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Mary Immaculate College

**A spatial analysis of the suppliers of nature based tourism in Ireland,
insights into the provision of walking tourism on the Sheep's Head
Peninsula, Co. Cork.**

Thesis submitted for Master's Degree (by Research and Thesis)

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Declaration

I, Gráinne Dwyer, declare that this thesis is my own work and has never been previously submitted by me or any other individual for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.

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Abstract

The tourism industry from 2012 to 2022 is expected to grow by an average of 4% annually to constitute 10% of global GDP (US\$10 trillion). It is also predicted by 2022, globally, one in every ten jobs (328 million) will be tourism-related. With the unprecedented growth of tourism it is essential that sustainable planning guidelines are adhered to. Sustainable management of our natural resources is now a high priority, as tourism planners attempt to avoid past problems associated with the mass tourism market as happened in the case of the rapid growth of the Costas around the Mediterranean Sea from the 1960s until the 1990s. This type of mass or 'fast tourism' represents the very antithesis of a type of tourism that is considered sustainable. The dominant approaches to tourism development heretofore illustrated little or no concern for the existing landscape, social, environmental or economic and it is hoped that the dawn of 'slow tourism' and more ecological approaches that are based on a valorisation of natural landscapes can avoid, and to some extent, ameliorate the problems of the past and rejuvenate rural economies.

This thesis looks in detail at an example of a tourism product that is based on the principles and practices of sustainability, as it examines the walking tourism industry in the Sheep's Head Way on the south-west coast of Ireland as a mechanism for local development. The primary data and information gathered form a narrative of the innovative efforts that led to the development of the walkway. A near census of the peninsula provides an in-depth analysis of landowners' and farmers' attitudes to the evolution of the walkway as well as other attributes such as: environmental awareness, issues of sustainability, community links, farm diversification and conservation of the landscape. The success of the walkway is achieved through effective collaboration, financial assistance from REPS (Rural Environmental Protection Scheme), Walks Scheme payments, and the desire of a community to showcase their native and spectacular landscape. The results illustrate significant differences among the landowners' orientations towards the environment and a range of factors that influence landowners' intentions to engage in environmental conservation and sustainable tourism. Other themes that emerge through this study include local economic benefits, community collaboration and land access rights. Suppliers of nature-based tourism activities are at the helm of the future direction of sustainable tourism

and it is essential that they are consulted and surveyed with the same detail as users of nature-based activities.

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List of Abbreviations

AAU- Agricultural Area Utilised
CoA – Census of Agriculture
CAP – Common Agricultural Policy
CSO – Central Statistics Office
EAFRD - European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development
ED – Electoral District
EEC – European Economic Committee
EU – European Union
FADN - Farm Accountancy Data Network of the European Union
GDA – Greater Dublin Area
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
ICT - Information and Communication Technologies
IFA – Irish Farmers’ Association
IRT – Integrated Rural Tourism
LAP – Local Area Plans
LEADER - Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l'économie Rurale
NBT – Nature Based Tourism
NFS – National Farm Survey
NDP – National Development Plan
NSS – National Spatial Strategy
RDP – Rural Development Programme
SAC – Special Area of Conservation
SAP – Special Area of Preservation
SMEs – Small and Medium Enterprises
SOT - Survey of Overseas Travellers
WTO – World Trade Organisation
WTP – Willingness to Pay
WCDP – West Cork Development Partnership
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
UNWCED - United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It's wild and beautiful, inspiring and friendly, the walk smelled like flowers and sea air.

The walks are magnificent; there are many places to visit and to eat as well as a Community Market to purchase local produce, arts and crafts... Everywhere I turned was a postcard worthy photo. The people I met along the way were friendly and helpful... A terrific place to walk in a wild windswept landscape, surrounded by two great bays, and the magnificent Atlantic. All credit to the landowners/members of the local community, who developed these walking trails. Being out on this peninsula gives one a great sense of freedom...This is what visiting Ireland is all about.

The above quote is the combined reviews of the Sheep's Head walkway from visitors located in Cork: Ireland, California & Texas: USA in 2013¹. The reviews of the peninsula reflect the visitors' appreciation of the area, and how the landscape is being used as an asset to attract people to visit. The Sheep's Head walkway located in south-west County Cork is a prime example of a local community-led² initiative to develop a rural area in decline. Community-led tourism initiatives can support local services and businesses which in turn disperses economic benefits at local level. Tourism, as seen in this case study, has also a major role to play in enhancing local development. It can foster public-private sector partnerships, lateral and vertical information and skills-sharing, and can also enable capacity building for the host community. According to Godfrey and Clarke (2000, p.3) communities form an essential element in modern tourism as they are;

'.. the focal point for the supply of accommodation, catering, information, transport facilities and services. Their local natural environment, buildings and institutions, their people, culture and history all form core element of what the tourists come to see; whether as towns, villages or cities, every community has

¹ All reviews were reviewed on the TripAdvisor travel website on the dates; 27th October 2013, 15th August

² Scherl and Edwards (2007, p.71) describe local communities as 'groups of people with a common identity and who may be involved in an array of related aspects to livelihoods. They further note that local communities often have customary rights related to the area and its natural resources and a strong relationship with the area culturally, socially, economically and spiritually'.

tourism at one level or the other and are affected by the growth and development of the industry.'

The people of the peninsula are the catalysts to local development; we can see from the above reviews that they have the potential to influence the experience of the visitor. The welcoming reception the host community often can leave lasting impressions, so it is essential that the host community is relatively on the same page in regards to the direction of local tourism development. Muganda *et al.*, (2013) also highlight how localised participation provides local communities with the capacity to directly influence change in their area. Local participation also facilitates greater ownership and grass-roots control of the tourism product. Tourism in many places has evolved from an imposed measure to bottom-up development, and the host community is the integral driver of a successful tourism enterprise. The most recent studies of tourism literature reveal that local communities form a fundamental component of the tourism development agenda (Aref *et al.*, 2010; Bushell and McCool 2007; Jamal and Stronza 2009; Tosun 2006). The importance of community involvement (in the case of this thesis, local rural development) must not be overlooked when planning future Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is a €4 billion programme and is paramount to the future development of rural areas. Minister for Agriculture (Ireland) Simon Coveney stated that

'The new programme will be a vital support to rural Ireland in terms of enhancing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, managing natural resources in a sustainable manner, and ensuring balanced development of rural areas' (Collins, 2014)

In the last decade, the demand for rural recreation has increased in Ireland as the population has become increasingly urbanised. Increased affluence, mobility and changing values have also brought new demands with respect to landscape, conservation, heritage and recreation, with a greater emphasis on consumption demands for goods and services in rural areas (Hynes *et al.*, 2007). For decades, utilising the landscape in rural areas for agriculture was the dominant process, and agriculture was the prevalent feature of previous Rural

Development Programmes. Agriculture, however, is no longer synonymous with rural areas which has led to the diversification of rural policy making. In recent years, a cohesive approach was not fostered between policies that promote agricultural development and biodiversity protection. Agri-environment and Natura 2000 measures have been operating since 1994 in Ireland. These policies were implemented to promote environmentally friendly agricultural practice. However, an on-going dichotomy exists between the promotion of intensive agricultural production and the management of our sensitive landscapes namely Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Protection (SAP). Internationally, Ireland has obligations for biodiversity conservation at a European level³ (preventing biodiversity loss is a priority for the European 2020 strategy) as well as globally⁴. The current direction for agriculture in Ireland is to develop the environmental and sustainable focus. In addition, Food Harvest 2020 identifies the need for a sustainable agri-food sector in the country. This sector currently employs over 50,000 people directly in addition to providing an outlet for the produce of around 128,000 family farms (Ireland, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 2014).

Rural spaces are dynamically changing and the response is ‘adapt to survive’. This can be achieved through innovation, entrepreneurship and the development of small and medium sized businesses (SMEs). A challenge that still faces rural areas is a poor quality broadband service and below average mobile phone reception due to black spots and lack of service. The development and upgrading of the country’s infrastructure and technologies is essential to the survival of rural areas.

Other challenges include the increasing size of farm holdings, which is creating added pressure for small or medium-sized farms. These smaller farms are generally located on land with poor agricultural output, namely peripheral areas. Tourism is fast becoming a mechanism for local development in communities that once relied heavily on agriculture.

³ European Commission. 2010. Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Communication COM (2010) 2020 final, European Commission, Brussels.
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed June 2014)

⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity. 2010. Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
<http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268> (accessed August 2012).

The landscape in Ireland is a precious resource, and utilising this resource in a sustainable way is the only way forward if we want to retain the aesthetic value which tourists come to the country to enjoy.

Walking tourism can be one method of utilising the landscape in a sustainable way, this type of tourism can contribute to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the host community. In 2013 alone, over 743,000 tourists engaged with some type of hill walking or hiking in Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). Numerous studies within academic literature examine the motivations of these walkers engaging with nature-based tourism activities, such as hill walking. However a gap exists in the literature with regard to the *suppliers* of this type of tourism, namely the land owners and farmers. This thesis hopes to address this gap in tourism research in a confined study area located in the Sheep's Head Way in Co. Cork. This thesis examines environmental attitudes and determines the factors that influence the landowners' intentions to permit the walkway throughout their land.

1.1 Suppliers of nature-based tourism

One purpose of this investigation is to examine the literature on the development of nature-based tourism in Ireland, and in particular the role providers of these land resources had in the development of the rural tourism industry. Extensive literature is available discussing nature-based or slow tourism but this has a strong focus on the consumers rather than the suppliers. This data is typically collected through tourism barometers and tourist surveys. Mulder *et al.*, (2006) reiterate the fact that the majority of research on rural access found in the public domain has been based on the demand side, and has tended to ignore the supply side. Multiple case study analysis conducted in the United Kingdom (ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2003, Leisure Industries Research Centre, 2003, Trevelyan, 2003, Evans, 2004, Land Use Consultants, 2004) analyses the needs of walkers with a demand-focused approach and does not address or quantify issues of concern to landowners. Landowners and farmers in this study are the tourism suppliers and stakeholders, whose voice is rarely heard within transport and tourism literature (Lohmann and Pearce, 2012). On a national level (Irish context), environmental discourses and attitudes of farmers, landowners or suppliers of

tourism are discussed in detail within some academic sources (Cawley *et al.*, 2007, Kelly, 2007, Buckley, 2008, Madden, 2009, Laple, 2012, Power *et al.*, 2013, Yadav *et al.*, 2013). Further extensive research is available exploring themes of the economic impact of walking tourism in the form of a report on West Cork. The report, in part, specifically examines the case study location, the Sheep’s Head peninsula. The report was carried out by URS Scott Wilson on behalf of West Cork Development Partnership (2012) and was funded through LEADER funding through the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013⁵. The report gives a detailed account of walking tourism, walking tourism in Ireland, walks in West Cork, issues and challenges that the region faces, and a summary of the economic impact of walking tourism. Results of the report did cover one supplier of tourism, accommodation providers; however, it did not delve into farmers’ or landowners’ attitudes towards the environment or tourism. This thesis explores these stakeholders through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, and attempts to fill this gap in the research and could complement the already published report.

1.2 Rural tourism

This thesis focuses on *rural* tourism activities and as seen in the findings of this thesis the majority of walking trails traverse private lands and especially agricultural farmland. Modern agriculture is multifunctional, which Potter and Burney (2002, p.35) define as

‘[land] not only producing food but also sustaining rural landscapes, protecting biodiversity, generating employment and contributing to the viability of rural areas’.

In order to counteract the decline in employment in rural areas, rural tourism is seen as a method of economic recovery. County Enterprise Boards, LEADER companies and sub-regional co-operatives all contribute to the development and promotion of rural enterprises. These areas need support from such actors to reach their greatest potential as they are communities in ‘areas of low population density areas where natural resources tend to be poor’ (Commins and McDonagh, 2002, p. 53). Rural areas are characterised by the natural

⁵ The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP) had a budget of €5.778 billion over a seven year period of which €2.339 billion was funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF) and €3.438 billion by the National Exchequer (Ireland).

landscape which is essential to nature-based tourism development. However challenges are present with the development of the rural tourism sector. Factors that reduce the effectiveness of rural tourism activities as an instrument for rural development include:

- Limited number of entrepreneurs in rural areas
- Conservative nature of some investors
- Short supply of spare capital in rural areas
- Small scale and dispersed nature of the industry involving many micro enterprises
- Lack of co-ordination, co-operation and partnership with government agencies to develop a “destination” as distinct from a “stop-off” point
- Fragmentation in product provision and marketing efforts
- Lack of policy for the management development and marketing of rural tourism (Heneghan, 2002, p. 71)

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on sustainability and nature-based tourism, and this has leaked into the tourism consumer consciousness. Hannam and Knox (2010) highlight that by examining the interdependence of tourism and the environment we can highlight conservation efforts and value our natural resources. Issues of maintaining a low ‘carbon footprint’ have also come to the forefront of a significant amount of holidaymakers’ decisions when planning tourist travel. Ireland has released a plan entitled ‘A strategy and action plan for Irish Trade, Tourism and Investment to 2015’, and within this document, the Tourism Renewal Group stresses the need for the tourism agencies to identify new nature-based tourism activities (Department of Enterprise, Trade & Innovation, 2010). The plan pin points a need to pursue new potential in areas that could gain a competitive edge for Ireland in the global market. The most important areas for development include Eco-tourism, and outdoor activities, such as surfing and walking (*Ibid.*)

Walking trails and routes have developed rapidly in recent years in many upland areas, especially through farmland that is not being intensively used for agricultural purposes. The number of persons engaging in recreational walking has increased by (+ 4.1%) from 2007 to 2011, and in 2013 over 24% of domestic holidaymakers participated in some form of hill

walking. This growing popularity could signal future development for walking trails that can be dually utilised for tourism development (The Irish Sports Council, 2011).

It is evident that many rural tourism businesses are not dependent on outside companies or firms and are more reliant on inter-community co-operation and collaboration (Heneghan, 2002). These local linkages are essential to the future development of the industry. Similarly there needs to be an emphasis on promoting rural areas as a long-term destination rather than a one-day or once-off experience. Since the majority of nature-based tourism activities are often not fee-paying, local communities can only gain financial benefits by tourists spending money in local accommodation sites, shops, restaurants, bars and services. Expenditure on these local businesses is often curtailed due to short-term or one-day trips, instead of spending a few days in the area. Rural areas that have walking trails can only experience economic benefits if money is spent by walkers in the local area. It is essential to realise that the rural landscape is not a redundant backdrop for the incoming visitor; landscapes are a dynamic living environment in a constant process of change (Meldon, 1995). An essential component of rural tourism development is often cited as the sustainable management of the landscape and the establishment of regional and local partnerships (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). Genot, as cited in Fennell and Malloy (2007), mirrors this theory and states that the primary obstacle to environmentally-sound tourism management can be attributed to the lack of co-operation and collaboration between tourism stakeholders. However, the success of the Sheep's Head Way as a tourist destination can *undoubtedly* be linked to strong community links, collaboration and the innovative yet sustainable use of the landscape as a resource. The walkway is an example of a tourist product where individual community members have developed a successful, rural tourism business, focused on nature-based walking tourism through their own initiative and with the added assistance of outside funding.

This section of this chapter has provided a brief introduction to the subject of this thesis, the suppliers of nature-based tourism. It is evident that a gap exists within the spectrum of tourism literature that focuses on the 'suppliers'. The next section outlines the aims and objectives of this thesis and provides a rationale for the study. The final section of the chapter will provide the thesis outline.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to undertake in-depth and comprehensive case study research that gives voice to members of the farming community and local civil society stakeholders as the main protagonists and guardians of a landscape that forms the basis of a well-established ecological tourism resource, namely The Sheep's Head Way. In so doing, this thesis aims to complement and add value to existing research that has tended to focus on users rather than on the suppliers of environmental goods within the tourism sector.

The objectives of this study are:

- To investigate nature-based tourism services and its products
- To investigate attitudes towards environmental awareness, sustainability, community links, farm diversification, conservation of the landscape, quantitative economic impacts and qualitative social impacts of the walkway.
- To investigate spatial differences of environmental attitudes, motivations and behaviours, if any.

1.4 Rationale for this study

These objectives are investigated through a case study approach in an Irish context. The case study is also located in rural areas as nature-based tourism occurs generally in these places. There is a universal need to investigate the phenomenon of tourism and this is particularly necessary in the Irish context. This study could also potentially contribute to the documenting of actual nature-based tourism case studies, which can be utilised in developing general trends, patterns or theories in the field of tourism studies. This research could potentially contribute to the assessment of the actual impacts of tourism and the level of sustainability achieved; other methods include in-depth longitudinal research in conjunction with economic, social and environmental auditing. From the literature reviewed, key research questions emerge that are within the scope of this study, namely, the economic impact of tourism and what value it contributes to local development. This economic value, however, is extremely difficult to quantify. Some of the literature

reviewed suggests that there is a gap in the research with regard to the systematic studies of the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impact of nature-based tourism activities. Others mention that a more comprehensive understanding is required of the social and individual benefits associated with open access to natural areas, and the carrying capacity of the destination. Finally, a selected number of scholars believe that cost-benefit analysis is needed at a micro and macro level with relation to both quantitative economic impacts and qualitative social impacts. This could potentially be the first step in developing a cohesive approach to the future development of tourism in Ireland.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review discusses the many subsets of alternative tourism, including: nature-based, eco-tourism, and sustainable tourism, slow tourism, walking tourism, community based tourism, rural tourism, and IRT or integrated rural tourism. It is necessary to review the literature surrounding these subsets and to investigate similar themes or characteristics between them all. This is to provide context for this study and an understanding of this type of tourism market.

Firstly, the three main subsets of alternative tourism will be discussed, namely, nature-based, eco-tourism and sustainable tourism. As nature-based tourism is a relatively new and emerging market, it is essential to tease out all definitions and to attempt to provide a holistic definition of nature-based tourism based on the existing literature.

Secondly, the focus will shift towards a discussion on other types of tourism including: rural and community based tourism (based on walking tourism) as these types of tourism form the core themes of this thesis. This section will discuss the importance of community-based tourism and how it can contribute to the most sustainable means of tourism management.

Thirdly, the chronological development of nature-based tourism will be discussed as well as reasons why it has emerged within the current tourism market.

Fourthly, a critique will be presented of the benefits and challenges of nature-based tourism. This section complements the results of this thesis, and both can be used to create a general comprehension of the opportunities and challenges that emerge from community-based tourism ventures.

To conclude the chapter, it is essential that characteristics of the nature-based tourist are investigated as the users of the tourism product. Although this thesis focuses on the supplier rather than the user, this section provides valuable insights for a comprehensive understanding of nature-based tourism in general.

The final section informs the discussion of results, and many models of tourism development found in the literature are subsequently assessed in the light of this case study

analysis. The review of this rapidly growing tourism market provides many themes that are investigated throughout the presentation and discussion of results.

2.2 Nature-based tourism (NBT) definitions

Firstly, to investigate the suppliers of nature-based tourism products it is paramount that nature-based tourism, its definitions and characteristics are investigated. As noted by Valentine (1993) most tourism can be described as nature-based tourism, yet we need to investigate what the primary characteristics are to compile a more complete definition. Nature-based tourism (NBT) can be considered an umbrella term that includes aspects of many other subsets of tourism. Nature-based tourism is an engaging activity and can no longer be simply considered as a gaze of a landscape. Bell and Lyall, as cited in Urry and Larsen (2011, p. 27) consider it as ‘as kinaesthetic experience- paddled through, jumped into, trekked across- is still dependent on the glorious vista’. In order to deconstruct the understanding of nature based tourism it is necessary to clarify and narrow its primary focus.

NBT is an umbrella term that encompasses all forms of tourism: ‘this includes mass tourism, adventure tourism, low-impact tourism, and ecotourism which all use natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form’ (Goodwin (1996, p.287). The first thing to remember is that definitions of nature-based tourism, ecotourism and sustainable tourism are all interconnected. In reviewing the literature, common key words emerge that define all three types. The most prominent key terms and words used in defining this type of tourism include (1) focus on nature and the landscape (2) sustainability (3) conservation (4) education (5) wildlife (6) activities (7) eco-tourism. It is important to realise that nature-based tourism may rank high on all seven dimensions as it is a broad subset of alternative tourism; however, sustainable tourism, for example, may only give reference to three or four dimensions.

Nature-based tourism in its simplest form can be considered as tourism that contains elements of outdoor activities or activities that engage with nature. According to Newsome *et al.*, (2002) it is tourism that is based on natural areas that contain elements of adventure,

wildlife, viewing of the natural landscape and ecotourism which encompasses conservation efforts and also educational programmes. This can be considered a broad holistic view of nature-based tourism. Urry and Larsen (2011) focus their definition on the discourse of landscape, of how we can take possession and control of it and subsequently gain pleasure from 'nature'. The Western Australian Tourism Commission and Department of Conservation and Land Management (1997, p. 4) adds that it can be simplified as 'tourism that features nature'. Nature, however, must be untouched and undamaged by globalization and human activity in order for it to remain attractive. According to Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, (2011), a landscape that can remain unspoilt and advertise itself as a natural environment is the key authenticating element in the tourist experience. Holden & Sparrowhawk, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2007) claim that the most popular tourism areas are places that the world perceives as being 'unspoilt'. The substantial growth of this type of tourism is based on the rise in appreciation of the natural landscape as Sæþórsdóttir (2010) concludes that peoples' motivations are to enjoy the scenery and also to appreciate nature. Valentine, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010, p.175) agrees that nature-based tourism can be defined as 'the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature'. Sandbrook (2010) claims that nature-based tourism can range from luxury safaris right down to backpacking. This reinforces the point that nature-based tourism has a broad remit and can include a diverse range of activities. The definition of nature-based tourism in comparison to ecotourism and sustainable tourism is primarily based around activity or recreational pursuits. Nature-based tourism operators base their survival on the natural landscape. Huybers and Bennett, as cited in Blanco (2010), explain that nature-based tourism activities are considered as a non-extractive use of natural resources and the standard of the experience is directly related to the quality of the landscape and environment. Valentine, Laarman and Durst, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010) incorporate a recreational and adventurist element in their definition. In a more concise definition of nature-based tourism, Hall (2005) lists activities such as fishing, hiking, hunting, boating, cycling, camping and sightseeing as components of nature-based activities.

As well as sustainability and focus of the landscape, Laarman and Durst, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010), state that education is an important element in the definition of nature-based tourism. De Rojas and Camarero (2008) expand this to say that visitors seek leisure, social interaction and education as an outcome of their tourist experience. Education naturally runs in conjunction with conservation and planning, and it is evident in the literature when defining nature-based tourism. In order for the landscape to remain 'unspoilt' as mentioned previously it is essential to preserve the natural beauty and sustain the ecosystem of the tourist destination. Healy and McDonagh (2009) adds that planners and conservationists are essential contributors in gaining an understanding about conservation of the natural environment.

Sustainability is the buzzword of the twenty first century; it is no surprise that it is connected to the definition of nature-based tourism. It is essential to develop sustainable and responsible tourism and nature-based tourism plays an essential role in this development (Healy and McDonagh, 2009). In order to achieve this development there needs to be a cohesive approach in all sectors of the tourism industry as sustainable development encompasses development environmentally, socially and economically. Smith *et al.*, (2010) investigates the sustainable development process and highlights that there are five steps in its implementation. These include the development of ecotourism, ensuring that it is satisfying for tourists, ensuring that it is ecologically sustainable and guaranteeing that nature-based tourism is locally beneficial and environmentally educative (*Ibid.*).

2.3 Ecotourism

Nature-based tourism is interlinked with ecotourism, as according to Liu *et al.*, (2012), nature-based tourism is a significant service of an ecosystem and can be a primary activity in which rural communities can engage and use for economic development. Healy and McDonagh (2009) state that nature-based tourism is often used synonymously with the term 'eco'. Yet, as the literature highlights, there is still no general consensus amongst tourism scholars as to how to accurately define nature-based tourism. There is, however, an agreement that the term 'nature-based tourism' according to Hvenegaard (1994) is often used interchangeably with ecotourism. Liu *et al.*, (2012) also adds that nature-based

tourism is often called ecotourism, yet he explains that ecotourism in fact is defined as a subset of nature-based activities. As mentioned throughout the definition of nature-based tourism, ecotourism itself is considered a subset of tourism with its own definition and characteristics. Fennell (2001, p.406) claims that there are up to 85 different definitions of ecotourism, and that the list is 'in no way exhaustive'.

Eco-tourist activities are said to be located in ecologically sensitive areas that might not be the case in the nature-based tourism subset. Generally ecotourism refers to areas of natural and unspoiled beauty yet its definition strays from ideas of recreational activity that are mentioned when defining nature-based tourism. Like nature-based tourists, eco tourists usually travel to 'relatively undisturbed natural areas' claims Ceballos-Lascuráin, as cited in Arnegger *et al.*, (2010, p.920). Butler (1999) adds that ecotourism is located in vulnerable and highly sensitive landscapes where some environments are unable to withstand even moderate levels of use. One purpose of ecotourism is to benchmark conservation of the environment and to educate about the importance of sustainability, as well as conserving the environment. The International Ecotourism Society, as cited in Arnegger *et al.*, (2010, p.920) claim that ecotourism also contributes to the development and wellbeing of the local community.

Gaining an understanding of who is partaking in this type of tourism, and why, can contribute towards other definitions of Ecotourism. Typical tourist types are said to travel with motivations to 'admire, study, and enjoy scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any cultural features (both past and present) found in such areas' (Ceballos-Lascuráin, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010, p.177). Ecotourism can be defined as a movement away from types of modernist development and methods of unsustainable transport. According to Urry and Larsen (2011), In order to be an eco-tourist it is essential to reject forms of unsustainable modern forms of transport, industrial and energy production. Some tourists are utilizing types of transport like ferry, train and bus services and avoiding the traditional use of the car. These types of activities, as Bjork (2000) claims, can contribute to sustainable development. Typical eco tourist destinations are said to be underdeveloped and are not capable of providing the sustainable transport services that the

eco tourist demands. These areas often lack infrastructure to respond to such development, which could cause future problems (Butler 1999).

2.4 Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism stems from issues of sustainability which is primarily highlighted and defined in the well cited Bruntland Commission in 1987. This became the basis of future definitions of sustainable tourism which have emerged with the growth of tourism studies. Sustainability goes hand in hand with tourism development, especially since the evident effects of mass tourism as seen in recent decades. An appropriate definition of sustainable tourism is 'tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time' (Butler and Pearce, 1993, p.29).

Butler (1999) revises this definition in a more detailed view that

'tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes'

(Butler, 1999, p.11).

As described in the above definition, it is necessary for sustainable tourism to encompass all of the three primary elements or tiers of sustainable development as issues of sustainability do not solely reflect issues about the environment. According to Diamantis & Ladkin, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010, pp.173-174) sustainable tourism includes the three tiers of ecological sustainability, cultural and social sustainability, and also economic sustainability. These three tiers are illustrated at figure 2.1. The tiers are further discussed in the following definitions where some definitions encompass all three tiers.



Figure 2.1: Three tiers of sustainable tourism

(Adapted from Mehmetoglu, 2010)

The World Tourism Organization has defined sustainable tourism based on past reports that include the Brundtland 1987 report ‘Our Common Future’ and the report ‘Agenda 21 for Tourism’. The World Tourism Organisation (2001) also bases its definition on the three tiers of sustainable tourism and defines it as follows:

‘[Sustainable tourism] meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.’
 (World Tourism Organisation, 2001, p.14)

Likewise the UNTWO definition also encompasses all three tiers of sustainability:

'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'

(UNWTO World Tourism Organization, 2012).

Swarbrooke takes a cohesive approach in defining sustainable tourism by linking all three tiers of sustainability:

Sustainable tourism is tourism that is economically viable, but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community.

(Swarbrooke, 1999, p.13).

Tourism that encompasses these elements of sustainability has become the primary area of development within the tourism industry. Policymakers and development agencies that are serious about sustainability often adhere to these guidelines. Sustainable tourism does not only include alternative tourist types; it is essential in the development of all types of tourism including mass tourism, fast tourism, sun, sea and sand tourism and also cruise tourism. Weaver, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2010, p.172) claim that sustainable tourism is the most 'comprehensive component of the alternative tourism framework' and that it includes ecotourism, nature-based tourism and, as mentioned, also touches on traditional mass tourism.

Bramwell *et al.*, (1996) include two tiers of sustainable tourism by including social and environmental sustainability, and mentions the issue of carrying capacity. It is often stressed that if guidelines of carrying capacity are not adhered to, the lure and attractiveness of the environment 'which is the prime attraction' could be destroyed.

'Sustainable tourism is tourism which develops as quickly as possible, taking into account current accommodation capacity, the local population and the environments... (it) needs to respect the environment and as a consequence does not aid its own disappearance'.

(Bramwell *et al.*, 1996, pp.10-11).

Natural England is a public body that is responsible for the protection and improvement of England's natural environment. Its focus on the ecological aspect of sustainability is reflected in its definition where there is no real emphasis on economic development or social and cultural enhancement.

[Sustainable tourism] is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development

(Natural England, 2011).

Definitions of sustainable tourism often differ depending on the organisation and the location in which it is based. An example of this is the OECS⁶ which is based in the East Caribbean and focuses its definition on culture and partnership within the community. As other definitions take a more global approach, OECS's definition is more localised:

'The optimal use of natural and cultural resources for national development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnership among government, the private sector and communities'

(Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS), as cited in Girvan, 1995).

Like nature-based tourism and ecotourism, it is also difficult to construct one concise definition of sustainable tourism. We know that the definitions of sustainable tourism are based on the ideas of sustainable development, but a clear definition must encompass all three tiers of sustainability, namely, ecological, economic and social. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) (2001) and the UNWTO (2012) achieve this quite successfully with their holistic approaches. What is evident throughout all definitions is that there is a movement away from short-term thinking and instead towards ideas of long-term development. This is possibly due to the decline in the mass tourism product such as in the

⁶ Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), created in 1981, is an inter-governmental organisation dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance between countries and dependencies in the Eastern Caribbean.

Costa del Sol in Spain which thrived from the 1970s onward. Tourism in areas like this consisted of short-term development of the landscape, including intensive high-rise coastal development that did not consider long-term sustainability factors. This failure in planning could be the contributing reason for the rapid decline that is evident from Butler's tourism area life-cycle ideas in 1980.

Contemporary definitions, however, claim that since sustainable tourism was at one time considered as exclusively relating to the physical environment, some scholars may prefer to classify it as IRT (Integrated Rural Tourism) to avoid confusion (Saxena *et al.*, 2007). Cooper *et al.*, (2005) claim that it is now the responsibility of the consumer to place pressure upon the tourism industry to act in a sustainable and responsible manner in order to single out destinations that are environmentally unacceptable to visit, and this is a key issue for the future of tourism development.

2.5 Assessing and Applying Perspectives on Nature-Based Tourism

As Fennell (2001) highlights, the literature has clearly been able to differentiate nature-based tourism *from* ecotourism. Arnegger *et al.*, (2010) understands that ecotourism is a subset of the broader umbrella of nature-based tourism. According to Goodwin (1996), ecotourism can be defined as leaning towards more sustainable tendencies than the broader category of nature-based tourism. Ross and Wall (1999) deem that ecotourism in many cases is considered to be more than just tourism to natural areas, to a degree that tourist motivations and consumer tendencies are different to that of nature-based tourism. There has been a general consensus that nature-based tourism and ecotourism are either consumer or non-consumer orientated. Fennell (2001) adds to the point made by Ross and Wall (1999) and differentiates between the two in claiming that nature-based tourism comprises of various types of consumer activities such as catch-and-release fishing, and that ecotourism can be non-consumer-oriented. Ecotourism, irrespective of the differences in definition, is ultimately deemed to be an additional segment of nature-based tourism (Priskin, 2003). Mehmetoglu (2010) focuses on links between the definitions of tourism. He suggests that unlike sustainable tourism as described earlier, nature-based tourism has been investigated frequently from the demand side, and studies have focused on the

motivations of tourists, preferences, demographics and activities of nature-based tourism seekers.

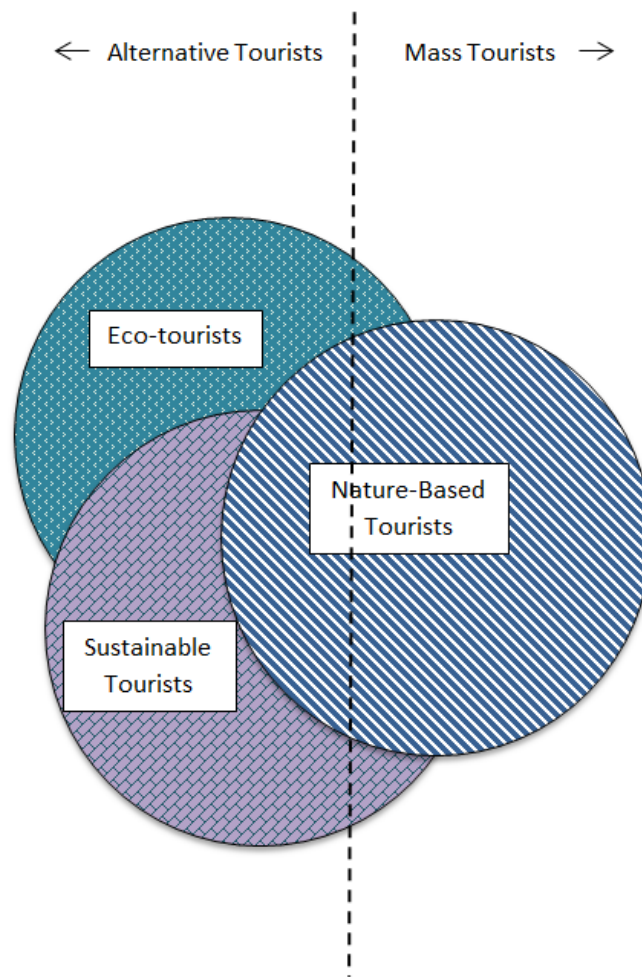
Previously in this chapter, all three types of alternative tourism have been defined by various academics and world organisations, and there are clear differences and similarities between them. In order to clarify the relationship of the three types it is useful to investigate measurable characteristics of all three types of *tourist*. Mehmetoglu (2010, p.192) successfully achieves this by creating a system called the NES-scale, which consist of three dimensions (nature, learning, and sustainability). This type of scale, which is expressed in the Venn diagram at figure 2.2, is based on the primary characteristics of nature-based, eco and sustainable tourists as defined previously.

The results reflected that nature-based tourists were:

‘those who scored high on the nature-dimension; sustainable tourists were those who scored high on the sustainability-dimension, while eco-tourists were those who scored high on all three dimensions’

(Mehmetoglu 2010, p.192).

Figure 2.2: Interaction between different types of alternative tourists and mass tourists



Interaction between different types of alternative tourists and mass tourists

Adapted from Mehmetoglu (2010) p.195

2.6.1 Other Types of tourism

Undoubtedly, all three types of tourism have close links to nature, yet, contrastingly, mass tourists which are said to be the opposite of alternative tourists scored low on all three dimensions. This was the opposite case to eco-tourists who scored high in all three dimensions, so it could be said that eco-tourists are at the opposite end of the spectrum in comparison to mass tourists. As mentioned throughout the chapter there has been a strong emphasis on the umbrella term of nature-based tourism, ecotourism and sustainable

tourism, yet among these definitions there are, in fact, other types of tourist activity that fall into the category of nature-based activities. These activities include the tourism types of: slow, walking community and rural tourism. Community tourism may not necessarily be nature-based, but in the context of this thesis it is.

2.6.2 Slow Tourism

‘Slow Tourism’ is said to be a contemporary type of tourist activity, which in particular is witnessing growth in Japan. Characteristics of this type of tourism include:

‘Being healthy and involving walking and the enjoyment of slow food, involving at least one overnight stay, limited use of cars or other motor transport, and to be in some sense green or ecological’

(Takeuchi, as cited in Fullagar *et al.*, 2012, pp.173-174).

Takeuchi, as cited in Fullagar *et al.*, (2012) also defines slow tourism as being unhurried, of high-standard, with overnight stays and focuses on experiences that are locally produced and locally consumed. An example of a type of slow tourism is the growing industry of walking tourism which is now discussed in greater detail.

2.6.3 Walking tourism

This thesis will concentrate on the supply side of the nature-based tourism market and focus on the interrelations between suppliers and participants of nature-based activities with special reference to walking tourism. Mulder *et al.*, (2006) emphasise that nearly all of countryside access research focuses on the demand side rather than the supply side, and this work will attempt to fill these gaps.

Walking trails and routes have developed rapidly in recent years in many upland areas and also through farmland that is not being intensively used for agricultural purposes. Recreation is fast replacing agriculture as the single greatest land use, and recreational activities such as tourism can be developed through a conservation and sustainably-led approach (Stelfox, 1995). Walking is one of the largest participation sports undertaken by

Irish residents⁷. Interest in this activity is also mirrored in tourism numbers for 2009, as over 800,000 visitors engaged in walking during their holiday to Ireland (Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, 2011). The number of persons engaging in recreational walking increased by (+ 4.1%) from 2007 to 2011, so its growing popularity could signal future development for walking trails that can be utilised for tourism development (The Irish Sports Council, 2011). Table 2.1 illustrates walking tourism growth based on country of residence 2006-2011. We can see from this that USA, Spain, Australia, Nordic Region and Australia are the regions with the largest growth, with each country increasing tourism numbers by over 100%.

Table 2.1: The number of tourists engaging with hiking and cross country walking on the island of Ireland based on country of residence 2006 – 2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average % 2006-2011	% change 2006-2011
Great Britain	10%	17%	8%	13%	14%	19%	13.5%	+90%
Germany	17%	26%	18%	29%	28%	21%	23.3%	+23.5%
USA	8%	14%	14%	24%	22%	19%	16.8%	+137.5%
France	23%	29%	19%	36%	37%	32%	29.3%	+39.1%
Spain	6%	13%	6%	24%	10%	15%	12.3%	+150%
Nordic Region	5%	6%	4%	8%	12%	12%	7.8%	+140%
Canada	21%	10%	9%	23%	25%	12%	16.6%	-42.9%
Netherlands	19%	29%	20%	28%	27%	25%	24.7%	+31.6%
Australia	9%	7%	2%	19%	10%	25%	12%	+177.8%
Italy	7%	15%	8%	22%	17%	17%	14.3%	+142.8%

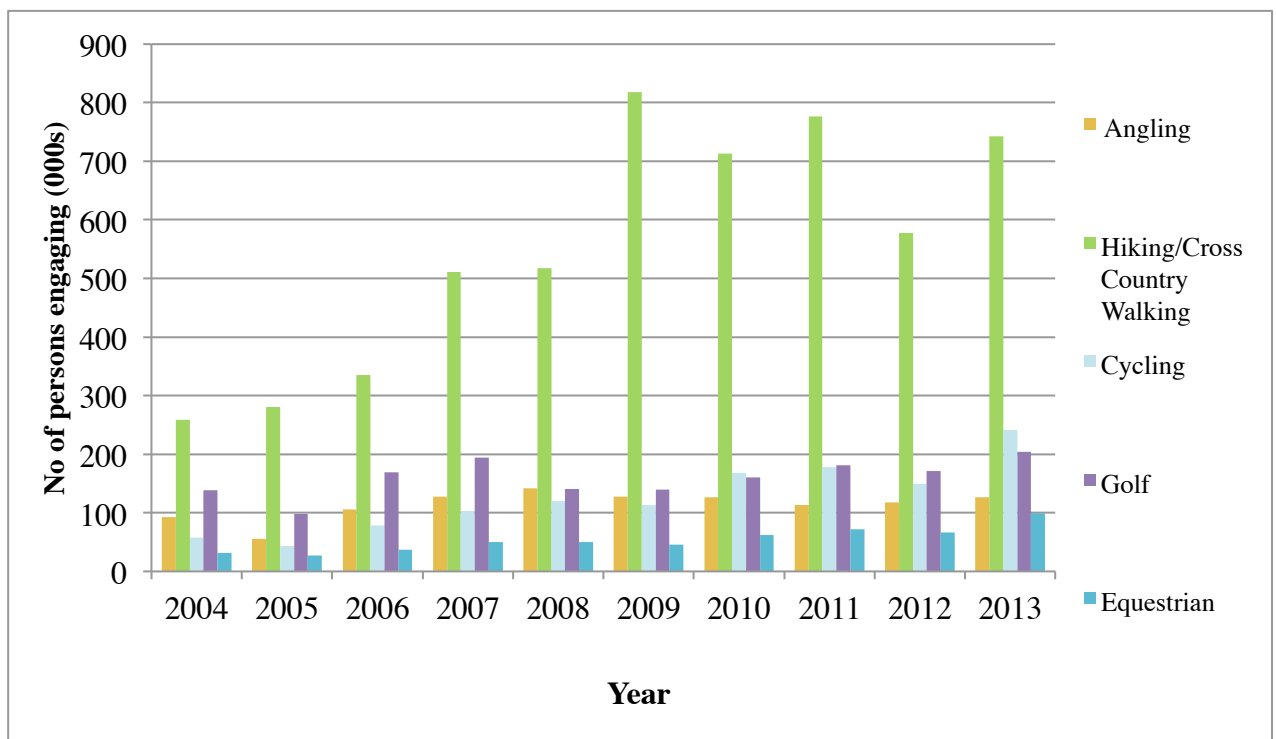
Source; (Tourism Ireland, 2011e, Tourism Ireland, 2011d, Tourism Ireland, 2011k, Tourism Ireland, 2011c, Tourism Ireland, 2011i, Tourism Ireland, 2011h, Tourism Ireland, 2011b, Tourism Ireland, 2011g, Tourism Ireland, 2011a, Tourism Ireland, 2011f).

⁷ It is reported that 46% of the adult population of Ireland (1.5 million people average) participate in recreational walking, 3% Cycling (Lunn and Layte, 2009).

Walking as a tourism activity is considered a sustainable method of generating revenue for rural communities, and it can be used as a means to complement conventional agricultural activities. The prevalence of walking tourism in Ireland is evident from figure 2.3, which illustrates an increase in those engaging in hiking or cross country walking as part of their tourist experience in Ireland. In the period from 2004-2011 the numbers of those who engaged in walking tourism increased by 185%. What is also evident from figure 2.3 is that the total number of overseas visitors to Ireland decreased in 2006, 2008 and 2009, but those engaging in walking tourism actually increased in these years.

Table 2.2 illustrates a similar trend with the numbers of those engaging in hiking or cross country walking increasing each year from 2005 to 2011 (with the exception of 2010). This is in comparison to the total number of overseas visitors to Ireland which decreased multiple times in 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010. The most significant find of these figures is in 2009 where the number of those engaging in hiking or cross country walking increased by 36.8% despite a 12.1% decrease in tourism numbers. 2012 saw a further decrease of tourists engaging in hiking/cross country walking but these figures rose again to over 742,000 in 2013.

Figure 2.3: Number of Overseas Visitors Engaging in Activities 2004 – 2013



Source: (Central Statistics Office, 2005, Central Statistics Office, 2006, Central Statistics Office, 2007a, Central Statistics Office, 2008, Central Statistics Office, 2009, Central Statistics Office, 2010a, Central Statistics Office, 2011, Central Statistics Office, 2012a, Central Statistics Office, 2013, Central Statistics Office, 2014).

Table 2.2: % Change of No of tourists engaging in Hiking/Cross Country Walking and Total no of overseas tourist visitors to Ireland 2005-2013

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No of tourists engaging in Hiking/ Cross Country Walking	+7.5%	+16.4%	+34.4%	+1.0%	+36.8%	-14.7%	+8.1%	-25.5%	+28.3
Total no of overseas tourist visitors to Ireland	+5.9%	+9.7%	+4.3%	-3.9%	-11.8%	-7.9%	+7.7%	+0.2	+7.2

Source: (*Ibid.*)

Ireland's largest visitor market is Great Britain, and those from that country that engaged with hiking and cross country walking increased by 90% when you compare 2006 and 2011 figures. Despite the decrease in 2008, the figure has risen steadily to 19% which is the highest value in the last six years. Table 2.1 highlights the percentage of those who engage with walking activities as part of their tourist experience. The table breaks down these figures based on country of residence. The table also highlights the percentage change of those tourists from 2006 to 2011 which shows that countries like Great Britain, USA, Spain, the Nordic Region, Australia and Italy all experienced over a 90% increase in those engaging in walking activities, when comparing the 2006 and 2011 figures. This considered, other countries have a greater share of average tourists engaging in walking activities, include Germany (23.3%), France (29.3%) and the Netherlands (24.7%).

Tourism barometers illustrate that those who engage with walking tourism come to experience the unspoiled landscape that Ireland has to offer. Rural tourism development can utilise this unspoiled environment for the supply of nature-based tourism products.

'The environment is of primary importance to the overall tourism product... careful management of the environment is an economic necessity as well as a social issue'

(Pollard, as cited in Breathnach, 1994, p.74).

More recently there has been a greater emphasis on sustainability and nature-based tourism; this has leaked into the tourism consumer consciousness. The Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation has recognised the change in consumer preferences and released a new strategy and action plan for Irish trade and tourism businesses titled *'Trading and Investing in a Smart Economy: A Strategy and Action Plan for Irish Trade, Tourism and Investment to 2015'* . Within this plan, the Tourism Renewal Group stresses the need for the tourism agencies to identify nature-based tourism activities as a more sustainable means of tourism for the island. The report pin points a need to pursue new potential areas that could gain a competitive edge for Ireland in the global market. The most important areas for development included Eco-tourism (including outdoor activities, such as surfing and walking) (Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation, 2010).

It is evident that development of rural tourism businesses is often not dependent on outside companies or firms, and is more reliant on inter-community co-operation and collaboration (Heneghan, 2002). These local linkages are essential to the future development of the industry, and there needs to be an emphasis on promoting rural areas as a long-term destination rather than a one-day or once-off experience. Rural areas are often bypassed in the marketing process as a secondary activity, such as 'sight-seeing'. This can be considered a once-off or brief tourist activity instead of a mainstream recreational resource (Bramwell, 1994). Since the majority of nature-based tourism activities, including walking, are often not fee-paying, local communities can only gain financial benefits by tourists spending money in local accommodation sites, shops, restaurants, bars and services. The expenditure on these local businesses is often neglected due to one-day trips instead of

spending a few days in the area. Rural areas that have walking trails can only experience economic benefits if money is spent by walkers in the local area. There are many stakeholders of the lands used to supply walking tourism including

'residents, farmers, fishery and forestry enterprises, local industry and services, providers of tourist accommodation and attractions and recreational users, state agencies and local authorities are also stakeholders'

(Nugent, 1995, p.32).

Collaboration or cooperation is required from these stakeholders to promote an effective tourism enterprise. Working together, however, is only half the battle as public liability is the primary area of concern for stakeholders such as farmers and landowners.

2.6.4 Public liability

Issues, such as open access to land, often limit the development of walking routes and can cause disputes between actors of the tourism sector and local landowners. However, the protection of the landscape and permitting open access to the countryside are not limiting factors to recreational tourism development. In fact, they can be combined in a conservation-led approach to rural regeneration (Stelfox, 1995). By allowing open access to the countryside you are encouraging people to take part in outdoor activities which will encourage them to engage in nature and promote an understanding of nature conservation. However, one challenge to the development of walking tourism does lie with the issue of public liability, when persons traverse private lands. Many land owners feel under pressure to permit open access to their land but with this they run the risk of costly insurance claims. Yet it seems that many landowners feel protected by the Occupiers' Liability Act which was passed in 1995 and excludes the duty of care towards visitors under section 3 of the act. This act was passed in order to protect landowners from any personal injury liability that they might encounter in regards to walkers on their land.

'An occupier of premises shall not be liable to an entrant for injury or damage caused to the entrant or property of the entrant by reason of a danger existing on the premises due to the negligence of an independent contractor employed by the occupier if the occupier has taken all reasonable care in the circumstances'.

(Government of Ireland, 1995, sect. 7 of the Occupiers' Liability Act).

This act was generally welcomed as it placed the responsibility of safety on recreational users themselves instead of the landowners (Stelfox, 1995). More recently, landowners have called for the implementation of a national indemnity scheme that would remove the burden of dealing with insurance companies, and legal teams for the landowner. This scheme was promised by early 2014, however no concrete plans have been established to implement it as of yet. In addition to this, there is a current debate about whether the walkers should have unrestricted access to the countryside as is the case in the UK. Some groups such as Keep Ireland Open, which is a voluntary organization, fight for legislation to keep the countryside open to walkers and other users through the means of a 'Land Access Bill'. Contrastingly, the IFA (Irish Farmers' Association) oppose a Land Access Bill, claiming it implements rights of way that are not there. Furthermore, farmers are opposed to providing open access through active farmland without the national indemnity scheme in place. The IFA Hill Committee Chairman said,

'the introduction of this Bill would have been a major setback to the good work of Comhairle na Tuaithe over the past number of years. Walks have been created through the goodwill of farmers and landowners and the various agencies involved in recreational tourism'. (IFA, 2013)

A Primetime broadcast entitled 'Right to Roam' aired on 29th of April 2014 provided a debate about legislating open access for walkers in the countryside. The legislation of countryside access however would formalise existing informal arrangements between landowners to provide access, and would be a top-down measure to enforce open access. This approach would go against the community-led bottom up approach of consulting landowners to provide access. Karl Boyle, CEO of Mountaineering Ireland stated that;

'The vast majority of private landowners in mountain areas freely allow recreational use of their land. Public enjoyment of the countryside for recreation, whether based on a legal framework or not, will always rely on co-operation between a range of stakeholders including private and public landowners, recreation groups, the public, tourism providers and community interests. With appropriate support and investment, our growing outdoor recreation sector will deliver not only significant health and well-being benefits to participants, but also social and much-needed economic contributions to rural communities'. (Mountaineering Ireland, 2014)

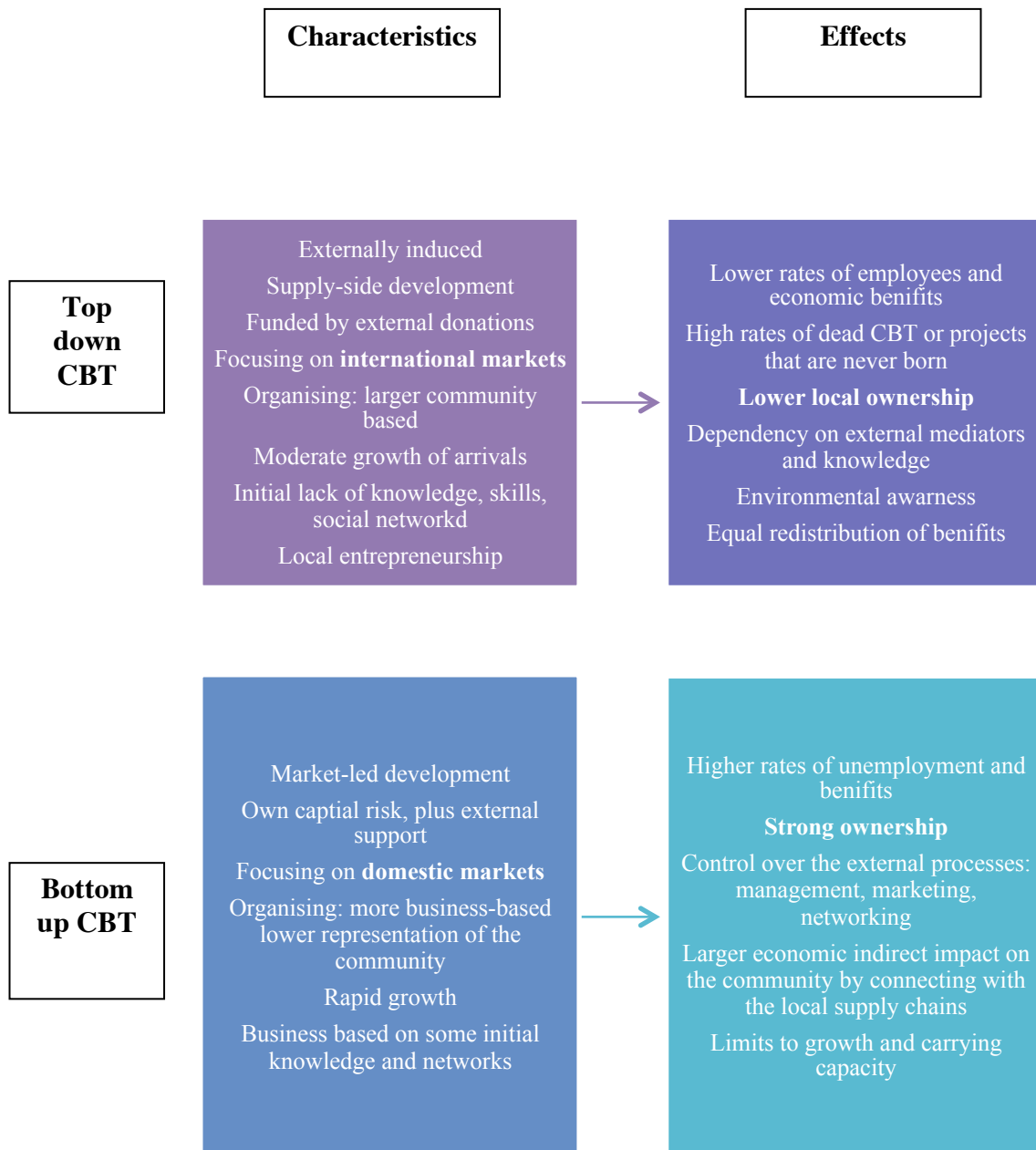
Other challenges for walkers include changes in agriculture, growth in commercial forestry, and Government and EU agricultural grant policies which have contributed to land erosion and have also limited access for users (Nugent, 1995). Fencing and active farmland is a major obstacle for walkers where the landowner and farmer are not supportive of permitting public access. Wright and Linehan (2004) argue that farmers and landowners generally do not support unrestricted access to their land especially in areas of scenic beauty. This statement is not supported when the case study is discussed in the next chapter where nearly all landowners agreed to open up their lands for walkers. Throughout Ireland there is an array of walking routes facilitated by cooperating landowners. Nevertheless, it is a reoccurring issue that farmers and landowners are anxious about public liability. There is a rigid dichotomy between the right for people to roam the landscape and respecting the working agricultural landscape. As seen in recent months, voluntary groups such as Keep Ireland Open insist that all lands should be kept open for walkers and users who want to enjoy the countryside.

2.7 Community based Tourism

A community-based tourism destination can be considered comparable to slow tourism as it adopts similar principles and views of the local ecosystem. The primary similarity is the emphasis on 'local' and 'nature' as compared to traditional mass tourism products. Murphy, as cited in Jamal and Getz (1995, p.186) defines community-based tourism as a product where visitors interact with the living and non-living as part of the tourist experience, namely local living hosts and services and non-living such as the landscape and sunshine. Zapata *et al.*, (2011) in addition highlights the different characteristics and effects that go hand-in-hand with community-based tourism projects. As seen in figure 2.4 there is a clear distinction in the difference between top-down and bottom-up examples of tourism growth. Throughout this chart it is evident that there are benefits and disadvantages to both types of development, but in summary bottom-up development appears to be a more sustainable long-term option for this type of tourism. A bottom up or endogenous approach can be considered the most effective way to contribute to local tourism development, yet there are

challenges to this approach. It is often the case that community groups could have competing interests or personal motives behind projected plans for community led tourism development, and this could alter the progress of the project. Cawley *et al.*, ‘notes that contrasting institutional regimes can often affect the trajectory of rural tourism’ (Clark and Chabrel, 2007b, p.345).

Figure 2.4: Community based tourism characteristics and effects



Instigators and administrators are at the top end of responsibility regarding the future of tourism, they, however, must adhere to sustainable means in order to progress in the industry. Best practices of tourism development often entail principles of good governance from all tiers of actors within the local area. Cawley *et al.*, (2007) list several actors that contribute to the development of local tourism projects, and those that are involved in the promotion of specific types of tourism such as IRT. The list is in no way exhaustive but includes the following: governments, state departments, tourism managers, entrepreneurs, tourists, and tour operators, those who control resources for tourism, institutions, and also host communities. Practicing good governance must radiate from all tiers of the tourism industry from the micro to the macro. More recently there has been a strong urgency for senior levels of government as well as at the local level to respond to past issues of bad practice and adhere to examples of good governance (Butler, 1999) and (Fullagar *et al.*, 2012). The development of nature-based tourism activities runs parallel with environmental protection and conservation, and many types of conservation do not require funding to implement. Blanco (2010) mentions that in some tourist destinations, stakeholders have initiated voluntary initiatives to protect and preserve their natural resources, which results in viable and alternative governance systems in the environmental and social side of the tourism industry. It is essential that practices of good governance are followed, especially on a local level as local actors are the closest connection to local development. If local and non-local actors work in synergy it can result in the creation of tangible financial flows that can benefit right down to local actors of the community (Balmford *et al.*, 2009).

An attractive landscape can be a drawing factor to entice the tourist, but also it could be a motivational factor for communities to become involved with their landscape. When communities invest in their local landscape, it is likely that everyone in the locality will experience some multiplier effects (Gullette, 2007). However, there are some cases where issues arise such as the lack of local land ownership. This ownership is replaced by ‘*outsiders*’ owning the land, which can result in a lack of control or connection with the land. An example of this is a study of the High Burren in Co. Clare where it was found that approximately 8800 acres, or 52% of the landscape, is owned by ‘*outsiders*’ not living in the local community (O’Rourke, 2005). This high percentage can result in mixed opinions

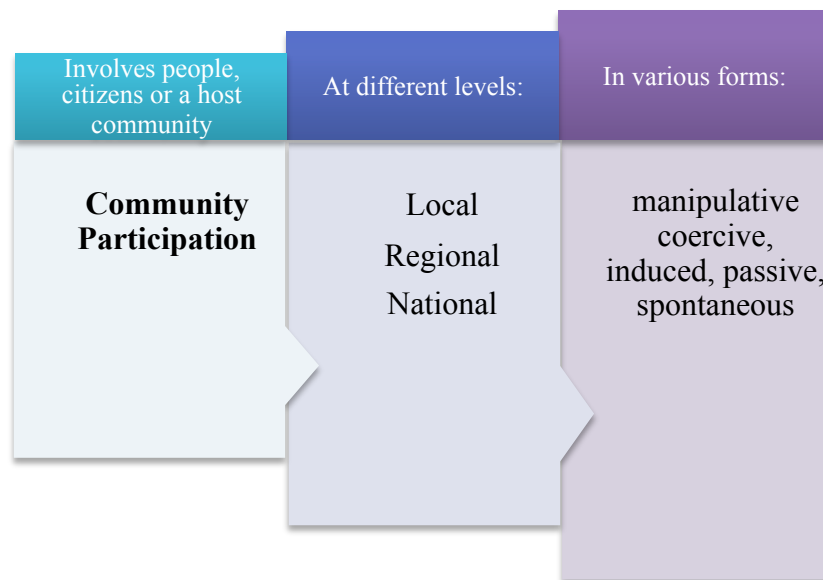
on landscape development in the area, namely due to this disconnection between landowners and the landscape. Similarly, a major issue in regard to local development in rural areas is the lack of local ownership of the community. This is often the case in idyllic settings where affluent ‘outsiders’ purchase holiday or second homes. These ‘outsiders’ may not fully comprehend or care about local needs and the decisions they make may be at odds with the needs and aspirations of the community (Dwyer & Edwards, 2000). It is estimated that on the country’s scenic peninsulas, over one-third of houses are holiday homes, which is the case on the peninsulas of Mizen, Beara and Sheep’s Head (Cork County Council, 2006).

Community control and engagement in the tourism industry play a vital role in gaining support for future development and also contribute to long term sustainability, which is the most desirable factor for tourism planners (Hall, 2005). This sentiment is reflected throughout many resident studies which suggest that community involvement in the planning process is crucial to the general sustainability of the tourism industry (Cook 1982; Murphy 1985; Jamal and Getz 1995). The utilisation of community knowledge and expertise is reflected at present in the implantation of local area plans (LAP) which are set out by the Irish Department of Environment and Local Government in the development process of local areas. Saying this, a similar approach could be considered feasible in the tourism context, as tourism development often runs in conjunction with local development. It is commonly believed that methods of participatory development could not only promote sustainable tourism development but also create an environment where local people gain greater and more balanced benefits from the industry (Tosun, 2000). This type of community control also contributes to more positive attitudes to tourism products and services. This, consequently, can conserve local resources and ultimately has a knock on effect by increasing local tolerance to tourism (Inskeep, as cited in Tosun, 2006). In summary, there is a high level of importance with ensuring local participation is evident when planning local tourism development. This is to ensure that benefits both economically and socially remain within the local hinterland. Local integration is defined as ‘the percentage of local people employed, the type and degree of participation, the locus of decision-making power and ownership of resources in the local tourism sector’ (Stem *et al.*,

2003; Briedenhann and Wickens 2004, as cited in Saxena *et al.*, 2007, p.351). As seen in Figure 2.5 it is evident that community participation can radiate to different levels from the local to national scale. It also illustrates that community participation can be present in various forms which indicated that motives for development can be skewed possibly due to financial or personal reasons.

Figure 2.5: Levels of Community Participation

Adapted from (Tosun, 2006 p.494)



2.8 Tools for developing tourism in a community – Regional Dimensions

2.8.1 Cooperation and Collaboration

Once empowerment at the local level is achieved, there needs to be lateral collaboration and cooperation. The tourism industry is developing continuously and collaboration is the favoured process. The difference between collaboration and cooperation is that

collaboration is said to be an on-going process and cooperation is a once off relationship that comes to an end (Jamal and Getz, 1995). One definition of collaboration for community based tourism planning is

'a process of joint decision- making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organizational, community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and or to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain'

(Gray, as cited in Jamal and Getz, 1995, p.188).

These key stakeholders will only engage in collaboration if partnerships have been previously established. It is essential that types of regional and local partnerships are promoted in order to ensure a more progressive form of collaboration (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). Collaboration is said to run in five stages as highlighted by (Gray, 1989, p.236).

1. the stakeholders are independent;
2. solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences;
3. joint ownership of decisions is involved;
4. the stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the on-going direction of the domain;
5. and collaboration is an emergent process, where collaborative initiatives can be understood as 'emergent organizational arrangements through which organizations collectively cope with the growing complexity of their environments'

An important characteristic of this process is that all parties recognize and acknowledge joint ownership of decisions and take collective responsibility for the tourism product. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the tourism product in most cases is a *shared* commodity and it needs the support of multiple actors in order for it to develop sustainably and progressively. Yet it is also important to note that many forms of tourism cannot work exclusive of any type of national aid or management. Fullagar *et al.*, (2012) mention that it is essential that many types of green and ecotourism activities be institutionalised and sponsored at a national level in order for them to operate at maximum capacity.

Cooperation, which is viewed as a once-off process, does, however, demonstrate benefits in the tourism industry. As Hall (2005) claims, cooperation can result in networking opportunities and gives rise to the development of technology, access to professional marketing knowhow, pooled financial resources and also additional educational training and support. It is these links of trust and networking in the context of localized cooperation that are the fundamental components in moving forward within the tourism industry (Petrou *et al.*, 2007). These characteristics of cooperation are regarded as an essential mix in developing the tourism product, coinciding with on-going collaboration. These forms of collaboration and cooperation can only evolve from the establishment of vertical and horizontal networks.

2.8.2 Networks in rural areas

Recent research has stressed the role of networks in rural development (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). Friedman (1990) highlights the need for utilizing vertical networking as a means of tapping into markets, and horizontal networking as a means of encouraging rural enterprise development. Through these dual types of networking it is assumed that local actors can infiltrate more external markets and potentially influence global capital. Chang *et al.*, (1996) and Buhalis and Cooper, (1998) have exhibited the role of vertical networking in enabling the infiltration of international tourist markets. This reiterates the idea that both types of networking are needed in the future development of the industry. The importance of networks can be attributed to the rapid rate of development of the industry and the fact that networks are often more effective than sole organisations. It is said that persons that engage in networking change faster than organisations, and it is more likely that these individuals will constructively influence future tourism development (Jamal and Getz, 1995).

Figure 2.6: Network Characteristics

Adapted from (Saxena, 2007, p.353)

Embedded	Disembedded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Built around local knowledges and relationships •(+) Form innovative activities •(-) However may be inward-looking •(-) May lack access to external knowledge and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Can facilitate access to external markets •(-) However local products risk 'losing' their distinctive origins and production processes
Endogenous	Exogenous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Reinforce strong attachment to place •(+) Promote local participation and ownership of resources •(-) May lack access to superior external resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Enable actors to access human and monetary resources •(+) Provide channels for getting local interests onto mainstream agendas •(-) Fails to link with local socio-economic structures •(-) Can create high economic leakage •(-) Can leave the local economy vulnerable to external shocks
Empowering	Disempowering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Facilitate local participation in managing local resource •(-) But participation may only be partial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(+) Dominated by local, regional or national elites with access to large resources •(-) But may fail to establish decision-taking systems •(-) Offer limited oppertunities for community development and participation

From figure 2.6 we can compare the different types of network characteristics that are present in today's tourism industry. Evident from this table, there are two primary types of networks both embedded and disembedded from the market. An embedded approach to networking has a single focus on the local and has little or no strength in an open market. It is also important to note that networks can be endogenous, which utilises local resources, or

exogenous, that taps into outside resources to supplement the already present local resources for tourism development. Within the literature it is evident that improvement in networking is encouraged especially from most actor groups in Ireland, tourists and resource managers in the Czech Republic and also from gatekeepers in the UK (Clark and Chabrel, 2007b). It is essential that both types of networking are applied, as embedded networks (local knowledge) and disembedded networks (external markets and skills) work best when used in synergy (Petrou *et al.*, 2007).

2.8.3 Governance

Over the last number of years failed policy-making and bad planning practices have spurred a shift in the emphasis from ‘government’ to ‘governance’. This social change has also demonstrated the significance of partnerships, networking, and cooperation and collaboration between institutions (Hall *et al.*, 2005). The institutional framework related to the tourism industry too, has evolved, over the last number of years, the primary change being the transfer of responsibilities and functions to sub-national and sub-regional levels. Governance can also be considered a new means of interaction between the state, civil society, and the corporate and private sector. It is within these relationships that numerous tourism interest groups and public residents engage with businesses and government regarding crucial planning and policy issues (Marsh, 2002) and (O’Flynn and Wanna, 2008). The new advent of governance structures has emerged in the guise of LEADER and various forms of local area partnerships that lead to empowerment in local actors (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). This contemporary approach facilitates new modes of governance, and this includes: ‘participation and power sharing; multi-level integration; diversity and decentralism; deliberation; flexibility, along with experimentation and knowledge creation’ (Zeppel, 2012, p.604). It is regarded that local governance structures are a better means of reducing the detrimental effects that tourism contributes to the environment. This can be attributed to greater local ownership, understanding of the environment and a cultural connection with the landscape. With the rapid development of the nature-based tourism industry there has been an increase in the number of tourists visiting ecologically and environmentally sensitive areas. This has resulted in an upsurge of interest given to

scholarly discussions regarding the appropriate instruments for environmental governance (Song *et al.*, 2012). Other areas of interest include a study of what countries demonstrate strong levels of good governance or investigations into what levels of power are assigned at local level. One comparative study was undertaken between Ireland and France, and it revealed that the West of Ireland region has below average executive power at both local and regional levels (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). This type of power at a local scale is an essential component in vertical networking in the promotion and marketing of tourism and is fundamental for infiltrating into national and international markets. However, in light of recent government White Papers and the 2014 Local Government Reform Act, the future existence of endogenous development is uncertain. The recent movement away from community-led development is the very antithesis of the previous trends towards devolution of powers.

2.8.4 Rural tourism

Although farm-based tourism has been the core of a majority of agricultural activity especially within Europe, farm diversification into tourism has, in recent years, become an acceptable means of addressing the socio-economic problems of rural areas (Sharpley and Vass, 2006). In the past, rural areas were seen as places of production, a landscape to provide for the host community. However rural areas can also be considered a place of consumption, as hosts of recreational and leisure activities (Woods, 2011). Rural areas are highly reliant on agriculture to develop the local and national economy, and tourism intertwined with agricultural areas can play a part in maintaining future development. The primary agricultural sector contribute 2.5% of GDP to the Irish economy in 2010, this is twice the EU average (European Commission, 2012). It can be considered that tourism was the leading contributor to services sector employment creation in Ireland from the years 1981 to 2005 and its contribution to GDP exceeded that of the primary sector in rural Ireland⁸. These developments in the countryside and the rural economy are reflected in the

⁸ Tourism comprised 7 per cent of total hours worked in the economy in 2007, up from 6 per cent in 2000 and 3 per cent in 1980. (Forfas, 2011). Between 1965 and 2000, the number of overseas visitors to Ireland increased almost fivefold while foreign exchange earnings from tourism advanced by a factor of forty. From the years 1985-2000, tourism growth has resulted in the number of overseas visitors climb from under two

past Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP). Although tourism is not mentioned directly, its importance is implicit in several of the RDP provisions. According to a (Europa, 2007) press release the aims of the Irish Rural Development Programme is:

- To support the development of the Ireland's rural areas whilst upholding the principles of sustainable development and to support agriculture in its provision of public goods;
- To enhance the environment & biodiversity, in particular building on the success of current environmental measures;
- To mitigate the effects of climate change, and protect Ireland's natural resources;
- To ensure a competitive agri-food sector by boosting innovation, added value & consumer focus;
- To address structural problems in the agricultural industry and the need for on-farm capital investment;
- To address local needs & boost the quality of life in rural areas & promote the creation of micro-enterprises⁹.

Axes 3 and 4 (which are implemented together in the Irish programme using LEADER methodology) focus on the creation of employment through diversification of farms into non-agricultural activities, the development of micro-businesses and the creation of tourism activities (Europa, 2007). In total the Irish Rural Development Programme had allocated a total of €659,455,250 for the development of projects which was part financed by the EAFRD (European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development) (Europa, 2007). In 2005 agriculture had declined again to just 2% of the total value added in the economy (Clancy, 2009). Table 2.3 illustrates the declining role of agriculture in GNP, exports and the total labour force, with the most severe decline being experienced from 1990 onward. This decline in the agricultural sector prompts reactionary measures to be taken to provide an alternative to agriculture.

million to well over six million Tansey Webster Stewart and Company Economic Consultants The Impact of Tourism on the Irish Economy. Irish Tourist Industry Confederation. (Tansey Webster Stewart and Company Economic Consultants).

⁹ Can be considered to be tourism related

Table 2.3: Role of agriculture in certain aggregates (%)

	1973	1980	1990	2000	2009
GNP	18%	11%	9%	5%	2%
Exports	40%	35%	21%	10%	7%
Labour force	25%	18%	15%	8%	5%

Source: (Kearney, 2010)

2.8.5 Integrated Rural Tourism

Integrated Rural Tourism also known as IRT can be described as utilizing resources of rural areas in order to sustainably develop the local community. Jenkins and Oliver; Saxena *et al.*, as cited in Cawley *et al.*, (2007) define IRT as interlinking social, economic, cultural, human and natural facets of the community. This definition also links in with previous ideas of sustainable development and again words like economic, social, cultural and natural are being used harmoniously. Like many nature-based tourist activities, IRT is growing at a rapid rate, yet the landscape must be able to cope with these rates of development. Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, (2011) claim that IRT is developing in a sustainable manner by retaining the identity of the community and reintroducing activities that have declined such as subsistence farming, and this forms an integral part of the environment. Throughout the literature, it is noted that IRT like many other types of tourism overlaps with sustainable tourism and that its definition has transitioned to a more holistic view. Swarbrooke (1999), Sharpley (2000) and Ilbery *et al.*, (2007) all agree that there is a relationship between IRT and sustainable tourism and that it can be described as ‘tourism that benefits the local environment’. The ‘local environment’ could perhaps be interpreted as the social, economic and ecological environment which again focuses on sustainability. Bramwell and Lane; Robinson *et al.*,; Tosun, as cited in Saxena *et al.*, (2007) claim that recent sustainable tourism development has actually broadened into ideas of long-term viability of high quality human and natural resources, a good quality of life for local

communities, and satisfaction for the tourist. One study undertaken in the England–Wales border Region suggested that there are certain types of tourist that engage in IRT and investigations suggested that IRT is a highly individualistic product that is based in areas that remain ‘undeveloped’. Some tourists in the study described IRT as ‘highly individualized tourism which caters to specific visitor needs’ (Male 60s, PE) as cited in (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007, p.452). Other tourists linked IRT to a lack of organization and over-development which can be a negative view on the development and implementation of IRT. One female in her 30s associated it with a ‘lack of any organised sort of entertainment’. Many others in the study associated it with ‘peace and quiet and were against any over-development of the area’ (*Ibid.*). The reoccurring theme of negativity towards over-development could possibly be part of a fear that IRT could transform into a mass tourism product.

Once a comprehensive overview of the definitions and characteristics of nature-based tourism has been discussed it is now necessary to determine the development and origins of this type of tourism. This next section will examine the emergence and growth of this popular tourism market.

2.9 Development of nature-based tourism

2.9.1 Emergence of nature-based tourism

The movement back to nature, a response to past and present tourism trends and coinciding with the realisation of the need for sustainability, signifies the consequential growth of nature-based tourism activities. In particular, rural and peripheral regions have experienced a shift from traditional agricultural activities towards tourism-based products of development. Peripheral and rural regions are areas often untouched by high levels of development which is evident in core urban areas; therefore, it is easier for these areas to retain high aesthetic amenity values (Hall, 2005). The attraction of the countryside has become a motivation behind tourist travel, and in many cases accommodation choices or proximity to a beach is no longer a deciding factor.

Nature essentially has become a primary draw for tourists and the central mechanism of tourist activities (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010). As a response to this change in consumer demand, several niche markets have emerged, including nature-based tourism (Arnegger et al., 2010). Butler (2006) adds that there is a decline in standardized, rigidly packaged mass-produced tourism destinations that were once the most popular type of destination. The advent of nature-based tourist activities has emerged with the decline of many mass tourism markets and replaces years of mass tourism consumption. Nature-based tourism can be considered tourists' reactions to globalisation and the visual commonplaceness which is evident in the mass tourism industry (Jacobsen, cited in Hall and Brown, 2000, p.176).

Rural areas that were previously reliant on one economic base, such as agriculture, are now diversifying into other sectors of the economy. This includes tourism, food businesses and cultural heritage. Stakeholders of the rural community, such as farmers, are often apprehensive about diversifying into other sectors like the tourism industry. Meredith *et al.*, (2012) highlighted in a 2012 Teagasc report 'Farm Development: Attitudes of farmers to farm diversification' that comparative research illustrates significantly low rates of on-farm diversification in Ireland (1.95%) comparative to the UK (31%). Yet, it is evident that tourism has the potential to generate equal or even an excess level of revenue for stakeholders of the community. A report in South Africa, for example, claims that nature-based tourism creates revenue equivalent to forestry, farming and fisheries combined (Balmford *et al.*, 2009).

As well as characteristics of nature-based tourists, their motivations also need to be examined. A majority of tourists make a conscious choice of rural place-based consumption through the medium of nature-based activities (Urry and Larsen, 2011). One study undertaken by Balmford *et al.*, (2009) examined temporal trends in visitor numbers at 280 protected areas (PAs) from 20 countries. On average, the report showed that there was a growth in total visitors to PAs in 75% of the countries that were investigated. An example of this significant growth of nature-based tourism is in the state of Victoria, Australia where nature-based tourism numbers are expected to grow from 1.11 million in 2006 to 1.61 million in 2016 (State Government of Victoria, 2008). The levels and nature of consumption vary as some tourists may come to explore the countryside and to engage with

outdoor pursuits, while others may have an interest in purchasing a property in the area if they are enthusiastically attracted to the local customs and way of life (Ilbery et al., 2007).

From the outset of the nineteenth century, tourism was focused on gaining benefits from natural amenities, for relaxation or health purposes. Scholars such as Hern (1967), Walton (1983), Sprawson (1992) and Urry and Larsen (2011) have made comments in particular about how tourism was based on the natural phenomenon of the sea and its assumed health benefits. Nature-based tourism can be seen as an alternative to a hectic lifestyle and a break away from a consumerist globalised world. Fons (2011) expresses that contemporary consumers of tourism are now seeking healthy challenges, and holistic experiences. By accessing nature-based tourism, it is said that you can achieve the experience of a holistic lifestyle. Tourism has evolved from looking through a lens at the landscape, to partaking and immersing oneself into activities that engage with nature. Furthermore tourism has evolved to ‘something to leap into, jet boat through, or turn completely upside down: the inverted sublime’ (Bell and Lyall, as cited in Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.112).

In many cases, nature-based tourism developed from a growing attraction to the countryside and a movement away from urban living. Ever since the 1970s it has been claimed that travellers searched for an ‘authentic’ tourist experience as a reaction to pressures of one’s ‘home’ society (Cohen, as cited in Morgan et al., 2010). Crompton (1979) and Dann (1977) also argue that tourism is a method of escape from the anomie of the western lifestyle. Another significant influence that lures people to the countryside is the attractiveness of the physical environment (Mossberg, 2007). This is a primary attraction for urban dwellers based on the sense of irregularity in the landscape, and escape away from the concrete that characterises the urban landscape. The appeals of the countryside are said to;

‘derive in part from the disillusionment with the modern,... the countryside is thought to embody some or all of the following; a lack of planning and regimentation, a vernacular quaint architecture , winding lanes and a generally labyrinthine road system, and the virtues of tradition and the lack of social intervention’ (Bell and Lyall, as cited in Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.109).

Other significant features of nature-based tourism derive from the progressive development of environmental politics, primarily with a focus of sustainability. Coinciding with this, it is

evident in the past twenty to thirty years that there has been a resistance to pervasive attempts to 'modernise' or 'urbanise' particular localities and areas especially in the rural hinterland (Urry and Larsen, 2011). It is necessary to confine development to already urbanised areas in order to preserve the rural idyll.

In the Irish context, it is essential to preserve the country's greatest asset, an unspoilt landscape. Tourism in Ireland has been long established on the traditional view that it is a 'wild, raw and unpolluted landscape, with a unique culture' (Nash, as cited in Healy and McDonagh, 2009, p.389). In order to advance Ireland's tourist industry in this case, it is necessary to impede development (in rural areas) in order to foster development (for rural tourism businesses). The issue of sustainability is central to future development but it also has in some sense become a fashionable term, and many tourists base their choice of destination on factors of sustainability. For example, the decline of seaside resorts can be attributed to a lack of sustainable characteristics; therefore, nature-based activities elsewhere have taken centre stage. According to Agarwal and Shaw (2007), the reason for the decline of popular seaside resorts can be attributed to competition from other destinations, with seaside resorts failing to adhere to changes in style, fashion and trends which have transformed many European destinations in the past number of years. These traditional resorts have been in decline since the 1960s especially in areas such as Scarborough, Skegness and Blackpool, where visitors had once peaked at 10 million a year (Nagle, 1999). Another reason for the decline of seaside resorts is the issue of congestion or overcrowding of tourist areas, which has occurred in many mass tourism destinations. The attraction of these resorts results in overcrowding the local population which consequentially reduces the quality of the tourist experience. On the other hand, this gives rise to an opportunity to develop rural tourism, as rural areas are not as crowded as these resorts, and can therefore be considered 'depopulated' (Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, 2011). Rural areas may feature an un-crowded landscape but the local people have an important part to play in the promotion and viability of the tourist destination and also in enforcing guidelines on carrying capacity so that the local landscape will not be over-utilised and environmentally degraded. It is also essential that local people foster a positive attitude and

cultivate a sense of place in order to ensure a positive experience for the tourist (Jennings and Nickerson, 2006).

2.9.2 A need for sustainable development

Butler (1999) points out that the most significant factor that has the potential to alter the course of tourism development is the progression of 'sustainable development'. Ideas of sustainability have been embedded in society as early as Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' (1962) and later defined by the Bruntland report in 1987¹⁰.

In recent years, however, sustainability as a core feature of tourism appears to have decreased in the consumer consciousness, with a shift to 'fast tourism'. People are travelling to further away places at greater speeds than ever before, and the geography of tourist destinations is no longer a deciding factor for the tourist. Speed, accessibility of travel possibilities and use of the internet have all had a distinct impact on the development of tourism. One aspect of this is that the tourism industry has a substantial reliance on the aviation industry. Air travel is highly important for tourism activities; it is reported that over 80% of all civil aviation is used for tourism purposes (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme, 2008). The European Union reported that between 2007 and 2012 the number of passengers travelling by air actually increased to 826 million (24.5% increase) (Eurostat European Commission, 2014). This is a significant increase in comparison with 1999 figures within the EU that reached just over 90million (817.7% increase). The increased rate of tourist activity in the aviation industry has resulted in both social and environmental problems. Sustainable measures through greater use of slower means of travel could ameliorate these problems.

In order to develop the tourism industry sustainably, it is necessary to take into consideration how the landscape can cope with changes in human development. It is important to note that it is an on-going process and sustainable development is not a process of applying limits. The rapid development of the tourism industry can be a

¹⁰ 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development UNWCED, 1987, p.15)¹⁰.

sustainable process if technology and planning is used to alleviate past problems. With nature-based tourism a challenge arises in creating a balance between profit and sustainability 'limits to development'. A major concern for nature-based tourism development is to create a balance between generating revenue for a local community, and social, cultural and ecological sustainability. Tourism planners are continuously attempting to find the most effective means to commodify local resources for commercial purposes (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). This, however, is a difficult practice, and a balance is needed when attracting tourists to ecologically sensitive areas while at the same time protecting and conserving the natural environment (Healy and McDonagh, 2009). Fundamentally, it is essential that the landscape remains attractive enough to entice tourism. In many cases tourism development contributes significantly to the destruction and deterioration of the local environment (Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, 2011). This loss of 'naturalness' can be considered natural 'capital' that is vulnerable to degradation regardless of visitor numbers (Butler, 1999). All types of tourist activity requires some type of development but with it comes the ultimate paradox as it is difficult to provide and sustain tourism numbers in a sustainable manner (Smith *et al.*, 2010). Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, (2011) adds to this by mentioning that the environment is the foundation of nature-based tourism but paradoxically future development of this type of activity is liable to damage the environment. A limit to development is a requisite in order to preserve the landscape as a commodity (Healy and McDonagh, 2009). Since nature-based tourism activities are to a great extent tied to the environment it is next to impossible to disregard this fact when considering tourism development (Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, 2011). This is a major challenge in the tourism industry, as other sectors of the economy do not face such a sensitive predicament when taking development into account.

There are many aspects and notions of what is sustainable and how to achieve it. Bramwell *et al.*, (1996) highlight that there are seven aspects of sustainability: cultural, environmental, governmental, economic, political, social, and managerial. Government bodies and actors of tourism development need to take a cohesive view of all seven aspects and incorporate them into future plans. It is important that all actors in the community are consulted while considering sustainable development of an area; however each actor can

have different interpretations of ideas of sustainable development. Butler (1999) explains that disparities among the uses and definitions of sustainable development can often cause widespread misuse and abuse.

2.9.3 Growth of Nature-Based Tourism

It is evident from the literature review that nature-based tourism coincides with sustainable development and sustainable tourism. Since the 1980s, there has been dynamic development of ecotourism and nature based activities (Wight, as cited in Arnegger et al., 2010). This is primarily evident from a significant increase in figures of people visiting parks and protected areas (Hall and Page, 2006; Eagles *et al.*, 2002; Healy and McDonagh, 2009). Yellowstone National Park, for example, shows evidence of this increase in visitor numbers between 2000 (2,838,233) and 2011 (3,394,322) this illustrated a 16.4% increase (U.S National Park Service, 2011).

The trend of growth of nature-based tourism is evident from figures across the globe. The Asia-Pacific region in 1993 alone reported that 10% of tourism revenue came from ecotourism activities (Dalem, 2002). Nature-based tourism in the year 2000 accounted for 42% of European recreational visitors and over 75% of Australia's international tourism market (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2011). In 2006, nature tourism contributed \$122.3 billion to the USA's tourism market (UNWTO 2010d). Wight, as cited in Arnegger *et al.*, (2010) claim, that nature tourism is in fact the most rapidly growing sector of the tourism industry. For example Mehmetoglu (2010) cites from (International Ecotourism Society, 2000) that up to 60% of international tourists can be classed as nature-based tourists. A more recent figure from Australia in a 2009 report is that there were 3.3 million international nature visitors, this figure increased at an average rate of 3% per annum since 2003 (Tourism research Australia, 2010). In 2010, over 21 million U.S. tourists visited international places; of these, more than 50% engaged in nature, heritage or cultural tourism experiences (US Department of Commerce, 2010). Out of these trips, each tourist engaged with visits to historic, cultural, and ethnic heritage sites, and it was reported that they visited national parks, environmental and ecological sites and also engaged in

camping and hiking activities (*Ibid.*). Approximately 10-20% of all international travel is also linked to nature experiences (UNTWO as cited in, Tyrväinen *et al.*, 2014).

Discrepancies do arise with figures like these, as some scholars would argue that some sub sectors of the tourism industry are growing at more rapid rates than others. Some academics (Hawkins & Lamoureux; The International Ecotourism Society, as cited in Arnegger *et al.*, 2010) argue that eco-tourism is the fastest growing sector, and furthermore suggest that it is the most important development to the tourism industry. The study of nature-based tourism is a global phenomenon and world statistics do not reflect a common trend of growth or decline. There is an absence of statistics to verify the reported growth in nature-based tourism; this may be attributed to the multitude of definitions and meanings of nature-based tourism. Nature-based tourism is very broad, and studies of this market are often segmented. Concepts of nature-based tourism ties in to the well-known, parallel concepts such as ecotourism and rural tourism, nature tourism, and green tourism, and it is difficult to treat them as separate entities (Rinne and Saastamoinen, 2005).

In some cases, the rate of persons engaging with nature based activities, are said to have increased or remained the same during times of economic recession. Despite this, Balmford *et al.*, (2009) point out that the rate of nature-based tourism has declined in Japan and the US. In addition, he points out that overall it still has significant potential to create revenue for conservation while promoting participation in nature-based activities. In the Provincial parks in Ontario, Canada, fees increased by 40% yet it did not result in a decline of visitor numbers, instead numbers increased due to better conservation investment and improved recreational services (Font *et al.*, 2004). Another example of this is a levy of 5% of the product price on outdoor recreational equipment which is implemented in the USA. This generates about \$350 million each year which is donated to wildlife agencies for conservation purposes (*Ibid.*). It was estimated in a Tourism Select Committee Report in 2001, that rural tourism in England generated £12 billion and sustained 380,000 jobs which in turn supported 25,000 small businesses (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007). Wales also experienced huge economic benefits from nature-based tourism as around £6 billion per annum is generated and is concentrated in the rural counties where two-thirds is generated (Alston, as cited in Haven-Tang and Jones, 2012).

The growth of nature-based tourism stems from the increased awareness of sustainability, and the move away from the mass tourism market. This tourism sector brings substantial opportunities for conservation and protection of our landscapes but it also has its challenges. This next section details these benefits and challenges and finally discusses characteristics of a nature-based tourist.

2.10 Benefits and challenges of Nature-Based Tourism

2.10.1 Commodification of local resources and creating benefits

Nature-based tourism in its simplest form is the consumption and enjoyment of the natural landscape through both human and natural resources. The landscape in the tourism industry is considered an open-access commodity that has the potential to benefit multiple actors of the community. Society can become preoccupied with acquiring and claiming goods as a means of personal economic gain, but if the landscape can be utilized sustainably it can remain a shared resource. The OECD and the Commission of the European Communities have endorsed the idea of commodifying our natural resources as a process of contributing to rural development (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). Economic gains from nature-based tourism activities can be utilized in the conservation and development of the local landscape. This at the same time creating employment opportunities and also a sense of community and pride in one's place (Healy and McDonagh, 2009) and (Liu *et al.*, 2012). To achieve this goal in practice, strategies are required to realize local benefits from biodiversity conservation (Hutton and Leader-Williams, 2003). One such mechanism is nature-based tourism, which aims to turn biodiversity into a marketable commodity (Naidoo and Adamowicz, 2005) and (Sandbrook, 2010).

It is important to note the importance of sustainability in regards to the growth and future development of the tourism sector. However, nature-based tourism can only be successfully sustainable if there is community participation that engages with a management that provides effective planning (Balmford *et al.*, 2009). This can be achieved through constructive relationships between state agencies and local providers. Only when both

parties are working together in synergy, can a positive contribution to conservation and sustainable development be achieved. Not only are environmentally proactive types of tourism better for the environment, findings from top European tourist destinations showed that they have also benefited from significantly better economic results (Alvarez Gil *et al.*, as cited in Blanco, 2010). It may also be possible that tourism in rural areas can act as an area for knowledge exchange, and a link to new markets. This type of exchange would typically occur in urban or metropolitan areas (Brouder, 2012).

2.10.2 Challenges of NBT

As mentioned previously in this chapter, this section will now discuss challenges that arise from the development of nature-based tourism activities. The primary issues include: creating an appropriate balance between profit and sustainability, limited capacity and empowerment, a lack of local community involvement, lack of coordination, cohesion and planning and collective interest, embedding and dis-embedding external markets.

Firstly, rural areas often experience out-migration; this not only creates a loss of population but also results in an out-migration of knowledge. When communities experience these vacuums of knowledge it often leaves a limited capacity to develop local industries. Many local communities, as a result of this out-migration process, lack expertise and capability of tourism business which can significantly influence the efficiency and effectiveness of local indigenous community participation in tourism development (Tosun, 2006). Some rural producers possess limited capacity to compete with international economies due to this lack of knowledge and business know-how (Ray, as cited in George *et al.*, 2009). In order to overcome these limits, communities can stimulate business growth by taking advantage of the characteristic features of the local environment and local culture (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). The establishment of small and medium businesses coincides with nature-based tourism development; the success of these businesses is often attributed to an in-migration of knowledge from urban areas. The growth of this sector is also linked to progressive counter-urbanization which lures those from the urban into rural areas (Gorton *et al.*, 1998). It is said that these types of migrants possess a high level of education, capital and business know-how which is invested into nature-based tourism enterprises (Short and Stockdale, as

cited in Paniagua, 2002). A significant proportion of European rural areas have experienced extensive periods of out-migration. Nature-based tourism is seen as a new method to combat this migration outflow. This is achieved by developing an area both economically and socially, firstly by creating employment and enhancing local capital, and secondly by breaking the barriers of rural social isolation and enticing migrants to repopulate areas with lost population (Ali Pour *et al.*, 2011). An example of this occurs in many offshore island communities located in the West of Ireland; tourism is considered a valued source of income in areas of such significant population loss (Clark and Chabrel, 2007a). Other factors that limit capacity and empowerment include a lack of financial resources at local level and distance and remoteness to tourism related businesses (Tosun, 2006). It is more difficult for local communities to acquire relevant business knowledge when there is a lack of collaborative links between tourism industries and local communities. It is essential to provide knowledge-sharing facilities in order to develop nature-based tourism industries.

Secondly, many nature-based tourism industries were unsuccessful in their attempts due to a lack of community involvement and collective interest. Strong and closed ties within a community are evident, especially in rural areas and have existed for several decades; such ties can make community involvement and integration difficult to achieve (Akgun *et al.*, 2010). Nature-based tourism at a local level is only effective if the greater part of the community and local actors is involved, and furthermore if the economic benefits of tourism is redistributed equitably (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Tourism is a contemporary feature in rural areas and its tradition and collective knowledge is limited. With limited traditions like this it is hard to 'develop a sense of collective good that can transcend the barriers of narrow self-interest; individual firms prefer to compete than cooperate' (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007, p.463). Saying this, it can be more straightforward to think of tourism as a common resource that will benefit multiple stakeholders in the community instead of a single business. Nature-based tourism activities resolve this issue as its resource, the landscape, is considered an open access commodity that is shared among the local community.

Thirdly, a combined lack of coordination, cohesion and planning has undermined many proposed developments within the tourist industry. Within a highly fragmented industry these faults are considered a well-acknowledged issue for managers of the industry and

developmental planners (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Studies in management, tourism and business journals have suggested that 'go-it-alone' policies are less effective than those based on endogenous policy making. Gunn, as cited in Jamal and Getz (1995, p.186) also state that 'no one business or government establishment can operate in isolation'. The fundamental quality of rural tourism is community involvement and local planning through networking and coordination (Hall *et al.*, 2005). The remoteness of rural areas is often a drawback for coordination as the rural hinterland is constructed of multiple micro-businesses that are not linked in a business sense. This can be attributed to a dearth of infrastructure from good quality road connections to efficient broadband systems. Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, (2011) concludes that this lack of information exchange and cooperation results in a communal feeling of exclusion or isolation from urban hubs of thriving businesses. As well as a lack of coordination between actors of the tourism industry, marketing is seen as a weak element in the development process of rural diversification into tourism (Hall *et al.*, 2005). Rural areas have a significantly lower rate of connection to broadband facilities that are an essential component in the marketing process. In Canada, 22% of rural households are without broadband connectivity which is essential in the profitability and productivity of local businesses (Industry Canada, 2010). Broadband in rural UK has 95% connectivity and a further £830m has been allocated for further broadband development projects in attempts to make the UK the broadband leader in Europe by 2015 (BroadbandIN, 2012). Concerning broadband connectivity in Ireland, the reported rate is 70% (Commission for Communications Regulation, 2011). In 2011, close to three-quarters (72.8%) of households in Dublin had broadband access to the Internet compared with only 55.4% in the Midland region. Just over half of households in Longford had broadband access (Central Statistics Office, 2013). The lack of communication facilities makes the cooperation and creation of business networks problematic for local actors, especially in rural areas. This type of networks creates long-term sustainability and viability of tourism projects. It also enables organic growth of the industry that could constitute an attractive asset to inward investment (Hall *et al.*, 2005). Rural tourism planners must also consider factors such as competition, forces of globalization and a lack

of models, spatial concepts and theories from which they can base future development plans (Dredge, as cited in Boers and Cottrell, 2007) and (Hall, 2005).

The commodification of the landscape does come with consequential problems when financial goals become the key motivating force. Places in Ireland such as the Burren National Park and the Cliffs of Moher suffered a blight of controversies concerning developments of the visitor centres. These controversies relate to the commodification of the landscape, the homogenization of nature and in this case the lack of community participation (Healy and McDonagh, 2009). In addition to these public controversies, the tourism industry also faces the challenge of intense competition for land. An idyllic landscape is required to attract the nature-based tourist, but at the same time the landscape is required to provide for the host community. Producers of wind farms, hydro and geothermal power production too need spaces for production, and this can cause discord among competing industries (Benediktsson, 2007). There are also other limits to a fully integrated form of rural tourism as the circumstantial nature of rural tourism develops through various trajectories, there are also regional and national disparities in tourism development and stakeholders of the community occupy different roles in tourism development (Clark and Chabrel, 2007a).

The development of walking tourism goes hand in hand with the conservation of the landscape. Hannam and Knox (2010) stress that by examining the interdependence of tourism and the environment we can highlight conservation efforts and value our natural resources. Issues of maintaining a low 'carbon footprint' have also come to the forefront of a significant amount of holidaymakers' decisions when planning tourist travel. Nature-based tourism activities offers a means of encouraging environmental and landscape conservation and educating visitors on the importance of sustainable development. The relationship between agriculture and nature conservation is a relatively recent focus of policy development and there is a significant need for future discussion and investigation on these links. Yet for years, there have been competing objectives between agriculture and landscape conservation and maintaining this balance is a major challenge for policy makers (Lee, 1995). There needs to be input from both providers and consumers of nature-based tourism activities in order to create a balance to tourism development. The management of

the walking trails landscape requires proper planning and creating the *optimum balance* between human development and environmental protection (Nugent, 1995). Standards of carrying-capacity on walking routes need to be adhered to in order to avoid rapid erosion of the landscape. It is known that intensive farming methods and plantations of non-native trees have also contributed to land erosion. Other negative aspects of nature-based tourism arise. In particular it needs to be assessed what level of local benefits translates into positive conservation outcomes, and to what extent are local benefits reduced by “economic leakage” (Emerton; Spiteri & Nepal, as cited in Sandbrook, 2010). This questions whether tourism leads to constructive development and if nature-based tourism has the potential to generate economic advantages to the host community from expenditure on tourist products and services (Sharpley, 2009). Policymakers as well as local actors need to be vigilant in ensuring sustainable methods are adhered to, and actors cannot naïvely assume that all nature-based activities will automatically lead to sustainable means, and in extreme cases be harmful to the environment (Butler, 1999). Ideas of sustainability are fashionable concepts, and all tourism-orientated businesses have in some cases ‘jumped on the bandwagon’ of sustainability promotion. The danger is whether sustainable factors are being utilized to a great degree or being monitored in the industry. The increase of ‘urban’ pastimes such as television, internet and video games has been linked to a reduced rate of outdoor activity. It is then argued that if people are no longer engaging in outdoor pursuits within their local natural environments how can they be expected to care about them? (Balmford *et al.*, 2009). This distant connection to the natural landscape can pose as a crucial problem that constrains development possibilities in these areas.

These new localisms are characterized by a growing respect for natural environments, the utilisation of local resources for economic activities locally, the increasing role of local self-government and empowerment. Cultural and local traditions are often amalgamated into the tourism product and this type of tourism experience is in high demand (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007, p.442). If tourism planners can develop tourism by encompassing sustainability and the community, nature-based tourism will be one of the most successful tourism enterprises. Before the suppliers of nature-based tourism are discussed in the profile and

results chapters, it is imperative to also comprehend characteristics of the nature-based tourist.

2.11 Characteristics of a nature-based tourist

The previous sections have defined each type of tourism within the nature-based spectrum, but it is now necessary to investigate what are the characteristics or profiles of a nature-based tourist in order to gauge a better understanding of this industry. This thesis focuses on the 'supplier of tourism' rather than the 'participant'. However it is necessary to discuss nature-based tourists to gauge a holistic view of the industry. Evidence from the literature suggests that a discourse emerges of a tourist type that is typically wealthy, highly educated and who possesses a degree of attachment to the environment. It could be argued that all nature-based tourists are environmentally aware, yet it is necessary to distinguish the different levels of environmental awareness. Ryan *et al.*, (1999) claim that this type of tourist is not a homogenous group but tourist activity is undertaken by a range of different types of tourist which might not be exclusively environmentally conscious groups. In order to measure and classify these types of tourists, several scholars have developed nature-based tourist typologies. Lindberg (1991, p.4) suggests that there are as many as four types of nature tourists, namely 'hard-core nature tourists', 'dedicated nature tourists', 'mainstream nature tourists' and 'casual nature tourists'. Weaver, (2001) and Weaver and Lawton, (2002) explain that these typologies are based on tourists' motivations and based on the degree of their commitment to nature and the environment. These types of tourist are said to have emerged in recent tourism trends, and in some cases are not the type of tourist that would engage with the traditional mass tourism product. Other academics describe these typologies based on demographic factors, travel characteristics and behaviour. These typologies which are adapted from (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007, p.447) are discussed in this section.

Some factors that are used to construct characteristics pertaining to a nature-based tourist include age, gender, education and occupation. One example of a nature-based tourist is described as 'white and wealthy enough to own a car, and able to purchase certain kinds of accommodation' (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.112). Persons that hold high incomes are considered to be well educated, and with excess disposable income are more likely to spend

more at a tourist destination (Lang and O'Leary, 1997). Mehmetoglu, (2010, p.174) has stated that sustainable tourists were more likely to spend 'more money per person per day, stay longer, and engage in multiple activities at the destination when compared to their non-sustainable counterparts'. A visitor survey was carried out in 2005 among 451 respondents in Jorana Falls, Queensland, Australia. The survey reported that most of the respondents had attained a high level of education, over half (53.9%) had a third level degree and 20.2% had a trade certificate (Tisdell and Wilson, 2012, p.221). It is said that individuals with professional and managerial type jobs are twice as likely as persons with manual jobs to engage with nature-based tourism (Savage *et al.*, as cited in Urry and Larsen, 2011; Urry, 1995).

Travel characteristics used to define nature tourists include travelling companions, duration of stay, seasonality, sources of information and modes of transport used. These types of tourists are generally believed to have a strong interest in nature, and usually travel more frequently and longer distances, and stay longer at a destination (Lang and O'Leary, 1997). Psycho-social behaviour and motivation focuses on travel product choice, their preferences for different products, benefits perceived, and sources of dissatisfaction. Ioannides and Debbage (1998) claim that this type of tourist is post-Fordist and consists of independent travellers that are rarely satisfied with sun, sea and sand destinations. Shaw and Williams (2002) claim that post-Fordist tourists are well educated and critical in their destination choice by focusing environment and culture as the basis of their holiday.

It is important to note that there are differences between mentioned typologies of nature-based tourists for example what type of activities in which they engage. It is said that those who are likely to work in the public sector are more likely to get involved in 'natural pursuits' such as camping, climbing and hill walking, and those who are private-sector workers are more likely to interact with country pursuits such as sailing, golf, shooting and fishing (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.109). This suggests that not only is there multiple types of nature-based tourist but also that there is more than one way of interacting as a nature-based tourist, for example, those that experience the landscape through consumption or through non-consumption means. It also suggests that the more affluent a person is, the more 'consumptive' they are of the landscape. Within the remit of nature-based tourism, it

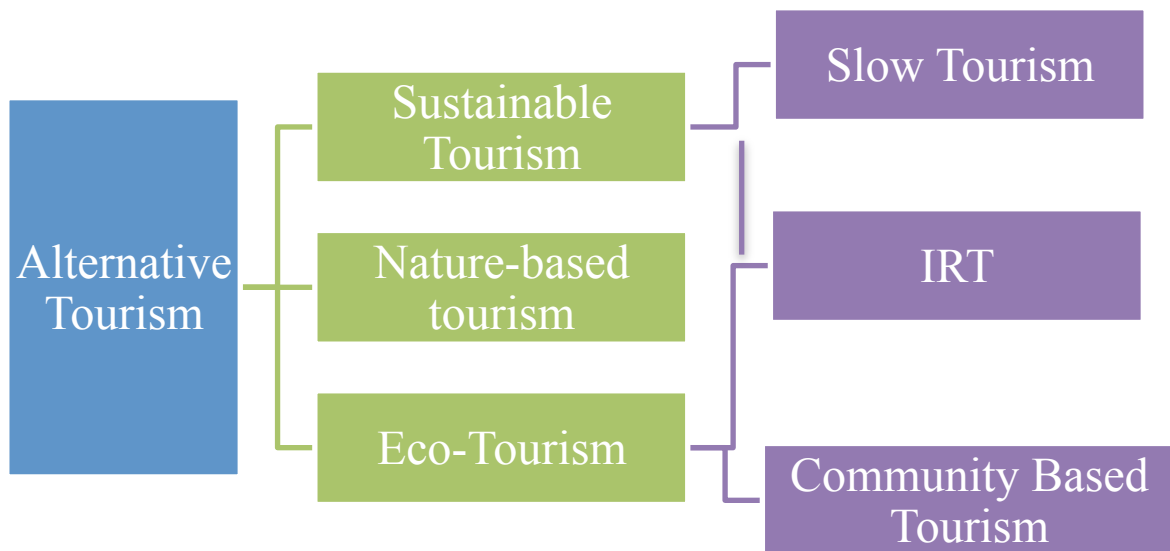
creates a dichotomy between typologies of tourists, one being consumptive and the other non-consumptive. An example of this is the disagreement between those who engage in hunting activities and tourists who enjoy the encounters with animals. Both tourists can be considered nature-based, yet there are ethical contradictions. On closer inspection, evident contrasts are present when discussing consumptive (non-ethical) and non-consumptive (ethical) tourists (Lovelock, 2008). The labelling of tourists as ethical is yet to be debated. It is often assumed due to the variables mentioned previously that nature-based tourists are a heterogeneous group. Yet many scholars would dispute this, and studies of the tourism sector still remain a complex and evolving part of the tourism industry (Arnegger *et al.*, 2010). In order to investigate if nature-based tourists are a heterogeneous group it is necessary to examine tourist behaviour and patterns. It may be necessary to monitor if there is repeat visitation, house income and travel distance and explore if these all contribute to tourist behaviour (Mehmetoglu, 2007). Sæþórsdóttir (2010, p.31) also claims that tourists can be analysed by the 'type of trip, characteristics such as nationality, age and sex, or their attitudes towards various factors'. Other contributing studies of nature-based tourism motivations, include Solnit (2001), Mc Farlane (2003), Meyer-Arendt (2004), Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) and Pesonen *et al.*, (2011).

2.12 Conclusions

As seen throughout this chapter there have been several attempts to define nature-based, eco, sustainable, and other forms of tourism that interact with the environment. Weaver (2001) claims that there has been theoretical and empirical approaches to define these types of tourism and these attempts have been on-going for over the last two decades. It is often easier to single out what characteristics are *not* parts of the definition, instead of trying to figure out to what we *can* include in a definition. It can be concluded that the alternative tourism market is somewhat opposite that of mass tourism. However, mass tourism is often defined by numbers and carrying capacity and since all environments can have different carrying capacities then nature based may indeed be mass in certain environments. We can also possibly agree that nature-based tourism is a subset of the alternative tourism market. In addition, by examining all definitions it is relatively clear that all three subsets of

tourism (sustainable, nature-based and ecotourism) are interlinked and related in some way as seen in figure 2.6. Problems and uncertainties arise however as we investigate further the subsets of nature-based tourism where definitions are numerous and often vary in context.

Figure 2.7: Subsets of Alternative tourism



As seen from figure 2.7 the matrix illustrates subsets of alternative tourism that encompass many types of tourism that can be considered the opposite of mass tourism.

When discussing subsets like IRT, community-based tourism and slow tourism it is unclear to what class of tourism they belong. For example it is uncertain if IRT falls under the subset of eco-tourism or sustainable tourism. In many cases it may not be necessary for us to ‘categorise’ subsets of the tourism industry and simply deem it acceptable to refer them under the broad scope of alternative tourism. (Weaver, 2001) and (Mehmetoglu, 2010) agree on this statement as they claim that all types of nature-based tourism can be located within the framework of, and be a subset of, alternative tourism. Mehmetoglu (2010, p.172) goes on to mention that nature-based tourism may also be a preamble to other terms such as ‘responsible tourism, green tourism, good tourism, adequate tourism, ecotourism, nature-

based tourism, and sustainable tourism'. Weaver (2001) adds to this list by noting that alternative tourism encompasses ecotourism, adventure tourism, conservation tourism, hiking experiences, forest tourism, farm tourism, ACE (adventure, eco- and cultural tourism) as well as particular forms of sea-sand-sun tourism. The interchangeability of terms such as these often creates confusion when discussing the alternative tourist industry. Fullagar *et al.*, (2012, p.174) adds to this list in claiming that there are other types of nature-based tourism, namely; 'ecotourism, green tourism, health tourism, long-stay tourism, industrial heritage tourism, and cultural tourism and in some cases food tourism has also been sub-linked'. As is evident from this chapter, there is still no overall agreement among tourism scholars as to what actually constitutes a nature-based tourist. It is often accepted that the tourism product can be both a composite commodity and a mixed good where certain elements of the tourism industry are private goods, public goods, and also open-access commodities (Tisdell, 2001). What is meant by this is that there are various actors and stakeholders to the tourism product and often we can consider the tourist product as a type of social property that we can all gain benefits from. We know from the title that nature-based tourism occurs in natural areas and with the natural landscape there needs to be some level of sustainability and responsible use. Healy (1994) lists some examples of where nature-based tourist activities may occur in 'forest land, wildlife areas, lakes, rivers, estuaries, pieces of shoreline, diving areas, fresh and salt-water ponds, and caves'. These locations quite often do not belong to or remain as property of, a sole local institution and this remains a key issue in open access values. The sensitivity of these areas is an important factor to the development of tourism and, as Blanco (2010) points out, these natural areas are liable to 'characteristic problems of overuse and lack of incentives for investment'.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY LOCATION – SHEEP’S HEAD CO. CORK

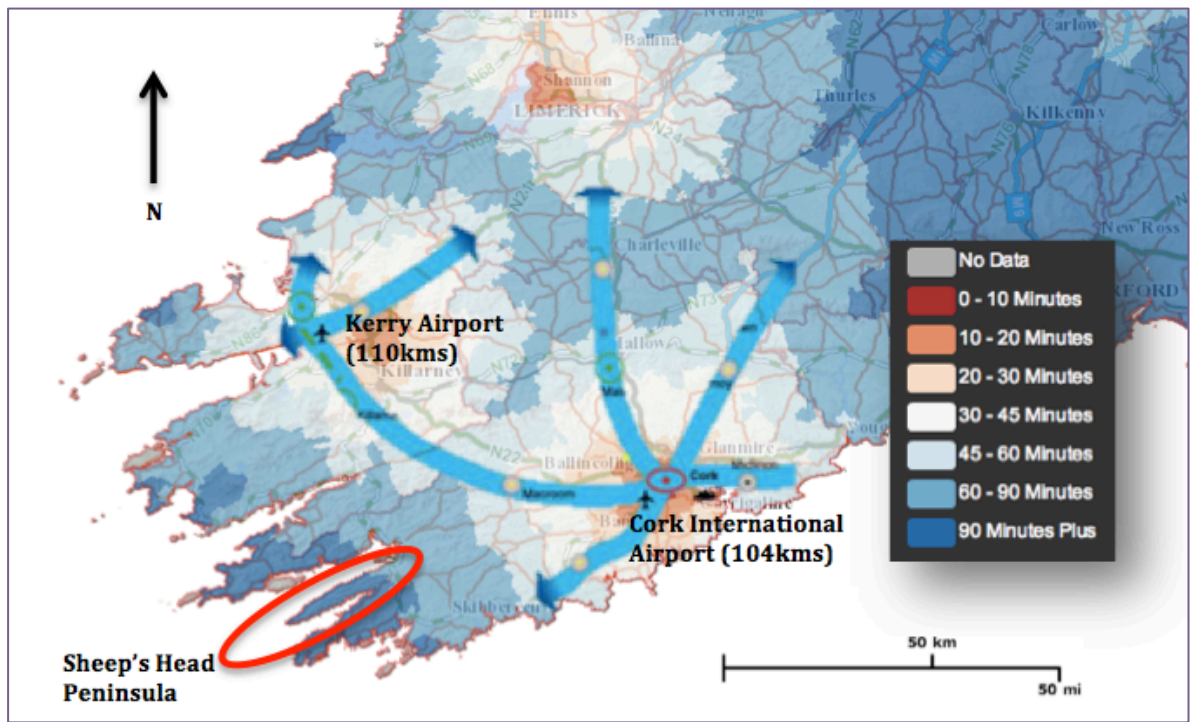
3.1 Introduction - Tourism in West Cork

The case study area for this study is The Sheep’s Head way located in West Cork, Ireland. West Cork (Map 3.1) according to the (West Cork Development Partnership, 2012) is an area that covers 2,170km² and has an indented coastline that runs from just beyond Kinsale to Ardgroom north of Castletownbere and spans over 550km. The economic base of West Cork is made up of small towns and villages that are inextricably linked to their rural hinterlands. The largest urban centres are within 40 kilometres of Cork City, and include Macroom, Bandon and Kinsale. Other medium sized urban centres such as Bantry, Castletownbere, Skibbereen and Clonakilty are dotted predominantly near the coastline, and they rely on fishing, tourism, and agriculture and artisan food production for economic survival. Most urban centres are 60 to 120 kilometres from a motorway or train line (Map 3.2).

Map 3.1: Case Study area of the Sheep’s Head Peninsula, West Cork



Map 3.2: Accessibility on the Sheep's Head Peninsula illustrating minutes travel time from access hubs such as airports or ferry ports.



(Source: Data derived from AIRO mapping (2013))

Economic disadvantage in West Cork stems largely from topography and access (O' Reilly and Cashman, 2008). The county of Cork¹¹ in population terms has grown faster than any other county in the province of Munster. The county experienced an increase of population from 2002 to 2006 of 11.4%, and from 2006 to 2011 a 10.48% population increase (Central Statistics Office, 2007b, Central Statistics Office, 2012b). The county has an average population density of 31.6 persons per km², which is nearly half of the national average of 60.56 persons per km² (GAMMA, as cited in O' Reilly and Cashman, 2008). West Cork comprises networks of small towns and villages that operate interdependently in networks. The area is not serviced by a large urban centre, the largest being Clonakilty (4,721) people.

¹¹ Figures do not include Cork City figures. Population 2002 (324,767 persons), 2006 (361,877 persons), and 2011 (399,802 persons).

The largest urban centres in West Cork are; Bantry (3,048), Skibbereen (2,760), Clonakilty (4,721) and Dunmanway (1,585)¹². Smaller villages in the area have populations such as: Ballydehob (271), Drimoleague (468) Schull (658), Leap (240), Union Hall (251), Rosscarbery (534), Baltimore (347), and Castletownshend (187). The case study area for this thesis contains the small villages of Kilcrohane (90) and Durrus (334). Although the area has many urban centres it can be considered predominantly rural due to its distance from services and infrastructure, and absence of a major urban core. Labelling of West Cork as rural may not fit the CSO definition, but considering the geographical and spatial qualities it may contribute to a better understanding to what constitutes ‘rural’.

West Cork has the potential to significantly develop nature-based tourism due to its rural location. Recreation and tourism have become integral component to the local economy and visitors have followed a trend towards the consumption of the countryside and coastline. The importance of tourism to the area is evident in estimated tourist figures. A WCDP report published in 2012 reported that, in 2009, the industry generated around 470,000 tourist visits which led to the generation of €134 million in revenue. What is interesting to note from these figures is that out of 328,000 of the visitors to West Cork, 153,000 are overseas visitors and 173,000 are Irish residents (West Cork Development Partnership, 2012). The South West of Ireland contains a significant number of rural holiday destinations and rural areas that are highly dependent on the industry. Developments of tourism in rural areas are often restricted by lack of infrastructure and services. The words ‘rural’ and ‘peripheral’ are often followed by negative and ‘backward’ connotations, and the rurality of a region can be viewed as an obstacle to development. However, West Cork’s ‘rurality’ can work in favour of development of nature-based tourism, as tourists are searching for an unspoiled destination, free from the urban fabric of city life and visual commonplaceness.

Data collected by Fáilte Ireland enables the examination of ‘who’ is coming to the South West Region to enjoy the rural landscape. Figure 3.1 illustrates the percentage share of tourists by age and nationality in 2010. From this figure, it is evident that over 15% of the total figure is aged 25-34 years, and over 40% of the total figure is over 45 years of age.

¹² All figures from the Census of Population, 2011

Differences in the age profile by region of origin are also evident in this graph; the region attracts an older generation of North American tourists; +25% over the age of 55. The region also attracts a younger cohort of tourists from Mainland Europe; 23% aged 25-34 years.

Figure 3.1: Overseas tourists to the South West by Age (%) and origin, 2010

Source: (Fáilte Ireland, 2011)

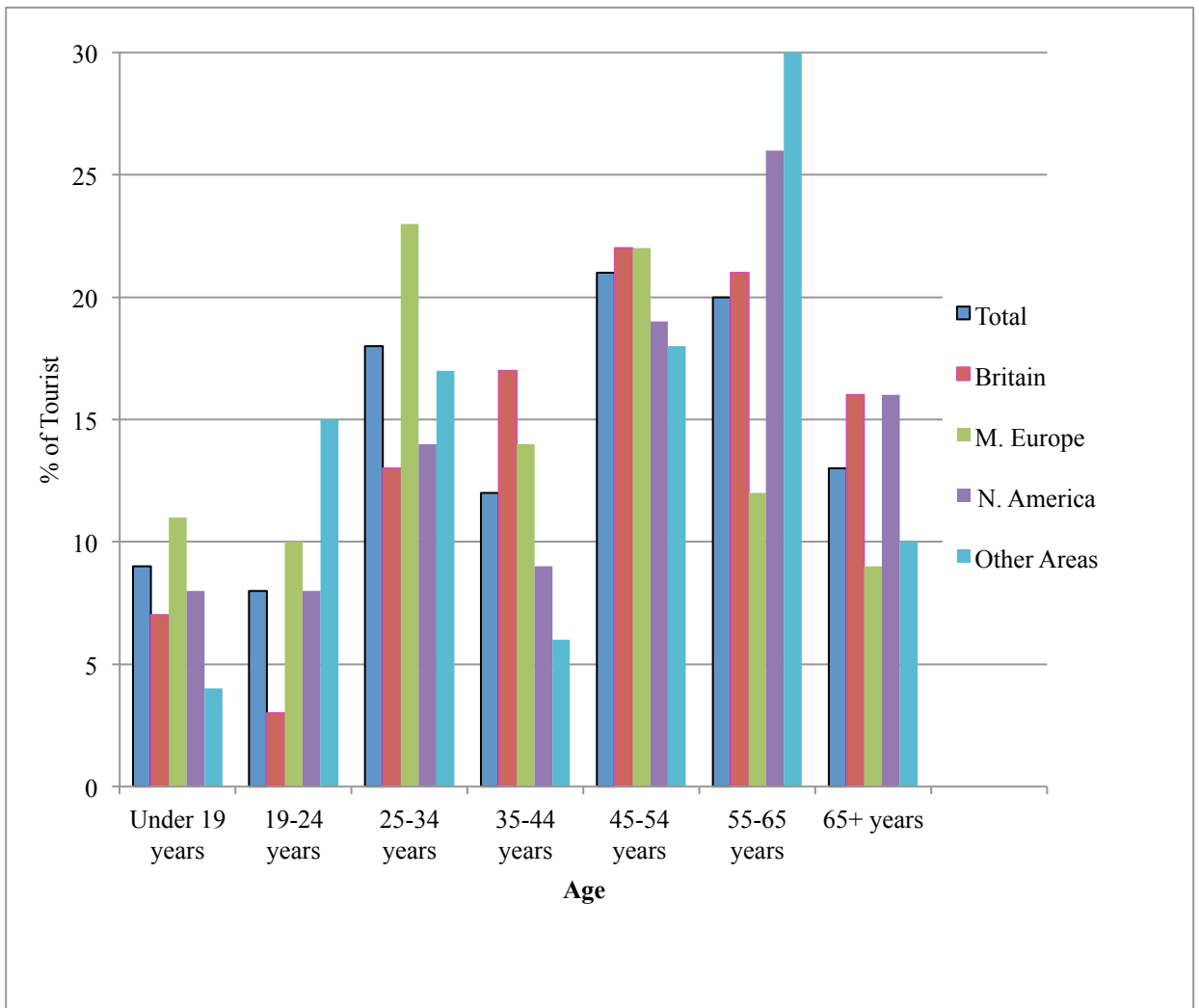


Figure 3.1 shows that North American tourists represent a much older group but also attract more young adults (19-24) years than its British counterparts. The British share of visitors is made up of over 75% of persons over the age of 35; the North American figure is just over the 70% mark. What is evident from figure 3.1 is that the majority of tourists in the

South West are the age of 45 to 65. From the literature, it can be suggested that this cohort of tourist is likely to have a greater level of expenditure during their stay here in the country.

Table 3.1 suggests that assuming a catchment scenario of a ‘medium number¹³’ of walkers, West Cork can potentially benefit economically by €13.9 million euro and generate over 350 jobs. A 23% increase in the number of walkers to the area could result in an increase of net expenditure by €3.8 million and an additional 100 jobs. As well as examining the types of tourists coming to the South West region, we can examine the types of tourism that are rapidly growing, particularly in the West Cork region. West Cork in particular has witnessed an increase of tourism based on ‘green’ sectors of the industry and this can be attributed to innovations in use of local land resources. These include; walking and cycling trails, outdoor attractions, gardens, national forests and parks, water based activities, bird watching, agri-tourism, historical sites and island trails. All of these types of activity are signature of the characteristic of incoming tourists who desire to interact with Ireland’s natural environment. Fundamentally, this type of nature-based or ethical tourism is a theme that has emerged in response to worldwide concerns about the impact of mass tourism. Assuredly tourism providers and tourists themselves have different motives when it comes to economically developing or consuming the tourism product, but both parties should at least be talking the same language with respects to the protection of the ecological integrity and socio-cultural values of the region. A significant majority of academic literature argues that there needs to be a tailored version of sustainable development in the form of sustainable territorial development¹⁴. New opportunities lay in the growth of nature-based tourism. In West Cork, the specialization in green tourism such as branding the area as a ‘walking destination’ may bridge any economic disparities. If the region was to increase for

¹³ 117,100 walkers

¹⁴ Valentine (1992) argues that a similar approach be considered when discussing codes of ethics for tourism, and a tailored approach is also necessary to fulfil the needs and expectations of different groups in the same setting. However, Weeden (2005) also suggests that tourism providers have expressed concern over too many codes of ethics in existence which may confuse tourists. This may be in the form of ‘brand soup’ where ethical practices such as ‘eco-friendly’ and ‘sustainable’ lose their ascribed meaning due to an excess of logos or awards on tourism products. In many circumstances, there has been evidence of ‘ethical wash’ where industry codes are not supported by the tourism providers themselves, which may be due to lack of regulation or poor enforcement guidelines.

example by 10% the numbers of active walkers to the numerous routes in the area it could generate over 35 extra jobs and €1.4m in revenue.

Table 3.1: Economic impact of walking tourism in West Cork

No. of Walkers	Low	Medium	High
Overnight walkers, of which	19000	27300	35600
<i>Domestic</i>	9900	14200	18500
<i>International</i>	9100	13100	17100
Tourist day walkers (over 3hrs), of which	90500	89800	89100
<i>Lived within the catchment area with sole intention of walking</i>	65500	67500	67500
<i>Holidaying for another reason – staying in West Cork accommodation</i>	13300	12600	11900
<i>Holidaying for another reason – staying in remainder of West Cork</i>	9800	9800	9800
Total economically active walkers	109500	117100	124700
Gross Expenditure			
Overnight - domestic	€1.9m	€2.8m	€3.6m
Overnight - international	€4.1m	€5.9m	€7.7m
Day tourist (over 3hrs)	€1.0m	€1.0m	€1.0m
Total expenditure (gross)	€7.0m	€9.7m	€12.3m
Net Expenditure			
Net expenditure (Economic Impact) ¹⁵	€10.1m	€13.9m	€17.7m
Employment			
Direct	1708	245	312
Indirect and induced	78	108	137
Total employment	256	353	449

Source: (West Cork Development Partnership, 2012, p.4)

¹⁵ This figure includes leakage.

3.2.1 Community led tourism development in West Cork

The facilitators of walking tourism in West Cork are the landowners and farmers that permit such trails through their land. Their active input into the development of new trails is quite extensive, as it is reported that these actors have established over 40 walkways under the Walkways Scheme and in turn have created 1,500km of scenic trails (ITIC, 2010b, Sweeney and Power, 2011). This provides additional income to farming communities, especially with the increase of those engaging in part-time farming.

Particularly in West Cork, there is a strong reliance on agriculture, forestry and fishing where the local economy is dependent on the natural environment. The West Cork Development Partnership states that over 74% of the land area in West Cork is used for agriculture (63% National figure) (West Cork Development Partnership, 2012; CSO, 2012). Similarly it is not surprising that fishing contributes to a significant share in employment with over 500 km of coastline. The WCDP also highlighted that West Cork (in particular Castletownbere, Union Hall and Skibbereen) have 14.6% of the workforce employed in fishing in comparison to Cork City (7.2%). With regional disparities like this, it is apparent that tourism is a strategic fit to counteract what West Cork lacks in the field of other sectors, namely in the industrial sector.

3.2.2 Policy intervention: enterprise supports

One initiative that was set up in 1991 to develop tourism products was the West Cork Leader Co-operative, and its remit encompasses an area as seen at Map 3.1. The West Cork LEADER Co-Op assisted with training and small-scale community projects, and they allocated funding for these projects.¹⁶ The local action group also spearheaded Ireland's first regional brand, Fuchsia Brands Ltd. The initiative that encompasses the fuchsia logo incorporates food producers, and tourism providers (McCutcheon, 2002). The Tourism Council with the support of the WCLC implemented the strategic branding of the fuchsia

¹⁶ The West Cork LEADER Co-operative spent almost €4.7 million during 2001–6 alone (West Cork LEADER Co-operative, 2007). Under axes 3 & 4 (LEADER Axes) of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, the West Cork LEADER Co-Operative (WCLC) was restructured as the West Cork Development Partnership and they received €14.6 million in funding (Department of the Environment Community and Local Government, 2007).

flower as a symbol of West Cork. The symbol as seen on road signage, tourism goods and local food produce was instrumental in reinforcing a quality ethos in the tourism sector and increased industry participation (O' Reilly, 2008). This Fuchsia Brand also incorporates The Sheep's Head Way which is a case study for this thesis. Since 1998, the brand has aimed to

'commercially exploit West Cork's natural image and strong identity, and to enhance networking, synergies and innovation among small businesses providing high quality goods or services'

(Dempsey and O'Reilly, as cited in Stead, 2011).

3.2.3 West Cork and ICT

A challenge to tourism development in West Cork has been identified by the Rural Development Programme 2007-2003 as *'low ICT uptake in rural areas'* (Europa, 2007). The use of ICT is crucial to the advancement of all tourism markets, and if rural areas lack this essential infrastructure it can be a major concern for future development. A Fáilte Ireland's Visitor Attitude Survey reported that over half of all visitors to Ireland regard the internet as the most important tool in getting information about holidaying in Ireland (Department of Arts Sport and Tourism Ireland, 2006). What is needed is a more influential engagement between tourism officials and actors in the industry to empower members of the rural community to utilize ICT and train them with the necessary skills. As part of Tourism Ireland's strategy 2008 – 2010, one of its elements is to increase skills competence and knowledge and how they can be used to transform the online tourism marketplace.

An example of the influence of ICT in the South West is the main eight websites that promote tourism in West Cork. These are: Discover Ireland, IrishTourism.com, Irish Tour Operators Association, Heritage Island, Lonely Planet, Heritage Ireland/Office of Public Works, Discovering Cork, and Fuchsia Brands. In investigating these sources of tourist information spatial variations emerged, with a strong focus in particular on 'honey pot' locations. A honey pot town (or village) attracts large numbers of tourists in comparison to adjacent towns and rural hinterlands. Some towns in the case study of West Cork have emerged as honey pot locations due to their more prominent exposure on the websites of the eight main promoters of tourism. These include: Baltimore, Skibbereen, Bantry,

Clonakilty, Glengarriff, Schull and Kinsale. This research was carried out by documenting the number of times each town or village was mentioned on each of these eight sites. Each one of these locations was mentioned between 6-16 times throughout the eight sources examined. The remaining 80% of locations in West Cork were mentioned fewer than 6 times. This shows that some locations have better promotion and exposure to the tourism market, and may benefit accordingly in their development. Thus, questions arise as to whether it is the presence of particular attractions or the marketing of a place that is driving tourist patterns.

3.3.1 Case study area: Sheep's Head Way

Sheep's Head Way also known as *Slí Mhuintir Bhaire* is situated on a narrow peninsula in the South West of Ireland in County Cork at map 3.3. The peninsula extends out towards the Atlantic Ocean between Bantry Bay and Dunmanus Bay. This peninsula is known as the Sheep's Head and is home to a walking route that spans from Bantry town to Durrus village as seen at figure 3.2. The route spans 88km and contains looped walks and encroaches into other neighbouring walks such as the Drimoleague walkway (Dillon, 2010). The peninsula is also home to the Sheep's Head Eastern Trail which is 52.5km in length and runs through the villages and towns of Bantry, Drimoleague and Gougane Barra (West Cork Development Partnership, 2012).

Figure 3.2: Photo of the Sheep's Head Peninsula with a view of Rossbrin Tower House



The Sheep's Head way is an example of a project where individual community members have, through their own initiative and with the added assistance of outside funding, developed a successful rural tourism business based on a nature-based walking product. As a case study for this thesis, this area spans approximately 86km² if you consider a cut-off point between the town of Bantry and Durrus village¹⁷. The route way traverses over 300 farms and was only made possible through the cooperation of *all* landowners, as nearly all of the utilised land is privately owned. This case study area can be considered a project that

¹⁷ The Sheep's Head is not an administrative unit; it has natural boundaries such as Dunmanus Bay and Bantry Bay.

reflects methods of best practice, and the methods used to achieve the success of the project could be utilised for other similar projects¹⁸.

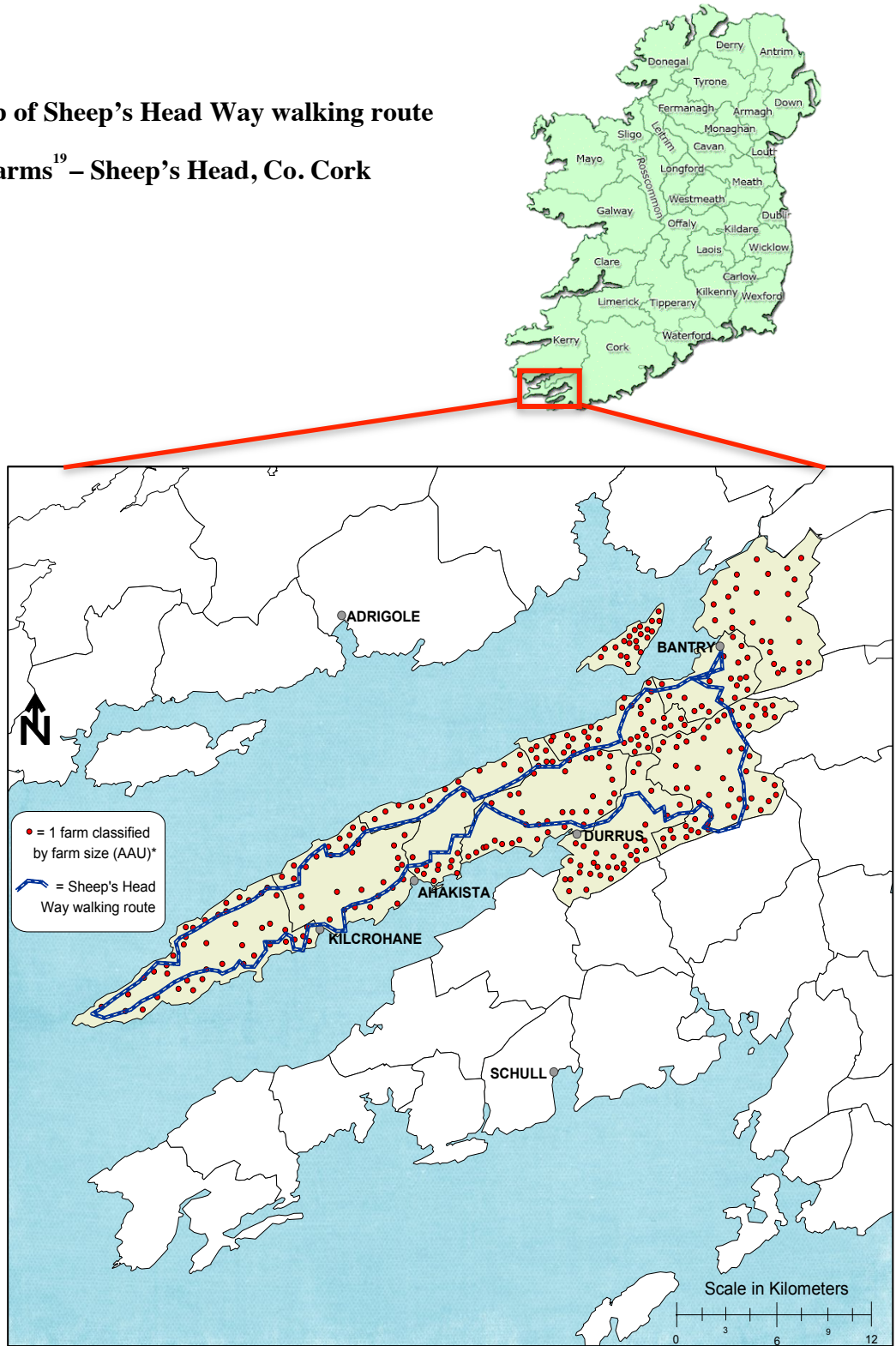
3.3.2 Defining the case study area

The Sheep's Head area will be defined in this thesis as consisting of the electoral divisions of: (045) Sheepshead, (044) Seefin, (038) Glanlough, (037) Durrus West, (036) Durrus East, (046) Bantry Rural/Whiddy Island, (043) Scart, (034) Bantry Urban, as seen on map 3.4.

According to the Census of Agriculture (2010) these eight EDs contain 330 farms in total (Central Statistics Office, 2010b). The Census of Agriculture (2000) reported a total of 348 farms. The loss of 18 farms may be from farm mergers on the peninsula (Central Statistics Office, 2000). Past trends have also reflected an increase of farm size, for example in West Cork in 2000 there were 4,540 farms. This is 1,111 fewer farms than in the 1991 Census of Agriculture; with their mean size having risen from 25.3 to 32.2 hectares which was the national figure (Stead, 2011).

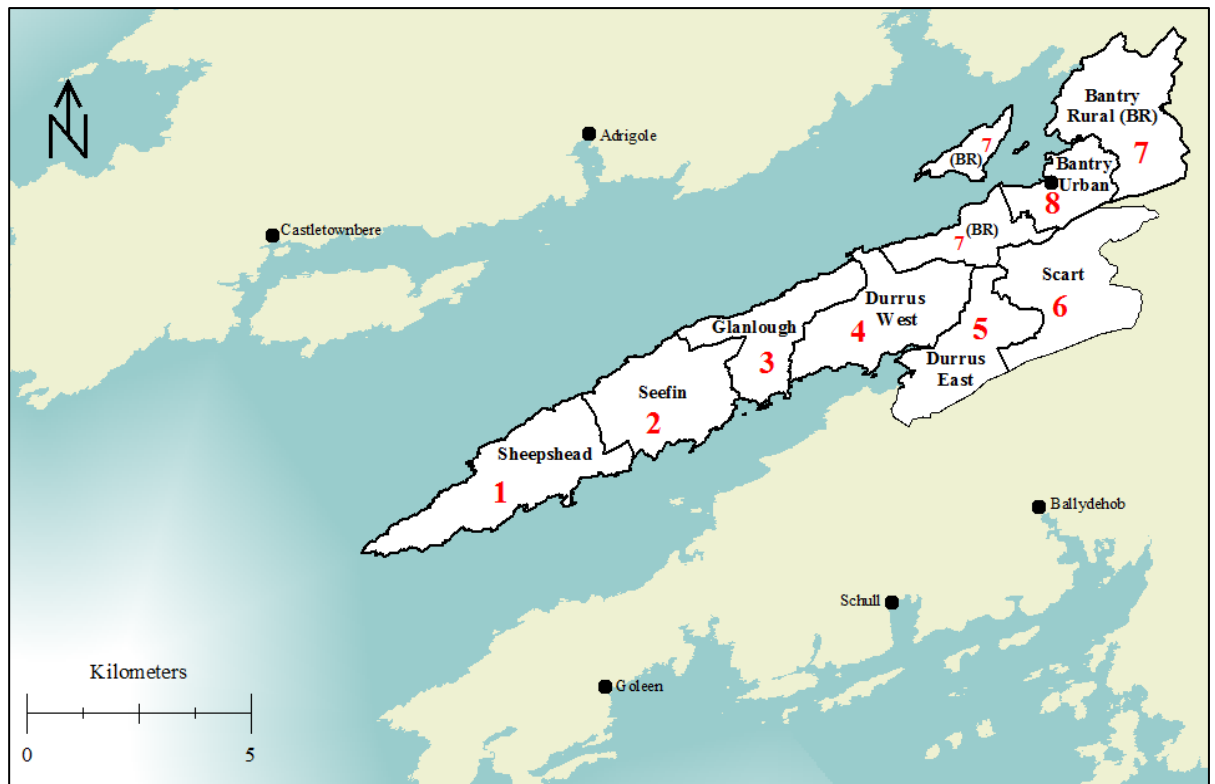
¹⁸ One specific example where there is a lack of cooperation from all landowners is a new €400,000 walk way along the Cliffs of Moher. This project is subject to an on-going dispute amongst two farmers regarding a 600m long stretch of land (Maguire, 2013). This is only a small section in the 12.7km route and it currently has support from 39 private landowners in north Clare (*Ibid.*).

**Map 3.3: Map of Sheep's Head Way walking route
with added farms¹⁹ – Sheep's Head, Co. Cork**



¹⁹ Agricultural Area Utilised (AAU): The Agricultural Area Utilised is the combined area under crops, silage, hay, pasture and rough grazing land in use (including fallow land). Areas under roads, tracks, water, bog, marsh, rocks, unused rough grazing land, buildings etc. are excluded.

Map 3.4: ED map of case study location, Sheep's Head Peninsula

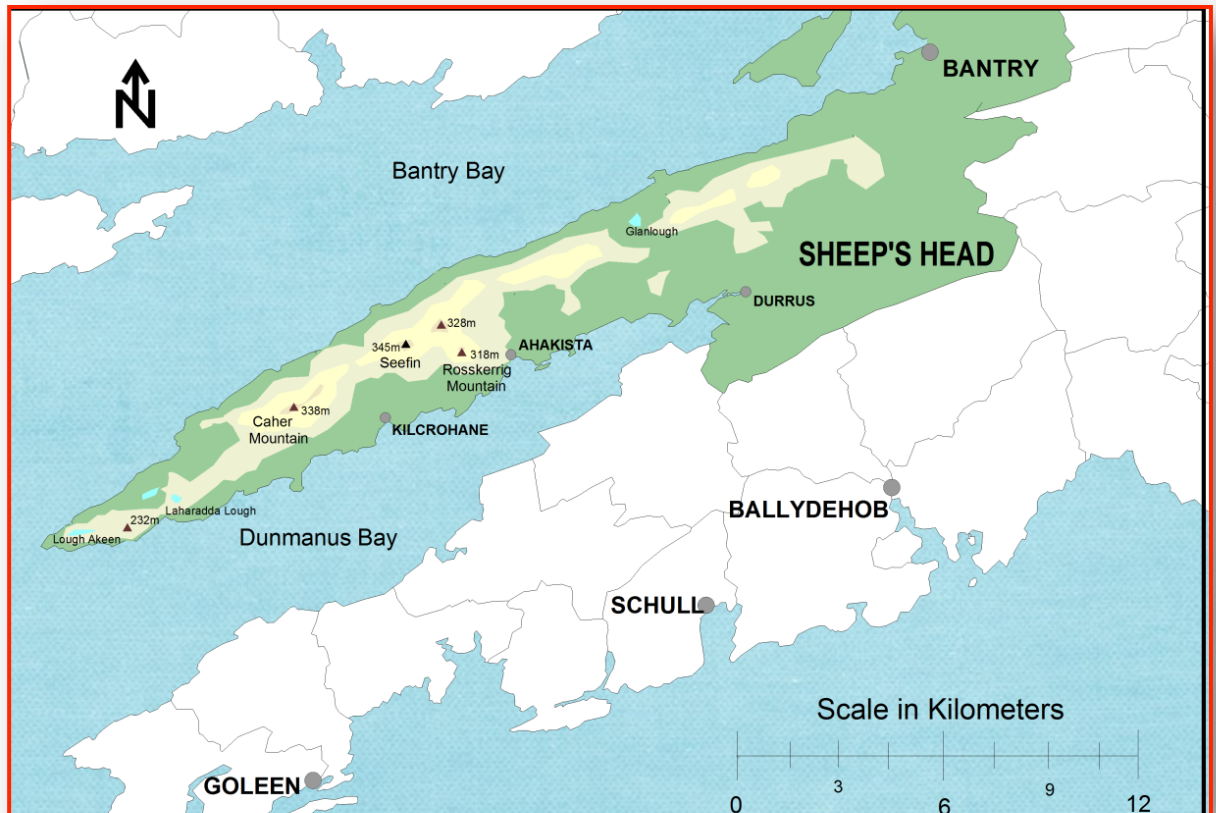


3.3.3 Geographical features of the case study area

From the village of Durrus to the tip of the peninsula is 25 km and from the town of Bantry to the tip it is 32 km. The whole peninsula measures 19km long and 5km wide (Mack, 2012). The narrow nature of the peninsula ensures a sea view from any point of the walkway and is an attractive asset for the area. The Seefin ridge is the highest point of the peninsula which reaches 345m above sea level (Byrne, 2013) as seen on map 3.5. The Sheep's Head Way has varied terrain with historical boreens, open grass and heathery moorland, paths through fields and woodland, and country roads. The actual soil composition is peat over old red sandstone and Upper Carboniferous limestone rock and heath land. The aggregate ascent over the whole walkway is 2460m (Irish Trails, 2010). Other physical features that attract tourists include the remains of a copper mine, stone circles and standing stones, sheer cliff faces and a blowhole, as well as an old Napoleonic signal tower (*Ibid.*). The walkway is serviced by the small rural villages of Durrus,

Kilcrohane and Ahakista and these villages benefit economically as they are stopover locations for the walker.

Map 3.5: Area Map of case study location – Sheep’s Head, Co. Cork



The area indicated on map 3.6, which the walkway traverses, was designated a special area of conservation (SAC) in 2006 due to the presence of rare birds such as the chough and peregrine (European Commission, 2013). Landowners are required to treat the landscape with sensitivity due to its protected status. Special Areas of Conservation originate from the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)²⁰. SACs can be considered an attractive commodity to attract a tourist, but also as remarked by Feehan (1995, p.24), the danger is that the SACs

²⁰ The Habitats directive whose purpose is “to contribute towards ensuring bio-diversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory” (Article 2) (Hill *et al.*, 2005).

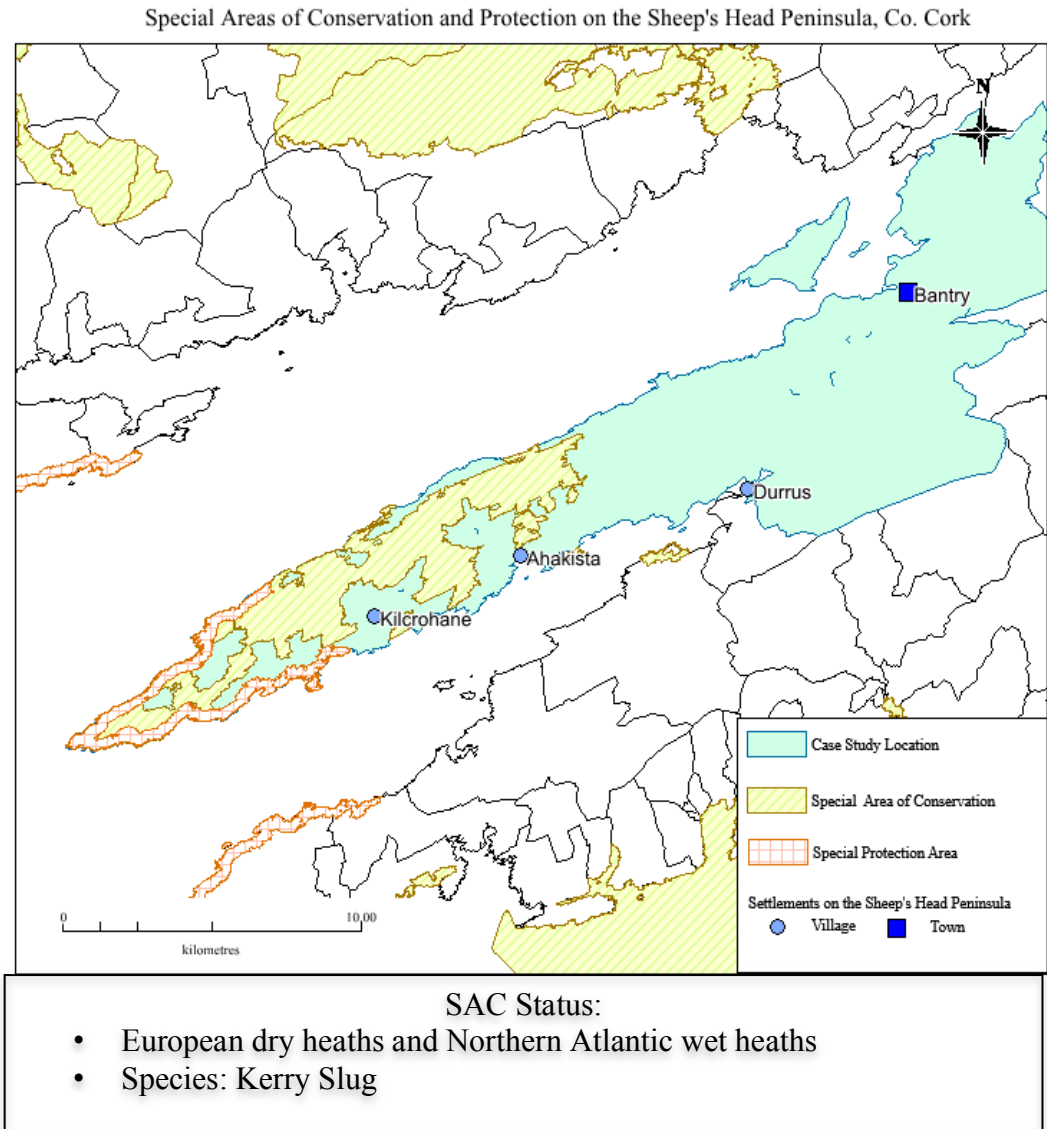
'are not seen as part of the community's wealth, but as something that is imposed on the community'. It is quite often the case that an SAC status can be somewhat restrictive to the landowner and farming in these areas can be considered a complex process. This, however, has not hampered the efforts of the local community in developing the area into a popular walkway. Map 3.7 highlights the soil characteristics of the walkway with the dominant soil being surface and ground water gleys and basin peats, both of which have poor drainage features and are quite boggy and wet. This type of soil is unsuitable for large scale crop production or deciduous forestry. Map 3.8 investigates the Corrine land cover of the peninsula, and it indicates that the dominant land cover is moors and heath lands which compose the majority of commonage land in the area²¹.

In Ireland, most commonages are situated in peripheral coastal and upland areas and their exceptional recreation appeal has increased demand for a broad range of open-air activities including hill-walking, mountain biking (upland areas), and horse riding (Phillips and Tubridy, 1994; Nugent, 1996; Dunne and O'Connell, 2000) as cited in Hynes *et al.*, 2007). This type of land cover is unsuitable for grazing or crop production but is a perfect fit for hill walking as it is a low maintenance type of landscape.

What is also noteworthy is that a significant proportion of farmers on the peninsula are participating in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) scheme. From analysing CSO data it was evident that the majority of the Sheep's Head peninsula has between 50-100% of farms in receipt of REPS payment as seen in map 3.9. This is a noteworthy high level of participation; the benefits include a greater understanding of the conservation of the landscape and farming in an environmentally sustainable way. However, there are limited studies to measure the environmental impact of REPS. One of the best measures of the environmental effectiveness of a scheme would be a comparison of the change in environmental state before and after policy implementation. This could be achieved through the monitoring of participating and non-participating farms (Bro *et al.*, 2004; Finn 2003; Finn *et al.*, 2008). Some environmental benefits, however, are apparent in the results chapter of this thesis.

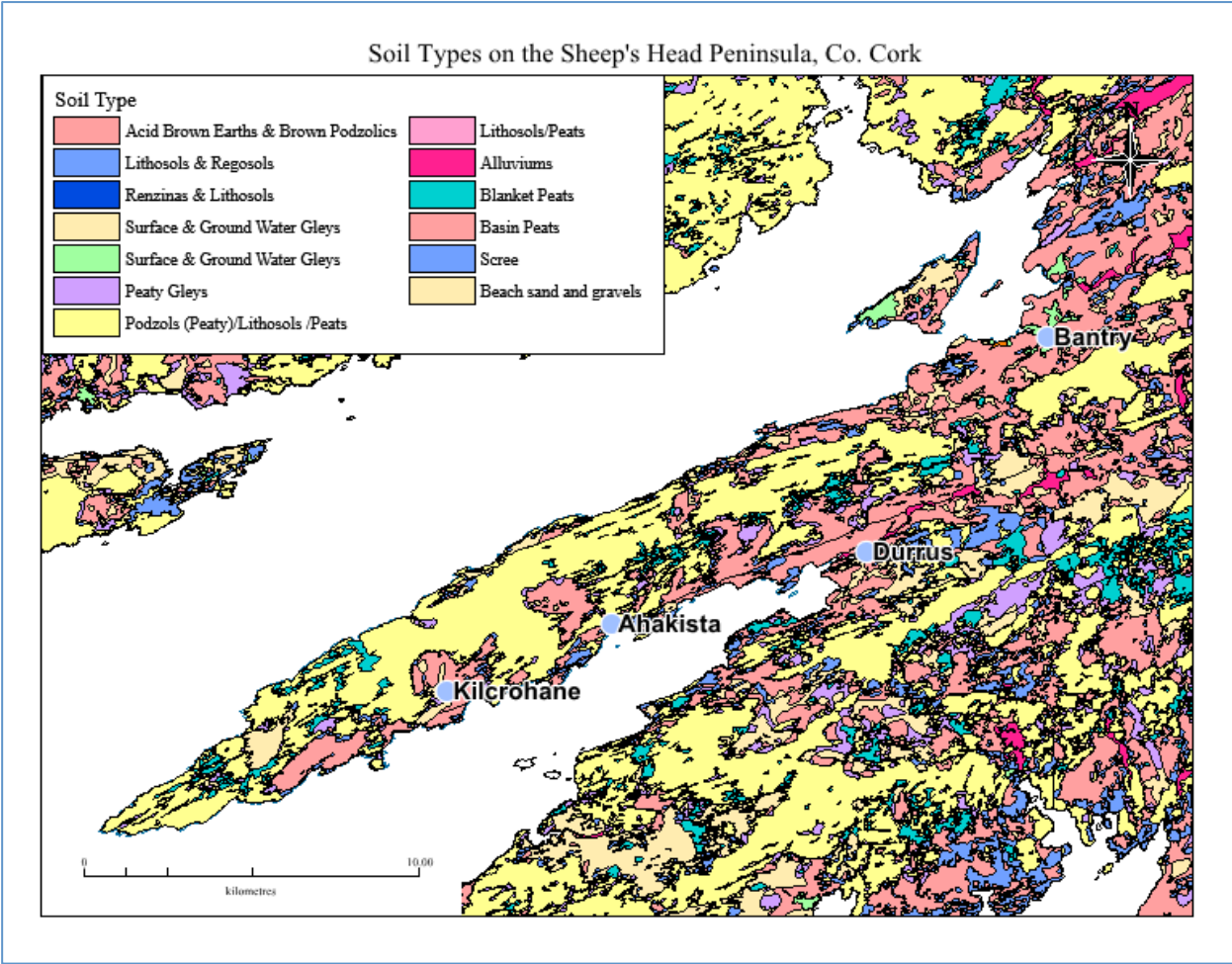
²¹ Commonage thus refers to unenclosed land on which two or more farmers have pasture rights held in common (Lyll, 2000).

Map 3.6: Special Areas of Conservation and Protection, SHW



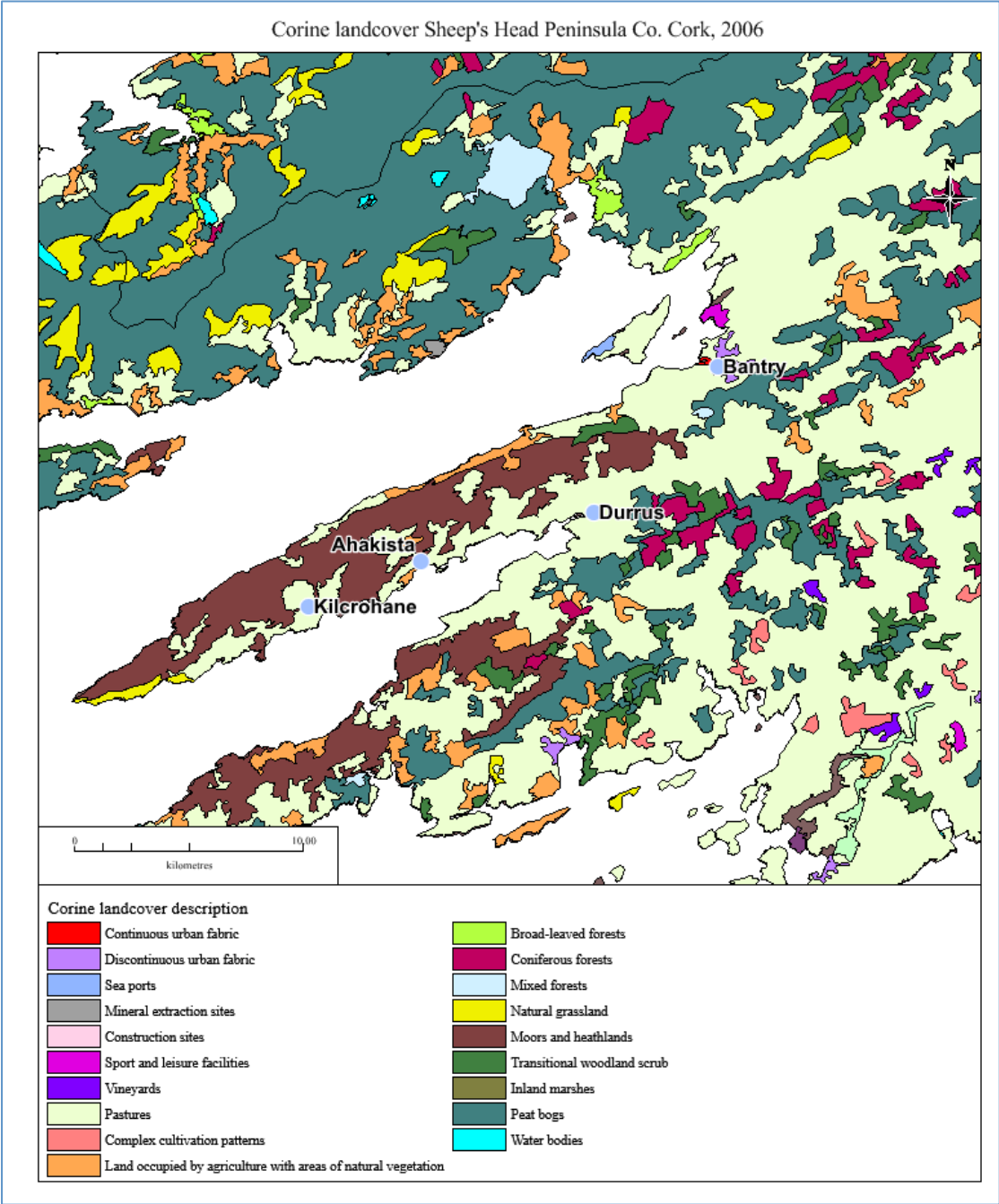
(Source: Mapping data downloaded from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), 2014).

Map 3.7: Soil Types on the Sheep's Head Way



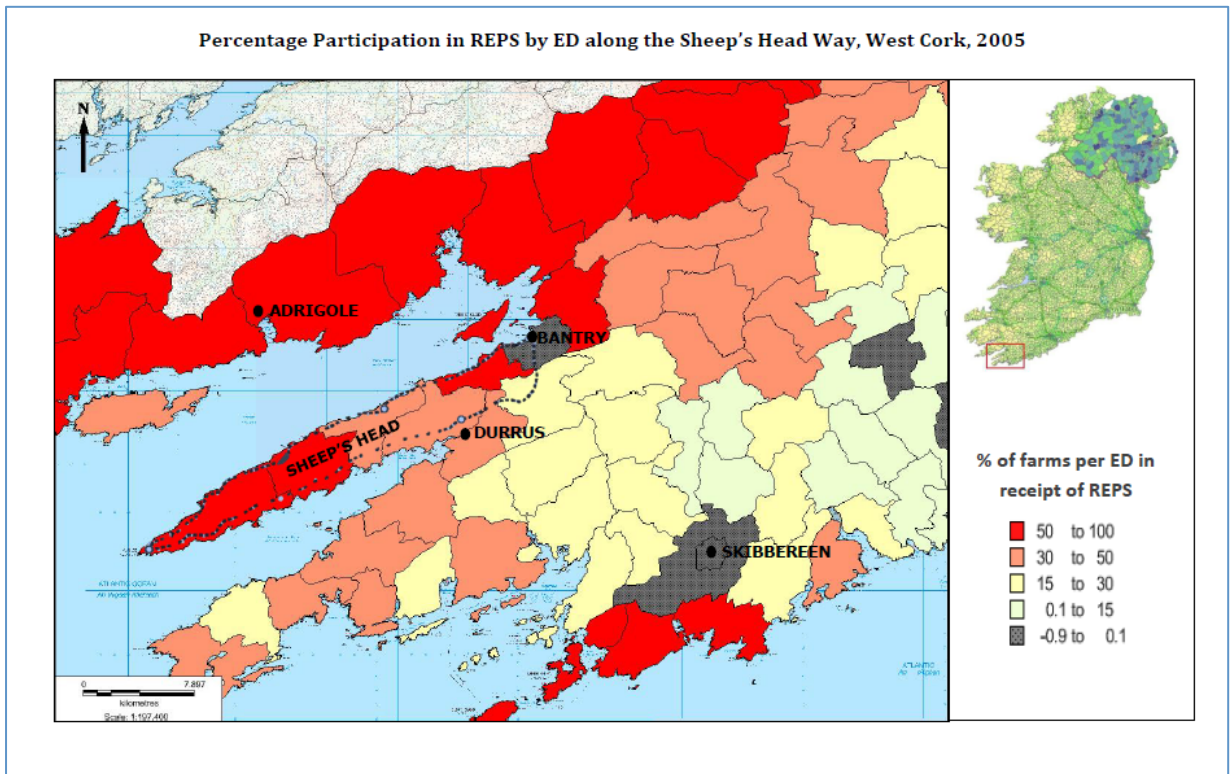
(Source: Mapping data downloaded from the Teagasc & The National Soil Survey (NSS), 2014).

Map 3.8: Corine land cover of the Sheep's Head Peninsula, 2006.



(Source: Mapping data downloaded from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)).

Map 3.9: Percentage participation in REPS by ED along the Sheep's Head Way, 2005



(Source: Data obtained from the Census of Agriculture, 2010).

3.3.4 Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile

The occupational breakdown of the peninsula is evident from CSO data (figure 3.3) and shows that 24.7% of inhabitants of the Sheep's Head peninsula are employed in professional services (23.5% national figure). The peninsula has a low uptake of employment in Public administration 4.4% (6.3% national figure). It has a low representation of employment in Transport and Communications 4.1% (8.1% national figure) and also in Manufacturing Industries 10% (11.6% national figure). The peninsula has a high reliance on Building and Construction as 9.4% of the population are employed in this sector (4.8% national figure). The same can be said for employment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing where 9.3% of the population are employed (5.1% national figure). It is evident from these figures that the area has a high reliance on primary and secondary activities which can be vulnerable in the current economy as the rest of the country is

trending towards tertiary economic activities or the services sector. Hence, a shift towards the development of tourism could stabilise the local economy and provide employment where there is a lack of service-based jobs.

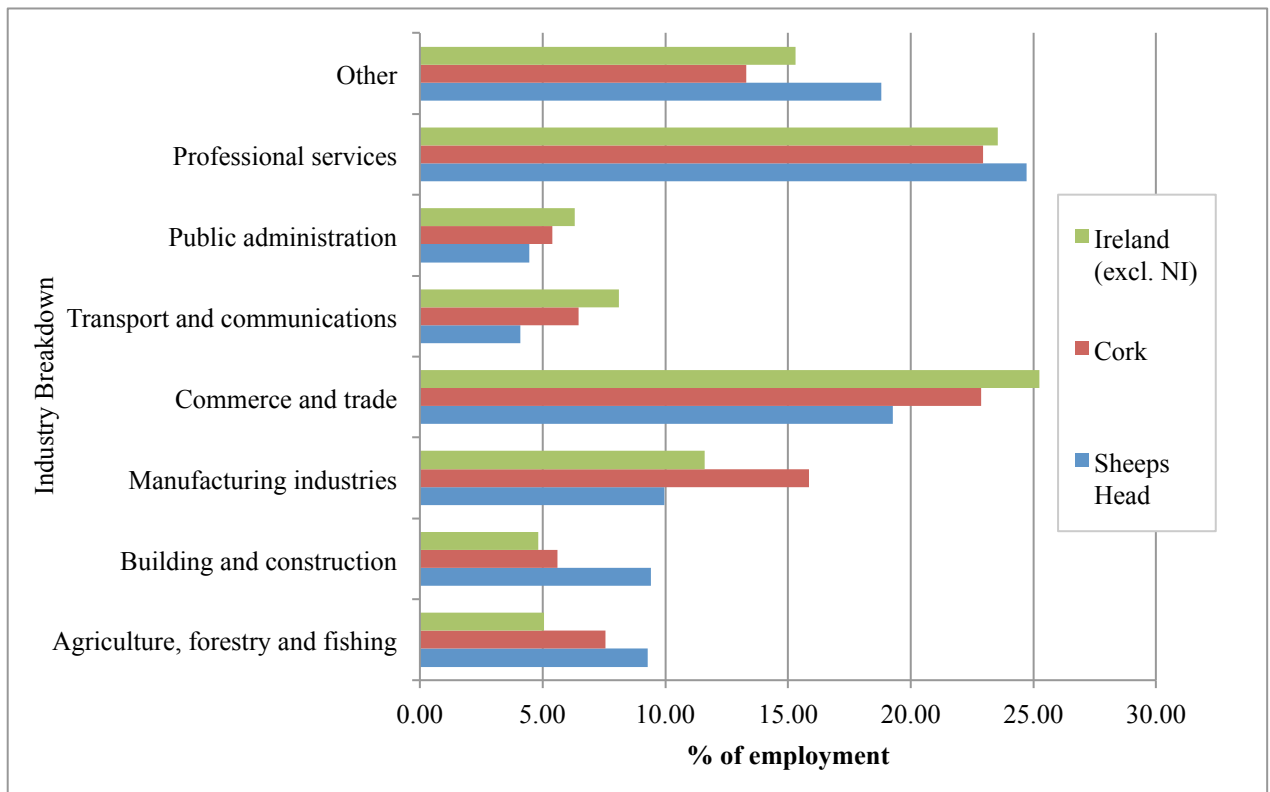
Similarly, the data collected as part of the data collection process reflect similar findings to CSO data since a near census of the peninsula was undertaken. A few important observations were made regarding the profile of respondents. A more in-depth analysis providing graphs and accompanying text is available in the results chapter. In summary, the break down in gender resulted in (N=132) males 62.3% and (N=80) females 37.7%. The ageing population of farm owners and landowners on the Sheep's Head Peninsula is evident with over 69% of the persons that completed the questionnaire as part of this study on the Sheep's Head peninsula aged over the age of 55 (35% 65 and over, 34% 55-64 years of age). In addition, 30.4% of respondents were aged 45 to 54 years of age. In comparison, only 51% of the national farming population are over the age of 55 (26% 65 and over, 25% 55-64 years of age). This illustrates an older population on the peninsula in comparison with the national average, which may in the future lead to a shortage of active farmers in the area. The evident ageing population of farmers in the area reflects the state of rural farming in Ireland today. Another interesting piece of information about the area is the diverse nationalities that are resident. The Sheep's Head peninsula, according to the Census of Population (2011), has -4.1% less Irish nationals, +210% more UK residents, +13.7% more EU (non-Irish & non-UK) residents, and -73.6% less rest of world residents in comparison with the all-Ireland figure. The most striking result here is the high concentration of UK residents on the peninsula which is also reflected in the past three censuses 2011 (7.69%), 2006 (11.04%), & 2002 (8.46%).

The area also has residents who are living in the area long term, with 81.6% of the respondents living 'at least 50% of my life' on the peninsula. Similarly, when the length of time the respondent has been farming in the area is examined, over 66% stated they have been farming more than 20 years in the area, and 20% farming in the area 10 to 20 years. It is evident from these figures that more than 86% of respondents are long-term farmers in the area. This high percentage of long-term farmers brings benefits of farming expertise and knowledge to the area and contributes to a sense of community. The respondents were also

asked about what type of farm they have. The results show that the most popular primary type of farming is ‘specialist sheep’ with 32% identifying this type. The second most popular type of farming is ‘suckler herd’ at 28%, followed by ‘mixed grazing livestock’ at 22%. Farming in the area ranked highly important as an occupation to the respondents. Over 60% of respondents stated that it was their ‘sole occupation’ (54% national figure). More than 33% of respondents stated that it was their ‘major occupation’ (34% national figure) and 7% stated that it was their ‘subsidiary occupation’ (15% national figure). When asked ‘if farming is not your sole occupation do you have an off farm job?’, 12.7% of respondents said ‘Yes’, 73.1% of respondents said ‘No’ and 14.2% of respondents opted not to respond to the question. Figure 3.3 breaks down occupation by industry and compares figures from Ireland, Cork and the Sheep’s Head peninsula. It is evident from this graph that the most dominant occupations on the Sheep’s Head include ‘other’ 18.2% (State 15.1%), Professional services 24.7% (State 23.5%), Building and construction 9.4%(State 4.8%) and Agriculture, forestry and fishing 9.3% (State 5.1%).

Figure 3.3: Breakdown of occupation by industry, a National, County and Case Study comparison, 2011

Source: (Central Statistics Office, 2012b)



3.3.5 Emergence and Evolution of the Walkway

The history of the walkway originated over twenty years ago when local landowners and farmers came up with the idea of the walkway. The founding member of the Sheep's Head Way was Philadelphia born Tom Whitty who had settled in the area in the 1980s (The Sheep's Head Way, 2014). It was said that he was inspired by Jim Leonard who was the first person to recognize the potential of the peninsula as a walking destination (*Ibid.*). Jim Leonard was an avid mountaineer, and by joining a local walking group, the idea of the Sheep's Head Way materialised. In order to develop the walking routes, four local farmers and landowners walked the land every Sunday in the early 1990s, this way they could map out the most appropriate paths for the walker (Mack, 2012).

Tom Whitty and local farmer James O'Mahony were involved in these early stages of the project and guided a committee to support the walking route. Within 18 months the walk had been researched and developed for public use (The Sheep's Head Way, 2014). By July 1996, the then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, officially opened the walk and it was subsequently recognized with an 'All Ireland Award' as a result of the development techniques and quality standards. The way marked route also won the 2009 Irish winner of the European Destination of Excellence award (EDEN)²² (The Irish Times, 2009). The chairperson of Sheep's Head Way Ltd., Mr. Gerard Burke described winning the EDEN prize as '*...truly a community achievement.*' (Keogh, 2009). The then Minister of State, Martin Manseragh, presented the committee with the award and praised the work of the committee stating that the work on the project was of a sensitive nature as

'the peninsula contains designated special areas of conservation under the habitats directive and special protection areas under the bird's directive and nationally-protected natural heritage areas' (Barry, 2009, p.2).

²² The EDEN award is the acronym for European Destinations of Excellence, a project that supports sustainable tourism development models across the EU. The project is based on national competitions for each participating country and takes place annually, which awards a selection of "tourist destinations of excellence" (European Commission, 2013). Since the start of the competition in 2006 there has been five Irish EDEN award recipients; (2007) Clonakilty District, Co. Cork, (2008) Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula, Co. Louth, (2009) Sheep's Head Peninsula, Co. Cork, (2010) Loop Head Peninsula, Kilkee, Co. Clare, and (2011) The Great Western Greenway, Co. Mayo (*Ibid.*).

At the prize-giving ceremony of the award all contributors to the project were mentioned from Jim Leonard and the late Tom Whitty, to the people of Muintir Bháire, and the landowners who allowed permission for their property to be used for the route. Other awards included the 'The Best Walk in Ireland' by Country Walking Magazine (Keogh, 2009). Sadly, Tom Whitty passed away in July 1998, not long after the official opening of the route, and his commitment to the project and his presence as a community leader earned him a memorial at 'Atha Thomais' at Gorteanish, Ahakista (The Sheep's Head Way, 2014). The first directorship of the project was established in 2001 with 'Sheep's Head Way Limited' which is a non-secretarial directorship (Duedil, 2013). The Sheep's Head Way is made up of a committee of voluntary members which include farmers, landowners and other members of the local community (The Sheep's Head Way, 2014). The walkway was established through the co-operation of the majority of landowners on the route. This was achieved by consulting all landowners and farmers who were required to sign up to the project and give permission for persons to traverse their lands. The aim of the walkway is to attract small numbers of visitors to the area who are nature-focused and those who are unlikely to spoil the natural landscape. All members of the committee agreed that by only targeting small groups they could avoid the disadvantages and negative effects of coach tourism. In 2013, a new tourism co-operative was formed that incorporated the Sheep's Head Way as well as many businesses along the route and the adjoining town of Bantry. The chair of the co-operative founding committee is John Tobin, who hopes that one single voice can promote the region in effectively than individual actors. He also hopes that *'as well as helping tourists, we'll be promoting strong and productive links between local businesses'* (Wordhoard, 2013, p.1). Membership of this group can be attained through an initial fee of €100 which gives inclusion in the co-ops tourism brochure and website. This website will act as an 'umbrella' site and will be linked to other sites run by national initiatives such as the new Wild Atlantic Way (*Ibid.*). As well as local support their project was only possible from other national and regional bodies. Persons and bodies such as Minister Ó Cuív, Senator Denis O'Donovan, Cork County Council, FÁS, West Cork Leader, the West Cork Development Partnership, the Irish Farmer's Association (IFA), the

National Trails Office, the RSS (feeds from Enterprise Ireland) and Fáilte Ireland (Keogh, 2009).

3.4 Conclusions

In summary, the peninsula has an ageing population with a diverse nationality base. Farmers in the area are either long term farmers or are significantly reliant on farming as an occupation. The residents of the peninsula are restricted to a limited occupation base as there is only one large urban centre in proximity of the peninsula, Bantry which has a population of 3,348 people (Census of population, 2011). The following chapter will outline the methodology and research methods used to investigate the research objectives.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

On examining the relevant literature sources, and discovering potential ‘gaps’ in tourism research, it was inevitable that this thesis would investigate the supply side of the tourism product. Examining the wealth of literature present on tourism and agri-environmental studies facilitated identification of a broad range of themes or objectives that are investigated throughout this thesis. These themes also contributed towards the various questions asked during the two stages of data collection. A pragmatic approach to research or mixed methods was applied in order to gather complementary data. The methods of this research started off with an analysis of maps and online data sources. Face-to-face interviews were then carried out where the findings were used to construct a questionnaire. This questionnaire was then distributed in the case study area to measure demographics, farming circumstances, economic circumstances, participation in farming schemes, experiences and motivations that relate to the Sheep’s Head Walkway, and overall to attempt to assess environmental attitudes. Inevitably there are limitations to all methods of research; however, achieving triangulation was the primary benefit of this mixed method approach. To achieve this type of triangulation multiple perspectives on the walkway were used when interpreting the results. Table 4.1 sets out the phases of data collection undertaken as part of this research and also how these phases link in with examining the research objectives.

4.2 Case study approach

According to Crowe *et al.*, (2011), using a case study approach allows in-depth and varied explorations of specific issues in their local setting. This type of approach allows for interpreting what the local setting and its context mean from the ‘local’ point of view, thereby allowing the researcher to develop an ‘interpretive understanding’ of the subjective understanding (Lee and Hubona, 2009). Gaps in tourism research in Ireland provided the reasoning for undertaking a case study analysis. This thesis seeks to investigate the suppliers of the tourism product and to create a set of data-rich results. Thus, it is logical to

confine the study within a specified location. Table 4.2 highlights the primary limitations and benefits when carrying out a case study analysis.

Table 4.1: Summary of Research Objectives and Research Methods Utilised

Research Objective	Research Method
[1] To investigate attitudes towards environmental awareness, sustainability, community links, farm diversification, conservation of the landscape, quantitative economic impacts and qualitative social impacts of the walkway.	<p>Phase 1</p> <p>A total of n=212 participants completed a questionnaire that was administered on a door to door basis. The overall number of refusals was n=9 so the response rate was 95.93%. A total of 26 questions (with 64 parts) were asked in the questionnaire.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven participants from the Sheep's Head Peninsula. All were asked the same 17 open ended questions (n=11)</p>
[2] To investigate spatial differences in environmental attitudes, motivations and behaviours, if any.	<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Data obtained from the completed questionnaires was mapped to establish spatial variations in results.</p>

Table 4.2: Benefits and limitations of a case study analysis

Benefits of a case study analysis	Limitations of a case study analysis
Spatially map the results	A lack of a second case study to add a comparability element to the study
Compare and contrast geographical spatial differences or similarities	Issues with comparability with national figures
Gain access to all participants due to the localized nature of the data collection	Maintaining objectivity throughout the research project
Compare results on a county or national basis.	

Within the relevant literature there is limited guidance for the conduct of case study research. These gaps may explain issues encountered by many researchers in the initial stages of data collection (Pan and Tan, 2011). When a single-case study is undertaken, the data collected should be standardised so that it can be compared with other studies. With this in mind, the majority of the questions asked in this study are based on previous studies and national data collection methods such as the Census of Population and the Census of Agriculture. As George and Bennett (2005) highlight, the single-case study research should not contain overly specific terms that are relevant only to a localised study but should preferably be applicable to many case studies within the same field of research.

This micro-scale case study approach attempts to challenge the shortage of academic studies that examine the supply of nature-based tourism activities and to examine innovation processes, community collaboration, environmental attitudes and the overall tangible and intangible benefits of this nature-based tourism development.

4.3.1 Approaches to the Study

Prior to considering the research objectives in this thesis, a narrative on the initial set up of the walkway was compiled through one-to-one standardised open-ended interviews. Furthermore, in order to investigate the research objectives, qualitative data was collected through informal and conversational interviews undertaken during questionnaire completion and also through quantitative data that featured from the questionnaire. The key to the progression of this research was to gain the trust of the community. Undertaking initial interviews with various facilitators of the walkway was a crucial stepping-stone for the planning and preparation of more in-depth data collection. The final approach of this study was to conduct a spatial analysis of the case study area based on the qualitative and quantitative findings. In order to protect anonymity of the respondents, the points on the maps that spatially represent the data were placed at random within the individual EDs.

4.3.2 Farmers perceptions of walking tourism

One approach to conducting research on the supply-side of tourism is to analyse the suppliers of walking tourism such as landowners and farmers. One such survey, the Irish

National Farm Survey (NFS), is collected as part of the Farm Accountancy Data Network of the European Union (FADN) in which 1,100 farms are included each year. Some elements of this survey were utilised for the questionnaire used for the data collection. Table 4.3 illustrates one question that was asked in this survey and shows ‘Farmers willingness to participate in hypothetical 5 year walking scheme’. Dependant on the farm system, the results varied ,with an average of 46.8% saying they would not participate, and an average of 21.0% suggesting they would participate free of charge. Conversely, an average of 27.7% said they would participate in exchange for payment. Farmers who stated that they would not participate cited worries over insurance and litigation (8% of respondents) and fears that the presence of walkers on their farm would cause problems with farm activity (73% of respondents) (Hynes *et al.*, 2008). The remaining respondents stated they would not participate for ‘other reasons’.

This type of methodology could be used in measuring and quantifying landowners’ opinions and perceptions of the Sheep’s Head walking route and similar questions could be asked in a further study of the area.

Table 4.3: Farmers willingness to participate in hypothetical 5 year walking scheme based on payment

Farm System	Would not participate (%)	Participate free of charge (%)	Participate for payment (%)
Dairy	55.49	17.64	26.87
Dairy Other	53.73	25.66	20.61
Cattle System	49.48	25.21	25.31
Cattle Other	50.5	23.24	26.27
Sheep	45.99	12.85	41.16
Tillage	52.7	21.33	25.96
Average	46.8	21.0	27.7

Source: (Hynes *et al.*, 2008)

Table 4.4 asks a similar question ‘*Farmers willingness to participate in hypothetical 5 year walking scheme based on land classification*’. This table suggests that landowners with land with high (51.8%) or limited (51.4%) agricultural usage value are the least likely to participate in such a scheme. Farmers with land of low agricultural usage are the most likely to participate with only 48.7% stating they would not participate, and 32.4% stating they would participate with payment. Farmers with land with high (26.8%) or limited (23.69%) agricultural usage value were the least likely to participate with or without payment for the scheme, presumably due to a greater farm income from more productive land.

Table 4.4: Farmers willingness to participate in hypothetical 5 year walking scheme based on land classification

Land classification	Would not participate (%)	Participate free of charge (%)	Participate for payment (%)
Land with high agricultural usage value	51.8	21.4	26.8
Land with limited agricultural usage value	51.36	24.96	23.69
Land with low agricultural usage value	48.75	18.86	32.39
Total	50.67	21.19	28.14

Source: (Hynes *et al.*, 2008)

4.3 Secondary data

4.3.1 Literature Review

In order to understand this field of research fully, an extensive literature review was conducted and encompassed all aspects of tourism. The research attempted to define nature-based tourism and its related subsets. As a wealth of literature is available on the topic of defining tourism, this proved quite difficult. The literature review also explored themes such as past trends in international and national tourism, the present state of tourism on a global scale and also on an Irish scale. Other specialised areas of investigation included environmental and economic attitudes of farmers and landowners, suppliers of nature-based tourism, community co-operation and collaboration and walking tourism. These themes created context and contributed to the questions asked within the data collection process.

4.4 Primary Data

4.4.1 Semi-structured interviews and other qualitative data

It is often stated that no research interview can be ‘unstructured’ as nearly all interviews need to contain some elements of structure in order to be effective. Mason (2002) lists the multiple characteristics of semi-structured interviews and how they can impact on research collection. These are:

1. An interactional exchange of dialogue
2. A relatively informal style
3. A thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach
4. Operates from the perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual

(Mason, 2002, p. 62)

As there is limited literature available regarding the establishment of the walking route, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with landowners lasting twelve minutes to one hour in duration. These interviewees were also asked to fill out a pilot questionnaire (see appendix). Spradley (1979) suggests that the ideal person to interview is someone with a history of the case study area, who is currently situated in the area, and who will also allow

sufficient time to interview them. With this considered, six landowners were selected in consultation with a local community representative (a member of *An Garda Síochána*), who knows the area and the people. The six participants were also chosen by purposeful sampling based on their geographical location rather than at random selection as a geographical spread of knowledge was most desirable for this study. All six participants were contacted by phone. The response rate was 100% in favour of participation in the organized interviews. The interviews took place on the 7th, 9th, 10th, and 11th of May 2013 in various locations on the Sheep's Head peninsula and environs. At the time of the interview, family members and neighbours participated in the interview process, so the total number of people collectively interviewed was actually eleven people.

In order to decide on the final list of semi-structured questions for the selected interviewees, it took four drafts and also numerous attempts at re-arranging the questions. The same seventeen open-ended questions were asked to all interviewees. All questions were standardized to facilitate comparability and to assist analysis.

The questions asked (as seen below) investigated the 'who, when, why and where' of the development of the walkway. The questions examined the interviewee's involvement in the walkway, reactions from family and local people, any observations, positive and negative, and offered room for the participant to discuss other aspects of the walkway. The questions asked during the interview process were as follows:

1. When & why did you get involved with the Sheep's Head Way?
2. In which year did that happen?
3. Who contacted you or did you contact specific people in regards to the walkway?
4. What was your first reaction when you heard about the Sheep's Head Way?
5. Did you talk to your neighbours about it?
6. Were your family involved in the project?
7. If you were (a bit) doubtful about the Sheep's Head Way in the beginning, what was it that changed your mind or brought you around? Was there a deal-maker or a clincher for you?
8. Did you use guidelines from a similar project or advice from an outsider to the area when developing the Sheep's Head Walkway?

9. Can you tell me about some of the positive experiences you have had in regards to this project?
10. Have you had any negative experience in regards to this project?
11. Have you experienced any first hand benefits from the creation of the walkway?
 - a. What, if anything, has the Sheep's Head Way done for people in this area?
12. What are your main issues or concerns for the future of the walkway?
13. In what way do you think the EDEN award has contributed to the local community?
14. If the whole project were to begin again, is there anything that should be done differently?
15. What needs to be done for the future of the SHW?
 - Who needs to do it? By when?
16. What do you think the future role of farmers should be with regard to the SHW?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of the project before we end?

All interviews were audio-recorded for which the participants signed consent forms, this allowed for an interview with a better flow as the interviewer or interviewee was not distracted with the taking of notes or stopping and starting the conversation. Wolcott (1995) suggests choosing to end a particular interview when the data required is attained from the session. Applying this principle, the length of interview varied and ranged in duration from 12.21 to 55.22 minutes.

The interview locations were dependent on the interviewees' availability and preference. In order to facilitate all interviews the meeting place was decided by the interviewee. Locations for these recorded interviews included the homes of farmers, their place of business and also on one occasion in an operating garage that due to surrounding noise, proved difficult to transcribe afterwards. As stated, only six people were contacted individually in organizing the interviews; however, it was common for family members such as wives, partners, children, neighbours and co-workers to sit in and willingly participate in the interview process. The final number of participants was eleven. This added depth and additional information to the conversation and possibly a better flow of

ideas and thoughts. The addition of ‘other’ interviewees inadvertently altered the planned methodology to a ‘joint interview’ rather than a one-to-one interview.

A ‘joint interview’ is classed as one interviewer questioning two or more respondents. This method may allow for some added benefits and drawbacks to the data collection process. Potential benefits include the collection of more comprehensive qualitative data, obtaining an agreed understanding of the event, or it may also add encouragement or flow to the conversation to someone who might otherwise be silent (Arksey, 1996). In the case of interviews with multiple family members present, they were asked the same questions so their answers were possibly a merged account when reconciling their own personal versions. However, as suggested by Seymour *et al.*, (1995) how do we measure or warrant value in this type of hybrid narrative? Bjørnholt and Farstad (2014) discuss further the advantages and disadvantages to interviewing couples.

However, problems may arise if utilizing this ‘joint interview’ method as some participants may over shadow others and disagreements may arise when accounting for particular events. It is suggested that ‘joint interviews’ may be considered as ‘contributions’ in the lesser case as suggested by Drummond and Mason (1990). As this initial stage of research consisted of exploring the shared experience of the development of the walkway, a joint interview resulted in the best option for data collection. This method in exploring shared experiences is recommended by both Morris (2001) and Radcliffe *et al.*, (2013). The advantages and disadvantages of joint interviews are evident in the following chapters.

During the initial interviews, the questions were adjusted and refined during the process of gathering qualitative and quantitative data. These interviews were then transcribed and sorted thematically to create a narrative of the set-up of the walkway. The eleven participants were aged from 21 to 63, so this contributed a varied narrative from both younger and older generations. The six participants were from geographically dispersed locations on the peninsula; again this gave a varied response. The participants were located in four different EDs on the peninsula. All eleven interviewees were asked to complete pilot 1 of the questionnaire after the interview process, feedback from this pilot contributed to the amendment of the questionnaire (pilot 2).

Interpreting and understanding the interviews is a complex process. As part of this research it was important to acknowledge that any meaning pulled from the qualitative data for example is contestable. It was also essential to realise that significantly diverse qualitative data cannot be easily categorised, coded, aggregated or compared as cited in Alvesson (2010). However, for the interpreting of the interviews and qualitative data gathered a systematic and technical approach was used. All qualitative data was categorised to create a set of indicators or themes that in some way related to the research objectives as seen in table 4.5. However some elements of analysing this qualitative could not be dealt with in this neat and linear way, this includes open ended questions from the questionnaire. The quotes utilised in the results chapter complements the quantitative data presented.

Table 4.5: Categories of qualitative data and relevant codes

Description/theme	Code
When & Why do you get involved with the Sheep's Head Way?	1
Who contacted you or did you contact specific people in regards to the walkway?/changes to routes	2
First reaction when you heard about the Sheep's Head Way?	3
Did you talk to your neighbours about it?	4
Were your family involved in the project?	5
If you were (a bit) doubtful about the Sheep's Head Way in the beginning, what was it that changed your mind or brought you around? Was there a deal-maker or a clincher for you?	6
Did you use guidelines from a similar project or advice from an outsider to the area when developing the Sheep's Head Walkway?	7
Positive experiences you have had in regards to this project?	8
Negative experience in regards to this project?	9
First hand benefits from the creation of the walkway?	10
What has SHW done for people in this area?	11

EDEN award has contributed to the local community?	12
Anything that should be done differently?	13
Future of the SHW? / What are your main issues or concerns for the future of the walkway?	14
Why is it so successful?	15
Future role of farmers should be with regard to the SHW? REPS /Facilitating access	16
Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of the project before we end?	17

4.4.2 Piloting the questionnaire

From the experience of interviewing the local landowners and farmers as part of the initial stage of data collection, some key points emerged. It was essential not to assume that the participants would be familiar with all technical or scientific terms such as: sustainability, bio-diversity, or the EDEN²³ award (European Destination of Excellence) which the peninsula won in 2009. From pilot 1 it was also imperative to allow the respondents to record both acres and hectares as part of their answers. This allowed for a more accurate answer rather than respondents guessing the equivalent hectares or vice versa. These figures were then converted to hectares by the researcher following the questionnaire.

For pilot 2 of the questionnaire, up to four drafts were created before going out in the field. The questionnaire was then piloted to seven more participants, selected at random and marked on accompanying maps; this ensured that they would not be selected again as part of the general data collection process. From pilot study 2, the questionnaire was amended in length and some questions were revised or reworded. Prior to the print of questionnaires for the general data collection on the peninsula a total of two separate pilots on two separate groups of people were carried out (total of 13 participants). On reflection, a pilot study is an essential component of research data collection.

²³ EDEN is the acronym for European Destinations of Excellence, a project promoting sustainable tourism development models across the European Union.

4.4.3 Questionnaire design and data collection

The final questionnaire design was created to focus on the research objectives of this thesis. The design of the questionnaire was tailored to a respondent such as a farmer or landowner in ownership or in lease of land >0.8 hectares as these large tracts of land usually contained the majority of the walking route. Private landowners or leaseholders on land that is on average <0.8 hectares generally did not have the walkway traversing their land, but on many occasions the walkway was situated on the public roadway next to their property. Initially the study was aimed at approximately 300 landowners or farmers based on the Census of Agriculture however on further investigation this figure was inaccurate. These anomalies in data may be from multiple ownership of commonage land, and/or absent farmers who reside outside of the case study area. In total n=212 landowners and farmers participated in the study, and the breakdown of respondents is evident in Table 4.5.

To get a near accurate account of land folios that the walkway traversed, the land registry²⁴ website (www.prai.ie) was consulted. A series of maps was created to identify the relevant folios of land that needed to be investigated; this formed the selection criteria for this study as seen in map 4.1.

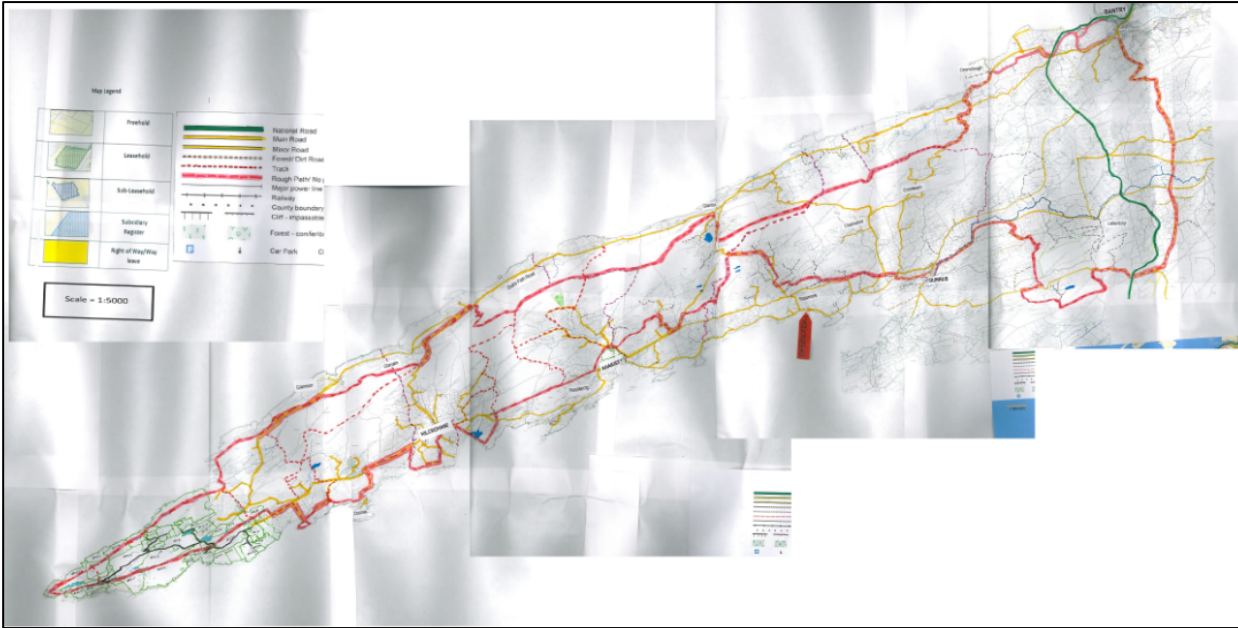
Further to this individual maps were created at a larger scale to facilitate the data collection process. Map 4.2 illustrates a photocopied version of the merged maps that were utilised during the questionnaire collection. This map measures 108x40 centimetres.

²⁴ The land registry digital maps are based on Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM projection) and are linked to a digital form of Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) maps. These published scales are 1/5000 rural, 1/2500 urban/rural, 1/1000 urban.

Map 4.1: Land folio map of Sheep's Head Peninsula



Map 4.2: Merged maps used during data collection



Before questionnaire completion, the respondent was asked to identify his or her land on the maps that the researcher created. This method created a two tailed benefit; firstly it facilitated marked points on the map that connected his or her questionnaire to his or her land folio. Secondly, it created a mapping checklist of households that were surveyed and households that were vacant. The time needed to distribute and to complete the questionnaires lasted from October 2013 to January 2014²⁵, and over 1,400 kilometres of roadway and pathway were covered on the peninsula. The overall response rate for this research is illustrated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Response rate for questionnaire collection – Sheep’s Head Peninsula 2013/14

	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Total number of households contacted	n=276	-
Number of respondents	n=212	100%
Number of refusals	n=9	4.07%
Number of vacant households after three call backs	n=55	-
Total response rate =		95.93%

The final questionnaire was six pages in length and was printed with a double-sided format. The first section of the questionnaire asks questions that establish demographic information such as gender, age and nationality, and gave a profile of the respondents. The second section investigates the farm type, size and importance of farming as an occupation for the respondent. The third section evaluates farm diversification and on-farm enterprises. Some questions in this section, for example, were; *Q.12. Please indicate if you have been offered*

²⁵ Limitations to this research include extensive storm damage to roadways in the months of December and January, which impeded research progress. In December 2013 Met Eireann reported gale force winds on 20 days during the month and storm force winds were reported on 6 days.

support to diversify your farm with non-agricultural activities? Q.13. Please indicate if you have any other on-farm business (if any) Q.14. Do you currently have an on-farm tourist enterprise? Questions asked in section two and three were adapted from the Census of Agriculture (COA) as the farmer or landowner would be familiar with the language and question type used. This facilitated an ease of response and created familiarity. As well as utilizing COA questions to make it easier for the respondent, it created an avenue to compare results of this case study with national figures. The fourth section examines participation and motivations to engage with farming schemes that complement farm income. Some questions that were in section four included: Q.17. Please indicate which (if any) of the following schemes the holding has participated in, by stating what year(s) you participated in the schemes? a) Walks Scheme, b) Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), c) Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS), d) Organic Farming Scheme, e) Natura 2000 payments and Q.18. If you have participated in any of the schemes mentioned above please rank your motivations for taking part by ranking 1-6. (1 being most important to you and 6 being least important to you).

The fifth section investigates details about the Sheep's Head walkway such as attitudes towards it, motivations for taking part, evaluating positive and negative aspects of the route and future recommendations on the walk. Some of the questions that emerged in this section included: Q.21. *Have you as a landowner experienced any positive or negative aspects of the walkway? And Q.22. Please read the following statements and indicate by ticking (ü) the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.*

- *Gaining financially was my main reason for getting involved in the Sheep's Head walkway*
- *Protecting the environment is very important to me*
- *Walking tourism can contribute to sustainable tourism*
- *Walking tourism in the area contributes financially to the local people*
- *The Sheep's Head EDEN award has contributed to the local economy*
- *Community effort led to the success of the walkway*

This section also examines environmental awareness, attitudes towards tourism development and community participation. The final section, section six, included a blank text box for 'additional information'. In this section, the researcher asked the respondent if they would like to add any other experiences they had of the walkway. What was interesting from this study is the high number of respondents that requested the researcher to read out the listed questions and fill in the answers on their behalf. The researcher requested in most instances²⁶ for the respondent to complete likert scale and rank order questions themselves in order to achieve the most accurate and honest opinion.

Sections one to five were coded and then input as quantitative data into the programme SPSS. Any qualitative question was typed into Excel and themes were then created on the information given. These themes were then inputted as coded questions into SPSS. On examining the questionnaire layout before analysis 21 out of the 27 questions were analysed quantitatively and 6 questions with 10 parts were analysed qualitatively. Each questionnaire was administered on a door to door basis and took approximately 20-35 minutes to complete. A blank copy of the questionnaire can be seen at Appendix 1.3 of this thesis accompanied with other documents used for the data collection process.

4.5 Conclusions of data collection methods

In summary, the literature review contributed to the understanding of nature-based tourism services and its products. The series of interviews with all eleven participants aided a general understanding of landowners' and farmers' attitudes to the evolution of the walkway and the catalysts of local development (the Sheep's Head walkway). The approach of the general data collection resulted in obtaining a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. This mix in data collection resulted in aiding the investigation of attitudes towards environmental awareness, sustainability, community links, and farm diversification, conservation of the landscape, quantitative economic impacts and qualitative social impacts of the walkway. Finally, to investigate spatial differences of

²⁶ Some respondents were quite elderly and in some instances possibly had poor eyesight or they were possibly uncomfortable with writing their own answers.

environmental attitudes, motivations and behaviours a significant series of data collected was mapped.

4.6 Mapping the outputs of online sources and data collection

As mentioned previously all respondents were identified by location of dwelling on a series of maps created by the researcher. These points were then assigned at random on a MapInfo mapping system to protect anonymity of the respondent. For example if there was 20 respondents from the Glanlough ED there were 20 points placed at random within that ED. Benefits to mapping data include providing the researcher with a demographic spatial analysis. Mapping can also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of spatial relationships based on time, value and change. By utilising maps as representations of the data, mapping assists the explanation of the findings in a more meaningful way and demonstrates relationships in a way that text could not provide. The selection of maps that represent the data collected can be seen in the results section of this thesis.

4.7 Ethical implications

Researchers in social sciences are responsible for adhering to an ethical approach to data collection. The integrity of the research depends on the professionalism of the researcher. In order to achieve this, visible identification of the researcher was worn at all times and door-to-door requests to fill out the questionnaire were carried out in a polite and non-invasive manner. All respondents were thoroughly informed what the research entailed, why it was being carried out, and to what institution or college body it was linked. On examining the CSO (Central Statistics Office) database on the demographics of the case study area prior to data collection, it was evident that a significant percentage of the population was over 55 years of age. The case study area has experienced a significant proportion of youth emigration. With this in mind, the researcher ensured that no one under the age of eighteen completed the questionnaire. Proper consideration and caution was given to those who seemed uncomfortable to fill in the questionnaire themselves for whatever reason. The researcher did not probe or persuade the respondent to complete any forms that they did not wish to complete. As the researcher was not from the case study

area, no real issue of conflict of interest was present. In order to achieve anonymity, the respondent was requested to refrain from writing his/her name on the questionnaire. All questionnaires were stored in a locked cabinet during the collection stage and analysis of the records. As this fieldwork traversed a significant area of rural farmland, a briefing on health and safety was essential. As advised by the researcher's department, a fieldwork risk assessment form (as seen in Appendix 1.5) was tailored to specifically suit the data collection process in the case study area. The fieldwork risk assessment form highlighted dangers and possible hazards to this type of fieldwork, and all relevant precautions were taken prior to and during the data collection process.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to undertake in-depth and comprehensive case study research that gives voice to members of the farming community and local civil society stakeholders as the main protagonists and guardians of a landscape that forms the basis of a well-established ecological tourism resource, namely The Sheep's Head Way. In so doing, the thesis aims to complement and to add value to existing research that has tended to focus on users rather than on the suppliers of environmental goods within the tourism sector. The results of this research delve intricately into the thoughts and opinions of these stakeholders. This chapter attempts to set out the results of this study.

Firstly, through the literature review, nature-based tourism services and products were investigated. This research can now be compared to the case study with a comprehensive overview of the nature-based tourism product of the Sheep's Head Way. This walkway can be considered a community-led rural tourism product that operates in a sustainable way. The walkway adheres to all elements of sustainability and the level of community participation is paramount to the longevity and success of the walkway. Secondly, two methods were utilised to investigate attitudes towards environmental awareness, sustainability, community links, and farm diversification, conservation of the landscape, quantitative economic impacts and qualitative social impacts of the walkway. The oral interviews and surveys created a comprehensive database that reflects multiple attitudes towards the environment, conservation and community participation. Thirdly, through the medium of mapping, spatial differences of environmental attitudes, motivations and behaviours were investigated and the results demonstrate a uniform pattern. This illustrates that community engagement and attitudes towards conservation and protection of the landscape are unanimous amongst the participants in the survey.

As outlined in the methodology chapter, three phases of data collection were completed in order to investigate the research objectives of this study. Based on the analysis of the data collected, a thematic account of seven primary findings will be set out in this chapter.

In summary, these themes can be considered the primary opinions about the walkway before it was even created. It can be said that, in general, the interviewees do not mind permitting public access on their land as long as it is in a responsible manner. It can also be suggested from the offset that there was only a slight minority of the resident landowners and farmers objecting to the proposed plans in the early 1990s. The next section of this chapter will utilise the data from the 212 respondents of the questionnaire amalgamated with further insights from the interview process. This section will ultimately appraise the seven primary findings of this research.

This chapter will illustrate all themes individually based on all data collected, and summarise the key findings.

5.1.2 A walkway in progress

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that tourism brings tangible benefits to a local community such as economic gain, an improvement in infrastructure and services, and a visible increase in tourist presence. Tourism, however, also provides intangible benefits such as social cohesion and new networking opportunities, conservation of the environment and landscape, and destination branding. Nature-based tourism can contribute significant intangible benefits to the host community. Undoubtedly the respondents generally felt that the walkway does bring extra people to the vicinity, the scale and frequency of these numbers are difficult for the locals to comprehend. One interviewee responds how the walkway has not only brought people into the area, but the increase of visitors has led to the development of local infrastructure and businesses.

'Oh yes defiantly, it is definitely bringing people to the area and it is very well known as a walking route since. I mean it has definitely drawn a lot of people to the area; there is no doubt about that. There is a lot of extra developments there is a lot of places that have expanded things as a result'. (Interviewee No.3)

To investigate the many benefits and challenges the walkway brings to the area a comprehensive questionnaire was carried out among the 212 respondents. The results of the

212 respondents states that the Sheep's Head walkway and looped walkways traversed 77.4% of respondents land. More than 22.6% of respondents state that the walkway did not traverse their land; however, the walkway in many cases route along public roadways adjacent to their property. According to Finn O'Mahony, a local farmer and son of James O'Mahony (one of the original founders of the walkway), the Sheep's Head Way traverses over 300 individual privately owned plots of land. This includes farmers' land, and also commonage with is part owned by multiple owners. The walkway also traversed through the land of non-farming residents. A total of 212 respondents completed the questionnaire in the months October 2013 to January 2014, and represent a near census of the peninsula.

As outlined in the case study section, the study area composed of eight EDs. The distribution of questionnaires was relatively even, with the exception of Bantry Urban (2%) where there were a significantly lower number of farms. This section will now focus on the seven primary findings from the data collection, each theme or finding will be discussed with the evidence from the questionnaire survey and statistical findings if any (phase 1), insights from the interviews (phase 1), and the spatial analysis of the findings (phase 2).

By combining the phases of data collection, we achieve a comprehensive overview and can generalise a majority of the findings. The seven main themes emerging from the questionnaire analysis include:

- 1) The importance of farming in the area
- 2) Endogenous development of a tourism product
- 3) Differentiating reasons for participating in the walkway
- 4) Economic, social and environmental benefits of the walkway
- 5) Attitudes towards sustainable development
- 6) Tourism enterprises in Sheep's Head
- 7) Opportunities and challenges of the SHW

These themes are analysed as separate sections throughout this chapter and will be summarised and related to the relevant literature in the concluding chapter.

5.2 Research Findings 1 – Importance of Farming in the Area

The break down in gender resulted in N=132 males (62.3%) and N=80 females (37.7%). Figure 2 illustrates the age breakdown of all respondents, with 30.4% of respondents aged 45 to 54 years of age. Figure 5.1 further illustrates the ageing population of the Sheep’s Head Peninsula in comparison with national figures. Over 69% of the persons that completed the questionnaire as part of this study on the Sheep’s Head peninsula are over the age of 55 (35% 65 and over, 34% 55-64 years of age). However when you examine this against national figures only 51% of the national farming population are over the age of 55 (26% 65 and over, 25% 55-64 years of age). This illustrates an older population on the peninsula in comparison with the national average which may in the future lead to a shortage of active farmers in the area (figure 5.2). What is noteworthy is the evident ageing population of farmers in the area which reflects the state of rural farming in Ireland today.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of respondents on the Sheep’s Head Peninsula by age category

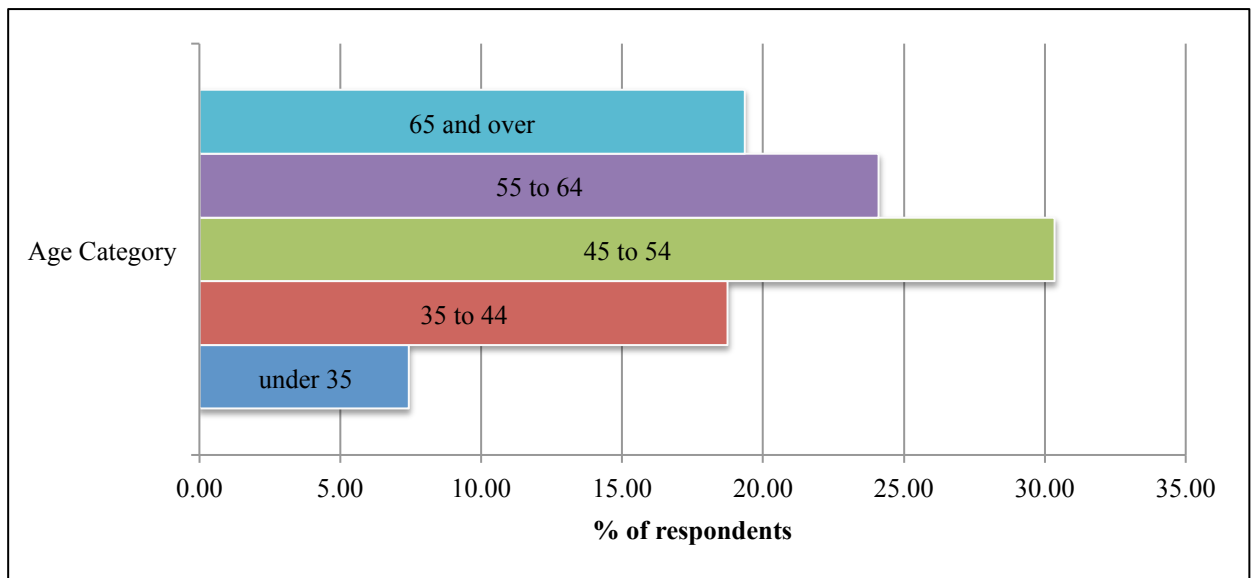


Figure 5.2: Percentage of respondents by age category in comparison with Ireland figures

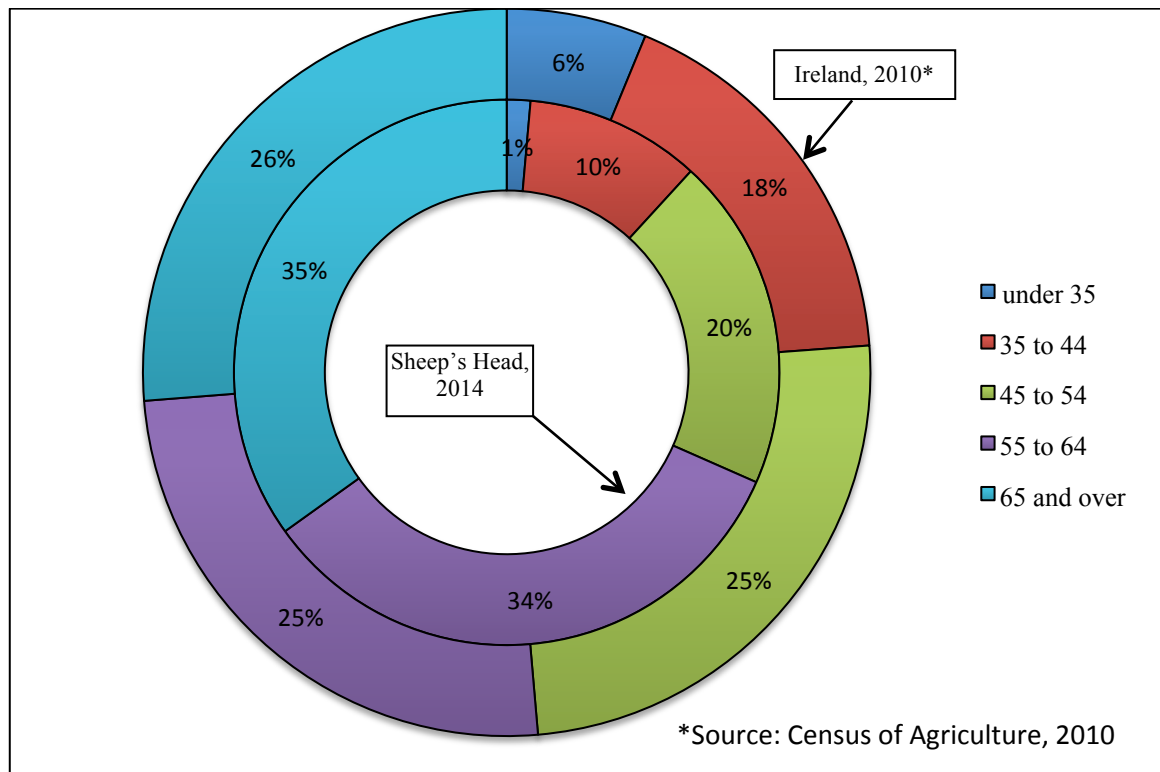


Table 5.1 Illustrates the breakdown by nationality on the peninsula, firstly with the nationality breakdown for all of Ireland, secondly the nationality breakdown of the Sheep's Head Peninsula (8 EDs) based on the Census of Population (2011). Finally listed is the nationality breakdown of the Sheep's Head Peninsula based on the results from questionnaire data collection. This table is quite revealing in several ways. To discuss these differences, nationality data from the Census of Population, 2011 (Ireland) will be compared with data from the Census of Population, 2011 (Sheep's Head Peninsula). This breakdown of nationality will be discussed first. Finally comments will be made on the data of nationality based on the survey collection process. The Sheep's Head peninsula, according to the Census of Population (2011), has -4.1% less Irish nationals, +210% more UK residents, +13.7% more EU (non-Irish & non-UK) residents, and -73.6% less rest of world residents in comparison with the all-Ireland figure. The most striking result here

being the high concentration of UK residents on the peninsula which is also reflected in the past three censuses 2011 (7.69%), 2006 (11.04%), & 2002 (8.46%). A second point to note is the significant lack of population from ‘Rest of World’. As this research concentrates on farmers and landowners, it is not surprising that 93.3% of respondents are of Irish nationality in comparison with the CSO figure for the area of 83.21%. What also emerges from the breakdown of questionnaire respondents is the evident population of landowners that are of Dutch nationality (2.4%) in comparison with the national figure of 0.10% (CSO, 2011). Figure 5.3 Further highlights the contrasts of nationality breakdown when comparing all three data sets and specifically looks at non-Irish nationals.

Table 5.1: Nationality % of the population in Ireland (2011) in comparison with % nationality of respondents on the Sheep’s Head Peninsula (2014).

Nationality	% Nationality, All of Ireland (Census, 2011)	% Nationality* Sheep’s Head Peninsula** (Census, 2011)	% Nationality* Sheep’s Head Peninsula** results from data collection (2014)
% population Irish	86.78	83.21	93.3
% population UK	2.48	7.69	3.8
% population Polish	2.49	3.21	0.00
% population Lithuanian	0.81	0.41	0.00
% population German	0.25	0.00***	0.5
% population Dutch	0.10	0.00***	2.4
% population other EU 27	2.42	3.28	0.00
<i>(total population EU, non-Irish, non-UK)</i>	<i>6.07</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>2.9</i>
% population Rest of world	3.48	0.92	0.00
% population not stated	1.19	1.28	0.00

* Results indicating 0.00 values represent data not available in the Census 2011, or data not specified during data collection.

** Represents results from the eight selected EDs; Sheepshead, Seefin, Glanlough, Durrus West, Durrus East, Scart, Bantry Rural, Bantry Urban which make up case study area.

*** Data not available

Figure 5.3: % Nationality of non-Irish respondents on the Sheep’s Head Peninsula, in comparison with % nationality of Ireland.

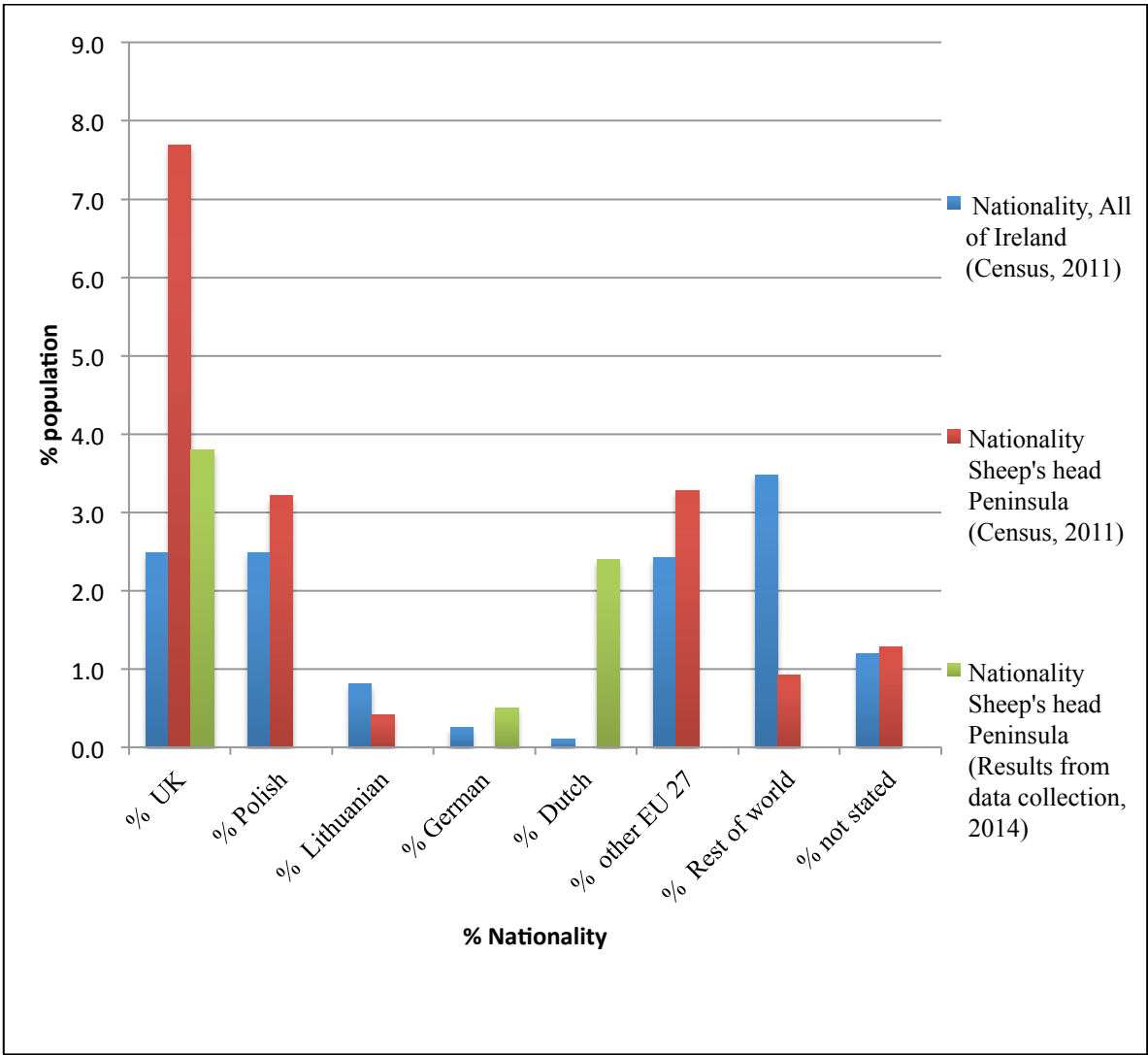


Figure 5.4: Length of time the respondent has been living on the Sheep's Head Peninsula.

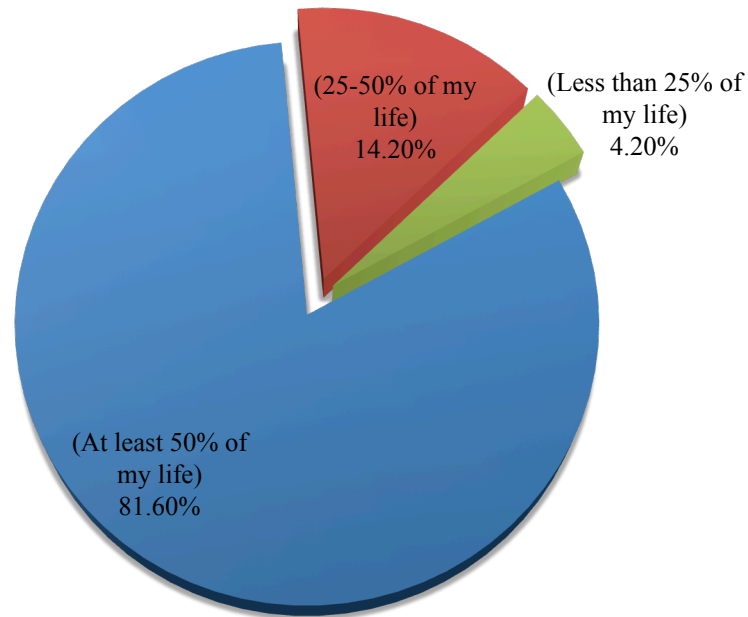


Figure 5.4 illustrates the length of time the respondent has been living on the peninsula. From this chart it is evident with 81.6% of the respondents living 'at least 50% of my life' the peninsula has residents who are living in the area long term. Figure 5.5 similarly illustrates the length of time the respondent has been farming in the area, with over 66% farming over 20 years and 20% farming in the area 10 to 20 years. It is evident from these figures that over 86% of respondents are long term farmers in the area. This high percentage of long term farmers brings benefits of farming expertise and knowledge to the area and contributes to a sense of community.

Figure 8 illustrates the breakdown of farming types on the peninsula. It is clear from this graph that the most popular primary type of farming is 'specialist sheep' with 32%. The second most popular type of farming being 'suckler herd' at 28% followed by 'mixed grazing livestock' at 22%. It was also evident from talking to the respondents that the uptake for farm diversification was low.

Figure 9 shows the breakdown of importance of farming as an occupation with 60% of respondents stating that it was their 'sole occupation' (54% national figure). Over 33% of respondents stated that it was their 'major occupation' (34% national figure) and 7% stated that it was their 'subsidiary occupation' (15% national figure).

Figure 5.5: How long have you been farming in this area?

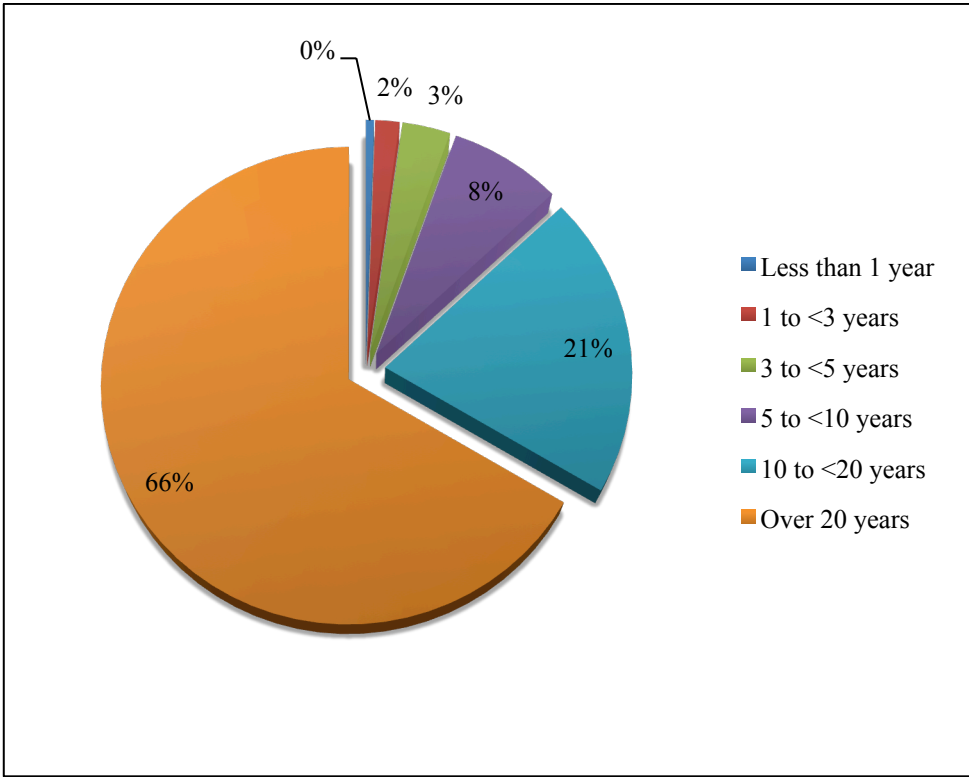


Figure 5.6: What type of farm are you working on?

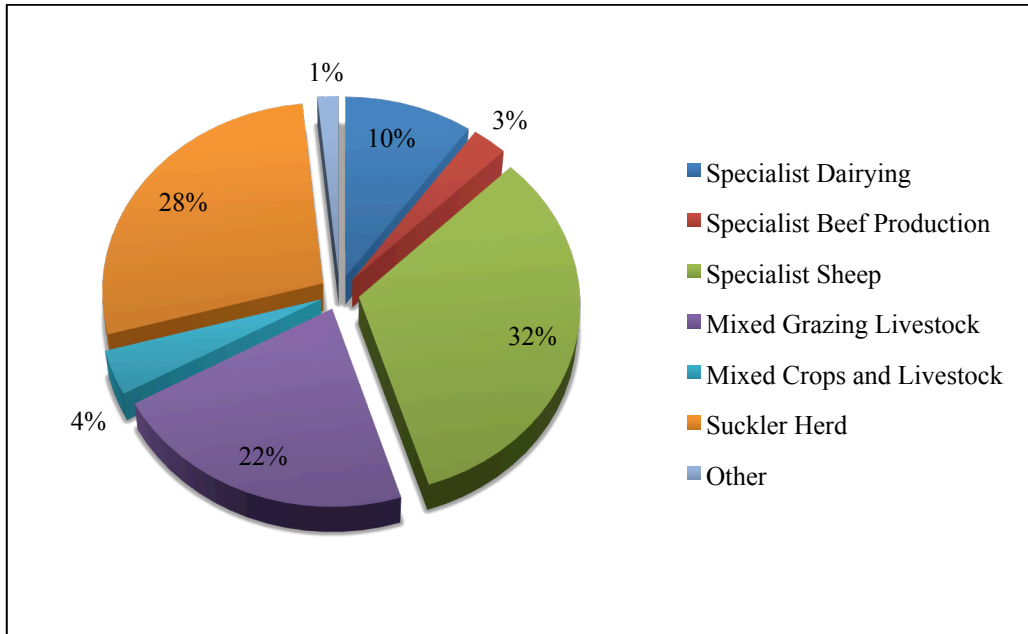
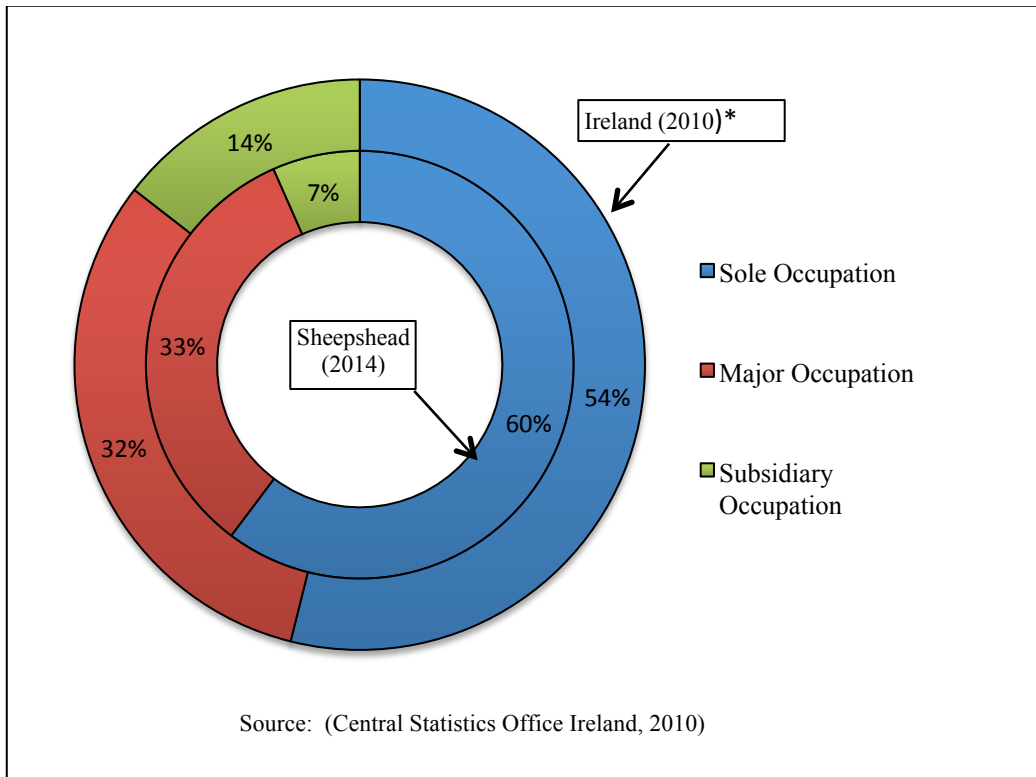


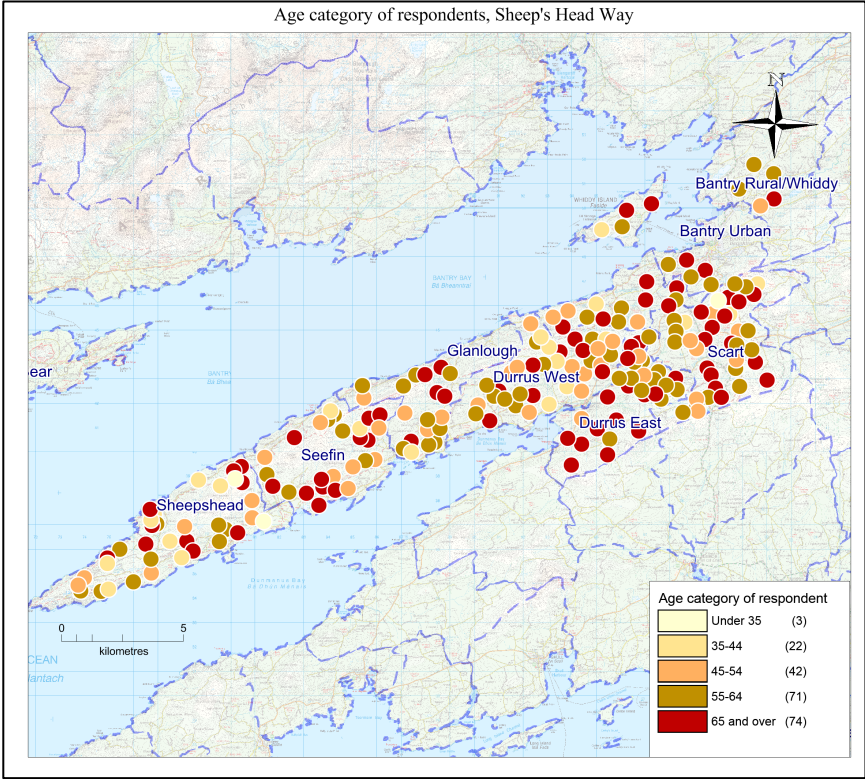
Figure 5.7: How important is farming to you?



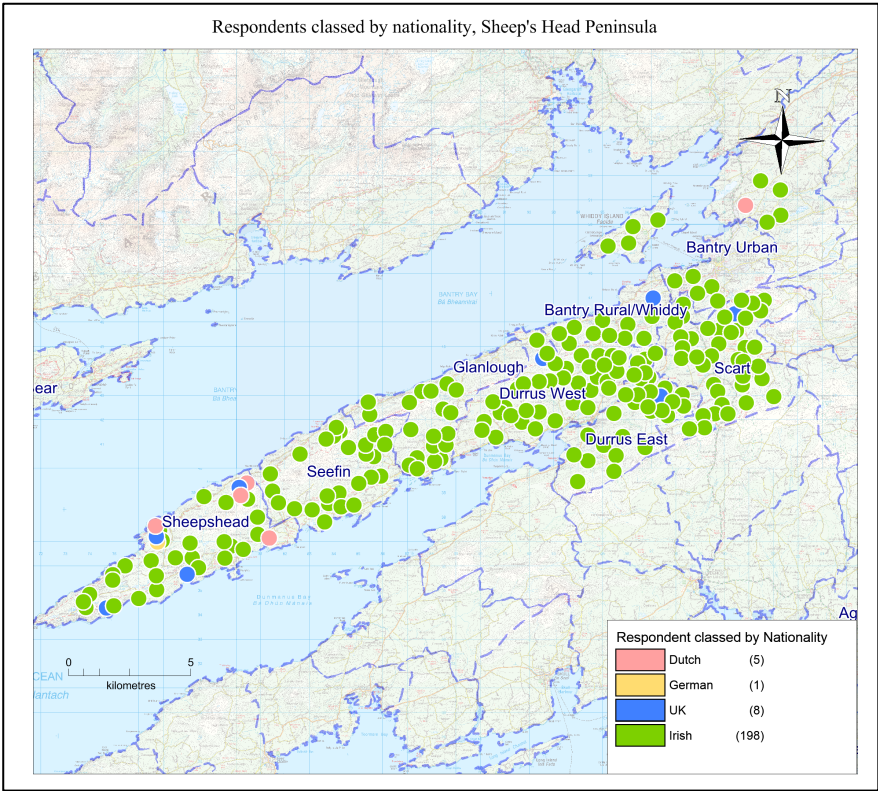
When asked ‘if farming is not your sole occupation do you have an off farm job?’ 12.7% of respondents said ‘Yes’, 73.1% of respondents said ‘No’ and 14.2% of respondents opted not to respond to the question. Upon reflection, the question should have been phrased ‘Do you or your spouse/partner have an off farm job?’, this way the data would be accurate for the whole household. It is interesting that the most common occupation for the 12.7% of respondents who stated they had an off farm job was listed as the construction or transport sector. However, it is questionable how much employment is currently available in these sectors with the slowdown in the construction sector.

Once the findings were spatially mapped it was evident that there are varied relationships based on geographical location. Map 5.1 illustrated the age category of respondents; it is evident that the youngest cohort of respondents is living on the ED Sheepshead. Map 5.2 illustrates a similar spatial pattern but this time looks at the nationality of respondent. The ED of Sheepshead sees the greatest concentration of non-Irish nationals (8 respondents). Map 5.3 illustrates how long the person has been living in the area, with a concentration of respondents living less than 25% of their lives predominantly in the Sheepshead ED. This figure replicates the previous similarities spatially indicating that all three variables are somewhat linked.

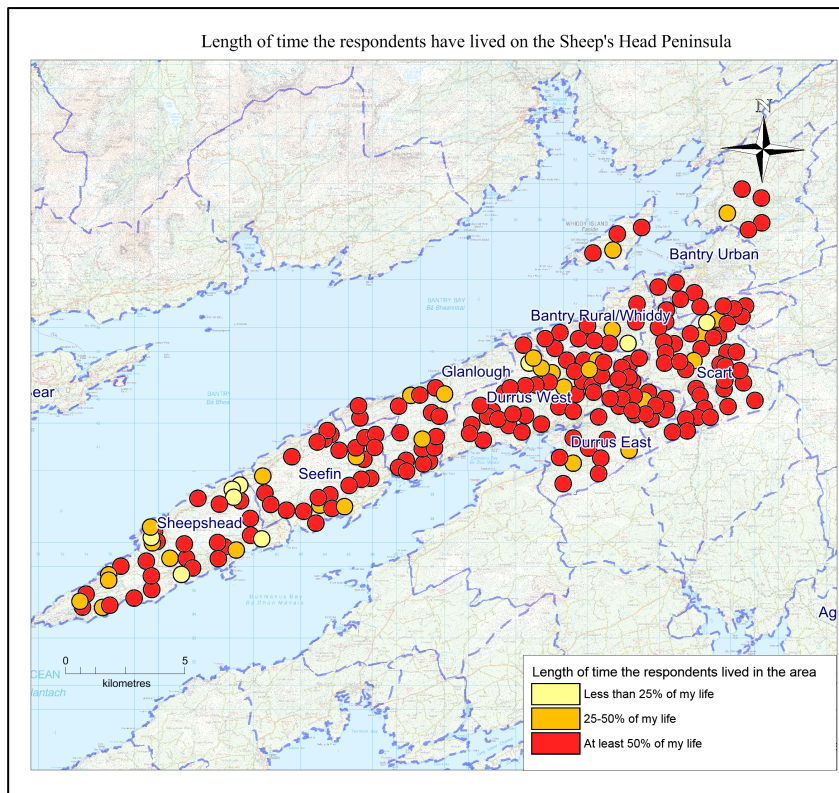
Map 5.1: Age category of respondents, Sheep's Head Way



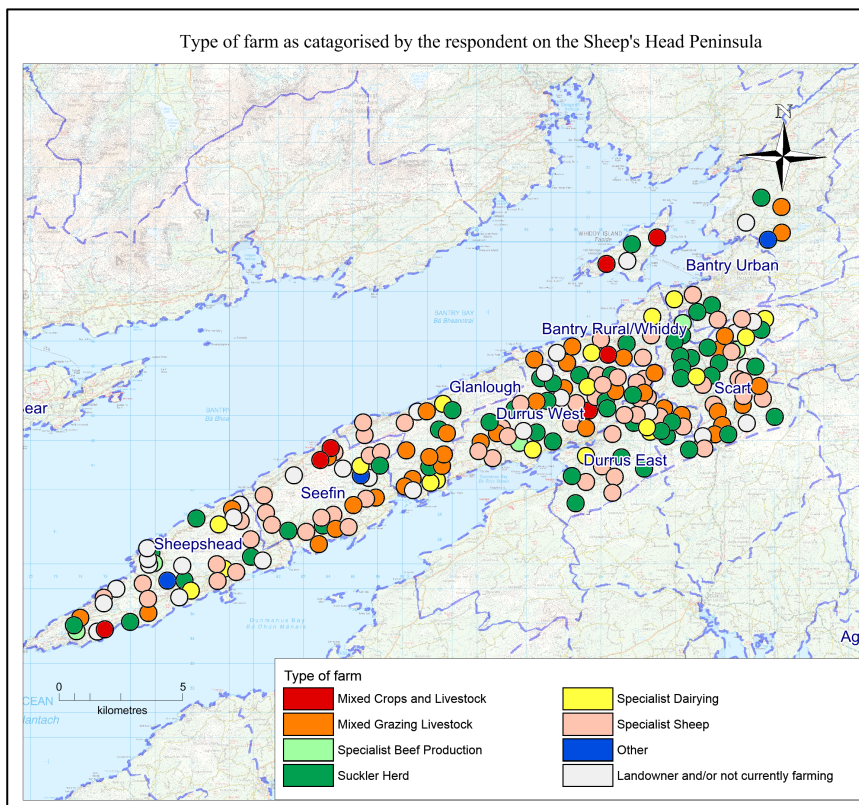
Map 5.2: Nationality of respondents, Sheep's Head Way



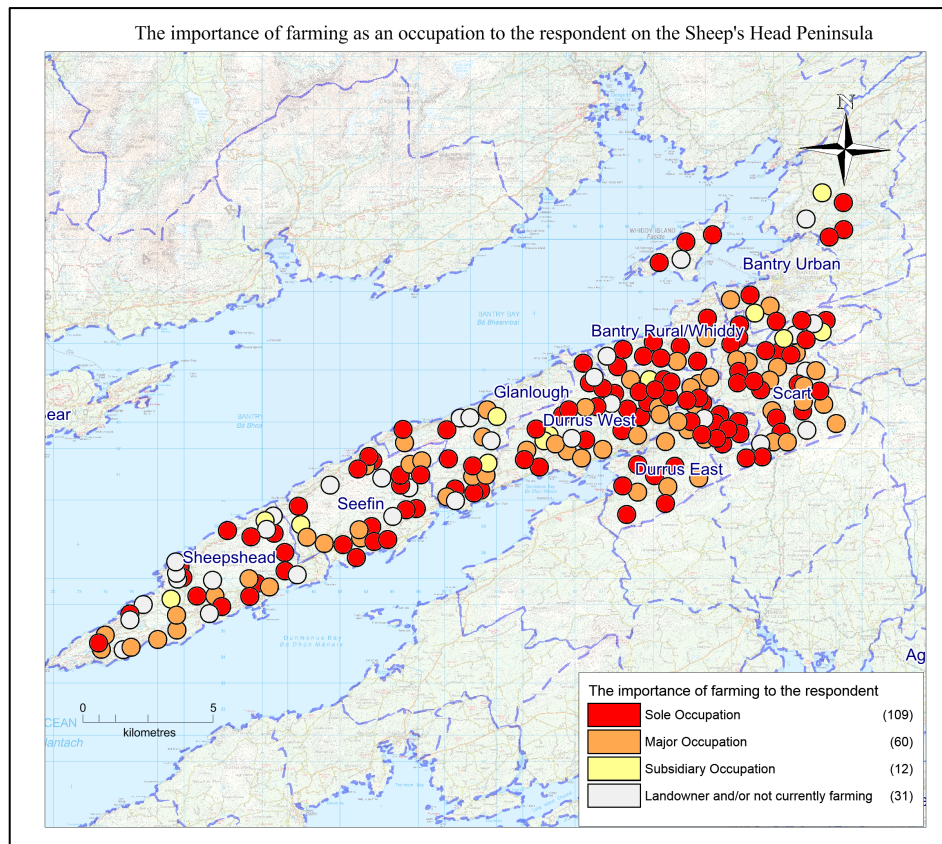
Map 5.3: Length of time the respondents have lived on the Sheep's Head Way



Map 5.4: Type of farm as categorised by the respondent on Sheep's Head Way



Map 5.5: The importance of farming as an occupation to the respondent



Map 5.4 illustrates the spatial variation in farm type on the peninsula, dominating this map is the popularity of suckler herd farming which may be the output from the Suckler Herds Welfare Scheme 2008-2012. The majority of this type of farm, as seen in the darker green symbols, is concentrated in the east of the peninsula where land is significantly less mountainous and suitable for suckler grazing. A similar pattern emerges with the farm type 'specialist dairying' with a high concentration in the east of the peninsula namely in the EDs Scart and Bantry Urban. This land has less rocky outputs and heaths and has the landscape characteristic of grassy fields which are somewhat flatter than the land west of Durrus village. We see from this figure that the majority of 'Specialist Sheep' farming occurs evenly in nature across all eight EDs. This type of farming, which is suitable in

mountainous or hilly terrain, is slightly concentrated around the Seefin and Glanlough EDs where the contours of the terrain reach over 300m. Map 5.5 illustrates the importance of farming as an occupation to the respondent. General comments from this data can conclude that the area is highly reliant across all eight EDs on agriculture as a ‘sole occupation’. As you move westward along the peninsula towards the EDs of Glanlough, Seefin and Sheepshead, it emerges that the importance of farming declines slightly and is listed as a ‘major occupation’.

Only 0.5% of respondents claimed they have been offered support to diversify into non-agricultural activities. 1.4% of respondents stated that they had a “Home Arts and Crafts” on-farm business, with 98.6% stating that they did not have an on-farm business.

Only 2% of respondents said they currently had an on-farm tourist enterprise, despite the fact that there are over 62 accommodation providers in the area; however a majority of this accommodation is found in urban areas such as the three villages on the peninsula and also in Bantry town which would explain the low percentage.

5.3 Research Findings 2 – Endogenous Development

The most striking result to emerge from the survey was the localised or endogenous development of the walkway, with no initial contact by government agencies, farming associations or walking development groups. 100% of respondents agreed that community effort led to the success of the walkway. Similarly, 100% of respondents stated overall that someone from the local area contacted them about the initial start-up of the walkway. From figure 5.8, it is clear that two community representatives spearheaded the project, namely James O’Mahony and Tom Whitty (76%). As the project evolved, a committee was established. Consultation with landowners was the key element to the development of this walkway to which can be accredited its later success. If a landowner refused to participate in the walkway, the walk was subsequently re-routed around that particular folio of land. Throughout the data collection process the entire community expressed support and gratitude for the Sheep’s Head Committee that brought the walkway to where it is today.

'I suppose the committee that are involved in the running of it really put in the hard work. They get ten out of ten as far as I am concerned, they do a great job' (Interviewee No. 4).

Another respondent highlights that the main reason that they got involved was due to their neighbour Tom Whitty who was one of the initial founders of the walkway. The respondent expresses the scale of effort needed to negotiate amongst landowners who are shareholders in areas known as 'commonage'.

'I suppose the main reason I got involved in it was there was a neighbour Tom Whitty, he was an American who came to live here and was very interested in the environment and scenery... I think if anyone deserves a gold medal it was Tom Whitty, as he went around to every farmer probably in the peninsula and asked their advice and his main problem was commonages, where the walk goes through which is known as common mountain areas. On the Brahlsh Mountain which is my section there is four people that have equal shares so he had to go to those four people to get their permission. But in some of the commonages there could have been 24 and the problem with that, is people were living outside the country and the property could have changed hands from father to son so he had to go and establish who the owners were it was really he who did the hard and back work' (Interviewee No. 4).

Some farmers permitted the walkway through significant tracts of land, but when asked are they on the committee many responded;

'No no. We would be what I call a 'facilitating landowner' (Interviewee No. 6)

This illustrates that some landowners and farmers are more than willing to participate in the walkway by facilitating the walk and that is as far as they want to get involved in the project.

Figure 5.8: Who contacted the landowners and farmers initially about participating in the Sheep's Head Way

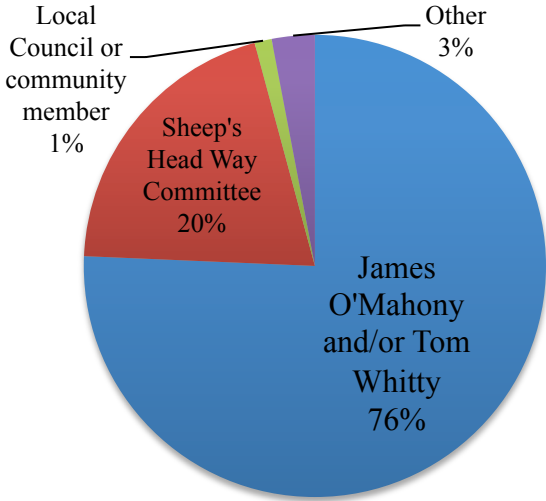
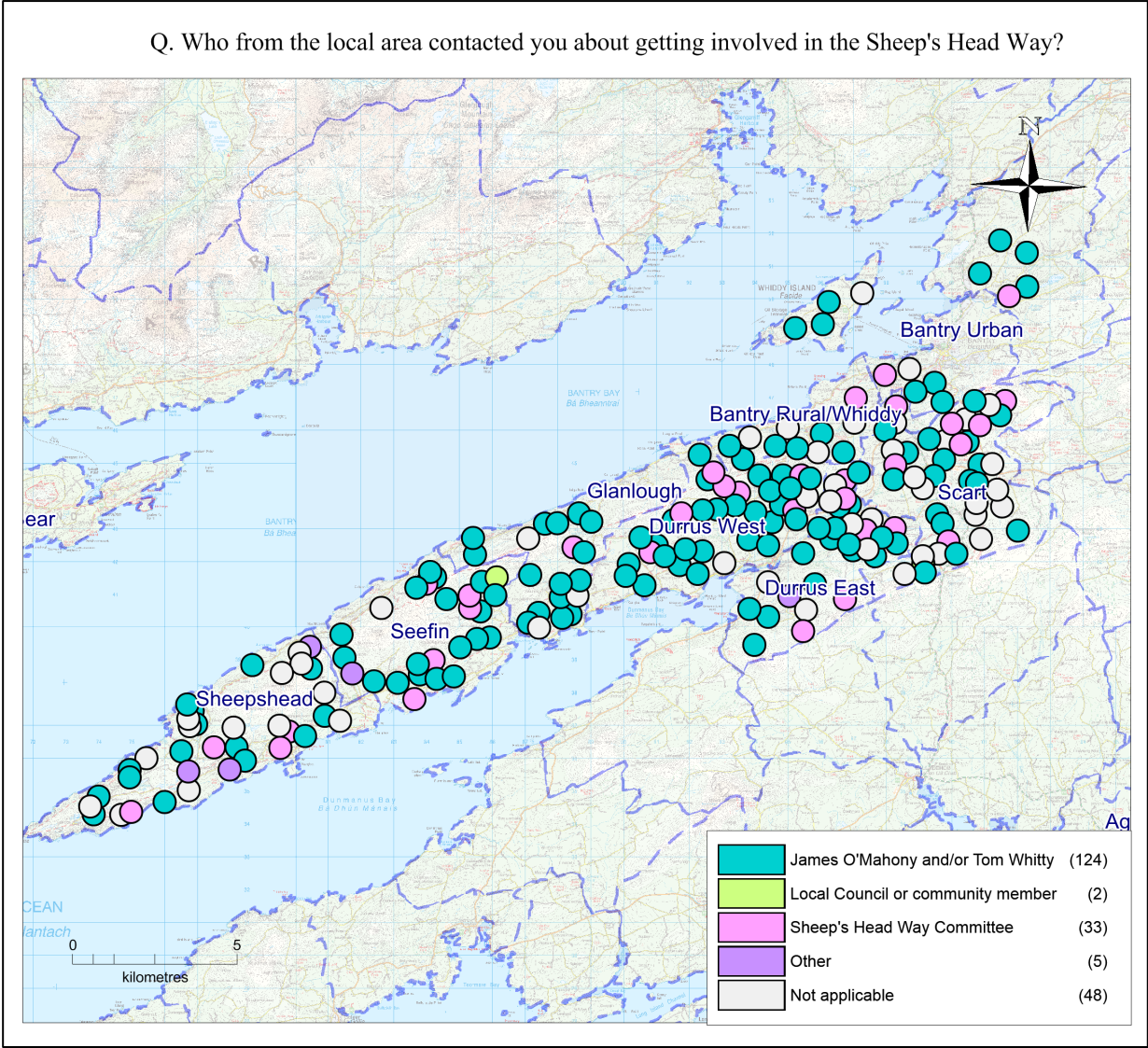


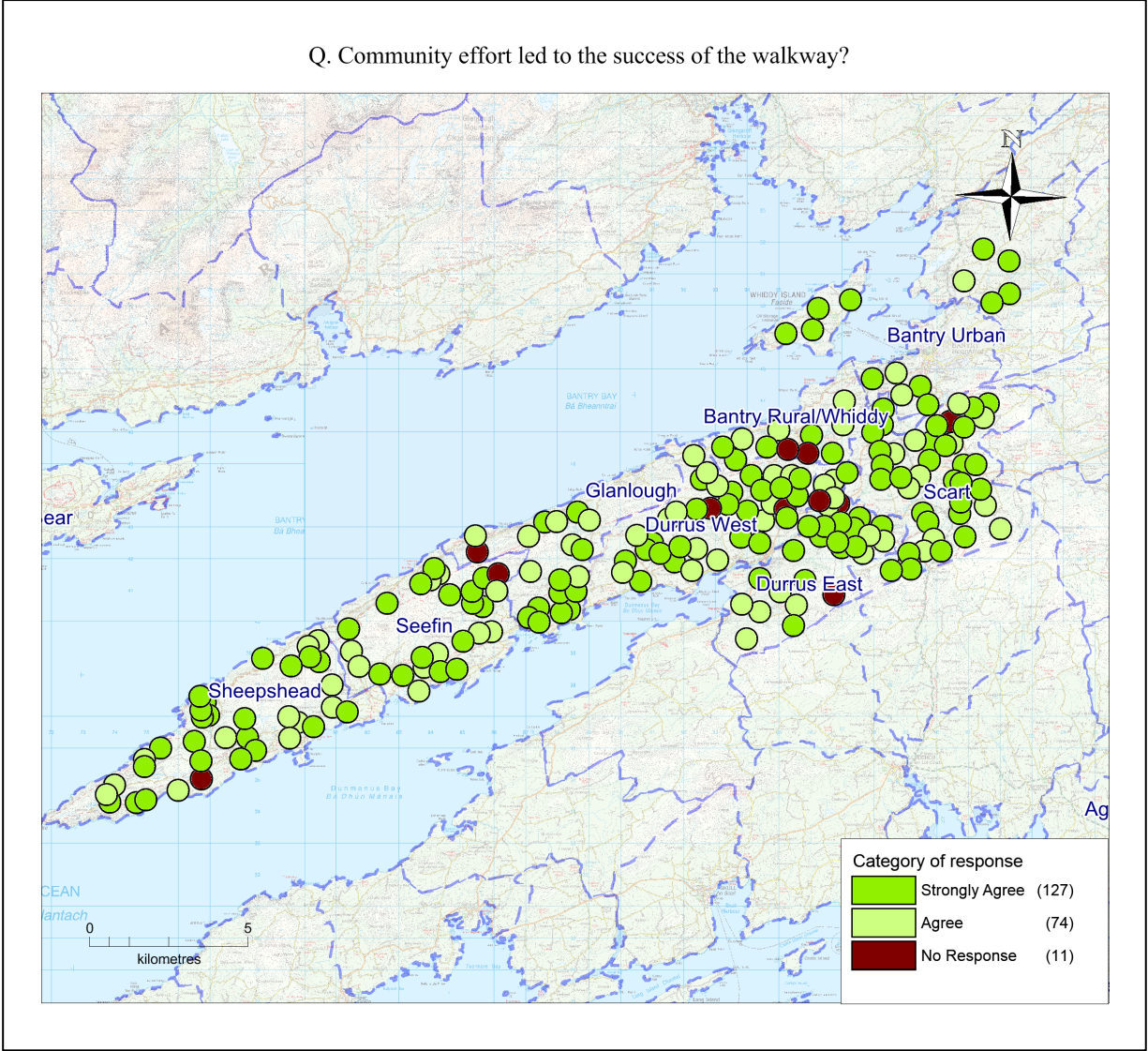
Figure 5.9: Tom Whitty and James O Mahony receiving the Waterford Crystal Award for “Best Walk in Ireland”



Map 5.6: Representation of the local actors that contacted the community about getting involved in the Sheep's Head Way



Map 5.7: Spatial representation to illustrate that Community effort led to the success of the walkway



On examination of map 5.6 it is evident that James O'Mahony and Tom Whitty were the general instigators of the projects across all eight EDs. Map 5.7 illustrates a similar spatial pattern as 100% of respondents across the case study area agreed that community effort led to the success of the walkway. Thus, it can be stated that there is a general consensus amongst the community that the success of the walkway stems solely from local people.

5.4 Research Findings 3 – Reasons for Participating

It is evident from interviewing all eleven interviewees and 212 respondents that attitudes towards sustainability of the environment, economic and social benefits of the walkway were varied. From the interviews, it is also apparent that there was mixed feelings about the level of community collaboration or co-operation.

From this phase of research the initial narrative of the creation of the walkway is established. Other themes emerged from the interviews such as: why the people get involved and what their initial opinion is of the project. One of the first questions asked during the interview was: *When & Why do you get involved with the Sheep's Head Way?* The reasons for participating vary; these varied answers are explained more explicitly under the subsequent themes, which also explore the questionnaire data. One respondent states that he or she gave permission to open their lands for the walkway for one reason, to develop the area.

'When it started back in the mid-nineties I thought it was a good idea like anything to develop the area. I suppose we are a bit bypassed as a peninsula because we are the small peninsula and Beara is the big peninsula and Mizen, people going out to Mizen and Crookhaven and everything out there. They are inclined to drive through Durrus and not drive out the Sheep's Head to a certain extent' (Interviewee No. 3).

Other respondents express concern about non-native landowners restricting access to the area. The respondents feel that unless they open up their lands now, it may become restricted in future years. One respondent who owns two areas of land and one farm on the north side of the peninsula with no agricultural use responds as follows:

'But we bought the north side of the hill a farm on the north side of the peninsula with no real use agricultural wise. But we bought it with a vision that

people would walk it one day. I saw it sold to a German when I was six and I always felt that it should be in our hands and we should control it.'
(Interviewee No. 6)

Here we see apprehension from the Irish landowner that the land will not remain open unless in the hands of an Irish landowner. This may be due to a perception of a loss of cultural connection with the land. The respondent highlights the importance of the history of the landscape and retaining the open tradition of access to the sea.

'There was so much history was there, it was Gort na Bhailigh (the land of the ways), people always turned back and forth across it and I didn't want it in the hands of someone who would prevent people from travelling back and forth. To the sea, to fish, to where the copper mines were to where the blow hole is all of those things that are so important, so I had an idea of people walking it long before the Sheep's Head Way was even dreamed of'. (Interviewee No. 6).

Another respondent relates a similar desire to retain open access to the land and states that the implementation of the walkway is a formality on the existing sections of walkway.

'We were fully supportive anyway for the walks like, we never stopped anyone going through the land, and then this came along as well' (Interviewee No. 2).

It is evident from these two respondents that land access to public walkers was never an issue, and the launch of the walkway was a possible formalisation of some existing pathways.

Another question posed to the interviewees was *'what was your first reaction when you heard about the Sheep's Head Way?'* Undoubtedly the biggest reaction from the interviewees was the vast undertaking of the project. Overall, the respondents felt that negotiating with three hundred landowners was an enormous task. One interviewee states:

'..it is no doubt it was a big undertaking for those who started it first because there were so many landowners to be consulted and anyone that didn't agree they had to devise a way of going around them' (Interviewee No. 3).

One of the success points of this case study is the 'no qualms' approach to the negotiation process. When farmers and landowners were asked to participate with the walkway, they had the option to say no or to suggest a path that suited them. Participants had a say in the

rerouting process of the suggested route, so this, in turn, gave a sense of control to the participant. One participant remarks how trouble-free the process of rerouting was for them:

'..like I said...we rerouted (the path) they wanted to come through our farm not through our own private pathways that we use for tractors and stuff like that and we just proposed a different route and they went with that without even arguing the point' (Interviewee No. 1).

This style of approach increases the speed with which the walkway can be developed but the long-term effect, as many mentioned, was the outcome of pointless or zig zag routes that are favourable to the landowner but not the walker. The local population, as discovered from the interview process, always recognised the potential in the area for something other than agriculture. Tourism was nothing new to the area but had not been harnessed to its full potential in an organised, co-ordinated way. Implementing the Sheep's Head Way not only formally created a looped walk but also created a brand identity for the area. Since the creation and launch of the walkway, business has dovetailed with the marketing process, and now the region has one recognisable brand and identity like its neighbours, the Beara Way and the Mizen peninsula. One respondent highlights the underlying potential of tourism to the area mirrored with the apprehensive uptake with the project:

'..there was a house across the road there that my mother used to look after. She looked after it for nearly twenty years and there was always tourists coming to the area so we knew what the potential was and what they could bring to the area. ...A lot of issues like that had to be sorted out, for every person that was interested there were 10 people who were wary' (Interviewee No. 4).

This apprehensive feeling stems primarily from the issue of public liability, insurance and permitting the public on lands that are actively used for agriculture. Many respondents even during the questionnaire collection still highlighted concerns and apprehensions they had in permitting public access. One respondent suggested that a possible lure to participate was the initial hope of financial support to implement the scheme.

I didn't think it would be as much of a success as it is probably, but I suppose a lot of farmers thought there would be grants and stuff involved in making it so a lot were for that, you know for any few pound extra (Interviewee No. 1).

To investigate if neighbours or the community discussed participating in the walkway the question was asked *'Did you talk to your neighbours about the walkway before you participated?'* One respondent highlights the importance of talking about it as a method to possibly sway the thoughts of wary landowners and farmers. He mentions that some people were totally against the idea but the number overall was quite small:

'Sure it would be quite normal that you would and talk about it. You know at the time when it was set up there was a top up on their REPS payment and so it was a very normal thing for people to talk about. I suppose it was a topic for discussion whether you were in an IFA meeting or in the pub, or outside the church or creamery. Because it was a good thing to talk about because some people were totally against it, they were few and far between thankfully'. (Interviewee No. 6).

As examined throughout this section, the participants who allowed the walkway had varied reasons for doing so. An interest in walking tourism is not a primary factor as only 10.2% of respondents are members of a walking group or state that they walk the paths only occasionally. As seen from figure 5.10, multiple statements were provided in the questionnaire and the respondents are asked to rank their opinion of the importance of each individual statement. The graph illustrates that the *most important* factor (a combination of 'highly important' and 'important') is 'a cultural connection with the land' (78.1%). This answer is not surprising given that over 80% of respondents are living in the area at least 50% of their lives. The reason 'to facilitate public access' ranks as least important amongst the respondents. The breakdown of opinion for this statement results in respondents answering as follows: 17.7% highly important, 33.5% important, 23.8% neither important nor unimportant, 20.7% little importance, 4.3% Not at all important. Table 5.2 illustrates further the rank of reasons in order of importance. Reasons to permit the walkway through their land that ranked over 29% as highly important included 'Promote growth in the locality', 'Co-operate with other landowners', and 'An interest in sustainable tourism'.

Figure 5.10: Reasons why the landowners permitted the walkway through their lands in order of importance

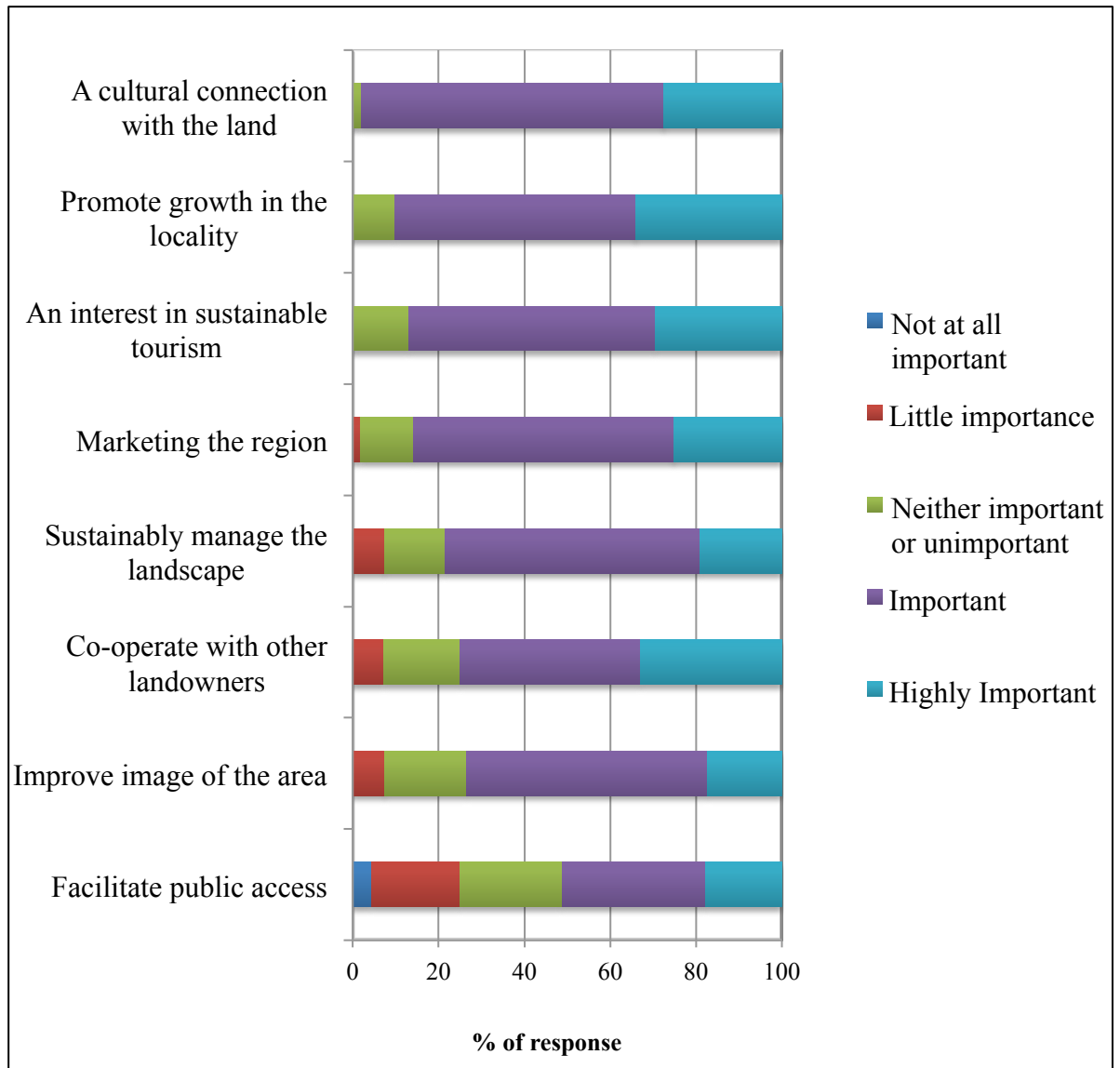
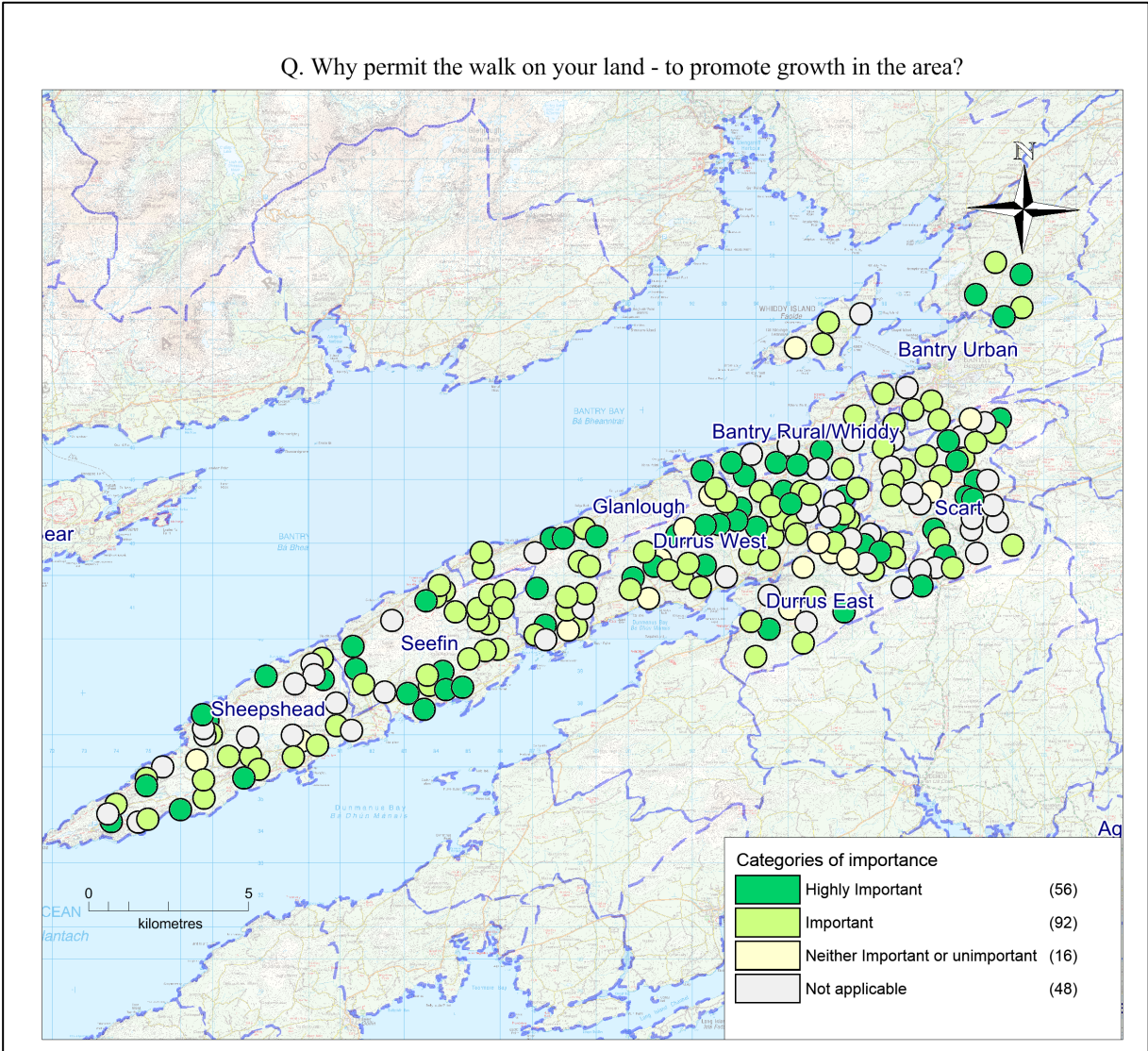


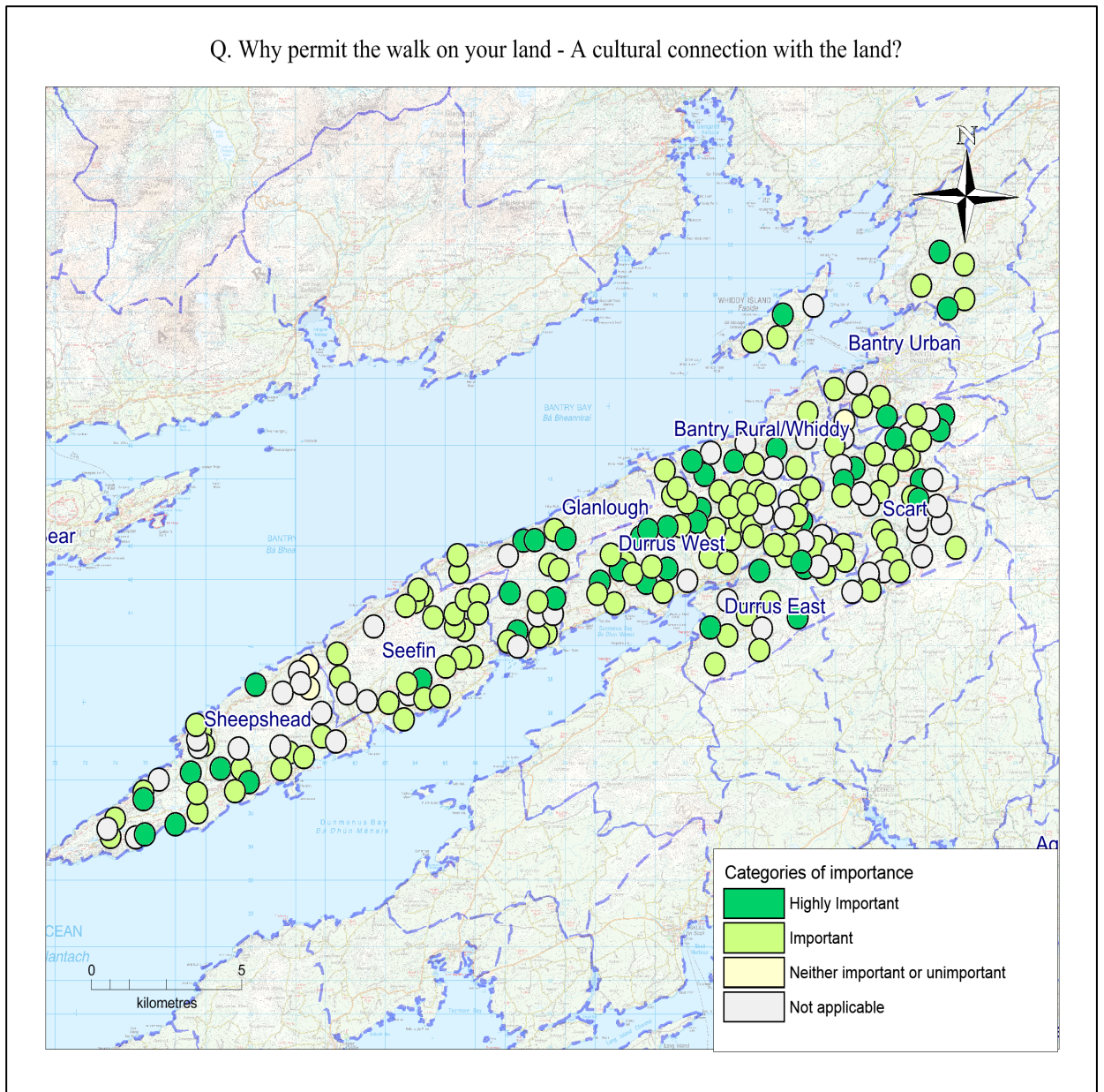
Table 5.2: Ranked reasons why the landowners permitted the walkway through their lands in order of importance

Reason for permitting walk through their land	% Ranked Highly Important	Rank
Promote growth in the locality	34.10%	#1
Co-operate with other landowners	32.90%	#2
An interest in sustainable tourism	29.40%	#3
Reason for permitting walk through their land	% Ranked Important or highly important	Rank
A cultural connection with the land	70.60%	#1
Marketing the region	60.70%	#2
Sustainably manage the landscape	59.50%	#3

Map 5.8: Permitting the walkway to promote growth in the area.



Map 5.9: Permitting the walkway because they had a cultural connection with the land.

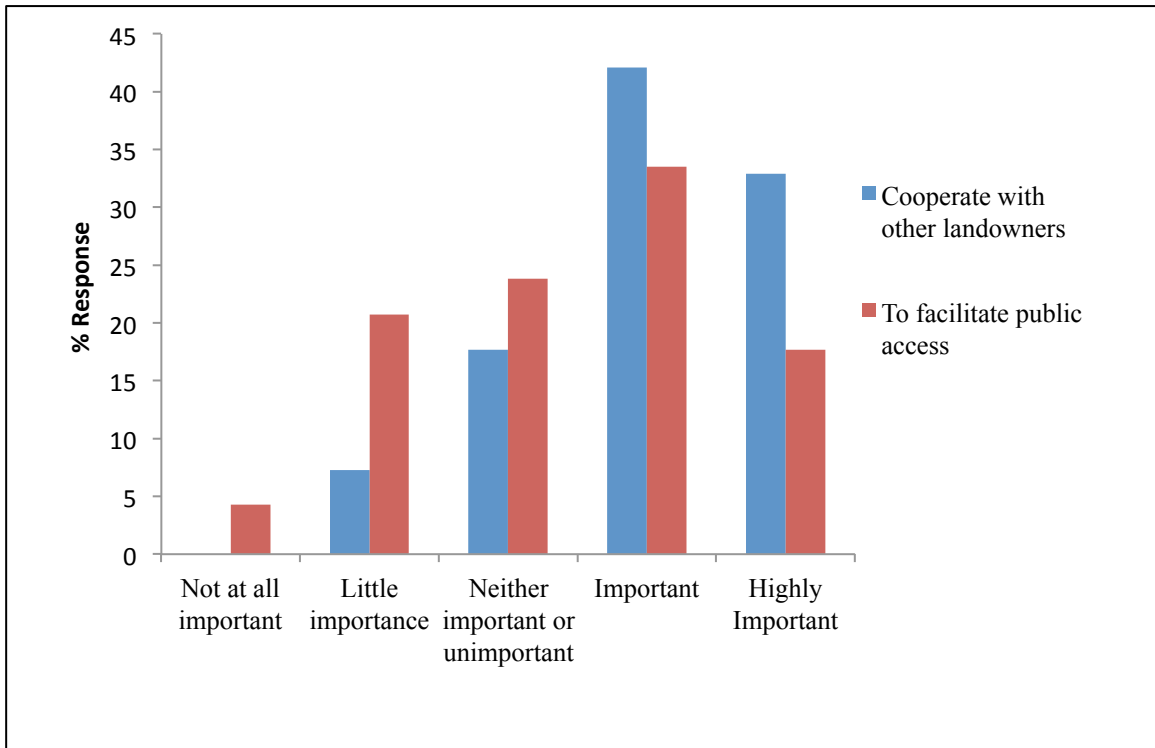


In addition, as seen on map 5.8 and map 5.9, we can spatially analyse differences in the importance of the various reasons. Across all eight EDs there is a common trend of

agreement amongst respondents. Map 5.9, however, shows a slight deviation from the general trend with respondents in the ED of Seefin predominantly identifying cultural connection as 'important'. Two elements from figure 5.10 that warrant further examination include the two statements 'cooperate with other landowners' and 'facilitate public access'. It is evident if one exclusively examines these two statements that 'cooperating with other landowners' ranks more important than 'facilitating open or public access'. More than 75% of respondents stated it is important to cooperate with other landowners whereas only 51.2% state it is important to facilitate public access. As illustrated in figure 5.11, the landowners are less likely to 'facilitate public access' as a reason for permitting the walkway (over 50% of respondents stated it is important). Instead, 'cooperating with landowners' is a more common response (over 75% of respondents stated it was important). As commented, it is evident that the community believes that local co-operation is the root to the success of the walkway:

'I think the main success point is that most of it is kept off the roadways...I think if the farmers didn't agree you would have people on public highways a lot and people don't like walking like that, people like walking through fields and heather and over rock and over our natural landscape, if farmers didn't agree to that I don't think it would of happened, if farmers didn't all agree...there was nowhere else to go with it' (Interviewee, No. 1).

Figure 5.11: Respondents’ opinion on cooperating with other landowners in comparison with facilitating public access



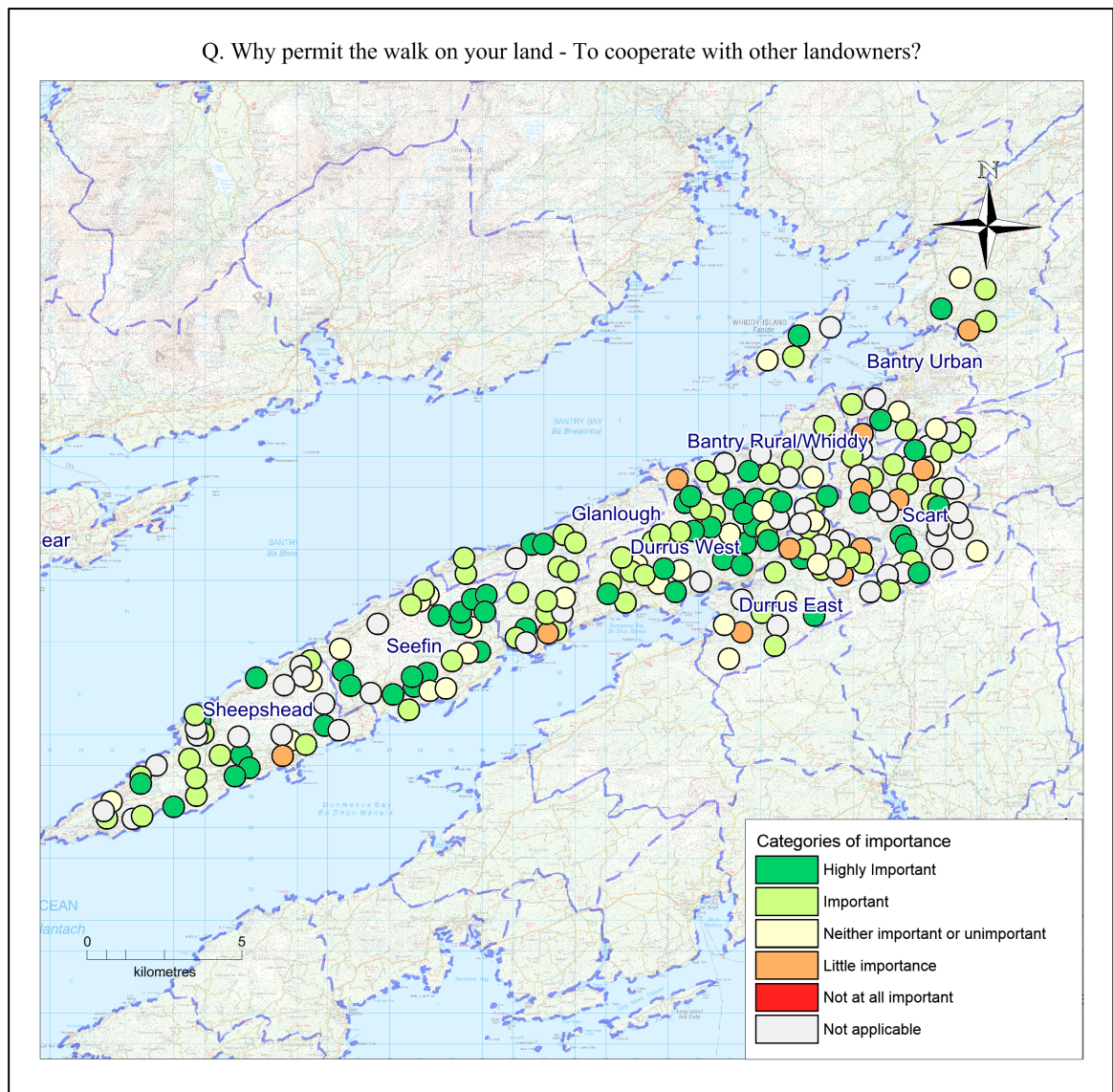
ED location of respondents and their attitude towards cooperating with other landowners ($p = .081$). ED location of respondents and their attitude towards permitting public access ($p = 0.000$, Cramer’s $V = .331$).

The significant variations in answers from figure 5.11 prompts further investigation to examine if there is any spatial variation in the respondents’ answers. Map 5.10 illustrates the importance of cooperation with other landowners. The figure illustrates a relatively uniform distribution of opinion with an even spatial spread of answers that list the reason as ‘highly important and important’. However, when the respondents were asked about the importance of facilitating public access a spatial variation of answers is evident. Map 5.11 illustrates this with a significant number of respondents in EDs in the east of the peninsula opting for answers such as ‘not at all important’ or ‘little importance’. This signifies a possible division in opinion spatially amongst respondents when discussing the contentious issue in Ireland today of permitting public access and rights of way. It also illustrates a general tendency of respondents to favour cooperating with their local landowners rather than facilitating the public. In some sense, the level of cooperation is a catalyst for other

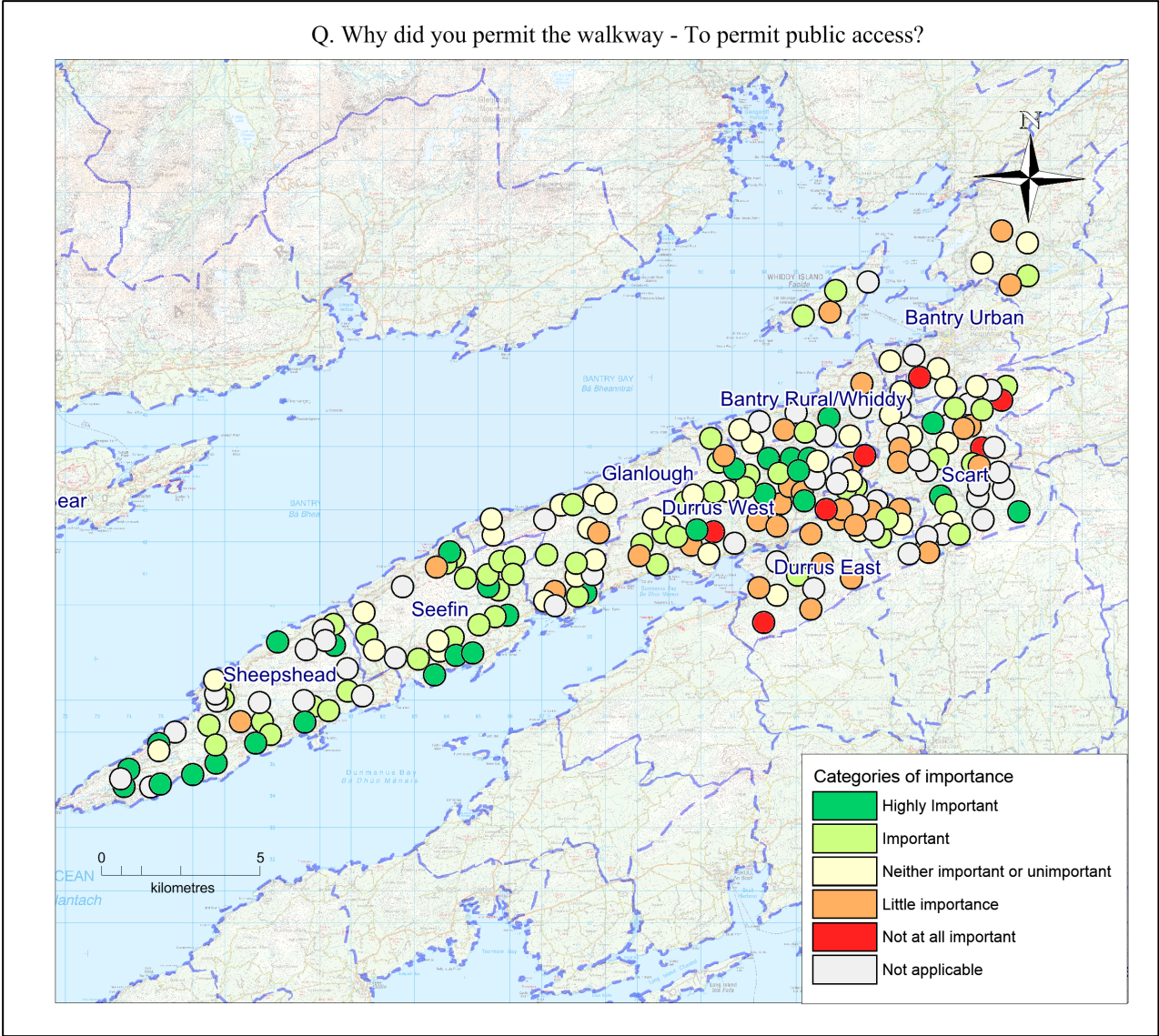
landowners to agree to the walkway. Landowners or farmers who considered opting against the plan felt that they were hampering development in the area. One respondent remarked:

'I agreed of course, because there was no point saying they could go through my farm if the next farmer did not say they could go through there' (Interviewee No. 4).

Map 5.10: Respondents' opinion on cooperating with other landowners



Map 5.11: Respondents' opinion on permitting public access



5.5 Research Findings 4 – Benefits of the Walkway

The development of the walkway introduced many financial, social and environmental benefits to the local area; however these benefits are difficult to measure in real terms.

Financially it created additional income for the local people through the medium of additional utilisation of local services such as shops, bars, cafes and accommodation. The development of the walkway also leads to the creation of new businesses such as conversion of old farmhouses and outhouses into B&Bs or hostels. New cafés appeared along the route way to supply demand for the increasing number of walkers during the past two decades.

Figure 5.12: Bernie's Café at the lighthouse, Sheep's Head Way



A defibrillator was also installed at a key walking location as a safety measure for the growing walking trade as seen in figure 5.13.



Figure 5.13: Defibrillator on the Durrus Road, Sheep's Head Peninsula.

Evidence of financial input into the area that may not seem obvious includes the improvement of local infrastructure. This included the establishment of new lay-bys, car parks, structural improvements at piers and also the widening and straightening of dangerous bends on the local road network. The increased tourism flow into the area led to the realisation that the local community could use tourism as leverage for local development, which in turn, would benefit the host community. One respondent from the interview stages of data collection comments;

...it [the walkway] puts you on a map and you can push for more things because there are more people coming to the area, so you probably get better funding that way. And the roads have improved a good bit. The main road to Kilcrohane now in the last 7-8 years has improved and if the walkway wasn't there I don't think that would have happened" (Interviewee No.1)

There is also additional evidence of improvements to infrastructure which not only benefits the tourist but also the local community. One interviewee highlights the fact that some dangerous roads along the peninsula are widened, and finance only became available due to the success of the walkway as seen at figure 5.14.

*'Yes there were bits of work done there too (the roads), we have managed to get bits of finance and bad bends and things we have improved along the way'.
(Interviewee No. 4)*

Figure 5.14: Widened Roads on the Sheep's Head Peninsula



We see here that funding for local infrastructure improvements comes as a result of a reasonable number of visitors to the area. These improvements are justified on the basis of visitor numbers. Another respondent remarks how the walkway is definitely bringing people to the area and commented that businesses are expanding due to the walkway:

'Oh yes definitely, it is definitely bringing people to the area and it is very well known as a walking route since. I mean it has definitely drawn a lot of people to the area; there is no doubt about that. There is a lot of extra developments there is a lot of places that have expanded things as a result' (Interviewee No. 3).

Figure 5.15: Tourism signage in Durrus village



Payment for maintenance of the walkway is seen as an added benefit to the landowners and farmers who main the pathways. This finding is an interesting one as the walkway was well established prior to the introduction of the Walks Scheme, which has been in existence since 1st June 2008. The scheme offers financial incentives to landowners to develop and maintain national way marked ways. Participants at that time were given a five year contract, and this contract was renewed in June 2013 for an additional five years. At the early stages of the development of the walkway it was suggested to some landowners that there may be financial aids in the future if they participated, although not guaranteed at the time. At present, there are 244 participants on the Walks Scheme on the Sheep's Head Way. These 244 participants contribute 22,494 hours in the maintenance of the Walks. The

payment was originally €14.50 per hour but has since decreased in value; however the recipients accept that with the current economic climate there would be changes to the rate:

'The payment has been decreased from the point of view that it was based on the Department of Agriculture scale that they had that they were paying for work done for other things. It was something like €14 something... €14.50 per hour I think it was. Now that was reduced in 2009 to €12.40 or something like that but it didn't affect the contracts that were in place, because of the contract. But it will affect the new ones now (contracts) but we will accept that like the way things are going' (Interviewee No. 3).

To investigate this financial incentive as a motivation for participating, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: *'Gaining financially was my main reason for getting involved in the Sheep's Head walkway'*. Over 74.9% disagreed with the statement as seen in figure 5.16. It is interesting to further note that when asked *"What would improve the walkway for landowners?"* over 30.36% of respondents stated *'Certainty about future payments (Walk scheme payments)'* would be an improvement. These two opinions somewhat clash as it is evident that 75% of respondents disagree that gaining financially is their main reason for participation; however, 30% of respondents are now stating that they are worried about the future payments to maintain the walk. These findings create a probability that landowners and farmers are becoming reliant on payments. It can also be argued that they are simply seeing it as recognition for their contribution to the development of the walkway. As commented by interviewee no. 3:

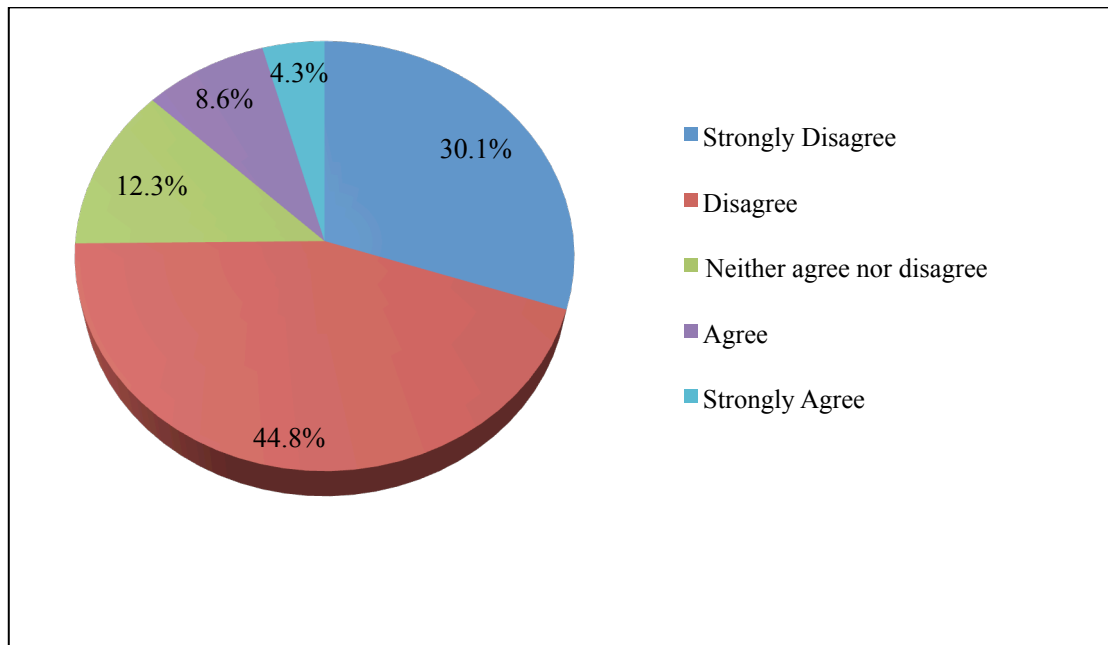
'What has been a great help to the walkway is the walks scheme... It was something we campaigned for years that the landowners would get some recognition because it helps everybody. It is a sweetener for the landowners to give access like and they do maintenance work on the walk...it isn't a big payment or anything like that but at the same time it is a little incentive anyway. There is a minimum and maximum payment kind of thing anybody won't get terribly rich out of it. At the same time it is an incentive and it is good for everybody. It is good for the walk, it's good for the landowners its good all round.' (Interviewee, No. 3)

Many recipients of this payment felt that if it was to discontinue, the standard of works carried out on the walkway would deteriorate and the volume of walkers coming into the area would decrease. This, in turn, would lead to a decrease in social benefits from the incoming walkers. One respondent remarked;

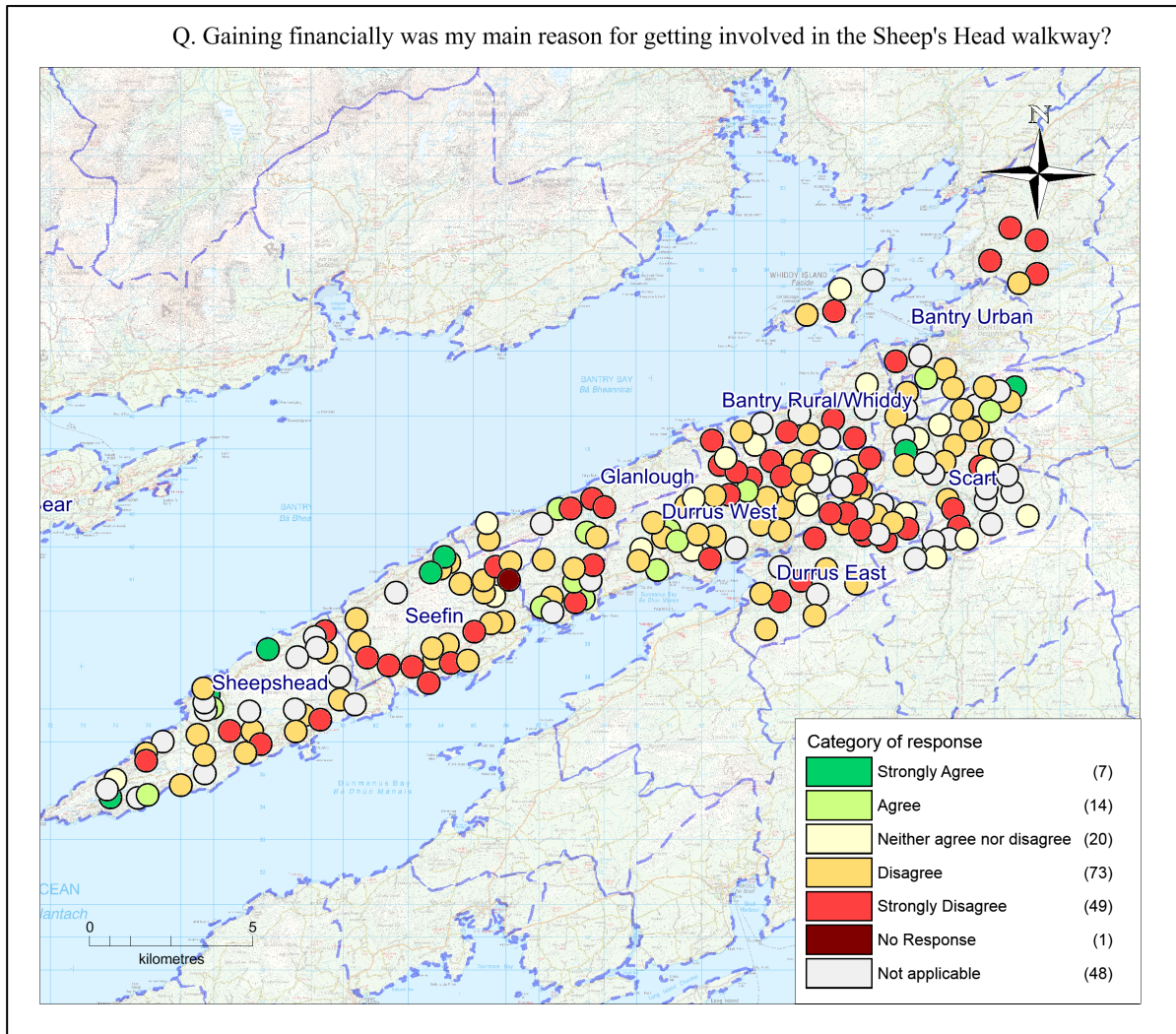
'I suppose the main concern is that we get a payment like and it is a big addition to the small farmer like and that would continue, that would be number one. And that the walk would be kept up to the standard it is because definitely for every walker that comes into the area, they spend and it is benefiting the area' (Interviewee No. 4).

We can furthermore spatially analyse this data, and by looking at map 5.12 it is evident that generally across all eight EDs the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement apart from a random spread of seven respondents. There is, however, a slight concentration of 'strongly disagree' respondents, mostly in the ED of Durrus East and Bantry Rural. This may suggest that the participants in the more urbanised areas feel they would not gain financially from the walkway.

Figure 5.16: Gaining financially was my main reason for getting involved in the Sheep's Head walkway



Map 5.12: Respondents opinion on the statement - Gaining financially was my main reason for getting involved in the Sheep's Head walkway



Analysis of ED location and level of agreement that gaining financially was the main reason they got involved in the Sheep's Head Way. ($p=0.015$, Cramer's $V=.268$).

Other spin-offs from the development of the walkway include the development of The Sheep's Head Producers' Market (SHPM), which was established in 2011 and has created economic, environmental and social benefits for the local community. The market is currently in a disused creamery which highlights the past deterioration of services such as creameries in rural areas.

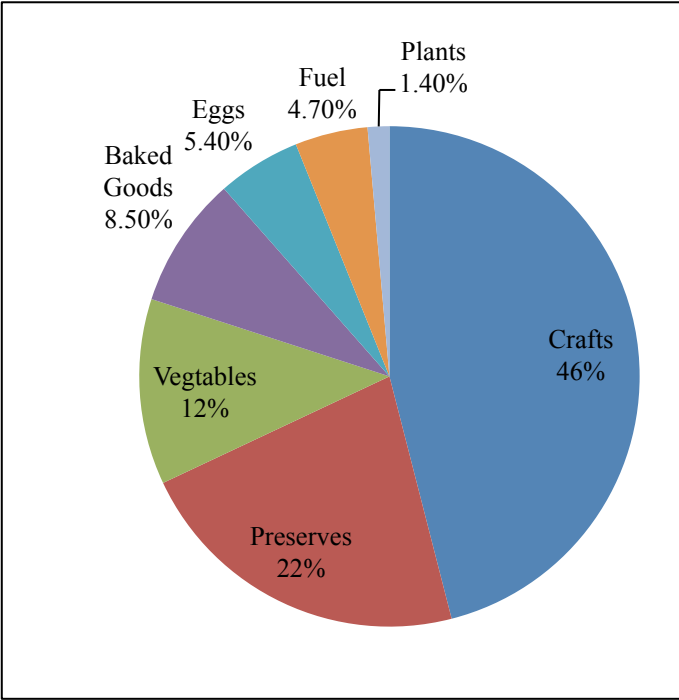
The market was designed to showcase and sell local produce and operate as a tourist attraction complementary to the walkway²⁷. The success of the market as a tourist attraction is evident from consumer data collected by the Sheep's Head Producers' Market Shop 01/09/12 to 05/01/13. The data collected from September to early January demonstrates the type of customer that purchases from the market. The study found that 59.9% of customers were local people, 37.6% were tourists/visitors and 2.5% were unknown (Sheep's Head Producers' Market, 2013). This is a brief snapshot of the customer type and reflects an impressive percentage share of customers listed as tourists granted this time period is considered off-season for tourism in the area. Figure 5.17 illustrates some outputs of produce likely to be found at the market and figure 5.18 illustrates the percentage breakdown of produce purchased by visitors in the investigated time period 01/09/12 to 05/01/13. Crafts listed as a 46% share of produce bought reflects a possible demand for local souvenirs or gifts.

²⁷ Aims of The Sheep's Head Producers' Market include; 1) increase local food production to reduce members' and locals' ecological footprint and improve sustainability in an era of climate change and economic instability; 2) it aimed to empower local entrepreneurs in a remote rural area to develop an artisan food, plant or craft business by providing a market for their output and by offering a new tourist attraction; 3) it intended to become a community focal point for sharing and exchanging news, ideas, services and skills.

Figure 5.17: Outputs from the Sheep's Head Producers Market

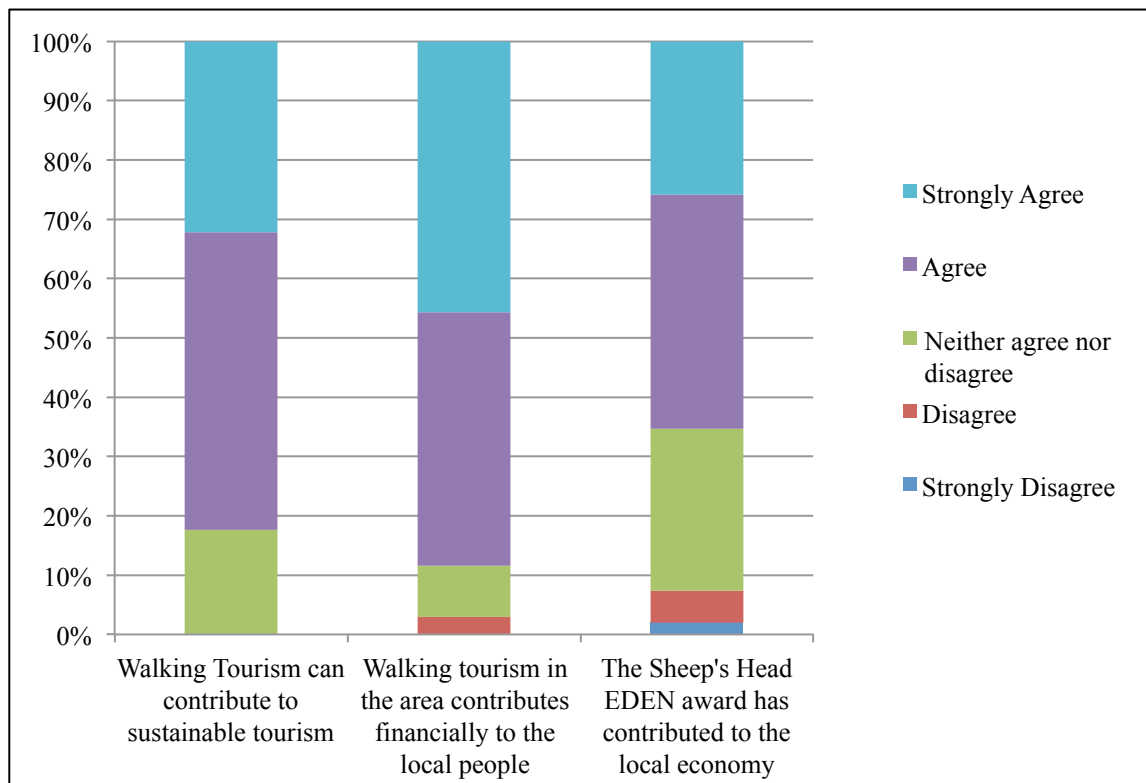


Figure 5.18: Percentage sale of produce to visitors at the (SHPM) 09/12 to 01/13



Overall, from the data collected it appears that there is positive opinion that the walkway contributes socially and environmentally to the local community. Figure 5.19 replicates this finding with 88.3% stating that walking tourism contributes financially to the local people and 82.4% of respondents agreeing that walking tourism contributes to sustainable tourism. The data reflects mixed opinion about the awarding of an EDEN²⁸ status in the area with 66.7% agreeing that it has contributed to the local area, 27.9% stating they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. It is interesting to note that 7.5% stated that they disagreed that it contributed to the local economy.

Figure 5.19: What has the walkway contributed to the local area?



²⁸ EDEN; European Destinations of Excellence, also known by the acronym EDEN, is an initiative launched by the European Commission promoting sustainable tourism development models across Europe.

Many respondents felt that the establishment and marketing of the walkway, including the accreditation of the EDEN award, brought an increase of tourists into the area. One respondent remarked;

'It (The EDEN award) has made a difference definitely in the past year now we have tried to develop a bit further. Loop Head in Clare have developed a tourism group. All the tourism providers if they are accommodation or whatever tourism products they would be providing they have all got together in a group to market the area and we are doing the same thing at the moment. We have established a group there in November (2012) so we are starting up at the moment to give the EDEN brand more promotion'. (Interviewee No. 3).

Some respondents noticed from the awarding of the EDEN brand there was an influx of tourists to the area. One respondent even remarks that there was a specific influx of walkers from Holland;

'For some reason there in 2008 they won the EDEN award whether it got big publicity in Holland at the time or not an awful lot of walkers came from there that year' (Interviewee No. 3).

The award essentially put the peninsula back on the map as many respondents felt the peninsula is often overshadowed by the popularity of the Beara Peninsula (North of Sheep's Head) and the Mizen Peninsula (south of Sheep's Head). Interviewee no. 1 commented that;

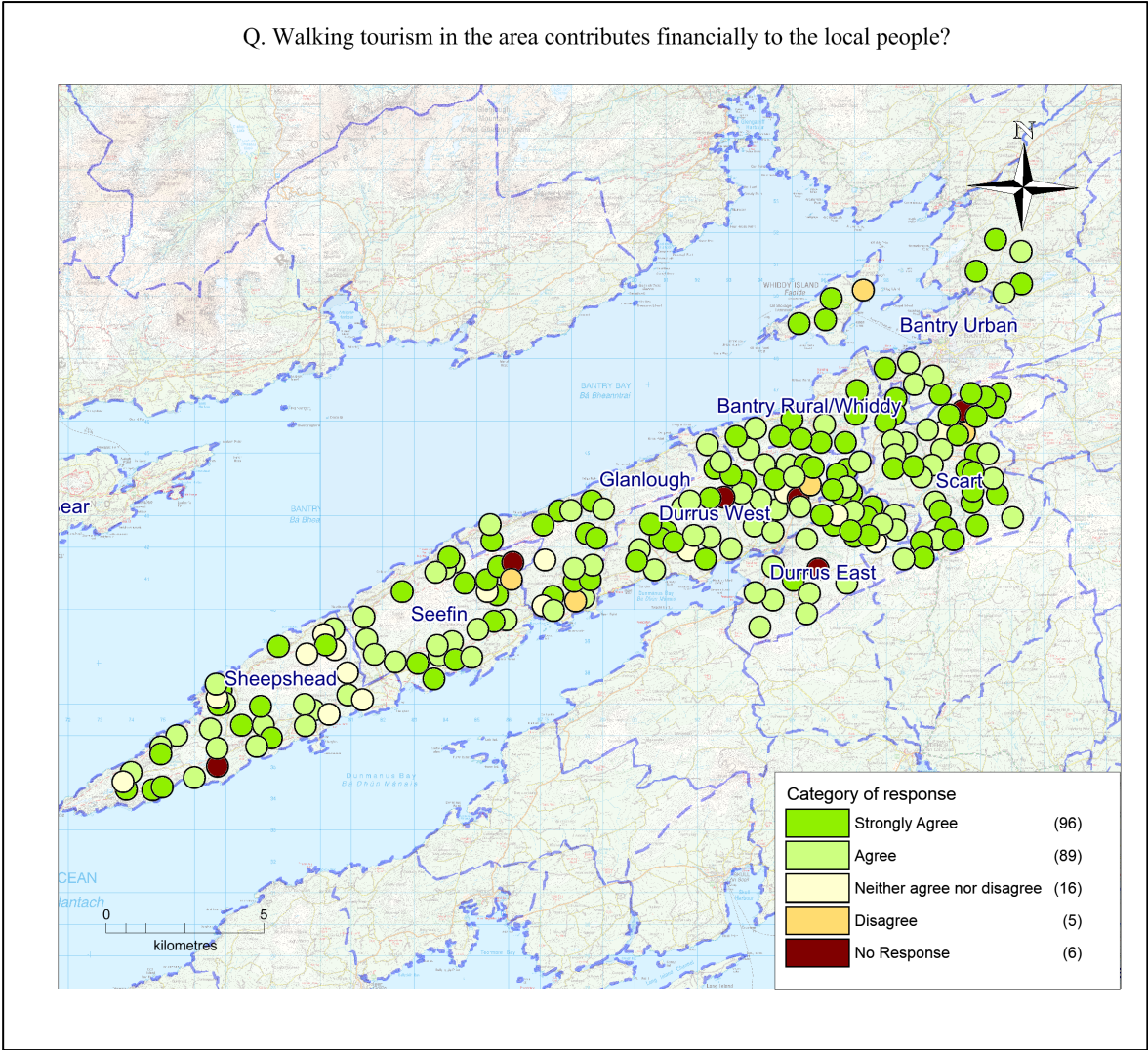
'I suppose it brings a lot more people around even if you visit any local bars there are a lot of tourists around. I suppose it was an area that wasn't known for tourism before (the walkway was created) so it brought a lot of people around' (Interviewee No.1)

The methods used to achieve the success of the project could be utilised as a benchmark for other similar walking tourism projects. The marketing strategy for Sheep's Head Way has drawn inspiration from a highly successful walking route already in place, Loop Head in County Clare. This walk way was voted the best tourist destination in Ireland from a poll in an Irish Newspaper 'The Irish Times' in 2013. Mr. John Tobin who is the chairperson of the Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-operative (SHBTC) stated that

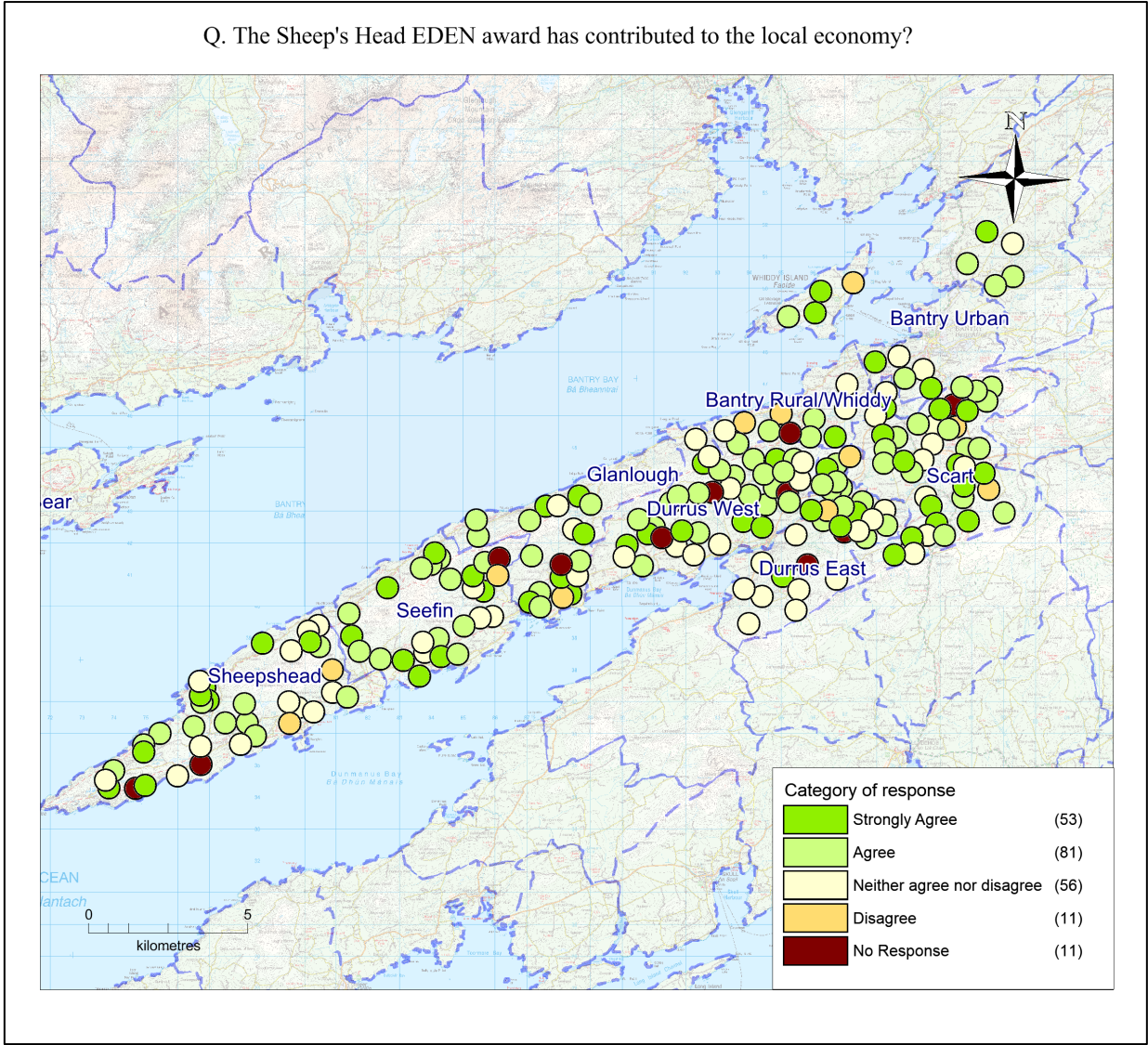
'from the outset, we have been working towards developing a plan like the one that was used on the Loop Head peninsula in County Clare... we need to work together, and promote ourselves actively in order to win a substantial share of the available tourist market'. (Keogh, 2013, p.1)

In addition to the mentioned benefits, it is generally accepted across all eight EDs that the walking route contributes financially to the local people. As seen from map 5.13, the majority of respondents 'Strongly Agreed or Agreed' that the walkway has contributed financially in some way. We can deduce from this figure that the economic effects of the walkway are not concentrated in any particular areas but are felt generally throughout the community. Map 5.14 illustrates a slightly more mixed feeling about the significance of the contribution the EDEN award has had on the local community. Generally throughout the peninsula there is agreement that it has contributed in some way, but more respondents have stated that they 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'disagreed' with the statement. A general finding from conversations with the respondents is that they do not know what the award is, or else feel that the award needs to be promoted more.

Map 5.13: Respondents view if walking tourism in the area contributes financially to the local people



Map 5.14: Respondents views if the Sheep's Head EDEN award has contributed to the local economy



In summary, the list of perceived benefits is not exhaustive but there is a general feeling amongst all eight EDs that some benefit is being created from the walkway. As one respondent remarked, it is an overall ‘community benefit’:

‘.as I said the B&Bs benefit, the shops benefit, the restaurants benefit it is a community benefit, and the other thing is the Sheep’s Head Committee have done a lot more than just the walk, they have provided car parking spaces that benefit everybody. If there is a narrow road they have made lay-bys even some of the really dangerous bends along the main road they have managed to get funding. So they have made the roads safer as well so they have done a lot more for the community than just the walk’ (Interviewee No. 4).

5.6 Research Findings 5 – Attitudes Towards Sustainability

As seen from the ‘Profile of the case study location’ chapter, more than 40% of the landmass of the peninsula is classed as a Special Area of Conservation, so it is inevitable that attitudes towards sustainability would rank positively. Based on the analysis of literature and of the interviews undertaken, a table highlighting the Sheep’s Head Way as a green and sustainable model of tourism was created. As seen from Table 5.3, it is clear that the Sheep’s Head way is the opposite of conventional mass tourism through the examples of good practices as listed.

Table. 5.3: Sheep’s Head Way – examples of best practice of green and sustainable tourism activity

MASS TOURISM	GREEN & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	Sheep’s Head Way examples
Development without planning	First plan, then develop	Development of Sheep’s Head way development group who consulted with all landowners.
District level planning only	Regional co-ordination of district plans	Co-ordination of plans to integrate the Drimoleague walkway.
Building outside existing settlements	Development within existing settlements	Developed the walkway on existing pathways and shared commonage land.
Intensive development in areas of finest landscapes	Fine landscape conserved	No railings or invasive signage was installed as part of the walkway.
New building and new bed capacity	Re-use existing buildings-better utilisation of bed capacity	Farm houses converted to Bed & Breakfast and hostels. No evidence of any new development to facilitate bed capacity.
Development by outside developers	‘Native’ developers only	Local people developed the idea and invited other members of the community to get involved.
Employment primarily for non-natives	Employment according to local potential	Local tour guides charge a minimal fee for groups of walkers.
Development only on economic grounds	Discussion of all economic, ecological and social issues	Consultation was evident among land owners with regards to the best possible route for the walkway. The area is also host to Special Area Protection status.
Farming declines, labour forced into tourism	Farm economy retained and strengthened	In some cases on farm accommodation provides supplementary income. Farmers acting as guide walkers also receive minor extra income.
Community bears social costs	Developer bears social costs	As the walkway traverses over 300 farms the developer essentially is the landowner who shares the opportunities and challenges of the walkway.

'Natural' and historical obstacles removed	'Natural' and historical obstacles retained	Old famine ruins such as buildings and potato rows preserved as part of the natural landscape.
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Source: Adapted from Butler (1992) and Lane 1988, Table. 7.1 is constructed from the initial interviews at the primary stages of data collection.

Farming in a protected area coupled with the long-term uptake in the REPS scheme contributes further to positive inclinations towards the environment. This feeling is also evident from a respondent who attributes his or her interest in the environment to participation in the REPS scheme;

.... Even with the farming I have been in REPS since the first year and I am finishing my last year in REPS 4 so I am nearly twenty years in that so I am very interested in the environment from that (Interviewee No. 4).

As seen from figure 5.20, 88.2% agreed that protecting the environment is very important to them. It is evident from figure 5.21 that over 78% of respondents stated that sustainably managing the landscape was important to them, and 86.9% stated that they had it was important to have an interest in sustainable tourism. These positive rankings of importance of sustainability issues are essential to the future development of the walkway and the locality. The community has generally strong links to sustainability, so it can be suggested that future plans for the area will encompass sustainable practice.

Figure 5.20: Protecting the environment is very important to me

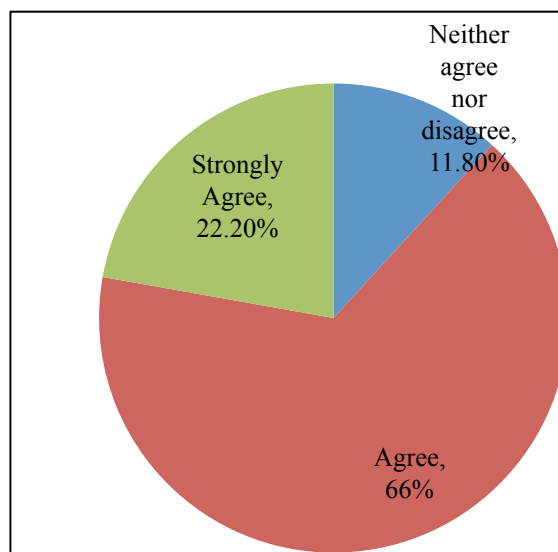
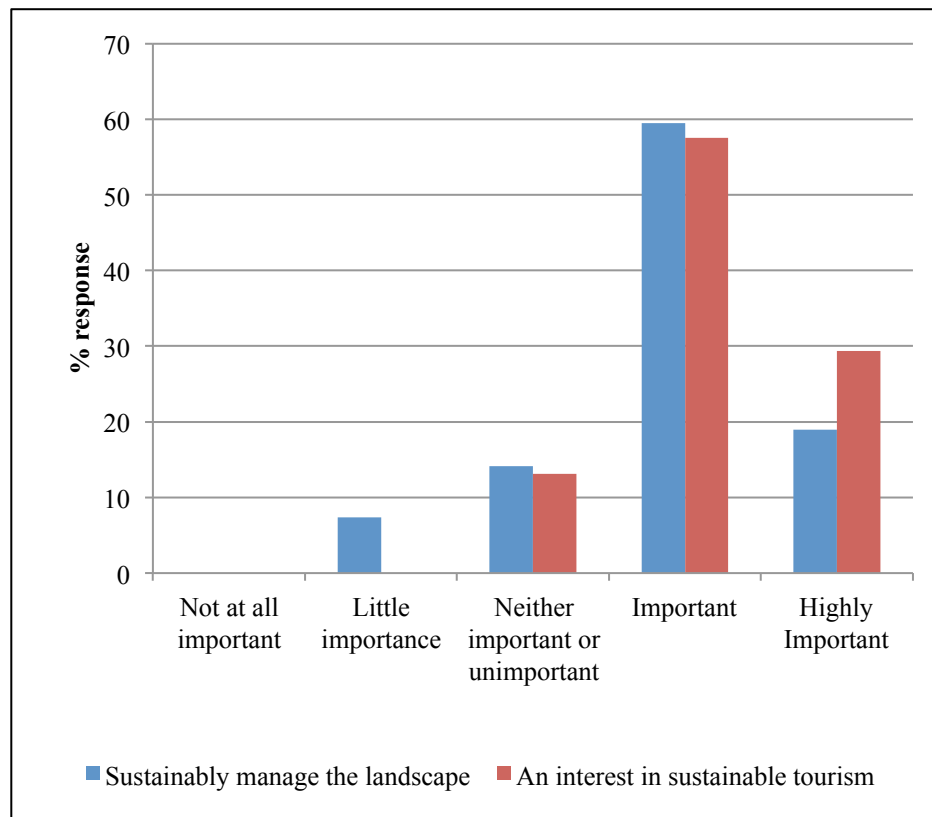
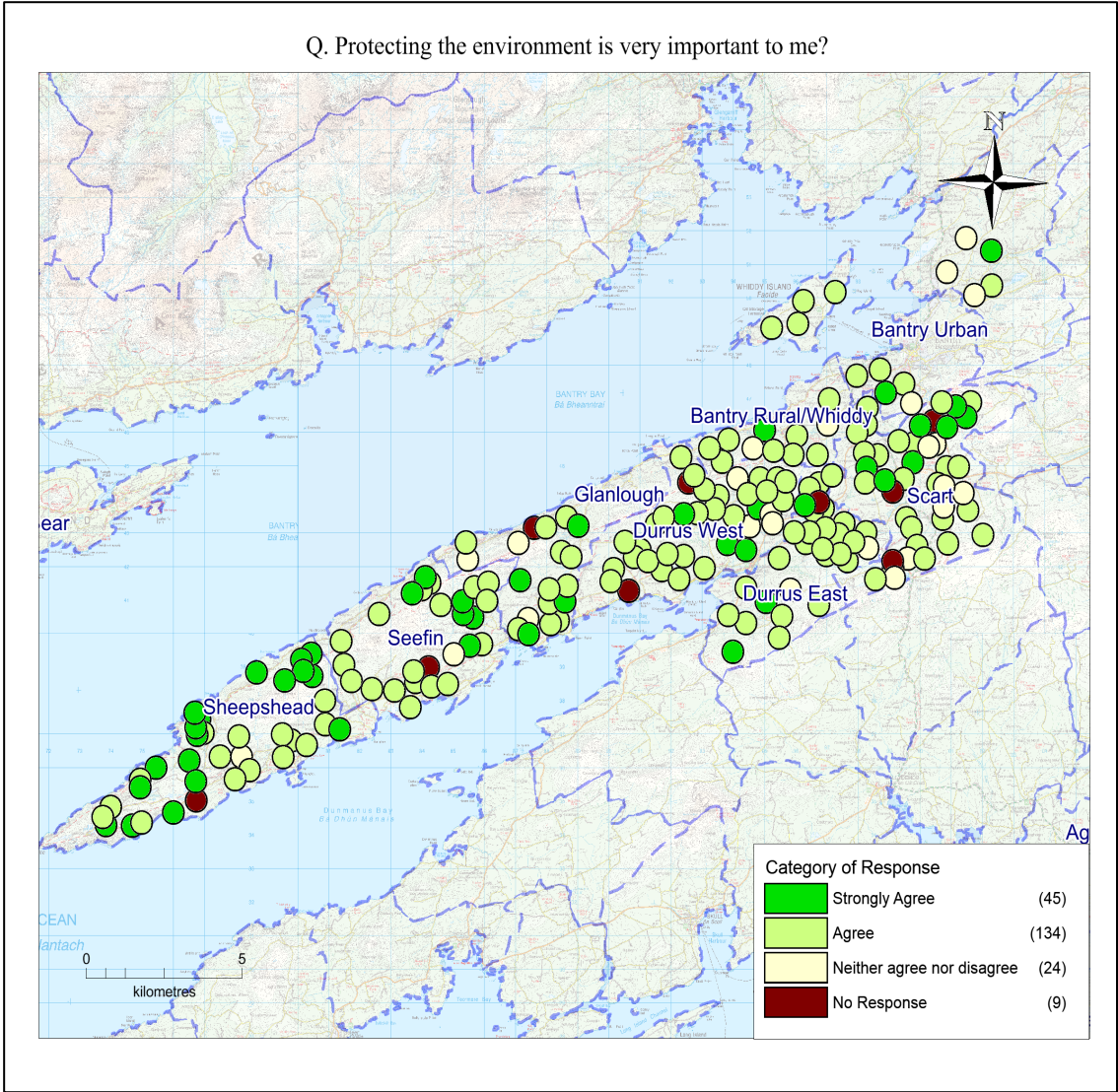


Figure 5.21: Respondents’ opinion on sustainably managing the landscape and sustainable tourism

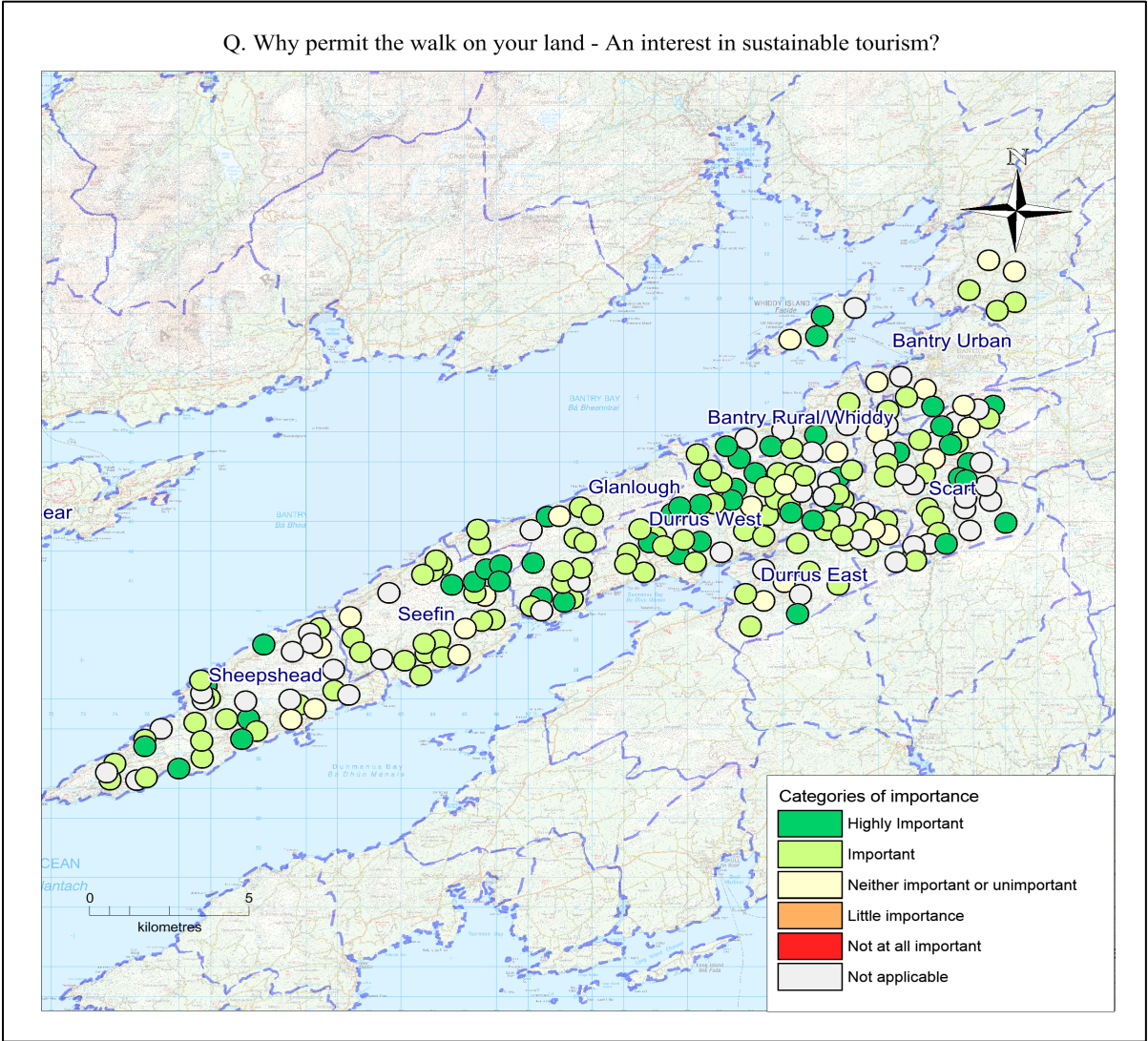


When examined spatially, appreciation for protecting the environment is a general feeling amongst all respondents; however, map 5.15 shows that there is somewhat stronger agreement that ‘protecting the environment’ is very important to the respondent, especially in the ED ‘Sheepshead’. This may be attributed to the ED having the highest percentage of land cover protected by SAC status. Map 5.16 illustrates the same spatial spread of opinion that the respondents who permitted the walkway felt they had an interest in sustainable tourism. Again, respondents in all eight EDs stated it was either ‘highly important or important’. Similar to the landowners and farmers who permitted the walkway, it was the general opinion from all respondents that walking tourism can contribute to sustainable tourism as seen from map 5.17.

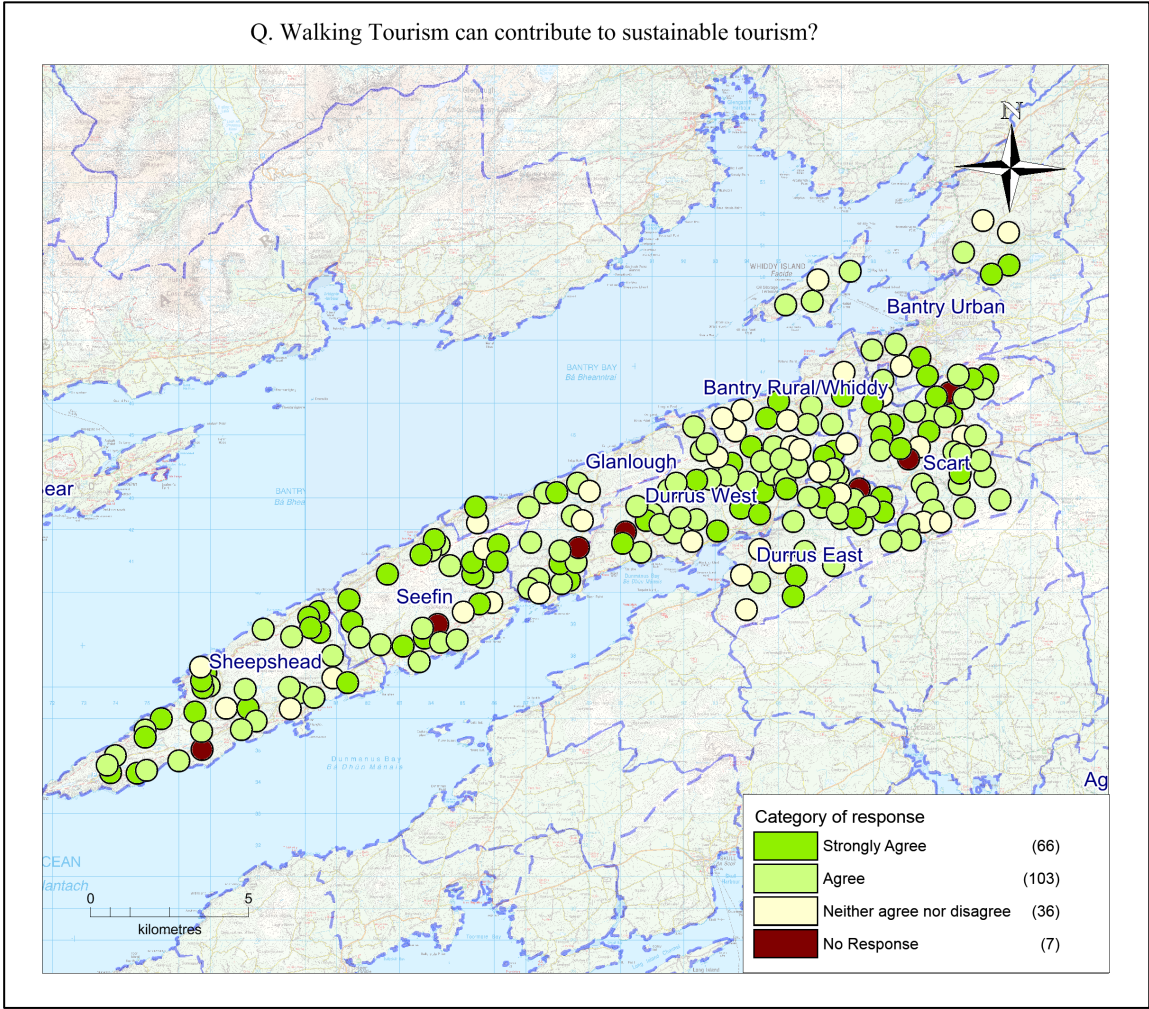
Map 5.15: Respondents opinion on whether protecting the environment is very important to them.



Map 5.16: Respondents opinion why they permitted the walk on their land when asked if they had an interest in sustainable tourism?



Map 5.17: Respondents opinion on whether sustainable tourism was important to them when deciding to permit the walkway.



In summary, the findings from maps 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 suggest there are positive attitudes to sustainable local development throughout the peninsula. The maps represent no unique spatial findings which suggest a unanimous feeling that protecting the environment and responsible tourism was the right fit in an area with a significantly sensitive landscape. What is also evident on the peninsula is an abundance of eco-friendly accommodation sites as seen in figure 5.22 which highlights the localised high regard for the environment and sustainability.



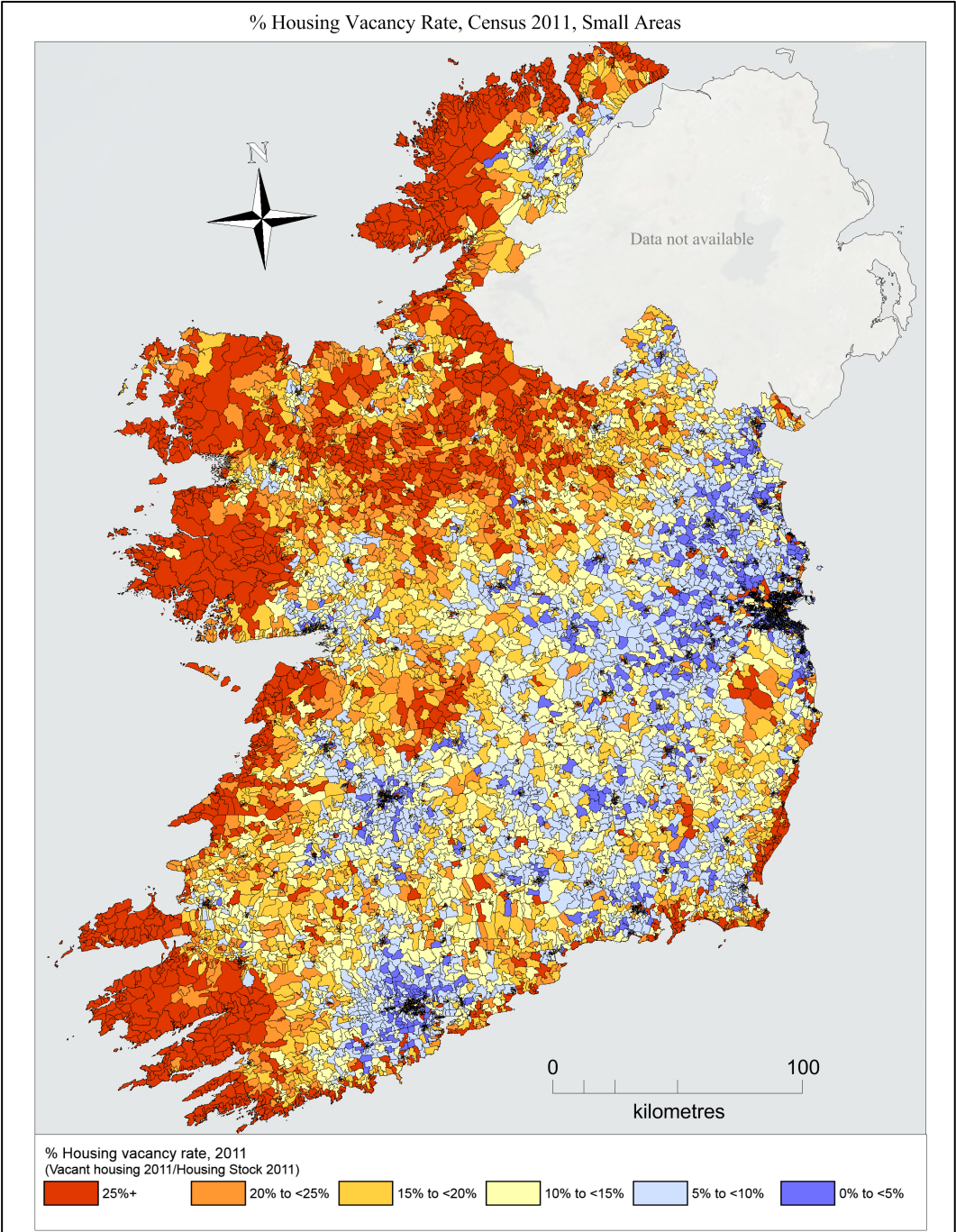
Figure 5.22: Evidence of eco-tourism accommodation providers

5.7 Research Findings 6 – Tourism Enterprises

The extensive nature and length of the walkway provides a market for tourism enterprises such as accommodation. Rural Ireland, especially in coastal locations, is no stranger to the phenomena of clustered holiday home development. This type of construction can have negative social effects on the host community as dwellings of this type may remain idle for consecutive months. In turn, the ‘residents’ of these properties are temporary dwellers and only contribute temporarily to the local economy. However, as witnessed throughout coastal regions, this clustered development can create increased seasonal employment for the local community and its environs. This work is usually temporary and carried out by employees with low skills.

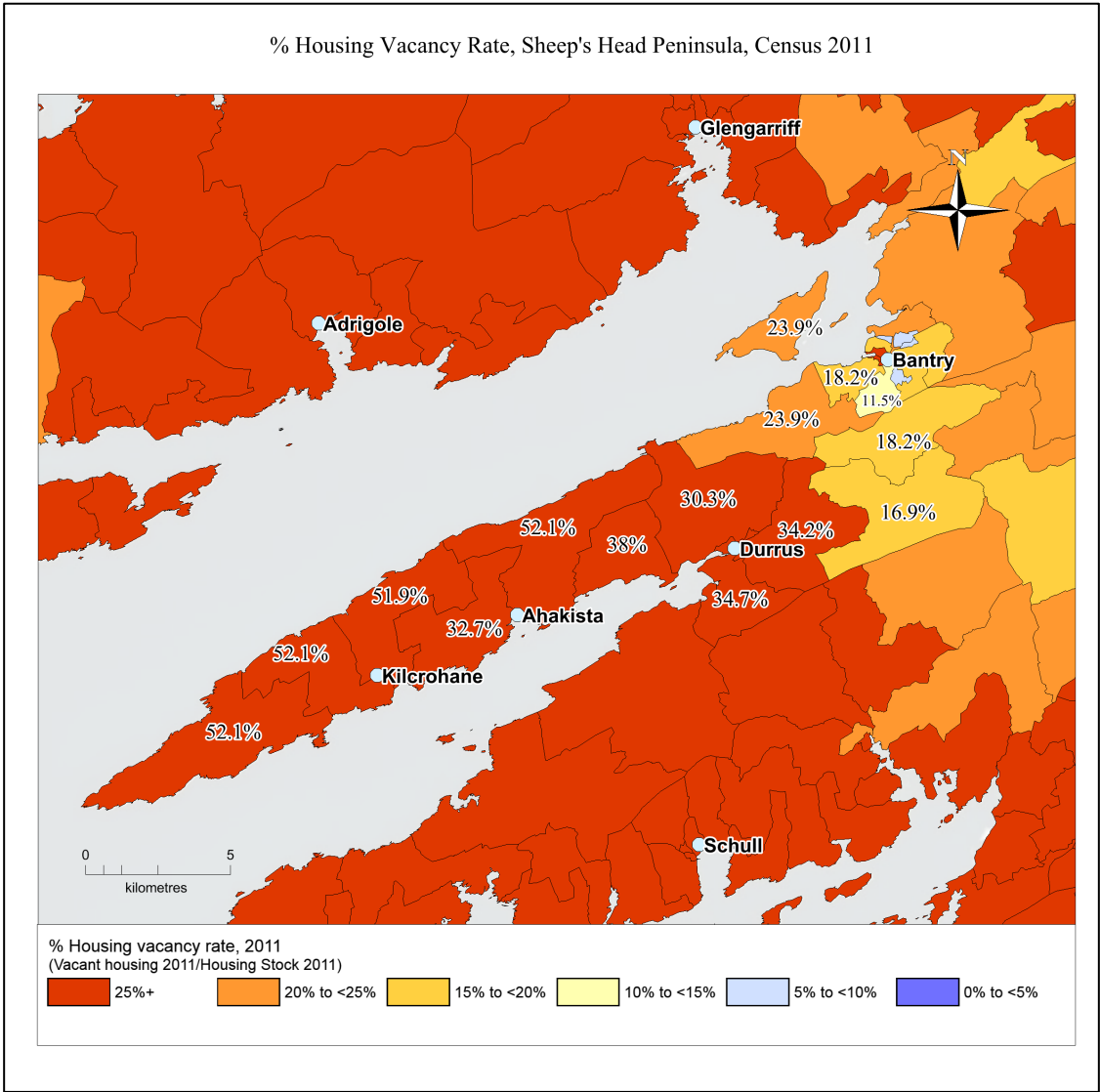
Map 5.18 illustrates Small Areas of Ireland and their percentage of vacant housing. This figure is based on the number of vacant houses divided by existing housing stock. The patterns that emerge from this data reflect an obvious trend of vacant housing in coastal areas.

Map 5.18: Percentage of Household Dwellings Classified as Unoccupied by Small Area, 2011



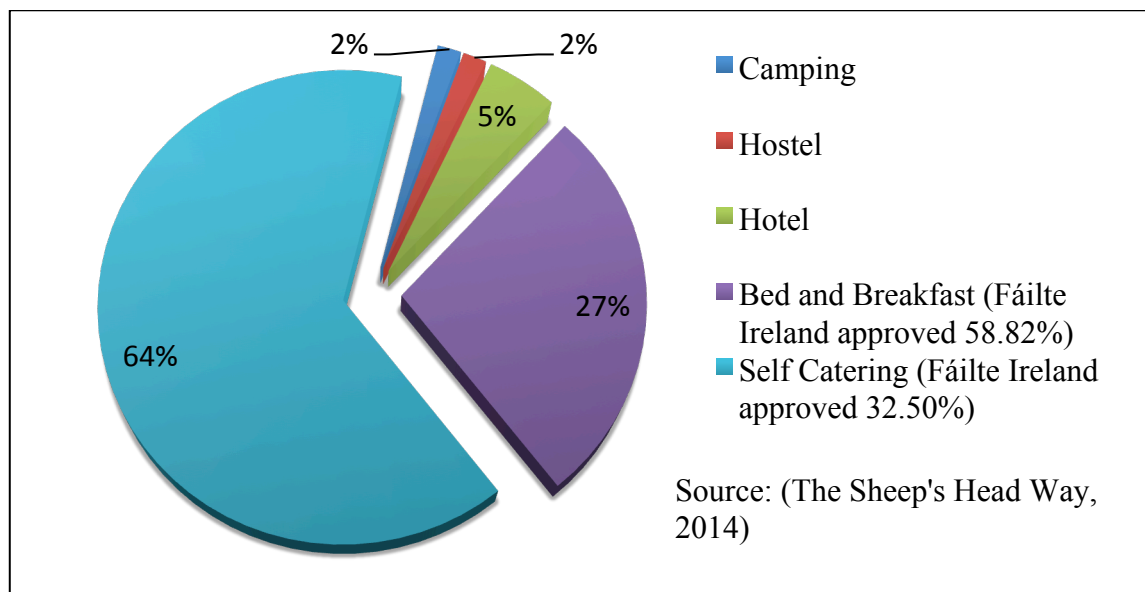
There are significant concentrations of vacant housing on peninsulas, and especially in areas such as West County Galway and Mayo; and the county with the highest share of vacant housing is Donegal. From this figure, we can see the Sheep's Head example, and it is clear that the entire peninsula has a percentage housing vacancy rate of more than 25%. If we examine this in more detail from map 5.19 and amalgamate the Small Areas back into EDs, we see that three EDs in fact have a vacancy rate of over 50% namely Sheepshead (52.1%), Seefin (51.9%), and Glanlough (52.1%).

Map 5.19: Breakdown of % housing vacancy rate on the Sheep's Head Peninsula, Census 2011



The vacant housing rate on the rest of the peninsula ranges from 30-38%, with the exception of the environs of Bantry town with 11% to 23.9% housing vacancy rate. These figures tell us many things; firstly, the vacancy rate does not solely reflect holiday homes but in many cases may be housing left vacant due to out-migration of rural areas. However, it can be considered an indicator of mass holiday home developments. We can also investigate further (figure 5.23) the breakdown of accommodation providers on the Sheep's Head Peninsula. This was achieved by documenting all of the active listings of accommodation providers within the environs of the peninsula. These were categorised into types of accommodation and whether or not they were Fáilte Ireland approved.

Figure 5.23: Breakdown of accommodation providers on the Sheep's Head Peninsula



A total of n=62 listings were found on the peninsula. The majority of accommodation that is available for visitors is self-catering properties at 62% (32.5% Fáilte Ireland approved). The second most frequent provider is B&B accommodation with a 27% share (58.2% Fáilte Ireland approved). Accommodation providers are often the primary financial beneficiaries of the tourism market, and a number of providers highlighted during the survey reported that they are struggling to maintain sufficient levels of business. Many suggested that the adjacent urban centre of Bantry is gaining the majority share of bed nights due to the two

hotels in the town. Others stressed that the rising cost of insurance and lack of support from enterprise agencies are detrimental factors leading to the closure of accommodation providers on the peninsula. One interviewee, however, suggests that the B&B owners were not trying hard enough to promote their businesses.

'The biggest single thing is to talk to the people. I will make a specific point even if I had to go a little bit out of my way to meet people and to converse with them but I would always ask them where are they staying? And a number of them will be staying in Killarney; you know it's a pet complaint of mine. I think the B&Bs here make no effort they want the trade to come in the door to them. The walk was officially opened in '96 and West Cork Tourism ran a festival that year and we guided it and we had 25 people, and the following year we had 230 people we increased it tenfold in one single year... I would have felt if I was a B&B owner that day I would be walking amongst those people pushing my card into their hand. And say "I'm John²⁹ and I have a B&B over the road and I can offer you a packed lunch, transport to the start of the walk x, y and z." you know and sell myself. Not one single B&B owner stood there that day and tried to sell themselves, it was unbelievable that the number of people that came back to me at the end of the day saying "You know thank you, great day, we would love to come back but there is nowhere to stay on this peninsula". I thought it isn't my job to be telling ye because the people that are making money out of it should be here themselves... But you can't beat being there you know, a politician will always press the flesh, you may not like it and that's the hard way but to look into their eyes and smile and make the personal contact with them. You know if one in every ten of them came back they might bring a partner they might bring family?' (Interviewee No. 6).

The view from the previous respondent illustrates that there is a possible lack of effort from the accommodation providers. This view may reflect a general consensus of accommodation providers or a personal opinion. The providers that are succeeding in the accommodation market are the ones who are adapting their premises to suit the customers and also who are seeking financial support from enterprise boards to develop their dwellings to suit the market. One respondent remarks how one of his neighbours received support to develop their existing dwelling;

.. for instance our neighbours Charlie McCarthy like his B&B and a lot of people would be coming to him because of it and I think for some people there are grants available for people who have old houses who want to do up their

²⁹ Name of interviewee was changed

accommodation for people doing hill walking so those kind of things. And maybe from West Cork enterprise board (Interviewee No. 2).

Similarly, interviewees highlighted that many B&B and accommodation providers are striving by renovating existing farmhouses and outhouses for the tourism market. On the peninsula, one respondent states:

.. there is a B&B and self-catering place completely rebuilt just down across the fields from us here (Interviewee No. 3).

Other respondents highlight that specific accommodation sites are solely attracting walkers:

.. The B&B down there, Julies place, Carbery Cottage and she has had many people stay because of the walk. The gateway was a new place where people go in there on a Sunday morning, for coffee before they plan their route. I suppose Ahakista Escapes a lot of walkers stay there (Interviewee No. 5).

We also see businesses adapting to the market and installing features that are walker friendly. It is apparent that the accommodation providers that are tailoring their accommodation sites to suit the walker are the ones with the best business in the area. One respondent comments on a B&B that installed wet and dry rooms:

McCarthy's what they have done is put in wet rooms and dry rooms and all that. I would say there isn't a week in the year that they have not got walkers (Interviewee No. 4).

An essential element to bring return walkers to the area is to create a quality experience that is unique from other peninsulas and rural areas. The Beara Way is a larger peninsula which has a well-established walking destination. It is essential that the Sheep's Head peninsula remains competitive to attract tourists to the area. It is also imperative that the peninsula works in collaboration with their neighbouring peninsulas to market the area as a regional destination. Towns or areas that market themselves as a single destination often stand less of a chance of attracting tourists. The local accommodation providers realised in the last three to four years that the two hotels in Bantry are gaining an increasing share in bed numbers. Instead of competing against them, a Sheep's Head Co-operative was formed, assisted by LEADER funding and business donations of €100.00 for membership. This

collaborative relationship can lead to many benefits such as information and skills sharing, marketing the region as a destination, and leverage to attract financial support due to its collaborative nature. Some local people feel that the B&Bs are in some ways being bypassed by the walkers who are opting for hotel accommodation. This is not specifically a local trend but a general one, as B&B bed nights are generally on the decline as customer preferences change. One respondent remarks how the carrying capacity of the walkway was at its peak during the boom years of 2006-2008:

Like at the height of the boom you could meet 40 vehicles coming in the morning and two people in each of these high-powered 4x4's. They came in with their packed lunch, they walk for the day and came west in the morning one after the other and they had left absolutely not a euro to show for their visit to the area.... The walk is worth more than the Maritime and the Westlodge. ...I would imagine that the walk is worth more to Bantry (hotels) than it is to the local B&Bs. (Interviewee No. 6)

Hopefully with the implementation of the co-operative new connections and relationships will emerge from the collaboration. This may lead to an increased business share of tourists seeking accommodation on the peninsula.

5.8 Research Findings 7 – Opportunities and Challenges

5.7.1 Opportunities

The success of the Sheep's Head Way can be considered an example of best practice; however, the sheer scale of the project did come with its own opportunities and challenges.

The section, research findings 4 - benefits of the walkway, discusses a multitude of benefits acquired through the formation of the walkway. This section examines the positive aspects as perceived by the facilitators of the walking route. Firstly, opportunities arose from the localised endogenous development of the walkway. The local people and owners of the land utilised for the walkway had a sense of control and ownership of the project. This led to increased community responsibility to ensure the success of the walking route. As evident from the previous themes, community collaboration and two key leaders in the community were the primary enablers of the development of the walkway. To examine further the opportunities and successes of the walkway the respondents were asked 'If you

think the walkway is successful what are the main drivers of these successes are? As this was an open ended question, the responses were quite varied; however, they were categorised into the following groups;

1. Local community (31.0%)
2. Good organisation and upkeep of route way (21.8%)
3. Two local actors of the community (21.3%)
4. Determination of the Sheep's Head Committee (11.2%)
5. Beautiful Scenery (7.6%)
6. Financial and or professional support (egg. LEADER) (4.1%)
7. Untroubled/open access of route way (3.0%)

From this data it is again evident that local community and the two actors who enabled the project were the main drivers of the success of the walkway, with over 52.3% of the response rate. Good organisation and determination of the Sheep's Head committee also rated favourably from the respondents with (33%) of the feedback received. It can be summarised here that a local organised committee was the basis for the success of the project. Nearly all of respondents remark that the beauty of the landscape is unmatched anywhere in the country and many others state that they never appreciated the landscape until they realised that other people were coming to the area to appreciate it. One respondent remarked:

When I was younger I spent a lot of time up on that hill and even as a young teenager I had no interest in views and stuff and when I went up on that hill I would think wow isn't this amazing up here and nobody else would see that only locals, and now is it open up to everyone to see its good. It brings people back to the area (Interviewee No. 2).

The respondents were asked the question 'Have you as a landowner experienced any positive aspects of the walkway?' The results highlighted that the most important aspect was to meet new people (42.9%); second, that it provides income for the local area 21.4%,

and thirdly it promotes our landscape (20.8%). The fourth most popular answer was that it has no effect on my daily routine (8.3%). This result may seem surprising as a benefit or positive aspect to the respondent, but it reflects the non-invasive nature of the tourism feature. The fifth most popular answer was that it brings people to the area (6.5%). Similarly, respondents of the interviews were asked to discuss any “positive experiences you have had in regards to this project?” The overall consensus from interviewees and respondents of the questionnaire stated that they have had a generally positive experience with the walkway. One positive that is often highlighted is the non-invasive nature of the walk which ‘does not bother’ the respondents. One respondent states:

Most people walk to the place they drop the car somewhere and they close the gates and everything in fairness. We have never had problems with litter (Interviewee No. 5).

5.7.2 Challenges and obstacles for future development

The respondents were also asked ‘What are the main obstacles to the development of the walkway?’ as seen in table 5.4. The most significant response to this question was the uncertainty of future payments for the maintenance of the walkway (36.0%). As these payments only roll out on a five-year basis and the future of these payments is uncertain and it causes worry amongst the recipients of the payment. Even though the financial amount is quite low, the payment is also viewed as recognition to the farmers for maintaining the walks. Another respondent highlighted the concerns they had about the payments for maintenance of the walkway. Regardless of the low value of the financial assistance it is something to assist the landowners and farmers in return for maintenance of the walk. Most of the respondents feel that the participants of the walkway were the right people to receive maintenance payments as the shops, cafés and services in the area gain organic growth from the walkway.

‘You know also as my husband was saying there, there was a top up in the REPS payment originally which was worth the top up at the time to people who were in REPS. And then was it the European Parliament at that time decided then it wasn’t agriculturally related, it was tourism related and they cut it from the agriculture it was taken away. It took years and years then in fairness the

Sheep's Head committee fought very hard to get back money for the farmers. And I think they were the ones entitled to it, and even though it is not a huge amount of money you get so much per linear meter. But they are the right people to get it, that means there is a bigger circle of people benefiting from the walk. It is the people who are important, the people who have given the access and made it possible for people to walk. So in other words there are quite a lot of people benefiting from it now because everyone on the Sheep's Head way who had owned a little bit of land' (Interviewee No. 7).

Table 5.4 Main obstacles to development

1. Uncertainty of future payments for maintenance (36.0%)
2. Other (19.1%)
3. People not spending enough money/time in the area (18.0%)
4. Not updating the Route (11.2%)
5. Peripheral location (7.9%)
6. Not linking the walk with neighbouring attractions (5.6%)
7. Lack of facilities (2.2%)

As well as the economic, social and environmental benefits listed throughout this chapter, the people of Sheep's Head listed their concerns about the walkway. These concerns centre around four main themes:

- 1) Walkers wandering into active farm yards and bringing dogs with them.
- 2) Issues of insurance and damage to property
- 3) Lack of expenditure from the walkers and
- 4) Issues of restricted access in the future

The biggest fear amongst respondents is the on-going issue of dogs on the walk or gates being left open (41%). Even though the website explicitly states 'no dogs allowed', people disobey the rule on a constant basis. Dogs that are not trained to be around agricultural

livestock can be a danger to the stock, and in many cases throughout the questionnaire collection, the respondents stated that some of their livestock have been killed by dogs, albeit on rare occasion. The second issue was walkers wandering off track/ parking inappropriately (31.7%). This was a result of walkers wandering on to active farmland that may be dangerous to themselves or livestock. Some respondents also commented that walkers parked their cars on narrow roadways blocking agricultural vehicles or private roadways. The third issue was, needing to be aware that people may always be on your land (16.1%). This was an issue for many respondents who felt that their land was now open to walkers and that their private land was subject to constant traffic. The final three issues mentioned were pointless routes (6.8 %,) 'other' (3.7%) and rubbish (0.6%).

An additional issue is the problem of insurance and damage to the landowner's property. Landowners and farmers generally feel as if they are not protected enough against public liability regarding damage to their property. This is a very important issue that needs to be addressed on a national basis but even more specifically in rural areas that are under SAC or SAP protection. One interviewee highlights that the biggest worry is walkers (not in a menacing way) causing fires on the peninsula. Nearly forty percent of the land cover on the peninsula is firstly in a special area of conservation and the vast percentage of this is commonage land with heaths and heathers. This type of land cover is extremely vulnerable to fires and with the peripherally of the area, it is very difficult for fire engines to access. A fire on this sensitive landscape would be detrimental to the rare species and biodiversity that is found on the peninsula. One farmer is anxious about the problem of fires in the area, caused by walkers:

'The biggest single worry that they caused us is lighting fires. I mean they have no concept; they do not light the fire to do any harm. Some of them camp out on the mountain and they have no grasp of the volatility of the mountain. And that is the biggest single worry, the litter and everything else is manageable. If they set fire to a mountain they could destroy tens and thousands worth...Like who would cover that? I mean if a mountain was burned during the closed season, which is from the end of February to the first of September. I mean number one the department is entitled to cut off your single farm payment, and the onus is on you to sue the person that caused the fire. How do you sue a walker like? ..I would still say the single biggest worry is the fires, and if I found them like they would be using small stoves and that sort of thing. They couldn't grasp that even if one wad of that dry fanán caught fire they could be capable of taking

out the greater area around them. That is something, I mean I met groups that come in with African drums and sit out on the points and I meet them and chant and they are fine out they are no danger or no concern but like that is where they could cause a big problem, totally unwittingly and you would always have to go to those people and try instil into them the danger. I mean technically they shouldn't camp, but a certain amount of them will they are travelling people or whatever' (Interviewee No. 6)

The third issue is the perceived lack of expenditure from the walkers and the issue of tours going in and out of the area without leaving some sort of contribution for the use of the landscape. Two issues arise from this: firstly, the lack of expenditure in local shops and cafés and secondly, non-native guides coming into the area. Some of the persons interviewed perceive the walkers as people who do not spend any money in the area. One respondent claims:

(I think some of the walkers are mean) Mean in the context of not spending, that is standard. Not only am I a facilitating landowner I am a member of Clonakilty walking club, I walk as well and I do think that walkers as a general rule are tight fisted. They bring as much as they can with them and avoid buying. So what they are worth is very little, but it has to be viewed in a background that without them there would be even less. (Interviewee No. 6).

On the other hand, the respondent acknowledges that without the walkers there would be no contribution to the local area, regardless of the value. Another respondent states how the situations with drink driving laws and changes in culture have influenced the stay of the walker and guide:

Benefits to the area financially over the years would have dropped because in the older days you had more guide walks around the place it would be common to go to one of the pubs in Kilcrohane or some place near the walk was happening and a shot of sandwiches would be put out and everyone would have their cup of tea or maybe a few pints. But with laws now stricter, people are less inclined to stay around (Interviewee No. 8)

The decline of tapping into local tour guides is due to the transition of walking clubs into a business type model. This is fuelled with the development of technology. One respondent claims that walking clubs come into the area so organised, with lunches, maps and technology that there is no longer a need for local guides:

There are clubs now whether it is any big business now there are a lot of walking clubs now and they come well prepared whether it is sat navs or whatever, maps or Google they don't have to depend anymore on locals for local knowledge, or anything now (Interviewee No. 7).

The fourth issue is the peripheral location of the peninsula and its restricted access to the tourism market via Cork or Kerry airports and ferry ports. The peripherality of the area was highlighted in map 3.2. These important hubs of connectivity are more than an hour and a half drive from the peninsula. There is an on-going fear that the area will not be able to consistently attract tourists as far west as the Sheep's Head.

One respondent remarked:

'I suppose the lack of the ferry and the lack of flights into Cork too, even friends of ours always come into Rosslare and drive down from there to here and that is a fair distance really' (Interviewee No. 7)

Although not a reported general fear amongst respondents, one respondent reflects that there is an increase of non-Irish landowners in the area and that he felt they may be capable of restricting access in the future:

'The biggest threat to it is you have less and less local people and more and more foreigners living in this area. The majority of them at best are not interested and worse if they dislike people travelling along and that is a threat going forward. I think it is number one as a landowner to make contact with them but also to let them know they are welcome on the land. If you go to them and say you are welcome and you make it so much more welcoming and so much more likely they will go back with a positive vision of the area other than if you walk past them ignored them or walk past them they might think "what is with yer man like, does he want us here at all' (Interviewee No. 6).

5.9 Conclusions

All of these themes contribute to the success story that is the Sheep's Head Way, and this case study area can be considered an example of 'best practice' when considering developing a rural tourist product. The local community has successfully enhanced the local area economically and socially and have done so in a sustainable manner by identifying opportunities in their local area. As illustrated in the maps there is little variation in findings: the impacts of the walk and perceptions thereof seem to be consistent across its case study area. This general consensus

amongst respondents is a tribute to everybody involved and can be considered as an indicator of positive local development. In the report *Innovation Modernising Rural Economy* published by the OECD (2012), it is highlighted that rural areas can harvest various areas of opportunity other than traditional agriculture. These “areas of opportunity” include tourism, forestry, renewable energy and local foods, and these areas can facilitate economic opportunities in rural areas. As seen from the data collected, tourism and local food produce are being maximised to their full potential to create a model of sustainable local development. The results in this chapter indicate the primary findings of this research under six themes. The next chapter moves on to discuss the relations and correlations between these results.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

As seen throughout the literature review chapter, there have been several attempts to define nature-based, eco, sustainable, and other forms of tourism that interact with the environment. It is often easier to single out what characteristics are not parts of the definition instead of trying to figure out what we *can* include in a definition. It can be concluded that the alternative tourism market is somewhat opposite of mass tourism. However, mass tourism is often defined by numbers and carrying capacity. Since all environments can have different carrying capacities, then nature-based may, indeed, be mass in certain environments. We can also possibly agree that nature-based tourism is a subset of the alternative tourism market. In addition, by examining all definitions it is relatively clear that all three subsets of tourism (sustainable, nature-based and ecotourism) are interlinked and related in some way. Nature-based tourism usually occurs in rural spaces, and these spaces can fit under a multitude of categories: rural areas with high/low urban influence, rural areas that are being used for intensive agriculture and rural areas that are remote and with poor or protected land. This list is in no way exhaustive, but it is important to note that the indefinable nature of rural spaces should mirror an indefinable means of how to manage these spaces. Each rural space is unique and under a legion of various influences. Thus, a one size fits all approach is fruitless in regard to nature-based tourism management and development. In the Sheep's Head Peninsula, a unique and individualistic approach was adhered to when the area was developed for tourism. Factors such as protected areas, active farmlands, rural hinterlands, and the changing course of agriculture were considered prior to the development of the walking route.

The results chapter illustrated various themes that emerged from the quantitative data but was also backed-up by a selection of qualitative data. The interviews and open-ended questions illustrated similar patterns that concentrated on a select number of themes. Some interviewees felt more strongly about non-Irish residents living in the area and how they potentially will have less of a commitment towards the walkway. Other interviewees focused on particular issues such as overuse of the walkway, redundant walking routes and

lack of marketing. Generally, the overall sentiment reflected a great appreciation and admiration for the landscape and the achievements of the Sheep's Head committee. The previous chapter identified these numerous themes in detail that emerged throughout this thesis. These themes, when examined, offer differing spatial variations when mapped. In general, there are few spatial variations in the attitudes, motivations and beliefs of tourism providers. This is not a negative or disappointing result from this research. The finding of uniform answers amongst all respondents is an indicator of positive community cooperation and collaboration. It illustrates a community that is on the same page in regard to sustainable local development. Results of this research enable us to understand the dynamics between community co-operation, collaboration and empowerment in rural areas. The aim of this thesis is to undertake in-depth and comprehensive case study research that gives voice to members of the farming community and local civil society stakeholders as the main protagonists and guardians of a landscape that forms the basis of a well-established ecological tourism resource, namely The Sheep's Head Way. In so doing the thesis aims to complement and add value to existing research that has tended to focus on users rather than on the suppliers of environmental goods within the tourism sector. Figure 6.1 highlights some of the key words that emerged from this study; the world pictured highlights the most used words throughout this document. It is evident that the larger the word the greater its presence in the thesis. As seen it is interesting, but not surprising to see the most prominent words such as: local initiative, LEADER, social, best practice, environment, cooperation, collaboration, endogenous, benefits and cohesion emerge.

of the data, were not a common feature. The results of the mapping are further discussed in this chapter.

As seen throughout the results chapter, these research objectives were investigated in a thematic way and the results were presented through seven themes including:

The importance of farming in the area

Endogenous development of a tourism product

Differentiating reasons for participating in the walkway

Economic, social and environmental benefits of the walkway

Attitudes towards sustainable development

Tourism enterprises in Sheep's Head

Opportunities and challenges of the SHW

This chapter will take a similar approach but will integrate models of nature-based tourism through the following themes: endogenous development; economic, social and environmental benefits of the walkway; community benefits from walking tourism; opportunities and challenges of the Sheep's Head Way and conclusions.

6.2 Endogenous development of a tourism product

As examined throughout this thesis, the most influential element of the formation and promotion of the walkway is the local people who are behind the project. A partnership approach at all levels can maximize tourism benefits and minimize duplicated effort and conflicts within a complex and multifaceted tourism industry (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Greer, 2002; Laddkin & Bertramini, 2002; Nimmonratana, 2000; WTO, 2001b). The grass root nature of the Sheep's Head development enabled further community co-operation and collaboration. This approach from two key stakeholders who spearheaded the project facilitated landowners and farmers to work together in co-operation to administer tourism development (Churgusa, 2007). Co-operation can be defined as

'groups of independent businesses which recognise the advantage of developing markets jointly rather than in isolation but may be unable to directly appropriate the benefits of co-operative activities... they are tied in a loose way' (Palmer et al., 2000 p.274, Palmer, 2002 p.135).

Morrison (1998) identifies the importance of co-operation in the tourism sector particularly for those who are located in a peripheral region or area. In the case of the Sheep's Head Way, the community is central to the character of the area. Gray (1985) identifies five critical characteristics of collaboration necessary to ensure that working together is successful. These include:

1. Interdependency of the stakeholders whereby an incentive is required to induce participation;
The Sheep's Head way was initiated by two prominent figures in the community who, in turn, formed a committee with the local community.
2. Joint ownership of decisions;
All decisions were collective rather than individual, and the walkway was branded as a community project owned by the community.
3. Solutions emerging by dealing constructively with differences;
Each landowner was given the option to reroute the walkway if they wished. This resulted in a more efficient set up of the walkway. However, many respondents claimed that this method facilitated ill-planned routes.
4. Collective responsibility for future direction;
The entire community gain benefits from the walkway, so it is a community responsibility to work collaboratively to update the route, promote it and develop it in the best interests of the community.
5. The recognition that collaboration is a dynamic, emergent process;
It is inevitable that people will move in and out of the area. This is an issue for the land access that was initially set up nearly twenty years ago. Many respondents fear that if the land transfers into an unwilling landowner, then the route ways will remain incomplete or access will be blocked.

As noted in point three, one respondent highlights his concerns for the ill-planning of some of the routes:

'I would say one thing that it is over extended. There are too many zig zags made into it, and it took from the credibility and quality of the walk... I think it

was ridiculous in some situations as in order not to upset farmers. But you have some farmers wanting the walk on their ground as obviously the more linear meters the better so you have stupid situations where the walk is almost in a zig zag. To a real walker that is totally disgusting like you know no one wants to walk in a zig zag. So I think that took from it and is a negative. But I think it could have been a hard decision because maybe they might of upset landowners (Interviewee no. 6).

In addition to these characteristics, there are much more important aspects of community collaboration. The increase of public engagement and the opportunity to meet and to discuss community issues and problems is an essential component of any community project (Michels and De Graaf, 2010). A community's sense of ownership, feeling of responsibility and practical involvement in tourism has since been stated by academics and practitioners as vital to the sustainability of tourism and of great importance to planners, managers and operators (Olsen, 1997; Campbell, 1999; Mountain Agenda, 1999; Ross & Wall, 1999; Page & Dowling, 2002; Boyd & Singh, 2003; United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2004a, 2004b; as cited in Simpson, 2008).

6.3 Economic, social and environmental benefits of the walkway

As seen in the literature review chapter, Mehmetoglu (2010) indicates ecological, cultural and social, and economic sustainability as the three tiers of sustainable tourism (Figure 2.1). All three tiers are essential components of the Sheep's Head Walkway, and the benefits the community receive from the establishment of the walking route. Zapata *et al.*, (2011) highlights the different characteristics and effects that are the outcomes of community based tourism projects. Figure 2.3 draws attention to the alternate characteristics and effects that are associated with top down community based tourism (CBT) and bottom up CBT. It is evident that there is significant input at community level to accelerate the project into what it is today. This bottom-up approach in the long-term is the most sustainable option for this type of tourism. Zapata's model of 'community-based tourism' identifies numerous characteristics that are evident in the Sheep's Head. One 'characteristic' that can be considered related to the case study, is that the business (tourism product) is based on some initial knowledge and networks. The project was spearheaded by

Tom Whitty and James O'Mahony, who were two prominent community figures that had local connections. Their expertise in hill walking (Tom Whitty) and farming (James O'Mahony) created a perfect synergy to expand their network. This network eventually transposed to the scale of over 300 participants who collaborated to facilitate the walk. The community experiences 'effects' of community-based tourism. These effects can be unique to the location and the community. One effect is the strong ownership of the tourism product. This is attributed to a strong cultural connection with the landscape which is the sole component of the tourism industry in the area. The respondents state (98.1%) that a cultural connection to the land was an important factor in permitting the walkway. Similarly 81.6% of the respondents state they are living in the area on a long term basis, 'at least 50% of my life'. It is also evident that 86% of respondents are long-term farmers in the area with over 66% farming over 20 years and 20% farming in the area 10 to 20 years. From these figures it is clear that the long-term residency of the respondents contributes to the cultural connection with the land, and a greater degree of ownership and responsibility for the landscape. The Sheep's Head Tourism Co-operative, set up in 2012, enables the community to have control over the marketing and networking of the route, which is another effect of bottom-up CBT. The community also has semi-control over the management of the walk; however, the special area status may not be compromised as this is a statutory measure. The participants who maintain the walkway must also comply with the Rural Recreation Officer who monitors maintenance efforts and, in turn, sanctions the Walk Scheme payment. This relationship still occurs at community level as generally the Rural Recreation Officer is a local employee employed through Local Development Companies (LDCs), and funded through LEADER funding.

6.4 Community benefits from walking tourism on the Sheep's Head Peninsula.

Saxena *et al.*, (2007, p.352) illustrates that there are five potential community benefits that can be derived from nature-based tourism ventures:

1. Direct economic benefits
2. Experiential benefits
3. Conservation benefits

4. Developmental benefits

5. Synergistic benefits

The listed five benefits are evident in the Sheep's Head case study and tie in appropriately with the themes discussed in the results section of this thesis. Synergistic benefits (relationships between local actors); however, are the most difficult of all benefits to measure and to quantify. Nevertheless, the value of these benefits must not be underestimated as they can contribute to social cohesion and information sharing.

Firstly, there are direct economic benefits that can be achieved if significant value is added to the economy through the promotion of nature-based activities (Saxena *et al.*, 2007). Ideally, the value added would be of a greater volume than value leakage from rural areas; this would potentially create a growth in income and additional opportunities for employment³⁰. A local economy is in equilibrium when the incoming investment to supply services and infrastructure equals the leakage (outgoing taxes, tourists spending outside the immediate area)³¹. In the early stages of the development of the walkway, the initial investment was modest, as the looped walk utilized most of the original pathways that were established decades ago. The landscape was not transformed in a dramatic and costly way as non-invasive infrastructure such as wooden signage and stone bridges was utilized. These natural materials blend in with the local landscape and are also cost effective. According to the local rural recreation officer, 244 participants contribute 22,494 hours, towards the maintenance of the walks. The payment is currently €12.40 per hour which would equate to an annual maintenance cost of €278,935.00³²; this financial assistance is supported by the Walks Scheme. In order to create the financial equilibrium where investment equals leakage, it requires the total number of incoming tourists to spend over €278,935.00 in one year. West Cork Development Partnership (2012) compiled a report to

³⁰ It is said that mass tourism developments such as golf and ski resorts create quite large economic leakages as profits are not dispersed among local beneficiaries.

³¹ Tourism affects the equilibrium by two types of income injections: tourists' expenditure and tourism investments (Ryan, 1991).

³² This is the basic maintenance cost of ensuring the pathways are kept clear, vegetation is cut away and fencing is intact. This figure does not take into account short or long-term projects such as new signage, advertising and marketing, and new fencing and styles.

evaluate the benefits of walking tourism. The process involved placing counters at Atha Thomais which is on the main Sheep’s Head way marked route. These counters document how many walkers utilised that particular route, from the 15th April and 13th July. Table 6.1 illustrates the daily totals from the counter.

Table 6.1 Sheep’s Head Way Usage Counts

Daily Total from Atha Thomais Counter							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Average	29	8.8	7.9	8.4	11	17.8	8.1
Max	372	34	19	24	47	72	22
Min	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: West Cork Development Partnership (2012)

Extrapolating the daily averages for the 109 day period suggests that the total number of walkers using the path is just over 4,700. However, using the daily maximum as a guide, this could reach up to 30,000. Walker counts of the Sheep’s Head Way from the period April 2009 to March 2010 indicate that the level of walkers using the route is over 22,000³³. By utilising basic calculations of the best case scenario for the walkway (30,000) walkers, the maintenance cost is divided by the number of walkers.

$$(\text{€}278,935.00/30,000) \times 100 = \text{€}10.75$$

This result, albeit basic in its formula, suggests that to create equilibrium between investment to supply services and infrastructure and leakage each tourist must spend over €10.75 on average. As tourism is generally an expenditure-driven economic activity (Mihalic, 2002), services and accommodation providers are the first to gain the financial benefits of tourism in the area. It is envisaged that the incoming tourist will spend money in the small businesses such as bed and breakfast accommodation, shops, gift shops and

³³ It is advised that count data be treated with caution due to the fact that there is limited qualitative observation to provide meaning to the counts themselves – i.e. weather conditions, special events, party size/composition, and local versus ‘tourist’ use.

restaurants that sell local produce, which is grown locally and tends to generate lower economic leakages (Lee, 1997). The peninsula has a strong ethos of supporting local produce and buying local, as is evident in the menus of the restaurants. The ‘Good Things Café’, for example, in Durrus village has a list of their food producers and the provenance of their food on their lunch menu:

Clovisse Ferguson, Gubbeen Greens, Schull Co. Cork (15km distance to café)

Fingal Ferguson, Gubbeen Smokehouse, Schull Co. Cork (15km distance to café)

Giana Ferguson, Gubbeen Cheese, Schull Co. Cork (15km distance to café)

John Chamberlain, Sea Urchins, Dunmanus Bay, Durrus, Co. Cork (1km distance to café)

Valerie Kingston, Glenilen Farm, Drimoleague Co. Cork (22km distance to café)

Tommy Arundel, shellfish, Ahakista, Sheep’s Head Peninsula, Co. Cork (8km distance to café)

Veronica Steele, Milleens Cheese, Eyeries, Beara, Co. Cork (67km distance to café)

Toby Simmonds, Toonsbridge Dairy, Macroom, Co. Cork (58km distance to café)

Jeffa Gill, Durrus Cheese, Durrus village, Co. Cork (1km distance to café)

This is only one example of many businesses endorsing local produce, which is a sustainable means of business. This practice also ensures that the expenditure of the tourist remains within the hinterland of the peninsula and enables less economic leakage. As witnessed in the results section, the respondents note that many cafés and restaurants had improved business as a result of the walkway. Some businesses such as the Sheep’s Head Way Café are 100% reliant on walkers for survival due to its peripheral location at the tip of the peninsula near Tooreen lighthouse as seen at figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 Sheep's Head Café at the tip of the peninsula



Secondly, there could be experiential benefits that can be achieved through strategic planning as well as the marketing and labelling of products and services of the host destination.

This collaborative and strategic approach is evident with the labelling and marketing of the walkway with two interlocking rams (Figure 6.3). This image is replicated for the Sheep's Head Producers Market with the same logo encased within a circular star (figure 6.4).



Figure 6.3 Sheep's Head Way Logo



Figure 6.4 Sheep's Head Producers' Market Logo

High quality and locally produced food are in high demand from the nature-based tourist, and they could ultimately lead to a higher standard experience for both tourists and the local area (Saxena *et al.*, 2007). The Sheep's Head Producers Market (figure 6.5) produces



this high standard product as all items in their store are produced locally, including crafts, fresh vegetables and fruit, fuel, baked goods and preserves. Over a third of customers using the producers market are visitors to the area. Saying this it is evident that the market has tourism appeal. The most popular items for tourists to buy are crafts or souvenirs, which are listed as a 46% share of produce bought. As well as economic development, the evolution of the agricultural sector can be used as an agent of sociocultural development (Tosun, 2006).

Figure 6.5 Sheep's Head Producers Market

The Sheep's Head Co-operative not only provides an outlet for the selling of local produce, but also it creates a meeting place of local people to discuss trade, sales and the future of the market. As rural spaces are no longer associated specifically with agricultural activities, they can be instead viewed as places where new forms of socio-economic activity occur; the market is a hub of this activity. These types of activity generally incorporate the tourism sector, leisure activities, speciality and artisan food production and consumption and e-commerce (Saxena *et al.*, 2007, p.347). In the case of the Sheep's Head Way, the producers market acts as a centre for many of these strands of activities but primarily incorporates tourism and artisan food production.

The third benefit listed encompasses conservation benefits, which would potentially be created through empowering the multiple actors of the tourist industry to take constructive action in the conservation and regeneration of human and natural resources (*Ibid.*). Meaningful local involvement can ensure that conservation efforts will be effectively promoted (Liu, 2012). Walkers on the peninsula can act as indirect rangers of the landscape and report damaged plantation, fallen trees or even land/coastal erosion. Walkers and users of the walking route can contribute to the conservation of the landscape informally, through documenting bird watching, species or wildlife. The walking tourism industry has great potential to contribute to biodiversity conservation and at the same time increase economic opportunities. This is the case specifically for protected and sensitive areas (Liu *et al.*, 2012). The Sheep's Head way has a significant proportion of its land mass protected under Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Protection (SAP). Areas that are protected under the EU habitats directive are protected by statute. The status can be, in many cases, a hindrance for farmers, as their usage of land for agricultural purposes is quite limited. On the other hand, protected areas provide multiple environmental services to the farmers and landowners, namely, watershed protection, erosion control, nutrient cycling and safe drinking water (Constanza & Folke, 1997; Kalemani & Chape, 2004). In addition, protected areas provide opportunities for leisure, wildlife watching, and other nature-based tourism activities (Chang and Gunnarsdotte, 2012).

It is evident from the Sheep's Head case that landowners and farmers in the area have a strong, if not symbiotic, relationship with the landscape and environment. The basic principles of conservation of the local landscape have been instilled in the farmers' consciousness perhaps from decades of REPS, coupled with awareness that it is a sensitive and protected landscape. Walpole & Thouless, as cited in Sandbrook (2010), agree that nature-based tourism is the basis for the generation of revenue streams for conservation and simultaneously benefiting the host community. This is also true for the peninsula as the areas under protection status cannot be farmed intensively; this land however, is suited for walking trails. These routes will not severely erode the landscape if maintained and if there

is adequate drainage. Walking tourism, in general, has a low impact factor on the land if the destination has no issues with carrying capacity.

Europarc Consulting GmbH (2012) state that the most ideal way to develop and to manage tourism in protected areas is to step back and create a sustainable tourism strategy. This strategy will then focus on visitor management and related conservation objectives. Siobhán Burke, who is the current marketing coordinator at Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-operative, is undertaking the task of developing a sustainable tourism promotion strategy for the Sheep's Head Way and the communities around it.

Alternative means of conserving the landscape whilst hosting sustainable tourism activities are evident in New Zealand. Throughout New Zealand, tourism operators are undertaking conservation work themselves, including: controlling pests and weeds, protecting threatened species, propagating native plants, contributing financially to conservation management and research, encouraging visitors to contribute, showcasing ecotourism best practice and care for the environment, advocating conservation to clients and involvement in local conservation campaigns (New Zealand, Department of Conservation, 2014). This strategy enables the tourism operators to advocate sustainable practice whilst tourists are observing or co-participating in the conservation efforts. This creates a pyramid of knowledge from the experienced tour guide to the tourists themselves. Additional ways in which walking tourism can contribute to conservation is raising the profile of protected areas. For promoting the benefits of biodiversity conservation and increasing local participation, education is key. The ideal formula for this type of sustainable tourism development is to engage stakeholders as the primary contributors to sustainability, coupled with strategic planning as an appropriate framework (Simpson, 2010). Tourism in sensitive areas like the Sheep's Head peninsula can become unsustainable for many reasons as pin pointed by (Kruger, 2005). One of the primary challenges for the area is the overpopulation of tourists. Two respondents note this occurring in 2008, which they claim was the boom year for walking tourism. They expressed their frustration as cars and jeeps obstructed the narrow roads along the peninsula. The year in question (2008) was not long after the area won the EDEN award, so a connection may join the two events. The second challenge is a lack of local community

involvement, which leads to consumptive land-use. This is an unlikely scenario for the Sheep's Head way as the community has been behind the project for the last two decades, and has initiated the creation of a new co-operative. The third challenge is not enough control and management of properties and resources, which can lead to the spread of unsustainable practices. As outlined in the results chapter, vacant housing on the peninsula is a social, environmental and economic problem. During the collection of data for this thesis, it was evident, however, that there were a number of 'eco-houses' or 'eco-accommodation sites'.

Fourthly, developmental benefits claim that integrated rural tourism³⁴ can become a path to "rural pluriactivity and rural multifunctionality", providing valuable new opportunities for the development of rural regions that are lagging where tourism can compensate for economic decline in agricultural output (Saxena *et al.*, 2007, p. 352). As farming in Ireland is changing at a rapid pace³⁵, small farmers on the Sheep's Head peninsula are struggling to compete with the scale of larger farms, whose outputs are significantly lower due to economies of scale. Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, (2011) suggests that the loss in agricultural income has justified the growth of rural tourist activities, yet it is important to note that agricultural activities can be utilised as an asset in the development of nature-based tourism. An example of this is establishing an 'open farm' business and charging tourists to visit the farm and live animals. No example of an open farm or any agritourism activities exist on the peninsula. Establishing an agritourism business may be a niche project for future businesses on the peninsula, and this method can utilise agricultural activities to develop nature-based tourism in the area.

In addition to the provision of agritourism activities, accommodation providers are particularly dependent on walkers to provide income for their B&Bs and self-catering houses. The majority of accommodation on the peninsula is self-catering (62%), 27% of the share is B&Bs. Typically B&Bs are established as a means of earning additional income to compliment an incoming wage. This said, it is important to note that it is not the intention

³⁴ IRT

³⁵ In order to combat the transformation that agriculture has experienced it, is essential that we stress the magnitude of tourism as an instrument of economic development (Briedenhann and Butts, 2005).

for walking tourism to substitute for agricultural activities; instead, the idea is to integrate a new type of income as a supplement to their current income (Saxena *et al.*, 2007)³⁶.

The fifth and final benefit is synergistic benefits which can be achieved through the development of partnerships between local actors in the implementation and reorganisation of institutional policies. Collaboration enables both parties to tap into a wide range of resources and benefits (Saxena *et al.*, 2007). Other partnerships include tiers of government and non-government programs and ideally create a link with the tourists themselves (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Dual partnerships are essential on all tiers of the public domain from the top-down and bottom up, which is also identified as ‘endogenous’ and ‘exogenous’ control (Awh *et al.*, 2012).

Linked with this benefit is the empowerment of local people and the community, using tourism as a mechanism for local development. Empowerment of local actors gives a sense of responsibility and ownership of the local tourism product. Community involvement is a type of endogenous action that may influence a greater value locally and create a feeling of empowerment (Cawley *et al.*, 2007). Empowerment, however, is not intended to encourage local groups to adhere to ‘do it alone’ policies but to work in conjunction with government and EU funding or assistance groups to create a more progressive type of tourist environment. As witnessed in the Sheep’s Head once the two founders of the walkway formed a committee they then searched for additional support and funding. This was the recognition that a project of this scale was not achievable by two persons, yet it was empowerment of local people that initiated the beginnings of the walkway. It was truly a case study of an endogenous project with 100% of the plans coming from local actors. Contemporary methods of planning have a significant reliance on participatory planning which can lead to empowerment. These modern concepts advocate an extensive range of ‘stakes’ which in doing so creates an equitable platform that involves a greater number of local actors in the planning and management of resources (van Rijsoort and Jinfeng, 2005). Local actors who want to promote nature-based tourism need to acquire responsibility of

³⁶ An example is the England-Wales border region that is experiencing a decline in agricultural income and has responded by implementing a strategy for integrated rural development with tourism at its core (Ilbery *et al.*, 2007).

their community as nature-based tourism is essentially the commodification of their culture and environment. This was evident throughout the case study as the local people have a cultural connection to the land. This connection is complemented by an appreciation of nature and the environment. Without some level of local empowerment the host community may become detached from the notion of local tourism and in time may view it as a threat more than a valuable and potentially viable economic resource.

There have been numerous positive case studies of empowerment within the local community that run semi-dependent, or independent, of higher authorities. Clark and Chabrel (2007a, pp. 377-378) list the following European case studies that demonstrate examples of good practice. Firstly, a hill walking holiday group called 'Terra Ferma' has been established in Valencia (Spain) which has contributed to increasing tourist numbers into a formerly unvisited area and has also improved the local sense of self-worth. Secondly, the England and Wales border tours and walking groups which use only local people as guides to prevent economic leaks and to ensure that local people benefit from this tourist activity. The third example of good practice is in Slavonice (Czech Republic) where the local World Heritage site is controlled by the town's Renaissance society. Fourthly, in Auvergne (France) a social network utilises the Route de Métiers to run the Regional Park and operates semi-independent of the public authorities. Finally, in the West Region (Ireland) a group called GaelSaoire has developed festivals that facilitate local people in selling local produce and reviving cultural traditions in an independent manner while being funded by the government. The Sheep's Head Peninsula can confidently be added to this list as a prime example of a successful bottom up development that is still functioning two decades later. As mentioned above, there are numerous examples of good practice in regard to empowerment and involvement of the local community.

More readily observed benefits such as economic gain are discussed in Jamal and Getz (1995), who cite several studies that have shown that persons who benefit from tourism are more aware of the economic advantages of tourism but have a lower perception of social and environmental impacts. Many studies that focus on rural communities reflect for the most part positive perceptions of tourism development and its influence on the local economy (Allen *et al.*, 1993). An investigation into social exchange theory can further help

explain resident attitudes towards the tourism industry. The benefits however must not be overlooked. Table 6.2 highlights the four different forms of benefits from community-based tourism, namely economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits and the building of skills and influence. What is recognisable from these four categories is that they encompass the three tiers of sustainable development as outlined previously.

Table 6.2 Positive characteristics and the benefits of Community based Tourism

Economic	Direct employment opportunities (including, administration, guiding, tours and transport, construction, hospitality, management, accommodation shopping, food and beverage outlets)
	Indirect employment opportunities (including, environmental management, entrepreneurs, other secondary industries)
	Supports the development of multi-sector or mono-sector non-profit enterprises (benefiting/controlled or strongly influenced by communities)
	Provides invigoration and development to local economies
	Provides alternatives to changing or fading traditional industries
	Increases land values, and thus rates payable to council for community services
Environmental	Improves environment (changes in subsistence leading to less degradation of natural resources)
	Encourages awareness and appreciation by the community of natural assets and the environment and other resources on which tourism relies
	Enhances management and stewardship of natural resources
Socio-cultural	Provides and stimulates infrastructure development (roads, communications, healthcare, education, public transport, access to drinking water and food supplies)
	Fosters civic pride (in community, culture, heritage, natural resources and infrastructure)

	Mutually beneficial (to all stakeholders in the community)
	Creates opportunities (broadening of idea horizons)
	Preserves cultural and social heritage and local languages or dialects, promotes cultural understanding
	Supports and preserves local and unique crafts and skills
	Appreciation of cross-stakeholder goals and agendas,
Building of skills and influence	Influencing and enforcing government policy (national, regional and local)
	Skills enhancement (training; such as administrative, service industry, maintenance, guiding)
	Building capacity collectively and individually
	Fosters empowerment: gender and community; social, financial, political and psychological

(Adapted from Simpson, 2008, p.3)

These net community benefits must be achieved in a responsible and sustainable manner and should outweigh any potential costs to that same community (the ‘community’ is so defined by the stakeholders involved in the tourism initiative). Success and achievement of these benefits depends on an increase in net benefits delivered to the associated community and its members as a result of the tourism initiative. The longevity and sustainability of these benefits is detrimental to the host community (Simpson, 2008).

As well as the five potential benefits that Saxena *et al.* (2007) list previously, there are, indeed, other benefits and changes that influence the natural landscape. With tourism development, social benefits arise from economic benefits if the value is dispersed among

the community. Within the current literature, the term rural restructuring has emerged when discussing developments of the rural hinterland. These developments include the diversification into the tourism sector as discussed in this chapter. Meridith (2006, p.4) defines rural restructuring as “fundamental changes to rural social life and rural social institutions as new organisational forms, ownership regimes and technologies accompany altered patterns of capital accumulation”. Hoggart and Paniagua (2001) elucidates that rural restructuring is the cause of contemporary drivers of change such as the forces of globalisation, and this subsequently results in the permanent transformation of rural areas. It is widely recognized that nature-based tourism has played an integral role in the economic and social side of rural restructuring (Jenkins, 1999). In many cases, rural tourism is promoted with higher priority than many other regional development policies in attempts to achieve economic restructuring (Paniagua, 2002).

Social costs which often stem from rural tourism development are difficult to quantify, and in many occurrences social and cultural change can undermine the individual character of the area (Sanagustín Fons *et al.*, 2011). An approach to avoid this destruction of the distinctive rural culture is to adopt a culture-economy approach. If this approach is embedded in rural tourism activities, it can be a strategic method of retaining the territorial identity of an area (Petrou *et al.*, 2007).

6.5 Opportunities and challenges of the Sheep’s Head Way

One of the main problems of rural tourism in Ireland is the fragmented nature of the product. Many of those involved in providing a rural tourism experience to the visitor are part-time participants, either in terms of working hours or in terms of the focus of the enterprise. This is certainly the case for the Sheep’s Head Way prior to 2012. Each facilitating landowner permitted the walkway though their land as a collective group of over 300; however, the follow-on degree of involvement desired by the landowner varied from person to person. Some landowners were happy just to permit the walkway and have nothing more to do with it, others were content to go and talk to the walkers. The remaining group of facilitating landowners went as far as getting involved with the Sheep’s Head Way committee.

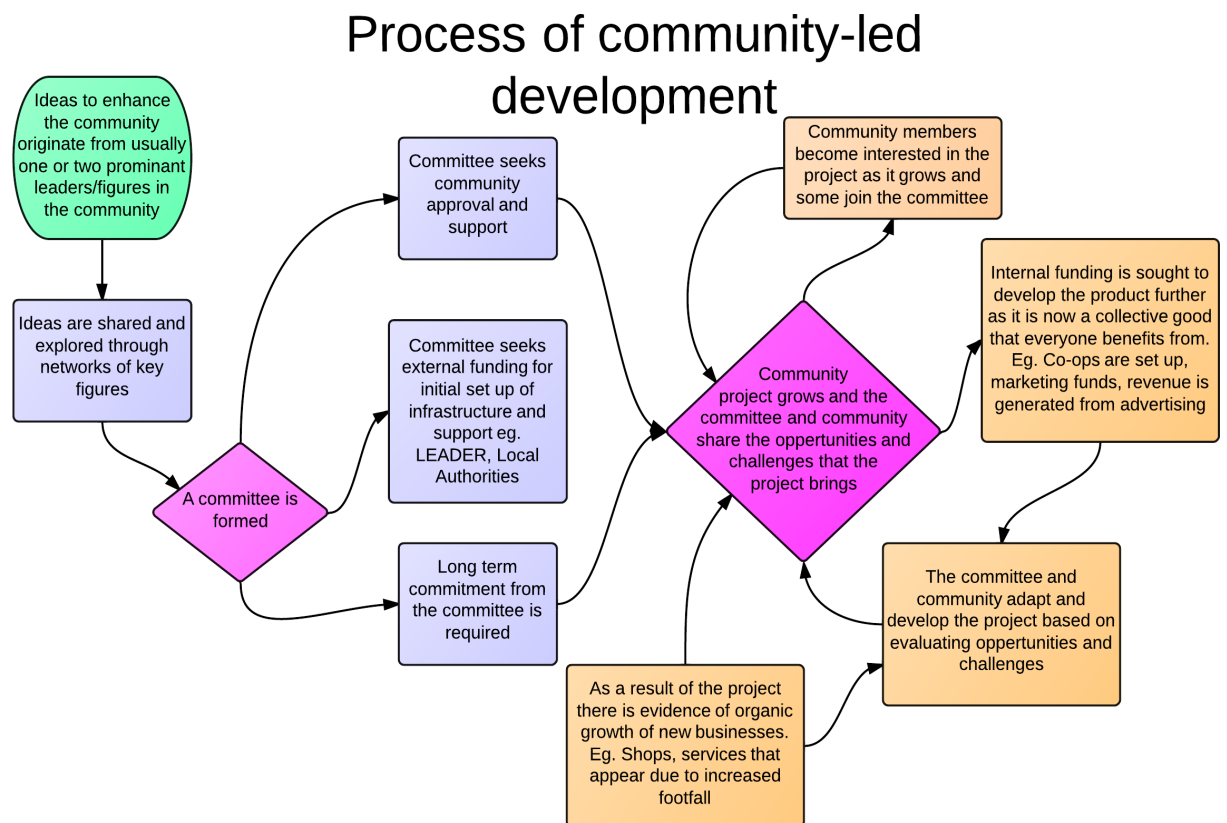
This thesis attempted to incorporate the examination of these typologies of community participation, development and planning paradigms and the role of stakeholders, and tourism initiative ownership structures as further investigated by Prentice, (1993); Simmons, (1994); Pretty, (1995); Ashley (2000); Ryan, (2002); Hall, (2003); Mbaiwa, (2005); Beeton, (2006); Tosun, (2006) and Hawkins & Mann, (2007); as all cited in Simpson, (2008). Furthermore, the degrees of participation and depth of community involvement is irrelevant when you consider the vulnerability of the market and tourism industry (Li, 2004; Scheyvens, 2002; Swarbrooke, 1999).

6.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter firstly explored the theme of endogenous development. It is no surprise (as witnessed in the Sheep's Head Way) that locally initiated projects are more sustainable, more cost effective and last for a longer amount of time than projects that are implemented in a top-down process. This is a common trait of community-led projects that build on entrepreneurial ideas and coupled with collective action. The establishment of community-led projects like the Sheep's Head Way require long term commitment. It also requires both external and internal funding to develop the project. External funding for initial investment is needed for set-up costs and training, internal funding is also required for marketing and further development of the project. As witnessed throughout this chapter the community can benefit in many ways from a project like the Sheep's Head Way. Benefits that are all evident in this case study included: direct economic benefits, experiential benefits, conservation benefits, developmental benefits and synergistic benefits. The primary opportunities that emerge from this research is the environmental, economic and social gains that evolve from a sustainable project like the walkway. The case study area is set in a rural location with a limited employment base. The potential for additional income from increased footfall of walkers is a significant incentive to continue the development of the attraction. Challenges include the question mark over Walks Scheme Payments and the future change of landowners in the area which could potentially disrupt the established walkway. If the observations in the field, the review of academic literature and analysis the data collected are put together a formula or process for

community-led development emerges as seen in figure 6.6. It is evident that one or more key figures of the community are the instigators of community-led development, this is followed by the sharing and exploring of ideas where a committee is then formed. The role of the committee expands to: seeking funding and support and long-term commitment is needed in order to experience sustainable results. Furthermore, the project will then grow and develop once these needs are met. The growth of the project attracts new committee members and community support. Internal funding is then sought from actors of the host community to market and further develop the project, this funding is normally acquired from actors who benefit from the project (eg. Shops, restaurants, bars, accommodation providers, and local services). Similarly the organic growth of businesses occur due to the increased footfall in the area. These new businesses feed into the internal funding for marketing and project development. Finally, successful community-led project will continuously evaluate opportunities and challenges to further develop the project.

Figure 6.6: Process of community-led development



The revitalization of rural areas fuelled by community-led development complements present tourism objectives, which includes a more equitable regional distribution of visitors throughout the country. Scenic rural areas in Ireland also tend to be areas of agricultural disadvantage, and hence the farming community now often looks towards rural tourism as a source of supplementing income. Rural tourism has helped to sustain agriculture and to boost local related industries. It has also been a catalyst in the creation of jobs through direct and related enterprises. (Gorman, 2005). Nevertheless, only recently has nature-based tourism been conceptualized as an independent part of tourism and as an important tool for the diversification of rural economies (Rinne and Saastamoinen, 2005)

Farm diversification into tourism has, in recent years, become an acceptable means of addressing the socio-economic problems of rural areas (Sharpley and Vass, 2006). Modern agriculture is multifunctional and can be defined as 'not only producing food but also sustaining rural landscapes, protecting biodiversity, generating employment and contributing to the viability of rural areas' (Potter and Burney, 2002, p.35). Walking tourism in the Sheep's Head is considered a sustainable method of generating revenue for the local community, and it can be used as a means to complement conventional agricultural activities. We have witnessed throughout this thesis that the core to the development of this walkway relied solely on local innovation and community collaboration. What is paramount for rural areas is the necessity of local initiatives, of capacity-building from within the community itself. There is, however, a temptation from some communities to question 'What is the government doing about it...?' but it does allow the community to retain ownership, configure a micro-development strategy to local needs and capacities and, most importantly, to retain ownership of economic growth (Kinsella, 2002). Local partnerships often evolve laterally and horizontally, and if local and non-local actors work in synergy the outcomes lead to the creation of tangible financial flows that can benefit right down to local actors of the community (Balmford *et al.*, 2009). It is essential going forward to harness and to retain these linkages. Support through LEADER via LDCs provides not only financial support but also provides expertise and skills development. Over the past two decades, the LEADER approach to community-led local development (CLLD) was created in a way to assist rural actors consider the long-

term potential of their local region (European Commission, 2011). This approach has proven an effective and efficient tool in the delivery of development policies.

The final chapter provides a list of recommendations and how this thesis may contribute to academic studies in the remit of nature-based tourism.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This thesis can contribute to the debate on the provision of public access for walking tourism initiatives. Yet, providing open access is only feasible if all actors that have the potential to facilitate the walkway are consulted and involved in the walking route. Given the divisive nature of this issue in Ireland today, this research was undertaken to examine farmers' willingness to allow individuals to access their land for recreational activities. This chapter will discuss future guidelines for collaboration, recommendations regarding IT, an examination of benefits that derive from nature-based tourism, factors of sustainability and the impact this study has on future rural policy planning.

7.2 Future recommendations and observations

Firstly, it is evident from this study that the most significant result from the research is that a high uptake in community participation results in a successful tourism product. This study can contribute to the literature by being an original attempt at showcasing the benefits and challenges associated with setting up a community led walking route. It also examines what can be gained from community participation and ownership of a project of this kind. The success of this project is undoubtedly linked to local participation. The results section of this thesis attempts to put a value on recreational activity on privately owned Irish farmland as also discussed by (Hynes *et al.*, 2007). The results clearly indicate that bottom-up and community-led development is the appropriate and most effective approach when developing rural areas.

As well as assessing all the actors involved in the industry it is necessary to establish the collaborative effort between them. Scheyvens (2002) highlights the importance of joint tourism ventures and discusses the vital links between communities and the private sector. The rural development programme in conjunction with LEADER (2007 – 2013) has established financial assistance to persons who achieve a better quality of life for the area³⁷.

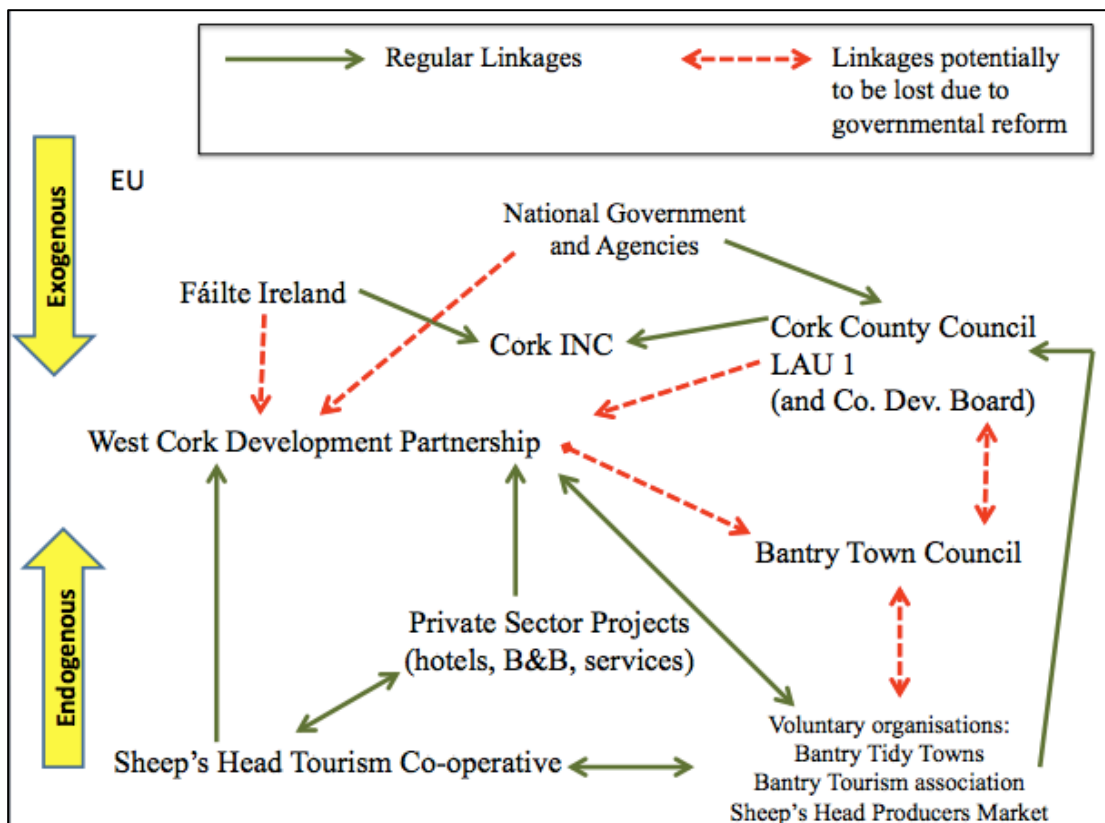
³⁷ Based on the following criteria; Diversification by farming families into non-agricultural activities. Supporting the creation and development of micro-enterprises in the rural economy. Encouraging rural

Under these criteria applicants can receive funding in order to develop tourism-based activities in the area. The case study area of Sheep's Head utilises funding and support from the mentioned LEADER funding to develop farm house accommodation and to generally enhance the walkway. Bottom-up development assisted through LEADER funding is witnessed throughout the case study chapter, and it is considered to be effective in developing a sustainable tourism product and using that product as a mechanism for local development.

The Sheep's Head walkway was one of the first four walkways that implemented the walks scheme in 2008. The walkway is supported by recreation officers working under LEADER companies. In the case study area the West Cork Development Partnership (LEADER) was responsible for administrating the walks scheme though a rural recreation officer. LEADER elements of the RDP 2014-2020 are implemented at sub-regional level using a partnership approach. The provision of community participation within the literature of the next RDP 2014-2020 the will be discussed further in the conclusion chapter of this thesis.

We see from figure 7.1 is that there are webs of connections and relationships working upward and downward on local, national and international scales. If these links are allowed to flow freely, this in turn, limits issues of heavy bureaucracy and inefficiencies. This figure illustrates two primary points; Firstly, there are a wealth of voluntary organisations in the case study location and cooperatives liaising with private and public sector bodies. This creates information flows of knowledge, expertise and ideas. Secondly, there are important linkages to be lost due to governmental reform and amendments to the provision of LEADER services. The West Cork LEADER Co-op set up the initiative Fuchsia Brands Ltd which incorporated food producers, tourism providers and the LEADER group (McCutcheon, 2002). The Fuchsia Brand also incorporates The Sheep's Head Way a popular walking route on the Beara peninsula.

Figure 7.1 Governance structures and linkages of tourism enterprises in the Bantry and Sheep's Head peninsula.



These reforms go against the endogenous and localised nature of local development and may have a detrimental and damaging effect on the future of community led development like we witnessed in the Sheep's Head peninsula. One of the main challenges facing the West Cork area is the decline of agricultural activity in addition to the loss of local services which led to a continuous migration of population towards cities and more urbanised areas. The tourism and food sectors were identified as the key components that could combat the fallout from agriculture (McCutcheon, 2002).

Nature-based tourism is one of the most tangible benefits that a community can derive from conserving its local landscape. However, these benefits are difficult to quantify and can result in a general loss of appreciation for the value nature-based tourism can achieve.

This collaborative approach is not new to the area of West Cork as it was one of the first areas to develop a 'destination brand' of the fuchsia flower. Not only did the brand enforce solidarity among local enterprises but also reinforced regional differentiation. Another benefit that West Cork has experienced from regional branding is spread of '*destination thinking*' where the brand has worked as '*social glue*' among actors of the industry (Woods and O' Reilly, 2008). This thinking is reflected in personal interviews that were undertaken as part of a study in regard to perspectives on West Cork branding. A business owner with less than 25 employees reflects ideas of destination branding in his answer:

"...if we have people that come into the restaurant and are happy, they might even stay a little bit longer, that doesn't mean they'll come back to my restaurant again, but maybe they will go down the street. ... At least they are here"

(Woods and O' Reilly, 2008, p.112)³⁸

Secondly, the future of nature-based tourism like all tourism sectors relies on the development of online marketing and administration. Ibrahim (2011) highlights that in order to keep on a par with global competitiveness, there is a need to develop our online resources. As well as this diversification of the tourist industry there is a strong need for tourism producers in Ireland to become on-par with their European counterparts in the field of e-ticketing, e-reservation, online payment, multilingual and updated information websites (Ibrahim, 2011, p.877). With the advancement of ICT, consumers of tourism are increasingly engaging in disintermediation, which is the direct booking or purchasing from a supplier and no longer using an intermediary which includes travel agents or tour operators (Tourism Ireland, 2008). The stakeholders that benefit from tourism on the peninsula need to adapt to the market trend and embrace technology in the promotion and dealings with their customers, the tourists.

One aspect that could be further investigated as part of a similar research project would be to examine levels of community participation in voluntary organisations that enhance community life. It was clear from observing the qualitative answers from this research that

³⁸ Additional comments include one owner of a yacht centre that has less than 5 employees stated in an interview that; "*it's not just get them (tourists) to me, but get them as far as Bandon and lure them west*".

a strong sense of active community is present, however it would be interesting to quantify this participation and engagement.

Thirdly, the most obvious characteristic of this case study is the benefits associated with nature-based tourism in a community. The value of tourism needs to be investigated further and the multi-dimensional span of this industry makes this prospect quite difficult to comprehend. The study of tourism and its nature-based subsets is a critical component to future policy makers. Tourism is an interdisciplinary academic discipline, and it has experienced rapid growth that has been examined in business journals, economic journals, geographical journals, sociology journals and environmental journals. This illustrates that there has been a comprehensive study of the development and rate of growth of tourism in all disciplines. Nyaupane, as cited in Mehmetoglu (2007, p.200) agrees that many scholars suggest that nature-tourism has been growing more rapidly than tourism in general. Sharpley (2009) also adds that tourism may not necessarily lead to development, yet it does have the potential to generate economic advantages to the community from expenditure on tourist products and services. These products can be something as simple as local crafts that are created on a small scale basis by local enterprises. In West Cork there are over 150 professional craft workers operating as one-person producers that do not make a full-time living from sales (McCutcheon, 2008). Considering that the craft persons direct economic impact is comparatively small, his or her presence adds to the area's creative reputation and tourism appeal. The same can be said for the Sheep's Head producers market that supplies only locally grown produce and crafts which are in high demand from the tourism market.

Fourthly, sustainable development has been a core issue in tourism studies and its presence in academic literature has been increasing from year to year. It is evident that there has been an increase of interest of this topic when we examine the rising number of academic publications. Sustainability, which can be achieved through nature-based tourism, is now viewed as the main component of the tourism industry. Examples of this include sustainable tourism choices, carbon off-setting from aviation, eco accommodation sites, and nature reserves now with established carrying capacity numbers. Sustainability is one of the

key factors in the development of the Sheep's Head Way and can be attributed to its success.

The fifth observation from the results of this thesis is that they can in some way contribute to future discussions about rural development and rural policy. Sustainable approaches to development as seen in the Sheep's Head way can contribute on a micro-scale to the planning future Rural Development Programmes. From this thesis, it is highly recommended that rural policy must facilitate involvement of local people in tourism development. This can be achieved by changing an over-centralized public administration structure and breaking patron–client relationship, in order to empower local people and establish a local civic capacity for sustaining participatory activities for the long-term (Tosun, 2006). This research also attempts to contribute to the understanding of how rural areas 'work' and how community-led development is the most sustainable tool in developing rural areas. It is hoped that further research could evaluate if there are certain processes in community-led development. It can be said that community-led development does not use a rigid formula or structure but it seems that patterns are emerging as discussed further in figure 6.6. The multitude of benefits that nature-based tourism brings are often underestimated and it is hoped that this research has explored and exposed the many types of benefits that can be associated with nature-based tourism. This research could also be used as a case study of best practice when it comes to community-led development. It is additionally envisaged that this research can be used as evidence that Government assistance is required to provide financial payment to farmers who maintain the walks through the walks scheme. These maintenance works are essential to the viability of the walkways, which as shown throughout this thesis is a detrimental benefit for the host community. As the future of the Walks Scheme Payments are uncertain it is hoped that this research can be used as an example of the importance of these payments.

Qualitative and quantitative research reveals emerging trends and details about the evolving tourism industry. Qualitative research often delves into the mind-set of the tourist or the host community and can be used as a medium in local consultation processes. It is vital for policy makers to acknowledge that the tourism industry is a diverse one to analyse, and its economic impact on the host community cannot be simply measured by figures of tourist

expenditure and accommodation price (Sandbrook, 2010). The Irish State, for example, on numerous occasions, has failed to participate and engage in local consultation which resulted in an undemocratic approach to conservation and sustainability. These are key questions moving forward with this research also identified by Leonard (as cited in Healy and McDonagh, 2009). It is evident from Seckelmann (2002) and Tosun, Timothy, and Ozturk (2003) that the over-centralization of tourism administration and lack of local participation in tourism are causing low acceptance of centrally prepared plans and programs among local residents, hence locally administered initiatives are the best policy going forward. As early as 1985, the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors delivered a speech at the first Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) held in Luxembourg. In his speech he called for a renewal of focus in community empowerment and the capacity of communities to develop their own local areas. He states that excessive bureaucracy slows down development in community-led development.

‘With regard, more specifically, to the political and institutional foundations for dynamic renewal of the Community, So I will have the opportunity, with my colleagues, to tell you how we think and feel about the value and limitations of the Community method as a means of creating an entity capable of holding its place in the world. I think we have to do some straight talking and, when we speak of excessive bureaucracy, the funereal pace of decision making and the difficulty of advancing as Twelve, we need to know whether we can eliminate the causes of these problems without jeopardizing a method which, all things considered, has enabled Europe to go forward’. (Delors, 1985)³⁹

In the context of rural development, the first major document to highlight the decline and problems in rural areas was the ‘Future of Rural Society’ published in 1988 for the European Parliament. The European Commission’s approach to rural development at that time considered three areas of focus. Economic and social cohesion, rural economy, protection of the environment and conservation of the community’s natural assets. The last White Paper on rural development was printed in 1999 titled ‘Ensuring the future - A strategy for Rural Development in Ireland, A White Paper on Rural Development’. The

³⁹ On 9 September 1985, President of the European Commission Jacques Delors delivers a speech at the first Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to be held in Luxembourg. He uses the opportunity to focus on the operation and the aims of the IGC.

Paper albeit now dated, encompasses the three tiers of sustainability (environment, economy and social and culture) as also mirrored in the 1988 document. Twenty six years later a report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 'Energising Ireland's Rural Economy' was published in 2014. This report however focuses on the economic development of rural areas and has no focus whatsoever on social issues. This type of disconnected thinking goes against a holistic understanding of rural areas. E. F Schumacher as early as 1975 promoted ideas against an economic focus of our world when he published 'Small is beautiful'. His writing was an attack on the intoxication with what Schumacher described as 'gigantism and the focus on economy'. In addition, a Government plan titled 'Action Plan for Jobs 2014' omits any strong rural focus in its content. This worrying trend of disconnecting the rural from the urban when creating policies or action plans is a backward step in rural development. The future of nature-based tourism in Ireland relies on joined-up thinking between state departments in policy making. Policy making, for example, between the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government is disconnected. One department has an agenda to promote intensive agriculture down to the last square hectare, where farmers will be penalised for non-producing land. The other department has an agenda to conserve the landscape and provide habitats for flora and fauna. These two agendas are contradictory and hold no place in sustainable practice. Initiatives like the Walks Scheme that provides an on-going payment to farmers to maintain the walkways is essential. The removal of these schemes would lead to the deterioration of these valuable assets. It is essential to remember that maintenance of these walks is an on-going activity and the walkways are not static projects. Therefore, the provision for maintenance needs to be safeguarded. The findings of this are finally consistent with the principles of sustainable tourism with respect to, in particular, the facilitation of local control and community participation as cited by (Bramwell, 1996; McIntyre, 1993).

To finally conclude, it is the dynamics and cooperation within community led initiatives that result in the most successful outcomes. It is also evident from the Sheep's Head Peninsula that if you place trust in locally initiated collaboration to deliver improvements in

the locality the result leads to better quality, efficiency and an increased fit between community needs and ‘solutions’ (Padley, 2013). The proposed plans to privatize community development on the 1st of January 2015 will undermine the progress in community led development over the last 120 years⁴⁰ (Harvey, 2014). Ireland needs a new rural development policy that encompasses all three tiers of sustainable development and needs to be dynamic enough to deal with the changing face of rural areas. A reinstatement of balanced development is needed where services and infrastructure is as good as urban areas. This equivalence principle of development is currently echoed throughout Scandinavia. Unless there is an urgent move to restore rural development as a priority policy in Ireland the future of rural areas is undoubtedly uncertain.

⁴⁰ Recent keynote speech from Mr Brian Harvey (2014) Communities, social policy and inclusion in a rapidly changing European environment [Keynote speech], Rural Alliances 6th Transnational Exchange Meeting, 23rd-27th June 2014, Breaffy House Resort, Breaffy, Castlebar Co. Mayo, Ireland. INTERREG IVB, 26 June.

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APPENDIXES


Appendix 1.1: Interview Questions

1. When & Why do you get involved with the Sheep's Head Way?
2. In which year did that happen?
3. Who contacted you or did you contact specific people in regards to the walkway?
4. What was your first reaction when you heard about the Sheep's Head Way?
5. Did you talk to your neighbours about it?
6. Were your family involved in the project?
7. If you were (a bit) doubtful about the Sheep's Head Way in the beginning, what was it that changed your mind or brought you around? Was there a deal-maker or a clincher for you?
8. Did you use guidelines from a similar project or advice from an outsider to the area when developing the Sheep's Head Walkway?
9. Can you tell me about some of the positive experiences you have had in regards to this project?
10. Have you had any negative experience in regards to this project?
11. Have you experienced any first hand benefits from the creation of the walkway?
12. What, if anything, has the Sheep's Head Way done for people in this area?
13. What are your main issues or concerns for the future of the walkway?
14. In what way do you think the EDEN award has contributed to the local community?
15. If the whole project were to begin again, is there anything that should be done differently?
16. What needs to be done for the future of the SHW?
 - Who needs to do it? By when?
17. What do you think the future role of farmers should be with regard to the SHW?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of the project before we end?

Appendix 1.2: Notice to Landowners on the Sheep's Head Peninsula

 <p>An Coarbóidhar Theas Láimneach, Éire</p> <p>South Circular Road Limerick, Ireland</p> <p>Tel +353 61 204300 Web www.mic.ul.ie</p>	<p>COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK</p> <h3>NOTICE TO BANTRY GARDA STATION AND THE LANDOWNERS SHEEP'S HEAD PENINSULA</h3> <h4>FIELDWORK ANNOUNCEMENT</h4> <p>My name is Gráinne Dwyer and I am currently a postgraduate student at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. As part of my thesis I am undertaking a study of the Sheep's Head Way with a focus on the landowners and farmers of the area.</p> <p>This fieldwork will involve a brief questionnaire that will be handed out door to door. I will be gathering my data on the Sheep's Head peninsula from September 27th to approximately November 15th. Can you please be aware of this in case members of the public phone your station enquiring about my purpose in the area.</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Project details: Project title:</td><td>"Mapping the geography of nature based tourism in Ireland: a Census of the providers of walking tourism on the Sheep's Head Way" – Gráinne Dwyer</td></tr><tr><td>Location(s):</td><td>A census of Sheep's Head Peninsula</td></tr><tr><td>Project Supervisor:</td><td>Dr Helene Bradley Davies & Dr Brendan O'Keefe</td></tr><tr><td>Brief description of the work:</td><td>This investigation will involve questionnaire based data collection with landowners and farmers of the Sheep's Head Way. This project aims at targeting all 300+ landowners in the area.</td></tr></table> <p>My contact details are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Email:</i> grainne.dwyer2@mic.ul.ie• <i>Post:</i> Gráinne Dwyer, Geography Department, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick.• <i>Or Mobile:</i> (086) 0839550 and may be passed on to enquiring parties if requested. <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>Gráinne Dwyer Postgraduate Researcher</p> <p>Dr Helene Bradley Davies Project supervisor Department of Geography, MIC</p> <p>Department of Geography Roinn na Tíreolaíochta</p> <p>Fax +353 61 313632</p> <p>Banaithe - 1838 - Established</p>	Project details: Project title:	"Mapping the geography of nature based tourism in Ireland: a Census of the providers of walking tourism on the Sheep's Head Way" – Gráinne Dwyer	Location(s):	A census of Sheep's Head Peninsula	Project Supervisor:	Dr Helene Bradley Davies & Dr Brendan O'Keefe	Brief description of the work:	This investigation will involve questionnaire based data collection with landowners and farmers of the Sheep's Head Way. This project aims at targeting all 300+ landowners in the area.
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Brief description of the work:	This investigation will involve questionnaire based data collection with landowners and farmers of the Sheep's Head Way. This project aims at targeting all 300+ landowners in the area.								

Appendix 1.3: Door to door questionnaire documentation



INTERVISITIO BENE LOQUORUM

Interview data collection – Gráinne Dwyer

MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE

|My name is Gráinne Dwyer and I am currently a postgraduate student at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. My research consists of analysing and measuring landowners' perspectives on walking tourism in the area so I am grateful that you are taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The answers you provide me with today will remain confidential and will be analysed as part of a census of the area. If you would like a summary of my findings please fill in your email or address on the adjoining page.

Please follow the instructions per question and can I ask you to refrain from writing your name on the page as *all answers will be treated confidentially*.

Please ✓ tick all answers unless asked to do otherwise.

1. **Please specify your gender :**
Male Female

2. **Age group (years old)**
Under 35 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 and over

3. **Please state your nationality:**
Irish UK German Dutch

Other

- Please Specify: _____

4. **How long have you lived in West Cork?**
At least %50 my life
25-50% of my life
Less than 25% of my life

5. **How long have you been farming in this area?**
Less than 1 year
1 to <3 years
3 to <5 years
5 to <10 years
10 to <20 years
Over 20 years

6. **What type of farm are you working on?**
Specialist Dairying
Specialist Beef Production
Specialist Sheep
Mixed Grazing Livestock
Mixed Crops and Livestock
Other
- Please specify: _____

1 | Page



7. How many hectares (ha) of farmland do you own?

_____/hectares

8. Is commonage used? Yes No

- If yes, how many hectares? ____/ha

9. How many adjusted hectares (ha) of farmland do you own?

_____/hectares

10. How important is farming to you? (please one)

Sole occupation Major Occupation Subsidiary Occupation

11. If farming is *not* your sole occupation do you have an off-farm job?

Yes No

- If yes please specify: _____

12. Please indicate if you have been offered support to diversify your farm with non-agricultural activities?

Yes No

- If yes, please specify: _____

13. Please indicate if you have any other on-farm business (if any)

(Please what applies to your farm)

a) Recreational activities (horse riding, pony trekking, golf, fishing, etc.)

b) Home arts and crafts

c) Processing of farm products (e.g. cheese making, etc.)

d) Fish farming / Aquaculture

e) Renewable energy production

f) Forestry

g) Other

- Please specify: _____

h) None of the above



14. Do you currently have an on-farm tourist enterprise?

Yes

No

If yes please specify: _____

If no have you ever had an on-farm tourist enterprise?

Yes No

- If yes please specify: _____

15. Do you own a bed & breakfast, hostel, camp site or self-catering accommodation on or near your farm business?

Yes No

- If yes, please specify

a) How many months of the year it is open for tourists?: _____ /months a year

b) Roughly how much a year does it contribute as a percentage of your *net family's earnings*?:

>10% 11-30% 31-50% 51-70% +71%

17. Please indicate which (if any) of the following schemes the holding has participated in, by stating what year(s) you participated in the scheme.

(Please write your answer in YYYY to YYYY format, e.g. From 1995 to 2010)

a) Walks Scheme

From _____ to _____ (year)

b) Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)

From _____ to _____ (year)

c) Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS)

From _____ to _____ (year)

d) Organic Farming Scheme

From _____ to _____ (year)



e) Natura 2000 payments

From _____ to _____ (year)

18. If you have participated in any of the schemes mentioned above please rank your motivations for taking part by ranking 1-6. (1 being *most important* to you and 6 being *least important* to you)

a) Reason for participating in the Walks Scheme	Rank 1-6	b) Reason for participating in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)	Rank 1-6
Improving appearance on the farm		Improving appearance on the farm	
Benefits wildlife and environment		Benefits wildlife and environment	
Extra Income		Extra Income	
Improves conservation of the landscape		Improves conservation of the landscape	
Pollution control		Pollution control	
To farm sustainably		To farm sustainably	

c) Reason for participating in the Organic Farming Scheme	Rank 1-6	e) Natura 2000 payments	Rank 1-6
Improving appearance on the farm		Improving appearance on the farm	
Benefits wildlife and environment		Benefits wildlife and environment	
Extra Income		Extra Income	
Improves conservation of the landscape		Improves conservation of the landscape	
Pollution control		Pollution control	
To farm sustainably		To farm sustainably	

19. Does the Sheep's Head Way cross your land?

Yes No

- If yes, (a) for what distance? _____ Km _____ metres
 (b) what year did the walkway start on your land? _____
 (c) How many hours per year do you need to maintain the walk? _____/hours per year



(d) Why did you permit the walk on your lands? Please read each reason tick (✓) how important each reason was for you in permitting the walkway through your land.

Reason	Not at all important	Little importance	Neither important or unimportant	Important	Highly Important
Facilitate public access					
Promote growth in the locality					
Improve the image of the area					
Sustainably manage the landscape					
Marketing the region					
Cooperate with other landowners					
An interest in sustainable tourism					
Cultural connection with the land					

20. Who from the local area contacted you initially about getting involved in the Sheep's Head Way?

21. Have you as a landowner experienced any positive or negative aspects of the walkway?

Positive: _____

Negative: _____



22. Please read the following statements and indicate by ticking (✓) the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.

Please ✓ the answer that applies to you	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Gaining financially was my main reason for getting involved in the Sheep's Head walkway					
Protecting the environment is very important to me					
Walking tourism can contribute to sustainable tourism					
Walking tourism in the area contributes financially to the local people					
The Sheep's Head EDEN award has contributed to the local economy					
Community effort led to the success of the walkway					

23. Are you a member of a walking group?

Yes No

24. If you think the walkway is successful what are the main drivers of these successes?

25. What are the main obstacles to the development of the walkway?

26. What recommendations or changes (if any) would you make to the walkway to improve it?

(a) For the landowners: _____

(b) For the walkers: _____

(c) For the local community: _____

Additional comments:

Appendix 1.4: MIC Interview clearance form for oral interviews



Interview data collection – Gráinne Dwyer - Research Student
 MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
 UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Interviews of Landowners and Farmers – Sheep’s Head Way

My name is Gráinne Dwyer and I am currently a research student for the Geography Department at Mary Immaculate College and I am grateful for your kind help and co-operation for this interview.

Description of interview
<p>Interviewee’ Name:.....</p> <p>General topics discussed:</p>

Conditions under which your interview/story is to be held by the author of this thesis (Gráinne Dwyer):
 Can I the author use your Contribution (both your interview/story and any pictorial material you give/lend us) for the following purposes:

	<u>Instruction</u>			
Can it be used for public reference and access?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can it be published (in full)?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you want your name mentioned?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Literary Copyright

You yourself have the right to use the information in the interview as you wish – e.g. in a local history journal, parish magazine, or to give to your friends or family. This right is known as the Literary Copyright. Please note that under the 1963 Copyright Act (Ireland) your recorded interview are protected by Copyright.

<p>Signed (Interviewee):</p> <p>Address</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date of recording</p> <p>Recorded by.....</p>

Appendix 1.5: Fieldwork Risk Assessment form



Mary Immaculate College
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

FIELDWORK RISK ASSESSMENT

Project title:	'Mapping the geography of nature based tourism in Ireland: a Census of the providers of walking tourism on the Sheep's Head Way' – Gráinne Dwyer
Location(s):	Various farms located on the Sheep's Head Peninsula
Project Supervisor:	Dr. Helene Bradley Davies & Dr Brendan O'Keeffe
Brief description of the work:	This investigation will involve questionnaire based data collection with landowners and farmers of the Sheep's Head Way. This project aims at targeting all 300+ landowners in the area.

Declaration

We have reviewed and assessed the possible hazards that might arise from the work planned for the project detailed above. All persons carrying out this work declare that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the safety instructions and control measures in the human geography generic risk assessment. This assessment will be reviewed if there is a significant change to the project, and annually for projects of over one year's duration. A full project specific risk assessment will be carried out if the project extends beyond this generic risk assessment.

Signed:

Supervisor:

Researcher(s):

Date:

Review date for risk assessment:

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify the risks which relate to the work in the planned dissertation, and to describe the control procedures which will be adopted.

The risk assessment document identifies a set of hazards which may be relevant to the project. For each hazard category the risk is identified and the control measure described.

General Fieldwork Hazards

Lone working - *Lone working can lead to difficulties in summoning help when required.*

Due to the poor mobile reception service in the area, supervisors will be notified prior to gathering data what areas I will be in on a day to day basis.

Provide supervisors with map showing expected location and time of return

Carry a mobile phone

Working in an isolated area - *This can lead to difficulties in summoning help when required.*

Leave details of the field site and a work plan (include contact name and address) with colleagues in the department prior to any trip.

Specify dates and times of departure and return.

Do not gather data during dusk or at night.

Fatigue - *This can lead to lack of concentration and a higher risk of accident.*

Do not try to do too much in one day, especially if the work is to be followed by a long drive home.

Environment

Weather - *Risk of variable weather conditions ranging from wet freezing conditions to very windy conditions .*

Consult a daily weather forecast for the area before setting out. Check Met Office forecast, www.met.ie

Wear clothing suitable for the expected weather conditions. However, be prepared for sudden changes and where possible take additional clothing.

Strong winds reduce energy reserves, as does cold weather, so take adequate food and drink supplies

Terrain - *Risks of slips, trips and falls. Avoid enclosed farmland or livestock if possible.*

Wear footwear suitable for the conditions.

Plan the route across the field to avoid the most uneven ground.

Avoid working in poor light conditions.

- **Field Boundaries - electric and barbed wire fences; hedges** -*risk of minor electric shock, cuts and abrasions.*
 - If working close to fences etc. avoid working with your back to the fence, in case you back into it.
 - Do not climb over fences - use gates or stiles
- **Animals** - *Various risks from animals – livestock and dogs on farms*

- If necessary to do so, pass through fields with animals quickly. Try to avoid walking near to the animals. Be especially aware of pregnant animals or those with young.

Chemical/biological Hazards.

- **Crop spraying** - *Risks of poisoning due to ingestion and absorption of agrochemicals including organophosphates.*
 - Seek information from land owner as to when crop spraying is likely and when entry to field will be safe. Do not enter fields until safe to do so.
 - Avoid pools and puddles which may contain chemicals.
 - Ensure waterproof protective gloves are worn.
 - Clean hands frequently, especially before eating - preferably use antiseptic medical wipes.
 - Untreated water in irrigation ditches and as applied to fields - Risks of microbiological infection from the water e.g. Weil’s disease, Hepatitis A etc.
 - Hepatitis A vaccination is recommended.
 - Ensure waterproof protective gloves are worn.
 - Clean hands frequently, especially before eating - preferably use antiseptic medical wipes.
- **Working with soil** - *Risks due to agrochemicals, micro-organisms and sharp objects. Risk of tetanus, cuts and absorption of chemicals.*
 - Ensure tetanus inoculation is up to date.
 - Wear protective gloves
 - Clean hands frequently, especially before eating - preferably use antiseptic medical wipes.
- **Plants** - *Risks due to agrochemicals and micro-organisms on plants. Risk due to poisons (atropine) contained in potato plants.*
 - Wear protective gloves when handling plant material.
 - Do not eat any plants as they may carry parasites or they may be poisonous.
 - Clean hands frequently, especially before eating - preferably use antiseptic medical wipes.

Health

- **Accident** - *Risk of personal injury*
 - Carry a First Aid kit

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the safety information and risk assessments provided for the project to be carried out.

Print Name	Signature	Date