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Wales in a global neighbourhood : perception of and reactions to local and global citizenship

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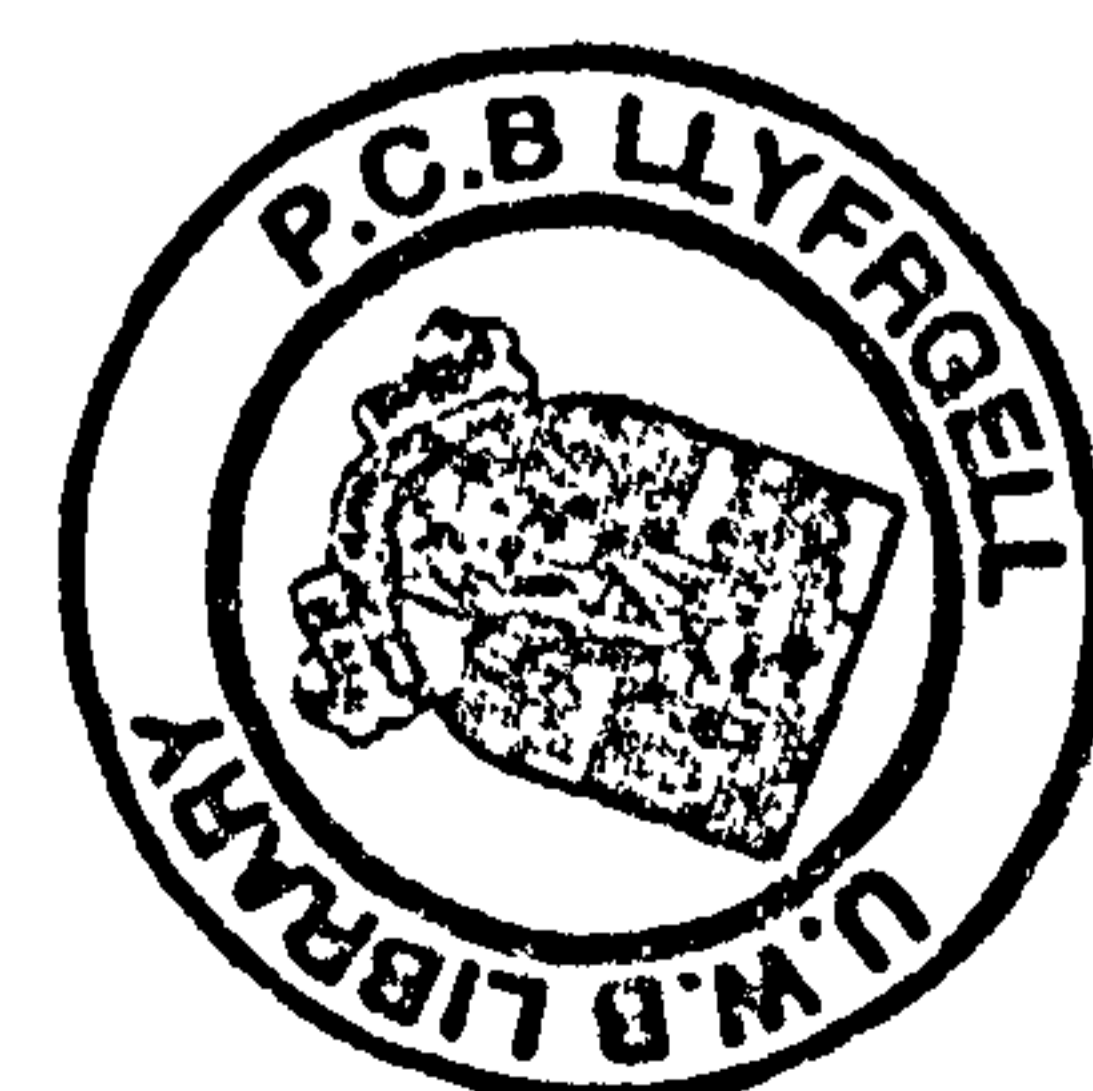
**WALES IN A GLOBAL NEIGHBOURHOOD:
PERCEPTION OF AND REACTIONS TO LOCAL AND GLOBAL
CITIZENSHIP**

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2009

A thesis submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Social Policy.

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ABSTRACT

An examination of how two rural Welsh market towns, Llangefni and Machynlleth, have been affected by the processes of globalization and in particular how their local residents and local business owners perceive and experience these changes, shows the uneven effects of globalization on locations, economies and cultures, resulting in some locations becoming homogenized, losing their identity and purpose for their citizens, whilst others become hybridized, developing for themselves new identities, purpose and social structures. This thesis contributes to the understanding of how people living in small rural historic market towns engage with the local and the global in their day-to-day lives, and consequently how empowered they are and feel as local and / or global citizens. It reveals how the social inequalities of education, class and culture exclude some and include others, resulting in what Bauman (2000) refers to as the 'global' and the 'globalized', empowering some and disempowering others. The inequality and unevenness of globalization is further compounded by contradictory policy objectives that seek to encourage civic participation and responsibility in local and global issues, but which are often at odds with the economic objectives set out for areas, leading to uneven development and implementation between areas. Through gaining a better understanding of how places, people and businesses are affected by and engage with globalization and by helping to identify what facilitates better and more meaningful local and global civic engagement and empowerment, the thesis aims to enable more appropriate policy directives, that will engage citizens meaningfully and equally in both local and global issues.

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To Do Wid Me

There's a man beating his wife
De woman just lost her life
Dem called dat domestic strife?
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

Babies are buried under floors
In a church behind closed doors
I don't know the cause
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

I've seen all de documentaries
An there's nothing I can do
I've listened to de commentaries
Why should I listen to you?
If I am told to I go vote
If I need more money I strike
If I'm told not to then I won't
I want de best deal out of life.

De fit cannot go jogging
Coz there's someone out there mugging
When they should be spreading loving
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

You an me must just stand back
Coz there gonna bomb Iraq
It's a surgical attack so
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

I just wanna live my life mate
So just leave me alone
Why should I fight de state?
When I'm trying to buy my home,
I just wanna earn my bread guy
An feed my family
You may starve and you may die
But wot has dat gotta do wid me?

Poets are dying in Nigeria
Or forced to leave de area
Multinationals are superior
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

An in somewherestan I've heard
Dat she can't say a word
An he must grow a beard
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

Wot has dat gotta do wid me?
I'm juss dis guy from Birmingham
An all I want to do is live good in de hood,
It's got nothing to do wid me
I'm juss your average football fan
An hey sum foreign team are very, very good,
Why should you worry yourself?
You cannot change a single thing
All you gotta do is tek wot you can get,
Why should you worry yourself?
Try hard an you will die trying
Wot can any of us do about Tibet?

I see a million refugees
On twenty million TVs
An I think who de fuck are these?
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

Your school has just been closed down
Your tax is buying bombs
An although you came from downtown
You don't know where your coming from,
You don't know what you are eating
Your food has a terrible taste
An you can be sure dat you are drinking
Sum kinda chemical waste

There's a price upon your head
Even though you're newly wed
A police juss shot you dead
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

An down in de police station
They are killing de black nation
But dat's normal race relations
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?
De man upon de corner dat is selling guns
So we can kill each other as we rave,
Or de crackhead who is trying to crack up everyone
Teking all your cash as you become a slave,
Or de mother in de gutter who is begging bread
Where de man dressed in de Gucci hails a cab,
All I am trying to do is praise de lord it must be said
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

A baby in Pakistan
Is making footballs for de man
Or is she Indian?
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

There's no proper propaganda
About Malawi or Rwanda
An all dis makes me wonder
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

I used to go on demonstrations
Now me feet can't take the pace,
I've tried being vegan
But there's egg upon my face,
My last stand was de Miners' Strike
I did de cop patrol,
Now it's central heating dat I like
An just don't need no coal
Indonesia needs more
British arms for East Timor
More Western bombs to bomb de poor
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

An over in Algeria
They say there's another massacre
Isn't dat a part of Africa
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

An I don't plan to go
To an American death row
There's no compassion there I know but
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

My God, I can see you have been tortured
An your wife has been drawn and quartered
An your children have been slaughtered
Wot has dat gotta do wid me?

Benjamin Zephaniah (2003: 74)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to explore peoples' relationship with the local and the global in two traditional market towns in Wales; Machynlleth in rural mid Wales and Llangefni situated in the centre of rural Ynys Môn in the north. The perspective is held that globalization is a reality and new in its accumulated power and breadth. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews with local residents, local businesses people and community workers, a picture of people's life-styles and opinions is sought to reveal peoples' relationship with their local and the global; how or if they perceive that globalization is affecting their towns and their lives, what affiliation they have towards local and global issues and to find out if they feel empowered as local or global citizens.

Through the use of observational and visual research methods each market town will be assessed in terms of some of the leading perspectives of how globalization is affecting local areas: whether the market towns are becoming homogenized into one global identity and in so doing losing their traditional identity and culture; or whether they are becoming hybridized i.e. are they incorporating new influences with traditional culture and identity and still managing to retain and create a unique identity. In order to explore and test these hypotheses and to try and create a visual representation of how the towns are affected by globalization, George Ritzer's definition of his grand narrative of the 'Globalization of Nothing' (Ritzer 2004) will be used to create a map of the market town centres to see if either town has become or is becoming homogenized or hybridized.

The scenery on Ynys Môn is undoubtedly beautiful, with its gently rolling gorse-covered hills. Llangefni is positioned in the centre of the island and is accessed today mainly from the A55 - the main road to Holyhead. There are some interesting old historical buildings dotted here and there as you make your way towards the town; an old windmill on a hill, a couple of gunpowder stores for use in the quarries half dug into the side of hills, but the town itself seems a lot less vibrant, if not depressed. You first notice the sprawling industrial estate, then, as you enter the town itself you notice the closed-down shops and the many charity shops; it hosts four supermarkets in close proximity to one another, and there is another currently being built. The other dominant

shops are a few of the cheaper high street stores. And you notice the litter. In the middle of the town is a very handsome Town Hall, rebuilt a number of years ago after it was nearly totally destroyed by fire, and in front of it, is the town clock. The town's market is quite large, but its stalls are standard market stalls, selling bargain clothes, cheap toys and tools - the usual. You feel that the town could be inviting, if only...

Nestled securely in the Dyfi Valley, Machynlleth is a surprise, when, after descending the scenic heather-coated hills and wooded valleys from the north, you eventually arrive in the market town, in what seems to be the middle of nowhere. You are immediately struck by some of its unusual features; its prominent clock, its colourful buildings, its attractive architecture, an art gallery and theatre where classical music and opera performances are being advertised and it hosts Wales's first Parliament building dating back to the 1400, where centuries' worth of graffiti can be read on the slate slabs on its back garden walls. Machynlleth has a vegetarian whole-food shop and café, its Wednesday market is busy and the stalls and the shops sell some unusual items, such as hand-made cosmetics, local organic vegetables, hand-made jewellery and bonsai trees. All this, and yet the town is relatively small. The first impressions you get from both market towns are therefore very contrasting and as such make it all the more interesting to explore.

Not long after I started this research the Live 8 protests and concerts were taking place across the globe from Italy, France, Russia, Johannesburg, Philadelphia to Britain in which millions of people were participating in a media fest to put pressure on the G8 Summit leaders, the World's most powerful leaders from the neo-liberal West, to cancel African debt, which is crippling the numerous third world countries which are contained within that great continent. It was a show of democratic power, in which millions had been geared up into making a symbolic gesture by participating in a large show of active global citizenship.

The previous big symbolic show of active global citizenship had been the Seattle protests in 1999 at the WTO ministerial negotiations, campaigning against global capitalism and its associated unfair trading rules that successfully led to the collapse of the WTO meeting (Clark & Themudo 2003: 111). More recently, demonstrations took place across the world in 2001 with the protests against the 'War on Terror' being raged

by America, Britain and their allies against the invasion of Iraq. The invasion did occur despite spurious reasons that are still being aggressively debated. In that instance people-power failed, and ended up poignantly demonstrating the crisis of democracy that many believe we are now faced with.

At the Live 8 concert TV presenter Jonathan Ross expressed “We are having a demonstration of globalization”, in response to the observation that we were seeing the coming together of celebrities, cell-phones, satellites, TV and Radio, the public and politicians over a global political issue, dubbed as the ‘Biggest awareness campaign in history’, “This is really the United Nation. The whole world has come together in solidarity with the poor,” declared Kofi Annan (the United Nation’s former Secretary-General). Some of the questions that were being asked by Jonathan Ross and BBC Political Editor, Andrew Marr who were covering the event on TV were: why are people going to Hyde Park? Are people watching their TVs because it is just good telly? Are they at the concerts just for the music? And are people still going to be interested in a few weeks’ time?

Here we watched what seemed to be a united front of globally aware and responsible people, yet there was enormous hypocrisy – Bill Gates was guest speaker at London’s Live 8 concert advocating the G8 goals and he was introduced by Bob Geldof as giving billions of pounds to charities each year, yet his company, Microsoft’s employment policy has been dubbed the ‘velvet sweatshop’ to describe its employment practices of long working hours in competitive environments that often results in workers incurring ‘burnout’ (McConnell 1996). Microsoft has created for itself a mainly temporary workforce, giving itself the freedom of having a mainly employee less corporation, enabling Microsoft to expand and contract its workforce at will, maximize its profits and to protect its inner core of permanent workforce from the fluctuations and insecurities of the market. By hiring a temporary workforce (nicknamed ‘permatemps’, as most end up working for the company for years) through outside agencies, Microsoft is effectively freeing itself of the responsibility of paying medical benefits, pensions, holiday pay, tax and job security (Klein 2001:249-252). All this to reduce staff expenditure and maximize profits, when Microsoft is one of the giant multinational corporations, whose profits amount to more than the annual revenue of whole countries.

Also the globally successful rock band Coldplay were introduced during an interview with Jonathan Ross at the Live 8 concert as having done a great deal of work to raise awareness of Fair Trade, yet the lead singer sported Adidas footwear and other branded clothing on the 'Friday Night With Jonathan Ross' show on BBC1 a week or so earlier in spite of Adidas' unethical reputation. We are left to wonder just how informed people generally are. If fairly well-educated celebrities who have been asked to champion the cause seem to not be fully aware of the whole picture and who certainly give out confusing messages, do they, in their thinking, represent the general public? Do people collude with these mixed messages? Are these famous people (branded products in themselves) the public's self appointed spokespeople or mirror-images of our society's semi-awareness? Or are they our token gestures, our conscience easing? How much do people really know about globalization, how responsible do they feel and how does it really relate to their local lives?

It is therefore important to explore and assess the general public's perspectives, knowledge and understanding of what they consider local and global citizenship means to them, to explore where they receive their information from, how they draw their conclusions, how informed they are and whether they actively use their knowledge and opinions in their day-to-day lives, why they might act on certain information and not on others and to assess the level of involvement in issues of citizenship, choice and principles. So, I will be attempting to look beyond the noisy social participants that engage in global citizenship issues to the more invisible masses, to comprehend more accurately the effects and influences globalization is having on individuals and the locations in which they live. More specifically still, it is important to observe how rural locations, with small communities and strong local identities, have responded and are responding to how they are being affected by, and their understanding of, global issues and how or if they feel their local lives, culture and identity are being affected.

There have been many wealth of books written and research conducted that look at aspects of globalization and citizenship, but their focus has largely been macro or urban with comparatively few place-based studies and there has been significantly less research into how globalization is affecting rural locations (Woods 2007). Similarly, whilst there has been a lot of research that explores global social movements, there has been a significant shortage of research that focuses on how the majority of people

understand, engage and relate to the processes of globalization or into how their perceptions or understanding of themselves as citizens might be within a local, national and global context (Albrow 1997). As market towns are the traditional service centres for their rural hinterlands, attached to which are often strong historical identities, they are recognised as distinct policy areas and provide a good sized population from which to sample, and it is for these reasons that two market towns in rural Wales have been chosen as locations for the research. This thesis therefore calls for more place-based research to be conducted and sets out to help redress the balance.

Wales is primarily a rural country (though most of its population is concentrated in urban areas) with a distinctive culture, its own language and a history steeped in mythology. Its spectacular mountainous scenery has most probably helped it preserve much of its identity through keeping (until fairly recently) many of its villages and towns relatively inaccessible. The economy has been based largely on farming, forestry and slate mining in the north and coal mining in the south. There had been a general decline in employment in forestry and agriculture from the 1930s and from the end of the 1970s onwards, as elsewhere in Britain, traditional industries began to close down as cheaper imports and labour could be bought from abroad (a recent example of this is the planned relocation of the Burberry factory from South Wales to Asia or South America) (BBC News: Friday 24 January 2007), the mechanization of industries meant that fewer people were needed to work in industries such as forestry, and farms began to rely heavily on subsidies to cope with the competition from imports from other countries, and so local economies and communities have had to adapt.

Today Wales is globalized, with the population wearing brand-named clothing made in China, with global high street shops locating themselves in most of the main town centres, most people have cars made in Germany or Japan, watch American films, fly abroad for their summer holiday and shop in Tescos where they buy food from New Zealand, South Africa and India. Globalization is happening to us and our cultures, it is a reality of the modern world whether we like it or not. However globalization has not (yet, at any rate) destroyed the Welsh language, Welsh identity or Welsh Culture.

Globalization has permeated the local. Its invasive nature necessitates that it does so, technologically, economically and culturally. Its advancement through the dominant

capitalist free-market economic structure ensures that it seeks to incorporate all economic structures and seek out new consumers wherever it can to buy its products. But its relationship with the local is also necessary in order to find and create new products and new markets. The local and the global have thus come to have a symbiotic relationship with one another, though how localities and local people react and respond to globalizing forces can vary enormously (Klein 2001).

Citizenship today is a contested concept, with many, such as Scholte (2000), and Ohmae (2000), arguing that the global capitalist economy is rendering nation states redundant, as they become less able to control local economies, which in turn undermines the Welfare-State by de-nationalizing services and opening them up to private companies and in doing so undermines the democratic process itself and makes unclear the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. But at the same time, in Britain, the Labour Government has been busy reinforcing the notions of 'active' and 'responsible' local citizens and 'global citizenship' was introduced into the national curriculum in 2002. Simultaneously, globalization, through the advancement of communication technologies such as the internet, has also aided the advance of global citizenship and democratized information. Citizenship today is then not a static concept but is becoming ever more difficult for politicians, academics and the like to define. It is therefore important to find out what citizenship means to people today.

The sentiments of public indifference and apathy to local and global issues expressed in Benjamin Zephaniah's poem at the beginning of this Thesis, reflect what many, including Michael Herzfeld (1992), would argue was the result of a 'social production of indifference'. The last General Election would certainly suggest this may be the case, as it saw the lowest recorded turnout of voters since the end of the Second World War, with recent audits showing that half the British public are disinterested in politics with most feeling disillusioned with the political system and feeling that Governments do not put the needs of the people first (Puttnam 2005: 4). Political parties are becoming in themselves brand products and citizens are increasingly seen as consumers and in so doing are turning 'democracy itself into a market place' (Needham in Puttnam 2005: 13). On the other hand, research by Sir David King suggests otherwise, that people are concerned and do want to be involved in local and global issues but are reduced to being passive observers by the non-inclusive political process. These

findings are backed up by the research done by Baroness Kennedy (March 2000) which found that people are participating in lots of issues and causes, but their contributions are dispersed among many issues and concerns and so go unrecognized and unappreciated.

'Citizenship' is central to social policy, but can we any longer just act nationally in our policy decisions? As Lord Puttnam acknowledged in a speech in 2005, "we do now live in a world which is, to quite an extraordinary degree, inter-dependent" (Puttnam 2005: 2). The then Chancellor, Gordon Brown, spoke of 'building stronger communities', and championed the "active involvement and engagement of local people themselves" (Brown 2006: 5), in recognition that people today feel insecure because their local communities are changing rapidly and warning that, "globalization could mean a free-for-all, a turning inwards, a new protectionism, even a break up of family life" (Ibid: 6). So, this research sets out to find out if the residents and business owners of Machynlleth and Llangefni feel they are represented in local or national government and if they feel empowered as local or global citizens.

Almost every concept addressed within this Thesis is contested: 'globalization', 'citizenship', 'the local', 'identity', 'community'. These concepts are all discussed in depth within Part One of this thesis where my use and perspective of these concepts will be defined. But the main aim is fundamentally to discover what these concepts mean to local people. The interviews therefore are designed to allow the participants to reveal and define for themselves how the local and the global influence their private worlds.

Plan and Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three parts: Part One, reviews the literature that relate to the main concepts discussed and explored within the research (globalization, citizenship, community, belonging, identity, nation-state, culture, Wales and devolution), within the context of exploring the relationship between the local and the global. Part two focuses on the research itself, looking at why and how it was conducted through to the research results. Part Three draws together the research conclusions.

In Chapter 1 a brief history of globalization is provided to contextualise how the process evolved through using the work of MacGillivray (2006), outlining the argument that whilst global interconnectivity is not new, 'globalization' as a phenomenon is. An overview of some of the leading perspectives of globalization will then be provided before exploring in more detail specific aspects of globalization, such as the globalization of the free market economic system and the growth of multinational organizations through the works of Marx (1985), Ritzer (2004), Castells (2000), Klein (2001) and Cohen and Kennedy (2000). Chapter 1 then proceeds to analyse globalization's influence on territory and nation states and their role in what is increasingly viewed as a borderless world (Ohmae 2000, Scholte 2000, Purcell 2003, Croucher 2004) in relation to the reorganization of governance to the supra-national and the sub-national levels.

Globalization is then explored in relation to its influence on citizenship and how 'citizenship' has evolved, and is likely to evolve in response to an increasingly globalized world in terms of residency, democracy, political and civic participation, rights, responsibilities and the effect the reorganization of power is having on social policy planning and delivery (Dower 2000, Dwyer 2004, Faulks 2003, Castles and Davidson 2000). These effects will be reviewed using the work of Held 2000, Brodie 2000, Bauman 2000 and Mayo, to contextualize what these reconfigurations are likely to mean to various social groups and their relationship and participation with the local and the global. Chapter 1 continues to set out some of the leading theoretical perspectives that are to be explored within this research: the cultural homogenization argument (Ritzer, Klein 2001, Smith 1990) that contends that the globalization of American and Western economic culture is creating a homogenous 'branded' culture; the cultural hybridization argument (Axmann 1997, Giddens 2002) that argues that global influences are contextualized and interpreted differently by people and cultures and so become hybridized into different unique forms: The Robertson 1995 cultural globalization argument meanwhile contends that homogenization and hybridization are occurring simultaneously emphasising instead the symbiotic relationship between the local and the global.

The local, in relation to the global, is then discussed, drawing on the works of Day (2006), Savage (2006), Tomlinson (1999) and Featherstone (1997), looking at how it

can have different meanings and connotations to different people and following on from this what impact these changes are having on communities and the ideologies and social structures that create them.

Chapter 2 follows the work of Day (2002), Fevre (1999) Cloke *et al* (1997) and others to explore how globalization has affected Wales, economically, culturally and politically; analysing how Welsh cultural and socio-economic identity has evolved, and how the changing economic structures are seen to be eroding community cohesion and identities. But at the same time, the twin processes of globalization and regionalization, through the establishment of the Welsh Assembly, also appear to be redefining identity, culture and citizenship, with Assembly policy documents emphasising partnership working between agencies and community development through developing an active citizenship ethos.

Chapter 3 first sets out the argument that attention should be re-focused on the local in order to gain a deeper understanding of how globalization affects people and places, echoing the calls of Woods (2007) for the need for more multidimensional place-based research to be conducted. The chapter then sets out the reasons why market towns have been chosen as the research locations and why Llangefni and Machynlleth have been chosen in particular. A profile of both Llangefni and Machynlleth is given so that the towns are understood within their historical context before setting out the aims and objective of the research and the qualitative research methodologies used (semi-structured interviews, observation and visual), setting out the main research stages, the research design and addressing issues of researcher objectivity.

Chapter 4 sets out to test George Ritzer's (2004) hypothesis of the 'globalization of nothing' through using primarily observational and visual research methods, creating a colour-coded map using Ritzer's concepts of 'something' (unique and indigenous) and 'nothing' (global and homogenous) of both market towns' retail outlets as a visual tool the maps show how each town has been affected by the 'globalization of nothing' and reveal Llangefni to be largely 'globalized' and 'nothing' full and that Machynlleth remains 'something' full.

Chapter 5 introduces the reader to how the research populations from both Llangefni and Machynlleth feel about their towns and the changes that have occurred and what life is like for their inhabitants and people who work in them, revealing how both towns have been affected and have responded very differently to local and global influences. Respondents' perceptions of what they perceive to be the purpose of the towns today are then analysed within a local and global context, showing how the global economic changes that have taken place in Llangefni and that have been largely directed through Council policy objectives, have fundamentally changed its purpose from being a market town to being an employment location, changes that are lamented by those interviewed. Machynlleth's purpose meanwhile remains that of a market town, but has changed as a result of globalization through the establishment and development of eco-friendly businesses and marketing of the town as a local and global ethical and sustainable tourist destination, retaining for its residents a purpose of place.

Chapter 6 explores respondents' lifestyles in relation to local and global influences, to see how they engage with the local and global within their consumption habits. What emerges is how socio-economic groups have unequal access to different local and global life-styles and choices and how peoples' cultural backgrounds and level of education attainment have a strong influence over the choices they made. The chapter then moves on to explore what the interviewees from both market towns understood by the word 'globalization' and reveals, not only the disparities in knowledge and understanding between informants, but also the disparities between both market towns, with Machynlleth respondents being far more knowledgeable and engaged with the concept than respondents from Llangefni.

Chapter 7 looks at the social make-up of both market towns; looking at what social groups exist within the towns, and what community, identity and belonging mean to people today. This chapter also looks at how the demographic, economic and cultural changes that have taken place have affected people's sense of identity, belonging and the formation of community networks within Llangefni and Machynlleth, revealing that the local remains an important place to which people attach their identities and develop a sense of belonging. However, what the interviews also revealed was that Llangefni's community infrastructure has been weakened, whilst Machynlleth's has been

reinvigorated by the economic, demographic and cultural changes that have taken place.

Chapter 8 examines how the Welsh Assembly and local policy directives have influenced the way in which each town has developed very differently from one another economically and socially, impacting directly on citizenship participation, empowerment and community development. Chapter 8 proceeds to explore respondents' engagement with and perspective of the formal political process that showed a cynicism and disengagement from the political system, but not from political issues *per se*. People's understanding of the word 'citizenship' is explored next, revealing that citizenship was perceived differently by different people, individually and collectively, by both market towns, referred to largely as identity in Llangefni whilst the emphasis was on being a 'good' citizen in Machynlleth. Following on from this, respondents' levels of civic empowerment, active civic engagement and perceptions of civic rights and responsibilities are analysed in relation to the local and the global and show how education, class and culture play a significant role in people's levels of empowerment and participation in the local and global arenas.

Chapter 9 concludes the research and summarises the main points of the thesis, drawing together academic theory, policy and the research results to provide an overview of the research and identifying further research possibilities.

CHAPTER 1

Complicated Times: Globalization, Citizenship and Social Change

The Phenomenon of Globalization

The notion of globalization has been linked to “well-nigh every purported contemporary social change, including an emergent information age, a retreat of the State, the demise of traditional cultures and the advent of a postmodern epoch”. (Scholte 2000: 14). It has been associated with both positive and negative connotations, ranging from “progress, prosperity and peace” to “deprivation, disaster and doom” (Ibid: 14).

Globalization is a term that is used almost indiscriminately in the media, by politicians, grass roots activists and non-governmental organizations and seems to be applicable to music, culture, economies, the environment, and travel, whilst anti-globalization protests such as those organized around the G8 summits, appear to be specifically opposed to global capitalism as an economic system. So what does globalization refer to? Is there really such a thing as globalization? Globalization is often discussed as a recent phenomenon to have enveloped the world, but is it? Is it not just an historical accumulation of links between countries and cultures that has accelerated more recently with developments in travel and communication?

The term globalization for some is a misleading one that would be more accurately described as Westernization (Heines 2001, Pieterse 1995). For others, all the phenomena such as internationalization, liberalization, universalization, westernization and cosmopolitanism have been occurring for centuries and the terminologies remain adequate as adjectives and yet they have each become redefined by some as globalization. As a result some (such as Hirst and Thompson 1999) argue that there is no single definition of globalization and it can be seen to be a jargon, catchphrase, sales pitch and slogan of social scientists, journalists, publishers, politicians and business people (Held *et al* 2000: 5). More appropriate descriptions to describe what is occurring, in Scholte’s view, to illustrate the fact that social geography can no longer be understood as entirely territorial or fixed in term of time and space, would be deterritorialization or supraterritorialization (Scholte 2000: 46). But what is certain, is

that we are living in a truly extraordinary age of social, cultural and economic realignment that is unprecedented.

In this chapter a brief history of globalization will be given to locate the ontological position from which the research is based, followed by a summary of the contemporary debates about globalization and citizenship, before introducing some of the key themes to be addressed within this research: homogenization, hybridization and glocalization. The perspectives explored are some of those which re-focus attention away from the general and to the particular and which re-establish the local as an intrinsic part of the global, developing the argument for and reiterating the calls of Woods (2007), Albrow (1997), Savage *et al* (2005) and others, that more place-based research is needed to understand how local cultures, economies, identities and people are affected by and are responding to local and global pressures and influences, looking at what implications this has for democracy, citizenship and civic engagement at the local, national and global levels.

A Brief History of Globalization

Globalization emerged as an academic topic during the 1980s when it was recognized that the capitalist free-market economic model had become *the* dominant global economic and social structure in light of the collapse of most of the Eastern block 'socialist' states, and the weakening of labour movements in the West. Multinational companies began to re-organize themselves globally, liberated by reduced state regulation and capitalizing on the development of new and improved forms of communication and transportation technologies, they soon started earning profits that outstripped whole countries' economies (Savage *et al* 2006, MacGillivray 2006). The fixities of societies, such as geographical boundaries, the meanings of place, of belonging and identities were changing, as were cultures, traditions and national economies. Globalization was used to describe the process of modernity and to define an age in the history of societies and the world that was markedly different to previous epochs. Globalization being defined as a "cluster of related changes that are increasing the interconnectedness of the world" (Croucher 2004: 13), economically, technologically, culturally and politically, and it has been argued that the "last decade of the twentieth century represented a turning point for capitalist globalization... and perhaps a turning point for humanity" (Mayo 2005: 1).

Human history can be seen as building up to this point in time, to a conquered world, where 'we' control time, space, nature and people, a destination that we seem to be teetering at the edge of - if only we can learn to control the weather. MacGillivray (2006), in his book *A Brief History of Globalization* gives a clear overview of how, what we today term as *globalization*, emerged demonstrating clearly that whilst its origins are historical, globalization is a recent phenomenon that "is in many respects not only new, but also revolutionary" (Giddens 2002:10).

According to MacGillivray (2006), people have since 500-600BC, been attempting to chart, navigate and conquer the world (as is shown in the Globalization Time-Line – see table 1). Trade and power fuelling the expansionistic desire of companies and countries to explore further and deeper into unknown territories for commodities, which by the late sixteenth century, had resulted in Spain and Portugal having carved-up the world into essentially two pieces in an attempt to monopolize trade in luxuries, particularly in spices. European demand for spices was such that it was becoming a commodity fetish in the fifteenth century – spices were regarded as "the most highly prized of all luxury goods" by the European nobility (MacGillivray 2006: 96).

The mass consumption of everyday luxury really took off in the seventeenth century for the wealthy, but it wasn't until the late nineteenth century that the "corporations finally began responding to the already powerful demands of global consumerism" (MacGillivray 2006: 111). In 1648 The Treaty of Westphalia was drawn up in Europe creating the Nation States model for European countries in an attempt to modernise and harmonise countries' economic and citizenship structures in the light of an increasing interconnected trade and economic relationships (Ibid 53).

In the mid eighteenth century the idea of *Laissez-Faire* (Free Trade Movement) was developed by French economists, and was an idea that was taken up by Adam Smith in Britain when opposing government tariffs on imports (MacGillivray 2006: 106). The free trade ethos fuelled much domestic investment which culminated in the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856, which meant that companies no longer needed to be chartered by the state, effectively cutting out the state-chartered middle-man. It was an Act which helped fuel the Industrial Revolution.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries France and Britain continued Spain and Portugal's battle to dominate the world. A global market consciousness began to emerge as the industrial revolution progressed and technology and travel enabled goods to be mass-produced and people and produce to be transported globally. It was in the twentieth century that the term 'global' became widely used in relation to international trade and in relation to the global warfare of WWII (and later in reference to the threat of the Cold War and to today's 'global war on terror'). The Second World War accelerated advances in information and transportation technologies that have been revolutionary in their effect. From the 1940s onwards a succession of international monetary and governmental organizations were established in order to protect the interests of Western markets and to strengthen Western nation states' powers from external military and economic threats and to bolster civic cohesion (The United Nations was established in 1942, and the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank were established in 1944) (U.N. 2005 & MacGillivray 2006: 211).

During the later half of the twentieth century we have witnessed satellites being orbited around the earth beaming invisible information for us to receive through our computers, mobile phones and television sets from all over the world and outer space. With the development of the World Wide Web money is traded electronically, transferring instantaneously from one country to another at the click of a button and with the developments in global travel to all but the very poor, distance is now measured in terms of time rather than miles, creating a 24/7 culture in which to party, communicate, conduct business, travel, be entertained and shop (See table 1):

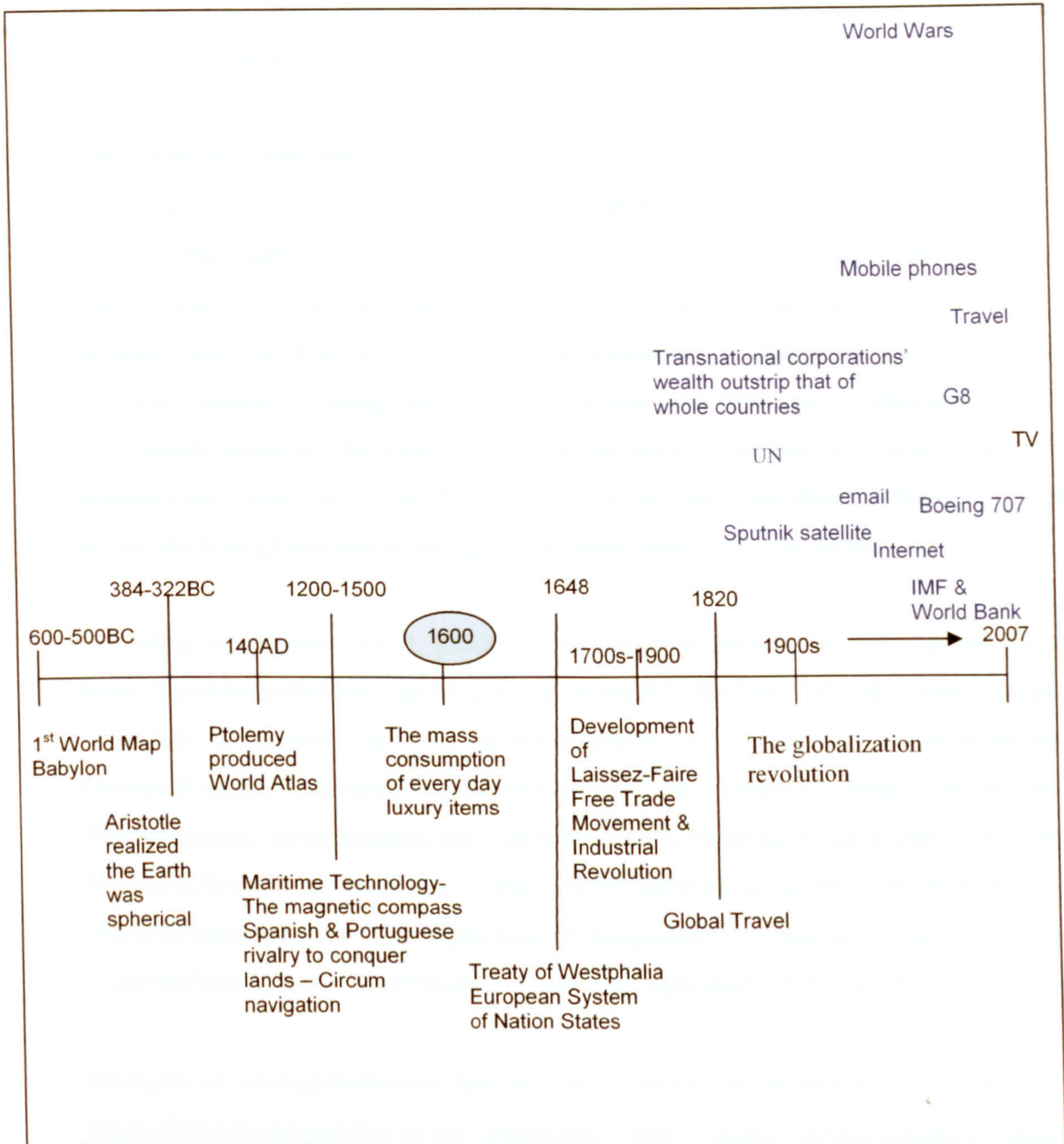


Table 1

(MacGillivray 2006)

Through looking at ‘globalization’ within an historical context, we can see that there is a close relationship between the development of global connectivity, of people and places, and the social and economic structures, such as the nation states and the free-market economic principle, that underpin Western societies today.

Globalization then, for the purpose of this study, is understood as a modern phenomenon, but one that has been developing throughout the history of human societies and is now fundamentally changing cultures, challenging social structures,

such as the family, the welfare state, the nation state and identities. Globalization is demanding that we re-look at how we address issues of citizenship, belonging, the environment and democracy.

Definitions of Globalization

Globalization is a contested concept, in that it can evoke passionate emotions of support or opposition, advocated by theorists, such as Giddens (2002), as a democratizing process that will bring greater cultural understanding, it has also been equated by theorists such as Bauman (2000), to the expansion of the exploitative capitalist economic system, eroding democratic principles and destroying cultural diversity. Confusingly however, the globalization debate does not follow any clear ideological perspectives, with for example, many Marxist and neo-liberals having shared perspectives on globalization, though their enthusiasm for it may differ.

According to Scholte (2000), globalization has been equated by different people to mean: Internationalization, referring to the increase in the flows of trade, capital, people and ideas: Liberation, referring to the creation of a borderless world economy: Universalization, meaning worldwide spread of customs, ideas, things etc: Westernization, modernization and Americanization, referring to the global spread and the imposition of the capitalist culture, often referred to as McDonaldization; and Deterritorialization, the reconfiguration of geography i.e. that social spaces are no longer defined in terms of territorial location and separation. (Scholte 2000: 14-15).

Examples of what globalization theories can be understood as encompassing can range from: Ohmae's perspective of the 'borderless world' (Ohmae 2000), created by places becoming increasingly connected to the global market place, which in Ohmae's opinion will improve the human condition through economic interconnectivity and wealth dispersal: Friedman's focus on the communication revolution, that will result in international co-operation which will bring forth deregulation and digitalization (Friedman 1995): Giddens' 'time-space distantiation', the "process in which locals are shaped by events far away and vice versa" (Giddens in Ray 2007: 9). Giddens does not see globalization as an organized movement, but instead as a 'runaway' set of processes that have and are developing faster than they can be controlled (as yet), but sees it principally as being a democratizing force. Harvey concentrates similarly on how the

compression of time and space is revolutionizing our relationship with our “spatial and temporal worlds” (Harvey in Ray 2007: 10): for Robertson, globalization refers to the development of a global consciousness, as a result of the compression of the world, making it a single place, creating a reflexive social awareness of sharing the planet with others. Robertson (1995) sees communities as responding differently, the changes being embraced by some, and resulting in defensive and protectionist reactions by others: For Urry (2000) globalization is fundamentally redefining social structures which is resulting in the decline of the nation state which is therefore bringing into question the whole notion of ‘society’ and so moving the foundations upon which sociology is based. Space, regions, networks and global enterprises (fluids) are the new social arenas. Castells looks at globalization as reconfiguring social structures in terms of the network ‘flows’, which in his opinion are becoming more powerful than flows of power (Castells 2000: 501): and for Albrow, (1996) we are seeing the end of modernity, as globalization is bringing forth postmodernity (Ray 2007, Savage *et al* 2006).

Globalization thus refers to a multitude of diverse issues to affect people and societies across the globe, affecting governance, economies, territory, cultures, identities and concepts of time and space at the national and the supra national levels. As Albrow explains, “the term ‘globalization’ binds the syntax of the global and its derivations into a ramifying set of meanings. They are thus effectively entwined in an unfolding story over time. It conveys a widespread transformation of the world. But this tendency to blanket coverage should itself indicate how unlikely it is to have a precise analytical set of reference points” (Albrow 1996: 86).

As such, defining globalization is not easily done and definitions can reflect the various perspectives. The Collins and the Oxford English dictionaries’ definitions (and most people’s reference points) of ‘globalization’ therefore seem woefully inadequate compared to what the term appears to encompass; “1. the process enabling financial and investment markets to operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communications. 2. the process by which a company etc, expands to operate internationally” (Collins Concise Dictionary 3rd edition 1995: 542) or “The process by which businesses or other organizations start operating on a global scale” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2006: 605).

As there is no room within this study to give adequate attention to the vast wealth of theoretical perspectives that relate to globalization, the focus will instead be on a few key authors whose perspectives are of particular relevance to this research, as they focus more particularly on the relationship between the local and the global. The authors used in this thesis understand the local and the global as being inter-related concepts and not separate processes, and in particular Ritzer's (2004) hypothesis will be tested in relation to how globalization is affecting market towns and their local populations in terms of their culture, identity and economy. In recent years there has been a growing awareness for the need for the social science disciplines to re-focus attention away from the macro and the general and onto the local and the particular, to gain a deeper understanding of how people's everyday life-worlds interact with their local and the global (Woods 2007, Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997), though as yet, relatively little place-based research has been conducted, a gap that hopefully this research will help to fill. Thus for the purpose of this research we can define globalization as:

Globalization is essentially about transnational flows (of people, money, cultures, goods etc.) across borders, but its effects will always be spatially located somewhere and virtual spaces are downloaded and accessed in particular places (Ray 2007: 1).

And

Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa (Giddens 1990: 64).

As Ray states; "A great deal of globalization literature based in political economy and abstract systems theory emphasises the way in which globalization undermines pre-existing social bonds but has relatively little to say about how social life 'gets done' in a globalized epoch" (2007: 71). This thesis set out to do just that, to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between the local and the global in people's everyday lives.

Globalization and Economies of Power

Marx himself, acknowledging capitalism as a global phenomenon and its expansionistic nature has meant that the local and the national have become (or are becoming) inextricable linked to the global, recognized capitalism's "need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere" (Marx and Engels 1985: 83). What Marx was referring to here is what is now termed Westernization and Americanization, as it is the cultural domination of the West, and America in particular, that is influencing and fuelling the global advance and proliferation of goods and commerce. The economic power of the West and America, force countries to engage with the free market economic structure, a system based on competition rather than co-operation, leaving poorer less developed countries economically vulnerable.

Today the global economy has changed the landscape in which sociological investigation is undertaken. Class must now be seen as global, although class systems continue to exist differently within different countries. In Britain, for example, we have a growing middle class and a growing underclass, but with the closure and relocation of the traditional heavy industries to cheaper production locations abroad, the working class are now located globally and so too are the bourgeoisie. This situation makes George Ritzer argue:

Karl Marx's ideas on Capitalism are perhaps more relevant than ever, his notions of alienation and exploitation are too work-related to have much relevance to the contemporary developed world where consumption is increasingly central (although it is probably more relevant than ever to the less-developed world where much in the kind of production-orientated work analyzed by Marx is increasingly done) (Ritzer 2004: 143).

The global economy, that is based on the trade of commodities, affects all economies to a degree, but that does not mean that all national or regional economies are global or fully globalized. Nation states still play a dominant role in the global financial system as government policies and regulations restrict the freedom of the global market - to an extent (Castells 2000: 261), though national economies are increasingly becoming subordinate to the global market and are often reduced to operating as companies within it (Perriton *et al* 2000: 288). Recent events with the 'credit crunch' and the onset of a

likely global economic recession, have highlighted the interconnectedness of financial markets, banks, pension funds, stock exchange markets and currency exchange rates, which all operate via what Castells calls 'capital flows', where capital is managed globally through information networks (Castells 2000: 249).

Advocates of globalization meanwhile argue that, if managed carefully, it is a universal force for good, as described in a 2005 government report; 'Globalization and the UK: strength and opportunity to meet the economic challenge':

The global economy is undergoing a profound transformation, involving fundamental changes in trading patterns and in the use of technology, and bringing radical changes to economies across the world. Globalization has the potential to increase global output, income and wealth in all economies, whether advanced, industrialising or developing. This potentially brings new opportunities for businesses and individuals, a better deal for consumers, and could lift millions out of poverty (HM-Treasury 2005: 15).

Giddens (2002) acknowledges that free trade is not without its problems, not least its ability to undermine fragile local economies, as domestic companies are increasingly having to compete globally and to expand globally, and small independent businesses such as shops are struggling against global competitors such as Tesco. Giddens however, also perceives economic free trade on the whole as reducing inequalities rather than creating or proliferating inequality, arguing that it is the countries which have engaged in the global free market economy that have on average experienced economic growth, and it has been those countries which have not opened up their markets, whose economies have stagnated or suffered. Though this view is disputed by many, such as Marjorie Mayo (2005: 22), as the income levels of 70 developing countries were lower in the 1990s than they were in the 1960s and 1970s, according to the Human Development Report (1996).

Labour too is now seen as a global resource, both for companies to relocate to where wage costs are cheaper, but also for people themselves to travel in search of work and/or life-style choices. The mobile nature of employment has created job insecurity and affects the poorest in societies. In the West there has emerged a growing underclass as the working class are now located all over the world, coupled with expanding financial communication and information sectors that require a smaller workforce than

traditional manufacturing and extractive industries, which according to Ritzer (2004), has resulted in the gap between rich and poor countries increasing and made unemployment a major challenge for the twenty-first century; a problem that led the then G7 employment and finance ministers to recognise it as being a global problem and to meet to discuss how to tackle the issue in 1997 (Held *et al* 2000: 52). However, as Scholte states; “when faced with a choice between sustaining social policy and improving global competitiveness, governments have tended to favour the latter” (2000: 214). But these migration trends have not gone unchecked as nationalistic and protectionist reactions against immigration have seen a tightening of immigration controls by states and a rise of hostility towards immigrant workers accused of taking ‘local jobs’ (Castells 2000: 261).

The beneficiaries of globalization have been the middle and upper classes, the professionals, managers, and skilled workers; the global market being much more accessible and offering far greater opportunities to these more mobile and cosmopolitan groups. Rich Western countries have done well out of globalization, with Western companies owning nine-tenths of the world’s capital assets (MacGillivray 2006: 287). As MacGillivray explains, “there is a big difference between being a globalizer and being globalized. Countries and citizens need to be aware of this difference if they want to manage globalization” (Ibid: 279).

The Global Economy and the Growth of Multinationals

By 2000 a report by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), reported that “of the top hundred economies, fifty-one are multinational and only forty-nine are countries” (Klein 2001: 340), “Wal-Mart, BP, Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon rank among the world’s top 50 economies” (MacGillivray 2006: 128), making multinational corporations in Naomi Klein’s opinion, “the most powerful forces of our time” (Klein 2001: 339), a view which is hard to argue against in light of the grouping of nation states that make up OPEC and the establishment of the G8 group of leading industrial democracies to protect and harness their powerful economic and industrial interests (the Bush administration’s cabinet being a prime example, as nearly all have or have had close links to multinational oil companies), making “economics .. a, if not the primary, engine of globalization” (Croucher 2004: 14), influencing culture, communication, the environment and information technology.

The neo-liberal economic principles under which the transnational corporations operate are being promoted globally and have enormous influence on countries' economic and political engagement. As a result these economic principles have become "codified in trade pacts, regimes and international governmental institutions" (Croucher 2004: 53). With the growth of Trans National Corporations (TNC) from the 1970s onwards, the growth in transnational production, trade and finance has integrated countries, finance, information and production structures, to an unprecedented degree, de-stabilizing traditional concepts of citizenship and the Nation State.

Multi-national corporations have capitalized on the technological advances by locating their factories in countries where production costs and labour costs are cheaper and by using the world's media to advertise their products to varying global markets through clever branding techniques. Most countries are eager to attract inward investment to provide employment for their citizens and bolster their economies and none more so than developing countries, whose people are also the most vulnerable. Companies are enticed by offers of economic incentives such as Export Processing Zones (EPZs) or offshore manufacturing arrangements that allow companies benefits, such as tax exemption and the suspension of certain labour regulations (Croucher 2004: 14), which are effectively industrial parks within which there exists a tax free economy, creating mini-states for companies, independent of national and local governments. These industrial zones enable the corporations to control the lives of their workers (often referred to as Zone workers), the majority of whom are unmarried women. Companies often cite as trade secrets the location of their factories, claiming protecting from competitors, but in doing so they avoid the issue of human rights violations.

Using Cohen and Kennedy's summary (Cohen and Kennedy 2000: 124), we can see that the effects TNC are having on local economies and local communities are numerous:

- In order to compete with TNC, small businesses are having to reduce wages and forfeit quality.

- Local businesses are finding it difficult to compete against the marketing power of the big corporations and are often forced out of business, even if their product is superior to the one being promoted by the TNC.
- Through the marketing powers of TNC, they are able to affect consumption habits e.g. the popularity of fast-food outlets such as McDonalds, but also more dangerously, through promoting products like Nestlé Baby milk formula in poor countries where it may be mixed with unclean water.
- Local governments' encouragement of direct inward investments with tax exemption enticements, often results in profits leaving the host country (which for poor countries especially can create a cycle of dependence) (Cohen & Kennedy 2000: 124).
- The unethical working practices of TNC have a direct affect on local people, local communities and local environments.
- Local people, local governments and at times national governments often have limited power against TNC to protect the interests of local workers communities or the environment (Ibid 130).

Globalization, Territory and the Nation State

Globalization is having such a profound affect on economies, social structures, demography and cultures that it, is in many theorists' view, fundamentally changing the social structures of society. In Ohmae's view for example, "nation states have *already* lost their role as meaningful units of participation in the global economy of today's borderless world" (Ohmae 2000: 207), their once powerful position as economic structures and mechanisms for wealth generation and distribution, has become outdated reducing them to little more than "bit actors" in the global scheme of things (Ibid: 207).

One of the key purposes of nation states was to manage economies by creating economic units through which countries could engage in global trade, whilst at the same time protecting their own economic interests and the welfare of their subjects from the ravages of capitalist free-trade. And it is also globalization that is now being accredited with the weakening of the nation states as economic and cultural globalization are seen as undermining national economies and citizenship identities.

It is the multinationals that are now being regarded by some, such as Klein (2001) and Ritzer (2004) as becoming the ruling bodies of our era and are setting the globalization agenda. For example, governments depend in part on taxing companies to fund the social welfare budget, governments also need to provide their citizens with employment, for which corporations are important contributors. However, as a result of the mobile nature of capital, it is the transnational corporations that have the greater power and not governments, as they can threaten to take their business elsewhere (as has been witnessed recently in Wales with the Burberry factory being re-located abroad where production costs were cheaper) (BBC News: Friday 26 Jan. 2007) which limits the abilities of states to meet their contractual obligations to their citizens. Transnational corporations have, to a significant extent, been the driving forces behind economic globalization. With offices located globally, with production located and re-located in countries and areas where they can take advantage of the low labour costs, they avoid having to comply to the costly working regulations of some countries (Croucher 2004: 53).

Globalization has, in Scholte's words, "transcended territory" (2000: 262) and in doing so has also decoupled the association of identity with the nation state. Purcell (2003) identifies two things that are occurring within the political and economic restructuring: De-territorialization and Re-territorialization. These twin processes of global restructuring have been occurring simultaneously, at the supra-national (as mentioned above) and the sub-national levels. At the supra-level, the establishment of supranational institutions such as, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), WTO (World Trade Organization), have meant that nation states have started operating as units within agreed policy frameworks and in doing so have relinquished a certain amount of their sovereign powers to these supra organizations, "the result is a highly competitive market, held in place by international agreements in which states have limited capacity to exercise regulatory powers to protect a 'domestic' economy" (Croucher 2004: 53). This enables the WTO, for example, to effectively hold countries to ransom if they do not abide by their free-market rules that operate in favour of TNC, the competitive and expansionistic principle of which, critics argue, empowers them to exploit natural resources, labour markets and flout environmental conservation, animal and human rights issues on an industrial scale (Klein 2001). The E.U is an example of a trans or

supra-national institution (or in Purcell's view, an emerging one, through its introducing a common currency and common citizenship) integrating nation states into a larger 'superstate' (Purcell, 2003:569).

In Purcell's (2003) view, through the establishment of sub-national institutions through devolution for example, local-state or quasi-state institutions are established in order to be responsible for local and regional economic development, unemployment, education and finance to "create competitive regional spaces through institutional state forms" (2003: 570) in order to pursue a regional neo-liberal development agenda. Economic activity is being re-organized according to a range of scales that are larger and smaller than the national – referred to by some as the 'glocalization' of economic activity: "The world system is being re-organized into an international system of regional economic agglomerates, replacing the waning international system based on national-scale economies" (Purcell 2003: 568). Thus state re-scaling has only been partial, but this partial glocalization has nevertheless weakened the dominance of the Nation State (Purcell 2003: 570).

Giddens meanwhile argues against the view that global power is becoming increasingly held by big corporations and not Nation States. He does not deny that some corporations are exploitative and that in the weaker developing countries they are able to exploit their powerful position through corrupt means for their own financial gain. The power of big business has nevertheless been over-exaggerated, and as such is unlikely to ever replace the Nation State, as Nation States control territory, law and military power. The advance of globalization will, in Giddens view, actually make it harder for companies to act irresponsibly through the advancement of international law and because they are increasingly under the watchful eye of Non Governmental Organizations (N.G.O.s) like Oxfam and Greenpeace who can lobby for sanctions to be imposed against rogue companies.

Scholte contends that whilst regionalization can react negatively to globalization through communities, cultures and peoples feeling threatened by a homogenized global culture, which can manifest itself in nationalist and neoprotectionist reactions against globalization and global capital, globalization and regionalization are not necessarily contradictory concepts, but are often interconnected. For example global advances in

communication and transportation have enabled co-ordinated activities on a large regional scale. Local produce has been able to be distributed globally (e.g. Cheshire cheese). Also, the transborder connections between people develops a consciousness of a social framework beyond that of the state (Scholte 2000: 47). However, Scholte argues “the end of territorialization owing to globalization has not meant the end of territoriality” (Scholte 2000: 59). i.e. one can no longer look at territory in isolation any more, but it does not mean the territory has become irrelevant. We are in a “globalizing rather than a fully globalized world” (Scholte 2000: 59).

James Rosenau (1990) identified two key changes that are taking place within the world system at the macro level; where the structure of the global system is changing from a state-centric to a multi-centric system of diverse, sovereignty-free collectives and at the micro level; where innovations in communications, transport and education have enabled individuals to have greater access and opportunities that affect the macro level. Rosenau argues that what separates the macro (typically, states) from the micro (typically their membership) is also under threat, as authority becomes obscured and so homogenous membership with clear organizational structures, is replaced by new social movements that are more disorganized, fragmented, local and less hierarchical. As Croucher explains; “Specifically, what we are witnessing is a decline in the territorial integrity of the sovereign state and the centrality of a territorially bounded state to the social and political identification or attachments of a populace” (Croucher 2004: 52), which has huge implications for citizenship as a form of belonging.

Globalization and Citizenship - The Contemporary Debate:

The ideology and political structuring of citizenship is at the heart of most countries' bureaucratic and organizational structure. Citizenship defines the relationship that each citizen has with his/her state, i.e. the contractual rights and responsibilities that the state and the citizen have to one another and as such is central to social policy planning (Croucher 2004). The nation state has come to be seen as the repository for citizenship and globalization is forcing a radical re-think of how citizenship is defined and managed, of how democracy can be maintained within a global and local political context, of whether the nation state model is outmoded, and how best to manage a welfare state system that is buckling under the pressure of the free market economic

model and the ever-increasing entitlement demands from citizens (Faulks 2003, Croucher 2004 and Isin 2000).

The concept and articulation of citizenship first appeared in Athens in the 15th century BC, but it wasn't until the emergence of the modern state that the practical application of citizenship rights as we know them today were developed alongside and in response to the emergence of capitalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and only with the advent of Western liberal philosophy and democracy, did citizenship take on such an important ideological framework (Croucher 2004: 44).

The nation state structure in the West has come to embody representative democratic principles, whereby the population are represented by a sub-group via the electoral process, to govern the population within a legal framework that protects a number of democratic principles that give the citizens certain fundamental rights, for example, free and fair elections and freedom of speech (Held *et al* 2000: 46).

The concept of citizenship has, over the years, gone in and out of fashion, and has recently once again re-emerged as a dominant theme and buzz-word. The renewed interest in citizenship reflects the changes that are largely occurring as a consequence of globalization. Globalization has challenged the nation-state structure and so has undermined the boundaries within which citizenship resides, as a result citizenship is being redefined and reconfigured at all levels and has become a prominent political and intellectual agenda. The meaning or meanings of citizenship are therefore at this moment broadening and adapting to an increasingly globalized world. Thus, the destabilization of the nation state and the structure and hegemony of the national scale of citizenship has opened up a space for imagining new ways to structure the relationship between a population and the organizational structuring of power (Purcell, 2003:570). Citizenship is therefore no longer necessarily being defined by nation, national identity or political loyalty, though for the time being, the national-scale is still the dominant form of citizenship, without which a person cannot become a citizen of another scale, for example of the E.U..

Confusingly, there is no fixed definition of citizenship, as Croucher explains, “even the briefest empirical examination of citizenship in practice reveals a staggering array of

different policies and arrangements that further complicate any understanding of what precisely citizenship means” (Croucher 2004: 45).

The concept of citizenship contains within it a space for individuality and freedom of choice. It also enables individuals to be able to participate within and influence governmental institutions and is a concept that appeals to both liberals and conservatives alike, as it contains individualistic and collectivist principles. In Britain in the 1950s T. H. Marshall’s perspective of citizenship was influential to subsequent debates, identifying three elements of citizenship: the civil, political and social.

- civil rights (legal – residency, fair trial, freedom of speech, right to own property, access to an impartial legal system, to be equal in the eyes of the law),
- political right (vote and participate in the political process at all levels, to establish own movement),
- social rights (welfare – where citizens are to share equal status with a national community: rights, education, health care) (Isin 2000: 6 & Chohen 2000: 82).

For Marshall, citizenship was developed in response to capitalism, he saw citizenship as evolving to counterbalance or to safeguard people against the exploitative and undemocratic nature of capitalism that generates social inequalities. It was for Marshall a war of good against evil and because of the establishment of the welfare state that provides people with social rights, citizenship was, in his opinion, winning (Maurice 1992: 19). Thus the Welfare State was formed in order to protect citizens from the uncertainties of the economic system providing a very broad range of services that go beyond the narrow categories of welfare and health and include: housing, education, transport, the environment, food, leisure, consumer policies and economic and employment policies (Maurice 1992: 23). The aim being that through providing socio-economic stability, citizens were enabled to partake in active political participation in their communities (Croucher 2004: 53).

Citizenship can then be loosely defined as membership of a political community, which usually refers to a nation state, the location they reside, within which, rights and responsibilities apply (Purcell 2003: 565 & Dwyer 2004: 17). Despite citizenship being

typically defined as a relationship between people and the state in terms largely of freedoms and rights, by virtue of it operating on a membership basis, it therefore also excludes others. Membership is conditional and rights are not universal.

The Beveridge report of 1942 *Report on Social Insurance*, was a principal building block of the welfare state, that set out a new system of social rights: 1) equal opportunities to all its citizens and: 2) citizens must pay for their social rights and welfare state via tax revenues within a growing economy in order to offset the inequalities of the capitalist system (such as individualism and the exploitation of the workers for the benefit of the owners of capital) which meant that citizens had a duty to work. The national insurance scheme would in turn provide citizens with a minimum income with which they could save money to create their own private pension and insurance kitties. Beveridge believed that as long as the private welfare system did not try and take over from the state welfare system then they could both co-exist. It is important to note however that despite there being an element of responsibility written into Marshall's concept of Citizenship, it is principally the development of "*rights rather than duties*" (Maurice 1992: 20).

Dominant Perspectives of Citizenship: Liberalism versus Republicanism

There has been much contention between the two concepts that citizenship is understood to mean: 'civil rights' and 'social rights'. The two dominant theoretical perspectives that have sought to create very different versions of citizenship are liberalism and republicanism (though in reality most citizenship models contain a combination of both perspectives).

Citizenship in the twentieth century has largely been developed through the influence of liberal theory; principally it has been created or developed to protect people from the increasing power of the state, seeing people as autonomous and rational actors and as such citizenship was developed to be a legal contract between the state and citizens, giving citizens the civil rights of life, liberty and property in exchange for security (Faulks 2003: 56 and Dower, 2003: 39). Liberalism's emphasis is on civil rights, which promote economic individualism and are in Faulks' opinion, essentially market rights (2003: 64). The state should, in liberalist opinion, ensure a minimum of civil and political rights in order to generate a competitive market-place based on free-market

principles. The individual liberty they advocate is independence from the state so as to participate in economic activity without interference, enabling individuals to fulfil their potential and through competition, create the most efficient and economical system through which social requirements will be met (Dwyer 2004: 24).

As Dower (2003) explains, the liberal conception of citizenship is a passive one, where the citizen's active engagement with democracy is limited to participating within the electoral process, which safeguards the rights of citizens to elect a government that will best represent their interests and safeguard what the liberal perspective perceives as being the three fundamental rights of the citizen. Democracy is seen then by the liberal perspective of citizenship, as primarily being a protective mechanism that limits the power of governments, protects the interests of citizens and fundamentally, is a way of realising its values (Dower 2003: 39-40).

Arguing against the individualistic ethos of the liberal perspective, the republican perspective instead emphasises community and loyalty. This perspective places more emphasis on obligations of members of a community (local and national) to one another, creating a cohesive and more functional national society, arguing that the individualism of the liberal perspective could destroy society by not adhering to communal rules and values that are necessary to create a functional society. The importance of the contractual relationship between the citizens and the state must, in the opinions of advocates such as Miller (1995), also include responsibilities (Dwyer 2004: 26). Citizens need to therefore participate in politics, both informally and formally in order to promote 'common interests', 'political participation' and 'commitment to the community' (Miller in Dower, 2003:40), i.e. active citizenship – where duty and participation are more strongly emphasised.

The republican position further emphasises the need for citizens to be more active within the political process than the liberal perspective advocates, in order to promote common interests. Democratic principles here extend to a duty of civic political participation (rather than just a right), and are understood as being an expression of autonomy (Dower 2003: 40).

The liberal perspective has more recently been criticized by republicans, socialists, postmodernists and ecologists, to name a few, as being damaging for social relationships, not only in terms of community and social cohesion and co-operation, but also detrimental to people's relationship with the natural environment. For critics like Faulks (2003: 65) there is no contention between civil and social rights, but rather it is market rights that are damaging to civil liberties.

The contention between civil and social rights has been highlighted by politicians since the Thatcher government of the 1980s to the 'Third Way' rhetoric of the New-Labour government, who see social rights as being detrimental to civil rights, which are what Faulks terms 'market citizenship'. The Conservatives and New Labour see social rights as detrimental to civic virtues such as responsibilities and entrepreneurship, believing instead that social rights should not be an institutionalised principle, but should be earned. The welfare state should be rolled back in order to create a society that takes responsibility for itself through developing a work ethic and family structure that creates a cohesive society rather than, as they see it, an undeserving and fragmented structure. Market 'rights' would of course remain central to their scheme, where the responsible and deserving would make their own welfare provisions for themselves and their families and would have the freedom to choose from a range of market provisions.

Faulks' (2003) criticism of many of the contemporary debates about citizenship is their failure to address the inequalities of participation for individuals based on class, gender and ethnicity within the current free market structure, "since all citizenship rights involve the distribution of resources, and because obligations are exercised within a social context, any discussion of citizenship is also a consideration of power" (Faulks 2003: 6). Market interests, Faulks argues, are taking precedence over citizenship rights. Sufficient resources therefore need to be provided by the state to maintain and implement rights, as without them "rights become a sham", as is the case when institutions are established "in favour of one group over another, then again citizenship is diminished" (Ibid: 6).

Faluks (2003) argues that social and civic citizenship are not un-harmonious concepts as critics contend, as we are interdependent social creatures both in terms of our relationship with other human beings, but also our relationship to the natural

environment; social and civil rights or the balance of rights and responsibilities are then interconnected. Also as economic markets affect individuals, then communities (as collectives) inherently have to deal and manage with the effects; consumers as such do not work autonomously within society, we are part of society, part of the collective. Responsibilities also (as conceived as part of the Greek idea of the Polis) were an important part of citizenship as they ensured that citizens were actively engaged within society and politics, which in turn safeguarded their civil and democratic rights.

Inextricably linked to the concept of citizenship are the notions of 'rights' and 'responsibilities' (language that has recently become synonymous with the political ideology of the Third Way and New Labour). As such, citizenship is defined by boundaries, for example, the rights and responsibilities of citizens in one country may differ from those in another and the responsibility we have to our fellow citizens are different from those we have to people outside our respective countries or states. And at the heart of the global citizenship debates are the issues surrounding how far the moral and ethical implications are associated with rights and responsibilities of citizens within their separate socio-political spheres (countries) and how they can or should extend these to become incorporated into one global human political code (Dower 2003: 38-39).

According to Faulks (2003), if we do not therefore try and re-engage people with the idea of a citizenship that contains both rights and responsibilities, and re-engage people with politics, we run the risk of citizen rights and democracy being undermined further as a result of a passive individualistic citizenship structure. We need, Faulks argues, to have an holistic model of citizenship urging that for "responsibilities and rights to be seen as legitimate they must be linked to a more extensive participatory ethic than liberalism advocated and this ethic must be underpinned by extensive social rights" (Faulks 2003: 81).

The debates around citizenship as encapsulated by Faulks (2003), Dower (2003) and Dwyer (2004), pose major policy issues for the future of political rights and democracy, and the need to engage citizens more actively through the provision of extensive social rights provided an ethical imperative behind undertaking this research.

Globalization and the Future of Citizenship

Ironically however, the reasons that made the development of welfare states necessary in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries are, according to many theorists (Bauman 2006, Croucher 2004, Scholte 2000, Faulks 2003), also the reasons for the crises that are being experienced within the Welfare State system today.

Globalization is therefore forcing the restructuring of the very foundations of countries. Nation States are in danger of becoming obsolete as national economic and social policies can no longer remain focused on home turf, national identities are being reshaped as we become more cosmopolitan and politics are becoming increasingly geopolitical. National state institutions such as the NHS are thus turning into 'shell institutions', unable to fulfil the tasks they were originally designed for and critics argue that social policy is becoming subordinate to the demands of the labour market (Scholte 2000: 22). Despite its growing pains however, advocates of globalization such as Giddens (2002: 18), see these developments as creating a world that operates and will increasingly operate as a more cohesive whole which has resulted in most nation states no longer having enemies (even after September 11). Others such as MacGillivray would reply to such opinion by warning that whilst "Global Trade may not be a convincing cause of deadly quarrels, but nor is it a reliable guarantee of peace" (MacGillivray 2006: 180).

According to Castles and Davidson (2000) the mobile nature of citizenship and the development of transportation and communication technologies have uncoupled people from the boundaries of a nation state, which has resulted in nation states having to deal with a range of new issues:

- It has freed people to move all over the world to work, holiday or emigrate; fundamentally destabilizing the nation state as membership categories become problematic, undermining established citizenship laws and procedures on integration.
- The scale of migration has been so fast, reflecting the technological developments of our time that it has left nations floundering when dealing with issues of citizenship, of de-population or large scale immigration (or both).

- The ethno-characteristics (such as language) of immigrants may be very different from that of the 'host' country, raising further infrastructural and social issues.
- The developments in global communication networks have enabled people and countries to communicate with each other directly and transmit and receive a range of information, undermining national cultures and identities and as a result "national culture is being squeezed between the global and the local" (Castles and Davidson 2000: 8).
- Citizenship entitlements and the funding of the welfare state system have been put under pressure.
- Communication technologies transcend boundaries making global politics and global information available to millions across the world, enabling individuals to engage with and participate in global political issues directly in a host of ways, the traditional restrictions of territorial boundedness no longer applying to the same degree, though access remains unequal; including some and excluding others.

Through these "transnational flows and connections" (Held *et al* 2000: 53) nation states and politics have inevitably become embroiled in global issues, political, environmental, humanitarian, economic and warfare. The rapid growth of intragovernmental organizations reflect the interconnectivity of governments and politics and the need to deal collectively with certain issues such as global warming or conflict, creating a political system that increasingly operates on a global governmental level. As Faulks (2003) asserts; "Many of the roots of the global problems today, such as the debt crisis, global poverty and environmental damage, are to be found in the self-interested activities of Western States. Thus our sense of citizenship demands that we develop obligations towards those who have lost out in the unequal neo-liberal order constructed in the interest of Western states" (2003: 42). This has considerable implications for citizenship, as applying democratic principles to a global political platform is problematic to say the least.

To complicate matters further, there is now a European dimension. The Treaty of Rome in 1957 was brought about to provide greater economic union between nation states.

However, more recently this has been extended to include social and political integration as well as the “homogenization of a wide range of governance policies” (Croucher 2004: 74-75). That has since furthered European citizenship legislation through: The Maastricht Treaty on European Union 1993, which established European Citizenship, and which enabled citizens in each member state to also be citizens of the E.U; the establishment of the European Court of Human Rights in 1989; the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 which re-enforced the EU principles on human rights under EU legislation and citizenship; the Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000; and the unelected nature of supra-territorial governmental agencies, such as the EU or organizations such as NATO or OSCE (Organizations for Security and Co-operation in Europe) has led many to worry about the future of democracy (Held *et al* 200). “The cumulative effect of all this is a common European legal and political status that transcends the authority of member states and contributes to the concept and practice of EU citizenship” (Croucher 2004: 77). This is a significant shift away from the long established interconnection of citizenship and the territory of the nation state.

This fragmentation of the nation state and re-territorialization of sites of governance brought about by economic and cultural globalization means that politics, economics, the natural environment and social welfare issues can no longer be restricted to the nation state and are becoming increasingly international and global in scope. How these challenges will ultimately affect citizenship is as yet uncertain, but currently, in Croucher’s view, citizenship is being affected in two ways: firstly citizenship is experiencing a crisis of erosion and secondly: citizenship is experiencing revitalization (Croucher 2004: 51). As Isin explains:

Rather than merely focusing on citizenship as legal rights, there is now agreement that citizenship must also be defined as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights. Being politically engaged means practicing substantive citizenship, which in turn implies that members of a polity always struggle to shape its fate. This can be considered as the sociological definition of citizenship in that the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities (Isin 2000: 5).

Citizenship therefore is being reconfigured at all levels of society, where proponents of the developing concepts of post nation-state models of citizenship, such as Soysal

(1994), call for a transnational citizenship to be developed, based on universal human rights, agreed upon and institutionalized into international law by supra-territorial institutions such as the UN, and administered at the national level. Meanwhile, 'global citizenship' as a concept is growing in popularity and promotes the ideology that we share one planet and as such, citizenship needs to work on the premise that individuals have a local and a global responsibility and can make a difference, especially if they operate collectively via global movements and networks (Dwyer 2003: 45 and Carter 2001: 176). These perspectives see civil society as becoming increasingly important as the base from where local and global citizenship issues are being fought and redefined (Mayo 2005: 46) leading many, such as Castles and Davidson to argue that, "Citizenship should therefore not be connected to nationality (that is, to the idea of being one people with common cultural characteristics); citizenship should be a political community without any claim to common cultural identity" (2000: 24) but that also takes into account the individual equal rights and needs of cultural groups. The shift in emphasis being made by these theorists here are new claims about the envisaged future of citizenship, but are not yet substantiated.

The issues that the globalization of information technologies have helped communicate, and the issues that have been directed at the exploitative nature of the globalization of capitalism, have been used to mobilize a range of diverse social groups in response to injustices that they feel are occurring. Social groups that would not normally be natural bed-fellows are joining forces in a common cause; NSM, NGOs, human rights groups, women's groups, faith-based groups and international government organizations, all of whom also embrace and utilise the new information technologies to raise awareness of their issues and to communicate with each other globally. Democracy and civic engagement is being re-defined by citizens themselves. Campaigns may centre on local or global issues (or both) anything from the promotion of fair-trade principles locally, opposition to Tesco's or to the McDonaldization of their local culture, the promotion of local cultural identities, to raising awareness about social injustices occurring in other countries, such as the recent protests against China's occupation of Tibet and the protests at the G8 summits against corporate capitalism. As Mayo (2005) states, "Globalization has been associated with increasing democratization, both locally and internationally. And conversely, globalization has been associated with growing concerns about the health of democratic forms of governance" (Mayo 2005: 34).

Significantly however, it appears to be those from higher-income groups and who have greater access to advantages in education, who are the most active citizens and who are more able to access and navigate themselves within the decision making processes (Mayo 2005: 42). It is important to recognise there is a class divide between participants. Income, education and access to information and technology are not evenly available or universal.

However, there is also evidence to suggest that though involvement and support for NGOs may be increasing and that those organizations provide opportunities for people to participate in civil society, both locally and globally, it is done largely through financial support rather than through direct involvement with an organization. This has lead Desforges (2004: 565) to argue that it could be concluded that “international civil society organizations are inimical to global citizenship because their interests lie in market driven recruitment of support which enables the continuation of their organization, rather than in popular participation in development issues”. The public relationship with NGOs is, according to Deforges, one of trust between the organization and its supporters to adhere to its ideological agenda, their connection with civil society primarily therefore being expressed through financial support rather than through active civic participation.

NGOs and charities have been experiencing a drop in levels of volunteering which is now being carried out by an increasingly ageing population. Similarly the financial supporters of NGOs are also ageing with “people over 40 not only giving more now than younger people, but they also gave more when they were younger” (Desforges 2004: 556). In order to address this issue and widen their support base, NGOs are increasingly advertising themselves by attracting people through selling lifestyle products (greetings cards, gifts, credit cards etc) as well as through the media and via educational programmes which target children and young people especially. One way this is being done is by providing educational material to schools that feed into the citizenship curriculum and in so doing, they are becoming increasingly professionalized and “structured by the institutional and financial imperatives of core funding ratios. The public are a necessary part of this income stream” (Ibid: 560).

Civil society has been promoted by governments and includes local and global organizations that encompass the voluntary sector and community organizations and networks as the sites for civic responsibility and participation by both the left and the right, where capitalist economic principles are reinforced or challenged. As Mayo explains:

Democratization is being promoted both locally and globally, whether this takes the form of policies to promote decentralization, or policies to encourage more direct approaches to democracy, including the promotion of citizen participation and empowerment. But democratization emerges as a complex process, with no easy answers to the dilemmas inherent in representation and accountability. Here too, political power and powerlessness cannot be addressed without taking account the underlying socio-economic context (Mayo 2005: 52).

At the same time there have been moves to re-locate the local within the global in an attempt to revitalize democracy and reinvigorate the concept of citizenship. There has been a growing trend to decentralise governance, accompanied by privatization and individualisation and it is widely viewed that the political parties have not kept up with the changes taking place in society (locally or globally) and have become unrepresentative of the public. However, the influential Power Inquiry (Power Inquiry 2006), which conducted research into British democracy, concluded that this has not necessarily resulted in political apathy from the public, as it sometimes seems in relation to civic engagement with the formal political process, but instead they are involving themselves in single-issue groups and movements that focus on issues of particular concern to them and which are both local and global in effect.

The re-alignment of power is taking place on two levels simultaneously; at the transnational (supra) level and the local level and has been characterised by Thomas (1997) as being the “globalization of economics and the localization of politics” (Brodie 2000: 114).

In some eyes local governments are beginning to be seen as possible agents through which the undemocratic nature of the global economy may be thwarted by their becoming pro-active in promoting and developing local economic strategies with the move towards devolved governance as well as decentralizing (delegation of

responsibility) and deconcentration (the relocation of decision making). However some would claim that *currently* these moves are governed largely by neo-liberal policy objectives in tune with the global economy: to cut back on public spending and through privatizing public services, turning citizens into “consumers, public spaces become commodified, and urbanity becomes narrowly redefined as a consumption experience available to some and not others” (Brodie 2000: 122) and as such are not guaranteed to be any more inclusive or democratic.

Globalization has changed people’s relationship with their locality and community, which, in Brodie’s opinion, is largely divided into those who are included and those who are excluded from the global economic market. Those in the former, reap the benefits and those in the latter, are “deprived of some of the most fundamental rights of citizenship” (Brodie 2000: 124). There are those who are economically restricted to their locality whilst others are globally and technologically mobile – space and place therefore has different meanings to different people. In Brodie’s view “globalization has forced a new and uncompromising pattern of social stratification” (Ibid: 124) widening further the gap between the haves and the have nots. Using Bauman’s (2000) analogy, globalization is both ‘space-liberating’ and ‘space-fixing’ (Bauman 2000: 1):

“What appears to be globalization to some means localization for others; signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate” (Bauman 2000: 2).

Globalization, Cultures and the Future of the Local

For Klein (2001), at the heart of capitalism today is the commodification of information and communication. Culture has become branded globally, diversity is seen as a commodity to be packaged and sold. Ethnicity, the identity politics of race, gender and sexuality and counter culture images, such as that of the hippy, punk or rapper are all fair game, and in the process, those groups are disarmed of any initial radical intent, through making their identities mainstream (Klein 2001: 20). With the creating of what Scholte terms ‘transworld’ products, such as shopping malls, lifestyles and lifestyle accessories, that are advertised globally via the mass media, the “[c]orporate obsession with brand identity is waging war on public and private individual space: on public institutions such as schools, on youth identities, on the concept of nationality and on the possibilities of unmarked spaces” (Klein 2001: 5).

Cultural information flows are, in Croucher's words, "profoundly imbalanced", as the majority come from the West and in particular America, which generates 44% of TV programmes exported globally (Croucher 2004: 25) and with American films monopolizing about 85% of the market. Supporters argue that Hollywood is a reflection of cosmopolitanism as it employs people from all over the world. Critics however argue that it is highly steeped in American values and thus conveys and even promotes a particular and narrow Western ideology (MacGillivray 2006: 259 - 260). English has become *the* global language. There are today about 6,900 living languages, compared to the estimated 14,500 that existed in the 1490s and the number of languages are predicted to fall by 50-95 percent over the coming century with one language a fortnight becoming extinct (MacGillivray 2006 & Croucher 2004). However, as previously stated, globalization is not a linear process and as MacGillivray explains, "[g]lobal languages are in a constant state of flux, and are highly adaptable to local needs. The internet can also facilitate the revival of languages such as Occitan and Welsh by joining up geographically dispersed speakers" (Ibid: 260).

An inevitable response to the interconnectivity that globalization brings about is the clash of cultures which instigates the rediscovery and redefining of the local, of identities, of cultures, of difference. Globalization must therefore be recognized as an uneven process, its effects varying significantly from locality to locality, from country to country. It may well be that some local cultures will not survive the infiltration of Western global consumer culture; however, other local cultures and locations may not be subsumed into a global mass, but instead react by strengthening their local identities. This increased exposure to difference, either through the media or physically (be that to peoples, cultures, races, religions, customs etc) is seemingly generating one of three responses: greater tolerance; universal understanding and celebration of difference; or, as Benjamin Barber conceives, a resulting universal uniformity, a 'McWorld', a "homogenous global theme park" (Barber 2000: 21) or it can conjure up fear and can make people feel threatened, resulting in 'jihad', a retreat and entrenchment into historical identities and often with renewed vigour, expressing their identities in terms of ethnicity, traditions and fundamentalism. As Day explains; "There are powerful forces making for the standardization of everyday life, but there are also benefits from maintaining something exceptional. Establishing one's niche in the global environment

may be the key to economic and social survival.” (Day 2006: 192). It is then, as Day warns, too early to write off the importance of place and the role of communities. As Feagan (2007) contends, “attachment to place and territory remain of importance in modern society despite the increased mobility of the population and despite the production of standardised landscapes” (Feagan 2007: 32). In Cresswell’s opinion (2004) it is impossible to think of a world without place, as it is “primal to human existence” and as such can be a powerful political force.

There are three main perspectives on how globalization is affecting the local to be taken into consideration within this research; the homogenization argument, the hybridization argument and the glocalization argument. Each perspective will be addressed separately below:

The Cultural Homogenization Argument

Ritzer (2004), Klein (2001), Smith (1990) and others contend that the Westernization of global communication networks will eventually lead, through the absorption of global cultures that become disembodied from their cultural contexts and become absorbed into consumer culture as another commodity, to the dilution of unique and meaningful cultures, creating instead one homogenized global culture. In Smith’s words it is the rationalization and functionality of capitalism’s business principles that operates “at several levels simultaneously: as a cornucopia of standardised commodities, as a patchwork of denationalized ethnic or folk motifs, as a series of generalized ‘human values and interests’, as a uniform scientific discourse of meaning, and finally as the interdependent system of communication which forms the material base for all other components and levels” (Smith 1990: 176). He suggests that for its leaders, the homogenization of cultures creates greater economic, military and administrative powers, but for its subjects it creates disenchantment and indifference. It is through analysing the power and influence which the capitalist free market is having globally with the rising power of the multinational corporations that critics of globalization, such as Klein, Ritzer, Smith and others, argue that globalization is resulting in the homogenization of cultures and identities.

In her book *No Logo* (2001), Naomi Klein charts the success of the brand logos as they became “cultural accessories and lifestyle philosophers” (Klein 2001: 5). Companies

have cleverly linked their branded goods to culture and identity, selling utopias; the perfect body, the perfect look, the perfect house, the perfect life-style, the perfect holiday, the perfect world. Klein argues that we are living in a corporate state as our private and, increasingly, public services, which include retail services, newspapers, television companies and internet providers, are being controlled by multinational corporate interests. We becoming so brainwashed, she argues that we salute the logo and have little room to criticize. Globalization is creating a mass-produced culture of branded identities where high street shops and food outlets are the same the world over; no matter where you go in the world you are likely to find a McDonald's, M&S, Nike, Tesco, Gap and tins of Heinz Baked Beans.

Klein cites the rise of branding in education, through companies targeting schools, universities, children, students and teachers in America, by offering learning incentives, cash incentives, facility incentives (sports gear, computers etc) and restrictions written into contracts, disallowing any criticism of their company. This is not such a major issue in Britain (yet), however it is becoming increasingly more common as was demonstrated by the successful TV culinary experiment, "Jamie Oliver's School Kitchens," that highlighted the branding of unhealthy school meals, the de-skilling of kitchen staff and the installation of vending machines from which schools can generate thousands of pounds of extra revenue. We are also witnessing a similar situation in Universities which obtain funded research from governmental organisations and multinationals with restrictions and conditions in their contracts (Klein 2001). Branded products and lifestyles have been interwoven into every element of Western society, so much so that Tony Blair was astute enough to recognize the power of branding and marketing when he metamorphosised the 'Labour Party' into 'New Labour' promoting 'Cool Britannia' to the backdrop of trendy pop-music. As such 'New Labour' is a concept party; branded, marketed and sold.

These 'global flows' of production as Ritzer (2004) calls them, become non specific to any time, country, nationality or locality. Ritzer refers to these new production and marketing techniques as 'McDonaldization' after the successful fast-food chain, McDonald's, which has become an iconic institution after taking the mass production techniques of Henry Ford to a whole new revolutionary level, transforming business practices that successfully paved the way in global marketing. The McDonaldization of

Society runs on four main business principles: efficiency, calculability, predictability and control (Ritzer 2004: 81). These business principles have since been universally adopted by, for example; TESCO, Vision Express, Disney, Multiplex cinemas, Blockbuster Videos, TV shopping etc, and have been instrumental, in Ritzer's view, in turning consumerism into a religion and shopping malls into "cathedrals of consumption" (Ritzer 1993: 5). As such, "globalization doesn't want diversity; quite the opposite. Its enemies are national habits, local brands and distinctive regional tastes" (Klein 2001:129).

As the traditional view of the 'local' is dependent upon intimate relationships with familiar people in a particular locality, when the local is infiltrated by the global, so the homogenization argument goes, local cultural identity is threatened. The time-space and geographical compression of the world through the new telecommunication and transportation technologies integrates localities into the global sphere and prevents them from being relatively isolated social structures. In fact the globalization of Westernization and Americanization dictate that localities must engage in the global cultural and economic sphere, the result being that unique local cultures die out as collective memories and traditions are lost, resulting in a homogenous world, devoid of individuality (Featherstone 1997: 93).

Bauman depicts the 'local' as having differing meanings and different functions to different classes. For some, the more affluent, 'locality' and its meanings, no longer have to be restricted to a time and place, but can be virtual, timeless and borderless, emancipating them from territorial constraints. For others however, familiarity and identity is changed despite them. For these people, access to flexible global dimensions and options are denied them (Bauman 2000: 8-19). Locality is being stripped of social meaning, having been recreated in cyberspace, thus all that is left behind is a physical location (Bauman 2000: 20). Public areas are increasingly becoming transformed into spaces of consumption, restricting access and engagement to those who are able to pay, "exclusivity rules here, ensuring the high levels of control necessary to prevent irregularity, unpredictability, and inefficiency from interfering with the orderly flow of commerce" (Steven Flusty (2001) in Bauman 2000: 21). A more in-depth discussion of the 'local' and its definition will be provided in Chapter 2.

The Cultural Hybridization Argument

Unlike the preceding group of authors, Axtmann (1997) argues that cultural globalization will result in heterogeneity and not homogeneity, arguing that the homogenization argument fails to acknowledge the 'contextuality of culture', by which he means how individual actors and communities i.e. the recipients of global mass communication, are able to interpret meanings and imagery in relation to their own local cultures, identities and needs. So too it must be recognized that collective identities are formed on many different fronts such as class, caste, ethnicity, religion, gender as well as the ethno-national. Neither are local cultural identities static, but always being contested and reconstructed (Axtmann 1997: 37). The plethora of images associated with a global identity throws up dilemmas of identity for people on a local and individual level as people have to reconstruct their identities in light of the new global images which can thus actually stimulate debate around religion, political ideology, social relationships, cultural identity, and personal identity, i.e. it politicizes identity. Axtmann argues that modernization or modernity is not necessarily inseparable from Westernization either, as states and communities are able to choose modernity and all the technological and communication and economic benefits associated with it and capitalism, but do not necessarily have to choose Westernization. This is a cause of considerable debate and tension that many countries and communities are grappling with. Evidence of this struggle can be seen in the rise of 'extreme reactions' in the form of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. "Despite the cultural manifestations, globalization reinforces concerns with collective identity above all through its effects on the polity and politics of the democratic state. It does so by problematizing the identity-bestowing notion of citizenship in the self-determining nation-state" (Axtmann 1997:36).

Anthony Giddens (2002) acknowledges the U.S.'s dominant role within globalization at the economic, geopolitical and cultural levels as it is (at present) the only global superpower and as such, its power and influence is disproportionate to that of other countries. He nevertheless refutes the argument that the globalization of Western, and in particular American, culture is resulting in cultural homogeneity. Conversely Giddens sees globalization as a largely positive phenomenon that energises people to renew and reinvigorate local cultural identities. As Giddens explains when acknowledging the global proliferation of American culture:

Cultural standardization is an intrinsic part of this process. Yet all this is a relatively superficial cultural veneer; a more profound effect of globalization is to produce greater local cultural diversity, not homogeneity (Giddens 2002: xxiv).

The Cultural Glocalization Argument

For Robertson on the other hand, globalization causes both homogenization and hybridization or as Robertson calls it, heterogenization; “These simultaneous trends, are in the last instance, complementary and interpenetrative; even though they certainly can and do collide in concrete situations” (Robertson 1995: 40).

The local and the global are seen here as products of modernity as they are both socially constructed concepts. Social sciences have, in Robertson’s view, been guilty of over-romanticising the past, of depicting the local as secure and homogenous places, which people regarded as home which contained strong cohesive identities and notions of kinship and which, by contrast, globalization has eroded, resulting in people experiencing an increasing feeling of homelessness (see Day 2006, Crow and Allen 1994, Cohen 1985, on Community). The other common assumption made is that people are interpreting and responding to the homelessness that some argue globalization is creating in broadly similar ways, whereas in reality, the effects of globalization and reactions to globalizing processes have been diverse and consist of “both routinized and ‘existential’ selves” (Robertson 1995: 35). People’s ability to identify ‘home’ being dependent upon how the contested category of location, time and space are managed, home may refer to a person’s specific residence, town, village, city, country, depending on how place-fixed or spaced-liberated they are.

Contesting the Americanization perspective, Robertson argues that the American cultural information that is communicated globally, is received, interpreted and responded to differently by different groups in different ways, drawing attention to the fact that the producers of global culture, actively tailor their merchandise for different global audiences and that, in turn, national products (the example he uses is Shakespeare) have become global products that are being adapted to local cultures. This demonstrates how non-western and developing world cultures have themselves

influenced Western modernity themselves, a fact that in Robertson's view, has been greatly underestimated and under-acknowledged (Robertson 1995: 38-39).

Aspects of local popular culture, such as dress, food, music and crafts can also be reworked and packaged for a global market. Television and other information communication technologies must be seen as producing the homogenization and fragmentation of culture and should be recognized as being tools for resistance as well as manipulation. Nor have places and people equal access to local and global information which can have an enormous effect on how people respond to information and events. People also digest, interpret and rework global images and cultural influences into their local cultural traditions, blending images and customs together, where they become indigenized, and sustain a sense of the local (Featherstone 1997: 117).

Robertson advocates the term 'glocalization' be used to counterbalance the preoccupation that globalization theorists have with macro analysis, which separates the local from the global, and thus fails to recognize how the 'local' is often constructed (to varying degrees) on a "trans-or-super-local basis" (Robertson 1995: 26).

[T]he debate about global homogenization versus heterogenization should be transcended. It is not a question of *either* homogenization or heterogenization, but rather of the ways in which both of these two tendencies have become features of life across much of the late-twentieth-century world (Robertson 1995: 27).

Re-establishing the Local back into the Global

One of the effects of globalization has been to make people aware of the world as a singular place, a 'locality' in its own right, but as Savage *et al* quite rightly point out, the 'local' can be an elusive concept. Like 'home', as noted above, it can refer to a nearby pub, the home, the village, the neighbourhood, the region and the nation (2006: 4), and so clarification of how the concept is to be understood and used within this research and in relation to globalization is needed.

It is important not to over exaggerate how globalization is affecting the majority of people's lives as 'local life' as opposed to 'global life' is still the predominant form of

social existence as a consequence of the domination of actual physical constraints, thus “[l]ocal life occupies the majority of time and space” (Tomlinson 1999: 9). It may be therefore easier now than at any other time, to live globally via travel and communication technologies. However for most people this ‘global’ existence is subordinate to the time-space physical location of ‘home’. It must be recognized that a fully global existence tends to be limited to a minority of people on higher incomes and with greater access to opportunities and not to the majority (Tomlinson 1999: 9).

The local is usually viewed in opposition to the global, as an intimate sphere of daily life that exists within a confined physical place, as opposed to the global, with its vast seemingly impersonal dimensions - a postmodern entity. It is as if concepts and people have to be seen in their otherness to each other in order to define their unique identities which are often constructed to be associated with place. And yet, it has been argued by Featherstone (1997), the concept of the ‘local’ is a relational concept and fluid over time. Boundaries are drawn up in relation to the existence of other identities and localities in order to define difference and uniqueness, therefore in order to situate a locality it is dependant upon the significance and proximity of other localities (Featherstone 1997: 92).

However Bauman (2006) argues, that for [some] others identities are bestowed upon them, that restrict them to stereotypes and stigmatized lowly positions, where their rights to be free and to chose their own identity are replaced with an imposed one. As Bauman explains, “the meaning of ‘underclass identity’ is an *absence of identity*; the effacement or denial of individuality, of ‘face’ – that object of ethical duty and moral care. You are cast outside the social space in which identities are sought, chosen, constructed, evaluated, confirmed and refuted” (Bauman 2006: 39). The lowest of all among the underclass are refugees who are also ‘state-less’. For these social groups, the freedoms, choices and mobility that globalization offers others is denied to them, reaffirming for Bauman that “Marx’s selection of class as the principal determining factor of social identity” (Ibid: 40) holds true. Capitalism is moving from an exploitative system to an exclusionary one. People’s relationships with place must therefore be understood to be unequal; including some, whilst excluding others.

Similarly for Massey people's relationship with place changes as they move in and out of locations and are unequally bound to places. Some might be more mobile than others (for example, travel different distances to work, holiday abroad etc) and as such it is not possible to provide a precise definition of place; thus one person's 'local' might include their neighbouring town, whilst to another it may be restricted to the village in which they live (Day 2006 and Savage *et al* 2006). For Lippard:

"Inherent in the local is the concept of place – a portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar.... Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there" (Lippard 1997). As Cresswell (2004) argues, places must therefore be understood in relation to other places, as networks – social, cultural, economic, their history and geography. So, places need to be understood within a multidimensional context.

The local can then be understood here to be a place territorially situated; and meanings applied to it can be understood as being socially constructed and temporal. Within this research the 'locals' are specific places, two rural Welsh market towns, which will be looked at within their historical contexts, but will be understood in relation to the meanings applied to them as places by their inhabitants at the time of research and in connection to their relations with the wider world.

Community Under Threat?

A common theme in the press, politics, with individuals and with social scientists when discussing the local, is 'community' and its demise. For theorists such as Zorbaugh (1929) and Frankenberg (1966), industrialisation has brought greater mobility, communication, diversified recreational options, increased urbanization and individualization, which has dislocated people from their localities and so their communities as a result of the diminishing complexity of social relations that bind people together (Day 2006: 10-11).

Community tends to conjure up a romantic understanding of a communal past that provided its members with support, stability, trust, friendships and co-operation, a way of life that is seen as having been eroded by the advent of modernity and now post-modernity. Rural, more isolated communities, offer for many who seek a more traditional idea of life, a glimpse of bygone days, a link with an idyllic past where the pace is slower and friendlier, a past that many want to re-establish. Accompanying any perceived threat is of course resistance, and new attempts to regenerate 'the community' have spurred some to argue that we are witnessing the rebirth of community.

Etzioni (1995) is a particular advocate of the community, promoting a communitarian ethos that reinstates values associated with the concept of the 'traditional community'; of obligation and responsibility, seeing community as being a social structure that instils morality and binds social groups through shared values and codes of behaviour. Communitarianism is essentially a move away from individualization and back to collective community living (Day 2006: 14-15). Similarly Giddens in his politically influential manifesto 'The Third Way', identifies the community as the location to foster principles of mutual social responsibility and active citizenship (Giddens 1998).

These attempts to renew the idea of a social collective defined by proximity, commonly understood as 'community', are regarded by some, such as Bauman, as futile, arguing that what is being witnessed is the last death throes of an outdated way of life. Global mobility, mass communication, information technology, a global economy and a consumerist Westernized culture have all aided societies' transitions from modernity to postmodernity. As MacGillivray explains, there are "Large majorities in almost every country [who] feel that their traditional way of life is being lost. Although they welcome many aspects of globalization, most people believe that their way of life should be protected against foreign influence. In the world of ideas, globalizing tendencies have long been in tension with local preferences" (2006: 264).

We each have an understanding of what a community is and means. Unfortunately however (as with most of the concepts within this thesis) there is no fixed understanding of the term and there are numerous competing definitions of community and as many perspectives on whether it has largely positive or negative connotations for its members and for society as a whole. At its most basic level community refers to

“those things which people have in common, which bind them together, and give them a sense of belonging to one another” (Day 2006: 1). However the characteristics of what many people and perspectives perceive as defining what community means are relatively fixed. The characteristics of a ‘traditional’ community are more often than not located within a rural context, where inhabitants share a common history, a sense of belonging and stability giving people a shared identity linked fundamentally to the locality which they inhabit and its employment opportunities.

The rise of information technology, increased mobility and greater employment opportunities have meant that people have increasingly taken advantage of the new possibilities available to them, but in doing so have had to forsake the intimacy and security which the physical territorial constraints of the traditional concept of ‘community’ offers. It is these changes within society that are seen to be responsible for the demise of the community.

In its wake it has created a vacuum in people’s lives, which has led them to carve out new ‘community networks’ for themselves in an attempt to bring together people with shared interests in order to forge communal relationships, imposing upon others their definition of community. For example “Newby (1979:169) identified how newcomers brought with them strong views about the desirable social and aesthetic qualities of the village, which he saw as conforming to an ‘urban’ perspective: villages should be picturesque, ancient and unchanging” (Day 2006: 185). As people strive to belong to a community they often attempt to recreate what they depict as being a community and in so doing impose upon it a locality, inadvertently destroying (at least some) of a location’s remaining community identity and forcing change upon it. These ‘community networks’ are often transient and more often than not, the initiators of community networks belong to the more mobile middle-class, resulting in the emergent ‘community’ formations being restricted to certain social groups and in terms of social agendas. The understanding of community thus exists as a very fixed and idealized concept in the eyes of many theorists and much of the general public. It is however in danger of becoming a middle class idyll, where once it would have been a practical reality, for better or for worse, and primarily of the working classes.

Mike Savage *et al*'s study into how globalization manifests itself locally, through culture, identity and life-styles in four locations around Manchester, exploring how people construct their feelings of belonging in terms of the local and the global, found that locations were used as fixities upon which people electively superimposed their identities and attachment that provide them with a sense of belonging. People construct their identities from a host of global and local connections, but places remain important as identity depositories. Coining the term 'elective belonging' Savage *et al*, argue that the 'local' still exists as 'fixed places' and remain important entities in peoples' imaginations, but argue that the traditional understanding of 'local belonging', as residing with kinship 'born and bred', is now, as a result of the influences of globalization (information and communication technologies, travel, migration etc) being replaced with people electing to belonging to a place, connected to work, life-style, friendship, age, cultural tastes and ideologies. The local remains therefore an important concept for people, but their meanings are less fixed and instead are far more fluid, reflecting the fluidity and mobility of living in a global society (Savage *et al* 2005).

One of the main changes that traditional communities have undergone in recent years according to Beck (1992), is that they have become more individualized and de-traditionalized. This has come about as a result of people having greater freedom of choice, through exposure to different types of lifestyles, to people of different ethnic, religious, racial and social backgrounds, and through greater social mobility, that has enabled people to choose or determine the type of lifestyle that they wish to live. This individualization of lifestyles does not however necessarily equate to the isolation of individuals or the fragmentation of social networks as there are, "significant pressures towards standardization, and the emergence of socio-cultural commonalities which bind individuals together; these include social movements and citizens' groups,...[which] may not depend upon physical proximity" (Day 2006: 187). These new social networks may be located within a physical space, a locality, but they are also manifested in the forms of social movements and citizens' groups and networks in 'virtual' spaces. These networks can potentially fulfil a similar role to that of the traditional community, by being closed social networks with clearly defined boundaries, where members share an affinity with each others' identity.

Identities that were once attributed to an area, region or country are now, due to the global flows of capital, available more-or-less anywhere in the world, “creating a world that is ‘amazingly mobile’, and structured into a complex pattern of flows of movements, consisting mainly of the transfer of signs and symbols from one place to another. Ideas, objects and people circulate on an international scale, covering great distance, at a faster pace than ever before” (Day 2006: 188), leaving many to feel alienated. However, the fact that people have become disembodied from communities, existing at the individual rather than the communal level is the result of what many, such as Bauman, argue to be the accession of postmodernity. People are living increasingly as isolated units, as traditional social networks and structures cease to exist; mass communication and increased mobility having undermined local community structures to such an extent that people have to construct new types of ‘community’ networks, attempting to find meaning and a sense of belonging in an increasingly meaningless world.

In Castells’ opinion, “our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity. The information technology revolution, and the restructuring of capitalism, have induced a new form of society, the network society” (1997: 1). This new ‘network society’ is based on what Castells calls ‘flows’, movements of spaces and time, that are diffused globally, but which have also stimulated reactions against these globalizing trends, generating an increase in expressions of collective identity that challenge globalization through evoking defensive, protectionist images and identities built upon ethnicity, history, culture, religion, family, language etc. If ideas of belonging, locations and the people who live there are becoming more fluid and electable, then it can be easy to understand how some more ‘indigenous’ community members can feel threatened and why local issues can become so emotional for both the ‘newcomers’ and ‘indigenous’ inhabitants alike (Day 2006: 187). The reality and conception of community is intrinsically tied-up with identity, life-styles and aspirational lifestyle choices. As such communities are also organic formations that are subject to change from both external and internal forces.

Conclusion

It is important not to over-exaggerate how globalization is affecting the majority of people's lives. 'Local life' as opposed to 'global life' is still the predominant social existence as a consequence of the domination of actual physical constraints, as lives are still predominantly locally lived in terms of time and space (Tomlinson 1999: 9). Globalization is, in Robertson's view, about the conceptualization of the world and as such most people are 'global', not necessarily in a cosmopolitan sense, but rather in their awareness of the globe consisting of different cultures that are interconnected economically and environmentally. It may be therefore easier now, than at any other time, to live globally via travel and communication technologies, however this 'global' existence is subordinate to the time-space physical location of 'home'. Rather than making assumptions on a basis of theory, it is perhaps more appropriate therefore to analyse how the time-space networking of certain social actors can affect people's lives at a local and personal level, e.g. economic relocations of factories, head offices being located to another country, global foods available in supermarkets and "how our very sense of cultural belonging – of being 'at home' – may be subtly transfigured by the penetration of globalizing media into our everyday lives" (Tomlinson 1999: 10).

CHAPTER 2

Wales, Globalization and Citizenship

Wales and Welsh Identity

Romantic images of Wales' Celtic heritage and distinct culture and identity originate largely from the nineteenth century, where mythical stories of land, legends and kings were evoked, and customs, symbols and ceremonies were re-appropriated to create a sense of a shared national identity, of a homogenous peoples. The Welsh Eisteddfod is such an example, it is as Day calls it, a "relatively recent fabrication" (Day 2002: 21).

Evidence of a romanticised Celtic past held by many Welsh people can be seen in the evidence given by the Reverend Aled Evans OBE, Commissioner for the Commission for Racial Equality in Wales to the Wales Select Committee in 2007 on 'Globalization and its Impact on Wales', who in answering the Committee's request to clarify his statement that migration into Wales should be understood with reference to "Wales' distinctive experience of having to embrace change", he replied that "It is partly a consideration of our history as a people. Going back deeply in our Celtic roots – a long time ago – we would reflect, for example, that Celtic spirituality was very welcoming of a stranger; there was a warm welcome technically to exiles in Wales, a far more embracive approach towards those who found themselves estranged politically from ancient cultures" (Evans 19 June 2007: 2).

Pryce (1986) saw that the Welsh language carried with it a complex myriad of ideologies, one of which was that it was seen as being symbolic of a specific and historical culture, representative of an old traditional way of life; English on the other hand is perceived as having connotations with modernisation. The Welsh language is used therefore not only as a form of communication but also as a signifier of resistance to change and an affiliation to what is perceived to be traditional Welsh culture and as a reaction against modernity (Day 2002: 96).

The demise of the language can be mapped in terms of the industrial developments which the Industrial Revolution brought about, the south became considerably more Anglicised than the rural north-west. As a result Welsh also morphed into several

vernacular types of Welsh, between north and south and between the Welsh used locally and the Welsh used by the educated elite; it thus became a social marker of status and power and identity (Day 2002: 216). Today, Wales is truly bi-lingual, with only around 20% of people speaking Welsh as their first language, English having become the global language of trade, media and science (Day 2002: 215).

The geographical lay out of Wales has been seen by many such as Bowen (1959) as playing a significant feature in how the Welsh culture and language have been infiltrated by external influences, notably English, resulting in the mountainous regions of north west Wales remaining, until fairly recently, relatively unaltered due to their comparative inaccessibility, compared to the less mountainous eastern and southern parts of the country (Day 2002: 96).

Social class, and the working class in particular, is usually identified with the industrialized urban areas, meanwhile rural Wales has been affiliated more closely to a feudal system, and rural populations have been referred to by Morgan (1986) and others, as the 'gwerin', a romantic image of a people who have survived oppression and conquests over the centuries (Day 2002: 214). The distinctions that is made is between the rural poor, the 'gwerin', who work on the land and the urban poor, the 'working class', who worked in factories and quarries, and who are distributed along the same geographical lines as language and ethnicity. As the term 'gwerin' is used to identify the indigenous population, it therefore renders all other social groups as 'outsiders' or 'not Welsh'. (Day 2002: 97-101). To categorize these differences, Balsom (1985) devised a 'three Wales model' that set out to define the divisions between the different forms of 'Welshness': 'Y Fro Gymraeg' (the Welsh-speaking 'heartland'), 'Welsh Wales' and 'British Wales' (Day 2002: 95). As Day explains, "writing about Wales makes one quickly aware of the disputes about what exactly constitutes Welshness, and who can be regarded legitimately as Welsh. Aspects of geography, history, class and personal identity all become caught up with the way in which these questions are addressed and answered" (Day 2002: 97). Wales does not therefore have an homogenous identity but is divided between geographical, social class, ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences; between the rural and the urban, the Welsh-Welsh, the English-Welsh and the English-British, between cosmopolitanism and 'localism', between the affluent mobile and the localized poor.

The politicization of the language by the new Welsh bourgeois intelligentsia that emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century, but which only became a dominant force in Welsh politics from the 1960 onwards (Mann 2006:252), has continued to fuel vociferous debates between the Welsh speaking and the non-Welsh speaking Welsh, as well as between the English speaking immigrants ever since. With accusations of racism being levelled at members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith (the Welsh Language Society) and more recently at Cymuned (a relatively new hard-line nationalist organisation) against the English, the 'English' have been accused of portraying colonial attitudes. Such loudly vocalised and emotionally charged debates as these, can often paint a distorted view of reality, claiming as Cymuned do, to speak on behalf of the Welsh community, yet the situation on the ground is often far less polarized, as has been demonstrated in research conducted by NOP (1995) and Mann (2002). They show that there is much greater consensus between the ethnic groups over the issue of the Welsh language than is often portrayed, with English speaking respondents being generally sympathetic to minority rights and Welsh respondents being far less hostile to English in-comers, bringing into question the legitimacy of the nationalist organizations' claims to be speaking on behalf of the 'Welsh' community (Mann 2006). This is not to deny however that there is not a prominent issue, especially in certain Welsh speaking areas. Nationalism in general defines itself in opposition to 'outsiders' and in the case of Wales and Welshness, this refers largely to the 'English', who are seen as colonisers.

Globalization and the Welsh Economy

Over the last few decades, Wales has been experiencing a restructuring of its economy and public services. The decline in agriculture and the traditional heavy industries, such as coal and slate mining came about as a direct result of their inability to compete on the global market, and have been replaced by an increase in the manufacturing and service sectors, a considerable number of which are foreign owned. However, despite there being an employment growth in these 'new' industries, they have "failed to raise levels of incomes above national means, with the county of Powys, for example, recording both one of the lowest rates of unemployment and lowest levels of average income in Britain in the early 1990s" (Cloke *et al* 1997: 3) and earnings have continued to decline in relation to Britain as a whole (Mainwaring 1995: 9).

The economic position of the people of Wales has been historically a unifying commonality shared between rural and urban locations; that of being a working class nation. The working conditions between rural and industrial jobs may have differed significantly, but the poor living conditions experienced by people acted as a unifying force, not only because of their shared economic position, but by the economic and social necessity to form strong social structures that established communities with a unifying sense of identity, belonging and shared interest. These cohesive social structures have since been badly eroded by the economic changes resulting in crumbling community structures, unemployment and the associated plethora of social problems that accompany economic decline or change. However, as positive as many of the characteristics of traditional social structures are, imbued with notions of support, trust and loyalty, it is also useful not to over romanticise the past by acknowledging that these close social networks were often inward looking and quite hostile to change.

Civil society in Wales has been seen as being un-conducive to social and economic development, as, despite it being a powerful force in maintaining identity and culture, it has been based largely on a defensive structure of self protection. The qualities for successful economic development requiring instead a more flexible, outward-looking and dynamic form of civil engagement, as Day and Jones (2006) explain: “Rich in social capital, their ‘traditionalism’ was nevertheless a hindrance to economic development. They were built defensively, to provide individuals and families with communal support, and to minimize risk, in conditions of adversity” (Day & Jones 2006: 43).

This cultural conservatism has created a fatalistic attitude, where people compliantly accept their fate, creating what some ascribe as being a cultural attitude of social apathy that was particularly vulnerable to the Thatcher’s neo-liberal economic policies of the 1980s which set out to change working practices in light of the emerging new competitive economy. Business success was viewed as depending upon the rationalization of the production processes to ensure the maximization of profits. A smaller workforce and the capabilities for mass production was therefore what were required to actualize this potential (Day 2002: 44).

The response to the decline of Wales' traditional industries from government agencies has been to attract Foreign Direct Investment. The attraction for companies to invest in Wales, particularly from the 1980s onwards was, Mainwaring (1995) argues, through being offered subsidies and because there was mass unemployment and a high percentage of low or unskilled workers who were willing, or rather, had no choice other than to accept low wages if they wanted a job (1995: 21). As Lovering (1998) remarked "it may not be entirely coincidental that the UK regions with the highest dependence on FDI (Wales, The North of England, Northern Ireland and Scotland) are also the UK regions with the lowest average wages, and the greatest ability to give grants" (1998: 28).

The decline in manufacturing industries led to a deskilling and a feminization of the workforce and a shift away from full-time to part-time work. Women, as well as young people and school leavers, were favoured as employees over men by many of the new Japanese-style employment practices, who considered them to be a more compliant workforce, who would be willing to accept lower pay than men, significantly affecting the employment prospects for unemployed men and the traditional economic relationship between men and women (Fevre 1999: 57).

However, Lovering argues that contrary to the 'talking-up' of the Welsh economy by the Welsh Development Agency, who argued that direct inward investment has helped local regeneration by establishing 21,700 new jobs in Wales between 1984-1995, the actual true increase in employment for this period was a mere 4000, as 17,700 of those jobs included in the WDA's figure were due to the acquisition of existing companies. Thus the effect FDI has had on employment in Wales has been in ownership of Welsh manufacturing companies, rather than in job creation (Lovering 1998: 24).

Foreign direct investment "currently accounts for something like a third of all industrial investment in Wales, and is concentrated mainly in the manufacturing sector" (Day 2002: 998) which have been blamed for further de-skilling the workforce and for the continuing decline of the Welsh economy (Mainwaring 1995: 23). The lack of a Welsh business class has added further to the deficit in the skills base of Welsh communities (Day & Jones 2006: 44).

To put the competition to attract foreign direct investment on a global scale, Wales had to compete, for example, with poor global competitors such as Namibia and Poland for a company assembling shoes to chose Pembrokeshire as a location for its factory, which would create 150 jobs. This is, in Day's words, "a pretty humbling position within the world economic order" (Day 2002: 199).

Despite Europeanization and globalization making it increasingly difficult to maintain control over a 'Welsh economy' and the threat they pose for Welsh identity, they do not, as Day comments, "seem to attract anything like the same degree of scepticism and downright hostility as tended to be associated with the presence of 'English' companies in Wales" (Day 2002: 200).

Wales' economic situation at the beginning of the millennium looked bleak, a prospect that was reflected in the opening lines of the Welsh Assembly's economic strategy 'A Winning Wales';

Wales needs to start on the task of economic transformation without any further delay. It is a challenging task but not beyond our capacity. If the people, businesses and communities of Wales work together, within an integrated framework agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government, the job can be done (NAW 2002).

The aim being to raise the standard of living in Wales up to that of the rest of the UK.

Up until 1st April 2006, when they, along with the Welsh Tourist Board became integrated into the Welsh Assembly, under the Department of Economy and Transport (Jones Sat 1 April 2006), it was principally the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and the National Council for Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) that had been charged with implementing social and economic changes for the National Assembly for Wales. The former is charged with attracting inward investment into Wales (though now its focus has shifted to incorporate the development of local businesses too) and has led much of the economic changes that have taken place. New industrial units have been established and economic incentives offered to attract foreign investments to come to Wales. On the back of this, new infrastructure (such as housing) has been developed to entice people with the relevant skills to relocate to these areas. The skills shortage,

especially amongst professional and managerial positions in Wales, has meant that a disproportionate amount of this workforce has come from outside the local vicinity and outside of Wales, which is changing the social dynamics of areas, often causing a clash of cultural norms and values, and leaving the 'native' Welsh population disproportionately represented amongst the lower paid and less skilled jobs. These economic and social changes have also created economic and social disparities between regions that have further undermined the unity of Welsh society (Day & Jones 2006: 50-51).

According to 2005 figures on GVA (Gross Value Added), Wales' economic activity continues to rank the lowest in the UK (Bryman and Roche Oct 2007: 197). Although Wales remains relatively successful in attracting direct inward investment, it has remained unsuccessful in attracting companies to relocate their headquarters to Wales, and so still has less managerial, technical or professional occupations in comparison to the rest of the UK (Ibid 217). Employment fell by 4.7 % between 2004 and 2005, largely as a result of the continued rationalization and restructuring of businesses. Wales is becoming less economically competitive and so less successful in attracting or retaining inward investment from MNC. This has been hampered further by the enlargement of the EU to include countries such as Poland, where production costs are lower. Wales has seen many large businesses relocate to Slovakia, Poland, France, Romania and Hungary, resulting in the loss of hundreds of jobs (Ibid: 206). In addition to this, many of Wales' job vacancies are increasingly being filled by migrant workers from Eastern Europe, as a result of businesses being unsuccessful in filling vacancies from the UK's labour market, and are forced to recruit overseas workers to fill posts for seasonal work that offers low pay and unsocial working hours (Ibid: 208).

Wales still has a high proportion of economic inactivity, exacerbated by low skills, lack of transport, lack of child-care facilities, and health issues, that the Welsh Assembly have set out to tackle through a range of development strategies, such as *the Development Strategy for Wales, Skills and Employment Action Plan* (Bryman and Roche Oct. 2007: 214).

Despite the bleak outlook above, Wales' economy has improved in the tourism market, growing by some 4% in 2006, a growth that the Welsh Assembly are hoping to

capitalise upon, producing an action plan *Achieving our Potential 2006-13* (2005), through “improving the quality of accommodation and tourism attractions, extending the branding of Wales and improving the accessibility of information for visitors to Wales” (Bryman and Roche Oct. 2007: 224-5).

The far-reaching social consequences of economic re-structuring

Over the last few decades, Wales has been experiencing the restructuring of its essential services: the deregulation and privatization of public transport in the 1980s and 1990s; the decline of Public Sector services, such as council houses, being sold off in the 1980s, has meant that most housing in Wales is now in the private sector, especially owner occupation; local shops and amenities have declined in response to the growth of ‘high street’ retail outlets in larger towns; there has been an outward migration of young people in search of better employment and higher education prospects; and there has been a population growth from people moving into Welsh villages during the 1980s, which placed a great deal of pressure on community structures, the Welsh language and local and Welsh identities (Cloke *et al* 1997: 3-4). The economic, demographic, communication and transportation changes that have taken place have significantly altered the face of Wales, linguistically and culturally. Rural locations are now accessible as places from which to commute to work, retire to or accessed as a rural haven, though the effects are distributed unevenly.

Relocation and out-migration of Welsh families as a result of the economic changes, has affected all but a few, usually isolated, places. This has undermined the cultural and social connectivity and importance of place and identity (Day & Jones 2006: 46). Cloke *et al*'s (1997) survey revealed that “newcomers were over-represented in professional and managerial occupations” (Cloke *et al* 1997: 63) resulting in higher levels of salary and greater employment stability. This has had considerable consequences for traditional Welsh communities (Day & Jones 2006: 50).

In addition to the in-migration of people in professional and managerial positions, Symonds (1990) identified a further “two main social types” that re-located to rural Dyfed; “retired people and younger craft-orientated entrepreneurs. Both were overwhelmingly English by origin”.... [However], the so-called ‘Woodstock’ generation of middle-class ‘drop-outs’, with their craft shops, wholefood restaurants

and ethnic clothing designs (Symonds, 1990: 29), were by no means identical in their tastes and aspirations to the 'early retired' couples living in bungalow developments and seaside properties" (Day 2002: 175).

There are many reasons why people have been attracted to come and relocate their lives and businesses in Wales, not least because of its picturesque beauty. People are attracted to the idea of rural idyll, where the pace of life is slower, quality of life is higher and the cost of living lower; to escape from the rat race of urban living and congestion. The numbers of people moving into Wales exceeded those moving out of Wales from the 1960s onwards (Day 2002: 173) and an inevitable consequence has been a steady rise in house prices as demand has risen and the incomes of many of the people moving into Wales are higher than that of the local population and increasingly congested roads. The price and availability of housing has become a major concern for local people as it is forcing the young to move away from their places of birth in search of better employment prospects and affordable housing, an issue that has been officially acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly (Mann 2006: 264). This issue has become a major concern for many people in Wales and focuses significantly within the argument surrounding in-migration and often becomes conflated within the wider argument of linguistic and cultural protection. This concern is reflected in results from a Welsh Language Board study by NOP in 1995, where over half the Welsh speaking population interviewed believed that 'local people in Welsh-speaking communities should be able to buy subsidised housing' and that purchasing priority should go to people who have lived in an area for 10 years or more, whilst in contrast only 26% and 27% respectively of the English respondents agreed with the above statements (Mann 2006: 259). It is not that these issues are peculiar to Wales, but their affect on Welsh language, identity and culture is (Day 2006).

Cloke *et al's* survey found that newer residents who had not lived through the rationalization of services in the areas in which they had moved to had a limited expectation of services and accepted the situation as it stood. This group also were more likely to have a car and so were able to access the facilities and services available in out-lying districts. The reduction of services was significantly changing shopping habits as people were increasingly using large supermarkets for cost, choice and convenience and far fewer people were using local shops for the purchase of their

groceries; this was eroding the cultural significance of the shop as the symbolic heart of the village (Cloke *et al* 1997: 98). These changes were in Shaw's (1979) opinion causing, a "self sustaining spiral of disadvantage: household deprivation, opportunity deprivation and mobility deprivation" (Cloke *et al* 1997: 103).

There is a growing number of disadvantaged people falling into the category of the 'underclass'; people who generally are less skilled or qualified and who experience social exclusion and marginalization that precipitate a cycle of poverty. The closure of the traditional industries has left large social scars in many parts of Wales. Where once whole communities had been established around key industrial areas near quarries or large factories, there is often now high levels of male unemployment, disaffection, disillusionment, poverty, and the accompanying vices of drugs and crime and environmental degradation. The economic changes have had further knock-on effects on neighbouring market towns, both economically and in terms of their reputation as being unsafe or depressing. Whole communities can thus become further marginalized and socially excluded from full citizenship participation within mainstream society, socially, politically and materially. A situation that leads Day to conclude that; "[o]verall, the extent of social distance and 'ghettoization' to be seen among both the better-off and the 'new' poor suggests that the time has come to finally put to rest the myths of the *gwerin* and a classless Welsh society" (Day 2002: 137).

The Rationalization of Services

Wales has been experiencing an increasing "centralization and rationalization" (Day 2002: 164) of public services, such as schools, doctors' surgeries, post-offices, village shops etc, as service providers try to maximise their profits, lower expenditure and centralize control, which is resulting in local areas and communities losing their independence, control and community cohesion. For example, a survey by the Wales Rural Observatory of Community and Town Councils on rural service provision found that of those councils that responded, "68% of councils do not have a GP practice, 84% don't possess a dental practice, and 75% ...do not have a pharmacy service" (2004: 3-4). These figures correlate to the size of the towns with 66.7% of towns with a population size of between 2000 – 4000 (where Llangefni and Machynlleth would fit in) having a GP surgery, which never-the-less still reveals a large deficit in provision. Similarly only 35% of towns with a population less than 500, and only 83% of towns

with a population of between 2000 – 4000 had a shop selling food only. “These figures highlight a significant proportion of councils even in higher population bands without this key service facility” (2004: 2-3). Out-of town shopping complexes undermine local shops and have had serious knock-on effects on small market towns which have found it difficult to compete, in term of prices and range of goods, with the large out-of-town chain stores. Invariably the people most affected by these ‘rationalization’ measures are the vulnerable in society; the poor, the elderly and the young (Ibid 164-165). Cloke *et al* found that services were becoming increasingly eroded for those people who were less mobile, with public transport services being reduced and fares increasing. This meant that in order to access jobs, services and facilities, a car was needed and this was having an adverse effect on the already disadvantaged groups, such as the poor, the elderly, the disabled, infirm and women (Cloke *et al* 1997: 77). At the same time Cloke *et al* found that a sense of place still figured strongly in the imagination of local people as they placed upon a locality emotional and symbolic attachment despite being far less localized and far more geographically mobile in terms of the distance travelled to work, shop, access services, to socialize and use leisure facilities etc (Cloke *et al* 1997: 139).

“[Rural] communities are best understood in terms of ‘communities of meaning’ rather than material social interaction. Community is thus seen to play a symbolic role in constructing and sustaining a sense of belonging which relies on the perceived validity of community culture. Belonging is enhanced by the drawing of boundaries which discriminate between the community and other places and groups, and thus it is the imagined community which differentiates between the local identities which are shared and those which are different” (Cloke *et al* 1997: 140). For example, Day and Murdoch (1993) observed that people who had moved to live in Wales as long as fifteen years previously, were still not regarded as belonging to the local community (Day and Murdoch 1993: 141).

The social and economic changes affecting Welsh Villages are causing what Rees (1951) referred to as the beginning of their social atomisation (Day 2006 b: 231). The significant changes that have occurred within the economic industries, resulting in populations no longer being static or homogenous as Day remarks, raise significant questions about what is a Welsh community (Ibid: 233). These “disparities in economic conditions and lifestyles between ‘post-modern’ and ‘traditional’ or ‘redundant’

communities put new strains on the cohesiveness of Welsh society” (Day & Jones 2006: 51). Cultural clashes, or differences (in terms of income, class, ideology, social networks) are often visible in both how people decorate their houses and in how they communicate with one another (Cloke *et al* 1997: 149). The English often appear, or are perceived to bring with them class practices when they come to live in (predominantly working class) rural Welsh locations, through their cultural constructs of the idyllic ‘English’ village (Cloke *et al* 1997: 150).

The diversity of people now living in Wales means that people bring with them a whole host of meanings to living in the countryside, in Wales, in a market town, in a community, leaving rural Wales less uniform than it previously was, raising as Day points out, issues for policy makers around the meaning of ‘rural’, or for that matter the meanings of community and identity (Day 2006 b: 234). As Murdoch (2003) notes the communities of today are not formed organically out of necessity, but are increasingly constructed by residents of a location or, as Bauman refers to them as “‘inauthentic’ simulations of the real thing” (Day 2006 b: 235). For example, people may be involved in their immediate community or community networks based around where they live, but they also may be involved with community networks that are not territorially located such as internet chat rooms such as Facebook, or in national or international organizations, or within interest groups or clubs etc. But it must also be noted that “[F]or critics of the old style of rural community, this represents a liberation from coercive pressures of uniformity and stagnation, which held back rural development” (Day 2006 b: 237).

Devolution, Citizenship and the Global Arena

As we saw from the previous discussion on globalization and citizenship, globalization is causing in Scholt’s view; ‘re-territorialization’ and ‘de-territorialization’ (2000), and as such there are several new and emerging multi-level sites of governance, such as decentralization and devolution, and uncoupling the association between the nation state and the welfare state; “devolution is developing at the very moment that there is a growing recognition of the important insights that a ‘transnational social policy’ focus can bring social policy analysis” (Williams and Mooney 2008: 493).

Community regeneration had up until this last administration been mostly the priority of the community activists and not government, and where governmental community regeneration initiatives did exist, they did so from a top-down approach, tending not to involve the communities themselves. This slowly began to change during the 1990s with the market liberalist ethos and then the New Labour's 'Third Way' which had at its heart a communitarian ideology, influenced by the writing of Giddens and Etzioni, that forged new links between the state, the private sector and civil society and has become embedded within current social policy. The market place is seen as the location through which social integration and community cohesion can be brought about through active citizenship involvement within the market, through the state and communities working in partnership with one another to develop a dynamic entrepreneurial culture, and system of welfare delivery through the privatization of public services, the aim being to maximise the potential for social capital whilst minimising state responsibility and reduce taxation. As Imrie and Raco (2003: 242) explain, "community 'empowerment' has been re-established in a context of shifting relationships between the state and civil society, with community representing a convenient territory of action to be mobilised, shaped and activated in the pursuit of broader agendas" and this tends to follow free-market principles and in so doing casts aside the ideology of universal entitlements associated with the welfare state.

Responsibility for the success of the new approach to welfare and service delivery is increasingly being placed on citizen involvement. Consumer choice is favoured over a state controlled public sector, and government policies aim to create a society, at the heart of which is an active civil society ethos where citizens take social responsibility for social problems through their involvement with, and support for, charitable organizations and through volunteering, reducing dependency on the state and instilling in people greater social and personal responsibility (Adamson 2006). Communities are therefore becoming instruments of policy and citizens as agents of policy implementation and the complexities associated with defining 'community' are "becoming fixed and structured in policy-making terms" (Imrie and Raco 2003: 248). "It is clearly important [therefore], to view devolution within the context of the New Labour 'modernising' project and as a product of its wider socio-economic and neo-liberal agendas" (Williams and Mooney 2008: 498).

Wales and Scotland have had a direct relationship with the EU (initially the EEC) for over thirty years and have been able to access regional funding, such as structural funds, “highlighting the institutional recognition by supranational agencies of multi-national distinctiveness within the UK” (Williams and Mooney 2008: 491).

The decision in 1997/8 to establish a devolved government in Wales was taken after a referendum was won by the slimmest of margins by those in favour of devolved governance; the Assembly’s establishment in 1999, has been testament to this trend. The focus of the Welsh Assembly is largely national and regional, whilst Westminster is becoming increasingly global in focus. Though as Williams and Mooney emphasise, devolution should be understood as an ongoing process and not a single event. For example, the Welsh Assembly has had primary legislative powers since 2006, before which it was limited to secondary legislative powers (Williams and Mooney 2008: 490).

Devolution (in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at any rate) is based on these regions having distinct national and ethnic identities, and as such, it is argued, they should be allowed to be partly or fully self-governing. However, with nation building usually comes the task of creating unified and homogenized identities, that are inconsistent with the diversity-rich nature of Britain and Wales, such as ethnicity and class and are problematic in relation to the simultaneous trend towards globalization and Europeanization (Williams and Mooney 2008: 496-7).

To foster a new entrepreneurial culture in Wales, £65 million of European money was made available under the Objective 1 programme from 2000-6 (Day & Jones 2006: 57), “[a]ligned to complement the National Assembly for Wales’ own subsequent Economic blueprint *A Winning Wales* (NAW 2001)” (Fudge April 2007: 4) that was to be implemented through creating regional, local and strategy partnerships across Wales, via initiatives such as the Communities First programme and which were to include local involvement in community regeneration initiatives – a distinct move away from the traditional top-down approach to policy implementation .

The Welsh Assembly has been developed to be a more representative based governmental structure that seeks to include local government, voluntary and regional

organizations within its decision making structures – it has a strong rhetoric of ‘partnership’ building. The Assembly is also more transparent in its proceedings making it and its ministers more accountable than traditional governmental structures (Thomas & Taylor 2006: 94). Wales has, according to Thomas and Taylor, a weak civil society compared to Scotland because of its historical relationship with England. It is largely through the economic elite, that an active, participative civic community is developed, an economic elite, that until relatively recently has been largely absent in Wales, and despite the significant cultural and political developments in this area, it has come about after much of Welsh identity has been fragmented, leaving many, for example feeling unconnected to Cardiff and the Welsh Assembly (Ibid: 88).

The lack of civic engagement and participation with the political process is reflected in the poor turn-out at national, and particularly, Assembly elections, and the findings of the Electoral Commission Report for the 2003 Assembly Elections, found this was due to people’s perceptions that very little is achieved through voting. The local Welsh focus of politics in Wales has come at a time when politics is more than ever global in scope. Wales is therefore in an odd predicament of the Welsh population being, as Thomas and Taylor observe, bifocal in their political relationship with the Welsh Assembly and Westminster, but there is also their third relationship with global politics as well (Thomas & Taylor 2006).

Moves towards devolved governance in Britain has, in the opinion of many including the government, undermined a unified sense of belonging, British identity and social justice (Williams and Mooney 2008), in addition to the erosion of national identities as a result of globalization. In response to this several citizenship initiatives have been proposed (such as a British Day) or established, such as the new citizenship test and ceremony for immigrants applying for naturalization (Home Office 2004: 9) to reinvigorate a unified British identity.

Wales is a prime example of the dichotomy of reactions that globalization generates. As political issues become increasingly international in focus, they are also simultaneously increasingly focusing on the local regional issues that emphasise community and particularist agendas that emphasise regional identities and cultures. For example the Welsh Assembly launched its policy document ‘Iaith Pawb (Everyone’s Language) – a

National Action Plan for Bilingual Wales' in 2006, which sets out to achieve a 5 per cent increase of Welsh-speakers by 2011 through a host of education initiatives and the rolling out and extension of bilingual policies and has set up a Welsh Assembly Policy Unit within the Assembly to monitor the action plan (Thomas and Gruffudd 2003: 77-78), its focus being on developing micro policies to bolster a 'national' Welsh civic identity. And in 2006, the Welsh Assembly launched its 'Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action', that sets out to develop and encourage a global civic consciousness and identity and active global citizens, via the education system, from primary education right through to lifelong learning in both the formal and informal education sectors (WAG 2006).

The twin processes of globalization and regionalization are creating spaces for re-thinking, re-defining and articulating culture and identity and have been seized upon by policy makers in the new devolved government. Culture is being re-forged to create and articulate a new 'Welsh' citizenship identity (Housley 2006: 159). There is then a tension and ambiguity in understanding what citizenship in Wales or 'Welsh citizenship' means today as it is being re-constructed in relation to and in response to local and global influences.

Globalization and regionalization are also redefining boundaries, structures, identities, ideologies and people's relationship with the nation state and the welfare state. For example the difference between the Welsh Assembly Government and Westminster's ideological perspective on Welfare is shown by the former placing far more emphasis on civic involvement in the planning and delivery of public services, in a move towards democratizing social policy making (Williams and Mooney 2008: 498).

At the heart of the Welsh Assembly's social policies has been its emphasis on citizenship issues to create a nation of active citizens that are socially responsible, community focused and that will also facilitate social inclusion and integration and rejuvenate democracy (Barlow 2006: 15). These efforts to create a unique "Welsh civil society", are, according to Williams and Mooney (2000), being mobilized around the particular ethnic identities of Welsh and English, in relation to 'rights' to affordable housing, employment and welfare, producing affiliations of different stakeholder groups which is creating "novel experiments in the democratization of Welfare"

(Williams and Mooney 2008: 497). Wales and its identity must be understood as currently being reconstructed and redefined under devolution and in relation not only to its relationship to the rest of Britain, but also to Europe and the wider world.

There is a shift from 'expert' to 'expertise' within the policy and decision making fora of the Welsh Assembly, with the change in emphasis from devolved government to devolved governance, opening up new avenues through which people and groups can participate in the planning and delivery of services and in doing so democratize social policy (Williams and Mooney 2008: 502).

When it comes to social welfare the Welsh Assembly's social policy objectives are couched in terms of developing a "new set of citizenship rights" at the heart of which is the development of a strong working relationship between the Welsh Assembly government and the voluntary sector in the planning, provision and delivery of welfare services in Wales through strong participation within the policy-making process (Drakeford 2006: 114-5).

An example of the community focus of the Welsh Assembly has been its development of the Communities First initiative, the aim of which is to help the most disadvantaged communities in Wales by supporting community-led programmes harnessing once again their promotion of the active citizenship agenda (Drakeford 2006: 116).

The Welsh Assembly government implements its active citizenship policy agendas through encouraging participation in and civic engagement with civil society groups, such as voluntary organizations, community groups and civic co-operations; its aim being to address the problems that the increasingly global market place has had on social structures, through encouraging greater social cohesion by re-kindling people's engagement and investment in community organizations, by promoting volunteerism to counter-balance the individualization of society and developing an ethos of reciprocity (Betts in 2006: 125). Volunteering is seen as social capital – creating a cohesive, socially inclusive and moral society of shared values.

The national assembly has promoted partnership working between statutory, voluntary and private organisations, through the establishment of institutions such as the WCVA.

A minister was installed to ensure that the interests of the voluntary sector were represented within the parliament and to promote the voluntary sector's growth in social sectors seeing volunteering as being intrinsic to 'good citizenship' as it would foster greater democratic participation and stronger communities through encouraging inclusive and supportive citizen participation (Drakeford 2006: 111).

Policy documents stress partnership working, the extension of the democratization of society, active citizen engagement in political and social issues which seem on the surface to be good policy objectives, whether one is in support of the continued inclusion and promotion of market liberalism, through a gentler continuum of the Conservative's policy of moving away from state to privately controlled welfare provision or not. However, it can also be analysed far more sceptically, as a tool through which government can gain greater control over civil society, through having key strategic actors working on its behalf in communities, implementing its policy agendas (Adamson 2006). Where community based organizations were once independent of the state and independently funded, they are now largely state-funded and regulated, compromising their independence from the state and can be seen instead as implementation tools for new policy directives. Charged with the responsibility of community consultation and funding bid submissions for service delivery that meet government objectives within a competitive environment, means that the representational and democratic policy ethos risks being reduced to mere rhetoric. Civil society and active citizenship become then, illusionary concepts luring people into a type of false class consciousness of democratic participation, whilst in reality they are doing the government's bidding whilst being disarmed as radical opponents (Adamson 2006: 286-288).

As Day et al point out, civil society in Wales seems to be encouraged and developed not in a political participatory sense, but rather as an economic imperative, which is reflected in the numerous undemocratic policies of the economic regeneration bodies (such as WDA, ELWA and the Welsh Tourist Board) that are largely perceived to be quango organizations operating top-down approaches (Day 2002: 205 & Day & Jones 2006). In addition to this concern, critics such as Hodgson (2006), warn that in the light of the increasingly bureaucratization of the voluntary sector, whose independence from government is being increasingly compromised, citizenship is being developed with the

intention of creating employees and not in order to make an empowered and engaged polity. This is evident through the fact that volunteering is becoming increasingly professionalized, with emphasis being placed on expertise, changing the very nature of the activity (Hodgson 2006).

The re-defining of political boundaries and civic involvement in the political process must also be seen, in Hodgson's view, in terms of New Labour's Third Way strategy, designed in response to increasing globalization and that sees voluntary organizations and active citizens as replacing the state's role as the main service provider (Hodgson 2006:163). Evidence of this can be seen through the government establishing an Active Communities Unit (re-launched in 2002) and from the voluntary sector being at "Heart of National Assembly policy" (Betts 2006: 127), through the establishment of the Voluntary Sector Partnership and the WCVA, aimed at increasing civic participation in volunteering. Additional evidence can be seen from the number of voluntary organization going up from 23,000 in 2000 to 30,000 by 2003 (Drakeford 2006: 113).

Partnership working is aimed at bridging the gap between the universalistic practices of the state and the particularistic objectives of specific communities/social groups to create a shared civic space that will foster civic allegiances and deepen understanding between different sections of society creating a more inclusive and represented society (Williams 2006, Adamson 2006).

According to Taylor (2002: 60 quoted by Williams 2006: 201), through encouraging active citizenship and participation within civil society the government are trying to breach the gap "between universalism and particularism, between individual and the collective, between public and private, between heterogeneity and equality, democracy and agency, formality and informality, reflexivity and order, enthusiasm and rules." Yet the exclusivity, resistance and hostility to groups that are seen as outsiders, or as being different from that of the local community, make it problematic when encouraging greater community cohesion, associated with a romanticised past, to ensure that each section of the community is represented and not just the vocal majority. A criticism voiced by Williams, with particular reference to Black and Ethnic minorities living in Wales, who warns that "too strong a commitment to the assumption

of community cohesion means that many diverse voices are not heard at all” (Williams 2006: 201).

What is certain is that globalization is affecting Wales economically, socially and culturally, and at the heart of government directives through which the new challenges are being faced, is citizenship, which is currently being re-defined and re-negotiated at all social levels as well as in relation to the local and the global. As Williams and Mooney (2008) articulate, “The depth and breadth of these devolutionary trends have important implications for the analysis and understanding of social policy in the devolved UK *as well as* for social policy developments at a transnational level” (Williams and Mooney 2008: 494).

CHAPTER 3

Researching the Market Towns

Why Focus on the Local and the Rural?

As globalization is such an all-encompassing and huge subject that, by its very definition is affecting the *entire* world, it is no wonder that most books, articles and research on the subject tackle the phenomenon from a macro perspective: the McDonaldization of society, cultural standardization, global economic and corporate dominance and looking at changes to and the meanings of time, space and travel. It is however at the local level that these globalizing forces are implemented and where their effect is felt, and where policy reactions and adaptations to globalization are administered; and yet there has been comparatively little research carried out at the micro level, though within a number of disciplines there has been growing interest and recognition that we need to re-focus our attention on the local in order to gain a greater understanding of how globalization is affecting people and places (Woods 2007, Cvetkovich & Kellner, Albrow 1997).

Furthermore, there have been even fewer studies carried out into how globalization is affecting rural locations, with the majority of micro research concentrating on urban areas, such as Castells' focus on the 'global city', where he forecasts that cities will lose their territorial necessity and importance the more globalized and interconnected we become, resulting in societies living increasingly urban existences that are decentralised. Thus Castells argues, "the global moulds the local, and electronic flows shape the economy through relations between units that are far away from each other in terms of space" (1997: 1). However, seeing 'cities' as being local, is still, one could argue, looking at the effect of globalization from a macro (large-scale) perspective, even if the focus has been narrowed down to particular locations. In response to this, sociologists such as Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst have warned that: "there is a danger that debates about globalization become conflated with studies of a few 'global cities', and that we lose sight of the numerically more significant middle ranking urban spaces" (Savage et al, 2006: 12). Savage et al therefore focused more specifically on how people who lived in four separate urban locations in Manchester were affected by

and responded to the forces of globalization within a local place-based context and in turn what the local meant to them and their sense of identity and belonging.

The emerging emphasis, to study how the global is affecting the local, is not before time and a great deal is to be learned about how communities, cultures, identities and the meaning of place are influenced by the forces of globalization. The local and the global are inextricably linked and in order for them to be understood in their entirety, their relationship needs to be acknowledged and more place-based research undertaken, coupled with an emphasis towards focusing on local discourses and practices (Cvetkovich & Kellner 1997: 1); in the words of Albrow, “scant attention has been paid to everyday life” (1997: 118). There is further a distinct lack of research into how globalization is affecting rural locations, which, in a similar vein to Robertson’s coinage of the term ‘glocalization’ to highlight the interconnectivity of the local and the global, has led Woods likewise to coin the term, ‘global countryside’ in order to highlight how interlinked the concepts are and to emphasise that although the effects may be less overt in rural areas, they are nevertheless felt and responded to (Woods, 2007: 486).

In a 2007 paper Michael Woods put forward what he called a new multidimensional place-based micro research agenda that would adopt the hypothetical concept of the ‘global countryside’ and which would look at places in relation to their historical identities when analysing the influence of globalization. He also called for the need for rural locations to be analysed in relation to power and political engagement in order to understand how rural places and people’s identities are reshaped in relation to, as a result of and in response to, global forces (Woods 2007: 503). It is these agendas that this thesis has set out to address and hopefully it will contribute to a greater understanding of how rural locations and the people who live in them, are affected by and respond to, both local and global forces. Like Woods, it assumes that people and locations need to be understood within their multi-dimensional existences; and, it is only through analysing the local and people’s life-worlds that we can assess and develop policies in relation to both the local and the global.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Wales is a particularly interesting place to study in this respect; its long historical identity and its rurality make it especially pertinent to

this type of research. It has undergone enormous change over the last few decades; economic, demographic, infrastructural (e.g. improved transportation links) and more recently, in obtaining a devolved government; the National Assembly for Wales, which has brought Wales into a new political era and provided new challenges for civil society. Wales has also become globally connected, via the internet and other forms of mass communication, all of which have put pressure on jobs, the language, culture, identity, housing and other municipal services, making it all the more relevant for research focused on rural areas of Wales to find out how globalization has affected rural market towns, how people perceive globalization to be affecting them and their town and how people perceive themselves as citizens in terms of both the local and the global.

Why Market Towns?

Although market towns have been used on numerous occasions as research locations (such as Margaret Stacey's studies of Banbury 1960 and 1975), there has been comparatively little recent research carried out in the UK as a whole and in Wales in particular, that looks specifically at market towns and their inhabitants (WRO 2007: 6).

Market towns were chosen as appropriate locations to undertake this research because:

- Market towns are where the urban meets the rural.
- They are the location for services for local communities.
- They are designated locations for growth for areas in need of regeneration by the British Government.
- Market towns have provided important services for people historically and as such tend to also have strong historical identities to which local identities are closely tied.
- They have a symbiotic relationship with their surrounding rural areas.
- They provide a good population size from which to sample.

Small towns and market towns have recently found themselves in the policy and media spotlight, as politicians, retail giants, campaign groups and grass-roots movements all clamour over issues relating to cuts in service and amenities, and the economic 'rationalisation' of services such as schools, hospitals and post offices which have seen

the dispersal of services away from central community locations such as town centres to nearby larger towns or cities. Recognised as sites of distinct policy intervention, market towns are facing many challenges as a result of changing economic and demographic trends; social deprivation and exclusion, the closure of major employers, and the competition facing local retailers from larger towns, supermarkets and other big-named retailers. These all have a direct knock-on effect on communities in their surrounding rural hinterland (WRO 2007: 5). According to some reports as many as 2000 independent retailers a year are closing down (APPSSG 2006: 8) as a result of being unable to compete with big-name high-street shopping outlets and supermarket giants such as the market dominance of the 'big 4' (Tesco, Asda-Walmart, Sainsbury's and Morrisons). Reports show Britain's towns either becoming cloned or turning into 'ghost towns' (Local Works Autumn 2003) or 'shopping deserts' (Sillito 15 Jan 2007:1) as local independent retailers close their shops as a result of their businesses becoming unviable, resulting in many town centre outlets becoming boarded up or the premises being re-opened as charity shops, painting a bleak picture.

Under a headline in the Guardian; "Condemned to History" (Brown Feb 7 2007: 3), an article laments the death of many traditional market towns as government policies to build new houses on green-field locations on the outskirts of towns turns them increasingly into primarily locations for accommodation, whilst other nearby larger towns or cities become the replacement main service, employment and social centres. This increasing commuter culture is seen as resulting in the purpose of many market towns as traditional providers of services and amenities to its residents and its hinterland, becoming defunct. Calls for a 'Local Communities and Sustainability Bill' by Local Works (2003), or grass roots movements such as the 'Slow Food Movement', 'think global, act local' movements, not to mention the numerous local campaigns to save local schools, hospitals and other services and provisions, all demonstrate how small towns and Market Towns have recently become a focus of fierce topical debate within society today. The increase in spatial mobility is therefore resulting in locations losing their traditional function.

In a recent ministerial foreword by Hazel Blears to a White Paper proposing changes to Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (July 2008), she states that "town and city centres are crucial to creating sustainable communities", where

independent shops are described as being able to be “icons of local pride, giving the high street a verve and a flair all of its own, and testifying to their town’s unique economic and social history” (Blears 2008: 1). Emphasising the importance of “nurturing the growth of small market towns”, the statement goes on to explain how small businesses face increasing global competition from on-line retailers, emphasising the need for partnership working between investors and local authorities. The changes, the White Paper claims, will “help mitigate the impacts of climate change” and promote sustainable economic development (Dept. of C&LG 2008: 5), through a variety of measures that include: promotion of sustainable transport options, emphasising the importance of creating a ‘sense of place and focus’ for community activities through enhancing public spaces and emphasising town’s historical heritage; ensuring that “people’s everyday needs will be met locally” (Ibid: 13). To achieve its aims it emphasises the need for local authorities to support the close working relationship between themselves, businesses, local investors and service providers (Ibid: 14). The amendments are also aimed at re-directing investment back into town and city centres and so reversing the recent trend of investing in out-of-town developments (only 40% of new retail development in 2005 occurred in town centres) (Dept. of C&LG 2008: 40). Its overall focus however, remains in providing greater choice for consumers, through encouraging greater competition between both independent and high street shops, acknowledging the findings of both: ‘All Party Small Shops Group’ and the ‘Clone Town Britain’ reports’ concerns. The former reported that “the intense pressure small shops face, from both market-led forces and external (macro-environmental) forces” (APPSSG 2006: 6), is likely to result in many small independent shops having ceased trading by 2015, with few being replaced. The report warns that “their loss, largely the result of a heavy unbalanced trading environment, will damage the UK socially, economically and environmentally (Ibid: 6). Similarly the ‘Clone Town Britain’ report, talks of people’s concern about how the dominance of big-name high street chain stores is reducing retail locations into ‘identikit’ town centres (Clone Town Britain 2008:1).

The White Paper argues that the reports do not reveal that independent retail is in terminal decline (Dept. of C&LG 2008: 54). Although there has been greater emphasis placed in the White Paper on qualitative monitoring of how people feel about their towns, the success of a town is still primarily judged on its economic performance and

the White Paper (Ibid 2008) has been criticized by Friends of the Earth for not introducing stronger amendments to protect both the natural environment and town centres and they are currently encouraging people to lobby their local MPs to call for greater planning controls on out-of-town retail developments and to strengthen policies on encouraging retail diversity and environmentally sustainable development (FOE July 10 2008: 1).

Published in 2005, Planning Policy Statement 6, to which these proposed changes are to apply, and which provides regional councils and devolved governments, such as the Welsh Assembly Government with central government's policy objectives to be used as the guide-lines within regional Spatial Plans (Dept. of C&LG, 2008: 11), are designed to be tailored to the specific needs of specific locations in order to develop "the most suitable approaches for each individual area" (WAG 2004: 3).

In May 2001 the British Government launched its Market Town Initiative (MTI) for England, stating in its Rural White Paper of 2000 that "market towns should be the focus for growth in areas that need regeneration" (Caffyn 2004: 9) with the aim that they should operate as the main service centres for their surrounding hinterlands. A separate Market Town Initiative had been developed in Wales by the Development Board for Rural Wales (DBRW) that ran from 1996 -1999 (Edwards *et al* 2003: 193-194), but more recently in Wales the Wales Rural Observatory (W.R.O.) has been set up by the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Policy Division to "undertake independent research and analysis on social and economic issues in rural Wales (W.R.O.: Overview), in response to its recognition of Wales being a "distinct policy area" (W.R.O. 2004: 1) in terms of needing to create a "sustainable rural economy, a sustainable rural environment and sustainable rural communities" (ibid: 2).

Market towns in the UK are typically defined as having a population of between 2000 and 20,000 and provide an important focal point for their surrounding rural hinterlands in terms of trade, services and community and have done so historically (Caffyn 2004:10), though the Wales Rural Observatory description of population settlements for market towns is somewhat smaller, ranging from 1000 – 15,000 (2007: 1).

Market towns have faced many challenges over recent years from the decline in agriculture, manufacturing and employment opportunities - with income some 20% below the normal average (www.bath.ac.uk/eri/seminars/sem3-summary.htm) - centralization of health and education services, lack of affordable housing, increased competition for local retailers by corporate shopping centres and chains, the reduction in public transport and the decline in their physical environment (Caffyn 2004:11). The sustainability of many market towns is thus under threat by amongst other things global economic influences and it is acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly Government that their powers are limited as policy development in Wales is strongly influenced by EU and UK policies (W.R.O. Key Findings 1: 1). Market towns have therefore been seen as sites for community regeneration initiatives, more recently with the WAG's Communities First programme that has focused on deprived wards, many of which are located in rural market towns. The Wales Spatial Plan provides the strategic policy document from which local authorities can help develop stronger and healthier communities that are sustainable socially, economically and environmentally, with increasing emphasis being placed on partnership working between agencies and the encouragement of greater citizenship participation in the planning and delivery of services and developments.

The Citizenship Agenda

Another recent White Paper 'Communities in Control: real people, real power', published in July 2008, sets out to improve local democratic participation, redirecting responsibility away from central locations of power to citizens and local communities in order to reinvigorate the third sector by encouraging social responsibility to participate in voluntary and charitable causes. The White Paper also aims at restoring "people's faith in politics" (C&LG 8 July 2008: 1), after recent damning reports such as the Power Inquiry's research into why there was increasing political disengagement within society from the formal political processes, which concluded that people felt they did not have enough influence over political decisions, that political power was "slipping back into the hands of the political elites" (Power 2006: 10), and that people generally felt alienated, uninformed and their interests unrepresented. The Power report did however also conclude that the public were not apathetic, as considerable evidence was produced to demonstrate that the British public were very interested in political issues, with an increasing number of people joining campaign groups, participating in

consumer boycotts and involved in charitable and voluntary organisations (Ibid: 16). The 'Communities in Control' White Paper, appears therefore to be redressing some of the Power Inquiry's findings by enhancing devolved government's and local authorities responsibility to promote democracy and plans to implement a range of policies to help build on the citizenship curriculum in schools, and provide a range of financial and practical assistance for organizations and citizens to help communities become more sustainable, to tackle climate change, develop local events, gain better access to information and increase emphasis on measures to promote local democratic participation within their local areas and local government over issues such as service delivery and planning (C&LG July 2008).

Policy directives can appear contradictory. Whilst there is an economic push towards the 'rationalization' of public services, such as schools, post offices, hospitals etc, which is being blamed for further undermining community cohesion and sustainability, there are also policies that set out to address the problems that face many communities through directives that actively encourage local community development and sustainability. Whilst policy documents stress the imperative need individually and nationally to address the effects of climate change, the economic policies appear to contradict many of the environmental objectives by supporting out-of-town developments and increasing the need to commute ever further to work, school, to socialize, shop etc, strengthening the commuter culture and car dependency, which further disadvantages lower income families. Whilst the retention of locations' historical identities is emphasised on the one hand, increasingly many market towns are becoming homogenised into a branded identity. And if we compare the two recent White Papers that have been published this year, both of which are produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government under Hazel Blears, the 'Proposed Changes to Planning Policy Statement 6' is primarily focused on economic objectives, with little meaningful emphasis on civic participation in the planning process, whilst the 'Communities in Control' White Paper, specifically sets out to do just this. The policies therefore appear both disjointed and contradictory on both local and global policy issues, there appears to be a lack of 'joined-up thinking' between policies. A contradiction that has also been recognised by Friends of the Earth, complaining that the Empowerment White Paper is in direct opposition to the Planning Bill, which seeks to "remove people's rights to have a say on decisions about major projects such as

roads, airports and power stations in their area” (FOE 9 July 2008). How then are people who live in rural market towns in Wales meant to make sense of these issues within their daily lives? How do they see themselves as citizens both locally and globally and how empowered do they feel they are? These are questions which merit investigation and which this thesis sets out to address.

As the report by the Wales Rural Observatory ‘Small and Market Towns in Rural Wales and their Hinterlands’ states, “It would be erroneous to treat small and market towns as a single homogenous category. The towns of rural Wales vary considerably, not only in population size and geographical setting, but also in terms of their service function and range of facilities offered, employment opportunities and patterns, population trends and characteristics and levels of investment. This variety presents a challenge in developing policy for small towns and incorporating them into the spatial planning process, in that ‘single-size’ strategy will not fit all” (2007: 90). So it makes it all the more important to understand why and how market towns develop differently from one another and what role their citizens play in their development, through drawing a comparative analysis between locations.

Because the focus of the investigation is to assess how globalization has affected historical and small rural areas of Wales and its inhabitants, market towns provide a convenient and logical location in which to conduct the research as they are “where the urban meet the rural” (Courtney and Errington 2000: 28), providing important services for rural communities in terms of shops, health services, libraries, as community and social hubs and as economic centres, to which local identities are closely tied. It is because market towns have traditional, historical and a “symbiotic relationship” (ibid:280) with their surrounding rural areas, that they are so fitting as a location for the purpose of this research, being firmly rooted in the local whilst providing a good population size from which to sample in order to monitor how global affects the local in terms of social, welfare and economic policies, their function and identity and the attitudes, identities, reactions and responses of their inhabitants.

Why Machynlleth and Llangefni?

There were several key objectives that needed to be met for deciding which market towns were to be chosen as the research locations of this thesis; they needed to have

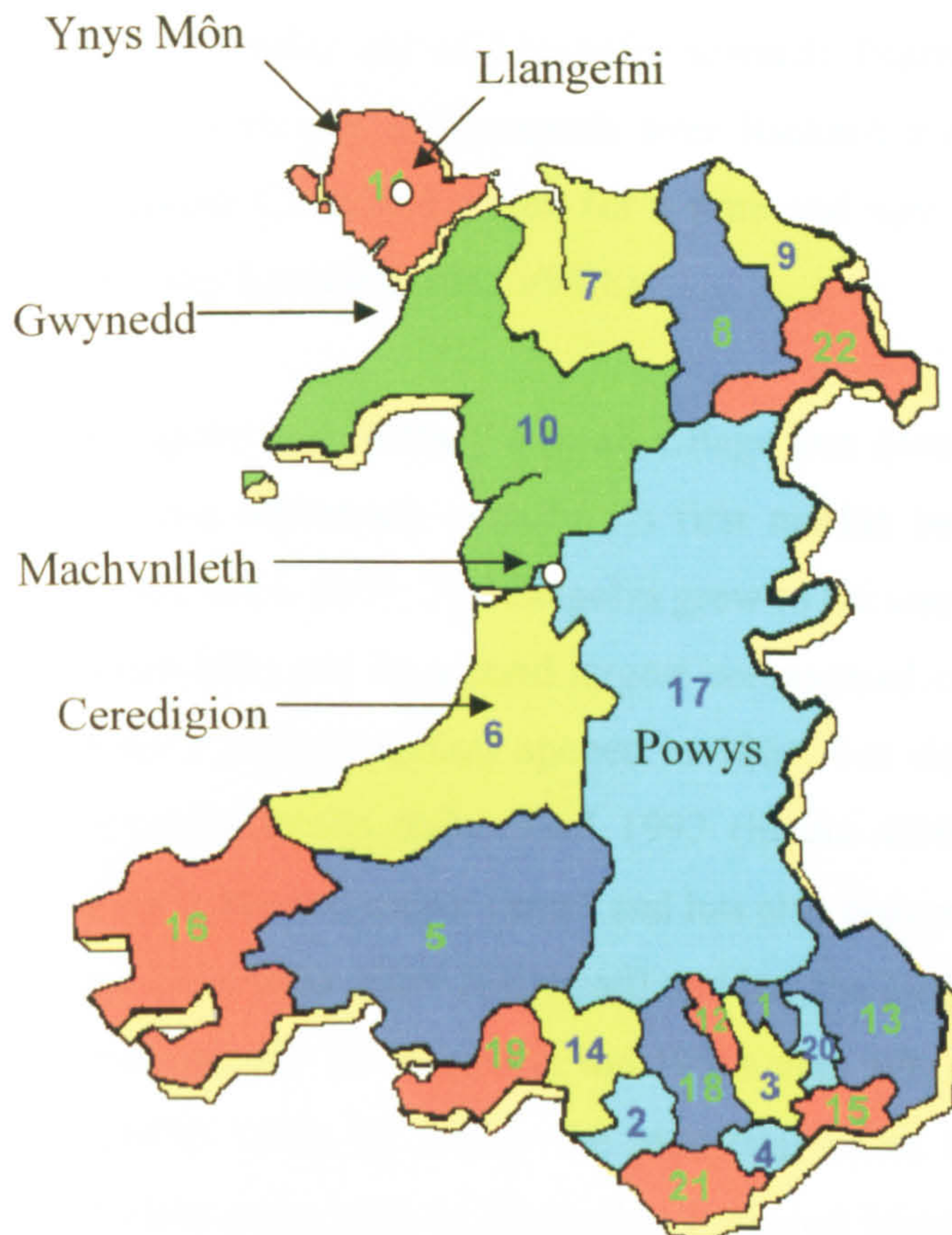
certain characteristics in common in order to be able to draw a realistic and fair comparable analysis between them. It was felt that they needed to be of a similar size, set in rural locations, to have historically operated as the main service centres for their populations and for their surrounding hinterlands, to have strong historical identities, have Communities First wards so as to provide an economic comparison to assess how global cultural influences are affecting local identities. The towns also needed to differ in order to see where, how and why market towns develop differently from one another and are affected by globalization and to compare the relationship local businesses and citizens have with their local and the global in their everyday lives within each town, looking specifically at how empowered they feel as citizens.

Two market towns were chosen for the purpose of this research: Machynlleth and Llangefni and although it would have been interesting to have incorporated more market towns, the scope of the research would have been far too large to be obtainable within the given research period. Machynlleth and Llangefni were chosen partly from (a limited) prior knowledge of both towns, and primarily because of their visual appearance and because they fulfilled the research criteria. Both towns appeared visually to be very different from each other and both seemed to me, as a visitor, to have very different atmospheres, which made them very interesting locations for research, immediately making one ask oneself numerous questions about why they seemed so different? Were they really very different from one another and if they were, then why and how? Both market towns were also situated in rural locations where Welsh remains the first language for many or most of the residents; they both had strong historical identities; they had similar sized populations; the towns had in the past played a central theme in local people's lives as they had been host to once or twice-weekly traditional town markets as well as a livestock markets, where people could buy their groceries, socialize and sell and buy livestock; both towns are today designated Communities First areas; Llangefni is situated within an Objective 1 designated area and Machynlleth Objective 2, and both towns were in similar commuting distances from universities: Bangor and Aberystwyth.

The two towns are situated in different geographical locations in Wales, Llangefni is situated fairly centrally on Ynys Môn / Anglesey, in the north, where the surrounding countryside consists of fields and fairly gently rolling hills and Machynlleth is situated

in mid-Wales on the edge of Powys county, but also borders both Gwynedd and Ceredigion, the countryside here having far steeper hills or small mountains, fields and is very wooded (See map 1). They were then considered to be two interesting and suitable locations to conduct this research.

Map 1 - MAP of Welsh Counties and the Market Towns:



Map adapted from: <http://www.walesdirectory.co.uk/counties.htm>

Profiling the market Towns

Profiling Llangefni

According to the 2001 Census Llangefni today has a population, of 4,662, and 82% (2001 Census) of its population can speak, write and read Welsh fluently, with the majority of those speaking it as their first language and in 2006 the town was named as

being “the Welshest place in Wales” by a survey that looked at the origins of residents’ names (icwales, Tue 28 Nov 2006: 1).

Llangefni is steeped in history with links back to the age of the Vikings, when it is believed that its original church on the site of where the current church, St Cyngar, is situated, was built in the woods in order to keep it hidden from the Vikings. Llangefni has close connections with Llewelyn the Great (Llewelyn Fawr), who was a direct forbear of the Tudor Dynasty and their ancestral home, Plas Penmynydd which lies two or three miles out of Llangefni towards Penmynydd (BBC 7/1/08: 1). It was Henry Tudor’s victory at Bosworth over Richard the III in 1485 that established a Welsh speaking Court in London for a time and saw the Tudor Dynasty reign for 118 years (History Learning Site, 5/9/08).

Llangefni was initially a small village that developed as an agricultural market town in the late eighteenth century, its first market being held in 1785 (Llangefni Residents Guide 2006-2007: 7). Llangefni grew to become the main agricultural trading centre for Ynys Môn and its second largest commercial centre (the largest being Holyhead). The town’s railway station opened in 1864, but closed in 1964, though the line remained open for goods trains until 1993 (ipedia 4/10/08). In 1899 Llangefni became Ynys Môn’s administrative centre and has also become the second largest employment centre on Ynys Môn (after Holyhead) and has the largest industrial estate on the island, which was initially developed in the 1950s and ‘60s and has continued to expand ever since (IACC 1999: 7). Today the industrial estate houses a mixture of large international factory units such as Grampian Prepared Meats, Glambia Cheese and Eastman Peboc and a range of small and medium sized businesses.

Llangefni still retains its position as the second largest commercial centre on the island, but since the closure of the livestock market (where the supermarket store ASDA is now situated) in December 1997, Llangefni is primarily referred to nowadays as the island’s administrative centre, being home to Ynys Môn / Isle of Anglesey County Council, who are a major employer in the town. Although the town still has its twice-weekly street market, held on a Thursday and Saturday in a car park at the side of the large Town Hall and clock, the town does not look as though it is prospering. In a report by the Planning and Economic Development Department of the Local Authority

in 1999, Llangefni was described as, “potentially a very attractive town set in a scenic rural landscape” (IACC 1999: 6), a description that is still true today, nearly 10 years on. Amid its Grade Two listed buildings is a mixture of high-street brand and independent shops as well as boarded up shops and charity shops and its generally neglected appearance gives the visitor the strong impression that the town has seen better days. In a report by the local authority in 1999, some of the threats facing Llangefni were identified as being:

- Diminishing role as an important market town
- Trade being lost to other prominent regional centres
- Enhanced by-passing of town once A55 has been completed
- Continuing loss of young people if new employment opportunities are not created.
- Social problems may grow unless effective community based initiatives take place (IACC 1999: 13).

In Llangefni today over 55% of families are on income related benefits (WAG 2004: 12), with 7.4 % unemployment (IACC 2006: 3) and 34% of the population have no qualifications (Ibid: 5). The Neighbourhood Statistics, reveal much about the town’s occupational classes and its economic profile and corroborates the income-related statistics given above, that the town is predominantly working class:

• Managers and Senior Officials	-	10.1%
• Professional	-	12.8%
• Associated Professional and Technical	-	12.3%
• Administrative and Technical	-	12.3%
• Skilled Trades	-	15.4%
• Personal Services	-	10.3%
• Sales and Customer Services	-	5.5%
• Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	-	14.4%
• Elementary Occupations	-	13.7%

(Census 2001, Neighbourhood Summary)

Ground for a couple of years, it was held in the town once again in 2007, the main event being moved from the car park beside the Town Hall to the football pitch on the Tudur ward.

Picture 1



The Bull Hotel, Llangefni on market day
September 2008

Profiling Machynlleth

According to the 2001 Census, Machynlleth's population is 2,147 and 58% of its residents speak Welsh.

Machynlleth's market dates back to 1291, documented in a charter by King Edward I to Owen de la Pole, granting him permission for a market to be held there every Wednesday. Machynlleth is however more famous for being the location of Wales' first parliament held by Owain Glyndwr after he was crowned Prince of Wales in the early 1400s (Davies 2000: 7) and still retains many of its historic buildings (see picture 2 below).

Picture 2



The Parliament House (left of picture), Machynlleth on market day September 2008.

The railway, which is still running today and remains one of the town's main access routes, first came to Machynlleth in 1863 (Davies 2000: 7) and its town clock, that sits at the head of the town, was built by the people of Machynlleth in 1873 to "mark the coming of age of Charles Stewart Vane-Tempest, Viscount Castlereagh, the eldest son of the fifth Marquis, of Londonderry of Plas Machynlleth" (Davies 2000: 8).

Plas Machynlleth was gifted to the people of Machynlleth by the seventh Marquis of Londonderry on 2nd December 1948 (Davies 2000: 13) and at the beginning of my research, was the location for Celtica, a Celtic heritage visitors' attraction that opened in 1995, though closed in the spring of 2006 shortly after the research commenced and has recently re-opened in April 2008 as a multi-purpose community centre.

Laura Ashley, the fabric designer, opened her first shop in the town in the early 1960s, where she and her husband lived, later expanding to open a factory in nearby Carno, becoming an important local employer and internationally renowned designer (Davies 2000: 39). The closure of the factory in 2004, resulted in the loss of 220 jobs (BBC News, Mon 25/10/04: 1).

The traditional industries of the area have historically been farming, slate quarrying in nearby Corris and Aberllefenni, forestry and the railway though these industries have been in decline over the latter half of the twentieth century, or in the case of the railways, have more recently started to sub-contract to companies from elsewhere who

bring workers in (Communities First 2004: 13) and the more recent closure of the Laura Ashley factory in 2004 has placed increasing economic pressures on the local economy. These industries have steadily been replaced, largely by tourism over the last thirty years, which is now worth about £333.2m to the local economy and generates around 11,193 jobs (TPMW 2008: 6). Machynlleth has also become renowned for developing a niche economic market and identity for itself, based on environmental sustainability. Described as “eco-pioneers” (Red Orbit: Wed 14 June 2006), the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT), located just outside the town in nearby Corris, on a site of a disused slate quarry Llwyngwern, which closed in 1951 (CAT 1995: 4), was founded in 1973 and opened to the public in 1975, as an educational and demonstration centre and offers a range of residential courses from weekend courses to MSCs and caters for school trips. CAT is now at the forefront of renewable technology development globally and has become a major employer in the area (employing 90 permanent staff and an additional 60 during the summer) and tourist attraction, receiving around 65,000 visitors a year (CAT 6/10/08).

There have been several CAT spin-offs in the town: Dulas Engineering which was established in 1982, whose focus is on developing renewable technologies, which range from photovoltaic, solar, hydro, hydrogen, wave/tidal and biofuels and were awarded the “Queen’s Award for Industry” in 2004 (Queen’s Award for Excellence 2004) and “The Western Mail Small Business of the Year” in 2006 and again in 2008 (WalesOnline April 23 2008: 1 and Dulas Online, Accessed 23/3/07). The company are based on the town’s small industrial eco-park that consists of environmentally friendly buildings and is claimed to be Britain’s first environmentally friendly business park, made by using the latest in sustainable technologies, and work closely with African, Asian and Latin American countries to address their energy needs (Dulas Online Accessed 23/3/07); and Ecodyfi, a regeneration organization, established in 1998, to promote sustainable community regeneration in Machynlleth both economically and environmentally, aiming to meet the needs of the local community with that of the environment and which works in partnership with Communities First, the overall focus therefore of all three organizations being on the global as much as the local.

Dubbed as being amongst “The greenest people in Wales” in a local newspaper article in 2002 (icWales June 14 2006: 1), Machynlleth has become renowned for its

environmental profile and many businesses have been developed locally on the back of this reputation, for example, the promotion of and support for buying local amongst many of the town's shops and eating places and more recently the opening of two home decoration shops, selling environmentally friendly products.

Today Machynlleth has 4.8% unemployment (BBC 24 Nov 2005), 35.7% of the population have no qualifications compared to 29.1% of England and Wales as a whole (Communities First 2004: 20) and it has a relatively high proportion of people aged over 75 (11.9% compared the average of 7.6% for England and Wales (Ibid: 8) which is the result of the out-migration of many of its young and the in-migration of people moving to the area to retire (Ibid: 10). The major issues are currently: affordable housing, which has been exacerbated by house price inflation created by the demographic changes; the out-migration of many of its younger population as a result of both the housing shortage and lack of 'conventional' employment and education opportunities (factory and office work); the cost and availability of public transport have been identified as often making the rural poor worse off than their urban counterparts; education initiatives and improved child care facilities (Communities First 2004).

Machynlleth is generally considered to be "a pretty town" by its citizens (Communities First 2004: 15). As you come into the town from the north over the river Dyfi, there is a Methodist chapel, 'The Tabernacle', which has since been converted into an Arts and Cultural Centre and is attached to another building which houses the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) (Wales) and has numerous independent shops painted a variety of colours. Machynlleth also holds a number of annual events, such as a carnival, the Light Festival which is a week of activities that include a lantern parade and the Pink Snowball Film Festival and the Machynlleth Music Festival.

Llangefni and Machynlleth are therefore interesting research locations to analyse and compare; both having long historical identities which had evolved to fulfil a similar service to their rural hinterlands, but the towns more recently appear to be developing very differently from each other in response to global influences.

Aims, Objectives and Research Methodology

The Research Methodology

The words 'globalization' and 'citizenship' are so familiar today within political, economic and popular culture dialogues, that there appears to be a common assumption that the concepts are universally understood, despite the meanings being widely acknowledged within academia as being contested. Policies talk of 'community development', 'active citizens', 'empowering communities', 'ownership and control' etc, where people are encouraged to take greater local and global responsibility, the interconnection between the two micro and macro concepts being increasingly emphasized. And yet, very little is known about what understanding people have of globalization or citizenship or how empowered people feel themselves to be as active local or global citizens.

People's relationship with 'place', 'community', 'identity' and 'belonging' are being challenged and re-defined by the postmodern forces of living in an increasingly globalized world, leading many to argue, as we saw in the previous chapter, that globalization is resulting in either homogenization or hybridization.

The need for research to be conducted at the local level is clear, both in terms of how globalization is affecting local areas and in terms of how people who live in these areas engage with, respond to and understand their position as a 'citizen' in relation to *their* local and the global, in their everyday life-worlds. These explorations will also be analysed in terms of policy directives and in relation to the theoretical perspectives of global homogenization and hybridization.

The comparative analysis of the two chosen market towns, Llangefni and Machynlleth, will provide us with a deeper understanding of how locations and the people who live there, are affected by and respond to different types of local and global influences and policies.

The key focus of this research is therefore to:

- Analyse both market towns in terms of homogenization and hybridization theories.
- To gain an understanding of people's relationship with the local and the global
- To look at how globalization is influencing communities and identities.
- To look at how globalization is affecting people's life-worlds
- To find out how people perceive themselves as citizens
- To find out how empowered people feel themselves to be as citizens both locally and globally
- To explore policy directives in relation to market towns and local and global citizenship engagement.

A qualitative in-depth understanding and analysis of the topic was sought at the onset, and in order to achieve the research objectives, a multi-method approach was viewed as being the most vigorous way of providing an in-depth understanding of the various research areas and a way of ensuring the research was as representative and reflective of the towns and the people who live and work in them as was possible.

The research methods used were: semi-structured in-depth interviews; observations and visual research methods which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The research was inspired by a conversation between two friends of mine regarding the possible future purchase of branded shoes for their respective children when they were old enough to attend school, and both concluded that if their child was being bullied for not wearing the latest fashionable footwear, then they would buy branded shoes that were probably made in sweat-shop conditions and possibly even by children. To put this conversation into context, both friends were brought up and still live in small rural Welsh villages and their children were due to start attending local, small, rural primary schools. This conversation (which I refrained from participating in) surprised me on many levels:

- 1) I was surprised that these particular friends were aware of the link between their purchases and unethical working conditions, as neither of them were particularly politically minded.
- 2) That they were aware that children were often the workers.
- 3) That they would comply with the pressure to buy branded goods despite the monetary cost to them
- 4) That they would knowingly buy the footwear for their children, despite knowing that other children would be making them in appalling working conditions and that they would therefore be supporting these unethical working conditions.

This conversation inspired me to want to understand just how informed and empowered people were as local and global citizens so I could better understand how to further enable and encourage people to become more responsible local and global citizens. But, such interests do pose some very serious methodological issues which need to be faced and addressed.

My own personal stance is that, I do feel strongly that we all have a responsibility to the environment, animals and our fellow human beings, both locally and globally and I do try and live (with much room for further improvement), as ethically as possible, through purchasing organic, fair-trade and local produce, being vegetarian, boycotting companies that I consider as having unethical practices, refrain from using a car as much as possible, recycling, using environmentally friendly cleaning products and paints etc. Such personal interests and involvements could potentially bias the research and in order to try and safeguard against this possibility I adopted reflective research practice, believing that it is important to recognize that the “researcher is part of the social world that is studied, and that this calls for exploration and self-examination” (Alvesson 2002: 171) and agreeing with the feminist dictum of the ‘personal is political’ (Seale 2004: 25) and as such we need to understand and acknowledge the “political implications of our location as a researcher” (Ibid).

In order to safeguard against any bias, I was diligently conscious of this danger throughout the planning, research and writing-up stages of the thesis (for example, ensuring that I did not refrain from interviewing people who challenged my ethical beliefs, such as butchers). My intention is to not judge people, but understand and

contribute to an understanding of how people engage with issues of citizenship and globalization.

Initially I had bilingual leaflets printed, with a cartoon of myself on the front cover hanging off a town clock rising from the world, with 'Help' written above (See figure 1) hoping to both familiarise local people and businesses with my presence in the town and to try and encourage people to volunteer to be interviewed.

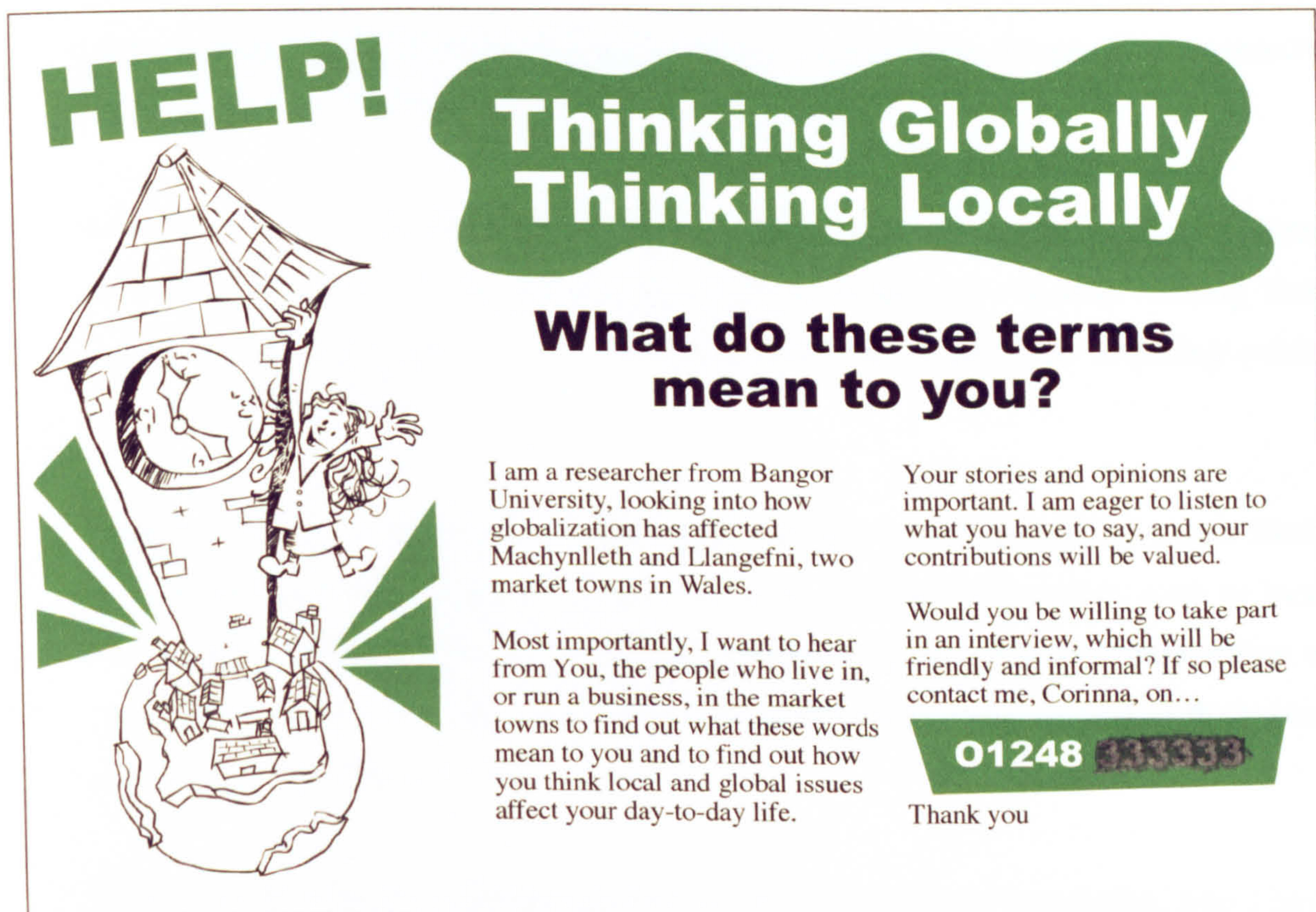


Figure 1 Help Leaflet

Inside the leaflet was written "Thinking Globally, Thinking Locally: what do these terms mean to you?" These leaflets were only sparingly used however, primarily to give people my contact details after I had interviewed them if they were likely to contact me subsequently. It soon became apparent that these leaflets were not appropriate as they would give the interviewee or potential interviewee too much information from the words; 'global' and 'globalization' and sentences such as, 'find out how you think local and global issues affect your day-to day life' and could discourage many people from agreeing to participate. The populations of both towns

were instead targeted mainly through the use of snowball sampling (which is discussed later in the chapter).

The Stages of the Research:

The thesis was undertaken in 2004, and for that first year, the focus of the research was on familiarising myself with the subject area, accruing the essential theoretical and academic knowledge to underpin the research itself. This year was also used to develop the research approach and construct the semi-structured interview questions. The main body of the research took place between 2005 and 2007, though I visited both towns in 2008 to observe any changes that might have occurred since. There were essentially three stages of the research process:

Stage 1: Initially, I familiarised myself with both market towns by making frequent visits to each market town, conducting initial observational research, visiting their libraries, visiting the shops, cafes and seeing local attractions and acquiring public information leaflets etc.

Stage 2: Interviews were then arranged with 'key informants', people who were likely to be particularly knowledgeable about the towns and their population, such as local community workers and local Councillors, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the local issues and concerns and to find out what social groups existed in the towns, where they socialised etc.

Stage 3: Interviews were conducted with members of the local population, who I have categorised as 'citizens' and 'local business people'.

It must be noted that observational and visual research methods were practiced and used throughout the research period and the interviews with 'key informants' continued to take place in Stage 3, alongside the other interview groups, as knowledge of who might be an important and useful "key informant", was an on-going process.

Due to financial and time constraints and accessibility the research was conducted slightly differently in both towns. Living not far from Llangefni, it was within easy and regular access, by bus or by car. Machynlleth meanwhile was less accessible, being two

and half to three hours away, by bus, car or train, making the travelling cost far more expensive too. Because of the time and cost implications associated with researching in Machynlleth, the most appropriate way of researching in the town was if I tried to organise as many interviews as possible to be conducted within a space of a few days at a time, when I would stay over in Machynlleth.

My accommodation was the Wynnstay Hotel, chosen for its central location, but also because its facilities made it a fitting environment to meet people and conduct interviews. Staying in Machynlleth (and in the Wynnstay in particular as it has a bar and restaurant, which I soon learnt was widely used by the local population), enabled me to familiarise myself with the environment and with the local people. I was offered cheaper accommodation by one interviewee in their house (partly arranged by a couple of interviewees, who had initially taken me under their wing) but I turned the offer down as the benefits of staying in such a sociable location outweighed the cost benefits associated with the kind offer. The drawback however of not having equal resources to research each market town meant that I could not afford to stay in Llangefni and so therefore was not as located within the town and as such did not, for example, have as many informal chats with people, such as the hotel staff or regular local customers.

I tried to compensate for this by frequenting the Bull Hotel in the centre of Llangefni, a similar type of premises with a bar and a restaurant that is frequented by local people as well as by paying guests. Many interviews were conducted there, observations made and attempts to familiarise myself (without being false) with the staff were made, but I wonder whether I would have achieved more social inroads if I have stayed in the premises for several days and on a number of occasions as I had done in Machynlleth? Every research method has its limitations and pit-falls which need to be addressed and acknowledged and most research necessitates, due to the constraints of time, financial access etc, that research omissions will inevitably occur, but through being a reflexive and reflective research, and through adopting a multi-method research approach, these inevitable limitations and pit-falls have hopefully been anticipated and minimised.

Observation:

Observation is one of the key research methodologies used within this study that is able to yield “rich, rounded, local and specific” (Mason 2005: 88) data. Observation is a

well established ethnographic method to use, as it can be a very effective and complementary tool, enabling the researcher to corroborate or, conversely, reveal anomalies in what people say and do. Not all data or experiences are recountable or easy for people to articulate or explain in interviews and as such, to be able to view data as multi-dimensional, can help the researcher obtain a richer and multi-faceted understanding of the research topic. It gives the researcher the opportunity to step back from any given social scene to observe what social groups might exist in a location, how they interact with each other, the subjects they talk about and the type of language they use. There is also a lack of artificiality in people's behaviour and in what they say when they are in their natural setting and unaware of being observed. Such observations can reveal much about the social groups that exist within a community and the community's integration in general (Mason 2005).

The observation of each town includes the spatial, locational and social organization of the setting, observing the towns as a whole; the types of shops and businesses; the types of produce sold; areas of social recreation; discernable social groups; how social groups communicate and interact amongst themselves; and how social groups interact and communicate with other social groups and during local events and festivals. Observation is thus used as "a supportive or supplementary method" (Robinson 2004: 312) within this research that will hopefully provide valuable insights into the influence globalization and localization is having on the towns.

Ritzer's concept of 'something' (generally referring to indigenous social forms that are locally controlled and rich and distinctive in content, e.g. a farmer's market) and 'nothing' (social forms that lacks individuality and substance, where space and services are impersonalized and automated, e.g. a shopping centre) was also used when observing the types of shops and produce sold in the towns, asking the questions whether there has been (as he terms it) a globalization or glocalization of the local culture and identity (Ritzer 2004). Naomi Klein's recognition and study of the how the logo as a marketing brand (e.g. Coca-Cola, Nike) has contributed to the successful globalization of multinational corporations and the homogenization of identities and life-style choices were also taken into account when undertaking observational research, by looking at how the local communities are responding to or resisting a corporatization of their individual and local identities (Klein 2001).

You can also get a 'feel' for a social setting through immersing yourself in the research location as both participant and non-participant observer, "developing empathy with the research" (Mason 2005: 85), enabling you as a researcher to be able to share relevant experiences. However the personal context of the experiences and perceptions must be recognised as being personal and not necessarily reflective of all participants and social actors. Observation is also selective, based on observational perspective and as such one needs to be aware of the specifics of what you are looking for, retaining a "critical awareness of how that has informed what you have observed, and what you have found interesting and relevant" (Ibid: 90).

I was overt about my position in the towns as a researcher (to those who asked or were approached by me) and that I was researching market towns which entailed conducting interviews, but I did not include 'observation' in my explanations. It was probably obvious to those who knew who I was that I was attending events like carnivals, festivals etc to observe town-life and activities, but I felt that to let it be known or be overt that I was observing the people, would most probably have made people feel self-conscious and discourage people from approaching me. I also did not consider it necessary as no confidential or personal information was sought or going to be used.

My immersion as an observer was unequal between social groups and between towns, meaning that observation and participation was not equal, but I would argue that this was reflective of the openness and types of social groups under investigation and the towns as a whole. For example, when researching Machynlleth, there were numerous social events that I could attend, and where many of the people I had interviewed or met were present, the atmospheres were invariable friendly and I was often approached and invited to join a group and introduced to people's friends and acquaintances. In Machynlleth, it was commonplace for interviewees to arrange to meet me in a social location after work (for example a café, a bar or a beer-garden) and on a number of occasions the interviewees brought along a friend or we were joined by friends of theirs during the interview, who then proceeded to take part in interview. This social mixing enabled me to observe and experience different social settings and the social interactions that took place in those locations.

In Llangefni however, the experience was very different, there were few social events to attend, and when I did attend the main Gwyl Cefni (Cefni Festival) event, which was a Welsh rock concert held on the town's football pitch, it was not attended by a broad representation of the town's population, but instead consisted largely of teenagers, who were not my interview demographic and consequently I knew none of them. The value of this experience and observation, was nevertheless just as important as those experienced in Machynlleth, though the lack of social events to attend in Llangefni, did prevent me from 'getting in with the locals' to an equal degree between settings.

A particular difference between the towns regarding the ability to observe each location equally was safety. Machynlleth, where I stayed periodically for a number of days during the research period, felt like a very safe place to be, where I had no reservations about going out at night on my own as a woman, either to meet interviewees or on my own as an observer to, for example, a local pub. Llangefni meanwhile was very different. On numerous occasions I was advised by my 'key informants' not to go out at night on my own in Llangefni, advice that was reiterated frequently throughout the research. On the first occasion that I undertook observational research of Llangefni at night, I was accompanied by my partner, who at the time had long dreadlocks, to one of the local pubs – this proved to be a very bad idea. Not only did it give me an associated 'alternative' identity, which was contrary to the image that I wanted to portray of a socially non-descript person that any social group could associate with and relate to, it also felt very dangerous as my partner's appearance was attracting negative attention and the atmosphere felt threatening – it was clear that he, and myself in his company, did not fit in and we left fairly quickly! I did observe Llangefni on numerous occasions at night, but not to the same extent as Machynlleth, as I did not feel safe as a woman walking around Llangefni on my own and I did not feel as though I could attend the local pubs at night on my own (though I did in the day). My position as an observer was thus compromised and unequal between locations, though I would argue, just as useful and reflective of those locations and added a deeper understanding and context to the interviews themselves.

Depending on what was being observed the field notes were made either during the observation, for example, when mapping the shops and market stalls in the towns I would be making overt notes or whilst observing a scene in a café or a pub where I was

having a coffee or a meal and could write unobserved. On most other occasions I wrote my notes after the events that I was observing had occurred, when returning to my hotel room, or on the bus or train home. Again, data collection was therefore unequal, but to overtly observe people would, I believe have compromised the research to a greater extent through making people feel uncomfortable and self-conscious.

Visual Research Methods

Observation was intrinsically part of this research, as I felt that qualitative research is about gaining an understanding of a research topic as holistically as possible, understanding people and places within their multi-layered contexts, so using visual research methods therefore emerged as a natural addition.

Initially I intended that only two research methods were to be used: semi-structured interviews and observation, but soon after beginning the research the importance of also using visual research methods became apparent, providing the research with an additional descriptive and illustrative tool to communicate many of the research findings and for providing evidence.

When first getting to know the towns and conducting the initial observations of the locations, I started to construct a map to help me document and 'see' how globalized, and in particular, how homogenized or hybridised the towns were in terms of the types of retail outlets that each location had. This was an attempt to test out Ritzer's hypothesis of the 'Globalization of Nothing'; that locations are becoming homogenized into a global branded identity and so losing their unique individual identities and meanings. The maps were initially only designed to be a personal aid but it soon became apparent that what the maps revealed visually was extremely useful and indeed turned out to be quite central in communicating and demonstrating how homogenized or hybridized the towns were. So they were developed further as a visual research tool to help the researcher explore and the reader 'see' the towns in relation to Ritzer's theory, before the in-depth part of the research commenced.

We live in a "multi-dimensional, multi-sensory 'reality'" (Mason 2005: 104) and as such how better to communicate that 'reality' than in as many ways as possible, in order to communicate as effectively as possible, enabling the reader to have a more

multi-dimensional picture of people, places, events and situations. The use of photographs within the research therefore emerged as a 'common-sense' addition to the research tool.

Visual ethnography is also a very complementary research tool to be used alongside interviews as written communication involves painting metaphorical pictures for the reader to see. We all visualise information and likewise interviewees draw pictures verbally for the interviewer, but also often refer to visual images and objects (as well as audio tools such as recordings) to help illustrate a point or explain something. As Pink explains, "Conversation is filled with verbal references to images and icons" (Pink in Mason 2005: 105) and visual references were constantly referred to within all interviews. For example many interviewees, whilst drawing verbal pictures of what their towns used to be like, often literally drew a map of the town of the time that they were referring to and found old pictures to show me. I was shown films, given a DVD, postcards, leaflets, was directed to look at buildings, tapestries, symbols and images. Also much of what people described could be brought to life through using visual images of their description, giving the reader every advantage in understanding what was being communicated and at times, it felt that there was no better communicative tool to show the images that were referred to in writing, they in effect, can bring the research, the stories and aural illustrations alive.

The use of visual data has as Jennifer Mason puts it been "underexploited in social science research" (Mason 2005: 105), and they are after all "still representations of reality" (Banks 1995: 2). But as Banks warns, they are content and context dependent and "It is important to remember, however, that all visual representations are not only produced but are consumed in a social context, one which invokes a family resemblance to similar representations" (Banks 1995: 2-3). No data is indisputable and no research method foolproof and no research method is superior, all have their place and as such visual ethnography is no different in needing to be "subjected ... to exactly the same degree of critical scrutiny" (Mason 2005: 106). Images must be understood therefore with the confines of a consumers' experience as people will make sense of images and will read and judge images, against their own understanding and construction of social reality and as such, there can be no one reading of a visual image, it being interpreted differently by each individual (Banks 1995: 3).

Most of the visual images that have been used within this research have been photographs taken by myself to document both towns and the events that took place in the towns whilst researching. I was conscious of having the power to produce biased representations of the towns or aspects of them, and every effort was therefore made to ensure comparative results were obtained, in order to achieve as fair and as accurate a representations of the towns and events that took place in them as possible. For example the effect of the weather produced noticeable differences on the towns' appearances, and so every effort was made to go to each town on their respective market day, during the same month and while the weather was comparable and as pleasant as possible (though the wet summers of 2007 and 2008 did not make this task easy). One also has to be careful with using visual research methods to keep focused on how as an individual one visualizes things and what images as a researcher you want to capture, the aim being to capture what the researcher can see and not what the camera necessarily focuses on (Mason 2005: 104). It is also important to note that the photographs were taken (or obtained) to provide visual examples of what many of the interviewees had referred to, for example showing colourful buildings, or graffiti, community events, what was sold in each of the towns' markets or high streets etc to provide comparative illustrations, and were used as evidence for the existence of hybridization or homogenization. Visual data is therefore used within this research, primarily as a complementary tool to the two main research tools – observation and principally, interviews.

It was difficult to map and take pictures of the towns unobserved; for example, whilst mapping the towns' shops, my presence was noticed by a number of shop owners and market stall holders in both towns, which on occasions led some to stall holders approaching me to ask me what I was doing, to which my reply was 'I am doing a project on market towns', and on other occasions, to suspicious and defensive looks from shop keepers. During photographing market scenes and specific market stalls in particular, permission was asked of the market stall owners for pictures to be taken, which did on occasion also inevitably lead to a certain amount of collaboration between the researcher and the stall holder, where a certain rapport between the agents developed, resulting in the stall holder often posing in the picture, but as the aim was to

record what they sold on their stall, this was not considered a problem, and in fact, often reflected the different social atmospheres in the towns.

Consent was asked for taking pictures of specific market stalls and from local organizations where pictures of local events were obtained from their websites but many of these pictures of street scenes and events did include members of the public, whose consent was not sought, which does pose ethical considerations about using such documentation. Except for the photographs obtained from a local organization's website, where permission to use their images was sought and given in writing, all other permission was obtained verbally, raising issues of informed consent.

Visual research methods are primarily used here therefore to: verify, contextualize, clarify, demonstrate and illustrate information obtained whilst using observation and interview research methods (Mason 2005: 108)

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews:

The qualitative nature of the research was imperative as in order to answer the research questions concerning the reasons behind actions, behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions, one needs to ask the population under investigation (Robinson 2004: 271). Thus, in-depth, semi-structured interview was considered the most appropriate research method to use here. Semi-structured interviews enable the interviewer to adapt questions, to delve deeper into motives and follow up interesting responses. Misunderstandings can be clarified and the interviewer is able to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge. By being less structured, the interviewer is able to develop a rapport with the interviewee and the interview itself can also be carried out in a more relaxed and informal manner, enabling the discourse to be more fluid and, hopefully, revealing more in-depth and interesting data.

Semi-structured interviews also enabled me to be sensitive and flexible to interviewees and situations and allowed me to conduct the interviews as organically as possible; the interviews not being overly pre-scripted, allowing me to follow interesting lines of enquiry relevant to the context to gain a deeper understanding. It also allowed the interviewee greater freedom than structured interviews allow, which is essential when asking questions about ethics, politics, perceptions etc (Mason 2005). Around 90

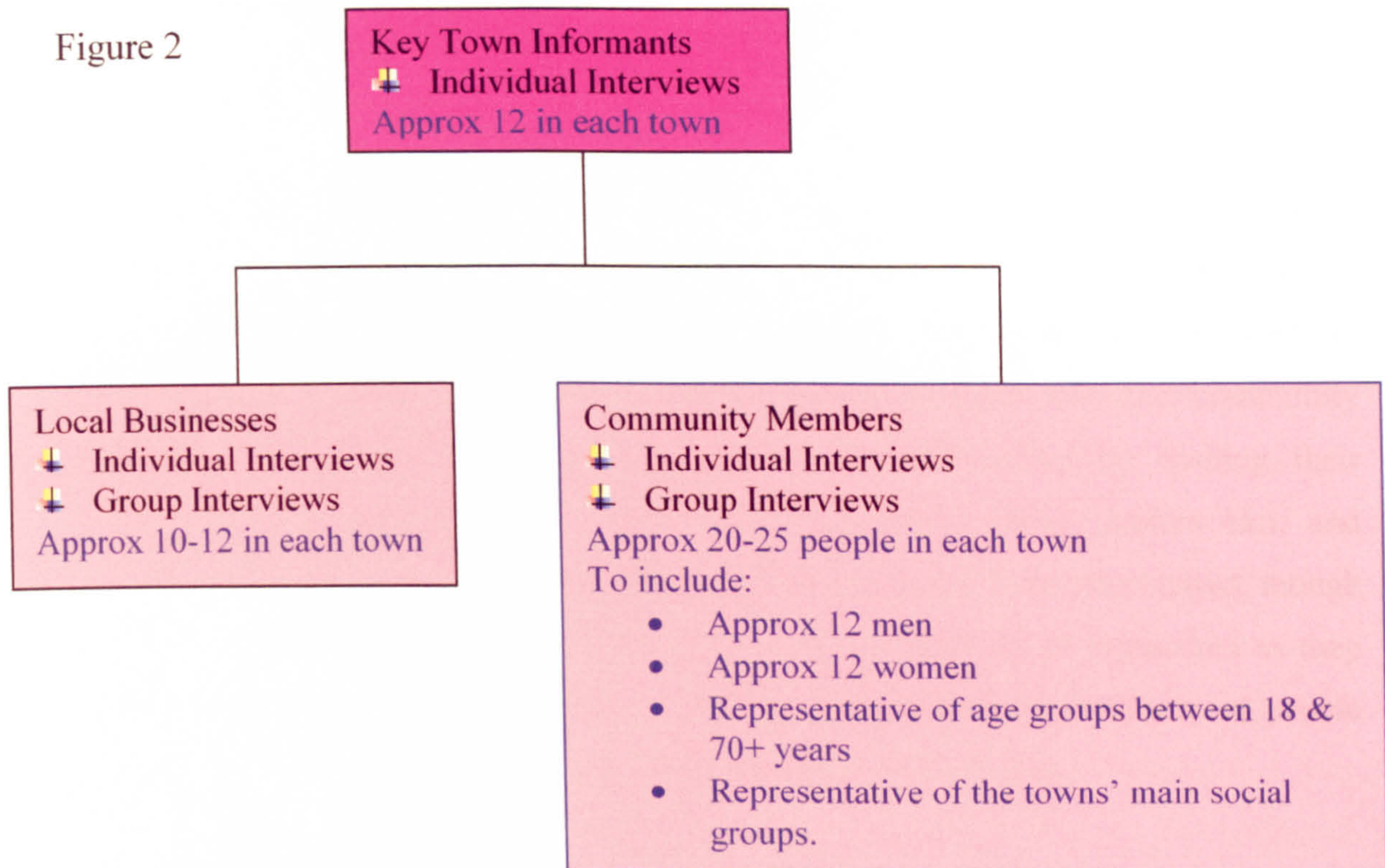
people were interviewed, approximately 45 in each town. Interviews took on average forty-five minutes, but sometimes took longer, depending on how informative, interested, opinionated or engaged the interviewee was with the general interview and the specific interview questions.

The interviews were arranged flexibly to suit the interviewees, some were pre-arranged and others were impromptu and the interviews took place in a variety of locations; cafes, pubs, places of work and people's homes. Several interviews turned into group interviews as interviewees often brought their friends along or the interview 'conversation' itself attracted the attention of others who then joined in. Nearly all the interviews were recorded and notes were taken. Interviewees were asked if they minded the interview being recorded, most were compliant, but one interviewee in Machynlleth and a handful in Llangefni did not want to be recorded.

The populations with whom the interviews were conducted were: local residents, local business owners and community workers, (categorised as 'citizens', 'local business people' and 'key informants') from which a picture of people's lifestyles and opinions is revealed:

- 'Key informants' were to provide me with an overview of the towns, the particular issues and provide information about the population i.e. what social groups existed in the town.
- 'Local business owners' were to provide the research with the local business perspective of how they perceive globalization to be affecting their town and their business and how empowered they feel as citizens.
- 'Citizens' were to provide local residents' perspectives of how local and global issues are affecting them and their town and how empowered they perceived themselves to be as local and/or global citizens (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2



The interview questions differed slightly between the three population categories: questions for ‘key informants’ focused on what they knew about the towns and the social groups within the towns; the questions for ‘local business people’ focused on how globalization was affecting local businesses, people’s customers’ habits and how as businesses they were responding to local and global pressures; and the ‘citizens’ were asked questions about their life-styles, perceptions and attitudes. All interviews had in common questions relating to citizenship and globalization (See Appendix 1,2 &3).

Sampling the Population:

The target population studied were of men and women over the age of 18 who were resident in each market town and who were broadly representative of the different social groups and generational spread of both towns’ populations. A comparative analysis has then been made, not only between the two market towns, but also between the social groups within and between each town.

The populations were targeted primarily through using snowball sampling, but which include an element of stratified sampling to ensure that a good cross-section of the towns’ populations was represented. Qualitative sampling is, as Mason argues, an

“*organic practice*” (Mason 2005: 127), evolving and developing throughout the research.

Targeting the ‘key informants’ and local business sample groups was not a problem, as these were more accessible ‘sitting targets’. Arrangements were generally made to interview ‘key informants’ over the telephone, being a particularly easy group to identify and contact (local councillors, Community First officers and other community workers and organizations). Local businesses were approached by visiting their premises (independently-owned local shops, cafes, pubs, tourist centres etc), and arranging interviews that way. Very few in each town refused to be interviewed, though the majority in Llangefni were only happy for the interview to be conducted as they worked in between serving customers, whilst in Machynlleth, the majority of people arranged for interviews to take place at a specific time and location.

The ‘citizens’ population was targeted through the process of snowball sampling which began soon after interviews with ‘key informants’ commenced, but in addition to this ‘citizens’ were also targeted in their places of work (banks, shops, cafes, hotels, leisure centres etc) and in social and recreational settings (such as cafes and pubs) from which the snowball sampling process continued.

It is therefore important to remember “that a representative sample constructed in this manner is representative only in terms of these known and specified sampling categories” (Mason 2005: 128), which in the case of this study emerged and became identifiable through observations made and via the interviews themselves, through the interviewees identifying the various social groups that existed in the towns. Thus what is achieved here is a snap-shot of perceptions, perspectives and life-styles of a cross-section of the population of both market towns that aims to be as representative as possible.

To ensure that a cross-section of each town’s population was achieved, each interviewee in the ‘citizens’ population category was asked to fill in a short questionnaire at the completion of the interview, asking them for their gender, age, educational qualifications, occupation and place of work, to enable me to monitor the social profiles of the interviewees to ensure that a cross-section of ages, genders, socio-

economic groups and educational achievements were obtained, and through which, I was able to identify and target specific social groups that appeared to be under-represented. As for representing other social groups within the towns, such as; ethnicity (e.g. English or Welsh), incomers or indigenous locals, from specific locations in the towns or from specific social groups based on ideologies, this was more difficult and was heavily reliant on the use of snowball sampling and through hoping to reach populations via knowledge acquired throughout the research about where and when different sections of the population socialized, shopped or worked.

The inevitable problems with these types of organic qualitative research approaches are that certain sections of the population are very hard to reach or even remain unidentified. Thus, these populations may be under or even un-represented within this research. There were a number of particularly difficult to reach social groups in both towns that have consequently remained under or un-represented within this research, namely the: 'commuter-belt' population of Llangefni, those who may live in the town, but who work, shop and socialize elsewhere; the 'retired incomers' in Machynlleth, i.e. retired people who have moved into the town from elsewhere; and people of different ethnic origins (other than Welsh and English). The above social groups were very hard to target as they were largely 'invisible' in the towns, often due to their being proportionately fairly small demographic groups and who were often either from eastern Europe and as such were not recognisably different or the more ethnically distinctive social groups, such as Chinese or Indian, who did not seem to be about during the day.

One issue that arises with such grounded, qualitative research is knowing when you've done enough. This occurred within this research when, as Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1981) claimed, theory-saturation was achieved (Mason 2005: 134), i.e. when the data patterns were common-place and data information was repeatedly occurring. This also coincided with having conducted interviews with around 90 people (and the approximate target number of interviews), lasting on average forty-five minutes each (though some lasted between one and two hours) and having to decide to stop interviewing for the practical reason, that of the time it would take to write-up interview notes and transcriptions and listen to and analyse the interview recordings, as well as the observational and visual data. Despite having preferred to have had the time, money

and opportunity to extend the research, to include more interviews and to encompass the hidden social groups in each town, the number of interviews conducted was extensive and were very rich in qualitative data, through which the research objectives were achieved. The information received by the interviews was corroborated by all three interview categories as well as by the additional observational and visual research methods. I would therefore argue that the quality of the research data is high and is reflective and broadly representative of reactions to, perceptions of and engagement with local and global citizenship issues and provides an in-depth understanding of how and why both towns have developed, are developing and are responding to local and global influences and pressures.

The Interview Design:

I was aware at the onset that people could feel threatened by the research topic, and could feel as though they might be judged on their answers, which might result in the data being distorted by people responding in the way that they felt was right rather than honestly, or may be discouraged from taking part. To safeguard against this, it was felt that the true nature of the research would only be revealed to the 'key informant' interview group, as they needed to know the true focus of the thesis in order to be able to understand what I was looking for and so be as much help as possible, and as this interview group were not asked personal questions about their life-styles, it was felt that they would be unlikely to feel threatened or judged by the interview content. Thus information about the nature of the research was curtailed from the other two interview groups the 'citizens' and 'local business owners', who were only told that I was researching market towns, how they had changed and how people use them today, but were forewarned that I would be asking them a few questions about their life-styles. So whilst I was not completely truthful with the 'citizen' and 'local business owner' interview groups, omitting from the explanation that research was looking at issues of globalization and citizenship, the information they were given about the nature of the research was true. This ethical compromise was felt to be the only way to gain valid data without overly misleading or compromising the interviewees or leading their answers in a particular direction.

All interviewee groups; the 'citizens', 'key informants' and 'local business people' were promised anonymity through my changing their names within the research, but

were also aware that interview quotes would be used within the thesis, through which there was a chance that they might be identifiable to those who knew them, and seeing as both towns are relatively small, via the quotes. Only one interviewee was concerned about being identifiable through her interview quotes, explaining that she wanted to voice her concerns about issues within the town without feeling compromised. To allay her concerns she was promised that no identifiable information would be used or quoted within the research. None of the other interviewees raised any concern about this possibility. The interview groups whose identity are most in danger of being exposed are the 'key informants' and the 'local business owners', as they were often very prominent people in the towns and from the context and content of their interviews it was very often difficult to disguise their identity. As many of these interviewees were so prominent locally (for example, local councillors, active and vocal members of the community or a community organization) their views were already widely known. And because it is largely only through knowledge of their perspectives that they would be identifiable and because these interviewees appeared unconcerned about anonymity, that although efforts were made not to reveal their identities, through excluding certain identifiable references etc, I was not over concerned about their identity being guessed, as these particular interviewees were not revealing anything particularly private, confidential or sensitive.

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of people's lives, life-styles, opinions and perceptions, people had to feel as comfortable with me as possible. I wanted to put people at ease to encourage them to be able to chat to me unselfconsciously and as naturally as possible and in order to attain this I tried to sublimate my persona to integrate myself socially as much as possible, trying to be as sensitive to and mirror the atmosphere, surroundings and interviewees as I could.

The deliberate attempt to neutralise my identity to one that can be related to by the various interview group was, I feel, successful as my identity as a woman, my age (early 30s), my class (working class, but one which is self educated and culturally more middle class e.g. brought up listening to Radio 4) or other identity classifications, never appeared to be an issue, except in my own feelings of vulnerability when arrangements were made to conduct interviews in people's homes prior to meeting them in person. A measure of the success in this was in a comment made by an elderly gentleman who I

had had numerous casual conversations with during my stay in Machynlleth and who commented after hearing me ordering some food and enquiring if a dish was suitable for vegetarians, said “Are you vegetarian? Well I never would have put you down as one of those!”

My English/Welsh, insider/outsider identity was referred to by only a small number of interviewees in Llangefni (see page 219), but where such issues did arise, they were very reflective of the town or the social groups of people being interviewed at that time. The context-dependent nature of these dialogues and observations which took place are therefore referred to in detail in the data chapters, but it is perhaps important to clarify this part of my identity here first: I was born and brought up in Wales, have both ‘Welsh’ and ‘English’ family, have attended Welsh medium schools and can understand Welsh and speak the language moderately well, but English is my first language. Whilst it would have been beneficial to have been able to speak Welsh more fluently than I do (see page 218), my accent, which, depending on who I’m speaking to, can sound North Walian or English; enabling me to ‘fit in’ reasonably well with whoever I am speaking to, by adapting my accent and my vocabulary according to the person or persons being interviewed. My identity as a researcher is referred to more specifically within the data chapters.

The interview questions themselves were designed carefully so as to initially make people feel that they were speaking on a topic that they felt familiar with; their town and their life-style, before going on to ask them specific questions towards the end of the interview about their understanding of what terminology such as, ‘citizenship’ and ‘globalization’ meant to them (if anything) (see appendix 1,2 & 3).

What I hoped to discover from the research, are the views and meanings that people equate to the subject matter being discussed. It must be recognized however that meanings are not static or universal, but change over time and are context dependent (Alvesson 2002: 63). Discourses can be seen as systems of thought which inform and rely upon material practice which produce subjective meanings. Language must therefore be seen as metaphorical and functional, reflecting active thought and evolving ideas and attitudes. The politics of ‘truth’, for example are socially constructed. As

such, it is important to note that the evidence from this, or any research, must be viewed within its historical time-place location.

Analysing the Data

Through the practice of keeping detailed interview notes, it enabled me to analyse the interview data through listening to the interview recordings and transcribing the relevant section of the interview that related to each specific data chapter as I proceeded. Initially I started making full transcription of the interviews, but found that I still went back to listen to the interviews for clearer understandings of context and atmosphere (for example sarcasm or irony are not easily translatable from dialogue into text) and found that it took as much time re-listening to the recordings as transcribing them. Re-listening to the interviews also kept the people and scenes alive and in the present, making the writing-up process interesting, animated and at times fun, in other words it kept it real.

The structure of the interview format was followed within the data analysis, as it is in the structure on the thesis, as it frames and helps tell the story of each market town and the people who live and work in them. The research is thus contextualised through: hearing the interviewees profiling the towns, discussing their life-styles, communities and identities and through the exploration of people's political and ideological perspectives in relation to the local and the global.

The results from each social group and within the 'citizen' category were analysed independently before being compared to the responses of the other interview populations 'key informants' and 'local business people' and social groups within and then between each market town.

Presenting the research

Postmodernists are also deeply critical of the bland, boring and passive way research is written and presented (Alvesson 2002: 135). Conventional academic styles of writing can make texts difficult to access and thus exclusive to a minority of academics. Critics also have a point when they argue that the focus on writing may result in the attention of the author being distracted away from the research and into telling an entertainingly engaging story (Alvesson 2002: 136). The style of writing that is favoured by the

Postmodernists, and which has influenced the writing of this thesis, is “*Impressionistic writing* [which] builds on a scientific method in which the writer shows rather than tells. Situations are (re)created for the reader to get a lively feel for what goes on” (Alvesson 2002: 136).

What is also hopefully achieved within this thesis is the implementation of Alvesson’s advice of how to avoiding passivizing the reader and instead actively engage him/her through resisting the “urge to persuade and control the reader’s response by making the case and writing as watertight as possible” (Alvesson 2002: 141). I.e. rather than avoiding discussing loopholes and weaknesses, the author should acknowledge and debate these issues or at least point out debatable issues (Alvesson 2002: 141).

The visual and observational data was analysed in relation to and in context with the interview data, incorporating observational descriptions and visual examples alongside interview narratives to provide the reader with as rounded and contextual and understanding of what is being reported as possible (Mason 2005: 150).

I cannot emphasise enough the importance that the voices of the interviewees should be heard within this text, as what is revealed within the extracts is more than just examples of explanations, opinions and attitudes, but also emotions. They are often contextual and reflective, giving a fuller reading and understanding of the research; for example the linguistic characteristics of both towns are very different, as are the verbal characteristics between social groups, such as in the phraseology and tempo, which can be reflective of the social dynamic within each town. It was important therefore to enable the interviewees to tell their story and to hear their voices. It is not for me, as a researcher, to define what people understand by the concepts of local and global citizenship, but rather for them to define it for themselves and to describe themselves how they think the towns have changed. It is the researcher’s job in turn to analyse, compare and acknowledge their definitions.

All interviewees’ names have been changed within the text to ensure their anonymity.

CHAPTER 4

Mapping Globalization:

A Visualisation of Homogenization and Hybridization

In this chapter, data obtained from observational research conducted in the two market towns will be explored in conjunction with visual research methods to test Ritzer's hypothesis of the 'globalization of nothing'.

Through using Ritzer's definition of 'something' and 'nothing', colour-coded maps have been produced to provide a visual overview of how globalized the towns appear to have become, based on the types of commercial outlets within each town, both 'permanent' (shops) and 'temporary' (market stalls).

Further data of the towns and their social events will then be explored, not only in relation to the homogenization argument of Ritzer, but also in relation to hybridization and glocalization arguments, before finally exploring whether or not these observations and the visual data obtained, are corroborated (or not) by the interviews.

Testing out Ritzer's Hypothesis

George Ritzer's theory of the globalization of 'nothing' is being used within this comparative study of two market towns for several objectives: The first is to test out his hypothesis to see if it can be applied successfully to two rural Welsh market towns. This will be done through observation of local shops, eating and drinking establishments, local events and from interviews with local people and owners or managers of local retail businesses and amenities. The second is an experimental exercise to see if his theory can be used as a visual tool to illustrate how globalized each town has become by mapping out the towns' shops and facilities and using colour to represent levels of individual and indigenous products, services and service provision i.e. the '*something*'; and that which is generic, impersonal and lacking in local identity i.e. the '*nothing*'.

The globalization of nothing is an extension of Ritzer's previous work on the McDonaldization of Society and on Marc Age's work on 'no-places' (Tomlinson 1999), and is in Ritzer's own words, his grand narrative to explain how the globalization of services, products and models of service provision and customer care are fundamentally changing people's relationships with their local environment, a consequence of which is an erosion of unique local cultures, traditions and identities. The process through which this occurs he terms *grobalization*, by which he means the aggressive desire of governments, corporations and organisations to impose themselves upon and to dominate, in an imperialistic manner, as many geographical areas as they identify as desirable or necessary for their cause/purpose (Ritzer 2004: 73), creating a homogenized global culture, where people identify more strongly with product logos and automated customer services than they do with localities and more traditional services, customs and produce and so markedly change the consumption habits and identities of cultures all over the world.

Ritzer's definitions of 'something' and 'nothing' can best be understood in opposition to and in relation to each other, what one has the other has not, what one does, the other does not, what one provides, the other does not and so on. The focus of this theory is on consumption and can be applied to people, places, things, services, food and customs. Ritzer's definition of 'something' is "*a social form that is generally indigenously conceived, controlled, and comparatively rich in distinctive substantive content*" (Ritzer 2004:7). 'Something' is generally unique and indigenous to a specific geographical place, is usually rich in meaning often pertaining to historical ties, contains strong local identity, is humanized (for example a small local business that has a familiar and close relationship with customers and staff), specific to a time period and (though here I think Ritzer is indulging in a bit of romantic and personal bias) enchanted. For example Bara Brith (a traditional Welsh fruit loaf) which is specific to Wales and Welsh culinary tradition would fit in Ritzer's definition of 'something', particularly if it was also sold in a local Welsh bakery or café, run by local people.

Conversely 'nothing' "*refers to a social form that is generally centrally conceived, controlled, and comparatively devoid of distinctive substantive content*" (Ritzer 2004: 3). 'Nothing' usually being generic, lacking in local ties, has no strong identity, no historical ties, no sense of place, is dehumanized (e.g. unfamiliar, lack of personal/close

relationships with staff and customers) and is disenchanted. Examples of types of nothing include; large chain-stores, high street shopping centres, multinational signs, logos, brands, mass produced goods, minimized and more impersonal service provision, self service, places and things devoid of individuality and an increased interaction with machines such as ATMs and websites. An obvious example of this is McDonald's, where food is standardised, service is scripted, the floor plans of each restaurant are virtually identical and the staff are discouraged from personalizing the restaurants and service, i.e. they are required to be non-people. You could be in a McDonalds anywhere in the world and at any time and you will know what you are getting (Ritzer 1993).

But how, one might ask, can a person be a non-person, as it may appear at first to be a contradiction? A non-person is someone e.g. a shop assistant or waitress, who does not interact with customers as a 'person', but rather as a 'non-person', as they are required and expected to negate their existence and personalities within their servitudal positions as, for example, a waitress might in a fast food restaurant that compels its employees to use its specifically scripted communication with customers. This would be in contrast to a locally run pub for example, whose bar tender and his/her personality becomes synonymous with the atmosphere within the establishment and is well known by and knows the regular customers, therefore creating a unique atmosphere and service. Thus the waitress is easily replaceable and expendable, whilst the bar tender is not (Ritzer 2004: 60).

'Something' and 'nothing' exist on a continuum with one-another, each category resides at either end of that continuum. It is thus a simplistic observation of a social phenomenon that Ritzer is observing, of two definitive categories, but he makes clear that he is concentrating on the extremities of this continuum, focusing in particular on the negative effects on society of the globalization of nothing, but does emphasise that 'something' and 'nothing' are social constructions that cannot exist independently of one another, but rather there is an ongoing relationship between the two categories; they are not static, but can change their status over time. For example, entrepreneurs are continually trying to transform 'something' into 'nothing' through mass marketing and in turn consumers impose meaning onto non-things, i.e. 'nothing', which thus transforms a 'nothing' into a 'something' (Ritzer 2004: 3).

There also exists however a contradictory relationship between the globalization of nothing, such as branded food and the love some people have for these brands and, as Ritzer warns; “we must not conclude that there are not problems associated with something or that there are not people today, perhaps a majority, who prefer nothing to something and who have good reason for that preference” (Ritzer 2004: 16), as there are advantages and disadvantages associated with both. For example if we compare the microwave meal (nothing) to a gourmet meal (something) we can see that each has its advantages and disadvantages: the gourmet meal is usually specific to a locality, is made with fresh ingredients, preferably locally sourced, entails skill to prepare, but is also time consuming and so can be costly; the microwave meal on the other hand is a generic product, is not place specific, ingredients are globally sourced, is of low quality, but entails no skill in cooking it as one only needs to read the instructions on the packet and is quick and convenient. Thus the labels given to Ritzer’s social constructs are in themselves value laden and must be understood as coming from certain epistemological positions that see globalization and the aggressive ‘globalization’ of companies, corporations and governments as being intrinsically detrimental to societies, cultures and identities. It can never-the-less be applied as a possibly useful tool to create a visual image of how globalized each town has become and to see how much of their individuality they retain, as well as considering his hypothesis (along with the work of others) with the main findings of the research itself.

The reason why this hypothesis may be of particular relevance within this study is because Ritzer’s particular focus is on the relationship between the local and the global, it is through his interest in this area that he identifies what he coins ‘globalization’ to describe an element of globalization, arguing that globalization as a concept is made up of different processes and as such it is a term that is often too generally applied by social scientists and other academics when analysing related issues. As discussed earlier, globalization encompasses a variety of processes, from politics, economy, ideology, technology, culture, inequality to the environment, and because of this it must be understood that there is no single globalizing process, but Ritzer does try and hone globalization down to three main processes: Capitalism, McDonaldization and Americanisation (Ritzer 2004: 73) and it is against the backdrop of his analysis of these

three components of globalization that he pitches his analysis of the effects of globalization on the local.

He identifies capitalism as being a major (and most powerful) facet of globalization as its success has meant that we are increasingly living in a time when there is no viable alternative economic system, as we now “live in an era in which, truly for the first time, capitalism is unchained and free to roam the world in search of both cheap production facilities and labour as well as new markets for its products” (Ritzer 2004: 81). It is the products that these expansionistic capitalist businesses are making that produce most of what Ritzer terms as non-things, non-people, non-places and non-services.

By McDonaldization he is referring to his previous work (Ritzer 1993) where he analysed the rationality behind the successful marketing and managing procedures of the infamous fast-food chain (which has itself become a symbolic representation of globalization and Americanisation to many). McDonalds’ business rationale being: efficiency, calculability and predictability, and has been adopted and been applied not only to other businesses all over the world, but also to politics, education and criminal justice, helping them to create and export their generic products virtually anywhere in the world, whilst ensuring minimal output and thus maximising their profit margins largely through employing non-human rather than human technologies. McDonaldization has thus become “a transnational process that is increasingly independent of any particular nation” (Ritzer 2004: 83).

However one of the by-products of this business model is that it produces what Ritzer terms the “rationality of irrationality” (Ritzer 1993: 121), which he derives from the work of Weber who analysed rationality as behaviour that is devoid of emotions and feelings, such as anger, pride, jealousy etc and so it is behaviour that is based on logic and not emotions. Behaviour affected by emotions, Weber argued, prohibits the truly smooth and efficient running of bureaucracies or any formal structure, and it is because of our emotional engagement that human beings are largely incapable of true rationality (Parkin 1993: 36-37). It is this type of rationality that businesses such as McDonalds have tried to achieve, through creating a generic, standardised, automated service, where the lay-out is functional, the food is the same the world over and service is largely automated, scripted and requires minimal skills. However, what Ritzer argues is

that the consequence of over rationalizing systems is that they have a dehumanizing consequence which has negative repercussions for society.

Americanization refers to the spread of American culture economy and politics in the form of: Hollywood films, music, sport; commercial global marketing of clothes, soft drinks, computer systems; global military and diplomatic engagement; educational training of the world's political, scientific and military elites; the expansion of the American model of democratic politics and the exploitation and use of the world's natural resources and labour market by American companies (Ritzer 2004: 88). Ritzer identifies three main reasons to explain why Americanization has become a dominant global force: the first being it is the world's only (for the time being) superpower which enables its production and export capacity to dominate the market: secondly because of its wealth and power, American businesses can more easily afford to use the world's advertising and marketing systems and finally: American culture has become people's second culture (Ritzer 2004: 90).

Ritzer felt that it was necessary to articulate the particularly aggressive and expansionist principle of globalization that is to be found within the three globalising processes identified above, thus *grobalization* was devised to define a particular element of globalization. This perspective views the expansionistic and aggressive character of globalization as being essentially detrimental to the local in its deterministic and one-directional nature, leaving the local virtually powerless to resist it. Culture, (via the media and commodities) thus becomes increasingly homogenised, leaving little room for individual creativity and innovation and as the higher echelons of the social structures are increasingly enmeshed within the global economic and political system, it leaves individuals virtually powerless to resist or create alternative worlds (Ritzer 2004: 77).

The concept of globalization was also developed as a theoretical perspective to provide an accompaniment and counter perspective or analysis to *glocalization*, which as discussed earlier, emphasises how the local cultures and individuals are adapting differently and creatively to one another and to the influences and processes of globalization. Such reactions vary from the embracing of cosmopolitan culture to the renewal of strong defensive nationalist sentiment. Glocalization has an affinity with

postmodern theory in its view that societies are becoming increasingly diverse and hybridised which enables choice and independence and unique adaptations of global influences and cultures resulting in heterogeneity (Ibid: 75-77).

However, Ritzer is clear about acknowledging some of the anomalies associated with his analysis of the 'globalization of nothing' and to re-emphasise the fact that something and nothing exist on a continuum with one another, with most things falling somewhere in between. The first of these anomalies that he is careful to point out is that as a result of the globalization of nothing there can be a re-emergence or re-invigoration of local traditions, or new 'glocalized' hybrid products or traditions may be developed that draw inspiration from local or regional history. But Ritzer argues that what often tends to occur in such instances is that they become marketed to a specific group e.g. tourists, and as such become mass produced and simplified and thus lose their certain unique 'something' and end up becoming another asset within the globalization of 'nothing'. What must be considered when analysing the two market towns is whether the local still exists independently of the global; the purely local, as Ritzer comments is, becoming increasingly difficult to identify.

The vast majority of that which at one time could have been thought of as local is today strongly influenced by the global. This means, amongst other things, that local products are likely now to be intertwined with imports from other parts of the world and themselves exported to other places to be integrated with that which is indigenous to them. In any case, the point is that the local, at least in the sense of anything that is *purely* local is fast disappearing from the world scene (Ibid: 109-110).

Such phenomena could have seriously negative consequences for global cultural diversity, certainly there may emerge new glocal amalgamations, but these will surely lack any major distinctive substance.

The second anomaly is that neither should we ignore the benefits that the globalization (or globalization) of 'nothing' has brought (especially to us in the West); it can be relatively inexpensive (though this doesn't always apply e.g. Gucci clothing); it can be efficient to produce; it has created an abundance of merchandise and; it has brought with it convenience. However its expansionistic nature means that where the global

grows, so something has to go, as a result non-things, non-places, non-people, non-services end up predominating (Ritzer 2004: 142).

However nostalgia and loss can play a significant part both in how people react to globalization and in how sociologists react to its effects. It is important therefore, as Ritzer warns, not to over-romanticize the local either, as many aspects of such small social structures can also be negative, provincial and inward-looking.

Mapping the Towns

A colour coded map of each market town has been created in order to help apply Ritzer's theory of the 'globalization of nothing' and to 'see' how globalized each town has become by depicting retail establishments such as: shops, cafes, pubs, etc in different colours to show how indigenous or generic (i.e. something or nothing) they are. The maps also provide a visual description of the lay-out of each market town to provide a clearer understanding of how each town has developed and to show how they are affected by and are responding to globalizing influences. It is important to note that the maps are used as an exploratory tool and, as such, there is scope here for the maps to be refined for further study.

The 'purely local' could only be identified as existing in the butchers' shops in both market town, which appears to confirm Ritzer's observation that the 'purely local' is disappearing rapidly, but then as global trade has existed for centuries, perhaps Ritzer's concept of the 'purely local' is misleading. Has it ever really existed in such a completely isolated form as the word 'purely' implies? Culture and identity are not static constructions but evolving formations that are reactive to both internal and external influences. Wales, despite having retained much of its historic identity and culture has, never been an isolated country, and as was discussed earlier, many of what are widely believed to be ancient cultural traditions, are in fact constructs of modernity and are in essence hybrid constructions of by-gone traditions (for example, the Eisteddfod) (Smith 1995: 157).

Food is often linked to cultural location and identity, of having a connectivity to place. This perspective is based on the "assumption that there is a fairly simple relationship between diet, cuisine and a sense of cultural belonging" (Tomlinson 1999: 122).

However this is not necessarily the case and certainly the connection of culinary traditions with location and a sense of belonging is, in Bell and Valentine's opinion, largely built on cultural mythologies.

There is no essential *national* food; the food we think of as characterising a particular place always tells of movement and mixing...all there is, is a menu of naturalized foods modified, adapted and hybridized over time. Furthermore, the food stuffs we think of as definitionally part of a particular nation's sense of identity often hide complex histories of trade links, cultural exchange, and especially colonialism (Bell and Valentine 1997: 169).

Here Bell and Valentine are referring specifically to national foods, but the points that they make must also be as applicable to local food, culinary tradition and local identities as it is to national foods. Having said that, the more micro our focus becomes on specific small geographical areas that constitute people's 'local', the more chances there may be of discovering a food that is very specific to a particular place/location.

However the industrialization of new technological techniques of storing, processing and transporting foods has undoubtedly radically altered our culinary habits and our availability of choices and has changed our reliance on locally produced food, which in turn has affected the local traditional food production industry. People's relationship with food production is therefore undermined by globalization as it takes away its link with locality, detaches people from the seasons as seasonal produce is now available all year round, which in turn undermines local seasonal festivities.

As such the 'local' will be measured in terms of indigenously conceived, made and run products, outlets, activities and service following Ritzer's definition but with the recognition that these indigenous cultural products have not necessarily been developed in isolation to external influences. This fact however is not to deny their cultural significance to people and place.

To create a pictorial image of both market towns to depict how globalized they have or have not become through using Ritzer's concepts of 'something' and 'nothing', proved to be quite challenging, not least because the categories themselves are simplistic and value laden. It was difficult to detach myself from the categorization process in deciding which establishments were more 'something' than 'nothing', finding it

difficult at first not to imprint upon places my own value judgements. Despite the obvious shortcomings of Ritzer's theory (simplistic categories, value laden and often romantic categorizations of types of consumption), I would still argue that there is merit in the theory itself and that it can be used as a useful tool to analyse how local areas are being affected by and are responding to globalization and in this particular context globalization.

The maps focus on the food and retail establishments and market stalls within each town and are designed to provide us with a visual image of how many indigenously conceived and controlled outlets and generically conceived and controlled outlets exist within each town. To grade each establishment by using shades of colour to depict where each generally exists on the 'something' and 'nothing' continuum proved to be too problematic as virtually all establishments have certain global trade or cultural links of one type or another and I found it virtually impossible to be truly objective in categorizing each establishment in this way; for e.g. where does a locally run and managed antique shop fall within the continuum? Where do I place a locally run jeweller's shop, where the jeweller makes his own jewellery, but who also sells a lot of imported jewellery? And where do you place a local health food shop, selling quality produce, often ethically sourced globally, or a small DVD & video rental shop selling the latest American block-busters?

To resolve these dilemmas and minimise the risk of non-objective engagement within this analytical process, the categories had to be reduced to two: 'something' and 'nothing', with only two grades of shading used to indicate their degree of 'localness' and 'globalness' and, within these fairly narrow categories, each establishment can fairly safely be placed. It must be noted however, that none of the categories are absolute, for example one would need to survey each business operation to understand everything about how they are managed or from where they source their supplies. For example a locally run and owned bakery, that offers personal service to its customers and that makes traditional Welsh breads and cakes must, under Ritzer's definition, be placed in the 'something' category, and yet it may use some global ingredients and recipes. In fact all non-generic establishments (except for the butchers' shops and to a lesser degree the local bakeries) were found to be hybridized, as all sold global products, much of which was generically produced, but as they were independently

owned, run and offer personalized services, they had to be placed on the 'something' side of the continuum with the darker pink colour indicating which establishments also sold and/or made local produce and products.

These maps are therefore designed to provide us with a visual representation of how many establishments are generally locally produced, locally run, indigenous and offer personalised service i.e. 'something'; and how many establishments are generally generically conceived, centrally run, that offer a non-personalised service and offer generic global products or produce, i.e. 'nothing'.

Something

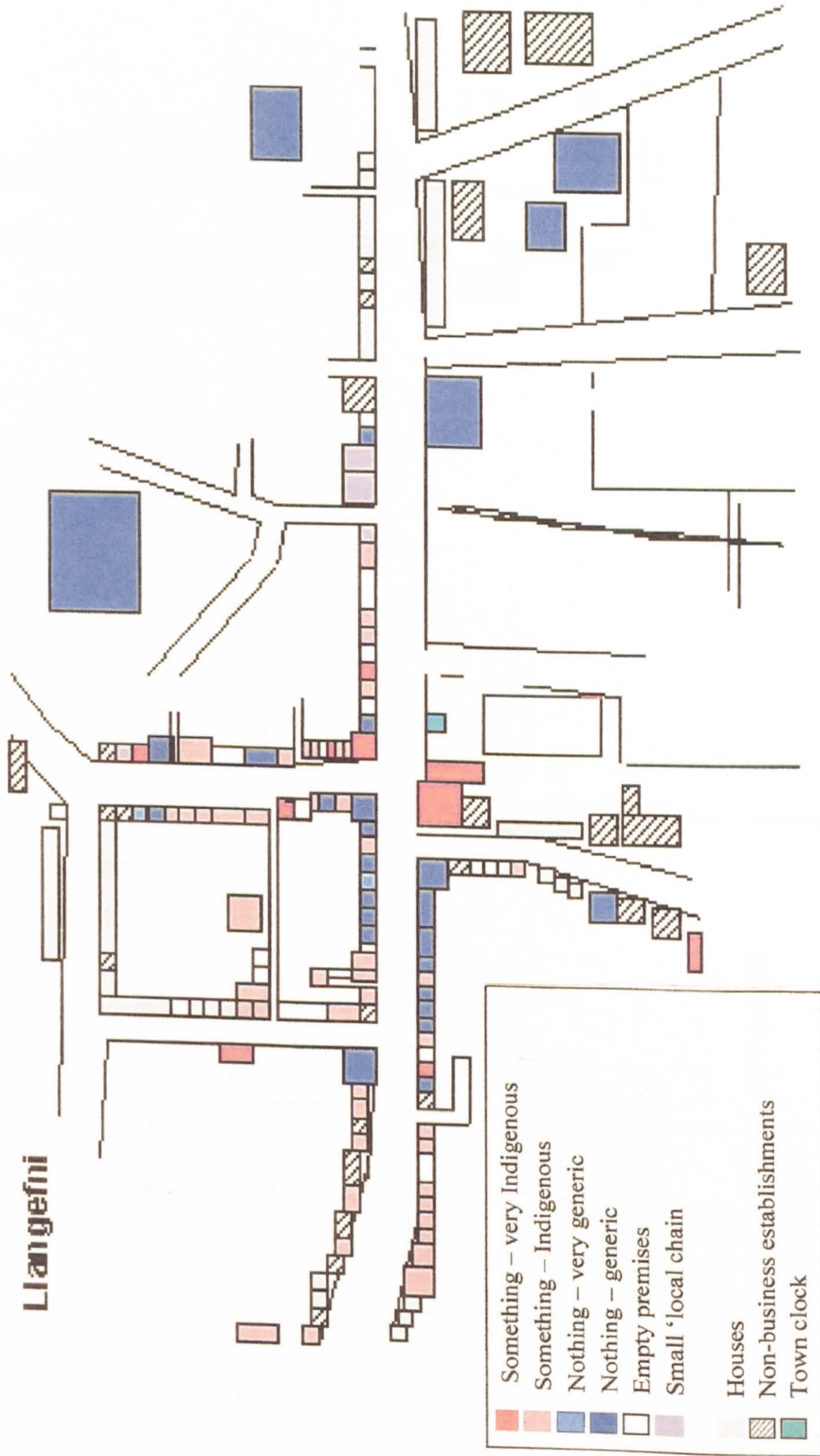
- The red colour depicts locally owned and run establishments that sell local produce and offers an individualized service to the public.
- The pink colour represents those premises that are locally owned and run establishments that offer an individualized service, but which sell very few or no locally produced and/or made produce.
- The purple colour represents those establishments that are part of a small chain and so are not in themselves unique, but neither are they generic. They may be local to the county or local to Wales, but are not unique to the town even if the establishment was founded in the town originally.

Nothing

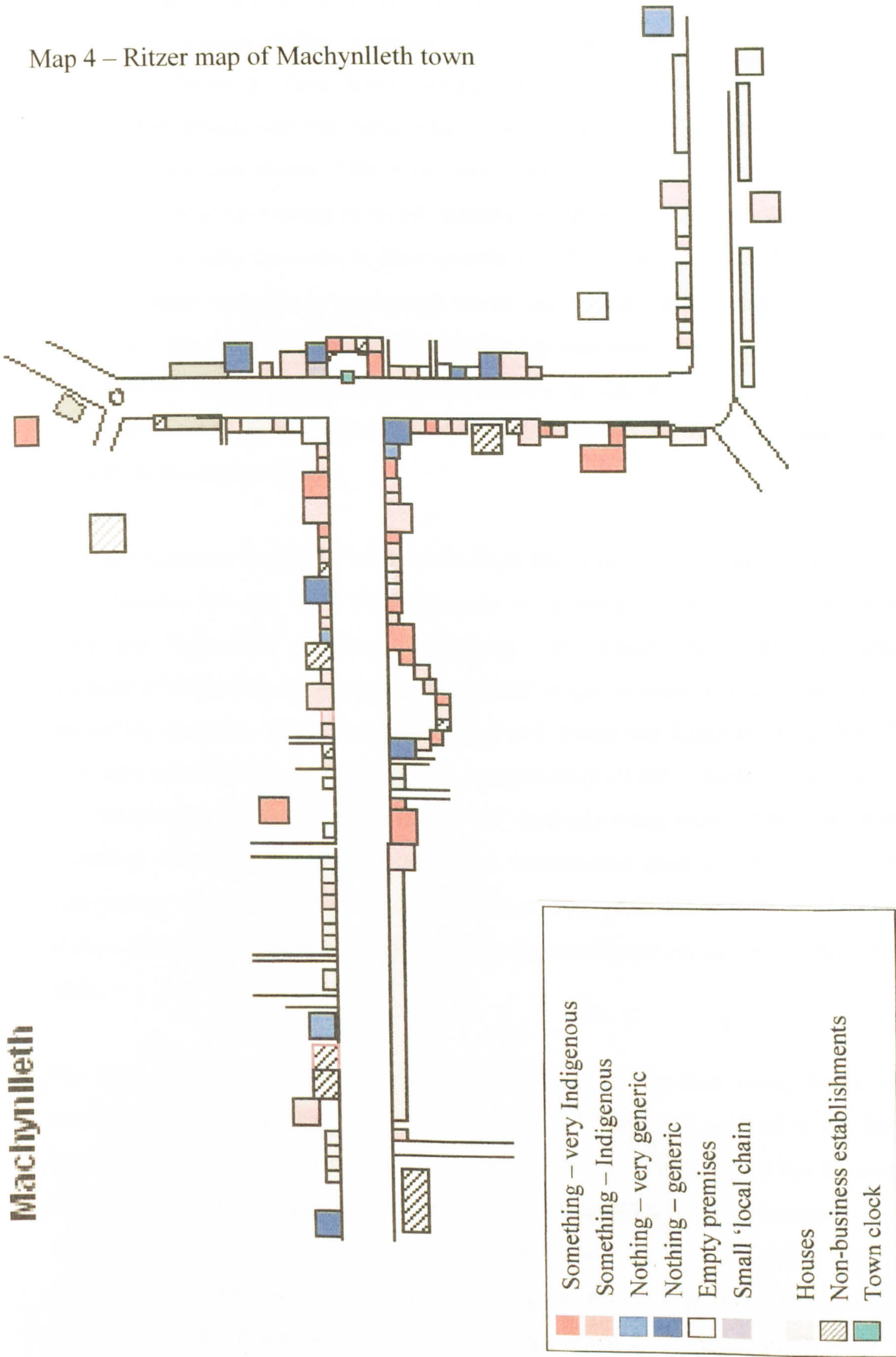
- The dark blue colour depicts those premises that are generic and global in scope and that are part of a multi-national chain and which sell generic global goods or produce and which offer a standardized service to the public.
- The pale-blue colour depicts those establishments that are part of either a smaller national chain that sell generic goods, but which may offer some degree of individualized customer service or higher quality of merchandise or produce.

In addition to these main categories; 'white' represents empty premises, 'grey' represents houses, 'black and white stripes' represents non-business establishments and 'green' represents the town clocks.

Map 3 – Ritzer map of Llangefni town



Map 4 – Ritzer map of Machynlleth town



What the maps clearly show is the differences in how each market town has been infiltrated by generic global companies, in particular Llangefni (Map 3) with the recognizable cluster of 'High Street' chains concentrating themselves in the centre of the main High Street, with the independent shops situated at the peripheries of the main street and down side streets. This is in sharp contrast to Machynlleth (Map 4), whose High Street comprises mainly of small independent shops. In fact the only generic high street shops and cafe that exist in Machynlleth are; 'The National Milk Bar', the 'AGA Shop', the 'Spar' (familiar in most small towns and villages) and towards the end of the town centre, the 'Co-Op'. The other branded establishments are a couple of banks. The location of the 'AGA' shop in the town is perhaps an indication of the general quality of the shops and of an income market in the local area, as the AGA company's target customer is the middle classes.

By contrast (Figure 3) 27% of Llangefni's High Street comprises of generic High Street shops, lumped into the 'dark blue' category of 'nothing', with a further 2% situated within the 'light blue' category of 'nothing'. The brand shops that have opened premises in Llangefni are generally those which target customers in the lower income bracket for example; 'Ethel Austin' clothing and 'Stead and Simpson' shoe shop. The town also currently has four competing supermarkets ('Lidl', 'Somerfields', the 'Co-Op' and recently 'ASDA'), with a fifth 'Aldi' currently being built (2008) and a further possibility of another retail giant opening a supermarket there too. 18% of the retail premises are empty and out of the 26% that have been placed in the 'nothing' category of dark blue, 4% of them are charity shops (figures based on survey of the town in 2006).

The maps depict the impact of 'globalization' on each market town, Machynlleth remains largely 'un-globalized' in comparison to Llangefni, on which the impact appears to have had a detrimental effect on independently owned and run businesses. The remaining independently owned shops in Llangefni are representative of the town's low income bracket. The name of a bridal shop 'A Shoestring Wedding' (according to 2006 Survey) is a particularly good example of this and many of the shops have the appearance of being quite run-down and are generally cold with traditional Calor gas heaters to warm the premises.

Figure 3

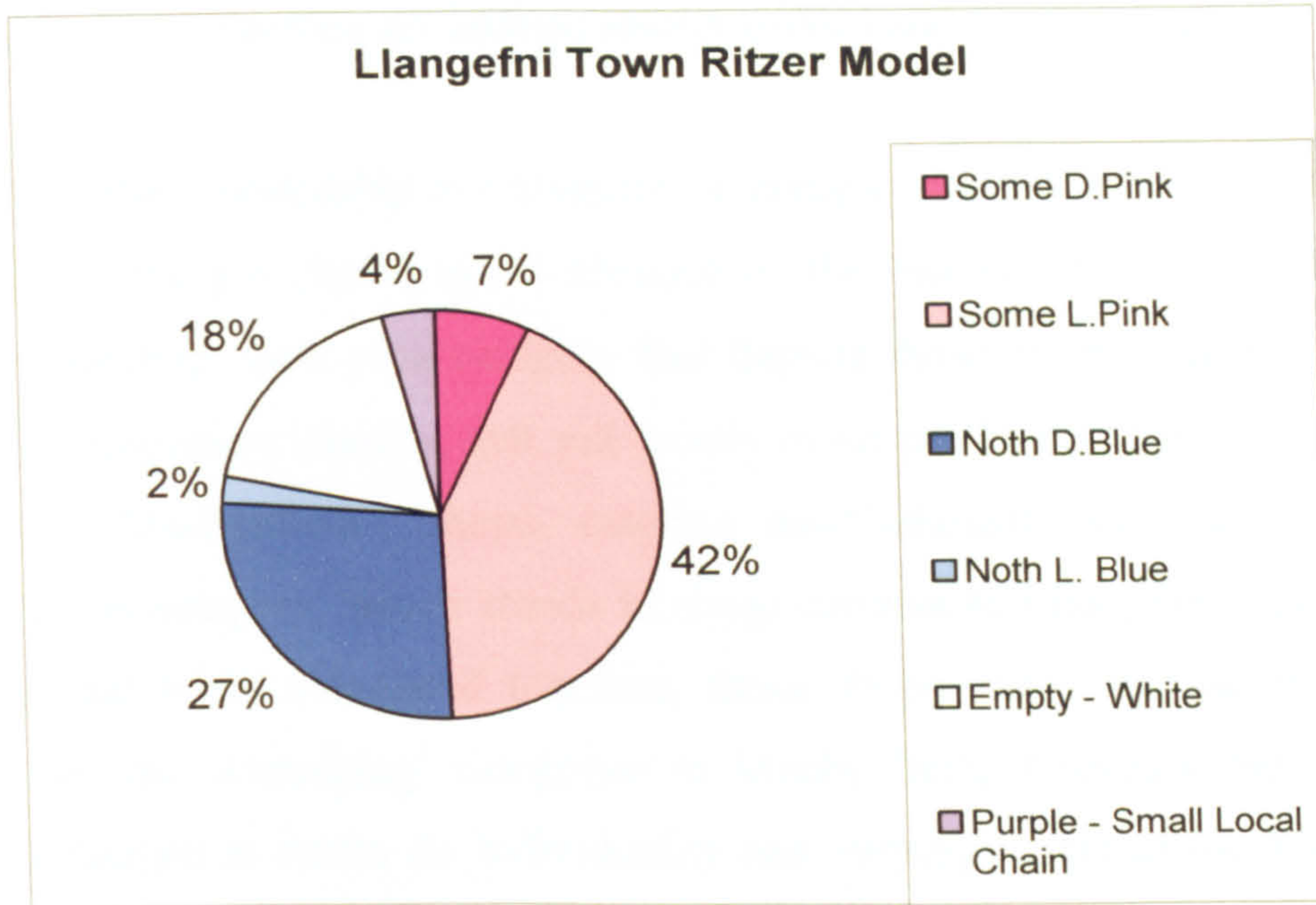
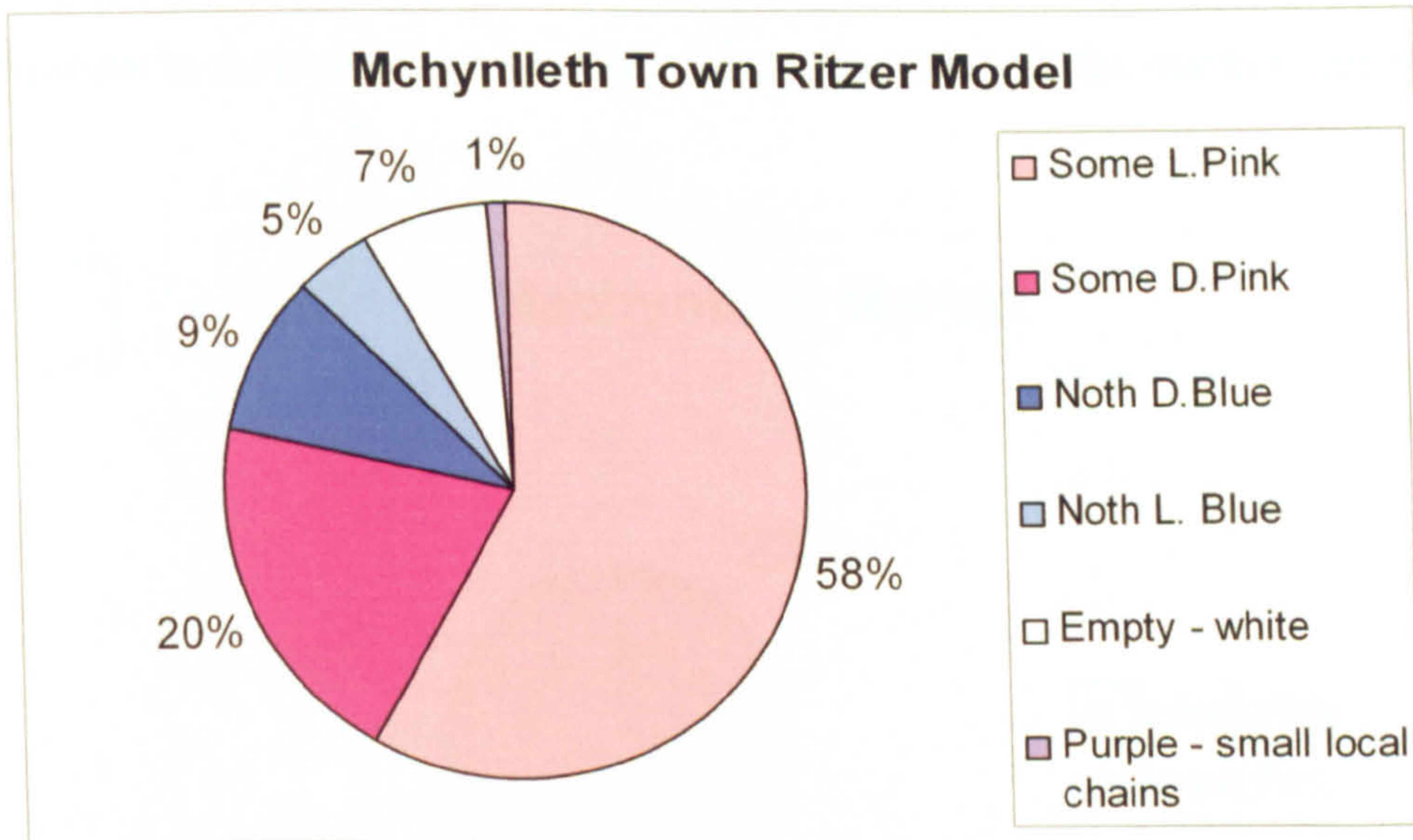


Figure 4

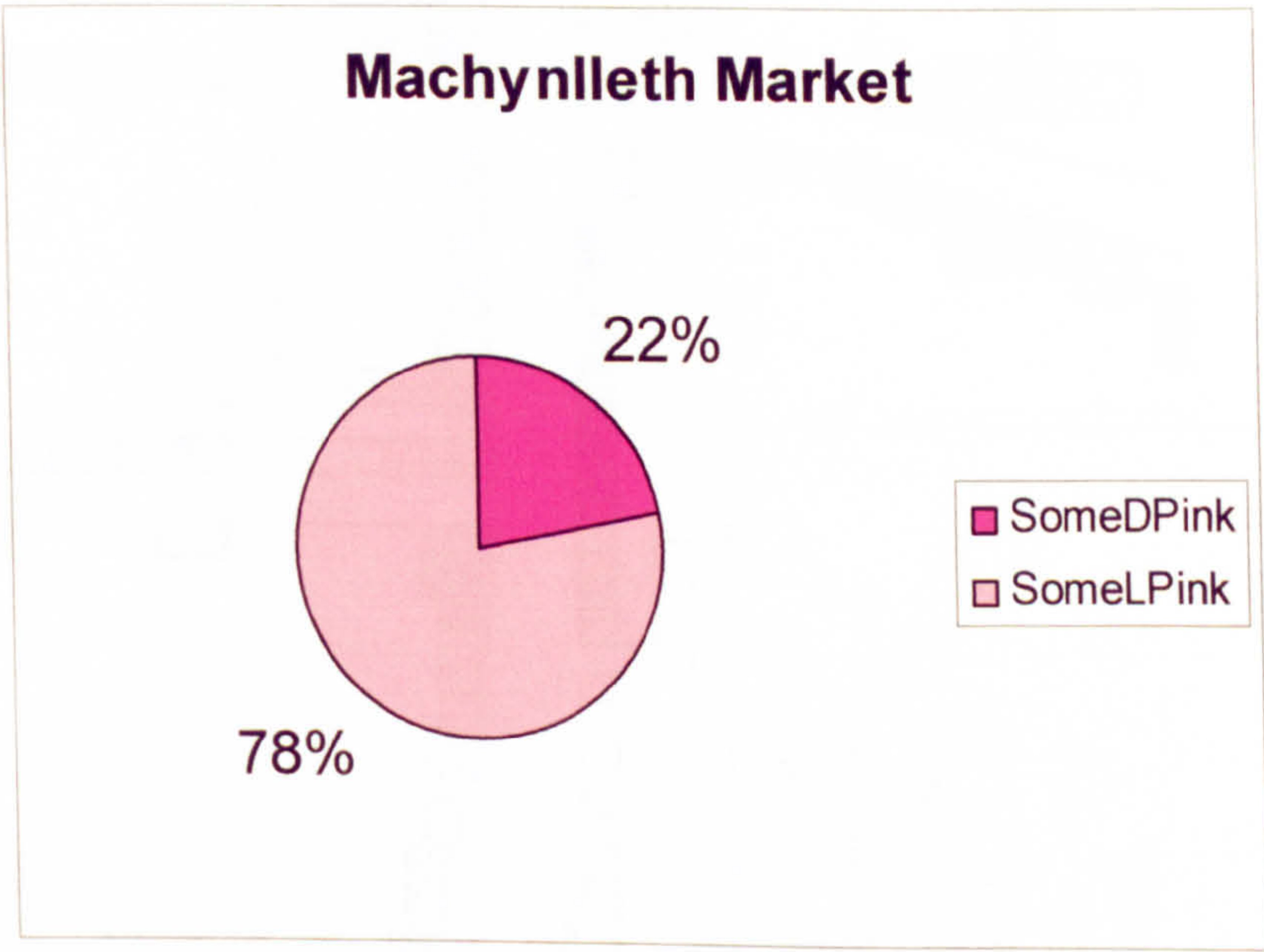


Much of what has been included in the map of Llangefni within the 'light pink' weaker category of 'something' are in fact very generic and hybridized establishments. The Town Market consists of standardized stalls offering a variety of largely low quality, cheap global products. There are a number of takeaways clustered together characteristically at the end of the High Street, that again offer the familiar Chinese, Indian, Cantonese and Kebab cuisines, again generally generic in style, service and

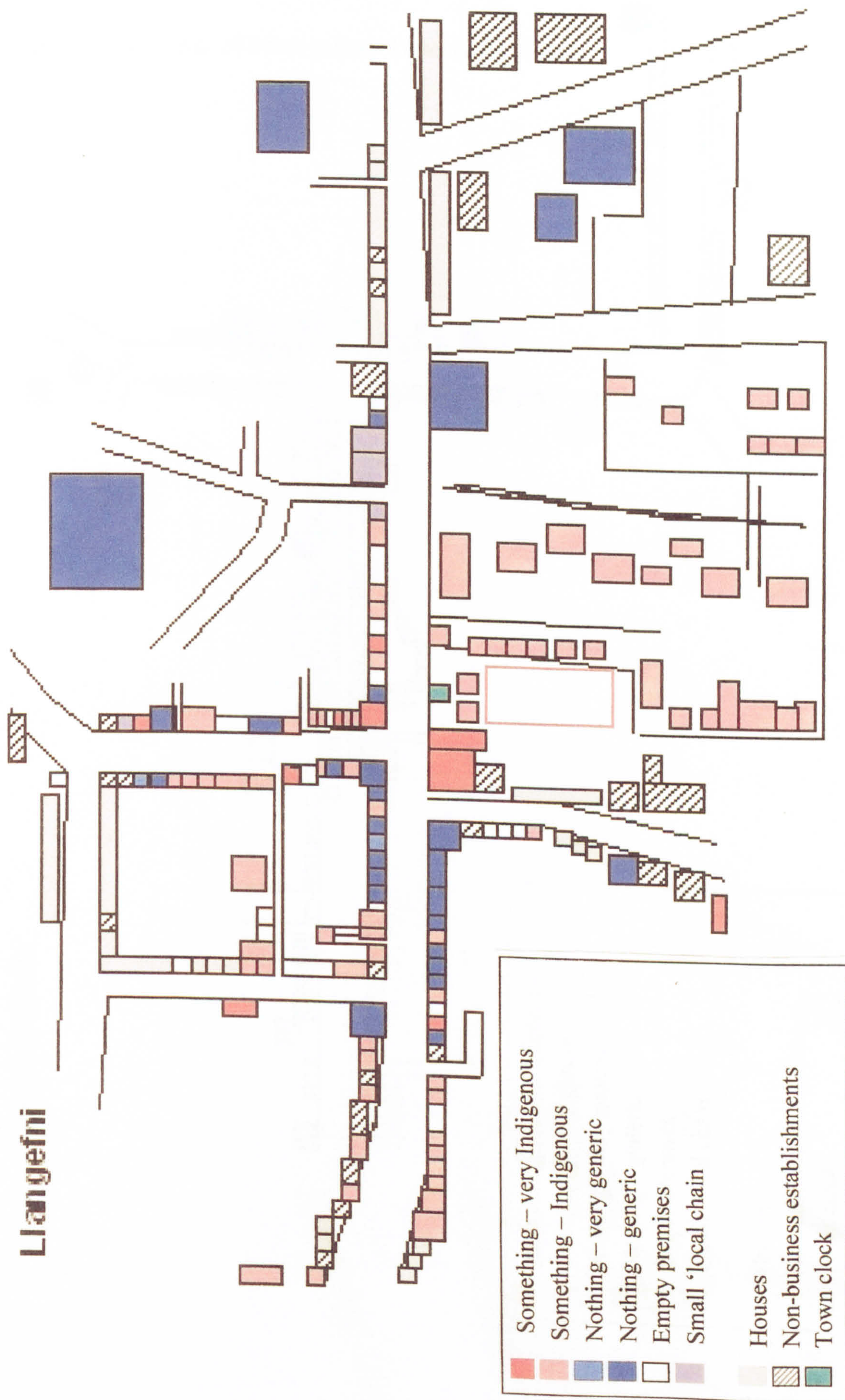
form and yet, both the market stalls and the takeaways have had to be placed within the 'something' category as they are independently owned and run (See map 4).

What is particularly noticeable in Llangefni, in comparison to Machynlleth, by looking at the maps or the pie charts, is the absence of the establishments placed under the 'stronger something' dark pink category that depicts those establishments that have a strong local indigenous identity, that sell locally made produce and products. 20% (see Figure 4) of Machynlleth's shops, catering establishments and market stalls are included in this category, which stands in sharp contrast to Llangefni's mere 7% (see Figure 3). And when calculated together, those shops, cafes and galleries etc that comprise the two 'something' categories in Machynlleth, it reveals that 78% of the town has managed to retain its individuality and varying levels of local and cultural uniqueness. Machynlleth is also the only one to have genuinely unique market stalls, for example selling locally-made organic cosmetics, topiary trees, a local co-operative stall selling locally grown or made produce and a stall selling local hand-made wood-craft (depicted in dark pink) which make up around 22% of the market (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

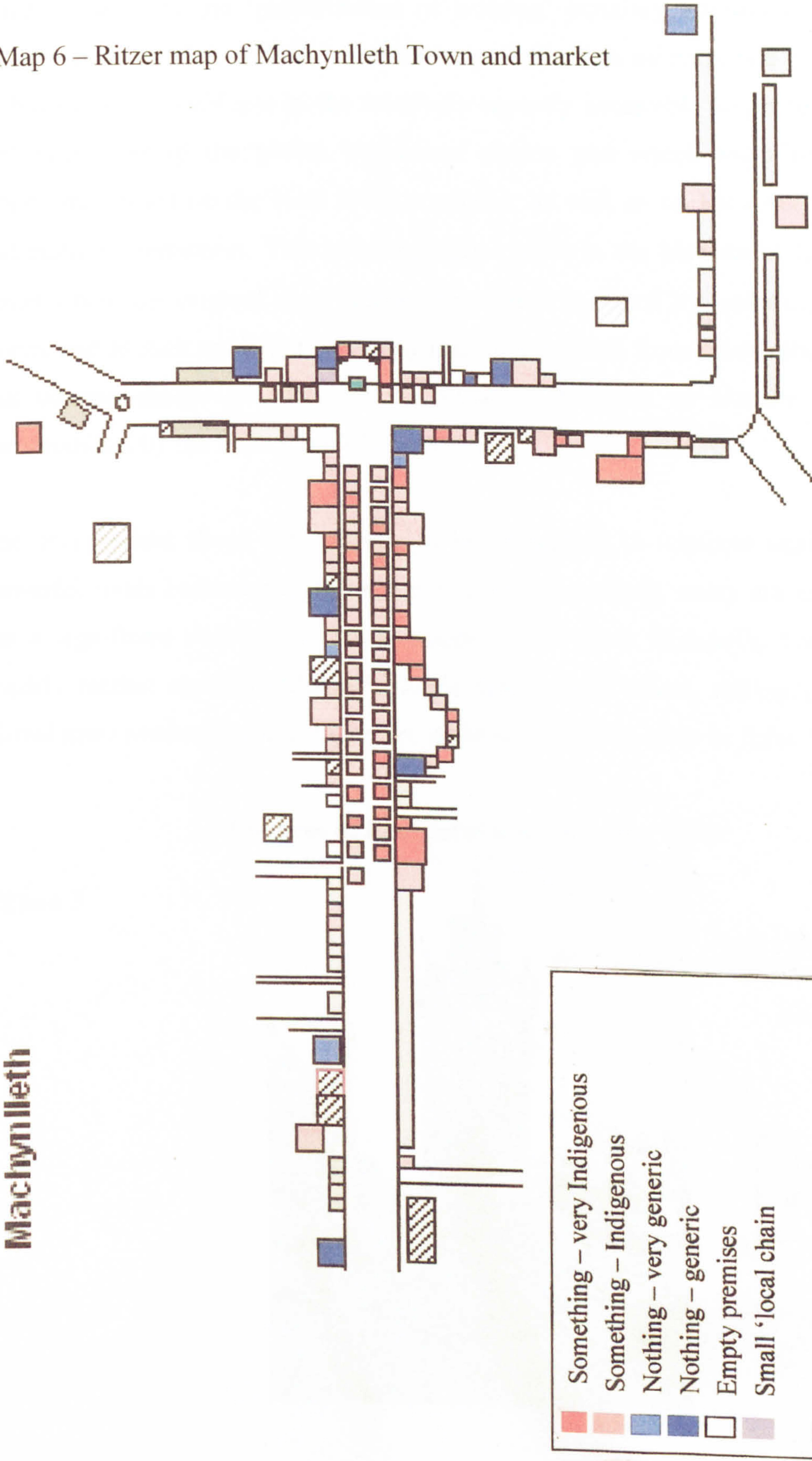


Map 5 – Ritzer map of Llangefni Town and market



Map 6 – Ritzer map of Machynlleth Town and market

Machynlleth



Ritzer's theory of the 'globalization of nothing' certainly appears to be happening visually in Llangefni, with the aggressive globalization of corporate companies, both within the town itself and in the relatively recently accessible larger towns and cities that host most of the global high-street chains and which seem to be having a detrimental effect on the local town economy, as well as on the town's individuality and cultural uniqueness. This is particularly visible in the pictures of Llangefni High-Street where the original shop facades have been replaced by generic branded chain-stores, and as such renders it relatively indistinguishable from many other town centres that contain similar branded outlets. Visually therefore its identity appears to be compromised by the infiltration of chain stores.

The independent shops also *appear* to be struggling to compete against their more powerful rivals because they have a run-down appearance, many are empty and there are a significant number of charity shops in the town. Similarly, Llangefni's twice weekly market appears indistinguishable from many others, selling generic, largely global mass produced goods (apart from the stalls selling meat or fish). See pictures 4 - 7.

Pictures of Llangefni town summer 2008

Picture 3



Llangefni Town Clock
on market day

Picture 4



Branded chain shops

Picture 5



Evidence of direct competition between local and global retailers

Note the Welsh flag which seems to be appeal for patronage based on nationality

Picture 6



Llangefni High-Street – showing empty, run-down, charity and branded chain shops

Pictures of Llangefni market – summer 2008

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Llangefni appears therefore to corroborate Ritzer's theory that the aggressive forces of globalization are far too strong to be resisted (Ritzer 2004: 98), which is inevitably resulting in the town losing its unique identity, it being replaced by a generic homogenous identity, devoid of individuality and as such is becoming a 'non-place'. This is poignantly captured in the photograph of the global branded Spar supermarket situated next door to a local independent newsagent, in the window of which is hung a large Welsh flag, signifying Welsh identity, localness and its independence (See picture 5).

Machynlleth meanwhile, contrasts sharply by comparison. Its colourful buildings and the retention of its original shop frontages, gives the town a distinctive individual identity. It has relatively few empty shops or charity shops compared to Llangefni and the buildings appear well maintained and well frequented. Here the small independent shops look as though they are thriving (though it must be noted that appearances can be deceiving and the visual data and observations made are to provide an overview of each town's appearance) (see pictures 10-13).

Market day is busy in Machynlleth and the range of quality, local, organic, hand-made or specialist stores (for example, specialist coffees, olives, cheese etc) add further to the town's uniqueness and, using Ritzer's critique, appears 'something-full'. Here, conversely to Ritzer's theory, globalization appears to be being resisted. Machynlleth therefore seems to fit more closely to the hybridization argument, as local and global images are being used in conjunction with one another to produce something unique; for example the market stalls selling topiary trees or olives, or the vegetarian Quarry Café (owned by the Centre for Alternative Technology) that sells home-made whole-foods that originate from all over the world, using global recipes and ingredients (see pictures 14- 16).

Two particularly good examples of the active hybridization of the global in Machynlleth can be seen in the way paper lanterns were created by local residents in the images of global branded cartoon characters, 'Buzz Lightyear' and 'Bart and Lisa Simpson', in 2006 for the town's annual 'Light Festival', where a lantern parade takes place through the town. The festival itself is a hybridized version of an ancient druid festival Samhain that has been resurrected and re-mastered into its modern day form

(See pictures 17-19). The other example was the inclusion of the Spar supermarket in the Women's Institute tapestry to celebrate the millennium, depicting iconic local buildings – for them the Spar had clearly come to represent the local (See picture 20).

Pictures of Machynlleth summer 2008

Picture 10



Machynlleth town Clock on market day

Examples of colourful independent shops

Picture 11



Picture 12



Picture 13



Machynlleth market summer 2008

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Pictures of Machynlleth Light Festival 2006

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Picture 20

Picture of the 2000 Tapestry depicting iconic local images (including the Spar – top right-hand corner)



Machynlleth 2000 A.D.

Observational and Visual Data Corroborated

Ritzer's theory on the 'globalization of nothing' was further corroborated during interviewing, to an unexpected degree. When initially asked what they liked and disliked about the market towns interviewees expressed themselves in terms of Ritzer's concepts of 'something' and 'nothing' and supported the initial observational and visual overview of the towns. For example, when talking to people who live in Llangefni they described the town in terms of it becoming a non-place, of losing its identity and becoming homogenized:

The market comes here on a Thursday, but what's significant about that – nothing. It goes to every other town or village in North Wales and throughout the country (Cllr Rowlands).

When we first opened the shop it was a nice little town – homely and friendly, but over the last eleven years it has just died. The first thing that happened is that they made it look like anywhere else (Aled).

Supermarkets have destroyed the independent shops... [there are] no personalized staff in the big shops (Jeanie).

We all like the supermarkets, but they are killing the town aren't they – well all towns really (Angharad)

Many of the interviewees recalled from memory all the independent shops that used to exist in the town and all the people who used to run and work in those shops - they clearly meant 'something' to those interviewees, whilst the shops and shop assistants of the town today appeared to be largely unfamiliar and as such meant 'nothing', they were, in effect and in comparison, 'non-people'. When remembering a certain toy shop in the town one interviewee reminisced about the shop keeper:

She always had these Star Wars-style plaits, she always had these plaits, dark hair and little round glasses...she was lovely ...if we had pocket money at the weekend we would go there and get bubbles (Sandra)

The shops and the shop owners and assistants that clearly meant 'something' to the Llangefni interviewees today were the remaining independent shops that had been in the town for many years.

The interview results revealed that the decline in individually owned and run shops which sold local produce and offered a personalized service, was perceived to be a direct consequence of what Ritzer calls 'globalization', i.e. the market dominance of the high-street chains, which are seen as being detrimental to the town and the townspeople's identity, individuality and independence.

Likewise the reason given for people liking Machynlleth was based on it having a unique identity, with independent shops and the town's colourful buildings were, for example, mentioned a number of times. The fact that the town did not have many branded chain-stores was widely described as being one of the town's attractive features:

Shops are so different – so many nice things (Sheila).

What I like about it is that it still has a small town atmosphere, it still has small independent shops. I think it is important to preserve those – it is a market town, it has a vibrancy connected with that (Frank).

You still haven't got your chain stores in the town, which is very unique in that sense – you can walk up and you won't see a Woolworths, a Smiths or a Boots (Daniel).

If you picked up and plonked in Birmingham, Newcastle, Worcester and plonked you there you wouldn't know which town you were in would you, because they are all the same aren't they, they've all got the same big stores, whereas here it is totally different (Cllr Rowlands).

Machynlleth, by contrast, still appears to be 'something' full, by retaining its independent shops it appears also to have retained its individuality. Global images and influences here become hybridized to create unique local identities and culture, enabling it to remain 'something' full.

It is important however to acknowledge how generic branded chains are able to offer some form of personalized service or sell some local produce. As Ritzer emphasises 'something' and 'nothing' are on a continuum; for example, the National Milk Bar in Machynlleth appeared to be a meeting place for young mothers having become individualised and familiarised through their local friendship with some of the staff. Likewise it is also possible for the shop assistants in a 'Londis' or a 'Spar' to offer a degree of personalized service to their customers, as we saw by the inclusion of the

Spar supermarket in a millennium tapestry produced by “it’s citizens”. Despite the fact that these establishments are still limited in terms of what they sell, how they lay the shop out, what hours they can open, how they are run, etc, we must be careful to acknowledge these concepts of ‘something’ and ‘nothing’ exists a continuum. Similarly, the take-away establishments in Llangefni and the Indian Restaurant in Machynlleth, whilst being (seemingly) independently and locally run and owned, offer a rather generic service and little personal customer interaction or individuality. Ritzer’s theory here is therefore used primarily as a tool, to provide us with an observational overview of how globalized both market towns have become by the economic forces of ‘globalization’; observations that happened to be backed up by the interview data. We leave it for the following chapters to address and assess the more complex affects of globalization and how engaged the people of Llangefni and Machynlleth are as both local and global citizens.

Conclusion

Ritzer’s theory of ‘globalization’ can then be successfully applied to both market towns and used as *a* visual tool to assess how economic globalization is affecting locations. It would appear therefore, that Llangefni is becoming homogenized and ‘nothing’ full and Machynlleth is hybridized and is still ‘something’ full. The interviews revealed that the places which were meaningful to people fitted into Ritzer’s category of ‘something’ (unique, locally run, personalized service, selling local produce), attached to which were strong notions of individuality, identity and belonging, and the loss of unique shops was perceived as being detrimental to the ‘identity’ of towns, the identity of the townspeople and to notions of belonging. Generic shops were seen to be turning locations into ‘non-places’, devoid of individuality and meaning. The term ‘globalization’ does therefore appear to be a complementary descriptive tool to use alongside Robertson’s ‘glocalization’, the former to describe the aggressive marketing techniques of global capitalism and the latter to emphasise the fact that an interplay between the local and the global takes place, which make the effects of globalization on places and people uneven, as people and places respond to and are affected by the forces of globalization differently.

In Llangefni it appears as though Ritzer is right that “the local is being progressively adulterated by the global” (Ritzer 2004: 110), whilst in Machynlleth, Robertson’s

perspective that, “not only is variety continuously produced and reproduced in the contemporary world, that variety is *largely an aspect of the very dynamics which a considerable number of commentators interpret as homogenization*” (Robertson 1995: 28) appears relevant here. The questions that arise from this data are:

- Why has globalization affected these two towns so very differently?
- What roles have local people and businesses played in how the towns have developed?
- Will it be that some market towns succeed through reinventing themselves whilst other will be absorbed into a homogenous mass?
- Can the ‘local’ hold out against the expansionistic nature of the global?

These are questions that the subsequent chapters set out to address.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVES OF THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL: RESPONDENTS' VIEWS OF THE MEANING OF PLACE

This chapter sets out to discover and explore people's relationship with the 'local' and the 'global'. The structure of the chapter is reflective of the naturalistic flow of the interviews, that allowed the interviewees to focus on the issues that are important to them, allowing them to take us on a journey of understanding about how people in Llangefni and Machynlleth see and feel about their towns and to learn about their issues and concerns. The importance of and purpose of place will be explored in relation to how the changing functions of both market towns have impacted upon the lives of their inhabitants and on their perceptions of place.

Local perspectives

It is significant that the local perspectives of place contrasted starkly between both market towns at the onset and the interview narratives provide a revealing insight into people's feelings about the places they inhabit, run businesses from and work in and into the perceptions people have of the positive and negative issues that are currently facing both market towns and the lives of their inhabitants. When interviewing in both towns, whether with citizens, local businesses, or key informants, interviewees were asked to describe the town; what they liked about the town, what they did not like, what changes had taken place and how they felt about these changes, so as to allow people's own agendas and priorities about their local life-worlds to come to the fore.

In Llangefni, the changes that people identified as having occurred in the town were associated directly with what people felt they did not like about the town today. The problems facing the town and the issues and concerns associated with these changes and felt by the people who lived and worked there, naturally therefore structured people's narratives about the town, a journey that consequently focused on the negative elements firstly, before moving on to people's descriptions of what they liked about the town.

In Machynlleth meanwhile, interviewees identified very few changes to have taken place in the town and some of the changes that were identified were closely associated with the many aspects of the town that people reported liking. The narratives were thus structured conversely, from the positive to the negative. Consequently the directions of the narratives from both the towns are reflected in the reporting of the results so as to frame the information in the way that best reflects how people prioritized events and situations and their perceptions of the towns today.

Attitudes and Perceptions in Llangefni

One of the first points of reference that most interviewees referred to in Llangefni was the closure of the livestock market in December 1997, this being seen as the one main social change to have taken place within the town, perceived as having had a devastating effect on the town's economy and community and as the catalyst for all other changes and ills to have afflicted the town. The town was repeatedly described as being previously 'bustling', 'lively' and 'thriving' prior to the farmer's market closing, after which it is seen as having deteriorated significantly:

The cattle market being removed from the town "killed the town". The farmers and their family used to come in together. It used to be busy on a Wednesday and sometimes a Thursday – the market used to be held on two days a week. (Ceinwen).

The cattle market was the hub of Anglesey, the problems started when that closed (Harri).

When the cattle market was going it was a busy town, when that stopped, you could tell that businesses were suffering. Wives used to go shopping – and when they stopped it had a knock-on effect on all the other businesses (Siôn).

The town deteriorated after the cattle market went – farmers from other counties used to come here and so it was bustling and tourists used to flock here too (Jeanie).

The nostalgic tones of the narratives accompanied almost every interview conducted in Llangefni, as if people were trying to impress upon me how different and 'colourful' the town once was, but they seemed also to be remembering how good they felt the town used to be for themselves, making it quite difficult at times to steer respondents away from their reminiscences and into other areas of inquiry, preferring instead to

recall the shops, personalities and activities that used to exist in the town. Their appraisals of the town as it stands today were in sharp contrast to the narratives of how they perceived the town to have been:

When you look at it as a visitor, it's visually depressing, It's glum, it's got more that it's fair share of booze shops and bookies and boarded up shops" (Geoff).

When asked specifically 'what do you like about the town?' the answers were invariably negative:

It's not really accurate to say we like anything about the town because we come in through our door, shut our door and there we are (Geoff).

There is nothing good about the town (Ceinwen).

It's a decaying town (Hughes).

The economic consequences brought about by the closure of the livestock market were compounded further in the eyes of the business owners by the expansion of the A55 dual carriageway from Bangor to Holyhead, providing a quick and easy route not only to the mainland towns and cities such as Bangor and Llandudno, but also to shopping destinations further afield, such as Chester, Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire Oaks, which served to worsen Llangefni's economic down-turn by reducing still further the amount of visitors to the town.

The most passionate responses by far however, were directed at the Ynys Môn Council, Llangefni being its administrative base, and which was perceived in most people's eyes to have successively mismanaged the town and failed to listen or act upon the issues and concerns of the local people and businesses. They referred to the Council in derogatory terms such as:

Get nothing from the Council. The Council don't try (Rhys)

The Council are hopeless (Harri)

The Council used to be proud to be councillors, but now they only look after themselves – they are all corrupt (Mike)

With allegations of corruption and tokenism being vented frequently by interviewees over planning decisions and regulations, confidence in the Council is clearly low. For example, disillusionment is felt by the town's people after they successfully persuaded the Council to rebuild the Town Hall at great expense a number of years ago after it was destroyed in a fire, but which now stands largely unused (except to hold the occasional Council meeting) and decaying. The reconstructed Town Hall was envisaged by local people to become a community venue to benefit the town, either for holding community events and activities or as the venue for the establishment of Oriel Ynys Môn, art gallery and heritage centre. The latter was instead built about 17 years ago on the outskirts of the town, and although valued by local people, the decision to build it out of town remains a contentious issue. The wasted iconic public space that the Town Hall is seen to be has reinforced people's perception of the mismanagement of public funds and a waste of possibilities, as Geoff articulates:

I don't know quite who it is or what it is that I least like, but it's something to do with the Council and Planning. This is very amorphous, I can't pin it, but it's something to do with a lack of positive attitude (perhaps not positive, perhaps that's just what I want), towards the structure of the town and such as and the development of the town and the ambience, the infrastructure, all the things that could be put together greater than the sum of the parts that could make the town work. The easiest way of me to say it is if you took towns like Hay-on-Wye and Beddgelert and look at what they have made of themselves very simply, it would be good to see Llangefni do something like that (Geoff).

The lack of confidence in the Council stems back in part to when Ynys Môn Council was a Borough Council in 1994, when corruption allegations were made against the Council's Planning Department and certain Councillors were allegedly embezzling money through having direct links to the beneficiaries of planning decisions; corruption that went all the way to the Director of Housing, a scandal locally dubbed 'Angleseygate' (Hansard February 14 Feb. 1994). The subsequent re-organisation of the County Councils in 1995/6 converted Ynys Môn Borough Council into a County Council. This was initially supported by some local residents who felt that previously money had flowed away from Ynys Môn to the then County administrative base in Caernarfon to the benefit of the Gwynedd region and to the detriment of Ynys Môn. However the re-organisation of the Councils giving Ynys Môn Council autonomy over

the island has not been felt to be a successful move as one informant commented when referring to this:

The Council have been rubbish; they are not turned on to what shoppers want (Rhys).

Coupled with this is what is seen as a lack of support for local business through the Council's policy of charging what are felt to be very high Council Tax rates, whilst encouraging large corporate retail outlets to establish themselves in the town as well as granting permission for four competing supermarkets to be built in the town (in addition to this there is currently an Aldi being built in the town and there is a rumour of another major supermarket being interested in building a store there as well). Practical issues such as parking and the management of the road traffic system are also seen as problems that the Council have not dealt with adequately. These policies and certain planning issues have for many worsened the town's economy, forcing many independent shops to close, and creating an influx of charity shops to the town (which unusually also have to pay a discounted rate of Council Tax, a tax usually forfeited for charities). The economic and planning policies of the Council have moreover resulted in the town's people and businesses feeling unsupported and uninvolved like passive bystanders.

The town is widely seen as in crisis, described in a recent BBC article about possible plans to build a cinema and community facilities in Llangefni on its large industrial estate, as being a needed "boost for Llangefni which is *dying on its feet*, it would create new jobs and also provide capital receipts for the Council which could be used for a new semi-orbital road" [my italics] (Chairman of St Malo, Gwylim Pritchard Jones BBC News 2 April 2008). The news came on the same day that 60 jobs are to be lost in the town after the imminent closure of the Peboc chemical plant whose plans are to relocate elsewhere (Hughes 2 April 2008, Daily Post).

The general reasons given about what the majority of people felt they least liked about the town, or for some, the reasons why they did not like the town at all were numerous, but also typical of run-down areas that have both social and economic problems, which was reflected in people's comments about the '*visually depressing*' appearance, the empty shops, the charity shops, litter, dog fouling and the general untidiness of the town.

Vandalism, burglaries, unemployment and the town's Objective 1 categorized disadvantaged Tudur ward were all frequently mentioned issues. Drugs featured highly on the list of what people said they did not like about the town, a problem that has persisted for many years there now, described by one interviewee as; "Llangefni is one of the worst places for drugs" (Mike), the town having gained a reputation at one time as being the 'drug central of Anglesey' (Mike), though the problem is perceived to be better than it once was following the arrests of a number of major drugs dealers in the town. It was also frequently commented that it was probably no worse than anywhere else, an example of a couple of comments are: "druggies – but they are in every town" (Deborah) and "drugs; its global" (Ieuan), revealing both an acknowledgement of and resignation to the perceived normality of this type of problem as it is viewed as not being specific to the local, existing instead within a wider global context.

The problems of drunken disorderliness in the streets, especially on Friday and Saturday nights, gangs of youths hanging around the town clock or the Spar and general 'yobbish' behaviour have made many, especially the elderly, feel too vulnerable to venture into the town on their own at night. Viewed as a result of boredom and bad parenting, it is seen as emblematic of general moral and social decline of common social values.

Alcohol on the streets, I mean kids I think have always drunk alcohol, I did it, kids do it, but that seems to have become more visible. They were on the streets creating quite (I suppose) a nuisance, so they put a banning order on alcohol on the streets, so they moved up to the school field, if you walk the dog you see them all the time, you'll say hello to them, but they'll be sitting in their den drinking and smashing bottles - you didn't see that when you first came here (Kate).

This fear was reinforced to me at the onset of interviewing, when I was warned by two key informants not to be on my own in the town at night. The story told by one informant (though perhaps not a typical incident), provides a good illustration of both the dangers and the familiar localness that exist within the town:

We were walking the dog about a fortnight ago, up town about twenty to ten in the evening, my husband and I, and this thing just shot past my head...and we both looked at each other and looked across the road and there was a male dressed in black on the top of a bay window roof with a gun - in Llangefni - pointing this gun, and you don't take it in because its Llangefni, so we just looked at him, we didn't move ... and he didn't rush

off he carried on pointing the gun.. We came home and I phoned the Police because I was worried that he was going to shoot somebody else .. and in the meantime there was other reports of shootings and he had shot a taxi and it had dented the Taxi, so I was very lucky...and this is Llangefni, so yes it has changed, and yet its retained its smallness in the sense that everyone knew about this because it's a small place and people stopping you in the street the next day saying 'are you ok?', and in a small sense the story had gone round that it was my husband who had shot me in the house ... which was quite funny (Kate).

The lack of visible Police presence reinforces people's feelings of vulnerability, and seemingly highlights how disconnected people feel the Police have become from the 'community' and is symbolic of how isolated people's life worlds are becoming from one another. This is particularly evident in the quote below that the Police are dislocated from the community by marooning themselves within their cars, within their symbolic structures and apparatus of power rather than interacting and developing relationships with and becoming familiar to local people.

Policing-wise, I don't think the service that they give now is as good as it was when I was in the job, when I came to Holyhead, there were 25 police stations on Anglesey and there are only five left, so they closed twenty, I would accept that some of those stations should have closed, but not twenty, so where have the Policemen who were in those stations gone? (Dilwyn).

The Police don't walk the streets to be in contact with the residents (Rhys)

There are no Police walking the streets, there is only one Community worker, before you used to know them well, now you don't know any of them and they only go out in a car – they are dislocated from the community (Dylan and Ieuan).

According to informants, the town has grown considerably since extending the A55 dual carriageway from Bangor to Holyhead that runs close to the town and has relatively recently become a commuter town, resulting in many people who live in the town not being visible within a community within the town and who are not regular users of the town's facilities. The town has also become a commuter town for people travelling into work, either to the industrial estate or to work for the Local Authority, the Council being the town's main employer.

There has been an awful lot of building going on, housing estates, and this is in the last few years, when we came to live here in 1984, this was a very

small site (housing estate)...., since then this estate has grown massively and has joined on to another estate and over the last few years Watkin Jones [a local building firm] sites are proliferating everywhere and the old hospital has been knocked down and they have built housing on there And on the other side of Llangefni behind the Pencraig housing estate, they are house building there now, £225,000 houses....and somebody told me the other day that no one has even been to look at them, I mean where are people going to get money like that from here?....So houses are sprouting up everywhere here and that's in the last few years, so you have all these people moving in. Many local people couldn't afford these houses, so there are lots of people moving in, lots of new faces, so that is changing... But where are all these people working, there is no work in Llangefni, or no extra work (Kate).

The expansion and subsequent influx of new people into the town has for many, particularly people in their forties and older who were brought up in the town or who have lived in Llangefni for many years, undermined the traditional community network within the town, turning what was seen as being a familiar place with familiar people into a less familiar place.

There was a time when you could come in to Llangefni and stop anyone in Llangefni and ask where such and such lives or for directions, but not so today, there are too many new people there. I go down town now and I know nobody, where as years ago you'd know everybody (Sandra).

(Such comments, whilst valid, should perhaps be treated with caution as it may be a consequence of getting older that people lose touch with younger people around them).

However, one informant provides us with perhaps a more rounded synopsis of what the people in Llangefni feel about their town today, where he paints a rather despairing picture of a town whose potential is wasted, that has become a not particularly nice place to live or work in, as was reflected in the interviews. But he also describes the pride that also exists within people in relation to community and identity. Sentiments that though less commonly reported are, as important to acknowledge as the more prevalent negative perspectives as they provide us with a more complete understanding of the social dynamics and perspectives that exist at different levels within the town.

I would say that on the whole there are some attitudes towards Llangefni that there is nothing, even though it is the hub of administration, that still it needs a lot of development for it to become a nice town, it's not a very nice place. At the same time you know, you have the Dingle that people are very

proud of, and people are very proud of their heritage and what they do here and want to look after each other as well (Dafydd).

The interview narratives reflect Dafydd's observations and reveal different levels of 'community' involvement; those who were very active in community activities or very submerged within a local community seemed to reveal a deeper appreciation of people and place that, despite its obvious problems, offer friendship, convenience and familiarity. As was evident when speaking to a couple of young women in a local pub, one of whom worked as a bar-maid there, it was clear that they were both familiar to and familiar with the other punters and were part of a social network and liked the town:

It's a good town – you don't have to travel, there are pubs (Deborah).

Everyone's nice (Cloe).

There's a good market – its lovely when the weather is nice (Deborah).

People are friendly (Cloe).

It has to be noted however, that when people talked about what they liked about the town, they did so, whilst often making reference to various concerns. As did one lady who is very active and visible within the community and who participated in a number of social activities: Meinir spoke with great fondness of the town and was keen to impart its positive features, revealing her level of social involvement, but was all too aware of some of the social problems that exist in and are associated with Llangefni:

I have been here now for 44 years ... The people in Llangefni are exceptionally friendly and lots of people meet in the street and have a little chat, so there's more community going on than smaller villages I have found out (I've lived in a smaller village). There are lots to do in the evening as well, though children can't afford it...We have an exceptional gentleman who cleans our roads. Have you noticed how clean Llangefni is? As for the druggies, you never see them (Meinir).

Similarly the pride in identity and place that Dafydd had observed was also evident in another active community member's account, whose description also contained evidence of the retention of tradition, identity and purpose in it being still a 'market

town', but which also charts the social changes that are occurring within the town as well:

It's central for the Island, nowhere's far if you want to go for a ride or a shopping trip or whatever. The Welshness of the town as well, I think there are over 80% of Welsh speakers in Llangefni and there is a good community spirit here, not so much on this estate, but where I used to live before, there were older people there and they would socialize more with you, people are working more here and are younger than where I used to live before. It's a very busy town, especially on a Thursday and a Saturday, people still come over from all over the island, you will always see someone you know who is not from Llangefni (Cllr Rhian).

One part of the town that people frequently said they liked and were seemingly proud of was a wooden-slatted walk-way through a local beauty spot called the Dingle, which weaves its way through trees that run alongside the river Cefni. The walk-way was re-developed by a local charitable company called Cwmni Tref Llangefni, established by a group of local people. However, for many, this proved to be the only part of the town they liked, as one interviewee commented when asked what they liked about the town:

It has the Dingle which is a nice place to walk, but I would have to stop there (Glyn).

But even such a beauty spot as the Dingle for some has been tarnished by recent social changes, as was revealed after speaking to a couple of retired ladies who remembered what the Dingle used to be like:

The Dingle beauty spot – but it's an abused location, people go down there to drink and do drugs and there is litter left (Mrs Thomas).

Yes, I used to feel safe in Llangefni and in the Dingle, I remember it being a location for innocent courtship in my day (Mrs Evans).

Most other comments that people made about what they liked about the town illustrated some of the benefits felt about living in Llangefni that seemed also to incorporate the changing use of the town and changing lifestyles:

It's comfortable, you can get most things here, except clothes (Angharad).

Dafydd: It is becoming quite self-contained, people can stay in Llangefni and get anything they want, there are some really nice cafes popped up, people do like to meet in there and there are at least three supermarkets I know of, so they are alright on that side of things, the new Asda has moved in.

I: How has that gone down?

Dafydd: I think it has gone down well actually, as far as I know, they're quite welcome to having more choice locally and they want it to be a thriving town, we've still got the traditional market, which is quite well attended, I think it's quite a strong market.

Local perspectives of Llangefni are therefore complicated, with a great deal of loyalty and reminiscing of a prosperous and idyllic past, which stands in sharp contrast to the reality people feel about the town today. Residents and business people associated the decline very strongly to the closure of the cattle market and Anglesey County Council's mismanagement of the town.

Attitudes and Perceptions in Machynlleth

The picture people painted of Machynlleth meanwhile was very different. Adjectives such as vibrant, friendly, safe, and colourful, occurred repeatedly in people's narratives, which described the town positively and affectionately. The reasons why people liked the town so much was illustrated clearly in the descriptions they gave, which encompassed issues of quality of lifestyle such as the availability of social activities, community involvement and connectivity.

Many interviews described Machynlleth as having a 'cosmopolitan' atmosphere. Businesses have been built up around tourism activities, such as mountain biking, with the town hosting a mountain biker's bunk-house and bike and repair shop, increasing further the town's social diversity. On the back of this the town has generated a wider reputation as being a cosmopolitan location for environmentally like-minded people that is situated in a rural and beautiful part of Wales, encouraging others to move to the area as a life-style choice. For example a number of interviewees said that they had moved to Machynlleth after hearing about its reputation, because they wanted to leave cities for a better quality of life in rural Machynlleth and sacrificed (at least for now) their careers and well-paid jobs (most had degrees and many also had postgraduate qualifications), to do voluntary work, work as gardeners or in cafes etc, feeling that the

ethics prevalent in the town, (environmental, vegetarian, fair-trade and 'buy local, think global') make the place a haven of tranquillity and camaraderie for people who are concerned about these issues and who want to live within a like-minded community and have a calmer pace of life.

I'd heard that Mach had quite a nice energy and vibe and I felt that Lampeter was losing it a little bit. I'd gone down quite an intellectual line, but now I am just gardening and doing stuff with my hands... people have said that 'oh you're wasting a good brain', it's like, well you could look at it like that, or you could look at it that I am learning about another part of myself (Bea).

We both wanted to get out of the city and make a new start and so we moved here (Christina).

Unlike Llangefni, Machynlleth still has a livestock market, held in the town. It is situated close to the town centre, but in an out-of-the-way location which is not visible or audible from the main thoroughfares of the town, making this part of the town's market identity un-referred to within the interview descriptions and profiling of the town and clearly was not a focus of attention, at least for those who were interviewed. The farming community however were referred to within the context of describing the cosmopolitan nature of the town:

We have a good mixture of people here because you have the farming community, the alternative technology centre who bring in a lot of students. I don't know, I think the shops are so different as well. There are people who come up from Aberystwyth, who come up here to do their Christmas shopping because the shops are so different and there so many nice things there. I think it's colourful, certainly some of the buildings are very colourful up the main street there. I think the Technology Centre bringing the people here who actually stay and open up businesses, I think that is really, really nice (Sheila).

The town's social diversity has generated an array of social activities from walking groups, theatre groups, music groups, opera evenings, alternative therapy sessions etc giving the town what many referred to as a vibrant atmosphere:

For a small Welsh town it's very vibrant..... It's the best experience I have really had of living in a small town, I have lived in a village, I have lived in the countryside and I have lived in cities, but it's the first kind of small town and have met so many friendly people, but also there is quite a lot happening

really, you can do something every night, either go out and do something or hang out with your friends, there is no reason to be bored, there is always something going on (Nat).

The fact that the town still has its independent shops symbolises for its residents, business owners and community workers, the town's independence enabling it to maintain its identity as a unique and historic location, through remaining relatively unbranded in comparison to other towns. This was a very important reason given by interviewees for what they most liked about the town; people seemingly taking great pride and pleasure in the town not being generic but colourful, unique and different:

I think it's beautiful, that's very inspiring, because people have painted the buildings it's a really pretty town and it's old and the colours of the houses are lovely and people do care (Shirley).

People like Mach I think really, people travel here on day trips to visit the shops and the café and things you know, some people seem quite envious sometimes when you say you live here (Lauren).

At the same time, linked by interviewees to the fact that the town is not very large, there is still a high degree of social familiarity retained between the town's residents which, from their perspectives, support their feelings of safety, familiarity and the perception of the town being a friendly place to live:

What I like about the town is that it always seems safe, I've got four children and it's a very safe environment to bring them up, there is very little crime, the worst thing is that a couple of lads might throw a drunken fist at each other on a Saturday night, but other than that it is a very safe environment to live and bring children up (Daniel).

The fact that the town is bilingual was also mentioned as a positive feature of Machynlleth, mentioned a number of times by some of the Welsh speaking respondents (as opposed to Llangefni, where the emphasis was on Welsh being spoken as a *first* language). Other reasons given of what people liked most about the town were linked to life-style issues, such as a stress-free lifestyle, close community, practical issues such as good schools and the location of the town such as being in a rural location, but within easy reach of other places particularly by rail.

Its quite a homely town, a close community. It needs more for young people to do. Apart from that it's a lovely little town (Dawn).

Nice area to live in, in easy reach of many places, railway station, though you need a car (Susan).

So positive were people's opinions of Machynlleth that when asking interviewees what they least liked about the town, very few people could think of anything, which again stands in stark contrast to the interview results from Llangefni:

There's nothing I don't like about it (Susan).

I can't say there's anything, I love this area, I have travelled the world and I love this area, I was brought up in Cemmaes seven miles away and I just love Machynlleth, I will never leave, I will always have a house here, if I want to travel again later on I will always have a house here in Machynlleth (Sheila).

And when people could identify an aspect of the town that they least liked, it was often functional, referring to recreational facilities;

The dislikes about the town would possibly be facilities, you know, sometimes the kids think 'oh why can't we go bowling or why can't we go to the multi screen cinema, but I say to the kids you know, when I was being brought up round here we used to go and climb a mountain, find a stream or play in the river and make you own fun, but possibly in the days of Play-Station and computer games, mountains and streams don't seem to hold it any more (Daniel)

One interviewee expressed a wish for the town to have a late alcohol-free gathering place with a family-friendly environment that could also be a music venue, another interviewee explained that the very things that she likes most about the town (rural, small, close community and uniqueness), are also the drawbacks of living in Machynlleth:

Sometimes it's a bit restrictive of what you can do maybe the night life isn't quite what it could be ... I like to go and see bands and thing and you have to travel to Wolverhampton or Birmingham..., but that's about it – there's no Marks and Spencer's (Lauren).

The comment about there being, “no Marks and Spencer’s” perhaps reveals people’s contradictory relationship with their idea of living in a rural idyll, with independent shops and the opposite attraction that some of the global branded outlets offer.

Others mentioned practical issues such as the Co-op supermarket being too expensive in comparison to supermarkets such as Morrisons or Tesco, not offering enough choice and its entrance being located in an impractical place, whilst others mentioned not dissimilar concerns to some of those that were expressed in Llangefni about community venues not being used to their potential:

Community centre is not being used to its potential and it’s not community centred and could be better used I think (Fiona).

One of the significant differences in people’s responses between the two towns was that in Machynlleth very few people could identify the town as having changed in any significant way, though one lady described how the weekly street market had grown significantly since the 1960s where she remembered there had been only two market stalls; a fish stall and a fruit stall. Machynlleth bucks the current trend of the decline of the traditional markets, and also is perhaps following a new trend for ‘gourmet’ markets, aimed at the more affluent few (Gould 2008). For many people, the only changes that they could identify were shops changing hands, the variety of independent shops diminishing, and the observation of a change in consumer culture of shopping for groceries in supermarkets, where everything is under one roof, rather than in separate independent shops, and that consequently the majority of the town’s grocery shops had been replaced with gift shops, the Co-op supermarket now providing the town with its main grocery shopping outlet:

I can’t think how it’s changed (Carla).

Umm....change is a difficult one umm, change or got better... when I was growing up I can remember there used to be a fruit shop, there used to be a bakers, a butchers, there used to be a toy shop a sweet shop, you would go to a shop and you would buy a particular thing, while now you pop to the supermarkets, when I was growing up there was two newsagents, whilst now there is only one struggling against the supermarkets, that the sort of thing that’s changed possibly for the worst, that your little independent shops have gone, but saying that you still haven’t got your chain stores in the town which is nice, it’s very unique in that sense that you don’t see a

Woolworths or a Smiths or a Boots, so change is a difficult thing to put your finger on. There is certainly more people in the town, there are more houses and more people living here, the football team isn't as good as it was twenty years ago, ha,ha,ha, so that's changed (Daniel).

Not in any great way, I mean shops and things they tend to come and go, but no it hasn't changed at all, it hasn't changed for as long as I can remember no (Sheila).

Some mentioned the fact that the town had grown in recent years and had become busier with the in-migration of people from England (or those who are at least perceived as being 'English').

The variety of shops has diminished – the Co-op and Spar have replaced independent shops such as grocery shops. Town itself hasn't changed, but the shops have. More English have moved into the area – no opinion about that (Carol).

Not really. A few more business have come to town and....I haven't seen much change really. More new people are coming into the town (Dawn).

During the interviews people would usually have to be asked specifically if the town had any problems, as they didn't necessarily emerge when people discussed what they liked least liked about the town, as was the case with the Llangefni interviews. The problems that Machynlleth was identified as having were addressed by interviewees as local concerns and important issues, but not as reasons for disliking the town. There also existed a degree of loyalty from respondents at times in not wanting to reveal negative aspects of the town:

There is I would say (I don't know what to say, I won't to get myself in to trouble ha, ha, ha), there is a high incidence of drug taking in the town, soft drugs fine, but there is an element of hard drugs coming into the town, and there is from the youth I would say, a drink problem, but that's because of the line of work I'm in and you see it... and also there's a problem of there's not enough policing in the town. You could be here of an evening and the main street is like a dragster course ... with cars and motorbikes with no control over it and that is a huge thing.... I think that is the problem in most small towns that you have to wait for something drastic to happen for something to be done about it. Boy racers have been a problem for years, but maybe it has only just started to get to somewhere like us, because we are rural (Daniel).

Many of the concerns and issues that interviewees spoke of in Machynlleth were similar to those expressed in Llangefni, and were similarly viewed as being representative of problems experienced everywhere, with people often commenting that, for example, young people drinking, taking drugs, being intimidating by hanging around in gangs (invariably outside the Spar shops in the towns) as being “no worse than anywhere else”, the difference in Machynlleth compared to Llangefni was that these issues were viewed as being comparatively not as prevalent or as much of a problem as they exist in most other places.

Similarly vandalism was identified as a relatively new problem that was being experienced in the town, as one interviewee remarked; “we have vandalism now which we never had once”. Some recent examples are the children’s skating shelter, an eco-friendly construction built by young volunteers in conjunction with the C.A.T. was burnt down shortly after construction, as was the town’s Rugby Club in 2006 (though these events were mentioned as symptomatic of the increased vandalism in the town and clearly annoyed and upset people, they were not so significant that they defined the town). The incidents of vandalism and general behavioural concerns associated with drinking and drug taking were seen as primarily being a problem of the young as a result of general boredom, economic disaffection and bad parenting - as was the general perspective of these issues in Llangefni.

There did however, exist a parallel narrative of issues and concerns within the town, which were often hidden beneath an external social veneer of social cohesion. Issues of language, ethnicity and belonging were clearly a concern for some members of the Welsh speaking community who were feeling that their language and culture was being threatened by the amount of English speaking people moving into the town making Machynlleth a less familiar place to them than it perhaps once was, but simultaneously, the benefits that the incomers brought to the town, particularly those associated with the Centre for Alternative Technology, was acknowledged by everyone who expressed these concerns:

We are getting a lot more strangers into the town and probably the Welsher side of it can’t accept it, whilst others can. Whereas you knew everyone before you know, you don’t know them now...A lot are very wary of these people from the Centre of Alternative Technology, which has been good for

the town in lots of ways, but the older generation feel that they're coming to take over. They've done a lot of good for the town (Sandy).

There has been a lot of history behind the wariness the Welsh speaking and indigenous inhabitants of the town have felt towards the English incomers. When the C.A.T. was established in nearby Corris in the 1970s it was associated with 'hippies on the hill', connected to whom, as one informant explained, were local stories based on fear and mistrust, such as "hippies dancing naked around a camp fire" (Sarah). But behind the rumours are more legitimate historic issues of resentment, for example; the fact that it has taken until relatively recently for the C.A.T. to think of developing a bilingual policy, as was explained during an interview with a C.A.T. employee in 2005, and of stories such as one told during an interview with a local business owner, of a C.A.T. manager reportedly telling local Welsh-speaking employees not to speak Welsh at work in the Centre's Quarry Café in the town. This had negative reverberations within the local indigenous community, Welsh and non-Welsh speaking alike. Efforts are being made to address these issues and bridge the social divides, particularly by the local economic and community development agency, Eco-Dyfi, but as one interviewee explained, wounds take time to heal:

There has been a thing with the local people and people moving in and you hear horror stories with CAT and the Welsh language and things like that take a long time to heal you know (Tudor).

Whilst the lack of communication between, for example, the local agricultural community and C.A.T. is still viewed by some as needing to be improved further, the arrival of the C.A.T. to the area some 35 years ago is, nevertheless, valued for having created a cosmopolitan atmosphere in the town, bringing in new ideas, the marriage of the old and new being widely viewed as a good thing.

From some of the English incomers into the town there was a high level of global awareness and a global perspective and analysis of the Welsh / English social divide that exists at one level of the local community, linked closely to economic disadvantage, and to employment competition:

Having lived in the east end of London where it was wildly multicultural and we were all best of neighbours, but here it's not like that at all. I think

the difference is that here it's economically depressed. Since I've been here the Fog Factory's gone that used to employ lots of people, I think partly because the clothing industry depends on huge files, so they needed patterns, big patterns quickly, so that they knock-up different clothes according to the patterns and there wasn't Broad Band in the county. So this is going back three or four years maybe, so partly because they couldn't get their, you know they were clobbered by that as a business, but also because the clothing business has all gone off to the Philippines anyway hasn't it, so that went and now there's another agency is closing and that's being moved to Aberystwyth and last year Celtica closed, so economically I think the town does have a lot of difficulties... There is any number of jobs making beds in the hotels or working in a canteen or whatever for very little money, and at some point whether you speak Welsh or not kicks in, so that is a filter as to which jobs you can and can not do... (Shirley).

The closing of Celtica shortly after starting this research, with the loss of seventeen jobs in the town, was described by one informant as being a 'very significant' blow to such a small town, which was soon to be worsened by the relocation of the Welsh European Funding Office of the Welsh Assembly, to nearby Aberystwyth.

The Purpose of Place

As we have seen, the perspectives people have of the two towns are very different, with narratives from Llangefni being largely negative, whilst the narratives of Machynlleth were very positive. The quality of life in these two locations is experienced and perceived very differently. However there were also many similarities with the concerns and problems experienced within both towns, associated largely with cultural, demographic and economic changes. Both towns are similarly situated in rural areas, acting historically as central location points in which social and economic activities take place to serve the needs of the inhabitants of not only the towns, but also those of their rural hinterlands. Market towns have developed, as practical locations for the provision of social needs and as the pivotal points at which people meet, trade is made, goods are bought and social services are provided.

The identity of the towns as market towns was very significant to people's perception of place in every interview conducted, whereas the differences arose in people's focus on present and past identities and the projected meanings that people placed on the locations in which they lived or worked. In Llangefni, the focus of the narratives were more often than not retrospective in their structure, describing the purpose that the town

had fulfilled rather than describing the purpose the town fulfils today. Whilst in Machynlleth, people described the town in its present state, describing its current functions and purpose within their narratives. An important point to emphasis here is that, even though both towns have street markets, Llangefni's market being held twice a week, Machynlleth's once a week, Machynlleth's was viewed as a market town because of the street market, the livestock market in Machynlleth was only ever mentioned by a local butcher and did not appear to be significant in the interviewees' perceptions of the purpose of the town. In Llangefni meanwhile, the loss of the livestock market was seen and experienced by many as detrimental to the town's purpose of place. There is no doubt that the twice weekly visit of the street market to Llangefni is seen as vital to the survival of many of the local businesses and to the town's social dynamic; its identity as a market town however, was clearly felt to have been undermined significantly.

Purpose of place: Llangefni

When people referred to the town as being a 'market town', more often than not they were referring to its past identity as a livestock market town, its present purpose being understood as being the "administrative hub of Anglesey". This identity is seemingly of secondary importance to its former identity and purpose, as is evident in the description provided by one key informant:

Llangefni is a market town, the importance of the cattle market and Bob Parry [livestock auctioneer] in the town over the years has been fundamental..... The market has been fundamentally important to Llangefni. Today it is the acknowledged administrative centre for the island, unfortunately the cattle market is gone (Cllr Roberts).

Likewise many of the business people spoke of what the town used to be like and how successful local businesses were and despite there being a new potential market for local businesses in the town, in the form of Council employees, this market seems largely untapped, except more recently by the redevelopment of the Bull Hotel, making it the prime social location for Council office workers. The two interview extracts below illustrate how the purpose of Llangefni has changed but its former identity remains strong in people's contextualising of how the town operates today and reveal the tenuous dependency of businesses upon the street market. The first extract came

from an interview conducted with a shop owner who had recently closed her business in Llangefni due to lack of trade and had down-graded to running her remaining shop in Bangor:

When the cattle market went, that was the start of it, we lost a lot of business once that stopped being there, farmers wives didn't come in on a Wednesday, they started coming in on different days..... At one time there were three of us working in the shop and it was very busy, we were steady all day, but after a while, after the market had gone, Thursdays and Saturdays were then our busy days.. because of the street market then [and now] you might as well close by two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon (Ffion).

Everything went down hill when the cattle market closed. It took away all the custom. People used to come in with their stock to sell or buy and wives used to come to town to do their shopping. There were much more shops then. You must appreciate that there were some beautiful little independent shops, ladies outfitters, shoe shops, there were three or four menswear, which now there's none, except me of course, there were names that just disappeared (Fred).

The crises of identity and purpose of Llangefni nowadays was articulated in an interview with a local Council worker which illustrated the problems facing many market towns today; struggling to meet people's needs and not becoming redundant as social and economic centres and just becoming a commuter belt location for work and housing. The significance of the town now being the administrative centre for Ynys Môn, seems to be of little importance for the people who live or run businesses in the town, as it appears to have very little impact on their lives, as the majority of people working for the Council commute in to work from elsewhere, the Local Authority not being a major employer of the town's people.

Dennis: It struggled then, because I think it grew up really, grew around that market to a certain extent, and so it's like a lot of market towns and so on, they haven't got a purpose as such, you know, their role has diminished in a way in the sense of shopping really. People go to, not just to Bangor, but will go to Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, Llandudno to do their shopping, and so the shops in town, there's very few, whereas you'd used to have quite a number of sort-of clothes shops, there are very few of those now (Dennis).

I: So it doesn't really meet people's needs then?

Dennis: Well I think so it's in a bit of a limbo in a way, OK you've got a large number of people who come to Llangefni to work on the industrial

estate here or in the County Council offices, The industrial estate here isn't particularly well connected to the town centre really, you know if you want to walk there, it's not particularly easy to do it. By the time you've walked there it's time for you to walk back again

For the Council, the building of the new Asda store on the location where the old livestock market used to be situated, will be an enticing feature in the town and the extra facilities provided, such as a two hour free-parking car-park and the development of a walk-way linking the supermarket with the town centre, to encourage shoppers into the town itself and so further benefit the local economy. The responsibility is then seen to be on local business to respond to the increase in potential customers by identifying and responding to gaps in the local consumer market.

What they can't find there, is a challenge then for the town then is to develop a source, or whatever you want to call it, a different kind of market produce, you know whatever they don't sell or is for sale in Asda sort of thing, and go for something that is different to what they can get there (Dennis).

This view was reiterated by another Council officer who put the onus on the independent retail businesses to evolve with the changes in the market, arguing that in the best high-street shopping centres that attract Next and other leading chain-stores, the Council Tax rates are high, arguing that it is not the high Council Tax rates for businesses in the town that is to blame for Llangefni not thriving, but rather the fault of the business owners who are not adapting to market demands. It was further argued that because the businesses are making very little profit, the owners of the premises are unable to charge high rents and some property owners are also, allegedly, not always willing to rent out their premises, causing the town to stagnate and not be an attractive location for more up-market high-street branded stores to locate themselves. The Council's prerogative clearly therefore is to develop Llangefni into a branded shopping centre, and whether the independent shops survive, depends on the business and marketing skills of the shop owners.

It seems therefore that the priorities and focus of direction that the Council has for the town is at odds with those of the town's citizens and business owners. There are however also many interviewees (business owners, citizens and key informants) who also touched upon the issue of the town's people and businesses not having come to

terms with the changes that have taken place within the town, and fundamentally, with the fact that the town is no longer a market-town in the sense that it once was. Rather than having evolved with the changes, the changes have been resisted, with a general nostalgic focus towards the past and a depressive perception of the future. Certainly this seems to be the case in point, as one interview with a local business owner touched upon when pondering the reason for the changes that she has recognised in the market:

People have got more money to spend you know, on luxuries, which is what I sell really, luxury items, than people have had in the past, they have had an awful lot of spare cash, but I don't know if it is the trends which have turned you know, towards the minimalistic look is in, or whether it's house prices going up, but people have stopped spending on themselves (Ffion).

The town, in other words has for many fallen into a depression, leading some people to perceive that a more complex relationship needs to be acknowledged between the Council and the town's people and businesses, to which blame can be apportioned in part; not only to the Council, but also to the attitudes of the town's businesses and citizens to change, as one local Councillor explained:

Significantly over the years, Llangefni has deteriorated and fundamentally people have not been able to acknowledge and come to terms with the changes, like in the population, in the way people go to work, go and do their shopping and these things.... We have to understand that the market is no longer here and the market that comes on a Thursday is a token market. (Cllr Roberts).

The responsibility for the town's evolution, needs therefore to be addressed (in some people's opinion) by the Council, local business and the citizens by acknowledging the fact that the town needs to change and will not thrive whilst people remain nostalgic about the past, a view that was expressed very frankly by Cllr Roberts, who seemed to embrace the generic high street market trends, believing them to offer people choices and, interestingly, that Llangefni's purpose should perhaps become a pretty village-type location for visitors:

Cllr Roberts: Local politicians and people who are fairly public if you like in their outlook, will come out and say 'well the shops in Llangefni are closing down', but you know, you have to recognise the fact that people nowadays want to go to the bigger stores and it's a question of choice, I say to them, you do it yourself, now then, you have to recognise that fact, don't try and

fight against it and say 'oh we need £50,000 to refurbish a shop', which is going to end up selling, you know, being used by Oxfam or somebody like that, this is madness and they have to recognise that. Llangefni has an amazing number of attributes, people need to recognise those and work on those.

I: What are the attributes then?

Cllr Roberts: The attributes are this: location, where it is, centrally quite close to the A55, in a rural area, it has a river going through it. I travel, you know, in this country, I like the Cotswolds, I go to places like Burton-on-the-Water, right, I and millions of other people, and they go there because it's peaceful, it's tranquil, yeah? You have the river going through the village, you have little bridges ... it's just basically a nice place to go where you do hardly anything.

There is then a tension between the perspectives of different members of the community, in particular between the Council and local businesses, where responsibility can be apportioned in part to both parties, the Council for not supporting local business, but also to local businesses' resistance to change and adaptation. However, as one lady explained, there is little opportunity or help for new or innovative businesses to develop in the town, as the financial risks involved are too great:

I think people are afraid of getting, um, starting a business you know, getting themselves into debt if they are going to start a business. I think there should be some sort of project or enterprise to make free rates for two years to get them set up. I have seen many a shop, even a friend of mine, she started her own business and, that year, you want the money don't you (Meinir).

Such is the pressure of the changing economic market that it is, fundamentally, in some locations, changing the purpose of place. Some businesses in the town were all too aware of the threats posed by the global economy with one business responding by de-branding their products so that customers could not source the branded goods they sell which are cheaper on the internet, the internet being seen by many businesses as posing a significant threat to their livelihoods. The large supermarkets were also regarded by some as being detrimental to their trade, as they sold goods cheaper than independent shops can afford to, as one business owner of an electrical repair shop expressed; "Asda has killed our business" (Glyn). Only a few months after interviewing him, his business had closed.

Generally the Council's strategy of bringing branded supermarkets into the town was viewed conflictingly by local people, with some hoping, "Asda will be an anchor to bring people to the town" (Angharad), whilst others viewed them as not only detrimental to local businesses but also as unbeneficial to the local economy, as the income generated would be filtered away from the local area, as one lady explained: "the money from shops like Asda doesn't stay here, take Lidl for example, the money goes off to Germany and so on" (Mrs Thomas).

The focus for Llangefni from the perspective of the Council and the many people who work in the town is that it is nowadays primarily an employment location for the administrative centre of the Local Authority and for the large Industrial Estate that was created in the 1950s and 1960s and which the Council plans to extend further in the coming years. According to figures from 2001, 2810 people commute into Llangefni to work, compared to only 730 who commute out to work (Wales Rural Observatory 2007: 109). Other than the Local Authority, most jobs in the town are low paid and most of the larger employers offer production-line jobs in meat and food processing (a sort of niche market which relates to the town's past role). Special incentives are given to entice direct inward investment into the town from major companies, but as one council officer commented "globalization has made it very difficult to attract inward investment as there aren't enough financial incentives" (Gellin). Recently the competitive global market has impacted upon many of the big employers on the industrial estate, causing the abattoir to close and the chicken factory to cut back on jobs, and as the Council officer added, "there are questions about whether they can remain based here because of competition" (Gellin), as their production costs are expensive, generate a lot of waste and use a lot of water. Thus the incentive for companies to move abroad to where production costs are lower because wages are lower, and where environmental and working regulations and animal welfare conditions are often much weaker, is enticing, enabling companies to maximise profits or even to remain profitable at the expense of their work-force, the environment and animal welfare.

The global social, economic and infrastructural changes that are taking place in Llangefni, orchestrated largely by the Council's economic and development policies and the resistance to these changes and disaffection felt by many of the town's people,

makes the purpose of place for Llangefni therefore very vulnerable. This raises the question of how much power a relatively small Local Authority has anyway in the face of global economic changes, given the internal differences within Councils and the fact that some Local Authorities are more effective and better managed than others. The power and effect of Local Authorities must therefore be recognised as being inconsistent and their influence over the development and management of locations variable.

Purpose of Place: Machynlleth

Machynlleth's identity and purpose was clearly associated at the onset of each interview as being a market town. The market, though was identified as being "not as important to the weekly calendar" (Frank) as it once was, by one interviewee and ex-market stall owner, because of people's shopping habits having changed. This was further illustrated in statement made by another interviewee:

Apart from I.G. Owens [ironmongers], you can't buy anything useful here, you have to save up all year for things you need and go to Aberystwyth, but you can go and buy a piece of jewellery made by Kelvin Jenkins and you can buy art and you can buy a piece of tat..., but you can't actually buy a light bulb, you know....which is a bit frustrating sometimes (Bea).

The market is still seen as fundamentally important to the town's economy and identity. The uniqueness of the market, described for example as a 'green market' by one interviewee (Richard), referring to the many stalls that sell garden plants, organic locally grown vegetables, organic locally made cosmetics and a stall selling locally carved wooden craft and garden furniture, which makes the market unique to the local area and provides an important function in the local economy by attracting visitors to the town who then also spend in local shops and eat in local cafes etc.

A member of the local co-operative market stall explained during an interview how the co-operative stall developed and grew to support local small vegetable producers and has expanded to sell free-range eggs and locally made soya milk and honey. The group who set it up also hold gardening related workshops and seed-swaps, which generates further a collective communal networking and activities. The co-operative stall is, in

the following interviewee's words, linked to an ideological view of a farmer's market, that of local people producing and selling local products:

It's basically a farmers' market, the way farmers' markets are meant to be (Bea).

The purpose of the town has however changed enormously in other ways reflecting some key developments relating to environmental and economic change. The establishment of the Centre for Alternative Technology in nearby Corris has had far-reaching economic and social repercussions for the Dyfi Valley and for Machynlleth in particular, generating not only a tourism revenue for the town, from people visiting CAT, but from people setting up 'green' enterprises in and around the town, inspired by the environmental ethos of CAT and other social life-style related ethical movements such as Fair Trade (movements that are largely absent from Llangefni). The diversity of enterprises range from: organic locally grown or locally made products sold on the market stalls, environmentally friendly and Fair Trade holiday accommodation, a delicatessen selling local, Fair Trade, organic produce to Dulas Engineering, a renewable energies consultancy, development and research agency that won the Welsh Small Business of the Year Award and the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2004 (Dulas Online 2007: 1).

Dulas Engineering is situated in Dyfi Eco-Park, an industrial park that is distinctly different from Llangefni's industrial park, (in size too, consisting of just a handful of business units) as it was developed as a 'spin-off' from the CAT by the Welsh Development Agency specifically designed to house businesses in constructions that have minimal environmental impact and is, in Dulas Engineering's words; "claimed to be the first environmentally-friendly business park in Britain, the award winning development represents an exemplar in energy and environmental performance" (Dulas 'Green Building and Sustainable Development', 2007: 1).

In 2004, the Dyfi Valley became designated as the first Fair Trade valley in Britain, a campaign that was supported by 1000 local individuals and 10 businesses, making fair trade products available in local cafes and Bed and Breakfasts, and the movement has been supported by the local Town Council and Powys County Council. The principle

behind it was expressed by the secretary of Dyfi Valley for Fair Trade, “We don’t want to exploit producers in developing countries” (Nicola Ruck, BBC News, 2004), and its aim was to educate people, “how as individuals and as a country obviously, we economically affect people in different countries” (Nicola Ruck). The numbers of businesses that have signed up to being part of the fair trade initiative had since increased, reportedly, to twenty businesses which included five cafes and hotels in Machynlleth itself by 2006, suggesting that global awareness amongst local people and businesses is very high, an impression which was backed up by many interviewee responses:

Awareness of fair trade, I would say, of the logo and very basic awareness is very wide, and I would be quite confident that you could go down the street on any day and you will find people buying fair trade, and that’s because of the campaign over the past three years (Miriam).

Reportedly during meetings that were held by the Dyfi Valley for Fair Trade group with the local Chamber of Commerce, questions were asked by local farmers about how fair trade related to Welsh producers who were feeling their position to be vulnerable within the global economic market and as such raised concerns about involving themselves in the project in case it had economic repercussions for their businesses and was of little benefit to themselves the emphasis from the fair trade group was to buy local to support local, as was explained by one informant:

Fair trade to a Welsh farmer, or a British farmer, Welsh farmers in particular, this group here are relatively poor farmers in the British system, so their position within the global trade is quite different ... so to have a discussion about what is fair trade when they don’t feel they are getting a fair deal is very difficult. As individuals in the group we are on very good terms with a few of them, and the position we try to publicise is buy fair and buy local, all we can do as a fair trade group is to say, that rather than buy something from a thousand miles away if it’s being produced locally” (Miriam).

The point that is being made is that profits are maximised by selling directly to the shops and that the money produced will remain in the local community.

The Dyfi Valley has also achieved the status of being an UNESCO Biosphere site, a status that is sought-out and obtained after meeting UNESCO’S ecological criteria. Part

of the Dyfi Valley was designated in the 1970s as one of the then 368 world UNESCO Biosphere sites in 91 countries (and is the only one in Wales) (Dyfi Biosphere 2007, The Scottish Government 2002), in recognition of the area's unique biodiversity, but the designation was never utilised and the area no longer qualifies within UNESCO's new criteria which has been expanded to include businesses and homes and are designed to promote "solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use" (UNESCO 2008: People Biodiversity and Ecology). In a recent move by a partnership of a range of government departments and organizations, in consultation with local business and local people, an application for an extended Biosphere status for the Dyfi Valley was submitted to UNESCO and was successfully obtained in 2002.

Originally, the Dyfi 'Biosphere Reserve' designation was solely about environmental and habitat conservation. Nowadays, Biosphere Areas explore how local people can benefit from protecting the things they value – local knowledge, language and culture as well as the local and global environment (Biosphere Summary 1/5/07: 1).

The Biosphere will serve to fulfil three main functions:

- a **conservation** function, to preserve genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes;
- a **development** function, to foster sustainable economic and human development, and
- a **logistic support** function, to support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development. (Ibid)

Dyfi Valley's identity, purpose and function is being further re-designed in terms of its environmental status, where the area's uniqueness or the creation of a unique identity and purpose for the area seems paramount within people's vision of its future, both within a local context, but also within a wider global context of being one of 482 Biospheres worldwide (Ibid), between which information and expertise will be shared.

Despite there being considerably fewer negative remarks being made against Powys Council than there had been about Ynys Môn Council, many of the contentions that were felt against the Councils were very similar, particularly in relation to the Councils not supporting local independent businesses, charging high Council Tax rates, and not listening to the concerns or opinions of local people and business owners. For example the Council had reportedly doubled the business Council Tax rates in 2006, causing many to argue that they are out of touch with local businesses and overestimating the profits that businesses were making and often making them untenable:

Powys County Council are intent on making it uncomfortable for businesses to continue, i.e. family members, sons and daughters to continue the family businesses, rates are extortionate, the rates comparable to what we have for our money are a no-no and I am sure now, though not everybody knows, I can think of five shops that are going to close before Christmas in town, meaning that trade is poor and one thing that points to the trade being poor is that we have one of the largest car parks in Powys and we have the smallest bloody sign showing where it is, so when the traffic comes down from the Midlands it's already passed the car park and it's too much bother to go back so they go to Aberystwyth or Aberdyfi so the town doesn't get any money (Cledwyn).

Machynlleth's position of being situated at the edge of the Powys County on the border of Gwynedd and Ceredigion was another contentious issue for some local business owners, as Powys is a European Objective 2 area, whilst the other two counties are Objective 1 (now known as 'Convergence Regions' since 2007), limiting the amount of financial assistance businesses in and around Machynlleth can access significantly:

It's the rurality you know....I mean you've got Ceredigion but it's four miles that way, you've got Gwynedd that's half a mile that way, we'd be better governed by one of those because believe it or not, those two areas are Objective 1 European funding and we are Objective 2 (Cledwyn).

It was felt at times by some business owners that there was little support given from the Welsh Assembly and local government to local businesses, whose policy was more focussed on attracting direct inward investment than in assisting and helping to bolster independent Welsh businesses:

The Welsh Assembly, rather than oiling engines if you like, that are already running and keep them running, are intent on starting new engines up and

Cledwyn: giving them lots of money and watch them conk out after three years, and if nobody believes that then go and see that big factory that's down in Newport - the Japanese are supposed to come there – how much money have they given them to woo them here – it's disgusting and that's our money from the tax you and I pay.¹

I: Do you feel that Globalization is affecting the economy here?

Cledwyn: We've got an abattoir up the road owned by a big company ... from the Sussex area and their employment has gone from local people, Welsh, to employing 80% Polish in the last six months, so that's not helping.

There are economic policy directives from government and other organisations in support of local sustainable enterprises, such as The Sustainable Procurement Task Force's (SPTF) National Action Plan, an organisation set up by the government in 2005, funded by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the HM Treasury, that urged "using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long-term benefits, is how the public sector should be spending taxpayers' money. Anything less means that today's taxpayer and the future citizen are both being short-changed" (Simms 2006: 1). This involves a top down approach to supporting local businesses, for example hospitals, schools, council offices, supporting local producers and businesses, through sourcing suppliers locally. These policies were viewed as being contradictory and empty, in the light of the wider global economic objectives and emphasis on attracting direct inward investment from big overseas companies which obtain economic incentives to locate in Britain, leaving the smaller independent businesses to feel unsupported and economically squeezed, as the extracts from one local business owner given below clearly demonstrate:

What has Tony Blair, Don Curry, everybody been shouting out, NFU, FUW for the last three years – local procurement. Schools, hospitals, old people's homes – local produce. We haven't had a chance, if you're ill in Machynlleth you could be eating Uruguayan lamb, it's as simple as that, so they're quite happy to put my rates up, but they're not happy to give me a chance of getting a bit of trade from their establishments, they always want to go cheap, cheap, cheap, so they buy in Australian lamb (Cledwyn).

¹ (Actually it is a Korean factory, 'Lucky Goldstar').

We've got a leisure centre down here, one day I was walking through and I couldn't believe it, I saw a lorry from Hereford Produce taking something in, so I went to have a good look and they were taking cakes and bread in there, so I came back to the shop and I phoned Powys County Council working office, I asked: 'could you tell me if there were two bakeries in town and could you tell me if they both pay rates to Machynlleth Town Council and Powys County Council?' – 'Yes' – 'could you have a look at Hereford Produce?' – 'Oh Mr Jones, Hereford Produce is not on the list'. 'Well, Hereford's not even in Wales I said... so you're quite happy to take rates off these two people and then buy your stuff from outside the principality', I said 'that sums you up in a bloody net-shell (Cledwyn).

(Although these policies must also affect Llangefni, they were not referred to within the interviews).

A significant development within the town, that is perceived to have strongly influenced the town's recent evolution, is the establishment of Ecodyfi and a brief background to the organization will be provided to put into context the following respondents' perceptions of the 'purpose of place'.

Ecodyfi is an umbrella not-for-profit organization set up to promote community regeneration with a green economic sustainability ethos. Established in 1998 by members of Dulas Ltd and Powys County Council, and funded largely by the Welsh Development Agency, its focus being that, "local needs must be met with long-term vision. This implies attention to global as well as local environmental sustainability, to the robustness of the local economy and the capacity of local people to take responsibility" (Ecodyfi 2008: About Ecodyfi). It has been set up directly to deal with the challenges facing market towns today and their changing roles, recognising that uniqueness is imperative to their survival within an increasingly competitive global market place:

Local distinctiveness is the key to success in many markets nowadays, particularly in tourism and increasingly in local produce (including food stuffs (Ecodyfi 2008: About Ecodyfi).

The aim of Ecodyfi is to influence social policy and help develop a sustainable local economy, its focus is as much on the local as it is on the global, marrying these two

concepts together as well placing communal responsibility at the heart of their organisational framework;

“Globalization of production and distribution systems leads to unsustainable levels of resource use and waste creating and makes local economies more vulnerable to external factors. Reversing this trend is sometimes called ‘relocalisation’” (Ecodyfi 2008: About Ecodyfi), revealing that there is conscious awareness of debates and discourses of globalization and its effect on the local.

Judging from the Machynlleth interviews, Ecodyfi seems to have become the linchpin between the different social groups within the town, particularly between the indigenous Welsh and the English-speaking communities, which has been key to the successful re-development of the town, bringing together environmental and ethical concerns with local economic and social priorities. This has helped generate entrepreneurial and community activity, coupled with a high level of individual social responsibility towards the local as well as the global environment and people. As one interviewee explained:

There is a feeling of people looking to improve things economically, all the time there are all sorts of projects, some successful and some not, but there is all the time people trying to do something (Miriam).

There is clearly then a global and local consciousness and motivation to combine entrepreneurial ambitions with being ethically responsible.

In the eyes of many of the interviewees, the things that happen in the town and its development are fuelled on the whole, not by local government initiatives, but largely through the foresight and dedication of the town’s people who are developing a new purpose of place for Machynlleth, generating an atmosphere of possibilities that makes others want to get involved with projects and developments. As Bea explains:

I feel like there is something waking up here, I feel like it has been trying to be something for a long time, but hasn’t really managed to sustain anything, but I think that ... it is a good time to be here, there is an energy rising and with the right people at the right time, we might just be able to do something with it (Bea).

What seemed apparent when interviewing people and from what people described in their interviews, is that the residents of Machynlleth both live and work in the town, an observation that is corroborated by research conducted by the Wales Rural Observatory (2007: 109) which reveals that only 315 people commute out of the town to work compared to 615 who commute into the town to work, and so provide Machynlleth with a wider economic function for many of its residents than for those living in Llangefni, as one key informant explained:

People mainly use the town for work – the majority of residents work in the town. Largely in the Eco-Dyfi industrial estate, the railways and Telecom or are self-employed providing services (Lloyd).

There was however, an observable difference between the social groups of people employed in the various occupations in and around the town. Though farming and tourism are the two most important local industries for Machynlleth and the Dyfi Valley (Ecodyfi 2008), the majority of the employment available for local people in the town are largely low paid and consist mainly of jobs in shops, cafés and hotels. The major employers for the town are the railway, the Centre for Alternative Technology and Dulas Engineering Ltd., of which the CAT employs about 120 staff, that consists of about 40 permanent posts with a further 12 - 16 volunteers, depending on the time of year, and as the interview extract below with a CAT employee demonstrates, requires largely well educated and highly skilled staff, recruited from all over Britain, though some employees have come from further afield.

I: Where does your workforce come from, is it from the local area, or is it from England and Scotland, or is it from abroad?

Sarah: It's the whole mixture. The skilled workforce is quite often people coming from further afield because there is not that many people who are qualified in wind turbines for example, in the country, let alone in Wales, so people come from all over.....The permanent staff are mostly British, the volunteers are mostly British because they can quite often claim unemployment benefits, whilst volunteers from overseas might have a problem with that. We do often get volunteers from overseas and we have joined the European Volunteer Scheme ...so we might have more in the future.

She said that the majority of local interest comes from school visits.

I: What criteria do you have to employ people?

Sarah: Each job has a description. Engineers need engineering, if you work in the education department you need some teaching qualifications. It's job specific. One of the key questions in an interview is what is the most pressing global issue of the day, but there's no right answer, it's just for an idea where their head's at.

I: Do you think CAT has benefited the local economy of Machynlleth in any way?

Sarah: Yes I do, Bed and Breakfast, hotels, pubs, the local shops as well, as well as people come to the area more.

Similarly Dulas Ltd also offers well-paid employment and requires a highly educated workforce, employing "highly qualified and skilled renewable energy experts" (Dulas Online, 'Welcome to Dulas Online' 2007: 1), which similarly requires them to recruit from all over Britain. These businesses clearly benefit the town economically, through attracting tourism, business and through attracting a higher economic group into the area who then spend in the town. However, because these two companies employ relatively few local people, the economic benefits felt by the indigenous local population of Machynlleth is largely secondary.

The Dyfi Valley and Machynlleth have thus taken on another purpose and meaning to that which they had a couple of decades ago, having re-invented themselves, as a market town into a unique area at the forefront of local and global environmental developments and social ethical responsibilities. This is in line with many other small market towns (such as Totnes, Lampeter and Hay-on-Wye) which have recognised the need to become more economically self-sufficient and/or to develop a niche market for themselves. Though we see from the comments from local business owners in the town that, similarly to Llangefni, the Council seems to contradict its policies to support and encourage sustainable communities with its wider global competitive economic policies which are often at odds with the interest of local businesses and local communities.

For the people who live in the towns, their purpose is of course much broader than the reasons alluded to above, as they are also the places where they and their friends and families live and socialise. These issues will be explored separately later in chapter 7.

Conclusion

Llangefni and Machynlleth are very different from each other and are experienced very differently by the people who work and live in the towns. We see at the onset the threat and vulnerability people feel from outside economic forces affecting the towns, such as factories re-locating to countries where labour and production costs are cheaper, or branded high street shops and supermarkets infiltrating the towns. How the market towns have been affected and how the people and businesses in those towns have responded, or are responding to globalization and the relationship people have with their 'local' meanwhile, differ considerably.

In Llangefni economic forces of globalization are changing the town, turning it into a generic homogenous place, whose purpose today does not appear to fulfil the needs or the expectations of those who work or live there. The changes are experienced by most as unwelcome and threatening to local identities and culture. Llangefni is described as though it is becoming a 'non-place', with generic logoed shops turning once meaningful places with unique characteristics ('something') into meaningless and impersonal places ('nothing'). The dominance of Ritzer's (2004) 'globalization' model is particularly discernible in the number of supermarkets that have established stores in the town and from the narratives of those businesses struggling to compete. On the other hand people in Llangefni are endorsing much of what globalization has produced. The internet and developments in transportation have changed people's use of and dependence on market towns, having greater choice and accessibility to travel further afield for their shopping and for the cheaper deal, which increasingly threatens local independent businesses and adds to the dominance of the brand, leading one shop owner, as we have seen, to de-logo his goods to prevent people from comparing branded products on-line or on in the larger high-street stores. The purpose of Llangefni is currently it seems, in limbo, and its status as a market town appears weak.

What came out of the interviews particularly strongly was that people felt they lacked power or influence over the changes they were experiencing. This appears to relate closely to the poverty and low levels of educational attainment in the town that limits the choices and, as Bauman (2000) argues, creates a polarisation between those who have access to and the facilities to engage with globalization, such as travel, access to transport, the internet and those who have not. Local existence appears, as Bauman

argues, to becoming uncomfortable for many of the poorer in Llangefni, exacerbated by the removal and relocation of public spaces to areas outside localized life, which is resulting in localities and communities losing their capacity to generate meaning and negotiation. It appears therefore in Llangefni that “being local in a global world is a sign of social deprivation and degradation” (Bauman 2000: 2). Which, judging by the protectionist sentiments, defensiveness of identity and nostalgia for a previous Llangefni with purpose and identity, is leading to a polarisation of reactions to the changes; nationalistic sentiments against changes on the one hand and an acceptance of or compliance with the changes on the other (see Scholte 2000).

The CAT has had a significant influence on Machynlleth’s development, economically and culturally. The town has become cosmopolitan and has attracted many educated people who are very globally minded, around which the town’s economy is now largely based and from which enterprises and organizations have been developed that are about generating sustainable global and local living (Ecodyfi, fair-trade valley).

The purpose of Machynlleth, for its residents and businesses at the onset is that it remains a market town. Its ability to stay relatively free from the high-street branded shops is seen as enabling it to retain its individuality. The threat of being ‘taken over’ by the multinationals is nevertheless seen as ever-present. People’s discourses show Machynlleth is a ‘something full’ place that is rich in meaning and substance.

However, for some, the changes that are occurring are again happening *to* them and the place, threatening the town’s identity and culture in a different way, by instead hybridizing the town into something new. Though it may be retaining its individuality and independence, it is still being changed by globalization, even if most people in the town perceive these effects to be positive. It still leaves some however to develop the same protectionist and nationalistic sentiments that were expressed in Llangefni and which also correlates to culture (Welsh), poor educational attainment and poverty, leaving those people feeling disempowered and often excluded from engaging with the processes of globalization equally.

The difference in how Llangefni and Machynlleth, two Welsh rural market towns, have and are being directly affected by globalization, emphasises how, as Robertson (1995)

contends, the local and the global are inextricably linked. But what is also revealed is the extent to which the effects of globalization are uneven and are experienced and responded to very differently. For both towns the local still remains an important ideological concept of where life and community should happen, and market towns are still regarded as needed as service centres. What appears clear so far is that these two towns are in the process of change and as such their fate is unknowable.

CHAPTER 6

Perceptions of Globalization: The Views of Groups within the Town

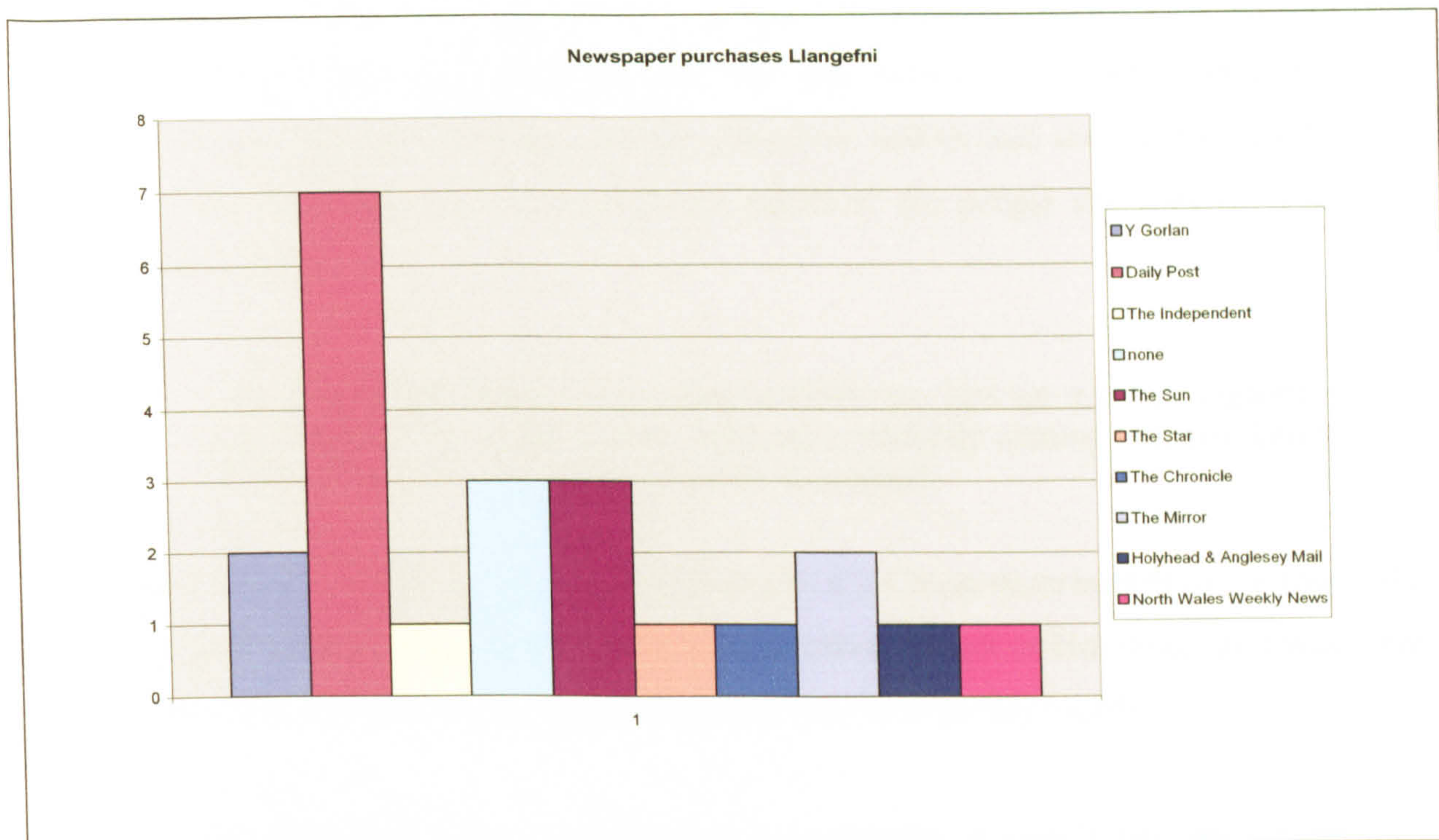
In the opinion of Manuel Castells (2000), we are increasingly living in a 24/7 global 'network society'. Whilst this may be true as a generalisation in Western countries, what are the realities of people's lives in small rural market towns, how do they engage with the 'local' and the 'global' in their everyday activities, and do people's lifestyles reflect their engagement with or knowledge of local or global issues? There were very distinct differences in lifestyles between the residents of the market towns, unsurprising perhaps because of the different ways market towns have developed over the past few decades, but nevertheless significant in showing how uneven the processes of globalization are and how revealing people's reactions to and engagement with their local and global spheres can be in understanding how people experience their lives in relation to globalization and their private life-worlds. In this chapter we will learn about the lives and life-styles of the people who work and live in Llangefni and Machynlleth. The narratives of the towns' citizens and business owners reveal their relationship with the local and the global in terms of whether and how they perceive the global to be affecting their lives and local life-worlds, economically, socially and culturally, allowing us to begin to understand what place can mean to people today and shows how the various socio-economic groups experience, access and engage with the local and the global differently from each other. Finally this chapter explores people's understanding of the term 'globalization', to assess how knowledgeable people are about the concept and to discover whether they apply their understanding of the term to their local lives or to more detached macro processes.

The Lives and Lifestyles of the Llangefni Respondents

What was revealing about interviewing people in Llangefni about their life-styles, was that the majority of people's life-worlds were very, very locally focused in one way, whilst at the same time not having a conscious local agenda. For example the majority of people listened to Welsh radio stations such as Champion FM or Radio Cymru, preferred watching local and Welsh television programmes or British soap operas and bought mainly local newspapers. Only one person interviewed (a retired teacher)

bought a broad-sheet newspaper. The majority bought a range of newspapers, mostly local as well as a daily tabloid such as the Sun or the Star:

Figure 6



Three people said that they never bought a newspaper and when asked why, one interviewee replied it was “too depressing”.

Eleven out of nineteen of the citizens interviewed in the town’s pubs (who tended to be representative of the poorer social groups within the town and about half of whom lived on the Bro Tudur Council estate) said that they did not have a computer, replying with comments such as: “No, do you think we are rich people?” (Dylan), when I asked the question. These trends were reflective of social class and education as it was mostly people on the lowest incomes who lived on the Bro Tudur council estate, who had little option other than to live their lives locally, shopping in the town for groceries and socialising in the town as the majority of those interviewed had no car. A couple of women from this social group described the town favourably when asked if the town catered for people’s needs, explaining that: “it’s a handy little town, we’ve got everything here” (Jeanie), and “The town caters for most of people’s needs” (Deborah). However as the interviews proceeded, even with the few interviewees who were positive about the town’s facilities, it emerged that they went out of town to Bangor to

do much of their shopping as they couldn't get all they wanted to buy or at the right price in Llangefni itself.

The supermarkets in Llangefni are regarded by many as being too expensive. For example the Communities First manager explained how one man had complained to her that he couldn't buy food for a single person in ASDA and she went on to describe what she had observed as the shopping habits of the people she sees from the Bro Tudur ward:

Take Somerfield, there's lots going in there, but just for a paper, cigarettes and things like that, very rarely will I see somebody coming out, you know, with a full trolley – it's a shame really (Caroline).

When asked if she knew if people shopped in the Co-op supermarket in the town, she explained that most people she knew went to either Bangor or Holyhead, as it was more economical to travel to the cheaper supermarkets, than to buy locally:

Caroline: No, I don't think so – I personally wouldn't like the Co-op because you just can't go in and do a full shop can you? I think mostly working people have to go out and they have to budget for the whole week, they have to make sure they've got everything in, but you do find that a lot of the young parents here, they share cars, they get a bus, they go to Holyhead to do their shopping, especially, you know, in Holyhead, you get Iceland, Farm Foods and you get a good deal there, and you've got the new shopping centre in Holyhead where you've got Argos, and all the clothes shops as well like Wilkinsons, all that is booming in Holyhead... There are things you just can't get here - it's such a shame they have to travel so far for it. You know we are in a deprived area and incomes are quite low here and they just have to budget, they have to, they can't afford to shop across the road, they can't. I couldn't and I work yeah.

I: How do people use the town, do they use the market to buy their groceries?

Caroline: No, considering we are the heart of Anglesey, there's nothing here. We've got a market on a Thursday and a Saturday, but it's not very good at all – and this is the biggest market on Anglesey and the stuff on the market's not cheap... You hear people talk that they go to Birkenhead shopping, Cheshire Oaks. We only have one clothes shop and one shoe shop in Llangefni.

In response to the recognised poverty in the Bro Tudur ward and the recognised need for people to eat healthily, Communities First have established a veggie box scheme, where for £2.00, people from the deprived ward can purchase a bag of vegetables, which are sorted by the Pensioners club, all of whom appear to be women. The priority being to supply low income families with fresh fruit and vegetable but with no consideration made towards sourcing organic, or local produce.

When interviewees from this social group were asked if they had any shopping criteria the answers reflected the observations made by the Communities First manager, that economy was people's first and often final priority: "I shop around when buying veg – for the economy" (Deborah). For this section of Llangefni's population, money and opportunities are in short supply. Their life-styles revolve around the town largely out of necessity, though most go further afield to supplement their weekly shopping. Only one out of the twelve people interviewed in this social group had GCSEs and O levels and only two had or have had a trade (one was retired). When asked what they did in their spare time, all the men answered drinking in the pub, and one added "playing football and smoking spliffs". It was only two of the women who were mothers who added that, apart from also drinking in the pub, they also went walking in the Dingle and went to the leisure centre with their children. Most of this group never went on holidays because they could not afford to and when asked if they ever eat out, most replied that they did not, or if they did it was to grab a take-away from one of the numerous take-aways in town. The only member of the group who happened to have a car and both she and her partner worked, said that they sometimes took the children to McDonalds.

Everyone else interviewed, not from the Bro Tudur estate, said that they went to Bangor or Holyhead to shop for groceries, mainly to Tesco and for clothes people mostly went to Bangor, Llandudno or Chester and a number of people reported being particularly fond of M & S (especially for the 'basics'). Most people reported using the town only for banking, the Post Office and to buy bread and meat from the local bakery and butcher. A small number of interviewees did try and be loyal to the few local shop owners in the town, particularly the local bakery and butchers, and one interviewee was particularly passionate about supporting local businesses where she can:

I buy anywhere and everywhere – I go a lot to Manchester because my daughter lives there. If I wanted something, like the basics, I go somewhere like Marks and Spencer's, the other stuff is sort of whatever's fashionable at the time.... My meat, I get off the local butcher and I will eat only his meat and the veg I get off the market...and if anything, they are fresher than the supermarket veg. When it comes to Christmas I buy everything in Llangefni. Oh yes, I make a point of it because I like to support 'Snowball' [nickname of a local shop owner] with the toys and so on (Meinir).

I try and shop here, I do try.... There's plenty here really, you know (Ceinwen).

I try to buy everything I can in the town, but its limited – I only buy my food shopping here (Glyn) (local shop owner whose shop closed shortly after interviewing him because he could not afford to compete with the supermarkets).

Most however did not have such priorities and one elderly lady admitted that:

I'm an eclectic shopper – I'm not a good customer (Mrs Thomas).

One business owner said that he knew of one elderly lady who was so scared of coming into town these days that she had bought herself a computer and ordered her food shopping online.

A few of the people interviewed who did not live on the Bro-Tudur ward socialised in the town to do certain organised activities such as line-dancing, attending Chapel, the W.I., The Rotary Club etc, but most did not, or if they did, they drove to the Tafarn y Rhos, a 'family friendly' pub on the outskirts of Llangefni, as one interviewee explained: "Unless you want to go to the pub and have a fight or have Karaoke, you go out of town to socialise" (Glyn).

I don't socialise in the town itself, I go back to Rhosneigr and Gwalchmai where my friends live. There still exists a strong sense of community in Rhosneigr (Siôn).

Very seldom do we go into towns in the evenings now, we go out somewhere, perhaps for a meal in the The Boat House in Red Warf Bay or Beaumaris maybe, we've been down to the Bull, because the Bull's OK (Angharad).

Most go to Bangor to Socialize (Jones).

What was noted was how well-travelled many people who did not live in the disadvantaged ward were, with some taking several holidays abroad a year, one person having travelled extensively to places like New Zealand, Japan, Thailand and Australia; another person was thinking of buying a property in Italy and he also travelled regularly to Brussels where his daughter worked as well as going on other holidays. When speaking to people about their trips, one man commented, "The world's a small place, you can be in Australia in a day and you can fly from Liverpool to Spain quicker than you can get to Liverpool"(Glyn). These respondents included a number of 'local business owners' and 'citizens' who were in the 'lower-middle-class' economic bracket, such as teachers, secretaries and managers.

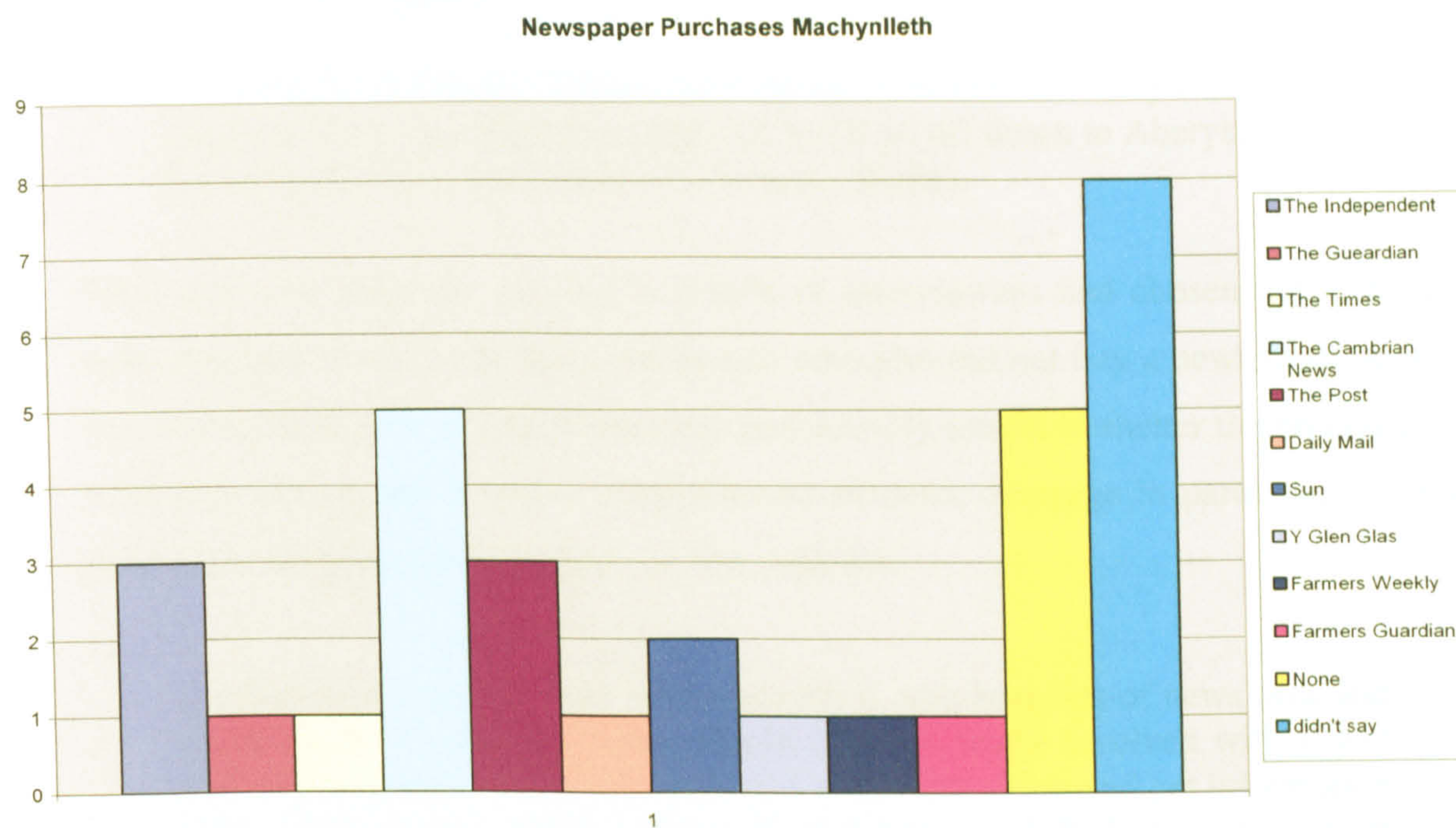
People's lives and lifestyles in Llangefni were then very different from one another, depending on which socio-economic group they belonged to; though people's lives were interacting with the processes and products of globalization on a daily basis, through the shops they used, the products they bought and their use of appliances such as TVs and their exposure to global images. For all social groups their focus was very local and/or immediate to their personal needs, shopping in high street shops out of economic necessity than out of choice, as they were not offered an alternative. Those who had travelled tended to be more globally and socially aware, but their focuses remained very local either to their specific social group or the town in general, preferring to listen, watch and read predominantly local programmes and newspapers. For most however, poverty and low levels of education meant that people's opportunities and knowledge and life-worlds were, out of necessity, locally focused.

The Lives and Lifestyles of the Machynlleth Respondents

What became apparent when analysing the data looking at the life-styles of Machynlleth's citizens, was how different they were from those living in Llangefni – they were richer in quality, though economically often they were not. The cultural differences between Machynlleth citizens (English, Welsh, middle-class, working-class) crossed over between social groups quite considerably. The majority of people who were interviewed were on low incomes, but as a group had far more qualifications than those living in Llangefni, with many having A levels, or their equivalent, a degree and occasionally higher. Though it must be noted, very few unemployed people were interviewed in Machynlleth, not for the lack of trying on my part, but most of the

people who were approached (and were not targeted in a place of work) in a café, a pub or via snowball sampling, happened to have a job, usually low paid and part-time in a shop or a local café.

Figure 7



As we can see from the table, there were far more people buying ‘broad-sheet’ newspapers, many of the interviewees bought a local paper, usually the Cambrian News, as well as another paper. Only one person said they bought a local Welsh language paper ‘Y Glen Glas’ and one interviewee, who was a farmer, said she bought both the farming papers mentioned above. Nobody who listened to the Radio said they listened to Welsh or local Radio stations, the most popular stations were: Radio 4, Radio 3, Radio 2 and Radio 1 (in order of popularity), reflecting perhaps the anglicisation of the town.

As in Llangefni, people’s life-styles in Machynlleth were very local in scope, but differed significantly, through often having a deliberate local agenda as well as, very often, a global agenda. Apart from a handful of people who didn’t really socialise, everyone who was interviewed socialised in the town and at each others’ houses, as family units and with friends. There was a striking difference in what people did in their leisure time in Machynlleth compared to Llangefni, as the majority of people from all social groups listed a handful of outdoor activities, such as walking, gardening,

canoeing, swimming and horse riding, fishing, going to concerts and watching football matches.

Spend time with my daughter, my family here, I'm quite booky, we're quite outdoorsy, riding, walking, eating out and drinking, it's got quite a big pub culture here (Lauren).

We socialise in friends' houses, go walking or in to town. Very rarely, maybe if we've got something special, we'll go off down to Aberystwyth but normally it's round town to be honest (Sheila).

What was also different was that a couple of interviewees had chosen not to have a television and tended to be the same people who also did not buy a newspaper because they found these form of media intrusive and actively sought to shelter themselves from what they saw as the negative bombardment of news coverage in particular but also general prescriptive media images, as Nat explains:

To be honest I am not very involved with it, you hear bits of news now and again, because there are some people who are really involved with it and read newspapers, listen to the radio and watch television and get information from other places, whilst I don't do that because I find the media quite intrusive and I have a lot of things in my life that I want to be thinking about and doing and I can find the media thing can take up so much energy and a lot of it is just, sort of, spin and story and not of actual relevance in a lot of ways, so I tend not to listen to it actually, I feel that I find things that I need to find out will just come to me..... I do listen the radio sometimes, mainly at work and mainly Radio 3 or 4, but find them irritating – it's the formulated language that they use, its irritating really (Nat).

In addition to these two interviews, there were numerous interviewees who said that they did have a TV but rarely watched it, choosing instead to watch specific programmes or films and not to watch news programmes on the television in order to protect children from feeling overwhelmed by the negative images and stories:

I have got a TV, but I don't know what I watch really, because I think I use the internet more than I use the telly now, I guess we just watch films and I guess some of the 'dramary' things on, I don't have a lot of time now, because I am studying at home and I've got the internet.... I've given up watching the news on the telly because it's all so horrible, so I look at it on the internet so that my child doesn't hear what's going on, on the news because it's pretty heavy-going some days now (Lauren).

I do have a TV – but I never watch it (Sheila)

I don't watch TV, I listen to Radio 4 instead, but if I do it's to watch the cricket (Tina).

What was also noticeable in comparison to Llangefni, was that, of those who did watch the TV, the programmes that many reported watching were the news, history programmes, documentaries, dramas and sport – far less locally focused programmes were reportedly watched; only one elderly local lady said that she liked to watch Welsh documentaries, Pobl-y-Cŵm soap opera and Coronation Street.

As indicated in the interview extract above (from Lauren), Machynlleth citizens were more computer literate than in Llangefni. Nearly everyone interviewed had a computer through which they accessed the internet for a variety of purposes: to book holidays, correspond via emails, to shop on-line, to watch news programmes, to download films and for general information searching.

The shopping habits and attitude of Machynlleth citizens was again very different from Llangefni's, many people did go to Morrisons in Aberystwyth to buy their groceries, as it was deemed the cheapest and most convenient place to shop, people's incomes being a key factor in their purchasing decisions:

A lot of the older generation do most of their shopping in Machynlleth... but I think a lot of the younger ones go out of town to shop because of the prices – because they're so much cheaper. I couldn't do my weekly shop in the local Co-op, I have to go once a month to Aber to stock up and just get daily provisions in the Co-op. Without the tourists I think we'd be in dire straights really. [My food purchasing priorities are] buy one, get one free and my meals are planned around whatever bargain they've got that week (Judith).

We have to get all our shopping locally, as we've got no car (Daniel).

Use the town for food shopping, but have to go elsewhere to buy clothes ... usually to Shrewsbury, but when you do pop to Aberystwyth you do go for the cheaper food shops, like Lidl or Morrisons to get loads of little extras that you can't get here...I buy local if I can yes, like off the market on the Wednesday you can get local produce there and if you go and socialise at a BBQ or something like that, very often it's kind of like a car boot sale, like they've got their own garden produce, it's like, 'oh I know I can get broad beans from so and so' (Cllr Rowlands).

Supporting local where possible was a principle often expressed before the interviewees were asked if they had any purchasing priorities. Most people interviewed reported buying much of their groceries locally, even if they did the bulk of their shopping in Aberystwyth, especially wholefoods from the CAT's Quarry shop, meat from one of the local butchers and fresh locally grown vegetables off the market on a Wednesday:

I try and buy my veg off the market store. I try and buy locally, organic, non-American rice (Shirley).

We've got some quite good sources of local food, like that deli and we've got a community co-operative thingy-stall on the market which is great and they sell all seasonal veg and jam and cakes and eggs and all that kind of thing, ...so I try and buy off that. The market provides quite a lot of our food – fruit and veg. and fish comes off the market. And the rest of the time I have to go in the Co-op – we eat quite healthily really (Lauren).

When Lauren was asked to elaborate on her purchasing criteria she explained how she balanced a tight budget with eating as healthily and as ethically as possible, a process that was commented upon on numerous occasions. Where possible and if affordable, a large percentage of the respondents in Machynlleth bought food based on different ethical criteria that was both local and global in scope and which varied from person to person:

Well it's a combination of being on a low income, so I am restricted by my low income, I try and eat as healthily and ethically as I can within my boundaries – sometimes I have to stray and buy things that perhaps I don't want to because of financial restrictions. I try and buy fair-trade, because here it's been such high profile – it's in the school and off the kids and everything and it's really good because you've got the influence off them – 'is this coffee fair-trade?' sort of thing – so you have to comply – it is the way to get through isn't it, I know that with the Council as well, I know the recycling team went to the school first and explained to the children the red bag, black bag scheme so that they could all recycle before we even got the bags at home and they were just ready for it when they came, and I thought that's pretty clever isn't it – as long as it's something good (Lauren).

We buy more and more organic vegetable and things like free range poultry and eggs, but we don't see it as essential, but we'll buy it if we can get it (Daniel).

I try and not buy dairy, I only buy really basic things, I try and not buy new things I like supporting second-hand shops – I try as much as I can (Christina).

The problems faced at times with trying to balance personal ethics with economy is explained by Bea, a member of the co-operative market stall where the price of organically grown vegetables is seen as prohibitive for people on low incomes and the prices of the vegetables sold on another of the town's market stalls was seen as unfairly high:

Actually everything I grow is grown organically... but I don't really buy organic that much you know, I buy off our market stall because its off people I know, but the other organic market stall is ridiculously expensive, I can't afford them... and I think it's wrong that they can get away with charging the amount they charge for things – but yea I should be organic all the time but I can't afford it" (Bea).

An opinion echoed by another interviewee and meat producer: "I have no food criteria, other than as a meat producer, there has to be meat on the table. I don't go for organic because it's too expensive and to be honest with you the expense is out of proportion" (Cllr Rhian). That also reflects the individualization of people's rationale behind their consumer choices as is revealed in the narrative below where an interviewee, who is a vegetarian, explains how she does not buy 'organic' produce, almost seeming quite passionate against it:

I grow a lot of vegetables, so I perhaps don't buy as many vegetables as many people do, but I certainly don't go down the organic route. As long as it hasn't been touched by any meat products, then I am quite flexible as to where my fruit and veg come from – I'm not stringent. I try and buy fair trade coffee I have to admit, but other than that nothing (Tina).

Only two women said that they bought clothes locally from the charity shops, for one Christina, quoted above, it was in order to not buy new items so as not to support big business in an effort to resist the consumer culture and for the other interviewee, was to dress creatively and individually on a low budget. The majority of people meanwhile went to either Aberystwyth, Newtown, Wrexham, Telford, Shrewsbury or Chester, budget remaining a key factor in people's purchasing decisions, but again, as the first interview extract below reveals, the ethical dimension of some people's purchasing habits is very much at the forefront of their consciences, even if they choose not to or cannot afford to act on them:

You'd start at Aberystwyth and, depending on how complex the requirement was, you'd go to either Wrexham, Shrewsbury or Chester. I'll go to those places about four times a year and the rest of the time I'll go to Aberystwyth... Being honest I probably buy cheap, which is probably wrong isn't it, you know ethically it's wrong to buy cheap but again I am restricted by budget. I sometimes buy expensive clothes, but I probably just go to Primark and Aldi and buy cheap ones (Lauren).

I go for 'cheaper the better' – Bonmarche places like that (Barbara).

We'll have a day out to Chester or Shrewsbury every couple of months or so. I generally shop in places like Next and go for quality you know (Carla).

Unsurprisingly, low income and a tight budget tended to dominate where people spent their holidays, though unlike Llangefni, most people did tend to get away for a short while, though for many, their holidays were spent in Britain, often in holiday parks such as Butlin's, camping, visiting family etc. Though, again, more people than in Llangefni travelled abroad extensively, some for the traditional sight-seeing and beach holidays to America, Greece, and France but many also for cultural experiences.

With some sections of the town's people, ethical awareness and personal dilemmas of conscience were given as part of their answers, displaying clearly how problematic some decisions were as the discussion between two friends, who were being interviewed together, reveals:

I do travel abroad yes - I know that it's really bad to fly – I know that, but it's cheaper and quicker – so what do you do? I try and be vegan as much as I can, but when I go out can I find anything to eat? – no – today I went in to a shop and came out with two apples, so today my conscience won, but on another day when I'm tired, I haven't got the energy – it's really hard work (Christina).

But then, you say 'went in and bought apples' – but where were they grown? Because you weren't given the choice to buy locally grown apples were you, so you may not have bought produce that's been factory farmed or whatever, but at the end of the day you weren't able to buy locally grown apples... We've got to remember it is there for us and we do live in the modern world. We are the children of the modern age, we are free to take what we need and what we want (Bea).

These interview narratives reveal to us how in Machynlleth people's awareness of how local actions can affect the local environment and the local economy as well as the planet and people globally is very high. What is also revealed is that people's relationship with the knowledge they have of certain issues is very complex and often a very fraught process of balancing life-style, ethics, convenience, budget, knowledge and personal commitment. People's lives and life-styles in Machynlleth are markedly different from one those in Llangefni and are reflected in the types of media sources that different social groups accessed (or even deliberately avoided). Education, culture and class therefore appear to play a key role in how people interact with their local and the global. These differences are primarily reflective of the fact that despite both market towns being or containing Communities First wards, Llangefni was ranked, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, as being the 73rd most deprived ward in Wales, whilst Machynlleth was ranked 408th (Wales Rural Observatory 2007: 106). Communities First partnerships being established initially in the hundred most deprived wards and then in addition to these a second tendering round was held for a number of innovative proposals, thus Machynlleth became included under the second criterion as one of the 'necklace community' of the Bro Dyfi Valley.

Globalization – the many meanings

What becomes apparent when listening to people's narratives on globalization is the marked difference in knowledge between the different interview groups about the meaning of the term 'globalization'. In both towns the 'key informants' and the local 'business owners', were on the whole, very knowledgeable about the processes of globalization and were very often able to give clear and articulate answers and examples of what they meant within their narratives. In Llangefni they were in sharp contrast to many of the 'citizens' whose knowledge and understanding of the term was far more limited or, at times, non-existent. The Machynlleth citizens were on the other hand very informed and again very articulate about what globalization meant. The data also (as expected) reflected the range of topics that the term encompasses, illustrating its complexity and the difficulty people have in understanding the concept confidently. The academic debates about whether or not globalization is a relatively new phenomenon was also reflected within the Machynlleth results.

There were distinct differences in knowledge between the three interview categories of 'key informant', 'citizen' and 'local business owner' and in order to reflect the differences in responses and knowledge, each interview category will be discussed separately.

The 'key informants' in both towns were people who were considered to be very knowledgeable about the towns or were themselves community workers such as community development workers, an ex-community police officer, local councillors or managers of key local social institutions that have close community links. They were therefore generally professional people who were, on the whole, fairly well or well educated. The purpose of the research was not concealed from this interview group as it was imperative that I was candid about what I needed to know and understand about the towns and the people who live there and also to give the key informants an opportunity to think about their town in relation to the 'local' and the 'global' prior to the interview. Conversely it was important that the other interview categories only knew that the research was looking at what changes had taken place in their town and how the towns were used today in order for a realistic picture of their lifestyles, knowledge, identities and local and global civic engagement to be obtained. How far Key Informants' prior knowledge that the research was looking at 'globalization and market towns' influenced their answers is difficult to tell, but those interviewed did not appear to have conducted any preliminary research into the subject.

People's understanding of globalization collectively was quite broad, though as individuals, people tended to have an understanding of *a* process of globalization, they were often insecure in their knowledge and comprehension of the topic, asking for reassurance that they had replied correctly and asking for a fuller explanation before they continued (any discussion of what globalization meant only took place after the interviews were over).

The Many Meanings of Globalization in Llangefni

In Llangefni the 'key informants' understood globalization to mean either the connectivity of the global environment or the interconnectivity of people and cultures:

It's the matter where we're using too many cars and airplanes – is that globalization or? ... and our rubbish (Cllr Rhian).

We're part of a global family I suppose, in that the world has become a very small place as you find when you go on holiday. We went with the choir last year to Brittany and because we were Welsh, the welcome we had there was absolutely incredible and they had Welsh names on the houses there and then you think of that link, and it's only down the road these days – Brittany.... I mean if you go on holiday to Italy or somewhere you can walk down the street and see someone you know (Dilwyn).

Something that affects us all, the world, well the earth if you like. It's to do with the environment, it's to do with how we use the resources and the effect those have on the whole of the world (Cllr Roberts).

An awareness of how we are connected globally and an awareness of what is happening in other countries which will inform how you feel about your place in the world standing on Anglesey (Dafydd).

Opinion differed considerably on whether globalization as they understood it affected the local area and local people, but what was also revealed was that the more people talked about the subject the more expansive their understanding of globalization was revealed to be:

Cllr Rhian: Yes because we are not doing enough really are we. People are still using their cars. I remember when there was foot and mouth, they did it in the council where you shared cars, a car pool, with other people from your town, for people working all through Gwynedd and all through Anglesey..., and it was fantastic for that period because it made such a huge difference to the levels of traffic. So I've been asking them if they could do something like a bonus that was linked into sharing your car with somebody else because it could make a difference you know, but they're not interested. You could start something like cycling to school or walking to school, but then we're part of this as well - I don't live very far from the school and we pick them up in a car too.

I: Do you think globalization is affecting the local economy?

Cllr Rhian: Yes in the long run, but people don't see it now do they. There was a survey on the roads done a few months ago, and there were something like 9,000 cars going up and down Llangefni from both directions, so in the long run it does affect, but people don't see it at the time do they.

I wouldn't have thought so, except I suppose you've got a Lidl's store here which is German, the flower shop down here, they get their flowers direct from Holland and then they [the delivery lorries] go to Dublin. Eastman, they do food preservatives there, and part of Eastman was films wasn't it,

well there's an off-shoot of that doing food preservatives and they're an American company. Glanbia Cheese is Irish and they make cheese for the pizza industry (Dilwyn).

No, I can't see where any of those issues have really had an effect on the town, I mean with climate change there are specific areas that appear to be suffering, but as I said to you earlier on, Llangefni floods – it has a river going through it, so you can expect that once every hundred years, that there is going to be a flood. Llangefni tends to be a little bit different because it has a very shallow river, but then people built on it [the flood plain] (Cllr Roberts).

The quotes indicate that there is a considerable disparity in how people relate to the concept of globalization as they understand it to mean, to locally lived lives. There was also what appears to be an insecurity and inconsistency of knowledge of the meaning or meanings of the term globalization.

When the 'key informants' were asked if they felt people in Llangefni were aware of global issues and whether they thought that local people had an understanding of globalization, the general consensus was that people were developing a global environmental awareness, recognising the link between burning fossil fuels when driving their cars and global warming. The only significant observation which was made was that people are now starting to recycle as a result of successful government policy directives implemented by the local authority which have issued households with recycling boxes and have introduced a recycling refuse collection, an activity that many people have reportedly started to take pride in doing.

I would say that Llangefni is very good with environmental issues, because we have got the introduction of these boxes and people take pride in it, they'll take time out every day to sort out their rubbish. Obviously there's hassle as well, you know, with some people refusing to do it, but it's made them more aware (Cllr Rhian).

It's hard to say because the number of people who go to church or chapel have gone down, I think that probably, you could say that maybe morally they're not so strict as they don't attend chapel like when they were young where it used to be hammered into you And the days of sitting round a table having a meal together has gone, you know (Dilwyn).

Generally speaking I say not (Cllr Roberts).

The directive about recycling, I think people are much, much, much more aware of it these days, just because of all the work that's been done. A lot of

the globalization does come to you environmentally, because it is something where we are all connected, so people are making the connection between themselves and driving too much, to the ice caps melting and maybe affecting a third world country, there is that element of the global coming in really strongly like that, but I think what people are really concentrating on is local, they do think local and act local, but they are also starting to think globally as well (Dafydd).

One key informant, who is herself a social scientist and is particularly knowledgeable about globalization, was able to be very reflective about the influence globalization has and is having on Llangefni itself, but felt that the townspeople generally were unable to draw any tangible connection between the local and the global, globalization being something 'out there', something that was opposite to the local and unconnected to their lives:

I suppose you, know, the wider processes of social change do have to filter down into the kind of local – I can see that. Even, if you like, the decline of agriculture in this area, the closure of the cattle market, you could link it back to broader processes and the closure of the shops and the businesses, and all the other concerns and the kind of service industries that have come up – all these things, I think, you can relate to the bigger processes, and the people moving in and kind of commuting and all those things, do and have impacted locally from a wider fence – but I don't know whether people make that link. Like I said to my husband today that you were coming... we were talking about the impact of it all - links between the local and the global in Llangefni and he looked at me and said 'global, here in Llangefni?', it was just like, he was quite taken aback (Kate).

Generally however people's awareness of global issues and understanding of globalization was thought to be low, with little awareness or support for local and global ethical issues such as fair trade, organic or local produce for instance. The reasons given for people's ignorance or lack of engagement with these issues were that people were generally too busy to actively source such products, especially if both partners are working (though the following interviewee specifically referred to women in families now going out to work and so not having the time to shop, clearly still perceiving shopping as being a predominantly female task), and were understood to be generally too busy, too detached and too ignorant of issues to do more than the odd token gesture such as recycling.

Yes, when you do get any problems cropping up, people are aware, some people think the public aren't interested, but they are, they understand and

sympathise with issues such as the ones you've mentioned [fair trade and recycling]... Some people... will make the effort, but I don't know that the percentage will be very high, as the majority of people are working, most families work, so time, we haven't got the time, to volunteer to look for local produce. That's the problem with volunteering really, not just with school thing, but with food and everything really, when you're working full time, with women working, it's more of an issue (Cllr Rhian).

People here generally sort of get on with their lives, they pay sort of token gestures towards things from time to time, like for example, recycling: bottles, clothing or whatever, but generally speaking it is not a priority for most of the people (Cllr Roberts).

I think it's hard to keep in mind what's going on in other places. Recently I went to a conference and it was talking about transnational work and one of the guys there, took a guy from the Rhondda valley (who was complaining all the way over), to Prague; 'why are we going over here?' etc, etc, and once over there he met other people who were having a harder time than he was having in the Rhondda and he came back being a total advocate for, and the strongest one working after that, about this sort of work with other places to get an idea of what it's like for other people. So I think, even though you get news where you find out what's going on in the world, I don't think they get the reality of what it's like in the world. You get a very media-based idea of what's happening, but the reality of it, I think not (Dafydd).

These observations were confirmed when interviewing the citizens who were on the whole very ignorant of what globalization meant and nearly a third of the interviewees said that they didn't understand what globalization meant at all or felt that the word didn't actually mean anything, it being a bureaucratic term used by politicians and made comments like: "Not a clue – a posh word for world-wide?", "it means nothing" and "there never used to be any of this crap until the EU started". Most other people had a vague idea of what globalization meant, with the exception of a couple of elderly women who were interviewed together and who had a broader understanding of its meaning referring to global warming, global telecommunications and global interconnectivity. They were very animated on the subject feeling very sceptical of the agendas behind media and political portrayals of cultures and differences:

Well it's global warming (Mrs Thomas).

Yes and the world is getting smaller and communities are communicating via technology. Communication – we should all be coming together but unfortunately there is a lot of growing up to be done in relation to countries and the sooner America realises this the better (Mrs Evans).

Yes, I'm not in favour of US policies – can't stand the man (Mrs Thomas).

Sceptical of the media and their portrayal of people and cultures and difference – it's the politicians that make it horrible (Mrs Evans).

We're all becoming more global, look at Llangollen, there's now international attendance of the Eisteddfod – joined in the arts (Mrs Thomas).

The citizens who were interviewed had a limited understanding of globalization, thinking it had something to do with the environment and were unable to expand further on their short answers such as: “Eco-friendly in a way and the carbon footprint”, “the big hole in the Ozone layer – environmental problems”, “the weather” and “something to do with the atmosphere”. When asked if they felt globalization influenced their lives or the local area, the responses were very interesting and revealed that most felt that it did not and only two respondents recognised that there was a relationship between their actions (and the actions of human beings in general) and the environment with one interviewee saying that he turns his TV stand-by off and another interviewee stating that “Well it's [globalization] bound to be having an effect now really – unless everybody becomes involved, every county has to become involved in this. As for affecting the town, well the traffic still goes through – the carbon emissions and everything” (Angharad). Two other interviewees meanwhile passionately replied that globalization was having a negative influence on people's lives because of losing income abroad and illegal immigrants taking local jobs:

Yes, because we have to pay for the third-world countries and keep people in jobs, in government offices (William) (he was resentful of this fact).

Yes – it affects all of us – illegal immigrants (Mike).

These comments reveal a further lack of understanding of and scepticism about the concept of globalization. It appeared also that apart from the one respondent, who turned his TV standby off to conserve energy consumption, the only activity that all other interviewees participated in was recycling, primarily by most it seems, because they have to, judging by comments such “we have to recycle, so we do it – but only because we have to” (Jones).

The 'key informants' did reveal however that there was a growing awareness locally of global issues with the promotion of fair-trade, organic and local food production within the local school and in the Council, giving an indication that targeting schools and young people in particular, is an effective technique to not only educate children, but through them and their involvement, educate the wider community.

I know the Co-op sell fair trade and a little girl in school was telling me all about fair trade because they were doing something in the local school about fair trade at one time and they had to collect some fair trade wrappers and the health shop sells some (Kate).

I can't say about organic, because it's only a small percentage of people who, you know, who are interested. There was a meal in the school yesterday made from all organic food from Anglesey... but I can't say that I know a lot about people who pick only organic food. Like fair-trade issues, I know what they are (Cllr Rhian).

The Oxfam shop does sell some fair-trade items, and to be fair I think the Council as well has recognised this fact and there's a café in the Council offices that also promotes the use of fair-trade goods and commodities (Cllr Roberts).

But you know, with education in schools and the university wanting to do some work in school and with communities at the moment, setting up workshops, bringing that awareness in and I think that people locally would really appreciate that kind of work because younger people are open to new ideas and working with other people. I think a global consciousness would be welcome, but at the moment I think it's very difficult to keep a total broad perspective of your place in this big world all the time but there are elements of awareness that get triggered every now and again. People forget that we are on a globe, you know, in a big universe (Dafydd).

Amongst local business owners the understanding of globalization was far more comprehensive and in sharp contrast to the 'citizens'. This social group understood globalization to mean far more than just the interconnectivity of the global environment, but also of economies, technologies and consumable goods and were far more able, because of their business positions, to see and feel the economic and policy influences and effects of globalization locally.

The easiest way to say it is: it's the opposite to local and parochial. It's easier to describe what it isn't than what it is. What it is and the consequences of what it is, is all these multiple things that come together, whether it's size, whether it's modern-ness, whether it's impersonal, back to

this business of being disenfranchised, and it's a bit easy to look at it in terms of all the negatives, and not in terms of the fact that I am wearing Portuguese shoes, a Chinese shirt and drive a Japanese car and all the rest of it, so it's really easy to go 'oh isn't it terrible because of all these naughty things that we are all aware of', rather than saying 'I really don't want to live in the 1950s again (Geoff).

Oh I understand it very well, but has it got an answer? I don't know? I mean, you see in this country that we're going to do this, we're going to do that, for example in Paris now you can't even smoke in the street – isn't it amazing! As long as every nation on the globe does the same, it is no point for one group doing that and all the rest like China and America pumping shit up into the sky and there's no point in millions of people going on holiday jumping on a plane every season... well, where does it go, all that pollution. Somebody said this has happened before, 2000 years ago, but then there wasn't this kind of civilization (Fred).

Discussions about the influence globalization is having on the town and on their business was wide-ranging, covering issues such as how imported foreign timber is unsuited to the British climate, products no longer being made in the UK, sending scrap to China for recycling and the internet, as it enables people to “shop from home” and undercut shop prices. In response to this, one furniture shop owner has taken to de-branding his products by cutting off the manufacturer's labels off the furniture he buys so that people can't compare prices between the items sold in his shop and the same items sold on the internet. Globalization's influence on Llangefni was summed up by one shop owner as:

Llangefni is the market town of Anglesey and no longer is quite the focus for all this parochial dealing and trading and all the social structure that goes with it, because so many things are now commodities and our lamb comes from New Zealand and our tomatoes come from Argentina and whatever rather than from Llangefni Market, on the site of which [the old cattle market] we now have Asda, which is quite poetic really (Geoff).

Several business owners were aware of fair-trade issues, but reflected the observation of the key informants and citizens that there was not a demand for or awareness of, fair-trade products in the town, with one shop owner cynically remarking that “people don't want to know where it's sourced or whether children are making them and are slaves. I try and buy British and a lot of companies are now advertising themselves as British” (Rhys).

What was also revealing about awareness of and engagement with local or global issues in Llangefni is that the owner of the town's health food shop (which is a type of food-outlet that is commonly associated with selling a variety of goods that cater for several ethical objectives such as fair trade, vegetarian, vegan, organic, local etc), explained that:

We sell some fair-trade, but we have never been asked for it. We are regularly asked for organic, but by quite a small minority... People do want local flour, local honey, but it's a fairly gentle attitude, they express that they would like something to be local but the emotion, if it's not available, isn't strong (Geoff).

One local garage owner was particularly informed and interested in globalization issues, feeling particularly strongly about the importance of buying fair-trade, discussing in-depth that he knew that parts for cars were often made in sweat-shop conditions in places like China, leaving him little or no choice than having to purchase goods that were likely to have been produced in unethical working conditions. Siôn also recognised how policy directives associated with the environment are linked to globalization as he explains:

Years ago, you would pour your anti-freeze down the drain, but now you have to dispose of it safely, as it has very pollutant chemicals in it. Not all businesses follow these guidelines though, which undermines the attempts of others. These businesses need to be brought in to line. I have a seven year old daughter and it is her future and her environment that I am concerned about and have a responsibility towards (Siôn).

Siôn recognised how globalization was affecting the local area but added: "Yes, but a lot of the town's people would most probably not know anything about it" (Siôn), explaining that being from a farming background he was familiar with farming practices and that despite the farmers' market no longer taking place in Llangefni, it is still a rural town surrounded by numerous farms and as such he often gets farmers coming into his garage asking for old tyres: "I explain that to them, that I can't give them any if they are going to use them to burn gorse because of how pollutant it is and illegal, but they give me a wry smile and say that it's for weighing down silage which is legal, but everyone concerned knows that they are really going to be used for burning gorse" (Siôn).

The recycling policy for cardboard and electrical goods was also heavily criticized by business owners, who felt that having to pay for their cardboard and electrical goods to be taken away for recycling was a disincentive for small businesses to recycle and was felt to be an additional financial burden on many already financially vulnerable small businesses.

We recycle cardboard – well, we try to anyway. But there again you see it's not encouraging, you have to pay to get rid of our empty boxes...we used to offer them to the companies that deliver them... but nobody seems interested in having them back. They should do more to encourage us, they should help, especially small businesses, it's such a struggle these days, between your rent, your rates, your water, gas, it's gone and things like that (Ffion).

There was a further additional inconvenience with the collection of electrical goods, as one electrical repairs shop owner explained that the collection companies would only collect a certain quantity of items at a time, causing an additional storage problem for small premises.

People's understanding of the term 'globalization' reflected the range of issues the concepts encapsulates but the respondents understanding on the whole was limited often only to one or two specific issues, such as the environment or global interconnectivity. What was most apparent was the differences in knowledge between the interview groups, with the 'key informants' and 'business people' having a far deeper understanding of globalization than the 'citizens', reflecting perhaps the general education and class differences between the interview categories. For the 'citizens' the 'local' and the 'global' remain very separate concepts. It was only really the 'business people', and to a lesser degree, the 'key informants' who recognised how globalization was affecting the market town and people's lives, and specifically for the 'business people', because of how it impacted upon their trade.

Llangefni appears to be developing a global environmental awareness, but as one of the interviewees above stated, people generally "think local and act local" (Dafydd), and wider global or ethical issues (such as fair trade, organic or buying local) were for the most part, left un-contemplated by people (if they were aware of the issues at all) but

they were certainly not considered a priority and global issues appear disconnected from their local life-worlds. Where global activity did occur, it was largely by doing the recycling, an activity that some felt was important, whilst others partook in the activity because of Council directives.

The Many Meanings of Globalization in Machynlleth

In a report for the Consumer Council of Wales on “Consumer’s Attitudes to Sustainable Consumption in Wales” (CCW 2004), Machynlleth was earmarked as an example of best-practice for sustainable community initiatives for the UK, since a high level of awareness of environmental sustainability was found amongst its residents, particularly on issues such as recycling, which the report concluded “*had become a social norm in the community*” (Ibid: 45), largely as a result of the awareness raising and community initiatives carried out by the Centre for Alternative Technology and Ecodyfi (BBC News 10/8/2004, Ecodyfi 2/8/2004). Awareness of and engagement with local and global issues in the town was very apparent at the onset of conducting research in the town, though the interview results revealed certain disparities in knowledge between the different social groups.

In Machynlleth globalization was understood by the key informants to mean homogenisation, interconnectivity of people and cultures, and countries becoming part of a global market. Some key informants on the other hand did not know what the term meant or believed it did not mean anything, it being a term used by politicians and business people to sound knowledgeable and justify their actions:

Do you know what, we were talking about this, and for me it was the world’s a smaller place and we’ve got the internet and all the rest of the technology, videos, phones and everything and the big stores are all over the world so the world seems a smaller place. But I don’t think it’s like that around here. Most cities and towns now all look the same with the same shops in them, but not here (Patricia).

The culture has become broader, because of the new ideas that are coming in and the mixing of the old and the new ideas together (Cllr Davies).

Businesses and people coming in from abroad, like in the local hospital the doctors are Indian, well, where would we be if they didn’t come here and fill these jobs (Daisy).

Global is the world, how it's done – I don't know (Fiona).

Absolutely nothing – a term to be used by certain people to justify things (Jacky).

Globalization was seen as influencing the town through changes in the tourist industry, with a different holiday clientele now coming to Machynlleth, for example, those looking for a short break or interested in outdoor activities such as mountain biking. The previous tourist market had generally been families coming for their annual holiday by the sea, a market that was now seen as going abroad instead. A Communities First worker had recognised how globalization had changed the farming industry, forcing it to become increasingly bureaucratized as a result of increasing global trade. A few meanwhile were unable to comment on how globalization had affected the town, this seemed largely due to being insecure about what globalization meant and because the town had managed to retain its predominantly independent status:

It's changed the tourism market, so the traditional seaside holiday is in decline, the people who used to do that now go abroad, to a certain amount the retail sector, though we have been relatively protected from that... People travel further for entertainment now than they used to... much less though than in most areas – there is still a lot of home grown stuff going on (Richard).

The farming community – there's more and more form filling... in farming today and health and safety... that's something that wouldn't be seen a few years ago, so that's made a difference and it's made a difference in what kind of businesses can be run from home today (Les).

Probably, but I wouldn't know (Fiona).

Generally speaking the key informants perceived people in Machynlleth to be more aware of global issues than the average person because of the influence of the Centre for Alternative Technology, the people who live locally who are associated with the centre and Ecodyfi. The knowledge of the town's key informants reflected the knowledge of the town's people, with some knowing a great deal about globalization whilst others knew very little and this split in knowledge tended to be representative of the two main social groups in the town: the indigenous 'Welsh' 'townspeople' and the 'English' 'townspeople' (many of whom were associated in some way with the CAT).

Though awareness of and participation in recycling, in particular, and fair trade generally, were considered to be widespread as the CCW report found:

Fiona: We've got the recycling place and when the rubbish men come round you know, they are collecting recycling and schools are doing it and so that's empowering the children then as well, not just the parents, but there's a lot of packages on a lot of things these days and it's easier to just throw them in the bin isn't it, but it's piling up somewhere then and so we all need do it .

Patricia: The environment thing, Powys County Council provide us with two different refuse sacks: one for paper and the other for tins and things, and I was doing that religiously, but then you run out of bags and I would say 'I want some more bags for the paper' and they'd say, 'well, we haven't got any'. Powys County Council should be putting more into that shouldn't they?

Cllr Rowlands: Yes my friend's got a wheely bin for compost and garden stuff, and we haven't got that here yet.

Patricia: No, so Powys Council, how are you going to get people doing things if you're not doing things properly?

Rose: There's a growing awareness, you know with the fair trade.

I: is that supported by mainly the CAT community or local people?

Patricia: No, no, it's local. A lot of the businesses sell fair trade coffee, and you know they've had lots of petitions and things and it's been well supported, so people are aware of what the implications of what fair trade's all about.

I: who buys local fair-trade and organic produce?

Fiona: Poorer people can't afford it. The CAT people tend to go down that line more.

What is revealed here is that active community involvement, through public campaigns and education awareness programmes in schools, appears to be effective in engaging and informing the local community and generate a desire in some to improve services further. Though, as the last interview extract indicates, the affordability of products is a prohibitive factor that prevents people on lower incomes from purchasing local, fair-trade or organic goods even if they wanted to. What is revealed from speaking to local citizens and business owners however, is that whilst cost is a prohibitive factor for

people on low incomes, the demand for local, fair-trade, organic and vegetarian products etc in the town is high.

Those key informants who had close links to and were often part of the indigenous Welsh townspeople had a very different perspective on how aware people were of global issues, revealing at the onset that many people in Machynlleth were generally considered to be fairly knowledgeable about global issues, but at the same time it was emphasised by these key informants that the 'local' Welsh population were primarily focused on local issues:

More than average, I do know that the Wales Consumer Council tried to find evidence of those living in the UK in sustainable development. They had a bit of focus groups around Wales, including one in Machynlleth, and they found that there was a very high level of awareness of environmental and ethical issues (Richard).

Obviously people do care about what happens in other parts of the world... and it is responded to and people do care about the environment, especially here and we know that's a global issue, but I do think underlying all that, mainly people are very much concerned with local issues, so of course they are aware and they do care, because it does impact them (Cllr Rowlands).

The traditional Welsh trait, your heart comes from your family and your land and you will protect both of those with your life.... so where as you may have sympathy with those who have problems elsewhere, you may not necessarily be able to have the time or the attitude to do anything about it (Jacky).

Knowledge of globalization was however broader and deeper on the whole than was indicated by the key informants, with most 'citizens' interviewed having *an* understanding of what globalization means and there were fewer people who did not know what the term meant, than was the case in Llangefni. The definitions that people gave however again revealed an uncertainty of what the term 'globalization' means and the variations of knowledge and understanding people generally have of the concept. Some were very informed (for example Shirley below, who was familiar with the argument that globalization is not a new thing, but a new word to describe the processes of global trade and communication and cultural exchange that has been happening for centuries), whilst others had a very limited understanding or did not know what it meant. For those who did have *an* understanding of 'globalization', it was generally

understood to mean: global community, integration of countries and cultures, technological developments, development of communication technologies, global trade and the global environment and a new word for an old movement:

I think most people would look at you and go 'what'? But I think people need to wakeup and smell the coffee. Ok we are in a little bit of rural Wales, but there is going to come a time in the not too distant future-, yes they need to step off their box and they need to know a bit more (Tina).

Quite aware I would say - Countries of the world and their economies really (Beryl).

Well I understand it as referring to trading globally I suppose, whatever that means, exchanging information, objects or money and favours (Nat).

Globalization would mean one community within the world (Daniel).

I think globalization is countries becoming more integrated over the years because of trade and technologies and things like that (Lauren).

It's the different countries in the world, how and what they do and what we use affects everybody – the whole world not just them (Tina).

It doesn't exist – it's always been going on (like the East Indian Company) – it's like Al Qaeda, it's a movement rather than a group. I'm familiar with when Tesco's open 379 jobs go (Shirley).

Globalization in my opinion is that we can contact anybody anywhere at any time (Cllr Rowlands).

Moving around all over the world (Wayne).

One company all over the world (Aaron).

Like the environment, too many cars on the road, would that be what it means? (Eirlys).

Similar to the perception of many of the 'key informants', for some citizens, globalization was not perceived as particularly affecting the town in any way. Many people felt that it probably was affecting the town, but were unable to identify how and could only make speculations based on their understanding of what globalization referred to:

No, bigger places yes, but not here... It's got to be seen as a positive but then you've got to get everybody to abide by the same laws and rules and

religions and so it all becomes a mess, which is why I don't do politics (Daniel).

I don't really know really, we've got things like the supermarket and you can get stuff in there from all over the world, you can get clothes here, all sorts of lovely things and bits of plastic that are made in China, and you can probably buy wood that has come from a Malaysian Rainforest, I mean I don't know that, but if I think about it, at the rate it's being chopped down and we are the consumers, I presume we must be using all that stuff (Nat).

It does yes, because I've grandchildren being brought up and what we do now could affect their lives later on (Eirlys).

It might do, yes, on various issues like global warming (Sheila).

It can help the town by advertising the town on the net and someone from Australia coming to visit the town, so yes it has its advantages in that area (Cllr Rowlands).

I liked it as it was years ago to be honest with you. I don't like it expanding and houses going up, that does frighten me a little bit to be honest, because the more people you get the bigger the crime rate, the drugs problem and that frightens me. I have a little boy and I want him to grow up on the mountain side like I did, like my mum used to leave her key in the door, but now I'm locking the door, making sure your windows are closed, your car's locked. It's quite troubling really, you think, oh my god what's happening to the town, it does scare me (Judith).

But when people were asked if they felt that globalization influenced or affected their life in any way, the responses were far more definite as people were able to articulate much more clearly, illustrating how some people perceive there to be an interaction between themselves and global influences. Globalization was often spoken of in terms of an external force, which affects individuals often indirectly; though many did see themselves as being a cog in the wheel of a movement for example, helping the environment by recycling and saving energy, buying and campaigning for fair trade, organic or local produce etc. For others meanwhile, even if they had an understanding of globalization, they could not relate their knowledge of the term to how it might be affecting their lives.

Yes, it must do. It must influence what I buy, what is available to me. It influences the economy, it influences lots of things like travel – lots of things I imagine (Lauren).

Yes, it has influenced my life, because we live in a modern society and we are right in there, Britain is right in there, in this whole globalization, being one of the most richest, wealthiest, most active countries in the world ... so you can't not really be involved in it (Nat).

I think it does indirectly because we are all trying to do our bit by conserving energy and recycling (Tina).

Yes, as on a bigger scale, people are making a decision about people's lives that weren't voted in. The Iraq war... It means that when I came here there were no Welsh cheeses in the Co-op and so you nag them and nag them and nag them, and because somebody in Manchester is making the decisions, so you nag them and get 300 signatures to get them to sell local produce (Shirley).

Once again, as we saw in Llangefni, the knowledge of local business owners was far more comprehensive than was revealed in the other two interview categories and particularly in understanding the economic influences globalization is having on small independent businesses themselves. They were particularly aware of economic pressures, finding it hard to compete with multi-national high-street chains and supermarkets. They were also far more aware of where the merchandise they sold was produced and of the possibility of their being made in unethical sweat-shop conditions. Trade in general was now perceived of as being global in both workforce and production, with most feeling very vulnerable as independent business owners.

Globalization, I suppose, is the fact that, as far as I am concerned, we as a country are not very competitive now, well, manufacturing in this country is on its backside isn't it? I was reading an article the other day, it was looking at manufacturing in this country and it cost £17 or more to employ somebody, before they start earning anything, and in China and India it unfortunately costs £1.60 so... We'll probably be on the same system eventually, but at the moment it is difficult (Tomos).

McDonalds on the corner of every street - the big five companies taking over the world, squeezing out small producers, on a micro-economic situation it's terribly disenfranchised by the multi national globalization (Joe).

I don't understand it at all, I am not even going to pretend to you that I know (Frank).

Globalization is the big companies, like Coke, quite negative, somebody said that you 'buy local think global'. If everyone did things in their own country there'd be less carbon footprint and people here are queuing up for a

job you know and where things are made, like in India, I don't now how they're treated (Tudor).

There are more than one strand, the economic where the world's becoming one market and it's much easier to travel and to move around, so you're seeing much more multicultural work forces, for example in a small town like Machynlleth, we've got 31 employees here and I would say that probably a third of them are not local or are not British (Lewis).

The diverse levels of knowledge between different people in the town was reflected throughout all the interviews conducted, with some people having a very limited knowledge, whilst others had a very expansive understanding of globalization. As one shop-owner explained, "We have a highly educated population here and lots of people come from other places" (Charlotte). This can be illustrated in the very comprehensive explanation of what globalization means that another local business owner provided, particularly in relation to the homogenization of locations by corporate brands:

I see globalization on different levels really. I see that the ever growing power of supermarkets in this country is globalization... Tesco are trying to push their way in...to many... towns. I see that when they offer something to the community, I see it as a bribe, to move a school, say in Porthmadog so that they could have the space and so they build another and at the end of the day they do very well out of it. For them to build another school is small change. It's basically that they're so powerful and stronger than the council who make the planning decisions because they have such a powerful machine to push things through that the Council don't have money and they're often not able to fight them. I see globalization on that level, I see it also in other countries; in India I see the effects of the growing middle class economy which is creating a lot of shopping malls and a lot of different companies are moving into there. I don't see it as being healthy long-term, seeing a McDonalds in every country in the world, in India they have very good local food and I think it's a shame really that Pepsi, Coca Cola and all these big names throughout the world... In France they have some anti-competition laws where they do protect a lot of smaller businesses there and I think we have to start looking at that here in the UK as the small grocery shops have all but disappeared ...and so there will be no wholesalers left to supply the ones that are remaining...We are also not creating the incentives for people to not use their vehicles, especially in a town like this, because people need their cars to travel in, travelling by bike, yes, there are cycle routes, but there are not enough of them, it's not safe to go on the roads with a bike. So I would say that if you look locally you see the effect of globalization, the different aspects of it and by the time people realise the repercussions it has already happened, it's too late (Frank).

Globalization's influence on the town was again felt to be limited, as a result of mainly two factors: 1) because of the relative lack of high-street global chain-stores and supermarkets, though the awareness of Tesco wanting to establish a supermarket in the town or nearby was very high and was seen as very threatening: 2) because of there being a concerted effort by most businesses that were interviewed to support local businesses, creating for themselves and the town as a whole, a niche business opportunity of providing individualized services, through providing locally made produce. The promotion of local produce also fitted in neatly with the broader global context and argument of the "buy local, think global" ethos, aimed at promoting global ethical and environmental awareness and to promote sustainable local economies, which also incorporates fair-trade principles and organic farming methods.

I think the vitality of the market and things, even though we have quite a good market here, they are not as good as they used to be – certainly in other towns, there is more vitality to this one, probably because it's a smaller town and less shops here, I think it is probably not affecting Machynlleth so much, probably other towns more so (Frank).

People think that organics are more expensive, but then they are much more labour intensive. Cheap is bad for the environment, people often don't think of that issue".... Globalization doesn't influence the town "not really - yet, because there are not that many really global companies in here – not yet anyway. Tescos are wanting to come into this area and until that point globalization might be a normal feature down the road but not here (Joe).

For example, the Wynnstay Hotel promotes its restaurant as selling 'home made' food, sourced locally (where possible); the owners of the delicatessen also have an organic farm (reportedly the first in the local area) and try and buy all their produce from within a hundred mile radius; the jeweller makes much of his own jewellery; and the CAT-owned quarry café and shop promote fair-trade, organic, vegetarian and locally made food.

The pressure of economic globalization was revealed further when business owners were asked if they believed globalization was influencing their business, principally the increasing competition from chain-shops. The benefits of global communication and travel were recognised by a couple of business owners in helping to advertise the town and the Centre for Alternative Technology to people from the rest of Britain and overseas and in enabling CAT to promote itself as a leading institution in renewable

energy. For one interviewee however, the question evoked a very passionate response against attention being focused away from the local; in his opinion people's attention and efforts should be directed towards the local.

Yes I think so, we certainly aren't as busy as we were three years ago, there has been a down-turn in retail, but there is other factors as well; the internet selling, the opening of larger shops, big, big garden centres, it all has a knock-on effect, it chips away. That, and the down-turn in the economy itself, retail is really suffering in the country at the moment, not the supermarkets, but certainly in the small independents. It's not just to do with competition, but is to do with property prices, leases – rental prices going up quite a lot, which is making it very difficult for many, for a lot of people, and then with the down-turn and there's not enough business and increases in rent and rates as well – it's a lot of pressure (Frank).

Oh yes, yes, it's a lot more competitive in a lot of ways isn't it.. We've just taken on a Honda dealership now, which is a new thing to us because that will take a few years for us to build up a new customer base (Tomos).

I'm a socialist but I think it [globalization] will happen whether I like it or not, I just have to make the best of it I can... the global market is here to stay. It must affect Machynlleth, it's inevitable, we're a living thing and not a museum and we must adapt as well... We make use of an organization for overseas marketing. As a chef, I have travelled all over the world. I would say that most of our customers are British, but there is an awareness of our overseas market... and the CAT, people come from all over the world to look at CAT and study its blue-print (or green print, if you like) and globalization has made that access easier – that's the positive side. The negative side of course is where companies outsource to wherever labour is cheaper – that's the down side of it where local people lose out (Lewis).

Now this is another issue here, I get angry with statisticians, we go all of a sudden from local to global, now how can something improve or influence something that's in Machynlleth, your talking about different continents, different cultures. I am concerned and if I had a little money left I would possibly send it to Peru, but my predominance is that Machynlleth is sorted out right and proper and, you know, there is an old phrase which says 'charity begins at home', that is true. You know when we had big floods in Carlisle a few years ago, did the people in China and Peru, did they have little boxes going round for the flood victims in Carlisle – I don't think so. But if something happens away from the UK, we tend to give clothes, give this, give that (Cledwyn).

The interviews with the business owners revealed the influence of their customer base. It was the people in the town who were largely associated with the Centre for Alternative Technology (a large proportion of whom were well educated), who were

more globally aware and more pro-active in their experience. Local businesses were reportedly often asked about certain products, such as the availability of buying bio-fuel at the garage, whether the hairdressers used hair products that were not tested on animals, or were aware of people boycotting certain products such as Nestle, because of a company's unethical reputation. Awareness amongst the town's indigenous people of global issues was however seen to be increasing as a result of the awareness-raising work of the CAT, the Dyfi Valley for Fair-trade campaign and the work of Ecodyfi. The influence of these organisations and campaigns and the general 'buy local to support local' ethos that exists within the town, has been seen to be encouraging the local 'indigenous population' to also participate in the purchasing of local, fair trade and organic produce:

We get asked for bio-fuel from time-to-time, but not a great deal (Tomos).

People are very aware about supporting local...There's a growing number of local people. There's the Quarry shop that's run by the Technology centre and it surprises me sometimes how many Welsh local people I see in there. The shop and the café are sometimes seen as hippy places and they're vegetarian, so a lot of people are going to go 'oh, no meat, that's rabbit food, you know', so you won't find many vegetarians amongst the local population I suspect, I think they'd be rather suspicious of a vegetarian café (Charlotte and Emrys).

Yes, local people come in [to the Quarry shop] to get their eggs and bread and honey, or special food, obviously less health food, the ones into health food are primarily people from the CAT community (Joseph).

I think those at CAT for example, make every effort to integrate... so there's an inevitable rubbing off, a certain amount of cross fertilization of awareness of certain issues (Lewis).

Joe: They boycott certain products, people are a lot more globally aware in this area and because of the Cat centre"... our old business used to deal all round the world - been there, done that. Now it feels like it's time to get back down to basics and very local, very close-knit, a lot of our products come from a hundred mile radius.

I: Do you feel that it is the indigenous people of the incomers who are concerned about these issues predominantly?

Joe: No, no, it's the incomers. We run an organic farm, we were the first local farm to go organic and I'm the one who goes out and talks about it, I'm the one who gives lectures and things, know more about the heritage and I've only been here 15 years. In one way they all really care about the

language and the culture, but they are completely indifferent about the environment – they just want to make as much money as possible from the land without thinking about the long-term effects for the next generations. And they're the ones who, I know that with property being high, they don't have to take that vast amount of money for their houses, they don't have to do it. (meaning that indigenous Welsh people should sell houses to each other at reduced rates in order to keep house prices down for local people).

As we have seen therefore, people in Machynlleth are generally informed about what the term 'globalization' means and have a fairly broad understanding of the concept. The main focus for many, especially the town's business community, was the threat of corporate globalization, homogenization and the inequalities associated with global trade and the connection between local actions having global consequences, was widely recognised. A large proportion of those interviewed were dedicated to activities such recycling, buying local, organic or fair-trade. There did appear however to be a divergence in perspectives and knowledge between the town's Welsh population and the social group who are affiliated with the Centre for Alternative Technology, the former being less well informed and more locally focused in general than the latter.

Machynlleth was not felt to have been adversely affected by the negative connotations of globalization that most people focused on, and was instead seen as remaining relatively independent from and unaffected by the aggressive forces of 'globalization', though the threat was ever-present and the preservation of the town's independence from high-street brands appeared to be a major motivating factor behind many people's actions.

Conclusion

People's focus in Llangefni is primarily therefore local, with little engagement with or understanding of what 'globalization' is or means. Life for most remains place-centred and the local remains detached from the global in people's perceptions of their life-worlds, even if they engage with the processes of globalization on a daily basis.

In Machynlleth people are far more actively engaged in participating within some of the processes of globalization, having on average a much more sophisticated understanding of globalization, having a high degree of awareness of the interconnectivity between the local and the global, facilitated largely by the education awareness initiatives of

organizations such as the CAT and Ecodyfi, incorporating into their life-styles and decisions considerations about local and global consequences to their actions (environmental, ethical and economic). The influence of big-business is deliberately resisted within Machynlleth by many of its residents through supporting local businesses and often juggling a tight budget with their personal beliefs so as to live responsibly and support their local economy (for example, by supporting local, fair-trade and organic).

Social class, income, education and life experience appear to be pivotal in peoples' understanding of and engagement with globalization; the ability to access information, to use information and to travel, facilitates a deeper understanding of the processes. Findings that were particularly reflected in the variations in knowledge between the interview groups, with 'key informants' and 'business owners' (who were proportionately more educated than the 'citizens') having on average a greater understanding of globalization than the 'citizens'. A deeper understanding of globalization appears to provide people with a greater ability to resist the negative elements of globalization. Residents and businesses appear to have more interaction with and control over their town's development. People seem more empowered as citizens.

What also emerged from the interviews was the success or potential of education awareness initiatives or certain policy directives such as recycling, as many interviewees from both towns endorsing such schemes, their success being more evident in Machynlleth through the work of organisations such as the CAT, Ecodyfi and the fair-trade group, but the education programmes conducted in Llangefni primary school and the compulsory recycling policy of Ynys Môn County Council appears to be gaining support. Though the costs involved for small business to be responsible by recycling equipment or cardboard was viewed as being unfair and prohibitive by businesses in both towns.

CHAPTER 7

The Importance of Community and Identity

In order to gain a deeper understanding people's relationship with the local and the global and before proceeding to explore whether people perceived themselves as having local or global civic responsibilities, we must first learn more about the people who live and work in the two market towns.

Distinctions between the different sections of each town's populations were very apparent within the interviews and the distinctions between the social groups were clearly an important indicator of affiliation for the townspeople themselves; though how these narratives and descriptions of the different social groups emerged from the interviews in each town was very different, as was the visibility of the different groups. In Llangefni, for instance, if you walked around the town as a visitor, there were no very obvious differentiations between people to indicate different social groups, whilst in Machynlleth, the differences between social groups was very apparent at the onset with different members of the community wearing markedly different clothing, hair styles, accessories and body language. Social and cultural engagement was closely associated with which social group people belonged to, and though the life-worlds of the towns' communities did of course overlap, they still remained on the whole distinguished from one another.

Although it would be misleading to say that everyone fits into *a* social group, what emerged from the interviews was that the majority of people were keen to identify themselves with a social group and were able to discern several other social groups that existed in the towns. These social groups appeared at times to be formed along Maffesoli's (1996) depiction of 'neotribes'. 'Neotribes', Maffesoli argues are social networks formed around common interests and beliefs and people's desire to belong to a community based on the sharing of 'feelings'. The need to belong is so important that people are "prepared to dissolve their personality into such groupings, which provide them with warmth and companionship" (Day 2006: 222). These 'neotribes' appear, as Putnam argues, to "offer an antidote to social disconnection" (Day 2006: 222) and are often very discernable through what they wear, how they behave, how they talk;

symbolism that make them both inclusive and exclusive to those who don't belong. However, although most respondents did not affiliate their identity or community along social class lines, many of the social groups were formed along economic and educational affiliations, so where Maffesoli's argument of the establishment of 'neotribes' may be useful, it appears also that social structures of age and class are still relevant in understanding community and identity.

Many of the issues experienced in Llangefni's Bro-Tudur council estate and the perceptions held in the town about the tenants who live there echo much of what Damer reported in his 1989 book *From Moorepark to 'Wine Alley'* which discussed how many council estates had become synonymous as areas with disaffected families and have evolved into 'ghettos' where "the estates come to be used by local authorities as 'dumping grounds' for thoroughly 'unsatisfactory' tenants or 'problem', 'unsuitable' and 'unsatisfactory' families and individuals... [that results] in the flight of any 'respectables' left in the neighbourhood" (Damer 1989: 19), a situation that is further compounded by all but the desperate refusing accommodation offered to them in such locations. The poor who live in these deprived 'problem' areas are thus stigmatised and seen as different from people and families who live elsewhere. Categories that Damer argues are representative of bourgeoisie ideology that seeks to organize and ascertain the compliance of the working class "to participate in a fundamentally unequal society under the guise of a democracy" (Ibid: 23). In line with what Damer concludes, the results from this research reveal that 'the working class' is not an homogenous group, but is split into race, religion, gender, respectability and so on (Ibid: 169), that there are differentiations between localities and people within the towns who are from predominantly working-class backgrounds, who hold different ideological perspectives and cultural practices from each other.

The narratives and discussions of the social groups and the themes that emerged from the interviews are reflective of the perspectives held and the perceptions of reality that the sample populations from both towns had. Their narratives must therefore be understood to be reflective of their views rather than as evidence of a reality or of any agenda of my own. In Llangefni, for example, there was a higher level of stigmatization and concern about the residents on the Bro-Tudur council estate, whilst in Machynlleth, very little reference or stigmatization of an economically disadvantaged group was

made. I would speculate that the reason for this is that in Llangefni, the disadvantaged Bro Tudur ward which houses the large 'problem' council estate, makes up approximately a third of the town; the Machynlleth council estate meanwhile is comparatively small, making poverty and social disaffection experienced by many in Llangefni an obvious feature that adds further to the problems that the people interviewed already feel the town has. Whilst in Machynlleth it is not necessarily the case that these issues do not also exist, but that the other social groups in the town are more apparent and people's more positive experiences of living in the town has resulted in those interviewees focussing on other forms of group diversification and issues. As a result, there appears to be far less working class differentiation and stigmatization occurring than in Llangefni. It would have been interesting to conduct a deeper exploration of the town's cultures and communities, but it was not in the scope of this research and its focus is primarily on people's *perceptions* of the local and the global. The views expressed did appear however to be typical of the towns' various social groups.

Llangefni - the Decline of Community

Community and Identity in Llangefni

Over 80% of Llangefni's population speak Welsh fluently according to the 2001 Census and most of those who speak it, do so as a first language. This was reflected in the interview sample obtained from Llangefni where the majority of interviewees spoke Welsh as their first language. Interviewees were given the choice of which language they wanted their interviews to be conducted in, though an explanation was given (usually in Welsh), that although I understood the language fluently, the more complex articulation of questions and explanations needed in conducting the interview solely through the medium of Welsh might have proved occasionally difficult and interviewees were asked if they minded if at times I would be interviewing them in 'pidgin Welsh' or what is locally known as 'Wenglish', (a mix of both Welsh and English words). Using the odd English word within a Welsh dialogue is not uncommon and in areas of Wales has become common practice, though admittedly not as extensively mixed as my dialogue could be at times. Some interviews were conducted

periodically in Welsh or bilingually, though the majority of interviews were conducted in English.

A significant example of the importance of group identities emerged after an interview was arranged with a local pub bar-tender who introduced me to some of the regular customers who she thought might also be willing to participate in the interview. There were initially a couple of retired gentlemen at the bar who, before agreeing to participate, first established my own group identity, before they were willing to proceed with the interview (and have been categorised below under the heading of ‘Welsh and from Llangefni group’). The interview went as follows:

Welsh and from Llangefni group

“Wy ti’n Cymraeg” (are you Welsh), to which I replied Yes. I was then asked; “Wy ti’n Taff. ta Gog.”, meaning are you from South Wales (Taffy being a nickname for people from South Wales) or from North Wales (Gogledd, meaning North). After distinguishing that I was from North Wales and spoke Welsh, the questioning then proceeded to determine if I was therefore from Ynys Môn or the mainland. To which my answer was the mainland. And finally my social class status was tested after re-establishing with me that I was a researcher at Bangor University, a number of inoffensive, but rather risqué flirtatious jokes were made, that I felt were done to test whether or not I was a social ‘snob’, or could join in with the fun. After having managed to pass most of the above tests, I was accepted and permitted to join them and ask them questions. This ‘graduation’ was marked by a distinct relaxation of the men’s body language, the cessation of rude jokes and the changes made in how they conversed with me from speaking in Welsh to now speaking in English by asking me “what do you want to know?”. It was clearly therefore important for my identity to be defined in order to determine whether or not they could relate to me.

The fact that the majority of people in Llangefni spoke Welsh as their first language was frequently mentioned in positive terms by largely the local Welsh speaking population at the beginning of interviews and was clearly seen as a proud and important part of their identity, as is evident in the extract below:

I like the Welshness of the town, I think there is over 80% of Welsh speakers in Llangefni (Cllr Rhian).

The importance of the town's Welsh identity did not exist in isolation, but was very specifically linked to people's perceptions of being from the town and thus belonging to the town if a person were from Llangefni 'born and bred', the assumption would be of course, that their first language would therefore also be Welsh. The distinction as to whether a person was from Llangefni or not and secondly whether they spoke Welsh as a first language or not, appears therefore to be of significant importance as to how accepted and integrated into this community people are. As my credentials were tested in the interview mentioned above, so too were the credentials of others who have moved into the town and the levels of successful integration appear to vary as is described in the extracts from two interviews given below where both respondents still describe themselves as not being from Llangefni, despite having lived in the town for many years:

Well it's a very Welsh community here isn't it, you know, I think there are about 75% Welsh people in Llangefni. Quite close knit I find, I am not from Anglesey originally, I am from Blaenau Ffestiniog, which is a quiet place, another tight community place. But people on the island here, I find to be very insular. It takes some time for you to be accepted here if you are not from the island, you know, but you know I have been involved with Rotary, the Choir, Town Company... I have been here since '84 (Dilwyn).

What I should say to you is that I came to Llangefni in 1984 when I got married – I'm from Bangor – Whilst I've lived here, I've lived here for twenty years, I have seen some changes, I don't see myself as a local still in the sense that I was from Bangor, and because I have always worked over the bridge if you like, most of my time, so I have not spent a lot of time here in a sense, in the day if you like, and I don't speak Welsh, though I can understand it. I don't see myself in the same way that my husband sees himself living here ... The farming community is very Welsh- still very Welsh – very Welsh community and when I met David, there was this kind of idea, I remember him saying, his uncle who was a farmer saying 'Oh you don't want to marry her, she's a towny', there was very much you know this kind of community, working and Welshness and to an extent I suppose a lot of that seems to have lessened over the years because the cattle market is no longer there and you know that is quite a sad thing in a sense because when the market was there, the farmers used to come into the cattle market and it was a draw for people to go, even in their lunch hour from offices or the builders' yard, and they would go to the market, just to hang around at lunch time to have that banter and chat with farmers and the wives would come in and go round the shops (Kate).

And a local community worker explained:

I found it very hard coming here to work. The verbal abuse I got was unbelievable, because I wasn't from the ward [referring here to the Tudur Ward]. At one point I was ready to resign yeah, because I thought I can not put up with this any more. I have got a relationship with the youth now and things have got better, but every now and again I will get it because I'm from Holyhead (Caroline).

The last extract indicates that identity appears to be far more narrowly defined than whether a person is from the island or not, and is reduced further to which town on the island a person comes from.

It is important to remark here that no reference was made specifically to the Welsh / English split, most probably because although the town's identity is seen as being threatened and weakened by 'outside forces', the town remains predominantly Welsh.

'Welsh and From Llangefni Group' and the Diminishing of Community

As is evident in the above extracts, group identities are important for community belonging and engagement. Identity, belonging and community are seen by many as being inextricably linked and this is reflected in the way interviewees' descriptions of social groups are interspersed with references to belonging and community. In particular, the local-Welsh indigenous population of Llangefni were seen as the social group of the town that for most people embodied the description of being a 'community' and are identified largely through local knowledge of members of this community. This social group was clearly seen as having diminished in size and the quality of the 'community' that existed amongst them or was generated by this group was seen as having deteriorated. Nevertheless, they were seen in nostalgic terms as being part of the town's 'old/traditional' community network that existed prior to the social and economic changes that have occurred in the town over the last few decades that the closure of the cattle market in particular represents. When community was referred to it was done so largely by people who were very actively engaged with this community and whose identities were clearly linked to it and who regaled fulsome explanations of what they understood the term 'community' represented, making references to friendships, familiarity, belonging and caring which actively occur as is shown in the extracts below:

People in Llangefni are exceptionally friendly. People meet in the street, they have a little chat, so there's more community going on than in smaller villages I have found out – I have lived in a smaller village (Meinir).

In Llangefni, everyone gets on, everyone mixes (Amanda).

I: How do you define community?

Cllr Rhian: Its people socializing together and it's a good community spirit, or that somebody will call on you or elderly people or baby sitting or community service or going to the school or feeling that you're part of something. Its people around town asking 'how are you' or 'how's your family', you know.

However, in every interview that identified the local-Welsh townspeople as being a social group in the town and with whom the 'traditional' community was seen as residing, were explained in terms of describing how they exist today, but were also described in contrasting terms to how this 'old community' was no longer as strong as it once was:

There's a good community spirit here, not so much on this estate, but on the estate where I used to live before, there were older people there and they would socialize more with you, people are working more here and are younger than where I used to be before (Cllr Rhian).

The traditional community was seen as existing particularly amongst the older generations, but this demographic was also seen as being the most vulnerable to the social changes that had taken place within the town with comments such as "older people are very lonely" (Cllr Rhian), which in turn was backed up by comments made by some of the elderly interviewees who spoke of fear of going out after five o'clock in the evening, vulnerability, isolation and of not being able to leave your key in the door for people to pop over and check you were alright. In comparison to some younger interviewees, older interviewees when asked if there was a sense of community in the town today many, answered 'no'. The places that this community did meet, was in the few independent shops and cafes in the town, and noticeably in the charity shops that appear to have become the new venues where community activity takes place, particularly amongst the older generation. The charity shops volunteer staff consisted mostly of retired local residents (all of whom appeared to be women) and the shops seem to have become the new meeting places for many of the townspeople to socialise

with one another as the first of the two interview extracts below observes and the second confirms:

There's lots of charity shops, I mean why do we need so many, but there must be a need for them or why do they keep running and the charity shops always seem to be very busy and they take local volunteers (Kate)

We have a lot of local volunteers here and a lot of people do come in here for a chat with the people who are working behind the counter (Penny) [local charity shop manager].

These observations are supported by the findings of research carried out by Betts (2006) on charity shop volunteering, which found that most volunteers were retired women and the shops had become locations that present “‘social opportunity’, particularly for the elderly customers, to meet each other and pass the time” (Betts 2006: 134).

For the younger generation it was seen as being easier for parents with children in the local school to be integrated into and participate in community activities, activities that seemed largely to revolve around the schools, such as pantomimes etc, as one community worker explained: “I imagine there is community, but just pockets of it...A lot of community things that are held are just for kids – they are child led and do not involve the whole community” (James), revealing how ‘community’ eludes at times even those who are employed to work with communities. These child-orientated activities, that several people identified as generating community involvement at one level, are likely to involve local women rather than men, as women are still the ones who predominantly fulfil the traditional child-care roles within the family, though this would need further investigation. The interviewees who saw themselves as belonging to this community, were not unaware however that other people who live in Llangefni may have a different experience of the town to themselves and may find social integration into the community life difficult and explanations were often ambivalent when describing the quality of community engagement as is revealed in the extracts below:

The community spirit, I don't think that's changed, I haven't noticed it being altered for the worst or the other way around. If you have got something on in the school or the town hall or wherever, you'll get good

support, but I do feel that the town is more difficult than small villages, if you do something in a small village you'll get everybody else, but I think it's because I'm a parent.. my friends are parents and I mix with them so I don't notice, if I were older I suppose I would be looking at Llangefni in a different way (Cllr Rhian).

There is a sense of community within the town, but then I am so wildly involved I have to say yes, though some might say no (Delith).

For most however, even if they were involved with or were part of Llangefni's 'traditional' community network, as it is often referred to, community and the loyalty that people associate with community is seen as having diminished considerably, with people frequently making comments such as; "The traditional community now don't come out" (Rhys), and some even declaring that "there is no sense of community" (Deborah), and a local business owner explained that: "community is walking down the street and talking to someone – they don't do it and don't have community events" (Hughes).

Frequently explanations were given as to how and why and when a sense of community had started to deteriorate in the town, most explanations started firstly with how the livestock market and the economic benefits that this created for the town had acted as a lynchpin for community activity and cohesion for the townspeople and the farming community from the town's rural hinterlands. Once the market was removed, the social and economic focal point and purpose of Llangefni was also removed. Secondly the increase of new people moving into the town was seen as having undermined the community further, through the townspeople becoming less familiar to one another as interview comments below reveal:

Years ago you know everybody knew each other, but now where I live - I hardly know half the people there (Ffion).

I live in Llangefni and know to say hello to my neighbours, but that's about it – but then that's the way I like it (Fred).

The symbolic significance of events, like the carnival, were clearly held as important signifiers of community and the lack of an annual carnival in Llangefni was seen as being symbolic of the decline or absence of community in the town today. The

detachment, despondency and disappointment on this subject are clear in the types of comments made:

The town used to have a carnival, but that gone – now there's nothing (Fred).

There used to be a good carnival, but that doesn't happen any more (Angharad).

There used to be carnivals, but they have not been held for years. The Council won't send people to organise stuff and those who used to are now too old and no one else has taken over (Cloe).

They used to do a lot more, people cared, plus they had more time...people are living their own lives now really – I think we're all guilty of that – there's not enough hours in the day sometimes (Ffion).

The emphasis appears to be that it is now the responsibility of 'others' or 'officials' to organise or at least take the majority of the responsibility for organizing community events. The organisational responsibility is no longer seen as residing with the community itself, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say with the town's residents, as the very absence of a cohesive community seems to be, or at least is seen as, the reason why the event stopped in the first place.

There is still popular support for Llangefni to have an annual carnival and Communities First receive a number of requests for help to re-develop the annual festivity, but the issues involved in organising one are generally felt to be insurmountable as one Communities First worker explained;

People come in and talk about how the community spirit was. We have had requests to start the carnival back, so after Christmas we are going to put leaflets out to see who's interested and we'll see who comes forward – there's a lot of work in organising a carnival. Health and Safety hasn't helped that community thing because you can't have floats any more because of the insurance, you can't stop the traffic on the street, so how do they expect people to get on (Caroline).

The older interviewees or those who were or had been most active in the town, such as Meinir, Ceinwen and Cllr Rhian, felt that their identity was connected to Llangefni and felt as though they belonged to the town.

Yes, I can't go from here now... I've always been here, I am part of the town really – part of the furniture" (Ceinwen).

Ceinwen was a volunteer in one of the Charity shops and was interviewed at the back of the shop where the shop manager was present and who added at this point that Ceinwen was "very, very well known - everyone knows her (Rose) as she used to run a well remembered business in the town.

I feel my roots are here now, I wouldn't like to leave (Cllr Rhian).

There is a strong sense of belonging (Meinir).

However the general consensus appeared to be that people's identity and sense of belonging were becoming increasingly detached from the town:

There is no longer a sense of identity and belonging – it only exists in pockets, for example in the clubs – rugby or football (Cllr Davies).

I: Do you feel your identity is connected to the town?

Mike: Yes when I was younger, but now it's associated with drugs – its embarrassing.

The in-migration of people moving into Llangefni falls generally into two categories: those who live in middle-class housing estates that have been built around the outskirts of the town and those who live in the Pencraig council estate on the Bro Tudur ward as one interviewee described; "The town is socially divided from where the Bull is [the Bull Hotel] – the Pencraig estate up one side and the middle class area up on the other" (Delith).

The 'New' Middle-Class

The extensive house building in Llangefni and the creation of the A55 dual carriage way has brought in a lot of new people into the town, though the perceptions held by those interviewees who spoke on this subject were that, though many of the 'local' people have bought some of the new properties that have been built, they have largely been at the cheaper end of the market and it is largely people from outside the town who have bought the majority of the new houses and especially the more expensive houses, changing the social class structure in the town noticeably and making the town a commutable destination to live. This is largely observable not in the town centre itself, but is reflected in the types of housing being built around the town, a trend that

was remarked upon on several occasions by interviewees and the narratives reveal several aspects about the changes that are taking place that are affecting the town's social structure, identity and community such as class and language:

Kate: It would be interesting to know who's moving into them [referring to the more expensive new-build houses], and a lot of new faces and people moving in and if you like, perhaps a lot of people who are more prone to be talking English, whether they are Welsh I don't know.. so there's a lot of that coming in.. and that's changing Llangefni from what it was, a very small place where everybody knew everybody, and that's there to an extent, but new people are moving in – lots of new people.

I: and are they mixing with old community?

Kate: Where we live here, there hasn't been a lot of movement, so I don't know, we never go down to the new estates, because you've got to go into them.. it's not a through road if you like, so we never go down there.... Llangefni really seems to be growing, stretching out a lot and that's changing the place in a sense, but changing it more for people like my husband who was born here, who is really Welsh, and he sees those changes, perhaps even more than I do, because I've not been here as much and have always been assessed as a towny ['towny' refers to someone from Bangor].

What is also revealed here and is obvious when observing these newly built estates, is that, following the traditional planning of many housing developments (notable council estates such as Pencraig), they are often self-contained and detached from the centre of town, inhibiting social integration. They also further segregate people along the lines of the social class and language, creating ghettoised areas, that result in increasing the 'traditional' community's sense of unfamiliarity and mistrust of incomers. Many of the people moving into Llangefni were not seen to be identifiable in their own right and could not be identified specifically as belonging to any particular social group, largely perhaps because they are unknown, but were just, in the words of one interviewee, part of an "an amorphous mass" (Geoff).

The only other social group in the town that was identified were the Council office workers, who were identifiable by their more formal clothing, particularly those who wore suits, though this social group were largely seen as not belonging to the town and who socialised on the whole separately from the townspeople, notably during

lunchtime, where many office workers frequented the relatively newly re-developed Bull Hotel, and to a lesser degree a new café in town.

The Bro Tudur / Pencraig Group

Associated with people moving into the town, was the creation of the Pencraig council estate that now encompasses most of the disadvantaged Bro-Tudur ward. Built after the Second World War, it is seen as being a major cause of concern for the town, associated with the many problems that poverty and disadvantage often create, such as drug use, anti-social behaviour and dysfunctional families and is seen to have played a significant role in the social disintegration of community within the town, through creating an atmosphere of fear and mistrust as was explained by the interviewees below:

The quality of the community is deteriorating - because after the war there was a shortage of housing – there was big building of pre-fab houses, but now Bro-Tudur is the no-go area filled with miserable people with drug problems who because of the point system jump the housing queue and the young people interact with them (Rhys).

It's been a problem for a long time, we have had a lot of bad elements in haven't we, they come in from other places that don't want them you know (Ceinwen).

Sandra: Because there are a lot of new people coming here to Llangefni to live, whether that's because they needed to be re-housed, or the fact that a lot of people have settled here it has changed a lot... I mean the drug culture it has affected every community, just like everywhere else, it has affected Llangefni, there was a time when you were younger, where people, you know, you could rely on communities to work together. Gone are the days when you could leave your back door open, gone are the days where you could rely on people living near you to help you if you had a problem, my great grandmother took a lot of children in for example to look after.

I: So you don't feel the community spirit is there any more?

Sandra: No, no. I feel that I've got it, I've inherited it from my grandmother and I've tried to be a very good neighbour and so forth and I help, but it's not what it used to be years and years ago you know.

I: and that's because of people moving in?

Sandra: I think so yes, there is a lot of new people coming in. I was brought up on the Bro Tudur estate when I was younger and even that estate has

changed, you've got boarded-up houses and then empty houses – it's become a rough area.

The 'Pencraig' or 'Bro Tudur' social group as they were referred to were perceived as being very identifiable. The two main social groups that were identified as existing in the town were also seen as being from the different ends of the town, for example, when one interviewee was asked if there were different social groups in the town she answered that: "There is, there's the council estate and then there's the Chapel" (Rose), (the 'chapel', referring not just specifically to those who attend Chapel, but denotes generally the 'traditional' Llangefni community). The Council estate referred to here is the Pencraig Council estate in the Communities First Bro Tudur ward that is situated at the top of a gentle hill, a short distance from the town centre, and is a very self contained area, largely cut off from the rest of the town. Very close to where the council estate is situated, are where some of the very expensive housing estates that were referred to earlier have been built over the last decade, creating a sharp economic and social contrast between the neighbouring housing estates. Out to the back of Llangefni and also up the hill, the opposite of the Bro Tudur ward, are where the 'old' or 'traditional' community, referred to above as 'chapel', is seen to reside, though again as we have seen, in a much depleted form (see map 2).

In the perceptions of the interviewees the Pencraig group were the most identifiable social group in the town, regarded as the cause of the erosion of Llangefni's 'traditional' community, as the interview extracts below illustrate:

You tend to get that group, it's that ward, Bro Tudur / Pencraig area you know, it's sort of, oh you know, 'we live this side of town' (Dilwyn).

The housing estate has a bad reputation across Ynys Môn and is seen as a dumping ground for problem families or families in need of housing or re-location from all over Britain, particularly the North West, such as Liverpool and Manchester.

More recently there has been a growing number of migrant workers from Portugal, Russia and Eastern Europe coming to live in Llangefni, which have according to Anglesey County Council (2005), impacted on the population and labour market and which is likely to have consequences for housing provision, though no evidence is yet

available to know how many people are moving into the town or what impact this is likely to have. Though it has to be noted that only a few interviewees referred to immigration of foreign workers into Llangefni and they remain, on the whole, an invisible demographic in the town.

People moving in to Llangefni causes tension between local people and incomers on several levels: firstly many local people feel that the housing points system that awards houses to people most in need rather than to local people is unfair, particularly to young local people who, it is often felt should have first choice, the contention being that young people are having to move away from the town to find affordable housing and jobs elsewhere. Secondly it is felt that the type of people who have been housed on the estate brings with them anti-social problems such as drunken disorderly behaviour, drug use, thieving and violence. Thirdly, as many of the people who are housed on the estate are not from Llangefni, or Wales for that matter and do not speak Welsh, this is seen as a threat to the identity of the town. The Pencraig council estate in particular is then seen as a threat to the culture of the 'traditional' community, making 'local' people feel defensive and see the estate as a major cause for the town's general decline and problems, as is revealed in the following narratives:

The things that have affected it are things like refugees for example, you know where people have been re-settled into the community 'cause they are not safe living where they are. We've got more other minorities coming in now, we've got a lot of Polish in Llangefni and Portuguese, but again that has been brought in because of the work they get (Sandra).

The type of person, if that is the right way to put it, the type of person that has been allocated housing in those areas, some would say, the lack of management on behalf of the Council, the lack of interest on behalf of residents generally in the town and that therefore what you have in Pencraig .. is not that it's a no go area, but that it is an area where generally most people wouldn't want to go anywhere near, where you'll find that if there is a Council house empty, it might be empty for a long time – it's one of these difficult to let's you know – but you will find somebody along the road who will say 'I'll take anything' and they end up in Pencraig, and what happened then is that after about a couple of months they - heart-broken – will come back and say they will want a transfer (Cllr Roberts).

Once you're in there you're stuck ... you've got no chance (Caroline).

This was backed up by one interview with a woman who had recently moved to the estate from elsewhere on the island and who said that the day she moved in there was “a man chasing another man with an axe down the street... it’s terrible ...and everyone has big dogs to protect them” (Clair).

Tenants apparently invariably request to be transferred to the council estate on the other side of Llangefni, which has a good reputation, or elsewhere. The issues facing Llangefni that are seen as stemming largely from the Pencraig Council estate are, in the eyes of one town councillor, not only economic but also largely a problem of education, with Llangefni’s Secondary school having reportedly the highest number of expelled students on the island, with more pupils being expelled from Llangefni than the other schools put together, a large percentage of whom are seen to come from the Pencraig estate, which serves to further isolate this economically deprived social group and reinforces their disenfranchisement from society as one Town Councillor ‘Roberts’ explained:

It is a question of education, if not the children to begin with, then the parents to be honest with you. It is an economic matter as well where they are (I would say), generally unemployed, long term unemployed and you know this is what their children grew up with, and I think the perception is they are the ones we see hanging around Boots, or whatever – its just a self-perpetuating thing – it’s a question of educating the parents and employment (Cllr Roberts).

During an interview with a community worker the issue of this social group having a poor education was also raised as a major problem, explaining that there were issues with communication, for example litter and household items are dumped on the Council estate by its residents and yet, according to community worker, the Council supply the Pencraig estate with three skips a year. For the Community worker the problems resided in how information is communicated to the residents. The Council advertise in the local paper and yet, as Caroline explains, many of the people on the estate don’t buy the local paper because, according to her, many of them have very poor literacy skills:

How do the Council expect people to access that service, the Council argue ‘oh we have put it in the Bangor and Anglesey Mail, Well not everybody buys the Bangor and Anglesey Mail. You know there are some people out there who are illiterate, they can’t read, they can’t write (Caroline).

Caroline explained further that she suspected that the problem was much more widespread than one would imagine, giving as an example how when conducting a house-to-house questionnaire in a similarly deprived area she was asked to fill in the answers for the respondents and she suspected that this was to hide the fact that they were not very good at or could not read or write. The shame of not being able to read and write very well, if at all, is in her opinion, felt to be too stigmatising for people to come forward for help explaining:

But you can't put a course on for them either, because they won't come forward and tell you (Caroline).

The Bro Tudur Group and their Lack of Community

When asking interviewees if there is sense of community in the disadvantaged ward, and in particular on the Pencraig council estate, most did not recognise there being one as people no longer felt safe, as one community worker explained:

I don't think there is a community spirit. I think it has changed so much in the last fifteen years. It's the fact that people don't feel safe in their own homes no more – you used to be able to leave your key in the door and your next door neighbour could just knock on your door and walk in – it's gone now. Anti-social behaviour is causing big rifts up on this estate. The Police as well, their hands are tied – there's just nothing we can do. I mean the Council have got the authority to evict because of anti-social behaviour but it's never been used. Another one you get complaints in here about and I know it affects people's health is dog fouling and you've got a dog warden on Anglesey and has anyone ever been prosecuted – I don't know- never. Why do they go to the point of paying a dog warden when they don't work on it (Caroline).

Our CPO [Community Police Officer] calls in here most days when she's on duty, and I don't think I have ever sat down and had a conversation all the way through with her, without her being called out to something up there and she is running like a fool up there – there is only her covering the ward – there's always a drugs raid or something going on – it's awful. And neighbourhood arguments – ooh... They've had a few murders up here haven't they? There is one woman who comes in here and used to volunteer in the office – I feel so sorry for her, she was relocated here and she's got a lovely house – her own house, the next door has been done up into two or three flats – there was a feller murdered there a few years ago and then they've got undesirables there now and the poor woman, she was a volunteer, but she's had to pack all that in because she can't go out of the

house now because she's been threatened and her kids can't play out because they've been threatened (Caroline).

During a group interview with a group of six friends from the council estate they were asked whether they felt there was a sense of community in Llangefni, the resounding reply was that 'no' with one member stating that, "there is no sense of community" (Cloe) and another member defining community as being "everyone coming together" (Deborah) and without this then community couldn't exist. Though of course friendships exist, amongst and between social groups, there was not felt to be a cohesive social unity within the town conducive to creating a cohesive community or communities. One local councillor however did recognise that community did exist in pockets in the Bro Tudur ward, explaining that:

There is a social divide between those on lower income and who have educational underachievement. There are some rough people in this group, but there are some good ones too. There is a community up there, but the vandalism and some of the stories you hear doesn't give it a good name (Cllr Delyth).

When asked if the people who were perceived as causing the problems could be identified, the answers were yes, but they were described in general terms, type-casting seemingly everyone whose body language and clothing was reminiscent of the style worn by many on the estate as being therefore from the estate as the next interview extract reveal:

Caroline: Undesirables – druggies.

Jeanie: You can tell which crowd are from Pencraig.

I: How can you identify them?

Jeanie: The way they walk. They look for trouble... it's as if because the ward has a bad name they have to keep it going.

When members of the 'Bro Tudur' social groups were asked to describe their identity, it was markedly not connected to Llangefni, but instead to their personal attributes. Neither did they report feeling that they had a sense of belonging to the town either, though this group clearly has a very extensive social network, whose social life seemed to revolve largely around the local pubs.

The Young People Social Group

Another social group that was very identifiable in people's commentaries was the very general category of 'young people', who were largely identified as youths 'hanging around' in groups in different areas around the town and in particular outside the Spar, Boots and the Clock in the centre of the town and were therefore a very visible group who many (including youth workers) find at times intimidating and as we saw in the first section of this chapter, are seen as one of the problems of the town.

The decline of a sense of community in the town is seen as being a significant reason why young people are for many perceived as behaving anti-socially. Interviewees reported that whilst there were numerous activities for young children, there were very few things for older children to do. Their disaffection from community involvement having led to social disengagement that many see as not only a local problem, but a symptom of wider social issues; young people were seen as victims of a general social malaise. The opinions expressed on this point alluded to the general lack of social investment in young people, from society in general and communities and parents more specifically, that young people were generally ostracised from social participation and from being able to contribute meaningfully within communal activities, as a result their lives were purposeless and devalued by adult society:

Drugs, vandalism largely the young local cannon fodder – what else have they to do - its that or the leisure centre (Hughes).

Youngsters stand around corners taking drugs or playing DVD games – they are not playing out any more (Harri).

The general point of view on this matter was that lazy parenting, which has come about as a consequence of society becoming more individualistic, is the root cause of young people's anti-social behaviour, as they are not instilling social values into their children or taking responsibility for their actions as one interviewee explained:

It's down to the parents – they are too preoccupied with what they want to do - teachers and Police can't discipline them (Rhys).

To overcome this problem, some interviewees argued that there “needs to be community development and involvement” (Lyn), that incorporates all sections of society and in particular the young, an example of how there is less community investment in young people was given by one interviewee as “They are closing the youth clubs - cutting youth clubs in half across Anglesey” (Lyn). Another example given by an interviewee to illustrate how the townspeople, and here particularly the Pencraig Council estate, are not community orientated or supportive of community developments, is the difficulty that the Council has experienced in creating a children’s play area:

“There’s no children’s play area on the estate, there have been several locations that are suitable, yet many people do not want a park near their house” (Jeanie).

The need to engage and not exclude young people from social venues is passionately relayed in the narrative given below where the interviewee explains that there are a number of empty premises that could be used for this purpose, but that the social collective will to be pro-active is lacking and again the issue of education is raised in order to promote parental responsibility for the actions and behaviour of their children:

“People say ‘there is nothing for our children’ right, and I’m saying; just look around you at the number of school buildings that we have in Llangefni, the Town Hall, the number of church rooms and rooms attached to chapels – we have an abundance of meeting places you know. It’s just a question of whether people have the wish, the desire to make use of them, you know, for children to come and meet and do things and we have to accept that in this day and age kids are going to come there with a bottle of cider when they are fourteen years old. No then you should try and educate them and you should certainly try and educate their parents and they have to be the ones who ultimately, you know, have to be responsible for these things, they can’t divorce themselves from that responsibility” (Cllr Roberts).

Machynlleth – The Survival of Community

in Machynlleth people were very aware of and analytical about, the different social groups that were perceived as existing and which consisted of a complex mix of: ‘townspeople’, young farmers, the Welsh speakers, tourists, ‘boy racers’, the ‘CAT Community’ and retired people – the last two being often referred to collectively by the ‘townspeople’ as ‘incomers’ or ‘outsiders’. However, despite many social groups being

recognised only three social groups were described in any length: the 'townspeople', the 'CAT community' and the local Welsh-speaking population, referred to by one interviewee as 'the traditional Welsh' .

The demographic changes that have taken place in Machynlleth over the past few decades have had a significant influence on the town's development and identity, it becoming a rather cosmopolitan town, which is somewhat unexpected when first visiting the place in relation to the town's size and rural location. Machynlleth is served by a railway which makes it an accessible holiday location for people from Shrewsbury, Newtown and Birmingham and has more recently become a popular retirement location. The establishment of the Centre for Alternative Technology in the 1970s, which has developed into a thriving business and a major employer in the area has attracted people into the town from all over Britain, but also people from all over the world interested in environmental and sustainable issues. These demographic changes have had a very significant influence on the town, economically (as we saw in 'Purpose of Place') and socially.

In Machynlleth 54% of the population speak Welsh, considerably lower than in Llangefni (2001 Census), and many of the interviewees (those who were Welsh speaking and sounding) were asked if they wanted the interview to be conducted in Welsh, but again, as in Llangefni, this offer was turned down on each occasion. My identity was never questioned by any of the town's social groups; some asked where I was from, but not, I felt, to determine my Welsh / English identity as such, but rather as an information-gathering exercise.

Community Integration and Division

When respondents spoke of the 'Welsh Community', there were disparities between which social group in the town they referred to. For some 'the Welsh' meant the 'townspeople' many of whom do not speak Welsh as their first language; for others 'the Welsh' denoted the town's Welsh-speaking population which often encompassed the farming community; whilst for others it was used more specifically to mean Welsh nationalists. 'Welsh' as a description is therefore used subjectively by respondents and is often used in general terms, its meaning only deducible within the context of a narrative.

Similarly, the 'CAT community' who were seen as distinctive from the 'original townspeople' were often born and brought up locally, being second or third generation in-comers and so are not recent additions to the town as many of the narratives seem to indicate. What appears to be happening is that people in Machynlleth, from various 'indigenous' social groups, are actively engaged in defining themselves and their identities in relation to the dominant presence of the 'CAT community', whilst also weighing-up the costs and benefits that the presence of such an active group in the town has on community cohesion, activities, agendas and identities, generating protectionist sentiments in some and valued by others.

Therefore, though the social groups are more clearly defined than they are in Llangefni, it needs to be recognised that the categories are subjective and overlapping and are in the process of being formed in relation to the diversification of the town's population.

The Overarching Machynlleth Community

Almost everyone who was interviewed said they felt that Machynlleth has a strong and vibrant sense of community that encompasses many different social groups and were able to articulate very clearly the qualities that they, the residents and workers of Machynlleth, felt created that strong sense of community. Principally they were: familiarity, friendliness, community social activities and a support network. The size of Machynlleth was seen as a very important reason why the town had retained its identity and its residents and workers had managed to remain familiar to one another; that encouraged loyalty and trust amongst its residents as the following extracts reveal:

It's got a good sense of community, and not in an enclosed way, like my village has got a really, really nice sense of community (Bea).

We've got a good community, a good young community in this area (Margaret).

Um, I think it's such a small community and everybody knows everybody. When you go to the Bank on a Monday morning or something, you'll probably meet ten people between here and the top of the street that you know. I think that's community spirit and people do mix well. People that drink here, they come from all walks of life and yet they seem to mix well ... they don't mind who they mix with, do you know what I mean, frankly I mean the English and the Welsh mix very, very well (Sheila).

A lot of people who know Machynlleth as being a very close-knit town, everybody knows everybody else and everybody knows each other's business, which in a way is very good and very positive because most big cities have lost that sense of identity where you talk to your next door neighbour.... I've lived in most of the UK but never actually settled, where as here I have found people are very welcoming, very keen to know what your doing and what your about 'who are you and where are you from and what do you do,.... it's lovely, it's nice (Joe).

The loyalty, which is an old fashion word I know, is very dear to me. Loyalty is an important word (Cledwyn).

The town's reputation for having a strong community spirit was also ascribed to the fact that there were lots of community activities available that facilitated people's ability to be involved with a variety of social groups and activities. The cross-over between Welsh and English cultures and social groups was also seen by many to be an asset that helped maintain a lively and interesting community atmosphere, preventing the town from becoming stagnant with a constant flow of young energetic people coming into the town in connection with the Centre for Alternative Technology who are willing to get involved in and organising community activities.

It's got a lot going for it community wise (Daisy).

It's wonderful with the two cultures, the Welsh culture and the English culture, are just over flowing with concerts and exhibitions and the energy for creativity here is stunning ... When people do come together it's totally inspiring (Shirley).

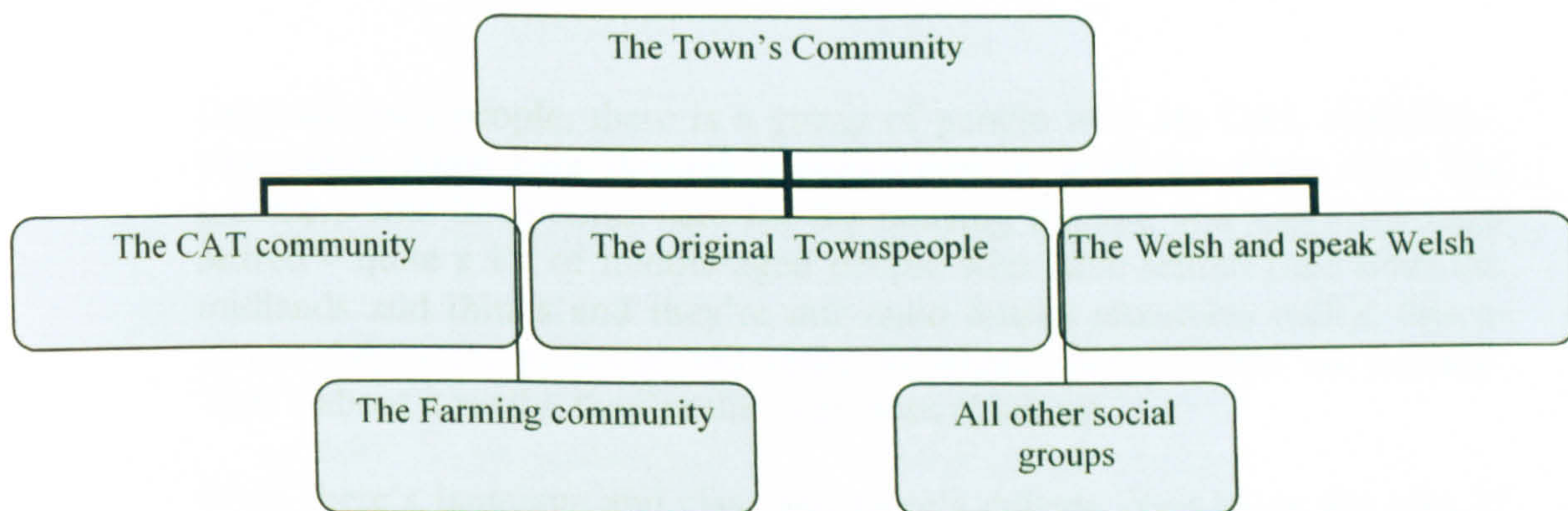
Community is the mixture of people coming in, farmers and people living outside and coming in to the town and that mixture with locals and townspeople and different generations as well and the incomers who also came in, in the last twenty years, who on the whole, have done a very good job of integrating and have been accepted on the whole and many have learnt Welsh and have done their best to try and integrate rather than keep themselves as a separate community. I think that has been quite interesting, seeing how initially they have been regarded as hippies and through all the derogatory terminology in those days (Frank).

Frank's last comment indicates that a concerted effort to integrate has been made by many of the English people who moved to the town.

A clear and important symbolic indicator of the existence of community for people seemed to be events such as the carnival and the lantern parade, with comments such as: “The carnival is a big statement of the community” being frequently expressed when discussing or describing ‘community’.

Community was also identified as existing on different levels, amongst separate social groups. There was an overarching community spirit within the town, but there were also sub-sections of communities that were seen to operate very independently from one another, but which come together to feed into what could be referred to as ‘the town’s community’.

Figure 8



For example, as the next interviewees reveal, people have a choice of ‘communities’ to belong to or to be part of:

A lot of people have a lot of ways in which they can feel they have a sense of community, although some communities have very little to do with others (Fiona)

The CAT community, they have a huge community of their own, they socialize in a big way... There’s the traditional Welsh, who speak the language and live the language, they have their own social scene, they have Welsh culture, go to Chapel and so on (Jacky).

There’s the oldies, you can tell can’t you they have their little cliques don’t they, where you can see ‘those’ people. That’s to do with age a lot I think, a lot of people were born here and grew up together and any given time you can walk down the street and you think ‘oh yes, I know who you all are’ and that’s quite interesting. And then there’s the youngsters who have their own sort of group, you can see them and then there’s the baby boomers and unless you were born here, which we weren’t, you tend to move in different circles I suppose. All the people that had babies at the same time, we were

all incomers, so we're totally different stuck in the middle sort of here, that's how I think of it any way (Tina).

Tina's last comment suggests that the English people who had moved to Machynlleth 20 or 30 years ago did not particularly integrate with the local population, and instead developed networks with fellow English incomers.

When people were asked if they could identify different social groups existing in the town, interviewees were very quick to identify various groups, such as: the 'Townspeople', farmers, 'the traditional Welsh' (as mentioned in the above extract), though these categories can all overlap with one another when people are making distinctions between the indigenous population and the 'incomers', 'retired incomers' 'boy racers', holiday makers, and 'the CAT community', for example:

Original town people, there is a group of people who are CAT orientated, who either come here through a connection or work for them, there are incomers who have come here for the housing market, you know, perhaps retired – quite a lot of middle-aged people who have retired here from the midlands and things and they're our main tourist attraction really, this is where they want to come and retire to where they've been on holiday. That's about it really, they're the main ones (Lauren).

Well, there's language and class and there's culture. You know the idea of tribalism where you have a religion, a militia, I kind of feel like the Welsh, you've got the army with their flags, that there is remnants of tribalism (Shirley).

The distinctions between the social groups are however becoming less discernable than they once were years ago when, for example the Centre for Alternative Technology was first established, according to one business owner:

It's less defined now, it may have been more defined at one point, but people come from all over, there's tourists, people come for cycling, biking and walking holidays, there's all kinds of people around and it's very hard to define people ... I don't think it has an identity where people need to necessarily (I mean they will in some cases) define themselves (Frank).

However most of the social groups were peripheral in people's descriptions to the town's two main social groups: the 'townspeople' and the 'CAT community', as the following extracts reveal:

The town operates on two levels doesn't it, there's the CAT type people and the rest (James).

It is probably not a wide cross-section of the community, because as far as I can see there are two main kind of groups in the community, which do kind of interweave and that's kind of the more um ..., incomers who often have connections in CAT and are essentially creative types of one sort or another and green kind of people, and local people, who tend to be, though this is generalising, who tend to be more traditional and tend to be, I don't know, farmers or shop keepers, and they don't always inter-cross that much, but I don't really know, but then I am speaking from the creative community, incoming type of thing and that's quite tight (Nat).

There were some obvious distinctions between the 'CAT community' and the 'townspeople', the clear demarcation of these social groups was observably apparent in the clothes both groups wore. The 'CAT community', having what is often described as an 'alternative', 'hippy' or a 'new agey' way of dressing, wearing colourful, creative and often ethnic-looking clothing, having dreadlocked hair, body piercings and tattoos. The 'townspeople' meanwhile were observable by their not wearing the types of clothing the 'CAT community' wore, wearing instead a mix of high-street clothes and styles that were in the main only distinctive by their comparison to the CAT social group. The other clear distinction between these social groups is their accents. The CAT community have, on the whole, English accents, whilst the 'townspeople' have a Welsh accent.

The Machynlleth 'Townspeople'

The 'townspeople' have a strong community network of their own and are visible and active members of the overarching town's community. They were to an observer a very visible social group, with people socialising together in shops, pubs, cafes and on the street, an observation that became confirmed and reinforced after becoming familiar with the town and with the town's residents. Closely associated with community are people's identity and sense of belonging, these concepts often seem to be inextricably linked to one another in people's narratives. On a number of occasions the fact that the town is bilingual was seen as a very important characteristic that helps retain the town and the townspeople's identity and heritage, even if, as one of the interview extracts below reveals, Welsh isn't necessarily their first language:

I like that everyone knows everyone .. I really like the fact that it's still bilingual here; I wouldn't want that to go away. I am not fluent Welsh – my family is - but I feel that it is important (Carla).

I like the fact that it's bilingual, that people speak Welsh and things (Daisy).

Important to the town's identity and therefore to people's identity, was not only the language, but also its heritage. There are three medieval buildings in the town, one of which is the Parliament House dating back to 1404 which held the first Parliament in Wales and has strong connection to Owain Glyndwr (Davies 2002: 32). Comments such as "I like its history", "I like the parliament building" were expressed by a number of people whilst discussing their and the town's identity.

A sense of community amongst the townspeople is seen as being very strong by most with comments such as: "Oh yes very strong, very strong, everybody will help everybody in my own experience" (Daisy), being common.

The way this social group described community was however different from the very pro-active 'CAT community', as is shown below. Evidence of the existence of a 'strong community' was given through examples of people 'rallying round' at times of need and being supportive of one another:

Yes, yes, especially when they're collecting something, ... people do get together and they do stick by one another like that as well, more than in a big town, because people know one another more here (Fiona).

I think there is definitely yes, like you've got the Red Cross, people help out, everyone seems to go and help out, see how they are, go and do shopping for someone or something like that, no matter which area of town you are people go together and help each other out (Eirlys).

Community rallies around when a tragedy happens. But it isn't as it was years ago because there are more people coming in (Carol).

Community seemed to exist very much in the daily contact people have with one another, in the street, in shops and cafes. For example most of the people who worked in the town, in bars, shops, cafes, in the Council offices etc, were local people, which kept a familiarity and social connectivity between people, creating many spaces and opportunities for people to meet and have a chat. One elderly gentleman who had

retired a number of years ago, and whose identity was closely associated with the town, kept himself busy and purposeful by preparing fires in grates etc in one of the town's hotels and his efforts were appreciated and his need to remain purposeful understood by the proprietors.

Similar to Llangefni the older population are often seen as the community lynch-pin, who retain values traditionally associated with romantic notions of community, of a caring social network that looks out for one another, as Lauren explains:

In some ways the core of the community are the elderly, the older people who are part of the town, they're the ones who are more likely to come and find you if your cat's missing or something. I don't know that's more part of them isn't it, they are more likely to behave like that (Lauren).

There were infrastructural issues similar to those raised in Llangefni regarding the Town Hall; that community centres were not supported enough by local government and remain under-utilised and their potential unrecognised and unfulfilled:

The community centre is not being used to its full potential and as a community centre, it's not a community centred place – it could be better used I think ... it's a shame (Fiona).

People felt strongly that their identity was very associated with being from Machynlleth as familiarity and support networks, and family history gave them a strong sense of belonging. People seemed proud of coming from Machynlleth and gave very loyal and sentimental explanations:

Sheila: I have travelled a lot, I have seen the rest of the world you know... but Machynlleth is home. And it seems to pull people, they do say, what is that um line aren't we what do they call it -

I: a ley-line?

Shelia: Yes, and they do say that there is something about Machynlleth that's amazing how people come here for a week and people stay here for a long time.

Yes, I feel that I belong here basically because everybody knows me and my family and not my generation or my children's generation, but my parents

and my grandparents and back beyond my grandparents. I will be talking to people here in the bar or see someone on the street and they'll say 'I knew your great grandfather or your grandmother and they'll say you're the family of this farm and that farm..... I was born in Wolverhampton and I will wind a lot of people up saying that 'I'm an Englishman but I do speak Welsh and I've lived here and my family's always lived here' and I will wind a lot of locals up who say 'no, your not, you're Welsh' and I'll say 'no I'm not Wolverhampton through and through'.. I think that gives you a sense of belonging to here then because they accept you and take you in and ask me how my father is – and in that sense it is community spirited, but that's a personal thing to be and not Joe Bloggs on the street you know...Identity – yes 'it's acceptance (Daniel).

Oh yes I do, I am very proud of coming from Machynlleth (Eirlys).

well I do yes, all my family are from his area (Tomos) .

born and bred in Mach and it's where my parents and brother and sister live (Carol).

If you cut Cledwyn in half, you'll see Machynlleth written through Cledwyn like Blackpool through rock (Cledwyn).

The Impact of the CAT Community

The 'CAT (Centre for Alternative Technology) community' is a very dynamic and large social group within Machynlleth. Not everyone categorised as part of the 'CAT community' has links to the Centre for Alternative Technology, but they have, more often than not, moved to the town because they were attracted to, what is often referred to as, an 'alternative scene' that is very environmentally focused, has a certain communal, socialist political ethos in common and tends to be very creative. As is revealed in the name of the 'CAT community', this social group is seen to be and see themselves as a 'community', a tight social network. The more subtle social structures (e.g. those who work for CAT and those who don't) only being apparent to those who are part of this general social category. The majority of the 'CAT community' appear to be well-educated, many to degree level and above, many of whom have moved to the town to work (often for the CAT or Dulas Engineering), though many did not move to the town or its surrounding hinterlands for work, but rather as a life-style choice. This group also consists of many second and third generation in-migrants, whose parents or grandparents had moved to the area in the 1970s or '80s and who themselves often have connections to CAT.

In the words of one interviewee: “The identity of the town is linked to it, the CAT” (Frank), with industries and businesses having been developed around the environmental ethos of conservation, sustainable and ethical living. The town has been able to retain an independent identity through hybridising a myriad of different influences, such as Welsh, English, ‘green’.

Many people who were interviewed often spoke of moving to the town to get away from urban areas and post-modern life-styles, where they felt overwhelmed by the enormity of global problems, such as global warming, wars, famines and the capitalist culture in general, preferring instead to retreat to a location that seems cocooned from the outside world; physically in how it is nestled within a valley and socially and culturally as it enables them to be with like-minded people who are also trying to live locally and globally responsible life-styles. An example of this is a few interviewees had chosen not to have a television in order to protect themselves and/or their children from hearing or seeing the news and feeling overwhelmed and helpless. One interviewee gave an example of how during the time of the protests against the current Iraq war, she had told some friend who had visited her not to discuss the war in her house as she explained “this is a house of love not a house of war” (Bea). The emphasis within this ‘community’ is for itself to create a community and to be communal, as the following interview extracts reveal:

I think one of the reasons that I am here is that I have been called home. A lot of people that I’ve know who live around here or lived in Lampeter couldn’t really say why they were here except they felt like, well, I was ‘called here’. I don’t think you can help it in a way, its home. I think it does call you, I think a place like this has very magical energy and I think it does call people to it and then you can’t leave even if you want to ha,ha,ha (Bea).

It’s in the middle of Wales and it feels like a very centred place to be (Christina).

Romantic images of place, spirituality and history are very bound up with people’s descriptions of what they feel about Machynlleth and/or why they have ‘been drawn’ to the town. As such, the CAT community members, old and new, tend to have very idealistic notions of what a community should be and are energetic and enthusiastic about creating a utopian image of ‘community’, enthusiasm that is kept fresh by the input from young people moving into the area as the narratives below reveal:

It's a very networked town on the English side, the ecology side is fantastic, it suits the environment wonderfully.... There's lots of walks ...and people are incredibly talented, and all the initiatives of building and all that's cutting edge (Shirley).

CAT is good, you have to say on the whole, because it brings people in and there's lots for young people that is stimulating, all be it a lot of them are incomers, but at the same time they're lively, they have parties, play music you know - (Charlotte Parry).

- which we like. We are torn sometimes between sometimes staying and moving on and probably if it wasn't for this small but important aspect of Mach I don't think we would stay here would we? (Emrys Parry).

-No. (Charlotte Parry).

We have a very mixed circle of friends which makes you want to stay. If it didn't have that special mixed aspect, we would probably move on actually (Emrys Parry).

As this social group have more often than not chosen to live in Machynlleth (some permanently, others temporarily), and have such a strong social network, everyone who was interviewed who was part of this group, reported feeling that they were part of a community.

I do feel part of the community yea, because I've been here quite a long time and with my work in this place, then I do yea – I'll do group things you know, I'm on the patients' forum at the hospital and stuff like that, I do get involved in things a bit (Lauren).

Nat: I feel a strong sense of community and I am part of it, I will walk down the street and there will be lots of people who will say hello (Nat).

I: How do you define community?

Nat: People communicating with each other and helping each other out, just being friendly and relaxed with each other, it is very relaxed when you can go and ask to borrow thing and people will do things for you and help you out and invite you round. Everyone's welcome ... there's so many lovely people.

Familiarity, acceptance and participation within communal/community activities were given as examples and descriptions of how they feel part of a community and this

group's active social engagement with others was also noted favourably by many of the 'townspeople':

Hippy-style ones are the nicest people you'd meet. You are always accepted in the group even if you don't eat organic etc (Christine).

Many interviewees from the CAT community reported having a strong sense of belonging to the town as we could see in the narratives above and most felt that their identity was connected to the town as well the next interview extracts reveal:

I: do you feel that your identity is in some way connected to the town now?

Nat: I find that my identity changes, depending on where I am and who I am with, but I feel very comfortable being here. When I came back from travelling, I went to the pub quite a lot and hung out there quite a lot and started doing this really crazy wavy dancing, and just got really into it and started just having a laugh, and just felt like, Oh I am home now, I am safe, I can just be really silly, and it's not just about being home, but it's about being here where things are really open and friendly and laid back you can do silly things. Things are possible here you know, things feel a lot more possible here than in a lot of other places I have been to in Britain, where people are just quite stressed and oppressed by various things, there is a sense of freedom here, which is why I like being here, because I am not a conventional person.

The CAT community is the most socially active group in the town, who (as we will see in chapter 8) are responsible for organising the majority of the town's community events, such as pantomimes, the lantern parade, and various other activities for adults and children throughout the year, which contribute to the town having a strong and vibrant community.

Sheila: It does have an amazing social calendar and to be honest, it's fair play to people like Ecodyfi and that for putting these things on. To be honest you know a lot of people talk about communities and English and Welsh and things like that and I think the English fair play, a lot of the incomers who've come to this town, and I'm Welsh through and through, but fair play, it's all the English that seems to put things on; festivals and that in the summer, there's lantern festivals going on in October. Fair play to people who've moved in here who seems to be doing more really than the real locals to be honest.

I: Why do you think that is?

Sheila: I don't know, I really don't know, it's always, always, fair play to them, OK the locals put the carnival on, and I think that's the only thing – the carnival week and that's it. Everything else that goes on here is, like I say the incomers always seem to do the preparations.

We have quite a lot through the year that involves the whole town, sometimes we have a medieval festival in September, that hasn't happened the last year, but that's quite a big thing, we have a lantern parade and all kinds of stuff goes on in the Winter and after Christmas and there's a panto that goes on after Christmas, which is great fun- quite barmy kind-of free-for-all the panto - and it's usually like a core group of adults that have been doing it on and off for years and they just get all the kids in and do it with a gang of kids and it is usually very professionally done. We also have events in the Tabernacle over Christmas, like there's one called the 'Post Turkey Flamingo', which is usually just a cabaret thing, where people go up and do their own stuff, which is great. You can usually go though the year and there's these things going on. We've got the carnival in the summer, which is very much a town people thing, it's not just the other groups, you know, the CAT and so on (Lauren).

The other town events that were organised were described by Lauren as “not necessarily by the people of the town, it's more for the people of the town by those groups” (Lauren).

The Welsh, and Welsh Speaking Group

Painted high up on a rock-face behind Parliament House are the words “FWA Cymru Rydd” (FWA means Free Wales Army and Cymru Rydd means Free Wales), and is often the first indication you get as a visitor that there is more to this harmonious-seeming ‘community’ than meets the eye.

Picture 21



There is a strong Welsh nationalist contingent in Machynlleth, some of whom were responsible for establishment of the Celtica 'tourist attraction' (according to its previous manager), and participate in an Owain Glyndwr march through Machynlleth to celebrate Owain Glyndwr's birthday in September. This was a sensitive issue for people to talk about because of the existence of a strong division between the Welsh / English in some quarters, and was an issue that people had themselves deliberated over at some length. It was largely brought up by English in-comers, but the social divisions between the (Welsh Nationalist) 'Welsh and speak Welsh' social group, was also analysed in some length by a number of community workers aiming to build bridges between 'communities', particularly the then manager of Celtica, to discover why such social divisions still exist. During an interview with two members of the 'CAT community' on this issue it can be seen that under the surface, social integration is still an uncomfortable and often difficult process to navigate:

I was speaking to my friend and he was saying that there was a lot of resentment amongst Welsh people (Christina).

Yeah, and I think if it was me I would be pleased that people are attracted to my land ... like CAT and everything, they really don't like the CAT lot do they (Bea).

Yea and where I work and stuff most of my clients are Welsh and they say things against hippies and stuff, and they haven't got a clue, derogatory things (Christina).

When asking why the issue of language and cultural difference is still a problem, the responses were very reasoned, well informed, and many of the English incomers were very interested in and supportive of Welsh history, but, as was one of the problems with Celtica, the blurring of mythology with historical fact was seen as problematic and nationalistic:

I think its very historical, I think the myths of origin, in the Welsh, the Celtic side are very interesting, I'm just reading Professor Sykes' book about archaeology and DNA and that's really relevant, I find I have to read something like that to place myself, I find it's much more complex living here, though maybe I am over sensitive you know... I think the Welsh language, the fact that it's wonderful that it's lasted, I think the Celtic culture is fascinating and it's a huge thing... I think it's wonderful, so

exciting and the Romans suppressed a lot of Celtic achievements in order to peddle their own myths about themselves, so I think the Welsh / English thing goes back to when the Romans left.

I went along to the opening of the Glyndwr Stones outside Celtica [erected on the lawn in front of the Plas], and there was the guy who was the secretary of the Glyndwr association, who happened to live in Swansea and happened to be an English speaker and that was his mother tongue and he opened the ceremony in English and a whole load of people shouted 'Cymraeg, Cymraeg', so I thought oh dear here we go.. and after the ceremony someone burnt the Union Jack which happens to be my flag ... so I think some people confuse the maintaining of the Welsh language with the mythology about their origins and their ethnicity and I don't think it stands up to scrutiny.

I think they get strength from it for their character and they take advantage of it in public life. You can't see who are the Welsh Nationalists, I am anti-nationalist in many ways and so you don't know who is going to dislike you as soon as you open your mouth... They have marches here with the, is it the Welsh army flag, St David's flag with that singer at the front...the one who runs Sain records, he's Plaid as well... it's a little group, you know, it reminds me of Nüremberg, you know the rally, the flags, the fake swords, the fake chain mail, I can't bear it" (Shirley).

When contemplating why these divisions exist, the perspective of the two friends Christina and Bea from the CAT community seemed to be that, it was largely down prejudice and fear and that over time, trust and familiarity could be established. Once local people got to know and understand a person then allowances were made, and in the second interview extract, issues of divisions between social classes arise, between the ethnic groups as one possible explanation:

Once they know you, they'll think 'oh OK I know what that person's about (Christina)

I think like gardening or market stalls they can relate to you if you're doing something down to earth more, I think that if you say you're a gardener that will count a lot, they then won't look at you and look at your dreads they will look at you and look at you soily hands, and I think if you're real they can relate to you because they are part of the land and the land is part of them, if you know what I mean so they can relate to you better because it's part of life (Bea).

The last comment by Bea shows a romantic image of a type of rural people, of 'y gwerin', that informs her perception of place and people and her notion of belonging.

The Welsh and English social groups were regarded as not generally socialising together, with the two social groups remaining distinctly segregated, with for example the 'CAT community' Friday night being the observable night for them to socialise in the town's pubs, and Saturday night being 'Welsh and Speak Welsh' night for socialising. As one of the women quoted above remarked:

Bea: I hardly know any of the Welsh speakers, which sometimes I find a bit, well I don't know, it's not really disappointing, but it's not a good thing.. in the town if you go to the pub, you don't really, I mean I'm thinking, most of my friends, or nearly all the people I go to the pub with or involved with the stall with, or anything, they're all English".

I: Why do you think that is?

Christina: I don't know why it is really.

Bea: I don't want to say it's because they are not as open to new ideas and things because that sounds wrong, but maybe that is part of it.... All the Welsh people I do know, they're all farmers' sons, they're all lovely, but they don't interact with the English in such a strong way. They do on a very personal level, but there's a dividing line. For example if you go out on a Friday night it's all us lot and on a Saturday night it's all Welsh... which is really weird.

When discussing this with the manager of Celtica who had tried to build 'partnerships' between the town's different social groups, he commented that "it's difficult to get them to mix" (Owen). When asked why this was the case the interview went as follows:

Owen: I think it's pure prejudice personally.

I: On both sides?

Owen: I am not convinced that it is on both sides, I think people are afraid of language.

I: So do you think this is coming from the non-Welsh speakers?

Owen: The non-Welsh speakers yes. I think people are afraid of the language and aren't afraid to raise the language, possibly because there are too many people to live their lives without touching the language. The almost annoying thing is that their affection to the community, the argument that is potentially put forward is that they don't understand the music and I think there are elements there where some Welsh groups are poor at bridging the audience, in terms of when they say it's an evening of Welsh music they are poor at being inclusive.

I: Do you think that there's an element of...we're in our gang

Owen: I think subconsciously that's what it probably is, I think there is an element of , on a personal front, I very much view it as, not so much keeping it to ourselves, it's the threat almost of once we start speaking English, ... its probably a recognition of I'll start speaking English but you almost recognize that it's not a question of speaking English whilst they make the attempt to understand my own language, it's once I start speaking the language they won't try to understand the language, and that might be again anecdotal but I think it's "I mustn't give an inch" sort of thing regarding the language. But what we then see is if we put on a Breton Band or with Mind Over Music we had a festival where people were singing in Danish, people will attend then and engage in it.

I: That's quite an interesting complexity between the people who use the centre and the indigenous Welsh speakers and the people who move into the area, it's quite complex...

Owen: I think it is quite complex, because people's identities and things are not in boxes, there is so much cross-over.

Community Integration and Division – The Impacts of Social Change

The demographic changes that have taken place within the town over the last few decades was frequently commented upon during people's explanations and descriptions of the social groups in the town, making clear distinctions between those who are the 'original townspeople' and those who have moved in from 'outside' and who were regarded as having changed the town's social dynamic significantly.

Reaction to the 'CAT community' within the town is complicated. Many 'townspeople' welcome and enjoy what the CAT community contributes to the town, making the town in some people's words, cosmopolitan and lively; some are less enthusiastic but are appreciative of and resigned to the benefits that this social group contributes to the town; and there are some who are uncomfortable and feel that their culture, identity and community are threatened or weakened by 'incomers'. Evidence of this debate within the community can be seen in the next interview extract below:

Fair play to the technology people they are willing to stand up you know, give them their due, they are willing to contribute and they are willing to work, fair play to them, which is more that what we do. I think the Welsh people have got their own lives at home, your own little circle and we are

very unused to stepping out of that circle, but the people that come in are more willing to stretch out and they do a lot more than what we do – local people (Eirlys).

This explanation from Eirlys, revealed an interesting perspective on some of the cultural differences between the two main social groups; the ‘CAT community’ being more outgoing than the Welsh people (which encompass the townspeople here) as being more reserved and private.

Others are less comfortable with the demographic and cultural changes that are taking place:

We’re getting a lot more strangers into the town and probably the Welsher side of it, you know, can’t accept it, but others do, but you lack that um, whereas you knew everybody before you don’t know them now, do you know what I mean? There are a lot here who are very weary of these people, who come in for the Centre for Alternative Technology, which has been good for the town in lots of ways, but the older generation feel that they are taking over, though they have been good for the town, you know, like putting on pantomimes and various other things in the community, they are always willing to participate and do something (Daisy).

There’s a lot more people coming in than what there was, I mean years ago when I was at school I used to know everybody who lived in every house here, but now you don’t you know – you haven’t got a clue who half of them are, the houses are going to outsiders rather than local people (Judith).

Comments such as Judith’s could also be reflective of how the concept of ‘community’ is also associated with ideology, to a past people and a romantic image of what ‘community’ used to mean and be like. It is difficult therefore to deduce how much of such perceptions are reality or a reflection of how, as people get older, they often lose touch with younger generations and so begin to feel increasingly detached from many of the people who live in the town as they become unfamiliar.

Belonging, its familiarity - people you know from when you were a child.
People coming in threaten that (Carol).

Though as Daniel, below, explains, many of the people who are referred to as ‘outsiders’ are second or third generation in-migrants, who are very supportive of and active within the overarching Machynlleth community and so perhaps shouldn’t be thought of in those terms any more:

There are people who organise things and there are people who are anti the people who organise things, so there are every year, for I think now the past five or six years a very good celebration around Guy Fawkes: lantern parades, fire-works, but that was first operated mainly out of a group from the Technology Centre and townspeople were like 'oh we don't want to associate with that because everybody's hippies', whereas you think 'no guys, come on, this is good for the town, lets move along' and then it was taken over by Celtica and it was fantastic for two or three years and the Celtica were closing because of lack of support for that function, so there are things that are organised and there's a festival every year that's attended, but that's more by people outside of town at the Tabernacle – the arts festival, The carnival is always very successful locally and that pulls everybody in – that's a Dyfi Valley thing – it's really nice. Going back to the CAT people, you're looking at only the third generation of people coming out of there now, the first generation of people where seen by the then town people as outsiders which is a problem wherever you go whenever something new starts, The second generation lives off the back of that to be honest and don't want anything to do with us, but the third generation thirty years on down the line, is that there is more integration and there is more people. I was having a conversation only a couple of weeks ago with someone who was saying 'oh I don't want anything to do with the CAT people' and I says 'look, we're thirty years in now and everybody is the same community and that's how it should be seen, but there's still the older ones who still think 'oh I don't want anything to do with that' and it's just sad because, there are now people my age, born here, went to school here and their families have brought that to this area and the people who are now running it are now local people – it's sad that that mentality still exists (Daniel).

The fact that many of these people may well now be 'local' was acknowledged on a couple of occasions in comments such as: "They could be local, but they're all strangers to me" (Daisy).

This shows both a reluctant acknowledgement that many of the CAT community have been born and raised in Machynlleth and a reluctance to accept them as 'local'. What appears to be important to many is the differentiation they make between those they *perceive* to be local and those who they *perceive* not to be. These perceptions are not therefore necessarily reflective of reality.

The value of incomers to the town is widely recognised, as they help to create Machynlleth's vibrant atmosphere and independent identity. The general feeling in the town by the 'townspeople' seems to be that although they are not totally happy that the

identity and the demographic structure of the town has been altered, they are also on the whole proud of how cosmopolitan the town has become. At the same time, the immigration of people from outside the town who are largely from England brings with it social connotations, such as pressure on the housing market, health and social services, as the following interview extract from a member of the 'townspeople' and a local town councillor explains:

Cllr Davies: The Dyfi Valley and Machynlleth has an elderly population, shall we say, those above pensionable age, make up about just under 30% of the population which is something between 9 and 10% above the Welsh average... and that is to do with people moving out of England, or indeed other parts of Wales, they've finished their working lives and they are moving to a quieter area for their retirement. I can understand that, but that of course then creates its own difficulties for certainly young local people and indeed for the cost of providing services, whether it's hospital services or social services. I am not suggesting that that shouldn't be so – it doesn't matter where anybody's from, they are human beings and deserved to be treated as such and not as a second class citizen I'm against barriers and walls and boundaries, other than the boundary of a cricket pitch - I have - I've got no time for it. Because once you start putting up boundaries, then you start saying, like 70 years ago the philosophy was: the worst of my people is better than the best of your people, and once you start that, then you're really going down the slope, because it feeds off itself, hatred builds up and all sorts of things are starting to be said and rumour becomes fact.

I: Do you think much of that takes place in Machynlleth at all?

Cllr Davies: No, that's what one must safeguard against. That's why I am very pleased that Machynlleth society is very cosmopolitan.... and I think it's good and that's why the railways is still important to Machynlleth.

On several occasions whilst interviewing people in Machynlleth social class was touched upon, and the disparities between employment and housing opportunities between 'locals' and 'incomers' or between Welsh and English people were given as some of the main reasons for hostility towards those referred to as 'incomers' by some of the 'townspeople':

English people get jobs and local people don't seem to get the chance unemployment is a big problem and jobs are hard to come by (Daisy).

The instances of segregation of children from different economic backgrounds, that tends to be largely split down the language/ethnicity line of 'Welsh' or 'English', is

also of concern for local people as many of the 'English' families (from both the English in-comers and the CAT community social groups) are said to send their children to an English school in Aberystwyth. The school is seen to be a higher achieving school than Machynlleth's predominantly Welsh-language secondary school and it is feared that it could lead to a two tier class system running along ethnic lines:

People are concerned about the school. The problem with the school, that's the thing with the people who've moved in, they tend to send their children to Aberystwyth to the English school [Penglais School teaches through the medium of English], so because the parents who are concerned about their children, you know achieving, so then all the English children who are achievers go to Aber [Aberystwyth], which brings this school down then doesn't it and it's difficult to improve it then (Tudor).

The largest complaint and issue that generated the most passionate responses was the shortage of housing. Despite many people appreciating the town being a vibrant place, full of young energetic people, the young people who are referred to are often people who have moved into the area to work or as students at the CAT, and together with the in-migration of other people moving into the area for work or to retire, these people are seen as pushing the local youth out of the town, as they add to the housing shortage, both rented and private accommodation, and are pushing house prices up and out of the reach for low-paid local people, forcing many young families and people to move away. There was also a perception that council tenants were being transferred from Liverpool and Birmingham to Machynlleth which was also seen as unfair, regarding that these people benefit from the points-based system to the detriment of local people.

There's a shortage of housing and housing is given to people from outside the area – the point based system is unfair to local people – families are moving away, especially the young, to find housing (Carol).

Judith: It angers me, it really does anger me, because there's no houses for young families starting off and the house prices are so high and you've got people from Aber. and places coming in here to buy the houses, it just keeps pushing the prices up, which pushed the locals out really. There is no way that I could afford to have a mortgage on my wage here because it's such a small wage and you've got all these people coming in and I think something should be done about that.

I: are the people who are coming in, do they work in the area?

Judith: I think Aber is the main place where people work, but then again I don't think any of the shops and things are getting anything out of them because they are doing all their shopping in Aber, so they're not benefiting the economy of the shops and things. And there's a lot of them from the midlands around who get houses as well and that angers me as well, because, not that I don't expect them to have a house, or anything like that, I just think fair play to people in a working family and there needs to be more help to them really, rather than just the benefits people... because of the points system, people think 'well we've got no hope at all', if you're working you can't get points and if your not working you get points and there's no hope for them, they have to rent privately most of the time, and then that costs them a lot of money then. ...A few young people stay in the area, but the ones that do really, are probably just getting by, maybe they're unemployed, maybe they're doing a job, flitting from one to the other, I think if you were wanting to get on in life I think you'd need to leave the town to do it really – I think you'd have to move away to get a decent wage basically because the wages are rubbish around here.

There was also resentment from one interviewee, who worked as a housing officer, about the disparity in knowledge and education between local people and in particular the CAT volunteers or students, who are on the whole well educated compared to the majority of local young people who are not, arguing that the CAT housing applicants or those who are applying for housing benefits for example, are much more skilled at navigating the housing and benefits system. Their education, in other words, often enables them to access more financial help than many less educated local people are able to. This interviewee also felt that the CAT volunteers were not legitimately working and contributing to society through paying taxes but were instead living off the back of hard working people, many of whom are low paid. For many people the social class divide in opportunities and lifestyle is still a dominant issue.

Not all those who were interviewed fell into one or other of the clearly distinctive groups. For example, those who were not part of any discernable social group in the town included people from England who had moved into the area (some many years ago) for work or through marriage and tended not to engage in community activities or socialising widely through choice:

I'm not a really good person to ask about that because I'm really quite a loner. I've got four children living at home (or did have) and my husband and I and, we're not very good at mixing, so I am not a very good person to ask because I like to keep myself to myself – though my children have found it a very good place to mix, the leisure centre is good for that, you

know, they belong to swimming clubs and canoeing clubs and things like that (Tina).

But they recognise that there seems to be a good community in the town through social signifiers, such as the annual carnival:

Oh yes I expect so, you can see by events such as the carnival, through community events like that, that people do get involved, though unfortunately I don'tI am not that sort of person, I like my own space (Beryl).

However for their children, their experience of the town is recognised as being very different from their parents, having been brought up there they feel acceptance and that identity and sense of belonging are connected to Machynlleth:

Tina: No, I mean my children are Welsh, my son is Meibion Glyndwr's right hand man, they're more Welsh than-Welsh. They are very proud of their roots and they are very proud that they can speak a language that very few people can speak.

I: Do your children want to stay living around here?

Tina: No, two of them wouldn't with their field of work, they would never get a job around here, but the two middle ones never want to leave it.

I: Do you have a sense of belonging to the town?

Tina: No I never have done. No, my identity is not connected to the town no – I'm Yorkshire and I'm Yorkshire through and through, although I can speak Welsh, because you have to because of the children, but I'm as passionate about my roots as the Welsh people are about their roots and at every possible opportunity I would go back to my roots, just sort of, you know, because that's where I came from, so no, I don't identify with them at all.

The last extract shows some of the cultural divisions between ethnic identities that exist for some people. For others however, even if they have chosen not to integrate or engage with community activities, they feel a sense of belonging to the town:

Yes, I guess so after living here for the past few years, yes, yes. My background is that we have travelled quite a lot during my childhood, so I haven't really associated myself with any one particular place, so I suppose

in that way working in Machynlleth and living locally is the longest I've ever lived in one spot I suppose (Barbara cashier).

Conclusion

What 'community' represented to the informants of both Llangefni and Machynlleth, was the social communal connectivity of people living in a shared space, of friendly neighbourliness, trust and familiarity. 'Community' is particularly associated with an ideological romantic image of past social structures, based on social interdependence which are seen as still existing (to various degrees) amongst the towns' older generations. Whilst the concept of community may remain elusive to academics (Day 2006: 1), it exists in the imaginations of those individuals who participated in this research as a fixed concept firmly associated with place, connected to which were romantic concepts of friendship, belonging and identity; a past or dying reality that was and is being mourned, or an active social construct, that exists or is being actively re-moulded or developed, to meet the ideological expectations of those involved.

The demographic changes that have occurred in each town as a result of the changing purposes and economic infrastructures of both towns have and are continuing to alter the formations of their community networks. For many of the older generations or for those who are connected to either of the towns' older community networks, the changes are often experienced as challenging to identities, threatening traditional networks, the Welsh language and therefore people's sense of belonging. The changes are experienced by many as a threat to be resisted through nationalistic and protectionist agendas based primarily on being Welsh, being Welsh speaking and of being from either market town 'born and bred'. These results therefore raise issue with Savage *et al's* (2006: 29) rejection of the classic view held by many post-war communities studies that characterise places by the tensions that exist between 'born and bred' and incomer groups, for in these two towns these tensions are still very present amongst some members of the population. Both towns' traditional community networks and identities are very place specific and their opposition to the changes and the people who are undermining their community and identity are seen primarily as being English and therefore a continuation of the English colonisation of Wales and are not seen by these social groups in terms of a consequence of global social changes. The responses to

changes are in many ways very similar, developing protectionist, nationalistic agendas in opposition to the 'incomers' who are seen as a threat. However, where differences do emerge is in how their sentiments are manifested. In Llangefni, where protectionist and nationalistic views are more widespread, people appear (judging from the interview population) to be more passive in their responses, expressing their discontents to each other rather than manifesting them in action. In Machynlleth meanwhile, these sentiments, although held by a significant minority of the town's population, appear to be acted upon more overtly through the graffiti on the rock overlooking the town and the annual Owain Glyndŵr march, held by a small, but well organised, Welsh nationalist group. The segregation between the 'Welsh' and the 'English' is also more obvious in Machynlleth as the town's Welsh / English demographic is more observable than in Llangefni, making these social differences more apparent in the town.

Llangefni's community infrastructure has become the weaker; people are seen to have become less traditional, more urbanised and are seen as becoming increasingly individualized, whose identities are being formed externally from the market town – a reflection of a postmodern epoch. As a result many are feeling increasingly alienated, either through the economic and social disaffectedness experienced by the 'Bro-Tudur group' or threatened like the 'Welsh and from Llangefni group'. The social groups in Llangefni are becoming marginalised and alienated from one another and 'community' is now only seen as existing in pockets in Llangefni amongst the traditional Llangefni residents or in the various sports clubs. People are seen to be too busy 'living their own lives' to organise community activities such as carnivals, which are seen as not only symbolically important but also important mechanisms for developing social connectivity and as 'social glue'. Even though these various groups may have extensive friendship networks inside or outside the town, these are not perceived as being 'communities'. Community still remains an important ideology in the imagination of all those interviewed, even if they felt it no longer existed in the town or were disinclined to participate in or generate community activities.

In Machynlleth the community networks formed there by the 'CAT community' are inspired and developed by those who have moved into the area in order to live in or create an idealized image of what a community ought to be. As Newby (1979) and Day (2006) have observed, these relative 'newcomers' are largely middle-class and bring

with them urban romantic perspectives of what a rural idyll and community should be like, on top of which are superimposed further ideological values about creating and generating sustainable (socially, environmentally and ethically) communities that are both globally and locally responsible. This social group are the most active in 'creating community' and in so doing impose change on traditional community networks, though having an inclusive agenda and energetic focus on community development, has meant that the town has retained an 'overarching community' and the 'traditional townspeople' at least, have been less marginalised because of the changes and to a degree appreciate the efforts made by the 'CAT community'. Savage *et al*'s concept of 'elective belonging' fits neatly here, as the 'CAT community' have chosen Machynlleth as a location upon which they can superimpose their identities and through living amongst a network of like-minded people, gain a sense of belonging to the town.

The local still therefore plays a very significant role in people's perception of themselves and where they belong, even if the location itself is not permanent. This group is far more transient and globally mobile than many of the other social groups in the two towns but it is nevertheless imbued with meaning and purpose while they are there. Community could be understood as "a phenomenon of culture: as one, therefore, which is meaningfully constructed by people through their symbolic prowess and resources" (Cohen 1995: 38).

It becomes apparent that people's engagement with the local and the global is closely associated to their social identities. We are seeing then the representation of two very differently unfolding reactions to the influences globalization is having on the towns' social structures. In Llangefni the postmodern changes that Beck (1992) identified as happening is occurring, whilst in Machynlleth, as a reaction against this, a concerted effort is being made against the social disconnectedness of postmodernity and a process of 'elective belonging' and the active construction of community is happening, that is a hybridised ideology, based on romantic images of a Celtic rural past, and on environmental and sustainable ideologies. People's sense of identity and belonging may be less place-specific or place-fixed in some cases but for others they remain and are actively sought out, to be connected to a place. People's conception of 'community' however remains, for the respondents in Llangefni and Machynlleth, firmly place specific. As Tomlinson (1999: 20) suggests therefore, globalization "alters the context

of meaning constructions: how it affects people's sense of identity, the experience of place and the self in relation to place, how it impacts on the shared understandings, values, desires, myths, hopes and fears that have developed around locally situated life."

CHAPTER 8

CITIZENSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore people's perceptions and understanding of citizenship. The variations between each town will first be explored in relation to Welsh Assembly and local government policy directives, which reveal how the visions and objectives for Machynlleth and Llangefni contained within The Wales Spatial Plan and the Local Development Plans go some way to explain why the market towns have developed differently from one another. The chapter then sets out to discover how politically engaged the respondents from both market towns are, before proceeding to examine what people understand by the term 'citizenship', how empowered they are and feel themselves to be as local or global citizens, what responsibilities they perceive themselves as having in relation to others and how active they are as local and global citizens.

Engagement and Participation: Policies, Practice, Purpose and People

As the Carnegie Trust report on community engagement and participation states, "there has been a radical reinterpretation of the role of 'policy making' and 'service delivery' in the public domain" (Bovarid, 2007: 2) over recent years. The emphasis on partnership working is now woven into nearly every governmental document, whether the topic is health, education, community development, sustainability or employment and expressed throughout is the emphasis on collaborative working between agencies; voluntary, statutory, user, community and private. So too has the relationship between the local and the global become a growing theme, with governmental documents setting out their agendas to incorporate global responsibilities within policies for supporting and creating 'sustainable economies' and 'sustainable communities', as the opening paragraphs of the Welsh Assembly's *'People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan'* document illustrates:

“In the early 21st century Wales, in common with other nations, states and regions, faces many challenges in the management of resources and territory. These include issues of globalization, the implications of technology and the knowledge economy and urban and rural lifestyles, and the potentially enormous impacts of climate change. Coupled with this are ever-rising personal expectations, demographic change and the ease of mobility, particularly of our most talented people.... A country the size of Wales has to optimize the use of public and private resources to create the best opportunities for its citizens in an ever modernising and expanding European Union.... This first Wales Spatial Plan...aims to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government’s policies and programmes come together effectively with the workings of local government, business and other partners across Wales, to enable a truly sustainable future” (Nov 2004: 3)

This document sets out the Welsh Assembly government’s policy objectives and guidelines for local County Councils to work to and interpret. The Spatial Plan identifies what the Welsh Assembly sees as the specific needs of the different areas of Wales, developing policy strategies for each. The differences between the strategies of ‘Môn’ and ‘Central Wales’, go some way in helping us understand the differences between how Llangefni and Machynlleth are developing and responding to local and global pressures and how civic engagement within and between both towns differs so considerably.

The strategy document emphasises partnership working between agencies and the community to develop specific policies for different areas, running along the strategy’s five themes of “Building Sustainable Communities, Promoting Sustainable Economy, Valuing our Environment, Achieving Accessibility and Respecting Distinctiveness” (Ibid: 5). To counter the demographic trends of falling birth rates and an aging population, in-migration is encouraged, particularly of well-educated and skilled people from across Europe, in order to balance out the demographic profiles of areas and is seen as being able to contribute positively to the identity and culture of places (though the document does note the sensitivities that surround the Welsh language and culture) (Ibid 9). At the same time local community identity and distinctiveness is to be encouraged and supported, both for community cohesion and economic imperatives of

promoting the locations' unique qualities and identities to attract tourism, through investing in community facilities and providing community services.

Communities are to develop their 'social capital' through participating in community voluntary action and volunteering, setting out the wider governmental strategy of emphasising active citizenship associated with which are rights and responsibilities. Local individual strengths are to be built upon in order for locations not to compete with one another and in order to harness potential and attract tourists. Emphasis is placed on enhancing town centres and utilising public buildings for civic functions.

Wales is no longer seen as isolated from other parts of the world. The interconnectivity of the economy and the environment is openly recognised and addressed in light of this, for example: "Wales' CO2 emissions are currently running at roughly double the capacity of our natural environment to absorb them... The potential implications for water supply are significant and Wales will not be immune from the repercussions that climate change has on the social and economic systems in other parts of the world" (Ibid 23). Increasing production of renewable energy and energy efficient housing, industry and transport are promoted in response. However, policies such as the building of 'major retail developments', which sounds very much like another name for out-of-town retail parks, and the rationalization of services, such as schools, seems at times to be contradictory to the strategy's aims of creating sustainable communities or achieving their environmental objectives.

Llangefni, at the time of researching, was within a European Objective 1 area (now known as 'Convergence Regions' since 2007) and had been designated as one of the largest Objective 1 project areas in Wales. It has been identified as one of the most deprived locations in Wales having over 55% of families on income-related benefits. However it is only one ward within Llangefni (Llangefni is made up of three wards, Tudur, Cyngar and Cefni) (Health Information Analysis Team, 2004: 4 & 5), the 'Tudur' ward, that has been designated as a Communities First area, as it is within this ward that the majority of the poverty is located, meaning that only a part of Llangefni town can benefit from or engage with Communities First programmes. Machynlleth meanwhile, is situated within an Objective 2 area, but despite not having as high a level of poverty as Llangefni, Machynlleth is also a Communities First ward and as

Machynlleth is not split up into different wards, its Communities First service serves the whole town. Llangefni is therefore, one could argue, at an immediate disadvantage from not being able to have an holistic programme to tackle poverty, disenfranchisement and community development, such as Machynlleth enjoys (WAG, Nov. 2004 & Communities First Powys, 12/8/08).

Communities First is about promoting active citizenship. It has been developed by the Welsh Assembly government to help and enable people living in disadvantaged areas, where the associated problems that all too often accompany disadvantage exist such as poverty, poor housing and environment, poor education, substance misuse, unemployment, dependence on the benefits system, stigma and social exclusion, to regenerate their local area and 'community'. The scheme's objective is to engage local people in identifying the problems within an area and how they might be tackled, enabling local people to be involved with 'partnership working' between agencies (public, private, voluntary and businesses) and to participate in joint planning to improve their lives and tackle disadvantage. The scheme claims to *"have helped give people in Communities First areas a sense of common purpose, a sense of hope and a sense of belonging"* (Communities First: 4/8/08).

However, a further discrepancy exists in the Wales Spatial Plan strategic document, when it lays out what the Welsh Assembly's visions are for the future of the two towns, which have a direct influence on how local government interprets and implements these visions locally. For example the document's 'vision' for 'Môn' is very different for its 'vision' for 'Central Wales'. The Spatial Plan does of course have to address the vast variations between regions (urban, rural, industries, geography etc), but the document nevertheless has discrepancies in emphasis and priorities that have direct impact on 'community' participation.

Llangefni comes within what the Spatial Plan terms as the 'Menai hub' (WAG, Nov 2004: 38), i.e. those towns that are situated along both sides of the Menai Straits which on Ynys Môn, extend as far as Llangefni. The emphasis here is the linking of the towns along the Menai Straits together and to Bangor in particular, by enhancing transportation routes through their 'Trunk Road Forward Programme' (Ibid:39), building upon what the Welsh Assembly sees as the success of the extension of the A55

dual carriage way across Ynys Môn, (which runs close to Llangefni), linking locations together (termed as 'international gateway corridors') effectively creating commuter areas, both to live and work in. Particular emphasis is given to building upon the proximity of Bangor University in helping to create a 'knowledge based economy'. There is considerably less emphasis on community regeneration and involvement, emphasising instead the need to "*work with partners in the area to agree the roles and functions of places and reflect these in LDPs [Local Development Plans]*" (Ibid: 40), which despite also stating that social deprivation is to be addressed through Communities First later in the document, does not stipulate community involvement at the strategic planning level.

For 'Central Wales' which includes Machynlleth, a very different level of emphasis is placed on community involvement. The locality is recognised as attracting people looking for a 'better quality of life' and supposedly has the greatest level of educational attainment in Wales, findings that have been reflected within the interviews from Machynlleth, and are all the more significant when one considers the fact that population density in this part of Wales remains relatively low. The Spatial Plan's emphasis is very much focused on the area's natural assets, seeing tourism as the area's main potential industry but also it emphasises the need for sustainable and sensitive development of the tourist industry in order to enhance the area's attractiveness and suggests that "*further innovative low impact developments similar to the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth should be promoted*" (WAG, No. 2004: 46). The plans for this area seem to be far more cohesive, emphasising economic and environmental sustainability:

"The policy direction set in Farming for the Future provides an opportunity to create a sustainable and diversified land management system, with the emphasis on higher-value production, closer synergy between farming, care for the environment and tourism" (Ibid: 46).

Rather than creating '*closer working links*' between locations, as the aim is for 'Eryri and Môn', the emphasis here is to improve links between rural communities to build '*complementary regional centres*', seemingly focusing therefore on the individualisation of town centres, seeing them as economic assets through attracting tourism. The directives also emphasise the need for local partnership working between

agencies to identify local needs and to strengthen local communities through both Rural Community Action, another community regeneration strategy that promotes partnership working and community participation in the identification of local needs and in responding to them (Powys County Council, 4 Feb. 03: 1) and the EU Rural Development Regulation that again stresses community development, social cohesion and sustainable development (though it is not clear in this document what is meant by 'community') (Council for the European Union: 21/10/05: 1) (WAG: Nov. 2004: 47). The Spatial Plan's directives for this area are therefore far more cohesive, with greater emphasis on community development and community participation.

These discrepancies between how each region is viewed may go some way then, in helping us understand some of the differences between the levels of civic engagement within both towns and perhaps why there are distinctive disparities between each town's Communities First initiatives.

It must be outlined that the Communities First workers who were interviewed in Llangefni and Machynlleth were very helpful and informative, but the programmes were very different, as is reflected within the on-line information available about both Communities First programmes. For Llangefni there was no information available at all other than a contact name and address; for Machynlleth meanwhile, there were numerous documents and significantly there was a great deal of emphasis on community participation with an interactive on-line 'Ideas Book' for members of the local community to be able to add their suggestions to how the local community, economy and environment could be improved and which is divided into specific themes: 'Economy and Employment', 'Education and Training', 'Countryside and the Environment', 'Housing', 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Community Activities', 'Quality of Life' and 'Transport and Communication' (Ecodyfi: 26 Sept 2003). Information on numerous public meetings and community projects could be found and the emphasis was very much on global as well as local sustainability, for example:

Local needs must be met within a long-term vision. This implies attention to global as well as local environmental quality and sustainability (e.g. climate change), to the robustness of the local economy (e.g. encouraging local

purchasing) and to the capacity of local people to take responsibility for the future (Ecodyfi, Communities First: 12/8/02: 2).

There is clearly a cohesive strategy and theme for Machynlleth and its surrounding hinterland, led by Ecodyfi, an organization with its own vision to be a “leader in sustainable community regeneration” (Ecodyfi: *About Ecodyfi*). This vision is achieved through strengthening the local economy (the most important local industries being tourism and farming), by developing economically and environmentally sustainable objectives that are also designed to enhance local distinctiveness, and is a deliberate reaction against the “globalization of production and distribution systems” (Ibid), seeing them as unsustainable, waste creating and damaging to local economies.

Knowledge about Communities First in general and about the strategies and activities for Machynlleth, in particular, can also be accessed on the Powys Communities First website, enabling local people, businesses and organisations to gain a full understanding of the aims of the project and become involved. Ecodyfi appears to play a particularly key role in the cohesive strategy in the town, keeping the ethos of collective community involvement and participation in economic, environmental and community sustainability and development central to organisations’ general focus within the town and which are complementary to the work of Communities First. Ecodyfi is therefore a unique resource at the disposal of the town.

This democratic and empowering ethos of public engagement seems to be lacking in Llangefni. Information does not appear to be available (or if it is, it is not easily accessible), there is no website, there is no interactive ‘ideas book’ to keep up-to-date with people’s agenda’s and priorities to enhance participation. The service offers training, classes in a variety of activities to tackle health and education, but does not appear to be as pro-active in involving local people to have a say about what type of town they would like to live in and how they would like their lives to be improved. Rather than being a service that enables the people who live in the Tudur ward to be included in a wider development agenda, it seems to operate instead as a service that provides things for them. Llangefni does not have a regeneration organisation such as Ecodyfi to work alongside and complement the Communities First programme. The differences in approaches appear to reflect the different emphasis within the ‘Wales

Spatial Plan' strategy for the areas of Wales in which Llangefni and Machynlleth are situated, and how Powys County Council, Ynys Môn County Council and the two towns' Communities First programmes have responded to and interpreted the policy directives.

These observations also seem to be borne out by the comments made about the lack of support by Ynys Môn County Council for the Communities First project by Llangefni's Communities First worker:

Llangefni's Object 1, but it's not all Communities First. See now, if you go down the road here, just after the roundabout, that's where my ward starts and up to the College, You know Communities First is all about inclusion and straight away there's exclusion, you know Holyhead has got six wards, only four are Communities First... In the ideal world you could solve every problem, but you could never do it – I mean Llangefni is the main town on Anglesey yeah, in Holyhead you've got four or five Communities 1st, Rhosneigr's got one, Cemaes has got one [both are villages] – they've all got one, even the small villages, and this is the main part of Anglesey and the Council aren't supporting us, but we were aware of that when we came here and we can't ask them [the Council] to move us elsewhere because we're not Council (Caroline).

This last comment is about having to move the Communities First premises as its current building was, at the time, due to be pulled down by the Council the following September. They were looking to re-locate within the ward but at the time of interviewing had not been able to find anywhere: "Some people have suggested the Town Hall, but I say no, because we'll get people coming in saying 'oh can I join that course' and I won't blame them, but I'll have to say no if they're not from the [Tudur] ward – you see – barriers straight away" (Caroline).

Again when interviewing a Council worker, he also spoke of the Council being limited to help the retail sector directly because of policy directives, but did reveal where their priority lies in encouraging larger and better paid jobs into Llangefni by demolishing many of the small work units on the industrial estate and building office units in order to attract people with more spending money into the town to bolster the local economy. (This market has up to now been largely unsuccessfully tapped, in respect of the hundreds of Council workers that work in the Council Offices in the town). This policy in part reflects the 'Wales Spatial Plan' strategy of seeing Llangefni as primarily an

employment and commuter location, and there appears to be a lack of a cohesive policy for the town as a whole:

We have to a certain extent got one hand tied behind our backs in terms of – it's difficult because of European regulations for us to do anything to help the retail sector per se directly. We can do things like environmental improvements sort of thing in the town, but I mean the Church Street [one way system and widening pedestrian area], is something that has been done in the past year or so. What we can try and do is help the town centre indirectly if you like, what we are trying to do at the moment, is... encourage or replace some of the low-density employment on the industrial estate, some of those buildings that are coming to the end of their useful life really and encourage bigger density of employment, like offices and things, as opposed to what is there now and try and increase how well paid the jobs are as well, so that you've got more people in the town with a little bit more money... who will go into the town and benefit the town (Dennis).

Llangefni, Machynlleth and Respondents' Political Disillusionment

Political Disillusionment in Llangefni

Much of the research results echoed the conclusions of the Power Inquiry (Kennedy 2006: 27), according to which "Popular engagement with the formal processes and institutions of democracy has been in long-term decline since the 1960s". In the words of one interviewee Llangefni is "quite politically charged", but this observation is at odds with most people's perceptions of the town or of their own level of political engagement. The general view is that people in Llangefni are on the whole not interested in local or national politics and furthermore, do not really understand it.

No, they're not interested. I don't think they understand it, you know if it's not taught in school from an early age, how are they supposed to understand it... I've spoken to people in other Communities First areas and they've said the same – why should we go out and vote, they'll do what they want anyway (Caroline).

Generally speaking people aren't – well it shows you when the election comes, people are generally disinterested, people are bored of local and national politics. They are only interested if something happens that affects their perception, their view of things, their house, their child (Cllr Roberts).

The town is not political at all – the town doesn't want to know anything about it. They would never stick together, they'd more probably end up fighting with each other (Siôn).

No, it's a strange place Anglesey, it's been Tory, it's been Liberal, it's been Plaid Cymru and it's now Labour and it seems to go in a cycle and you can never predict how it's going to go. The farmers traditionally have been liberal or conservative and here you'd expect it to be Plaid Cymru and it's now Labour, so you don't now where you are really (Dilwyn).

This perception is then reinforced by people's initial responses to the question "do you consider yourself to be political?", where invariably the initial response was "no". Through probing a little deeper however, to encourage interviewees to elaborate and explain how they felt about local and national politics, an array of political opinion was revealed and their narratives also helped explain why the general perception of Llangefni held by all three interview groups was that Llangefni people were not political.

People associated the word 'political' principally with political parties, towards which a great deal of hostility and scepticism was felt. Even those interviewees who did consider themselves to be political, included in their explanations and statements negative comments about political parties, distancing their own political ethos from the main political parties or the current political system *per se*. Respondents were very cynical about politics national or local and gave an array of negative comments about the similarities between political parties and the disempowerment of the general population, stating that the government, whichever party may be in office, followed its own agenda, rather than that of the population. Comments such as:

I'm not political – local or national – it won't make a difference, it's all for their own gain (Jones).

No – I won't be voting this time, they're all cowboys and Indian (Dylan).

Politics is not relevant to people's lives - what have they ever done for us? (Ieuan).

No, the political parties are all six of one and half a dozen of the other (Mrs Thomas).

No, I am not political – local or national – they are all so the same I'm independent. The issues may be relevant but the way they do it is not good (Harri).

No, most of the people won't vote. Some of them, because they don't feel it'd be relevant and because they feel so depressed with the Council (Cllr Rhian).

No, I get quite fed up with politics to be honest with you. Anglesey County Council are, how can I put it, not the most trustworthy Council (Dilwyn).

This cynicism about politicians and the political parties was also reflected in research conducted by Henry Milner (2003) and in the Power Inquiry (2006) which both concluded that one of the main reasons for the decrease in people voting was because they felt that “all politicians were the same” (Power 2006: 92). After the initial negative responses, the questioning often elicited quite passionate dialogue from interviewees, either when explaining to me their reasons for feeling like this, but also within the bigger group interviews amongst themselves, revealing actually a great deal of interest in and concern with political issues. Fundamentally, as was indicated from the extracts above, there exists distrust of politicians and political parties, both local and national, finding them ineffectual, unrepresentative, leading people to feel both alienated and disenfranchised from local and national formal politics:

I voted Plaid Cymru last time as Ieuan Wyn Jones was local, but he was ineffectual and before that Thatcher sold off our coal, railway, Telecom, houses I have never been political, but Labour have brought unemployment down, though people don't feel it. People aren't happy, they're negative. Poverty doesn't need to cause the 'what can I get out of it attitude' (Mrs Thomas).

A lot of my friends are Conservatives but they do not want to vote for Cameron (Mrs Evans).

I get more involved in local politics more than national politics – the government are just a bigger version of what we have locally – full of vacant promises. I am only involved in local politics by attending meetings that are held in the town. I don't like the political system – if I felt that I could get anything done I would stand as an Independent councillor, but there's no point when you've got a corrupt council [here he is referring to scandals relating to Ynys Môn Council]. Politics is relevant to life but the decisions made are not relevant. There should be local weekly referendum about local plans etc, democracy, and on national and local issues (Glyn).

I'm fairly sure that they [the public] feel their [politicians'] agenda is relevant, but that the solutions are flawed or ill construed and that they make people feel apathetic and disenfranchised. I am worried about the quality of people's lives - disenfranchisement – the simple fact that the majority of people (there are always the exception) are neither capable, aware or able to effect change and to affect the quality of their lives in the way that they would like to. The Masquerade of democracy – perhaps even the notion of whether democracy's a sensible model... but it is simply the fact that it seems to be paradoxical to me that 95% of the population are bloody good folk, all the things that they separately wish for seem to be difficult to realise so the leviathan that we are all aboard just sustains its existence... and seems incapable of fulfilling it's original purposes. But yea, we've got a crap political system and we delude ourselves that we've not (Geoff).

These views are quite sophisticated, and may be what one might expect to get from some of the 'CAT community' in Machynlleth and show there is not a total lack of interest or withdrawal from political awareness from Llangefni respondents either.

During one group interview with a number of participants in one of the town's pubs, a customer who had not been participating in the interview up until that point, joined in by commenting under his breath "I would vote for the BNP party", which after further inquiry, spurred on a lot of discussion among the interview group and generated further interest and a lot of support for airing this opinion from other people in the pub as well as from the original interview group; for example one person explained that:

You only need to look at the papers to see how much crime they [immigrants] are committing (Dave).

Yes and why should we pay taxes for them to live here? (Dylan and Ieuan).

These comments led on to a wider conversation about how one of the interview group had himself gone over to work in Germany during the 1980s when he was younger and when German wages were far higher than British wages. What was interesting was that these comments were made without any of the group seemingly linking the fact that he would have been a migrant worker then himself.

The view of immigrant workers 'stealing' local or British jobs was also echoed elsewhere as one business owner explained that:

I am political but it's difficult because I can't understand these foreign workers coming over here and then they send their money back home. They are taking up local jobs. People should do these jobs and not get the dole (Rhys).

These comments reflect the level of powerlessness and disenfranchisement that people feel and are synonymous with the rise of political parties such as the BNP and UKIP, whose protectionist political agendas are attracting support, reportedly representing the views of a large proportion of the British public who are currently not represented by any of the main political parties. According to the Power report it could "be argued that recent higher levels of support for the British National Party are early examples of this process" (Power 2006: 35). These trends are particularly prevalent amongst some of the country's poorest and newly disenfranchised – the industrial working class, whose political voice and interests, once represented by the Labour Party, are now increasingly alienated from the political system (Ibid: 31).

People in Llangefni are primarily concerned with local politics, rather than national politics, as one interviewee explained, illustrating also the predominant working-class identity of the town and also the distinguishing identity demarcations between 'them' and 'us' that are associated with people's sense of belonging that we saw earlier in chapter seven. The interview extracts below also reveal, how people do not generally reflect on how events or trends that are seen to be occurring locally or are affecting people locally, are often a reflection of wider international or global trends:

If you get involved in conversation with neighbours, it's always about local issues, it's never about national issues, their concerns are about what's going on here, obviously the shootings at the moment is a big story in Llangefni and the drugs bust, but it was never set in a bigger context and the issues now about Iraq and Lebanon, nobody ever talks about that. I find that quite, well not strange, but no one ever really discusses that really, it's always what seems to happen to them – they're very wrapped up in what is going on here. How do you get the opportunity to discuss national issues with your neighbour? And if you do they'll probably look at you and think 'what are you talking about?' It tends to be quite excluding for people, I mean I wouldn't do it here, because I was, if you like, one of them, and then I went to University and then they'd probably think, 'where's she getting all her big idea from – she's gone to University and she thinks she knows it', and so because I'm really one of them I don't do it, it wouldn't work, so I wouldn't attempt it. I talk on the level they would expect me to talk, if you like (Kate).

Politicians are jumping on the band wagon with this global warming, we've had ice ages, we've been tropical at one time. I think the politicians are just using this as an excuse to tax us (Mrs Thomas).

Where people did remark positively about the current political parties, they did so very apathetically, acknowledging some good work that they felt had been achieved, but within the same sentence also included negative or indifferent comments. People's understanding of government appeared at times to be vague.

Well, they haven't done much have they, any government have they – really? I will tell you that they do look after the elderly. I've had two cataract operations and they give you a Taxi to go there [the hospital] you know, pick you up and bring you home, they are very good like that I must say to this government (Ceinwen).

Oh I don't know, since I have retired, if you were talking to my children they would probably give you a different answer, you know when you retire, you are a bit more laid-back. Well they haven't done a lot for pensioners but on the other hand it's not as if you are living off your old-age pension completely, so they are doing more for the pensioners through help at Christmas, with your heating and things which we've never had before. I sometimes think it is the people with young children who are missing out really, you know. I suppose they are representing people locally, when I think of it, they are doing as good a job as they can really, but then I don't mind Tony Blair, I don't know who we could get with the same outlook and things, personally (Angharad).

It's not relevant to my life really because I'm not politically minded, but I think if I saw unfairness I would have an opinion. I quite like what the Labour government has done, I do feel that the small businesses have been helped by keeping the inflation down, people have more money to spend on luxuries, which is what I sell really isn't it – luxury items. People have had in the past an awful lot of spare cash, but I don't know if it's the trends or the house prices going up, people have stopped spending on themselves (Ffion).

People are not then necessarily uninterested in politics as such, but rather in the current political system and political parties, feeling increasingly unrepresented, disaffected and alienated from the process. The priority for the majority of people interviewed in Llangefni was with local politics, rather than national or global, as one interviewee explained; "You've got to start at the ground floor – local first. It affects us more really than the global. There's a lot of school closures going on now isn't there" (Meinir). Most people's political agendas therefore revolved around identity politics; of being 'local', Welsh and the Welsh Language, as one key informant had observed:

I would say that people come from different political ideals whether they are aware of it or not, and sometimes there is a sort of protective element which comes from a strong Welsh identity or even English identity, so there's the on-going English / Welsh elements which comes from the past, which is still very prevalent now and that also gets transferred to people coming in from outside the UK. But I would say that Llangefni hasn't been subjected to it [immigrants] on a large scale, perhaps it's too small, but in my experience I don't think it has been a big issue so far (Dafydd).

And because Llangefni is the administrative centre for the Island and because organisations, statutory, voluntary and private, in the caring sector in particular, are influenced by Welsh Assembly strategies and initiatives, it is also the centre for political activity for the island as key informant Dafydd continues to explain:

Because it is such a hub for community-based organisation and the Council and all sorts of initiatives that affect Anglesey, based on Welsh Assembly Government initiatives or whatever, politically it's an absolute mine-field in that sense. So I would say it's quite a strongly politically charged area because of the type of town it is. Even on the simple basis that Anglesey used to be part of Gwynedd and now they've got both separate Councils and people from Anglesey feel that they do things differently sometimes to those from Gwynedd and that and those differences really did pull them apart and there doesn't seem to be a great incentive to work together closely as part of North Wales, there's a strong 'we are Anglesey, and we'll do things separately and you're Gwynedd and we'll sort of be in competition' and I think that that is sometimes to the detriment of the people of the area (Dafydd).

This highlights further the gap in participative engagement of the townspeople and their level of alienation from the political process in a town which, because of its political infrastructure (the administrative base for Anglesey County Council), could facilitate political interest, participation and engagement on local, national and global levels. The focus of the majority of political interest lies largely around the politics of language and Welsh / English nationalities. It was only really on this issue that most interviewees felt themselves to have any significant political interests:

Mmm, I suppose there would be some that I could see would be interested in national politics in the sense of some people can be quite anti-English, people moving in and Plaid Cymru kind of political parties. They can be quite political in the sense that they think the place is being overrun by English people, moving in, that would be a concern for some in a sense, that

many of the kind of small holdings are no longer affordable, going for £250,00 and so on, so it's people from outside who can sell their houses and downsize or buy these places up and renovate them – my husband works at the builders, you see, and he sees these people and in his mind, because he's very Welsh, it's all the English who are coming here and buying these places and we haven't got a hope in hell of getting one and he knows because he's dealing with them all. I don't know if you saw the big sign on the A55 a few years ago near Llanfair PG, 'Dim Coloneau' (No colonists) (Kate).

Well they are trying to bring in the Welsh Nationalists very much, but I don't think it will ever be Welsh Nationalist here, no. But I'm not political, not at all, not at all (Ceinwen).

Not strongly political, but I would support the Welsh language, that's the only political issue – I go to a shop in Llangefni sometimes and get served by someone in English who I know can speak Welsh and I say to them 'I've paid for you to have a bilingual education', that's the only thing that makes me cross when they don't try, especially in a small town like this where you know the education, if they haven't been through this system, then OK, forget about it, they can't help it then, fair play, can they? But if they have been to school, well.... (Angharad).

During election time I would say. It's not one of the strongest areas on the island, but number-wise and how they vote, Llangefni would be Plaid Cymru mostly, there are pockets of other political parties, but people are willing to express you know, whereas years ago, they wouldn't have (Cllr Rhian).

I remember the day, I knew somebody who was in a very good job and she intended to take the job on permanently, because she was only part time and she was refused for a very simple reason; because she couldn't speak the language and everything else was perfect about this person and that is political isn't it and once you go down that road there is no end to it, so I don't really want to discuss that matter [politics] at all (Fred).

For many people then the town's Welsh identity is very political, if not *the* most political and often emotional topic. Though many of the residents in Llangefni may not act upon their political feelings other than in their daily interaction, the Welsh / English politics within the town is widely felt, by people who work, run business, live and visit the town. The political focus of Llangefni is also overwhelmingly local in scope, revolving around local needs and concerns.

Political disillusionment in Machynlleth

As was found in both the Power Inquiry (March 2006) and the ESRC's survey of political participation in the UK, far from there being political apathy amongst the general public, it was the "failure of politicians to inspire trust, to communicate clear policy platforms and to reach out to habitual non-voters. That failure seems deeply embedded at the UK level but is also present in the devolved nations despite extravagant claims made in the 1990s of a new politics of better participation for ordinary citizens" (ESRC, June 2005: 1). The majority of people interviewed in Machynlleth proved to be very political, but similarly to Llangefni's respondents, distanced themselves from the formal political process:

I think it's very hard not to be political, I think these days you become political even if you don't want to be political. I don't think you can help it, I don't think people can say they're not political (Frank).

I have political opinions and views. It is more a personal thing for me, where I express my views, live my life in a certain way or express my views to people I meet, but I am not political in that I don't write letters to MPs... But do I hold political opinions and do they affect my life? Yes. I don't know whether political is a word I would use really to describe it, I am aware and concerned about environmental issues, and so I will try and be aware all the time spread that awareness and try and find new information. If it seems relevant to me in my life, but I try not to bombard myself with information, because you have to be able to use the information you have got in your life really for it to be constructive (Nat).

I don't really know - more nationally than locally. I don't really get involved. I think I am less interested in things like that, than I was ten years ago, I'm probably more interested in my community that I can directly impact on, rather than politics within a community." It has become more relevant "since the Welsh Assembly happened and they impact on us more, but still most politics seems to be London-based doesn't it? (Lauren).

Yea, I'm passively political, I've not organised anything myself, but I did go down to the protest [Iraq War] in London, not that it did much (Joseph).

I: Do you feel that national or local politics are relevant to your lives?

Charlotte and Emrys: In some ways, we went on the march against Bush [Iraq war] in London, not that we march a lot... We are not active politically, but we keep up with current affairs.

Joe: I haven't been involved in politics very much, locally I'm still learning the ropes so I don't really have an opinion and my other experience is that

some people are very strongly opinionated and if you don't agree with them you get squashed, so I'd rather not get involved.

I: Do you feel that national or local politics are relevant to your lives?

Joe: Yes, national politics does affect you and everything you do, whether it be small or large, and I always keep up-to-date with what's happening in the UK as a whole, but the main issues don't seem to affect us as much.

Oh I like to have my little say, but I'm pretty laidback here really, I think things and say 'oh I must do something about that' and then it's having the time to do something about it. Like when the Laura Ashley factory closed up there, we protested about that you know and I was one of the ones drumming up support for it (Judith).

No, I don't have any trust in any of it. I can't even engage with any of it. I suppose I do feel that it's relevant because lots of things are going to affect everybody, but my way is to live my own life the best way I can and in some way working with the land for me is the best way I can deal with it. Sooner or later the shit is going to hit the fan, fuel is going to dry out and I think if we know how to till the land, grow our own food, collect our own water... I think the councillors are quite good from what I've heard and are willing to take people's views on board, but I haven't really had any experience of them (Bea).

People in Machynlleth are more overtly political, participating in demonstrations and keeping up-to-date with current affairs, viewing local and national politics as relevant to their lives. But increasingly, it seemed, the interviewees felt that they were distancing themselves from formal politics, focusing instead on their own personal political ideologies and incorporating these into their life-styles and turning their attention towards their local community, often because they felt they could have an effect on their local vicinity and thus felt more empowered, in contrast to feeling overwhelmed by national and international politics and political situations.

Frustration, cynicism, lack of trust and lack of policy differentiation between the parties were cited as some of the main reasons for the lack of affiliation to the current democratic process. People generally felt impotent and discouraged from engaging with or participating in local or national politics. As the findings of ESRC research into election turnout also reveals, politicians are generally disliked, not trusted, are expected to manipulate and 'spin' agendas and be self-interested (ESRC June 2005: 1). The Power report similarly reported that people felt that "politicians have little or no interest

in their constituents' views, are only concerned with their own careers, cannot be trusted to tell the truth, and are corrupt" (Power March 2006: 62).

Yea, you get politicians come down to talk to you and they say we're going to do this and that and then they don't, so people get a bit frustrated with them (Cllr Rowlands).

People feel 'what's the point', don't they? (Rose).

I just think people feel that they have to look after their own, because there's nobody else who's going to (Patricia).

They speak a lot, but don't seem to do anything about it... It all seems to me to be jobs for the boys and they seem to waste a hell of a lot of money. It's frustrating (Ian).

Labour are Tories in pink clothing (Lewis).

Personally I don't see that there is much difference between one party and another party, we have no real choice – Labour or Conservative or whatever. I did once write a letter to my local MP and got a real flannel letter back (Christina).

National politics – no – all as bad as one another, they all promise loads and deliver nothing (Carol).

There's no point voting someone else in, it'll make no difference because they'll all do the same... Even if you did get into local politics, they'd still be changed to what someone above you wanted to be done (Wayne).

I never get involved in local or national politics. Why waste energy making a song and dance when no one's going to listen (Carol).

The calibre of politicians today and the direction in which politics has developed in general, was felt by some to have diminished considerably and was closely associated with the branded packaging of politics, the political process becoming media savvy, focusing on how to sell policies and their parties to the public, rather than developing ideological positions and communicating them comprehensively. The mass media, the disproportionate power of media moguls, such as Rupert Murdoch and the Americanization of culture, were identified as the main causes of this:

Cllr Davies: If we go back forty years, we still had people who were able to express themselves to a crowd of people – that doesn't happen now. The television has taken over, the politician now talks to the camera and with all

the presentation, the make-up people and the way that it's presented, the music in the back-ground all the things coming in at the right moment – we are conditioned – not by Tony Blair in particular, they all do it, whether it's the Labour Party, Plaid, the Liberal Democrats, I'm not criticising them, it's just the way society is: it's like a package, a cake, it's wrapped up nicely now, like for a child, it's all packaged nicely so that the child's eye goes for the colours.

I: Do you think that prevents people from getting engaged in politics?

Cllr Davies: Well yes, it prevents you from getting engaged, it may prevent you from getting to the kernel of it, to that which really matters. They're a periphery thing, all the packaging and things doesn't matter a jot, it's the biscuit inside that will nourish you. But where are they, the politicians, where are any of the political parties? There aren't the orators – where are they? I never had a lot of time for Enoch Powell's politics but by god I liked to listen to him, whether it was live and on television or on radio, the way the man presented his philosophy was superb, whether you agree with what he said and the way he brought that philosophy out into the open is another thing, but the way he was able to present himself was brilliant – huge brain and so was Aneurin Bevan – there are no people like them now. It's a product of Americanisation

I was a member of the Green Party at one time and I was a founder member of Montgomeryshire Green Party back in the '80s, but probably slight disillusionment with the meetings and stuff where people seemed to be focusing on things which were not so important and the bigger picture was forgotten about. But I don't have a political remit, I know what I believe in and I know what I think is right, but I don't think any of the parties actually achieve that. It's probably a disillusionment with the political system which many people have really – I don't feel that it's actually a democracy, even though it is in name. It's all about media campaigns and the newspapers are very powerful influence – especially Murdoch, Sky and buying into ITV recently. It's very worrying, you know, when one or two people can have so much power and people are swayed by what they read (Frank).

Anger with the national and devolved governments and the political process in general, was palpable at times during the interviews, with interviewees becoming quite passionate about how un-representative and un-democratic they felt the political system to be, complaining about politicians being more interested in gaining votes, rather than representing an ideological view. Several of the people interviewed felt that they either couldn't vote because there was no one to vote for that would reflect their political perspective or their interest, or as a protest statement against the current political system:

I can get quite cross about certain things and I don't think anybody looks outside the box any more. I just think that Tony Blair drives me bloody mad because he sends all these lads, which could quite easily be anybody's son, without a hand to the consequences and I know enough about American politics to know that they knew enough about what was going on with Al Queda before they ever blew up the Twin Towers and I just think that they should have been in full view of the facts before it all happened and that really makes me cross at the moment, but I don't do anything about it because I just don't think anybody listens to anyone at our level. I certainly wouldn't vote for him and I certainly wouldn't vote either as that's my way of protesting against the political system at the moment. That's the only way you can do it. As for local issues, well you only have to see some of the councillors who seem to be in it to see their name in the local paper every day, no issues are ever-well, the biggest thing at the moment is the thing with Celtica where they decided to close it and then the building is just left empty – you know, make a decision! (Tina).

We have a voice, through supporting in a small way various local campaigns such as the Plas, but no, we feel overlooked in this particular locality, had we'd been living in a town thirty / forty miles to the East, we might feel differently, that's locally. Nationally well, no, because they've done the worst, most seriously awful thing you could think of – Afghanistan and Iraq. We've tended to vote Liberal, but last time I didn't vote at all, and I even know our MP Lembit Opik, and you know, I like him but I'm not too happy about some of his policies. We feel that he has a farming rural community, he has to compromise a lot to get re-elected and therefore it takes him in a direction that we wouldn't want him to go... You know people have died for the vote and some countries still haven't got the vote, but at the same time who am I going to vote for – in all honesty I couldn't – we don't feel our viewpoint is very well represented (Charlotte and Emrys).

People in Machynlleth did not, on the whole, feel that devolution had increased democratic participation, feeling instead overlooked not only by Westminster, but also by the Welsh Assembly, increasing people's disappointment with the political process and further deepening people's despondency. This perspective was also reflected in the Welsh Assembly election turnout, which was reduced from 45% in 1999 to 38% in 2003, with the general perception being that it had not made much difference (ESRC June 2005: 1).

I do vote nationally and locally, otherwise you don't get change, but no, national or local politics isn't really relevant to my life. It's quite a farming community around here and you never see a farmer on a push-bike, they've always got new Range Rovers and I think a lot of things round here like Lembit Opik and the BNP, I think they concentrate too much on the farming community than what they do about crime and young people, because

there's the future and no one stands up and says why this crime's happening you know (Judith).

I think that bypasses most people, they certainly feel they are bypassed by the Welsh Assembly and so they also feel they are bypassed by government. I do feel that people here really feel overlooked and that nobody's listening and that it's not important enough. It almost feels that we are fighting for everything, everything, about all the services, but nobody's listening and yet it has got a wealth of things to offer, things you can't put a price on (Patricia).

I: one of the aims of the Welsh Assembly was to democratise Wales, do you think it has been successful in this respect?

Cllr Davies: Devolution failed the first time round and I canvassed strongly for it. I voted for it this last time but if there was an election for devolution next month I'm not sure which way I would vote. Insofar as Wales has a voice of its own in the Assembly, I'm not quite sure that Wales has benefited in any other respect. Probably that it's a talking shop, but whether or not it should have created powers, that's another question again, because greater power means greater responsibility and whether or not that responsibility would have been enacted in a responsible way, I'm not convinced as yet.

The National Assembly – waste of money – does nothing, it's just a big drain on the income of Wales, if money is spent anywhere it goes either to South Wales or to North Wales (Carol).

Other than the interviewee 'Lauren', cited earlier, who felt that politics had become more relevant to people in Wales since devolution, the only real contribution that the Welsh Assembly was credited with achieving, and by only one interviewee, was in promoting the Welsh language via the education system:

There's been a thrust from the Welsh Assembly to promote the Welsh language through the department of Life-Long Learning and so on, but primarily through the education system. The thrust must always be with the schools and with the nurseries, but not thrust upon people, it must be because people want it, otherwise at some point there will be a reaction against it... I think the balance is right at the moment, but one must always guard, because I don't want to – I would hate to think of myself falling into a train of thought that I and others have criticised others for in the past. In the past it was 'oh why can't I have my forms in Welsh' and they were denied it and that's absolutely wrong – it's abhorrent – and I wouldn't want to be doing the opposite, I would hate to be on earth if I fell into that train of thought, as I would be no better than people I have criticised (Cllr Davies).

For many, politics was external to their lives and from Machynlleth, as one 'Key Informant' put it, "Well apart from the Welsh Assembly, I think that local people are very, very much concerned about local issues and that's the impression I get." (Patricia). People generally felt that it was not relevant to their lives, unless there were policies that directly impacted on them, such as the bureaucratic procedures needed to be undertaken by farmers, affordable housing and policies relating to people's work, such as child care policies:

People don't bother with politics because it's not relevant to us here (Lloyd).

Sometimes... things like housing... the prices are high are relevant. This can push locals out as only outsiders can afford the houses round here (Dawn).

I don't think it really affects us, doesn't matter what happens really, it doesn't affect us in the county to be honest (Sheila).

It's relevant to my work with child care, but other than that, it's not really, no (Carla).

Relevant, yes definitely – too much of it – too much paper work – they care more about the paper than they do about the animals that we are caring for [Margaret is a farmer]. Their agendas are relevant to their agendas not to people's lives – not this government. Having said that people have gone out and fought for us to have the vote and we've now got that chance, got that say so we should blinking well use it! (Margaret).

For all the other respondents, politics was either something they had no interest in, didn't really understand and didn't get involved with, or those that felt themselves to be mildly political, certainly did not participate politically in any way:

Me no, oh God no! Not politically motivated – I stay well clear of that (Frank).

I have no political opinion, it's not relevant to my life, I have no interest (Daisy).

No, I'm not political - local or national. I have no real opinion on it to be honest with you. It's easier to sit on the fence, I think (Sheila).

I don't understand a lot of it, I think it is put across in a way that youngsters and people like myself just don't understand it (Carla).

No, I vote, but political no. No, I don't think it's relevant as long as there are people who are able to run the country and the locality efficiently, I don't see that there's any way that I should be involved (Hilda).

And to the question is national politics relevant? The replies were:

Not really, no. If there was something I felt strongly about I would contact our local MP, but no (Eirlys).

Going back to the Welsh being the Welsh we are not willing to speak out. I am more vocal now than I was six years ago since I started working, because you get a bit of confidence. But again you make a lot of noise, but you don't blow it out... Tony Blair, he's more concerned about other countries than he is about his own country – he should put his own country first (Margaret).

No - local or national. I have views on things like that yes, but don't do anything about it. I think the main reason is I don't think that anyone standing up and airing their views is going to change what is going to be done anyway (Wayne).

Citizenship and its Many Meanings

It was visible through people's body language, reactions and expressions, that 'citizenship', like the term 'globalization', was a word which people were very insecure about, providing an array of definitions of what they understood the term to mean and that many did not understand the term at all. Overwhelmingly though, the majority of people from both market towns associated 'citizenship' as referring to the locality to which they belong. Citizenship, for most people, was very place-specific. Far from being understood in terms of a universal identity connected to a specific nation state, associated with which are notions of right and responsibilities, what was reflected instead were pluralistic and multi-faceted interpretations. This became all the more apparent when comparing the data from Llangefni and Machynlleth, as the levels of understanding of what citizenship means differed very significantly.

The Meanings of Citizenship in Llangefni

Respondents' understanding of citizenship in Llangefni was very limited, the small amount of data obtained during this part of the interviews reflected how little people generally could say on the topic, often giving succinct answers that they felt unable to

expand upon. A significant number either did not know what citizenship meant or, on three occasions stated that they considered the term 'means nothing'. As they could not or would not expand on their statements those who felt it 'means nothing' were taken to mean, within the context of their previous statements, that the word 'citizenship' was a political tool in line with their concept of the word 'globalization'.

For most, 'citizenship' referred to belonging to an area or a town and specifically for most people interviewed, that location was Llangefni. It was also associated with belonging to a community and with familiarity:

Someone who belongs to that area or town or something... I'm a citizen of Llangefni (Ceinwen).

Civilized with everyone – close, tight community, where everyone knows everyone (Rob).

Part of a community – citizen of Anglesey, a member of the population (Jones).

Person of the community that pays Council Tax (Deborah).

We're one of them, we are part of it - Part of a community (Mrs Evans).

Like with like – together – I'm a citizen of the town (Delyth).

The people of the area (Siôn).

Spanning out from the definitions of citizenship given above, referring to people's immediate locality, for the next largest proportion of interviewees, the definition of 'citizenship' was enlarged to include people's national identity, which to them meant being Welsh:

The country you're from – I'm a Welsh citizen (Dylan).

The country you're from – Wales (Gwyn).

Welsh born and bred (Mick).

It's your nationality... I'm a Welsh Citizen (Harri).

Well, it's the Flag - Welsh and proud – but there isn't a sense of citizenship and there is a North/South divide in Wales (except when the World cup is on). But I do regard myself as a Welsh citizen (Hughes).

Only two interviewees said they were 'British citizens' and as the comments made by Ffion and Fred below reveal, citizenship is a concept that for many has not really been thought about and for especially Fred, who is Italian and who moved to Llangefni many years ago after marrying a local girl he met whilst working in London, who felt he could not answer:

The first thing that would come to my mind is that I am a British citizen, but I've never thought about it in any other way, you know. It's nationality really or the area where you're from (Ffion).

Citizenship, I don't know? You mean like citizenship – where you live, where you belong? I wouldn't now how to answer that, I'm sorry (Fred).

The complexity of the term 'citizenship' and how multi-faceted people's identities are in relation to it, was only really reflected upon by a small number of interviewees, who saw 'citizenship' as referring nationally to Wales, but also to the UK, Europe and even, for Geoff, the world.

I'm a British Citizen and a Welsh one. I am Welsh but people presume I'm English because of my accent [Liverpudlian] – it defines me and this bugs me (Dave).

Oh I'm a citizen of the UK, the Citizens' Charter, our rights and things. But I am also a European citizen – I've always said that Welsh is part of Europe, I believe in that particularly (Meinir).

Well that's a tricky one isn't it, it depends who you are, being part of, not really a local place because citizenship becomes more than that doesn't it now, it's not just being in your own little community. You find these people who come here, immigrants, who have to sit these tests on citizenship and things and they are quite tricky the questions aren't they, they are quite difficult for them to answer, so citizenship – I don't know, it's become a much bigger thing. You have to be wary of what things stand for these days. I mean years ago it use to be quite simple, being a citizen of such and such a place, but now citizenship has become something much bigger (Angharad).

Bloody hell, right: well we could get all academic as the UK doesn't have citizens as we're all subjects, I would not particularly want to go off on that, I'd rather use the term more generically: the standard mix of rights and responsibilities in a community... How would I describe myself? I would

now, it's a bit like being a thirteen year old with a diary, and you've got ... Lancashire, England, Europe, the World, um, you leave that behind as you grow up and then you move back into it, so I would be in all those (Geoff).

According to these interviewees, 'citizenship' is recognised as being a complex term, the meaning of which is evolving in line with changing demographic trends and global connectivity. It is also recognised as being able to have several meanings as well as it being able to be interpreted individually. It was however only one interviewee, 'Geoff', who understood 'citizenship' to contain within its meaning 'rights and responsibilities' and he was far more familiar with the word within an academic context.

The Meanings of Citizenship in Machynlleth

Any common understanding of 'citizenship' proved to be even more elusive in Machynlleth than it had been in Llangefni, the definitions being far broader. Another very discernible difference between the two towns was people's 'general' knowledge of what 'citizenship' meant, providing more expansive descriptions and holding stronger opinions than had been generated in Llangefni.

As in Llangefni there was a small number of respondents who said they did not know what 'citizenship' meant and their comments are quite revealing, suggesting that many people are not generally used to discussing or contemplating 'citizenship' as a concept and although two of them could guess at what it meant, they were far from secure about their knowledge:

I don't know, it's from where you're from – I don't know (Tudor).

I don't really know what it means. I presume it relates to what country you are from (Daisy).

I'm not sure actually! (Emma).

For many of the local townspeople 'citizenship' meant coming from and belonging to a village or town you were brought up in, i.e. "Machynlleth born and bred". This group gave very matter-of-fact answers to the question, but did not expand upon their statements, but in-line with their previous comments about the shortage of homes for local people for example, their perception of who should have more rights than others

to local services and provisions, is connected directly to whether someone is a citizen of Machynlleth or not.

Citizenship to me is somebody who has been born and bred in an area...
[I'm a] Citizen of Machynlleth (Tomos).

Citizen of Mach (Ian).

As a person living somewhere....[I'm a] Citizen of Machynlleth (Fiona).

Being part of a community (Jacky).

Well I would say that you have to be born and bred in Machynlleth, not someone whose lives here for short time, but born and bred around the Dyfi Valley, I would say. Being from Machynlleth (Judith).

To belonging to the community in the town really - Machynlleth first, then Wales (Eirlys).

For others meanwhile, it is more than just belonging to Machynlleth, as, tied up within its philosophy are notions of 'rights and responsibilities', with the emphasis being placed on being a 'good citizen', by contributing in some way to your local community. What was different about this set of respondents, was that they were a mixture of townspeople and people who had moved into the town, all of whom were active members of the community in one way or another e.g. members of the Chamber of Trade, a local councillor and local entrepreneurs.

To be part of your community, to care about it, to care what happens to the people – to be a good citizen and caring about the local issues, people, looking after your community, that sort of thing. So I would say that I am a citizen of Machynlleth. I think one of the problems that can happen, and I've found it happening to myself really, is that you can become very insular and that's just because of the size of the community (Patricia).

A person belonging to a place who would do some good work towards the place. A true citizen would be very positive towards the town. People are generally good citizens, being a small isolated place, people tend to stick together (Lloyd).

A sense of belonging to where you are, or an area that you know or are part of or active in and where you are comfortable developing yourself then you will be beneficial to the area that you live in (Joe).

Citizenship is national responsibility, but I don't suppose people have got any of that feeling, and can and should have an effect on an area (Charlotte and Emrys).

The shift in emphasis being made here is from citizenship being defined by 'place' to 'behaviour' instead.

Many people understood 'citizen' to refer to a person's country of origin, which for some was Wales; for others it was Britain, and for many it was both. The complexity that many found in the concept of 'citizenship' is well illustrated in the narratives of Nat, Lauren and Judith below, the politics of identity making it very difficult for people to categorize precisely what citizenship means and how they define themselves within that category, an undertaking that Lauren is particularly resistant to partake in, understanding 'citizenship' to be a political tool. As Purvis and Hunt state, "the rising intensity of identity politics presents formidable challenges to any efforts to theorize citizenship" (1999: 458). The connectivity between citizenship and right and responsibilities is emphasised far more by these interviewees, who consisted of an array of townspeople, CAT community and English incomers.

Being a Welsh citizen or a British citizen?.. When Devolution came, I was very, very split. My heart said yes, we need something for Wales, but my head said; am I going to have to pay more bloody rates in order to supply it and is it going to cost me and are we going to have an extra tier of government that we could well do without, because at present all the Welsh Assembly government is a talking shop, they don't make any big decisions as regard to policy – Westminster still does that, so is it a tier that we could do without? Is it more important for us to pay for schools and hospitals that we need in rural areas than sixty Assembly members which are possibly of no bloody use to anybody (Cledwyn).

Being a patron of the country. I'm British, but a Welsh citizen (Dawn).

Citizen of Wales (Carol).

British Citizen (Susan).

Being an individual that belongs to either a town or a country. A British Citizen (Daniel).

People who live here, people who have a right to live here in this country – Britain – being British (Sheila).

Welsh – I say I'm Welsh like that, because I think there is so many people who I think are trying to break it, you know – learn Welsh – I'm from Wales (Wayne).

Subject to the rules and the Laws of a particular country – the UK (Phil).

Citizenship is where you belong and what you are. I am a Welsh person – I am British, but I am not English – I would love to be known as a Welsh citizen and not a British citizen. I'm Welsh and Welsh through and through to the bone and you wouldn't be able to change that either (Margaret).

I was born at the end of the second world War with the greatest socialist government ever, and so I was brought up as a good citizen, which is about being responsible first I would say, a responsible member of a community (Shirley).

I don't think it is a very easy thing to understand what it is to live on this island, When I went to Australia people were asking where are you from, and I would say I am from Wales, and they would say ah, that's in England, and I would say, no it is a different country, and they would say, well, do you have your own currency? Uh no, and, do you need a passport to cross the border? No, so they couldn't understand, because their definition of a country is different, but to me, growing up in Wales, and I know, because I was born in England and when we came over, I was made very aware that there were two countries, and the Welsh people made it very clear that it was a separate country with a different language, so then you try and explain that when you go abroad and you realise that no one really understands what it is. I consider myself to be British and on a smaller level I consider myself to be Wenglish, you know half English and half Welsh, because that is what I am really (Nat).

Again, that could be a bit, umm, makes me think of 1984 [George Orwell Novel], to me citizenship would be being part of a community and living with your fellow citizens and belonging to that place as well. It's a funny word 'citizen' isn't it. It feels a bit Russian to name myself as part of that community, I don't know whether I would want to do that though, I would say I am part of this community, but I wouldn't want to name myself within that community as a citizen, although we are. I don't feel like I'm English or Welsh or anything, I feel like I'm British. I am British, but I am just a person living somewhere to me. But I know people are very tied up with all that, especially the schools are, my daughter's Welsh because she was born here and her being Welsh makes me English, although I have an English accent I only lived there [England] until I was thirteen so I don't have that sort of strength of feeling about it all, maybe not even about Britain (Lauren).

Oh my god - people! Citizen of the United Kingdom, but if you were to ask my children or ask the people I worked with they would say they were Welsh and I think that's the difference between the incomers and the people that were born here and have lived here all their lives (Tina).

What was very different in Machynlleth was that a significant number of people understood citizenship to mean something broader again than the definitions we have seen already, expanding to Europe and the world and often people's identities as 'citizens' could be multi-layered. The respondents who saw themselves as 'global citizens' had a firm understanding that as individuals they had a responsibility to other people and the planet in general and saw people, societies and the activities of humans as having an effect on people all over the world as well as locally. To be a responsible global citizen one therefore also has to be a responsible local citizen, as the two concepts are seen as being inextricably linked.

I think of citizenship on a local level. I think there's been a load of rubbish talked about by politicians about the meaning of being British and I think a lot of British people will think 'well, that's not what we are', but I mostly think it's directed at the new immigrants wanting them to have an identity like they have in America where the immigrants are much more integrated into the American way of life. I think they have been much more successful in that, we seem to have created a lot of ghettos, though the Hindus are very good at integrating and always get on in business, the Muslims are much less so. But no, I see them as being part of the community really and being responsible for that community, looking after wherever you can or doing the best to integrate or be part of that community at various levels (Frank).

To the question 'how would you define yourself as a citizen?' Interviewees replied:

Hard to describe really... My mother was Dutch, so I am half Dutch and half English. I don't know. I don't really have an affinity with, though you're part of a country and you respect the ways of a country, when you travel a lot you take on attributes of other countries as well and become more of a global citizen in that respect (Frank).

Responsibility we share within a global community, partaking in a culture (Joseph).

I'm a citizen of the world (Noel).

Something born in the French revolution. Citizen of the world – I'm a child of the world. Am I a citizen of – a good question? Um – citizen status, Britain has never been that kind of a country, it's either been a benevolent dictatorship or a parliamentary democracy, so this idea of the citizenship has never really arisen, so it's that question: do we need a Bill of Rights for Britain as there is no Bill of Rights as such... I do agree with the broad sense of British citizenship... that when people come here they abide by our laws as we abide by theirs and quite rightly so (Lewis).

Whether or not people in Machynlleth I would doubt, because even if you wanted the concept to change to feel European, well that's not going to happen in a few generations – well it's not going to – and of course concepts will always be brought into nourishment if you like from the school and from the home environment. Whether one should feel more European, that's another question (Cllr Davies).

The Consequences of Citizenship: Power and Effect

Consequences of Citizenship in Llangefni

Most people in Llangefni did not perceive that as individuals or as 'citizens' (however they defined it), they could have an effect on people elsewhere in the world, with some feeling that people could make a difference as a collective, but not as individuals. But by far the most typical answer was: "No, not me personally". The majority of the respondents who perceived themselves as being able to have an effect on people elsewhere, were a number of local business owners, and this mostly in a very small way through being part of an economic system; by for instance, buying goods from abroad. One business owner saw her business as affecting people elsewhere through supporting charities (by allowing charity boxes to be left on the shop counter).

We're very small, oh like a grain of sand – not in any big way (Geoff).

Yes, we've got the Jigsaw and Air Ambulance and Cancer charity boxes here (Amanda).

Not really, at the end of the day we are only little fish really (Fred).

Yes – buying a kettle from somewhere is giving someone a job (Hughes).

It was only one interviewee, a local garage owner, who perceived his business as affecting people elsewhere in the world to any significant degree, both environmentally and through his purchasing of mechanical parts made in countries renowned for their 'sweat-shop' working conditions, a practice that he felt very strongly about, feeling very uncomfortable about not being able to have a 'fair-trade' option available to him, feeling trapped into supporting unethical working practices:

Yes my business can affect people elsewhere. There are loads of ways you could look at it, for example a car pollutes the air, the only way we are

going to stop polluting and global warming is if we bring emissions down. Bringing parts in from Indonesia and North Korea, but they are not brought in by fair-trade principles. The car industry is an unethical industry and gets its parts made as cheaply as possible in countries where they are made under sweatshop conditions. I also donate money to charitable collections and causes (Siôn).

The narrative provided by one 'citizen', Meinir, who perceived that individuals could affect people elsewhere in the world, reported that many in Llangefni will not donate money to charities for people abroad and will only donate to local causes, reflecting not only how locally focused the people of Llangefni generally are, but it is also perhaps a reflection of how much help they feel they or the town need. It may also be symptomatic of how disempowered and disenfranchised people feel in their ability to make a difference to their own lives, let alone have an effect on the lives of others:

Yes, once you start butting into wars and things too often and the UK is up to whatever America does, you know, and America affects a lot of the UK as well, I think we're little copy-cats and um, with disasters and things you know, I think everyone should help each other. A lot won't give to charity if it's not a local one. I've collected for charities like Oxfam and people have refused to give money – you'd be surprised – they say there's enough to deal with at home, what's it to do with them. With the Ozone layer as well, it's like a ripple (Meinir).

Meinir's observations were backed up by comments made by three interviewees who expressed their anger against people and the government providing foreign aid, believing it to be precipitating the problem of starvation as it prevented people from helping themselves by creating a dependency culture. The view that it was also pointless donating money as it usually never reaches the people in need, being intercepted by corrupt governments, was also aired, reflecting again the cynicism and disempowerment people often seem to feel about governments and situations generally.

Yes, by stopping the aid (Mick).

The government send people to Africa and send money, but the governments are corrupt. Birth control is needed, it would stop the problem of starvation in its tracks (Gwyn).

Yeah, show them how to help themselves (Dave).

In order to ascertain how empowered people felt themselves to be in their lives and about what they believe in, the interviewees were then asked if there was an issue they felt strongly about, positively or negatively, whether they felt they have the knowledge and confidence to protest or campaign about it. The answers fell into three categories; either people felt that they would not, usually because they felt that there was no point as their efforts would be futile (one interviewee was now of this opinion after a previous unsuccessful campaign); could not, because they did not feel confident enough to make a stand; or people felt they would (and a number had), protest against something, but generally only if it was going to affect them directly:

I wouldn't voice concern as it would make no difference – it's useless – I tied myself to a tree once (William).

Only a minority would protest or promote something, most people comment that 'there is no point – they are all the same' (Delyth).

We would protest if there was anything needed to for example, the bio dump protest near Gwalchmai (Deborah and Cloe).

If I was affected (Jones).

Well you'd think about it, but you'd keep it to yourself. No, no, I wouldn't go shouting in the street and things, no (Ceinwen).

I don't think I have the knowledge, I am a bit too quiet to stand up and say 'you can't do that here'. No, I can't stand up and protest (Angharad).

In my own way. I made a stand with police in Llangefni – shop watch – to report if you have known shop-lifters in your shop, you were given a radio, which I thought 'oh that's a good idea', and then it turns out you have to pay for these machines, so I thought, 'oh, I'm not going to do that' – I couldn't afford it, I'm only a small business and the overheads of employing people. I thought at first, oh, this is my way of helping the town, if they would have funded the scheme you know – but everything costs – it's all down to money, there's only so much you can give out really (Ffion).

Oh no – it doesn't make any difference. If I don't agree with something I will do something about it. I did where I was living [near a quarry] before, there was a lot of lorries coming through passing the houses and that and I made a petition (Amanda).

Oh yes I've done protesting, oh yes. There was Wylfa B [a planned new nuclear power station to replace an existing one on Anglesey] – I protested about that one. I was in the papers because they were using the one way system for big lorries when they were building that road and they were

shaking our houses and so me and Mrs Hughes next door sat in the street and we told the newspaper we were doing it first, so that we could get as much publicity as we could get. I think sometimes you need shock-tactics to make it work. I've been involved with making money for the hospice at home in Llangefni – that was a big project, going back a few years. Election time, I'll take people's names and things like that, I haven't done much canvassing, I've done leaflet drops though. Oh yes, well, protesting is the best one isn't it, or use the media (Meinir).

I've protested about the planned Biogas depot as it would have been in a village [Gwalchmai] (Siôn).

None of the interviewees mentioned being *proactive* in any way and only focused on negative issues that would directly affect them, their responses being instead, reactive to situations. Of those who had already protested, all but one of them (Meinir), were local business owners and who appear, as a group, to be far more knowledgeable and empowered than the majority of the 'citizens' in Llangefni.

Interestingly, when people were asked if they felt that as consumers they could influence big business and have an affect on businesses generally, nearly everybody agreed that they could, though in Llangefni, this did not translate very often into action. For example most people mentioned that they felt that consumers had purchasing power, but only one person mentioned, for example, boycotting certain goods and only one person mentioned trying to support local businesses when buying certain items like fabric. One business owner said that she tries to buy locally-made goods, by which she meant Welsh, to sell in her shop, but explained how hard she found it to be, with goods being made further afield in England or abroad:

I won't eat lamb, I won't eat Tuna because of the fishes being caught in the net, I try and buy local food as much – I don't like food that has travelled... I had an American Raspberry once – and it was cheaper as well (Meinir).

No, not at all (Ceinwen).

Oh definitely, look at me I go to Tesco every week, so I am definitely supporting them and they give me points. I try to support the local shops in town, you know the local shops, I think they need the support. If it's possible to get it in town, like the fabric shop I always prefer to get it in town (Angharad).

Yes we can have an effect – anything we buy supports their business (Deborah).

Oh sure, it might be slow, or it might be quick, but of course they do (Geoff).

Oh yes, and I think the big business is taking over too much, you know you've got your out-of-town shopping and even in Llangefni, with Asdas and what not there, people would rather go shopping in one big shop rather than go round the streets and I think it is going to kill all high streets – it's just a matter of time. If you go round Tesco now they're selling crystal, which we sell, televisions, like the shop across the road sells – they're exploiting the market really, they know the money's there to be had and people want to spend on themselves and they want the whole cake and not just a small piece of it. I think if everybody stood up and we all sort of complained, then they would take notice. We have tried to get local products, or something that's got a connection with Wales and if we do come across anything we do seriously take it on, you know, because local people will support locally made, but I can't think of anything – Portmeirion [pottery] – that's made in Stoke-on-Trent, but most people think it's a local company (Ffion).

People generally see themselves to be far more empowered as consumers than they do as citizens, but in Llangefni especially, people seem very reluctant or disinclined to act on issues unless it directly impacts on them.

Consequences of Citizenship in Machynlleth

Many of the Machynlleth interviewees from all interview categories felt that, as citizens and as businesses, they have or can have an effect on people elsewhere in the world, though these views were held predominantly and more strongly both by members of the 'CAT community' and 'English incomers' rather than the townspeople. It is also important to mention that all of those who expressed these opinions, who could be categorised as being part of the 'CAT community' and the 'English incomers', were well-educated and felt themselves to be relatively empowered as individuals to either promote or protest about something they felt strongly about. The responses from the townspeople meanwhile (who were, as a population, proportionately less educated), were far more sedate and they felt far less empowered to promote or protest against something they felt strongly about. Amongst this group, there was also a great deal of contradiction within their answers; for example many people did not feel that as individual citizens they could have an effect on people elsewhere in the world and yet they did see themselves as being able to influence big business or affect businesses per se, through buying fair trade, boycotting goods, buying organic and buying local.

Not only were people more aware of the global interconnectivity of people and places, but there was also an effort made by local businesses to make a connection with people in other countries, such as in India or Africa and to try and contribute positively to helping people in poverty by, for example, supporting an orphanage, or supplying villages with equipment to help their local economy which those villages would be unable to afford to buy themselves. These relationships were also regarded as being mutually beneficial:

I: Do you feel that your business has an effect on people elsewhere in the world?

Frank: Yes, very much so, because we are dealing a lot with India so, yes, we are technically supporting a lot of families in India and a lot of poorer people who get the benefits of orders that we make in India and also Nepal and we also support an orphanage there, which I will be going out to in February, so we are hoping to raise money for that. I am just waiting to go out there to take more photographs.

I: How did you get involved in that?

Frank: It came through our suppliers, because we were looking for a project and we couldn't find anything in India, because they were either too big or had enough support anyway and we were looking for something smaller that we could identify with and promote through our wholesale business.

Frank continued to explain that his shop was also in the process of stopping supplying consumers with plastic bags for environmental reasons, though re-educating the public was proving to be difficult, stating that:

Frank: We still find it very difficult to; some people still get angry when they don't get given a plastic bag, because we don't readily give. Especially plastic ones, we do some hemp ones now and some recycled paper ones will be coming in, if it's [their purchases] below a certain value we want to charge for them and they resent it, where as in Germany, they are charged for all plastic bags.

I: Do you feel that your business has an effect on people elsewhere in the world?

Shirley: Yes – [she showed me a picture of a person, 'Jacob', who got in contact with CAT] and they gave him some solar panels and they had a glut, for instance of bananas, that rot and the solar panels dry the slices and then

they bag them as sweeties. So, he's a fine man and we need more of them. He's into green agriculture and he's very committed to his community so this is an example of how networked we are here... And we had some new computers and had six old ones to dispose of, so I sold three of them for £300 and then that £300 paid for the other three to be sent out to Africa and he's started a resource centre and these were the first computers in this little tiny Bush in Tanzania...and that's had wonderful knock-on effects, so yes, that is an example of how we can have an effect, yes.

Yea, of course, very much so. All businesses should take responsibility, they always say they can't because of whatever, this is the global way, and the way of the market and the economy will go down-hill, but we must become more social or else America [American big business] will have its way – there is too many factors in the world economy (Joseph).

Yes, there's no doubt we do, it's a global economy (Lewis).

Other business owners meanwhile felt that their businesses could affect people elsewhere in the world, but only in a very small way and felt far less empowered to be active citizens. The comments also reveal that for these business owners, it was not something that they had really thought about before:

Not as far as I am concerned, only on a very, very small scale (Tomos).

Yea, well not a big effect (Tudor).

I think you probably could if you wanted to, not on a world-wide scale, but on an individual level I think you probably could, but how and why you would want to affect others, for the life of me, I don't know. If someone next door to you was going to build on a piece of land and they haven't got planning permission, then fine – I've never really thought about it before to be honest (Frank).

Similarly, many of the 'citizens' felt very strongly that as individuals they could affect people elsewhere in the world through their everyday activities, environmentally and through their purchasing habits. Links were made here again between Machynlleth town and poorer countries elsewhere; for example in Lauren's narrative, she talks about the local primary school participating in gift-aid, by encouraging the children to collect items to send to poor children in Romania at Christmas, teaching the children how as individuals they can have a direct effect on the lives of people elsewhere.

Can do, yes. Everybody is having an impact aren't they on the world, whether that's carbon footprint-wise or lots of us try and do thing to try and

help that, like our children send lots of stuff to Romania at Christmas, so all things like that impact aren't they. It's quite an unusual thing really about gift-aid business, that you, a person in mid-Wales, can send a gift to a person somewhere else – it's direct isn't it (Lauren).

Yes, I believe we are all connected on a spiritual level, I believe that everything is interconnected. And maybe if I am buying something somewhere it may affect someone else elsewhere (Nat).

No, people, individuals, don't affect people elsewhere – it's the politicians who are. But consumers can have an influence by shopping locally and by not shopping in big Tescos and places like that, yes. But I don't feel I could make my voice heard if I wanted to... decisions have already been made (Carol).

As individuals it probably isn't that easy, maybe as a group or, you know, but as individuals, it's pretty difficult". [As consumers] We should be able to and we have done with issues in the past haven't we, with things like South African wine and stuff like that, we all stopped buying it... I never actually have protested, but I am sure if I ever felt strongly enough about something I would take part. You read about so many things these days, don't you, I think it's easier to put my head in the sand. There was a big meeting about fuel prices and things the other day [organised by Ecodyfi], well unfortunately, if the prices are going to go up, there's probably not a lot we can do about it to be honest (Sheila).

I don't think I influence other people in the world personally, but I'm sure things like traffic pollution and nuclear pollution yes, down the line it does have an effect (Daniel).

Affect people? I don't know, in a small way I suppose, like people who need aid, yes, but I really don't know... I am [empowered] with work yes, on my own I think I'd find it quite hard, because of confidence, but yea, I would know how (Carla).

I would like to think, yes we would, [be able to affect people elsewhere], but I don't think we do – not enough, again coming back to politics – we've got one voice and does that voice work for you all the time? Well no, it doesn't, does it? (Margaret).

Others meanwhile felt individual citizens could not affect people elsewhere in the world and felt very overwhelmed and disempowered as citizens:

I feel that if there is something you want to complain about, it is very difficult to get to the core of where you want to get to, everybody seems to be hiding behind their parapets, everywhere you go you don't get a positive or direct answer (Wayne).

As individuals we haven't got a hope in hell (Aaron).

When asked if they felt empowered as citizens to promote something or protest about something they feel strongly about, the majority of people gave positive responses, particularly those from an educated background and/or part of the 'CAT community'. In Machynlleth interviewees were far more proactive to promote something they felt strongly about such as using reusable nappies, buying local and fair trade as well as protesting against something they felt strongly about, as one man remarked 'citizens are quite powerful locally' (Tomos). However, for Tomos and others, whether as citizens people could be powerful globally was doubted and the feeling of being overwhelmed by conflicting information about situations undermined their confidence to be proactive.

I know what to do, yes (Shirley).

Yes, I have done [protested and promoted] and I do at times, yes. I will rant about breast feeding or reusable nappies, I have been known to get active over things like that (Lauren).

Sometimes, I think it is more like the other way round, if I have been empowered, then I can do those things and that's just a personal thing, because it's not about being given something by someone else, empowerment is about finding something in yourself and becoming that, and being that (Nat).

Yes. Recently the carnival wasn't going to go ahead, but as a community we managed to get it going again. Yes, I have never boycotted anything, but I try to buy local produce (Dawn).

Yes, like buying fair trade and things like that, yes – I always do that. I think well we're a small town and we rely on the tourists and without them we'd probably have no shops at all, I do try and buy local eggs and things like that you know, I try my very best. I would buy everything from Machynlleth if I could, I often don't have time (Judith).

No I don't feel in a little place like this we've got much power you see. It would depend entirely on the situation. Citizens are quite powerful locally, but in order to get anything global happening we have to convince some very big players – George Bush (Tomos).

I suppose people have all together, they probably could. I mean I've witnessed it with people boycotting garages selling expensive petrol a few years ago, or people buying organic (Peter).

No I don't know (Tina).

We have almost too much information, there are so many conflicting views it's hard to pick it out (Lewis).

As is remarked upon several times in people's narratives of citizenship empowerment, many acted upon their beliefs through their purchasing habits to support fair-trade, local, organic etc products and by boycotting certain goods that they deemed to be unethical such as Nestlé, McDonalds and South African produce during apartheid, or even, by deliberately *not* boycotting a product such as beef during the 'Mad Cow Disease' outbreak, in order to support local businesses.

A small effect, like with mad cow, I think everyone supporting the butchers round here, like I never stopped eating beef, not that I eat much anyway and lots of my family didn't either (Carla).

I would like to think so, hence the 'No McDonald's' thing, though there is always going to be a percentage of the population that is going to do that stuff. When I grew up Mum and Dad didn't buy South African apples because of Apartheid you know, it's easier for me to not eat Shreddies and things [because they are Nestle] (Lauren).

Yea, especially in a small area like this, if you sell one duff thing in an area like this, believe you me, everybody knows about it – it's not like Birmingham (Tomos).

Oh yes, look at how Sainsbury's are now packing with maize derived packaging and a long time ago I didn't buy South African fruit and that sort of thing (Shirley).

Yes I do, yes I do, definitely. I think the most horrifying thing that I have just read in a long time is where our garbage goes – to China and that really shocked me. So if I wanted to get rid of a PC, I would take it to Potters [the local recycling yard] and think that that's where it's going to end up and actually it's ending up on some scrap heap on the outskirts of some town in China and that's appalling. And progress is ok isn't it, as long as it's for the right reasons and I just think they build all these powerful computers and they change them and where are they going and I don't want some small child to be dismantling it and be subjected to all these things. Perhaps we should just slow down and accept what we've got. So yea, what we do in our everyday lives in this area does affect other people, but I don't think a lot of people realise that because they just don't want to know, they just bury their heads in the sand and think well, it's not on my back door, it's that syndrome really (Tina).

The last answer given by Tina above (who had previously said she did not know if she felt empowered as a citizen) reflects many people's views that as individual 'citizens' they felt quite powerless, but as consumers they felt quite powerful, perhaps reflecting the changing emphasis of 'citizenship' by the last two successive governments which have increasingly linked citizenship with being a consumer.

Citizenship: Rights and Responsibilities

Perceptions of Rights and Responsibilities in Llangefni

Reflecting the low level of empowerment that people felt as citizens in Llangefni as well as the wide-spread lack of understanding of 'citizenship', the majority of people interviewed reported that they did not feel that they had any local responsibilities. Most people did not elaborate on their negative statement of 'no', but those who did, revealed feelings of apathy, depression and once again the resurfacing of resentment towards Anglesey County Council for being unrepresentative of local people and undemocratic. This view was expressed by all ages and was particularly prominent amongst the most disadvantaged of Llangefni's society, the unemployed, those on low wages and those with few or no formal qualifications.

Should do, but we don't do enough (Jones).

No, you have no say with the Council and so there is no point in trying (Mick).

In the 50s everything worked great, everyone worked together (Dylan).

Recycling bins are handy (Ieuan).

Primarily for those that did perceive themselves as having local responsibilities, they consisted mainly of donating to local charities, an activity that a number of businesses have remarked upon within previous narratives, though what can be heard in the interview extract below is that often the burden of responsibility to donate to all the local collections as a local business, becomes an added financial pressure to already financially vulnerable livelihoods:

We try to support most things. We are in the Rotary and Inner Wheel which is supportive and I do support Christian Aid as well. I used to do Marie Curie raffle boxes and donate to charity as well, especially the hospice and any cancer charity. There's always more you could do probably (Angharad).

Yes, everybody thinks you've got your own business, that you can support everybody, you can support all the local charities. You lose count of all the people who come in and ask for donations and I hate turning anybody down, but they all think you can afford it – it's the same with shoplifters. We had a problem with shoplifters in Llangefni and when I confronted one lad he said 'so you can afford to lose it', and I said, 'do you think I'm given these things? I do have to pay for them, you know, so when you take it off my shelf, it's my loss' - it's amazing isn't it. We now have a panic button, so if anybody comes in and we're not happy – she [shop assistant] pressed it once and it took the Police three weeks to come and yet they expect you to support their projects that they've got, you know, to help the town or whatever (Ffion).

One man said that he felt he had a responsibility to the environment both locally and globally and so grew his own organic vegetables and bought only organic vegetables, stating that "I don't like chemicals – it's all gone fast-food these days" (Gwyn). He explained his reasons (not only to me but also to a company of his friends whose responses to his initial statement indicated that they felt that his opinions were rather extreme) were because he had developed an intolerance to chemicals after working with 'sheep dip' when he was younger, and subsequent allergic reactions were given for his decision to now only eat organic vegetables.

Only three interviewees emphasised being a 'good citizen', two of whom had been and are very active in the town's 'traditional Welsh community', though a comment from Margaret reveals, once again, scepticism about how effective one's efforts are likely to be. As we have seen earlier, Geoff was the sole interviewee in Llangefni to possess a comprehensive understanding of 'citizenship' and saw himself as a local business owner with a variety of local responsibilities:

Oh yes, you try your best you know, though you don't get very far. You try to be a good citizen... "Well you try and do things that they [local government] tell you, don't you, like all this recycling (Ceinwen).

Yes, you've got to try your best (Meinir).

Yes I do, very strongly. We, not in any particular order, we're part of the economy of the town, so there is a responsibility there, we, a very old

fashioned concept, but the nature of retail we are in we serve people, not just in serving them, but we listen to them and give them information... and people have expectation of a business like this – trust – which is quite nice (Geoff).

As for global responsibilities, people's responses were very contradictory and confusing. When asked if they felt as citizens or business owners, they had any global responsibilities, the resounding answer was 'no', accompanied by mainly negative and cynical comments or seemingly unrelated comments:

Well, I've got a niece that's black, because my nephew's married a girl from Nigeria and she's lovely you know and I think the world of her (Ceinwen).

We're tiny, it would be arrogant to think that we're more than that, sure I've got a dimmer on the light, all the sort of environmental things we are aware of, though we are not as good as we could be, so yeah, but in a miniscule way (Geoff).

No, my business is too small. This country has to be the saviour of the world, environmentalists go on about turning your thermostat down by a couple of degrees but if you go abroad - see how much pollution is coming out of factories there – why do we have to save the world? Why can't they do something? (Hughes).

The government in their wisdom are perhaps trying to stop us using cars by using this global warming excuse to promote business in town, but then there's the big shops that encourage people to travel to them (Mrs Evans).

Though when asked whose responsibility they felt it was to respond to global concerns – 'citizens', governments or big-business – the answers were resoundingly "everyone", apart from one exception who stated 'America' (Ceinwen), with emphasis being placed on environmental responsibility, revealing how unclear people are about citizenship and any rights and responsibilities that accompany that concept.

Everyone has responsibility. My daughter's very energy conscious and works for companies that promotes GM crops. My grandchildren eat healthy too – unless their dad takes them out to a McDonalds for a treat - it is quite cheap to eat healthy today if you buy good healthy stuff (Harri).

Everybody really, even my contribution of just recycling boxes, you know, something like that, if everybody did it, it would sort a lot of things out. But you get all the material the government sends out about not doing this, not doing that and they go out and do something stupid, so you think why can I be bothered when they can't be bothered basically (Ffion).

All of us when you think of it, and big business as don't do much they just cream as much money as they can get from people and they don't give anything back. There are little pockets of people doing quite good things across the world and, um, if we could just all come together and have one. I think responsibility lies at all levels. I used to work in the council and I know that there were lots of local factories who use to leak out chemicals into the Cefni river and they were only fined a little teeny pittance and then when you think of how that affects the wildlife all the way down – I think we all should be responsible, but I think they should crack down more on businesses (Meinir).

That's why we've got to be so careful about the products that we use, because of global warming. You can see it everywhere, all the plants and all the flowers. I think we've got to do things now, like buy washing powder where you can wash at thirty degrees. I try to be more careful with water, I know we have plenty of rain, but I clean my teeth without running the tap [in order to conserve water]. No aerosols. And you do them quite unconsciously really; you don't think that you're doing it (Angharad).

Oh without a doubt, it has to be everyone's responsibility, effective in different ways (Geoff).

Everyone should be responsible to a point but it's a world government thing. Every country should be responsible for their bit not just one country taking on the burden (Hughes).

Perceptions of Rights and Responsibilities in Machynlleth

The contrast between the two towns was most evident in the responses by the Machynlleth interviewees as to whether they felt they had any local responsibilities. Both the main interview categories of 'citizens' and 'business owners' all answered in the affirmative and usually backed their statements with explanations and examples. The overarching theme that ran through all the narratives was the need to support local businesses and in turn local businesses saw themselves as having a responsibility to their local employees:

Yes, on a small scale. Having pride I guess in your own country isn't it – having pride and trying to do your part for the world (Sheila).

Yea to a certain extent, we employ local people and I always try and do my best for the community in a way through sponsoring different events (Tomos).

Yes, once people have got round to the thinking that buying local is better for, firstly your community, economically, but also that will have an impact

on the visitors and again benefits the economics of their local area. Machynlleth businesses went as a group to look at Ludlow and other slow-food towns and trying to see if we can replicate or emulate what they've done here (Joe).

I personally do yes, for example as a seasonal business I try not to lay people off in the winter, because people are dependant on you for their livelihoods. I also think I am relatively careful with what I do, I am not for example a vegetarian because I think it's unnatural, but I don't deny anybody else right to be vegetarian, though I happen to feel it's unnatural. I won't take factory farmed meat for myself or here and I try and make sure that my children eat a decent meal... So I'm aware but not fanatical (Lewis).

Words such as 'pride', 'lucky', 'do my best', 'benefit' and 'responsibility' are used within people's narratives. The Machynlleth respondents clearly felt passionate about the need to be responsible and the collective ethos, as it seems to be, appears to strengthen people's resolve to contribute towards the supportive atmosphere as one interviewee stated: "Oh yes, it's a way of life isn't it" (Shirley). At times this sentiment can be rather protectionist amongst some of the 'townspeople' social group.

Local social responsibility - to a degree yes, to look after what we've got. We're lucky in Mach. with having a low crime rate and it's [crime] not committed by the locals, but by people coming in. If one does see something they should report it, but then there's no police (Carol).

Yes - I'll support what is going on in the Town if I agree with it (Carla).

Yes, supporting the community or whatever (Judith).

Yes I do, I feel quite strongly that I should not speed in the thirty mile an hour speed limit and throw my rubbish wherever I want to, but that's the etiquette of life isn't it, where you should respect other people (Tina).

Yes, I do because it doesn't take a lot to recycle - it's not rocket science and it doesn't take a lot to take bags with you when you go to the super market (Tina).

Two interviewees revealed how the degree of responsibility people feel varies from person-to-person (or in the opinion of one interviewee from culture-to-culture) as does the level of confidence individuals feel in acting responsibly at times:

It's always nice to think that you have a say about what is going on in your town, responsibility is, I think, a bit strong. You know, I'm not responsible for telling that child to stop throwing litter on the floor and I'm not

responsible for telling a boy racer that he shouldn't be doing that, but it is nice to think that you could do something about it (Daniel).

I guess we should have, but do we have is another thing? Again we're back to the community – the English will buy a property, do it up and move on, if we moved to a property, we'd do it up and we'd live in it, we will not move on, we don't dare, don't get me wrong I'm not labelling the English as bad or nothing, but they have a bit more guts to them than we have (Margaret).

There was less unison however when asked if they felt they had global responsibilities. The majority of respondents still responded in the affirmative and some clearly perceived themselves as having as much global responsibility as local responsibility, the two concepts being for many interconnected e.g. the 'think global, act local' ethos, and this attitude was most strongly felt amongst members of the 'CAT community' and the 'English Incomers':

well I try and be responsible wherever I am, I do try and support certain things, but I can't quite think what they are, I might not buy things with palm oil because I think it might be connected to cutting down the rain forest or something like that (Nat).

Yes absolutely, though there's a difference between globalization and being a global citizen though, I feel there is a difference between the two, if you are a global citizen you are taking responsibility for the countries that you are in at the time and have respect for those countries, rather than just necessarily take from them, you want to give something back to them. Also not to put on your own ideas about how that country should be either. I feel very strongly that with certain issues a country has to find their own way, I think child labour has been one of those, people in the West have been totally against it, but you know there are situations where children are the only bread-winners for a family and I'm not suggesting we allow that to happen, it is actually banned in India now, but there are children still working, because that's the only thing they can do to make a living. A lot of people talk about fair trade but without having the knowledge about how that country operates. Perhaps that is something that we should try and do more to educate people about the products – it's time and patience to kind of inform people. Also it's nice if you have something that's working, to give back in a certain way, whether that's locally or globally (Frank).

We've all got responsibility in that respect, especially environmental you know...The environment is the main thing of course and we have to be very strict on environmental issues, well it's not just BP but the local Council as well will check you on wet stock and fuel and make sure there is no leakages and we have to spend quite a lot of money making sure everything is right in that respect (Tomos).

Yes I'm horrified at Darfur and send as much money as I can, so yes, I guess that's where I express my responsibility isn't it (Shirley).

Yes really, I know people say that we should look after our own, but we should, like that Tsunami, we do it and Children in Need on the telly – we do it and we should. It is very, very good for giving for charity all the locals give, it's only the incomers that don't (Judith).

Though for some members of the 'townspeople' social group, having 'global' responsibilities was felt to be too much of a burden, though even here comments about 'believing in recycling' and 'individually no, but collectively yes', reveal a degree of global responsibility and awareness:

Personally in the great scheme of things I am one person, we are all just one person, so it's hard to say that you are responsible for anything globally happening, but as a group of people or as a group of citizens of a country, then yes you can say we are responsible as a whole group for pollution, or for cleaning up this, so individually no, but collectively yes (Daniel).

No. But I believe in recycling (Susan).

Global responsibilities – no. You never know what's around the corner (Carol).

Most people felt strongly that the main responsibility for global issues falls to "everyone", individuals, governments and multi-national corporations:

It's everybody, it doesn't come down to any particular group or sub group, or party or business, it's everybody. That goes on to the environmental levels as well, it's very hard sometimes for us to bring about changes in our own country, it's even more difficult to try and bring about that change in another country, places like India for example will say that they have a right to develop like we have done... it's very easy for us to preach (Frank).

Our responsibility – people, because people like BP are very strict on it (Tomos).

Everyone, people have a great deal of local and global responsibility –like buy fair-trade or locally- made things (Joseph).

Everyone's responsibility, because we are all born equal and we all die equal you know, some of us are born with more intelligence, some people have more money, some people have more looks and some have more luck, you know, but we are all human being on different journeys but no one is higher or lower than anyone else I think in the bigger scheme of things, you know. And it can seem not like that and some people of course do have

more power or are aware or use their power more, obviously if your talking about companies or politicians like and that (Nat).

Everybody's responsible. It would be nice if everyone was concerned (Shirley).

I think we should all do it (Judith).

I think everybody has an individual responsibility within their own four walls to do what they can and what they should really, because it's not for us, it's not for our children, it's for our grandchildren. We are all as guilty as the rest of it, you get to a certain point and realise 'shit I shouldn't be using this and shouldn't be doing this', the oil's not going to be there for ever and people need water ... So yea, we all have a responsibility (Tina).

For others, the weight of responsibility should fall on the shoulders of governments and big corporations primarily. Images of David and Goliath being evoked in people's descriptions of the enormity of the tasks – whatever they may be:

Largely it's corporate responsibility because they are largely responsible for the creation of this situation, even though it may be a local end user (Lewis).

It should be government, but whether they ever do anything about it is another thing isn't it (Sheila).

Individually, unless we are all Erin Brockoviches [a film where a single person takes on a powerful company], we can't do much about it, but countries and larger companies in countries should be leading the way if you like, perhaps not responsible for everything, but saying that 'we are going to do this to achieve that'. One person might start something and have a snowball effect, but its got to be a bigger collective (Daniel).

All of us – governments should take the main responsibility, but we all should, but they shouldn't force us (Margaret).

During a group interview all three participants agreed with one member's statement that governments should take the majority of responsibility for global issues; "they should listen to the country and what the country want" (Aaron, Phil and Wayne), but they all also agreed with another member's opinion that, "though everyone is responsible for the environment – we all recycle" (Paul).

The contradictions in policies and the unequal efforts being made in being responsible both locally and globally, between local government and 'citizens' was seen by one

interviewee as being intrinsically unfair and unsupportive of local businesses, through charging them a fee to recycle their cardboard:

You tell me why there is an Economic Development Office in Powys County Council, because I would think what are they doing? Everybody knows that the Ozone layer is a very tricky one, you'll get a third who are very concerned and a third who are barely concerned but aren't sure what to do and a third who will say 'sod you, I'll do what ever I want to'. The CAT side would say that that is their remit, to educate the local people. I am worried about it, but again what are people doing to help us? Is there something I should be doing? We look at lots of green issues and here's another one for you: we're talking about renewable energy and conservation, renewable materials, now we have a yard - Potters, a recycling yard, and they give us bags at home and my wife is very, very good at it, I have a van load of cardboard at Christmas time and was told that I would have to pay a registration fee because I was a business, so that's Powys County Council led. So what happened to the cardboard? I bloody well burnt it at night. Bloody nonsense! (Cledwyn).

Active citizenship and community involvement

Active Citizenship and Community Involvement in Llangefni

There are people in Llangefni who are undoubtedly active citizens, who contribute to their local environment in a variety of different ways, formally, through volunteering and joining organizations and informally, through their daily interaction and participation with others. The establishment of Cwmni Tref Llangefni CYF in 1998, by a group of local business people to "pursue the promotion of the public benefit or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation (and in particular Llangefni...)" (UK Charity Finder), is an illustration of more formal active participation, whose emphasis is on partnership working and lobbying the County Council. The organization won both the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales award in conjunction with Anglesey County Council in 2006 and the UK MAB (Man and Biosphere) Urban Wildlife award for Excellence in 2004 in partnership with the Anglesey County Council, for the Dingle/Nant-y-Pandy Enhancement Project where they created wooden boardwalks, foot bridges and installed sculptures and information panels telling the public about sites of historic and ecological significance. The scheme was meant to symbolize local regeneration (Urban Forum 2004) and, as we have seen

from many of the interviewees' initial narratives about the town earlier in Chapter 5, it has been a successful development which local people are clearly proud of. Cwmni Tref Llangefni had also been successful a few years earlier when there were 17 empty shops in Llangefni, in persuading some local shop owners with empty premises to let them out rent-free for a year as an incentive to attract new businesses to establish themselves in the town.

Other examples of active citizenship can be seen in the narratives of some of the 'citizens', such as Meinir and Hughes:

I am thinking of going on the Town Council – I've been asked by the Mayor... Yes I am quite active, I've done fund-raising, I used to teach line-dancing for the mentally handicapped (or I should say learning difficulties), there used to be a carnival and I used to help out, I used to do sewing for them, you know, and the same thing, I used to help out with the Theatre Bach with sewing and things with my children when they were there. There's no good neighbours scheme as such, but everybody does it, you know, without thinking they're doing it – like neighbourhood watch (Meinir).

I try to go to all meetings – there are not that many. I try my best to help with any activities (Hughes).

I took part in a sponsored bike ride for the local school (Mick).

Citizens' active participation and support can also be seen within the narratives of 'Mary' of Oriel Môn, as she explains that they have received much local support recently over the opening of a new gallery, dedicated to a recently deceased and well-known local artist:

If people feel strongly about something, then they will say, like Oriel Kyffin Williams, there's a lot of support for it, we've had to raise money for it and people are very supportive of it, people have bought prints and that, he was well known to people, everybody knew Kyffin Williams and feel as though they have an ownership of him in a way. So if there's a cause they'll rally. If they don't like something as well, they won't complain, but they will make their feelings known (Mary).

There was only one interviewee however, who had an ambition to be an active citizen on a broader level than just local. Through the use of the internet, Geoff intended to

develop and promote a more democratic political system than the one we currently have in the UK and hopefully develop a social movement that will push for political reform.

Yea I've raised my kids and educated them and a few others and it's sort of quite ironic that one of the functions of this business is so that I can retire and the reason that I want to retire is, not to do nothing, but to do something and that something is to, mainly through words, have a small 'p' political influence... through using modern media, like the internet to collate interests. And I am very concerned about, in this country, the tenure that politicians have and the way it sort of works so that a significant part of that tenure for Prime Ministers to do what the hell they like, and all they've got to worry about is they've got to engineer an election and the notion of a general election is anachronistic and I would love to be a part of awareness-raising, so that politicians feel insecure. And I have some models and methods and interesting ways of doing that, but basically, so that any particular politician from the Prime Minister downwards, where we are involved in a bit of a national lottery where they would not know if their seat was going to come up or not next month and I think that would change the way that they – it might cause them not to misrepresent us (Geoff).

It was more common however, when asking people if they were active in the community to hear (particularly amongst the older generation), how people in the town were *once* very active, but how nowadays things had changed detrimentally and they and the majority of local people, no longer took part in being active within the town.

Ceinwen: We used to have very flourishing Rotary club here... I was chairman at one time of the female side of the Rotary club, The Inner Wheel. I used to be very active member of the community at one time, you know. The Masons were very, very strong here too at one time, you know.

I: Are you still active in the community?

Ceinwen: No, not really, I go in at five o'clock and close the door – I'm terrified of going out.

There are active members of the town, but a lot of people complain but don't do anything because they say there's no point (Cllr Delyth).

People cared before, now people are too busy living their own lives (Anwen).

There were calls for the “need to encourage the growth of community mindedness” (Janet) and several remarks by ‘key-informants’ and citizens connected to local organizations and charities, that volunteers were hard to come by; as one volunteer in a

local charity shop put it, “we are desperate for volunteers” (Mrs Evans) (this shop has since shut). This shortage was reportedly resulting in a disproportionate burden of responsibility being placed on existing volunteers, exacerbated further by the difficulties charities encounter in obtaining and providing volunteers with sufficient support.

Some of them are [active]. If you want volunteers it’s quite difficult, but anything to do with the school, like a school fair, people will volunteer themselves, but generally, no, it’s those who are, tend to be the same crowd (Cllr Rhian).

The general lack of participation being described by one business owner, Geoff and local community worker, Dafydd, in terms of people in the town generally having a ‘lethargic’ or ‘passive victim’ attitude, for example (as we saw earlier in Chapter 7), people requesting that Communities First re-establish the local carnival, local people feeling unable or being unwilling to establish a carnival committee themselves or being involved with it:

What it’s not yet done ...well there are two attitudes you could take - I’m a passive victim (it might be a beneficial victim, it might not all be nasty) and it’s something that happens to me, or it could be something that I’m involved in. But I don’t get the feel that Llangefni or Anglesey has got the scales balanced (Geoff).

Dafydd: I think in Llangefni, there is an on-going commentary about services or events being provided to further community development, but the community not being interested, unless there’s something free or something to eat.

I: why aren’t people concerned or want to become involve?

Dafydd: I think there are a few elements to it, sometimes I think people are not aware of how their lives can be improved by small things and you’ve got the stigma relating to going somewhere as someone in need, you’ve got maybe some sort of lethargy based on things not going very well in your life. But there is a flip side to it in this town, where people do get really enthusiastic about community involvement, but maybe it’s different parts of the community, I’m not sure. But there is a definite strong community involvement and partnership working and enthusiastic people who want to contribute and make things work.

When asking one key informant and local Council Officer if citizens were active in the town, he described people in Llangefni as being generally lethargic and not pro-active, but could be reactive:

Not a lot, what you tend to find is a lot of apathy, and a lot less pro-activity, if you like, and I don't think that's unique to Llangefni, I think what you find is that people will get involved against something rather than for something. People get together to stop things rather than to do things (Dennis).

An observation that was backed-up by several interviewee descriptions of how many people in Llangefni would react against issues, largely if they felt they were going to affect them. The first example of people being re-active given below, was mentioned by two key informants and is an illustration of how ignorance and fear, coupled with disempowered social groups, can lead to quite worrying situations as the slogan, quoted from an interview with 'key informant' Kate highlights, "houses for locals, not for loonys":

Sandra spoke of when she worked in the Council for people with learning disabilities in response to the Care in the Community Strategy;

Going back a few years, we opened a residential home on Park Hwfer road. Now initially we didn't have any problems with that, but later on, people were being re-settled and we opened a community house and the amount of concern and people's view was very, very negative about it and they held the view that they shouldn't be living in the community, they should be living in large institutions and we don't want them on our door-step. And that was quite a difficult time, I remember when we actually set up the house, we had eggs and things pelted up there. I think it was probably the younger ones that were doing all the damage but the attitude was 'they shouldn't be left in the community, they should be in big institutions and what the hell are they doing here and 'my daughter's six years old bla, bla, bla', but once they were resettled people came to understand and it came from a lack of understanding of mental handicap, as it was called then, and people's difficulties and rights and so forth. Now quite recently we are in the process of opening a residential support bed complex up at the top of Llangefni... and the local community have got wind that people with mental health problems are going to be housed there and they set up this group, they rallied round. The building that was there had painted on it 'we don't want loony's here' and there was a lot of opposition to it, and this is the local people and the older generation who I expected better from really and it grew from fear and lack of understanding and I was having to answer

questions like 'are these people able to climb walls?', and I would say 'OK, why', thinking where's this going? 'Well my back garden' and 'my kids' and things were said like 'paedophiles and drug abusers' were what people were scared of. A lot of the opposition came from the man of the cloth, who should have known better. The project is going ahead, but I have no doubt we are going to have difficulties in the early stages, until people are living there and we are able to allay people's fears (Sandra).

A few years back there was a big campaign against the Council, because of corruption in the Council, so that was quite big and there was another one where they [the Council] wanted to turn the old railway track into a cycle path, and that got quite heated, because some train enthusiasts wanted to open the railway again and others wanted it to be a cycle path. A local GP was heading the campaign, wanting it to be a cycle path, and then the other people were Welsh Anglesey people from all over the island and they were Councillors and they wanted it to be a railway – that was on the radio and everything (Kate).

Some of them yes, like there are some parents now complaining about the school budget. If something bothers them, they will let you know (Cllr Rhian).

The explanations provided as to why people were largely not pro-active citizens in Llangefni were numerous. As mentioned by Dafydd earlier, the difficulties that many people encounter in their lives as a result of social deprivation often make it difficult for them to find the energy to be pro-active, made even harder by the numerous disadvantages experienced by those who live in social deprivation. Engaging with this social group is particularly difficult as we have seen from the descriptions given from Communities First Officer Caroline throughout the data chapters, about the lack of literacy skills, confidence and social exclusion, an observation also made by a local Council worker, whose narrative reveals how very un-integrated this social group (the majority of whom live of the Bro-Tudur ward and council estate) seem to be in the town and the difficulties encountered in service provision:

The Communities Firts group work quite concentrated in the Communities First ward and it's quite difficult to get them to engage with stuff that affects the town, all of the town as it were. Facilities or services or whatever that are in the town, although they are not in the Communities First ward can serve them as well. I mean things like, Citizens Advice Bureau have a presence in the town centre, but when they went and had a presence in the Communities First ward, they had a lot more people coming to see them than they did when they were just in the town, which is strange as it's not very far [for them to walk to] (Dennis).

People also spoke of there having been numerous social set-backs, disappointments, (such as the closure of the snooker hall after it was vandalised by offenders and the removal of Gwyl Cefni from being held in the centre of the town), and tokenistic social involvement by local government which have taken place and that have discouraged social involvement over the years, and created a general cynicism with the prevailing attitude becoming “what’s the point?”, this further increasing the general feeling of social depression and disempowerment in the town.

There used to quite a strong Chamber of Trade, they used to meet regularly then when we opened up. You know, you had the local person running it and he was on the Council and he used to pass on all the plans that the Council had and that sort of thing and so it got a bit, not dirty, but people got fed-up with it, nothing was being done basically. It was always the same people who would turn up basically and in the end there was only about six of us meeting and the big shops like Co-op and Spar and Boots, they never used to come and they never used to send a representative either. I was not active, no, but I used to attend the meeting and they used to ask your opinion, like one time they wanted to get carrier bags made, so I supported that and said ‘oh yes that’s a good idea – support your local town centre’, but nothing came of it. Like we used to run a competition in town for the best window display and we used to contribute towards that, you know every year, but I notice and everybody else notices as well, that the same people then won it, whether they did the best contribution or not (Ffion).

What they’ve started doing is the Gwyl Cefni... and for the first couple of years they ran it from the main square in town, they fenced it all off and had a stage built on the car park, you could buy drinks, but you had to go into the exhibit... and it was absolutely great actually, because we were all mixing and having a lot of fun. They did it for two years and some bright spark decided then to run it from the Mona airfield and then bus people there from Llangefni. But this year it seems to be ... that they’re sharing it within the town, so there will be a stage set up at the new football field, there’ll be acts or things going on in the pubs, so there’ll be a variety of things going on the Friday and the Saturday (Sandra).

Generally speaking no. I’m school governor and we had a parents’ evening last week and I think only two or three turned up. That is not to say that people aren’t concerned with the education of their children. People, I think, measure the importance of having this sort of meeting, if some bloody bright spark in the Assembly said ‘well we have to consult and we have to do this and we have to do that’, well it’s something that bulls do – manure – rhetoric! (Cllr Roberts).

Another illustration of this is the Town Council and the County Council’s apparent initial hostility to the establishment of Cwmni Tref Llangefni, with extraordinary

stories being told by members of the 'cwmni' (company) of one County Councillor refusing to support any of the charity's proposals unless they were said to have been her ideas. On another occasion another County Councillor refusing to support the development of the Dingle nature reserve, despite Cwmni Tref Llangefni having raised some money to purchase an additional section of the woodland and donating it to Anglesey County Council to be part of the Dingle development, a Council owned nature reserve. In the words of one member of Cwmni Tref Llangefni "Anglesey County Council are a strange Council – when politics come in, common sense goes out the window" (Mr Parry), (though support from and co-operation by, the County and Town Councils and with Cwmni Tref Llangefni is now said to be much improved). When the 'cwmni' (company) was initially established, it had apparently attracted the involvement of a wide cross-section of the community, but as a result of the difficulties the company had experienced and the hostility and lack of support by the local councils, many people had become despondent and tired of battling, and the company had since been reduced to a number of dedicated local and professional and business people.

There was a further story told about Cwmni Tref Llangefni (by a member) about it initially being called Llangefni Regeneration Partnership, a name that the County Council were (reportedly) particularly hostile to, the County Council's co-operation with the organization improving once they had changed their name. The Council then apparently set up a local partnership group of their own that soon disbanded, and there is recent talk of the Council re-establishing a new partnership group, which appears to be further evidence of the Council's reluctance to participate in joint partnership working with the community or support community initiatives.

For others meanwhile, it is the changes in life-styles and purpose of place that can be a contributory factor in people being less active locally than people once were or were perceived as being. For those who work and socialize outside of the town and who may have young families, there often isn't the time or the opportunity for people to actively participate locally.

Some people will be active in the sense that they've been here a long time, perhaps younger people here are too busy for one thing, you know with their

families and maybe working out of the area, running a home and paying the bills, people kind of keep themselves to themselves don't they, they are too busy living their lives and haven't got time to get involved – I can see a lot of that going on. “Someone said to me once, they saw this part of Llangefni very much the kind of middle-class, suburbia-type where young people and families are just working, not getting involved in things and people are living their own lives, aren't they? And if you're not working here and you're just living here and you're going out of the area to shop, and if you're out to socialise, well how do you build up that sense of who my neighbour is – you can't can you? (Kate).

Active Citizenship and Community Involvement in Machynlleth

Machynlleth town has an impressive array of active citizens whose focus is both local and global in scope. The twin emphasis of 'local' and 'global' within many of the town's civic initiatives, illustrates how interrelated they are seen as being and how interconnected people are globally. For many of the interviewees, in order to be an active and responsible citizen, one has to think globally as well as locally. The right for others to have a decent standard of living and a universal respect for the environment is intrinsically understood by many as a *universal right* and *responsibility* of each citizen. The examples within the town are numerous, for example: the establishment of a fair-trade group and its success in the promotion of fair-trade awareness and practice resulting in the Dyfi Valley being designated a 'Fair-Trade Valley'; the establishment of Ecodyfi, whose emphasis is on encouraging and supporting sustainable, environmentally-sensitive community and economic developments; the environmental sustainability emphasis of the Centre for Alternative Technology; the attempted creation of a local currency to help the local economy through developing a 'LETS' (Local Exchange Trading Systems) scheme a number of years ago, by a now disbanded local organization, Elemental Earth; and The Chamber of Trade's interest in the town being designated a 'Slow-Food Town'.

This sentiment and ethos can be seen not only in the perspectives and activities of organizations like Ecodyfi, but also within local businesses, for example the fabric shop selling a line of fair-trade fabric, the Wynnstay Hotel's emphasis on buying locally sourced produce and the shops selling eco-friendly home decorating products. (See picture 22 below).



Picture 22 The Deco Shop, Machynlleth

Our [Ecodyfi's] contribution has been piecemeal [in relation to the environment], giving away free light bulbs and giving away public transport information to hopefully encourage them [the public] to use public transport more (Richard).

Tourists coming here want local British products, they want to have local farm-house cheeses, they want local biscuits and local wine, so we give them what they want. Again, fair-trade is something we try very hard to establish, we've got fair-trade teas, chocolate. It's not as big as the whole local movement, for example we do sixty cakes a week and they just fly out, people want local cakes... So first and foremost it's selling locally-made produce and then hopefully, if we can, go to the Organic and fair-trade. People get very excited about local produce, fair-trade is a little bit more difficult. There's another shop round the corner that's vegetarian and they sell a lot of fair-trade stuff, so we try not to compete, but complement what they've got (Joe).

I won't use chicken that has been factory raised and adulterated, and I won't buy fish that are harvested by methods that damage the environment like trawling the sea bed. Every little thing you do has an impact in that sense (Lewis).

We are sort of an ethical business, we do our best to be fair trade, certainly with our own imports we are very careful to monitor and we do question our suppliers and check up on how things are made and various things like that, so that is important. Because we try and be as diverse as we can, we have to buy in from a number of sources and we get a lot of things from China

which is always difficult to quantify – it's kind of a grey area. We recycle, though I still fly twice a year, so I am still guilty of creating carbon emissions, but I don't buy a load of trees to counter that, but I don't know if that has been proven to be a benefit anyway (Frank).

There is a distinct emphasis on community consultation and empowerment within the approaches of organizations such as Ecodyfi and Communities First in Machynlleth, who actively seek to engage all sections of the 'local community' in participating in local events and debates. Such approaches appear to be widely practiced within the town with many people giving much thought to how to be as inclusive and representative of all sections of the community as possible.

One of the principle reasons for Machynlleth's success in facilitating many people in the town to be active citizens is Ecodyfi. Its monthly events calendar is widely available in cafes and notice boards throughout the town as well as on the internet, making knowledge of events, clubs and activities available to everyone. Ecodyfi also keeps the local people informed of local issues and developments via its website, which also provides weather forecasts, public transport time-tables and provides useful information for local people, local businesses and visitors, empowering people with knowledge and helping them to get involved, as is illustrated by the following two examples from its website: "Investing in the Dyfi Valley: Community leaders are getting together to decide the top investment priorities for the Dyfi Valley and have thrown the doors open to local residents who wish to attend" (Ecodyfi 27/10/07) and in a webpage entitled 'Supporting local jobs in the Dyfi Valley', the ensuing article states:

Communities in rural Wales have grown used to seeing jobs under pressure from the global economy. Now people in the Dyfi Valley are getting back to basics to change this pattern. Communities First is putting on an event to explore the power we hold in our hands to create and support local jobs... (Ecodyfi 20/3/06).

By using inclusive words such as 'we' and 'our', it reinforces people's perception of ownership of their town and their lives. By providing a centralized community-focused service whose aim is helping, facilitating and empowering the 'local community' through providing community consultation and involvement, it seems to have become pivotal in facilitating community cohesion and in bridging the gap between various social groups within the town. This is further strengthened by the partnership working

of Communities First with Ecodyfi, whose work is complementary to one another; the Ecodyfi website providing a Machynlleth Communities First information page and link to Powys Communities first main website (<http://www.Ecodyfi.org.uk/>). For them and many other people who work in the community, their emphasis is on encouraging others to take responsibility both locally and globally with support, a task, as we see below, that is certainly not an easy one, even in a location with comparatively (to Llangefni) very active and empowered citizens:

I think we have helped more people get engaged than would otherwise have been the case, but there is an awful lot of people round here who all they can do is put their hands up and say 'what can I do?'... Because it's too difficult, even some of the people who you could describe as natural supporters of organized social action get discouraged, when they think about the scale of the problem they get overwhelmed and discouraged. You can see it too in the community planning work as well, where there are people who will respect the solutions provided by the county councillors for the area. There's a kind of lack of willingness to recognise that individuals have any kind of power or influence, not just in terms of the scale of problems but also in terms of effectiveness. There's a lot of people who say 'it's the Council's job' or 'it's the governments' job' or whoever, as opposed to us as individuals... We hope to do a bit more consolidation on people's different needs and we're working with the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) on that... focusing on individuals' life-styles and help them think about their impact and what changes they might make, we don't know what that approach might be yet, but that would be a more direct approach to life-style (Richard).

My perception in the past is that there is a certain feel to the people that, people from Cardiff will come up to do stuff and actually what's going to happen unless you do it yourself sort of thing and if you want to do it yourself, there is support there. I think that may be changing and I think a significant factor in that is the involvement of Ecodyfi who are very proactive.... I think we are learning how to share our concerns and trying to be, if you like, a more effective community, one that recognises that there are segments and there will always be segments and almost recognising that you don't want to lose those segments or you lose a bit of diversity. So I think there is a group of us that have been discussing how you can turn the whole various segments into a vehicle that will be more productive. I think with the global issue there is something about Machynlleth and the Dyfi Valley which are global in a way, I think people are aware of what is going on in a way, but I think it's also very refreshingly immune from all that, like it hasn't got your Marks and Spencer's or even your small chain shops or like, the club culture, but all that probably means is that that part of the population go elsewhere on a Saturday night, like Aberystwyth (Owen).

It's the same as most other places I guess, you get a group of people who are and then you get those who aren't, this is a Communities First Challenge if you like to try and create an inclusive programme. Plenty of people come forward with their ideas, but when you tell them that we are here to help you bring about change, then they kind of shy away from it then as there isn't a community council to do it, even though they criticize the community council, but when you actually try and get them to take responsibility, they shy away from it because they are not used to it. When you go back years ago, especially in the rural areas when people would attend village halls, Chapels and churches and what have you, there was a strong sense of community and people were more willing to take part (Les).

According to respondents from Ecodyfi and Communities First, the social groups hardest to engage with or consult with are the most disadvantaged groups in the town, mainly the unemployed and those with low educational attainment, the majority of whom live on the Bryn-y-Gôg council estate. As Richard explains below, this group are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion because of their lack of literacy skills or the vocabulary to articulate themselves clearly, their lack of confidence and because of the reputation of (and perhaps experience of) community consultation exercises being tokenistic and therefore pointless to attend (and in this respect have much in common with the Bro-Tudur ward in Llangefni).

In the Communities First ward, one of the main problems we find there is engaging people from Bryn-y-Gôg, which is a council estate at the edge of town, partly because at the beginning there was a lot of consultation with people, it was all about giving people the opportunity to express their needs and desires, a lot of talking basically, and there is a lot of stigmatism around here of 'talking shops' and whilst we used a variety of techniques there... unemployment and low education – many people couldn't talk very well and so they would be even more reluctant to write and even to stand up with a mic. [microphone] in a public forum and speak would not be easy (Richard).

The parents I work with [Sure Start] have quite low self esteem a lot of them, so they are not very empowered, but then on the other side you might have somebody who's constant – too much there at every meeting and that then dis-empowers others to act or to talk about different things, but I think as a service who deliver services in Machynlleth, we do work closely together in partnership, I am sure that if I had a parent that wanted to have a say on something, I would put him in touch with the appropriate person and I would support them through that (Fiona).

There are people who would like for things to happen, there are people who want to try and make things happen and there are people who just seem to go with the flow. So ... you've got your committees and things (town council, carnival committee) and so they've got their own little cliques if

you want to get their thing to work, but (maybe this is irrelevant), yesterday there was a meeting held by the Town Council, held for residents of the town's council estate. There are 114 houses on this estate and only 16 people turned up for the meeting, but everybody will have an opinion on what that meeting was about, but what they should have done is, gone to the meeting.....Everyone will have an opinion but not everyone will go forward and say this is what I think we should do, and this is what I think we shouldn't do (Daniel).

Town's people may think a lot, but they wouldn't want to go and voice it (Cllr Rowlands).

I am not an active member of the community - not enough time to be... Maybe if there was more Emily Pankhursts in us we wouldn't let the government get away with what they do (Carol).

Television, Cars, people don't mix like they use to, the loss of services; Post Offices, the village shop where people used to meet. You see if they don't meet in the shop or the post office, well, they don't mix really (Les).

The role of the CAT community

The majority of active citizens in Machynlleth were identified as being from the CAT community and English incomers, as they are predominantly the most educated and empowered social group and are very pro-active in trying to generate a dynamic, creative local community that is both locally and globally aware and responsible. For instance the founder of Ecodyfi himself formerly worked for the CAT. Many, as has been stated previously, have moved to Machynlleth and its hinterlands for a certain lifestyle, to be surrounded by like-minded people who share similar ethical and ideological perspectives about society and the environment. Being part of a large social collective such as exists in Machynlleth's 'CAT community', further empowers and facilitates already pro-active or fairly pro-active individuals to act upon certain issues, for example fair-trade. The size of the town (and the Dyfi Valley as a whole), must also make it easier for people to see the fruits of their labours and feel therefore that they are having a positive effect. One also wonders whether the geographical layout of Machynlleth, situated in a wooded valley, also contributes to the protective cocoon-type positive existence that so many who move there seem to feel and be seeking, tucked away from the overwhelming 'outside world' where the global problems seem insurmountable and local community living unattainable.

They (CAT community) are involved in a lot of projects (Rose).

They [the CAT Community] do play a big part in the town, because a lot of the people who work up there (the CAT), do the pantomime, a lot of them are involved in that, a lot of them put a pantomime on every year... They are passionate about their beliefs and they will get things done, whereas some local people will just sit back and let things happen...I will say what local people don't do, I went to a meeting and the ones the local people consider 'the CAT people' right, now they are really pro-active, very pro-active, and a lot of the local people, although they will be extremely supportive, they will tend to be more traditional step-back. Now I went to a meeting about fair trade and there was absolutely packed, a very vocal meeting, well in that meeting, there was only two people there who I would sort of consider to be local and that was me and a colleague and the rest of that meeting were all people to do with the CAT and so it was very passionate, very vocal. What struck me, is that if you go to a meeting that they've organised it will be really well supported and they're passionate and they're vocal and it's brilliant, but some local people can see that as they are being pushed out and their community's being taken over if you like and that's not a huge consensus, but that feeling can be there and it just proved to me when I went to this meeting that there weren't any 'townspeople' there (Patricia) (herself from Birmingham originally).

In the meeting about the future of Celtica, there was only about twelve 'local' people present out of about a hundred there (Daisy).

There are a lot of active individuals in this area, mainly from people moving into the area, not the CAT community as such, but it has influenced a lot of people who've moved into the area and are tied into it (Joseph).

The people who turn up to meetings and things, fair play, is always the incomers, it isn't the locals, always the incomers (Sheila).

I think they do wonderful work [CAT Community], they are a bit wayward for me you know, but they put on these displays and people love it you know, when it comes to Halloween they go into the school and do workshops with the kids (Judith).

These observations are reflected in the narrative extracts below as well as throughout their interviews, as we have already seen within the last three chapters:

I tried to spend the local pound, you know a pound spent in your local economy is worth five. So when my washing machine went, I went to Aberystwyth to a shop owned by a local person to buy a new washing machine and asked which one was made in Wales and then I bought a Welsh washing machine. Because if you shop in Morrisons', your money will go straight out to shareholders who may not live in Britain. I think the time has come to really support small local stuff (Shirley). [Shirley is referring here to the Hotpoint factory in Kimnel Park in Clwyd, North

Wales, so by 'Welsh' she is referring to it being 'made in Wales' as the company itself is global].

Yes I do things to a degree, I won't buy certain products, like I have a really big problem with Nestlé because of the milk and I have a problem with fast-food restaurants because they're foul and because they bribe our children with things and they treat their staff badly and they're just crap basically. I have to be careful, I have changed my ways a little bit because if you're too fussy, if you put too much of that on children, I think it probably drives them to it and I'll be suddenly meeting her [daughter] in town and she'll be eating burgers and wearing a Nike T shirt, you know, I'm going to force her the other way so there has to be a little bit of give and take (Lauren).

Yes I work in the café, I get involved in performing, I've been involved in quite a lot of things. Singing and writing songs. I do healing work, raiki and being a supportive and honest person. I am also quite interested in racial interaction and people's well-being and helping people become themselves and having their own personal journeys (Nat).

Creative Solutions to Community Development and Support

A member of the CAT community was responsible for establishing Film 15 an organization that helps young local people between the ages of 14 and 19, identified as at 'social risk', to participate in a film-making project, aimed at empowering young disadvantaged people, by supporting them to be creative and in control of their own project which could be on any topic of their choice. For instance, the one attended in 2006 ranged from motor-sport track-racing, the second world war, zombies and absent fathers to name but a few. The films, which are of a high quality, are screened in the Tabernacle theatre during the Pink Snowball Film Awards (again established and organised by people who would fall into the CAT community social group). The event is organised to create a Cannes-like film festival (it's name is beamed in bright pink on a wall opposite to the Tabernacle which was once a chapel and is now a theatre and arts venue) and people dress up in creative, often hand-made, colourful ball gowns and outfits to give the occasion an air of excitement, interest and fun. (See pictures 23 & 24 below).

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The Pink Snowball Film Festival also shows a short-list of films produced by local people of all ages who are not involved in the Film 15 project. Those whose films were unsuccessful in being short-listed are aired in the town later in the week which, during researching, took place in a marquee at the back of the White Lion pub.

Another example of how active the CAT community is as a social group in the town and how empowered they are, can be demonstrated by a remarkable DVD film entitled 'Plas i'r Bobl / The People's Plas', which was produced by members of the CAT community as a campaign tool to demonstrate that Plas Machynlleth (Machynlleth Palace) stately home belonged to the people of Machynlleth. The DVD, which is now also available on YouTube, demonstrates how local issues can become globally accessible and how global communication techniques are now used to communicate local issues, was produced for the Plas Steering Committee with the support of the Machynlleth Pink Snowball Awards. The film was shot during a day dedicated to the future of the Plas, as it is locally referred to, which was designed to illustrate the numerous social activities and groups that exist within the town, with local bands and dance groups performing in Marquees and tepees in the grounds of the stately home, whilst indoors a meeting was held and opinions and ideas sought on the future of the

building, and a 'Big Other Diary Room' (a hybridization of the Big Brother TV series), had been created where local people could go and express their views and feelings about the Plas and its future (See picture of Y Plas below).

Picture 25



Y Plas, Machynlleth.

This campaign arose in 2005, shortly after my researching in Machynlleth had commenced, and was concerned with the future of the building after Celtica, a Celtic heritage centre, was due to be closed down in the spring of 2006. Public meetings were held and a survey was conducted by the Plas Steering Committee, the members of which were appointed during a public meeting in January 2006, and were tasked to represent the views expressed by the people of Machynlleth who attended the public meetings and to report back to Machynlleth and District Community Forum with a business plan for Plas Machynlleth that was then to be presented to Powys County Council (Ecodyfi 16/5/06).

The Plas was bequeathed to the people of Machynlleth by Colonel Beaumont, the seventh Lord Londonderry in 1948 (Davies, 2000: 13) and many of the residents of Machynlleth became animated about the future of the building after Celtica was to close amid fears that Powys County Council would sell the building or use it for their own ends and not consult with local residents after its legal title had, after reorganizations of local government, passed to Powys County Council (Ecodyfi

7/12/05). As one 'Big Other Diary Room' contributor in the video commented; *"The Council have a particular legal position where they can sell this building and I cannot question their legal right to do that, but I do question their moral right to do that"*. How strongly local residents felt about their ownership of the building was also illustrated in a quote by Andy Rowlands, Manager of Ecodyfi, in an Ecodyfi article: *"There is no doubt that the future of this building is at the very centre of life in Machynlleth; in keeping with the spirit of its original gift to the people by the 7th Lord Londonderry. Our proposal will secure its future as well as returning the building to the heart of the community"* (Ecodyfi, 16/5/06).

Another Ecodyfi article reported that there was *"a good mix of English and Welsh speakers"* at the initial meeting in 2005, that brought together social groups that did not often meet such as Young Farmers and Mach Fringe (a local arts group that would be seen to be part of the CAT community), (Ecodyfi, 7/12/05), though according to some interviewees the majority of local people who attended that meeting and subsequent meetings, were from the CAT community, (or were they perhaps just the most obvious social group as they were reportedly the most vociferous contributors?). Certainly efforts seem to be energetically made to be inclusive of all social groups in the town. There was clearly a conscious effort in the DVD to be representative of all social groups as well as a desire for the social groups to become more integrated, for example one diary room participator emphasised the importance of making sure that the local Welsh community was included in the plans for the Plas, indicating the danger of the townspeople's voices and views being under represented or side-lined by the more socially dominant CAT community social group and other 'Big Other Diary Room' commentators stated that they hoped the Plas, being used as a community centre, would *"bring together all the cultural differences"*, and *"we live in a fantastic area, we're surrounded by fantastic people: we need the Plas for the people"*. From the video footage of the day and of the 'Big Other Room' participators, although there did appear to be a mix of the town's social groups present, the CAT community were certainly the most actively involved and vocal, and the fact that the DVD is in English only, is perhaps an illustration of this and a demonstration of how active and empowered both locally and globally this social group is, and how much they feel Machynlleth belongs to them as well as to its indigenous towns people, as another DVD contributor

described, put it: *“Its been a really fantastic day here at the Plas and I think it shows how much community involvement there is here in Mach.... It’s the People’s Plas”*.

The campaign was successful and on the 1st of April 2008, Plas Machynlleth was handed back to Machynlleth Town Council, where many of the community’s proposals for the town are now being implemented. An illustration of the pro-active and empowered attitudes that exist in the town, are captured in Y Plas Machynlleth’s webpage entitled ‘Future’ displaying the adage; “When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen and those who wonder what happened” adding “Those involved at Y Plas, make it happen” (Y Plas Machynlleth).

Owen, who had clearly thought hard about the social dynamics of the two main social groups in the town, expanded further on some of the observations and speculations made above as to why the CAT community is more pro-active than the townspeople and how, until more recently, with the inclusive focus of Ecodyfi, the Centre for Alternative Technology itself was largely un-inclusive of the local population. Though the priorities of the CAT community and the townspeople may be converging, there is still a significant difference in priorities between both social groups. This coupled with being comparatively less empowered, less confident and less educated, means that the townspeople are in particular the more disadvantaged section of this social group, are far less active locally and globally than the CAT community and the English incomers are per-se.

I: Do you think it’s because of education or culture that the CAT community are more active than local people?

Owen: I not sure whether it’s a cultural thing, my own feeling is that many of the issues of Ecodyfi are felt by the people who are happy to wash their hands of it, so there is a lot of common ground there, but the incomers are more pro-active and invariably well educated, they have degrees, they have a lot upstairs and so it’s a community that Ecodyfi deal with as well as the population that don’t pressure education and further learning... The CAT community are very highly educated and are quite concentrated and so naturally they have an ability to deliver. There’s now a lot of emphasis based on community consultation and I think it’s fair to say that CAT was established without that community consultation, and for years people locally were thinking ‘what the hell’s going on up there’ and that’s where

people's mixed affection with the whole community scene arises from and I think, to a certain extent, it's sort of considered as 'how much local employment has there really been, up until late, it's tended to generate employment, but not local employment. If someone today tried to establish a centre like that, it would be much more inclusive and involve wider community consultation sort of thing. So lots of things that I believe happened in CAT we are getting as a knock-on effect on the local community... The indigenous Dyfi Valley community had no input into 'did they want it or did they not', sort of thing, and has consequences and is a difficulty, in as much as, to try and establish the fundamental weaknesses to people who have got the pressures facing the man who's in the pub, sort of thing. ... I am not quite sure why the local community doesn't buy into certain initiatives that they do, other than, you know, there is this large proportion of people who have moved into the area because they've taken a decision to take their lives in a certain direction and you've then got an indigenous community who has sympathy along those lines, but they are not necessarily the same priorities either, so that presents a clash doesn't it.

I don't know what their [indigenous local people] priorities are, I'm just thinking of what my own would be, you know if someone asked 'do you support green trowel?' or something like that, and my answer would be 'well of course I do, but it's not necessarily the priority in my life' sort of thing, the priority for me is language and the safe-guarding of the language is my priority. It's not that we don't share sympathies.

He gave an example of a plan to create cycle paths around Machynlleth in order to attract tourists to the area, and encourage families to come and cycle in the countryside, explaining that he is far more interested in creating cycle paths between outlying villages and Machynlleth for local people and to enable children to travel to school safely on a bike.

Owen: In the Dyfi Valley, I think we've got a reputation for being green and there are strong initiatives in the area, but again if you look at the population of the area, I wonder are we greener than any other sort of community, if you take out the people who are closely affiliated to CAT – probably not – and we're back to the priority thing. I'm not quite sure that it is a fair label to put on the area, a nice thing to aspire to and I think it is correct that we should want to aspire to it, but whether or not it's truly green is another matter, it's probably more of a perception.

I: Why are some people not active.

Owen: I think there is a strong sense that somebody else can do it – it's quite frustrating at times – when things are seen as somebody else's responsibility. People are also scared of becoming involved because they are aware of how much of their time gets taken up through involvement in an issue, so it can affect family life. I think people get involved in causes that affect them.

These observations certainly seem borne-out by many of the townspeople's narratives, their priority being primarily locally focused. Many of the townspeople are very active locally and are very supportive of local events and local causes, though as with many organizational committees, the responsibility of initiating and organizing events etc often falls on the shoulders of a few, though their efforts may be supported by the majority. The events seem on the whole to be different in nature to the activities of the CAT Community, which is far more arts and environment orientated, and instead focus on more modest and local issues, such the annual carnival, the putting up of the Christmas lights or raising money for charities and the town clock:

Patricia: The town clock, that campaign's been running for about four years now, and the Town Council said that if we made the set target of £25,000, then hopefully we'd be able to save it, but we've almost got £25,000 and that's mainly from local fundraising, so people are really, really passionate about the town clock and that's just the town clock and so they feel passionate about a lot of other things in their town – there's a sense of pride.

I: are these local people?

Patricia: Yes, but you will find that within this group you will get a core of people who are willing to go an extra mile really, so they will be the ones to do the organising and the letter writing and the rallying, but the town as a whole is really supportive and they will come out and say that to you.

The amount of people that I speak to in this town, people are complaining left, right and centre, whether it's about bus services being stopped and so on (Rose).

I would like to think I was, you know, if someone wanted help with something they would come to me and I would help them, like fund-raising, but I am very lucky because I am in a place that is busy and I can do a lot, like we run a children's fun day here you know. I would try and help – I would never say no to anybody. My whole family has done that, my Taid [grandfather] is a town councillor, my aunty was deputy mayor and things like that, so we have been really quite involved in the town (Judith).

Yes, I support social events such as the carnival and help out when I can and I am involved in setting up a children's project at the moment (Carla).

Oh yes, belong to many societies; I belong to Merched yr Wawr, I belong to the Chapel, I was secretary for Merched Yr Wawr, I enjoy doing things. (Eirlys).

Not as much as I used to be, though I did raise money for the rugby club not so long ago (Wayne).

I'm involved with the golf club, involved with the badminton club, so yes (Aaron).

Yes, I organise triathlons and organise Sainsbury's Mile [charity fund raiser], Sports Relief. The other sports clubs pitched in and did a BBQ for one event (Phil).

Generally what you find is you get the same people sitting on all the committees, I wouldn't say it's a flaw, but sometimes you could do with some new blood... There's not enough people who get involved... I am involved with the Chamber of Trade but I don't do much outside the Chamber of Trade, but there should be more trades people involved in the Chamber of Trade even if it's just to give the others a break for twelve months. You know if you have twelve months off, you carry on like a beaver, which would be a good way of doing it, you know. Yea, I get involved with the Chamber of Trade, putting the Christmas lights up (Peter).

One business owner explained that in response to the Town Council no longer putting up the town's Christmas lights, the Chamber of Trade had taken over this duty which was clearly felt to be an important social responsibility as well as important for businesses to attract Christmas trade: "The town council used to do the Christmas tree lights and the Chamber of Trade do it now and we do it very successfully, it's a lot of hard work and it falls on the shoulders of just a few (Cledwyn).

Conclusion

The direction in which both towns have developed can be seen as being reflective of Welsh Assembly and local policy directives, the driving force behind which is to develop each area's economic potential. Community development and civic engagement seem to be secondary considerations. The policy strategies for both market towns are contradictory to one another, emphasising the development of environmentally sustainable economies and communities in Machynlleth, whilst in Llangefni encouraging inward direct investment and enhancing its role as a commuter and employment location. The policies seem less about people and communities and more about economies; community and civic engagement seem far less of a priority in achieving these economic objectives in Llangefni than they are in Machynlleth.

Interest in and engagement with the formal political process was low in both market towns, reflecting the Power Report's (2006) findings that the current political system is

outdated, unrepresentative and unreflective of the public generally. The political system is seen as being undemocratic at all levels; national (Westminster), regional (Welsh Assembly) and local (County Councils) and the bureaucratic processes involved are seen as preventing effective public political participation, leading to the general consensus that there's 'no point in trying'. Consequently people feel increasingly disenfranchised and threatened, with little control over the processes that affect their lives. The branding and Americanization of politics has resulted for many in political parties becoming weaker, their ideological content being replaced by vote-winning strategies.

In Llangefni, whose population is the more disempowered of our two market towns, this largely results in political apathy coupled with a growing interest in protectionist politics through fear and lack of control over the changes that are affecting their town and their lives. These views were reflective of the interviewees with low education attainment, the types of newspapers they purchased (tabloids) and poverty. Whilst in Machynlleth people were far more politically informed and active, particularly amongst those with higher educational qualifications, though their attention is directed increasingly to their local community where they feel they are able to effect change and/or to live their lives according to their own political ideologies. What the interview results from both towns reveal is that people are in fact very political, but that levels of empowerment and engagement with politics (formal or informal) vary enormously from place to place and are reflective of poverty, education, local culture and local infrastructures that enable participation to occur.

Citizenship was understood by most people in both market towns primarily to mean 'belonging', but people's definition of what they understood citizenship as meaning they belonged to encompassed anything from: the town or village a person came from; the local community from which they were part of; a nation – which for some was being Welsh and for others was being British; being European; belonging to the world. It was only really in Machynlleth that people associated citizenship with behaviour, where great emphasis was placed on the importance of being a 'good citizen'; citizenship referring to rights and responsibilities that each person has to one another locally, nationally and globally. There is therefore a considerable difference between the interviewees of the two market towns in their emphasis, understanding and

engagement with the concept of citizenship. In Llangefni, citizenship was associated closely with identity, whilst in Machynlleth the emphasis was on civic participation, conceptualizing citizenship to be a contractual and moral arrangement but interestingly, the emphasis was on responsibility rather than rights, and these responsibilities extended for many, further than nation state borders to encompass the whole world. Citizenship is therefore becoming an increasingly complex concept, encompassing a myriad different understandings and perceptions from the local micro focus to the global macro focus.

In Llangefni people were not empowered as citizens and did not feel that they could effect change. They did however feel more empowered as consumers, believing that people do have *purchasing power*, though most did not act on issues unless they affected them directly. In Machynlleth meanwhile, people were far more empowered and saw themselves as being able to effect change and many had experience of doing this. It was primarily however the 'CAT Community' and the 'English incomers' who were the most empowered and similarly were also proportionately the most educated. Though similarly to Llangefni, people in Machynlleth perceived their power mainly in terms of consumer power, but conversely to Llangefni, the Machynlleth respondents were active in exercising this power through their purchasing choices – choosing certain products (local, organic, fair-trade), and boycotting others (Nestlé, McDonalds, South African produce).

Machynlleth, despite its geographical appearances of being a relatively isolated small market town, is in fact a very globally connected place where many people have a very strong sense of local and global citizenship responsibility; an ethos that is acted upon and promoted strongly locally, and this citizenship perception exists side-by-side with other members of the 'town's community' whose life-worlds are very locally focused, locally lived and locally perceived.

Although in Llangefni most people perceived that responsibility for local and global issues rested with 'everyone', this sentiment was limited in scope or rarely acted upon (through recycling or the local business man who bought fair-trade), their disconnected arguments, cynical comments and distinct lack of narrative from most interviewees appears to be reflective of people's lack of knowledge, lack of understanding,

disempowerment and disengagement from the civic participatory processes associated academically with citizenship. In Machynlleth principles of responsibility, both local and global, were enacted as "*a way of life*" through their life-style choices, though disparities did occur between the different social groups; the 'CAT community and 'English incomers' seeing themselves as having both local and global responsibilities, whilst the 'townspeople' were primarily locally focused and placed greater emphasis on 'supporting' local events for example, rather than being responsible for organising them.

The key difference between respondents' active participation in both towns was that Llangefni was perceived as being reactive when issues threatened to directly affect them, with words like 'victim attitude', 'apathy' and 'lethargic' being applied to the general lack of public participation or volunteering in the town. Machynlleth on the other hand, was seen as being pro-active, with people, especially from the 'CAT community' and 'English incomers' social groups, dedicating a great deal of energy to a variety of local causes, events or enterprises that very often also encompassed a global agenda or ethos and which encouraged active civic participation.

The significance and independence of an organization like Ecodyfi, whose focus is on sustainable community development and civic engagement is considerable in influencing policy development and in implementing and overseeing policy directives that meet that organisation's own objectives. Ecodyfi is also central in developing active civic engagement, developing local and global civic consciousness and responsibility and in empowering people to become active local and global citizens. Community cohesion and empowerment is developed and supported through co-ordinating and disseminating community information, through the 'The Dyfi Diary' or their webpage, working in partnership with Communities First to bolster and facilitate civic engagement and empowerment through working and responding to local agendas, through which people experience change and become empowered. Education, social deprivation and culture also appear to be key ingredients in how active, knowledgeable and empowered people are able to become, emphasising once again, the inequalities and disparities that exist between people and areas; the implications for citizenship, civic engagement, participation and empowerment (local and global) is therefore huge. Added to this disparate mix of reasons for the variations in people's civic engagement

and understanding of citizenship are the different policy agendas contained within the Wales Spatial Plan and the contradictions that exist within policy documents which emphasise community development and sustainability and partnership working, as well as the government's environmental objectives, are all prioritised differently from area to area, depending largely on the economic profile and agenda of specific locations.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to explore how small rural market towns have been and are being affected by the processes of globalization and most importantly how their inhabitants and the people who work in them perceive and experience these changes, particularly in relation to their engagement as citizens with the local and the global. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the main points and findings raised in the thesis, that hopefully contribute to a deeper understanding of how individuals interact with local and global processes and to understand what this means for the formation of social solidarities and civic participation and empowerment. The chapter will also reflect on the research process and the validity of the research results and identify areas for further research.

In this new millennium “globalization is in full swing. A composite of economic, technological, political and cultural processes is increasing the interconnectedness of the world” (Croucher 2004: 185) and in our two market towns, its effects are numerous and complex, highlighting at the onset how uneven the processes of globalization are.

As Day (2002: 258) remarks, “it is apparent that over recent years Wales has been changed, profoundly and irreversibly” by the processes of globalization, changing it economically, demographically, technologically and culturally. As a result its rural Welsh market towns are being re-constructed in light of these new influences and pressures. The relationship between local and the global is now reflected within policy documents that seek to address issues of community cohesion, identity, participation and sustainability as well as meeting environmental objectives, though the principle emphasis remains the development of local economies.

Using Ritzer’s theory of the ‘globalization of nothing’ and applying his concepts of ‘something’ and ‘nothing’ into a visual tool to map how ‘globalized’ both towns are, proved to be very effective. The maps revealed the extent to which global branded retail outlets have infiltrated Llangefni in comparison to Machynlleth, which remains relatively unaffected. Such a visual tool was a very useful accompaniment to the

observational and visual research techniques that were also adopted, enabling data to be checked and verified in relation to each other, providing the researcher with checks and balances on the validity of the data and personal subjectivity.

The interviews further corroborated what the maps revealed and Ritzer's theory of 'something' and 'nothing', demonstrated how generic establishments are (largely) devoid of meaning, characters and 'social space'. They have become 'nothing-full'. In Llangefni the respondents lamented and mourned the lost personalities, the individuality and the uniqueness of the now closed independent shops and the existing local businesses are struggling to compete against the supermarkets and other branded outlets. Whilst in Machynlleth, the respondents celebrated and were protective of their independent shops, cafés and so on, which were viewed as being meaningful and unique - 'something-full'.

The loss of Llangefni's livestock market was perceived as marking the downturn in Llangefni's identity, prosperity and community, changing it from being perceived as a 'market town' and service centre, to instead being seen as the island's 'administrative hub' and secondly as being a commuter town (as a location to reside or work) from which the respondents seemed detached. For them, the town had lost its purpose and the changes were seen as threatening, evoking protectionist and defensive sentiments in many. Meanwhile for respondents in Machynlleth, the town's purpose and identity was still as a 'market town' fulfilling its traditional role as service centre to its citizens and its surrounding rural hinterland. The establishment of the Centre for Alternative Technology has had a huge influence on the town's economic and cultural development, attracting into the town educated environmentally-conscious people who have established additional eco-businesses and other ethical developments, hybridizing the town culturally and economically.

What emerged at the onset was how local life was experienced very differently by different social groups within each town as well as between each town, which correlated with the social class, cultural and educational backgrounds of the respondents. Those on low incomes, and who had few educational achievements appeared to be excluded from participating equally in, or accessing the processes of globalization, compared to those of higher income or educational achievement, leaving

many to feel disempowered. This means that for some who are excluded from these processes, their locality, as Bauman (2000) would argue, is being stripped of social meaning, as is the case in Llangefni or is being changed despite and without them for some in Machynlleth. The reality of borders and boundaries are therefore largely a “class stratified phenomenon” (Bauman 2000: 12). Such disempowerment is dangerous, as it evokes in many either of the two polarised reactions that Barber (2003) identified as ‘jihad’ or ‘McWorld’, both of which are detrimental to democracy, equality and diversification.

In both towns there is a high degree of awareness of a symbiotic relationship between the local and the global, but their emphasis and perspectives towards those global issues perceived to be affecting each market town differs considerably. In Llangefni, the global economic market, the rise of branded shopping outlets and the emphasis placed on attracting direct inward investment, has been seen to undermine the town’s identity and purpose, with the general view being that Llangefni has been a victim of global economic trends, with changes happening to it. People’s emphasis as a result is on a nostalgic past when the town was seen as fulfilling a purpose for its people. Meanwhile, for critics of this nostalgic attitude, they emphasise instead the need to embrace the changes placed upon Llangefni by the global market forces.

In Machynlleth on the other hand, the emphasis is markedly different, for the town has carved out a purpose and identity for itself, based on the twin processes of developing a locally and globally sustainable economy and ethos. Here the global and the local agendas have been developed and headed by local organizations, local businesses and local people, providing its citizens with a sense of empowerment and a forward looking perspective and so retaining for Machynlleth a purpose of place for its citizens.

The difference in knowledge of globalization and people’s response to their knowledge is, as we have seen, very different between Llangefni and Machynlleth and the more informed people were, the more empowered they appeared to be in, not only using and accessing, but also in resisting, the negative aspects of globalization and seem to have more control over the town’s economic and community development. The CAT and Ecodyfi in particular, seemed central to Machynlleth’s respondents’ awareness of the interconnectivity of the local and the global. As a result people seem empowered to

resist big business, by supporting their local economy, and balance their budgets with their ethical concerns. What emerged from both sets of interviews was the success of and potential for education awareness campaigns and clear policy directives. People in Machynlleth appear to be empowered by their knowledge, believing that their actions are able to make a difference both locally and globally, through their support of local initiatives and local movements, whose focus is also global (for example 'think global, buy local'). Whilst this is lacking in Llangefni, the initiatives and suggestions raised by a number of the interviewees there indicated that there was a possibility for the support, success and implementation of a range of measures to highlight the interconnectivity of the local with the global. The suggestions made included:

- The development of environmental incentives and policies, such as car sharing to travel to work (as Gwynedd Council implemented during the Foot and Mouth outbreak), could be encouraged by Councils and other major employers to influence people to reduce fossil fuel emissions and traffic congestion.
- Recycling costs could be dropped and collection facilities for small businesses could be improved.
- Community education programmes can be very successful and need to be expanded further.
- Education programmes in schools appear to be very effective at filtering information through to the wider population, i.e. in the way children educate their parents.
- The interconnectivity between the local and the global appears to be key; developing initiatives that are seen to benefit local people and local places as well as people and the environment elsewhere.

As Cresswell (2004) notes, place still appears to be an important concept to people even if many locations are losing their sense of 'place'. As life still exists for most people at the local level, the space where, as Ray calls it, "life gets done" (2007), then it remains an important arena within which people impose meanings, values and construct their identities, and is mourned by those who feel that their 'local' in this instance their market town, is losing its sense of place. For the respondents who participated in this research, 'community' is closely associated with place, to a romantic image of

belonging, identity and communal social structures. As we have seen “social identities are not given, but constructed out of the intersection of a variety of memberships and commitments” (Day 2006: 212).

Community networks in both market towns are altering in response to the demographic and economic changes that have taken place, undermining traditional social structures and creating spaces for new community networks to be developed and emerge. For the ‘traditional’ members of both towns, the local is historically constructed and the changes are often experienced in negative terms as being forced upon them, instilling feelings of defensiveness and nostalgia, principally in Llangefni and Machynlleth revolving around being Welsh and speaking Welsh, though as we have seen, identity and belonging can be narrowed, for example, to being ‘Llangefni born and bred’ and broadened to include Wales as a nation, depending on the context and the person. Identities are not fixed concepts but are negotiated and are formed in opposition to other social groups, which in this case is the ‘English’. The threat to community and belonging is not perceived as a consequence of globalization, but as an extension of English colonization. I take issue here with Savage *et al* who, from their research in Manchester, concluded that “we...see very little evidence that the local is historically constructed in this way as a kind of defensive identity” and go on to argue that the “local is thoroughly implicated in various kinds of global connection and the local can only be understood as a direct product of this” (Savage *et al* 2006: 204). Whilst this may be true where their urban research was conducted, it is not true for these rural Welsh market towns where Robertson’s glocalization perspective is more pertinent and which acknowledges the mixing of local as well as global influences.

Savage *et al*’s concept of ‘elective belonging’ is however very relevant to the CAT community in Machynlleth, who have been and are active in constructing ‘community’ upon which certain ideological principles and identities are superimposed, but which also draw on romantic images of the town’s Celtic heritage and people, ‘y gwerin’. Members of this social group are often transient, but the importance of place, and the feeling of belonging that they attach to it, is no less important or significant. This social group, which is proportionately well educated and / or often from middle-class backgrounds are, as Bauman (200) calls them, ‘the global’ and for them, the ‘local’ can be an elected place to be, whereas for others, especially those from the disadvantaged

social groups, the localization can be a symbolism of poverty and exclusion, creating ghettoized areas such as the Bro Tudur council estate. Wales, as Day (2002) notes, does not have a homogenous identity, and neither do Llangefni or Machynlleth. Their social structures are diverse and complex, and are formed along line of class, ethnic, cultural, interest, occupation, age etc.

Market towns have become designated as sites of “distinct policy areas” (Caffyn 2004) for locations in need of regeneration, and policy strategies have been set out which are to incorporate a host of objectives that emphasise partnership working, active civic engagement and participation, local and global responsibility, sustainable employment and community development. The recognition of the relationship between the local and the global is interwoven into most policy documents, however the contradictions that exist within the various policy documents, not only work against each other, making their objectives difficult to achieve or even unachievable, but can also undermine civic empowerment and democratic participation. The Wales Spatial Plan, which is the policy document that sets out the tailored policy strategies for areas of Wales and our two market towns, and which all other policy documents feed into, is focused primarily on developing local economies, and as Machynlleth’s local economy has recently been built up around ‘green industries’ (Dulas Engineering, CAT, green tourism), helped significantly by the existence of Ecodyfi, then the Spatial Plan’s environmental and community building policies can be applied more fully here. Llangefni meanwhile, as part of the ‘Menai Hub’ strategy area, is seen as an employment location and a commuter town, the emphasis here is on encouraging direct inward investment, from retail outlets to manufacturing facilities. The development emphasis for both towns is at once therefore different.

The contradictions in emphasis that exist between the other existing and proposed policy documents (such as the ‘Communities in Control: real people, real power’ White Paper and the ‘proposed changes to Planning Policy 6’ White Paper) means that local authorities are likely to interpret and prioritize these policies in line with the Wales Spatial Plan’s overarching objectives differently. Hence in Llangefni, the priority does not appear to be community development, meaningful civic participation or in developing an ethos of local and global responsibility, whilst in Machynlleth, these commitments are priorities because the identity and uniqueness of the town is

recognised as its economic asset. Therefore despite both towns being in European Objective 1 and Objective 2 areas and recognised as being or containing Communities First wards, the support given to these schemes is not equal. Woods (2008) notes these contradictions as existing in the Rural White Paper (and accompanying documents) that sets out a programme for community development and governance on rural planning policy which have failed to give local authorities additional planning powers, despite stating its commitment to include communities in decision-making processes, its main focus being instead to reduce costs (Gardener 2008: 178). The rationalization of services, that are undermining communities are having their biggest impact on society's most vulnerable, contradictory to community development policies and programmes, such as Communities First, or to meeting environmental objectives, which raise major concerns about Westminster or the Welsh Assembly's commitment to civic empowerment and participation.

The independence of Ecodyfi as a development agency and its commitment to working in partnership with Machynlleth's Community's First programme and actively encouraging and facilitating civic participation in the development of the town appears to be pivotal to the success, development and community cohesion of Machynlleth.

Also the discrepancies in efficiency, commitment and engagement between Local Authorities are also considerable factors in the development of market towns, as are the skills and commitment of the community workers, an observation noted by Edwards, Goodwin and Woods (2003: 203) who discovered that "the key role of particular elite agents in the regeneration process highlights the difficulty of generating a more collective engagement that is capable of involving the wider community and delivering the rhetoric of New Labour collective empowerment".

The respondents from both towns were found to be very political, though they often perceived themselves as not being so, associating 'politics' with the formal political process, seeing it as unrepresentative, undemocratic and archaic. Empowerment levels differed enormously and ran along education, class and poverty lines, where people appeared apathetic and defeated in Llangefni, whilst in Machynlleth, respondents were actively engaged in local and global political issues.

Respondents' understanding and engagement with the concept of citizenship differed enormously between market towns and between residents, the common thread was in it being understood as referring to 'belonging'. But more broadly the emphasis was on *participation* in Machynlleth and on *rights* in Llangefni. Therefore, as Isin states; "[r]ather than merely focusing on citizenship as legal rights, there is now agreement that citizenship must also be defined as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights. Being politically engaged means practicing substantive citizenship, which in turn implies that members of a polity always struggle to shape its fate. This can be considered as the sociological definition of citizenship in that the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities" (Isin 2000: 5).

The different levels of empowerment experienced between people in Llangefni and Machynlleth are illustrated in the analogy given by Christine:

Machynlleth is more touristy, people are more relaxed because people are on holiday. *You don't feel as skint in Machynlleth as you do in Llangefni even if you are.* In Llangefni the Welsh is slightly different, the people there are harder – they are not laid-back, there is a shortage of jobs and money is tight. Llangefni is less friendly (Christine: emphasis added).

This I feel is reflective of how empowered people feel in both towns in terms of their own lives and local-life worlds, but also of how empowered they are to bring about or resist change in their towns or even further afield. People in Llangefni mostly felt powerless and consequently were reactive to things that affected them, whilst people in Machynlleth were empowered as both local and global citizens and were instead proactive locally and globally. What appears to be occurring however is that citizenship power is increasingly being seen and used in terms of 'consumer power' to support the local economy or to boycott unethical companies. To be globally responsible is also regarded as being a privilege for those who can afford to be, though in Machynlleth efforts were made by many of its residents on low incomes to buy local, organic, fair-trade or environmentally friendly products where possible, juggling their principles with their income. It may be, as Desforges (2004: 567) argues, that "social capital, time resources and communicative abilities available to those in Britain who are interested in global development [or local for that matter] may be limited, such that a more fiscal

form of citizenship fits neatly with any desire for involvement in global [or local] politics”.

People’s relationship with and experience of the local and the global depend very much on how empowered people feel as citizens. The participatory level of local agents within the towns appears crucial in raising global awareness, in community development and in generating local or global civic participatory activity. However what seems clear from the interviews is that ‘empowered’ civic agents seem largely confined to the educated and middle classes, and particularly those who adhere to specific cosmopolitan and / or environmental ideologies like those held by the ‘CAT community’. This social group (which included both the young and middle-aged) was particularly focused on being active citizens and developing local and global active citizenship participation within the town via community activities and involvement designed to engage with all social groups in the town. Whereas in the case of Llangefni, active local citizens were largely drawn from the middle-aged and elderly populations from the ‘Welsh and from Llangefni’ group and notably not the young, which corroborated the findings of Betts (2006) and Desforges (2004) in their work on charity shop volunteering and civic participation in non-governmental organizations in Britain respectively. Active citizenship here appeared to be measured in terms of the existence of a ‘community’ which was generational and fast vanishing.

For most people civic democratic participation is becoming increasingly problematic, leaving the disenfranchised, such as the poor, the disabled and the young, unrepresented in local, national or global politics. Whilst the increase in single issue groups, pressure groups, government focus groups, patient groups and so on may represent certain sections of society, it means that the voices of others go unheard. Representative civic participation is then reduced disproportionately to the middle classes, the educated and members of single issue groups and not to society as a whole, which raises concerns not only for democratic participation in general, but also for civic engagement and empowerment in people’s own individual lives, in their local area as well as globally. In which case, there is limited scope for achievement of the government’s objective of developing a civic ethos that encompasses rights and responsibilities if significant proportions of the population are to be excluded, disempowered and unrepresented within the local, national and global political arenas.

For those who participated in this study who have a good comprehension of globalization, citizenship participation is generally seen as needing to operate at the international global level, since rights, responsibilities and notions of belonging are perceived as being shared between people locally and internationally, whilst for others who do not have a good understanding of globalization, citizenship is still confined to the national, if not to the local, level. As May (2005) argues, globalization appears both to enhance democracy for some and undermine democracy for others. There are then scales of citizenship and civic engagement and, as Croucher (2004) notes, citizenship discourses and citizenship involvement is still unequal as it not only includes, but also excludes. Globalization and post-modernism have “brought citizenship to the political *and* intellectual agendas” (Isin 2000: 5). Notions of citizenship are currently being simultaneously eroded and remade and as such, have to be seen as part of an evolutionary process which is currently being reshaped by civic and political agents, nationally as well as internationally.

There are many factors at work and the complex myriad of theories all appear to have their place. The glocalization analogy of Robertson is neatly complemented by the globalization of Ritzer. But how people and places respond to global influences and the globalization machine, how the local interactions take place, is uneven and is dependent upon a range of local dynamics, that can result in some places becoming homogenized like Llangefni, whilst others evolve and become hybridized like Machynlleth. However Machynlleth’s independence is not a sealed fate as the expansive nature of globalisation means that the threat of homogenization remains ever-present as we have seen by Tesco’s recent plan to locate itself in the town.

Globalization is not reducible to being a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ set of processes, and neither can it be reduced to creating either homogenization or hybridization. Whilst the ‘globalization’ machine of capitalism and consumerism is undoubtedly powerful, globalization also facilitates communication, understanding, global accessibility and interpretation. However, the effects of globalization are uneven and unequal. As we have seen, those who are educated and middle-class are far more empowered as a social group than those from lower economic backgrounds and who have limited educational attainment. For the educated, they have greater ability to access information and are

more empowered as citizens, for them, globalization provides access to ideas, people, places, cultures: it can enable them, it can empower them, allowing them to create for themselves the community and life-style that they want, as we have seen the CAT community is doing in Machynlleth. They are, as Bauman describes, the 'global'. For others meanwhile, who do not have the skills, the knowledge or the finance to access and engage with the many processes of globalization, they become the globalized, restricted to their local out of necessity, rather than out of choice. For these social groups, their lack of civic empowerment means that things happen *to* them, for good or for bad. The homogenization of Llangefni subsequently weakened the town's purpose, meaning and identity for its citizens, turning it into a 'non-place', with 'non-people' selling 'non-things'. Their social, economic and educational disempowerment makes them vulnerable. It makes them victims. As such, these findings show us that the "sociological problems of power and social division such as social class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, institutional organization and capitalism remain as central as they have ever been" (Ray 2007:200).

As with any qualitative research and the limitations associated with how much data can be obtained, it is difficult to know how representative the information received is of the town's population as a whole, or of the specific social groups. And were time and resources available (or if there were a future expansion of this research) it would have been (and would be) interesting to research the towns' 'hidden populations' (the commuter-belt residents in Llangefni, the in-migrated retired residents in Machynlleth and the farming communities of the hinterlands). I do however believe that the interviewing that was conducted was comparatively extensive and the information obtained seemed reflective of those social groups sampled as their narratives corroborated each others as well as that of the observations made and casual conversations had along the way. There were other social groups that were left out of this research and further research is needed on children and young people, to look at how *they* perceive and interact with the local and the global and how empowered they feel as citizens. Such a study could contribute much to forecasting future civic engagement and to monitoring the success of the global citizenship and citizenship curriculum agendas.

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CITIZENS

Introduction

Hi, nice to meet you, I'm Corinna. Thanks for meeting me today and agreeing to talk to me. It will be just a bit of a chat really about the town, how it's used, who lives here, if it's changed at all since you've lived here and so on.

Part 1: Profiling How the Towns Are Used

Have people a global or a local conscience?

Firstly, I would like to know a little about what you think about the town.

Q. What do you most like about the town?

Q. What do you least like about the town?

Q. How long have you lived in the town?

Q. Has the town changed or altered in any way over the time you have lived here?

- If so, in what way?
- What do you feel about the changes?

Q. How do you use the town?

- Shopping - food, cloths, gifts, DIY, pets, Market etc
- Socializing
- Library
- Community activities/centres
- Work
- Schools
- Doctors

- Banks

Q. Does the town cater for most of your needs?

Q. Has the town got any problems?

Q. Does the town have a social calendar for community events (carnivals, festivals etc)?

Q. Is there a sense of community within the town?

- If so can you identify and explain it and how it works?
- If not can you expand on why you think it doesn't exist?

Q. What different social groups exist within the town?

Q. Do the different social groups mix with one another?

Q. Do you have a sense of belonging to the town?

Q. Do you feel that your own sense of identity is in some way connected to the town?

- If so, in what way?
- If not, why not?

Q. Do you have any / are there any local social concerns?

Q. If so, what do you think are the causes of these problems? (e.g. crime, price of housing, type of employment, unemployment, young people leaving the area, closure of local shops and businesses etc).

Q. Would you consider yourself to be an active member of the / your community / town?

- If so in what way?
- If not why not?

Q. Do you consider yourself to be political?

- What do you feel about local politics?
- What do you feel about national politics?

Q. Do you ever get involved in local or national politics (e.g. protect the clock, closure of schools, businesses, surgeries, environment etc)?

Q. Do you find local or national politics to be relevant to your life?

Part 2: Globalization / Localization

Are people's identities and citizenship engagement located in their locality or globally?

Q. What do you do in your spare time?

Q. Where do you mainly go to socialize and why?

- Do you go on holiday?
- If so, where?
- How do you get there?
- What are you looking for in a holiday?

Q. Where do you mainly shop for groceries?

Q. What types of food do you eat?

Q. Do you have any particular criteria behind any of your choices (price, fair-trade, organic, local, political boycotting)?

Q. What types of eating establishments do you go to and why with:

- Friends?
- Children?

Q. Do you own a car or use public transport?

Q. Where do you go to buy cloths and cosmetics etc?*

Q. What styles of clothing do you like to wear?

- Do you like wearing designer labels?

Q. How would you define your identity?

Q. Do you read a newspaper?

- If so which one?
- How often?

Q. Do you have a TV? If so what TV programmes do you watch?

Q. Do you listen to a radio station? If so which one?

Q. Do you have a computer?

- If so, do you access the internet?
- If so, how regularly?
- What type of sites do you access?

Q. What is your first language?

Q. Do you speak any other languages?

Part 3: Rights and Responsibilities and Reactions to Policy Implementations

Do people perceive globalization to be affecting their lives?

Q. What do you understand by the term globalization?

Q. Do you think globalization influences your life?

Q. Do you think globalization has affected the town?

- If so in what way?

Q. Do you feel that globalization is largely a positive or a negative phenomenon?

Q. What do you understand by the term citizenship?

Q. Do you think of yourself as a citizen?

- If so, do you define your citizenship in terms of local, regional (Welsh), national (UK), European, global or other?

Q. Do you feel that we as individuals have an effect on people elsewhere in the world?

Q. Do you feel that as a citizen you have local social responsibilities?

Q. Do you feel that as a citizen you have global responsibilities?

Q. Do you feel empowered to be an active citizen to either promote something or to protest about something you feel strongly about?

Q. Whose responsibility is it to respond to global concerns in term of, for example, corporate responsibility towards the environment, human rights etc?

Q. Do you feel that as consumers we can have an influence on big business through our purchasing habits?

Q. Do you feel you have a responsibility towards the environment, both local and global?

Q. A lot of people these days are worried about the environment, is there anything you particularly worry about?

Q. Is there anything you do or don't do because you are worried about an issue?

Q. Is there anything you don't eat?

Personal details from interviews with citizens

Please could you take a few moments to answer the following questions. All information given will be kept anonymous to ensure the confidentiality of interviewees.

Q. What's your age?

Q. Are you in paid employment? If so, what is your job?

Q. Are you in voluntary employment? If so, what is your job?

Q. If you work, where is the location of your occupation?

Q. What educational achievements do you have?

Thank you!

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS

Introduction

Hi, nice to meet you, I'm Corinna. Thanks for meeting me today and agreeing to talk to me. It will be just a bit of a chat really about the town, about your business, who lives in the town, who your customers are, and if the town changed at all since you've run a business here and so on.

Part 1: Profiling How the Towns Are Used

Have people a global or a local conscience?

Firstly, I would like to know a little about what you think about the town.

Q. What do you most like about the town?

Q. What do you least like about the town?

Q. How long have you run a business in the town?

Q. Has the town changed or altered in any way over the time you have run your business here?

- If so, in what way?
- What do you feel about the changes?

Q. How is the town used by local residents?

Q. Do you think the town caters for most of their needs?

Q. Has the town got any problems?

Q. Does the town have a social calendar for community events (carnivals, festivals etc)?

Q. Are you, or is your business involved in any of the social events?

Q. Is there a sense of community within the town?

- If so can you identify and explain it and how it works?
- If not can you expand on why you think it doesn't exist?

Q. What different social groups exist within the town?

Q. Do the different social groups mix with one another?

Q. Where do local people mainly shop?

Q. Where local people go out to socialize?

Q. Do you have a sense of belonging to the town?

Q. Do you feel that your own sense of identity is in some way connected to the town?

- If so, in what way?
- If not why not?

Q. Do you have any / are there any local social concerns?

Q. If so, what do you think are the causes of these problems? (e.g. crime, price of housing, type of employment, unemployment, young people leaving the area, closure of local shops and businesses etc).

Q. Would you consider yourself to be an active member of your community / town?

- If so in what way?
- If not why not?

Q. Do you consider yourself to be political?

- What do you feel about local politics?

- What do you feel about national politics?

Q. Do you ever get involved in local or national politics (e.g. protect the clock, closure of schools, businesses, surgeries, environment etc)?

Q. Do you find local or national politics to be relevant to your life?

Part 2: Globalization / Localization

Are businesses identities and citizenship engagement located in their locality or globally?

About your business

Q. When was your business established?

Q. How did you develop / establish your business?

Q. What market is your business targeting?

Q. What criteria do you use to employ people e.g. ethics, qualifications etc?

Q. Which language predominates amongst the workforce?

Q. Which nationality predominates amongst the workforce?

Q. Does your workforce consist of paid employees or volunteers or both?

*** Q.** Where do your volunteers come from?

Q. Where do your paid workers come from?

*** Q.** What socio-economic group would you classify your workers as belonging to?

Q. How has your business or the people who work in it been accepted locally?

Q. Has the relationship between you and the local community changed in any way over the years?

Q. Do you think your business has influenced the economy of the Town?

Q. Has your business influenced the local way of life?

Q. Is your business influenced by the local way of life?

Q. Do you take a pro-active approach to your workers and customers to be involved in the local vicinity / environment? If so in what way?

Q. How popular is your business amongst the local residents?

*** Q. How popular is your business amongst visitors?**

*** Q. How many local residents visit your business?**

*** Q. How many visitors visit your business?**

Q. Have you noticed any consumer trends e.g. have you seen a difference in consumer demands?

Q. Are you aware of any customer concerns locally?

Q. How do you respond to their concerns or trends?

Part 3: Rights and Responsibilities

Do people perceive globalization to be affecting their lives and how are they responding to it?

Q. What do you understand by the term globalization?

Q. Do you feel that globalization is largely a positive or a negative phenomenon?

Q. Do you think globalization influences the way you conduct or run your business?

Q. Does your business have global contacts?

Q. Has global mass communications influenced how you do business?

Q. Has global mass communications influenced the success of your business?

Q. Do you think globalization has affected the town or the local area in any way?

Q. Do you think that the process of globalization has reshaped the main structures of social relations in the town?

Q. How aware are people of environmental, social or ethical issues?

Q. What do you understand by the term citizenship?

Q. Do you think of yourself as a citizen?

- **If so, do you define your citizenship in terms of local, regional (Welsh), national (UK), European, global or other?**

Q. Do you feel that your business has an effect on people elsewhere in the world?

Q. Do you feel that as a local business person you have local social responsibilities?

Q. Do you feel that as a local business person you have global responsibilities?

Q. Do you feel empowered to be an active citizen to either promote something or to protest about something you feel strongly about?

Q. Whose responsibility is it to respond to global concerns, for example, corporate responsibility towards the environment, human rights etc?

Q. Do you feel that consumers can have an influence on big business through their purchasing habits?

Q. A lot of people these days are worried about issues such as the environment, is there anything you particularly worry about?

Q. Do you have any purchasing priorities?

Q. Is there anything you do or don't do because you are worried about an issue?

Q. Is there anything you sell or promote in response to any concerns you may have?

Q. Is there anything you don't sell in response to any concerns you have (for example, sell fair trade or organic products, source ingredients, food or products locally)?

Q. If you buy locally, what do you consider to be local?

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Introduction

Hi, nice to meet you, I'm Corinna. Thanks for meeting me today and agreeing to talk to me. It will be just a bit of a chat really about the town, how it's used, who lives here, if it's changed at all since you've lived here and so on.

Part 1: Profiling How the Towns Are Used

Have people a global or a local conscience?

Firstly, I would like to know a little about what you think about the town.

Q. What do you think is good about the town?

Q. What do you least like about the town?

Q. Do you live in the town?

- If so, how long have you lived in the town?

Q. How long have you worked in the town?

Q. Has the town changed or altered in any way over the time you have lived / worked here?

- If so, in what way?
- What do you feel about the changes?

Q. How is the town used by local people?

- Shopping - food, cloths, gifts, DIY, pets, Market etc
- Socializing
- Library

- Community activities/centres
- Work
- Schools
- Doctors
- Banks

Q. Does the town cater for most of people's needs?

Q. Where do local people mainly go to socialize and why?

Q. Where do local people mainly shop for groceries?

Q. Has the town got any problems?

Q. Does the town have a social calendar for community events (carnivals, festivals etc)?

Q. Is there a sense of community within the town?

- If so, can you identify and explain it and how it works?
- If not, can you expand on why you think it doesn't exist?

Q. What different social groups exist within the town?

Q. Do the different social groups mix with one another?

Q. Do you think that people have a sense of belonging to the town?

Q. Don you feel that people's identities are in some way connected to the town?

- If so, in what way?
- If not, why not?

Q. Are there any local social concerns?

Q. If so, what do you think are the causes of these problems? (for example, crime, price of housing, type of employment, unemployment, young people leaving the area, closure of local shops and businesses etc)?

Q. Would you consider local people to be quite active member of the community / town?

- If so, in what way?
- If not, why not?

Q. Do you think people in Machynlleth / Llangefni are political?

- What do think people feel about local politics?
- What do think people feel about national politics?

Q. Do local people ever get involved in local or national politics (for example, protect the clock, closure of schools, businesses, surgeries, environment etc)?

Q. Do you think people see local or national politics as being relevant to their lives?

Part 2: Globalization / Localization

Are people's identities and citizenship engagement located in their locality or globally?

Q. What do you understand by the term globalization?

Q. Do you think globalization has affected the local area?

Q. Do you think globalization has affected the town's economy?

Q. Do you think that the process of globalization has changed the social dynamic of the town?

Q. How aware are people of environmental, social or ethical issues?

Q. Are some local people active in promoting, for example, fair trade, local or organic produce?

- If so, are these people from a particular social group that you can identify?

*** Questions are also tailored to the specific towns and the specific key informants:**

*** Q.** Do you think the CAT centre has altered the identity of the town?

- If so, what changes have you identified?

*** Q.** Do you think the centre / organization has been successful in promoting active local and global citizenship? If so, in what way?

*** Q.** Why do you think some people are not active local citizens or active global citizens?

*** Interview Questions (Communities First and Town and County Councillor).**

*** Q.** When was Communities First established in Machynlleth?

*** Q.** In what way did Machynlleth (or the Dyfi Valley) meet the Communities First criteria?

*** Q.** What criteria do the council / Communities First use to employ people, for example, ethics, qualifications etc?

*** Q.** What language predominates amongst the workforce?

*** Q.** Which nationality predominates amongst the workforce?

*** Q.** Where do your volunteers come from?

*** Q.** Where do your paid workers come from?

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