational cultures, collaborating mechanisms and competing interests within these networks which were not apparent before the trouble. It also reveals the role of shared histories of mutual co-operation, tough negotiations or outright competition and rivalry between members of these networks.

There are two major strands of participatory tactics used by actors within different networks during community crises: contest and collaboration. In the first strand - contest - the tactics used are based on a conflictual approach, including protest and subversive activities. In this case, the actors utilise their connections within social networks to challenge dominant policy structures, and this action eventually brings the networks together. An example of such protest community action is provided by people in the Russian village of Khlopovo who worked together against the rigid system of water regulation implemented by the local collective farm:

*Orina Tonkova: We kept asking: “please, lower the level of water, we’ve got the bridge under the water”. Then, we came together, dug the breach in the dam, and the water level*

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384 Here I refer to de Certeau’s (1984) distinction between tactical and strategic action, which is discussed in Chapter 3. Tactics in this case is seen as a decentralised action, which opens up possibilities, links up polycentric patterns of action together, and creates networks.

385 Two parts of the village located on two banks of a small pond are connected by the long bridge, which gets flooded every time collective farm stores the water in reservoir. The technicians from the local collective farm are in charge of the water level regulation, but they follow rigid operational rules which do not allow quick and flexible responses to flooding.
dropped. We had a former farm manager with us, he knew where to dig. Later, the collective farm put the pipes in there, and everything was OK.

Ekaterina Kazakova: The collective farm manager, she did not want to do it. She was worried that if she released water on the fields, she would be fined. People from the district administration would come and punish her.

Polina Zhuravleva: That's why they did not give tractors to help us.

Orina Tonkova: How do you call it? A discharge-cock? There is a thing which lets the water out slowly. When the level is low enough, they close it. But the fishermen broke it, so it was not possible to open this discharge-cock again. The collective farm manager said: “We are opening it for you for the last time. If you break it again, I am not going to help”. That's exactly what happened. So people had no other option but to take the spades and dig the hole in the dam.

Valentin Egorychev: So they could walk across the bridge to another part of the village.

Orina Tonkova: And later the whole village went to see how they restored the dam. We looked in the eyes of the collective farm manager. And people actually helped to restore it, because it is our place and we have to look after it.

Polina Zhuravleva: And she did not say anything. Because she understands that we did the right thing. She knew that we have to do things together when it concerns the whole village.

(20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)

Plate 26. The “pond of conflict” in Khlopovo
In this case, collective action within the local social network suggested the need for flexibility and adaptability within the organisational structures of the collective farm. The ensuing agreement on water regulation and co-operation in restoring the dam demonstrate the coalescence of the networks. A process-leadership role was performed by the key actors within the social networks (especially the former farm manager), who formed a connecting link between the establishment and the community, shortening the distance between the two and making it easier to come to an agreement. This key actor enjoys the respect of people in the community and still maintains good relationships with policy makers. In fact, the involvement of the former farm manager in the protest action helped to avoid long-term conflict between the collective farm and the community and to create an interpersonal relational system between the two networks. The merger of the networks in this case was, however, very limited. The links between the key actors and a temporary co-operative work did not create a proper coalition between the villagers and policy makers where they all shared values and norms.

The second group of tactics used in crisis – collaboration – is based on stronger agreement and readiness to act in cooperation. In this case the intensity of participation in the joint activities, and the extent and durability of the inter-network links are much more significant. A local educational worker in an Irish village gives the example of such temporary merger in crisis:

There was a problem with the absence of the second teacher in the [local] school... And the parents saw people removing their children from the school and sending them outside for education... That left the school with low numbers. And in danger... The parents who came ... would be the elected representatives [in their schools]. And we worked with them for 6 months until we resolved the problem... Those parents now know that when they have an issue, and they could come for help... And we know that if they need help, they will come... There was a general unrest in the community. There was a crisis in the school, the parents were angry with other parents, who took their children out... So we had a meeting of the parents, all parents... And what we wanted to achieve was just to look at the problem and find out what were the real issues. And parents, they were very, very honourable. They did not try to turn it into mayhem. They spoke about what their experiences were, both sets of parents were there. What we did, we planned a strategy around how we were going to deal with that issue. And they had already asked for a

386 For example, a farmer in Khlopovo refers to the former farm manager as "the man of sense. He knows what to do" (Natalia Belkina, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo).
387 "He used to be a branch manager, sort of right-hand man of the collective farm director. They still ask his advice on the local matters" (Polina Zhuravleva, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)
meeting with the chief executive officer of the [local educational authority]... And we had to organise that meeting so that the parents would be able to speak and their voices be heard... We were looking for an outsider to chair the meeting... We filtered out the key points and we picked key people to make those points at the meeting. They volunteered in the group that night. So it was logical, clearly defined and what was asked was reasonable... Because otherwise... people would have gone to that meeting, they would have been talking about lockers and buses and wet days and whatever. And he would have been able to just ignore it. So when they went to the meeting, they made their points and the action was taken... The CEO ... went off the deep end. He's never been in the situation when the parents have actually managed to achieve what they achieved at that time. So he bullied the school, the principal, he moved teachers around. And it was very obvious sort of, "night of the long knives" in [the local community and] the school, while it could have been handled much more delicately... Parents behaved with dignity, but the behaviour of the authorities was undignified. So there were a lot of repercussions on that, which actually in the end of it wall was for the good [of the whole community]. Because it brought all this stuff out and brought people together. (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

In this case, the intervention of policy makers in a situation of "community unrest" helped to bring people together. Moreover, experience of collaborative work established long-term links of trust and support between the members of different networks. The adaptation of policy and social networks to a crisis situation was different. Firstly, the confluence of the networks implied their (re)structuring. On the one hand, the routine-oriented bureaucratic hierarchy of the educational authority and formal chains of command and communication had to be reconsidered in order to deal with the uncertainty and turbulence within local social networks. In fact, links between policy makers were made more fluid: an outsider was brought in to mediate discussion, subordination within policy hierarchy was challenged, and an opportunity for wider participation of social actors was provided. A combination of rule-driven (logical structure) and improvisation driven (bringing in an outsider) deliberation and consensual decision-making allowed the accommodation of social links, in their contradictory and messy (heterogeneous) form, within the policy structure for the duration of the conflict.

Moreover, fluid and heterogeneous social connections within the village were reorganised to fit within policy structure. In the community crisis social connections were transformed to enable them to act in a more "pragmatic" way. Everyday community practices ("lockers and buses and wet days") had to be made meaningful and translated into clear, specific and
logical statements ("key points") in order to transform them into functional links within an organisational structure.

Secondly, the merger of the networks brought about long-term changes in the social and political landscape of the area. Understanding of the role of social networks in the policy-making process helped to build durable relationships of trust between lay people and policy makers. This case therefore reaffirms the conclusions made in Chapter 3 about the inability of exclusively rational policy making to address heterogeneous poverty. The confluence of the networks provided greater scope for learning and dealing with local problems than a centralised arrangement would have. Doing away with the technocratic and mechanistic approach to problem-solving helped to both preserve the coherence of educational system and to re-integrate the local community. The coalescence of the networks elucidated their weak points. It demonstrated that social networks are good at creating variants for resolving the situation, but that they do a poor job in selecting from them and retaining the selected options. Moreover, it showed that the imposition of a more unified command structure could have come down heavily on conflicting behaviour, but that this would not have resolved the long-term problems and would have also eliminated niches for possible future co-operation and inclusive participation.

The merger of social and policy networks therefore creates a more efficient and morally sound field of community action. It helps to increase the selection of ideas so as to find alternatives for coping with community crisis, allows for integration of various professional and practical experiences, facilitates exploration of underlying reasons for conflicts, and motivates different network members to work on the problems in a morally sound and respectful way despite conflicting ideas. Temporary confluence of networks, in this case, provides a base for wider inclusion in community work and policy action, and suggests ways to make this merger permanent. The next section considers long-term changes in policy making which make it chime with the social interactions within rural communities.

**Becoming fluid: connections between policy and social flows**

This section studies the interactions between social and policy networks within spaces where difference is not fixed\(^{388}\) and where geometrical links are not prioritised over non-linear connections. The focus is on the specific mixture of striated and smooth spaces (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) where the former are being enveloped in the latter. I study

\(^{388}\) Here I refer to fluid understanding of difference suggested (after Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) in Chapter 3.
the smoothening of fixed and directional links, the reversal of hierarchies and formal (bureaucratic) patterns of action, and their transformation into more directional and amorphous forms\textsuperscript{389}. Here I am interested to see how policy networks accommodate social networks and how their linear and dimensional links follow fluid flows and social connections. In other words, I am teasing out the emerging signs of fluid politics and monitoring the process of rhizomatic transformation of policy networks.

First, the section focuses on the ways in which fluid politics develop in so-called animation schemes, where policy makers are acting "in space" rather than "in front of it"\textsuperscript{390}. Changing the positionality of policy actions (decentralisation and de-normalisation), in this case, brings them closer to interpreting everyday experiences within social networks. Second, the section proceeds with the analysis of interactive policy making where everyday practices are not disciplined within the isolated sphere of the political but allowed in all their heterogeneity. The confluence of the networks in this context happens when everyday connections "feed back" into policy structures and replace some of the policy links. Third, the section considers situations of creative interpretation of everyday experiences within policy networks. Inventive adaptation of policy structures to the fluidity of social interactions blurs the boundaries of their jurisdiction and makes their functioning more uncertain\textsuperscript{391}.

**Animation**

In the case of animation, policy networks are transformed in a way which helps to more closely understand and experience the reality of rural living and communication within local social networks. A policy actor in this case acts as a catalyst, or animator, with the objective of facilitating the development process in which previously controlled and oppressed people become creative subjects of the policy making rather than passive objects. As Banks (1990) suggests, "the need is much more for a facilitator or enabler, than for a tutor" (p.229, quoted in Scott \textit{et al.}, 1991). In other words, the role of the animator is not to "develop" rural people in the transitive sense, but to create a space in which they can improve their living conditions themselves. Dialogue in this case is not limited to isolated policy actors and isolated villagers; it takes place between rural people and their living world.

\textsuperscript{389} Here I ground my theoretical discussion in Chapter 3 on fluid and creative power and consider how it is enacted in different ways in fluid politics.

\textsuperscript{390} Here I refer to networked vision of politics discussed in Chapter 3

\textsuperscript{391} In this section I ground theoretical ideas about uncertain politics (discussed in Chapter 3) in specific contexts of the Russian and the Irish villages.
In the Russian and Irish villages, animation is therefore interpreted as a process of opening up opportunities for rural people. It implies mobility and action, immersion in rural life, and direct and indirect encouragement. As a former local official explains:

*These days policy makers should not be sitting in their office... guarding that office. They should be in the field, going around doing their work and living with people*”. (Yulia Sharapova, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)

There is still some sort of control and organisation involved in animation, as an area development manager in Ireland describes:

*Animation means facilitation where the partnership companies will help communities or individuals in a hand-held way to evolve to a process of thinking through their problems. It could also involve secondary funding, dealing with difficulties with planning permissions. It could also involve encouraging the process of [programme] design so that the communities themselves are involved in the layout design and picking up of what the real needs are locally.* (Fergal Connelly, 13/06/2001, Galway)

In this case the degree and conditions of merger between social and policy networks are regulated by policy mechanisms. Although initially policy makers immerse themselves within the reality of rural life (through participant observation or spontaneous interviews) over a certain period of time, they later extract from this reality a series of themes which they consider central to the participants’ life preoccupations. In fact heterogeneous reality is eventually reduced to the number of issues which can be handled within the existing development framework.

Still, animation encourages people’s involvement in policy actions which may improve their living conditions. Social actors in this case willingly follow patterns of interactions and modes of behaviour suggested by policy makers. Policy actors reinforce the values and norms of activism, serving as a source of inspiration and leadership, radiating a sense of security and helping to cope with situations of uncertainty and conflict. A local cleric in the Irish village provides an example of the animating action:

*We hoped to get the money to build a football field, a large football field. People were talking about it in the village, during the mass... I didn’t have trouble getting support once the word was passed from person to person, from family to family. It was amazing that people came. A lot of people that would not be... normally coming... that would normally*
stay away [came] because I was involved... Because people have a special regard for [a local cleric], because he represents something important to them... I went back to Oughterard, which is 20 miles from here, because I've been working there. That gave me an advantage. But if I had not, I would not have the courage to go to a place like Oughterard, but I sold 3,000 pounds, maybe 4,000 pounds worth of tickets in that parish, a large parish with wealthy people. But if I did not know them, I might have sold just 100 or 200 pounds worth of tickets. So it is knowing people that makes a big difference. And then football people ... got up together and sold 20 pound tickets all over Connemara. They raised about 80,000 pounds... They probably had cousins or sisters or brothers in the outlying parishes, so that network was there (Tim Ó Caoineáin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc).

Plate 27. The results of animation: football field in Ros Muc

Policy makers virtually connect policy and social networks, or at least shorten the distance between the two and create links between other policy actors and rural dwellers. Animators in the Russian villages tended to be those people who play a key role in the local community and represent a certain policy network (a local nurse or a librarian). Animation, in this case, improves the efficiency of policy networks and reinforces community values, as well as instilling traditions of collective action392.

392 A librarian in Zhilkontsy provides an example of animation reinforcing community values: “There used to be a rubbish pit in the ravine... So me and the head of local administration, we cleared it all, just two of us.... Now, this year, people came together and cleaned their village. There is no rubbish, everything is clear”. (Tamara Zakutina, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)
The role of animators here is to define the needs of the area and encourage local action to meet these needs. As a pub owner puts it, the task of these programmes is “to assist people to defrost” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc). Policy actions do not neutralise social networks, rather, they encourage social actors to use their local connections in different ways and to rediscover the multiplicity of local links. Although animating practices try to accommodate a multiplicity of local links, they inevitably subjugate and, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) put it, “metricize” them. The next section considers the ways policy networks provide space for extension and renewal of social networks which enrich these policy structures.

Interaction

The coexistence and intermixing of striating and smoothening practices does not simply imply encoding and translation of the latter by the former; it also means allowing propagation of non-metric multiplicity and its extension into the striated space, thus providing an “impulse without which it would perhaps die of its own accord” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 486). This section considers the situation of merging policy and social networks when the latter are allowed to penetrate and to transform the former from inside. As you know from Chapter 3, interactive politics encourages the participation and accommodation of different social activities thus broadening an understanding of poverty. Fluid politics allows for anticipating responses and hybridisation of policy mechanisms, as an educational worker in Ros Muc testifies:

Courses are difficult to set up in rural areas because of infrastructure, lack of support... It takes time for people to decide whether they want to do it or not... [We deal with it] by making opportunities available to them. And by letting them know what is available. If it is computer training or various other smarter courses, trying to tailor the course to meet the needs of the people... [You] anticipate what people tell you about what they want... We do different modules and... run night-time courses... because people don't come wanting to do the same thing (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

Interactive policy-making implies following flows of communications between actors, mapping these connections, and transforming policy links. A rural administration official in Khlopovo provides an example of this interactive action:

393 See also discussion on striation of space in Chapter 3.
Say, we are thinking about setting up electricity poles. We don’t rush with it because we don’t have a lot of money. We know that dachniki are coming into this village, and they might need electricity. And now, dachniki come to me: “We need to install electric equipment there. We only need a tractor, we’ve got everything else. We will do the job ourselves”. We helped them, and saved money. And everyone is happy. (Marina Tomilina, 15/06/2000, Zhuravna)

Interactivity therefore is not linear and does not produce fixed, immutable material objects and connections, but rather fluid (“becoming”) arrangements of actors. In this situation, the incidences and forms of inter-network correlation are uncertain, as an Irish area development manager states:

Partnership process development is uncertain... the one in Ros Muc evolved all by accident. One thing led to another... [a local community leader] said: “Let’s try this, see how it goes”. And the community were questioned... what was a driving [force] in Ros Muc was that the community centre was the drain on the community resources and then they somehow found the way to keep it viable... Pléaráca then, they started as a community arts program. The original funding was from Europe. The local minister at that time tried to find different ways of getting money for them. So he married them to the community development programme. It was a perfect match, because it was close enough, and that’s how things happened. (Fergal Connelly, 13/06/2001, Galway)

Insofar as the policy work is interactive, policy makers give up full control over the sequence of events that every single participant will encounter and choose to experience, allowing their experiences to vary with each interaction. Interactivity therefore brings hybridisation or symbiosis of policy links and social connections, which means a combination of their qualities. Policy-making remains a goal-driven process, which includes more uncertain and improvisatory forms. The emerging signs of interactivity do not entail a revolution in policy-making; they are in fact only interactive to some extent. The only choice the interactor has is which of the policy options to choose and when to experience them. Interactive politics therefore does not imply simply a laissez-faire

394 Pléaráca Teo (Community Arts Scheme) was founded as a service to improve the living standards of the Gaeltacht communities from the point of view of arts/social and cultural events. The organisation is particularly directed at the communities of Ros Muc, Camus, Cill Ciarán and South Connemara in general. Pléaráca is funded by the Community Development Programme of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.
approach, but something more accountable, something which puts the results of interactive communication within the policy context. As a development worker in Ireland states:

If you are going to consult with people, you have to actually tell them what will be the results of the consultation... And whether they are likely to be incorporated in something or likely to influence policy... As opposed to using the community to say "we did consultation"... Say, the government's only public consultation for the new National Health strategy for Ireland for the next 5 years was to put a notice in the Irish Times. (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway)

This excerpt from the interview provides an example of policy networks being unable to manage positively the complexity of the relationship between policy and practice. Interactive policy-making makes a gesture towards openness but then swiftly forecloses participatory options for non-policy actors: some options are available but not others, and the space and rules for interaction are defined in advance. This keeps policy structures stable and effective, at the same time allowing for policy makers to be seen publicly to be successful in working with communities.

"Blurred boundaries": creativity and invention

This section develops the discussion on fluid politics in Chapter 3 and studies different mechanisms of creative and inventive policy making in the Russian and the Irish contexts. It considers situations where state practices reflect a continuing transformation (or mutation) of flows generated within the dynamic connections between (lay) actors. In so doing, the state mechanisms transcend the clear boundaries of regulated striated space; they become "determinitorialised" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This produces a correlation between flows, which can either interact to accelerate one another (what Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, call the connection of flows) or which incorporate or translate one another thereby blocking their movement (conjugation of flows). This section reveals particular ways in which determinitorialised and metamorphic flows within the system of policy making are connected with the flows and activities in the social field. I am interested to see how emerging heterogeneous, creative and more "human" links within technological policy networks create mutually supportive and productive connections with social networks. Determinitorialisation of policy links means that they escape stabilisation and fixation within a certain territory or operational field. In this case the boundaries, forms and scope of policy practices become blurred and uncertain. Creative transformation of policy links
brings them together with changeable social networks. A utility worker in Khlopovo provides an example of such confluence of the networks:

"Most of the things we do together with the villagers. We don't get enough spare parts from Zarajsk [district centre]. So my workers dig over scrap metal piles trying to find something. And we ask local people, they bring spare parts to us. They understand that we are improvising with limited resources." (Anastasia Krutova, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

The existence of strong norms (such as women don't work\textsuperscript{395}) and the social closeness of the Irish village\textsuperscript{396} don't allow too much space for policy experimentation. Creative policy making, however, can get people involved and can make use of local connections. For example, the crèche project in Ros Muc encourages local women to avail themselves of the educational programmes introduced to the area, as a community worker states:

\textit{What we are looking at, at the moment, is a crèche. So the sub-committee is made up of Cumas\textsuperscript{397}, Pléaráca, the parents of children, VTOS\textsuperscript{398}. Like the parents will know what's needed. We know what we could provide. Cumas will know about the funding. Muintearas\textsuperscript{399} will be also involved in it as they will provide training for the individuals about the crèche... I don't think it is very healthy for any organisation just to go out on their own and try to save the world, because you would have to have respect for all the other people... in your area... Let's go back now to women at home. It is difficult to bring them anyway... If a woman does not have facilities for her child, we have arts classes and stuff like that – if they don't have a facility for their child, how can they avail (themselves) of the workshop?.. We free them to go to work, we free them for further education, free then to attend workshops, free them to do what they want to do if that facility was there. It is all sort of interlinked – parents, work, education, workshops, social life, parish council, which is another committee.} (Rút Ní Mhaoláin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc)

\textsuperscript{395} See chapter on social networks in context.
\textsuperscript{396} See Chapter 5 for discussion on this issue.
\textsuperscript{397} Cumas Teo. is an area development company (partnership) responsible for social, economic and cultural development in the Irish speaking part of Conamara.
\textsuperscript{398} Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a EU funded programme which provides unemployed people with the opportunities for education and training with a view to progression to employment.
\textsuperscript{399} Muintearas is the Gaeltacht Education Project developed by the local community co-operative in Ceantar na nOileán (county Galway) to invest in human resource development, particularly in early childhood education. Co-funded by the Gaeltacht Authority (Údarás na Gaeltachta) and the EU Muintearas is currently operating a wide variety of innovative programmes in the Gaeltacht areas in order to provide training/educational opportunities for the various sectors of local communities.
In this case inventive policy making links together policy and social actors. On the other hand, local actors within cohesive (but bounded) social networks in the Irish village more easily compromise over their common goals, thus facilitating the construction of the inter-network links. Better understanding of development practices by local people also encourages a creative transformation of policy links and the merger of the networks. Compare the understanding of fluidity of policy mechanisms described by a farmer’s wife (1) and an educational worker (2) in Ros Muc:

(1) *I used to be on the committee for Pléaráca, but after a few years I thought it was time for me to get out and somebody else different to get in on. I think it is important for these committees to change so that people don’t get used to what they are doing. I’d like to see more people coming in.* (Glynis Uí Luathairí, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)

(2) *I come in to a meeting and want to get ideas and get support and don’t want to dictate or to lead all the time. But I find that quite difficult to get that innovative or creative energy from the people. Even though the committee seem to be committed, they are very supportive of my work... I am intending to bring in a facilitator to work with... I am taking three new people out of my board, my subcommittee. And it will give me an excuse and a reason to do facilitative work... and bring in new people. I realise that this dynamic is missing.* (Noirfn Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)

In both cases, people see the rotation of committee members as the way to make policy networks more sensitive, flexible and inclusive. Creativity is considered an important component of fluid policy making and as a way to bring together social and policy networks. In the Russian villages, experimentation represents a way to keep policy mechanisms working (in the situation of limited funding) and to reinforce weakened local social networks. As a member of the rural administration in Khlopovo explains:

*Social security came to the village. They owe people money, children’s allowance... say, they owe to a single mother with three children about 2,000 rubles for the whole year... But the social security does not have money. So they make an agreement with a local shoe-

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400 Policy making does not simply provide educational opportunities, but also reinforces the local moral infrastructure.

401 As Chapter 3 demonstrates, Irish rural people are more familiar with the documents regulating development practice and more aware of specific mechanisms of rural development than people in rural Russia.

402 Social security service (Служба социальной защиты) is a social welfare department in the district government responsible for alleviation of poverty, empowering of disadvantaged individuals and families for an improved quality of life.
making factory. The factory has to pay taxes, don’t they? So they give 100,000 rubles worth of shoes to the social security towards their tax payments. Now, social security people come to our village with their files, they have files for every family. And give shoes to pay their children allowance arrears. You may take it if you want or not to take it, it is up to you, they don’t force you. But people take shoes because they don’t know when they will get money. And because they can exchange them for milk or food with their neighbours. Or maybe pay for something within the village. (Marina Tomilina, 15/06/2000, Zhuravna)

Inventiveness in policy making, in this case, is not exclusively material. Instead, as I argued in Chapter 3, creative policy action opens up new possibilities, generates new links and produces new arrangements of actors and artefacts in smooth space. An emerging fusion of the networks works outside the rigid boundaries of the state form; it is deterritorialised and therefore it is inclusive of different actors and forms of action. The synergy of network flows is context specific (because it embraces local networks) and general (blurred boundaries because of deterritorialisation). It develops in a way to become a “science of singularity” (de Certeau, 1988), which brings together the generality of science and the particularity of the actual.

This fusion of the networks is, however, unstable and unpredictable. Passages between smooth and striated space are uncertain and continuously changing, therefore I cannot talk about long-term forms of interactions between policy and social networks in this case. Here I want to reveal the signs of local integration of connections and the succession of linkages in a deregulated (transforming) striated space, rather than provide an explanatory system which would freeze these links. The idea is to demonstrate tentative connections without categorising them and to show the emergence of new creative and exciting ways of bringing things together. The next section is not as optimistic as this one. It demonstrates that the links between social and policy networks are not always in existence.

**Absent links**

This section considers the situations when policy networks and social networks fail to meet. It studies the lack of cohesion between networks within different spatial and temporal spheres, paying specific attention to the internal dynamics and structure of misplaced connections. My analysis also distinguishes between real and imagined fields of interaction

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403 Even though the discussion is about shoes, I am interested in new non-material connections which are created by policy makers.
of policy and social actors. It studies different representations of the confluence of networks. Different scenarios of misconnection of social and policy networks within the Russian and Irish villages are presented in Table 3.\(^{404}\)

Firstly, a mismatch between social and policy networks can be attributed to the specificity of how state institutions function. As I argued in Chapter 3, a vision of power as domination in control is translated into policy mechanisms which striate space. The flows of action are distributed within this measured space; they do not distribute themselves in the same way as in smooth space. In this case, the heterogeneity of connections between different actors is reduced to a limited number of fixed links. As a result, some places are not linked together and some actors find themselves dropped from these rigid policy structures. In the Russian villages this disappearance of connections happens because ties within the controlling policy networks (which bring social and policy actors together) lose their strength\(^ {405}\) (see Ksenia Rodimova (1) in Table 3). In the Irish village it is the transition to more fluid mechanisms of policy action which weakens the links between the networks\(^ {406}\).

At the same time, as I argued earlier, regulatory policy networks organise links (conjugate flows) rather than provide real connections. In this case policy making only gives an appearance of action\(^ {407}\) and rural people feel left out of policy networks (see Igor Stroev (1) and Rónán Greilish (1) in Table 3).

Secondly, social and policy networks do not meet because of their different temporalities. Regulatory policy mechanisms are insufficiently flexible to follow the social actors in their everyday communications. Quick connections and fluid activities within the social field render explicit the reactive character of the political apparatus. This is especially visible within the Russian villages, where limited political action happens in the non-coherent communities (See Valentina Golubeva (1) in Table 3). Quick flows escape rigid time frames, set up by policy mechanisms, thus questioning their viability and continuity (See Noirfn Nic Eachrain (1) in Table 3). Moreover, miscommunication between the networks occurs when policy mechanisms try to imitate quick everyday links. Here, rural politics which promotes regular policy interventions intends to capture changeable everyday flows.

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\(^{404}\) I attempted to deal with the big number of accounts of network mis-connections in Table 3, which should be seen only as a means to represent multiplicity of opinions (without reducing it to singular accounts) and not as a means to construct a hierarchy of interviews. Every interview quoted in Table 3 is numbered to facilitate cross-referencing (quotes which are used in the chapter are underlined in the Table 3). Hereafter I refer to the name of the interviewee and a reference number in Table 3 to reinforce my arguments.

\(^{405}\) As I argued in Chapter 4, development of policy networks in Russia is thwarted by the lack of funding. This reduces flexibility of policy making and density of policy link, thus leaving more people outside policy reach.

\(^{406}\) Policy networks are being transformed from rigid but predictable structures into a set of more mobile but uncertain connections with social actors caught within “in-between” spaces of miscommunication.

\(^{407}\) As I emphasised in Chapter 4, referring to McDonagh’s (2001) analysis of Irish rural policies, rural development in Ireland is often associated with “development spectacle”.

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within regulated (non-changeable) policy structure. However, instead of creating fluid connections, this controlling political mechanism fixes objects and relations in place before alternatives have a chance to develop. For example, spontaneous (but limited in time) peaks of development activity within the Russian villages are followed by even longer periods of apathy (see Tamara Zakutina (1) in Table 3).

Moreover, sets of ordered links within regulating policy networks do not totally correspond with the fluid social connections because of the difference in their organisation. As soon as co-movements of flows within social and policy networks become measured and quantified, gaps and congestions appear. These gaps indicate spaces where social flows cross over the fixed boundaries of the striated spaces, while congestions suggest spaces where everything intermingles and where flows are accumulated within a specific "region". On the one hand, the congestion of flows undermines the stability of the state system and engenders conflict (see Igor Stroev (2) in Table 3) and rivalry (see Fergal Connelly (1) in Table 3). On the other hand, constantly modified distances within social networks do not match metric magnitudes within regionalised policy structures, thus creating the gaps between the areas of social and policy interactions. "Out of reach" places therefore indicate not only geographical boundaries (see Yulia Sharapova (1) in Table 3), but also operational limits, areas of policy jurisdiction (see Fergal Connelly (2) in Table 3). Another reason for miscommunication between networks is the difference in the quality of links between spaces of social actions (smooth) and state institutions (striated). In policy networks, positions are more important than connections and lines are subordinated to points. By contrast, it is the connections, the vectors of movement, which produce smooth and fluid social spaces. The mismatch between direction and dimension explains the absence of inter-network links. In the Irish village, the mismatch between the abundant and elaborate policy networks and the social webs of connections occurs because position is prioritised over actions (see Noirín Nic Eachrain (2) in Table 3). In the Russian villages policy networks are not as well developed. The operational functionality of the limited number of these policy networks is based on mechanisms of organisation and control (see Yulia Sharapova (2) in Table 3). In this case, directional links within social networks are subjected to metric determination within policy networks. The organisation (imposing of dimensionality) of directional links can also lead to the creation of hierarchies between symmetrical (policy actions) and non-symmetrical (social interactions) movements. In this case, the scope of communication and the direction (reciprocity) of connections are limited thus separating the networks (see Svetlana Kamneva (1) and Fionnuala Caomhánach (1) in Table 3).

408 As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) state, rhyzomatic and arborescent connections do not completely coincide.
Lastly, there is a symbolic field of (non)interrelation between policy and social networks, which I want to explore. The functioning of policy networks encourages long-distance vision. On the other hand, the vision created within social space is immediate and not singular; multiple actors “in-space” create different visions of policy/social networks which are transformed with the change of the actors’ positions. Hence, the near-distant distinctions in the visions of network interrelations: policy makers both in Russia and in Ireland produce unifying and generalising images (see Brianna Ó Hógáin (1) and Yulia Sharapova (2) in Table 3), while rural people favour more immediate and organic visions (see Orina Tonkova (1) and Glynis Uí Luathairf (1) in Table 3).

Moreover, the gap between networks occurs because of a difference in forms of expression within social and political spaces. While policy makers create categorical visual systems with sharply delineated boundaries and clearly separated symbols, social actors produce symbols existing within the ambiguous interstitial domains of non-categorical vision. In Ireland, unifying visions of policy-making in social space produced by policy actors are not matched by the heterogeneous (and continuously multiplying) visions created by social actors (see Fergal Connelly (2) in Table 3). In the Russian villages, strong state ideology mechanically binds action within the boundaries of specific representation of the networks interaction (see Yulia Sharapova (4) in Table 3), so that everyday visions tend to be excluded from the more general picture. In this situation rural people become disillusioned with the idea of challenging dominating structures/visions (See Maria Petrova (2) in Table 3). This misconnection of visions separates social and policy networks both in imagined and real worlds.

Conclusion

At the end of the chapter I want to return to the initial idea of “interrelations in context”, focusing on the two concepts inherent therein.

“Interrelations”

Connections/links

Interrelations between social and policy networks do happen, but their temporalities and spatial forms differ. The most stable links between the networks occur when social

409 Or even physically disconnected from policy networks, as Maria Petrova (1) in the Table 3 testifies.
relations are fixed and normalised by the state mechanisms of regulation and control. Institutional networks in this case establish and maintain relatively stable order by means of translating heterogeneous social practices into measured and simplified forms of interactions. Passages between networks in this case are conjunctions but not connections. Homogenisation of links causes their quality to deteriorate and limits the scope of networks. Less durable links are produced when policy and social networks come together in times of crisis. The need to fend off risk temporarily transforms the networks and brings them together. In this case more durable inter-network links happen as a result of collaborative rather than contesting activities. Both policy and social links are restructured to accommodate each other: fixed policy networks adopt a fluid-like form while social networks fit within a regulated and logical institutional infrastructure. A crisis merger of the networks is based on trust and reciprocity between actors as well as their willingness to change, which really connects them in temporary but heterogeneous and multifunctional assemblages.

Flexible connections, which provide opportunities for the closest interrelation between social and policy networks, are tentative, changeable and uncertain. Links between “subversive” social actions and policy structures are also temporary since the mechanisms of control in this case provide little scope and limited opportunities for inter-network interaction.

It is also interesting to see how different actors are enrolled in policy networks through the process of translation. Key actors who enrol other actors into networks are those whom rural people see as the “authority”. Firstly, the enrolers include the actors of the “executive elite”, or mediators, who have power to mobilise large numbers of intricately interwoven constituents (Whatmore, 2002). In Russia these include collective farm directors and the head of rural administration who wield real power because they are in charge of limited local resources. In Ireland, this group of enrollers is constituted by the managers of local

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410 As I argued earlier in this Chapter, homogenisation of policy links entails exclusion of actors who drop out of these fixed policy structures.
411 For example, see the case of educational development in Ireland which forged strong links between local authorities (educational committee) and local villagers (parents of children going to secondary school).
412 As Grint and Woolgar (1997) suggest, the process of translation involves four main stages. First, key actors are identified within the community. The task of policy makers is to persuade these key actors that the solution to their problems lies with the enrolers (Latour, 1991). Second, existing networks are gradually dissolved and replaced with the ones created by the enrolers. In this case “messy” and unstable social networks are replaced with the more durable networks which Law (1984) calls “networks of administration”. Third, policy makers create a solid identity to the new network. For example, in case of the new “starostaskhody” network it is presented as a new governance structure which encourages local participation and empowerment. Finally, the alliance is mobilised to represent an expanded network of absent entities.
413 However, as Tamara Zakutina (2) in Table 3 stresses, rural administration does not have power in terms of resources (unlike collective farm), but it uses its links to the other organisations to enrol actors (networked power).
development companies and members of local authorities, who have power to mobilise people with different abilities and embodied practices into policy networks. This power is enacted through mobilisation of multiple links in economic, social and moral networks. Multiple mechanisms of translation and multiple connections position these actors in the centre of policy networks. Actors with organisational skills manage to mobilise people with different abilities and embody practices into policy networks, which are presented as networks of participation and bottom-up development (see also Murdoch and Marsden, 1995).

Secondly, teachers, librarians and local GPs constitute “network-makers”. These actors consolidate power because they use the mechanism of network ordering which Law (1984) calls “enterprise”. As emphasised in Chapter 2, these people (whom I often chosen to be my gatekeepers) take an active part in network formation and provide access to different localised webs of communications. A specific case should be made for clerics in Ireland, who can act at a distance and use church networks resources to enrol different actors in policy making.

Thirdly, there are local entrepreneurs (Ireland) or dachniki (Russia) who have substantial economic resources to influence local policy decisions by means of creating alternative policy networks.

Interrelations/positional moves

Social networks interrelate, but the extent of their interrelation is different. First, there is a confluence of networks where the flows of social and political action are connected. The

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414 As you know, Chapter 4 emphasises the existence of long traditions of rural development in Ireland. In this context with strong habits of social organisation the enrollers create durable networks, making patterning of social practices integral to enrolment (Whatmore, 2002).

415 For example, the Russian collective farm supplies foodstuffs to its members for free or at reduced prices. In Ireland, local policy makers channel financial resources from the EU (LEADER programme), from the Irish government (Regional Development Plans) and from the Gaeltacht Authority bringing together different groups of actors in different development organisations.

416 For instance, local authority in Russia organises village festivals through mobilisation of local social networks. In Ireland, rural development organisations re-establish local links through the arts project (see discussion in this chapter).

417 See discussion on the place of the Russian collective farm and Irish development companies in moral networks in Chapter 4.

418 Importantly, it is not only actors themselves, but also documents and specific devices (for example, in Russia there is a car which is specially allocated to the director of collective farm or rural administration, which is called “director’s car”) which comprise the collective agency of these enrollers (see also Law, 1986 on hybridity of enrollers).

419 See the example of crèche project discussed in this chapter.

420 See the example of an Irish educational worker mobilising different actors to deal with the school’s crisis, discussed in this chapter.

421 See discussion in this chapter on the role of church leaders in enrolling people in the project for repair of the roof of the community hall.

422 I discussed in this chapter the case of co-operation between dachniki and rural administration on construction of electricity poles, when effectively dachniki channel the flows of policy networks and create alternative policy connections.
flows accelerate each other and extend their scope of action. This happens when social networks transform social networks and make them more changeable and fluid. It is also true for a situation when the merger between the networks happens as a result of social activities in the blindspots of the political system. Although, in this case positions of some actors within networks are important (they indicate the cracks within the system rather than play “key” roles), such positioning is still secondary to their roles and connections with other actors.

Secondly, there are positional moves of actors between the networks which question the existence of networks per se. If actors’ positions within the emerging policy-social network become more important than the links between them, the combination of networks is transformed into an extended action set with connections substituted by exchange (“give-and-take”) links. This merger of networks is incomplete as it both limits inter-network communication and excludes actors who don’t have enough resources to participate in it. This happens during a temporary “crisis” merger of networks where “key” actors form connecting links between the establishment and the local community. In a similar vein, when policy networks accommodate social networks, singling out “key” actors facilitates the imposition of regulation and control. It also helps to unravel “hidden” social networks and transform them into utilitarian and homogeneous sets of links. Connections between networks in this case are neutralised and hollowed out.

“Context”

Existence of dense social connections and traditions of cooperative work encourages the merger of policy and social networks. In the Irish village, links between farmers, mna tí and others provide ready-made channels for introduction of local development initiatives, where they are superimposed on the local community as a part of regulatory policymaking structure. In the same vein, the existence of viable social networks encourages development of interactive and fluid policies and the ensuing interconnection of action flows. The solidarity of the Irish village provides more opportunities for creative and experimental policy making as uncertain development does not immediately threaten local

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423 Even in case of animation the involvement of “key” actors is temporary and is directed at catalysing, accelerating social flows.
424 Fluidity is modus operandi of these social networks as they escape the state mechanisms of regulation and capture.
425 it is evident in the case of putting the roof on the village hall, which resulted into temporary informal committee responsible for that development project being accommodated within the local policy networks.
426 As an Irish development worker states, during the process of consultation on the new health strategy there were a series of meetings with local people organised all around the country. “The biggest attendance was in the Gaeltacht”, she emphasises, “because of the local links and traditions of development” (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway).
community structure. The cohesion of the local community together with long-established traditions of co-operative work facilitate the network merger in times of crisis. In this case: roles, hierarchies and co-operative strategies are established before the crisis, while a stock of social capital fuels the collaborative action. On the other hand, tight connections and kinship links do not encourage a wide participation in policy activities, which makes them rather exclusive (see Eibhlín Ó Luathaire (1) in Table 3).

In the Russian villages weak inter-community links do not encourage a fusion of networks. Introduction of new institutional mechanisms (such as starosta/shkody) proved unsuccessful because of the lack of anchor points/links in local communities. Similarly, local animation initiatives enjoyed mixed success, while creative policy making is mostly limited to spontaneous action, rather than being part of a new way of thinking. Lack of traditions of independent voluntary work in the Russian context hampers the progress of organised policy actions. However, strong control within policy networks encourages inventive subversion and a tactical merger of the networks. In this case, strong neighbourhood ties within the Russian villages provide the basis for appropriation of “hidden” resources within policy networks and encourage this symbiotic existence of “canny” social actors and a state apparatus of (weakening) control.

The merger of the networks does not always happen. Connections between networks do not always happen in place but often remain a symbol, the wishful thinking of policy makers who want to believe in the efficiency and moral importance of their actions. Because of different qualities and temporalities of these networks, links between them do not necessarily happen as planned by policy makers (see Fergal Connelly (2) in Table 3). Moreover, the merger may link only a few actors and spaces caught “in-between” spaces of interaction, whilst others may fall out of these network interrelations. In the next chapter I want to study these “in-between” and “out of place” (mis)connections, further paying specific attention to the exclusivity of social and policy networks (and their contextualised interrelations). The concluding chapter addresses these issues in detail. It considers how interrelations of networks affect poverty and how rural policies can be changed to alleviate it.

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427 See Noirín Nic Eanchairn’s discussion in Chapter 3 on experimental modular educational programmes.
428 Chapter 4 provides an account of long-standing tradition of collective work in Ireland in the form of meitheal (working parties) and development co-operatives.
429 For example, see the case of secondary school teacher considered in this chapter.
430 As I argued earlier in this chapter, policy actions tend to be limited to one-off events like clearing of the cemetery in Zhilkontsy.
431 For example, in the case of the tractor driver in Zhilkontsy considered in this chapter, he does not have many other options.
### Table 3. Absent links in lay and policy discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Absent networks</th>
<th>Non-visible (virtual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Russia</strong>&lt;br&gt;Every time it rains, the only phone in the village does not work, full stop. It stays like this until the weather gets dry. So we cannot call the ambulance. (<a href="1">Maria Petrova</a>, housewife, 21/06/2000, Khlopovo)&lt;br&gt;To tell the truth, we don’t help families with many children, single mothers. There is no state support for them in the village. I don’t remember when anything was done for them. (Marina Tomilina, local authority member, 15/06/2000, Zhuravna)</td>
<td><strong>Russia</strong>&lt;br&gt;There is new director of rural administration. Some people are working for the other, but this one only cares for himself. He is a secondary, redundant director. (Pavel Ignatiev, retired farmer, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)&lt;br&gt;Local authorities, they don’t do anything. Just talking... Only promises. (Igor Stroev, retired farmer, 24/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)&lt;br&gt;There is anarchy, no authority (<a href="1">Ksenia Rodimova</a>, retired teacher, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy)&lt;br&gt;My husband has just found out he is eligible for free medicines... For the last 17 years we were not aware of this free medical help (Ekaterina Kazakova, housewife, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ireland</strong>&lt;br&gt;People who left school without completing the first level of education, are coming back asking for ways to come back... At the moment, I have not been actually able to offer them that return system, because there is no system out there, there is no facility for them to go back (Noirín Nic Eachrain, development worker, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc)&lt;br&gt;You know, the ambulances cannot find the places because they don’t have maps with the names in Irish. And the elderly from the villages far away from Galway have been sent to the city because there is no local hospital. (Ailís Ó Cuinn, development officer, 14/06/2001, Galway)</td>
<td><strong>Ireland</strong>&lt;br&gt;[People] are not aware of us, they don’t know the system and they are losing out... Say, for instance, we are going to Inishmore, which is a very big island... There are few hundred people in Inishmore and they are really away from Galway or department of social welfare... And you might be in an outreach there the whole day, and you might only reach two people... I think, people don’t understand the amount of work we can do, and the amount of power we have (<a href="1">Fionnuala Caomháinach</a>, development worker, 18/06/2001, Ros Muc)&lt;br&gt;[Development organisations] now have a huge amount of money... And if you go like this – let’s point at something Cumas did, or let’s point at something Pléaráca did... (Ciarán Ó Braonáin, pub owner, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc)&lt;br&gt;Development committees... they work only for themselves (<a href="1">Rónán Greilish</a>, fisherman, 09/07/2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limited operational periods

2. Different temporal scales of experience

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Ireland

ROSS MCGEE

There will be a gap (Brugha O Hiegain, Development Worker, 03/07/2001, Clonmel)

Once you've started a project, you have to think about starting another one of the same size. (Brugha O Hiegain, Development Worker, 03/07/2001, Clonmel)

If there is no continuity, you initiate a project, but there is no one to take over.

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Kildare

CAWAY

The year (Tamaara Zakhilema 9, (1) (Ipsilium, 13/06/2000, Zillikon):

Last year, the cleaning of the villages and their yards were already a big problem, but with the recent changes, they have announced a new month of cleaning. From 15th of May, from 15th of June, from 15th of July.

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Zimbabwe

ZIBUNGA, Development Worker 12/06/2000, Zillikon)

We need to organise (self-development) courses so people don't have time for some sort of development for unemployment. (Elena, Development Worker, 03/07/2000, Kibopho)

I will be waiting for your visit (Alexandra Podolozhina, St. Petersburg)

I need to organise (self-development) courses so people don't have time for unemployment. (Elena, Development Worker, 03/07/2000, Kibopho)

You cannot imagine how long I was discussing this director (Dr. nat) and I still think about how long I was discussing this director (Dr. Maran).
### 3. Different organisation/structure/combination of actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaps</th>
<th>Congestion</th>
<th>Quality of links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Russia**
*There are different after-school societies and hobby groups... But they no good for my children... First, there is no place to eat [after school]... Second, it is too long to wait until next bus [home] comes. And there is no place to wait.* (Alexandra Podkolzina, shepherd, 22/06/2000, Khlopovo)

It's been 2 years since social security worker stopped coming to me... They say I live too far away in the village (*Igor Stroev* (1), retired farmer, 24/06/2000, Maslovo)

Because rural administration is in Maslovo village people in Zhilkontsy are out of reach. (*Yulia Sharapova* (1), former local official, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)

*There is a gap in power. It is not rural administration which has power, it is the collective farm.* (*Tamara Zakutina* (2), librarian, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

| **Russia**
*Most of the good things locally are done for pensioners. Maybe too many things... Because pensioners are going to vote, unlike young people.* (Alexei Shalimov, tractor driver, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

After the surgery I was promised a car. Every double amputee is eligible for a car... I submitted all the documents for a special commission... And the chair of the commission told me: “The state spent too much money on you already. We helped you as a pensioner, as a war veteran, as a retired collective farmer. And now you are asking for a car! [as a disabled person]” So they did not give it to me. (*Igor Stroev* (2), retired farmer, 24/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)

| **Ireland**
*All old people in Ireland are entitled to free public transport... However, if you in the rural area, you might not be able to go anywhere, because bus service is very sporadic.* (*Fergal Connelly* (2), development worker, 13/06/2001, Galway)

*There are so many associations that confuses them [rural people]: “Why there is this association and this association?” And they cannot understand why in a small community you cannot have one.* (Ailis Ó Cuinn, development worker, 14/06/2001, Galway)

In some cases there are rival community groups set up. In Ros Muc, for example, there is Pléaracá, which is operating in the same area as Cumas Teo. They were set up as a

| **Russia**
*We are entitled for free heating fuel... But I cannot just go and get it because no one knows how much I am entitled for. You have to go to either to the [collective farm’s] accounts department or to the municipal heating company. They want to co-ordinate it, but there is lack of co-ordination, bad linkage. There is no one to pick up the phone and tell you: “Sit down. I am going to find out for you”.* (Orina Tonkova, nurse, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)

We are like parasites. We exist and work because local authorities help us. Everything depends on the way they look at us. Our authorities look at us alright, we are happy, we are helped. But we feel inferior or something like that. (*Svetlana Kamneva* (1), local authority member, 27/06/2000, Zhuravna)

| **Ireland**
*The community council and Pléaracá... Although there are a lot of people working in the two things, they feel that one is gonna take away from the other. Rather than getting together and co-operating, you know, for the good of the community. There does seem to be that kind of thing that it is more a matter of competing against each other instead of co-operating* (Glynis Ú Luathairí, artist, 09/07/2001, Ros Muc)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of links</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and another, and people (from local government) just a kind of miss-communicating between one we kind of second level to politicians. It is well kind of second level to politicians. It is would just refer down to us. This would be local politicians. They would just not know how to deal with it. So they would just not know how to deal with it.</td>
<td>Council worker, 1/8/06/2001.</td>
<td>Council worker, 1/8/06/2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Council worker, 2/06/2001.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The biggest assurance was in the Castlereagh The biggest assurance was in the Castlereagh</td>
<td>Council worker, 1/4/06/2001.</td>
<td>Council worker, 1/4/06/2001.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Symbolic absence: difference in imagined roles and functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different expectations/visions: Russia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy makers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encouraging endogenous development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most local people are intimidated. They are far away from everything [concerning development]... They often don't want what you want from them. Because they are illiterate, glubinka1. I am the authority for them. Whatever I say is the law for them. But I want them to develop, I want to enable them to do things themselves. (Yulia Sharapova (4), former local official, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating decision-making to policy actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are higher than us, they decide on what decisions to take. It is a tradition that sel'sovet [rural administration] does things. (Maria Petrova (2), housewife, 21/06/2000, Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The authorities collect money [taxes], so they have to decide what to do here. (Boris Dobrov, 25/06/2000, retired tractor driver, Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control and supervision</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Before 1998 the role of rural administration was to manage and provide local services: education, medicine etc. We funded them. After April 1998 all these services were transferred to the district administration, so our role became: “to control the work of local services”...What is meant by control? To make them work? They work by themselves. (Yulia Sharapova (2), former local official, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material help, making life easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is good that the local authority controls us, but it would be better if they could also help. (Vera Belova, retired nurse, 23/06/2000, Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a feeling that the authorities work against us rather than for us. If I need to get medicines in Zarajsk [district town], I need to get 500 stamps and signatures. There are people who are entitled to free medicines. They will get them, but only the cheapest ones. (Orina Tonkova (1), nurse, 27/06/2000, Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving efficiency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We used to fund local services. Now everything is centralized. It is easier for us. Before that we had to manage all these services, to get funding. Now it is more efficient and easier to manage. We don't have this headache. (Marina Tomilina, rural administration official, 15/06/2000, Zhuravna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We used to have a shop here, they [the authorities] closed it. They said it would be better, more mobile. We used to have a farm's branch, they closed it. And disconnected the telephone which was there. They say things are going to be better. Better for them, worse for us. (Boris Dobrov, retired tractor driver, 25/06/2000, Khlopovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing infrastructure (“hardware”)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We sort out global, major issues. Because infrastructure crumbles now... When it was built the authorities were well funded. And now we came to the point – everything is in ruins, and we don't have money. (Yulia Sharapova, former local official, 14/06/2000, Maslovo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after people (“software”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are forgotten. All the authorities are in Maslovo. There are mostly elderly people living here. They need help, care and understanding. (Pavel Ignatiev, retired farmer, 26/06/2000, Zhilkontsy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Glubinka (глубинка) comes from глубина, or depth and refers to a godforsaken place in the middle of nowhere.
#### Developing Enterprise (Hardward)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13/06/2001, Ros Muic</th>
<th>2/2/2000, Ros Muic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "The development of the [community] economy here is to organise community resources. Thus... In 10 years time there will be more concern for a specific site. Where is the money? Are your resources available?" | "Grass roots are dominated by the old problems of better roads and better access. Ross Muic, 09/07/2001.

### Different Exploitations/Visions: Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural People</th>
<th>Policy Makers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People do not want to change anything. They do not want anything.</td>
<td>I think one way to work with (community groups) is not by giving them financial help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION. RURAL POVERTY AND RURAL POLICIES
CONCLUSION. RURAL POVERTY AND RURAL POLICIES

The main objectives of my study were essentially two-fold. First, I intended to uncover the complexity of poverty experiences and mechanisms contributing to social exclusion of people living in the countryside. Second, I was interested to explore the relationship between rural poverty and rural policies which are supposed to deal with poverty-related problems. This involved theoretical discussions on the construction of rural poverty and marginalisation of poor people, as well as on the conceptual debates on formulation of development politics and the mechanisms of anti-poverty decision-making. Drawing on empirical research presenting comparative narratives of rural poverty in Ireland and Russia I wanted to go beyond an examination of specific “poor” and “excluded” people, in order to consider the processes of impoverishment and marginalisation. At the same time, I was interested to discover the links between specificity of poverty experiences of different people in different places and policy initiatives aimed at the alleviation of rural social malaise. In my work I went beyond material definitions of poverty trying to understand its different constructions in social, cultural and political domain. This does not mean that I take an anti-material stance; the task of my research was to uncover different multiple dimensions of poverty and understand its heterogeneous manifestations.

This thesis examined interrelations between policy structures and poverty with reference to two case-studies of rural poverty in contrasting market and non-market economies. The selection of countries and communities for my analysis reflected the need to think about a wide range of circumstances affecting poverty. Close engagement with poverty practices and experiences of rural people has changed my thinking about rural policies and challenged me to look further for explanations of reasons for rural social malaise. The first case study in Russia investigated the processes constructing poverty in the country with highly controlled and regulated policy making, constrained local governments in the planning area, and with rural development programs hampered by lack of funding. My study has showed that one of the main reasons for aggravation of conditions of rural living was oversimplification of poverty in rural policies and fixity of mechanisms of anti-poverty policy making. The analysis of my empirical results demonstrated that in the case when the scale of poverty problems is massive and when traditional (rational and controlling) anti-poverty policies do not seem to work, alternative approaches to understanding and dealing with poverty could still help to improve living conditions of rural people. My fieldwork studies in Russia therefore encouraged my search for

432 According to the Russian Statistical Office (Goskomstat, 2002) there are about 30 m people living in the conditions of poverty in Russia.

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alternative, fluid and creative politics which can deal even with serious poverty problems in the context of limited funding and distrust from rural people.

The second case study in Ireland considered the construction of poverty in the country with long traditions of rural development and strong welfare policy networks. The results of my empirical research have shown that even in the situation when considerable effort and funding is put in, the development and implementation of anti-poverty programmes, alternative approaches to understanding and dealing with poverty, could make a significant difference to the lives of rural people. Poverty stories which I encountered during my fieldwork made me rethink the current system of rural policy making and encouraged me to go beyond consideration of the existing welfare policy networks which deal with poverty. My study in rural Ireland energised my search for alternative rural policies which do not consider poverty solely in material terms and do not address it in exclusively rational and logical manner. It demonstrated the need to theoretically challenge traditional thinking about rural policies as purely controlling mechanism linked to distribution of power and resources. My empirical research in Ireland showed that in this case even significant funding and attention to rural poverty may not lead to its amelioration.

Chapter 1 located my work within the background of previous research which dealt with the issues of rurality, poverty, otherness and rural development. It provided an overview of the studies which inspired and energised my research on rural poverty and rural “others”. With the benefit of hindsight it considered the evolution of anti-poverty policies and analysed their influence on the alleviation of poverty and exclusion of specific groups of rural people.

Discussion on researching rural others was continued in Chapter 2 which summarised the difficulties related to studies of relations which lead to poverty and marginalisation. It deconstructed those categories of interpretation which comfortably conform studies on otherness to a limited number of research subjects and policy narratives emphasising sameness rather than difference. The chapter emphasised the need to use methodological vehicles which ensure ethical and empathetic research of people living in conditions of poverty.

Chapter 3 provided a complex analysis of different topographies of difference. First, it offered different accounts of issues related to the production of difference within social networks and identified poverty in terms of networked resources (social and cultural capital) obtained through differently configured social connections. The chapter established connections between heterogeneous interpretations of poverty and the hybridity of spatial configurations of social links, and warned about the dangers of any one-sided analysis of those relations between elements and actors which create links marking off
difference. Second, it focused on the ways in which different knowledge and power transform experiential meanings of poverty. The chapter challenged concepts of rational and logical decision making within policy networks which produce oversimplified, trivialised and de-sensitised constructions of poverty and otherness. It referred to different postmodern and poststructural approaches to poverty and otherness which allow a more hybrid and complex understanding of these phenomena.

Chapter 4 grounded these theoretical frameworks within the context of rural Russia and Ireland and argued that contested constructions of the countryside have both shaped interactions within social networks and determined political actions. It revealed the conflict between dominant abstract and homogeneous constructions of rural space, which engendered direct, mechanical and fixed networks of appropriation and control, and alternative forms of creative expressions of the countryside, which created multiple connections and allowed different others to contribute to the formation of multiple ruralities.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 refer to the results of my empirical work to broaden understandings of connections between contextualised poverty and rural policies (their findings are discussed in detail later). Chapter 5 unravels the links within social networks, which reproduce specific local contexts and differentiate rural spaces. Chapter 6 unfolds poverty links and practices and studies connections between the affect of policy networks on poverty and quality of policy links. Chapter 7 uncovers different temporalities and spatial forms of interrelations between social and policy networks and demonstrates how context promotes or restricts policy actions.

In the next section I review the findings of my empirical research and address the questions posed at the beginning of my work. I start with summarising the results of my study which demonstrate complex construction of poverty and otherness within different networks.

Social networks

One of the tasks of my research was to establish the relationship between poverty and the spatiality of social links in different contexts. The focus was not only on the density of social connections, but also on quality of these links and their heterogeneity. Thus, the analysis of social networks in Ireland in Chapter 5 demonstrated the existence of dense low-intensity links based on kin, which stretched across the rural community. Despite the multiplicity of these connections they do not create variability in exchange systems and do not encourage active interpersonal (face-to-face) communication. Relations of trust and reciprocity are highly structured and mostly confined to the members of kin networks, while being closed to the others. Existence of fixed social networks encourages
normalisation and appropriation of difference. In this context poverty is constructed within social networks as a one-dimensional and static experience mostly linked to non-belonging to a particular networks of kinship.

In the Russian villages social links are more intensive and heterogeneous, but their scope is limited to particular neighbourhoods. Flexible social connections between groups of people provide space for inclusive and unstable interaction, but strong internal boundaries of these segments (kin, neighbourhood) lead to a closeness of community and an intolerance to difference. Experiences of otherness in this case are linked to physical isolation in a place where neighbourhood networks do not extend, and to exclusion from work-related networks which provide functional contacts. In this context poverty is the “in-between” experience, when people are unable to act in a completely self-interested way or when they are isolated from work-centred networks of co-operation.

Cultural networks

Chapter 4 outlines the role of contextualised meanings and representations of rurality and community in the construction of poverty. In the Irish village cultural links encourage local cohesiveness and reinforce social networks, but they are homogeneous and ethnically exclusive. The issues of religion, language and community are central in local perceptions of poverty. Otherness is culturally constructed as exclusion from church-based links, non-involvement in “traditional” workgroups and leisure practices (pubs, GAA club), as well as an unwillingness to take part in the Irish-speaking activities.

In comparison with this, cultural boundaries in the Russian villages are more blurred as networks stretch outside the physical limits of the villages. Rural communities are more ethnically and culturally heterogeneous and open to various sorts of difference. Poverty in this context is not linked exclusively with “traditional” lifestyles, but it is related to the wider ability of actors to improve the cohesiveness of community and to integrate into the systems of mutual help and support (pomochi and skladchina). Importantly, poverty is seen as an individual problem which cannot be solved by external forces, because rural policies are deemed ineffective. This “individualistic” vision of poverty entails cultural exclusion and “othering” of the poor who are unable to provide for themselves living independently. Apart from this, poverty is related to feeling of belonging to a place which is conveyed through “absent” links with exiles and “non-visible” connections within the informal economy. Otherness, therefore, is constructed as the inability to share these visible and invisible symbols of community.

As Chapter 5 establishes, the collective farm in Russia tends to be the centre of both employment and exclusivity.
Moral networks

As Chapter 3 emphasises, normative definitions of poverty and otherness are renegotiated within moral networks in rural communities. Chapter 4 illustrates this with references to the moral networks in the Irish and Russian villages. In the first case, cohesive rural community is built upon strong normative framework, which implies normalisation and regulation. In this case community is seen as a common ideology so that collective action is strongly supported and individualism is rejected as a threat to collective morality and a detriment to the local system of social links (as a cause of “bad” links). Poverty is recognised as an inability to follow local norms of behaviour and socialisation, so that people with non-traditional lifestyles are othered. Otherness is internalised as exclusionary rules are incorporated into local thinking. Non-local actors who are not involved in the local networks of trust are considered as “forever others”.

On the contrary, in the Russian villages such strong norms do not exist, so the solidarity of rural communities is less obvious. In this context collective moral values are undermined by the rise of individualism during the economic transition. Consequently, the importance of voluntary work and unconditional help is downgraded so that the integrity of local moral links is jeopardised. The effect of this is two-fold. First, in these rural communities the existence of poverty is accepted and limitations for anti-poverty collective action are recognised as poor people are expected to adapt to self-reliant lifestyles. The disappearance of moral links affects poor people first as they find themselves excluded from local moral networks. Second, the existence of a weak normative framework opens up opportunities for easier accommodation of difference. Inclusion of people with “unusual” lifestyles in the community is dependent not on their behaviour but on their ability to construct and maintain local connections. Poverty in moral networks relates to people’s ability to contribute to local community.

Policy networks

Chapter 3 outlines the role of policy networks in the construction of poverty and otherness. It argues that a rational interpretation of everyday actions in logical policy structures misses out on the complexity of poverty experiences and aggravates the hardship of rural people. On the contrary, fluid politics of difference which use sensuous and creative ways of articulating the everyday, provide better opportunities for transformation of conditions related to poverty. Chapter 4 grounds these theoretical ideas in the context of rural Ireland and Russia. It demonstrates the existence of centralised rational policy networks in Ireland.

434 See for example the case of butyl’tsy in Chapter 6.
which *de facto* concentrate on strict control and management of short-term rural development policies while *de jure* promoting participation and empowerment of rural people in decision-making. Logical policy making objectifies poverty before dealing with it, so the poor are visualised and “othered”\(^435\). Importantly, the web of multiple rural development organisations does not act as a true network because structural positions (nodes) in it are prioritised over connections (vectors, lines). In this case, the majority of policy flows are distributed within measured space which means that despite the great number of development initiatives in place variability of policy links is limited. Some actors are not connected in these fixed policy networks and are therefore excluded.

At the same time, increasing funding opportunities in Ireland push rural development in innovative directions, encouraging “alternative” policy making. Chapter 7 provides examples of these “different” rural politics working within a specific rural locality, including information sharing (FÁS\(^436\) programmes), consultation mechanisms (educational development), and recognition of “unusual” skills and knowledges\(^437\). These policies provide opportunities for multiple connections to develop and encourage inclusion of different actors in decision-making. In so doing, policy actors become embedded in the networks of different others\(^438\) so that otherness no longer implies inferiority and danger, but instead is associated with creative difference. The meaning of poverty also changes: it is seen as a set of transformative elements coming together in different combinations which are not always associated with negativity and problems.

Overall, Chapter 7 demonstrates that the construction of otherness and poverty in the Irish village is contested. On the one hand, the existence of strong norms and the closeness of local social networks do not allow space for experimentation and development of “alternative” policy links. A multiplicity of policy flows is organised into the set of homogenised channels, where different policy initiatives duplicate and contest each other entailing exclusion of the actors also do not fit in. On the other hand, the familiarity of rural people with development vocabulary and the long-term history of development (co-ops) encourage a creative transformation of policy networks. Social networks substitute non-flexible policy networks and work in the gaps or “blindspots” of policy structure providing opportunities for a renegotiation of otherness.

\(^{435}\) Chapter 7 also provides examples when rational policy making makes social interactions more accountable, which pre-defines exclusion of the poor.

\(^{436}\) FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair) is the Training and Employment Authority which seeks to increase the employability, skills and mobility of job seekers and employees and to promote social inclusion.

\(^{437}\) Chapter 7 refers to the art project in Ros Muc funded by Pléaráca when local people took part in design and production of greeting cards with local pictures, organised painting classes for the elderly people in community centre and led courses on fishing and sailing.

\(^{438}\) Chapter 7 indicates the ways that bring fluid policy networks and social networks together.
As Chapter 4 demonstrates, within the limited number of centralised policy structures in rural Russia poverty is constructed as inferiority and powerlessness, thus reflecting subordination and othering of rural people in decision-making. The structure of rural planning is inherited from the Soviet period, and former Communist bosses (collective farm managers, heads of rural authorities) have retained their key positions in this system which remains fixed and exclusive. Places within this structure are linked with status, and contacts between actors are reduced to instrumental links used almost exclusively to maintain these positions. Otherness in this case is related to poverty, and it is constructed as inability to connect into the status networks linked to power.

Plate 28. Places of power: collective farm’s office in Maslovo

At the same time, scarce resources limit the powers of policy makers to plan and pursue rational development initiatives. Policy making is uncertain and often depends on specific personalities in the structured system of decision-making. While the positions of policy actors in this system remain unchanged, the links between them are constantly transformed

439 “Functional” policy networks chime together with the individualist social connections which geared towards obtaining tangible and short-term results.
440 As Steinberg (1996) explains, actors are classified to their positions in the system rather than by their input. People from kontora (or office) include managers of the collective farms and heads of rural administration, who are recognised as the local authorities. As Chapter 7 shows, links between the kontora people constitute local policy networks, where positions are prioritised over connections.
441 Maslovo’s farm has a branch office in Zhilkontsy.
442 Chapter 7 demonstrates that personal involvement of key actors in specific rural projects changes living conditions of some rural people in the Russian villages.
to accommodate the shifting conditions of economic and political transition. This transformation entails continuous re-negotiation of poverty and re-definition of otherness, but it happens within the ideological boundaries of the regulatory and controlling policy making. As Chapter 4 states, policy makers attempt to deal with the “outrageous” poverty and to redefine continuously the poverty line, but this does not imply creating opportunities for wider participation of different “others” in decision-making. On the other hand, fragmentation of rural communities into the sets of neighbourhood networks facilitates regulatory policy making and the exclusion of the poor. This implies a creation of new links within the villages in the form of starosta and skhody in order to establish localised policy structures, although local participation in decision-making is limited and rural actors are seen as powerless and inferior “others”. On the other hand, weak community structures provide opportunities for “informal” policy links to develop in the “in-between” spaces. First, a pre-existing symbiosis of policy and social networks (farms and rural households) encourages interactive rural policies, which challenge rigid constructions of poverty and give voice to the rural others. Second, alternative connections within “survival” networks, driven by the lack of funding and sense of desperation, substitute the ineffective policy links and encourage experimentation and creativity. Fluid links in this case work with difference without measuring and fixing it.

**Temporality of poverty**

As Chapter 7 indicates, poverty experiences unfold not only in different spaces, but also in different times. The chapter provides an overview of different spatial and temporal dimensions of poverty as it is created in social and policy networks. Moreover, Chapter 6 demonstrates the importance of recognising the transient character of poverty experiences, which do not necessarily fit within the time-frames of specific policy initiatives. In the Irish village, poverty has different temporalities: apart from contemporary practices and experiences it includes dreams of the past for the future that was never realised. Poverty is associated with a lack of mobility, movement and change: poverty of the 1960s is no longer acceptable in the 21st century. In a similar vein, Chapter 4 demonstrates that the

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443 Chapter 6 demonstrates that rational policy making instead of alleviation of rural hardship leads to fixing of poverty and isolation of the “other” poor (as a farmer states, the state tries to keep people in poverty).

444 Village leader.

445 Regular community meetings.

446 As Chapter 7 emphasises, policy makers in this case formalise existing social connections and use key actors to get access to key positions within social networks.

447 See Ciaran Ó Braonáin’s discussion on poverty as what “people did not have” in Chapter 6; see also Benjamin, 1977 on his analysis of historicity of the everyday.

448 See Eibhlín Ó Luathair’s discussion on this issue in Chapter 6.

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identity of the “other” is also changing over time incorporating non-conforming images from past and present\textsuperscript{449}.

Chapters 5 and 7 consider the transitional character of poverty in the Russian villages in the changing political and social context. This transition implies continuous renegotiation of the definition of the “poor” in the context of “country”, “countryside” and specific “community”. Poverty is produced on the intersection of national and rural identities as the ability to adjust to the on-going transformation of national and local social networks, cultural symbols and ideologies. In this case short-term poverty experiences are not taken seriously as long as they are synchronised with the changing ideological and cultural framework. People who are unable to live across different temporalities and accept the need to change are excluded (see Ksenia Rodimova’s discussion on this point in Chapter 4).

**Different mapping of poverty and otherness**

There are two important comments which need to be made to complete this summary of findings about specific poverty networks. First, as Chapter 3 established, spaces are heterogeneous and multiple, and they are constructed through the intersection of different networks. It is important therefore to consider the interrelations of this multiplicity of different networks in production of interstitial spaces of poverty. Second, as is obvious from my empirical chapters, context does matter. Poverty is contextualised and it is necessary to consider the spatial basis for its networked production. To this end this section explores multiplicities of poverty and difference discussed above within a specific spatial layout of one of the villages of my study\textsuperscript{450}. In so doing, I want to use poststructuralist ideas presented in Chapter 3 to paint a different cartography of heterogeneous poverty, as well as to represent the simultaneity of differences produced within different contextualised networks.

Even a brief look on the map (see Appendix 2) reveals the existence of the “core” village within the village of Ros Muc. Most of the key buildings are located alongside the main road in the village and they include two pubs, three shops, two schools, health centre, and two community centres. There used to be St. Patrick’s church in Cill Bhriocain within this linear core network, but it was replaced by the new Chapel of Incarnation in An Silear. Essentially, the majority of people live around these focal points, including the network of

\textsuperscript{449} See Proinsias Ó Fearghaill’s discussion on travellers in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{450} I avoided comparisons between different contexts because my task was to consider interrelationships between spatial manifestations of poverty within specific locality. Moreover, spatial layouts of the villages are inevitably different, and this could make comparative analysis of localised poverties can be unnecessary complicated.
the “key” community actors. Moreover, new central points in the village include two rural development organisations – Cumas Teo. and Pléaráca Teo. – which are located both on the main road and in the historical centre of the village. This strategic location of the development companies in Cill Bhríocáin, a traditional space of power where there used to be a medieval church and where community meetings were held (Robinson, 1990), demonstrates a claim to “localness” and belonging to the area. All recent developments in the village were located within this “core” area.

Unsurprisingly, in the minds of the villagers this “core” network of key buildings and actors is associated with power and change. The sense of place and of rootedness is constructed on the basis of attachment to this “core” community. Most of the local social networks originate within the “core” community. Consequently, local development is culturally appropriated and organisationally dominated by these key people. The symbolic boundary of this core network therefore delimits spaces of power (inside the main village road) and spaces of powerlessness, which are also associated with poverty.

Roc Cíde is one of the parts of the village which is located beyond this symbolic boundary. The very name of the place, peninsula in the far sea, suggests its isolation and the weakness of links with the central part of the village. This area witnessed a spectacular decline in importance and in population in the last 30 years (hence many uninhabited houses). Before the roads were built the Ó Briain shop in Roc Cíde was the principal retail outlet for the whole South Connemara, and the O’Brien family dominated this part of the village and the whole of Ros Muc. Homogeneity and limited scope of kinship links, however, made them vulnerable: they quickly deteriorated once the retail business moved to the centre of Ros Muc. The road from the central village to Ros Cíde is

[451] As a pub owner states, this networks unites “the ones who are well-up”: “the guard… three teachers, the doctor, the nurse and … a priest, who socialise together” (Ciaran Ó Braonáin, 25/06/2001, Ros Muc).

[452] These projects included construction of football pitch in An Gort Mór, replacement of the roof of An Crannóg, clearing the cemetery in Cill Bhríocáin, renovation of Coláiste Tin, unsuccessful installation of new telephone mast on the garda (police) building in An Gort Mór, and unsuccessful development of the knitwear factory in An Turlach Beag.

[453] Local people are divided into those who go to Miko’s and Clark’s; distances are measured from O’Mailey’s shop.

[454] Networks of mna tf (women who host Irish students) bring together people who do not live far away from community centres, where the student gatherings happen (most of these people live in Ros Dubh and Cill Bhríocáin, and only one family lives in An Turlach Beag). Football-related networks connect people who work on the football pitch and play Gaelic football – most of them tend to live in the vicinity of the football pitch (few of the young car-less people admitted in the interviews that they had to drop out of this networks because they lived too far away).

[455] As a local farmer comments on cultural exclusion, “they [key people] don’t respect the poor ones. They think that they don’t know anything… and drink their Guinness only” (Rónán Greilish, 24/07/2001, Ros Muc).

[456] See discussion on this issue in Chapter 7.

[457] Hereafter translations of the Irish place names are provided on the basis of the interviews with the people in Ros Muc, as well as definitions of places listed in Robinson, 1990.

[458] Hereafter real family names are substituted with fictional names.

[459] The goods were shipped from Galway and then distributed by boats locally.

[460] See earlier discussion on this issue in this chapter.
considered locally as a road to “far away places” partly because of the historicity of long-distance sea trading connections. These connotations of isolation and exclusion were later re-negotiated in the construction of the new image of this place. Nowadays Roc Cíde is seen as a space of out-migration and poverty, which is justified on the moral grounds as the consequence of alleged “individualism” and “self-isolation” of the Ó Briains. On top of that, the integrity of kinship links has suffered from the change in this family fortunes, which left many of the Ó Briains socially isolated not just from the rest of the village but also from the other family members.

Plate 29. Old shop in Ros Muc

Another marginal space within Ros Muc is both culturally and politically constructed. Aill Bhuí or “the yellow cliff” is a part of the village which is traditionally associated with the seaweed collection and it is not considered to be the best place to live. The marginality of this place was reaffirmed by the construction of council houses in 1980s, as the local development officer states: “the council had a little bit of land there... and it built six houses, then put there people from somewhere else and those people were excluded” (Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway). The poverty experiences of the tenants were thus

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461 The road to Ros Cíde was the setting of the story Na Bóithre (“The roads”) about emigration by the Irish writer Patrick Pearse, who lived in Ros Muc (Robinson, 1990).
462 Many of the Ó Briains moved out of Ros Cíde to the other more central parts of the village, while other families (for example Connellys) moved in. This has changed the scope of the kinship networks and deteriorated intra-family connections.
463 The name of the local harbour is An Crompán Bréan, or the foul creek, from the smell of rotting seaweed, which explains the negative image of this place.
constructed within a multiplicity of social, cultural, moral and political networks. First, the poverty of these people was associated with their homelessness and inward migration. Second, their poverty had cultural connotations as the incomers were from outside the village and were unable to share local symbols and histories, especially spatial histories of poverty associated with Aill Bhúí. Third, these people were socially excluded as they were artificially isolated in the small area outside the “core” space of the village. Lastly, the intentional placement of these people in the marginal space suggested their powerlessness and political exclusion.

Plate 30. The harbour in Aill Bhúí

At the same time, geographical marginality does not always imply exclusion. Spaces of power in the village are contested by those whose belonging to the “core” community is denied. Chapter 6 offers glimpses of some of the ways in which centrality of the “core” spaces in the village is challenged by the existence of the “networks of excluded” which bring together people living “on the margins” of the community. First, it describes experiences of one of the New Age people, who came to live in the village and worked in the art project in Pléaráca. Not only had these people worked in one of the focal areas of...
community, they also settled down within the core space of the village\textsuperscript{465}. In so doing, these newcomers made clear claims of belonging to the area, at the same time contrasting limited kinship connections with their extensive contacts in the wider world\textsuperscript{466}. The image of a local villager trapped within the rigid framework of family links needs to be set against the relevance of wider connections and exotic networks; the rigid difference is contrasted with the fluid difference. These newcomers are seen as "others" in the village but their "otherness" is mutating and contradictory. On the one hand, newcomers moving into the community is seen by the locals as a "transgression" of the core space of the village, which clearly defines the New Age people as dangerous "others" who have to be excluded in order to preserve the local integrity. On the other hand, these people take place in community events and they are part of the development networks associated with power, which suggests that they cannot be considered as absolute foreigners and "forever others". As Chapter 6 indicates, inclusion of these newcomers in the local social networks entails redrawing of the symbolic boundaries within the community and questions the established problematic. Poverty is no longer linked to the exclusion from local networks, but is considered within the framework of the wider connections stretching outside the physical boundaries of the community.

Second, Chapter 6 suggests the existence of a network of small farmers which challenges the domination of "key" actors in the village. This network connects people whose "traditional" lifestyles are associated with hardship and poverty. These people live in the peripheral parts of Ros Muc, the very names of which have connotations of farming, isolation and roughness\textsuperscript{467}. The physical isolation of these people does not imply their social and cultural exclusion as they are linked within different networks of exchange and mutual support (workgroups\textsuperscript{468} and networks of social capital). As Chapter 3 states, this multiplicity of connections entails a blurring of the rigid boundaries of the "other" and reduced possibility of social exclusion for these people. Moreover, the heterogeneity of links provides wider cultural resources and choices for these actors.

Importantly, the existence of these "alternative" networks, which are not confined to the "core" of the village, challenges the hierarchy of places in Ros Muc and related constructions of "otherness". It turns out to be that these farmers manage both to live in their interstitial spaces beyond the "core" networks associated with power, and to avoid its

\textsuperscript{465} Two of them used to rent a bungalow just opposite one of the pubs, another one rented a house near the post office.
\textsuperscript{466} Chapter 6 describes them as "affectual networks".
\textsuperscript{467} Few people from An Tamhaigh Bhig ("the small arable patch"), Snámh Bó ("swimming place of cows"), An Silear ("the Cellar"), Gairfean ("rough land") are connected with the others living in Ros Locha ("peninsula near Wheat rock") near the bogs of An Turlach Mór ("the lonely field").
\textsuperscript{468} People in workgroups are not solely involved in farming: these links are used to enable people to work together on the bog and to co-operate with seaweed collection and scallop fishing.
normalising and regulating influence. With recourse to the arguments presented in Chapter 3, I can conclude that people who are not linked with visible regulatory and controlling power can still possess power and knowledge producing space where difference is not measured and fixed, but fluid and not associated with negativity. The marginality of these actors is inverted: they live in spaces of creativity and power, rather than spaces of poverty and powerlessness. Some farmers recognise their possession of this “invisible” power and try to use it to achieve their goals: they formed a pressure group to change sheep grazing regulations (Rónán Greilish), composed a petition against changes in regulation for peat production (Glynis Úi Luathairf) and led the local protest against the installation of new telephone mast on the police building (Rút Ní Mhaoláin). Thus, these people are seen as marginal only in the striated space constituted by the “core” network of “key” people. In the space of fluid differences constructed by multiple networks, the centrality of rigid frameworks and fixed constructions of poverty is questioned. In this case, farmers themselves become “key” actors in the construction of both social and policy networks. Within these networks poverty changes as its elements (practices, symbols and artefacts) come together in different combinations, which do not necessarily manifest in negative experiences.

Policy implications

The above analysis based on my empirical research refers to the interconnectedness of social and policy networks in specific contexts in the creation of different rural identities and poverty experiences. It reveals a different picture of poverty, which is fluid and complex, and which does not necessarily fit within the existing policy mechanisms. Close engagement with fieldwork therefore demonstrated that poor people are left isolated and misunderstood; their experiences of poverty are misinterpreted and inadequately addressed in rural policy programmes. Moreover, as this analysis shows, policy making often contributes to the reproduction of poverty and to the aggravation of living conditions of rural people. My fieldwork results, which showed the inability of current policy-making to deal with rural social malaise, encouraged my search for alternative rural policies. The question I've been asking myself since the beginning of my research was how can rural poverty be alleviated? It is now time to ground my theoretical findings, inspired by my empirical research, in rural policy discussions. The following section considers different ways to implement in practice my ideas about dealing with poverty which can improve living conditions of rural people in Russia and Ireland.
The debate about multiple natures of poverty earlier in this chapter raises important issues about how rural policies can be changed to work with complex and heterogeneous rural problematics. It shows that there is a need to challenge existing rationalised and centralised policy making by demonstrating the inability of this politics to improve rural living conditions and to acknowledge the opportunities provided by the alternative mechanisms of dealing with rural social malaise. This involves questioning the rigid conceptualisations of poverty and otherness, as well as the ways of interpreting the everyday experiences of rural people. For example, Stroev’s case presented in Chapter 6 demonstrates that commitment to one particular definition of poverty in rural policy making leads to the situation when other circumstances related to poverty are overlooked. This case indicates that people’s living conditions can be improved if the construction of poverty is broadened and alternative ways of dealing with poverty are considered.

An appreciation of some of the critiques of fixed and logical policy making provided earlier in this chapter lead me to suggest that the existence of “alternative” policy links should not simply be recognised, but their development must be encouraged. As Chapter 3 established, alternative connections bring alternative interpretations of otherness, and encourage wider inclusion of people in policy making. This helps to break the existing power hierarchies and avoids the subordination and othering of people living in the condition of poverty. Moreover, it is important to use a fluid approach to transform policy structures and to show rural people that key actors actually change. As Chapter 7 shows, social security workers’ experimentation with alternative anti-poverty development mechanisms help to alleviate poverty of the neediest people in the village of Khlopovo. At the same time, the development of

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469 Traditional association of poverty with the rural people of old age reflects oversimplification and trivialising of poverty.
470 Multiple definitions of poverty relate to Igor Stroev being an OAP, war veteran, disabled person included in local social networks.
471 Such as bringing medical services to Stroev, using social connections and key people (starosta) in the village to get him included into policy networks.
472 Chapter 7 shows that fluid politics helps to avoid isolation of people poverty.
473 As Chapter 5 asserts, rural planning structures are inherited from the Soviet people so that key actors retained their positions in the networks of the powerful. Moreover, Russian rural authorities are not elected, but appointed by the district officials, which undermines their legitimacy and moral status. Unsurprisingly, rural people do not trust the local politicians and do not believe that rural policies can deal with poverty.
474 Social security service linked up with the shoe-making factories in order to pay the arrears in children allowance.
475 Creative use of limited resources provides opportunities for lone parents to get delayed children benefits in the form of shoes, which they can exchange for food within local social networks.
alternative links in the Russian villages challenges the exclusivity of mostly farm-centred social networks and provides different opportunities for both employment of the “poor” people and for their inclusion in community.

- Linked with these issues of decentralisation of existing policy-making, there are some unresolved issues about the connectedness between policy and social networks in the implementation of rural policies. In many ways, fluid transformation of rural decision-making involves further renegotiation of positions of “other” links within the policy structure and a redefinition of their very “otherness”. Empowerment of local actors and recognition of the equal importance of “traditional” and “informal” links could reduce hostility towards rural development and demonstrate that people’s actions have an influence on policy making. In this case rural policy makers can use the existing symbiosis of collective farms and rural households to bring social and policy networks together. For example, the hybridisation of farm-centred activities and social links in rural Russia entails the incorporation of “informal” links in the policy structure. In this case illegal practices of stealing produced within “informal” social links are replaced with the continuous material aid to the villagers distributed through “official” and legal policy channels, which helps to improve living conditions of the villagers and promote their inclusion in rural community.

- A further set of issues is related to the dematerialisation of rural policies. First, the narratives of poverty presented in Chapter 6 demonstrated that in most cases people

476 As Chapter 5 shows, collective farm tends to be the only source of employment in the rural communities, and both social and work-related links are farm-focused.
477 Rural authorities in Khlopovo turn a blind eye on home brewing and provide opportunities for people involved in this “semi-legal” business to buy ingredients (most importantly sugar) at reduced prices (through local collective farm). Brewing in rural Russia is commonly seen as a “women’s business” and a “traditional” rural activity, which keeps together informal “home-brewing clubs”. Allowing brewing to develop helps local authorities to encourage women’s economic empowerment, to maintain local traditions and to reinforce local social networks providing opportunities for alleviation of poverty.
478 Difference can be seen in the centre of productive and creative transformation rather than treated as a negative and dangerous (trespassing) force.
479 Rural people feel that they are not left out in urban-biased policy making. Moreover, after a period of forceful collectivisation, strict regulation and control in the Soviet time rural people do not have any reasons to trust the state. Inconsistent reforms in the 1990s have deteriorated conditions of living in the countryside and contributed to poverty, so people remain apprehensive of participation in state development initiatives.
480 As Chapter 5 explains, collective farm alongside with the rural administration is treated as the authority in the Russian villages.
481 Collective farm in Khlopovo gives out for free the excess of harvest and sells foodstuffs to the collective farm members at reduced prices. As a farm manager admits, they give away the foodstuffs which would otherwise be stolen thus creating conditions for people not to get involved into illegal activities. Stealing in this case is accounted for (incorporated) in policy making in the form of hand-outs. People receive guaranteed help from the local authorities instead of being pushed towards taking part in the risky, insecure and morally inappropriate stealing business.
living in “troubled” conditions do not associate their living with material poverty. Second, other rural people do not think about poverty exclusively in material terms. In this context technological rural policies, which seem to be preoccupied with “effective use of budget funding” (Inga Khomyakova, regional development worker, 06/06/2000, Zarajsk) and paperwork, need to be less materialistic and more people-oriented. This could help to strengthen the “collective spirit” which used to bind people together in the Russian villages (Chapter 4), and to encourage the involvement of actors in voluntary work with non-tangible and uncertain long-term benefits. Chapter 7, for example, juxtaposes the sensuous and “human” approaches for dealing with the poverty of elderly people taken by rural medical attendant, with the more rigid and technological treatment of these patients by the head of the local hospital. It shows that in the first case rural policies had more “success” with helping people out of their troubles than in the second case.

* Apart from the fluid interpretations of everyday poverty, inclusive policy making needs to take into account its different temporalities. Rural policies can provide flexible time-frames where transient policy actions can be supported and “temporary” actors can get involved. As Chapter 7 demonstrates, the village enhancement programme in Zhilkontsy involved not only one-off policy initiatives (such as clearing of the cemetery), but supported continuous small-scale improvements and encouraged

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482 Instead, villagers associate poverty with specific lifestyle and loneliness or exclusion from social networks (Igor Stroev, Zhilkontsy).
483 People in Khlopovo, for example, associate poverty with the way children are dressed or the way villagers are involved in community affairs.
484 See people’s reflections on rural policies in Chapter 7.
485 As Chapter 5 shows, this turn away from “functional” policy making could improve the quality of links within rural communities (as individualism is seen to deteriorate links) and to encourage inclusion of people with limited material resources into local social networks.
486 See also Alena Darysheva’s story about “emergency” placement of villagers in the local hospital in the breach of the existing regulations in Chapter 3.
487 There is also a problem of getting free medicines which are guaranteed to war veterans, disabled people and other categories considered as “poor”. These medicines are listed in a special document approved by the head of the local hospital. If eligible recipients of these medicines want to have a stronger or a different medicine, the local authorities instruct rural medical attendants to persuade their patients to take the subsidised version, often compromising the effectiveness of treatment (Oksana Mysina, 21/06/2000, Zarajsk). Few rural medical attendants, however, admitted going against the rules and allowing patients to choose the alternative treatments for free, as they believed this could provide better treatment.
488 I use the term “success” here without any references to achievement or indication of fixity of development process (I don’t see it as a stage-by-stage development with the end point).
489 Rural policies can capitalise on successful involvement of rural actors in policy initiatives. As Chapter 7 shows, local librarian played an important role in organising people for clearing the cemetery initiated by the rural administration. Local officials can support involvement of these actors in rural development, which would ensure the continuity of rural development.
490 Within the framework of the village enhancement scheme local administration encouraged young people to redecorate the local club and add new facilities to it. As a local tractor driver admits, this day-to-day moral and material support from local authorities encouraged people to install new club lights, provide outside connections for the speakers and re-paint the walls in the club “at their own pace”.

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people's daily co-operation on village betterment. Consequently, apart from inclusion in policy programmes people were provided with the opportunities to improve their well-being.491

Plate 31. "Medicines for poor": free medicines available for "deprived" rural people at the medical assistant’s house (doctor’s surgery) in Zhilkontsy

- One of the potential problems of a focus on “difference” and “otherness” is that rural policies can become de-socialised (taken away from people by concentrating on cultural changes) and de-contextualised (taken away from specific places by focusing on general theoretical ideas). It is important therefore to keep a focus on people in particular places and to make rural policies context-specific, especially in Russia where

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491 At the same time, Chapter 6 shows how slow and untimely responses to changing living circumstances of incomers made their life more difficult and aggravated their hardship.
face-to-face communication and physical contacts are very important (see Chapter 4 on this issue). The examples of rural policies which use the peculiarities of localised social and cultural landscapes to alleviate rural poverty include working with dachniki in developing rural infrastructure (Chapter 7) and empowering young people in the case of the clubhouse reconstruction in Zhilkontsy.

Plate 32. The results of empowerment: reconstructed rural clubhouse in Zhilkontsy

Ireland

Thus far, in discussing some of the issues related to policy approaches to poverty in the Russian context I have stressed the importance of a heterogeneous and complex understanding of rural social malaise. Although in Ireland there have already been some noticeable moves towards different ways of dealing with poverty (see Chapter 4 and earlier discussion in this chapter) some of the issues raised earlier are also relevant in the Irish context. At the same time, as I established earlier, otherness and poverty are context-specific as they are created within particular localised networks, including webs of policy links. The task of this section is therefore to concentrate on the ways different theoretical

492 Rural administration encouraged young people to take initiative in reconstruction of the local clubhouse (as its most active users) and suggest possible improvements. In so doing, local authorities both provided temporary jobs for the unemployed young people and improved the clubhouse, which is a focal point of the community (it is a place where local people receive their pensions, hold community meetings and stage village festivals).
approaches can inform anti-poverty policies, and through policy practice alleviate poverty in rural Ireland.

- One of the issues related to restructuring of rural policies in Ireland concerns the place of new approaches to poverty and otherness in the policy structure. It is important that emerging signs of fluid policy making are treated seriously and "alternative" policy mechanisms are supported. Further development of rural policies must continue to challenge essentialist and non-dialectical approaches to poverty and otherness and attempt to work with difference without appropriating it (emphasising difference rather than sameness, providing space for "unrepresentative" practices to be linked in policy programmes). In the Irish village of Ros Muc this appreciation and propagation of difference can help to create new connections for inclusion of different rural people in the construction of heterogeneous community, which is not circumscribed by the limited number of competing kinship links. For example, a pantomime organised by Pléaráca brought together different people including local development officer as a "hairy monster" and a New Age person as a "rebellious farmer" (see Chapter 6) and provided opportunities for cultural and social inclusion of people in the local community (as well as employment opportunities). Moreover, as Chapter 3 demonstrates with the case of new educational initiative in Ros Muc, fluid politics can ensure equity in the representation of different kinship groups in policy making and challenge exclusive visions of otherness and poverty in local cultural networks.

- Another issue concerning the move towards fluid decision-making relates to "harmonization" of rural policies. This involves the decentralisation of policy-making, as well as the acceptance of a new mobility of policy links (a much more dispersed set of governmental institutions) and a fluidity of non-hierarchical policy

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493 See approaches mentioned earlier in this chapter – recognising "unusual" knowledges, giving voice to others, encouraging interactivity.

494 Chapter 7 provides an example of inventive politics when a crèche is created in Ros Muc. In this case policy makers use difference to create multiple links between local people (social networks) and different organisations (policy networks) including Údarás na Gaeltachta (work and employment schemes), Muintearas (early childhood education), FÁS (training and development workshops) and parish council. In this case complex definition of poverty and otherness is developed within heterogeneous rural space and opportunities for different people to get included in social and policy networks are provided.

495 Pantomime travelled all around Connemara and it was also staged in Galway, so people were employed for at least half a year. Because of the initial success, many of the actors were re-employed to play in the successive pantomimes.

496 In this case, the state is in the middle but not in the centre of policy-making. Chapter 5 provides the example of community development programmes, when the state, acting at a distance, encourages transformation of rural policy-making and blurring the boundaries of "otherness" through immediate participation of different localised groups in development initiatives.

497 New initiatives promoted by the Citizens Information Centre, which are briefly described in Chapter 7, are aimed at development of asymmetrical networks. As a local development worker states, in this case
mechanisms\textsuperscript{498}. In the Irish context harmonisation allows the bringing together of a multiplicity of existing social and policy networks (co-ops, networks of mná tf\textsuperscript{499}, workgroups, development organisations like Cumas Teo. and Pléaráca Teo.) not in mutually exclusive\textsuperscript{500}, but in complementing ways. This fluid transformation of policy networks entails not just a tokenistic move towards community participation\textsuperscript{501}, but ensures the empowerment of rural actors thereby using their knowledge of development vocabulary (see Chapter 4) and helps to overcome distrust of and suspicion towards rural policies. For example, Chapter 7 stresses that the renegotiation of educational policy links and organisational rules during the school-related conflict helped to bring together social networks (parents committee at school) and policy networks (educational council), established long-term inter-organisational links based on reciprocity and trust, contributed to a blurring of the boundaries of otherness (proving different understandings of what is a “problem” child) and provided opportunities for improving local educational services.

- Another concern (also considered earlier in the Russian context) relates to the way in which sometimes Irish rural policies can privilege generalised and “functional” approaches of dealing with poverty without giving to specific attention to the importance of sustained and contextualised work on the ground with “troubled” rural people. As Chapter 6 argues, a fluid politics of difference is impossible without listening to specific voices of deprived and “other” people in specific localities. First, the contextualisation of rural policies can help to avoid a reification of specific forms of “otherness” and privileging particular “others” over other “others”. Chapter 7 demonstrates with the case of football-pitch development that policy practices which take account of the exclusivity and narrow focus of church-based networks in Ros Muc\textsuperscript{502} can help to reconsider criteria of “otherness”\textsuperscript{503}, ensure inclusion of different voluntary organisations of rural people working on local poverty-related issues are not considered as “second level down to politicians” but as a legitimate force in itself capable of improving local living conditions (Fionnuala Caomhánach, 18/06/2001, Ros Muc).

\textsuperscript{498} This involves rotation of policy actors and continuous recreation of different connections during implementation of policy initiatives. As Chapter 7 demonstrates, fluidity of policy networks is encouraged both by policy actors (bringing in facilitator in educational committee) and by rural people themselves (promoting high membership turnover in committees), which allows inclusion of many different people in policy networks and blurring the boundaries of “otherness”.

\textsuperscript{499} Women who are looking after their houses and provide accommodation for the students coming to learn Irish.

\textsuperscript{500} Chapter 7 provides examples of the rivalry between different development organisations.

\textsuperscript{501} One of the issues related to restructuring of anti-poverty policies in Ireland concerns the ways new approaches to poverty are reflected in policy practice. As Chapter 5 emphasises, quite often complex understanding of poverty is not translated into policy practice, which remains exclusive and homogeneous (favouring sectoral approaches).

\textsuperscript{502} For example, Chapter 5 provides some evidence of ethnical exclusivity of church-centred networks.
people in community development and improve local living conditions\textsuperscript{504}. Second, context-specific policies can make extensive use of existing social connections and policy infrastructure to deal with poverty. In the case of Ros Muc several projects developed by Pléaráca\textsuperscript{505} use the creative potential of local networks organised around traditional working and leisure practices and avail themselves of government support for Irish-speaking activities. Third, fluid rural policies sensitive to the local context can help to emphasise local specificity, thus reinforcing local moral links and improving the quality of social connections and the stock of social capital. Context-specific policy-making unravels connections of local actors within wider communities which are not circumscribed by specific geographical boundaries thus providing space for the inclusion of people with different mobility\textsuperscript{506} and sociality\textsuperscript{507}. For example, Chapters 6 and 7 offer glimpses of the results of a community arts project involving the fluid transformation of local policy networks, which led to renegotiation of criteria for otherness\textsuperscript{508} and poverty\textsuperscript{509}.

- A final concern relates to accommodating different temporalities of poverty within existing policy networks. Apart from providing flexible time-frames which are sensitive to transient poverty experiences\textsuperscript{510}, rural policy makers can learn from the experiences of fruitful collaboration during temporal mergers of different networks\textsuperscript{511} in order to develop inclusive long-term policies\textsuperscript{512}. Time-sensitive policy-making also

\textsuperscript{503} During the football-pitch project localised politics has overcome the existing division between “locals” and “non-locals” which is central to the local construction of poverty (see Chapters 5 and 6). Local development encouraged the use of wider connections and involvement of distant (non-local) actors in the form of sponsorship and moral support.

\textsuperscript{504} In the case of football-pitch development local priest, who partly initiated the project, did not take central position in the development committee and stepped down from power after the project was under way.

\textsuperscript{505} Apart from above-mentioned pantomime, it supports traditional boat-races and restoration of Galway hookers, provides teaching courses of traditional Sean-nós dances and music, and organises local festivals.

\textsuperscript{506} McDonagh (2001) emphasises that recent Irish development policies encouraged Irish people immigrated from Ireland to come back to the country. Similarly, there have been few attempts by the development organisations in Connemara (Údarás na Gaeltachta, Cumas Teo.) to encourage exiles to return to their homes in Ros Muc in attempt to revitalise local community or to sell their houses to the local homeless people. In so doing, rural policy makers recognised the importance of “absent” links existing between local people and exiles in construction of poverty and exclusion.

\textsuperscript{507} See “neo-tribes” and “affective” networks considered in Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{508} New Age people were included.

\textsuperscript{509} Allocation of temporary jobs helped to deconstruct the dichotomy of working/non-working poor: people were allowed to continue drawing their dole while at the same time participating in community art activities such as teaching art in the local primary schools and creating greeting cards with local pictures.

\textsuperscript{510} Chapter 7 demonstrates how the project of crèche development led to alleviation of poverty related to time-pressures on lone parents. Poverty of single mothers is often linked to their inability to take part in community activities because of the lack of time they could spend away from their children.

\textsuperscript{511} For example, in case of conflict (see Chapter 7).

\textsuperscript{512} For example, Chapter 7 shows how policy makers capitalised on the results of the networks merger in case of the conflict around the exclusive educational policies. In this case the changes that followed helped to ensure participation of rural people in local policy making and created a basis for a long-term co-operation on local educational development.
provides a feeling of continuity of rural development and encourages people's consistent involvement in policy practice. Chapter 7 refers to the community effort to repair the roof of the village hall, which led to a temporary informal committee being set up, responsible for that development project being accommodated within the local policy networks. In this case, however, even though policy initiatives helped to improve local living conditions, relations between rural people were formalised in order to fit within rigid policy structures. If policy makers avoid the appropriation of difference while still remaining sensitive to transient policy experiences they can develop more inclusive rural policies. In this case transformatory politics or poetics (as it is considered in Chapter 3) attends to formal generalities of the everyday poverty and to the here-and-now-ness of everyday poverty practices.

Within this thesis I have been arguing for different flexible approaches for understanding rural poverty and a sensitive deconstruction of homogeneous and trivialised visions of rural social malaise. With reference to specific contextualised examples this work has demonstrated that fluid and complex dealings with rural problematics could help to improve the lives of rural people. The most serious and unresolved issue, however, is related to the connectedness between research and rural policies. In these conclusive comments I consider the issues related to poverty and otherness within the discursive framework of rural policy making and present them in the form compatible with policy actions. To this end I choose one particular development project and demonstrate how theoretical ideas about alternative ways of dealing with poverty can translate into policy practices and fit within the existing policy environments.

To demonstrate a possible transformation of policy making I take as an example the existing project in Ros Muc which involves setting up educational courses for early school leavers. The ideas about alternative politics can be translated into policy practice in the following ways:

1) Networked politics
The project can benefit from a networked approach which involves bringing different agencies together and providing opportunities for collaborative work between local and regional authorities. If both development organisations in the area (Cumas and Pléaráca) can both take part in this educational project joined by the parents committees from local schools and few local employers they can develop better understanding of the reasons for leaving education, training requirements and skills necessary to get local jobs. Importantly,

513 They became a part of the hierarchy of "professional" and "non-professionals".
policy networks should provide connections rather than conjugations, that is ensuring that actors can actually link up and act together when it is necessary. For example, an Irish development worker hopes that she can "pick up the phone and get somebody to answer her query" when she needs it (Fionnuala Caomhánaíoch, 18/06/2001, Ros Muc). A networked approach to politics also assumes that this project encourages the involvement of people who are eager to work and make connections rather than those who are simply enjoying the stability of their important network positions (see Noirín Nic Eachrain's discussion on this point in Chapter 7).

Broadening the scope of policy networks by involving voluntary groups in educational development can help to capitalise on previous achievements, learn from experiences of local educational co-operation and use practical knowledge of rural people about dealing with poverty and exclusion. For example, the case of an excluded child discussed in Chapter 7 showed that bringing in experienced educational workers with hands-on experience of dealing with poverty can improve local living conditions. In a similar vein, the involvement of early school leavers as facilitators in the project can both encourage other people to join in and help to deal with arising communication/personality problems.

Networking also involves sharing and disseminating information using different webs of communications, including alternative policy channels and social connections ("word of mouth"). As another development worker admits, "certain people would be very much dependent on some form of network whether it is a social welfare department, or whether it is the doctor, GP... I suppose in a sense it is easier to get in touch with these people through the other organisations and ... especially through the health services" (Rút Ní Mhaoláin, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc). This use of different network links can increase participation in the educational programme and get involved those people for whom this educational course can make a difference in terms of both finding jobs and getting included in the local community. In this case poverty is treated as a heterogeneous problem including a lack of educational opportunities, lack of self-confidence and isolation, and it is addressed in different ways through different networks. Policy networks are continuously transformed through the incorporation of different experiences, learning strategies and through the rotation of actors, which enables policy makers to deal with changing poverty.

2) Fluid and creative politics

Experimentation and interactivity during this educational development could help to improve local living conditions. Establishment of courses consisting of different modules, which can be put together in different combinations, make them more accessible and inclusive than traditional programmes with rigid training agenda. Interactive politics
allows local people to take control over local educational development and include the subjects which they consider interesting and important. For example, as a local educational worker admitted, when local people voted for inclusion in courses on sawing and home management in the educational agenda, the enrolment into this programme increased (Noirín Nic Eachrain, 03/07/2001, Ros Muc). Moreover, after taking home management courses many people continued their training course and learned other subjects. In this case educational policy making is uncertain and fluid; it evolves to address changing requirements and deals with different problems of rural people. It is the politics of the everyday which deals with the “here-and-now-ness” of poverty, that does not separate professionals from the other actors, because rural people define the educational agenda.

This educational project can also be made more “successful” if it incorporates sensuous and poetic elements. It can provide space for courses on traditional Sean-nos dancing and singing, drawing and crafts making to appeal to people who are not usually involved in educational development. Local people are very concerned with maintaining local traditions, and there were two volunteers who tried to teach traditional dancing in the village hall (one of them died and another one left the area). Incorporation of these subjects into educational project can ensure that this educational development deals with both material (development of skills which can get people jobs) and emotional (dealing with unhappiness and unease about loss of traditions) sides of poverty. Thus, if these artistic elements are taken seriously and not sidelined in rational educational policy making, this project can actually improve living conditions of the local people.

Although my theoretical analysis of poverty and alternative politics took me away from traditional policy making, the purpose of my work is still to translate these ideas into practice in order to make life of rural people better. The above discussion demonstrated that ideas about alternative understanding of poverty and the ways to deal with it can be incorporated in existing policy practices and, importantly, they can alleviate poverty. It now depends on the willingness and the ability of the Russian and the Irish development agencies to take on board these ideas about different ways of dealing with poverty and to implement them in policy practices.
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Location of the Irish field study area (Ros Muc)
Appendix 3: Location of the Russian field study areas

European part of Russia

Zarajsk district in Moscow region

Khloporo field site

Zhilkontsy field site
Appendix 4: Zhilkontsy field study area

Appendix 5: Khlopovo field study area
Appendix 8. Rural Development Network: Galway County
Appendix 10. Rural Development Network: Russia and the EU
Appendix 13: List of participants

The following people were interviewed during the months of June-August 2000 (Russia) and June-August 2001 (Ireland). The following tables do not list all the participants of my research, but only represent those people who are mentioned or referred to in this thesis. Respecting the confidentiality, which I ensured to all participants in this research, the real names of the interviewees were substituted by fictional names (pseudonyms).

**Irish participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fictional name</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Appearance in the text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ailis Ó Cuinn</td>
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<td>42, senior official in the regional authority, Galway</td>
<td>Ailis Ó Cuinn, 14/06/2001, Galway</td>
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<td>Aoife Ní Chonchúir</td>
<td>22/06/2001</td>
<td>80, retired teacher, widow, Ros Muc</td>
<td>Aoife Ní Chonchúir, 22/06/2001, Ros Muc</td>
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<td>Brianna Ó Hógáin</td>
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<td>Brianna Ó Hógáin, 15/06/2001, Galway</td>
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<td>Cian Ó Braonáin</td>
<td>25/06/2001</td>
<td>55, local development worker, pub owner, Ros Muc</td>
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<td>Cristín Ó Haodha</td>
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<td>43, factory worker, single, Ros Muc</td>
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<td>Sonia Samoilova, 09/07/2000, Focus Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Svetlana Kamneva</td>
<td>27/06/2000</td>
<td>40, local authority member, Zhuravna</td>
<td>Svetlana Kamneva, 27/06/2000, Zhuravna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamara Zakutina</td>
<td>13/06/2000, 14/06/2000 FG</td>
<td>38, librarian, married to a plumber, Zhilkontsy</td>
<td>Tamara Zakutina, 13/06/2000, Zhilkontsy; Tamara Zakutina, 14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tatiana Abakumova</td>
<td>03/07/2000</td>
<td>48, shop worker, single, Khlopovo</td>
<td>Tatiana Abakumova, 03/07/2000, Khlopovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentin Egorychev</td>
<td>20/06/2000, FG</td>
<td>55, tractor driver, married to Olga, who is a milkmaid, has children</td>
<td>Valentin Egorychev, 20/06/2000, FG Khlopovo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valentina Golubeva</td>
<td>25/06/2000, FG</td>
<td>69, retired teacher, married to a farmer, Khlopovo</td>
<td>Valentina Golubeva, 25/06/2000, FG Khlopovo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vera Belova</td>
<td>23/06/2000</td>
<td>76, retired nurse, married to Artem, who is a retired collective farm manager, Khlopovo</td>
<td>Vera Belova, 23/06/2000, Khlopovo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viktor Komarov</td>
<td>14/06/2000, FG</td>
<td>33, plumber, single, Zhilkontsy</td>
<td>Viktor Komarov, 14/06/2000, FG Zhilkontsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yulia Sharapova</td>
<td>14/06/2000</td>
<td>40, former local official, married to a senior manager of the collective farm, Maslovo</td>
<td>Yulia Sharapova, 14/06/2000, Maslovo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoya Karpova</td>
<td>09/07/2000, FG</td>
<td>73, retired shop worker, widow, Zhilkontsy</td>
<td>Zoya Karpova, 09/07/2000, FG Zhilkontsy</td>
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Appendix 14: Sample form for budgetary interview

**BUDGETARY FORM**

___________ (month, year)

**Monetary expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Purpose of spending</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Total, £</th>
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**Non-monetary receipts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What was received as money substitute</th>
<th>From whom</th>
<th>On what conditions (in exchange, as a price of goods, work pay, for no particular reason, as a gift)</th>
<th>Amount and approximate price of goods received</th>
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**Non-monetary expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What was given as money substitute</th>
<th>To whom</th>
<th>On what conditions (in exchange, as a price of goods, work pay, for no particular reason, as a gift)</th>
<th>Amount and approximate price of goods given</th>
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**Household produce**

(Allotment farming produce, fishing, mushroom picking, conserves, preserves)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce</th>
<th>Quantity produced, gathered etc.</th>
<th>Quantity processed</th>
<th>Used as animal feed</th>
<th>Set aside</th>
<th>Quantity given to someone</th>
<th>Quantity sold (money received)</th>
<th>Quantity lost or stolen</th>
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</table>
### Money receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>For what and from whom received (including sales of foodstuffs and service pay)</th>
<th>Amount received, £</th>
<th>Sold Amount</th>
<th>Total, £</th>
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<tbody>
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Approximate cash balance in the household at the beginning of the month (13 of July)

|      |                                                                                   |                    |             |         |

Approximate cash balance in the household at the end of the month (31st of July)

|      |                                                                                   |                    |             |         |

### Debts/credits and borrowings

**Household debts at the beginning of the month:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owed to whom</th>
<th>Amount owed</th>
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**Household debts at the end of the month:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owed to whom</th>
<th>Amount owed</th>
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### Household receivables

**Money receivable to the household at the beginning of the month:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person owing the money to the household</th>
<th>Amount receivable</th>
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</table>

**Money receivable to the household at the end of the month:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person owing the money to the household</th>
<th>Amount receivable</th>
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</table>

### Major family events during the last month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family members away from home during the last month (who left home, why, for how long)</th>
<th>Guests, visitors etc. (Who came to stay, how long for)</th>
<th>Family holidays/celebrations (reason, how many times held, number of guests)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of help/service given to you</td>
<td>Whom did help you?</td>
<td>How long did it take?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of help/service given to others by you</td>
<td>Whom did you help?</td>
<td>How long did it take?</td>
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</table>
Appendix 15: Discussion themes for the interviews

OFFICIALS

- Where do you fit in the policy-network?
- What power derives from that network?
- Where is the source of power?
- How power decisions are spatialised?
- How decisions are implemented (understanding decision-making machinery)?
- Why are you doing what you doing (motives and goals of decision-makers)?
- How decisions are made available to those to whom these decisions are applied?
- What are the “problems”? (poverty?)
- Is there any problems of functioning of policy-network?
- What are the ways to make the things better?
- Does particular policy help to alleviate problems? How policy meets people’s needs?
  - What is the measure of success?
  - Is there any dialogue between authorities and community?
  - Are there any pressure groups/promotional groups campaigning for rural poor?

LAY PEOPLE

- What kind of informal networks exist in this locality?
- What is your place in informal networks?
- Understanding the context (Sense of belonging, solidarity, community values)
- What power derives from those networks? In what forms that power is represented?
- The dimension of historicity/futuricity?
- How policy-decisions are delivered into that particular locality?(key actors?)
- What are the “problems”? How people cope?
- Does particular policy help to alleviate problems? How policy meets people’s needs?
- Do those who are the audience of policy-decision are its recipients?
- How policy-networks and lay networks are related to each other?
- How to make the things better?
Appendix 16: Sample transcript

Location: Ros Muc, co.Galway
Date: 22/06/2001

Interviewer: Sergei Shubin (S)
Interviewee: Rúi Ní Mhaoláin (M) (Real name of the interviewee is substituted fictional one for confidentiality)

*NOT FOR QUOTATION

Introduction – some preliminary conversation

S: Could it be a start with what are you doing in this organisation [the organisation]?
M: Well, it is a community arts organisation. It came about, I suppose, in 1990. There was an article written about Irish language by journalist from the Aran islands, he died since. It was a document written for Board na Gaeltachta, and that document stated the fact that the Irish language was in decline and would be dead and buried in 10 yea’s time. So group of people from all over Connemara, some of them, actually, not from Connemara, but living in Connemara. They got together and they decided: “we have to do something, raise this issue, see what the general public thinks about language, why the decline, why aren’t parents speaking the language to their children, what Department of Education is doing about the language, what’s the government doing about the language?” – that sort of thing. Well, at the beginning, I think, they decided to organise the funeral for the language and bury it.

S: Funeral for the language? It is like symbolic gesture?
M: Yes, symbolic gesture. Say, it’s dead, you know, what could be done. They thought out of that it would make people aware of how delicate and how dangerous the stage the language was at that time. So one of that group, anyway, decided, that maybe, you know, it was not the right thing to do – to bury it. What can you do after that? Then, if people did not react to it? So they decided instead to organise a festival.

S: I see. What kind of festival was it?
M: Again, it took part in every parish and village in Irish-speaking Connemara. The area covers from Carna to Bearna and the Aran Islands. And that was done with the events taking in, I suppose, the culture of the area – Shan-nós dancing, traditional dancing, singing, regattas, sailboat events, sport – all of that sort of thing.

S: Did they manage to organise the festival from scratch? What about financing?
M: Well, the local government body called Udarás na Gaeltachta, they gave a grant towards organising a festival. Apart from that, you know, it was just takings at the door and stuff like that...

S: Sorry for interrupting you, can you tell me, how successful were takings at the door? Will people be willing to give money away?
M: Well, for some events you might charge, maybe two pounds, you could not charge any more than that, because it was geared towards everyone in the community. So everyone in the community – whether they were working or they were unemployed, elderly or whatever – the fee was kept so low that everybody was able to contribute. And if you did not have the fee, you won’t hassle it, you know, because of that either. There were only some one-day events, I mean, we celebrated the 10th festival last year. There are certain events each year such as the Shan-nós dancing and singing and the sea events. But we discovered as well that more and more young people are taking Shan-nós dancing, singing and stuff like that. Many more of them involved now in the competitions that were closed years ago. What we are trying to do, I suppose, is to give the young people the chance to be proud of their language and their culture. Now we are back in 1990: from this area and from parishes in Connemara at fairly good distance from Galway city the population was in decline as well and all the young people, because of the lack of employment, they flee to America and quite a large number of them applied for that Morrison visa, that was quite famous at the time. All the young people, actually, were leaving after leaving school which was a cause of concern as well. And we were left with very elderly population and we still are today, actually.

S: So, what is your major target here?
M: The major target... Let me just explain to you. Two years after the festival this committee decided: “Well, there is a lot more we can do rather than a festival for one week once a year”; So, at the time they applied for funding to the Combat Poverty Agency – the Agency which was set up by the government in Dublin. And for the funding from the EU called “Horizon”. So they applied for that and this company [anonymous] was set up. From the beginning our main target groups were women in the home, as you can see there is little around for women, you know, you can’t go to a hotel to sit and meet your friend and have a cup of coffee. Unless you fancy going to a pub or place like there was no place for women to get together, you know, even to socialise. So one of our target groups were women, the elderly and youngsters leaving school at early age. So there is a program of activities provided for different categories... Well, this did not exclude the men either – they were the main target group and I suppose at that time we thought men have
more of an outlet as regards socialising and getting together than women did. I suppose, the transport issue was another thing whereas men might have had cars and they were working and they were using a car, while women did not have a car. It was much harder for her, sort of to get out and about. Because of the geographical distance and lack of transport we set up our office here in Rosmuck – because it was one of the worst areas hit by immigration and unemployment. And we thought that by setting up the office her I might stabilise, you know, process and somewhat it might give people some hope. We believe it has, really. Aitre came after that and they set up here as well and few other things have started to move. I mean, we have VTOS which is run by Galway county Vocational Educational Committee (VEC). It is a good program for women and men and people of, I suppose, it is adult education. And you can, again, sort of, go back and get all your certificates if you did not have a chance to go to school and get them when you were younger. Quite a lot of things came after that. Now, 3 years ago we became a CDP (Community Development Program). The original program was a pilot project for 3 years, so after that it was the end of the funding. So we were looking for other funding so we could continue our work. We managed through the Department of Social Welfare, they had a program called CDP. So, that what we are at the moment.

S: How can you formulate the major aim of your organisation?
M: The major aim, I suppose, is the Irish language
S: To keep up the Irish language?
M: Yes, I suppose, as I said before, we need to make people realise that they have something very special and something very unique and they can be proud of that. And with this go a lot of other things that lost elsewhere in Ireland, a sort of culture. So they go hand in hand and we feel that if people stopped and think of this, of what they have, it can be used as well to make the way of living. For instance, we have Irish colleges here, where people are coming for a number of years to learn the language here, so this can be developed. Tourism of a kind can be developed.

S: So it is not only a question of keeping up Irish language, it is more promoting the Irish language.
M: Yes, promoting the Irish language. To promote the Irish language you need to have something here to make people feel that what they have they can be proud of. You must have a way of leaving, earning a living and things like that. So, that’s where I think cultural tourism will come to it.
S: So altogether, it is not only keep language itself but make people who speak that language happy. How does it involve community development – your company is called Community Development Partnership?
M: It is a community development project, really. But we are doing it through the arts, if you know what I mean.
S: What I’m trying to find out is how do you work with other development companies in here? They might do something to develop the area. Their major priority would be development of this area, rather than development indirectly, through arts.
M: Yes, we network very well with other organisations.
S: In what way?
M: Well, for instance, as regard resources and stuff like that. For instance, if Aitre [fictional name of another development organisation], if they wanted to do something that we would maybe have trained people in that field who may be able to run that workshop or whatever, we work together…
S: You would provide people…
M: Yes, yes. What would happen, Aitre will have funding. They will be able to fund us to do piece of work. It is the same with other organisations, you know. That’s just one example, if you know what I mean. As well as that we work together on different issues in the community such as housing, transport.
S: How can you promote transport through arts? Irishness, arts and transport – how together?
M: Quite honestly, we have to work with everything that affects living in the area. It is community development.
S: Are there any points of intersection when Aitre are trying to do something and you are trying to do something?
M: No, we try very much to avoid things like that. And, I suppose, not just with Aitre, but with Muintearas [early childhood education body] as well. Muintearas is the other organisation, they run an educational program for young people. No, we would not sort of undertake doing something that some organisation like Aitre, if somebody else out there is doing.
S: Do you keep in touch closely with Aitre and the others?
M: We do. This is what I mean – if there is an issue such as housing and transport or something like that, we will get together. We will form a sub-committee maybe made up of people from different organisations and work on that issue together. Same with childcare. We would not just be working alone, we will be working in a group with other organisations.
S: To what extent you can do the things you are trying to do? You mentioned that Aitre have funding and they can subcontract you if necessary. To what extent you have funding necessary to do community development?

M: At the end of the day, what you can do is defined by funding. As I said, the funding we get from the Department of Social Welfare - CDP funding. That covers wages and the overheads of the office, rent and rates, maintenance. Then we have to source funding for our work. Udáras na Gaeltachta is one of the organisations we get funding from. From Rhine na Gaeltachta – I need to think for a moment how to translate it...

S: It is OK. Is it enough funding?

M: No, this is the problem. We get again from Aitre, depending on the piece of work, we get some funding. We get a little funding from Galway county council and from the VEC. They are the main finders. What we do then if there is something we want to do, we submit a plan based on that piece of work in the hope that we get funding to do it. That’s how it works. But definitely we don’t have enough money. It is difficult when you don’t, you know. And as well is that what we are looking for as matching funding from Udáras na Gaeltachta. What I mean is matching funding as regards the CDP money we get, you know, similar amount from Udáras. We could then work on a 3-year plan rather than a piece of work here and piece of work there. It would be more realistic and more efficient indeed.

S: You mentioned that you work together with Aitre. Can I ask you to give me some other examples of your close cooperation with the organisations working in this area? I am just trying to find out what do you really mean by networking?

M: Well, networking is, I suppose, the relation between the organisation and the agencies, the other groups in the area.

S: How does it work – is it both ways, one way?

M: Information. If you have the information then you are not going to be duplicating work either. This is where sub-committee comes handy made up of different organisations.

S: Is it coistf – committees? So are you talking about kind of sub-coistf?

M: Yes, fohr-coistf as we call them.

S: And how does it work, this sub-committee?

M: Well, again they come together on regular, fairly regular basis, depending on what they are working in, what their issue is.

S: So, for your area, your particular area, how does it happen?

M: For instance, what we are looking at the moment is a creche. So the sub-committee is made up of Aitre, [the organisation], the parents of children, VTOS. Like the parents will know what’s needed. We know what we could provide. Aitre will know about the funding. Muintearas will be also involved in it as they will provide a training for the individuals about the crèche.

S: Is Muintearas a part of FÁS[educational training and development body]?

M: No, FÁS is another organisation. So then that group will find out about certain building, the regulation regarding childcare, all of that. The management group will be set up.

S: Why do you think it is important to bring different organisations in this sub-committee? Why do you think it cannot be done by [the organisation] itself?

M: Well, first of all we would not have the manpower. We would not have the know-how either - so it is the combination of different things.

S: Maybe funding?

M: Oh, yeah, the funding as well. And as well as that, I don’t think it is very healthy for any organisation just to go out on their own and try to save the world, because you would have to have respect for all the other people and all the other organisations and committees in your area.

S: You mentioned that some parents participate in this sub-committee. How do you select those parents?

M: Well, the parents themselves have to put forward someone.

S: Do they have any formal organisation?

M: Well, Aitre will be very much involved in bringing the parents together and discussing this with them. And then they would decide whom they would put forward on the sub-committee.

S: Can I ask you strange question? Why your organisation is involved in this crèche project? I can see everyone else contributing something...

M: Why we? What about mothers? Let’s go back now to women at home. If a woman other does not have facilities for her child, we have arts classes and stuff like that – if they don’t have a facility for their child, how can they avail of the workshop?

S: So, eventually you are pursuing a goal of freeing them for your workshops?
M: Yes, we free them to go to work, we free them for further education, free then to attend workshops, free them to do what they want to do if that facility was there. It is all sort of interlinked – parents, work, education, workshops, social life, parish council, which is another committee.

S: What about of area of jurisdiction of your organisation – is it all Gaeltacht?

M: All the Gaeltacht. But under the CDP we have targeted the area that we fill is very much in great need of a lot of things. And that area is Camus and Ros Muc here. For the simple reason we have very few facilities here. We don’t have café, restaurant, Camus don’t even have a pub where people could even meet. We have no public transport whatsoever. Very little employment. Another facilities – if you lived closer to Galway city you could avail of a lot of workshops at night-time, you know. And this came from a meeting we had with people before the [the organisation] was set up – what was lacking, what would women like to do.

S: It seems to be more or less women-targeted...

M: It used to be. For the past year or two we recognised that men are very much isolated as well now. In an area like where we are working, there are quite a large number of men living on their own. They stayed with their parents and when their parents have died, they started to live on their own, running very small farms. And it is an awful lot of job with it at the moment. Prices some years ago were better. Now they are depending on grant aid, they are very much isolated. It is not easy to deal with them, to get them involved. So we’ve tried over the couple of years now [to help them], especially when agriculture grant forms are to be filled in. They have been always dependent on someone sent by Teagasc, but there was never anybody who could speak the language. Some of them had difficulty with that, because some of these people are elderly. They grew up in a time when people did not speak English, and because they have never left home, they did not have an opportunity to speak English. That is one of the other things we are trying to bring to light that such services in a Gaeltacht area should be provided through the Irish language. So we organise nights and maybe days here when such things are coming up, when they can come in and talk to someone in Irish, get their forms and stuff like that filled in and then try to have something for them afterwards, if you know what I mean. It is sort of a way of attracting the men (smiling)

S: Do you mean beer or something like that – a kind of encouragement.

C: No, the main tradition in the area, coming back to the 2nd World War was that people were cutting turf, taking it to the Aran islands where they did not have turf and selling it. And we have traditional boats called Galway hookers. And there are a lot of tradition, stories around that and people are still interested in that. So we are bringing in a lot of people who are good at this and who got a lot of information about this and so you then get those people attending something like that. And they have something after that...

S: What do you mean by that?

M: Well, we will have a cup of tea and couple of drinks maybe and the discussion around something and show a tape of some event, maybe festival.

S: How do you organise things like that? Do you involve any voluntary groups as you don’t have a lot of resources?

M: Oh, we do, yeah. Voluntary work is becoming more difficult now.

S: Why?

M: It is not really [easy], I suppose. When things are going well even though there is not a lot of employment in this area, there is a lot of work to be found in Galway city, it is not far away now. So there are a lot of people are travelling to work, which more so than they used to do some years ago. And of course that leaves less and less free time to do voluntary work.

S: But still, if you are really keen on doing things, you might always find the time...

M: You will always find a certain number of people. But it was never ever everybody in the community doing it. People will do voluntary work for what, I suppose, certain things they are interested in themselves. Remind you now that some people are coming to do the talks, showing slides and things like that - we were talking moment ago about Galway hookers. Those people give their time voluntarily.

S: What about yourself? Are you from this area?

M: I am. I am from this area.

S: OK. You were talking about community. Do you think there is a community within Ros Muc or people more or less separated from each other?

M: Well, of course, we don’t have sort of a centre village as such. People sometimes find that hard to believe. But I mean, we have a strong community here. For the sort of, I suppose, population and resources we have, or the lack of them (smiling), I think Ros Muc has done quite a lot of work voluntarily. For instance, did you see the new football pitch has been built?

S: Oh yes, how did you build it?

M: A lot of again voluntary work went into that. You know, people collecting money and funds every week, selling tickets and staff like that over the years. What they do they have a price by the end of the week and they sell a number of tickets for a pound a line or whatever and then you have a chance of winning something
small at the end of the week. They have fundraised a lot for that. Yes, eventually when, I suppose, when it
was seen that they are making a good way ahead they did get grants, but for voluntary committee to
undertake a piece of work like that it takes some courage, especially in the area like this.

S: Why especially?
M: Because the population is very very small. It is very worrying even at this point at time whether they
would have enough youngsters to play, you know, at that pitch. When the youngsters are here, or in any rural
area, when they reach a certain age and they want to go and study, of course they would need to go to
Galway city, a places like that. It is a drain, again, on the community. All roads lead out rather than in.

S: Is it much more easier for the football club to organise such kind of voluntary work than for any other
organisation? Because football club is using the money of its members, a kind of membership fee.
M: It is not a membership fee but rather a GAA.

S: What does it do?
M: It is a Gaelic football organisation. They are very strong. And the clubs do get a small amount of money
from the organisation. The members would be very interested in the football anyway. But it is a lot of hard
work, especially when you go and give your time voluntarily. And it has taken quite a number of years. It is
hard work, really is.

S: Can I ask you about the community again? What sticks community together, what links community
together? What is it - you said there is a strong community spirit here.
M: Where it comes from is that the people in the community, their ancestors have been here for a number of
years. I feel that it is one of the strongest points here.

S: Or it is like historical memories?
M: Yeah. Strong roots as you would call it. Strong bonds, I suppose. A lot of the community would be
related to some extent.

S: Do you think it is close-knit relationships rather than anything else?
M: It used to be at one time. Close-knit relationships would not be as strong now as they used to be.

S: Where did people go to in order to keep up these ties?
M: Oh no, other than a pub there is no place. That would be definitely for the men for the years the central
point.

S: What about the women?
M: The women also as well, now. Well, of course our culture [did not allow] the women go to a pub about
30 years ago. It is particularly new.

S: Well, if women do not go to the pub, where would they go?
M: Well, there is the thing, there was no place for them to go, and there was one of the reasons that we, [the
organisation] decided that women would be one of their targets.

S: Did you create a space for them?
M: Well, I think, what we did, we organised our workshops. And out of the workshops came the chance to
meet with other women in other places. And as well as that, about every 2 years we organise a pantomime,
when men, women and youngsters from different parts of Connemara come together to perform. So it is very
much a social outlet. And the festival again is another form - and it takes part once a year.

S: What about community hall, do people go there?
M: Well, they have badminton and stuff like that couple of times a week. I would not be able to tell you a lot
about that because it is not one of the things I am closely associated with.

S: I am swapping questions. Some of them are related to your activity as the boss of [the organisation]. Some
of them are related to your experience of living in this place. And I am trying to bring the two together. So if
I ask you about the community hall it does not matter whether you did some work with it or not.

M: There is a community hall. It is very much taken up by other things now at the moment. For instance, the
Irish colleges use it for the summer period. In the winter time they do have some activities for the youngsters.
But again, it is more or less a sports club and the parish council is involved in organising that. Yes, there is
badminton, I think, one night a week and someone takes part in it, men take part in it. It is easy to forget
when you are not directly involved in it.

S: But you live here, know the people, you know what they are doing...
M: I have been living here for 30 years. I do know the people. Of course, I went to school with them here,
most of them would be adults by now.

S: I was interested to find out about the links between the people. Does it help you if you know the people in
the village? Does it help you to organise them to do some voluntary work for you or to participate in the
events you are holding?
M: It can be an advantage, it can also be a disadvantage (laughing)
S: Can you explain, please?
M: I will try. The advantage is, especially for our type of work, that we are trying to be in touch with the people who are, I suppose, most isolated. And being from the area helps you because you would know these people. And on the other hand, I suppose, when you are coming in and trying to do something differently or offer something differently, it might well be better accepted if it came from someone from outside?
S: Why?
M: For the simple reason that, I suppose, we know that person so well. We know what the way of thinking is - all of that. And I think for somebody new coming in it would be a case of curiosity.
S: Is it not interesting enough?
M: It works both ways, if you know what I mean. Somebody who comes from outside - for instance you. Say, Russian guy is coming, he wants to talk to you about community development, whatever. First of all they want to come because you are Russian guy - see what I mean? (laughing). You will get them in!
S: Is it difficult to get people in, generally?
M: Yes, the people that we would like mostly to get in and get involved.
S: Who are they?
M: Again, people who are very much cut off. People who don't have the self ... how would you put it... that are shy, people who feel that they lack self-confidence. They would feel like, you know, what we have to offer is not for them because we would not be able to do that, we would not be able to get involved in the pantomime. We would not be able to paint or to write or anything like that, you know. First of all, the most difficult part is to get them in. And if you can get them in you can work on their self-confidence then. But getting them in is difficult. Being from the area at least you will be able to identify these people.
S: Can you help me to find out who are those the most isolated people are? How can you describe them? Is it like men over 40, women with children?
M: No, it can be right across the board.
S: So what would be you criteria for them to be described as the most cut-off?
M: Maybe lack of education. Again, no means of transport - no means of getting to the place where activities take place. Certain, I suppose, psychological problems. Again, people who have lived on their own for quite a long time they find it difficult. It is not like living in a town where people would say to you "Hello! Good morning". These people here can go for days maybe without seeing anybody. Again, self-confidence. They don't feel confident enough to go out even maybe to do their shopping sometimes - they would be dependent on other people to do it for them. It is that sort of isolation. And how we try and get through to those people sometimes is through local doctor. Especially, some problems might cause them to attend the doctor on a regular basis. So he can advise them saying that maybe they should get involved in this or that, it would be good for them.
S: What about people who are different? You are talking about community and community development. But there are sometimes people who don't want to get involved not because they are shy but because they are different. Maybe because they do not speak language or something like that. I am trying to understand whether you have people like that in the community as well?
M: We do have people like that.
S: Why would you call them different?'
M: You mentioned one thing there – the language, which would, I suppose, make them different. Especially from our point of view, because it would be very hard for them to get involved in some of the activities we organise. Because we do all our work though the medium of the Irish language. Because that's our main purpose of being here. But again we would try and we raise this issue from time to time and we work closely with Aitre on this. For instance, what sort of support do they have, what kind of support can be provided for them to learn the language, to fit in within the community - that sort of thing. They are issues, really. We cannot as an organisation do everything, but we can work with other people on certain things. And we can raise issues. And that would be an issue.
S: I am trying to think about difference in a broader perspective. OK, let's forget about language difference. Among those Irish-speaking people there are some people who are different. Why they are different?
M: Why they are different, is it?
S: Why would you think about them as different?
M: Are you talking about people we are trying to attract?
S: People who have a different way of life or something like that. For me as an outsider it would be difficult to understand why they are separated from the other people. Maybe even difference in lifestyle would not be that obvious for me. They don’t do several things, they don’t go to several places... What about small things
they don't do? What about places they don't go? What would be the visible signs for you to call them outsiders?

M: No, I would not call them outsiders. I would not say in a sense they are different, I would say they are isolated. By isolation I would mean that they are not easy to reach. And their isolation is linked with a whole lot of other reasons. As I said, you know, be where they live - if they live on their own, the are isolated from other people. If they are living somewhere where they can't get to the shop, if they are depending on somebody else to do this for them or to bring them to the shop, they are isolated because they cannot do it freely themselves. And because of their isolation, due to a whole lot of factors, they lack confidence. And even if you provide transport for them or if you provide activities for them, you would still have to work with them. Or some person with the knowledge of how work with them to bring them to a certain point when you can get them more involved in things. You cannot put time on that. Some of them you would not reach. You can only try at the end of the day.

S: Another question please. You were talking about community and I am trying to understand whether people are strongly linked together or not? Because we were talking about people who are completely isolated. I am trying to ask you about what happens to the other people. Do they link with each other, do they help each other in a difficult situation?

M: Oh, they do.

S: In what way?

M: Well, I suppose, bereavement is one of the things, I suppose, that we are [coming together]. I suppose, that goes back to tradition.

S: This is more disastrous thing. I am talking more about day-to-day things. Do community members help each other in day-to-day activities? Say, for instance, there was a case in Russia when people decided to do something about their graveyard. And they joined their efforts, they have got a tractor, they cleared their graveyard. And it was a whole community action without anyone else helping them. What about this kind of thing?

M: Well, you will need to have a leader, I think, to bring together this sort of thing.

S: Is it possible to find something like that?

M: Depends on the issue or whether it is a local [thing]. Again, the graveyard - that happens once or twice a year when the community comes and they do things like that. Parish council, they have organised clearance of the sides of the road and stuff like that. That's going on a continuous basis.

S: What's the community role in this?

M: The community will come in. It just has to be announced somewhere: “Tomorrow we are clearing the road. In that village and that village. People of that village will come out at the sort of time”. People will do it. Not everybody, but most of them [same in Russia -point of leadership and organisational details - announcements].

S: And how would you describe - people are closely linked together or they are separated as the community?

M: Again, with the change of time, it depends on the issue.

S: I am asking you in general - feeling of the community: whether do you have a really close community which is easy to organise, where the initiatives would be easily supported, or whether it consists of much more separated people? They might say: “I am minding my own business, when it comes to the community, I might come or might not”.

M: Oh, you get that.

S: What is the general feeling?

M: The general feeling is… if there is a strong issue, something that is worrying the community, something to do with the community, they will [come together]. I will give you an example. Few years ago, there was an aerial mast to be erected quite close to one of the schools up there. And, of course, we were not too happy about this because of radiation. We just got a word that it was going to be erected. There was nothing we could do because the government has given the right for the erection. So there was not planning permission that we could question. So the community came together. They spent month on rotation basis, night and day there. And it was the only on in Ireland that did not go up.

S: So is there a strong community spirit?

M: There is. It depends on the issue. If something, for instance, if you had hay, or grass cut, and it was going to rain and you think “Goodness, that was dry and I cannot get it on my own”. Yes, the village would help you with it - anybody who's here. Again, there are things when people would say: “I am not interested in that. So I won't get involved”. It varies. But there is a strong community. Still and all, not everybody goes out and thinks “I am just going to do my own thing and I'm not going to bother for anybody else”.

S: If there is a strong community, a kind of network, links between the people, is it easier for you to work with them as an organisation? Is it easier for you to implement your initiatives? When there is a strong
community spirit, is it more likely that people would support your initiatives and people would be much more eager to take part in the initiatives? If they are close, if they are more consolidated?

M: It depends on interest. It is interest-driven.

S: You mean if they are interested in personal development?

M: Personal development. Skills and stuff like that they feel they require. Yeah, that would be very much that. Sort of services we can provide such as photocopying, typing, use of computers, you know. Yes, they would sort of pass that on from mouth to mouth "you can get that sort of help". For us it is easier to find [the contacts] amongst the different people out there, so we would know who is in this committee, who is involved in that. So if you want for any particular reason to link in with that particular group, you would know the best person to contact in that area.

S: So it would be easier for you to organise some events?

M: Yes, yes.

S: What I’m trying to find out is whether there are some kind of informal networks within the community? Say, situations like that: “I would help you to do the things, you would help me to do the other things”.

M: Yes, you get that. Especially, I know even my own son doing these things at the moment. Some fellows of his own age, if one of them building a house, if he knows somebody who can do the woodwork, he would do that. My son, for instance, would do the plastering. And if he was doing something again, that group would come along and help him out. But it is very much sort of, I think it is more amongst the younger going now than among the older. It is a different tradition. Before now you would be talking about, maybe, saving the hay or saving the turf, now it would be more about building a house or building a shed, laying a path or something like that.

S: Say, we consider different situation. We went with a guy to the school together. Then, when you grew older, you were trying to find a job for your son. And that person, whom you went to the school with, is running a place, say, a pub, where you want your son to work. Will it be easier for you to use this link and get a job for your son?

M: Yes, you would do that if you knew the owner, yes. You would.

S: Does it work like that?

M: Less and less now. It depends on the type of job you are talking about now. OK, if you are in the building trade, you may be asked to recommend somebody, yes. Or in any job, really. Yes, there are certain jobs that have to be advertised. Yes, it can still be a good way of employing people. To a certain degree.

S: If I come back to the issue of links between the people. Is it easier, do you think, to work with the people in a community like this if they are already somehow organised? Does the existence of social networks make it easier for you as a community development organisation to work with them or it makes it more difficult because people are already organised and they maybe reluctant to join?

M: I suppose, certain people we are talking about they would be very much dependent on some form of network whether it is a social welfare department, or whether it is the doctor, GP, or whether it is the hospital, whether it is Aitre... I suppose in a sense it is easier to get in touch with these people through the other organisations and for certain people, definitely, this is one of the things we are trying to breach at the moment, especially through the health services. And up until now we did not make much of a headway there. But seemingly it is beginning to happen. Because I think certain people think that because they are dependent on social welfare they should not do this or they should not be involved at...

S: What do you mean?

M: Again, it goes back. I suppose, to the sort of history attached to that. If you were on social welfare, for instance, you were totally dependent on the Department of Social Welfare, which meant you did not do any work. You could not do any work if you were dependent on that money. Otherwise, if you did, you lost some of that money or all of that money. There were things like that, even though the whole situation now has changed very much people still have that at the back of their mind. And, OK, if certain people are, I would say, dependent, but not actually dependent, if somebody is ill - they depend very much on what their doctor tells them on what they should do or on what they should not do. So I think a doctor or a health nurse would play a very big part in what that particular person is get involved in things.

S: Would they say: "Don't get involved?"

M: They probably would not say "Get involved in it", I think that is where the contact between the organisation like [the organisation] and Health Service would be valuable. Because the Health Service would not probably know that we are here at all and that we could provide a service to a certain people. Therefore we would have to have a contact with them. And then again, I think it would be far better for us to get in touch with the person through the Health Department rather than [get in touch] directly with the person. Because they might say: "Well, I do not know, I am not well, maybe this is not for me". But if the nurse said: "It would benefit you, maybe you should get involved in this!". So your question was: "How effective or how good, or how important the networks are?". I think they are very important.

S: Do you try to use the networks? You said "It would be very great if you could use this Health Service"...
M: It is beginning to. Initially, we made a few approaches and we raised the issue couple of times. I suppose, in relation, definitely to the elderly here, at least, there is the awareness here that suggests something eventually will happen. In very, very recently we were approached from somebody from the Western Health Board on the issue of people coming out from the psychiatric hospitals and maybe getting them involved in our programs and our workshops. Even though it happened just yet, at least something happening now.

S: Is it difficult to get this sort of people involved? I mean, are you scared of bringing together people who just left psychiatric hospital and housewives with 3 children or someone like that? Is it difficult to bring different people together?

M: As I said, it has not really happened yet. But I am not sure it would be all that difficult. Because maybe if you were in the city, you would not know the people coming from psychiatric hospitals. But here they are neighbours, these people are our neighbours. People know them in general, you know, everyday life. So just because that person happened to be ill, I don't think, you know, I don't think it would be so much of a problem to work with different people in a workshop or whatever.

S: Would people be apprehensive?

M: Oh, I don't think so. Not now. Maybe if we were talking about 20 years ago – yes, it would be difficult, but not now.

S: Can you give me any other examples when you are trying to network with the other organisations, when you are trying to combine efforts in community development?

M: Well, I suppose another example would be childcare. I mean, a lot of different groups will have an interest in that. (we interrupt for a moment just to have a drink of water)

S: Yes, I remember you gave me the example of crèche. Apart from this, you explained that the people are working together, but to what extent do they effectively work together? I was explained that in some cases there might be a board of directors in different organisations where there would be people from different organisations. Are they still closely linked together or they still more or less trying not to lose their personal ground as they represent different departments? Or they are trying to work together as one committee?

M: I think generally people would try work together. But, of course, we are all human beings and our personal interests come into play at times. I suppose one of the other things in a small community like here is that a lot of the same people would be involved in different organisations. So it is very difficult, it is not so much all different organisations coming together, it maybe two or three people would be members of different organisations.

S: Is it literally two or three people talking to each other on behalf of different bodies?

M: Yes, it could well be. It is because, you see, how small the community is.

S: It is large, actually, it comprises like 500 people. Why only two or three people do represent them?

M: Oh, there will be more than that. But what I mean is that maybe two or three people would be involved in all different organisations and you know when you are coming together you might be wearing three or four different hats at one time. The organisations would be bigger than that. What I mean is that maybe one or two people maybe involved in different committees.

S: Are they selected by the people? How do they get to those committees?

M: It depends. It depends on the organisation. For instance, in our own organisation we have the annual general meeting every year, three of the members will have to step down every year, but they can put their names forward again. But there is a voting process. Generally, I suppose with other organisations which are not companies limited by guarantee, they have, what you call it... I can't think of the word now... Yes, it can be sort of made up of interested members. For instance, GAA club here: there will be a certain people in the locality interested in football. So they would come together, I suppose, depending again on how two or three people name one person. And maybe two or three others may name somebody else until they make up a committee. It is that sort of process. Generally, I suppose, as well, there are people in any community that are very good at putting themselves forward, you know, that have an interest in being involved in committees and doing different things. But I don't think they would be out of support of people on the ground.

S: What about people who are deprived or poor, to what extent they can have an access to those committees?

M: They don't. Hardly ever.

S: What's the reason?

M: Because, usually the process of selecting a committee or board of managers is the meeting of people in the certain area. For instance, here in community centre. Generally, people will not come along.

S: Why?

M: Even if it is the national thing, they will not vote.

S: It is probably different. The national thing would not, probably, really matter for them, why local thing is really important because it is where they live?

M: Again, it is different. I suppose, that's what isolates them.
S: Do you have any ideas why they are not willing to?
M: First of all, I think, they fill: "It is for other people. It is not for us".
S: Why?
M: Why? I don't know. Secondly, they don't want to know. They are quite happy to live in the way they are as long as it is not an issue that can disturb that living. And again, if you are not offering something either in money or better living conditions, they don't understand. If you don't have it there to offer then it is very difficult to explain to them that it would be that you will be working on and raising the issues. But then they don't see it that far down the road.
S: If they don't see any material benefits. They are not coming?
M: If they don't see it right there and then, yeah. They can't see how an organisation could make a difference by raising certain issues regarding their maybe conditions and isolation and all of that. They seem to be closed to that. As far as they see at that point at time, as long as they get their money or allowance from elsewhere, as long as nothing is happening to affect that, they seem to be quite happy, you know, to go along. Just let other people do their own business.
S: I was told that [the organisation] was trying to approach those people...
M: Yes, we tried very much
S: What kind of responses you've got?
M: Well, one person, we might just be lucky. We tried different ways of doing it. And one of the ways, I suppose, the pantomime was a good way of contacting the young people. When going to them directly and talking to them you are just wasting your time. By getting maybe some member of the family in, we are opening a door for them to come in as well. Yes, then certain issues might come up. Maybe somebody can come to me and say: "I am waiting for a house for x number of years. I am still waiting for the county council to do something about it. They are not coming back to me. I have been to a lot of TDs and a lot of politicians and they say we would get back to you but nothing was happening...". At least you got to know them at this sort of personal level. I might say: "We have a meeting on such a night, we will be discussing housing issues, maybe you should come in. Again, we might use your case". It is by means like that we are trying to get closer to them.
S: You are talking about those people who are not willing to join that kind of "official committees". Do you know, do those poor people organise themselves in any way? They might be not willing to join those official committees, but they might have some informal links between themselves as they know they are not in those mainstream committees. And if they know that someone is in trouble as well they might be willing to get in touch and share the experience and get some help...
M: Some people might tell you just straight: "they are not interested. They are minding their own business. They don't care what anybody else does". Sometimes they look at it, certain committees and things that happen as pure nonsense.
S: I know what you mean. But what I am asking is whether those people who are not in the committees are organised between themselves?
M: No, no
S: Are there any networks of exclusion?
M: I know what you mean. I don't think there are, no.
S: They're not trying to help each other because they know they can't go to those committees, they might try to choose their representative between themselves.
M: To organise someone to go? No. They really single themselves out, I think. Yes, as a community they know one another. They might be helping each other if there is such a thing as cutting the hay and drying the hay and feeding the cattle or whatever like that. But as regards committees and the work of the committees and anything like that, I don't think they would even discuss it.
S: But the thing is that they would not probably call it "committee" or think about it as the committee. They might probably do it like that: "OK, let's talk to Paddy. Let's talk to Pandraic. We cannot get the best price for sheep. Let's think what and how we can do about it". They would not call it "committee" or official meeting, you know what I mean?
M: Yes. I explained you. It depends entirely on the issue. For instance they won't be interested in coming along on the annual general meeting, for instance and think: "OK, let's put Jackie or Paddy to represent us on the committee".
S: They would not do it?
M: They would not do it. "Or maybe one or two of us may attend the workshops if there is a transport available. They would not do that. But going back to sheep again. If you are a small farmer interested in sheep or interested in cattle and let's make it interesting for them. And we did it. We organise information meeting on this for them, they would come in, because it is interesting for them. It depends entirely on the issue.
S: I am trying to see what issues would be interested for those people. Maybe not general issues of community development, maybe something closer to the ground, something closer to their everyday life which is interesting for them. If you are talking about "community empowerment and social economy" people would not just understand this language and they would not know what is behind it. They would not get involved in it because they think it is rubbish or it is not related to what they are doing.

M: As I said, it has to be of benefit, financially, especially, to them. Again, that's going back what you mentioned about farmer like. Yes, they would not want to miss out if they have their forms not filled properly on EU grants and staff like that. Or there was some programme started up that would increase their income if they did A, B or C - they want to know about that. Because it is of personal interest and financial interest to them. The difference between that and trying to get somebody involved in something when they can't see the benefit - for instance, when you are trying to get somebody in the workshop or taking part in some programme such as VTOs down the road to develop their skills or education - is they don't see the long-term benefit for themselves.

S: They don't know, probably, there is a long-term benefit.

M: They don't. So there is a lot of personal development, really, that needs to be done.

S: It is a short-term thinking?

M: Yeah

S: Sorry that I dwell on that issue. It looks like that people separate the things which are interesting for them from those which are not interesting for them. When you are talking about things, you think those things might be interesting for them and the others not. So you try to decide for themselves and suggest something, that those people would see as obscure and difficult to understand. As you said, they might instead be involved in the things which they understand easily. Does it mean that those disadvantaged people are more likely to get organised if there is something more closely related to what they are doing...

M: Oh, yes.

S: ...And does it mean that in this case they can actually group together and they can select their representative to defend their interests? If it is in their interests?

M: Well, we would love to see that happening. It is not happening.

S: So they are not organised in any case, even it is about something they understand easily, something about farming?

M: They are not. They will come in individually, but they would not be organised.

S: They would not select people, they would not make a pressure group?

M: They probably would if you did it if you organised them, but they would not do it themselves [people need a leader]. It is a very sort of isolated way of thinking, way of mind: "It is my corner and it is my life and it is my income and I protect that as much as possible. And more or less the next man or the next woman can do the same [they can survive on their own]." But I suppose as well you would get, probably, the other way of thinking: "I want to mind my business. I don't want anybody else to mind my business. I don't want people to know how much income I get a week. I don't want my neighbour to know what cattle I got and payments" - that sort of things. They are very protective about that.

S: We have a saying in Russian: "My house is on the edge and I don't care about anyone else".

M: Yes, that's it (laughing)

S: Thank you for your time. I think that's actually it.
Dear 

You are served by the social security worker from the Social Security Committee under the Administration of the Zarajsk District.

Head of the department of social help to pensioners and disabled people is **** Alena Nikolaevna. Her tel. no. is 2-22-**

Head of the Social Security Committee is **** Nina Nikolaevna. Her tel. is 2-19-**

Social security worker is responsible for the following services:

- Assistance with gaining access to retail, communal, medical, and legal services etc.;
- Purchase and delivery of food, hot meals, and medicines at the expense of the person served, assistance with cooking;
- Assistance with delivery of clothes for dry-cleaning, washing and repairment, help with the payment of bills;
- Assistance with getting medical help, accompanying the person served to the district hospital in Zarajsk and to the old people’s home;
- Help with organisation of house repairs, firewood provision and gardening;
- Water deliveries, stoking the fire, clearing of driveways from snow;
- Dusting at least every 10 days, rubbish collection;
- Washing the floors once a month, washing the windows twice a year;
- Basic medical help in case of sickness;
- Assistance with post-surgery recovery, including special recovery problems for disabled people;
- Assistance with getting subsidies and benefits granted by the current legislation;
- Assistance with getting pensions and other social benefits;
- Assistance with getting legal advice and consultations;
- Assistance with legalisation of documents, including documents required to get additional social help;
- Help with funerals.

According to the current legislation, the social security service can be terminated if the subject of help fails to conform to the norms and rules of social security service. If the served person repeatedly (more than 2 times) fails to pay fees for social security service stipulated by the Service Agreement, and if he/she systematically breaches the rules of service, the service is withdrawn and the served person has to compensate the service expenses to the Social Security Committee. The withdrawal of service may also happen in case of person’s alcohol abuse, immoral behaviour, and rough treatment of social security workers.

Social security worker has to visit you at least twice a week.

Terms and conditions of the social service are accepted. Signed