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Young Irish Adults in Civil Society: Volunteering, Reflexive Identity Work and Social Capital

Geoffrey Robert Weller
Technological University Dublin

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**Young Irish Adults in Civil Society:
Volunteering, Reflexive Identity Work,
and Social Capital**

Geoffrey Robert Weller

PhD

Dublin Institute of Technology

2008

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Volunteering, Reflexive Identity Work,
and Social Capital**

Geoffrey Robert Weller M.Sc., B.A.(Hons)

PhD

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr. Aidan O'Driscoll

Mr. Brendan O'Rourke

School of Marketing

November 2008

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explain how young Irish adults are capable of achieving identities as episodic volunteers. Participation in civil society in Ireland is changing, with new forms of volunteering emerging (Donoghue et al 2006). Issues of identity and identity construction appear to be symptomatic of these changes (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). This research focuses upon young Irish adults' identity work as they discursively construct their episodic volunteering (Macduff 2005). The research uses a discourse analysis lens (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). It is based upon 17 intensive interviews with young Irish adults, aged between 21 and 26, who volunteered for an Irish civil society organisation. The research also draws upon social capital theory. The analysis of the interview data has resulted in the emergence of eight conventional notions of the volunteer engagement, used by the young Irish adults to construct and achieve their identities as volunteers. It has also allowed for the development of a "parsimonious model" (Leonard-Barton 1992) of volunteer identity work and social capital generation and use. The research finds that: the young Irish adults engage in episodic volunteering as a reflexive identity/biographical project; volunteering is possible because of the availability of a transitional, relatively risk-free, moment in their lives; the volunteer identity is an acceptable deviation from, and adjunct to, a socially prescribed life course. The study points to how the pure episodic volunteering organisation provides a space in which an identity/biographical project, congruent with the reflexive project of the self, may be achieved. The research makes manifest that the young Irish adults engage in identity work, in particular relationships, in order to generate and use social capital and thereby achieve the identity of volunteer. It points to the effect of this as the ignition of intense bursts of social capital generation in Irish society.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of Ph.D., is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature _____ Date _____

Candidate

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GLOSSARY

Discourse

This research understands the meaning of discourse in its most open sense, following Gilbert and Mulkey (1984) and Potter and Wetherell, as “all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.7).

Identity

The conception of identity that this research uses, comes from a broadly social constructionist perspective on self and identity (Gergen 1985; Wetherell and Maybin 1996). It follows Edley and Wetherell’s conception of self-identity as “*accomplished* in the course of social interactions; reconstructed from moment to moment within specific discursive and rhetorical contexts, and *distributed* across social contexts” [italics in original] (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.205).

This is a conceptualisation that is also reproduced in other works by Edley (1993), Harré (1993), Henriques et al (1984), Potter and Wetherell (1987), Shotter and Gergen (1989), Widdicombe and Woofitt (1995), and in more recent work by Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005).

Identity work

Identity work is understood to be how individuals reflexively accomplish the sense of self in the course of social interactions: a self that is reconstructed from context to context, producing a sense of coherence and distinctiveness (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003, p.1165). This means that the identity work is the individual “engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness” (Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003, p.1165).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity in modernity is a defining characteristic of all human action (Giddens 1990; Beck et al 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Giddens contends that reflexivity in our modern society “consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character ... But only in the era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalised to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life” (Giddens 1990, pp.38-39). Reflexivity has extended from an individual “reflexive monitoring of action” to an institutional reflexivity, a “wholesale reflexivity - which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself” (Giddens 1990, p.39). Beck et al (1994) consider that reflexivity is a two-fold mechanism, made up of: structural reflexivity (institutional, industrial) and self-reflexivity (individual reflection on social change). The effect of the mechanism is conceived of as individualisation. Structural reflexivity refers to the “self undermining” and “self transforming” effects of institutional and industrial development (Beck et al 1994, pp.174-183). Self-reflexivity refers to the individual’s reflection on those changing institutional conditions, conceived

as a continual self-monitoring of the life course (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.35).

The reflexive project of the self

The reflexive project of the self “consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives” within a context of multiple choices, filtered through abstract systems (Giddens 1991, p.5). Individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options, with reflexively organised life-planning becoming a central feature of the structuring of self-identity (Giddens 1991, p.5). The self is a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible, in which “self-understanding is subordinated to the more inclusive and fundamental aim of building/rebuilding a coherent and rewarding sense of identity” (Giddens 1991, p.75). The reflexivity of the self is continuous, as well as all-pervasive, with the individual conducting regular self-interrogations (Giddens 1991, p.76).

Civil society

Civil society is understood here to be a “sphere of intermediate associations that are separate from the household and the state” (Connolly 2007, p.4). In the liberal tradition civil society refers to groups, networks and relationships that are not organised by the state, which have, according to this viewpoint “ensured pluralism in a political system, exercised restraint on governments, and through the advancement of group interests, generated policy ideas, and also assisted in the implementation of policy” (Connolly 2007, p.4). Civil society’s relationship to the state is bounded by its being “the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state,

and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules” (Diamond 1994, p.5).

Edwards contends that civil society has three fundamental dimensions: civil society is a ‘space’ for associational life; the term is often used for a good society, the type of society we want to live in; civil society offers arenas for public deliberation (Edwards 2004, p.8).

Volunteer and episodic volunteer

This research takes as its “working” definition of the volunteer, from Jenner, as “a person who, out of free will and without wages, works for a not-for-profit organisation which is formally organised and has as its purpose service to someone or something other than its membership” (Jenner 1982, p.30).

Episodic volunteering, according to Macduff (2005, p.50), is volunteering that is made up of separate, especially loosely connected episodes, that are temporary and limited in duration. Harrison suggests that “most volunteer participation is discrete or episodic, rather than continuous or successive” (Harrison 1995, p. 375), while Danson suggests that episodic volunteers “go from organisation to organisation getting involved in one-off events, then move to other events at other organisations” (Danson 2003, p.37).

Social capital

Contemporary social capital theory has been significantly influenced by the writings of Bourdieu, Coleman, Burt, and Putnam. The authors approach the notion of social capital from different perspectives, though they do share the concept of social capital as a metaphor for advantage (Burt 2000; 2007). Burt summarises how “The advantage created by a person’s location in a structure of relationships is known as social capital” (Burt 2007, p.4). Social capital is the

resources accessible through social ties that occupy strategic network locations (Glover 2004, p.146). Woolcock and Narayan (2000, p.226) offer a definition of social capital that this research uses: “social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively”. This conceptualisation captures the fundamentals of a number of interpretations of social capital, including those of Bourdieu, Coleman, Burt, and Putnam.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

This chapter begins by setting out that the interest of this thesis is in how young Irish adults are able to achieve identities as volunteers in this modern contemporary Ireland. It goes on to consider the recent socioeconomic changes that have shaped Irish society. These changes have caused concern at the highest levels of government as to their effects upon community and collective action in Ireland. That concern has resulted in the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, setting up a taskforce to review the present situation and consider the future of active citizenship in Ireland. The chapter continues with a discussion of the effects of late modernity upon identity. A “new” form of volunteering that is strongly emerging and is the choice of the young Irish adults who took part in this study, episodic volunteering, is then introduced. This is followed by a review of the research methodology. The theoretical perspective chosen to guide this research is a social constructionist approach - specifically focused through the lens of discourse analysis. The research question and the research sample are then presented, before turning to a consideration of the role of social capital theory in this thesis. The organisation of the thesis is then discussed.

1.2 THE BACKGROUND TO THE THESIS

This research is interested in how young Irish adults are engaging with civil society, as volunteers. It is an interest that has been sparked by recent socioeconomic changes in Ireland and their effect on its civil society. A growing conviction amongst researchers in the field of civil society and volunteering is that volunteering is undergoing radical change, affected by the convergence of broader sociocultural transformations and resulting in a “transition” in the types of volunteer participation. This research seeks to understand how young Irish adults, who have grown up through the radical social and economic changes of the so called Celtic Tiger, are volunteering, not in order to seek some comparison as to what happened in the past and what has changed, but to understand how these individuals are able to achieve identities as volunteers in this modern contemporary Ireland. In many respects their generation is at the vanguard of those who have been shaped by the Celtic Tiger. Their engagement with volunteering offers insights into the effects of social changes upon civil society in Ireland, now and into the future.

Ireland has undergone significant social and economic changes over recent decades. In his recent work on the transformation of Irish society in the past half century the eminent historian R.F. Foster identifies how the effects have been felt as a profound modernisation of lifestyles, values, occupational structures, political concerns, challenges, religious practices, sexual mores, and cultural production (Foster 2007, p.7). In economic terms Ireland’s growth rate has outperformed other European countries. The numbers in work increased by 45 per cent between 1987 and 2001 (Foster 2007, p.35). In the same period

unemployment was reduced from 17 per cent to 4 per cent (Kennedy 2001a). The standard of living went from two thirds of the EU average to equalling it (Foster 2007, p.35). Clinch et al note that this has meant that “The national self-image has been transformed. Ireland has gone from being a country to get out of to a country to get into. The melancholia reflected in the emigrant songs, like Andy Irvine’s ‘It’s a long long way from Clare to here’, are like echoes from a distant age” (Clinch et al 2002, p.24). Since 2001 Ireland has featured at the top of a list of countries most intensively globalised, in terms of economic integration, trade statistics, foreign direct investment, capital flows, travel and tourism, international telephone traffic, internet use, cross-border financial transfers and membership of international organisations (Foster 2007, p.27).

Ireland has a population that has, in the majority, either grown into adulthood through, or is growing up in the midst of, the Celtic Tiger economy (CSO 2006a online; Tovey and Share 2003; O’Connell 2001). It is those individuals, including the young Irish adults of this study, who have experienced and are experiencing the transformation of Ireland’s culture and its economy. An effect of this is a change in personal and cultural expectations. It is those individuals who have experienced Irish economic success and with it an extraordinary rise in Irish consumption and consumerism (O’Connell 2001). At the same time the once principal moral guide in Irish society, the Catholic Church, has declined in importance. This is particularly evident in relation to the most intimate and vital areas of life, including contraception, births outside marriage, and abortion (Kennedy 2001b).

Foster notes that the quaint oversimplified image of Ireland as the archaic 'Island of Destiny', peddled to unsuspecting tourists, is gone, at least for the Irish themselves (Foster 2007, p.3). It has been swept away by a contemporary Irish facility for changing practices and expectations, for looking forward, rather than to the past (Foster 2007, p.3). Foster comments that "One of the profound changes of attitude experienced by the Irish in the late twentieth century was the realisation that they could play many roles, and that history did not dictate a determinist and stereotypical fate" (Foster 2007, p.186).

The socioeconomic effects of the Celtic Tiger have been criticised. Its effects have not been evenly felt across society, leaving some communities who were economically disadvantaged at its start still in the same position now (Kirby et al 2002). Ireland has become characterised as a nation of consumers, where self-interest predominates over the greater good (Loneragan 1999). Ireland has transformed, modernised and globalised, undergone an evolution, a revolution in some cases, none of which have removed the essence of what it is to be Irish, but rather invigorated the identity debate, by adding new voices and perspectives.

Concern has arisen as to the effects of such rapid social changes on the capability to sustain community and collective action in Ireland. The desirability of community and collective action in Irish society (Tovey and Share 2003, p. 107) has resulted in political efforts to reconsider and reinvigorate civil society in Ireland. Those efforts are to be observed at the highest political level, spurred on by the former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's concerns regarding civil society and Irish democracy. This has become manifest in efforts, to quote Ahern, to start a

“national conversation...to establish what Active Citizenship means to people in the changed country that is Ireland today” (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, Foreword). The concern appears to have been driven by discussions with, and the work of, Robert Putnam (2000), whose influence on Irish, British, broader European and American political thinking (following his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*) has led to an awareness that disengagement with community and civic life is detrimental to democracy. The result of this political will is the government-sponsored Taskforce on Active Citizenship, set up in April 2006, to report on the state of active citizenship in Ireland. Its recent reports have sought to answer the question of whether there is a crisis in Irish civil society (particularly in relation to volunteering and the community) and also a loss of trust in institutions, politics and the capacity of communities for collective action.

The taskforce reports conclude that there is little evidence of crisis, but that changes are taking place in Irish civil society that need further examination (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.2). Any Hiberno-American parallels of a crisis appear to be less than conclusive. Ireland is not, at present, facing a debilitating crisis in its civil society, as a significant proportion of the population are actively engaged in some form of community and/or civic life, though there is little room for complacency according to recent studies that point to poor levels of volunteering and/or patterns of decline in volunteering (Donoghue 2001; Guinness UDV Ireland 2002; NESF 2003). The future of civil society engagement is open to question, debate, concern, and also political intervention in contemporary Ireland.

Individuals who are living in contemporary Western Europe (such as the young Irish adults of this study) are, according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002), experiencing *individualisation*, the result of contemporary institutions imposing upon people no other option than to construct an elective biography: “we live in an age in which the social order of the national state, class, ethnicity and the traditional family is in decline. The ethic of individual self-fulfillment and achievement is the most powerful current in modern society” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.22). Individuals in late modernity create their self-identities, reflexively making the self, amidst a diversity of options and possibilities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.3; Giddens 1991, p.3). Giddens (1991) suggests that the result of this is that the individual is under constant pressure in her or his attempt to achieve unification of the narrative of self-identity - protecting and reconstructing it, whilst affected by intensive and wide ranging changes. According to Giddens (1991), late modernity is seeing the emergence of life (style) politics. The author suggests that this means that political issues, which flow from processes of self-actualisation and globalising influences, are affecting the reflexive project of the self, whilst at the same time individuals’ reflexive projects of the self are influencing global strategies (Giddens 1991, p.214). One such political effect is the advent of “third way” politics, as evident in Irish, British and American society. According to Giddens (1998), one of its broad aims is the assistance of citizens to achieve their reflexive projects of the self. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.27), for individuals living in modern societies, the focus is on individual identity, whilst collective identities are “zombie categories, which have died yet live on”. Identity is according to this world-view no longer assigned, but self-created (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim

2002, p.27). It is this “eclipse of community” thesis (Tovey and Share 2003) that drives this research.

In late modernity different forms of volunteering are emerging, one of which is episodic volunteering. This research takes as its starting point an interest in young Irish adults’ engagement in civil society. It focuses upon their choice to engage as episodic volunteers. Episodic volunteering is of particular interest as it is a “new” form of volunteering that is growing as *the* choice for engagement in civil society (Styers 2004, p.85). There is not a great deal of research into young adults’ volunteering generally and in Ireland in particular. There is still less research into the particular form of volunteering that the young Irish adults who took part in this study are participating in - episodic volunteering (Macduff 2005; Handy et al 2006, p.34). This thesis adds to the research on this emerging form of engagement in Irish civil society.

1.3 THE FOCUS OF THE THESIS

In order to explore young Irish adults’ engagement in civil society, the theoretical perspective chosen to guide this research is a social constructionist approach - specifically focused through the lens of discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). This research is led by Gergen’s social constructionist contention that “we are not independent of our surrounds; our surrounds inhabit us and vice versa. Nor can we determine, as human beings, the nature of our surrounds and our relation with them beyond the language we develop together” (Gergen 1999, p.48). This thesis focuses

upon the discourse intentionally developed in the interviews, between the young Irish adult interviewees and the interviewer (the talk about being a volunteer and the volunteer engagement). This research considers the interviewees' versions of their identity and the social world as a resource in order to say something about social reality, whilst also considering how the individuals produce those versions of themselves and the social world, and how they are legitimised by various means.

The research takes its conception of self-identity from Edley and Wetherell as being "*accomplished* in the course of social interactions; reconstructed from moment to moment within specific discursive and rhetorical contexts, and *distributed across social contexts*" [italics in original] (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.205). This is a conception that is reproduced in works by Potter and Wetherell (1987), Edley (1993), Harré (1993), Henriques et al (1984), Shotter and Gergen (1989), Widdicombe and Woofitt (1995), and in more recent work by Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Identity is understood to emerge as a social and cultural phenomenon and is achieved through social action, particularly language. The kind of interview used here offers a space in which that identity may be produced, and discourse analysis offers a lens to comprehend its construction as a cultural and social phenomenon. It is a useful analytical tool to examine "communal methods of self-accounting, vocabularies of motive, culturally recognisable emotional performances and available stories for making sense" (Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.338).

A clear research question was developed following an iterative process. It emerged because of an interest in and readings of the civil society/volunteer literature, combined with an ongoing interest in the literature on identity and its usefulness to understanding contemporary society. The researcher is interested in civil society and volunteering due to having volunteered himself for a number of organisations (Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Hillingdon Hospital Radio and Leonard Cheshire Disability) and having been employed prior to this research by a civil society organisation, based in the UK, called Leonard Cheshire Disability. The focus on volunteering, particularly the episodic volunteering chosen by young adults, came about due to meeting young adults who volunteered for short periods, when needed, and with more than one organisation with whom the researcher was himself engaged in long-term volunteering. A reading of the literature found that others were discussing this phenomenon as a new and growing form of volunteering. Personal experience and the literature caused the realisation that more research could (and should) be done in this area (there is little at present) and resulted in the development of a driving interest in young adults' episodic volunteering. The focus on identity came about due to an interest in how individuals shape their identities in late modernity, which was developed during the completion of a thesis for the researcher's M.Sc. in Marketing, and the publication of a paper (see Weller and Sherlock 2005). From this the researcher realised that the study of the construction of identity could potentially offer extremely useful insights into how young Irish adults engage as volunteers. Further reading of the literature on identity strengthened this view.

The result of the iterative process described is the research question: “How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?”. The researcher came to this work with an interest in how individuals “do” volunteering, how they are volunteers, what it is, and what it takes, to be one. With an understanding that the focus should be on the “doing” of the volunteer identity, the researcher reviewed the available methods for analysing identity and came to the realisation that a discourse analytic method - particularly that strand developed from the work of Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), through Potter and Wetherell (1987) and further refined in the work of Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001) - would provide a useful lens in order to pursue the research question.

The data for this research was gleaned through interviews with young Irish adults, who talked about their experience of volunteering. They were 11 women and 6 men between the ages of 21 and 26, who were recently graduating students (volunteering having begun prior to their final examinations and been completed shortly after), postgraduate students, or employed. In common with other discourse analytical studies the research includes an analysis of the interviewer’s own talk (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Harré and van Langenhove 1991; Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995; Edley and Wetherell 1997; Lee and Roth 2004), though the main focus is upon the young Irish adults’ talk in the interviews as they work to construct an identity as a young Irish adult volunteer.

The interviewees all fundraised for and took part in a charity challenge, with Cyclecharity (a pseudonym), in 2006 and on their return were contacted by

the researcher and interviewed. The data was then considered in relation to the research question. In setting out to understand the young Irish adults' engagement as volunteers the research has found that the interviewees are engaged in an identity project as volunteers, necessitating strategic identity work. The analysis found certain discourses that were consistently used by interviewees and interviewer (within and across the interviews) in the construction of the identity of volunteer and of volunteering. In order to be understood to have been a volunteer, the young Irish adults used particular conventional notions of the volunteer engagement to achieve the identity.

The construction of this thesis has been an iterative process, with the issue of social capital not initially presenting itself as useful to explore, nor as a tool to aid the analysis. The main focus was on the language of volunteering and identity. The exact moment when social capital became of interest may be tied down to when the researcher was coding the interview data and noted that the young Irish adults were all constructing how they used the resources available in their relationships with others to achieve an identity as a volunteer. The analysis found that they were generating and using social capital through strategic identity work. This initially came to the researcher's notice in their constructions of rehearsals of what they were going to say, prior to a conversation or public speech, to accrue social capital in such a way as to achieve a donation of time/ money. This realisation opened up the issue of social capital to the researcher.

The social capital literature enabled the interpretation of the interviewees' talk about the necessity to use relationships with others in order to volunteer. Those relationships were with the Cyclecharity organisers, family, friends, other

volunteers, donors who were known and unknown, and the beneficiaries. An analysis of these relationships, as they were constructed by the interviewees, offered an insight into the connection between identity work, volunteering and the accrual of social capital. The research has found that the young Irish adults engage in constructing a particular identity as a volunteer in order to accrue social capital and through doing so achieve the identity of volunteer. This finding adds to the explanation of why there is a necessity to construct a *credible* identity as a volunteer, beyond avoiding any cognitive dissonance, or difficulty in the reflexive project of the self. Without the social capital literature this finding would not have been forthcoming. The interest in social capital has led to the finding that in the construction of the identity of volunteer the young Irish adults construct relationships (with representatives of the civil society organisation (Cyclecharity); other volunteers; beneficiaries; strong tie donors; and weak tie donors) in which it is necessary for them to modify their identity work strategically to be positioned as credible volunteers in order to generate and use the necessary social capital to achieve the identity of volunteer.

1.4 THE ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, research and thinking on the individual, identity and civil society in late modernity are discussed. The issue of self-identity in a Western developed society, such as Ireland, is considered in relation to the engagement in civil society. The chapter begins with an overview of theories relating to the individual and late modern society, particularly in relation to identity and identity construction, biography and self-reflexivity. This is followed by a discussion relating theories on the biographical consequences of late

modernity. The chapter then introduces the concept of the civil society. The focus turns to an explication of the debates on the condition of civil society in late modernity and the question of what it is. Civil society in Ireland is discussed to contextualise its impact in Irish society.

In Chapter 3 research on the volunteer identity and volunteering is reviewed. Research on ascertaining a definition of the volunteer and its sociocultural boundaries of use is considered. Theories of volunteering are reviewed. Volunteering in Irish society and research offering insight into its nature are explored. The chapter considers research on volunteering during young adulthood and addresses the contention that in achieving an identity as a volunteer young adults are engaged in an altruistic individuality in their volunteering. It then moves to a presentation of research on the changing nature of volunteering and the contention that reflexive volunteering has arisen. Research on episodic volunteering is examined and discussed in greater depth, as well as other suggested new volunteering types.

In Chapter 4 research on social capital is discussed. The section begins by considering the debate on the definition of social capital. The contemporary social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Ronald Burt and Robert Putnam are briefly considered. Particular empirical studies on social capital in Ireland, Europe and America are presented. The chapter goes on to offer insights into the consensus as to the essential elements of the social capital concept that dominate the discussion - specifically networks, norms and trust. This is followed by a brief introduction to the complex issue of measuring social capital.

Chapter 5, the methodology chapter, begins with a presentation of the research question. It explains the process of developing the research question before moving to an explanation of the social constructionist underpinnings of the analytical method chosen for the inquiry. That methodology, discourse analysis, is then discussed. An explication of the discursive approach to identity is presented. How individuals reflexively accomplish a sense of self through identity work is made clear. The chapter then introduces the interviewees and discusses why they were chosen. The use and usefulness of the interview as a data collection method is discussed. An explanation of how the researcher gained access to the interviewees and of the research ethics that have underpinned this work is provided. The tools used in the analysis of the interview data - subject positions and interpretative repertoires - are outlined. The chapter ends with a discussion of the validity and limitations of the research.

The following two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, offer an analysis of the interviewees' engagement as volunteers. The first of the analysis chapters (Analysis I) focuses upon the discourses used and negotiated by the interviewees in the construction of their identities as volunteers. The second analysis chapter (Analysis II) uses a social capital theory perspective to consider how the identity of volunteer is constructed as achieved in social settings.

In Chapter 8, the conclusion chapter, the findings of the research and its contributions to particular fields are discussed. This conclusion chapter begins with a discussion of the finding that the episodic volunteering engagement is a reflexive identity and biographical project for the young Irish adults. It is

contended that it is an engagement that occurs because of the availability of a transitional moment in the young Irish adults' life course in which the episodic volunteer identity/biographical project does not risk the interviewees' careerist identity/biographical goals. The chapter offers a contention that the episodic volunteer identity is constructed by the young Irish adults as a deviation from, and as an adjunct to, a socially prescribed life course. This is followed by a discussion of the volunteer as a generator and user of social capital. The treatment goes on to present an interpretation of Cyclecharity as a pure episodic volunteering organisation and an igniter of social capital generation. A discussion of future research is then offered. Finally, the chapter turns to the question of the state of Irish civil society in relation to young Irish adults' volunteering.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter has shown how the research question, "How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?", is driving the research to consider the changing nature of Irish society, concerns regarding the health of civil society, the effects of individualisation upon self-identity, and the forms of volunteering that young adults are engaging in, in late modernity. It has presented how the research question is being answered. This chapter has set out how Irish society is undergoing significant socioeconomic changes that are the result of the Celtic Tiger economy. It has shown how there are high-level political concerns that those changes have affected collective action and community in Irish society. The chapter considered theories that suggest that individuals who are living in

contemporary Western Europe (such as the young Irish adults of this study) are experiencing individualisation, the result of contemporary institutions imposing upon people no other option than to construct an elective biography (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The chapter introduced episodic volunteering as the form of volunteering used by the young Irish adults who took part in this study, in their elective biographies, their reflexive projects of the self (Giddens 1991). The following chapter considers theories and research regarding how the individual, identity and Irish civil society are being shaped in late modernity.

2 THE INDIVIDUAL, IDENTITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN LATE MODERNITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers how individuals reflexively respond to the question “Who am I?” before considering how the answer may be informed by an engagement with civil society. It discusses the individual, identity and civil society in late modernity. It begins with a brief discussion of self and identity in late modernity before a consideration of theories related to what it means to lead a life in a Western developed society such as Ireland. The situation of civil society in late modernity is then discussed. The issue of civil society and its antecedents, both global and in the Irish context, are considered, as is the nature of the sector itself and the question of its situation in light of Putnam’s (2000) “bowling alone” hypothesis. These topics are applied to Ireland, with the focus being on recent attempts to both understand and positively invigorate civil society in this country.

2.2 THEORIES OF SELF AND IDENTITY IN LATE MODERNITY

The traditional “commonsense” view of human nature is based upon the assumption that an individual’s personality is consistent and singular (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Potter and Wetherell note that as such the self is considered “an entity and, like any other entity or natural physical object, it can be described

definitively once and for all” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.95). This perspective has engendered a range of psychological concepts and models, the most influential being trait theory, role theory, humanistic theories and social identity theory. The traditional models share an assumption that the self exists as a singular and coherent entity (Gergen 1994), their focus being on the individual, with varying degrees of attention to the context the individual inhabits. Further assumptions include the self as the unitary entity, an autonomous agent, the centre of experience, as an initiator of action, a coherent whole, separate from other distinct selves (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.101). The traditional assumptions of identity as singular, coherent and pre-defined have been challenged by a contention that identity is never unified. The contention is that the identity, in late modernity, is increasingly fragmented and fractured, never singular, instead “multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall 1996, p.4). Identity is hypothesised as a dynamic unstable element, changing, insubstantial, situated in a flow of time, involved in a process (Wodak et al 1999, p.11).

This turning away from the traditional approaches to identity has occurred as a result of critiques from a number of disciplines, with Kenneth Gergen and social constructionism leading the vanguard of language-based approaches to the self (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.102). In their influential social constructionist work *The Social Construction of Reality* Berger and Luckman (1971, p.36) identify that language “marks the coordinates” of the individual’s life in society, whilst also filling it with “meaningful objects”. They conceive of social order as an ongoing intersubjective human production. The authors consider that “Both in its genesis (social order is the result of past human activity) and its

existence in any instant of time (social order exists only and in so far as human activity continues to produce it) it is a human product (Berger and Luckman 1971, p.70). The self is understood to be a phenomena that is constructed in an interrelationship with both a natural environment and a specific cultural and social order, so that “The specific shape into which this humanness is moulded is determined by those socio-cultural formations and is relative to their numerous variations ... man constructs his own nature ... man produces himself” (Berger and Luckman 1971, pp.66-67). In response to those formations and their variations the authors point to how “The human organism manifests an immense plasticity in its response to the environmental forces at work on it” (Berger and Luckman 1971, p.66). Other sustained critiques of the traditional models of identity have come from cross-cultural studies, feminist studies, systems theory, critical theory and deconstructionism (Sampson 1989, pp.1-2). Potter and Wetherell suggest the essential object of the critical movement has been “to displace attention from the self-as-entity and focus it on the methods of constructing the self” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.102).

Paralleling and informing these changes in the understanding of identity there has been a recent increase in theories suggesting a societal movement from modernity (understood here as industrialised civilization) into a “late” (Giddens 1990; 1994), “reflexive” (Beck 1992; Beck et al 1994) or “post” modernity (Lyotard 1984). Though by no means coming together as a synthesis, offering a coherent theory of this stage of modernity, these theories and concepts offer certain similar arguments, suggesting, according to Giddens (1991), that we are now living through the modernisation of the industrial society, against the backdrop of new forms of mediated experience with the effect that

self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour - the reflexive project of the self. Reflexivity in modernity is, according to Giddens (1990), a defining characteristic of all human action. All individuals keep under observation what they are doing as an integral element of doing it. They engage in the “reflexive monitoring of action” (Giddens 1990, p.36). Giddens contends that:

The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character ... But only in the era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalised to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world.

(Giddens 1990, pp.38-39)

Reflexivity has extended from an individual “reflexive monitoring of action” to an institutional reflexivity, a “wholesale reflexivity - which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself” (Giddens 1990, p.39). Beck et al’s (1994) theories of the late modern shift offer the contention that this change is the result of reflexivity as a two-fold mechanism: structural reflexivity (institutional, industrial) and self-reflexivity (individual reflection on social change). The effect of the mechanism is conceived of as individualisation. Structural reflexivity refers to the “self undermining” and self transforming” effects of institutional and industrial development (Beck et al 1994, pp.174-183). Self-reflexivity refers to the individual’s reflection on those changing institutional

conditions, conceived as a continual self-monitoring of the life course (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.35).

We are living in the world in a different sense than during previous eras of history (Giddens 1991). We share the same local life, the same temporal and spatial constraints of the human body, yet according to Giddens (1991), the combining of the transformations of place, the intrusion of distance into local activities, and the centrality of mediated experience has radically changed what “the world” actually is. He argues that our lives are lived locally, yet our phenomenal world is global. Elements of mediated experience consciously and subconsciously penetrate our lives, as do influences outside our lived geographical context. These result in distinct tensions and difficulties on the level of the self that, according to Giddens, cause “dilemmas which, on one level or another, have to be resolved in order to preserve a coherent narrative of self-identity” (Giddens 1991, p.187).

The individual faces a number of dilemmas in late modernity. Giddens (1991) describes, firstly, how the individual is under constant pressure in her or his attempt to achieve unification of the narrative of self-identity - protecting and reconstructing it, whilst under massive intentional and extensional changes. This is not to suggest that the individual is unable to cope with a world that is essentially alienating and oppressive, a dystopia. In fact, to some degree it is the social systems that supply unifying influences (Giddens, 1991, p.191). In a somewhat paradoxical twist it is diversity that may be used to create a distinctive self-identity, as the individual incorporates elements from the different settings they inhabit (home life, work, subcultural groups), into their life (Giddens, 1991,

p.192). A second dilemma, according to Giddens (1991), comes from the individual's perception of being powerless, in their relation to society, and their attempts to use autonomy. The individual wrestles with the dominant system to gain some independence, as more of their life is ceded to its controlling influence. Giddens (1991) suggests that powerlessness and active reuse intertwine in all contexts, in a reflection of Foucault's (1978) assertion that where there is power there is (affirmation of and) resistance to its influence. A third dilemma results from the situation in late modernity that in many areas of social life, including the domain of the self, there are no determinant authorities, though there exist plenty of claimants to authority. Giddens (1991) contends that the dilemma is ordinarily resolved through a commitment to a certain form of lifestyle, daily routine and a belief in certain abstract systems. A fourth dilemma relates to personalised versus commodified experience. The contention is that we undertake the project of the self in late modernity, but under conditions strongly influenced, according to Giddens (1991), by the standardising effects of commodity capitalism. It is a market-governed freedom of individual choice that envelops the framework of individual self-expression. The result is that the project of the self may become heavily commodified – presenting modes of life to aspire to, which are unachievable, generating inadequacy in the individual.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) point out that the questions which attend life in late modernity, “who am I and what do I want?”, are not peculiar to this era. What the authors suggest is peculiar and new is that now what was expected of only a few – to lead a life of one's own – is being demanded of all. The result is that there are no more fixed, predefined images of man or woman:

The new element is first, the democratization of individualization processes and, second (and closely connected), the fact that basic conditions in society favour or enforce individualization (the job market, the need for mobility and training, labour and social legislation, pension provisions etc.).

(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.8)

What we are seeing (where the dilemmas outlined by Giddens (1991) may be recognised as coming from) is according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) *institutionalised individualism*. Using this theory, developed from the work of Talcott Parsons (1978), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim contend that as a result of institutionalised individualism the individual faces the challenge:

You may and you must lead your own independent life, without the old bonds of family, tribe, religion, origin and class; and you must do this within the new guidelines and rules which the state, the job market, the bureaucracy etc. lay down.

(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.11)

Heelas (1996) contends that at this moment of late modernity, the present is characterised by both more traditional and more individualized biographies and structures. Individuals are engaged in a society that may be experienced as a mixture of various trajectories, from the more tradition-informed to the more individualised (Heelas 1996, p.11).

For those living now, at least in developed societies, individualisation has not turned them into “self-programmable individuals” (Castells 2000, p.19) or biographical automatons, but rather, as Bauman (2002) maintains, has left the individual constantly at risk. The individual is involved in a never-ending process of the construction of an identity, of shaping an “elective biography” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.3), involved in the risky life politics of identity, self-creation and self-assertion - the “prize” and the “danger” lying in the freedom to choose, the compulsion to constantly make choices (Bauman 2002, p.64). Enzensberger (1992) describes how we are all *average deviationists* as lifestyle choice makers, no longer sharing similar biographies, but normal in our separate deviating paths. The human becomes *Homo optionis*. He or she is able to decide on almost everything, “life, death, gender, corporeality, identity, religion, marriage, parenthood, social ties”, as everything is negotiable (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.5).

It is clear that for both Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) and Giddens (1991), individuals in late modernity must strive to create their self-identities, reflexively making the self, amidst a diversity of options and possibilities. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.3) contend that the individual’s life is now “the ‘elective biography’, the ‘reflexive biography’, ‘the do-it-yourself biography’”. Giddens (1991, p.5) describes this as “The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives”. The author goes on to explain how the reflexive project of the self “consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives” within a context of multiple choices, filtered through abstract systems

(Giddens 1991, p.5). Individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options, with reflexively organised life-planning becoming a central feature of the structuring of self-identity (Giddens 1991, p.5). The self is a reflexive project with a developmental trajectory from past to anticipated future, where “The lifespan, rather than events in the outside world, becomes the dominant ‘foreground figure’ in the *Gestalt* sense” (Giddens 1991, p.76).

2.3 CIVIL SOCIETY IN LATE MODERNITY

The civil society debate is conflictual and ongoing, reflecting the fact that civil society in late modernity, as a concept, is contested, with no single shared definition or single theoretical model. Van Til and Ross (2001) note that in its current incarnation civil society continues to mean many things to many people. The authors suggest that the concept of civil society comes perilously close to being the “playdough” of the social sciences, capable of being formed into nearly whatever shape the theorist chooses (Van Til and Ross 2001, p.122). At its most basic civil society is understood here to be a “sphere of intermediate associations that are separate from the household and the state” (Connolly 2007, p.4). In this “liberal” tradition civil society refers to groups, networks and relationships that are not organised by the state, which have, according to this viewpoint, significant influence upon the health of democracies. Connolly argues that civil society has effectively “ensured pluralism in political systems, exercised restraint on governments, and through the advancement of group interests, generated policy ideas, and also assisted in the implementation of policy” (Connolly 2007, p.4). Van Til and Ross suggest that the concept of civil

society is linked to a recent movement towards the transformation of societal relationships:

The idea of transformation is one in which the charitable segment of society frees itself of the constraints imposed by government and business, and proceeds to have a similar effect on others, including the two groups just mentioned. It involves changing the relationships between people and institutions, as well as the concepts that mandate or support these relationships. It starts, perhaps, with asserting parity among political, economic, and charitable values, followed, it is hoped, by recognizing the equal legitimacy and “historicity” of all three (or more) types of organisations. It is a budding idea, open to articulation, and it has particularly been captured in the 1990s by the concept of civil society.

(Van Til and Ross 2001, p.122)

The authors consider that the idea of civil society has taken root in America and elsewhere because of its articulation by those who led the recent liberation of such Central European nations as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland from four decades of Soviet dominion. The academic debate, as a result of research on the recent democratisation of Eastern Europe, has framed civil society as essential to democracy, (Connolly 2007, p.4).

Civil society's relationship to the state is bounded by its being "the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules" (Diamond, 1994, p.5). Edwards (2004, p.8) suggests that civil society has three fundamental dimensions: civil society is a 'space' for associational life; it is a good society, the type of society we want to live in; and it is a space for arenas for public deliberation.

The present interest in civil society in Ireland and elsewhere is, according to Salamon et al, the result of a "global associational revolution", evident as:

a massive upsurge of organised private, voluntary activity in virtually every corner of the globe. The product of new communications technologies, significant popular demands for greater opportunity, dissatisfaction with the operations of both the market and the state in coping with the inter-related social and economic challenges of our day, the availability of external assistance, and a variety of other factors, this associational revolution has focused new attention, and new energy, on the broad range of social institutions that occupy the social space between the market and the state.

(Salamon et al 1999, p.3)

The authors categorise the "social space" in which the "broad range of social institutions" belong to as being variously described as: the "nonprofit" sector, the

“voluntary” sector, the “third” sector, the “social economy”, the “NGO” sector, the “charitable” sector and the “civil society” sector.

The *Global Civil Society Yearbook* describes its titular subject as “the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks and individuals located between the family, the state and the market and operating *beyond* the confines of national societies, polities and economies” [italics in original] (Anheier 2007, p.3). Anheier summarises the key findings of the last six editions of the *Global Civil Society Yearbook* in the following manner:

- The growth and expansion of global civil society seems closely associated with a major shift in cultural and social values in the developed world in the 1970s. The shift saw a change in emphasis from material security to concerns about democracy, participation and meaning. It involved, among others, a formation towards cosmopolitan values such as tolerance and respect for human rights [Inglehart 1990];
- Those values facilitated the cross-national spread of social movement around common issues that had not been picked up by conventional party politics, particularly in Europe and Latin America: leading to a broad-based mobilisation of social movements, women’s, peace, democracy and environmental, and particularly an increasingly international “movement industry” [Diani and McAdam 2003; McAdam et al 2001];
- The 1990s brought a political opening and a broad mobilisation of unknown proportion and scale. Anheier [2007] offers as an

example the *Idea of 1989* by Kaldor [2003], which coincided with a reconsideration of the role of the state in most developed countries, as well as growing disillusionment with state-led multilateralism in the developing world among counter-elites [Edwards 1999];

- As well as the broadened political space, favourable economic conditions, the vastly reduced costs of communication and greater ease of organising facilitated the institutional expansion of global civil society in organisational terms [Anheier and Themudo 2002; Clark 2003];
- By 2002, a changed geo-political environment and the economic downturn challenged both the, by that moment, relatively large infrastructure of global civil society organisations, and the broad value base of cosmopolitanism in many countries, particularly amongst the middle-class and the elites [Held 2003];
- The result being that new organisational forms and ways of organising and communications have gained importance, with social forums [Glasius and Timms 2006], internet-based mobilisation [Clark and Themudo 2006], and transnational networks [Katz and Anheier 2006], being prominent examples;
- The developments, as the expansion of global civil society in general, have been accompanied by a resurgence in religion in some parts of the world and a change in state-religion relationships [Juergensmeyer 2007; Inglehart and Norris 2007], the result being a more conflict-prone and extremely

diversified complex sphere of ideas, values, institutions,
organisations, networks and individuals

(Anheier 2007)

Anheier (2007, p.4) offers a number of criticisms of the study of global civil society to date. Most of the work has had a Western bias, with only recent work, particularly by Ezzat and Kaldor (2007), Said (2005) and Glasius et al (2004), stepping off into trying to understand civil society in non-Western countries. Further, Anheier (2007, p.4) suggests another shortcoming that needs to be addressed in the research - the issue of conflict and civil society. He points to questions of the “civilising” power of civil society and the challenge of terror groups to its continued existence. In a recent, interesting take upon the question of determining the nature of civil society, Anheier (2007, p.5) suggests that civility and incivility are important to the research agenda, in order to consider inclusions and exclusions of certain organisations, networks and activities under the “umbrella” term “civil society”. Anheier (2007) suggests that this implies that any definition of global civil society should include civility in its normative sense - as respect for others (Shils 1997, p.338), public behaviour toward strangers (Carter 1998, p.58), and a form of self-regulation (Billante and Saunders 2002, p.33). This means, according to Anheier, that the definition of global civil society should be revised, as “the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks and individuals that are based on civility, located *between* the family, the state and the market and operating beyond the confines of national societies, polities and economies” [italics in original] (Anheier 2007, p.6).

2.4 THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR ORGANISATION

The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, which has brought together 150 researchers in order to study the civil society sector in over 40 countries, offers a widely accepted definition of a civil society organisation - the “structural-operational definition” (Salamon et al 1999, p.9). According to this definition to be a civil society sector entity an organisation must have the following attributes: it must be organised, with some structure or regularity to its operations (i.e. regular meetings, procedures, decision-making structures), whether or not they are formally constituted or legally registered; it must be private and not part of the “apparatus” of the state, though it may receive funds or support from it; it must be not profit distributing, not primarily commercial in purpose and not distributing profits to directors, stockholders, or managers (surpluses must be reinvested into the objectives of the organisation); it must be self-governing, having its own mechanisms of internal governance, able to cease operations on its authority, and fundamentally in control of its own affairs; and it must be voluntary, where membership or participation is not legally required or otherwise compulsory (Salamon et al 1999, pp.9-10). The definition is flexible enough to include a wide array of entities, including “hospitals, universities, social clubs, professional organisations, day care centers, grassroots development organizations, health clinics, environmental groups, family counseling agencies, self-help groups, religious congregations, sports clubs, job training centers, human rights organizations, community associations, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and many more” (Salamon et al 1999, p.3).

The authors of the “structural-operational” definition note that its application has proved useful in all the countries studied in the *Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project*. It is argued that it is broad enough to encompass entities in both developed and developing countries, yet sharp enough to separate the civil society sector from institutions in the other two sectors, business and government (Salamon et al 1999, p.10). The definition encompasses: informal as well as formal organisations; secular as well as religious organisations; organisations with paid staff and those staffed only by volunteers; and organisations performing essentially expressive functions (i.e. advocacy, human rights, cultural expression, political expression) as well as those performing essentially service functions (i.e. the provision of health, education or welfare services) (Salamon et al 1999, p.10). The definition further embraces organised forms of citizen action, including social movements and community-based cooperative activities with fundamentally solidarity objectives (Salamon et al 1999, p.10).

2.5 CIVIL SOCIETY IN ‘CRISIS’?

The issue of engagement in civil society has recently taken a somewhat pessimistic turn. The contention from some sides is that community participation and voluntary engagement are declining rapidly in a number of Western European countries and (more particularly) the USA (Bellah et al 1985; Etzioni 1993; Bennett 1998; Wuthnow 1998; Lane 2000; Putnam 2000; Putnam 2002). The most well-known and outspoken academic driving this contention (and with arguably the most political impact here in Ireland, the UK and the USA) is Robert Putnam. His work, in particular *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000), has provoked a

flurry of concerned action and academic research, but has also received significant criticism (Edwards and Foley 1997; Hooghe 2003; Ladd 1999; Paxton 1999; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999; Stolle and Hooghe 2003).

In *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000) Putnam found a general decline in social capital in America, the result of a marked disengagement with community and civic life by those born since the 1960s. The evidence for his contention, the analysis of a series of longitudinal surveys of behaviour (from voluntary association memberships to informal socialising), and the urgency of his prose style, impresses upon the reader a sense of “crisis” in American civil society. Though Hooghe notes that this calamity is perhaps an example of “American exceptionalism” (Hooghe 2003, p.42). Hooghe argues that Putnam’s contention of a loss of trust and engagement in civil society are observable in other industrial countries (Putnam 2002), but evidence to date of a “crisis” in Western European civil society is less than conclusive (see Dekker and van den Broek 1998; Hall 1999; Topf 1995; van Deth 2000).

Putnam (2000) suggests a number of key causes that explain the alleged decline in civic participation in the United States. These are the effects of: generational replacement; television viewing; increasing time pressure; rising geographical mobility; the decline of marital stability; and the decline of religious affiliations. Putnam contends that the “long civic generation” (born between 1910 and 1940) is being replaced (as it expires) by later generations whose members are less inclined to participate actively in civic life. The result of younger generations’ lessened interest in social and political life is discerned to be the “graying of civic America” (Putnam 2000, pp.255-257).

Television is suggested as causing individuals to ignore social and civic activities, resulting in a compounding of feelings of isolation and alienation (Putnam 2000, p.283). Putnam (2000, p.204) further concludes that geographical mobility disrupts community ties and pulls up roots, which take time to reestablish. Increasing time pressures are suggested as a cause for declining participation - “active” civic engagers may be limited by time-poverty (Putnam 2000, pp.189-203). But also time-poverty may negate engagement for those who are potentially “active” (Putnam 2000, p.189-203). Putnam (2000, pp. 277-279) further suggests that there is evidence that an increase in the divorce rate causes individuals to be less trusting and to engage less civically than married people. The decline in religious affiliation is linked by Putnam (2000, p. 67) to a lessening in engagements in civil society, as belonging to church communities is found to be a strong predictor of civic engagement, volunteering and philanthropy, beyond the church itself. These findings have caused politicians and academics to “prick up their ears” in relation to Irish society and elsewhere. The effect has been an ongoing process of research and policy development that is seeking to answer questions regarding Irish civic participation. The following section considers this reexamination of Irish civil society.

2.6 CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRELAND

Describing the Irish civil society sector is difficult due to the lack of a complete database, from which a definition and delineations may be gleaned. The lack of a single comprehensive source, indicating, for example, the activities and size

and number of organisations, has been an ongoing issue that has irked researchers engaged in the field (Donoghue et al 2006; O’Sullivan 2005; Acheson et al 2004; Donnelly-Cox et al 2001; Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs 2000). The recent effort to address this concern, *The Hidden Landscape: First Forays into Mapping Nonprofit Organisations in Ireland* (Donoghue et al 2006), is the most comprehensive mapping project to date. It offers a good deal of information on the Irish civil society sector, plugging gaps in the knowledge of the “nonprofit”¹, or civil society sector, in Ireland. A further recent effort to seek to understand active citizenship in Ireland has been undertaken by the Taskforce on Active Citizenship with its specially commissioned ESRI *Survey of Civic Engagement*, undertaken in the autumn of 2006.

O’Regan et al (2005, p.4) point to the roots of the Irish civil society sector being in a variety of traditions. Religious organisations were fundamental in the 19th and 20th centuries to the development of welfare, health and educational services on a nonprofit basis (O’Regan et al 2005, p.4). In addition to this, the authors note that rural and urban communities drew on less formal traditions of mutual aid to establish cooperative and associational organisations. Social concerns and movements in Ireland have been reflected in the growth of civil society organisations since the 1960s, particularly in the areas of community

¹The authors of *The Hidden Landscape* (Donoghue et al 2006) note that their sampling frame is based upon Salamon et al’s (1999) definition of a civil society organisation, widened still to include organisations synonymous with Irish life, such as credit unions. This highlights the interchangeability of terms for the sector, as Salamon et al (1999) identify this as a frame for identifying *civil society organisations* whilst Donoghue et al (2006) use it to identify *nonprofit organisations*, yet it defines and delineates the same entities.

development, women's rights, environmental issues and the representation of marginalized groups from a rights-based perspective (Donoghue 1998).

The Irish State has been a key actor in the development of the Irish civil society sector. Acheson et al (2004) note that this has been achieved through an active policy of supporting social, educational and health services (particularly through religious organisations), and through its financial support of particular organisations. In detailing the voluntary sector ethos in Ireland, Donnelly-Cox and Jaffro (1998) show that the traditional voluntary organisation has given way, in recent decades, to professional or social service voluntary organisations. These exist alongside community development organisations, with a strong emphasis on community participation and empowerment. The social partnership model² has provided a template for the State-civil society relationship, and at the local government level (Donnelly-Cox and Jaffro 1998; Daly 2007). Specific policies on the relationship between the State and civil society organisations date from 2000, with the publication of the White Paper, *Supporting Voluntary Activity*. The document sets out the core principles that continue to shape the relationship between the State and civil society, recognising: (1) that the nonprofit sector is a core component of a vibrant civil society; (2) that it is necessary to consult nonprofit service providers and other groups in receipt of State funding about service design and development; (3) the diversity and autonomy of the sector; (4) the sector's role in contributing to policy and relevant

² The Irish model of social partnership is considered distinctive as it is based on the principles of deliberative democracy. The deliberative features of the model are considered to be threefold: first, the negotiations to conclude national social agreements are not confined to the government, trade unions and employers, but also include a wide range of civil associations that articulate the interests of the civil society sector as well as the farming sector; second, agreements are not simply concerned with wage determination, but cover a wide range of matters designed to promote social inclusion; third, there is an effort to avoid agreements being overly centralized by promoting programmes at the local, territorial level (Teague 2006, pp.421-444).

legislation; and (5) the legal obligation that rests with the State for the delivery of services (Donoghue et al 2006, p.16). The issues of definition and delineation of the sector are not clearly set out in the legislative framework governing statutory civil society relationships (Donoghue et al 2006). The issue of a lack of development in this area is being addressed in the *Charities Bill 2007* (Oireachtas 2007, online), which is set to come into law in the very near future. Until the Bill becomes law there is no statutory definition of charity and charitable status except as a tax designation (Donoghue et al 2006).

Research on Irish civil society has primarily focused upon voluntary and community organisations and community development. Researchers have attempted to position Ireland within the broader debates about civil society in the various “processes of change” occurring locally, nationally and globally (see Deakin 2001; Collins 2002; Callanan 2005; Meade 2005). Research has examined the economic significance of the Irish civil society sector (Donoghue et al 1999), the modeling of Irish civil society organisations (Donnelly-Cox and O’Regan 1999), the relationships between the State and Irish language civil society organisations (Donoghue 2004a), and foundations in Ireland (Donoghue 2004b). Researchers and research groups have attempted to discover the extent of social participation in Ireland.

The most comprehensive recent research on the civil society sector, *The Hidden Landscape* (Donoghue et al 2006), sought to glean information via a questionnaire from 25,000 organisations in Ireland, identified by the researchers as members of the civil society sector. The researchers received 4,300 valid responses (a response rate of 21 per cent) (Donoghue et al 2006, p.79). The

report includes data on the size, age, resources, geographical location, roles and values of the organisations that make up the Irish civil society sector. The authors suggest that the environment in which the civil society sector operates is undergoing a “great change [that is] social, economic, demographic, cultural and, if the proposed regulation of charities comes into force, legal” (Donoghue et al 2006, p.79). The authors rightly conclude that the civil society sector has reached a stage in its history where such a survey may offer answers to organisations’ “questions about their futures” (Donoghue et al 2006, p.79).

The main findings of the report are: half of all responding civil society organisations are “young”, having been established only in the past 20 years; the organisations are engaged in a wide range of activities for a large number of beneficiaries, both individuals and organisations, particularly in the fields of development and housing, education and research, sports and recreation, culture and arts, and social services; the total income for the sector was estimated at €2.564bn and total expenditure €2.556bn in 2003; most organisations (90 per cent) earned less than the mean income of €738,205, with half of all organisations earning an income of less than €40,000 and expending €39,000 or less; the economic contribution of the responding sample came to 2.17 per cent of GNP, which when grossed up to include the full sampling frame equals 3.84 per cent; those organisations that reported resource vulnerability (deficits between reported income and expenditure) were in the fields of the environment, culture and the arts, international development and religion; those that were resource secure were philanthropy, trade unions, sports and recreation, advocacy, law and politics and development and housing.

The organisations report that the most important relationships for generating financial resources were with the State, and the local community or wider society. The most important relationships for generating human resources (including volunteers) were found to be the local community and wider society, and to a lesser extent other voluntary and community groups. The report found that community orientation emerges as important in the roles performed by Irish civil society organisations. Their value for communities was an important factor. Further, the effects of the “religious” is declining in significance among civil society organisations in Ireland (Donoghue et al 2006, pp.79-83).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the individual, identity and civil society in late modernity. Identity is understood to be a dynamic unstable element, changing, insubstantial, situated in a flow of time, involved in a process (Wodak et al 1999, p.11). Self-identity is a reflexively organised endeavour - the reflexive project of the self (Giddens 1990). It is not determined by predefined images of woman or man, but rather the result of individualisation processes (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.8). The present is characterised by an individualism that is institutionalised in society - in the job market, the need for mobility and training, labour and social legislation, pension provisions and so forth. Civil society operates as a space for individuals to associate with one another, in relationships that are separate from the household and state (Connolly 2007, p. 4), in order to act to change societal conditions. It has the potential to transform societies, such as those of the former Soviet hegemony (Van Til and Ross 2001), acting to both encourage and to monitor democracy (Connolly 2007, p.4).

Those organisations that may be included in it, that individuals choose to engage in, include a wide array of entities, from universities and social clubs to professional organisations and grassroots development organisations, from religious congregations to sports clubs and from community associations to soup kitchens, and many others (Salamon et al 1999, p.3). Whether civil society is in some way in crisis, when considered beyond American shores, is the cause of a significant and inconclusive debate in academia and in political circles. What is certain is that there is now a real interest in Irish civil society driven by the challenge both to understand it and to ensure its health. The following chapter discusses the individual's engagement in civil society as a volunteer. It considers the effect of societal changes on individuals' - particularly young adults - volunteering; it reviews research on the state of volunteering in Ireland; and it examines new forms of volunteer engagement that are arising.

3 VOLUNTEERING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There is an ongoing debate as to the effect of sociocultural changes upon the qualitative and quantitative nature of individuals' engagement with volunteering. It is a debate that is particularly relevant in relation to the changing nature of Irish society in general (Foster 2007; Tovey and Share 2003; Corcoran et al 2007; Clinch et al 2002) and the effect upon the civil society sector in Ireland (Donoghue et al 2006; Donnelly-Cox et al 2001; Powell and Guerin 1997). This chapter discusses research into the volunteer and volunteering in late modernity generally and in relation to Ireland. It seeks to offer insight into the ongoing debate as to the definition of the volunteer, in all of its fluidity.

The chapter goes on to consider the issue of volunteering in Irish civil society, relating this to the question of a "crisis" in civic participation. The discussion considers the State's efforts, through the Taskforce on Active Citizenship, under the auspices of the former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, to comprehend volunteering in Ireland and to offer some form of support for civil society in the future. The limited research on volunteering in young adulthood is discussed, with particular attention to the question of the young adult volunteer in late modernity and the contention that they are engaged in an altruistic individuality (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, pp.28, 171). To further understand volunteering in late modernity, as experienced by the young adult,

the chapter considers volunteering as affected by the self-reflexive biographical quest and the individual as a reflexive volunteer. The new forms of volunteering, those that have grown rapidly in recent years, are considered, as they are blended in “volunteer cocktails” (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.170), dependent upon the biographical necessities and capabilities of the individual. The research focuses particularly on one of the growing forms of civil society engagement, episodic volunteering.

3.2 DEFINING THE VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are essential to civil society. Yet there is no clear-cut definition of the volunteer that encompasses all forms of volunteering, and limited research into the issue of definition (Handy et al 2000, p.46). Many researchers suggest that too many different activities and situations are aggregated into the concept of the volunteer resulting in confusion (see Cnaan et al 1996; Scheier 1980; Smith 1994; Tremper et al 1994; Vineyard 1993).

Handy et al (2000, p.46) underline this unhelpful conceptual aggregation with the example of an individual who volunteers to help the American Big Brothers Big Sisters organisation (though this might equally apply to the Irish example of Concern Worldwide or Suas Educational Development³) and an individual who volunteers to organise a one-off ski trip. Both individuals may be

³ Big Brothers Big Sisters is a youth mentoring organisation that helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with mentors. Concern is a non-governmental, international, humanitarian organisation dedicated to the reduction of suffering and working towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries. Suas Educational Development supports the education of thousands of children in primary schools and increases the capacity of its partner NGOs to benefit under-resourced educationally disadvantaged communities through fundraising, public awareness building and mentoring programmes.

legitimately defined as volunteers according to published definitions of the concept. The sheer scope and variability of the concept of the volunteer has been documented by Cnaan and colleagues, showing that research that does not clearly define how the individuals under study *are* “volunteers” results in any generalisation across contexts being fraught with ambiguity because of the variety of interpretations that may be applied by others (Cnaan and Amroffell 1994; Cnaan et al 1996; Handy et al 2000).

In a particularly influential paper Cnaan et al (1996) engaged in an in-depth literature review to ascertain a generally applicable definition of the volunteer. The authors focused upon its sociocultural boundaries of use. They found four particular dimensions - free choice, remuneration, structure (of the civil society organisation), and intended beneficiaries - with some leeway across dimensions noted by the authors:

For example, in the dimension of free choice, we identified three key categories: (1) free will (the ability to voluntarily choose), (2) relatively uncoerced, (3) obligation to volunteer. Whereas all definitions would accept category 1 (free will) as relevant in defining a volunteer, pure definitions would not accept category 2 (relatively coerced), and only the broadest definitions would accept category 3 (obligation to volunteer).

(Cnaan et al 1996, p.370)

The researchers point out that the definitions and their dimensions constrain the identity of volunteer, delimiting its potential for negotiated construction across contexts (Cnaan et al 1996, p.365). Cnaan et al's (1996) conceptual and empirical analysis also suggests that the public perception of the term "volunteer" is the outcome of the perception of the net cost to the individual/s of any volunteering situation. They suggest the equation as total cost minus total benefits to the individual. The individual who accrues more net cost is then perceived as more of a volunteer.

Handy et al (2000, p.47) developed the model to gain insight into the potential use of the 'net-cost' concept as a tool to analyse public perceptions of who is a volunteer. The researchers took a cross-cultural approach to the question (undertaking surveys in America, Canada, India, the Netherlands, Italy). They found a broad consensus that the perception of who is a volunteer is dependent upon net cost (Handy et al 2000, p.64). However, what actually constitutes benefits and costs to the volunteer is described as "a complex calculus requiring further research" (Handy et al 2000, p.64). The research found that the higher the perceived net cost to the volunteer the higher the individual is ranked as a volunteer - this being the case across the four dimensions of the definition of the volunteer, discerned by Cnaan et al (1996). This trend was found to be prevalent across the countries in the study, and according to the authors, "without exception it is significant at the two polar ends of who is 'definitely' a volunteer and who is not" (Cnaan et al 1996, p.64).

Meijs et al (2003) extended the enquiry to eight countries, finding that the net-cost concept applied across a range of societies, with a consensus as to

who could be counted as a definite volunteer. The researchers found “some variation ... regarding who is least likely to be considered as a volunteer” but “remuneration ... will have a definite impact on people’s perception of who is a volunteer across all regions” (Meijs et al 2003, p.32). However, despite the findings of a broad consensus as to the notion of the volunteer, the authors found differences of culture and context, such as different views about the legitimacy of some of the “perks” of volunteering.

The research presented here takes its “working” definition of the volunteer from Jenner: “a person who, out of free will and without wages, works for a not-for-profit organisation which is formally organised and has as its purpose service to someone or something other than its membership” (Jenner 1982, p.30). In using this definition the researcher is aware that its dimensions may be perceived as too narrow or not narrow enough depending upon perspective. It is useful as the definition is rich enough to account for most widely-held perspectives on who a volunteer is (see Cnaan et al 1996). A further narrowing of the definition will be presented in the section below on episodic volunteering. The choice to define the volunteer, and to narrow that definition down further, acknowledges Cnaan and colleagues’ suggestion that without defining the characteristics of the group under study, what sort of “volunteers” they are, the result is plagued with ambiguity and uncertainty (Cnaan and Amroffell 1994; Cnaan et al 1996; Handy et al 2000).

3.3 THEORIES OF VOLUNTEERING

In considering recent theories of volunteering, Wilson (2000, p.217) distinguishes the predominance of two broad perspectives on volunteering at the individual level: “One assumes a complexity in the constitution of the person while treating the context as background; the other treats the human actor as driven by fairly simple mechanisms while treating the context in which those mechanisms work as complex” (Wilson 2000, pp.217-218). The first perspective is associated with more subjectivist approaches to sociological explanation, focusing on the search for the motives, values and beliefs of volunteers (Wilson 2000, pp.217-218). The second, a more behaviourist approach, is encapsulated in ideas relating to human capital, exchange theory and social resources (or social capital) that assume that actors are rational and that the decision to volunteer is based upon the weighing of costs and benefits (Wilson 2000, pp. 217-218). The following sections consider these theories.

3.3.1 Motives, values and beliefs

Motives play an important role in thinking about volunteerism, with researchers in the field engaged in a considerable effort to compile an inventory of motives for volunteering (Cnaan et al 1996; Clary et al 1998; Okun et al 1998; Snyder et al 1999; Sokolowski 1996). Motives also play a significant part in how volunteers and volunteering is perceived. Wilson notes that:

most sociologists would not regard these motives as predispositions. Rather, they would treat motives as constitutive

of action, part of a discourse giving meaning to and helping to shape behaviour [Fischer and Schaffer 1993; Midlarsky and Kahana 1994; Smith 1982, p.28]. Thus, one reason why teenagers are more likely to volunteer if their parents volunteer [Rosenthal et al 1998, p.490; Sundeen and Raskoff 1994, p. 392] is that their parents have taught them a positive way to think about volunteer work. They have learned motivational attributions as part of a larger set of cultural understandings passed on to them by their parents [Wuthnow 1995, p.105].

(Wilson 2000, p.218)

If motive talk is culturally learned, Wilson suggests it makes sense that “these frameworks of consciousness ... influence the decision directly” (Wilson 2000, p. 219). However Wilson determines that overall the relation between values and volunteering is weak and inconsistent, an example of this being the finding that religion and civic values do little to encourage volunteering (Wilson 2000, p.219; Greeley 1999; Hoge et al 1998; Ladd 1999, p.72; Smith 1998, p.39; Wilson and Janoski 1995). According to Wilson there are a number of fundamental reasons for this lack of a predictability between motivation and volunteering. Those reasons being that: each form of volunteering is inspired by different sets of values, not captured by highly generalised value questions; different groups attach different values to the same volunteer work (Serow and Dreyden 1990, p. 560; Sundeen and Raskoff 1995); and values tend to be ineffectual outside of the support communities where norm enforcement is possible (Wuthnow 1991, p.156).

A number of studies have engaged specifically in understanding volunteer motives (for example, Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991), Clary et al (1998), Gaskin and Davis Smith (1995), Jenner (1982), Sokolowski (1996)). Recent studies considering the motivation of volunteers are offering a complex picture, with motives often argued to be an altruistic-egocentric mix or continuum (for example, Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991), Yeung (2004), Clary et al 1998, Davis Smith (1996), Van Til (1988)). The issue of why people volunteer - their motivation for volunteering - remains an unresolved question. The following section will consider a range of research on the motivations for volunteering.

Clary et al (1998), in their work on the psychological functions of volunteering, suggest six motivational functions served by volunteering. The authors took particular labels for these functions, from Katz (1960) and Smith et al's (1956) taxonomies of functional motivations, in order to describe the motive talk of volunteers. The motivational foundations of volunteering were discerned to be relating to: values, where volunteering provides for individuals to express important values, altruistic and humanitarian, and to feel it is important to help others; understanding, where volunteering allows individuals to seek to learn more about the world and offers them a chance to exercise skills and abilities that might otherwise go unpractised; social, where volunteering allows individuals to be with like-minded people and to be engaged in an activity viewed favourably by important others; career, where volunteering allows individuals to explore different career options and to look good on one's CV; protective, where volunteering allows individuals to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to help address personal problems; and enhancement,

where volunteering allows individuals to achieve personal growth to develop “psychologically” (Clary et al 1998, pp.1517-1518).

Research by Yeung (2004) on the individual meaning and experience of volunteering for individuals engaged with religious organisations in Finland suggests particular volunteer motivations. The researchers found a nuanced complexity to the motivations of the volunteers - offering 767 motivational elements in 47 themes (Yeung 2004, p.39). The major motivational factors for volunteering were found to relate broadly to: getting and giving; continuity and newness; distance and proximity; and thought and action (Yeung 2004, pp. 32-38). A further interest in Yeung’s (2004) work was the extent that religiosity is a motivation. Her research found that religious motivations were not important to the volunteering of the research participants despite that volunteering taking place for and within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland or its church associations. Yeung contends this does not suggest the insignificance of the role played by religious motivations, as “this is to misunderstand the data, since the present findings highlight the interlocking nature of motivational elements—and this also involves religiosity, norms, and values” (Yeung 2004, p.41). The complexity of unravelling the effects of religiosity on the motivation to volunteer have been suggested in other studies (Wolfe 1998; Harris 1996). Wolfe (1998) views religiosity as a motivational inspiration to volunteering, whilst Harris (1996) contends that volunteering may be interpreted as an extension of beliefs.

In a study by Wuthnow (1991, p.58), individuals were found to use particular “languages” of biblical tradition, nature, utilitarianism, and voluntarism to account for the motive of caring as volunteers. Wuthnow contends that the “vocabulary”

of motivations used in those accounts raises deep dilemmas because it is too “rich”. The author argues that the individual has an overabundance of repertoires to draw on to account for caring: “Our problem is not finding one suitable account but deciding among multiple accounts – deciding which one is most plausible or, more likely, deciding which combination to put together and how best to combine them” (Wuthnow 1991, p.59). Wuthnow (1991, pp.83-85) points to the discursive pluralism at the centre of the construction of volunteer motivation as problematic, because of the way that individuals’ understanding of their selves intersects with cultural standards of behaviour. Society judges some accounts of motivations for caring as better than others, that there are good motives and bad motives, and holds that motives should be in some sense pure (Wuthnow 1991, p.61). The individual, according to Wuthnow, needs ways to account for their motives that allow both discursive plurality and moral purity: “to give multiple accounts and yet to give them in a way that does not diminish their importance” (Wuthnow 1991, pp.63-64). As multiple vocabularies may be invoked, they have to be organised in a way that is credible, so as to avoid cynicism. Wuthnow (1991, p.84) contends that this motive-talk is the forum in which individuals work out the relationship between their individuality and altruistic endeavours. It is complex and neither compels the individual to choose from the vocabulary of self-interest or the vocabulary of voluntary compassion. Instead, Wuthnow found that the subjects he interviewed managed the problem of discursive pluralism, and the cynicism that it may generate in those judging an individual’s motivational discourses for volunteering, by situationalising their accounts: “by telling stories that embed values in specific contexts, that frame principles as particulars” (Wuthnow 1991, p.83). Wuthnow (1991, p.83) suggests that this is a widely used strategy, allowing the individuals to link a conception of

themselves (their individuality) with an understanding of their caring behaviour, transforming the pluralism of larger settings into the particular discourses of their self-identities.

3.3.2 Human capital

According to individual-level theories of volunteering, founded on behaviourist assumptions, the decision to volunteer is based on a rational weighing of its costs and benefits (for example Cnaan and Amroffell 1994; Cnaan et al 1996; Handy et al 2000). This suggests that the ability to volunteer is dependent upon resources (Wilson 2000, p.220). Individual attributes such as education, work and income are inputs that are suggested as making it easier to face the demands of volunteering. It is considered in itself as a productive activity and its meaning to volunteers is not particularly relevant (Herzog et al 1989, p.S129).

An individual's level of education is suggested in a number of studies as the most consistent predictor of volunteering (see McPherson and Rotolo 1996, p.181; Sundeen and Raskoff 1994, p.392). Brady et al (1995) and Rosenthal et al (1998) suggest that education increases the potential to volunteer as it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy and builds self-confidence (Brady et al 1995, p.285; Rosenthal et al 1998, p.480). Research suggests that educated people are also more likely to be asked to volunteer (Brady et al 1999), with the result that they belong to more organisations (Herzog and Morgan 1993, p.137) and develop civic skills (Brady et al 1995, p. 285).

Human capital theory offers an explanation as to why children inherit their parents' volunteering habits which is different to that suggested in motivation studies. It suggests that rather than modelling ideals, parents supply resources (Wilson 2000, p.220). Children of "high-status" parents were found to be more likely to volunteer (Sundeen and Raskoff 1994, p.392). But Wilson (2000, p.220) notes that the scope of conditions of human capital theory is not clear. An example of this ambiguity is found in a study by Janoski and Wilson (1995). It suggests that parents are role-modelled by children volunteering for groups concerned with community problems, but conversely the parents were found to provide resources for children volunteering for more self-oriented organisations (for example unions and professional organisations).

Research on paid employment and volunteering offers competing findings and conclusions. Role overload theory (Markham and Bonjean 1996) predicts a negative relationship between paid work hours and volunteer hours - with time constraints appearing to affect full-time workers, as part-time workers are more likely to volunteer (Wilson 2000, p.220), though this theory is complicated by the finding that volunteering amongst the unemployed and homemakers is lowest - a finding that Wilson suggests points to work as a form of social integration, encouraging volunteering (Wilson 2000, p.220). Further complication exists as among full-time workers there is a slight upward curve in volunteering as paid work increases (Wuthnow 1998, p.76). As occupational status increases so does the likelihood of volunteering (i.e. professional and managerial level workers) (Smith 1994, Stubbings and Humble 1984; Wilson and Musick 1997b).

Further, Wilson and Musick (1997b) found that people who have self-directed jobs are more likely to volunteer.

3.3.3 Exchange theory

The rational choice assumption is that actors will not contribute goods and services to others unless they profit from the exchange (Smith 1982, p.39). This does offer some insight into the variation in volunteering, as first, individuals do, according to research, weigh the costs and benefits of volunteering (see for example Cnaan and Amroffell 1994; Cnaan et al 1996; Handy et al 2000). Secondly, many volunteers have a stake in their volunteer work (for example those who volunteer in their children's schools or activity groups at their church) (Wilson 2000, p.222). Thirdly, some people volunteer as they anticipate needing help themselves or have received help and wish to give something back (Banks 1997; Broadbridge and Horne 1996; Freeman 1997; Kincade et al 1996). Fourthly, volunteers explicitly acknowledge the benefits they receive (Omoto and Snyder 1993, p.167, Chambre 1995, p.123). Fifthly, volunteers are not indifferent to rewards (Field and Johnson 1993, p.1629). Sixthly, the volunteer engagement provides the benefits of solidarity, including socialising with others with whom emotional ties may be formed (Wuthnow 1998, p.149). Finally, some volunteers explicitly seek compensation for deprivations (Gora and Nemerowicz 1985, p. 40).

A number of criticisms may be levelled at research that explains volunteering as exchange. Firstly, exchange theorists focus too much on quantifiable costs (i.e. time spent and income lost) and not enough on other

resources required in volunteering, such as civic skills, that are difficult to quantify (Wilson 2000, p.222). Secondly, while volunteering may provide “psychic” benefits they are not necessarily the reason people volunteer: “A volunteer might feel good about doing the right thing, but she does not do it because it makes her feel good; rather it makes her feel good because she thinks she ought to have done it” (Wilson 2000, p.222). Thirdly, when volunteers explain the personal benefits of serving others they may simply be engaging in reciprocity talk, in which they articulate their need to complete the transaction, by describing how much they enjoy the effort, in order to restore a balance to the relationship (Wuthnow 1991, p.95). Fourthly, exchange theory assumes that individuals must act in a self-interested manner in order that social equilibrium may be achieved, but a competing theory argues that people’s identities are important and that many people consider themselves as helping others without thought of or expectation of praise (Hart et al 1996; Schervish and Havens 1997, p.240). Finally, exchange theory assumes that individuals make their decisions to volunteer in isolation, when, in reality, individuals assess their environment and decide on courses of action in relation to formal and informal social networks and group solidarity (Rochon 1998, p.97).

3.3.4 Social Resources

The research on social resources and volunteering in everything but name closely resembles social capital theory (which will be discussed in the following chapter) in its investigation of the effects of “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2000, p.19). The research suggests that extensive social

networks, membership of multiple organisations and prior volunteer experience all increase the chances of volunteering (Jackson et al 1995, p.75; Marwell and Oliver 1993; McPherson et al 1992, p.157; Smith 1994, p.255; Walsh 1988, p. 125; Wilson and Musick 1997a). Midlarsky and Kahana (1994, p.219) found that face-to-face invitations to volunteer, the result of these social networks, are far more effective for recruitment than mass media appeals. Rochon (1998, p.102) points to the crucial role that social resources play when volunteering in activism to bring about social or community changes. Wilson and Musick (1997a) suggest that social resources help to explain why people of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to volunteer, as they join organisations and are more likely to be active in them. This also explains the case for extroverted people being more likely to volunteer, as there is no relation between altruism and extroversion (Herzog and Morgan 1993, p.136). Again, this is also the case with religious people in relation to church attendance (Wilson and Janoski 1995). Social networks also may explain the higher percentage of volunteering amongst parents and the married. Wilson and Musick (1998) note that social resources also work *in combination with* human capital: the effect of social resources on volunteering is stronger among higher-status people.

Social ties generate trust, and research suggests that trust makes it easier for individuals to donate time (Brady et al 1999, p.162; Wood 1997, p.601).

Social ties also encourage manifold relations that might be used as “side payments” to overcome the free rider problem - individuals do not want to let friends down (Wilson 2000, p.224). Social ties to organisations help define the volunteer role (or identity), making it easier to perform (Wuthnow 1991, p.201).

Social ties also increase the chances of being asked to volunteer (Brady et al 1999, p.158).

Wilson suggests that integrating social resources into a theory of volunteering “undoubtedly enriches it” (Wilson 2000, p.224), though he also perceives a number of problems that remain to be dealt with. Firstly, there is the question of whether social ties are positive or negative, the answer being dependent upon the type of volunteering (Wilson 2000, p.224). Conventional volunteering may be supported, but less conventional activities, such as activism, might be shunned. Secondly, Wilson (2000) considers that social ties may be relatively insignificant, depending on the nature of the volunteering. Research by Jaspers (1997) and Omoto and Snyder (1993) found that AIDS volunteers and animal rights activists were more likely to be reacting to the mass media rather than network ties (Jaspers 1997, p.175; Omoto and Snyder 1993, p.167). Thirdly, Wilson (2000) notes that it is frequently difficult to pinpoint what a social resource is in advance of the volunteering engagement. The meaning of social capital varies between studies and something that could function as such can always be found (Wilson 2000, p.224). He cites two studies that highlight this complication. Church attendance is often cited as an example of social capital, but Wilson and Janoski (1995) found that it has no effect on the volunteer rate of moderate Protestants - Wilson (2000) asks “Does this disprove the theory or simply mean that church attendance is not a social resource for this group?” (Wilson 2000, p.224). McAdam and Paulsen (1993, p.224) found that the sheer number of social ties did not encourage participation in civil rights campaigns - only those ties with significance in relation to the civil rights work for which the individuals were being recruited caused individuals to volunteer. A

fourth, and significant problem, is that one of the key elements of the social resources theory, trust, does not predict volunteering consistently (McAdam and Paulsen 1993, p.224). Deckker et al (1997, p.230) found that trust is unlikely to increase volunteering if people are volunteering to protest against the government, or working conditions created by the government.

3.4 IRISH CIVIL SOCIETY AND VOLUNTEERING

Concern has grown recently as to the extent to which Irish citizens are prepared to be involved in communities: time, work, commuting and patterns of changing values and lifestyles have brought into focus questions about whether there is a “crisis” of volunteering and community (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a). The issue of the health of Ireland’s civil society is increasing in prominence in governmental, academic and media discourse, with concerns regarding deficits in civic engagement leading conversation, comment and policy.

The renewed interest in civil society and volunteering may be understood as part of a broader worldwide trend to engage with “perceived” deficits in civil society (Seligman 2002, p.28) and to encourage individuals to play a more active role in different aspects of economic, political and social development (Taylor 2003, p.43). More directly Daly (2007, p.2) notes that there is a resurgence in interest in the Irish civil society because of a number of factors: the inequality of access to the benefits of the successful economy; the decline in the influence of the Catholic church; corruption scandals which have undermined trust in political leaders and political institutions; and critiques of

Ireland as a nation of consumers, where individual interests predominate over those of the broader society.

3.4.1 Political action on Irish civil society and volunteering

Political action on the civil society crisis question may also be attributed directly to the effect of Robert Putnam's meetings with, and suggested "guru" status for, former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Such a high-level interest in civil society has concentrated government efforts to investigate ways to reinvigorate Irish civil society (O'Connor 2005, online). Prior to announcing members of his Taskforce on Active Citizenship, the former Taoiseach said in a Sunday Business Post article, "I believe in the intrinsic value of our democratic society and the freedom it confers on all of us to participate. Ironically, for democracy to work, participation is not really optional; it is critical to ensure we have ongoing healthy development" (O'Connor 2005, online). This belief has clearly shaped recent political efforts and discourse. The effort to reinvigorate and understand Irish civil society has manifested itself via the government's reassessment of the role of civil society organisations, particularly the role of the voluntary and community sector to meet the needs of communities (Daly 2007, p.1); its seeking out of new ways of increasing citizen engagement, via the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007a); the movement of the *Charities Bill 2007* (Oireachtas 2007, online) through the Oireachtas, which will, in the very near future, give legal charitable status to civil society organisations; the publication of the General Scheme for the Charities Regulation Bill 2006 (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2006); initiatives such as the audit of democracy, *The Report of the Democracy Commission. Engaging Citizens: The Case for Democratic*

Renewal (Harris 2005); and even, in the media, RTÉ's Time of Our Lives Survey (Daly 2007, p.1).

Concern regarding the health of Irish civil society has concentrated political and academic minds, in an effort to understand and engage with the sociocultural changes shaping Ireland and its people. The State-sponsored Taskforce on Active Citizenship's recent reports have sought to answer the question of whether there is a "crisis" in Irish civil society, particularly in relation to volunteering and the community, and also a loss of trust in institutions, politics and the capacity of communities for collective action (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.2). The report outlines its *raison d'être* as being the result of, "Huge progress [resulting in] social, economic and cultural changes", some of which "have eroded aspects of community spirit and human well-being" (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.11). The aim of the Taskforce is to instigate an investigation and a discussion on active citizenship in Ireland, a form of citizenship that it defines as requiring active engagement in the civil society:

In our view, being an Active Citizen means being aware of, and caring about, the welfare of fellow citizens, recognising that we live as members of communities and therefore depend on others in our daily lives. Active citizens: support and become involved in different types of voluntary and community activities; respect and listen to others with different views from their own; play their part in making decisions on issues that affect themselves and others, in particular by participating in the democratic process;

respect ethnic and cultural diversity and are open to change;
welcome new people who come to live in Ireland.

(Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.12)

The fact that this Taskforce was established by the former Taoiseach to lead a “national conversation ... to establish what Active Citizenship means to people in the changed country that is Ireland today” (An Taoiseach 2007) is itself suggestive of a concern, at the very least amongst the political elites, the patrician and chattering classes, that something may not be quite right in the state of Irish civil society, or at least its perceived potential.

Research suggests that this concern may be both warranted and unwarranted (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). It may be unwarranted because there appears to be no statistically clear decline in civic engagement. However, it may be warranted because of a *perception* that there is a decline, a perception that may damage people’s view of Irish society as a shared, participatory community.

3.4.2 The state of volunteering in Ireland

The most recent research related to volunteering, the Taskforce on Active Citizenship’s report to government (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007a), was undertaken in 2006 and is based on findings from a specially commissioned *Survey of Civic Engagement*, undertaken by the Economic and Social Research

Institute⁴ (ESRI) as well as a parish-based survey⁵, undertaken by the Council for Research and Development, a Commission of the Irish Bishops Conference (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.16). Prior to that research there had been a number of other reports on civil society in Ireland, upon which the *Survey of Civic Engagement* sought to build: the “Volunteers and Volunteering in Ireland” Report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Sports, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (2005); “Engaging Citizens: The Case for Democratic Renewal in Ireland” Report of the Democracy Committee (2005); “The Policy Implications of Social Capital” (No.28) Report of the National Economic and Social Forum (2003); “Tipping the Balance” Report of the National Committee on Volunteering in Ireland (2002); White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationships between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs 2000).

The Taskforce on Active Citizenship’s ESRI survey found increases in the numbers of adults who say that they do unpaid and regular volunteering outside of the home or were actively involved in the community in the previous 12 months, and an overall stability in the pattern of active engagement (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). These findings are quite different to other recent studies that have identified poor levels of volunteering and/or patterns of decline in volunteering (Donoghue 2001; Guinness UDV Ireland 2002; NESF

⁴ The ESRI survey involved telephone interviews with 1,046 individuals, aged over 16, interviewed as part of the monthly *Economic and Social Research Institute EU Consumer Survey* (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007b).

⁵ The Council for Research and Development report, *Active Citizenship in faith-based communities*, involved the use of a semi-structured questionnaire, conducted in nine focus groups, involving 76 participants, of whom the majority were aged over 50 (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007b).

2003). The Taskforce's ESRI survey estimates that two million adults (two thirds of the adult population) are not actively involved in their community, in any form of "civic activity" (i.e. attending a public meeting, joining an action group, contacting an organisation or public representative over an issue, contacting the media, etc.) (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). The Census of 2006 suggests that this figure was actually higher, at over 2.8 million in 2006 (CSO 2006b, online).

The *Census 2006* offers an interesting insight into the state of civil society volunteering in Ireland. It determines that the younger the individual is the less likelihood that they will be a volunteer (CSO 2006b, online). The Census found that 553,255 persons, representing 16.4 per cent of the population aged 15 and over, were "involved in one or more voluntary activity" (CSO 2006b, online).

The Census found that the 20-24 age group (a group of particular interest in this research) had the lowest participation rate in civil society, with 35,730 individuals recorded as involved in one or more voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). Of that age group, taken as a whole (342,475 individuals), the Census shows that just over 10 per cent were engaged in voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). The individuals volunteering in that group make up just under 6.5 per cent of the whole volunteer population (CSO 2006b, online). Of the 25-34 age group (a further group of interest, with some of the young Irish adult interviewees included in it) 83,369 individuals were recorded as involved in one or more voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). Of that group, taken as a whole (722,439 individuals), the Census shows that 11.5 per cent were engaged in voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). The individuals volunteering from that

group make up 15 per cent of the whole volunteer population (CSO 2006b, online). Of the 35-44 age group (121,647), 19.5 per cent engaged in voluntary activities (CSO 2006b, online). The group made up 21.9 per cent of all volunteers in Ireland (CSO 2006b, online). The 45-54 age group had the highest participation rate with 22.7 per cent involved in voluntary activities (118,589 individuals) (CSO 2006b, online): that group being 21.4 per cent of the total volunteers in Ireland. The 55-64 age group (85,961 individuals) had a 21 per cent participation rate in voluntary activities; making the volunteers in that age group 15.5 per cent of all volunteers in Ireland. The 65 and over age group (69,940) had a 14.9 per cent participation rate in voluntary activities, with volunteers over 65 years of age making up 12.6 per cent of those volunteering in Ireland. A rough analysis of the figures suggests that civil society in Ireland is engaged with by a mixture of age groups, with those aged between 35 and 54 making up the vanguard of volunteers in 2006.

The nature of volunteering is considered by those who took part in the Taskforce's research as essentially changing in very significant ways, with a greater emphasis on responsibilities and skills (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.19). However, there is an apparent sense of unease about how wider changes in Irish society and the economy will impact on volunteering and the sense of community in the future (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.19).

According to the Taskforce on Active Citizenship there is a strong interest in the concept of active citizenship and civic participation in Irish society and a willingness to participate in measures to achieve these. However, there is a common perception that volunteering is declining, with half of those asked, who

worked in the civil society sector, noting that it is harder to recruit new volunteers (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.16). The authors outline a consensus amongst the respondents as to the barriers to active citizenship and civic participation: time, new patterns of work and leisure and changing values and choices; and in practical terms, insurance, bureaucratic burdens and lack of facilities (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.16). Many of the respondents felt cut off from decision-making, feeling that getting involved did not make the difference it could or should make in their opinion (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.16). The report suggests that Ireland is average to slightly below average in terms of reported group membership and volunteering compared with other OECD countries, but is rich in informal social networks compared to other economically developed countries (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17).

The Taskforce report concludes that active citizenship is changing and not necessarily declining, with no clear evidence that people are less involved than before. The *Survey of Civic Engagement* found an increase in both volunteering and community involvement in the four years since the last similar survey, in 2002 (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). In terms of political involvement the researchers found: 38 per cent of those who took part in the survey are interested in politics (either “definitely” or “somewhat”); 54 per cent said that they thought they could influence decisions at the local level; and there was a 76 per cent voter registration in the 20-29 age group (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). The authors also conclude that there is a need to acknowledge and support the unique contribution of voluntary and community

organisations: viewing these as the “backbone” of active citizenship (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.19).

The 2007 report by the Institute of Publication Administration, *Best of Times? The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger* (Corcoran et al 2007), took a different tack to that of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship, considering the propensity of Ireland’s growing population of suburbanites to engage in voluntary activity/membership in voluntary organisations. The emphasis of this particular study was on local involvement, within suburban locations - the focus being on the social fabric of those suburbs.

The research found that there is a danger now, and as Ireland’s suburbs grow, of the erosion of “the many ties that bind in suburbia” (Corcoran et al 2007 p.197). The study focused upon four locations: Lucan, Ratoath, Mullingar, and Leixlip (Corcoran et al 2007, p.192). The research found that: 31 per cent of the Lucan respondents claim membership of local voluntary organisations; for Ratoath the figure was 34 per cent; for Mullingar 40 per cent; and for Leixlip 48 per cent (Corcoran et al 2007, p.192). To understand further local participation, the proportion of respondents engaged at any time in “a form of action relating to local issues” was surveyed, with results that vary considerably: only 18 per cent of individuals in Mullingar were so involved; in Leixlip, 25 per cent; in Lucan, 47 per cent; and in Ratoath, 51 per cent (Corcoran et al 2007, p.195).

The report’s authors contend that their findings show that suburbanites found it difficult to deal collectively with the problems they faced as a “community”, this being the result of a lack of institutions at neighbourhood level,

which left them “struggling in their efforts at managing their own local affairs” (Corcoran et al 2007, pp.196-197). The finding of an “institutional void” that confounded their best efforts to participate collectively in social action is echoed in the *Taskforce Report to Government* (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a) in relation to the lack of facilities for new housing developments. The report suggests that “it is difficult for people to feel respected or included or to inculcate a sense of community or citizenship” when government does not take account of their needs (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.19). As more of Ireland becomes suburban every day, this void may only increase without affirmative political will and action.

The Taskforce for Active Citizenship suggests that ultimately a coherent and comprehensive approach is required to achieve a “strong citizenry”, capable of drawing the disparate strands of civil society together (Taskforce for Active Citizenship 2007a, p.20). Respondents to the Taskforce’s ESRI report suggest that this should be managed through a single government department. However, the effectiveness of any such policy is questionable as the recent success of the Irish economy has “heightened tension” between the State and civil society organisations, splitting the sector into two (indistinct) camps (Daly 2007, p.10). The resulting tensions have forced a wedge between an “organised ‘state-influenced voluntary or civil society sector’ and ‘an autonomous civil society creatively identifying and responding to concrete needs’ [O’Sullivan 2005, p. 43]” (Daly 2007, p.10). Daly contends that there is a real concern that the “illusion of consensus” (Murphy 2002) of the social partnership between State and civil society is not meeting the demands and expectations of citizens (Daly 2007, p.10). The government’s agenda on active citizenship may not have the

legitimacy required to engage individuals whose needs may be more effectively met through “autonomous” means, those means being “direct action, legal action, social dialogue and analysis through alternative social and political forums and campaigning and advocacy” (Daly 2007, p.10). The question is whether these activities can fit into the social partnership framework and the government’s future vision for civil society and the civil society sector, a vision that some argue (see Collins 2002) is an encroachment too far into the public sphere.

3.5 VOLUNTEERING DURING YOUNG ADULthood

As noted in the previous section, the most recent Census figures suggest very few young adults are engaged in volunteering in Ireland (10 per cent of the 20-24 age group and 11.5 per cent of the 25-34 age group were engaged in voluntary activity in 2006, according to the Census 2006 (CSO 2006b, online). Little is known about the reasons for these individuals’ volunteering engagement, nor is there a great deal of research on volunteering amongst young adults in other countries (Haski-Leventhal 2008). The focus of research on volunteerism during young adulthood has been on two issues. They are the characteristics of volunteers, particularly their personality and motivations, and the potential effects of volunteering (for example, on agency, social relatedness and moral-political development and awareness) (Marta et al 2006, p.224).

Oesterle et al (2004) considered the question of whether there are particular factors that will attract young American adults to volunteer and others that will obstruct or have no effect on volunteering. The authors analysed data from a

nine-year study of individuals who were 18-19 years old at its start and 26-27 years old at its completion. The research found that being employed full-time reduced volunteering - for each month of full-time work in a given year the odds of volunteering that year were reduced by 4 per cent (Oesterle et al 2004, pp. 1139-1140). The authors conclude that “Involvement in work, rather than promoting volunteering by providing social integration, actually hinders volunteer participation in early adulthood” (Oesterle et al 2004, pp.1139-1140). Marriage was found to neither promote nor hinder volunteering, though having pre-school children clearly limited participation in volunteering (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1140). Attending a post-secondary school education institution was found to foster young adults’ participation as volunteers (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1142). The authors suggest that the significance of education in early adulthood is that it “promotes the acquisition of all three forms of resources: civic skills, social connections, and civic values” (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1143).

The authors found that prior volunteering behaviour has a significant effect upon volunteering (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1141). Having volunteered one year earlier was found to have the strongest effect on volunteering in the current year - the authors concluded that the young adult respondents were almost eight times as likely to volunteer in a given year if they had volunteered in the preceding year (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1141). The authors conclude that their findings show that “volunteering is to some extent a stable behavior” during the transition to adulthood (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1141). Only one sociodemographic indicator had a significant effect upon volunteering during that transition - young men were found to be considerably less likely to volunteer

(Oesterle et al 2004, p.1141). Race and parents' socioeconomic status neither promoted nor hindered volunteering (Oesterle et al 2004, p.1141).

Fletcher and Major (2004) considered the nature of gender difference in medical students' motivations to volunteer. The median age of their respondents was 25.4 years. Using Clary et al's (1998) Voluntary Function Inventory (see section 3.3.1, Motives, values and beliefs, for an explanation of the functions) they found a clear gender difference in motives to volunteer. Women rated all the motives (values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and ego-protective functions) more strongly than men (Fletcher and Major 2004, p.112). The study showed that both men and women ranked values first, followed by understanding, enhancement, social, career, and protective (Fletcher and Major 2004, p.112). The essential finding, according to the authors, is that both men and women rated values and understanding as relatively "important" whereas only women rated the remaining motives as relatively "important" (Fletcher and Major 2004, p.113). The researchers suggest that the fact that both men and women rank the relative order of the motives similarly "may be indicative of a universal motive structure (e.g., *values* greater than *protective* for everyone in helping professions)" [italics in original] (Fletcher and Major 2004, p.113). Overall women rated each motive higher than did men, which led the researchers to suggest that "women are more motivated towards volunteering activities than men are ... Men, even in a helping profession, are less motivated to volunteer than women are" (Fletcher and Major 2004, p.113). Fletcher and Major (2004) suggest that the same messages used to recruit volunteers would be effective for both women and men, so long as they reinforce the salience to the values and understanding functions.

Research by Rehberg (2005) offers insight into the motivations of young Swiss adults considering international volunteering. The author found that the motivations for volunteering included: achieving something positive for others, which included motivations relating to helping, giving, doing good, achieving or changing something, being geared to ethical values, and feeling useful, and doing something useful; a quest for the new, which included motivations relating to becoming acquainted with new cultures, intercultural exchange, doing something different, getting away, getting deeply acquainted with a new culture and everyday life, meeting new people, making new friends, and learning or using foreign languages; and a quest for oneself, which included motivations relating to gaining experience, advancing oneself, professional orientation, clarification, and development, and discovering or transcending personal limits (Rehberg 2005, p.113).

A recent study by Marta et al (2006, p.225) of 461 young Italian adults, aged between 24 and 31, who volunteered with children and adolescents for a minimum of three hours a week for more than 20 weeks, found that young adult volunteers are inspired by a distinctive and composite pattern of motivations, including both self- and other-oriented motivations. Prior research on young adult volunteers points to both self- and other-focused motivations, with the volunteer engagement maintained predominantly but not entirely for other-focused reasons (Guglielmetti and Marta 2003; Pozzi and Marta 2006). In order to achieve a coherent picture of the motivations behind young people's volunteering the research referred to Omoto and Snyder's functionalist and motivational framework and the Voluntary Function Inventory (see section 3.3.1,

Motives, values and beliefs, for an explanation of the functions), as did Fletcher and Major (2004). It was conducted using self-reporting questionnaires (Marta et al 2006, p.226). It found that the young people's motivations for volunteering are "varied and internally highly differentiated", suggesting that young adults do not all act on the basis of the same motivations, or, most importantly, from the same combinations of motivations (Marta et al 2006, p.229). Marta et al (2006, p.228) found motivations for volunteering which included those that were values related, motivations of filling time, of career-orientation, and those related to ego-protection. Young adults with a "composite" motivational framework were, according to Marta et al (2006, p.229), found to be more satisfied with both the activity and the organisation, more integrated into the organisation, and more willing to remain active in volunteering for longer. The research found that young adults who are very clearly motivated by career concerns and perspectives manifest a "temporary commitment" to the activity and the organisation: "The choice to become a volunteer is very closely related to professional self-improvement and no other motivation can sustain the choice to volunteer after the young person has found a good job, at least for the time being" (Marta et al 2006, p.229). A further, interesting, finding was of a portion of young adults engaged in volunteering "who are not particularly pro-social, are dissatisfied with the voluntary activity and with the organisation they belong to, and are not very committed to continuing their involvement, even though they may have been carrying it out for a long time and for many hours a week" (Marta et al 2006, p. 229). The researchers suggest that these individuals are simply "filling time", or passively maintaining a commitment made in the past (Marta et al 2006, p.229).

Haski-Leventhal et al (2008) engaged in a cross-national study with the goal to understand the relationships between volunteering and vocational/ educational choice. The research took data from 6570 students in 12 countries (Belgium, Canada, Croatia, England, Finland, Holland, India, Israel, Japan, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, and the United States). Of those students 90 per cent were aged 25 years old or younger. The authors found that when asked about the frequency of volunteering, only a handful of students reported volunteering weekly (12.4 per cent) or even monthly (7.4 per cent) (Haski-Leventhal et al 2008, p.11). Humanities students showed the highest rates of regular volunteering (27.7 per cent), followed by the natural sciences (19.6 per cent), engineering and business (18.3 per cent each), and finally social sciences (18.2 per cent) (Haski-Leventhal et al 2008, p.11). A large percentage of students (65.7 per cent) reported that they donate money (Haski-Leventhal et al 2008, p.11). Haski-Leventhal et al (2008) conclude that the chosen academic programme/vocation significantly explained the level of student volunteering.

Research suggests that volunteers in young adulthood have, in comparison to their peers, higher levels of self-esteem, optimism and self-efficacy (Hart and Fegley 1995; Pancer et al 1998). Further, they are more motivated in their educational work, achieve better academic results, and have higher employment aspirations (Fletcher et al 2000). The initial volunteering engagement is determined by both self- and other-oriented motivations, but the engagement is maintained for other-oriented reasons (Guglielmetti and Marta 2003; Pozzi and Marta 2006).

3.6 THE YOUNG ADULT AS A VOLUNTEER IN LATE MODERNITY: AN ALTRUISTIC INDIVIDUALITY

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.159) argue that in late modernity, with its institutionalised individualistic currents, the willingness to exist for others, to act voluntarily formally or informally, is growing and not disappearing. This leads to some important questions, asked by the authors:

How can the longing for self-determination be brought into harmony with the equally important longing for shared community? How can one simultaneously be individualistic and merge with the group? How might the variety of voices which vie within each of us in a confusing world be combined into a political statement and action pointing beyond the present day?

(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.158)

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.159) argue that individuals, particularly the young, are simultaneously individualistic and merged in groups in a highly political way. They are using subversive energies and irony, unintentionally acting politically by depriving politics of attention, their labour, consent and power. The authors suggest that “Individuals practise a seeking, experimenting morality that ties together things that seem mutually exclusive: egoism and altruism, self-realization and active compassion, self-realization as active compassion” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.159). The longing for shared community, the refusal to accept an end to sociality, is contended to be an act of

subversion - one that undermines the currents of institutionalised individualisation in late modernity. This has the effect of creating an altruistic individuality, which itself is the result of the high degree of self-determination and a diversity of opportunities, causing a loss of orientation that leads to a demand for social networks that create a sense of meaning and belonging (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, pp.28, 171).

The most recent research on altruism corrects the traditional academic view of humanity, taken by the natural and social sciences, with its extreme emphasis on selfishness, replacing it with a view that emphasises forms of prosocial behaviour (Yeung 2006, p.15). It is a finding that offers substance to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) contention of "altruistic individuality". Kohn notes the difficulty in explaining community if the only driving factor is egoism: "The problem with theories of motivation based on self-interest is not that they are false but that they are only partly true" (Kohn 1990, p.234). He concludes that "Neither egoism nor altruism seems adequate" (Kohn 1990, p.239). This perspective is reinforced, according to Yeung (2006), by studies in evolutionary biology and philosophy.

The prosocial individual is still, in this view, selfish, placing his or her well-being first. However, Yeung notes that selfishness has in the course of time been affected by social models, values and norms, which emphasise fairness: "Such a human being both internalises certain behaviour models and takes other people's expectations and needs into consideration on the basis of comparing differences in well-being" (Yeung 2006, p.15). The inadequacy of the theory of the entirely selfish individual is enriched by the concept of altruism. The

“gaining something for myself” is linked in both biological and cultural evolutionary terms with “giving something to someone else” (Yeung 2006, p.18).

Human behaviour runs the continuum between pure self-interest and pure altruism. In relation to motivation, human thinking, acting, behaving are almost always motivated by both egoistic and altruistic elements. However, there is still a significant debate in relation to theoretical points on the altruistic-egocentric continuum - what separates “pure” altruism and altruism, self-interest and “pure” egocentrism - how to measure and what to measure, where to draw the lines, how to tot up the results. Monroe suggests that altruism may be defined as “behaviour intended to benefit another, even when this risks possible sacrifice to the welfare of the actor” (Monroe 1996, p.6). She points to six critical elements of the definition:

1. Altruism entails action;
2. The action must be goal-directed, either consciously or reflexively;
3. The goal must concern the welfare of another;
4. Intentions count more than consequences;
5. The act must carry some possibility of decrease in the actor’s own welfare;
6. There must be no conditions or anticipation of reward.

(Monroe 1996, p.7)

Monroe (1996, pp.6-7) contends that there is a continuum of behaviour with pure self-interest and pure altruism as its poles. She suggests that altruism is empirically relatively rare. There is still a division amongst scholars as to the six critical points postulated by Monroe, with the sixth criterion, “no conditions or anticipation of reward”, being particularly divisive (Monroe 1996, p.17). This point is critical for some authors who consider that helping behaviour resulting in joy is not altruistic. Batson (1986) considers helping that makes the individual helper feel good about herself or himself as intrinsically egoistic. Bar-Tal and Raviv (1982) and Rushton and Sorrentino (1981) contend that the altruistic individual may experience self-satisfaction as a result of the altruistic act. Yeung suggests that a starting point for research into the dilemma comes from Montada and Bierhof’s (1991) definition of altruism as voluntary “behaviour that aims at a termination or reduction of an emergency, a neediness, or disadvantage of others and that *primarily* does not aim at the fulfillment of one’s own interests” [italics in original] (Montada and Bierhof 1991, p.18).

There are a number of important links between altruism, civil society and volunteering. Membership of groups and networks, engaged in civil society activities, nearly always requires some sacrifice of personal interest. Prosocial behaviour fundamentally relates to all aspects of civil society, even to the point, according to Yeung that “One could even state that civil society is fundamentally about pro-social behaviour” (Yeung 2006, p.25). Yeung (2006) contends that altruism acts in relation to social cohesion, togetherness and civic participation and that these are elements that form an active civil society.

The contention that volunteer engagement in a civil society organisation encourages the development of “new” values and opinions (such as those associated with altruism) has been heavily critiqued (Hooghe 2003), suggesting that there is instead a reinforcement of those values and opinions, so that it appears more likely that the engagement does not introduce qualitatively new values, but enforces already existing values (Hooghe 2003, p.93; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Coffé and Geys (2007, p.389) note three strands of research offering insight into this process: that there is a socialisation process occurring within the organisation, with the effect that value congruence occurs due to peer group effects (Hooghe 2003, p. 92); other research suggests that it is self-selection which results in this value congruence, where individuals with similar values and opinions choose to join particular organisations (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999); and others contend that both effects tend to be mutually reinforcing (Brehm and Rahn 1997).

As noted earlier, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, pp.28, 171) contend that the discourses of individuality and altruism, self-interest and selflessness, are not incompatible. Instead the late modern period is witnessing an altruistic individuality, the result of the high degree of self-determination and a diversity of opportunities. It causes a loss of orientation that leads to a demand for social networks that create a sense of meaning and belonging (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, pp.28, 171). The new type of solidarity, resulting from increased individualisation, is exhibited voluntarily, and not so much from a sense of obligation. It is less inspired by a sense of helping: “The real surprise is that self-assertion, enjoying oneself and caring for others are not mutually exclusive; they are mutually inclusive and strengthen and enrich one

another” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.160). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) contend that the mutuality of existing for oneself and others can be understood if deeply rooted, old patterns of thinking, which do not reflect the modern condition, are set aside. The authors consider that insight into contemporary volunteering is blocked by four dominant assumptions about voluntary commitment, that distort both the public and scholarly debates:

1. The equation and confusion of commitment with membership - if membership lists are the only things that show commitments, then non-members are of necessity egoists.
2. The self-sacrifice assumption, that only by ignoring oneself can one live for others.
3. Silent help or the *housewife syndrome*, conveying that the dignity of serving others is that it remains invisible, that is, unpaid and unacknowledged, done at the behest of others who are in control.
4. A clear separation of roles between helpers and needy - it never occurs to anyone that those who commit themselves to others also need help and receive it from their service, that perhaps the enrichment might lie precisely in the experience of mutual helplessness. [italics in original]

(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.160)

These assumptions, according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.160), portray the volunteer as selfless, invisible and heroic, a passive docile dupe

controlled by some overbearing charitable hierarchy. The authors consider these assumptions as viable reasons for individuals' flight from traditional organisations, particularly traditional political parties, where they may lose autonomy, becoming anonymous, dependent upon the hierarchy, and only an executing agent of the organisation's instructions (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.160). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002, p.158) note that those who want to get involved go to non-traditional activist organisations, searching for informality, activism and credibility.

Marta et al (2006, p.223) contend that volunteering research that specifically outlines the effects of self- or other-oriented motivations, without the understanding that they are mutually inseparable, is not entirely useful, because of the incoherency in the findings. Instead they suggest a more composite approach in which the focus is the specific combination of self- and other-oriented motivations - defining the individual as purely motivated by the self or the other does not offer a rounded approach to individuals' engagement as volunteers. The following examples illustrate the confusion if the volunteering engagement is explained as the result of purely self- and other-oriented motivations. Omoto and Snyder (1995) found that the length of the volunteering engagement was dependent upon self-oriented motivations, but not upon other-focused motivations, such as expression of compassionate values or community concern. Other studies (Penner and Finkelstein 1998) obtain the opposite result: other-oriented motivations predict length of service. To add to this confusion, Clary et al (1998) found that self-focused motivations are predictive of the intention to remain active in volunteering for a longer duration of time. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen's research, in which they asked respondents to rank in

importance 28 motives found previously in a literature search (followed by a factor analysis on the responses), led to their conclusion that “Volunteers are both altruistic and egoistic. That is, volunteers do not distinguish between types of motives; rather they act on both” (Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen 1991, p.281). The authors suggest that volunteers do not act from a single motive or category of motives but from a combination of motives that can be described overall as “a rewarding experience”. Volunteers not only give but also take.

3.7 TYPES OF VOLUNTEERING: COLLECTIVE AND REFLEXIVE VOLUNTEERING

As noted earlier, research suggests that volunteering is changing in nature in Ireland. Donoghue et al (2006) assert that voluntary organisations can no longer assume that individuals will be “life-long adherents” to a cause. The growing conviction amongst civil society researchers that volunteering is undergoing radical change, as the result of broader sociocultural changes, is postulated as a ‘transition’ in the types of volunteer participation. The transition has been catalogued by Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) as: from traditional, classical, and old to modern or new (Hustinx 2001); from collectivist to individualistic (Eckstein 2001); from membership-based to programme-based (Meijs and Hoogstad 2001); and from institutionalised to self-organised (Beck, 1997).

Anheier and Salamon (1999, p.46) suggest a reason for the transition to new forms of volunteering as being the modifying effects of individualisation and secularisation on the motivational patterns and bases of volunteering. The contention is that those factors are causing volunteering to become less

collective and more individualistic or reflexive (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003; Marta et al 2006). The effects of sociocultural changes, according to Hustinx (2004, p.2), are being felt in two interlocking types of transition - changes in the form of participation and changes in the profile of the participants.

The suggestion is that volunteer participation has become transient, occasional and sporadic in comparison to former patterns of involvement and that it has become de-institutionalised, as voluntary organisations lose their positions as central venues for participation (Hustinx 2004, p.2). Individuals choose to engage in less membership-based and pre-structured group volunteering, preferring loose arrangements, informality and no bureaucracy (Bennett 1998; Selle and Stromsnes 1998, 2001; Meijs and Hoogstad 2001; Wollebæk and Selle 2002). The suggestion is that there is a change in volunteers' "subjective disposition" (Hustinx 2004, p.3). It is argued that the willingness to participate has become more individualistic, more self-centred and calculated (Gaskin 1998; Wuthnow, 1998; Safrit and Merrill 2000; Hustinx 2001).

An important distinction when considering types of volunteering in late modernity must be between *classic volunteerism* and *new volunteerism* (Hustinx 2001) and *long-term* and *short-term* or *episodic volunteering* (Macduff 1990, 2004, 2005; Handy et al 2006; Bryen and Madden 2006; Hustinx 2003). Hustinx highlights the difference between the "classic volunteerism" of collective volunteering and the "new volunteerism" of the reflexive volunteer, which is illustrated in Table 3.1 (Hustinx 2001, p.65). The term "collective" volunteering relates to the more traditional social institutions and mores. The term "reflexive"

volunteering relates to the social institutions and mores that are characterised by individualisation and to the intensity and short-term or fleeting involvement that defines episodic volunteering.

Table 3.1: Classic volunteerism vs. new volunteerism

	Classic Volunteerism	New Volunteerism
Culture	Identifies with traditional cultural norms	Individualisation
Choice or organisation	Based on: Traditional cultural identities Great loyalty Delegated leadership Solid structure	Personal interest Weak ties Decentralised structure Loose networks
Choice of field of action	Based on: Traditional cultural identities Inclusion and exclusion	Perception of new biographical similarities Taste for topical issues Dialogue between global and local
Choice of activity	Based on: Traditional cultural identities Needs of the organisation Idealism	Balance between personal preference and organisation's needs Cost/benefit analysis Pragmatic
Length and intensity of commitment	Long-term (unlimited in time) Regular Unconditional	Short-Term (clearly limited in time) Irregular or erratic Conditional
Relationship with the beneficiary	Unilateral, "altruistic", "selfless"	Reciprocal

Source: Hustinx 2001, p.65

The research suggests that in the collective volunteer organisation the volunteer is engaged in activities that are deeply rooted in community and tradition, with a sense of duty, or obligation (Macduff 2005, p.53). The individual shares a sense

of the collective “we”, with the highest goal of the group being a dedication to the common good (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, pp.172-174). Codes of conduct, written and unwritten are the norm, with a member-based structure and strong institutional ties (Macduff 2005, pp.53-54). Collective volunteering involves volunteering acts that are, according to Eckstein (2001, p.829), initiated, stipulated, and supervised by groups, regardless of the intentions or preferences of the individual group members. Volunteers carry out tasks or services that are decided by others and usually supervised by others in the group. Macduff notes that the individual need not write his or her “volunteer script”, but rather will do what is good for the organisational community (Macduff 2005, p.53). Further, these groups are often characterised by community and class homogeneity (Macduff 2005, p.53; Beck 1994; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) emphasise that biographical continuity is an indispensable base for collective volunteerism. Through devoted community service, biographical stability is guaranteed and collective identity is reinforced. Socially predetermined and stable modes of living and thinking ensure a persistent community orientation (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172). Macduff (2005, p. 54) suggests that a good example of these types of organisations is men’s clubs of 1950s America, for example the Rotary, Elks and Lions. The reflexive volunteering model, according to Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003, p.172), represents individuated forms of commitment, in which the focus is shifted onto the individual as a volunteer actor, as opposed to a member of a collective community. Reflexive volunteering is usually programme-based and, most often, self-organised (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172).

Beck maintains that these shifts are about the “dissolving of the contours of the tenor and substance of political debate” (Beck 1994, p.2). It is a contention that appears relevant to an Ireland where political debate is being affected by an increasing activism (for example, regarding mobile phone masts, incinerators and Irish involvement in America’s “extraordinary rendition” of suspected terrorists). Individuals and communities are self-organising (and then dispersing) to directly engage political leaders and political institutions, the traditional democratic decision-making institutions. They are using means such as “direct action, legal action, social dialogue and analysis through alternative social and political forums and campaigning and advocacy” (Daly 2007, p.10)

Hustinx and Lammertyn note that “The structural and individual reflexivity typical of the late modern volunteering context is reflected in the progressive weakening of collectively established identities and life courses. As a result, volunteering is no longer naturally inscribed in collective patterns of behavior” (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172). It is suggested that shifts in behaviour of volunteers are the result of the necessity of individuals in late modernity to create their self-identities, reflexively making the self, amidst a diversity of options and possibilities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.3; Giddens 1991, p.3). One such option, which fits the necessity of constant personal (re)invention, is episodic volunteering. It is a form of reflexive volunteering. Research suggests that for the individual engaged in reflexive volunteering it is the individual world of experience that is the frame of reference. The decision to volunteer is based upon personal considerations in the context of highly individualised situations and experiences - the decision to volunteer is dependent upon a biographical match, as:

The self-reflexive biographical quest becomes the driving force for primarily self-centered volunteer attitudes ... On the one hand, volunteering is used as a tool to cope with biographical uncertainties and personal problems; on the other hand the volunteering field is seen as a “market of possibilities” [Evers 1999, p.55] for self-realization and the setting of personal goals.

(Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.173)

Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) note that a number of researchers observe stronger support for self-directed or instrumental motives among more “modernised” and younger categories of citizens (Barker 1993; Dekker and Van den Broek 1998). Any suggestion that the reflexive volunteer is an egomaniacal type of volunteer is tempered by findings that suggest a pluralization of motives (as noted earlier), as the individual’s pursuit of self-interest occurs alongside, rather than at odds with, a compassion for the beneficiaries - a compassion that is no less strongly felt than that held by collective volunteers (Dekker and Van den Broek 1998; Hustinx 2001; Wuthnow 1991).

The emergence of reflexive volunteering does not mean that collective volunteering is dead. There is no rigid division between the styles of volunteering, but rather there is a continuum that reflects the traditional collective categories to one end and the more reflexive forms to the other (Macduff 2005, p.55). A mixture of styles exists within many, if not most, civil society organisations. Individuals are engaged in concocting “volunteer

cocktails”, blending collective and reflexive styles of volunteering, oscillating between “traditional” and “modern” forms. The result is that individuals are engaging in new forms of volunteering such as episodic volunteering, “charity challenge” volunteering and online or virtual volunteering.

3.8 EPISODIC VOLUNTEERING

Episodic volunteering is an example of the new reflexive volunteering. It was first described by Nancy Macduff (1990), who suggested that there was a change in the way individuals were volunteering. She asserted that individuals were opting for short-term volunteer engagements rather than traditional long-term volunteering opportunities. Episodic volunteering is a phenomenon that is growing (Styers 2004, p.85) and as such is garnering academic interest (see Handy et al 2006; Macduff 1990, 2004, 2005). Handy et al (2006, p.32) even go so far as to note that it is a future wave of volunteering. This growing preference for short-term or episodic volunteering is, according to Styers (2004, p.85), the biggest change in volunteering in recent times.

Macduff suggests that “short-term” is an inaccurate description for volunteering that is not long-term or continuous (Macduff 2005, p.50). Episodic volunteering, according to MacDuff (2005, p.50), is volunteering that is made up of separate, especially loosely connected episodes, that are temporary and limited in duration. Harrison (1995, p.375) suggests that “most volunteer participation is discrete or episodic, rather than continuous or successive”, while Danson (2003, p.37) found that episodic volunteers “go from organisation to organisation getting involved in one-off events, then move to other events at

other organisations". According to Auld (2004, p.10), "modern volunteers seem more likely to prefer a short one-off involvement, possibly on a regular or repeat basis". A study by Hustinx (2004, p.18) found that of 652 Flemish Red Cross volunteers two out of every ten (21.3 per cent) were episodic volunteers. Brudney's (2005) study of American volunteering found that 31 per cent of all American volunteers may be defined as episodic volunteers.

Macduff has developed the definition of episodic volunteering to take into account that "not all volunteers who provide short-term service disappear at the end of their duties" (Macduff 2005, p.50). Episodic volunteering may be perceived as existing along a "spectrum", where:

episodic volunteers might include someone who volunteers spontaneously at a food bank for one day over Christmas, someone who works at the same food bank and at other seasonal charities for many days throughout the Christmas season, and someone who volunteers at the same food bank every Christmas (for one or more days) in addition to volunteering at the organisation throughout the year.

(Handy et al 2006, p.32)

Most organisations include both long-term and episodic volunteers, with some organisations involved in recruiting only individuals interested in episodic engagements (such as the civil society organisation with which the interviewees in this research engaged) (Macduff 2005; Handy et al 2006). Macduff (2005)

classifies episodic volunteering as based upon the duration of the individual's engagement as a volunteer whilst Handy et al's (2006) taxonomy considers the individual's volunteering mix.

According to Macduff (2005, p.50) the first episodic volunteering class - temporary - distinguishes volunteers who give "service" that is short in duration, usually for a few hours, or a day at most, and do not return, or are otherwise engaged by the organisation: they are rarely members. She offers examples of this type being people who help to pass out water to runners at marathons, cook burgers at a party for homeless children or arrive at a beach to clean refuse (Macduff 2005, p.50). The second form of episodic volunteering - interim - points to individuals who give continuous service on a regular basis for less than six months (Macduff 2005, p.50). Macduff (2005, p.50) suggests this definition includes a student who interns at a social service agency to gain experience and a task force working on a special project for three months. The third form - occasional - recognises individuals who provide service at regular intervals for short periods of time, for example someone who works every year on an annual fundraising event for a charity, but only on one event (Macduff 2005, p.50). This group might include individuals who volunteer for a month or two, or just the evening of the event (Macduff 2005, p.51). Macduff (2005, p.51) gives as examples volunteering as a coordinator of annual cookie sales for the local Girl Scouts, providing periodic services as an auctioneer for a gala fundraising dinner and work at the registration table for a Special Olympics event each year.

Handy et al's (2006, p.33) study of a community in Canada, that during the summer hosts a series of eight local festivals and cultural events, focuses

exclusively (the first empirical study to do so, according to the authors) on the episodic volunteers on whom the events rely. Using a survey method, focusing on demographics, volunteer involvement and frequency, motivations, rewards, recruitment, and perceptions of the value of volunteering, the research delineated three distinct categories of episodic volunteers: long-term committed volunteers, habitual episodic volunteers and genuine episodic volunteers (Handy et al 2006, pp.33-35). Long-term committed volunteers are discerned to be individuals who, in addition to the episodic volunteering at the summer festivals, are also engaged in long-term, regular, committed volunteering within the same or other organisations (Handy et al 2006, p.33). This type has been recognised by other researchers, such as Perlmutter and Cnaan (1993) and Macduff (2005) (Handy et al 2006, p.33). Habitual episodic volunteers are described by local volunteer coordinators in the study as “circuit volunteers”, who volunteer for multiple episodic opportunities (three or more) throughout the year (Handy et al 2006, p.33). Genuine episodic volunteers are ascertained to be individuals who volunteer for two or fewer volunteer episodes in a year (Handy et al 2006, p.34). This group is compatible with Weber’s (2002) definition of episodic volunteering, as those who contribute their time sporadically, only during special times of the year, or consider volunteering as a one-off event. Those volunteers, according to Weber (2002), give time without an ongoing commitment, often for time-specific, self-contained projects, with a limited time commitment.

A study by Hager and Brudney (2004) suggests that organisations invest more in long(er)-term volunteers in comparison to episodic volunteers. The authors studied the difference between organisations relying more on episodic volunteers and those relying more on long(er)-term ongoing volunteers. They

found that organisations relying more on episodic volunteers “tend to apply more recognition activities, collection of information on volunteer numbers and hours, and measuring the impacts of volunteer activities”, whilst those relying more on ongoing volunteers “are more likely to have liability coverage or insurance protection, training and professional development for volunteers, screening and matching procedures, and regular supervision and communication” (Hager and Brudney 2004, p.6). The findings suggest that organisations that recruit long(er)-term volunteers are working harder to develop those individuals’ skills than those that use episodic volunteers

Handy et al (2006, p.40) concluded that Long-Term Volunteers gave the most hours to volunteering and donate the most to support charitable causes. Interestingly the study found that Long Term Volunteers and Genuine Episodic Volunteers have a similar number of years of volunteer experience (Handy et al 2006, p.40). Of those solely involved in episodic volunteering Habitual Episodic Volunteers were the more committed. Those individuals were found to give many hours when possible (in this case during the summer) and to assume leadership roles (Handy et al 2006, p.40).

The authors suggest that a “sense of community” is an important factor in understanding the number of hours volunteered by individuals (Handy et al 2006, p.40). They suggest that the reason that Habitual Episodic Volunteers’ hours volunteered are significantly higher than those of Genuine Episodic Volunteers is that episodic volunteer engagements are reinforced by the sense of community found amongst such volunteers. A lack of a sense of community between Habitual Episodic Volunteers and Long-Term Volunteers is posited. The

authors suggest that this is the case because for Long-Term Volunteers their long-term commitments might be more important, and found elsewhere than in the relatively short festival period (Handy et al 2006, pp.40-41). Further the authors postulate that for Genuine Episodic Volunteers, who may be constrained in their engagement, and participate sporadically, with little chance of returning, episodic volunteering is not where they seek out or find a sense of community (Handy et al 2006, p.41). Interestingly, the authors note that a common belief regarding episodic volunteers, that they “are a new breed of volunteers who are not willing to play by the ‘top-down’ model of volunteering or to invest in being trained before being given the volunteer task”, is open to a reinterpretation in their study (Handy et al 2006, p.42). This view is reflected in Hustinx’s (2003, 2005) findings, where she contends that episodic volunteers tend to consider themselves as autonomous, choosing tasks that are not necessarily based upon the objectives of the organisation but rather on personal goals, preferences and motives (Handy et al 2006, p.42). In opposition to this contention, Handy et al (2006) found that the episodic volunteers in their study were well able to be directed.

Dietz’s (1999, pp.54-55) two studies of long-term and a test study of episodic volunteers found that “values” was chosen as the premier motivational factor for the majority of both long-term and episodic volunteers. For long-term volunteers “esteem” was second, then “understanding” (Dietz 1999, pp.54-55). The researchers found that the episodic volunteers reversed the second and third motivational factors, placing the factors in the order of “values, “understanding”, then “esteem” (Dietz 1999, pp.54-55). Macduff (2005, p.52) and Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003, p.174) note that Dietz’s (1999) study supports

the idea that episodic volunteering may be driven by self-interest, but that does not mean that it is not also motivated by compassion.

Bryen and Madden's (2006, p.30) Australian study of 10 individuals, of whom 5 were episodically volunteering with environmental groups (the other 5 being organisers) as "bushcare" volunteers, used in-depth interviews and a focus group to understand their "bounce-back" from volunteering episode to volunteering episode - an under-researched area of volunteering, according to the authors. Demographically the individuals fell into the 45-65 year age bracket, the "baby-boomer generation". The authors point to how the group contained individuals who were working full-time, part-time and were self-employed, and were from various backgrounds, such as homemaker, businessperson and professional (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.26). The study found that episodic volunteers were difficult to identify, and to categorise, using Macduff's (2005) framework. The researchers observed that the volunteers oscillated between long- and short-term volunteering similar to that observed by Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) in their collective-reflexive styles of volunteering continuum (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.20). The researchers also found that group leaders could not distinguish between episodic volunteers and long-term volunteers who episodically attended volunteering "group working bees". The difficulty was that the individuals, rather than identify themselves as episodic volunteers, "saw themselves as merely juggling time and volunteer commitments" (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.20). Evidence was found of organisational and group flexibility allowing individuals to oscillate along the above continuum, depending upon biographical capability and circumstances (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.21).

Bryen and Madden's (2006, p.30) research found that episodic volunteers do differ from "traditional" volunteers. The study found that the episodic volunteers were motivated by predominantly altruistic and multidimensional motivations - in this case environmental preservation and the building of social capital. Egoistic motivations, having fun and socialising, were noted to be less important (Bryen and Madden 2006, pp.22-23). A "personal ask" was found to be the principal organisational factor that appears to contribute to "episodic bounce-back", alongside "making a tangible difference to a physical area" (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.26). But the authors also suggest that other organisational factors may contribute, including appreciation, equipment, enthusiasm from the organisers, guidance from senior staff and flexible working practices (Bryen and Madden 2006, pp.23-25). In terms of psychological factors, Bryen and Madden (2006, p. 29), found that the amount of satisfaction from the actual achievement of the volunteering mission, the protection of the environment and/or community reasons, had the greatest impact on "bounce-back". The authors consider that, for episodic volunteers, finding satisfaction in achieving the mission appears to be central to the volunteer engagement (Bryen and Madden 2006, p.29).

3.8.1 Other "new" emerging types of volunteering

As well as the emergence of a new wave of episodic volunteering, other types of reflexive volunteering have been discerned. New trends include "charity challenge" volunteering, online or virtual volunteering, employee volunteering, cross national volunteering and 'volunTourism' (Mautner 2005, online). The changes in the volunteer engagement appear to relate to the societal changes

discussed earlier, as well as, more practically, the capability of individuals to engage as volunteers using new technologies.

The “charity challenge” volunteering engagement, according to Mautner (2005), has its roots in such fundraising events as sponsored walks, runs, abseiling, head-shaving and so forth: “The basic idea behind this type of fundraising is that an individual does something difficult, or at least out of the ordinary, and gets family, friends and colleagues to give them money in recognition of the effort, which the fundraiser then passes on to a charity of his or her choice” (Mautner 2005, online). Rather than being based upon a single individual philanthropic donation the “charity challenge” involves personal activity and substantial investment of time, with the funds raised through the individuals’ social networks. Wharf et al (2003) note that these are normally a form of physical activity event, with the physical activity often being the significant tool for fundraising. Mautner (2005, online) suggests that organisations “go to great lengths to to mask the ‘touristy’ nature of charity challenges”.

Online or virtual volunteering could not exist without the internet, a technology that has changed many aspects of social life. In volunteering terms, Mautner (2005, online) notes that the world wide web has changed the engagement in two ways - it is the recruitment tool and the tool for volunteering. A survey by O’Rourke and Baldwin (2004) found that online recruitment ranked second to word of mouth in its effectiveness at recruiting volunteers. As well as the web’s usefulness for recruiting and matching individuals to civil society organisations, Mautner (2005, online) points to the capability of individuals to

actually perform the volunteering activity online: “In this area, the United Nations functions as a key clearing house through their website <http://www.onlinevolunteering.org>, though other organisations also offer opportunities for ‘virtual volunteering’”. Mautner (2005, online) describes this form of volunteering as the most extreme form of reflexive volunteering. It is, according to the author, a paradox of social closeness and global distance, actuated by lifestyle and identity politics.

3.9 DISCOURSES OF THE VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEERING

This chapter has discerned some of the streams of research that are offering new insights into volunteering in late modernity. The following table, though by no means an exhaustive descriptive list, presents discourses exemplifying how the volunteer and volunteering have been constructed in recent research:

Table 3.2: Discourses of the volunteer and volunteering: a summary

Discourses of the volunteer and volunteering	Author/s
Free choice Remuneration Structure (of the civil society organisation) Intended beneficiaries	Cnaan et al (1996)
Values: To express important values Feeling it is important to help others Understanding: Seeking to learn more about the world A chance to exercise skills and abilities that might otherwise go unpractised Social: To be with like-minded people To be engaged in an activity viewed favourably by important others Career: To explore different career options To look good on one's CV Protective: To reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others To help address personal problems Enhancement: For personal growth To develop 'psychologically'	Clary et al (1998)
Getting and giving Continuity and newness Distance and proximity Thought and action	Yeung (2004)
Religiosity	Yeung (2004)
Self-focus, self-interest, egocentrism, enjoying oneself Other-focus, selflessness, altruism, active compassion Individuality Self-determination Self-assertion Opportunity Solidarity Sociality	Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002)

<p>Values Filling time Career-orientation Ego-protection</p>	<p>Marta et al 2006</p>
<p>Achieving something positive for others: Helping, giving, doing good Achieving or changing something Being geared to ethical values Feeling useful, and doing something useful</p> <p>A quest for the new: Becoming acquainted with new cultures, intercultural exchange Doing something different, getting away, getting deeply acquainted with a new culture and everyday life Meeting new people, making new friends, and learning or using foreign languages</p> <p>A quest for oneself: Gaining experience, advancing oneself Professional orientation, clarification, and development Discovering or transcending personal limits</p>	<p>Rehberg (2005)</p>
<p>Individuated forms of commitment Transient, occasional and sporadic Programme-based volunteering Self-organised volunteering De-institutionalised Less membership-based and pre-structured group volunteering, Informality No bureaucracy</p>	<p>Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003)</p>
<p>Duration of the engagement Prior and/or subsequent reengagement(s) with volunteering</p>	<p>Macduff (2005) Handy et al (2006)</p>
<p>Values Understanding Esteem</p>	<p>Dietz (1999)</p>
<p>Altruistic Egoistic Building of social capital Fun Socialising Rewards, recognition and appreciation Tangible reasons</p>	<p>Bryen and Madden (2006)</p>

Source: Derived from the literature

The table illustrates the discourses regarding the volunteer and volunteering, that have emerged in recent research, that offer insight into what it is to engage in civil society. It presents discourses found in research relating to the definition of the volunteer (Cnaan et al 1996); motivations for volunteering (Clary et al 1998; Yeung 2004); motivations for volunteering amongst young adults (Marta et al 2006; Rehberg 2005); and research on new forms of volunteering (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003): as an altruistic individuality (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), and as episodic volunteering (Macduff 2005; Handy et al 2006; Dietz 1999; Bryen and Madden 2006).

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the volunteering literature and focused on: research on ascertaining a definition of the volunteer and its sociocultural boundaries of use; theories of volunteering; volunteering in Irish society; research on volunteering during young adulthood; the contention that in achieving an identity as a volunteer young adults are engaged in an altruistic individuality; research on the changing nature of volunteering; the contention that reflexive volunteering has arisen; and research on episodic volunteering, as well as other suggested new volunteering types.

The resurgence of academic and political interest in volunteering in Ireland is part of a broader worldwide trend to engage with “perceived” deficits in civil society (Seligman 2002, p.28) and to encourage individuals to play a more active role in different aspects of economic, political and social development (Taylor 2003, p.43). The changing nature of Irish society (Foster 2007; Tovey

and Share 2003; Corcoran et al 2007; Clinch et al 2002) has had a profound effect upon the civil society sector (and vice versa) and its most fundamental constitutive element, volunteering (Donoghue et al 2006; Donnelly-Cox et al 2001; Powell and Guerin 1997). The research reviewed in this chapter suggests that volunteering in Ireland is changing. Organisations can no longer assume that individuals will be “life-long adherents” to a cause (Donoghue et al 2006), with many of them finding it harder to recruit new volunteers at all (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.16). Political action is now deemed necessary to reinvigorate volunteering and civil society in Ireland. This chapter has noted that amidst this concern for the future of civil society individuals are still engaging in their own versions of what it is to be a volunteer. They are defining their own identities, as academics work to understand the nature of the volunteer in late modernity - what it means to be a volunteer and how and why individuals do volunteer. The chapter has discussed research on how young adults are volunteering, noting that in the case of Ireland few young adults volunteer (CSO 2006b, online), with little research about why they do so and perhaps more importantly why others do not. A new perspective on volunteering, that of altruistic individuality, was considered as an explanation for young adults’ (and others’) engagement as volunteers in societies, such as Ireland, in which the currents of institutionalised individualisation necessitate individuality above community (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The discussion of the emergence of new forms of volunteering, that are less collective and more individualistic or reflexive (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003; Marta et al 2006), suggests that episodic volunteering may be a symptom of changes in society. Its growth (Styers 2004, p.85) and potential as a future wave of volunteering (Handy et al 2006) indicate changes in the way that individuals

engage as volunteers, as they choose to use civil society to achieve their reflexive projects of the self. The following chapter considers social capital theory and its relationship to civil society and volunteering.

4 SOCIAL CAPITAL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It would be hard to imagine how civil society could continue to operate in the way it does without the relationships that volunteers generate and use in their work for a particular cause. Without those relationships who would fill in the fundraising form or drop some coins into the tin, give a lift, sponsor the team, or do any other of the numerous tasks for which people are “roped in” to help out? It is through these “ties that bind” that civil society, and society itself operates, according to social capital theory. It is to the consideration of this particular issue that this chapter turns.

The chapter begins by noting the antecedents of the theory of social capital, before tangling with the slippery issue of defining social capital. It is an issue that will further arise with consideration of some of the most influential voices on social capital. The contemporary social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Ronald Burt and Robert Putnam are considered. Recent research on social capital and civil society in Ireland, mainland Europe and America is then discussed. The chapter goes on to offer insights into the broadly agreed views as to the essential elements of the social capital concept that dominate the discussion - specifically networks, norms and trust. Finally, different measures of social capital are set out.

4.2 DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The first acknowledged reference to social capital, in its contemporary sense, was by Hanifan in his work as superintendent of schools, in West Virginia, USA. In order to explain the importance of community participation in enhancing school performance he invoked and defined social capital as:

those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among individuals and families who make up a social unit ... If [an individual comes] into contact with his neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community.

(Hanifan 1916, p.130)

Putnam notes that this definition “anticipated virtually all the crucial elements in later interpretations” (Putnam 2000, p.19), before its disappearing, and independently reemerging in similar forms in the work of: Seely et al (1956), in relation to urban sociology; Jacobs (1961), in her analysis of city neighbourhoods; Loury (1977), in a study of labour markets; Bourdieu (1986) and Schlicht (1984), to underline the social and economic resources embodied in social networks; Coleman (1988; 1990), on education and its complementarity

with human capital; and Putnam (2000) and Fukuyama (1995), in their application of the concept to national and regional society.

There is an ongoing debate as to the meaning of social capital, resulting in many definitions (see Adler and Kwon 2002), each dependent upon the discipline and level of investigation. None of the definitions receive unanimous support; all are to some degree in dispute. Burt succinctly points out that “Social capital is the Wild West of academic work” (Burt 2007, p.5).

Adler and Kwon distinguish the central intuition in the field being that the goodwill shown to the individual has worth, explaining that social capital is “the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor’s social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor” (Adler and Kwon 2002, p. 23). The authors note that definitions vary dependent upon whether they are focused primarily upon (1) the relations an individual maintains with others (see Bourdieu 1986; Burt 1992; Portes 1998), (2) the structure of relations among individuals within a collectivity (see Coleman 1990; Putnam 1995a; Fukuyama 1997), or (3) both of these linkages (see Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Woolcock 1998).

Contemporary social capital theory has been significantly influenced by the writings of Bourdieu, Coleman, Burt, and Putnam. The authors approach the notion of social capital from different perspectives, though they share the concept of social capital as a metaphor for advantage (Burt 2000, 2007). Burt points out that:

Social capital explains how people do better because they are somehow better connected with other people. Certain people are connected to certain others, trusting certain others, obligated to support certain others, dependent on exchange with certain others. One's position in the structure of these exchanges can be an asset in its own right. That asset is social capital

(Burt 2007, p.4)

For Bourdieu social capital is the promise inherent in membership of a group, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1997, p.51). According to Coleman, “Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure” (Coleman 1990, p.302). Burt summarises how “The advantage created by a person's location in a structure of relationships is known as social capital” (Burt 2007, p.4). Putnam considers that “Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2000, p.19).

Woolcock and Narayan offer a definition of social capital that this research uses: “social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively” (Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p.226). This definition captures the fundamentals of a number of interpretations of social capital, including those of Bourdieu, Coleman, Burt, and Putnam. It is a useful definition for the development of the analysis for a number of reasons, not simply because it points to an underlying agreement as to what social capital may be (which in itself is extremely useful), but also because: firstly, it focuses on relationships as the sources of social capital; secondly, it recognises that important features of social capital, such as norms, are developed in an iterative process; and thirdly, it makes clear that individuals use social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p.237) through the “leveraging” of their relationships.

Social capital is leveraged through memberships of different social structures (Portes 1998). According to Portes in order to leverage the social capital available in those social structures “an individual must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage” (Portes 1998, p.7). Social capital is embedded in social relationships, but its access and use reside with the individual (Glover 2004, p. 146). Bourdieu (1986) points out that differences in access to capital shape both economic and social worlds. Access to social capital is dependent upon one’s position in a social network (Burt 1992), with the effect that there is inequality in social capital (Foley et al 2001; Lin 2001a,b). Glover notes that as a result of this thinking:

there is a consensus developing in the literature [Burt 1997; Foley, Edwards and Diani 2001; Lin 2001a,b; Portes 1998] that social capital, as a theory-generating concept, ought to be conceived as resources accessible through social ties that occupy strategic network locations. Under this premise, the social structure influences the “use-value” (availability) of an individual’s network position or ties [Foley, Edwards and Diani 2001]. Moreover, an individual’s ability to use his or her position to access resources within a network depends upon his or her capacity to make direct and indirect connections with others.

(Glover 2004, p.146)

In order to generate and use social capital the individual must invest in social relationships, through which the resources of other individuals may be accessed and borrowed (Lin 2001a). Direct and indirect social ties are the tools of social capital generation through which individuals are capable of increasing their limited resources (human and economic capital) to achieve their goals. The following sections discuss the contemporary social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Ronald Burt and Robert Putnam.

4.2.1 Pierre Bourdieu

Contemporary interest in the concept of social capital can to some degree be traced to Bourdieu, who first engaged in an analysis of social capital, in *Actes*

de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales in 1980. Bourdieu defined social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

(Bourdieu 1997, p.51)

Initially ignored by the English-speaking research community, due to a lack of contemporaneous translation, the lack of visibility masked what Portes (1998, p. 3) has contended as the most theoretically defined treatment of the term amongst those engaged in its definition.

Bourdieu focused upon the benefits accrued by individuals through their engagement in groups, and upon the deliberate construction of sociability for creating social capital (Portes 1998, p.3). For Bourdieu social capital is made up of two elements - the social relationship and the resources available. Social capital is, according to Bourdieu (1997), a collective asset from which group members may accrue social “credits” that can be used to facilitate particular purposes. It is strategic and both an individual and collective property. Bourdieu contended that social capital is not reducible to economic or cultural capital but

rather acts with them as a multiplier of their effect, whilst at the same time it is itself being created and maintained by their conversion in the “unceasing effort of sociability” (Bourdieu 1997, p.54).

4.2.2 James Coleman

Coleman’s work on social capital put the term “firmly and finally on the intellectual agenda” in the late eighties (Putnam 2000, pp.19-20), with his elaboration of the concept in the *Foundations of Social Theory* (Coleman 1990) and his seminal paper on the subject, *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital* (Coleman 1988). Coleman focused his attention upon the educational context in which social capital could arise (Coleman 1988; 1990). Coleman’s chief contribution to the field is in his relatively uncomplicated sketch of the concept (Schuller et al 2000; Putnam 2000). His key idea is that networks of individuals with closure are the key sources of social capital. Network closure is argued to do two things. Firstly, Coleman points to how it affects access to information, so that information inherent in the network may be made accessible to others within. An example he gives is that, “a person ... who is not greatly interested in current events but who is interested in being informed ... can get the information from a friend” (Coleman 1990, p.310). Secondly, he suggests that closure affects sanctions that make it less risky for people in the network to trust one another. Coleman’s argument predicts that network closure makes possible trust and norms by facilitating effective sanctions: “When an effective sanction does exist, it constitutes a powerful, but sometimes fragile, form of social capital ... Norms in a community that support and provide effective

rewards for high achievement in school greatly facilitate the school's task" (Coleman 1990, pp.310-311).

4.2.3 Ronald Burt

Burt is probably the most notable academic to link networks with social capital, with his work on "structural holes" (Burt 1997, p.340). His key insight, notably in his empirical work on managers in large organisations, is that weak connections between groups - structural holes - create a competitive advantage for an individual whose relationships span the holes: "The structural hole argument defines social capital in terms of the information and control advantages of being the broker in relations between people otherwise disconnected in the social structure" (Burt 1997, p.340). Burt (2000) notes that the structural hole between two groups does not mean that people in the groups are unaware of one another. It means that people on either side of the hole circulate in different flows of information - they focus on their own activities so that they do not attend to the activities of the other group.

4.2.4 Robert Putnam

Putnam's work on social capital has caught the imagination of academics and politicians alike, with such provocatively titled works as *Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America* (Putnam 1995b) and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Putnam 2000). In *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000) Putnam argues that there is a general decline in social capital in America that is the result of a marked disengagement

with community and civic life by those born since the 1960's. This was tracked through a series of longitudinal surveys of behaviour, from voluntary association memberships to informal socialising.

Putnam (2000, p.19) considers that social capital refers to connections among individuals, the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. He relates the concept to "civic virtue" and connections with other members of society: "'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital" (Putnam 2000, p.19). Putnam (2000, pp. 20-21) focuses particularly on reciprocity as a major contributor to social capital formation, and on trustworthiness as a social lubricant that promotes the kinds of interactions that reinforce norms of generalised reciprocity. Though the empirical research of *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000) is confined to America it has influenced a debate among researchers on the question of declining social capital that is still ongoing and is causing waves in public policy in Ireland and beyond.

4.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The notion of a fundamental relationship between social capital, civil society and volunteering may be traced back to two of the fields' most influential books, De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835/1998) and Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963). Within this relationship voluntary organisations assume an instrumental role, as organisations that individuals intentionally participate in,

which “facilitate social connections and cooperation, and by virtue of repeated interactions engender trust among members” (Anheier and Kendall 2000, p.11). This instrumental feature makes these organisations distinctive, according to Putnam, as they have the capacity to act as repositories for the sources of social capital - obligations and expectations, information potential and norms and sanctions (Putnam 1993a, p. 89). They are incubators of civic virtue (Putnam 1993a, p. 89).

4.3.1 Social capital and Irish civil society

In Ireland, the 2002 *Survey of Social Capital*⁶ undertaken by the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), asked a number of questions relating to the engagement in volunteering, active membership in a community organisation, civic engagement and charity giving, in order to measure social capital:

A “Do you take part in any type of unpaid voluntary activity or service outside your own home or workplace on a regular basis?”

B “In the last 12 months have you been actively involved in any type of voluntary or community group such as a sports, residents or professional association, parish group, political party, trade union etc.”

⁶ The ESRI was commissioned to undertake the survey as a module of “social capital” questions in its monthly EU Consumer Survey. Data findings from the Survey are reported in Section V of Report No. 28 of the National Economic and Social Forum at http://www.nesf.ie/publications/nesf_28.pdf

C “During the last 12 months have you: (C1) attended a public meeting; (C2) joined an action group of any kind; (C3) contacted an appropriate organisation to deal with a particular problem; (C4) contacted a T.D. [member of parliament] etc.; (C5) undertaken unpaid voluntary work in a political party; (C6) written to a newspaper; (C7) contacted or appeared on TV/ Radio?”

D “During the last 12 months have you: ... made a voluntary donation of money e.g. to charities, school, church?”

(NESF 2002, p.59)

As well as the above questions the others in the NESF survey related to voting; social support with bringing up children; social support, in relation to the number of close friends; informal sociability, in relation to visiting others; informal sociability, in relation to receiving a visit; the absence of feelings of social isolation; meeting with friends and family “as much as liked”; and trust (NESF 2002, p.59). These nine questions were used as indicators of social capital.

Healy’s (2005) analysis of the NESF survey suggests that when controlling for gender, age, marital status and educational attainment, clear patterns of statistically significant correlation emerged for groups of indicators, significant not only in relation to Ireland, but to the wider question of trust and social capital and to the future development of quantitative (and one would suggest

qualitative) research indicators of social capital. Healy found that in Ireland volunteering, civic engagement and community involvement were statistically associated with one another (Healy 2005, p.61). The NESF survey suggests that people who did not feel socially isolated were more inclined to volunteer or engage in their local community (Healy 2005, p.61). Most interestingly, trust was not correlated with any of the other eight measures, despite it being considered, in the literature, as a proxy measure of social capital. As Healy notes, "In other words, a simple question on 'trust' in this or any other survey does not capture social capital" (Healy 2005, p.61).

There are a number of variables associated (positively) with measures of social capital in Irish society (Healy 2005, p.62). It is possible to distinguish between mainly "formal" measures of social capital based on membership of community organisations, "organised volunteering, voting and other types of civic engagement on the one hand", and "informal" measures, such as "number of close friends and lack of feeling of social isolation" (Healy 2005, p.63). Indicators of "formal" social capital point to a strong predictive role for: level of completed formal education - for volunteering, community engagement, civic participation and voting; number of children in the household - for volunteering, community engagement, and voting but not for civic participation; being married - for community engagement, civic participation and voting but not statistically significant for volunteering; length of residence at current address - for volunteering, community engagement and voting but not for civic participation; and the least amount of time spent watching TV - for volunteering, community engagement and civic participation but not for voting (Healy 2005, p.63). The findings point to demographic factors (age, gender, marital status and size of

location) as having a stronger relationship with social capital measures than socioeconomic measures based on income, occupation, employment status or level of educational attainment (Healy 2005, p.63).

“Formal” education is a strong correlate of social capital in Ireland, according to the NESF survey, with higher education graduates seven times more likely to volunteer in the community than those whose education was completed before Intermediate or Junior Certificate level (Healy 2005, p.65). This finding reflects a similar observation made in the 1950s by Almond and Verba, who reported a strong link between various types of political engagement (discussion of politics, voting, sense of competence to influence government) and level of completed (formal) education (Almond and Verba 1963, p.276). Verba et al (1995) found that education, *ceteris paribus*, increased political participation and that literacy skills among adults have shown a positive relationship with participation in voluntary community activities for several OECD countries. The positive link between the number of children in a household and volunteering in Ireland is possibly a result of parents’ local involvement in educational, sporting and youth-related volunteer activities (Healy 2005, p.66).

The NESF survey further found that being employed was positively associated with volunteering. Having a job was a predictor of community involvement (Healy 2005, p.66), with the number of hours worked having only a slight effect upon volunteering. These findings are similar to those of Putnam’s (2000) research in relation to America that showed that the impact of increased working time and female labour force participation in the United States has not been associated with a fall in social capital as measured by community

engagement or volunteering. Healy points to there being a link between volunteering and community engagement in Ireland and the length of time someone has lived in their area. Though there is a cautionary caveat in applying this to social capital in general, as there is not a significant link with the more civic levels of participation (Healy 2005, p.66): the suggestion being that if individuals have “put down roots” they are more likely to get involved locally (Healy 2005, p.66). Further, this may mean that they are more likely to “get to know” others in their locale, thereby establishing relationships of mutual help and trust. Neither community engagement nor civic participation was significantly related to religiosity (as measured through church attendance). However, Healy (2005, p.68) notes that religiosity is statistically significant for the turnout in the 2002 general election, suggesting that, if this forms some general pattern, “religious” citizens are more likely to turn out to vote at elections and referenda, though this does not mean that they will vote purely on dogmatic grounds.

Television viewing, cited by Putnam (2000) as one of the significant factors causing the alleged decline in civic participation in the United States, was found to be negatively related to volunteering, community engagement and civic participation in Ireland (Healy 2005, p.68). This confirms the concerns of the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, that the television is “lethal to community involvement” (O’Connor 2005, online). Also, respondents were less likely to volunteer the longer they spent travelling to and from work, though the link is not statistically significant between commuting and volunteering (Healy 2005, p.68).

There is “a very different picture” emerging in the analysis of “informal social capital” in Irish society (Healy 2005, p.68). The evidence suggests that individuals living in urban areas (especially Dublin), home-owners and those living the longest at their current address were less likely to report “feeling socially isolated” (Healy 2005, p.68). Dubliners were more likely to have fewer “close friends” and to receive or pay a social visit at home than individuals living in the country. The NESF survey found that young people under the age of 30 reported their having fewer “close friends” than other (older) age-groups. Being employed was associated with a greater number of “close friends”, which, Healy notes, substantiates the hypothesis that paid employment increases the number of social contact points and potential network supports (Healy 2005, p.68).

4.3.2 Recent international studies of social capital and civil society

A number of recent empirical studies have assessed the relationship between volunteering and social capital formation in other parts of Europe and America. They have provided empirical findings that suggest that social capital *is* generated in civil society. But they argue that the effect of social capital formation in civil society may in fact be relatively small in comparison to that suggested by Putnam (2000).

Woolebaek and Selle considered whether active and passive participation in voluntary associations contributed to social capital. They focused upon what they call three “subdimensions of social capital” - trust, social networks, and civic engagement (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.41). Their analysis was based upon a nationwide survey (1,695 responses) of Norwegian adults. It found a clear

relationship between participation and social trust (Woolebaek and Selle, p.43), unlike the findings of the NESF study in Ireland (Healy 2005, p.61), though it found no link between age and social trust, suggesting few indications of a “long civic generation” in Norway (Woolebaek and Selle, p.46), as found by Putnam (2000) in America. Young people who belonged to voluntary associations were found to be significantly more trusting of others than those who did not (Woolebaek and Selle, p.46). The authors’ results do substantiate Putnam’s (2000) notion that participation in voluntary associations contributes to social trust, though they found that their results did not support his emphasis on active face-to-face participation (Woolebaek and Selle, p.46).

Wollaebaek and Selle (2002, pp.48-49) further found that participation in voluntary associations is related to both the extent of social networks and the presence of neighbours, colleagues, or students from the respondents’ local community, workplace, or educational institution in the respondents’ set of connections. The authors found that participation broadens social networks. But their findings also make clear that the amount of time spent participating has no effect upon the breadth of social networks, and is certainly subordinate to the number of affiliations the respondents had (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.49).

Civic engagement, defined by the authors as “the crucial link between social connectedness and participatory democracy”, was found to be consistent with the scope of voluntary participation (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.50). Civic engagement was shown to be moderately to strongly linked to participation, with those affiliated with voluntary associations being more civically engaged than those who are not (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.51).

Wollaebaek and Selle (2002, p.52) explain that the weight attached to the role of voluntary associations in the formation of social capital in Putnam's theory is corroborated by their results at the individual level. The authors contend that participation in leisure or cultural associations needs to be accompanied by an engagement in a more politically focused organisation to have an impact upon social capital formation: "The most productive form of participation with regard to the formation of social capital seems to be not only participation in several organisations but multiple affiliations in associations with different purposes" (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.55). Overall Wollaebaek and Selle conclude that a possible interpretation of their data is that "the role of voluntary associations in the formation of social capital is overstated in the work of Putnam and other social capital theorists", based as it is upon the effects of active participation in voluntary associations (Wollaebaek and Selle 2002, p.55).

Wollebæk and Strømnes (2008) argue that the scope of the voluntary sector is more important than the activity level of members for the formation of social capital. The authors analysed the intensity and scope of 13 European voluntary sectors, namely those in Switzerland, Russia, Portugal, Denmark, West Germany, East Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Norway, Romania, Moldova, Spain, and Sweden (Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008, p.255). They argue that the primary mechanism of social capital formation in the voluntary sector cannot be the socialization of individual members. They point to how their analysis reveals no additional effect of active participation in voluntary associations (face-to-face encounters) over passive membership.

Wollebæk and Strømnes make clear that their analysis shows that social capital is constructed through institutional (macro), not social (micro) processes, arguing: “It is not face-to-face encounters but awareness of strong and visible voluntary organisations in society that generate a belief in the utility and rationality of collective action. Thus, voluntary organisations institutionalise rather than generate social capital” (Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008, p.249). The authors suggest that their findings agree with the gist of studies (Dekker and van den Broek 1998; Freitag 2003; Mayer 2003; Stolle 2001; Isham et al 2006; Wollebæk and Selle 2002) that have found a weak effect of organisational participation on social capital formation at the individual level, and especially the absent effect of face-to-face contact (Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008, p.260). Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008 consider that discarding the role of associations is however premature. Instead, they argue that “it is possible to retain a pivotal role of associations in the formation of social capital without reverting to a pure micrologic of individual socialization” (Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008, p.260). The alternative interpretation, according to the authors, is that civil society organisations affect the formation of social capital in society because they demonstrate the rationality and utility of collective action.

Isham et al (2006, p.367) considered whether volunteering for nonprofit organisations could be an alternative source of social capital formation, as membership declines in civic organisations in America. Using data from an annual survey of adults in Vermont in America the authors found that the probability of receiving a social capital benefit is significantly greater if involvement is with a religious or social service organisation, as opposed to with a humanitarian, artistic, health care, or other type of organisation, regardless of

whether an individual volunteered for that organisation (Isham et al 2006, p. 378). This finding is echoed in Yeung's (2004) research on the threefold relationship between religiosity, voluntarism, and social capital. She also found positive effects of religious organisations on social capital formation.

Isham et al's analysis showed that the more one volunteers for a nonprofit organisation, the more one is likely to feel socially connected and civically engaged through his or her involvement with that organisation (Isham et al 2006, p.378). Further, a relationship with religious or social service organisations was found to increase the probability of being socially connected and civically engaged. Yeung (2004, p.406) notes, in her research, that the effect of those social/civic connections are different depending upon whether one volunteers as a church volunteer, as a volunteer in both church and other contexts, as a non-church volunteer, or one is a non-volunteer (Yeung 2004, p.406). The findings indicated that particular congregations and their volunteer activities maintain strong social networks (Yeung 2004, p.415). Yeung (2004, p.415) suggests that this is the case because people who volunteer in church (both church volunteers and volunteers of both church and other contexts) spend significantly more time with local parishioners than do the others.

However, Isham et al (2006, p.378) found that volunteering for a religious or social service organisation does not have an additional social or civic payoff, despite the likelihood that participation increases social connections (Isham et al 2006, p.378). This is a finding that is illuminated by Yeung's argument that, if time spent volunteering is taken into account, church volunteers appear to be the most restricted to small social circles - their fellow parishioners. In this

regard, church volunteers seem to illustrate high bonding social capital (exclusive within a group) (Yeung 2004, p.416). Yeung (2004, p.416) concludes that her analysis suggests that the church volunteers could be characterised as representing bridging altruistic social capital (their altruistic attitudes and eagerness to help) but bonding social capital in personal life (spending time).

Isham et al (2006, p.378) note that in terms of the probability of receiving a social capital benefit, the effect of involvement with religious or social service organisations and the effect of being in a two-parent family are relatively greater than the effect of volunteering (Isham et al 2006, p.379). The authors conclude that their findings suggest that volunteering for nonprofit organisations may be a partial substitute for the decline of traditional membership. Through volunteering for nonprofit organisations, individuals are more likely to be socially and civically engaged, though at the margin, the social capital generated through additional volunteering seems to be relatively small (Isham et al 2006, p.378).

Coffé and Geys (2007) considered the validity of a recurrent theme running through the social capital literature, that “Association membership empowers individuals and develops their democratic values, generalised trust, cooperative norms, racial and religious tolerance, and so on” (Coffé and Geys 2007, p.387). Empirical research has provided little evidence for this assertion (see Wollebæk and Strømnes 2008; Wollebæk and Selle 2002; Isham et al 2006; Dekker and van den Broek 1998; Freitag 2003; Mayer 2003; Stolle 2001). The central argument of Coffé and Geys’ research is that such a conclusion may be overly strong. The reason suggested by the authors is that membership in different types of associations does not necessarily engender similar outcomes.

Coffé and Geys' (2007, p.401) study of association membership in the Netherlands found empirical support for the view that individuals' values and attitudes differ across members in (predominantly) bridging or bonding associations⁷. The authors' analysis of data from the 2002 Administration Planning and Statistics survey of the Flemish government found that individuals with given characteristics may self-select into certain types of associations or members may develop civic attitudes only in certain types of groups. The authors contend that their analysis illustrated that hobby, artistic, and humanitarian associations tend to be more bridging than associations for women and the elderly (Coffé and Geys 2007, p.401). They found that members in heterogeneous or bridging associations appear to be different with respect to their attitudes from members of bonding associations (Coffé and Geys 2007, p. 401). They explain that their findings thus show that it does not suffice to take into account only whether or not someone is a member in a voluntary association (or count the number of memberships an individual has). They suggest that, rather, it is advisable to complement the measurement of participation with information about the different types of associations a respondent is a member of. They conclude that members of various types of civil society organisations clearly adhere to different social and political norms and attitudes.

Wang and Graddy (2008) explored the impact of social capital - measured by social trust and social networks - on individual charitable giving to secular

⁷ The authors distinguish between bonding and bridging (Putnam 2000) associations: "The former are associated with closed networks, while the latter entail cross-cutting or overlapping networks" (Coffé and Geys 2007, p.387).

and religious organisations in America. The authors found that social trust, bridging social networks, and civic engagement increase the amount given. In contrast, they found that organisational activism only affects secular giving. The authors' findings offer strong support to the hypothesis that social capital fosters charitable giving (Wang and Graddy 2008, p.39). The authors found that: individuals who trust others more give more to religious and secular causes; individuals with a greater diversity of social networks and broader civic engagement give more to both religious and secular organisations; and individuals actively involved in more formal groups donate more to secular causes (Wang and Graddy 2008, p.39). The role of social capital was found to be similar for both religious and secular giving. The authors consider that their results underscore the importance of trust, connections to other individuals, and connections to organisations in determining charitable behavior (Wang and Graddy 2008, p.39). A further interesting finding of Wang and Graddy's (2008) research is that the determinants of religious and secular giving are different. The authors found that happiness, religiosity, home ownership, marital status, and number of children affect religious giving, but not secular giving (Wang and Graddy 2008, p.39). In addition, the research found that people who volunteer more also donate more (Wang and Graddy 2008, p.39). The results of the study provide evidence of a strong and consistent relationship between the different aspects of social capital and charitable giving.

4.4 THE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Though there is no unanimously agreed definition of social capital, there appears to be some consensus as to the essential elements of the concept,

which dominate the conceptual discussion - particularly networks, norms and trust (Schuller et al 2000, p.9).

4.4.1 Norms

Portes (1998) offers distinctions for characterising the motivation of individuals in relation to circumstances mediated by social capital by offering two broad classes of motivation related to norms. The first broad class of norms are distinguished by Portes (1998) as *consummatory*, being based on deeply internalised norms. These are learnt in childhood or in experiences in later life, allowing the feeling of a shared destiny with others. The second broad class of norms are *instrumental*. They are still based upon learnt norms, but are norms that give greater scope to rational calculation. Adler and Kwon note that this class of norms “can be based upon obligations created in the process of dyadic social exchange [Blau 1964], an enforced trust—where obligations are enforced on both parties by the broader community” (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.25). The authors further point to the tendency in social capital research of implicitly assuming that individuals are driven by instrumental motivations (this being inspired by rational actor models). With individuals seen as cultivating and exploiting social capital, for example, to advance their careers (De Graaf and Flap 1988; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988); to survive in competitive rivalry (Burt 1992; Pennings et al 1998); and to reduce transaction costs (Baker 1990).

Adler and Kwon suggest that social capital is sometimes motivated by normative commitments of a less directly instrumental nature, particularly norms of *generalised reciprocity* (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.26; Portes 1998; Putnam

1993b, 2000; Uzzi 1997). Putnam notes that generalised reciprocity involves “not ‘I’ll do this for you, because you are more powerful than I,’ nor even ‘I’ll do this for you now, if you do that for me now,’ but ‘I’ll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you’ll do something for me’” (Putnam 1993b, pp. 182-183). The norm of generalised reciprocity works to resolve problems of collective action and binds communities:

It transforms individuals from self-seeking and egocentric agents with little sense of obligation to others into members of a community with shared interests, a common identity, and a commitment to the common good.

(Adler and Kwon 2002, p.26)

Norms vary across the general and the specific context and are therefore constantly changing, and requiring individuals’ “reading” of the situation. It is understandable that, as a result of variations between individuals, contexts and their interpretation, that there is ambiguity as to the motivational sources of social capital. Adler and Kwon (2002, p.26) conclude that it is the specific content of the shared norms that determines whether they function as a source of social capital.

4.4.2 Trust

There is a degree of consensus within the social capital field that points to trust as an essential component of social capital and as a necessary element of

social networks (Patulny 2004; Coleman 1988, 1994; Fukuyama 1995). Anheier and Kendall (2000) note how its origins, as a concept, are somewhat confused and changing, the result of its use by economists, sociologists and political scientists. Further, there is some confusion in the literature as to the relationship between trust and social capital (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.26). Some authors equate trust with social capital (Fukuyama 1995, 1997). Others view trust as a source of social capital (Putnam 1993b; Putnam 2000). Still others consider it to be a form of social capital (Coleman 1988).

Putnam (2000) and Fukuyama (1995), as exponents of the concept in relation to civil society and economic development, have recently raised the profile of trust both within the social capital field and beyond. Their work follows on from Coleman (1990, 1994), Almond and Verba (1963), and De Tocqueville (1835/1998), whose work links trust with associational life and the polity (Anheier and Kendall 2000). Fukuyama defines trust as:

the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and co-operative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community. Those norms can be about deep “value” questions like the nature of God or justice, but they also encompass secular norms like professional standards and codes of behavior ... prior moral consensus gives members of the group a basis for mutual trust

(Fukuyama 1995, p.26)

Fukuyama (1995, p.26) and Putnam (2000, p.136) note that social capital is a capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society, or parts of it. For Putnam (2000, p.136), trust is essential to social capital and civic engagement, particularly social or generalised trust, that which is associated with giving individuals “the benefit of the doubt”. Putnam notes that the “thin trust” in the “generalised other” is more useful than “thick trust” (trust embedded in personal relations that are strong and frequent), because “it extends the radius of trust beyond the roster of people we can know personally” (Putnam 2000, p.136). Fukuyama suggests that social capital cannot be acquired without community. The acquisition of social capital requires habituation to the moral norms of a community, with “the acquisition of virtues like loyalty, honesty, and dependability” (Fukuyama 1995, p.27). The group itself, according to Fukuyama (1995, p.27), has to adopt common norms before trust can become generalised amongst its members. Social capital cannot be acquired without community.

Fukuyama distinguishes societies characterised by high trust and low trust, and consequently between forms of solidaristic organisation which are “older, economically harmful or inefficient” and those which are “wealth creating” (Fukuyama 1995, p. 159). Fukuyama suggests that nations such as Japan, Germany and the United States are high-trust societies, with “rich and complex” civil societies (Fukuyama 1995, p.130), whilst China, Italy and France are low-trust societies, characterised by a restriction in trust and civil society. Fukuyama considers that a lack of trust is costly to societies:

Social capital has major consequences for the nature of the industrial economy that society will be able to create. If people

who have to work together in an enterprise trust one another because they are all operating according to a common set of ethical norms, doing business costs less ... By contrast people who do not trust one another will end up cooperating only under a system of formal rules and regulations, which have to be negotiated, agreed to, litigated, and enforced, sometimes by coercive means. Widespread distrust in a society, in other words, imposes a kind of tax on all forms of economic activity, a tax that high-trust societies do not have to pay.

(Fukuyama 1995, pp.27-28)

Fukuyama claims that “a nation’s well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive, cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in the society” (Fukuyama 1995, p.33).

4.4.3 Networks and membership

The formal structure of networks of relationships has been the focus of network theory approaches to social capital. Networks are understood to be the relational structures through which social capital functions. Alongside trust, networks are key components of the concept of social capital (Schuller et al 2000). Castells defines the concept of a network as: “a set of interconnected nodes ... open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they share the same communication codes, for example, values or performance goals” (Castells 1996, p.470). Probably the most prominent

scholars to make an explicit bridge between networks and social capital are Coleman and Burt.

Coleman (1988) argues that the extent to which individuals' contacts are themselves connected - the closure of the network structure - facilitates the emergence of effective norms, maintaining the trustworthiness of others and as a result strengthening social capital. A more open structure, according to Coleman (1988), means that violations of norms are more likely to go undetected and unpunished, with the effect that people will be less trusting of one another, thus weakening social capital. Contrasting with Coleman's pinpointing of closure as resulting in stronger social capital, Burt (1992) argues that a sparse network with few redundant ties often provides greater social capital benefits. Burt considers that a key source of social capital is a network of ties characterised by many structural holes, linkages to groups not otherwise connected: "The structural hole argument defines social capital in terms of the information and control advantages of being the broker in relations between people otherwise disconnected in the social structure" (Burt 1997, p.340). Burt's key insight, particularly in his empirical work on managers in large organisations, is that people gain advantages by exploiting informational gaps in the formal organisational structure.

Adler and Kwon note that the difference between Coleman and Burt is dependent upon their respective internal and external foci and the related difference in assumed goals. They observe that both closure and sparse networks may yield benefits: "Closure provides social capital's cohesiveness benefits within an organisation or community; structural holes in the focal actor's

external linkages provide cost-effective resources for competitive action” (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.25). The value of the social network is dependent upon the state of the other sources of social capital and on the task and symbolic environment confronting the individual.

4.4.4 Types of networks - forms of social capital

Woolcock (1998) discerns two key concepts central to an understanding of social capital, in two distinct forms - *embeddedness* (Granovetter 1985) and *autonomy*. Granovetter’s (1985) seminal contribution to social capital theory is his contention that all economic action is inherently enmeshed in social relations of one configuration or another, and that economic development essentially brings about a change in the kind, not degree, of embeddedness (Woolcock 1998, p.162). Granovetter points to two types of relationships, strong interpersonal ties and weak interpersonal ties. The author suggests that the strength of an interpersonal tie is dependent upon “a (probably) linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie⁸. Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly intracorrelated” (Granovetter 1973, p.1361). Woolcock and Narayan note that Granovetter’s (1973, 1985) work conceives of how strong intracommunity ties give families and communities a sense of identity and common purpose, with both strong and weak ties affecting solidarity (Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p. 230).

⁸ Granovetter (1973) clarifies how the ties discussed in the paper are “assumed to be positive and symmetric; a comprehensive theory might require discussion of negative and/or asymmetric ties, but this would add unnecessary complexity to the present, exploratory comments” (Granovetter 1973, p.1361).

Following Granovetter, three common claims have been developed in relation to embeddedness: (1) all forms of exchange are embedded in social relations; (2) embeddedness can take distinct forms (i.e. social ties, cultural practices and political contexts), all of which have a powerful effect on shaping the types of opportunities and constraints individuals face when seeking economic advancement; (3) perhaps most significant, many benefits gained by embeddedness in a given network are not without corresponding costs (Woolcock 1998, pp.163-164). To establish the costs or benefits of embeddedness it was posited that the presence or absence of *autonomous* social ties needed to be incorporated into the analysis (Woolcock 1998, p.164). At the micro level this focuses attention on the extent to which community members also have access to a range of non-community members (Woolcock 1998, p.164). Both individuals and communities are able to draw on embedded (intra-community) ties and autonomous (extra-community) ties.

Further to understanding social capital in action, elsewhere three particular forms of social capital have been distinguished: social bonds, bridges and linkages. Bonds and bridges are analogous to embedded and autonomous social ties respectively. Woolcock (2001, p.10) notes that this is the most common and popular distinction. The OECD defines *bonding* and *bridging* social capital as follows: “Bonding refers typically to relations among members of families and ethnic groups. Bridging social capital refers to relations with distant friends, associates and colleagues” (OECD 2001, p.42). Putnam notes that bonding and bridging social capital are not “either-or” categories, they are “more or less” dimensions - many groups simultaneously bond along some social

dimensions and bridge across others (Putnam 2000, p.23). Bonding applies to social ties, obligations and trust among people who are “alike” (by virtue of gender, or ethnicity, or social background or any other dimension), whilst bridging refers to social ties among people who are “not alike”. Individuals may find it easier to establish close and mutually supportive ties with others who are alike in some key aspect (especially familial or kinship-based) (Healy 2005, p. 76). Putnam quotes de Souza Briggs’ conception that bonding social capital is good for “getting by”, but bridging social capital is crucial for “getting ahead” (de Souza Briggs 1997, pp.111-117); further, he explains that bonding social capital is a kind of “sociological superglue” and bridging social capital is a “sociological WD40” (Putnam 2000, p.23).

Bonding and bridging social capital may appear to be comparable to Granovetter’s (1985) conception of strong and weak ties, yet they are distinct, whilst they also inform the discussion. Healy notes:

Frequently, confusion arises in relation to the nature of bonding and bridging social capital. The concept of bonding can be confused with “strong” ties or even exclusive in-group solidarity. It is possible that individuals can be members of a homogeneous network but with weak ties to each other. The presence of bonding does not describe the strength of ties or the absence of ties to people outside a “bonded” group. Rather, it refers only to the degree of homogeneity in a particular network.

(Healy 2005, pp.76-77)

Putnam contends that “bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves” (Putnam 2000, p.23). The OECD concurs with Putnam (2000) and Woolcock (2001) that bonding social capital may have negative effects, noting that without bridging ties, which can transcend social divides (i.e. religious, ethnic, socioeconomic) bonding ties can become a basis for narrow interests, and cause exclusion (OECD 2001, p.42).

In addition to bonding and bridging social capital Woolcock (2001) has conceptualised linking social capital as the capacity of individuals to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate community radius. The concept of linking refers to relations between different social strata in a hierarchy, where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups (OECD 2001, p.42). Following the multi-dimensional synergistic approach to social capital, that he advocates, Woolcock (2001, p.11) contends that different *combinations* of bonding, bridging and linking social capital are responsible for the range of observations in the literature, arguing for the integration of a dynamic component in which optimal combinations change over time. Woolcock gives a useful illustration of the effect of combinations of bonding, bridging and linking social capital, in practice, in relation to social capital and poverty:

These distinctions have particular significance for understanding the plight of the poor, who typically have a close-knit and intensive stock of bonding social capital that they

leverage to “get by” [Briggs 1998; Bebbington 1999], a modest endowment of the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital typically deployed by the non-poor to “get ahead” [Barr 1998; Narayan 1999; Kozel and Parker 2000], and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions such as banks, insurance agencies, and the courts.

(Woolcock 2001, p.11)

It is clear from this contention that social capital can be a double-edged sword (Woolcock and Narayan 2000; Adler and Kwon 2002). Putnam (2000, p.21), despite appearing to offer a social capital panacea for society’s ills, quotes urban sociologist de Souza Briggs’ (1998) warning against a treacly sweet “kumbaya” interpretation of social capital. Putnam (2000, p.21) points out that networks and associated norms are generally good for those inside the network, though not always positive for those outside: emphasising the effects of gangs, nimbyism (“not in my back yard”), power elites and the social capital networks employed by Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City bombing and the Ku Klux Klan to underline this. The reality of the horrific “honour” killings of young women and of their community’s “silence” in relation to the criminal activities of a minority of its members are examples of the real risks of bonding social capital for both group members and society at large. Powell and Smith-Doerr (1994) astutely observe that the ties that bind may also turn into ties that blind.

Just as social capital may be actively directed toward socially negative outcomes it may also have negative effects when not enough resources are

actuated. Woolcock and Narayan (2000, p.230) describe how a lack of weak intercommunity ties can cause sectarianism, along religious, class, gender and socioeconomic lines. One need only consider the social and political situation in Northern Ireland to this present day. The OECD (2001) equates the risks of social capital to the effects of a restricted radius of trust within a tightly knit group, that can promote forms of social interaction that are inward-seeking and less oriented to trust and cooperation at the wider community level - the effect may be destructive to social cohesion.

4.5 MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Researchers have engaged in multiple measures of social capital in order to quantify it (see for example the 2002 *Survey of Social Capital* detailed in section 4.3.1 for a recent Irish example). Typically most available measures centre around trust and levels of engagement or interactions in social or group activities (OECD 2001): for example, membership of voluntary organisations, churches or political parties. There has been a rapid development in the conceptual discussion of social capital that has not been reflected in empirical measurement tools (Stone and Hughes 2002). Trust has been used as a way of approximating social capital in a number of studies (Fukuyama 1995; Inglehart 1997; Knack and Keefer 1997), though again there is the issue of culturally specific meanings of trust and, as noted by Healy, the questionability of its use as a single indicator at all (Healy 2005, p.61).

Coleman (1988), Hall (1999) and Putnam (2000), as well as a number of government and international organisations, have offered various measures of

social capital. Coleman (1988) developed social capital indicators for children's educational attainment, including personal, family and community dimensions. Hall's (1999) focus is on formal and informal networks of sociability, and on the norms of social trust widely associated with those networks - emphasising that although problems of measurement necessitate an emphasis on voluntary associations, trends in other forms of sociability should be considered, particularly participation in charities and informal relations with neighbours and friends.

Probably the most influential measure (certainly politically) of social capital is that used in *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000). Putnam (2000) uses a composite index that represents engagement in a wide range of civic and political activities, interrelating indicators of formal and informal community networks and trust, to measure social capital in America. The World Bank has developed a model based upon contextual variables as determining factors of social capital, combining cognitive, structural and institutional elements: the Social Capital Assessment Toolkit (SOCAT). Similar initiatives have been undertaken by the OECD, and other countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

Woolcock and Narayan (2000, pp.239-240) offer three reasons for the difficulty in measuring social capital: (1) the most comprehensive definitions of social capital are multidimensional, incorporating different levels and units of analysis; (2) the nature and forms of social capital change over time, as the balance shifts between informal organisations and formal institutions; (3) no long-standing cross-country surveys were initially designed to measure social capital and as such contemporary researchers have had to compile indexes

from a range of approximate items (measures of trust, confidence in government, voting trends, social mobility, and so forth). Another complexity relates to the cultural specificity of social capital (Robinson 1997). A further methodological issue relates to the scaling up of social capital from the individual to the community (as it is usually perceived as a communal characteristic), because of the contention that collective social capital cannot simply be the sum of individual social capital (Portes and Landolt 1996).

4.6 CONCLUSION

For anyone who has engaged in a volunteering activity it is self-evident that social capital is at work, whether it is in the attempt by an individual on the street to ask for a donation, one's efforts in helping with a school play or the effort to entice others to turn up for a fundraising karaoke night at the local pub. In such cases social capital is both the glue and the oil (to paraphrase Putnam) that holds together and lubricates volunteering and civil society. In this chapter the antecedents of the theory of social capital were discussed, before going on to consider the difficult issue of defining social capital. The central intuition in the field of social capital theory is that consideration shown to an other has worth - so that social capital is "the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor" (Adler and Kwon 2002, p. 23). The contemporary social capital theories of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Ronald Burt and Robert Putnam were considered. These authors approach the notion of social capital from different

perspectives, though they do share the concept of social capital as a metaphor for advantage (Burt 2000, 2007).

A further consensus developing in the literature is that social capital is resources that are accessible through social ties that occupy strategic network locations (Glover 2004, p.146). Research on social capital and civil society in Ireland, mainland Europe and America was discussed. The chapter presented work by Healy that suggested a number of variables that were associated (positively) with measures of social capital in Irish society, including education levels, the number of children in a family, whether an individual is married and demographic factors (Healy 2005, p.62). The chapter went on to offer insights into the broadly agreed views as to the essential elements of the social capital concept that dominate the discussion - specifically networks, norms and trust. Finally, different measures of social capital were set out. The following chapter presents the research methodology.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the methodology used to answer the research question: “How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?” The methodology used is unusual in the volunteering literature. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research question, before embarking upon an explanation of the form of discourse analysis used - a social constructionist discourse analysis approach (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). This is followed by a statement of how identity is understood in this paradigm. The rationale for the research sample is then presented, before an explication of the use of the interview and the tools of analysis is offered. The chapter finishes with a consideration of the validity of the methodology and the limitations of the research.

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question has been the result of an iterative process, a moving amongst the literatures, as one might expect of any thesis. A clear research question emerged because of an interest in and readings of the civil society/ volunteer literature, combined with an ongoing interest in the literature on identity and its usefulness to understanding contemporary society. The

researcher is interested in civil society and volunteering due to having volunteered himself for a number of organisations (Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Hillingdon Hospital Radio and Leonard Cheshire Disability) and having been employed prior to this research by a civil society organisation, based in the UK, called Leonard Cheshire Disability. The focus on volunteering, particularly the episodic volunteering chosen by young adults, came about due to an interest in (and experience of) meeting young adults who volunteered for short periods, when needed, and with more than one organisation with whom the researcher was himself engaged in long-term volunteering. A reading of the literature found that others were discussing this phenomenon as a new and growing form of volunteering. Personal experience and a review of the literature led to the realisation that more research could (and should) be done in this area (there is little at present) and resulted in the development of a driving interest in young Irish adults' episodic volunteering. The focus on identity came about due to an interest in how individuals shape their identities in late modernity, which was developed during the completion of a thesis for the researcher's M.Sc. in Marketing, and the publication of a paper (see Weller and Sherlock 2005). From this the researcher realised that the study of the construction of identity could potentially offer extremely useful insights into how young Irish adults engage as volunteers. Further reading of the literature on identity compounded this thought. The result of the iterative process described is the research question:

“How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?”

The researcher's initial interest in, and reading of the literature on, the civil society and volunteering gave the research its focus on young Irish adults who volunteer episodically. There is little research as to young Irish adults volunteering in Ireland, nor is there a great deal of research regarding this group in general (Haski-Leventhal et al 2008). The same may be said in relation to episodic volunteering, which despite its growth (Styers 2004, p.85) and potential as the wave of the future (Culp and Nolan 2000), has received little attention from researchers (for examples of recent research see Handy et al 2006; Macduff 2004, 2005). The volunteering literature chapter (Chapter 3) shows that a significant amount of research is interested in *why* individuals do volunteering - focusing upon their motivations and attitudes. The researcher's prior interest in identity in late modernity led the inquiry to consider identity as essential to understanding the volunteer in an Irish society that is still undergoing significant socioeconomic changes. As a result, this research focuses on *how* individuals do volunteering - focusing upon identity and identity work.

With the understanding that the focus should be on the "doing" of the volunteer identity the researcher reviewed the available methods for analysing identity and came to the realisation that a discourse analytic method would provide a useful lens in order to pursue the research question. Discourse analysis takes the view that identity is "*accomplished* in the course of social interactions; reconstructed from moment to moment within specific discursive and rhetorical contexts, and *distributed* across social contexts" [italics in original] (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.205). As a result of this method the analytic lens focuses upon how individuals do volunteering *discursively*. The strand of discourse analysis chosen as the basis for the analytic lens used here is that

developed from the work of Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), through Potter and Wetherell (1987) and into the work of Wetherell and Edley. The research question is loosely similar to those posed by Wetherell and Edley in their research on the masculine identity across a number of journal papers (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). Their method has proved effective in the production of useful research in that field, offering a guide to this researcher's inquiries.

5.3 A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

This research method is based upon the view that through language individuals actively engage in constructing society. This research takes the social constructionist approach of discourse analysis as its analytical framework, focusing on discourse as a topic in its own right (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p. 35).

5.3.1 Social constructionism

Social constructionism uncovers the processes through which concepts are produced, maintained and reproduced in human interaction (Harré 1983, 1990; Potter 1996) led by the contention that "we are not independent of our surrounds; our surrounds inhabit us and vice versa. Nor can we determine, as human beings, the nature of our surrounds and our relation with them beyond the language we develop together" (Gergen 1999, p.48). It is from this perspective that discourse is understood as essentially constructive and constitutive, rather than only reflecting meaning. Discourse is constitutive of

social life, building objects, worlds, minds, social relations and so on (Wetherell 2001). Language does not simply reflect nor is it purely representative of phenomena, it is *used* to accomplish things (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.33). A commonly shared social constructionist perspective is that knowledge and reality are cultural categories; they are elements of discourse that are invented, used and defended within social practices (Edwards 1997, p.52).

Individuals use previously existing linguistic resources to actively create accounts. This involves the continual and active selection from the countless words and available meaning constructions; the chosen construction being consequential, influencing ideas, generating responses and so forth:

The fundamental assumptions of discourse analysis are that language is a medium orientated towards action and function, and that people use language intentionally to construct accounts or versions of the social world, this active process of construction being demonstrated in language variation.

(Elliott 1996, p.65)

Social constructions can, according to Gergen, take a variety of specific forms: “For any state of affairs a potentially unlimited number of descriptions and explanations is possible” (Gergen 1999, p.47). It is through the (re)construction of meaning that ambiguity is avoided. Volunteering and the volunteer identity, for example, gain meaning in the social practices of daily life, as they are daily (re)constructed in multiple ways in multiple contexts. Taking a social constructionist

approach allows for the exploration of the young Irish adults' construction of the self and the interactions and the contexts in which the volunteer engagement is constructed, offering insight into how they socially construct themselves as volunteers. By cataloguing these social constructions and identifying commonalities and variations, reflecting interpretations of the volunteer engagement in the interviewees' everyday life experiences, it is possible to answer the research question.

5.3.2 Discourse analysis

This research takes as its method discourse analysis, as developed in the field of discursive social psychology, the foundations of which are laid out by Potter and Wetherell (1987) in their work *Discourse and Social Psychology*. The authors outline a discursive paradigm that rethinks the connection between language and social psychology. They demonstrate "how some of the most fundamental theoretical notions in traditional and more radical social psychology can be illuminated by an analysis of discourse" (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.1). Alvesson and Kärreman offer a conception of the usefulness of discourse analysis and of how it may be used:

Discourse analysts show that an emphasis on the representational capacities of language conceal and obfuscate the more productive question of its creative and functional capacities: what language use actually accomplishes. The statement A may or may not represent the thing T, but why is the

statement A produced in the first place, and what does it accomplish?

(Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, p.137)

The particular discourse analysis that informs this research, that of Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001), as it is founded upon the work of Potter and Wetherell (1987) takes as its basis developments in the sociology of scientific knowledge (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984), ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Garfinkel 1967; Antaki 1988; Sacks 1992; Edwards and Potter 1992; Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995) and a range of notions, particularly poststructuralist and Foucauldian-influenced notions of discourse (see Hollway 1984; Wetherell and Potter 1992).

Wetherell and Edley (1999) note a commonplace distinction between two competing theoretical camps: a fine grain form of discursive psychology influenced by conversational analysis and a more global form of analysis derived from poststructuralism (Burr 1995; Parker 1992; Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995). This bifurcation is suggested, by the authors, as a mistake. Their contention is that an adequate discursive psychology needs a more eclectic base. The research method, developed by Wetherell and Edley and used in this research, adopts a two-sided analytic approach, combining insights from the ethnomethodological/conversation tradition (see, for example, Antaki 1988; Edwards and Potter 1992; Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995) with those stemming from post-structuralist and Foucauldian-influenced notions of discourse (see Hollway 1984; Parker and Shotter 1990; Wetherell and Potter 1992). It is a

synthetic approach, weaving a range of influences into a viable approach to discourse analysis (see Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell and Potter 1992), taking into account, that “When people speak, their talk reflects not only the local pragmatics of that particular conversational context, but also much broader or more global patterns in collective sense-making and understanding” (Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.338).

From the ethnomethodological/conversation tradition the method takes the emphasis on the *action orientation* (Heritage 1984) of people’s talk and the notion of social order constituted intersubjectively, as the participants display to one another an understanding of what is going on. This method takes seriously the object of inquiry - the internal sense of the interaction in its own terms. It recognises that the “hugely advantageous feature of studying talk-in-interaction is that this is one socio-cultural site furnished internally with its own constitutive sense” (Wetherell 1998, p.392). From post-structuralist and Foucauldian-influenced conceptions of discourse the method takes the notion of discourse as organised by “institutional forms of intelligibility” (Shapiro 1992), which have a history and which overlap power relations. Wetherell notes that this allows for “carving out a piece of the argumentative social fabric for closer examination”, whilst taking a genealogical approach:

suggests that in analysing our always partial piece of the argumentative texture we look also to the broader forms of intelligibility running through the texture more generally. This is what Shapiro [1992] means by the concept of proto

conversations - the conversational or discursive history which makes this particular conversation possible.

(Wetherell 1998, p.403)

The method goes a significant way to capture the paradoxical relationship that exists between discourse and the speaking subject. It allows for the embracing of the fact that people are, at the same time, both the products and the producers of language (Billig 1991).

The research method leads to a focus on the function(s) of the language. The discourse analyst is 'reading' the context, in order to understand the *function*. If talk is oriented to many different functions any examination of language, over time, reveals *variation* (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.33). Individuals are using their language to *construct* versions of the social world. Put concisely: "The principal tenet of discourse analysis is that function involves construction of versions, and is demonstrated by language variation" (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.33). Potter and Wetherell emphasise that the term "construction" is appropriate as:

First, it reminds us that accounts of events are built out of a variety of pre-existing linguistic resources, almost as a house is constructed from bricks, beams and so on. Second, construction implies active selection: some resources are included, some omitted. Finally, the notion of construction emphasizes the potent, consequential nature of accounts. Much of social

interaction is based around dealings with events and people which are experienced *only* in terms of specific linguistic versions. In a profound sense, accounts “construct” reality.

[italics in original]

(Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.34)

The construction of an account is not necessarily a process that is deliberate or intentional, or even achieved consciously (or self-consciously), but may simply emerge as an individual attempts to make sense of a situation (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.34). As Potter and Wetherell (1987) explain, the discourse analyst is then keenly aware of the necessary variability of people’s language use. Discourse is a relatively ambiguous pathway to actions, beliefs or actual events. Inconsistency across and within accounts is normal (Potter and Wetherell, p.34).

Discourse is the topic for the discourse analyst. This research understands ‘discourse’ in its most open sense following Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.7), who themselves follow Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), as covering all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds. This research acknowledges at its root Potter and Wetherell’s fundamental observation, that:

we are not trying to recover events, beliefs and cognitive processes from participants’ discourse, or treat language as an indicator or signpost to some other state of affairs but looking at

the analytically prior question of how discourse or accounts of these things are manufactured.

(Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.35)

As such, Potter and Wetherell identify how discourse analysis starts from the following assumptions:

1. Language is used for a variety of functions and its use has a variety of consequences;
2. Language is both constructed and constructive;
3. The same phenomenon can be described in several different ways;
4. There will, therefore, be considerable variations in accounts;
5. There is, as yet, no foolproof way to deal with this variation and to sift accounts which are “literal” or “accurate” from those which are rhetorical or merely thereby escaping the problems variation raises for researchers with a “realistic” model of language;
6. The constructive and flexible ways in which language is used should themselves become a central topic of study.

(Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.35)

Effectively, as will be discussed in the following sections, the implication for identity and the concept of the self, from a discourse analytic approach, is that

identity is understood as “a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than ... a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). This way of thinking has engendered a reconsideration of what the self may be perceived as and how it may be analysed and discussed. The research presented here is spurred on by Potter and Wetherell’s contention that the emphasis should be, as much as possible, on attempting to understand fully the consequences of the discursive interaction:

Not only do we need to be able to describe the content of representations of people in different contexts or the sheer range of self-images available in ordinary talk, but we also need to ask how these images are used and to what end, and thus what they achieve for the speaker immediately, interpersonally, and then in terms of wider social implications.

(Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.110)

Wetherell et al note that this style of analysis is capable of dealing with a major problem plaguing trait and attitude research, “that people are inconsistent in their behaviour and opinions, flexibly adjusting their response according to their perception of the context and a large variety of interactional and self-representational goals” (Wetherell et al 1987, p.60). The problem for traditional research, that variation and contradictions generate validity issues, for the discourse analyst generates a resource to understand the functions of the discourse (Potter and Mulkay 1985). Further this method abandons the

presupposition that people have “an attitude” that may be represented through mutually exclusive response categories, or act on the basis of a set of fixed identities or stable sets of attributes (Wetherell et al 1987).

Wetherell makes it clear that discourse analysis is concerned with the practices that produce persons, notably discursive practices, but it also seeks to put these in a genealogical context, as it:

focuses on the situated flow of discourse, which looks at the formation and negotiation of psychological states, identities and interactional and intersubjective events. It is concerned with members’ methods and the logic of accountability while describing also the collective and social patterning of background normative conceptions (their forms of articulation and the social and psychological consequences).

(Wetherell 1998, p.405)

This paradigm offers the opportunity to understand how the interviewees (and interviewer) are both the products and the producers of the discourse, to comprehend how individuals achieve identity whilst “constrained and enabled by language” (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.26).

To be clear, the social constructionist approach of this research asserts that individuals are using language to construct versions of the social world but at the same time it does not deny the “objective reality” of phenomena (Potter 2003).

As such, the discourse analysis method used here allows the researcher not to be entirely categorical about the discursive level in research (Wetherell 1998; Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, p.149). The analysis on occasion considers the level of the meaning of the talk and also its capability to inform about the interviewees' culture and practices. This perspective emphasises the partial ability of language to convey something beyond itself and for the variation in the relative consistency and value of utterances to be potential clues to phenomena beyond themselves (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, p.148).

The researcher is aware of the need when considering meaning that it is necessary to be sure to establish how the individual makes sense of what they are doing. As Alvesson and Kärreman note, "To consider the level of meaning implies an interest in what people mean by the expressions they use. It also implies an interest in what meaning they ascribe to the practices they, and others, deploy" (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, p.149). The authors explain that the difference between taking the level of meaning seriously and taking it for granted has been described by Geertz (1973) as making either thick or thin descriptions. A particular example, used by Geertz, the difference between a twitch and a wink, is suggested as descriptive of the difference. Described thinly, there is no difference between the two. As phenomena they are both contractions of the eyelid:

Yet the difference, however unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed communicating in a quite precise

and special way: (1) deliberately, (2) to someone in particular, (3) to impart a particular message, (4) according to a socially established code, and (5) without cognizance of the rest of the company ... the winker has done two things, contracted the eyelid and winked, while the twitcher has done only one, contracted his eyelid. Contracting your eyelid on purpose when there exists a public code in which doing so counts as a conspirational signal is winking. That's all there is to it: a speck of behavior, a fleck of culture and—voilà—a gesture.

(Geertz 1973, p. 6)

The method of discourse analysis used here does not leave the level of talk, but rather treats utterances, as Wetherell suggests, as indicators of how people speak on specific matters in certain social situations, “the participants’ orientations to their setting and the emergent conversational activities” (Wetherell 1998, p.401). In this way the method used is capable of accounting for the difference between a twitch and a wink.

This research views accounts as very local cultural material - in this they are treated as indications of situation-specific meanings, ideas, and values (Alvesson and Kärreman's 2000, p.152). Their congruency with other contexts is then open to further interpretation. To view utterances as reflecting actual practices, phenomena that are “out there” implies two assumptions (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, p.152):

First, that such accounts reflect people's genuine beliefs and knowledge about a specific phenomena and, second, that these beliefs and knowledge are not basically cultural, or reflect personal meanings and consciousness, but stand in an accurate relationship to facts about the practices (actions, events, situations, processes, structures, and relations) 'out there.'

(Alvesson and Kärreman's 2000, p.152)

Alvesson and Kärreman (2000, p.152) suggest that this necessitates that the researcher demonstrate or at least make plausible arguments that are based upon these kinds of interpretation. Research is available that demonstrates the productiveness of being sensitive to the framing power of context and language. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) cite studies of leadership in social, interactive situations rather than as an abstract behavioural style (Knights & Willmott, 1992); power as it is expressed in action in which linguistic behaviour is central (Alvesson, 1996); structure as a historical accomplishment in local settings rather than structure as an eternal property of formal organisation (Barley 1986, 1990); the vocabulary of motives rather than motivation (Mills 1940); talk as an administrative device rather than as a carrier of abstract principles of administration (Gronn 1983); identity work in narrations rather than identity as an essence (Alvesson 1994); and symbols as agents of change and stability rather than as expressions of corporate culture (Gioia et al 1994).

5.3.3 A discursive approach to identity

The conception of identity that this research takes comes from the discourse analytic approach of Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). It is a social constructionist perspective on identity (Gergen 1985; Wetherell and Maybin 1996). Identity is an ongoing process and construction that is based on a reflexivity on the part of the individual, as they ask: “Who am I?”. This research understands identity as “*accomplished* in the course of social interactions; reconstructed from moment to moment within specific discursive and rhetorical contexts, and *distributed* across social contexts” [italics in original] (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.205):

what it means to be a person, the formulation of an internal life, an identity and a way of being in the world develop as external public dialogue moves inside to form the “voices of the mind” [Wertsch 1991]. Subjectivity and identity are best understood as the personal enactment of communal methods of self-accounting, vocabularies of motive, culturally recognizable emotional performances and available stories for making sense [Gergen 1994; Harré and Gillett 1994; Shotter 1984]. Discursive practices are also a pervasive and constitutive element in all social practices - materially effective and the core of social action.

(Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.338)

Identity is constructed in negotiation with others and in relation to the context. This is a conceptualisation that is also reproduced in other works by Edley (1993), Harré (1993), Potter and Wetherell (1987), Widdicombe and Woofitt (1995), and in more recent work by Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005).

There is significant analytic value in approaching identity as “a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than ... a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.585). The following framework - a synthesis of the key works on identity from a number of different social theories - is extremely useful to this conceptualisation of identity. Five principles fundamental to the study of identity are offered by its authors:

(1) identity is the product rather than the source of linguistic and other semiotic practices; (2) identities encompass both the local and the global, constructed in terms of macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles, and also locally ethnographically emergent cultural positions; (3) identities may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems; (4) identities are relationally constructed through several, often overlapping aspects of the relationship between self and other, including similarity/

difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy; and (5) identity may be part intentional, in part habitual and less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation; in part a construction of others' perceptions and representations, and in part an outcome of larger ideological processes and structures.

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.585)

Identity is an emergent product rather than the source of linguistic and other semiotic practices. This emphasises its nature as a social and cultural phenomenon. It is achieved through social action, especially language. This is a familiar idea within several branches of sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2005), iterated in: the ethnomethodological concept of 'doing' various kinds of identity (Fenstermaker and West 2002; West and Zimmerman 1987; Garfinkel 1967) and the related conversational analytic concept of identity as an interactionally relevant accomplishment (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Sidnell 2003); the post-structuralist theory of performativity (Butler 1990); and the semiotic concepts of creative indexicality (Silverstein 1979). This research understands that identities are not "ontologically prior to the discourse that calls them forth" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.591), but rather are dependent upon the interactional demands of the social context.

As Hall eloquently notes identity may be understood as:

the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to "interpellate",

speak to us or hail us into place as social subjects of particular discourses (an individual sees a representation of a social category and thinks, “yes that’s me”), and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be “spoken”. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us.

(Hall 1996, pp.6-7)

Identities are, according to Hall (1996, p.7), the successful articulation of the subject into the discourse. Hall (1995, p.65) maintains that the individual only discovers who they are because of the identities they are required to take on, into which they are hailed - the necessity to act at all requires that the individual take up those positions. As such, it is important to understand identity as a relational phenomenon, achieved intersubjectively. It is partial, as it is produced contextually and is dependent upon ideology: “Even seemingly coherent displays of identity, such as those that pose as deliberate and intentional, are reliant on both interactional and ideological constraints for their articulation” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.605).

The turn to discourse has challenged the view of identity as simply a collection of broad social categories. Bucholtz and Hall note that linguistic ethnographers have found that individuals often orient to local identity categories rather than to the analyst’s sociocultural categories: “At the most basic level, identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.591). The contingent nature

of these temporary positions is necessary, according to Hall, in order to say anything at all, “even though meaning refuses to be finally fixed and that position is an often contradictory holding operation rather than a position of truth” (Hall 1995, p.66). These positions, despite their temporariness, contribute no less than larger sociological and ethnographic identity categories to the formation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.591).

In identity construction indexicality “involves the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings”, with the effect that in constructing identity individuals draw on ideologies, rooting the self in beliefs and values (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.594). The overt introduction of referential identity categories into discourse is the most obvious example of the indexical processes through which individuals construct their identities in discourse (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.594). Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p.594) note that this has been a “primary method” used by nonlinguistic researchers in their approaches to identity. It has been refined by researchers focused upon the discourse, as:

The circulation of such categories within ongoing discourse, their explicit or implicit juxtaposition with other categories, and the linguistic elaborations and qualifications they attract (predicates, modifiers, and so on) all provide important information about identity construction.

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.594)

As well as emerging in referential identity categories, identity emerges in interaction in the implicatures and presuppositions regarding the identity position of the self and the other; in the stance taken in relation to an other or to something; and the choice to use linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, p.594).

Individuals are engaged in identity work, reflexively accomplishing the sense of self in the course of social interactions: a self that is reconstructed from context to context, producing a sense of coherence and distinctiveness (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003, p.1165). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe this identity work as requiring a constant effort, a taking account of oneself that may be enhanced by certain circumstances. The individual is:

engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness. Identity work may either, in complex and fragmented contexts, be more or less continuously on-going or, in contexts high on stability, be a theme of engagement during crises or transitions. More generally, specific events, encounters, transitions and surprises, as well as more constant strains, serve to heighten awareness of the constructed quality of self-identity and compel more concentrated identity work.

(Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003, p.1165)

Anderson (1995) considers that identity work necessitates individuals' negotiation of personal identities, as they struggle to make internal peace with the multiple components of their selves and the claims of the different social systems of meaning to which they are connected. Identity work is then based upon adjusting to the demands of constantly shifting contexts. This research uses the discourse analysis tools developed by Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001), in their work on the construction of masculinity (part of a broader project to develop a critical discursive psychology of masculinity), in order to analyse the identity work being undertaken. Discourse was chosen as the site for investigating men's identities - as it is here, in the investigation of the volunteer and volunteering - because of the central role that discursive practices play in the constitution of subjectivity (Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.337).

5.4 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The sample has been chosen in order to permit the inclusion of discourses that are relevant to the research (Wood and Kroger 2000). The focus is on language use in interaction, as the primary site in which selves are constituted, negotiated, and resisted (Widdicombe and Woofitt 1995, p.222). This research is based upon 17 interviews with 11 female and 6 male young Irish adults aged 21 to 26, who took part in fundraising and a charity challenge for an Irish-based organisation, Cyclecharity (a pseudonym, chosen due to its relation to the form of the charity challenge) in 2006. The interviews were undertaken from August to October 2006. The following table gives details of the names (once again these

are pseudonyms), age and situation (student/employed) at the time of volunteering, dates on which the interviews took place and whether the interviews took place face-to-face or on the telephone:

Table 5.1 Interviewee information

Names (pseudonyms)	Age	Situation	Interview date	Type
Ann	21	Graduating student	8/9/06	face-to-face
Brendan	22	Graduating student	5/9/06	telephone
Carol	24	Paralegal	13/8/06	telephone
Dervla	21	Graduating student	14/8/06	telephone
Ellen	22	Graduating student	17/9/06	telephone
Jane	22	Graduating student	3/9/06	telephone
Jerry	24	Car salesman	29/9/06	telephone
Lucy	25	Postgraduate student	15/8/06	face-to-face
Marie	21	Graduating student	17/9/06	face-to-face
Michael	24	Self-employed	21/9/06	telephone
Onya	23	Graduating student	19/8/06	telephone
Peter	25	Postgraduate student	19/9/06	telephone
Ryan	21	Graduating student	8/8/06	face-to-face
Shauna	22	Graduating student	28/9/06	telephone
Sorcha	21	Graduating student	1/8/06	telephone
Therese	21	Graduating student	2/8/06	telephone
Tommy	21	Graduating student	16/9/06	telephone

Source: Interview data and researcher's notes

The majority of the interviewees were graduating students (undergraduate level) who volunteered for Cyclecharity prior to their final examinations and completed their engagement soon afterwards. The other interviewees, who were postgraduate students or employed, had a prior relationship with Cyclecharity, having previously volunteered with the organisation. Two of the interviewees were involved in long-term volunteering (Hustinx 2001) during the engagement with Cyclecharity - Brendan, who volunteered for the Simon Community, and Ellen, who volunteered for Scouting Ireland. During the interviews there is also reference to Jack O'Neil (a further pseudonym), who is the Director of Cyclecharity. He is a lecturer at an Institute of Technology in Ireland and volunteers his spare time to the organisation. A further individual who is referenced in the interviews is Angelica McManus. Her role was to contact students to inform them of Cyclecharity and to ask them to consider becoming involved. She is also a lecturer at the same Institute. Both individuals went on the Cyclecharity charity challenge in 2006.

Cyclecharity is an organisation that provides humanitarian aid to children and young adults with disabilities in post-Chernobyl⁹ Belarus. Its works include the building of specialist housing, the rebuilding and refurbishing of orphanages, and the provision of medical support and equipment. The organisation has been recruiting young adult volunteers, specifically third-level students, since 2000. The Cyclecharity experience is described by the organisation as 'A Humanitarian Adventure for Student Volunteers'. The majority of the 85 volunteers who took part in 2006 were young Irish adults, with a few older and some non-Irish

⁹ The Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident of 1986.

participants¹⁰. Those who were graduating were recruited prior to their final exams and went on the charity challenge after their exams, but prior to graduating. The charity challenge to Belarus was undertaken in June 2006 and was eight days in duration. Prior to the charity challenge the young Irish adult volunteers who were interviewed fundraised for the organisation. A requirement of volunteering was that they raise €2000 each: roughly €1200 went to the cause, with the rest going to cover costs (flights, accommodation, food and bicycles, and so forth). Cyclecharity provided fundraising materials, such as sponsorship cards, to the volunteers. The charity challenge involved a cycle through Belarus. As well as the cycling component a number of visits were included in the charity challenge itinerary, including: ones to the orphanages and services used by the organisation's beneficiaries; a trip to a deserted village in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone¹¹; a meeting with Belarussian government ministry officials; and sight-seeing trips.

The young Irish adult interviewees were chosen as they are from a generation that has known the significant effects of the major social and economic changes that occurred in Ireland in the 1990s, the economic miracle of the "Celtic Tiger", which, it is argued, has effectively reshaped "the lifestyles, values, occupational structures and political concerns and challenges of the Irish people" to "increasingly resemble those of 'modern' societies of Europe and North America" (Tovey and Share 2003, p.51). Whatever occurred in contemporary Ireland in that period, and its ramifications, being felt at present,

¹⁰ Due to administrative difficulties on the part of Cyclecharity an exact figure for young Irish adult participants taking part could not be given.

¹¹ The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone refers to those portions of Belarus that were contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident and which are now no longer populated.

have been acutely experienced by the young Irish adult interviewees who engaged in this research. Their construction of the volunteer identity offers insight into the contemporary engagement with volunteering.

The sample has also been chosen because of the research interest in young Irish adults' engagement in episodic volunteering - an area that has received little academic analysis, despite its being a phenomenon that is growing rapidly (see Handy et al 2006, p.31; Macduff, 1990, 2004, 2005). The research organisation, Cyclecharity, is engaged in recruiting *only* episodic volunteers. This is useful to the research as it means that all the individuals are engaged in a similar volunteering experience, engaged in a similar identity work. The young Irish adults all construct how they have taken part in prior episodes of volunteering and construct the engagement with Cyclecharity as a further episode. The particular form of episodic volunteering undertaken by the young Irish adults may be described using Handy et al's (2006, p.34) taxonomy of episodic volunteering as *genuine episodic volunteering* - where individuals volunteer for two or fewer volunteer episodes in a year. This form of episodic volunteering, according to Handy et al (2006), is compatible with Weber's (2002) definition of episodic volunteering - as those who contribute their time sporadically, only during special times of the year, or consider volunteering as a one-off event. Those volunteers, according to Weber (2002) give time without an ongoing commitment, often for time-specific, self-contained projects, with a limited time commitment. It is the case here. In terms of Macduff's (2004) taxonomy they may be considered as *interim episodic volunteers* - individuals who give continuous service on a regular basis for less than six months.

The research sample has also been chosen in light of the academic and public debate regarding: the theoretical accounts of the self as a reflexive project, the significance of lifestyles, and the issue of life(style) politics in late modernity (Giddens 1991); the processes of institutionalised individualism and their effect upon the self and community (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Bauman 2002; Maffesoli 1996); and the modern engagement with altruism and individuality and its effect upon engagement with volunteering (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Wuthnow 1991).

As outlined earlier, the sample is structured to permit the inclusion of discourses that are relevant to the research and therefore the sample size is predicated upon an interest in the generation of sufficient relevant linguistic patterns (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.161). The sample size is the result of a reading of the initial interviews, as suggested by Wood and Kroger (2000, p.80), with the decision to stop at 17 interviews having been dependent upon discursive variability and overlap. The endpoint of the interview data collection came about when the researcher was confident of having “a sufficient number of arguments of sufficient quality and having sufficient data for those arguments to be well grounded” (Wood and Kroger 2000, p.81).

Previous studies examining the discursive construction of identity differ widely in their sample sizes - suggesting no particular rule of thumb for the research method other than sufficiency. Here I offer up a few pertinent examples. In their paper on membership authenticity Widdicombe and Woofitt (1990, p.261) engaged in 19 interviews conducted with 26 young people, in groups or with individuals. The work was expanded from the initial paper to a

book considering the construction and function of personal and social identity, and group affiliations, with the corresponding data collection increasing from the above to 38 interviews conducted, and 85 people interviewed, again either separately or in groups (Widdicombe and Woofitt 1995, p.229). Recent discourse analytic doctoral dissertations on the construction of identity by hospice patients by Kabel (2005) and the negotiation of sexuality by student teachers by Evans (2000), indicate the importance of considering the nature of the research questions in relation to sample size. Kabel (2005) engaged 38 staff and patients in her study, focusing on participant observation and interviews. Evans (2000) in her critical discourse analysis interviewed only 4 individuals. Edley and Wetherell (1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Wetherell and Edley 1999) in a relatively large-scale research project on the construction of masculinity engaged in interviews with 8 “small groups” of 17-18 year old male students over the course of two school terms and further to the study interviewed 60 men aged between 20 and 64 years. This research has been led by the work of both Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Potter and Wetherell (1987), Widdicombe and Woofitt (1995) and particularly Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001) in their arguments regarding sample size, as the aims of those authors, in terms of the understanding of the construction and function of identity and discursive practices in a “group” setting, are most relevant to this study.

5.5 THE INTERVIEW AS DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The interviews were undertaken over a three-month period, August to October, in 2006, following the individuals' completion of the Cyclecharity charity

challenge, and transcribed over a further nine-month period. The interviews, on average, took around 45 minutes and were recorded on a MacBook using Garageband software or an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder. Some of the interviews were undertaken face to face and others were undertaken on the telephone in order to accommodate the schedules of the interviewees (see Table 5.1). The interviews were undertaken post-charity challenge in order to have access to the full “episode” of volunteering with the Cyclecharity organisation, from registration to the end of the engagement, as generally defined by the interviewees as the handing over of the fundraising money or return to Ireland, following the charity challenge.

The type of interview approach used was intensive interviewing, also known as unstructured interviewing: “a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the respondent ... rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis” (Lofland and Lofland 1995, p.18). This type of interview is characterised by its open-endedness, which enables the interviewee to give answers to questions within their own frame of reference, and challenges the preconceptions of the researcher (May 2002, p.124). The aim is to discover the interviewee’s experience of a particular topic or situation (Lofland and Lofland 1995, p.18). The method provides a qualitative depth, allowing interviewees to talk about the subject in their language, using their frames of reference and therefore allowing the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the subject’s point of view (May 2002, p.124).

Lee and Roth note that the interview is used in different ways depending upon the perspective of the researcher:

There are four general ways in which interviews are used, namely as (a) “a source of witness accounts of the social world,” (b) “a source of self-analysis,” (c) “an indirect source of evidence about informants’ attitudes or perspectives,” and (d) “a source of evidence about the constructional work on the part of the informant (and perhaps also the interviewer) by means of which interview data are produced” [Hammersley 2003, p.120].

(Lee and Roth 2004, p.2)

The first two ways of using interviews point to their being understood as resources, whilst the second two consider them as topics (Lee and Roth 2004, p.2). In the first two the interview is a resource for discovering something about the world and social reality (Lee and Roth 2004, p.3). The second two ways of using the interview necessitate the examination of how the participants manage the interview itself: how they manage, for example, the presentation of identity. Researchers who use the interview as topic, according to Breuer and Roth (2003), despair in extreme cases of obtaining any useful information from the interview because whatever is said by a participant can never be something solely attributable to that individual. However, Lee and Roth note that by treating the interview as both resource and topic - as is the case with the research presented here - a stance may be taken that allows the researcher to be both faithful to and critical of research data and the circumstances it was collected in (Gilbert and Mulkey 1984; Silverman 2001):

In doing so, we realize that as much as there is no reason to doubt the veracity of our participants' accounts normally, we are constantly mindful that interviewing is a social interaction that takes rhetorical effort to accomplish successfully. Thus, both researchers and participants take on their normative roles, which usually means that the former initiate the interview, ask questions, and steer the conversations while the latter are the actual subjects of interest and respond to requests of researchers. Issues of identity and self-presentation are at stake and have to be managed actively but are usually ignored or glossed over when taking interviews solely as a resource.

(Lee and Roth 2004. p.3)

The analysis of the interview data in this thesis both takes the interviewees' versions of the social world as a resource, in order to say something about the world and social reality, and also considers how the individuals produce those versions of the social world and how they are legitimised by various means.

The advantage of the interview, as noted by O'Rourke and Pitt (2007, p.9), is that it is recognisable by participants as an integrated whole, offering opportunities to "balance" one remark with another. The interviewees generally have considerable control over the context in which discourse is produced: "their meanings are not so dependent on the unexpected turns of other conversational members as they might be in an interaction of three or more, or in more time-indefinite snatches of conversations" (O'Rourke and Pitt 2007, p.9). The interview

also offers the researcher the opportunity to intervene actively, enabling the researcher to deliberately question the interviewees on the same issues, giving greater comparability in responses, and increased simplicity in initial coding (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.163). The interview further allowed the researcher to engage in talk about interactions which would have been impossible to record due to limitations of access and time. Examples of the successful use of the form of interviewing undertaken in this research come from Kitzinger and Frith (1999) and McGowan (2002). Kitzinger and Frith (1999) researched how women turn down requests from men for sex, from reports given subsequently by the women. McGowan (2002), in her work on how the private domain is silenced within organisations, relied on reported discourse to explore how managerial discourses silenced managers talk of their care-giving to elderly relatives. These researchers offer perceptive discourse analytical perspectives on the foci of their research, where in each case the actual interactions were impossible to record. The decision to engage as an “interactive social scientist” (O’Rourke and Pitt, 2007) in the interview process, rather than attempt to live up to the “dead social scientist” test (Potter 2004, p.541), was made as a result of the above decision process and in the knowledge that achieving zero researcher involvement is problematic in practice. Ten Have’s remarks have been kept in mind: “Experimenter effects’ are not ‘bad’ in themselves, but should be taken into account, and used or avoided depending on one’s chosen research strategy” (Ten Have 2002, p.527).

The Exhibits were chosen as they are rich examples of the ways in which the discourses were constructed by the interviewees. The analysis and coding of the interview data led to a particular thesis being developed, which was then followed by the researcher examining the interviews to find extracts that best

and most richly epitomised particular findings. The extracts used as Exhibits had already been coded and analysed. Once they were chosen a deeper analysis was then undertaken. For example, in order to illustrate the conventional notion of free will the researcher looked through all the extracts coded as relating to the discourse of free will and chose the ones that offered the opportunity to present an analysis that epitomised its use in and across the interview/s.

The Exhibits are referenced to allow the reader to refer back to the interview transcriptions. They are referenced in the following manner - Source: Interview Number Name of interviewee (Date of interview): starting full/partial sentence - ending full/partial sentence. For example Exhibit 24 is referenced as Source: Interview XV Sorcha (1/8/06): 390-405. The reference points out that the Interview is number 15 in the transcriptions document and that the interviewee is Sorcha. The date when the interview took place was the 1st August 2006 and the starting full/partial sentence of the Exhibit is number 390 and the ending full/partial sentence is number 405.

5.6 NEGOTIATING ACCESS AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Access and ethics are critical aspects for the conduct of research. The fact that qualitative methods may be used to investigate personal or private opinions means that there were inherent ethical considerations that had to be taken into account before proceeding with the research. The researcher guaranteed anonymity to those taking part and that no one but the researcher would have access to the full taped interviews. The researcher also took time to study and incorporate in the research the guidelines outlined by the Social Research

Association and other organisations like it to ensure the ethics of the research, including:

- to respect intended and actual participants' rights to privacy;
- to avoid deceiving participants about why the researcher is undertaking the research, its purpose and how the data collected will be used;
- maintaining objectivity during the data collection, analysis and reporting stages;
- respecting assurances provided to organisations about the confidentiality of (certain types of) data;
- respecting assurances given to organisations and individuals about their anonymity;
- considering the collective interests of participants in the way the data is used.

(Saunders et al 2003)

Further, the research has been informed by the researcher's reflection on questions asked by Mason (2005). These questions included: How far is my own interview practice and style ethical?; On what basis am I judging what is ethical and what is not?; What justifications can I offer for the ethics of my interview practice and style?; and, On what basis, and to whom, are these acceptable? (Mason 2005, p.79). Further to the question of gaining informed consent the researcher kept in mind: Have I gained the "informed consent" of my interviewees for their participation?; Whose consent should I seek?; and, How can I be sure that the consent is genuinely informed? (Mason 2005, p.80).

Access to the interviewees was achieved through the Cyclecharity organisation Director, Jack O'Neil, who personally contacted a few of those interviewed - following a discussion as to the necessary requirements of the research, in terms of age of participant, gender, nationality and so forth. Once the researcher made contact with those individuals he asked for further contacts from them - stipulating the necessity that the individuals be young Irish adults. All of those who were then contacted agreed to be interviewed, offering their informed consent to a 45 minute or longer intensive interview discussing their engagement as volunteers with the Cyclecharity organisation. This method of interviewee contact was considered the most useful in the circumstances as, due to administrative difficulties, the Cyclecharity organisation did not have full records of all of those who had taken part in the charity challenge, which would have provided the necessary names, personal details and telephone numbers to aid the researcher.

Each of the interviewees was assured that their details would be confidential, with a pseudonym used instead of their actual name - this was done verbally when the interview was being arranged, prior to the interview meeting or telephone call. The time between initial contact and the interview offered the interviewee the opportunity to reconsider her or his decision to be interviewed. The choice to not go ahead was further reiterated at the beginning of the interviews, as was the promise of anonymity repeated at both the start and finish of the interviews. The researcher feels justified in using this informal method, following Murphy and Dingwall's argument in relation to ethnographic work, one that is equally applicable to any qualitative process:

The rights of research subjects in ethnographic work will not be respected simply because consent forms have been signed ... Signed consent forms may actually jeopardize the confidentiality of participants by making them identifiable. There are genuine difficulties about the means of respecting rights to autonomy and self-determination. The answers depend more on the moral sense of the researcher and their ability to make reasoned decisions in the field than upon regulative codes of practice or review procedures.

(Murphy and Dingwall 2001, p.342)

None of the interviewees expressed concern as to confidentiality, it being more of a concern to the researcher. Further, none of the interviewees cancelled the interview during the time between the initial contact and the interview proper. In that time they could reflect on the request and reconsider. They were all, in fact, happy to engage in the research project, in what appeared to be an extension of their “warm” feeling for Cyclecharity and its organisers.

5.7 THE ANALYTICAL TOOLS

In order to focus on the interviewees’ talk this research uses analytic tools that are capable of analysing dialogue and are sensitive to the various (historical) resources society makes available to construct the identity of volunteer (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001). Those analytic tools are: subject positions

(Hollway 1984; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Harré and van Langenhove 1991) and interpretative repertoires.

5.7.1 Coding of the interview data

The analysis began with a coding of the interviews in order to make some initial sense of the data (Mason 2005, pp.154-156). The process began with a number of close readings of each interview. The close readings resulted in the finding of particular general discourses, evident across and within the interviews - presented in the analysis section as conventional notions of the volunteer engagement. As the researcher's familiarity with the data increased the discourses were given particular descriptions (Mason 2005, pp.159-161). The indexing of the data presented opportunities to note further instances of the general discourses that were used by the interviewees (and interviewer) to construct the identity of volunteer. This gave the researcher confidence as to the robust nature of the indexing process and its capability to provide a useful interpretation of the interview data. The coding process then turned to the issue of the interviewees' construction of their relationships with others - particularly how they constructed those relationships as resources for social capital generation and use. The relationships that emerged from the readings of the interview data were considered in relation to the social capital literature.

With the research question in mind, the analysis examined how the discourses that were found were manipulated and negotiated by the interviewees in their achievement of their identities as volunteers. The analysis then turned to asking if those discourses were similar to those suggested in prior

research. Following this the analysis turned to the question of what new discourses, or different manipulations and negotiations of discourses found in other research, were occurring in the interviews.

5.7.2 Subject positions

Subject positions are a central concept of discursive psychology, connecting interpretative repertoires to the social construction of particular selves: “They are identities made relevant by specific ways of talking” (Edley 2001, p.210). People do not encounter discourses pre-figured or pre-formed; instead individuals are re-constituted as subjects in the moment of their use (Edley 2001, p.210):

What ... clearly fuels positioning is accountability or participants’ orientations to their setting and the emergent conversational activities. It is also very clearly the case that what a subject position comes to be is only partly the consequence of which discourse it can be assigned to ... the invocation of positions and thus their significance is indeed local, highly situated and occasioned.

(Wetherell 1998, p.401)

Hall suggests that who we are always stands in relation to the available text or narratives. Identity is formed “at the unstable point where the ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of a culture” (Hall 1988, p.44). As such, we are both the products and producers of language (Billig 1991). The concept of the taking up of subject positions is, according to Edley (2001), one “that

connects the wider notions of discourses and interpretative repertoires to the social construction of particular selves” (Edley 2001, p.210). Billig (1991) notes that it is generally accepted that individuals have some choice in the subject positions they assume - taking up certain subject positions, resisting and negotiating others. Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p.586) suggest that identity may be understood quite simply as the social positioning of the self and the other.

Hollway in her analysis of the construction of subjectivity in heterosexual relations, first spoke of “positioning oneself” and “taking up positions”, and their relation to the other:

Discourses make available positions for subjects to take up. These positions are in relation to other people. Like the subject and the object of a sentence ... women and men are placed in relation to each other through the meanings which a particular discourse makes available.

(Hollway 1984, p.236)

An individual must adopt a particular position, in order to engage effectively in a particular story-line, and as a result this determines social acts available during the conversation. A single individual may undertake several varieties of positioning during any dialogue. Positioning is restricted by: the individual’s own capacity to position themselves; their intention to position themselves or to be positioned by others; or the power that they may derive from specific locations in social orders and networks (Harré and van Langenhove 1991, p.406).

Individuals accumulate records of particular transitory identity categories, those prior subject positions that may be reinvoked across different contexts:

Such bringings-to-bear are briefly over and done, of course, but their accumulated record is what gives a person their (portfolio of) identities. Ephemeral as they might be, they become available for future invocation as instances of times when the person was (understood to be) a linguist, a Kennel Club member and so on. The speakers are doing three things at once: invoking social identities, negotiating what the features or boundaries of those identities are and accumulating a record of having those identities. They will be able in the next round of their interactional history to draw on having all been exposed to this conversational display of identities.

(Antaki et al 1996, p.488)

This suggests that at a minimum the reflexive knowing self exists, continuous and distinctive across contexts - providing an impermanence of passing subject positions that is the basis for identity. In order to “spot” subject positions Edley suggests that analysis is “largely a matter of experience and intensive (re) reading” (Edley 2001, p.210), with the effort being focused upon trying to stay aware of what is implied by a particular discourse or interpretative repertoire, always asking “What does a given statement or set of statements say about the person who utters them?” (Edley 2001, p.210).

5.7.3 Interpretative repertoires

The concept of interpretative repertoires was first developed by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) in *Opening Pandora's Box*. The researchers were particularly focused upon scientists' understandings of what was involved in scientific work. They found that there were two distinct oppositional ways of talking about or constructing scientific activity, one of which was dependent upon the empirical characteristics of the impersonal natural world and the other constructed through variable factors outside of the realm of biochemical phenomena (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984, pp.56-57). These different variable ways of talking were described by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) as interpretative repertoires.

The concept of interpretative repertoires was further developed as a theory and as an analytical tool, in the field of social psychology, by Potter and Wetherell (1987). They define interpretative repertoires as "basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events" (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.138). They are generally organised around one or more central concepts. Interpretative repertoires are socioculturally available ways of comprehending and constructing the world, allowing the individual to make sense of and account for themselves, others, society, and so forth (Potter and Mulkay 1985; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell 1998; Edley 2001). They are part of the culture's common-sense, rhetorically constructed, pre-figured resources for discursive improvisation, often expressing ideologically opposed subject positions (Edley 2001, p.198).

Interpretative repertoires are used by individuals as relatively coherent ways of talking about objects and events in the world (Edley 2001). In discourse analytic terms interpretative repertoires are the “building blocks of conversation”, a range of linguistic resources that the individual draws on in social interactions (Edley 2001, p.198):

Interpretative repertoires are part and parcel of any community’s common sense, providing a basis for shared social understanding. They can be usefully thought of as books on the shelves of a public library, permanently available for borrowing.

(Edley 2001, p.198)

The metaphor of the library book is particularly useful as it captures the point that when individuals talk about things they are using terms provided by history. Edley (2001) notes that the effect is that conversations are usually made up of a patchwork of “quotations” from various interpretative repertoires. Conversation is a rhetorically constructed quilt pieced together from many a “culturally familiar and habitual line of argument comprised of recognizable themes, common places and tropes” (Wetherell 1998, p.400). To use another metaphor, interpretative repertoires are like the pre-figured steps that can be flexibly and creatively strung together in the improvisation of a dance (Edley 2001, p.198). As a linguistic resource, an interpretative repertoire may be put to a number of uses, dependent upon contingency and context; for example (to extend the metaphors) they may be taken off the shelf to be used for a rhetorical flourish

during an argument, or availed of to tap dance around a difficult conversational moment.

Edley (2001, p.198) suggests that, as with subject positions, finding interpretative repertoires is a “craft skill”, which may be developed through practice. The general rule is familiarity with the data, leading to the recognition of patterns across different individuals’ talk, particular images, metaphors or figures of speech: “This is a sure sign as an analyst that one is getting a feel for the ‘discursive terrain’ that makes up a particular topic or issue. In a very real sense it is an indication that one has captured or encountered most of what there is to say about a particular object or event” (Edley 2001, p.199). Wetherell and Potter suggest that analysis is not about following “rules or recipes”, but rather often involves “hunches” and the development of tentative interpretative schemes that may be abandoned or revised” (Wetherell and Potter 1988, p.177).

5.8 VALIDITY AND LIMITATIONS

The research follows Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) advice on analytic techniques that may be used to validate the findings of this kind of inquiry. The four main ones being: (a) coherence, (b) participants’ orientation, (c) new problems, and (d) fruitfulness (p.169). Potter and Wetherell contend that “A set of analytic claims should give coherence to a body of discourse” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.170). The analysis should show how the discourse fits together and how discursive structures produce effects and functions (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.170). The validity of the analysis is dependent upon the coherence of its case. Taking account of both the broad patterns and many of

the micro-sequences ensures that it will be tighter (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p. 170). Also, importantly, the search for coherence must be allied with the search for exceptions to the pattern, as they may point to interesting special features of the discourse, or cause the researcher to reconsider the analytic claims. The necessity is that the interpretation “makes sense” of the data.

A further criterion for validity points the analyst to focus on the interviewees’ orientation in the discourse. The interviewer should question how the interviewee views what is going on in the context so as not to apply unwarranted analyst-driven assumptions. Potter and Wetherell illustrate this in relation to variability and consistency, noting that it is not sufficient for the analyst to say that a statement is consistent and another dissonant: “the important thing is the orientation of the participants, what *they* see as consistent and different” [italics in original] (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.170). If it is not obvious that the interviewees orientate to the interpretation provided by the analyst then the issue of the validity of the findings is in question (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p. 171).

A further criterion for validity is, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 171), clarifying the linguistic resources used to make certain things happen. This may result in solving problems, but at the same time creating new problems. This is an effect that offers validation, as “The existence of new problems, and solutions, provides further confirmation that linguistic resources are being used as hypothesized” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.171). As an example Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.171) point to the turn taking organisation proposed by conversation analysts, who, once having explained its effectiveness for

producing coherent sequential discourse, had to engage with the resultant problem of explaining how individuals manage to end conversations. The criterion of fruitfulness is, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987), in many ways the most powerful, referring to the scope of the analytical scheme to comprehend new forms of discourse and to generate novel explanations. Essentially the analyst is being asked to generate fresh explanations and insights that are useful.

The researcher has already discussed a number of inherent limitations of the research method and process in the previous sections. Some further more general limitations exist - particularly the limited generalisability of the research. The researcher limits his findings to the local discourse of the individuals interviewed, with any generalisation done with the utmost trepidation. Antaki et al note:

It is fatally easy to slip into treating one's findings as if they were true of all members of the category in which one has cast one's respondents ... Probably few discourse analysts want or intend explicitly to be reporting surveys; but without care, their reports may give that impression. Such a fault makes the work an easy target for the quantitatively-minded, who will properly see it as failing to supply use evidence for its claims. If a survey is wanted, survey tools must be used.

(Antaki et al 2003, p.27)

To be clear, the choice of sample, its size and make-up, is not a limitation as understood within the discourse analytic method of this research; however, it is important to state the limitation the researcher places on himself, aware of the necessity to focus on the discourse as a local and global phenomenon, rather than assuming that the interpretation can be casually taken from the local and applied to the global.

A further few specific limitations have been encountered in the working through of this research project. These are specific to the logistics of the work at hand, rather than theory-based. The researcher considers the engagement with the Cyclecharity organisation to have been extremely useful. It “fit the bill” as an organisation that recruits only episodic volunteers, freshly recruiting and retaining individuals on an annual per charity challenge episode basis. The limitation occurred in accessing interviewees, as has been noted earlier, due to administrative issues within the organisation that effectively meant no records were available to choose interviewees from. This has caused no real difficulty to the research - all of the individuals contacted were young Irish adults, they are of a mix of genders, and come from all over Ireland, as the result of careful screening by the researcher. It is a screening process nevertheless that was based upon limited information, and a process of coaxing of information from interviewees, which resulted in individuals offering details of friends and acquaintances. The effect has been that the majority of the interviewees are from only a handful of educational institutions.

A further limitation has been caused by the necessity to interview some of the interviewees on the telephone. This is not considered by the researcher to

be a major problem, as the focus was on the discourse. But it is still an issue, which was caused by the impossibility of scheduling face-to-face interviews, due to some of the interviewees work, educational and social commitments. Being interviewed on the telephone did not appear to concern the interviewees, who are, in comparison to the researcher, of a generation that has grown up with mobile phones, and appeared to be as conversational on the telephone as they might have been face to face. Not having the researcher in the room did not appear to hinder responses. There is no apparent difference between interviews on the telephone and face to face. The researcher considers that this validates the choice to do interviews over the telephone.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out how the research has been driven at its core by the question “How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?”. It is a question that is most usefully considered from a social constructionist perspective, through the method of discourse analysis. The particular form of discourse analysis, that of Wetherell and Edley (Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1998, 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999; Edley 2001), is founded upon that developed by Potter and Wetherell (1987). It is also informed by Alvesson and Kärreman’s (2000) comments on considering the level of meaning in the discourse. The discourse analytic tools of subject positions and interpretative repertoires are those chosen to develop an understanding of how the 17 young Irish adult interviewees achieve the volunteer identity. In analysing the interviews they are considered to be both a resource for, and the topic of, the analysis. This perspective allows the

researcher to be faithful to and critical of the research data as a space in which versions of the social world are constructed and in which those versions are used by the interviewees (and interviewer) to achieve particular identity work. The following chapters present an analysis of the interview data using the methodology described in this chapter.

6 ANALYSIS I: THE CONVENTIONAL NOTIONS OF THE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore young Irish adults' engagement as volunteers. This is done by analysing the discourse used by the interviewees (and the interviewer) in their talk about volunteering. For this research the discourse analytic method has been the lens. It has acted as both a magnifying glass and as a telescope, respectively working as a tool to consider society in the interaction and the interaction in society. The focus has been held true by the research question "How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?". The analysis is split into two chapters - Analyses I and II. Both chapters consider issues of identity construction and constraint - how we are all at the same time both the products and the producers of language (Billig 1991), enabled and constrained by language (Edley and Wetherell 1997, p.26). The first of the analysis chapters (Analysis I) focuses upon the discourses used and negotiated by the interviewees in the construction of their identities as volunteers. The second analysis chapter (Analysis II) uses social capital theory as a tool to consider how the volunteer identity is achieved in particular social settings.

6.1.1 The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement

The analysis found certain discourses which were consistently used by the interviewees and interviewer in the construction of the identity of volunteer and of volunteering. They are defined here collectively as *conventional notions of the volunteer engagement*. The terminology used makes it clear that the research found the interviewees and interviewer share particular concepts (notions) of what a volunteer is and what volunteering is about in the interviews. These are concepts that the research finds are generally held (a convention) by the interviewees and the interviewer in and across the interviews, a simple example is that the individual is volunteering for a cause - usually constructed as a “good” cause. The term “conventional notions” is derived from the work of Wetherell and Edley in which they explain their research interest in “how men position themselves in relation to conventional notions of the masculine” (Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.335). Their focus is on the discursive strategies involved in negotiating membership of gender categories - how do men take on the social identity of “being a man” as they talk, and what are the implications of the typical discursive paths they follow (Wetherell and Edley 1999, p.335)? This research has a similar aim, albeit with a different focus - the volunteer identity rather than the male identity. As such, this research borrows the term from the authors as a useful and proven label for the representation of the analysis findings.

This analysis has found that the interviewees and interviewer use the conventional notions of free will, biographical capability, prosocial/altruistic commitment, ideological revision, other-focused change, the good cause, prosocial solidarity, and organisational prosocial credibility in the achievement of

the identity of volunteer. Table 6.1 presents the conventional notions alongside a brief description of how they are constructed, and further offers an extract from an interview to illustrate their use.

Table 6.1: The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement

Conventional notions	Constructed as	Interview extract
free will	the voluntary nature of the choice to engage and continue to engage as a volunteer	“I wanted to do some charity work”
biographical capability	self-determined biographical action	“I haven’t been able to get much done in that period of time. But, in previous jobs ... when I worked in the Students’ Union ... when I was a child ... I never had this work and volunteering thing”
prosocial/altruistic commitment	a fidelity to an other-focused cause	“Because you’ve seen the kids and you want to give as much back to them. You see a problem you can’t always expect somebody else to fix it. You have to help out yourself as well”
ideological revision	a change to the interviewee’s system of ideas and ideals about the world	“So I think Cyclecharity and other things like that really kinda make you think, oh it’s not just my little life, you know. I’m not just living in this bubble where it’s all about me, me, me”
other-focused change	achieving or changing something for the beneficiaries of the civil society organisation	“I mean we helped to build a house for kids who leave that orphanage ... it’s worth it, the time and that, you’re doing it to make their lives better”
the good cause	the prosocial reason for the existence of the civil society organisation and its volunteers	“I showed them the sponsorship card and showed them what we were trying to do and we were trying to help children in, like disadvantaged children over there”
prosocial solidarity	a unity or agreement of feeling or action that is other-focused	“So like, it really was a group of people that, really wanted to, just a caring group of people, that wanted to get to know each other and make this experience that was really worthwhile”
organisational prosocial credibility	the organisation being trustworthy, capable, and engaged in the achievement of a prosocial cause	“I just think they they’re, the company itself, the organisation, the people who work there they have a lot to offer and they’re amazing people for what they do”

Source: derived by the author from the interview data

The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement were found through a process of coding to make analytical sense of the interview data (Mason 2005, pp.154-156). This involved a number of close readings of each interview. The close readings resulted in the finding of particular general discourses, evident across and within the interviews - presented here as the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement. As the researcher's familiarity with the data increased, the discourses were given particular descriptions (Mason 2005, pp. 159-161). The indexing of the data presented opportunities to note further instances of the general discourses used by the interviewees (and the interviewer) to construct the identity of volunteer. This gave the researcher confidence as to the robust nature of the indexing process and its capability to provide a useful interpretation of the interview data. The Exhibits were chosen as they are rich examples of the ways in which the relationships were constructed by the interviewees.

With the research question in mind, the analysis examined how the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement were manipulated and negotiated by the interviewees in their achievement of their identities as volunteers. The analysis then turned to asking if the discourses were similar to those suggested in prior research. Following this the analysis turned to the question of what new discourses, or different manipulations and negotiations of discourses found in other research, were occurring in the interviews.

The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement are set out in the order presented in this chapter due to the researcher's view that it is a useful

way to discuss and illuminate the findings of the research. The conventional notion of free will is set out first as it is arguably the fundamental conventional notion of volunteering (see Cnaan and Amroffell 1994; Cnaan et al 1996; Handy et al 2000). The conventional notion of biographical capability is presented next as the research finds that the discourse is interlinked with that of free will by the interviewees and interviewer. The participants construct how the choice to engage as a volunteer is dependent upon the biographical capability to enact that decision. The conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment follows on from that of biographical capability as this research considers it to illuminate further what the individual is pledging their biographical capability to. Following that the conventional notion of ideological revision is presented as it identifies the construction of the change in the interviewees' thinking about volunteering. The conventional notion of other-focused change is then presented to show that the choice, biographical capability and (revised ideological) commitment of the individuals are constructed in the interviews as resulting in change for the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. The conventional notion of the good cause is then presented, illustrating the interviewees' efforts to construct the cause as being virtuous. The conventional notion of prosocial solidarity is then presented, as it offers insight into the construction of the relationship between the volunteers. Finally, the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility is presented as it points out how the interviewees construct the relationship with the civil society organisation. The following sections set out the findings gleaned from the analysis of the interview data.

6.2 FREE WILL

This research finds that a conventional notion that is used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of free will. It is used by the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer. It is constructed as a discourse of the voluntary nature of the choice to engage and continue to engage as a volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of free will in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.2.1 Analysis

Exhibit 1

Interviewer: *I mean, so how come you took the time out of, of, of your life to actually do this bit of volunteering and fundraising for [Cyclecharity]?*

Therese: *At the time I was just finished college and I didn't really want to go working. But I wanted to do some charity work. But, ehm, I just couldn't afford to go for three months. I was thinking of going to an orphanage for three months, working over in an orphanage. But I just couldn't afford it.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 33-40

In Exhibit 1 the interviewee and I construct the identity of volunteer using the conventional notion of free will. The extract is about the interviewee's decision to volunteer with Cyclecharity. Evident in this extract is the work by both participants to construct the interviewee's achievement of the identity of volunteer as being of her own free will (the conventional notion of free will), and further as a self-determined biographical action (the conventional notion of biographical capability, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section), rather than as non-voluntary or coerced activity (Interviewer: "how

come you took the time out of, of, of your life to actually do this bit of volunteering and fundraising for [Cyclecharity]?”; Therese: “I wanted to do some charity work”). The free will to volunteer is constructed by the interviewee as curtailed by social forces, particularly related to the job market, beyond the interviewee’s control (“I just couldn’t afford to go for three months ... I just couldn’t afford it”).

My question juxtaposes an interpretative repertoire of free will (“*how come you*”) and one of biographical capability (“*took the time out of your life*”) - a juxtaposition which is repeated in the interviewee’s response. In this manner I position the interviewee initially to the volunteer subject position (free will) and then the self-determined subject position (biographical capability). In doing so I make credible the interviewee’s identity as a volunteer - constructing it as an identity achieved through her own free will, uncoerced by others, and biographically achieved, unconstrained by social forces. The interviewee replies by constructing the volunteer engagement as her choice, using the free will interpretative repertoire (“*I didn’t really want to*”), juxtaposing this with the potential alternative social and economic constraint - employment (“*to go working*”).

The response continues with Therese positioning herself using the free will interpretative repertoire (“*I wanted to do some charity work*”) as having been a volunteer *in potentia*. Her positioning of herself using the biographical capability interpretative repertoire (“*I just couldn’t afford to go for three months. I was thinking of going to an orphanage for three months, working over in an*

orphanage. But I just couldn't afford it") to the self-determined subject position emphasises how her free will to achieve the identity of volunteer was constrained by social and economic forces. The interviewee manipulates the conventional notions of free will and biographical capability to construct both the volunteer identity and an identity as a volunteer *in potentia*.

Exhibit 2

Interviewer: *And so how come Cyclecharity was the thing you chose to do? I mean, I know, I appreciate it came in at a time in your life when I guess you were finishing your degree and*

Therese: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *and, ehm, you had plenty of other things on your plate. As you, as you said. Plenty of other people have told me about their own experiences of finishing their degrees. I mean why choose Cyclecharity of all the other things you could have done?*

Therese: *Well Cyclecharity was something that was organised by the college, DIT, so it was. Everyone knew about it. And knew about the Cyclecharity Walk that there used to be held instead of Cyclecharity. And it was, it was very easy to sign up to, cos if you go and work for GOAL or stuff you have to go through a lot of, a lot of application processes and stuff. So it was just easy at the time to sign up for that charity.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 63-72

In Exhibit 2, an extract from Therese's interview, the conventional notion of free will is again evident in both participants' talk. I return to the question of why the interviewee chose to volunteer at that moment in her life, using the free will interpretative repertoire to position her as a volunteer ("*so how come Cyclecharity was the thing you chose to do*"). Again in this extract free will is juxtaposed with biographical capability. The interviewee is positioned using the volunteer subject position ("*I mean why choose Cyclecharity*") and the self-determined subject position ("*you had plenty of other things on your plate*") as a volunteer. In this way I continue to construct the interviewee's volunteer identity as dependent upon free will and constrained by biographical capability.

In her response the interviewee evidences her choice (free will) to engage through reference to her decision-making process, rather than acting out of blind compliance - evidencing her choice of Cyclecharity as informed by her prior knowledge (*“something that was organised by the college, DIT, so it was. Everyone knew about it. And knew about the Cyclecharity Walk that there used to be held instead of Cyclecharity”*) and the administrative process through which she engaged (*“And it was, it was very easy to sign up to”*).

Exhibit 3

Interviewer: *Would you ever do a bit of the evangelising, you know, come along and give it a try, sort of?*

Brendan: *No, not really, I mean, if some someone asked me about it, how did you get interested, how did you get involved and things. I would certainly, you know, it s not preaching. I would try to encourage them as much as I can. But if I was actually asked I wouldn t force my opinion on them, what I thought, how I think everybody should volunteer on anyone else.*

Source: Interview II Brendan (5/9/06): 139-143

In Exhibit 3 I ask if *“evangelising”* is something that Brendan engages in. The use of the word *“evangelising”*, seeking converts (normally in reference to Christianity, though not used in that sense here), receives a response from the interviewee that evidences the necessity to construct the volunteer engagement as the result of free will rather than any form of overt influence by others. Brendan responds by working up a rhetorical defence to the suggestion that another individual’s identity as a volunteer may result due to coercion on his part. He does so by using the free will interpretative repertoire in order to construct the advice that he would give to others to volunteer as non-coercive

(“if some someone asked me about it ... it s not preaching ... I wouldn t force my opinion on them”). He positions himself as an encourager rather than an evangeliser - supporting the concept of volunteering, rather than seeking converts.

Exhibit 4

Interviewer: *Would you ever, I mean, it sounds that you d be concerned, maybe, they d have a negative reaction or*

Brendan: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *I mean, what s your opinion?*

Brendan: *I think that volunteering is not for everybody and if you re forced into doing it it s a bit like community service.*

Source: Interview II Brendan (5/9/06): 145-148

Exhibit 4 follows on from the last extract and again highlights the necessity to construct the identity of volunteer using the conventional notion of free will rather than one of coercion. Brendan responds to my question using the free will interpretative repertoire to emphasise that volunteering is a choice (“*I think that volunteering is not for everybody*”). The interviewee constructs the effect of having no choice, not being able to enact free will, to determine whether volunteering should be a part of the reflexive biography of the self, as a form of punishment (“*if you re forced into doing it it s a bit like community service*”).

Exhibit 5

Interviewer: So you wouldn't, you wouldn't. I remember Jack talking about, I mean, I guess Jack started quite late in life in a way, in the sense of starting his own charity up. But he said there comes a time in a person's life when they'll do it. It has to be the right time.

Brendan: Yeah

Interviewer: Do you feel that? The right character or the right time?

Brendan: Yeah

Interviewer: Is there a particular

Brendan: Yeah. I definitely would agree what he said there about the right time. I know personally that I had planned and thought about the Simon Community before I went away and travelled. I felt I wasn't ready to do it. I didn't have the time to commit and it was, I felt I wasn't ready to commit and it just wasn't the right time in my life for it. And then when I came home from traveling it kinda hit me again. I remember before like I went away I wanted to do it. And I came back to volunteering with the Simon [Community] and I did it. Because it was definitely the right time in my life to do it.

Source: Interview II Brendan (5/9/06): 151-173

Exhibit 5 begins with my recalling a conversation with the organiser of the charity, in which Jack O' Neil proposed that the construction of the identity of volunteer is contingent upon a particular biographical moment, "*the right time*". Brendan acknowledges my construction as appropriate - that the free will to be a volunteer is dependent upon a biographical capability ("*Yeah... Yeah*"). The interviewee positions himself, using the volunteer subject position, as reflexively making a choice of his own free will to engage in volunteering with the Simon Community, choosing when to make it a biographical choice ("*I know personally that I had planned and thought about the Simon Community before I went away and travelled*"). The use of the free will interpretative repertoire is followed by the interviewee using the biographical capability interpretative repertoire to position himself as self-determined in making volunteering part of his reflexive project of the self ("*I felt I wasn't ready to do it. I didn't have the time to commit ... it just wasn't the right time in my life for it ... I came back to volunteering with the*

Simon [Community] and I did it. Because it was definitely the right time in my life to do it").

6.2.2 Discussion

This research shows how a conventional notion of free will is used in relation to talk about volunteering and is used by the interviewees to construct their identities as volunteers. It is constructed as the ability to act at one's own discretion, unconstrained by other forces - a choice in the interviewee's reflexive project of the self. It is used in the interviews at moments where the participants construct the biographical choices available to the interviewees at the time of volunteering - in talk about engaging with Cyclecharity, other organisations, and future volunteering.

The analysis points to how volunteering is constructed in these instances as a choice of biographical project that may be incorporated into the interviewee's life. It is constructed as one of a number of elective identities available to the interviewee at that moment in their life - particularly careerist (a job or career-related education) and hedonistic (a holiday) - which may be taken up and engaged in at that particular biographical moment. For many of the interviewees it is constructed as the choosing of a temporarily usable identity, available in a transitional moment, in which institutionally prescribed careerist and hedonistic identities are not exerting pressure on their free will to choose to volunteer.

The analysis finds that the conventional notion of free will is constructed to differentiate the identity of volunteer from other identities - it is voluntary - enacted out of one's own free will, without undue influence or coercion from others or other social forces (such as the necessity to enter into a career). The importance of this discourse has been highlighted in Cnaan et al's (1996) work in which they engaged in an in-depth literature review to ascertain a definition of the volunteer and most particularly its sociocultural boundaries of use. The authors' synthesising of multiple definitions of the volunteer found a hierarchy of dimensions, of which "free choice" was primary as a discourse for defining the volunteer (Cnaan et al 1996, p.369). The research found that within the dimension of free will categories existed that are accepted as relevant in defining someone as a volunteer (Cnaan et al 1996, p.370). These were found to be ranging from (1) free will, (2) relatively uncoerced, and (3) obligation to volunteer. The authors found that all definitions of the volunteer accepted category 1 (free will) as relevant in defining a volunteer, pure definitions would not accept category 2 (relatively uncoerced), and only the broadest definitions would accept category 3 (obligation to volunteer). This research adds depth to Cnaan et al's (1996) findings. The analysis points out how the interviewees in this research work to construct their identities as volunteers as close to Cnaan et al's (1996) category 1 - that the volunteer engagement is of their free will, a voluntary choice - as possible. Any deviation from this "pure" definition is countered with a rhetoric that works to return the construction of the identity of volunteer to its being a choice made of free will. This finding adds a new richness to Handy et al's testing of Cnaan et al's (1996) synthesis - that in the definition of the volunteer what is shared cross-culturally is an understanding of "the two polar ends of who is 'definitely' a volunteer and who is not" (Handy et al

2000, p.64). This research shows that the question of who is “definitely” a volunteer is a constantly contested issue, as the interviewees work up the identity in and across contexts using the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement.

This research finds that the juxtaposition of the conventional notion of free will and biographical capability suggests that the *enactment* of free will is vital to the identity of volunteer. A discourse of free will is essential to the identity of volunteer, but without the concomitant discourse of biographical capability the identity is not credible. The findings show that to talk about choosing to volunteer and to talk about being incapable of enacting that choice negates the identity. The movement from volunteer *in potentia* to volunteer *in actuality* is dependent upon biographical capability. The interviewees’ construction of the overcoming of obstacles, whether they are personal or social, emphasises the enactment of free will. Obstacles, or costs to the volunteer, according to Cnaan et al, increase the “purity” of the volunteer identity (Cnaan et al 1996, p.373). An individual for whom the net cost of volunteering is low is, according to the authors, viewed as less of a volunteer than someone with high net costs (Cnaan et al 1996, p.37). The analysis of the interview data finds that all the interviewees here construct net costs to their decision to engage and continue to engage as a volunteer. The finding suggests that for the interviewees there is a constant cost/benefit analysis of sorts as to the use of volunteering in their reflexive projects of the self. This adds new insight to Cnaan et al’s (1996) findings, offering evidence of a continual monitoring of the purity of the volunteer identity as the individual works up the identity in each new context.

6.3 BIOGRAPHICAL CAPABILITY

The analysis of the interview data finds that a conventional notion that is used by the interviewees and interviewer to construct the identity of volunteer is that of biographical capability. It is constructed as a discourse of self-determined biographical action. The following extracts show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of biographical capability as it is used by the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer.

6.3.1 Analysis

Exhibit 6

Interviewer: *Now the first question to begin the interview is, ahh, a quite straight forward question. Ehm. Who are you?*

Carol: *(laughs) Ehm. I don't know. I'm a twenty four year old. Ehm, recently started a new job. Just at the minute trying to get myself on some sort of career path. Ehm, currently happy. That's about me. Still live with my parents.*

Interviewer: *(laughs) And how does the volunteering fit into that, that description [of who you are]?*

Carol: *It is a bit tough. I did just start the new job and I'm literally just in it for a month. So I haven't been able to get much done in that period of time. But, in previous jobs I was in, when I worked in the Students Union, for example, it was a lot easier to give your time to something, because the Students Union wanted you to give your time to that cause. Ehm, other charities that I've been involved in generally, when I was a child, or when I was a student, I never had this work and volunteering thing. It's difficult at the minute, but I'm sure I'll be able to figure it out once I get settled in.*

Source: Interview III Carol (13/8/06): 1-19

In Exhibit 6 the identity of volunteer is constructed, using the conventional notion of biographical capability, in relation to the identity of student and careerist. This extract begins with my asking the interviewee, Carol, to describe

who she is. Carol begins her reply with her age and then positions herself as a careerist (“*recently started a new job ... get myself on some sort of career path*”). It is an identity that she goes on to construct as an obstacle to the biographical capability to achieve the identity of volunteer.

I ask Carol to explain how she is able to fit volunteering into her life, suggesting that the interviewee is, in achieving that identity, engaged in a reflexive organisation of her project of the self to contend with delimiting sociocultural pressures (“*And how does the volunteering fit into that, that description [of who you are]?*”). In response Carol positions herself as a particular type of volunteer, an episodic volunteer, in the recent and distant past, and in the future. She does this not by simply listing her volunteer experiences, but instead by identifying the sociocultural pressures that are affecting her biographical capability to engage as a volunteer. Carol uses the conventional notion of biographical capability in order to offer a reflexive comparison of the self-determination necessary to engage as a credible volunteer in her present life and the biographical capability necessitated previously, prior to her starting on a “*career path*” (“*I haven't been able to get much done in that period of time. But, in previous jobs... when I worked in the Students Union ... when I was a child ... I never had this work and volunteering thing*”). In engaging in this rhetoric the interviewee uses the self-determined subject position to emphasise her achievement of the identity of volunteer in spite of sociocultural pressures. Those pressures are constructed as causing her biographical capability to achieve the identity of volunteer to be more “*tough ... difficult*”. The “*work and volunteering thing*” is constructed as causing the interviewee to reflexively reconsider her biographical capability to construct her volunteer identity (“*It s*

difficult at the minute, but I m sure I ll be able to figure it out once I get settled in”). It is a reflexivity that is required in order to overcome the demands of her career.

Exhibit 7

Interviewer: *Did you, so did you actually do anything like that. Did you go out or did you not participate in anything?*

Tommy: *Well, I didn t actually partake. I didn t actually get involved with the organisation [an educational civil society organisation]. But I did go out and visit, you know, to see the work that they did. I saved up that summer and I went out and visited them. I didn t have that much time to give, obviously work on a career, you know, getting work experience. So, I didn t think I would have. I thought, like, I could go out, but, you know, I could give some money, you know, probably the money could be more benefit than the work I could do, you know. So that was my thinking behind that.*

Interviewer: *And so have you not really, kind of, ehm, done that much, that much volunteering until you, you were actually asked to get out there and fundraise for this event?*

Tommy: *Ehm, well I did do more fundraising during the year for another charity, CARII,*

Interviewer: *okay*

Tommy: *Children at Risk*

Interviewer: *Right*

Tommy: *in Ireland. Ehm, I fund, I had an event for them during the year. Ehm. And I ran a battle of the bands contest. So that raised a thousand euro doing that. So, you know, I do an odd thing.*

Interviewer: *Ehm*

Tommy: *But I wouldn t, I wouldn t go over the top. I wouldn t spend too much time, you know, doing these different fundraising events or anything.*

Source: Interview XVII Tommy (16/9/06): 72-103

In Exhibit 7 the conventional notion of biographical capability is used by the interviewee to construct the predominance of the careerist identity/ biographical project over that of the volunteer identity at a particular moment in his life. The extract follows a discussion of Tommy’s past volunteering. I ask if the interviewee did engage in the particular episodic volunteering that he had been speaking about (at some length) in the previous reply, yet never made entirely explicit as to whether he was actually a volunteer or only considering

that identity. I ask if the interviewee engaged as a volunteer and the interviewee replies by positioning himself as a spectator, rather than as a volunteer (*"But I did go out and visit, you know, to see the work that they did"*). In this case the identity of volunteer is conceded by the interviewee as biographically impossible to achieve because of his choice to achieve a different identity, as a careerist, rather than reflexively contend with sociocultural pressures (*"time"*) in order to achieve the identity of volunteer. The interviewee constructs how he chose to position himself as a careerist. He constructs his biographical incapability to achieve the identity of volunteer (using the conventional notion of biographical capability), as a result of the constraints of time and career (*"I didn't have that much time to give, obviously work on a career, you know, getting work experience"*).

I go on to position the interviewee as a relatively new volunteer, limited in experience (*"And so have you not really, kind of, ehm, done that much, that much volunteering"*), following Tommy's positioning of himself using the self-determined subject position as an apparent (at least to me) non-volunteer. Tommy responds to my positioning by repositioning himself as an episodic volunteer, explicitly outlining his biographical capability to achieve a number of episodes of volunteering, in order to credential his identity as a volunteer.

My positioning of Tommy causes him to counter rhetorically by positioning himself explicitly and distinctly as an episodic volunteer (*"I did do more fundraising during the year for another charity...And I ran a battle of the bands contest"*). In this positioning the interviewee constructs the volunteering as occasional *"an odd thing"*, on which he *"wouldn't spend too much time"*. It is in

these comments that the conventional notion of biographical capability is particularly evident - in using this nonchalant, disinterested tone, the interviewee sets in relief the careful explication of the fundraising (note how he does not simply give the acronym CARII, but the full title) that he uses to evidence his biographical capability to construct a credible identity as an episodic volunteer.

6.3.2 Discussion

The analysis presented here and that gleaned from the interviews shows that the conventional notion of biographical capability is used to construct the volunteer identity as biographically self-determined and achieved in opposition to particular socioeconomic factors. The interviewees appear to be negotiating distinct tensions as they work on, what Giddens describes as, the “aim of building/rebuilding a coherent and rewarding sense of identity” (Giddens 1991, p.75). Those tensions are constructed as two particular biographical constraints upon the achievement of the identity of volunteer - their achievement of careerist and hedonist identities/biographies.

The research finds that the construction of the identity of volunteer, using the conventional notion of biographical capability, points to the interviewees engaging in an “individuated form of commitment” in their volunteering (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172). Evident in the data is a reflexiveness on the part of the interviewees in their choice to use volunteering as a tool in the construction of their lives. The biographical work necessary to achieve an identity as a volunteer is constructed as useful to the reflexive project of the self at the moment of volunteering in comparison to choosing other identities. The

interviewees' reflexiveness is particularly evident in the talk about social pressures to enter employment or focus upon the completion of their studies, or concentrate upon career or familial relationships. This reflexivity appears to affect whether the interviewee chooses to expend their biographical capability upon volunteering.

The research finds that the interviewees construct volunteering as a self-focused experience in their reflexive project of the self - they are engaging in something new and challenging. The analysis adds depth to the finding that young Swiss adults are motivated to volunteer as "a quest for oneself" and "a quest for the new" (Rehberg 2005, pp.116-119). This research finds that the interviewees construct volunteering as the gaining of experience for oneself, discovering personal limits - discourses that Rehberg (2005, pp.114-116) suggests are evidence of a "quest for oneself". Further, the interviewees construct their need to experience something "new" (for example volunteering itself, a new country, a new challenge). The findings presented here show that the decision to volunteer is not undertaken entirely for the self, but is also constructed as needing to be other-focused, prosocial and altruistic.

The analysis further points to the finding that the use of the conventional notion of biographical capability is also particularly evident in the interviewees' talk about the choice of the form of volunteering - episodic engagements. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) note that individuals engaged in new forms of volunteering, such as episodic, engage in activities that match their biographical capability at that moment. The authors consider that the individual pragmatically balances her or his needs with the organisation's and its beneficiaries' (Hustinx

and Lammertyn 2003, p.172). This research deepens this understanding of the pragmatism behind the decision to volunteer. The analysis suggests that the interviewees' pragmatism goes beyond balancing the needs of the self, the organisation and its beneficiaries to a consideration of other identities/ biographical projects that might be achieved and to the socioeconomic forces that constrain their achievement. The findings suggest that biographical capability does not simply relate to the "right time" or the right cause to engage with but also to the engagement's compatibility with other biographical projects in the elective biography, which themselves are either chosen through free will or are prescribed.

The research finds that the interviewees and interviewer use the conventional notion of biographical capability to construct the effects of particular institutionalised sociocultural pressures, particularly relating to the achievement of a career and to hedonism, upon their achievement of the identity of volunteer. The interviewees use the discourse to construct particular prescriptions - the most prevalent being that they should engage in a linear progression from a student identity to a careerist identity, either through employment or entering a career-focused educational course. Further, they outline a prescription on focusing upon volunteering once employed. Empirical evidence of the refocusing away from volunteering when employed has been found by Oesterle et al (2004). The authors found that for young American adults being employed full-time reduced volunteering - for each month of full-time work in a given year the odds of volunteering that year were reduced by 4 per cent (Oesterle et al 2004, pp.1139-1140). The authors conclude that "Involvement in work, rather than promoting volunteering by providing social integration, actually hinders volunteer

participation in early adulthood” (Oesterle et al 2004, pp.1139-1140). The prescriptions presented in the interviews are constructed as causing the volunteer identity to be necessarily achieved in particular transitional moments between other identities - in moments where there is “room” to achieve the identity without damaging the credibility of the other. The transitional moment between the student identity and the careerist/hedonist identity is constructed as a moment in which the individual is biographically capable of achieving the identity. The transitional moment between career and other identities (for example hedonistic) is constructed by those interviewees who were employed as a moment in which significant biographical effort/capability is required to achieve the identity of volunteer.

6.4 PROSOCIAL/ALTRUISTIC COMMITMENT

A conventional notion used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of prosocial/altruistic commitment. It is constructed as a fidelity to an other-focused cause and used to achieve the identity of volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.4.1 Analysis

Exhibit 8

Interviewer: *It sounds like a lot of work [the engagement with the charity]. Why do it? You know, you re just starting a new career. Why add to the burden on your time, your leisure time, time with friends?*

Carol: *I, ehm, got involved in Cyclecharity walk when I was a student at college and then whenever I started working in the students union I was taken out on a trip to Belarus and because of what you see and because of what you hear when you re there. Maybe things you don t even see, but you know, or maybe know are happening, you want to just, you just want to help out. Because you ve seen the kids and you want to give as much back to them. You see a problem you can t always expect somebody else to fix it. You have to help out yourself as well.*

Source: Interview III Carol (13/8/06): 34-43

Exhibit 8 begins with my positioning the interviewee, using the careerist interpretative repertoire, as a careerist (“*you re just starting a new career*”), and also as a hedonist using the hedonistic interpretative repertoire. I construct these identities as requiring significant biographical commitment (“*Why add to the burden on your time, your leisure time, time with friends?*”), constructing volunteering as a difficult and unnecessary adjunct to those biographical accomplishments (“*It sounds like a lot of work [engagement with the charity]. Why do it?*”).

The interviewee uses the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment to position herself to the prosocial/altruistic commitment subject position (“*because of what you see and because of what you hear when you re there ... to help out*”). This subject position is further reinforced using the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment, in Carol’s summarising of her engagement as one that is driven by a fidelity to the cause and its

beneficiaries. It is a fidelity that is dependent upon her own insight into the situation of the beneficiaries and her capability to change it (*“Because you’ve seen the kids and you want to give as much back to them. You see a problem you can’t always expect somebody else to fix it. You have to help out yourself as well”*). The interviewee’s use of the talk about the beneficiaries suggests the importance of emphasising an other-focused commitment, of using the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment.

Exhibit 9

Interviewer: *What are you giving yourself? You talk about wanting to give more, what are you giving of yourself?*

Lucy: *I’d say a lot of my emotions and physical energy at the moment. Ehm, I’m giving myself wholeheartedly to it because it’s, I’ve gone, I’ve given a whole career direction change, in terms of like, I did physics, I did physics in college, initially. And from getting involved in Cyclecharity I, I, I realised that it opened up other doors for me that I otherwise wouldn’t have, otherwise basically got advantages, or at least gotten to see. Ehm. And I was, it was annoying because I wanted to really get involved with a charity and it’s so hard, it’s so hard to get involved with charity work and humanitarian aid because there’s so many people out there who want to do it, who want to be the givers and carers and all that of the world, but unless you have something under your belt, potentially under your belt, in terms of educational qualification it’s very hard to get in there. So, when I decided I’m giving so much to it, I want to give so much to it, so why not go back and do a degree that’s going to basically be a stepping-stone for me to go and do that full-time after college.*

Source: Interview VIII Lucy (15/8/06): 70-76

Exhibit 9 begins with my asking a question about commitment (*“What are you giving yourself? You talk about wanting to give more, what are you giving of yourself?”*), asking Lucy to explain her dedication to volunteering. Using the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment I force Lucy to engage in a defence of her identity as a volunteer. In her reply Lucy constructs her commitment to volunteering as prosocially/altruistically unrestrained (*“I’m giving myself wholeheartedly to it”*), referencing her ongoing biographical work (*“I’ve*

given a whole career direction change"). But she further points out that her commitment is self-focused - it is pro-self/egocentric - in opposition to the prosocial/altruistic commitment subject position which she had previously constructed. When taken in relation to her emphasis on career-direction the following remark may be understood as a construction of career-focused commitment ("*I wanted to really get involved with a charity and it s so hard, it s so hard to get involved with charity work and humanitarian aid*") and her engagement with Cyclecharity as a tool to further that career ("*from getting involved in Cyclecharity I, I, I realised that it opened up other doors for me ... basically got advantages*"). Her commitment is constructed as self-focused. She uses the careerist interpretative repertoire to position herself as focused upon the realisation of her career goals ("*a whole career direction change ... it s so hard to get involved with charity work and humanitarian aid because there s so many people out there who want to do it*").

However, the interviewee also uses the prosocial/altruistic commitment interpretative repertoire to highlight that her focus upon self-realisation positions her as one of "*the givers and carers and all that of the world*". She underscores this positioning throughout the response by constructing how she is giving and not taking ("*I m giving myself wholeheartedly ... I ve given a whole career direction change ... I m giving so much to it, I want to give so much to it*"). In this manner Lucy uses the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment to rhetorically reconstruct her identity as a volunteer as credible.

Exhibit 10

Michael: *Just ehm. Like the fact, I would have done quite a bit of training for this and it wasn't a race. There was one particular girl, I'm not going to name her, I can't even name her anyway. But she found the cycling tough, you know.*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Michael: *But she wouldn't, she wouldn't be that muscular or anything. And she wasn't. She stayed on it, she might have come in last and she might have come in last by half an hour or less but she finished. You know.*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Michael: *And to me that made more of an impact on me than those that were up the top. You know, I'm just saying, like. Just things like that. And that brings out the, that brings out the, brings out a lot of fight in people and stuff like that, you know.*

Source: Interview X Michael (21/9/06): 446-463

In Exhibit 10 Michael goes on to construct the commitment of another volunteer, “*one particular girl*”, using the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment. He points out that volunteering is not about leading the group, at the head of the cycle, but about the strength of will required to achieve commitment (“*She stayed on it ... And to me that made more of an impact on me than those that were up the top*”). Michael constructs the young woman’s commitment as selfless and prosocial, in that she could at any time have given up. She is used as an exemplar of commitment to selflessly achieving the task necessary to raise the money for the cause - in this case by overcoming a lack of physical capability to achieve the aim of the cycle, to ride a set distance promised to her funders, in order to achieve the volunteering task (“*She stayed on it, she might have come in last and she might have come in last by half an hour or less but she finished*”).

Exhibit 11

Interviewer: *Do you think in the future there'll be, ah you'll be able to do this kind of thing again? Or will you carry on volunteering? Has it given you a taste*

Shauna: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *or is it something, it was right now, but later on you may be too busy with work and*

Shauna: *Ach, God, I hope that never happens. No, ah. No, I know it's not a one off. It's first of all cos Belarus, I'll always, no matter if I never get to volunteer again with that, you'll always have an affiliation with it. You know. I'm gonna see the person in the supermarket collecting for it, handing over probably as much as I could. I will always have an affiliation with it. And please God, I would, I would go again. It's kind of a selfish reason I'd be hesitant to do the Cyclecharity, because it's such an amazing experience, you know, as a group. I wonder, oh God, if next time it would be as good. Sure you'd just be dying to go back anyway too. As one guy said on the documentary, if I went back next year and I didn't see all the same people I'd be wondering where were you all. You know there's that kind of element. But, I would, I hope, please God, now I wouldn't be too busy at work I'd do something again. And I'd definitely do something other than Cyclecharity as well. I'd be open to doing other volunteer work. It's just you know I have finished my holiday, I have to get my first job (laughs). You know it's not always as easy as just have time to go away for like. You know?*

Source: Interview XIV Shauna (28/9/06): 478-500

Exhibit 11 begins with my asking Shauna if she is committed to engaging as a volunteer in the future (“*Do you think in the future there'll be, ah you'll be able to do this kind of thing again? ... will you carry on volunteering?*”). I construct the engagement with Cyclecharity as a sample of the volunteering she might continue with, dependent upon her interest (“*Has it given you a taste*”) and biographical capability (“*or is it something, it was right now, but later on you may be too busy with work and*”). Shauna constructs her commitment using the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment. Shauna positions herself, using the prosocial/altruistic commitment interpretative repertoire as a committed episodic volunteer (“*But, I would, I hope, please God, now I wouldn't be too busy at work I'd do something again. And I'd definitely do something*”).

other than Cyclecharity. I d be open to doing other volunteer work"). She constructs her future commitment as being a prosocial/altruistic commitment (using the prosocial/altruistic interpretative repertoire) to the civil society organisation, even though this may only be a very minimal engagement (*"you // always have an affiliation with it. You know. I m gonna see the person in the supermarket collecting for it, handing over probably as much as I could"*).

The use of the "God" trope on a number of occasions does not evidence the effect of religiosity upon Shauna's volunteer engagement but rather the interviewee's use of the norms of Irish society to construct her response. This analysis of the use of the trope is made clear in a later question in which I link volunteering with religious or political inclinations (*"is there anything else, like, you know, people who belong to charities which are related to churches, perhaps about their faith or, you know, other charities are about politics ... did that, has that ever figured in your mind, you know, about what you did. Religion or politics?"* [612-618]) to which Shauna responds that she acts/acted on "instinct" in her decision-making, rather than as the result of an orientation to a particular religious or political belief (*"I did this Cyclecharity, I go on things, I go on instinct. I don t really think things through very much. So I was like, Cyclecharity brilliant, raise money, brilliant."* [623-625]). The God trope is used in Exhibit 11 in the Irish vernacular, as a form of exclamation to express constructions of the future (*"Ach, God, I hope that never happens ... And please God, I would, I would go again ... I wonder, oh God, if next time it would be as good ... But, I would, I hope, please God, now I wouldn t be too busy at work I d do something again."*). I acknowledge the argument that the use of the God trope may suggest that the interviewee has a theistic conception of fate - that

there is a divine guiding hand at work in her life - though, even if this is the case, Shauna's construction of her engagement as a volunteer (and with other experiences) is explicitly identified by her as not the result of a religious (or political) belief but of her own secular decision-making processes, her "instinct".

6.4.2 Discussion

This research finds that the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment is necessary to the construction of the identity of volunteer. The use of the conventional notion suggests that the identity of volunteer is made credible by the construction of a choice to commit to a particular other-focused endeavour. In this case it is to the charity challenge for the Cyclecharity beneficiaries. It is an endeavour that is constructed by the interviewees as a deviation from a self-focus to an other-focus - to an overt and explicit care for others - for an episode, a transitional period.

The analysis of the interview data points out how the interviewees' talk about the commitment to a prosocial/altruistic aim is often constructed in dichotomy with pro-self/egocentric identities (to which the interviewees construct their commitment). This is particularly evident in relation to careerist and hedonistic identities. The research finds that this apparent dichotomy emphasises the peculiarity of the volunteer identity for the interviewees, when compared to their talk about other identities achieved in their past and future identities and life choices. In the interviews the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment is only used to construct the identity of volunteer. It is never used in

relation to talk about career or hedonistic pursuits. The focus in those discourses is upon pro-self/egocentric commitments.

The construction of the student and careerist identities, as a linear progression from one to the other, offers insight into the position of the volunteer identity in the interviewees' reflexive projects of the self. It is an adjunct to a particular socioculturally prescribed life course (as constructed by both interviewer and interviewee) from student to careerist. The identity of volunteer is constructed (as noted in the previous section) as a commitment that is achieved in a transitory moment for the majority of the interviewees (all except two of them who were engaged in long-term volunteering as well as with Cyclecharity), before reengaging with the prescription to progress from student to careerist identity/biographical projects.

This research shows how volunteering is constructed as a potential tool for achieving a career - a pro-self egocentric commitment. It is constructed as particularly useful as an addition to a CV and to use in job interviews. This is a finding that develops Clary et al (1998), Marta et al (2006) and Rehberg's (2005) interpretation of the motivations for volunteering of, respectively, volunteers in general and Italian and Swiss young adults, as being career-focused. In those cases the analysis suggested that volunteering was a positive tool for enhancing employment prospects. But this research adds new insight, as it finds that volunteering is also constructed here by the interviewees as limiting their potential career, as well as limiting their capability to achieve future familial responsibilities and relationships (parenting, for example) and hedonistic experiences (holidays and social activities). This agrees with and illuminates

Oesterle et al's (2004, pp.1139-1140) finding that involvement in work hinders volunteer participation in early adulthood. The research presented here finds that rather than an entirely positive choice in terms of employment and other biographical choices, volunteering is constructed as a limiting factor. This finding offers insight into the episodic nature of the interviewees' choice to volunteer. The volunteer identity is one that is achieved where there is a limited risk to other identities (particularly a careerist identity in the case of the young Irish adults) that the individual may perceive as more important or necessary to the reflexive project of the self. This offers a further example of the interviewees' reflexive awareness of their biographical capability and constraints upon their free will.

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct commitment both as ideological (requiring a reflexive thought process) and as requiring their agency (physical action) to achieve the task necessary for the "good" cause. Commitment to the 'good' cause is constructed as being as episodic as the interviewees' volunteering. It is constructed as fluidly movable between civil society organisations and their "good" causes, interrupted by other more urgent identity/biographical projects. This finding points to the interviewees as being episodic volunteers, according to the definition of episodic volunteers offered by Macduff (2005) and Handy et al (2006). The interviewees use discourses of duration of engagement and reengagement to construct their prosocial/altruistic commitment as delimited and contiguous from childhood into young adulthood and into their future lives.

Further, the interviewees use the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment to construct their fidelity to Cyclecharity as not only contingent upon a direct engagement with the organisation and its cause, but as remaining following disengagement, though diluted by the necessity of other identity/biographical work. The construction of such a long-term relationship further suggests the nature of the volunteer engagement as an identity/biographical project, with a clear beginning and end for the interviewees. It is an episodic volunteering engagement that continues in its shaping of the individual's reflexive project of the self over the longer-term.

6.5 IDEOLOGICAL REVISION

An analysis of the interview data finds that a conventional notion used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of ideological revision. It is constructed as a change to the interviewee's system of ideas and ideals about the world. The conventional notion is used by the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of ideological revision in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.5.1 Analysis

Exhibit 12

Interviewer: *I mean, do you see the likes of Cyclecharity and other organisations like that, are they following a similar vein? You know, in their*

Ellen: *Oh yeah, of course, like. I think, I think every type of volunteering, no matter what it does, whether it's with disabled children, or with, like, working with perfectly normal children, or helping in the GAA. I don't know whatever it is, like. All of it's about, you know, giving back, not giving back, but kinda just making the world a little bit better. It's kinda a bit clichéd, but like, you know, if everybody was just a bit more open, a little bit more open. And I'm not like, everybody's entitled, completely entitled to obviously their own beliefs and whatever. But everybody's entitled so everybody should be okay with everybody else. I dunno it's round some. I don't even think that we think about it that much, to be honest. It's just part of what we do. So I think Cyclecharity and other things like that really kinda make you think, oh it's not just my little life, you know. I'm not just living in this bubble where it's all about me, me, me. There's so much out there. And it's so easy and so rewarding. And I think you can be quite selfish about it and say it is very rewarding and that's mainly why I do it. But that's okay. So it's just about giving a little bit, I think.*

Source: Interview V Ellen (17/9/06): 698-715

In Exhibit 12 the interviewee uses the conventional notion of ideological revision to construct her identity as a volunteer as requiring a revision in her way of thinking. Ellen constructs volunteering as a compassionate prosocial endeavor, aimed at “*making the world a little better*” whilst juxtaposing this with a construction of her non-volunteering self and non-volunteers in general as “*living in this bubble where it's all about me, me, me*”. The engagement is constructed as requiring a revision from a pro-self egocentric ideology to one that is prosocial and altruistic. Using the conventional notion of ideological revision she emphasises that it is through an engagement with a civil society organisation such as Cyclecharity that this change in ideas and ideals may occur (“*So I think Cyclecharity and other things like that really kinda make you think, oh it's not just*

my little life, you know. I m not just living in this bubble where it s all about me, me, me”).

The revision is interestingly constructed as the stepping outside of an ideological “bubble” to “so much [that is] out there”, that goes beyond “where it s all about me, me, me”. This suggests that other identities, that are constructed elsewhere in the interview by the interviewee as self-focused (those that are principally about her self-fulfillment and self-realisation), for example the careerist and hedonist identities, are within the interviewee’s and others’ “everyday” ideological bubble, which contains a self-focused drive for the “me, me, me”. The identity of the volunteer is constructed as outside of the “me” bubble, driven by an other-focused ideology (predominantly about others’ self-fulfillment and self-realisation) of “making the world a little better”.

Exhibit 13

Interviewer: *Do you think anger is not a good emotion, a useful emotion in these kind of situations? You have to*

Brendan: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *Like you said before*

Brendan: *I think in these situations if you re angry you might get blinded by the situation and you won t be able to help the person.*

Interviewer: *I guess, is that the ethos in the Simon Community, of just, you said there earlier on about getting, going day by day, bit by bit?*

Brendan: *I think so. I think, one thing I learnt from doing the Simon Community, you have to be a bit more level-headed than you are because you see things at a different kind of angle. Things that would have made you get a bit stressed before seem a little more insignificant. And I think it s the same, not much anger will solve anything. I s pose when you see people on the streets you realise you re very very fortunate and very lucky to have what you have. When you see someone not getting angry about living on the street then you shouldn t get angry either.*

Source: Interview II Brendan (5/9/06): 95-105

Exhibit 13 begins with a question relating to the effectiveness of being angry as a volunteer. This question follows a previous discussion about emotion, brought about by a question about the feelings that the interviewee has about the beneficiaries' circumstances. The interviewee constructs the identity of volunteer as requiring a revision in his ideology ("you have to be *a bit more level-headed*"). The volunteer engagement is constructed as requiring a change in the individual's system of ideas and ideals ("*because you see things at a different kind of angle*"). The wording "*than you are*" is particularly informative of the necessary ideological revision, suggesting a change in perspective from the non-volunteer identities that the interviewee achieves in other engagements.

Brendan constructs this ideological revision as contingent upon achieving the identity of volunteer. He constructs his identity as a volunteer using the conventional notion of ideological revision to the compassionate ideologue subject position. His volunteer identity is constructed as informed through a compassionate engagement with the beneficiaries ("*When you see someone not getting angry about living on the street then you shouldn't get angry either*").

Exhibit 14

Interviewer: Now that you've done this, do you regret not having done something like this before. You know, now that you've had a taste for doing this?

Onya: I don't regret doing it before because I wasn't at that frame of mind, or stage, where I probably would have. I could, I think that people should, like. I think that looking back now at all the transition students, in this day and age people are taking so much for granted. I think that maybe school trips, people, they should bring them away maybe and do something like that, like. As part of their school trip, like. I think that would be a good idea. Just to bring them off, instead of bringing them off to France or Paris or stuff like that, just to open their eyes and to take, like, just appreciate what they have in life. But I plan on doing more stuff like this. I hopefully will go back to Belarus now next year, you don't, so it will, it will guide you. Like, at some stage if you do, ehm, do volunteering, like stick at it or go back again, that once off.

Source: Interview XI Onya (19/8/06): 159-170

In Exhibit 14 Onya constructs her prior decision not to engage as a volunteer as resulting from her incapability to revise her ideology in order to achieve an identity as a volunteer (“*I wasn't at that frame of mind, or stage, where I probably would have*”). Her use of the conventional notion of ideological revision emphasises the contingency of such a capability, the requirement of a new “*frame of mind*” that is conditional upon a particular life “*stage*”.

Following her own brief explication of the decision not to volunteer, the interviewee goes on to construct the motivation of young people (“*transition students*” in particular) who choose not to engage as volunteers. These individuals are positioned, using the pro-self/egocentric interpretative repertoire, as “*taking so much for granted*”. In order to engage their interest in wider social issues (and presumably their engagement) the interviewee suggests a curriculum requirement, “*school trips*”. She constructs that experience as necessary for an ideological revision in others (“*I think that maybe school trips, people, they should bring them away maybe and do something like that, like. As*

part of their school trip, like. I think that would be a good idea. Just to bring them off, instead of bringing them off to France or Paris or stuff like that, just appreciate what they have in life”). By constructing the engagement as a volunteer as requiring an ideological reflexivity (“*appreciate what they have in life*”) the interviewee positions herself, and the other young people she refers to, as potentially capable of revising their ideologies.

Near the end of the response Onya returns to my question, regarding her engagement as a volunteer, following on from her construction of an explication of her and other young people’s decision not to volunteer. She positions herself as a future volunteer *in potentia* (“*But I plan on doing more stuff like this*”). In doing so she constructs the ideological revision necessary as informing her future biographical capability (“*I hopefully will go back to Belarus now next year, you don t, so it will, it will guide you*”). Onya constructs the ideological revision as having longer term effects upon her potential engagements and relationships, in general, with volunteering.

6.5.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interview data shows that the conventional notion of ideological revision is used by the interviewees to construct the volunteer identity. It is used to evidence a revision of a personal ideology or “way of thinking”. The interviewees align their volunteer identity to an ideology of compassion - a sympathetic pity and concern for the suffering and misfortune of the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity.

This research adds new insight to prior work on values (Hooghe 2003; Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999; Brehm and Rahn 1997) by finding how the interviewees construct their engagement with Cyclecharity as causing them to revise their way of thinking - their ideas and ideals. This realignment of the personal ideology to compassion for the suffering and misfortune of the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity is constructed as different to the ideology held prior to the engagement as a volunteer and to the ideology held in relation to other identities (such as careerist or hedonist). The interviewees construct how they chose to volunteer because of a realisation of sympathy for the cause and the beneficiaries once they were contacted by Cyclecharity. This finding adds to research (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999) that suggests that it is self-selection that results in this value congruence, the result being that individuals with similar values and opinions choose to join particular organisations. The analysis suggests that there is a socialisation process occurring between volunteers, and between the organisation and the volunteer, which is constructed as a shared compassion and decision to act for the beneficiaries. The research finding adds to Hooghe's (2003) notion that value congruence occurs due to peer group effects (Hooghe 2003, p. 92).

The finding that the volunteer identity is achieved through a revision of ideology from pro-self egocentric to other-focused altruistic ways of thinking adds new richness to research on values that has emerged in recent volunteering research on young adult volunteers (Marta et al 2006; Rehberg 2005; Fletcher and Major 2004) and in research on episodic volunteers (Dietz 1999; Bryen and Madden 2006). The research presented here identifies the construction of the necessity to change ideologically. Further, the research

suggests that the “default” personal ideology is not an other-focused altruistic ideology but rather a self-focused ideology. This is evidenced in the interviewees’ construction of their prior identities as students as self-focused, and present or future identities as careerists requiring a self-focus in order to be successful.

The interpretation of the revision of personal ideology adds depth and also confirms Marta et al’s (2006, pp.222-223) findings that their young Italian adult respondents were constructing values that relate to an opportunity for young adults to express altruistic or humanitarian values and attitudes. The authors suggest that it is an *other-focused* discourse (Marta et al 2006, p.222). The research develops Rehberg’s (2005) analysis of young Swiss adults’ interest in international volunteering as resulting from a focused altruism. It also adds to Fletcher and Major’s (2004) concept of a universal motive structure that is shared by young men and women and which foregrounds values as essential to the volunteer identity. The finding of a revision of personal ideology provides insight in the field of episodic volunteering. Both Dietz’s (1999) and Bryen and Madden’s (2006) work on episodic volunteering suggest that discourses of values (specifically motivations) were essential to the interviewees’ construction of their identities as volunteers. Bryen and Madden’s (2006) research notes that altruistic discourses were used to construct the identity of volunteer. The research here shows that values are revised from those held in other identities.

This research develops Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (2002) suggestion that the discourses of individuality and altruism, self-interest and selflessness, are not incompatible in the individual’s construction of their ideology in late

modernity. The interviewees are engaged in negotiating the apparent dichotomy of other- and self-focus, egocentrism and altruism, in the construction of their personal ideologies as volunteers. The findings point out that this negotiation is dependent upon the context in which the identity work is taking place to achieve the identity of volunteer - the predominance of self-focused or other-focused constructions of a personal ideology being dependent upon who the individual is talking to.

This research adds a significant caveat to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) argument that self-interest and selflessness are no longer incompatible for volunteers. The research finds that their compatibility is dependent upon the individual's reflexive weighing up of just how self-interest and selflessness may be presented to the other. The "thinking behind" the volunteering engagement is constructed by the interviewees in differing ways dependent upon whether the other is a church congregation (predominantly other-focused constructions of values) or the person's mother (predominantly self-focused constructions of values). The research finds that an error in the negotiation of talk about self-interest and selflessness may cause the identity of volunteer to lack credibility and therefore be unachievable.

This research finds that the episodic volunteer identity is a space in which the interviewees are engaging in a transitory personal ideology. They construct how they are "trying on" the episodic Cyclecharity volunteer identity for a period in their reflexive project of the self before working up another identity. This finding echoes Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's suggestion that the late modern period is witnessing generations engaged in an altruistic individuality where

“Individuals practise a seeking, experimenting morality that ties together things that seem mutually exclusive: egoism and altruism, self-realization and active compassion, self-realization as active compassion” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.159). This research finds that episodic volunteering is a form of “experimenting morality”. The volunteer identity presents an opportunity to change from a pro-self/egocentric identity/ideology to an experimentation with one that is fundamentally a prosocial/altruistic identity/ideology. This change is constructed here as transitory by the majority of the interviewees. It is an episodic experimentation with an ideology revised by volunteering. It is an episodic foregrounding in the interviewees’ lives of other-focused ideas and ideals, limited to the episode of volunteering, with the ideological revision constructed as a driving force for a future (but not immediate) reconstruction of the identity of volunteer.

What is not evident in the construction of the conventional notion of ideological revision is religiosity. Whereas other research has suggested a link between religious faith and volunteering (Yeung 2004; Wolfe 1998; Harris 1996; Cnaan et al 1993; Serow 1991) the prosocial/altruistic ideology constructed by the volunteers is not connected with such a driving force. There is no explicit talk by the interviewees relating religiosity and volunteering.

6.6 OTHER-FOCUSED CHANGE

The research finds that a conventional notion that is used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of *other-focused change*. It is constructed as the achieving or changing of something for the beneficiaries of the civil society

organisation - in this case the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. The interviewees use this conventional notion to achieve the identity of volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of other-focused change in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.6.1 Analysis

Exhibit 15

Interviewer: *And coming home did you, did you have to, did you have to play up or did you play down the fun, you know, when you were talking to people about it. Did you feel that you had to still, you know, tell them about the. What did you tell them? You know in a way these people give you money and like you said earlier on about you don't want to say that it was, you know, for you having a holiday. And even just then when you said holiday you were real quick to say, oh no it wasn't a holiday. I mean*

Sorcha: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *do you feel like you can say yeah I had a fantastic time but I saw where the money went and it was fantastic too?*

Sorcha: *Yeah. I was, I was honest like, maybe not as honest saying oh we had fantastic fun and you know we were singing every night.*

Interviewer: *Yeah*

Sorcha: *You know you don't want to. But at the same time I think it's important to say to, like, people that you can have a good time doing a good thing. Eh, cos if you, if you come back saying oh you know it was great cause, but, you know, you know, it wasn't fantastic time, you're not really promoting, or you're not enticing them to do it. I, I like to think that I'm enticing people to do it by telling them which could mean in turn raising more money. At the end of the day that's what it's all about, it's about raising money. Fundraising for a good cause. So I'd like to think that by me telling them that I had a really good time it will entice them to do something like this.*

Source: Interview XV Sorcha (1/8/06): 710-731

In Exhibit 15 the interviewee constructs her identity as a volunteer using both the conventional notion of other-focused change and a discourse of

volunteering as self-focused change. My question emphasises the necessity to use the conventional notion of other-focused change in order to achieve a credible identity as a volunteer. The discourse of self-focused change (a discourse that emphasises the use of agency for self-fulfillment or self-realisation) is used by me to construct hedonism as potentially damaging the credibility of the interviewee's volunteer identity (*"And coming home did you, did you have to, did you have to play up or did you play down the fun, you know, when you were talking to people about it ... these people give you money and like you said earlier on about you don't want to say that it was, you know, for you having a holiday. And even just then when you said holiday you were real quick to say, oh no it wasn't a holiday"*). I go on to ask if the apparent dichotomy of constructing the volunteer identity using the conventional notion of other-focused change and the discourse of self-change can be successfully negotiated (*"do you feel like you can say yeah I had a fantastic time but I saw where the money went and it was fantastic too?"*).

Sorcha responds to my question by acknowledging the necessity to negotiate the apparent dichotomy between positioning herself as an other-focused change agent and literally being "*honest*" about her hedonistic experience as a self-change agent (*"I was honest like, maybe not as honest saying oh we had fantastic fun and you know we were singing every night"*). The emphasis on honesty and dishonesty seems to suggest that the interviewee is reflexively aware of the necessity to conform her identity as a volunteer as far as possible to the conventional notion of other-focused change, in order to be positioned by others as an other-focused change agent, rather than a self-change agent.

Sorcha goes on to contend that she must nevertheless position herself as a self-change agent in order to ensure that more individuals become volunteers (*“But at the same time I think it s important to say to, like, people that you can have a good time doing a good thing. Eh, cos if you, if you come back saying oh you know it was great cause, but, you know, you know, it wasn t fantastic time, you re not really promoting, or you re not enticing them to do it”*). This construction of the necessity of self-change is justified by the interviewee as a necessary element of encouraging volunteering (*“I m enticing people to do it by telling them which could mean in turn raising more money”*). By returning to talk about the positive social purpose, the “good cause”, she constructs a rhetorical reminder that her agency was directed at an other-focused change (*“it s about raising ... Fundraising for a good cause”*). In doing so the interviewee deliberately positions herself using the conventional notion of other-focused change in order to achieve a credible identity as a volunteer.

Exhibit 16

Interviewer: *And what was your feeling about having to fundraise? Having to take the time. You know, having to ask people. Which can be quite a difficult thing, to ask for money, in our own society. I mean. How did you feel about having to do that?*

Dervla: *Yeah, I didn t, I didn t mind it at all, like. I knew, like, my family and like [home town] s a small enough kind of town so everyone hears about it and that, like. So I knew I wouldn t, everyone would support, like. And once you say Chernobyl people, people are like, don t mind giving to it because that it s a good cause and they know the fact that I m going out myself to do something for, that they know is going straight into that cause.*

Source: Interview IV Dervla (14/8/06): 133-143

In Exhibit 16 the interviewee uses the other-focused change agency interpretative repertoire to position herself as an other-focused change agent using the tropes of the “*good cause*” and of “*Chernobyl*”. The construction is used to emphasise the focus of her other-focused change agency - to “*do something*”. The interviewee is reflexively aware of the effect of the use of the conventional notion of other-focused change - the achievement of the identity of volunteer (“*So I knew I wouldn't, everyone would support, like ... And once you say Chernobyl people, people are like, don't mind giving to it because that it's a good cause*”). The extract evidences that the conventional notion of other-focused change is constructed as requiring agency on the part of the volunteer (“*they know the fact that I'm going out myself to do something*”) for another (“*they know is going straight into that cause*”), but it also requires that the agency is constructed as having a direct effect for the beneficiaries (“*straight into that cause*”).

Exhibit 17

Interviewer: *Do you think you are one of those people who are, kind of, in a way, stemming the tide. Ehm, you seem to be one of the 20 per cent, or not even, 20 per cent might be too high. But you know, who are in opposition to the kind of nine to seven work day and weekends maybe drinking, or you know?*

Ellen: *Yeah, all that stuff. I personally don't see it. To me, it sounds pathetic, but my life revolves around Scouting. And not in the sense of, all, not in the sense that I've got nothing better to do. Because there's a hundred other things I could be doing. But all my friends are involved. All my like, people that I get on really well with. My boyfriend's really involved. So it's kind of a life, a life decision as well. It's a, I've got, I've got so much out of Scouting. The person I am today is because of the people that helped me when I was growing up in that environment. So, not like I feel that it's my responsibility to give it back, I don't. It's just I really feel, I don't think volunteering should be promoted as, oh you have to give something back cos that's not even necessary. I think it should be promoted as, you know, do you want to do something, like, do you want to have fun. A lot of people really feel their lives are empty because they wake up, they go to work, they go drinking, and that's kinda, well I think, I think a lot of people would disagree with me, but I think that's a kind of meaningless existence [laughs]. [Interviewer: laughs]. I don't know. I really feel that if people could see that it's such, it's for your own benefit. It's not necessarily for everyone else, even though along the way so many other people benefit. I think the same happened with Belarus, like. Everybody had so much fun that, okay, not that other people were benefiting was incidental, because that was the point. But people weren't, it wasn't rammed down your throat the whole time that the reason you're here is for this. It was just everyone have as much fun as possible because there's no point in doing it unless you're having fun. And I think volunteering that's the way it has to go, because people don't have the time just to do something for someone else anymore. There has to be, I don't know if that's what I want to say, not that there has to be an element of something in it for yourself. But I think knowing that the Irish population is so that way at the moment, promoting that aspect, that there is something in it for you as well as benefiting other people could perhaps, I dunno, might like, increase the efforts to get more people involved. I dunno [laughs].*

Source: Interview V Ellen (17/9/06): 431-456

In Exhibit 17 the apparent dichotomy between other- and self-focused change agency is particularly explicit. Ellen responds to my question by constructing volunteers as both engaged in other-focused change (“*the people that helped me*”) and as self-focused change agents (“*my life revolves around Scouting ... all my friends are involved ... My boyfriend's really involved*”). The interviewee constructs her identity as a volunteer by positioning herself as a self-

change agent. She does this by constructing her volunteering as a significant tool in her reflexive project of the self (*"my life revolves around Scouting. And not in the sense of, all, not in the sense that I've got nothing better to do. Because there's a hundred other things I could be doing. But all my friends are involved. All my like, people that I get on really well with. My boyfriend's really involved. So it's kind of a life, a life decision as well. It's a, I've got, I've got so much out of Scouting."*). The construction is followed by Ellen also constructing the identity of volunteer as one of other-focused change (*"The person I am today is because of the people that helped me when I was growing up in that environment"*). The organisation's volunteers are constructed as changing her life for the better - they are positioned as other-focused change agents.

The interviewee constructs this apparent dichotomy between other- and self-focused change agency as necessary in order to encourage volunteering (*"I think it should be promoted as, you know, do you want to do something, like, do you want to have fun ... not necessarily for everyone else, even though along the way so many other people benefit"*). The construction, *"it wasn't rammed down your throat the whole time that the reason you're here is for this"*, underscores the interviewee's rhetoric: too much of an emphasis on the conventional notion of other-focused change and too little on self-change is damaging to the achievement of the volunteer identity (*"There has to be, I don't know if that's what I want to say, not that there has to be an element of something in it for yourself...promoting that aspect, that there is something in it for you as well ... the Irish population is so that way at the moment"*).

6.6.2 Discussion

The analysis finds that the conventional notion of other-focused change is necessary for the construction of the identity of volunteer. This is particularly evident when it is juxtaposed in apparent dichotomy with a discourse of self-focused change agency. The finding suggests that the interviewees are reflexively aware of the negative effect of making predominant a discourse that emphasises changes to their lives, which are the result of volunteering, over a discourse that emphasises the changes to the lives of the beneficiaries.

The research finds that the discourse of self-focused change agency is constructed by the interviewees as necessary for the achievement of other-focused change agency. The potential for self-change, evidenced particularly in relation to personal growth, hedonism and sociality, is constructed as a necessary encouragement for other-focused change agency. The interviewees evidence how self-change agency encouraged their decision to become volunteers and ensured their retention as the volunteering progressed. A reflexive awareness of the necessity to combine the conventional notion of other-focused change and one of self-focused change when encouraging new volunteers reinforces the contention of this research that individuals in late modernity are driven by the question, what effect will volunteering have upon my reflexive project of the self? However, this research also finds that there is a real concern for others' reflexive projects of the self, in this case the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity.

The finding of the juxtaposition of the conventional notion of other-focused change and self-focused change offers new insight into existing research on the issue of remuneration and volunteering. The interviewees are constructing their remuneration (the self-focused changes to their reflexive projects of the self) as in no way being worth more than the efforts to achieve other-focused change for the beneficiaries. Cnaan et al (1996, p.370) in their defining of the dimensions of the volunteer identity contend that remuneration, the nature of the reward, is an essential element. The authors note that the 'purist' approach to volunteering holds that there should be no reward, with, at the other extreme, a broad approach that holds that remuneration is acceptable only if it is worth less than the value of the work or service provided (Cnaan et al 1996, p.370). This is echoed in research on altruism where Batson (1986) considers helping that makes the individual helper feel good about herself or himself as intrinsically egoistic, whilst Bar-Tal and Raviv (1982), Rushton and Sorrentino (1981) and Montada and Bierhof (1991) contend that the altruistic individual may experience self-satisfaction as a result of the altruistic act. The interviewees use the conventional notion of other-focused change to underscore their volunteering as being as "pure" as possible in terms of its altruistic intent and the limitations of their remuneration. They position themselves as altruistic individuals whilst reflexively constructing the necessity that volunteering must be self-focused, in order to attract them to it and keep them engaged. Their need goes beyond a requirement for 'self-satisfaction' to a necessity that volunteering be a useful addition to their reflexive project of the self. It is a tool for self-realisation.

This analysis adds to other research that finds that volunteers construct their volunteering engagement as being one that positively changes others lives.

Rehberg (2005, pp.114-116) noted that young adults construct their motivations, in the construction of the identity of volunteer, as predominantly other-focused - achieving something positive for others. This is a finding that is echoed in Bryen and Madden's (2006) research on episodic volunteers. The motivations outlined by Rehberg (2005, pp.116-119) include: helping, giving, doing good; achieving or changing something; being geared to ethical values; and feeling useful, and doing something useful. Rehberg further points to the juxtaposition of these constructions of talk about motivations with a discourse of self-focused change agency, specifically related to talk regarding "a quest for oneself" and "a quest for the new" (Rehberg 2005, pp.116-119).

Both Rehberg (2005) and Bryen and Madden (2006) contend that for the majority of their respondents other-focused change is predominant as the motivation for volunteering. This research disagrees with those authors' interpretations finding instead that other-focused change is not constantly predominant in the interviewees' construction of their identities as volunteers. Rather the interviewees fluctuate in their construction of their volunteering, one moment constructing the engagement as being predominantly about other-focused change and then predominantly about self-focused change, and vice versa. In this manner they position themselves as both other-focused change agents and self-focused change agents.

6.7 THE GOOD CAUSE

An analysis of the interview data offers the interpretation that the interviewees and interviewer use a conventional notion of the good cause. It is constructed as

the prosocial reason for the existence of the civil society organisation and its volunteers. The conventional notion is used by the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of the good cause in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.7.1 Analysis

Exhibit 18

Interviewer: *How did you ask?*

Ryan: *I usually put Chernobyl into it because, ehm, a lot of people wouldn't recognise Belarus with Chernobyl. They would think Ukraine, even if they would think. A lot of people forgot about or seem to have forgotten about easily. So I just went up and I said, I had a list, like, of what was going to happen with the money when the funds were collected. You know, that sort of stuff. So I just showed them that. I showed them the sponsorship card and showed them what we were trying to do and we were trying to help children in, like disadvantaged children over there. So.*

Source: Interview XIII Ryan (8/8/06): 75-84

Exhibit 18 begins with my asking Ryan to explain his technique for acquiring donations. I ask him to reconstruct the persuasive rhetoric necessary to be positioned as a credible volunteer by others (“*How did you ask?*”). The interviewee positions himself using the conventional notion of the good cause, to a good cause representative subject position, in his construction of the use of rehearsal and props to succeed in his identity work (“*I usually put Chernobyl into it ... I had a list, like, of what was going to happen with the money when the funds were collected ... I showed them the sponsorship card ... we were trying to help children in, like disadvantaged children over there*”). He constructs how he works up a persuasive rhetoric using the conventional notion of the good

cause. This is achieved through the use of two interpretative repertoires, specifically related to Cyclecharity: the effect of Chernobyl interpretative repertoire (*"I usually put Chernobyl into it"*) and the helping disadvantaged children interpretative repertoire (*"trying to help children in, like disadvantaged children over there"*).

Ryan explicates how he engaged in a rehearsal of the identity work necessary to be positioned to the good cause representative subject position. He makes explicit how it is not simply enough to use the word "Chernobyl", as an effective resource for the construction of the cause, but rather that there is a necessity to construct, using the Chernobyl interpretative repertoire, a Cyclecharity specific explication of the cause as good (*"I usually put Chernobyl into it because, ehm, a lot of people wouldn't recognise Belarus with Chernobyl. They would think Ukraine, even if they would think"*). Further, the interviewee emphasises his precision in the construction of the good cause, by listing for the potential donor the other-focused changes that are indicative of the good cause (*"I had a list, like, of what was going to happen with the money when the funds were collected. You know, that sort of stuff. So I just showed them that. I showed them the sponsorship card and showed them what we were trying to do"*). It is worth noting here that Ryan does not, in the interview context, consider it necessary to reiterate the list, perhaps due to the stronger necessity to use it rhetorically during fundraising contexts than in a setting where his position as a volunteer is not contended as lacking credibility.

Exhibit 19

Interviewer: *And was it tough getting out there and, were you confident getting out there and, you know, rattle the bucket, go on the radio? It takes, you know, a certain amount of confidence and courage to get out there, you know.*

Therese: *Yeah. I took. I was very confident I could do it because I think, you know, you re doing it for a good cause. It isn t like. You don t feel like you re begging off people. If you know what I mean.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 107-116

Exhibit 19 begins with my constructing the identity of the volunteer as necessitating significant identity work (“*were you confident getting out there and, you know, rattle the bucket, go on the radio? It takes, you know, a certain amount of confidence and courage to get out there*”). The interviewee constructs how by using the conventional notion of the good cause she achieves the volunteer identity (“*I was very confident I could do it because I think, you know, you re doing it for a good cause*”). The response evidences how, through using the good cause representative subject position, the interviewee was able to actuate others to position her as a credible volunteer. Therese constructs an explication of the identity that would be achieved if she was unable to construct the Cyclecharity cause as good, when asking for money, as being that of a beggar (“*You don t feel like you re begging off people.*”). It is a socially negative identity. This evidences the necessity of sensitively constructing evidence of the engagement using the conventional notion of the good cause.

Exhibit 20

Interviewer: *Yeah and how, how did you, how did you ask them for the, having not experienced anything in Belarus there, and, you know, only really seeing I guess the materials, you know, Jack and Lucy had a their promotional materials and*

Therese: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *And they re, you know, they re telling you all about it. I mean how did you do, how did you go about asking?*

Therese: *Well I, I researched what happened in Belarus first of all and I found out a lot about what was going on in the country at the time. And then I used the cause materials from Lucy and ehm Cyclecharity. I put up posters around my local area and made people aware of it before I started collecting. And I approached people by. Everybody knew about Chernobyl, like, so it was, it was very easy at that time, like, to raise awareness about that charity or that, like, disaster. And just a couple of weeks before that Adi Roche [a famous campaigner for children affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster] had a programme on TV about Chernobyl.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 118-128

Exhibit 20 follows on from the previous extract from Therese's interview. I ask her how she constructed a discourse in order to be positioned by others as a good cause representative. She constructs how she used pre-prepared Cyclecharity fundraising resources to rehearse the necessary identity work ("*I guess the materials, you know, Jack and Lucy had a their promotional materials*"). The interviewee elaborates on how she positioned herself through a significant amount of research and evidence ("*I researched what happened in Belarus first of all and I found out a lot about what was going on in the country at the time*"). She constructs the "*cause materials*" as tools which she used to position herself as a good cause representative ("*And then I used the cause materials from Lucy and ehm Cyclecharity. I put up posters around my local area and made people aware of it before I started collecting. And I approached people by*"). Further, Therese explains her use of the Chernobyl interpretative repertoire in her construction of the good cause in order to be positioned as a good cause representative ("*Everybody knew about Chernobyl, like, so it was, it*

was very easy at that time, like, to raise awareness about that charity or that, like, disaster”) and therefore achieve a credible identity as a volunteer.

Exhibit 21

Interviewer: *So what is it that normally gets you interested in doing these kind of bits of, I guess you could call them, episodic volunteering? You know, now and again?*
Tommy: *I don't know, I suppose it would have to do with the people who are involved already. You know. I have to like them. And I have to, you know, see the work that they're doing. Or this kind of. It would have to appeal to me in some way. So you know obviously the Cyclecharity, it's a very good charity. It's very noble cause. It's dealing with, you know younger, helping children. I suppose. You know. There is something about the organisation, the people involved. I suppose there is an element of trust, just to make sure everyone's money is allocated correctly and that kind of stuff. And that would be, draw me to it. Ahm, mainly, I suppose.*

Source: Interview XVII Tommy (16/9/06): 108-125

Exhibit 21 begins with my asking for an explanation of Tommy's decision making process when deciding to engage as a volunteer. In this manner I position the interviewee as an episodic volunteer (“*So what is it that normally gets you interested in doing these kind of bits of, I guess you could call them, episodic volunteering?*”). Tommy responds by constructing his decision-making process using the self-change interpretative repertoire. He explains that his decision to volunteer is self- rather than other-focused (“*I don't know, I suppose it would have to do with the people who are involved already. You know. I have to like them ... It would have to appeal to me in some way*”). But in order to counter this explication, to position himself as other-focused, he also constructs the “*appeal*” using the conventional notion of the good cause (“*So you know obviously the Cyclecharity, it's a very good charity. It's very noble cause*”)

In order to achieve the identity of volunteer the interviewee constructs Cyclecharity's cause (and therefore his) as conforming to the conventional notion of the good cause, using the helping disadvantaged children interpretative repertoire (*"It s dealing with, you know younger, helping children"*). He constructs helping children as a *"very noble cause"* and the charity as therefore *"very good"*. In this way he makes it explicit that, using the conventional notion of the good cause, his decision to volunteer is not entirely self-focused (*"It s very noble cause"*).

6.7.2 Discussion

This analysis finds that the conventional notion of the good cause is a discursive resource used particularly in the construction of the organisation's *raison d'être*; that of raising funds for and providing humanitarian aid to children and young adults with disabilities in post-Chernobyl Belarus. It is used by the interviewees to substantiate the credibility of their volunteer identities to others. This research offers new insight into the construction of the good cause. A review of the literature offers little in the way of research on the issue of the good cause - what qualifies as a good cause, what the constituents of such a construction are in a single organisation and across organisations, and so forth.

The findings here suggest that the cause is necessarily constructed as good in order to achieve the identity of volunteer. For it to be good there is the necessity that the beneficiaries are constructed as in need of help of some sort, that the agency of the individuals and organisation are constructed as prosocial and altruistic, and that there is a construction of some form of significant other-

focused change that is the result of the capable and trustworthy agency of those involved. This is not, however, an exhaustive list of the elements of the conventional notion of the good cause as it appears to be dependent upon the specific volunteer engagement. In other words, the interviewees use particular cause/organisation/sector specific discourses, dependent upon the nature of the civil society organisation, in order to substantiate the credibility of their identities as volunteers. In this case the discourses particularly relate to Chernobyl and children with disabilities.

The analysis of the data shows that in order to ensure that the cause is perceived as good the interviewees construct how they and the organisation are effecting a positive life change for the beneficiaries. This is a finding that develops Cnaan et al's (1996) research, which identifies intended beneficiaries as an essential defining factor of who is a volunteer. This is a finding somewhat analogous with the conventional notion of the good cause presented here. The authors suggest that the definition of the volunteer is dependent upon who benefits (Cnaan et al 1996, p.371). The 'purist' definitions require that the beneficiaries be strangers with whom the individual has nothing in common and the broadest definitions include the volunteer as a beneficiary themselves (Cnaan et al 1996, p.371). This research finds that in relation to Cnaan et al's (1996) classification the interviewees work to construct their identities as closely to that of the 'purist' definition as possible, though this research also finds that the interviewees cause the purity of their volunteer identity to be reduced by positioning themselves as self-change agents - as beneficiaries of the volunteer engagement - constructing how their enjoyment of the volunteer experience is also an explicit aim of the organisation and themselves. The research finds that

rather than financial reimbursements the interest of the interviewees is in the receiving of social repayments - particularly the accrual of social capital in their social and career-focused relationships.

6.8 PROSOCIAL SOLIDARITY

A conventional notion that is used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of prosocial solidarity - constructed as a unity or agreement of feeling or action that is other-focused; in this case towards other Cyclecharity volunteers and the beneficiaries of the organisation. The interviewees use the conventional notion to achieve the identity of volunteer. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.8.1 Analysis

Exhibit 22

Interviewer: *And did the people you met [on the charity cycle] did they, were they up for, up for anything. Up for getting on the bikes every morning. Was it all that, helping each other, kind of way?*

Ellen: *Yeah certainly like. Ehm. There was completely the fun element. That was always important. But I mean. But I mean at the same time there were times when people were visiting the orphanages and some people were reduced to absolute tears and hysterics and everybody was so helpful. And I personally fell off my bike on the first day and broke my wrist.*

Interviewer: *Oh God.*

Ellen: *Yeah [laughs].*

Interviewer: *I didn't know that.*

Ellen: *And everybody was just so good, like. And everybody, everybody wanted to make sure I got the most out of my holiday as well even though. Not even holiday but expedition. Even though I couldn't cycle like. So everybody was really into making sure everybody, I think it brings out the best in people. And like you're put into the situation that isn't always easy. Mentally and physically tough going. And everybody made sure everybody got there in the end. Everybody had a really good time. So that was really positive.*

Source: Interview V Ellen (17/9/06): 313-340

In Exhibit 22 I construct the volunteer engagement as requiring solidarity, both through a unity of agency (“*And did the people you met [on the charity cycle] did they, were they up for, up for anything. Up for getting on the bikes every morning*”) and through the individuals’ compassion for one another (“*Was it all that, helping each other, kind of way?*”). I use the solidarity interpretative repertoire (“*getting on the bikes ... helping each other*”) to achieve this construction. In doing so I position Ellen as having engaged in a solidarity with the other volunteers. The interviewee in turn positions herself as engaged in a mutual hedonistic unity, a sociality, using the sociality interpretative repertoire to

construct the engagement as a united effort to make the experience pleasurable (*“There was completely the fun element. That was always important”*).

Ellen constructs the solidarity of the volunteer engagement as achieved through an *“important”* hedonistic sociality. But, in the next sentence she also constructs the engagement as a prosocial solidarity (using the solidarity interpretative repertoire). This is achieved through reference to one of the prosocial reasons for their engagement, the visits to the orphanages (*“But I mean at the same time there were times when people were visiting the orphanages”*), and the solidarity which ensued as a result of the emotional impact of meeting the beneficiaries (*“and some people were reduced to absolute tears and hysterics and everybody was so helpful”*).

The interviewee constructs the experience of solidarity through sociality further in her talk about a personal experience - her falling off of her bike and seriously injuring herself, and the response of the other volunteers (*“And I personally fell off my bike on the first day and broke my wrist”*). Ellen uses the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity to construct the response to her injury and subsequent incapacitation. She constructs how it causes others to unite in solidarity around her, offering support and acting to ensure that she enjoyed the engagement as a volunteer (*“And everybody, everybody wanted to make sure I got the most out of my holiday as well even though”*). Here the interviewee references the sociality of the experience - constructed as a *“holiday”* - as necessary in order to complete the volunteering with the others. This is evidenced further in her beginning to construct the sociality once again (*“So everybody was really into making sure everybody,”*). In following that partial

construction to its completion she constructs the pro-self sociality, as a positive social characteristic (*"I think it brings out the best in people"*). The interviewee constructs the prosocial solidarity, achieved through the adversity of the cycling experience (*"And like you re put into the situation that isn t always easy. Mentally and physically tough going"*), as necessary to ensure the achievement of the common volunteering task for all of the participants (*"And everybody made sure everybody got there in the end"*).

Ellen constructs the engagement using both the solidarity and sociality interpretative repertoires in her closing remarks, evidencing how the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity informs her construction of the engagement and also evidencing the essential (at least in this context and constructed by Ellen as vital for this group) pro-self sociality of the engagement (*"And everybody made sure everybody got there in the end. Everybody had a really good time. So that was really positive"*).

Exhibit 23

Interviewer: *I think when I was talking to Ann [another interviewee] about modern Ireland and to Brendan [another interviewee], I think about his next door neighbour, his not knowing his next door neighbour. But, but, going away to a country to help other people. Ehm, you know the kind of, and I was talking to Ann about the, the changes in Ireland. Ehm, you know how it's become a lot more, a lot richer and ehm, people are busy in their own lives and making money and that kind of thing. I mean was, was there, I mean did you, was there a big difference? I mean. How can I put this? Did, was there. Did it surprise you this kind of, you know, this kind of caring side of people? You know. You talked about how you wouldn't see it at work.*

Jane: *Oh yeah definitely. Ehm because we knew basically there was a group coming from our college and there was a group coming from [another Irish college] and [another Irish college] and we sort of expected everybody to stay in their own little group and ehm that wasn't the case at all. The first day everybody kinda parted, everybody wanted to get to know other people, about their lives, about how they did their fundraising, why they were there. So like, it really was a group of people that, really wanted to, just a caring group of people, that wanted to get to know each other and make this experience that was really worthwhile. And ehm make it a great experience. We all kinda knew God this was going to be a life changing experience and make the most of it. Ehm but in one sense I was surprised at the start because I did expect people to stick to their little groups. But even though everyone has ehm loads of other friends that I didn't really have everyone wants to keep in touch with me. So it's very good. But I've been out on other, go out and meet new people and say, oh yeah definitely keep in touch but they never do. But this is different because we're all still in touch.*

Source: Interview VI Jane (3/9/06): 390-417

Exhibit 23 begins with my construction of modern Ireland as a place where feelings of sociality and community are limited by the pervasive effects of socioeconomic change (“*I think when I was talking to Ann [another interviewee] about modern Ireland and to Brendan [another interviewee], I think about his next door neighbour, his not knowing his next door neighbour ... the changes in Ireland. Ehm, you know how it's become a lot more, a lot richer and ehm, people are busy in their own lives and making money and that kind of thing*”). I use the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity to suggest a comparison between Irish society in general and the volunteering engagement, which I construct as a space in which solidarity may be achieved more readily (“*was there a big difference ... Did it surprise you this kind of, you know, this kind of caring side of*

people?"). In the question Jane and the other interviewees are positioned as negotiating the dichotomy between an Irish society in which solidarity is limited and the volunteering engagement in which it is openly available.

Jane constructs the engagement as a volunteer as a search for an immediate shared solidarity - some form of unity with other volunteers beyond her friendship group - which surprised her (*"we sort of expected everybody to stay in their own little group and ehm that wasn't the case at all. The first day everybody kinda parted, everybody wanted to get to know other people"*). The interviewee's reply suggests her everyday experience is of a solidarity delimited in its expression in comparison to the volunteering engagement. The volunteer engagement is constructed by her, using an interpretative repertoire of prosocial solidarity, in order to position herself and the other volunteers as sharing in a unity of other-focused feeling (*"So like, it really was a group of people that, really wanted to, just a caring group of people, that wanted to get to know each other and make this experience that was really worthwhile"*).

Jane constructs the other-focused solidarity of the Cyclecharity experience as effecting a sociality from which a unity of feeling and action could be derived. The other volunteers are constructed as other-focused (*"just a caring group of people"*) in their (self-focused) sociality (*"wanted to get to know each other"*) and solidarity of purpose (*"and make this experience that was really worthwhile"*). The importance of sociality to the achievement of a prosocial solidarity is underscored by the interviewee's construction of the relationships after the Cyclecharity event as enduring (*"But even though everyone has ehm loads of other friends that I didn't really have everyone wants to keep in touch with me."*

So it's very good. But I've been out on other, go out and meet new people and say, oh yeah definitely keep in touch but they never do. But this is different because we're all still in touch").

Exhibit 24

Interviewer: *And do you think if it had just been a single email to you, it wasn't to your friends as well, I mean, would you have considered it? I mean, you went out, I guess, as a group, em, it experienced a lot as a group. Was that part of, part of what this was all about?*

Sorcha: *It was and it wasn't. It was, it was definitely started off on the, ah, doing the charity fundraising. But then as there was four and then there was eight of us going we were kind of like, I suppose, excited that we were going together. It was like a group experience, ehm, rather than individuals. Because it made it easier. You had someone to talk to that you knew well. It wasn't an experience being shoved in with a group of people you'd never met before. Especially going to another country and I must say the cycle at times was tough and I was glad to have one of the girls beside me to say, come on keep going because I probably would have thrown, threw the bike on the side of the road and left. But, ehm, yeah no. I think the fact of having friends there did make a difference, ehm. But, I don't think it would have deterred me from doing it altogether if none of them were doing it.*

Source: Interview XV Sorcha (1/8/06): 390-405

In Exhibit 24 the interviewee constructs the importance to her of a sociality and solidarity with others in her initial achievement of the identity of volunteer and for its continuation. I construct the engagement as a volunteer using the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity when asking about the catalyst that caused the interviewee's decision to move from volunteer *in potentia* to volunteer in actuality. I query how much the decision to volunteer was influenced by the sociality and solidarity of Sorcha's friendship group ("*And do you think if it had just been a single email to you, it wasn't to your friends as well, I mean, would you have considered it? ... Was that part of, part of what this was all about?*"). Sorcha begins her reply by constructing the catalyst to engage as both

due to the solidarity of her friendship group and as not related to that solidarity (*"It was and it wasn't"*). It is a response that is made clearer as she goes on to construct her need for a sharing of prosocial solidarity and pro-self sociality with her friends in order to achieve the volunteer identity (*"doing the charity fundraising ... we were going together. It was like a group experience"*).

Sorcha further constructs the engagement and the achievement of her identity as a volunteer as having necessitated the sociality of another particular (unnamed) individual. The person she describes is another volunteer who, elsewhere in the interview, is identified as not a member of the friendship group Sorcha originally signed up with. The interviewee constructs their relationship as being based upon a shared solidarity and sociality (*"Especially going to another country and I must say the cycle at times was tough and I was glad to have one of the girls beside me to say, come on keep going"*). Here she uses the interpretative repertoire of pro-self sociality to construct the solidarity with the other *"one of the girls"* as the reason she was capable of achieving the volunteer identity and the engagement successfully. Sorcha again expounds upon her achievement of the engagement and her identity as a volunteer as the result of a pro-self sociality at the end of the response (*"But, ehm, yeah no. I think the fact of having friends there did make a difference, ehm. But, I don't think it would have deterred me from doing it altogether if none of them were doing it"*).

6.8.2 Discussion

This analysis finds that the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity is used in the construction of the identity of the volunteer. The discourse is

constructed as a unity or agreement of feeling and/or action that is other-focused. It is particularly focused upon constructing the relationship between volunteers. The construction of the unity of feeling and/or action relates to the individuals' other-focused engagement as volunteers - to effect a positive change for the the cause or beneficiaries of the cause/organisation. In the case of the volunteer engagement with Cyclecharity it is constructed as a shared effort at fundraising for the organisation, the charity challenge bicycle ride in Belarus, and the visits to the orphanages to meet the beneficiaries.

The analysis of the interview data shows that the conventional notion of prosocial solidarity is not used in isolation, but with a discourse of sociality. The discourse of sociality is constructed as a mutual hedonistic unity. It is constructed as a collaboration in order to achieve a pleasurable experience for the self with others. Sociality is constructed as a necessary driving force for the prosocial solidarity of the volunteering engagement by the interviewees. The interpretation of the data further highlights that the interviewees construct how sociality is fuelled by solidarity. The sociality is constructed as a social space of mutual support where individuals sustain one another emotionally. The interviewees' construction of the sociality is as a space in which they may find pleasurable experiences. It is also a space in which they may find refuge together from the enormity of the engagement, the "shock" of the beneficiaries' circumstances, of the cultural differences, of the effects of their agency on the lives of those they have fundraised for and the enormity of the work to be done.

This research finds that sociality is constructed as vital to the achievement of the identity of volunteer - both for encouraging the initial engagement and for

maintaining the solidarity of the engagement to its end. It is a finding that develops Clary et al's (1998) work on the psychological factors served by volunteering. The findings presented here illuminate the authors' suggestion that the sociality of volunteering allows individuals to be with like-minded people and to be engaged in an activity viewed favourably by important others (Clary et al 1998, p.1518). This research finds that the sociality of like-minded people is a driving force for the volunteering engagement. But it is not simply the relationship with other volunteers that is constructed as necessary. Relationships with individuals who support the interviewee's work to construct the volunteer identity - particularly donors of time and money (those important others) - are constructed by the interviewees as vital. They are important people in the achievement of the volunteer identity as they provide the necessary donations of time and/or money. Further they are like-minded not simply in the sense of wanting to achieve a prosocial outcome for the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. This research finds that they are like-minded in the sense that they want the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer in their reflexive projects of the self. This is particularly the case in the constructions of family members' efforts to assist their child/sibling in the accrual of donations in order to achieve the identity of volunteer.

The finding that the prosocial solidarity and pro-self sociality are used by volunteers adds richness to prior theoretical discussions. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002, pp.28, 171) theory of volunteering in late modernity points to this form of engagement as being an act of subversion, undermining the currents of institutionalised individualisation in late modernity. The research finds that the interviewees' construction of the volunteering engagement as a space in

which social relationships are achieved, in which a sense of meaning and belonging exists, suggests that they are engaging in what the authors define as altruistic individuality (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.28; p.171). The research presented here finds that the self-focused sociality and other-focused solidarity combine to create a space in which pro-self individuality is enacted whilst the individual simultaneously acts in an other-focused manner - resulting in an altruistic individuality. It is a space in which the enactment of altruism is not constrained to the relationship with the beneficiaries but is also for other volunteers, creating a space where individual needs are met through the sociality and solidarity of a sharing community.

The finding that the solidarity of shared community is constructed as constrained in the interviewees' lives (beyond the Cyclecharity challenge) and yet flourishes in the volunteer engagement illuminates Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's theory that volunteering is a refusal to accept an end to sociality and is therefore an act of subversion, undermining the currents of institutionalised individualisation in late modernity (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, p.28; p.171). The interviewees construct how they are capable of a shared solidarity immediately when they engage in the charity challenge - seeking out others, from different friendship groups, and bonding.

When considered in relation to the interviewees' discourse regarding socioeconomic pressures, particularly to achieve a career for the self, the solidarity of volunteering may be understood as subversive. The contention by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim that this form of solidarity in sociality is a political stance or some form of subversion by individuals in late modernity (Beck and

Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, p.159) is not a discourse that is expressed by the interviewees. The volunteers do not construct a stance in opposition to society. This analysis contends that the subversiveness is in relation to the currents of institutionalised individualism that act to increase individuality and decrease a sociality in which solidarity may burgeon. The volunteering space is in this sense a subversive arena for the encouragement of community.

This research echoes and develops Rehberg's (2005, p.118) analysis of young adults' interest in volunteering as dependent upon its being enriching and inspiring. The interviewees construct how a shared experience in a new country is of particular interest to them. It is constructed as attractive because of the exotic nature of the experience. But it is also attractive in another way, as a result of the relationships with others. The solidarity and sociality of the volunteer engagement are constructed as the most enriching elements of the experience. They are constructed as vital to all of the elements of the experience, including: the cycling, meals, evening entertainments, shopping, meeting the beneficiaries, even taking the flight there and back. They are also constructed as essential to the memory of the experience and to the potential for future volunteering.

This research develops upon the finding that volunteering could also be potentially strenuous and exhausting (Rehberg 2005, p.118). The interviewees construct the potential for the charity challenge to cause just such difficulties. This research finds that the interviewees construct the sociality and solidarity of the volunteering engagement as an antidote to the ill-effects of the engagement. The interviewees construct how through having fun and supporting one another any strains or exhaustion are alleviated.

6.9 ORGANISATIONAL PROSOCIAL CREDIBILITY

The research finds that a conventional notion that is used by the interviewees and interviewer is that of organisational prosocial credibility. The conventional notion is constructed through talk about the organisation being trustworthy, capable, and engaged in the achievement of a prosocial cause. It is used to achieve the identity of volunteer by the interviewees. The following extracts from the interviews show the manipulation and negotiation of the conventional discourse of other-focused change in the construction of the identity of volunteer.

6.9.1 Analysis

Exhibit 25

Interviewer: *As a volunteer. I mean what do you think of the organisation itself? I mean, I guess you've. What degree did you do?*

Onya: *Ehm. Management and marketing.*

Interviewer: *I guess you know the ins and outs of that, management, marketing, business. I mean as an organisation, what it's able to do. Is it an effective organisation? Is it? What do you think of the organisation itself?*

Onya: *Ehm. I don't know a lot about, actually, the organisation itself. But, what I do know, I think it is, ehm, a very good organisation. I had never heard of it now before I did get that email. Ehm. So, and then dealing with Lucy, I think she is very professional, she is very lovely and she was just an amazing person. And she just contributed so much to it. And, I just, I don't know. I would have a lot of, ehm, good. I'd very much, I'd have a lot of faith in Cyclecharity. Like they don't, they're not, like the way, you know, some companies would be trying to sell their company to the public. But, I don't have, from my point of view, because I had not heard of Cyclecharity. I think people who would be interested they would be there to help. And they do everything they can to help. But they're not in people's faces as well, so. Ehm, I don't know about the, I don't know much about the management side of Cyclecharity. But, ehm. Or the organisation. But what they did. They organised for us to go over there. They must be a very strong company, as they were. They must be well organised to do it so professionally. I m. I don't doubt it because we're not the only people that go over to Belarus. So they must be very busy as well, organising different groups, different groups that want to go over to Belarus. I just think they they're, the company itself, the organisation, the people who work there they have a lot to offer and they're amazing people for what they do.*

Source: Interview XI Onya (19/8/06): 466-498

In Exhibit 25 the interviewee uses the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility to construct the organisation, its staff, and her own identity as a volunteer. The extract begins with my positioning Onya as capable of offering a detailed critique of Cyclecharity (“*I guess you know the ins and outs of that, management, marketing, business. I mean as an organisation, what it's able to do. Is it an effective organisation? Is it? What do you think of the organisation itself?*”). Onya responds by offering a critique using as a resource

the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility. Onya constructs her critique of the organisation using as a tool her relationship with one of its organisers.

The critique is preempted by the interviewee's constructing the organisation using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility (*"But, what I do know, I think it is, ehm, a very good organisation"*). Onya goes on to position the civil society organisation as having prosocial credibility through expounding upon her relationship with one of the civil society's administrative staff. The interviewee uses the capability interpretative repertoire to position Lucy as a capable individual (*"So, and then dealing with Lucy, I think she is very professional, she is very lovely and she was just an amazing person. And she just contributed so much to it"*). She continues, using the trustworthiness interpretative repertoire, in order to construct Lucy and by extension her engagement with Cyclecharity itself as credible (*"And, I just, I don't know. I would have a lot of, ehm, good. I'd very much, I'd have a lot of faith in Cyclecharity"*). In this way the interviewee positions herself as a member of a credible civil society organisation - one that is prosocially credible.

The interviewee continues to align her construction of Cyclecharity with the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility in her use of the capability interpretative repertoire to construct the organisation as having the qualities and abilities to achieve the mission/cause (*"But what they did ... They must be a very strong company, as they were. They must be well organised to do it so professionally ... they must be very busy as well, organising different groups, different groups that want to go over to Belarus. I just think they they re,*

the company itself, the organisation, the people who work there they have a lot to offer and they re amazing people for what they do”). It is particularly clear in this extract that an explicitly stated limited knowledge of the organisation and presumptions about the work undertaken by Cyclecharity do not stop the interviewee from constructing the organisation using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility (“I don t know a lot about, actually, the organisation itself. But, what I do know ... I don t know about the, I don t know much about the management side of Cyclecharity. But, ehm. Or the organisation. But what they did”). This suggests the necessity to construct the organisation and its staff as engaged in a prosocially credible activity in order to achieve the identity of volunteer.

Exhibit 26

Interviewer: *I mean Cyclecharity. Do you think that s an organisation that, you know, ethically you d be happier with, or are you happier with? Knowing that you were actually working for an organisation like that.*

Therese: *Yeah definitely. Because the organisation was so small.*

Interviewer: *Ehm*

Therese: *And because yeah, you were, like, in direct contact with Jack and the people who organise it. You had a lot more trust for the organisation. Whereas if you went for a bigger organisation you re not as sure. You don t know everything that s going on in the organisation.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 526-538

Exhibit 26 explores another critique of Cyclecharity, constructed using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility. The extract begins with my asking Therese to critique her volunteering with Cyclecharity as an ethical engagement (“I mean [the civil society] do you think that s an organisation that, you know, ethically you d be happier with, or are you happier

with?”) and as a choice for her agency and life course (“Knowing that you were actually working for an organisation like that”)

Therese responds to the question by constructing Cyclecharity using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility. Trustworthiness is constructed as dependent upon the closeness of the relationship between volunteers and the civil society organisation’s staff. Cyclecharity is constructed by the interviewee as being trustworthy using evidence of her close relationship with its organisers (*“you were, like, in direct contact with Jack and the people who organise it. You had a lot more trust for the organisation”*). The interviewee legitimises her identity as a volunteer by constructing Cyclecharity, using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility, in comparison to larger organisations. She constructs untrustworthiness using an example of the administrative distance between volunteers and “a bigger organisation” (*“Whereas if you went for a bigger organisation you re not as sure. You don t know everything that s going on in the organisation”*).

Exhibit 27

Interviewer: *And did you yourself ever experience any negativity from people about this, about raising the funds and volunteering away and talking about what you re getting involved in?*

Therese: *I have. I think people are very wary of charities. Some people not everyone. But I think I said, when I said I was going to be involved in Cyclecharity for some reason people were very wary of Cyclecharity. I asked them why, but they couldn t tell me why. But, ehm, yeah some people were very negative towards it because big organisations like Goal and stuff, so much of their money goes on administration, expenses and stuff. Yeah, like everyone, not everyone, is like, I was surprised how generous people were. But there are some people out there who were, that are very wary of charities and they think the money isn t going towards the cause that it should be.*

Source: Interview XVI Therese (2/8/06): 863-874

In Exhibit 27 the talk turns to the issue of engaging with individuals who are “negative” about the engagement as a volunteer. In this construction I again construct the engagement with civil society organisations as open to critique (“*did you yourself ever experience any negativity from people about this*”). Therese responds by confirming that a critical response to the civil society sector and its organisations is a prevalent discourse in society (“*I have. I think people are very wary of charities. Some people not everyone*”).

Therese constructs an explanation of some individuals being “wary” of civil society organisations using Cyclecharity as her example (“*But I think I said, when I said I was going to be involved in Cyclecharity for some reason people were very wary of Cyclecharity. I asked them why, but they couldn t tell me why*”). The interviewee constructs mistrust towards civil society organisations as resulting from a wider societal critical discourse. The mistrust is constructed using the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility - larger organisations are constructed as not being trusted in their capability to allocate funds appropriately (“*because big organisations like Goal and stuff, so much of their money goes on administration, expenses and stuff...there are some people out there who were, that are very wary of charities and they think the money isn t going towards the cause that it should be*”).

Therese uses the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility - trustworthiness and capability - as a critical tool to assess the legitimacy of civil society organisations. She offers a critique (on behalf of sceptics of the civil society sector) that questions the legitimacy of large civil society organisations.

Whilst engaged in this construction of a sceptical critique the interviewee also works to position herself as a credible volunteer in a credible civil society organisation that should not be included in a critique that (according to her rather than to the sceptics), is a form of “guilt by association” (“*But, ehm, yeah some people were very negative towards it because big organisations like Goal and stuff, so much of their money goes on administration, expenses and stuff*”).

Exhibit 28

Interviewer: *And so for your, ehm, experience, ehm, was Cyclecharity organisation what you expected? You know, when you went out there getting that initial email. Was it for you in your mind an effective organisation? The kind of organisation that does actually get things done?*

Shauna: *Ehm, yeah I think it does. Because you've got someone like Jack running it first of all. He's like, he's a man with a mission, so you know. And they are very good. He's someone very mo, very well, in charge, and passionate about it and, you know, very much a part of Jack's life, so I think no matter what I do again with Cyclecharity in the future, I think it will be successful and continue, continue to do a lot of work. Aah, and I think Jack is like kind of, is in contact with a student base, he's gonna have fresh, if he continues Cyclecharity every year, you know, he's gonna have a fresh base of students to contact every year. You know there's students where they're a transient, where you have new faces in there all the time. So it's a great group to target because, you know, [Interviewer: Ehm] if you keep targeting students to get involved I think it will be really successful.*

Source: Interview XIV Shauna (28/9/06): 502-519

In Exhibit 28 the interviewee uses the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility to construct the credibility of its organiser, Jack O'Neil, and vicariously her identity as a credible volunteer. This extract begins with my asking Shauna if the Cyclecharity organisation met her expectations (“*And so for your, ehm, experience, ehm, was Cyclecharity organisation what you expected?*”). I use the interpretative repertoire of capability, to question the effectiveness of the organisation, in its achievement of

its prosocial mission/cause (*“Was it for you in your mind an effective organisation? The kind of organisation that does actually get things done?”*).

Shauna responds by constructing the organisation’s Director, Jack O’Neil, using the conventional notion of prosocial credibility, as effective and capable in achieving the mission (*“Ehm, yeah I think it does. Because you ve got someone like Jack running it first of all. He s like, he s a man with a mission, so you know. And they are very good. He s someone very mo, very well, in charge, and passionate about it”*). She constructs the effectiveness through positioning the organiser, “Jack”, as the central dynamo in the organisation. He is constructed as an exemplar of the organisation’s attributes (*“Because you ve got someone like Jack running it first of all”*), particularly its capability to achieve the mission/cause (*“I think it will be successful and continue, continue to do a lot of work”*). In doing so Shauna positions herself as engaged with a legitimate civil society organisation, and therefore as a credible volunteer.

6.9.2 Discussion

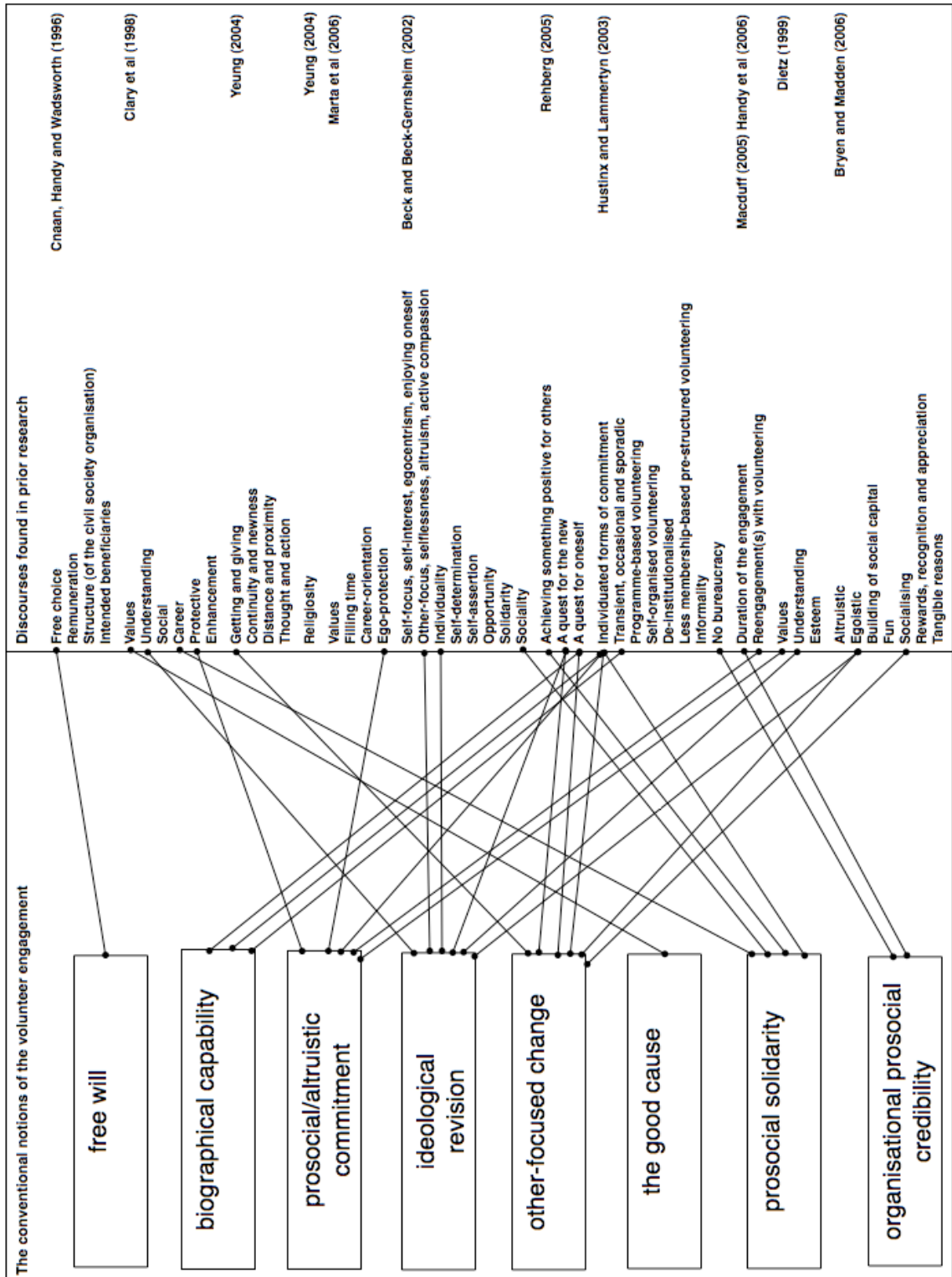
The research finds that the volunteer identity is achieved through the use of the conventional notion of organisational prosocial credibility. It is constructed by the interviewees through talk about the organisation being trustworthy, capable, and engaged in the achievement of a prosocial cause. This research offers fresh insight into the relationship between the organisation and the volunteer.

Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003, pp.172-174) suggest a number of organisational factors that distinguish new forms of volunteering from classic volunteerism. The authors suggest that organisations that offer new forms of volunteering will be de-institutionalised, less membership-based and informal in nature, with little bureaucracy (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172-174). This research finds a construction of the closeness of the relationship between volunteers and the organisation's staff. It is a closeness that is constructed as allowing the individual to see the trustworthiness of the organisation, its capability and its focus upon its prosocial cause. Large organisations are constructed as lacking a necessary transparency in their relationships with volunteers - a lack that results in a critique by the interviewees of their prosocial credibility. For the interviewees the closeness and informality of the relationship with Cyclecharity is constructed as resulting in the organisation's prosocial credibility.

6.10 CONVENTIONAL NOTIONS OF THE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT AND PRIOR RESEARCH

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, with the research question in mind the analysis examined how the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement were manipulated and negotiated by the interviewees in their achievement of their identities as volunteers. The analysis then asked if those discourses were similar to those suggested in prior research. Following this the analysis turned to the question of what new discourses, or different manipulations and negotiations of discourses found in other research, were occurring in the interviews. Figure 6.1 illustrates how this research links with prior research.

Figure 6.1: Conventional notions of the volunteer engagement and prior research



Source: derived by the author from the interview data and prior literature

The diagram shows how the analysis has enriched research on volunteering, offering new insights into areas investigated by prior researchers. The analysis has illuminated work on volunteering in late modernity, and more specifically volunteering amongst young adults and episodic volunteering. The diagram can only offer a simple illustration of the spread of findings presented in this chapter and their relation to the prior research as presented in the previous discussion sections.

6.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the first of the research findings - that the young Irish adult interviewees and the interviewer use, negotiate and manipulate conventional notions of the volunteer engagement in order to construct the volunteer identity. The analysis of the extracts explicated how the conventional notions were used by the young Irish adult interviewees to discursively achieve the identity of volunteer, and further how through their use the interview participants were able to construct talk about the volunteer and volunteering in contemporary Irish society.

The chapter set out how the analysis of the interview data found that volunteering is constructed as one of many electives in the interviewees' lives. The interviewees construct their engagement as volunteers as self-determined and achieved in opposition to particular socioeconomic factors. The finding deepens the understanding of the pragmatism behind the decision to volunteer, pointing to how the interviewees measure the value of volunteering against other potential identity/biographical projects. The volunteer identity is achieved

through a revision of ideology from one that is almost entirely pro-self egocentric to one that includes an other-focused altruism. It is necessary to change ideologically to become a volunteer. Volunteering is constructed as useful for self-change (for example, personal growth, hedonism and sociality). The potential for self-change is constructed as affecting the decision to engage and as ensuring retention as the volunteering progresses. The goodness of the cause is constructed as essential. Its virtue is constructed as being dependent upon the organisation's capability to effect prosocial altruistic change. Fundamental to the interviewees' volunteering is the expectation and realisation of a shared solidarity - a unity or agreement of feeling and/or action that is other-focused. Sociality is constructed as a necessary driving force for the prosocial solidarity of the volunteering engagement. Self-focused sociality and other-focused solidarity combine to create a space in which pro-self individuality is enacted whilst the individual simultaneously acts in an other-focused manner. The interviewees construct a closeness not only with their fellow volunteers but also between themselves and the organisation through its staff. It is this closeness that shapes their construction of its trustworthiness, its capability and its focus upon its cause.

This chapter has presented a thesis that contends that the interviewees' achievement of the identity of volunteer is dependent upon identity work. The following chapter adds to this thesis by presenting an analysis that explains how the interviewees' identity work - the use, manipulation and negotiation of the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement - is strategically focused in particular social contexts to generate and use social capital, and that it is

through the accrual of social capital that the achievement of the volunteer identity is reinforced and maintained.

7 ANALYSIS II: IDENTITY WORK AND SOCIAL CAPITAL ACCRUAL

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis presented in this chapter considers the interviewees' construction of the relationships they engaged in as volunteers and their use to achieve the volunteer identity. The decision to overlay the lens of discourse analysis with the filter of social capital theory has been made to add further insight to the research question "How is the volunteer identity achieved by young Irish adults engaged in episodic volunteering?".

Woolcock and Narayan (2000, p.226) write that "social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively". As noted in Chapter 4, this definition captures the fundamentals of a number of interpretations of social capital, including those of Bourdieu, Coleman, Burt, and Putnam. It is a useful definition for the development of the analysis for a number of reasons, not simply because it points to an underlying agreement as to what social capital may be (which in itself is extremely useful), but also because: firstly, it focuses on relationships as the sources of social capital; secondly, it recognises that important features of social capital, such as norms, are developed in an iterative process; and thirdly, it identifies that individuals use social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p.237) through the "leveraging" of their relationships.

Of particular interest in this research is the individual's "leveraging" of the resources available in the relationships (Glover 2004, p.146; Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p.226). The reason for the interest is that the interviewees (and interviewer) consistently talk about those relationships in terms of their usefulness for themselves and for others. The analysis finds that the interviewees construct an advantage in building the relationships with others because of the resources that may be mobilised. The finding that the relationships are constructed as useful aligns with Burt's assertion that there is a consensus in social capital theory that "The advantage created by a person's location in a structure of relationships is known as social capital" (Burt 2007, p. 4). This research contends that at the most fundamental level the "advantage" in the interviewee's positioning in particular relationships is that it enables them to achieve the identity of volunteer.

The research finds that the interviewees construct the resources - the social capital available in the relationships (Glover 2004, p.146) - as necessary to the achievement of their identities as volunteers. To explain this more clearly it is useful, at this point, to identify the relationships that are constructed by the interviewees as resources that they may use. The relationships constructed by the interviewees as useful to the construction of their identities as volunteers are with: the civil society organisation (Cyclecharity); other volunteers; the beneficiaries; individuals with whom the interviewees had a strong social tie (constructed as close family and friends); and individuals with whom they had a weak social tie (constructed as members of the local community and strangers).

This research shows that when the interviewees are constructing the identity of volunteer, they are constantly focusing attention upon their use of the resources (the social capital) in the relationship for others and for themselves. They construct an advantage both to the self and to the other in the generation and use of social capital in the relationships. They position themselves as engaged in using social capital both for the self and for the other. The research finds that the self-focused and other-focused generation and use of social capital are both necessary to the achievement of the identity of volunteer.

The following sections present the analysis of the interview data. The Exhibits were chosen as they are rich examples of the ways in which the relationships were constructed by the interviewees. The following sections offer individual analyses and discussions of how the interviewees construct the relationships with the civil society organisation; other volunteers; the beneficiaries; individuals with whom they have strong social ties; and individuals with whom they have weak social ties.

7.2 THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct how the civil society organisation, Cyclecharity, positions them as necessarily engaged in the generation and use of social capital. The relationship is constructed by the interviewees as one in which they position themselves as generating and using the resources available predominantly for the self. The following section offers an analysis of the interviewees' construction of the relationship with the civil society organisation.

7.2.1 Analysis

Exhibit 29

Interviewer: *And do you think, ehm, I mean the, what was your, your, if you could sum up your experience of the event itself after raising that kind of money, I mean was it the kind of event? I've heard some people saying Jack really pumped up the idea of it was going to be fun. I mean did that interest you, that idea that it would be fun? A good time.*

Tommy: *I s pose I. The reason I went, I just wanted to see. I knew it was a part of the world that I d never see and, you know, seeing, it was the twenty-first anniversary of the accident. I thought it was, I thought it would be a good time to go and see it and see that aftermath of it. And the fun thing, ehm. You know? I s pose charity work it s not meant to be, it s not meant to be tough. You know people do it for the love of it. It s a kind of a calling, I s pose. And so I knew it was going to a bit of craic. I ve been cycling, you know, I ve gone cycling before. They re enjoyable. So it just depends on the group of people going. So obviously I knew there was going to be lots of different groups going that it would be interesting to see what would happen. Jack did push the fun element. But that wouldn t be, that wasn t the reason why I went, anyway. Ehm, it just happens when we were over there we did enjoy ourselves and that made it certainly a lot easier.*

Source: Interview XVII Tommy (16/9/06): 254-275

In Exhibit 29 I construct how the interviewee was engaged in generating and using social capital for the self by constructing how the organisation positioned him, and the other volunteers, as self-focused change agents (“I've heard some people saying Jack really pumped up the idea of it was going to be fun”). I follow this by asking the interviewee if that positioning affected his construction of his identity as a volunteer (“I mean did that interest you, that idea that it would be fun? A good time”). By contrasting the “fun” on offer in the volunteering engagement with the conventional notion of other-focused change, the question undermines the interviewee’s identity as a volunteer.

The interviewee, throughout his response, constructs how Cyclecharity positions him as a generator and user of social capital for the self - using the resources in the relationships for his own needs. It is a position that the interviewee is willing to (re)position himself to. The interviewee constructs how the organisation's choice of charity challenge enabled him to have fun (*"And so I knew it was going to a bit of craic"*) in a situation that was undemanding (*"I s pose charity work it s not meant to be, it s not meant to be tough"*). The interviewee explicitly constructs his (and other volunteers) being positioned by Cyclecharity as engaged in generating social capital for the self - using the resources in the relationship to engage in hedonism (*"Jack did push the fun element"*). The interviewee does not ignore my contention that Cyclecharity's positioning of him and other volunteers - as users of social capital for the self - makes difficult the credibility of the identity of volunteer. In apparent opposition to his positioning of himself, and his construction of how Cyclecharity positioned him, as engaged in using social capital for the self, he ends his response by ameliorating that construction, denying that was his reason to volunteer (*"But that wouldn t be, that wasn t the reason why I went, anyway"*).

Exhibit 30

Interviewer: *And was it, ehm, it seems very oppositional from talking to people about it. The idea of going out on the bike for like, having fun in the evening*

Ryan: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *as the DVD shows*

Ryan: *True. Yeah.*

Interviewer: *and then going to these these services*

Ryan: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *seeing new services and present kind of service, institutions. Did that, did that jar at all? Or did it seem like a smooth sort of. Was there any, you know? How did that make you feel to suddenly*

Ryan: *It brought us back down to earth. We were having a good time and the vodka was flowing and all that sort of thing. We were doing free vodka or whatever. But I think meeting the children really brought it down to earth. It showed us exactly why we were there. I think it was probably done in the right way. I s pose it could be done differently. But, I dunno how to prepare people for seeing that. For seeing the children for the first time. Whereas people that were already there would have known, like. Be well used to it. But, ehm, I don t see how else they could prepare for it. But, eh. I think they gave us the whole experience. Brought us in the serious aspect after.*

Source: Interview XIII Ryan (8/8/06): 277-308

In Exhibit 30 I construct how the interviewee is generating and using social capital (the resources) in the relationship with other volunteers for himself (*“having fun in the evening”*). I use the conventional notion of other-focused change to construct how using those resources for the self undermines the credibility of the interviewee’s identity as a volunteer (*“it seems very oppositional from talking to people about it. The idea of going out on the bike for like, having fun in the evening ... and then going to these these services”*). I ask the interviewee if that positioning as a self-focused change agent - achieving/ changing something for the self - affected his identity as a volunteer (*“Did that, did that jar at all?”*).

The interviewee defends the credibility of his identity as a volunteer by constructing how Cyclecharity’s construction of the volunteer engagement

positioned him (and the other volunteers) as self-focused change agents (“*We were having a good time and the vodka was flowing and all that sort of thing. We were doing free vodka or whatever*”). Using this construction he notes how the organisation positioned him in such a manner as to use social capital for the self from the relationship with other volunteers. But as the response progresses the interviewee positions himself as an other-focused change agent (“*But I think meeting the children really brought it down to earth. It showed us exactly why we were there*”). He uses this construction in juxtaposition to my positioning of him as a generator and user of social capital (in the relationships with other volunteers) for himself. It is a reminder that social capital in his other relationships was generated and used for the beneficiaries (“*why we were there*”).

Exhibit 31

Interviewer: *It sounds like you had a great time.*

Marie: *Yeah.*

Interviewer: *Did that. How. Did that any way jar with what you saw at the orphanage? Some of that money you raised was going to you having a good time [Marie: Ehm], as well as. You know?*

Marie: *Well, I think it was more that we would raise an awful lot of money. We can still have a good time along the way. You know? It's compulsory to have fun when we're over there. I don't think volunteering and going to Belarus needs to be as harrowing and, you know, dreadful as people make it out to be. I think more people would get involved if they realised you can go there with a nice bunch of people and still have a good time. As well as doing something good. You know? I think we need to realise that as well. It's not all trudging along and seeing these horrible sights. You can do good and still, you know, have a good time as well.*

Source: Interview IX Marie (17/9/06): 360-379

Exhibit 31 begins with my constructing how Cyclecharity positioned the interviewee as using social capital both for the beneficiaries (“*Some of that money you raised*”) and for herself (*going to you having a good time [Marie:*

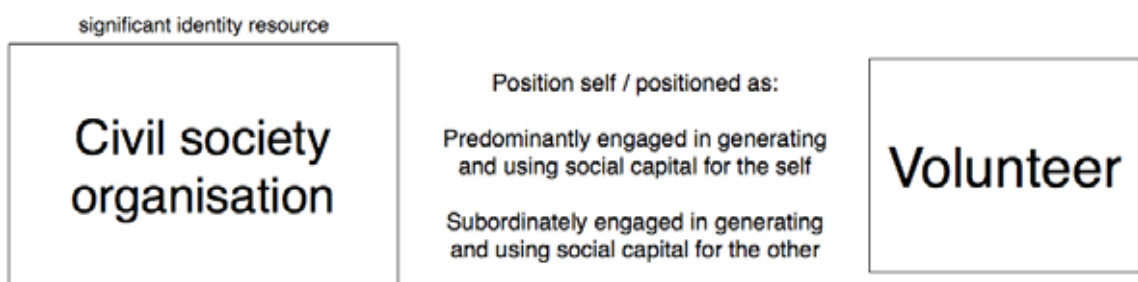
Ehm], as well as”). Again this positioning is presented as effectively causing the interviewee’s volunteer identity to lack credibility. This is achieved through the use of the conventional notion of other-focused change (“*Some of that money you raised*”) in juxtaposition with positioning the interviewee as a self-focused change agent (“*going to you having a good time [Marie: Ehm], as well as*”). The interviewee initially responds by positioning herself as an other-focused change agent (“*I think it was more that we would raise an awful lot of money*”), in order to make clear that social capital generated in her relationships was used for the beneficiaries. The interviewee then goes on to construct how Cyclecharity positioned her, and the other volunteers, as having to use social capital for themselves through enforced hedonistic experiences with others (“*It s compulsory to have fun when we re over there*”). The interviewee constructs how the organisation mandates the use of the resources in the relationships with other volunteers for the self as a tool for recruitment (“*I think more people would get involved if they realised you can go there with a nice bunch of people and still have a good time*”). The interviewee ends her response by positioning herself as an other-focused change agent (“*You can do good*”) and as a self-focused change agent (“*and still, you know, have a good time as well*”). In doing so she constructs how the apparent dichotomy of using social capital for others and for the self does not, in her opinion, cause her identity as a volunteer to lack credibility (“*You can do good and still, you know, have a good time as well*”).

7.2.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct the relationship with the civil society organisation as essential to their achievement

of the volunteer identity. They construct how they were recruited through the “social networks” shared by themselves and Cyclecharity in order to do “good deeds” (Putnam 2000, p. 117). The interviewees construct how they are positioned by the organisation as engaged in the generation and use of social capital in the relationships made available through their taking on the identity of a Cyclecharity volunteer. That positioning is constructed as focusing their identity work upon achieving a hedonistic sociality/altruistic solidarity with other Cyclecharity volunteers. As such they construct how they are positioned by Cyclecharity as predominantly engaged in the use of social capital for the self - as self-focused change agents. However, they also position themselves as engaged in the generation and use of social capital for others, the beneficiaries of the organisation, as other-focused change agents. It appears that this positioning is used to counter any construction of their volunteer identity as lacking credibility. Figure 7.1 illustrates the positioning of the volunteer in the relationship with the civil society organisation.

Figure 7.1: The relationship with the civil society organisation



Source: Derived from the researcher’s analysis of the interview data

The framework presented in Figure 7.1 shows how in the construction of the relationship between the interviewee as volunteer and the civil society organisation the volunteer is predominantly positioned as engaged in generating and using social capital for the self, and subordinately for the other. The diagram confirms that the positioning is constructed as occurring in the relationship with Cyclecharity and not beyond that context. It further establishes that the civil society organisation is a significant identity resource for the achievement of the volunteer identity. It is such because it provides the materials to construct the volunteer identity. The interviewees construct how through the relationship they acquire the necessary knowledge of what identity work is required, receive tools that may be used to assist in that identity work (for example marketing materials), and further are given support to maintain that identity work.

The research shows that when the interviewer positions the interviewee as engaged in using social capital for the self - as a self-change agent - the credibility of the volunteer identity is placed in question. The interviewees work up a rhetorical defence apparently recognising that the credibility of their identity is at risk if they do not show that they have used social capital for the beneficiaries. This finding leads to the question, if there is some recognised dichotomy in the construction of the identity of volunteer, caused by the positioning of the volunteer by Cyclecharity as predominantly using social capital for the self, why does it not invalidate the achievement of the identity of volunteer? The research finds that the interviewees' construction of their being positioned by Cyclecharity as predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the self suggests that instrumental norms (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.25) apply to the relationship. Instrumental norms relate to the accrual of

social capital for egocentric needs and the idea of enforced trust, where obligations are imposed on both parties by the wider community (Portes 1998). The interviewees construct how their obligation at its most fundamental level in the relationship with Cyclecharity is to achieve the identity of volunteer. The obligation on the part of the Cyclecharity organisation is constructed by the interviewees as to provide resources through which that identity work may occur - resources that may be as disparate as advice, promotional materials, and the sociality of the charity challenge experience itself. The analysis suggests that the enforced trust in the relationship results in the interviewees' acceptance that the identity of volunteer - constructed by the organisation - is credible despite the positioning of volunteers as predominantly self-focused change agents, rather than entirely engaged in other-focused change. The research finds that the interviewees trust that the organisation's positioning of them - as predominantly engaged in generating social capital for the self - is sufficient for them to achieve the identity of volunteer. This may also explain why the promotion of hedonism and sociality are suggested by a number of the interviewees as tools for the recruitment of volunteers. The organisation's construction of these as appropriate legitimises the use of the volunteer identity for the self. It legitimises the position of self-focused change agent and the generation and use of social capital for the self.

The research adds depth to work that suggests that self-selection effects result in individuals with certain characteristics choosing to join particular types of associations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). The interviewees all construct how they wanted to be volunteers with Cyclecharity because of the potential to generate and appropriate social capital for the self

(particularly in relation to the hedonism and challenge of the experience) and for the other, the beneficiaries (by supporting the cause). As the previous chapter identifies they construct how they were positioned as volunteers *in potentia* by Cyclecharity, but it was only when they positioned themselves (self-selected) as volunteers in actuality that they chose to volunteer. The interviewees also construct how they self-selected in terms of their reflexive awareness of the relationships that they could use as resources. The research shows how they self-selected due to the knowledge of the 'advantage' they had due to their "location in a structure of relationships" (Burt 2007, p.4). This interpretation adds to and illuminates Wollebæk and Selle's (2002) finding that participation in voluntary associations is related to both the extent of social networks and the presence of neighbours, colleagues, or students from the respondents' local community, workplace, or educational institution in the respondents' set of connections. This research finds, as did Wollebæk and Selle (2002, pp.48-49) that volunteering broadens social networks.

The analysis does not suggest that the interviewees' positioning by Cyclecharity constrains their identity work across the other relationships they engage in as volunteers. Rather it contends that within the civil society organisation–volunteer relationship a particular positioning occurs. The following sections point to how the interviewees are reflexively aware of the need to position themselves depending upon the relationship that they engage in in order to achieve the identity of volunteer.

7.3 OTHER VOLUNTEERS

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct their relationship with other volunteers as one in which they are engaged in the generation and use of social capital. The relationship is constructed by the interviewees as one in which they position themselves as generating and using the resources available predominantly for the self. The following section offers an analysis of the interviewees' construction of their relationship with other volunteers.

7.3.1 Analysis

Exhibit 32

Interviewer: *I mean how do you think it turned out to be that way, that sort of thing?*

Onya: *I think the group that went, I think everyone was so positive. Looking at how, ehm, the whole disaster affected Belarus I think everyone just needed to joke about and, just to keep the spirits high and keep, just like, stopping ourselves from getting really depressed by looking at it. I think people just joked, started telling jokes and everything like that. Then everyone else got in the mood and it just continued, I think. And everyone warmed up, like relax chill, had a great time. There was the hard times like cycling and going to see the orphanages, the kids and ehm. But I think everyone tried to keep it positive, like, for ourselves and then when you go and see the children too. You can't [laughs], you can't get saddened amongst them because they won't understand. So you have to, like. Like I think it was all, everyone was on great form and everyone made an effort. There was no, we were all there for the same reason. To help. There was no bitchiness or anything like that. And, like, for a crowd of 88 to go over it's rare that everyone could get on so well, like. There always would be, like, fighting and that. Like, just, I don't know. But.*

Source: Interview XI Onya (19/8/06): 403-419

In Exhibit 32 the interviewee positions the other volunteers and herself as predominantly engaged in the generation and use of the resources (the social capital) in those relationships for the self. The interviewee positions herself and

the others as engaged in self-focused change - working to change the emotionally difficult circumstances of the charity challenge through the engendering of a shared sociality (*"Looking at how, ehm, the whole disaster affected Belarus I think everyone just needed to joke about and, just to keep the spirits high and keep, just like, stopping ourselves from getting really depressed by looking at it"*). The suggestion is that each individual used the relationship with the other volunteers to engender a mutual sociality in order to avoid unhappiness and despondency. The interviewee constructs the tragedy of the situation in Belarus (*"the whole disaster"*) as a catalyst for the working up of the generation and use of social capital for the self. She constructs the social capital (generated and used through the sociality of joke telling and response) as a necessary and predominant resource in the relationship between volunteers.

The interviewee goes on to construct how the sociality of the relationship between volunteers engendered a solidarity, using the conventional notion of other focused change (*"we were all there for the same reason. To help. There was no bitchiness or anything like that. And, like, for a crowd of 88 to go over it's rare that everyone could get on so well, like"*). She constructs a reminder of herself and the others as other-focused change agents (*"we were all there for the same reason. To help"*). This construction suggests that the generation and use of social capital for the other, the beneficiaries, stimulates the building of solidarity in the volunteer relationship. It is what engenders the relationship. The sociality that is achieved through the generation and use of social capital for the self is a driver for the relationship between volunteers.

Exhibit 33

Interviewer: *I never really thought about it that way. About how much had been spent on drink and, yeah [Ann: Yeah], I can see. I've seen the DVD and I wonder if the people will think that or see the fact that it needs to be attractive to them and so something [Ann: Yeah]. It's one of those problems, yeah, [Ann: Yeah] that's hard to solve.*

Ann: *No. And especially Irish people, they're always going to be like that. You know? And [Interviewer: Yeah] See the quality that Irish people have as, because they're so sociable all the time, and we got on with the Belarussian people so well. They just clicked in with us. But at the same time I don't think the trip would have been as successful if people hadn't been out together. And I know drink comes with that naturally. But, ehm, it was when everyone gelled. You know? When you're on the bike you don't want to talk to anybody. You're in so much pain. And you're just cycling along. And there was times when [laughs] some of my friends were, like, crying at times, and we just would be like, there's no way you could. But you do bond with people cos you're, you're experiencing something and you're trying to get to the end. A lot of people, and a lot of girls are, I'm fierce proud of two of my friends in bits, and I've never seen them, they were really suffering, like. And it was hailstones and the lot and they made it to the end. And they were just, you know, you get a lot of kind of, I don't know what it is, kind of bonding with people because you just kinda admire them so well. You know? When you came to the end. Because you know how much pain they were in. And to see them coming in was great. And then you're in such a mood the, as in well done, you did it. It's the going out part is when you gel with people. And that's what gets the whole group going forward. You know? That kind of way. And that's what we're getting back. I don't, it's the cycling, or, cos it is lovely to see the children, but it is upsetting. You know? And as much as the drinking could, there could have been less of it. I think that the amount that there was balanced everything in a kind of happy and sad. Cos, it was a very emotional trip altogether. So the only time we were happy was when we were drinking [laughs]. That's just being honest.*

Source: Interview I Ann (8/9/06): 273-309

In Exhibit 33 the interviewee constructs how the generation and use of social capital for the self results in a sociality that engenders a solidarity amongst the volunteers and also with their Belarussian hosts (“*it was when everyone gelled*”). Further, she constructs how the use of the resources available in the relationship with other volunteers gives rise to a solidarity. It is a solidarity that is forged by the need for the support of others due to the physical task of cycling across Belarus.

At the beginning of the response the interviewee constructs the Irish identity as inherently social (*“Irish people, they re always going to be like that. You know? And [Interviewer: Yeah] See the quality that Irish people have as, because they re so sociable all the time”*), positioning herself and the other (Irish) volunteers as culturally engaged in the generation of social capital for the self and other. She goes on in her response to construct how the other-focused solidarity of the volunteering engagement required sociality (*“But at the same time I don t think the trip would have been as successful if people hadn t been out together”*). It is in this sociality, constructed as fuelled by both the pleasure of drinking (*“I know drink comes with that naturally”*) and the pain of cycling (*“When you re on the bike you don t want to talk to anybody. You re in so much pain ... some of my friends were, like, crying at times”*) that she constructs how important the generation and use of social capital for the self was to ensure that positive relationships would occur (*“it was when everyone gelled ... But you do bond with people cos you re, you re experiencing something and you re trying to get to the end ... And then you re in such a mood the, as in well done, you did it. It s the going out part is when you gel with people. And that s what gets the whole group going forward”*).

Further to this, the interviewee constructs how the generation and use of social capital for the self was necessary for creating a shared solidarity within her friendship group (*“I don t know what it is, kind of bonding with people because you just kinda admire them so well. You know? When you came to the end. Because you know how much pain they were in. And to see them coming in was great. And then you re in such a mood the, as in well done, you did it”*). The effect of the facing of adversity together, the overcoming of the “*pain*” through

the shared solidarity/sociality of the volunteering, is constructed as giving the interviewee a sense of pride (*"I m fierce proud of two of my friends in bits, and I ve never seen them, they were really suffering, like"*).

Exhibit 34

Interviewer: *And do you think if it had just been a single email to you, it wasn't to your friends as well, I mean, would you have considered it. I mean, you went out, I guess, as a group, em, it experienced a lot as a group. Was that part of, part of what this was all about?*

Sorcha: *It was and it wasn't. It was, it was definitely started off on the, ah, doing the charity fundraising. But then as there was four and then there was eight of us going we were kind of like, I s pose, excited that we were going together. It was like a group experience, ehm, rather than individuals. Because it made it easier. You had someone to talk to that you knew well. It wasn't an experience being shoved in with a group of people you d never met before. Especially going to another country and I must say the cycle at times was tough and I was glad to have one of the girls beside me to say, come on keep going because I probably would have thrown, threw the bike on the side of the road and left. But, ehm, yeah no. I think the fact of having friends there did make a difference, ehm. But, I don't think it would have deterred me from doing it altogether if none of them were doing it.*

Source: Interview XV Sorcha (1/8/06): 390-405

In Exhibit 34 I ask the interviewee if she would have volunteered without the sociality and solidarity of her friends. I position her as biographically capable of achieving the identity of volunteer (using the conventional notions of free will and biographical capability and their respective interpretative repertoires) and then ask her if she would have volunteered without her friends. The interviewee positions herself as using the resources in the friendships to spur her on in her own volunteering (*"It was, it was definitely started off on the, ah, doing the charity fundraising"*). She further positions herself as a self-focused change agent by constructing how the social capital available in the relationship with other volunteers (her friends) gave her the necessary impetus both to be a volunteer and to maintain the volunteer identity (*"But then as there was four and*

then there was eight of us going we were kind of like, I s pose, excited that we were going together. It was like a group experience, ehm, rather than individuals”). The interviewee juxtaposes this response with a construction of her anxiety at volunteering on her own, without that sociality - without resources available in the relationship with other volunteers whom she knew (*“Because it made it easier. You had someone to talk to that you knew well. It wasn t an experience being shoved in with a group of people you d never met before”).* The response suggests that the potential sociality available in her relationship with her friends (the social capital for the self) was significant in her decision to volunteer. Further, she constructs how it is the social capital available in the mutually supportive relationships in her friendship group that maintains her engagement in the volunteering experience (*“Especially going to another country and I must say the cycle at times was tough and I was glad to have one of the girls beside me to say, come on keep going because I probably would have thrown, threw the bike on the side of the road and left. But, ehm, yeah no. I think the fact of having friends there did make a difference”).*

Exhibit 35

Interviewer: *And how did you ask? What were the kind of things you talked about? I mean other people have told me about, ehm, focusing on, on the children. Others haven't really talked about. I expected a lot of people to emphasise the torture of the cycle ride and the joy in people's eyes, as they watched some, knew these people would be doing hundred of kilometres and they'd be glad to hear of the horrors.*

Jane: *Oh yeah. Ehm. A lot of people, said that to me. I wouldn't be a very physical person, like, I wouldn't be strong. Everyone kinda thought, you're not going to be able to do this. Why are you going here? Ehm, there was obviously the option to go on the bus. But I was kinda like that's there for safety. But I really want to push myself. And they were kinda like fair-play. You know? I will sponsor you if you're going to do this. So I thought yeah, it's a few thousand euro, and it's worth torturing. So the second day was the hardest day of the cycle. I was close to tears because my legs were caving in on me. It was awful, but, I had to. One of the girls, Susan, she's gas she, we, kinda like, became partners for the whole cycle. And whenever I was in a down phase she was like come on Jane, come on. Egging me on and giving me support and when she was getting tired I'd come back and stay with her. And she would talk to me. And even people, there would be a sing-along, cycling with a partner as we were going. Just to make the cycle easier on yourself. So a lot of people didn't exactly complete the cycle, but we did push ourselves to the very end.*

Source: Interview VI Jane (3/9/06): 240-267

In Exhibit 35 the interviewee positions a fellow volunteer, Susan, as being in a social relationship with her that enables her to achieve the identity of volunteer in difficult and trying circumstances. The interviewee constructs how she uses the resources in the relationship to help her get through the cycling element of the charity challenge. She uses the friendship, support and empathy available. The extract begins with my positioning the interviewee, using the conventional notion of prosocial change, as having generated and used social capital for the beneficiaries (*“And how did you ask? What were the kind of things you talked about? I mean other people have told me about, ehm, focusing on, on the children ... a lot of people to emphasise the torture of the cycle ride”*). Jane positions herself as engaging in the charity challenge to *“push”* herself to achieve the satisfaction of proving others wrong by going beyond her physical limits (*“A lot of people, said that to me. I wouldn't be a very physical person, like,*

I wouldn't be strong. Everyone kinda thought, you're not going to be able to do this. Why are you going here? ... But I really want to push myself). This construction and her construction of her fundraising (*"So I thought yeah, it's a few thousand euro"*) position her as having engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the beneficiaries.

The interviewee then goes on to construct how the difficult physical and mental nature of the cycle (*"So the second day was the hardest day of the cycle. I was close to tears because my legs were caving in on me. It was awful, but. I had to"*) necessitated her using the social capital in her relationship with another volunteer, Susan, for her own needs (*"One of the girls, Susan, she's gas she, we, kinda like, became partners for the whole cycle. And whenever I was in a down phase she was like come on Jane, come on. Egging me on and giving me support"*). She goes on to construct how Susan used the resources in the relationship to the same ends, to keep her going, to help her to maintain the identity of volunteer (*"and when she was getting tired I'd come back and stay with her. And she would talk to me"*).

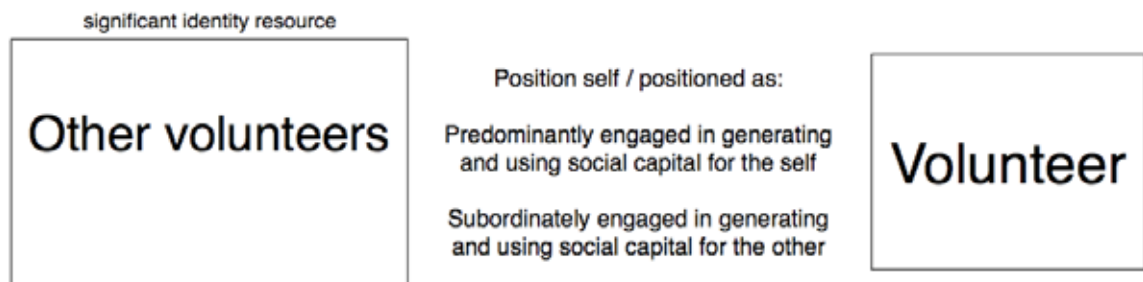
7.3.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct the relationship with other volunteers as necessary to their achievement of the volunteer identity. They construct how Cyclecharity, their friends and fellow colleagues recruit them to become volunteers. The finding adds further weight to Putnam's explanation that "social networks provide the channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds" (Putnam 2000, p. 117). The interviewees

construct how they predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the self. They are predominantly using the resources available in the relationships in order to achieve the identity of volunteer. They construct how a sociality is achieved in which volunteers work together to enjoy the volunteering experience and to support one another in difficult physical, mental or emotional moments.

The research contends that the interviewees position themselves and other volunteers as engaged in using social capital for the self from the relationship even when they construct their offering support to one another. The reason for this contention is that the interviewees position themselves and the others as self-change agents who are engaged in creating a mutual sociality and solidarity from which they may draw to maintain their volunteer identities. They construct how they and the other volunteers are using the resources of the relationship, the empathy of another, the friendship and so forth, for the self. The following diagram illustrates the positioning of the volunteer in the relationship with other volunteers.

Figure 7.2: The relationship with other volunteers



Source: Derived from the researcher's analysis of the interview data

The diagram presented in Figure 7.2 shows how in the construction of the relationship between the interviewee and other volunteers the volunteer is predominantly positioned as engaged in generating and using social capital for the self, and subordinately for the other, the beneficiaries (rather than other volunteers). The diagram makes clear how the positioning is constructed as occurring in the relationship with other volunteers and not beyond that context. It further establishes that the relationship with other volunteers is constructed as a significant identity resource for the achievement of the volunteer identity.

The relationship with other volunteers is constructed by the interviewees as a significant identity resource because of it being a space in which the identity of volunteer is maintained and renewed. That maintenance and renewal are constructed as occurring through the sociality and solidarity engendered in the relationship. The interviewees construct how they use the sociality and solidarity to invigorate their identity work. The relationship is constructed as a space for mutual care and for the sharing of the enormity of the volunteer

engagement - particularly in relation to the cycling and the meeting of the beneficiaries. But further it is also constructed as a space in which others' identity work is on show. The interviewees construct how they note how others volunteer and use that as a model for their own identity.

The analysis of the interview data adds richness to Putnam's (1993b, p. 173) conception of typical voluntary organisations as creating relationships that foster face-to-face interactions and result in solidarity and reciprocity. The analysis finds that the sociality and solidarity of the relationship is constructed by the interviewees as a space in which social capital is generated and used for the self. The sociality and solidarity are constructed as acting to increase the bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 2000, p.23) available in the relationships. The interviewees construct how they bond more closely within their friendship groups due to the necessity to support and maintain them. They construct how the resources of friendship and empathy in those relationships are used by them to achieve their identities as volunteers. But further the interviewees construct how they bridge across the friendship groups to use social capital from relationships with others who they did not know prior to the volunteer engagement. Again, this is constructed as their leveraging those relationships to use social capital for themselves for support, encouragement, and fundamentally the achievement of their identities as volunteers. These findings add depth to de Souza Briggs' conception that bonding social capital is good for "getting by", but bridging social capital is crucial for "getting ahead" (de Souza Briggs 1997). The sociality and solidarity of the volunteer relationships are constructed as producing the social capital necessary to bind the volunteers together as a single determined unit, focused upon the achievement of a

positive volunteer experience for all (including the beneficiaries), and the achievement of the identity of volunteer for each individual.

The research finds that the positioning of the interviewees and other volunteers as predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the self does not undermine their identities as volunteers. The research suggests that this may be because of the effect of the relationship between the volunteers and the civil society organisation. The civil society organisation's positioning of the interviewees as necessarily engaged in the use of social capital for the self opens a discursive space in which that identity may be achieved by those who volunteer without losing credibility. The interviewees construct how the use of social capital for the self is "officially" sanctioned and mandated by the organisation (see the previous section). This suggests that within the confines of the Cyclecharity charity challenge the relationship between volunteer and civil society organisation has a overarching effect upon how the interviewees position themselves in relation to other volunteers - it is a significant identity resource that drives the generation and use of social capital predominantly for the self.

7.4 THE BENEFICIARIES

The research finds that the interviewees construct their relationship with the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity as one in which they are engaged in the generation and use of social capital. The relationship is constructed by the interviewees as one in which they position themselves as generating and using the resources available predominantly for the other, the beneficiaries. The following section

offers an analysis of the interviewees' construction of their relationship with the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity.

7.4.1 Analysis

Exhibit 36

Interviewer: *When you think of the people who are being helped, the young people in Belarus, helped by the Cyclecharity and the Cyclecharity organisation, what's your thoughts on them? Do you think about them when you're volunteering?*

Peter: *Yeah, ah, yeah. You do. I know people have said it. You've probably heard it before, but when you're over there you'll always find, ehm, a person, you know, you kind of remember. That's sort of special to you for one reason or another. Em. And then you'd often, you'd often think about them. There's not too many days go by that you wouldn't think, you wouldn't think about them. You may have a picture of them up on your wall, or it helps you to be a better person. I remember one particular chap, you know, I don't think I'd ever forget how intelligent he was and how smiley he was. And he'd never been given a chance and probably never could be given a chance. I just remember thinking, oh God, Jesus, if you could do anything for this person wouldn't you. That's just myself. I suppose that's what I think about I'm doing in the fundraising.*

Source: Interview XII Peter (19/9/06): 323-339

In Exhibit 36 the interviewee positions himself as predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the beneficiaries, in his relationship with them. The interviewee begins his response by constructing a relationship with a single beneficiary. He uses that as an exemplar of his relationship with the beneficiaries in general (“*You've probably heard it before, but when you're over there you'll always find, ehm, a person, you know, you kind of remember*”). He emphasises, through use of the conventional notion of prosocial/altruistic commitment, that he was determined to engage in activities to alleviate the beneficiary's tribulations in any way he could. He constructs this as

necessitating his generation and use of social capital for the beneficiaries (*“I just remember thinking, oh God, Jesus, if you could do anything for this person wouldn't you. That's just myself. I suppose that's what I think about I'm doing in the fundraising”*).

Exhibit 37

Interviewer: *If I said to you, at the end of the day you've achieved enough. You've got a few Euros in there. You say you're going to do something again [Ryan: Yeah] and even when you're. Ah, the organisation's out there. It's really all about making people feel good about themselves. Getting to know each other. Have a bit of fun.*

Ryan: *Yeah. It's about more than people getting to know each other. Feeling good. I suppose helping people like that would make you feel good about yourself. But, that's only one part of it. I won't say it doesn't exist because it does. Ehm, like, when you see the children over there you'd see that, like, even contact with people that weren't nurses or doctors, were. They'd run straight over to you, like, ehm. They'd, they'd grab onto you straight away, so that contact with people, like, that was important. So, ehm, I think, I think it does do more than just collect a few euros for them, like. Obviously we've raised quite a bit and they'd be looking to get children out of these institutions and into proper, sort of, homes for them. And, eh, hopefully that can be achieved. Hopefully some good will come of it.*

Source: Interview XIII Ryan (8/9/06): 534-554

In Exhibit 37 I position Ryan, using the conventional notion of other-focused change, as succeeding in generating enough social capital for the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity (*“If I said to you, at the end of the day you've achieved enough. You've got a few Euros in there”*). This is however immediately followed by my positioning of the interviewee (and other volunteers), using the self-focused change agency interpretative repertoire, as engaged in generating and using the resources in those relationships for themselves (*“It's really all about making people feel good about themselves. Getting to know each other. Have a bit of fun”*). Ryan responds by positioning himself as predominantly engaged in using social capital for the other and

subordinately using social capital for the self (*"It's about more than people getting to know each other. Feeling good. It's about helping people like that would make you feel good about yourself"*). His construction is used to negate my positioning of him as engaging in using social capital predominantly for his own needs (*"But, that's only one part of it. I won't say it doesn't exist because it does"*).

Ryan ends his response by returning to my construction of him and the other volunteers as engaged predominantly in the use of social capital for the self. He positions himself as having engaged in generating the resources available in his relationships with others for the beneficiaries. In doing so he constructs his relationship with the beneficiaries as being one of predominantly generating and using social capital for them (*"Obviously we've raised quite a bit and they'd be looking to get children out of these institutions and into proper, sort of, homes for them. And, eh, hopefully that can be achieved. Hopefully some good will come of it"*).

Exhibit 38

Interviewer: *Yeah, when I asked you a question just a while ago [Ann: Yeah] you talked about, you might be interested in getting more involved [Ann: Yeah]. And you asked yourself what can you offer [Ann: Yeah]. It's quite a big thing. I mean, it's not like, ah, just having a bit of fun. So there must be something that's drawn you back, drawn you in [Ann: Yeah]. And it's more than just the drink and fun [Ann: Yeah]. Cos you wouldn't exactly be*

Ann: *Yeah, I don't know to be honest. It's very hard. I can feel the whole week, what was accomplished. Everything feels interlinked. And the funny thing is it was only when everyone bonded as a really tight unit that we went to see the children. So, I can't imagine seeing the children without the drinking between us, the cycle and everything. Because, because most of it was, as I was saying with the lads playing, that was a emotional as if you were there on your own. You could see, you could see the lads that were so, ehm, hard to describe them, they were real fun-loving people, like. But they were, they'd be very, ehm, they were just lovely, to see different sides to them. You know [Interviewer: Yeah]. Ehm.*

Interviewer: *Sensitive*

Ann: *Oh yeah, definitely, that was it. Oh God, they were brilliant with them. I was really shocked now with the whole men before women thing with the kids. You know? It was so, the opposite of what it used to be. And, ehm, I was really expecting them to be the ones stand against the wall. And I have to say when I walked in first, like, I got such a, kind of, Jesus, I stood back a bit. And it was, it was, it was only the lads being so natural with them, going in there, like. My first reaction was God. And you feel bad going in there, going over and saying, hi yah, and you don't even speak their language [laughs]. You know? So, I was really impressed by that. I don't think there's one point. I don't know why it affected me so much.*

Source: Interview I Ann (8/9/06): 501-534

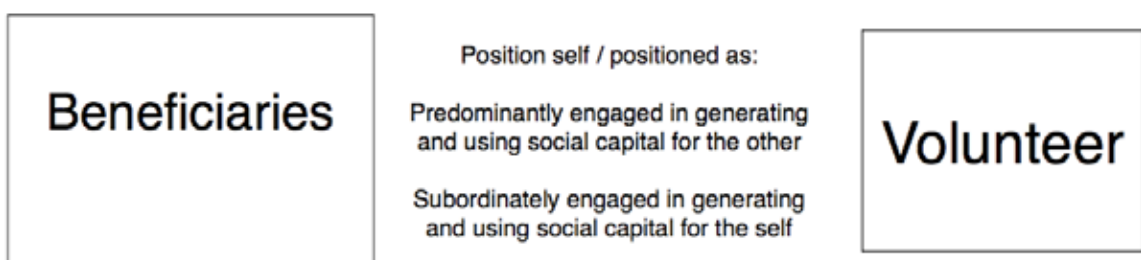
In Exhibit 38 I construct volunteering as an engagement that requires that the individual generate and use social capital for the beneficiaries (“*you asked yourself what can you offer [Ann: Yeah]*”) and for the self (“*I mean, it's not like, ah, just having a bit of fun*”). The interviewee responds by constructing her experience of other volunteers playing with the beneficiaries (“*with the lads playing, that was a emotional as if you were there on your own. You could see, you could see the lads that were so, ehm, hard to describe them, they were real fun-loving people, like. But they were, they'd be very, ehm, they were just lovely, to see different sides to them*”). She positions the other volunteers as generating the resources in the relationship predominantly for the beneficiaries. The

interviewee constructs her own initial inability to engage in a relationship with the beneficiaries because of a concern that she could not generate the necessary resources for them in the relationship, in the same manner that the “lads” did (*“My first reaction was God. And you feel bad going in there, going over and saying, hi yah, and you don t even speak their language [laughs]”*).

7.4.2 Discussion

The research finds that the interviewees construct the relationship with the beneficiaries as necessary to their achievement of the identity of volunteer. The interviewees construct how in those relationships they engage in the generation and use of social capital. The research contends that the interviewees position themselves as predominantly engaged in generating and using social capital from the relationship for the beneficiaries. The following diagram illustrates the positioning of the volunteer in the relationship with the beneficiaries.

Figure 7.3: The relationship with the beneficiaries



Source: Derived from the researcher’s analysis of the interview data

The diagram presented in Figure 7.3 makes clear how in the construction of the relationship between the interviewee and the beneficiaries the volunteer is predominantly positioned as engaged in generating and using social capital for the other, the beneficiaries, and subordinately for the self. The diagram shows that the positioning is constructed as occurring in the relationship with the beneficiaries and not beyond that context. The diagram does not point to the relationship as a significant identity resource.

The analysis of the interview data suggests that the relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiaries is not a significant identity resource. The interviewees construct how they are nervous of meeting the beneficiaries and rely upon each other to maintain the identity in the interaction. They construct how they use one another's identity work as a resource for their own, offering one another mutual support and using others as models for their engagement with the beneficiaries. The relationship with the beneficiaries is not constructed as one in which they may develop the volunteer identity, but rather as one in which they must draw on the resources from the relationship with other volunteers to carefully position themselves in order to maintain their identities as volunteers.

The analysis finds that the relationship between volunteer and beneficiaries occurs as a result of bridging social capital. Putnam (2000, p.23) suggests that bridging social capital is a form of sociological WD40. To apply this metaphor to the constructions of the volunteer engagement is to note how despite language (English and Belarussian), age barriers (young adults and children), and in some cases the effects of a physical or learning disability, the

volunteers and beneficiaries relate to one another. The generation of social capital for the beneficiaries in the relationships - the efforts on the part of the volunteers to ensure that the beneficiaries have a good time - “oils the wheels” of the experience.

The research illuminates Putnam’s notion that “social networks foster norms of reciprocity that encourage attention to others’ welfare” (Putnam 2000, p.117). The analysis shows how the interviewees construct their relationship with the beneficiaries as one which positions them as predominantly engaged in generating and using social capital for the “others’ welfare”. Putnam points out that norms of generalised reciprocity involve “not ‘I’ll do this for you, because you are more powerful than I’, nor even ‘I’ll do this for you now, if you do that for me now,’ but ‘I’ll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you’ll do something for me’” (Putnam 1993b, pp.182-183). Norms of generalised reciprocity appear to be in evidence in the interviewees’ construction of their relationships with the beneficiaries. The research suggests that in the case of the beneficiaries the interviewees construct a norm of subjugation of egocentric interests in order to support them, with little or no expectation of their ‘doing something for me’.

The analysis adds to research on linking social capital (Woolcock 2001). Woolcock (2001, p.11) relates linking social capital to the capacity of individuals to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the immediate community radius. This research shows how the interviewees construct their position as, in a sense, a link between Ireland and Belarus, between strong and weak tie donors and the beneficiaries. The construction of

the identity of volunteer actuates linking social capital for the beneficiaries - resources that they would not be able to access without the interviewees' achievement of their identities as volunteers.

7.5 STRONG TIE DONORS

The interpretation of the interview data points to the finding that the interviewees construct their relationship with individuals with whom they have a strong interpersonal tie - friends and close family - as one in which they engaged in the generation and use of social capital. The use of the term "strong tie" relates to Granovetter's (1973) identification of two types of relationships, strong interpersonal ties and weak interpersonal ties. The interviewees' and interviewer's construction of the relationships between themselves and their families and friends are discerned as strong interpersonal tie relationships, in line with Granovetter's proposition that the strength of an interpersonal tie is dependent upon "a (probably) linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie¹². Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly intracorrelated" (Granovetter 1973, p. 1361). Further, this research shows how the interviewees construct the individuals as donating time and/or money that is used by them to achieve the identity of volunteer. The relationship is constructed by the interviewees as one in which they position themselves as generating and using the resources

¹² Granovetter (1973) clarifies how the ties discussed in his research are "assumed to be positive and symmetric; a comprehensive theory might require discussion of negative and/or asymmetric ties, but this would add unnecessary complexity to the present, exploratory comments" (Granovetter 1973, p.1361).

available predominantly for the self. The following section offers an analysis of the interviewees' construction of their relationship with strong tie donors.

7.5.1 Analysis

Exhibit 39

Interviewer: *So how did you manage to get that money together?*

Shauna: *Yeah. Because it was, because it was around our exams I, I looked into organising an event. Just carrying out, like it was too much organising for me. If I was doing this now, this week, I'd organise an event because I had time. But I was so fogged with study at the time that I didn't have time to dedicate to that. Ehm. So what I did was I literally approached all my friends and all my family and I, I got great support from them. And I wrote a letter to local businesses around Carlow and Laois, here, where I'm from and, ehm, got an amazing response from them as well. I just, my father's a builder, I just wrote letters to people that he maybe worked for, or suppliers, or the bank that we're with. You know? The car dealer, my mother, father, buys her car from. You know people I have some connections with that might know me or my family. Thank God there were a great response.*

Source: Interview XIV Shauna (28/9/06): 208-222

In Exhibit 39 the interviewee constructs how she used the bonding social capital (Putnam 2000) available in her relationships with her family and friends to generate and use the resources available in the relationship for herself (“*all my friends and all my family*”). Shauna explicates, using the conventional notion of biographical capability, how achieving the volunteer identity necessitated the activation of the resources in those relationships for herself (“*I was so fogged with study at the time that I didn't have time to dedicate to that ... So what I did was I literally approached all my friends and all my family and I, I got great support from them*”).

The interviewee explains how she used the relationships with her parents (strong tie donors) to generate social capital for herself from others with whom she had no direct relationship (weak tie donors) (*“And I wrote a letter to local businesses ... my father s a builder, I just wrote letters to people that he maybe worked for, or suppliers, or the bank that we re with ... The car dealer, my mother, father, buys her car from. You know people I have some connections with that might know me or my family”*). Those weak tie donors are constructed as accessed through the interviewee’s use of both bonding social capital (with strong tie donors, her parents) and bridging social capital (with weak tie donors, local community members) (Putnam 2000). A brief final construction of the reaction from donors (*“Thank God there were a great response”*) is used by the interviewee to position herself as engaged in those relationships in generating and using social capital for others, the beneficiaries, though it is the construction of the accrual of social capital for the self that is predominant in the talk about the relationship between herself and the strong tie donors.

Exhibit 40

Interviewer: *How did you feel to actually go out there and ask people for money to get you, ah, sort of on a bike in a foreign country?*

Ryan: *Yeah. That was a bit difficult because I wouldn t, I wouldn t like approaching people for money at the best of times. But, ah, it was just a matter of first of all I asked my relatives and they seemed more than happy to give. A few of them took sponsor cards and they would have worked in hospitals and they would have passed these around there. I went to all the local businesses and the pubs and shops and that. Sort of just to see if they d help us. A lot of them didn t because there was, there was another Chernobyl thing going on at the same time. So I wasn t getting a lot of support from them.*

Source: Interview XIII Ryan (8/8/06): 54-62

In Exhibit 40 the interviewee constructs his reliance upon the social capital available in his relationships with strong tie (and weak tie) donor relationships in his achievement of the identity of volunteer. The extract highlights how the interviewee favours strong tie donor relationships (as do most of the interviewees) as a way to accrue social capital - presumably as these are relationships that have proved to be useful for the generation and use of social capital in the past and are considered a resource for further identity work as a result.

The extract begins with the interviewee using the conventional discourse of other-focused change to position himself as engaged in the generation of social capital ("*approaching people*") which may be converted into donations ("*for money*"). He constructs his reluctance to focus his identity work on positioning himself as engaged in generating social capital for that purpose ("*That was a bit difficult because I wouldn't, I wouldn't like approaching people for money at the best of times*"). The construction points to his reflexive awareness that it is necessary for him to construct relationships with strong ("*my relatives*") and weak tie donors ("*local businesses and the pubs and shops*") and to generate and use social capital from them.

The interviewee constructs how he uses the bonding social capital available in his relationships with his relations (strong tie donors) to generate and use social capital for himself ("*it was just a matter of first of all I asked my relatives and they seemed more than happy to give*"). Again, as in Exhibit 39, these conduits of social capital are constructed as extending beyond the interviewee's strong tie donor relationships. The interviewee constructs how he

uses the resources available in those relationships to “bridge” to others with whom he has no direct relationship (weak tie donors) (“*A few of them took sponsor cards and they would have worked in hospitals and they would have passed these around there*”). The extract ends with the interviewee positioning others as engaged in a similar generation and use of social capital to achieve the identity of volunteer (“*A lot of them didn t because there was, there was another Chernobyl thing going on at the same time. So I wasn t getting a lot of support from them*”). They are constructed as attempting to access the same potential weak tie donors as the interviewee.

Exhibit 41

Interviewer: *And how did you go, how did you go about fundraising yourself? I know it is quite a significant amount of money to ask people for.*

Dervla: *Yeah. I literally just, ehm, like. I was going to organise a table quiz and stuff like that. But I never actually needed to in the end, like. I just used the cards and my family. Like my mum has a big family so she gave a card to all of her brothers and sisters to bring into work and to get their friends to fill in. And everyone was giving five and ten euro, sometimes even more. So it builds up gradually like that. All I needed was the cards in the end. I didn t need to hold a table quiz or that, like. I never got the chance to, with my exams and that, as well. Like I was too late. But I m happy that I actually got it through the cards.*

Source: Interview IV Dervla (14/8/06): 116-131

In Exhibit 41, as in the previous extracts, the interviewee constructs the use of the bonding social capital available in her family relationships as a resource for the achievement of the identity of volunteer. Again the extract shows the use of bonding social capital by the interviewee to position family members as surrogate generators of social capital for the interviewee in relationships to which there is no direct access (the most prevalent examples are donations from a sibling’s coworkers and from coffee mornings run by

mothers). The extract begins with my positioning the interviewee, using the conventional notion of biographical capability, as engaging in the generation and use of social capital (“*how did you go about fundraising yourself? ... I know it is quite a significant amount of money to ask people for*”).

The interviewee constructs how she leveraged the bonding social capital in her relationships with strong tie donors to use the resources in the relationship for herself (“*my mum has a big family so she gave a card to all of her brothers and sisters*”). She positions herself as able to generate and use the resources because of her position as a member of a “*big family*”. The interviewee constructs how she is reflexively aware of the potential resources available as a result of her position (“*I just used ... my family*”). Again the relationships from which she is able to use social capital are constructed as extending beyond the direct reach of the interviewee. The “*cards*” are constructed as tools through which she is able to bridge across relationships, positioning her relatives as generators of social capital on her behalf.

Exhibit 42

Interviewer: *And did you find, did you find yourself, this is something, you know, you re comfortable doing? I mean is it, would it be something you d be, ehm, you know, wouldn t mind getting out there and, you know, asking and, ehm, putting yourself out there? You know? To get that money together.*

Dervla: *Yeah. No, I didn t. Like I said my, my family helped me out a lot, like. They, like, instead of just asking the family to support me I also gave them a card to fill if they could from their family and their friends and that, like. So they didn t have no problem about that. They didn t mind asking. Bringing it into work and asking people that. We did ask, like. They were all fine about it, like. They didn t mind supporting once they knew it was a good cause. They were fine, happy to open their wallets and give the money and it didn t feel bad for them because, you know, it s for a good cause. And, you know, the more people you have the more money you get for them, so.*

Source: Interview IV Dervla (14/8/06): 322-338

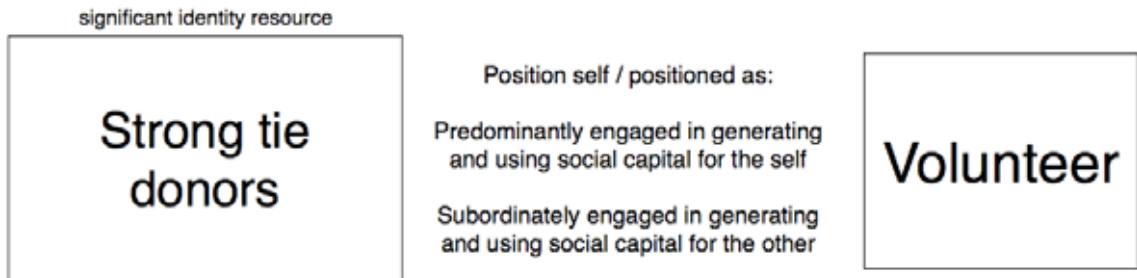
Exhibit 42 occurs later in the interview with Dervla. The extract begins with my using the conventional notion of ideological revision, suggesting that the individual must revise her or his way of thinking in order to engage in generating and using social capital. Positioning the self in order to generate and use social capital is constructed by me as angst-inducing (*“did you find, did you find yourself, this is something, you know, you re comfortable doing?”*). Dervla replies to the question by constructing how she used the bonding social capital available in her relationships with strong tie donors in order to use social capital (*“my family helped me out a lot”*).

The interviewee again constructs how her position in the familial relationships enabled her to use her family as surrogate generators of social capital for her (*“I also gave them a card to fill if they could from their family and their friends ... Bringing it into work and asking people that”*). She points out that having a large family, a large number of strong tie relationships, means that the resources available to her are significantly increased (*“And, you know, the more people you have the more money you get for them, so”*). But she does construct how her use of the relationships did depend upon her positioning herself using the conventional notion of the good cause as engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the beneficiaries (*“they didn t mind supporting once they knew it was a good cause. They were fine, happy to open their wallets and give the money and it didn t feel bad for them because, you know, it s for a good cause”*), though this positioning is constructed as subordinate to her constructions of her using the resources in the strong tie donor relationships for herself to achieve her identity as a volunteer.

7.5.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interview data finds that the interviewees construct the relationship with strong tie donors as necessary to their achievement of the volunteer identity. The interviewees construct how in those relationships they engage in the generation and use of social capital. The research contends that the interviewees position themselves as predominantly engaged in generating and using social capital from the relationship for the self. Figure 7.4 illustrates the positioning of the volunteer in the relationship with strong tie donors.

Figure 7.4: The relationship with strong tie donors



Source: Derived from the researcher's analysis of the interview data

The diagram presented in Figure 7.4 shows how in the construction of the relationship between the interviewee and the strong tie donors the volunteer is predominantly positioned as engaged in generating and using social capital for the self and subordinately for the other. The diagram shows that this occurs in

the interactions between the volunteer and the strong tie donors. It points to the relationship being one that is constructed as a significant identity resource.

The research contends that the relationship between the volunteer and the strong tie donors is a significant identity resource because it is a relationship in which multiple identities are and have been constructed and, through the bonding social capital available, are resourced and maintained. The interviewees construct how they not only are volunteers in those relationships but also position themselves as children, brothers or sisters, friends, fellow students, work colleagues and so forth. The strong tie relationships are constructed as being resourced for many identities - the social capital available is sufficient to develop and maintain those identities. The volunteer identity is one of many identities that may be resourced in these relationships.

The research adds further depth to work that suggests that self-selection effects result in individuals with certain characteristics choosing to join particular types of associations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). The interviewees all construct how they self-selected in terms of their reflexive awareness of the strong tie relationships available to them - with family and friends - that they could use as resources. The research explains how they self-selected due to the knowledge of the "advantage" they had due to their "location in a structure of relationships" (Burt 2007, p.4).

The research illuminates Burt's assertion that "Social capital explains how people do better because they are somehow better connected with other people" (Burt 2007, p.4). This is particularly evident in the interviewees'

construction of their positioning in their family relationships as generators and users of social capital for themselves. The constructions show that there is a willingness to accede to the interviewees' leveraging of social capital in those relationships because of their position. Further, the interviewees construct how they favour generating social capital in those relationships, presumably because they are reflexively aware of previous instances when those resources have been given to them due to their position as a child, sibling, friend or colleague.

The analysis finds that relationships constructed with family and friends are essential to the achievement of the identity of volunteer. They are the relationships that are constructed as most accessible to the interviewees and the first to be accessed. They are constructed as strong social ties that make possible a shared solidarity. This research shows that these ties result in a strong sense of common purpose - that purpose is constructed by the interviewees as predominantly their achievement of the identity of volunteer. The research illuminates the OECD's (2001, pp.45-46) finding, that families and friends provide social relationships (internal and external to those groups) and generate significant social capital for their members. Strong tie relationships are constructed as more accessible social capital resources, because of the bonding social capital potentially available, than those of weak tie donor relationships, which are constructed as needing more effort in order to leverage bridging social capital. Putnam's (2000, p.23) definition of bonding social capital as a kind of "sociological superglue" is particularly evident, as the interviewees construct the bond as a generator of significant social capital for the achievement of the volunteer identity.

The findings point to some of the strong tie donors (particularly family members) constructing relationships on behalf of the interviewees. In a sense they are acting as surrogate generators of social capital for the interviewees. The data does not provide information as to the necessary identity work used by those individuals in order to generate the resources in other relationships. The suggestion here is that the relationships do not appear to simply necessitate a social tie between volunteer and donor, but may go beyond that proximity. The research contends that this necessitates the construction of further identities, beyond the volunteer–strong tie donor relationship, as the strong tie donor, positioned as such by the volunteer, then positions himself or herself as a social capital generator in relation to other potential donors.

7.6 WEAK TIE DONORS

The analysis finds that the interviewees construct their relationship with individuals with whom they have a weak tie - associates, members of the local community and strangers - as one in which they engaged in the generation and use of social capital. The use of the term “weak tie” relates to Granovetter’s (1973) identification of strong and weak interpersonal ties (see section 7.5). The relationships between the volunteer and associates, members of the local community and strangers, are weak interpersonal tie relationships. The research identifies how the interviewees construct those with whom they have weak interpersonal tie relationships as donating time and/or money that is used by the interviewees to achieve the identity of volunteer. The relationship is constructed by the interviewees as one in which the volunteer positions herself or himself as generating and using the resources available predominantly for the other, the

beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. The following section offers an analysis of the interviewees' construction of their relationship with strong tie donors.

7.6.1 Analysis

Exhibit 43

Interviewer: *I mean, from my understanding of Cyclecharity it seems that it needs as much help as it can get ... In terms of your own fundraising, how did you go about raising that money? Taking that time to volunteer your time to, you know, go around so many people, I guess [Ann: Yeah], unless it was one big donation [Ann: No]. How did you manage to get*

Ann: *Yeah, it was actually very hard, cos I was, there was two or three weeks before our finals. I was up to ninety with everything and I had it in my head to. A lot of people, Jack said to us that we could raise the money afterwards, but I had it in my head that I wanted to get it beforehand. You know? And, ehm, so what I did was I went home. I made, you know that anyway. The people there are very good. Basically I think they know my family very well, they've been there twenty years, so everyone knew every generations. You know that kind of way. You know the sisters as well, their friends were around. Everyone was around. So it was lovely to be surrounded by a community that knew us. You know? You know that kind of way. And you've always got the advantage they feel like they have to do something [laughs]. The advantage of them knowing you is that they have to do something [said whilst laughing]. But I actually, ehm, spoke at six or seven masses, eh, at home. Cos the congregations are huge in Naas. So I was basically able to speak to them. And I had the same speech for every mass. One of the masses was aired on radio. So that was on radio as well. So it went really well, I was able to, I wasn't able to get the collection from the church. Because, you know the way they do it and that, they need their own collections and everything. So what I did was I said, eh, if anyone wants to support me just leave money into the parish office. And then they were actually take this here, there's too much here, so they were actually worried about people. So I couldn't get over the response that I got. And I ended up with 4270.*

Source: Interview I Ann (8/9/06): 354-390

Exhibit 43 begins with my constructing the interviewee's volunteering as necessarily requiring her to engage in relationships with others in order to generate and use social capital ("*Taking that time to volunteer your time to, you know, go around so many people, I guess [Ann: Yeah], unless it was one big donation [Ann: No]. How did you manage to get*"). The interviewee responds to

my question by acknowledging that was the case and by pointing out how difficult creating those relationships was (*"it was actually very hard"*). In order to do this she uses the conventional notion of biographical capability to construct the circumstances that had the potential to limit those relationships (*"it was actually very hard, cos I was, there was two or three weeks before our finals. I was up to 90 with everything"*). She goes on to construct how her relationships with weak tie donors - people in her local community - were essential to her achievement of the volunteer identity (*"what I did was I went home ... The people there are very good. Basically I think they know my family very well, they've been there twenty years, so everyone knew every generations. You know that kind of way"*).

The interviewee constructs how returning *"home"* allowed her to achieve relationships with both strong (*"my family"*) and weak tie donors (*"The people there ... their friends ... So it was lovely to be surrounded by a community that knew us ... the congregations"*). The interviewee constructs how she considers that local community members are obligated to provide social capital upon her positioning of herself as a volunteer (*"So it was lovely to be surrounded by a community that knew us. You know? You know that kind of way. And you've always got the advantage of them knowing you is that they have to do something [said whilst laughing]"*). It is a construction that is particularly telling of her use of the bonding social capital in that relationship to generate bridging social capital (*"they know my family very well, they've been there twenty years, so everyone knew every generations"*).

The interviewee constructs how she engaged in the preparation and delivery of very specific identity work in her relationship with the local church congregations (weak tie donors) (“*And I had the same speech for every mass*”). The potential in that relationship, for the generation and use of social capital, is constructed as dependent upon her considered preparation of her identity work (“*I had the same speech for every mass*”). The identity work used in the relationships is not made explicit in this extract. However in Exhibit 44 it is constructed as used to position the interviewee as being predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity (“*all you can say is, in my speech I said, I was more aiming towards, the, look we have everything, just give a euro, you know*”).

Exhibit 44

Interviewer: *And how do you feel doing that, standing up there in front of all those people, with a major ask?*

Ann: *Yeah*

Interviewer: *A real imposition on these people who were sitting there.*

Ann: *Yeah, sometimes you feel like you don't want to be a beggar. You know that way. And all you can say is, in my speech I said, I was more aiming towards, the, look we have everything, just give a euro, you know. It was kinda, really, and you wouldn't believe, you know the way I said you can leave it at the Parish Office, at the end of mass I used to sit down, grand, cos I didn't want to be annoying people. But then when I was walking out my hand was full of money. I was sitting at the edge. People just like throw in twenty euro, twenty euro, twenty euro. And one man actually handed me a five hundred euro note. Right. And it was rolled up this small. He kinda went like this in my hand. And I went thanks a million. And I looked, then I was thinking how did that, how did he have a five hundred euro note at mass. Right. But then I was after writing a letter, I asked the Parish priest, that there's just a few people around Naas that are very wealthy and they don't mind giving money to things. And I asked for a few names. And I wrote to them and told them about it. So, I think. I actually wrote to them and told them what the cause is about and at the end [laughing] I said I'll be at this mass, this mass, this mass. So he must have come to mass then. And the other people I wrote to sent me back cheques for 500 euro. I couldn't believe it.*

Source: Interview I Ann (8/9/06): 398-423

In Exhibit 44, continuing from the previous extract, the interviewee constructs how she was determined not to be positioned as a beggar in the relationship with the church congregation of weak tie donors (*"Yeah, sometimes you feel like you don't want to be a beggar"*). It is an identity that is associated with asking for money for the self rather than for others. She then constructs the necessity to be positioned and to position the self as predominantly engaged in generating and using social capital for others (*"And all you can say is, in my speech I said, I was more aiming towards, the, look we have everything, just give a euro, you know"*). The interviewee goes on to explain that her positioning of herself in that manner was extremely effective - she was able to generate and use social capital to receive a great deal of donations (*"It was kinda, really, and you wouldn't believe ... I was walking out my hand was full of money ... People just like throw in twenty euro, twenty euro, twenty euro. And one man actually handed me a five hundred euro note"*).

The extract ends with the interviewee reiterating the necessity for her of creating relationships with weak tie donors in order to achieve the identity of volunteer (*"I asked the Parish priest, that there's just a few people around Naas that are very wealthy and they don't mind giving money to things. And I asked for a few names. And I wrote to them and told them about it"*). She constructs how she positioned herself as engaged in generating and using social capital for others in her correspondence with a group of weak tie donors - the *"very wealthy"* in her local community. She constructs how she was successful because she positioned herself, using the conventional notion of prosocial change, as engaged in generating and using social capital for others (*"I actually wrote to them and told them what the cause is about and at the end (laughing) I*

said I'll be at this mass, this mass, this mass ... And the other people I wrote to sent me back cheques for five hundred euro. I couldn't believe it").

Exhibit 45

Interviewer: So was it, ehm, how did you actually get together. The, the, the. If I can go back to the very start

Ellen: Sure, sure.

Interviewer: of that. Getting the information about Cyclecharity. How did you get to know about it? You said there about Jack and a gang of you getting together and talking about it.

Ellen: Yeah, well basically he just sent an email saying this was happening, is anybody interested? If you were interested you went to an information meeting. So we went to an information meeting. And he was just kinda. It was like. Nobody really had that much of an idea of what they were getting themselves in for. So we just knew that we had to raise money and turn up and there was cycling. Which was quite vague [laughs]. So we all went off and we went to each raise our money. And that for some, that was a really big challenge for a lot of people. And ehm, especially because we were doing our finals. Because people didn't have the time. In the end everybody actually did it so easily because, not just that, but people, like, the Irish population are very willing to support good causes. So if you find the right medium to channel this kind of request then they're happy to help you. And my mum actually ran a coffee morning in the local community centre after mass on a Sunday. For one Sunday, just three masses, and ehm, I just stood up at each mass and, ehm, made a little speech about what I was doing and stuff like that and sure I thought I'd raise a couple of hundred, but I raised the whole two thousand at that day.

Source: Interview V Ellen (17/9/06): 164-183

In Exhibit 45 the interviewee constructs how she and other Cyclecharity volunteers engaged in constructing relationships in order to generate and use social capital ("So we all went off and we went to each raise our money ... And that for some, that was a really big challenge for a lot of people. And ehm, especially because we were doing our finals. Because people didn't have the time"). The "challenge" of constructing relationships relates to weak tie donors, "the Irish population", to which she later refers. She constructs her ability to generate and use social capital as being dependent upon her using the conventional notion of the good cause ("In the end everybody actually did it so

easily ... the Irish population are very willing to support good causes"). The construction shows how she positions herself as predominantly engaged in the use of social capital for the beneficiaries.

The interviewee constructs her reflexive awareness of the necessity to construct her identity as a volunteer in a particular manner that ensures the generation of social capital (*"So if you find the right medium to channel this kind of request then they re happy to help you"*). Further she constructs how important the relationships with weak tie donors were to her achievement of her identity as a volunteer (*"a coffee morning in the local community centre after mass on a Sunday ... For one Sunday, just three masses"*) and goes on to construct the effect of such relationships as being the generation and use of social capital (*"I just stood up at each mass and, ehm, made a little speech about what I was doing and stuff like that and sure I thought I d raise a couple of hundred, but I raised the whole two thousand at that day"*).

Exhibit 46

Interviewer: *You said earlier on there about the people you'd seen before you, you know, you'd seen in the newspaper off on different trips, like, the Great Wall of China and things like that. Did you ever imagine? What did you think of those people, before you actually did it yourself, who would appear in the paper, would be looking for a few euros?*

Sorcha: *I really commended what they were doing. You know, at the? And I actually always. That nearly made me want to do it. Not the fact of being in the paper, but the, the adventure part of it as well as the raising money. Part of it I think was, ehm, we were told at the beginning to raise one thousand eight hundred and fifty at least. I think it was one thousand eight hundred and, ehm, that kinda seemed a lot at the time. But when the money kept coming in. But, I was talking to my mum about it and, ah, we just decided between the two of us that if I paid for my own way, because one thousand eight hundred and fifty was covering our expenses as well. But if I, ah. My mum said that between the two of us we'd pay for me to go which was three or four hundred euro, covering my, my costs. So when I was advertising to get my money off the public I said I would cover my own costs. So I think that would have enticed people to give money, to give more money, ehm, because they knew that it wasn't going to cover my travels. You know? Like, I had a good time when I was over there people only saw, like, that. Oh, we don't want to pay for Sorcha to jet off for a week. You know? So I think that paying for, paying for it myself, which I did, probably enticed people to give me the money.*

Source: Interview XV Sorcha (1/8/06): 164-185

Exhibit 46 begins with my asking the interviewee to consider her constructions of other volunteers featured in the media. I position those individuals as using the media as a tool to achieve relationships with weak tie donors (*"What did you think of those people, before you actually did it yourself, who would appear in the paper, would be looking for a few euros?"*). Sorcha initially responds by positioning herself as engaged in using social capital for the self (*"the adventure part of it"*) and for others (*"as well as the raising money"*), before going on to relate the importance of relationships with weak tie donors for the achievement of her identity as a volunteer.

The interviewee constructs the necessity to be positioned as predominantly engaged in the generation and use of social capital for others in

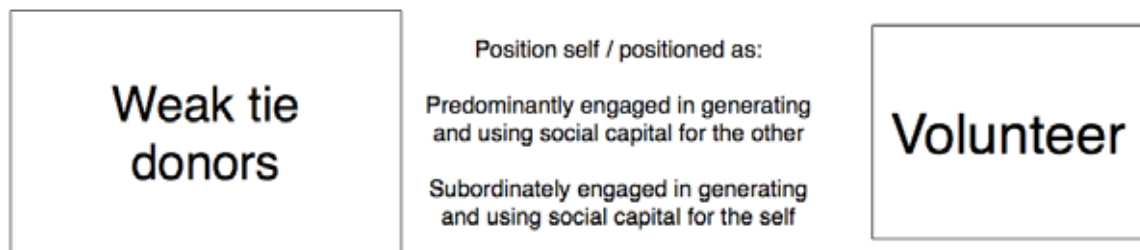
her relationships with “*the public*” - weak tie donors. The construction of her conversation with her mother evidences the anxiety of the interviewee not be positioned as generating and using social capital for herself (“*I was talking to my mum about it and, ah, we just decided between the two of us that if I paid for my own way, because one thousand eight hundred and fifty was covering our expenses as well*”). This reflexive awareness is constructed as necessitating a careful construction of the volunteer identity - to not be predominantly positioned as engaged in the generation and use of social capital for the self by weak tie donors (“*So when I was advertising to get my money off the public I said I would cover my own costs*”). The interviewee constructs how, by avoiding that positioning and emphasising that she was engaged predominantly in using social capital for others, she was able to achieve the identity of volunteer (“*So I think that would have enticed people to give money, to give more money, ehm, because they knew that it wasn't going to cover my travels*”). The opposite positioning is constructed as having the potential to adversely affect the interviewee’s weak tie donor relationships (“*Oh, we don't want to pay for Sorcha to jet off for a week*”).

7.6.2 Discussion

The analysis finds that the interviewees construct the relationship with weak tie donors as necessary to their achievement of the identity of volunteer. The interviewees construct how in those relationships they engage in the generation and use of social capital. The research contends that the interviewees position themselves as predominantly engaged in generating and using social capital from the relationship for others, the beneficiaries. The

following diagram illustrates the positioning of the volunteer in the relationship with weak tie donors.

Figure 7.5: The relationship with weak tie donors



Source: Derived from the researcher's analysis of the interview data

The diagram presented in Figure 7.5 shows how in the construction of the relationship between the interviewee and the weak tie donors the volunteer is predominantly positioned as engaged in generating and using social capital for the other and subordinately for the self. The diagram shows that this occurs in the interactions between the volunteer and the weak tie donors and not beyond that context.

The research finds that the relationship is not a significant identity resource as the interviewees construct how they find it necessary to draw upon the resources in other relationships - particularly with the civil society organisation and strong tie donors - to achieve their identities as volunteers. They explain that they use the resources made available by Cyclecharity, marketing materials and information on the cause, to generate social capital

rather than relying upon the resources in the volunteer–weak tie donor relationship. The lack of resources for the identity work is further evidenced by the careful use of the social capital that is available to be positioned as a member of the local community and as a credible volunteer. Further, many of the interviewees construct how they rely upon the local relational resources of their families (for example, as local community/church members) to construct their identity in the relationships with weak tie donors.

The research adds further depth to work that suggests that self-selection effects result in individuals with certain characteristics choosing to join particular types of associations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). The interviewees all construct how they self-selected in terms of their reflexive awareness of the potential weak tie relationships available to them - within their local communities - that they could use as resources. The research shows how they self-selected due to the knowledge of the “advantage” they had due to their “location in a structure of relationships” (Burt 2007, p.4).

The finding that the interviewees work to achieve particular relationships with weak tie donors and then leverage them to use social capital further illuminates Burt’s assertion that “One’s position in the structure of these exchanges can be an asset in its own right” (Burt 2007, p.4). It appears to be an assertion that the interviewees are acutely aware of and further are aware of the necessity of engendering that position (whether it is as a speaker to a church congregation or as a letter writer to rich locals) and using it to achieve their identities as volunteers.

The analysis of the interview data agrees with and adds new depth to Wollebæk and Selle's finding that participation as a volunteer is dependent upon "the presence of neighbours, colleagues, or students from the respondents' current local community, workplace, or educational institution in the respondents' set of connections" (Wollebæk and Selle 2002, p.46). The research finds that the interviewees construct the importance of the presence of those groups of individuals. Though it further finds that the "current local community" is substituted in the Irish setting for the familial local community - that community the individual grew up in and where their parents reside. It also expands the notion of "neighbours" to include the church congregation (which may be made up of individuals who are not living in the close vicinity of the family home) and local businesses.

What is particularly noticeable is that one of the most successful ways in which the relationships with neighbours are leveraged, for the accrual of social capital, is through the local church and through other civic institutions (such as the pub, local shops, the local school, even the local radio station). This finding adds further illumination to Brown and Ferris' (2007) finding that individuals' relationships and their trust in others and in their community were important determinants of giving and volunteering. The interviewees construct how they have trust in others in their community to support their achievement of the identity of volunteer - particularly when they are recognised as a local. It must be noted that "local" does not only relate to being of a family that are members of the local church congregation. It may also relate to being a member of the local community in general and also a regular in a local pub. Being positioned as a

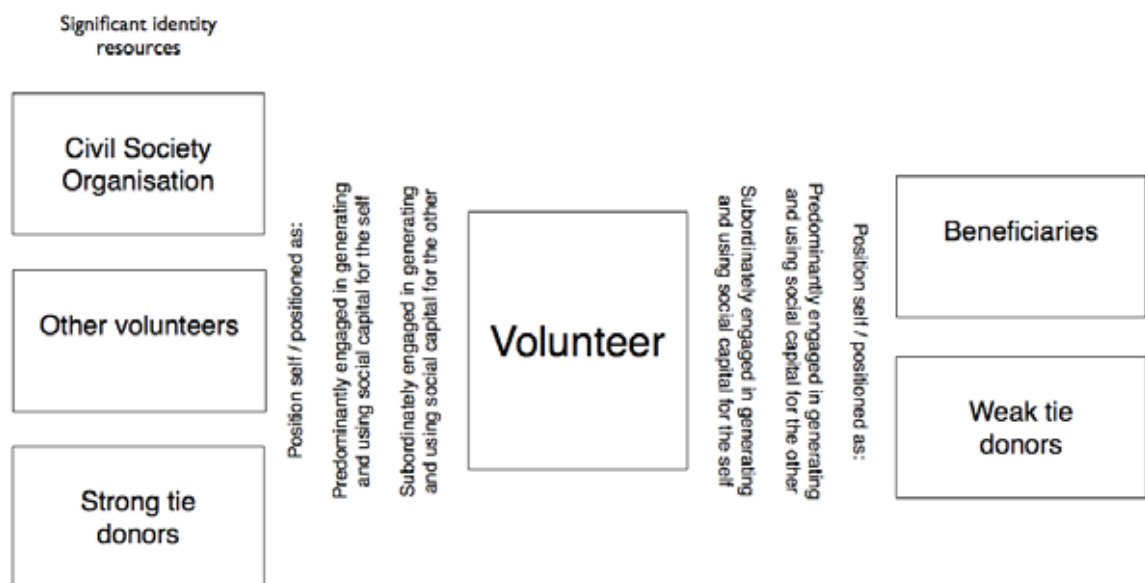
member of the locality (by other members) is a reflexive strategy that is constructed by the interviewees as a significant tool to leverage social capital.

The interpretation of the interview data finds that the interviewees used their identity work to engender a shared solidarity (Granovetter 1985) with weak tie donors, achieved through focusing their discourse on constructing the circumstances of the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. The interviewees construct how they use talk about the beneficiaries' circumstances when they are fundraising with a bucket on the street, giving a speech at a church or on the radio, in their letters to wealthy locals, and so forth, in order to generate social capital. The research illuminates the OECD's (2001, p.46) notion that the everyday social interactions between neighbours generates social capital and offers the potential to culminate in the ability to work together for the common good. It further adds to it by making clear that those relationships require significantly more effort to initially make happen than relationships with strong tie donors. Examples of this care and significant effort include the considered communication of the volunteer engagement (through the use of letters, flyers and leaflets), going around to local businesses, the planning of events and the rehearsal of speeches. These evidence the amount of work required to generate social capital in weak tie donor relationships. The relationships with weak tie donors are constructed as the most difficult to access. But they are also constructed by the interviewees as having the potential to reward the individual with a significant amount of social capital that could be turned into donations. It is a finding that is particularly evident in the case of the church congregations.

7.7 A MODEL OF IDENTITY WORK AND SOCIAL CAPITAL ACCRUAL

This research adds to social capital theory by developing a parsimonious model (Leonard-Barton 1992) that shows how through identity work social capital is generated and used and the identity of volunteer is achieved. The following model illustrates the identity work engaged in by the interviewees to generate and use social capital in their relationships in order to achieve the identity of volunteer.

Figure 7.6: A model of identity work and social capital accrual



Source: Derived from the researcher's analysis of the interview data

The model explains how in the construction of their identities as volunteers the interviewees distinguish particular relationships in which they may engage in identity work to generate and use social capital. The interviewees construct how

they position themselves as volunteers at the centre of the relationships. This finding develops Burt's assertion that "One's position in the structure of these exchanges can be an asset in its own right" (Burt 2007, p.4). The interviewees construct how they position themselves in relationships with the civil society organisation, other volunteers, the beneficiaries, and strong and weak tie donors in order to generate and use the resources available therein using two distinct discursive strategies: the positioning of the self as predominantly engaged in generating social capital for the self and subordinately for the other and predominantly engaged in generating social capital for the other and subordinately for the self. The strategy used is dependent upon the relationship.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this chapter considered the interviewees' construction of the relationships they engaged in as volunteers and their use to achieve the volunteer identity. The analysis points to the finding that the interviewees construct an advantage in building the relationships with others because of the resources that are available therein to achieve the identity of volunteer.

The analysis points out that the individuals manipulate the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement (see Table 6.1) to position themselves as volunteers and it is through their doing so that they are able to generate and use social capital. The interviewees construct how the generation of social capital is dependent upon their achieving a credible identity as a volunteer. It is through their reflexive use of the conventional notions that they are positioned as volunteers (see the previous chapter) and through that positioning that the social

capital in the relationship may be generated and used. The reflexivity involved is particularly clear in extracts where interviewees talk explicitly about their rehearsal of their fundraising speeches to church congregations in which they ask for donations. The extracts show how the interviewees are reflexively aware of the need to manipulate the conventional notions to construct a credible identity as a volunteer and thereby generate social capital in that relationship.

The interviewees construct how through their deliberate positioning of themselves at the centre of the relationships (rather like a spider in its web), they were able to generate and then use the social capital in different ways. The interviewees construct how the form of volunteering they engaged in - the fundraising and the charity challenge - necessitated their use of the resources in those relationships. They construct their need to leverage social capital, for example: to fundraise for the beneficiaries; to receive help from family and friends in order to fundraise; to be supported in their fundraising by Cyclecharity's organisers; to increase awareness of the work of the organisation and of its cause; to be allowed to fundraise at church services and to receive donations once there; to work with other volunteers to enjoy and complete the charity challenge; to support other volunteers and to receive support; to gain satisfaction from the experience of meeting the beneficiaries and to ensure that they did the same.

The analysis finds that the interviewees construct how they position themselves and are positioned as predominantly generating and using social capital *for the self* in their relationships with the civil society organisation, other volunteers and strong tie donors. These are found to be significant identity

resources. They are constructed by the interviewees as discursive spaces which provide the materials to develop and maintain the identity. Further, the model illustrates how the research finds that the interviewees construct how they position themselves and are positioned as predominantly generating and using social capital *for the other* in their relationships with the beneficiaries and weak tie donors. The research contends that it is through this identity work that the interviewees leverage the resources available in those relationships and achieve the identity of volunteer. The following chapter draws together the conclusions of this and the previous chapter and provides a discussion of the important implications of this thesis.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to explain how young Irish adults achieve their identities as volunteers. This is a useful endeavour as in late modernity the nature of civil society and our engagement in it is changing. Issues of identity and identity construction are symptomatic of these changes. This thesis is built using a social constructionist view of the world through the lens of discourse analysis. It also embraces social capital theory. It has been developed by analysing how a group of young Irish adults talk about being volunteers. The analysis of this talk, during intensive interviews, has resulted in the emergence of eight conventional notions of the volunteer engagement that are used by the young Irish adults to construct their identities as volunteers. It has also allowed for the development of a “parsimonious model” of volunteer identity work and social capital generation and use. These findings and insights from the research have enabled the researcher to engage in a worthwhile reflection on the nature of volunteer identity, social capital and civil society.

This conclusion chapter begins with a discussion of the use of the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement that emerged in the interview data. The next section presents the finding that the episodic volunteering engagement is a reflexive identity and biographical project for the young Irish adults. In the following section it is contended that it is an engagement that

occurs because of the availability of a transitional moment in the young Irish adults' life course in which the transitory episodic volunteer identity/biographical project does not risk their careerist identity/biographical goals. The following section offers a contention that the episodic volunteer identity is constructed by the young Irish adults as a deviation from, and as an adjunct to, a socially prescribed life course. This is followed by a discussion of the volunteer as a generator and user of social capital. The next section presents an interpretation of Cyclecharity as a pure episodic volunteering organisation and an igniter of social capital generation. A discussion of future research is then offered. The chapter concludes by turning to the question of the state of Irish civil society in relation to the young Irish adults' volunteering.

This research has demonstrated the usefulness of discourse analysis as a tool for research in the civil society field. Its contribution is to evidence how this method may be effectively taken up, applied and refined to the necessities of civil society research - offering a method that is robust enough and effective enough to be used to offer valuable insights. It has been applied by various researchers, in differing incarnations in the study of such topics as: scientific discourse (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984), racism (Wetherell and Potter 1992), gender and employment (Wetherell et al 1987), marriage (Lawes 1999) rape (Wood and Rennie 1994), and masculinity (Wetherell and Edley 1999; Edley and Wetherell 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999). This research has used the method to focus upon the discourse of the volunteer and volunteering and as such has been able to offer contributions to civil society and volunteering research.

8.2 ACHIEVING THE VOLUNTEER IDENTITY AS A REFLEXIVE, TRANSITIONAL, BIOGRAPHICAL PROJECT

This research contributes to the field of volunteering by evidencing how the volunteer identity is discursively constructed by the young Irish adults who took part in this study. The analysis shows that in the achievement of “being understood” to be volunteers the young Irish adults (and the interviewer) consistently use certain discourses in the construction of the identity of volunteer and of volunteering. Those discourses emerged as conventional notions of the volunteer engagement - they are concepts (notions) of what the volunteer and volunteering are that emerged in the interviews. The identity work (of both the young Irish adults and interviewer) used in the interviews required the capability to develop these ways of talking about volunteering in Irish society. The analysis makes manifest how that capability came from the young Irish adults’ engagement in a wider conversation about what a volunteer is in Irish society. It is an ongoing conversation that they construct in the interviews as occurring within their own families, with their friends, in their local communities, in the media, and even with strangers.

The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement are used by the young Irish adults and the interviewer as building blocks for the construction of the identity of volunteer. The conventional notions of the volunteer engagement are: free will, the voluntary nature of the choice to engage and continue to engage as a volunteer; biographical capability, self-determined biographical action; prosocial/altruistic commitment, a fidelity to an other-focused cause; ideological revision, a change to the young Irish adult’s system of ideas and

ideals about the world; other-focused change, achieving or changing something for the beneficiaries of the civil society organisation; the good cause, the prosocial reason for the existence of the civil society organisation and its volunteers; prosocial solidarity, a unity or agreement of feeling or action that is other-focused; and organisational prosocial credibility, the organisation being trustworthy, capable, and engaged in the achievement of a prosocial cause. The conventional notions are discursive practices ready and available to be used in and across contexts, which inform the way individuals speak about the volunteer and volunteering. The analysis evidences how the young Irish adults and the interviewer negotiate the meaning of volunteer in the interviews, sharing common conventions on how to converse about the subject matter.

Discourse analysis has been an extremely useful analytical tool for research in the civil society field. It has allowed the researcher to analyse how the young Irish adults accomplish the volunteer identity and construct an account of their volunteering. It allows the researcher to delve deeper than the level of description in order to ask how accounts of being a volunteer are used and for what reason, and therefore what they “achieve” for the young Irish adult “immediately, interpersonally, and then in terms of wider social implications” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.110).

8.2.1 Episodic volunteering: an identity and biographical project

The analysis notes that the young Irish adults construct their volunteering as being the result of their own free will. It is their choice to engage in volunteering as an identity/biographical project in their reflexive project of the

self. The analysis points to the choice to engage as being dependent upon the biographical capability of the individual. This suggests that episodic volunteering is an individuated form of commitment (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172) that is used as a identity/biographical project. The findings illuminate research that points out that people with certain characteristics choose to join particular types of associations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). This research makes clear that for the young Irish adults joining Cyclecharity the episodic volunteer identity is constructed as a useful addition to the reflexive project of the self.

Giddens argues that the individual is engaged in a reflexive project of the self, that necessitates the negotiation of distinct tensions and difficulties on the level of the self, “dilemmas which, on one level or another, have to be resolved in order to preserve a coherent narrative of self-identity” (Giddens 1991, p.187). A particular dilemma that appears to be prevalent for the young Irish adults is one of being under constant pressure to achieve unification of the narrative of self-identity, protecting and reconstructing it (Giddens, 1991, p.192). The episodic volunteer engagement is one such attempt at reconstructing the self - the taking on of a new identity - one that is relatively risk-free because of its episodic nature.

The young Irish adults construct the episodic volunteering as a choice in their reflexive project of the self. It is a choice that is limited by biographical constraints (such as the necessity to focus upon career/hedonistic goals) and not without difficulties (such as the necessity to construct relationships in order to generate social capital), but one that is constructed as nonetheless useful as

an identity/biographical project. The analysis builds upon research that suggests that young volunteers want “a quest for oneself” and “a quest for the new” (Rehberg 2005, pp.116-119) by showing that the most fundamental quest is for what Giddens (1991, p.75) perceives as the “building/rebuilding [of] a coherent and rewarding sense of identity”. This research deepens the understanding of how young Irish adults construct the pragmatism behind the decision to volunteer. The analysis indicates that the interviewees’ pragmatism is constructed as going beyond balancing the needs of the self, the organisation and its beneficiaries, as suggested by Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003), to a consideration of other identities/biographical projects that might be achieved and to the socioeconomic forces that constrain their achievement.

Giddens (1991, p.192) contends that individuals, in unifying the self-narrative, are engaged in incorporating elements from the different settings they inhabit (home life, work, subcultural groups) into their elective biography. One such element the young Irish adults are using in their construction of the reflexive project of the self is volunteering. They are electing to engage in a more individualised trajectory in their construction of their life course. They are choosing to engage in episodic volunteering as opposed to other forms of commitment. The episodic volunteer identity is a temporarily usable identity sending them, for at least a short time, along a biographical path that deviates from their constructions of institutionally prescribed careerist and hedonistic identities/biographies.

The young Irish adults’ continual self-monitoring of their reflexive project of the self explains why the engagement is episodic in nature. Evidenced in the

analysis is a discursively constructed recognition of institutionalised sociocultural pressures relating to career and hedonism. These are constructed as prescribing particular identities and biographical projects. The analysis points to how the effect of these prescriptions is that volunteering is constructed as using resources that might otherwise be directed to achieve a career. This is a finding that adds to and illuminates research on career and volunteering (Clary et al 1998; Oesterle et al 2004; Rehberg 2005; Marta et al 2006) by evidencing that volunteering is constructed as detracting from career achievement and development. It is also constructed as having a limiting effect upon relationships (such as parenting) and hedonistic experiences (for example, holidays and social activities). The young Irish adults are constructing their reflexive projects of the self whilst aware of the negative effects of the volunteering engagement.

The engagement as a volunteer is constructed as occurring in a transitional moment between the student and careerist identities - a moment when one ends and another is yet to begin. It is constructed as being where there is "room" to achieve the identity without affecting any other identities. That transitional moment is constructed as a space in the young Irish adults' lives when institutionalised sociocultural pressures are alleviated for an episode: an episode of volunteering. The analysis makes manifest how the young Irish adults construct the volunteering engagement as necessarily requiring a space in which the pressures of institutionalised individualism (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.8), particularly those of the job market, are alleviated. The analysis makes clear that the young Irish adults are under pressure from institutional forces to focus predominantly upon the socioeconomic needs of the self and those closest to them (their partner and children) and it is only in the

transitional moments, in which volunteering occurs, that the focus is turned to others beyond kith and kin with any concerted intensity and longevity. Career is constructed by the young Irish adults, in contrast to volunteering, as *not* about doing things for others.

The effect of the prescription to achieve a career identity following the student identity is that the volunteering engagement is constructed by the young Irish adults as necessarily episodic (even for two who volunteer regularly, it is still an adjunct to a careerist identity). It is “fitted in” around the pressure to achieve a career. In talk about the future the analysis indicates that again volunteering is constructed as an episodic element of the reflexive project of the self, limited by prescribed sociocultural forces, particularly career, but also further along the life-course by the demands of parenthood. Those future transitional moments where episodes of volunteering may occur are constructed as imagined career-breaks of a few months in duration or when children have grown up and left home. Any future volunteering is constructed as episodic and occurring only in transitional moments of the life course.

8.2.2 Episodic volunteering in a transitional biographical moment: an option for the risk-averse

The analysis provides evidence that the volunteer identity is limited by the young Irish adults’ construction of the engagement as possible only in a transitional moment. The identity is constrained to where there is room for its achievement without negatively affecting any other (particularly the careerist identity). This finding illuminates Bauman’s (2002) contention that the shaping of

the biography involves risky life politics. In choosing to engage as episodic volunteers the young Irish adults show themselves to be risk-averse in relation to their reflexive projects of the self. The majority of them (all but two) are willing only to volunteer for a short time and only when the activity does not affect other identity/biographical projects. This also applies to the young Irish adults' construction of their future volunteering.

The episodic volunteering can be used, and then disposed of, having fulfilled the necessities of that particular moment in the young Irish adults' lives. It is not, to paraphrase Bauman (2002), a "risky" identity/biographical project. It does not overtly affect any other of the prescribed identities constructed by the young Irish adults as identity/biographical goals. As noted earlier in this section, the young Irish adults construct how anything beyond episodic moments of volunteering are likely to detract from their careerist, familial and hedonistic identities. The real risk, which they are averse to, may be interpreted as an immersion in long-term volunteering. There is concern that such commitment will limit the identity and biographical work necessary to achieve other identities. Further, the analysis makes clear that an aversion to longer-term volunteering also effectively stops their engaging in this form of active citizenship. Being an active citizen as a volunteer is constructed by the young Irish adults as necessarily limited to short moments in their lives. They may be characterised as the episodic civic generation, rather than the long civic generation described by Putnam (2000).

Episodic volunteering is a relatively risk-free option for the risk-averse, in their reflexive project of the self. As such it is an option that is constructed by the

young Irish adults as a potential form of volunteering in their imagined futures. Those futures again are constructed as constrained by institutional social pressures to achieve a career, and in addition to raise a family. Episodic volunteering in transitional moments, as a result, is constructed as the most attractive form of immersion in civil society.

8.2.3 The episodic volunteer identity: a deviation from and adjunct to the prescribed life course?

The analysis further evidences how the engagement as an episodic volunteer is constructed by the young Irish adults as a deviation (the exception rather than the rule) from the “normal” socioeconomically prescribed life course - from student to careerist. Wuthnow (1991, p.72), in his study of American society and volunteering, suggests that the taking on of an identity that is necessarily significantly other-focused, such as that constructed by the young Irish adults, gives rise to a tension between deviance and normality, at the level of the self and of society: “We feel compelled to account for our motives because we believe caring is in some ways deviant ... compassion is considered unusual by the majority of the population” (Wuthnow 1991, p.72). The “norms of material success and a comfortable life” (Wuthnow 1991, p.72) are institutionalised as normal and prescribed as necessary to the contemporary reflexive project of the self. The young Irish adults’ engagement as volunteers deviates from those “norms” of self-focus (careerism and hedonism) to a focus upon the needs of others, the beneficiaries of Cyclecharity. But that deviation is momentary, lasting only as long as the episode of volunteering, before they return to the pursuit of a

career, which Irish society defines as the route to “material success” and a “comfortable life”.

The young Irish adults’ talk about the choice, or free will, to volunteer evidences that volunteering is accessible to these young Irish adults. They construct how they are supported in their decision to volunteer, by, for example the civil society organisation, family, friends, local communities and strangers. This makes clear that volunteering between college and career is accepted in Irish society. But the talk about biographical capability suggests that it is an engagement that necessitates significant individual effort to take part in, to deviate from the “norms of material success and a comfortable life” (Wuthnow 1991, p.72). The constructions of the choice to engage and the capability necessary to achieve the volunteer identity emphasise how it is not institutionalised as a biographical decision and it is not prescribed by sociocultural pressures from, for example, the state, the (job) market, or other societal bureaucracies. This is made clear when one considers the institutionally available resources for the young Irish adult seeking employment in comparison to those available to support volunteering in Irish society. Put simply, the young Irish adult job-seeker may avail of multiple state and private employment bureaux and be supported financially in their job-seeking, whereas the interview data evidences the do-it-yourself approach of the young Irish adults’ volunteering, one that requires the building up of an infrastructure of relationships which may only then be leveraged for their resources.

The research adds further depth to Wuthnow’s finding that caring for others is done within “special settings and under unusual

circumstances” (Wuthnow 1991, p.73). This is evident in the analysis of the young Irish adults’ relatively atypical biographical decision to engage with a civil society organisation. The “settings” could not be more “special” nor the “circumstances” more “unusual”, in that the engagement necessitates the young Irish adults going out into the public sphere to generate and use social capital. They construct how they went door-to-door to local businesses and neighbours, put up posters to advertise themselves, talked on radio programmes and to church congregations. This is even before they go to a foreign country to cycle for miles and spend time in orphanages with the beneficiaries. For the majority of the young Irish adults this was the first time they had ever engaged in many of those activities. Their constructions of their trepidation and having to overcome their fears to engage in the special settings and unusual circumstances further illustrate a deviation from what they consider to be normal in their lives.

The young Irish adults’ talk about the commitment to a prosocial/altruistic aim and to other-focused change, to an ideology which compounds an other-focus, further emphasises the peculiarity of this identity for young Irish adults. The talk about the past and future life course emphasises the predominance of identities that are self-focused and institutionally prescribed as such, particularly those of the student (constructed as a recent predominant past identity), of the careerist (constructed as a present/future predominant identity) and of hedonist (constructed as a present/future predominant identity). In comparison, the identity of volunteer is constructed as emphasising the predominance of other-focused ideology, agency and change.

This is further underscored and most explicitly delineated in the talk about the ideological revision that the young Irish adults chose: the new way of thinking required to achieve the identity of volunteer. It is a revision that is, at least for the episode of volunteering, intensely other-focused, with the concerns of others' biographies at the forefront. It is an ideological revision of the young Irish adults' predominant way of thinking, a prescribed self-focus, to one that deviates to a focus on the other.

The analysis shows how the peculiarity and deviant nature of the identity of volunteer is constructed as unsustainable beyond the transitional adjunctive moment between studies and career without significant identity and biographical work. It finds that the majority of the young Irish adults are not prepared or capable of sustaining it. This makes evident that the construction of the volunteer identity for these young Irish adults is implicitly regulated by the particular social institutions noted earlier, particularly the state and the (job) market. The identity and biographical work is necessarily refocused to other identities following the episode of volunteering in order to achieve the reflexive project of the self. This suggests that those other identities (student, careerist, hedonist, parent) are easier to sustain in the reflexive project of the self in contemporary Irish society. Arguably this indicates that the young Irish adults have ceded their lives to the controlling influence of institutionalised pressures which emphasise career and hedonism. These are institutionalised pressures which include a tolerance for volunteering but only as an adjunct to other (student, careerist, hedonist, parent) identity/biographical choices.

The young Irish adults construct the episodic volunteer engagement as not only a deviation from a prescribed identity/biographical work, but also as an adjunct (supplementary rather than an essential part) to their life course. Civil society participation is constructed as not an essential element of their reflexive project of the self. This interpretation is echoed in Hustinx and Lammertyn's finding that "volunteering is no longer naturally inscribed in collective patterns of behavior" (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172).

The young Irish adults construct the volunteer identity as neither explicitly nor implicitly prescribed in Irish society in the way that the student, careerist, familial or hedonistic identity is. Rather it is constructed by the young Irish adults as a choice of their own free will (albeit limited by their biographical capability). It is a choice that is episodic and transitory and deviant in comparison to careerist and hedonistic identity/biographical choices. The young Irish adults construct how they position themselves as volunteers in actuality, choosing to volunteer with Cyclecharity not as an essential next step in their life course - from student to volunteer to careerist - but rather as a supplementary identity/biographical project, in the transitional moment between student and careerist identities. The supplementary nature of the engagement is further evidenced in the talk about it being an opportunity to experience a new country, an adventure, as different to the "usual sun holiday", as something to do with the time available before starting a new course/career. The volunteer engagement is constructed as just another option. If the individual had not been positioned as a volunteer *in potentia* they would have expended their biographical capability elsewhere.

However, that the young Irish adults construct the volunteer engagement as an adjunct to their prescribed life course, a deviation in the transition from student to careerist, is not to say that once the participation exists it is not reported by them as encouraged by society. The analysis evidences how the identity/biographical project is encouraged in the relationships with family, friends and the wider community. This is evident in the construction of the social capital that was generated in those relationships. There exists a tension between the volunteer identity being deviant but also being accepted. It is a tension that appears to be navigable because the volunteer identity is out of the ordinary but not extraordinary. The young Irish adults construct how their decision to volunteer is out of the ordinary (when compared with the majority of their peer group), but it does not have an extraordinary effect on them or on others' (their families, friends, communities, and so forth) who accept the decision and help them in their choice. The young Irish adults' construction of the ability to generate and use social capital beyond family and friends suggests that the episodic volunteer identity is a positive social identity in Irish society. Though the analysis makes clear that the engagement as a volunteer (for the majority of the young Irish adults) is far from a positive social identity for the longer-term goals of the reflexive project of the self.

8.3 THE VOLUNTEER AS GENERATOR AND USER OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The analysis points to how the young Irish adult volunteers are generators and users of social capital. The previous chapter's findings show how they distinguish particular relationships in which they may engage in identity work to generate and use social capital and in doing so achieve the identity of volunteer.

The findings make clear how the interviewees construct their positioning of themselves in relationships (with the civil society organisation, other volunteers, the beneficiaries, strong and weak tie donors) in order to generate and use the resources available in them. Further, the analysis explicates how they use two distinct discursive strategies. It finds that the interviewees construct how they position themselves and are positioned as predominantly generating and using social capital *for the self* in their relationships with the civil society organisation, other volunteers and strong tie donors. The chapter illustrates how the interviewees construct how they position themselves and are positioned as predominantly generating and using social capital *for the other* in their relationships with the beneficiaries and weak tie donors. The analysis points out that the individuals manipulate the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement to position themselves as volunteers, and it is through their doing so that they are able to generate and use social capital. The analysis of the interview data (Exhibits 29 to 46) shows that the interviewees are reflexively aware of the need to manipulate the conventional notions to construct a credible identity as a volunteer and thereby generate social capital in that relationship.

These findings resulted in the development of a model (see Figure 7.6) that explicates and tracks how the young Irish adults engage in identity work in order to generate and use social capital and in doing so achieve the volunteer identity. The linking of identity work and social capital has proved useful to explain how social capital is leveraged by individuals to achieve the identity of volunteer. It provides a model to explain how through the positioning of the self and the other social capital is generated and used by the young Irish adult volunteers.

The analysis points to the young Irish adults being positioned and positioning themselves as engaged in the generation and use of social capital to predominantly achieve a hedonistic solidarity with other volunteers. The finding adds depth to work that suggests that self-selection effects result in individuals with certain characteristics choosing to join particular types of associations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). The interviewees all construct how they wanted to be volunteers with Cyclecharity because of the potential to engage in a hedonistic solidarity (the hedonism and challenge of the experience) and because of the potential to help others, the beneficiaries. The research shows how the young Irish adults construct relationships that are based upon a prior shared sociality, their friendship groups, and an expectation of an expanded sociality during the volunteering engagement, the making of new friends. This finding builds on Putnam's explanation that "social networks provide the channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds" (Putnam 2000, p. 117).

The analysis notes that sociality and solidarity are constructed as acting to increase the bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 2000, p.23) available in the relationships. The sociality and solidarity of the volunteer relationships are constructed as producing the social capital necessary to bind the volunteers together - enhancing prior friendships and setting in motion new ones. These findings add depth to the conception that bonding social capital is good for "getting by", but bridging social capital is crucial for "getting ahead" (de Souza Briggs 1997). The analysis explicates how the bonding social capital between the young Irish adult volunteers (which they construct as developing because of

the “bridging” between groups) helps them to engage with the beneficiaries, a task that is constructed as emotionally challenging due to the beneficiaries being children and young adults with disabilities. The analysis finds that the bonding social capital in the (old and new) relationships between volunteers acts as a “sociological superglue” (Putnam 2000, p.23) that makes the relationship between the young Irish adult volunteers and the beneficiaries more effective. The hedonistic sociality/solidarity makes possible an other-focused sociality/solidarity that is constructed by the young Irish adults as helping them to engage with the beneficiaries as a group. The analysis illuminates Putnam’s notion that “social networks foster norms of reciprocity that encourage attention to others’ welfare” (Putnam 2000, p.117). This is particularly the case in the young Irish adult volunteers’ relationships with the beneficiaries. They construct how they subjugate their egocentric interests in order to support the beneficiaries when they are directly engaging with them. There is no expectation of them “doing something for me”. Rather the analysis suggests that what is expected is that the volunteering engagement overall does something “for them”.

The interview data demonstrates how self-selection effects result in individuals with certain characteristics choosing to join particular types of civil society organisations rather than others (Newton 1999; Whiteley 1999). The analysis identifies that to achieve the volunteer identity the interviewees needed to generate and use social capital. The interviewees all construct how they self-selected in terms of their reflexive awareness of the potential strong and weak tie relationships available to them that they could use as social capital resources. The findings show how they self-selected due to the knowledge of the “advantage” that they had as a result of their “location in a structure of

relationships” (Burt 2007, p.4). The finding illuminates Burt’s assertion that “Social capital explains how people do better because they are somehow better connected with other people” (Burt 2007, p.4). The analysis points to how strong tie relationships are constructed as more accessible social capital resources, because of the bonding social capital potentially available, than those of weak tie donor relationships, which are constructed as requiring significantly more effort to develop bridging social capital. An interesting finding of the research is that some of the strong tie donors (particularly family members) construct relationships on behalf of the young Irish adults in order that they may achieve their identities as volunteers. In a sense they are acting as surrogate generators of social capital.

The analysis points out how for the young Irish adults having access to a familial local community (a community in which their parents/family are present) is important to the achievement of the volunteer identity. The finding agrees with and adds new depth to Wollebæk and Selle’s research that found that participation as a volunteer is dependent upon “the presence of neighbours, colleagues, or students from the respondents’ current local community, workplace, or educational institution in the respondents’ set of connections” (Wollebæk and Selle 2002, p.46). The research presented here also finds that for a number of the young Irish adults the local church and local businesses are vital resources for the generation of social capital. Further, the analysis shows how a familial relationship with those institutions is the key to accessing social capital. The young Irish adults use the bonding social capital of their familial relationships to generate and use the social capital available in

relationships they “bridge” to with church congregations and local business people.

8.3.1 The use of norms to accrue social capital

The analysis adds new insight into research on the use of norms in the generation and use of social capital (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.26; Portes 1998; Putnam 1993b; Putnam 2000; Uzzi 1997). The findings show the use of instrumental norms and norms of generalised reciprocity (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.25). According to Adler and Kwon instrumental norms “can be based upon obligations created in the process of dyadic social exchange [Blau 1964], where obligations are enforced on both parties by the broader community” (Adler and Kwon 2002, p.25). Instrumental norms relate to accruing social capital for the individual’s own egocentric advancement, whereas norms of generalised reciprocity relate to the idea of a transformation in individuals from focusing on the needs of the self to a prosocial focus on the needs of the wider community. This research contends that instrumental norms - norms of obligation - are evident in the interviewees’ construction of their relationships with the civil society organisation, other volunteers and strong tie donors. In the case of the relationship with the civil society organisation there appears to be a norm of obligation - that the interviewees achieve the identity of volunteer and the organisation provides the resources to support them in that identity work. In the case of the relationship with other volunteers a norm of shared sociality and solidarity is used by the interviewees to maintain their identities as volunteers. The norm relating to the strong tie donors is one of familial or friendship-based

obligations that the interviewees construct as providing them with support with their identities.

Putnam points out that norms of generalised reciprocity involve “not ‘I’ll do this for you, because you are more powerful than I’, nor even ‘I’ll do this for you now, if you do that for me now,’ but ‘I’ll do this for you now, knowing that somewhere down the road you’ll do something for me’” (Putnam 1993b, pp. 182-183). Norms of generalised reciprocity appear to be in evidence in the interviewees’ construction of their relationships with the beneficiaries and weak tie donors. The research contends that in the case of the beneficiaries the interviewees construct a norm of subjugation of egocentric interests in order to support those individuals, with little or no expectation of them “doing something for me”. In the case of the relationship with weak tie donors the norm of generalised reciprocity is particularly clearly constructed. The interviewees’ construction of their asking for donations and receiving them and of others doing the same, without expectation of an exchange of resources in their local communities, offers evidence of their awareness and use of a norm of generalised reciprocity in those relationships.

The analysis adds to research on trust by finding that the interviewees construct their positioning in the volunteering relationships in order to achieve a credible identity as a volunteer and in doing so engender trust. Fukuyama (1995) and Putnam (2000) note that social capital is a capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society, or parts of it. Fukuyama asserts that trust is “the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and co-operative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other

members of the community” (Fukuyama 1995, p.26). Mindful that the concept of trust is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, the research suggests that, through the positioning of the self and the other in the relationships constructed by the interviewees they are working to achieve trust. The commonly shared norms relate to the conventional notions of the volunteer engagement and those norms that exist in the relationship itself. The research evidences how the interviewees construct their relationship with others using the conventional notions to make credible their identity as a volunteer and also use the norms of the relationship (obligation or generalised reciprocity) to generate and use social capital. The contention is, put simply, that the credible construction of the identity of volunteer and the reflexive awareness of the norms of the relationship result in the generation of social capital.

8.4 SOCIAL CAPITAL GENERATION AND USE: ACHIEVING THE VOLUNTEER IDENTITY/BIOGRAPHICAL PROJECT

The analysis points to how social capital generation and use is a vital tool for the young Irish adults’ reflexive project of the self. As noted earlier in this chapter, the findings show that the young Irish adults are using volunteering in the construction of their reflexive projects of the self. The identity/biographical volunteering project is episodic and occurs in transitional moments in their lives. The findings explain how social capital generation and use affects the decision to engage as a volunteer in an episodic fashion, in a transitional moment, for a limited brief engagement. Further, the analysis also offers insight into why the volunteer engagement is constructed as an adjunct to the prescribed life course (from student to careerist) as constructed by the young Irish adults.

The young Irish adults construct how they use particular relationships to generate and use social capital in order to achieve the identity of volunteer. They construct how they self-selected to engage as volunteers because of their reflexive awareness of the potential strong and weak tie relationships available to them that they could use as resources. The interpretation of the findings suggests that if those were not available the volunteer identity would be difficult to achieve for these individuals. They need the social capital available in those relationships in order that it may be translated into donations of time and/or money. Their construction of their position at the centre of those potentially social capital rich relationships was, as Burt nicely sums up, “an asset in its own right” (Burt 2007, p.4). With that asset the young Irish adults were able to achieve the episodic identity/biographical volunteering project in their reflexive project of the self. This points to how the capability to develop relationships and leverage them for the resources therein is essential to the achievement of the volunteer identity for these young Irish adults and perhaps suggests at least one reason why others who were offered the opportunity to volunteer with Cyclecharity did not do so.

The analysis of the young Irish adults’ generation and use of social capital offers insight into why individuals engage in episodic volunteering rather than long term volunteering. An interpretation of the findings suggests that this is related to the capability of the young Irish adults to build relationships and generate and use social capital from them. As described earlier, the findings suggest that the young Irish adults are risk averse. They are concerned that the construction of the volunteer identity may limit the identity and biographical work

necessary to achieve a career or engage in hedonistic pursuits - those electives which are constructed by the young Irish adults as prescribed by institutional social pressures as necessary in their reflexive projects of the self.

The young Irish adults construct how they have time in their reflexive project of the self to develop relationships and time to then leverage those relationships to generate social capital to achieve the volunteer identity. But that time is limited to the transitional moment, between graduation and full-time employment, because of their need to focus upon the achievement of a career. The findings make clear that the majority of the young Irish adults cannot or are unwilling to engage in generating and using social capital for both volunteering and career. This suggests that their concern is to focus their social capital upon a career as the more useful identity/biographical resource for their reflexive project of the self. The findings suggest that the “short burst” of social capital generation in episodic volunteering, rather than the prolonged “slow burn” of social capital generation in long-term volunteering, is achievable in the majority of the young Irish adults’ reflexive projects of the self.

A further interesting point from the analysis is that the young Irish adults’ construction of their generation and use of social capital for the other, the beneficiaries, in such a concerted manner offers further insight into why volunteering is a relatively atypical biographical decision. The analysis shows that the young Irish adults go to significant efforts to develop relationships with weak tie donors that they would not do in everyday life in order to generate and use the resources in those relationships. They construct how those relationships are deviations from the ones they would usually be engaged in. The young Irish

adults' responses evidence that they do not normally go door to door talking to local businesses, give speeches to church congregations, or stand with a bucket on their local high street cajoling passers-by. They are deviating from the usual relationships they make in their day-to-day lives, specifically to generate and use social capital for the other (and also for the self). The generation and use of social capital so explicitly directed for the other, the beneficiaries, is in itself a further explanation of how volunteering for these young Irish adults is a deviation from their prescribed life course.

8.5 THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION AS A PURE EPISODIC VOLUNTEERING ORGANISATION

As noted in the analysis, the type of civil society organisation engaged with by these young Irish adults is related to their reflexive project of the self. The engagement that they construct as having been willing to accept is one that is episodic, other- and self-focused, and occurring during a transitional moment in their biographies. Cyclecharity is constructed by the young Irish adults as promoting its objectives in such a way that they chose to volunteer. They are not only engaging in a new reflexive form of volunteering (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003) as episodic volunteers, but also engaging in an organisation that is specifically constructed to entice individuals who may choose such a project: a pure episodic volunteering organisation.

As Brown notes, an organisation's identities are constructed by its participants' discourses, "constituted by the identity-relevant narratives that their participants author about them" (Brown 2006, p.734) and by those "stories" that

the participants construct to “understand the social entities with which they identify” (Kornberger and Brown 2007, p.500). The civil society organisation, Cyclecharity, is constructed by the young Irish adults as a space in which to achieve a particular identity/biographical project, that is congruent with the needs and necessities of their reflexive project of the self. The pure episodic volunteering organisation offers a transitory immersion into civil society, then back to the life course. It both encourages and makes available the adjunctive episodic engagement. Alvesson and Willmott note that:

The potency and influence of the media of regulation is always conditional upon organisational members’ receptiveness to them. Discourses may be comparatively familiar and readily interpreted within an ongoing identity narrative and associated emotional condition; or they may be experienced as disruptive of it.

(Alvesson and Willmott 2002, p.633)

The Cyclecharity organisation’s “media of regulation” is constructed by the young Irish adults as conducive to their engagement with the organisation - from the moment of the “ask”, the initial email, in which the young Irish adults were positioned as volunteers *in potentia*. A congruency between the civil society organisation’s construction of the volunteer identity and the young Irish adults’ willingness to position themselves to that particular identity, to engage in the necessary biographical work, ideological revision, willingness to act as a change agent for others and so forth, manifest in the analysis the successful use of the “media of regulation”. The pure episodic volunteering organisation, Cyclecharity,

is constructed to make possible an immersion in civil society for individuals who are incapable or unwilling to take on a longer-term participation.

8.5.1 Igniting social capital generation

The interpretation of the data shows how the young Irish adults engage in a short heightened burst of social capital generation and use in the achievement of their identities as volunteers. This finding points to the pure episodic volunteering organisation as, in a sense, an igniter of bright blazes of social capital generation. The interviewees construct how the organisation positioned them as volunteers *in potentia*. To continue the metaphor, that positioning could be likened to holding a match over a fuse. Their positioning of themselves as volunteers in actuality sets the taper burning and the identity work in the relationships with family, friends, local community members and so forth ignites a blaze of social capital generation.

The research points out how the young Irish adults construct Cyclecharity as positioning them as volunteers *in potentia* by offering the opportunity to engage in the generation and use of social capital both for the self and for the other, the beneficiaries. They take on an identity/biographical project that is constructed as necessitating their engaging in an extremely intensive concerted effort to generate social capital. As a result social capital is generated in the young Irish adults' relationships with family, friends, acquaintances, the local community and strangers. In this manner the pure episodic volunteer organisation orchestrates a significant generation of social capital in a particularly condensed period of time by recruiting individuals who potentially

have access to relationships that can be leveraged for the social capital available therein.

8.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

In the process of drafting this thesis the researcher has become aware of a number of avenues for further research. For all the suggestions outlined below the researcher considers that the method used in this research - discourse analysis - has a strong place as an analytic tool. As noted earlier in the chapter, it allows the researcher to delve deeper than the level of description in order to ask how discursive accounts are used and for what reason, and therefore what they “achieve ... immediately, interpersonally, and then in terms of wider social implications” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, p.110). Its flexibility as a research method has allowed the researcher to analyse discourses that relate to identity, volunteering, civil and Irish society in general, and social capital. This quality makes it an extremely useful tool for anyone engaging in civil society research.

This research has engaged with those young Irish adults who were “turned on” by volunteering, and not those who were “turned off”. A fruitful research project would involve a consideration of why many more young Irish adults do not explicitly choose to engage with civil society as volunteers. In what way do they construct civil society? Further to this “turning on/off” to civil society, a study of how Irish society’s educational institutions, from first to third level, construct volunteering, using the discourse analysis method, would offer insight into the engagement with civil society.

This research has considered young Irish adults' construction of their identities as episodic volunteers. The researcher considers it useful to engage in similar research into other newly emerging forms of volunteering in Irish society, such as "charity challenge" volunteering, online or virtual volunteering, employee volunteering, cross-national volunteering and volunTourism (Mautner 2005). Other researchers have drawn attention to the scant, but developing, research literature in these fields (see Brudney 2005). The first question, of course, must be what forms of volunteering are emerging in Ireland. Similar studies to the one engaged with in this thesis could then follow, with the result that a greater understanding of emerging volunteering trends would be available.

The research shows that pure episodic volunteering civil society organisations are igniters of intense, though short-lived, blazes of social capital generation and use. The researcher considers that this needs further development. Further research into such organisations as social capital generators in Irish society would prove extremely useful. Some authors (Dekker & van den Broek 1998; Freitag 2003; Mayer 2003; Stolle 2001; Isham et al 2006; Wollebæk and Selle 2002) who are engaging in research on civil society organisations and social capital generation argue that voluntary association may have significantly less effect upon the formation of social capital than that suggested by Putnam (2000). Wollebæk and Strømnes (2008) go so far to offer an alternative interpretation of their effect upon social capital formation, suggesting that organisations institutionalise rather than generate social capital. Yet the research presented here finds that the pure episodic volunteering organisation is reliant upon igniting intense social capital generation to achieve its aims. This area of contention suggests that further research is necessary.

Finally, the researcher considers that there needs to be more research on volunteering amongst young adults in Irish society in general. Civil society depends upon their involvement. Some other researchers (for example, Haski-Leventhal et al 2008; Marta et al 2006; Rehberg 2005; Oesterle et al 2004; Fletcher and Major 2004) have offered, and are continuing to present, interesting insights into volunteering amongst young adults in other countries. There has not been a large-scale study in Ireland that focuses directly upon young Irish adults. This researcher considers this to be remiss. They are the first generation to have grown up through the “Celtic Tiger” (CSO 2006a, online) and therefore, it may be contended, the resultant socioeconomic changes may have a profound effect upon how they engage with civil society. More needs to be done to understand what volunteering means and how it is being engaged with by young Irish adults.

8.7 SO ARE WE REALLY BOWLING HURLING ALONE?

Putnam (2000) suggests, in his influential book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, that individuals in American society are experiencing a disengagement from one another and a disintegration of social structures due to a lack of civic vitality. The analysis of American society in that work and the direct influence of its author has caused politicians and academics in Ireland and elsewhere to reassess the importance of community bonds, and civil society in general, in order to ensure the health of Irish democracy. As noted in Chapter 3, the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, set up a Taskforce on Active Citizenship in 2006 in order to instigate an investigation and a discussion on

active citizenship in Ireland. Its findings, presented in 2007, suggest that concern for the health of active citizenship in Ireland may be both warranted and unwarranted (Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007a, p.17). It may be unwarranted because there appears to be no statistically clear decline in civic engagement, but it may be warranted because of a *perception* that there is a decline. The concern is that such a perception may damage people's view of Irish society as a shared, participatory, community.

Census 2006 does suggest that the younger the individual, the less likelihood there is that they will be a volunteer. The Census found that only 10 per cent of 20-24 year olds engaged in voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). Of the 25-34 age group, the Census shows that 11.5 per cent were engaged in voluntary activity (CSO 2006b, online). The bulk of volunteering in Ireland in 2006 was done by individuals aged between 35 and 54. The figures suggest two hypotheses for civil society in Ireland in the future. The first is that as the young Irish adults in this study and their counterparts grow older they will engage more, taking on the bulk of volunteering. They will take over from the older generations. The second hypothesis is that their rate of engagement will stay relatively constant and therefore active citizenship will fall in Irish society. It is a hypothesis that follows Putnam's (2000) findings in America, that as the older civically minded generations die they are not being replaced. This research has not set out to prove or disprove either hypothesis, but simply offers them as illustrations of potential outcomes. The fact that Ireland more closely resembles Europe than America (Tovey and Share 2003, p.51) and has a culture that is not equivalent to that of the United States seems to undermine a 'Putmanesque' future. Though that is not to say that there are not homegrown or Europe-wide

problems facing Irish civil society. Daly notes that there is a resurgence in interest in Irish civil society because of a number of factors: the inequality of access to the benefits of the successful economy; the decline in the influence of the Catholic church; corruption scandals which have undermined trust in political leaders and political institutions; and critiques of Ireland as a nation of consumers, where individual interests predominate over those of the broader society (Daly 2007, p.2). Further, Corcoran et al (2007) and The Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007a) note feelings of a lack of community in Irish society, due to a failure of planning and Government action, in an increasingly suburban Ireland.

This research is able to contribute to answering the question ‘Are we hurling alone?’ by considering how the young Irish adults who volunteered with Cyclecharity construct their intentions to continue an episodic involvement in civil society as they grow older. They do not construct a future in which long-term volunteering is applicable to the needs of their reflexive projects of the self. Instead they construct a future that reflects Donoghue et al’s (2006) suggestion that voluntary organisations can no longer assume that individuals will be “life-long adherents” to their cause (Donoghue et al 2006). The young Irish adults construct how rather than being “life-long adherents” to a particular cause they are “life-long adherents” to multiple causes. That adherence translates to engagements as volunteers that are episodic and transitional.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the young Irish adults’ engagement as episodic volunteers stimulated bright blazes of social capital generation in their communities. For a short period of time they acted in unison to generate social

capital for the Cyclecharity cause. If episodic volunteering continues to grow, perhaps becoming the future of volunteering (Styers 2004; Handy et al 2006, p. 32) in Ireland, these bright blazes of civic participation will become more frequent. They may reinvigorate civil society in Ireland and engage more individuals to take part who otherwise could not take part in longer term volunteering because of socioeconomic pressures.

Voluntary organisations are fundamental to maintaining a vibrant democracy. They allow individuals to express their interests and demands as “otherwise quiet voices multiply and are amplified” (Putnam 2000, p.338). This is clearly evident as one of the effects of the young Irish adults’ engagements with Cyclecharity. They act as a voice for the organisation, the beneficiaries and its cause in Irish society. The analysis points to the young Irish adults engaging in cooperation and public-spiritedness and highlights how they engage in public life as a result of volunteering. The analysis has shown how Cyclecharity, a pure episodic volunteer organisation, is a space where social and civic skills are learned and developed rapidly. It is a “school for democracy”, to borrow from Putnam (2000), where the young Irish adults have developed social and civic skills in order to generate and use social capital in order to achieve the identity of volunteer.

That Irish society is capable of producing such individuals, the young Irish adults of this research, engaging their interest in civil society as volunteers, and maintaining that engagement through the availability of social capital through social relationships of support, is not to be overlooked. Without the individuals who engage with the institutions of civil society that promote prosociality, Ireland

would be a significantly different place. Further, without the individuals that provide the social capital to volunteers to support their volunteering it would be difficult to imagine how volunteering could exist, and also civil society as it is recognised now. It is through these institutions and crisscrossed social relationships, which daily touch our lives, that the civil society is discursively constructed, maintained, critiqued and invigorated. It is the background discourse to the volunteering identities of the young Irish adults who took part in this research.

The issues raised in this conclusion envision both a civil society “lite” immersion, suggesting a limited immersion in civil society for these young Irish adults in the future, and a little paradoxically, that those immersions are generating at least some of the social capital necessary to sustain Irish civil society and democratic society itself. Who is to say that such episodic rather than long-term immersions will not have an invigorating effect upon civil society in Ireland? The young Irish adults who took part in this research all constructed volunteering as an option in their reflexive projects of the self. They positioned themselves as volunteers *in potentia*, constructing their previous experiences of volunteering (including that with Cyclecharity) as priming them to engage once again. But those constructions suggest that institutionalised pressures to achieve careers, to marry and have families, to be hedonists and so forth, institutionalised in Irish society, may limit those potential engagements. Despite the young Irish adults’ construction of the contention that their future engagements may only be episodic, the connection to civil society is constructed as not lost, but rather as dormant, activated by their being positioned by others as a volunteer *in potentia*, a donor, an employee and so forth - positioned from

civil society participant *in potentia* to civil society participant in actuality. The civil society engagement may then be understood as one that is never ending, requiring only activation. The challenge for the civil society sector is to activate young Irish adults to engage as volunteers using the appropriate identity/ biographical projects as they construct their reflexive project of the self, now and in the future. The young Irish adults in this research are able to navigate the tensions, and even contradictions, of volunteering in a late-modern world and offer little evidence (to paraphrase Putnam) of “hurling alone”.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Weller, G R, O'Rourke, B K and O'Driscoll, A (2007) *The spark that becomes a flame? A study of young Irish adults talk about their future involvement in civil society*. 23rd EGOS Colloquium. Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria.

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