Chapter Seven

Historical Anthropology through Local-Level Research

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It is a common assumption today that two paradigms typify the growing nexus between history and anthropology. One paradigm, which typifies history, is "a movement away from social history ... and towards a new cultural history" (Kalb, Marks, and Tak 1996: 7). In its concern with epochs, mentalities, and collective representations, it uses anthropology as a repository of concepts, methods, and empirical data that historians can raid. The other paradigm, which typifies historical anthropology, is the one through which anthropologists operate in order to do history, using a central method of local-level research[1] and exploring issues related to "autonomy, deviance, protest" and social change (ibid.). However, a problem with dividing the historiographic world in this way is that a basic division within historical anthropology itself is ignored: that of the distinction between "historical ethnography" and the "anthropology of history."[2]

Historical ethnography is a genre that analyzes a past era of a particular locality using archival sources and, when possible, local oral history. Very commonly, historical ethnographers try to link the past with the present, chronologically and processually, in order to explain the present by understanding the past. The concern here, then, is not only to record the past for its own sake but to show how things came to be the way they are now.[3] This is an orientation rarely shared with historians.

Historical ethnographies may also be produced for periods that are entirely in the past and for which only archival data can be used. Such work is, of course, a more straightforward invasion of the historian's field. It is also a

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departure from conventional anthropological concerns with the present day. Because of this, such ethnographies are uncommon, although their numbers have increased in recent years.[4] Such studies may be synchronic or diachronic. The former are less common in anthropology than in history because the general anthropological concern with social dynamics and change and with individual decision making and strategizing make synchronic studies, of the past as well as of the present, unattractive.

Historical ethnographies assume a "recoverable past." They are analytical histories that are outsiders' constructions. Nevertheless, in using oral history, such accounts do not ignore "native points of view" or insiders' ideas of the past, even as they are anthropological constructions of that past. From this perspective, such historical ethnographies contrast with those anthropological studies that deliberately focus on the ways and cultural rationales by which a particular people envision, create, and re-create their own past and relate it to their perceived present. This we call the anthropology of history. It aims to record insiders' views and perceptions and to carry out analyses in the insiders' own sociocultural terms. Little attempt is made to produce an "objective" history. Instead, the concern is with what people know and remember about their past, how and why, how people make sense of the past and relate it to the present, and how people's perceptions and understandings of their past are a retrospective product of their present. Often, this form of historical anthropology is linked to a reflexive approach, with the anthropologist's experiences woven into the narrative to become an intrinsic part of the published ethnography.[5]

In this genre, the anthropologist is concerned with exploring a people's version of their own past, linking it to their present-day cultural conceptions and social arrangements. Thus, insofar as people explain the past to themselves as, consciously and unconsciously, they explain and justify their present, history is conceptualized in this genre as ideology and, therefore, it can be formed and reformed even as people believe it to be "true." It is the study of such transformation(s) that attracts the anthropologist of history. In this genre, too, history can be conceived of as "tradition," and its invention the object of study. Or the aim may be to analyze collective memory and the construction of identities (national, ethnic, local) through the use of historical symbols, meanings, narratives, and events. Thus, the genre will often discern several different histories in a given locale, related to gender, age, class, or other significant category. In this genre, then, the past as a contingent cultural construction is the object of anthropological study.

It may appear that the division within historical anthropology, as manifested in the ways in which history and historicity are integrated, follows an older and general divide between cultural and social anthropology. The former is concerned mainly with meanings and symbols and the latter mainly with social relations and processes. However, historical anthropologists have cut across these older divisions. Nevertheless, we suggest that essential elements

of this divide are surfacing within historical anthropology. Such division concerns what should be privileged in analysis: the material or the symbolic, the action or the belief. The division, in turn, rests on the fact that no anthropological construction of the relation between what people do and what they believe has ever been universally accepted.

Points of Convergence: The Small Scale and the Context

The division within anthropology and the privileging of particular conceptual elements has never meant a total neglect of the other elements, nor has it ever produced a complete break. Rather, there has been a persistent concern for the reciprocal ties between action and belief, material relations and cultural meanings. This concern necessarily enters historical anthropology. So although particular anthropological studies of the past fall more or less into one or another of our two historical genres, aspects that inform the other are seldom neglected.

In part, this stems from the anthropological concern with holism—the notion that all aspects of social and cultural life are in some way interconnected. In part, too, it stems from empirical concerns that are common to both genres: exploitation and dominance, however phrased, are central. So, too, are the topics through which these are explored: class formation, colonialism, the state, protest, and resistance. Convergence also occurs because key concepts, although they may vary, derive from a shared history of changing paradigms within the discipline itself. Ultimately, commonalities emerge out of two other anthropological concerns: the notion of the local level or small scale, and the efforts made to contextualize this.

In the social sciences, various levels of human activity are perceived. These may be crudely designated as local, regional, national, and international. Disciplinary specializations on one or another of these levels produce different kinds of data, analyses, and understandings. It is anthropologists, however, who have long specialized in working at the small scale or local level; and those who do historical anthropology most commonly continue that tradition. In noting this, however, it is important to state that this does not mean that anthropologists assume that the smaller represents the wider society or culture—the "larger scale." Nor does it imply that the small-scale unit is seen as somehow typical of other small-scale units that share some of its features. In practice, the localities assumed by ethnographers vary in size, geographically and demographically, as determined partly by particular sociocultural contexts and partly by the interests of the researcher. A locality is not necessarily a so-called community; rather, it is an area within which it is convenient and reasonable to collect interconnected data, historical and/or contemporary. Thus, for example, a locality might be a single village, a cluster of villages, a small town, an urban ward, a stretch of country or of a town occupied by people with common interests and multiple interactions (e.g., farmers, fishermen, factory workers), or a politico-administrative area. In our own research in rural Ireland we took, as our principal locality, two adjacent electoral divisions, which covered a small town and much of its hinterland, for which statistical data had been collected by governmental agencies for a century and a half. However, for some purposes we included larger localities for which particular historical data were available or in order to take in a wider geographical range.

What then does local-level research mean? What is it that historical anthropologists can do, and are doing, in their continued concentration on the small scale? To begin with, every locality (however defined) within the same region, nation, or state has in some degree experienced different conditions—ecological, economic, demographic, political, cultural—and these have made for somewhat different histories as the reactions and choices of the inhabitants, with respect to local problems as well as to external opportunities and impositions, resonated through time and space.[6] Contrary to assumptions often made by those who study at more macrolevels, the experiences of people at different local levels, in varying places, are seldom identical. At the very least, the nature of historical homogeneity is a matter for enquiry. It is more useful, though, to accept that anthropological findings have long thrown great doubt on the existence of local uniformity even in the face of similar external pressures. This is, of course, because people seldom react uniformly to such stimuli. Only in exceptional historical circumstances are they mere pawns.

There is, then, great value in local-level research in the sense of examining how major, large-scale processes—the so-called important questions of historiography—have played out at the small-scale levels where people live and interact and where they experience both change and continuity, trying to make sense of what they encounter and deciding what to do. For example, major processes may be identified at the macro level: the emergence of capitalism or its consolidation, state formation, the decline of religious authority, the growth of xenophobic ethnicity, technological revolution. A more intensive and reliable understanding of such processes, though, can only be obtained by exploring these at the local level where cognition, belief and social interaction are actualized. The question then becomes how the so-called macroprocess actually worked amongst people as they lived their lives, engaged hopes and fears, experienced successes and failures, and dealt with intractable problems.

Complementing such insight into major transformative processes via locality-based research, and perhaps under its influence, other changes, perhaps less important from a macro viewpoint, may be highlighted and, when explored at the local level, may illuminate the larger scale. For example, the geographical range of marriage choices, the nature of neighborly cooperation, and the class origins of artisans or shopkeepers are the kinds of issues that escape attention at macro levels but directly underlie such large-scale processes as class formation and economic change. As well, conclusions and generalizations derived at a macro level can, and indeed must, be tested at small-scale levels. How far

do they hold good? Do they need to be modified, held in abeyance, or even rejected? After all, it is at the local level that people communicate, express opinion and make decisions, cooperate, quarrel, and exploit. For example, demographic statistics may show a trend to, say, earlier marriage or fewer children; but it is at the local level that people choose and act (consciously or not) and express their ideas and motivations. Demographic statistics, in other words, are only generalizations of the results of choices made by people in their own localities. As another example, the origin, nature, and reproduction of the bourgeoisie may be conceptualized at macrolevels, but it is at the level of actual life that capital, both financial and cultural, is appropriated and accumulated and both power and privilege exercised.

Local-level research, in other words, allows and promotes better understanding of both particular and general processes. This is because there are variations in action and reaction, perception and ideas, at different local levels and because locality-based research allows an exploration of the contingent factors. Anthropologists, therefore, find confusing the ways that historians and others working at nonlocal levels seek locally derived, apt illustrations of the conditions and processes they are studying. Thus, they may take an illustration from one locality for one point while an illustration of another may come from a different locality in the same region or, even, from the far side of the country. A third feature may be illustrated from another locality. This analytical sleight of hand disregards the probability that pertinent conditions likely vary significantly in each of the localities and that the illustrations may very well have been affected by those differences. Quite apart from the fact that such casual illustrations cannot prove anything—although too often they are taken to clinch an argument—they may in reality be misleading because of small-scale variability.[7] The historical anthropologist, on the other hand, usually feels obliged (often with some frustration) by the disciplinary notion of holism and its research methodology to examine and report on a set of social-cultural features as they have been actualized simultaneously and interconnected within the same milieu, among the same people. Locality-based research, in other words, encourages contextualization; and contextualization gives a validity to anthropological understanding.

A final aspect of local-level research that must be emphasized is that regional or national histories—and the data and analyses by which they have been constructed—are in large part composed of facts, events, ideas, and processes that occurred in a myriad of local places. There should be, therefore, a dialectical relation between a set of local histories and a macrohistory. To understand the dynamics of that dialectic, historical anthropologists provide an essential perspective that, unfortunately, is too often neglected by historians and macrotheorists.

In all these ways, "scale reduction and scope expansion go hand in hand" (Kalb, Marks, and Tak 1996: 7) in historical anthropology, and although such anthropology may be divided by empirical foci, centralizing concepts, and,

ultimately, genre, the fact of local-level concentration is key. Indeed, it is the ways in which and reasons why this occurs that differentiates historical anthropology from the historians' use of anthropology.[8]

What also distinguishes historical anthropology is its concern with context. It is a truism in sociocultural anthropology today to say that the small scale (local places, meanings, and social relations) is enmeshed in "wider arenas" or contexts and that this must form part of any study. However, how the wider context is conceptualized leads to the variations in methods, concepts, and theories that now permeate historical anthropology, regardless of genre. Three common contextual strategies can be highlighted: that local realities are enmeshed in a global (capitalist) system; that they are integral parts of ideological, cultural, and/or material systems of power, domination, and/or hegemonic processes; and that they are spatially incorporated in larger geographical units.[9]

These three ways of conceptualizing context are not, of course, mutually exclusive. However, an emphasis on one does tend to orient and affect historical understandings. This is because the varying ways of constructing context reflect, in part, the long standing anthropological way of dividing societies and cultures into economic, political, ideational, and social systems. Thus, it is fair to say that context defined as a world capitalist system typified an economistic approach that, in the 1980s, privileged the analyses of social relations as these were manifested in production and which, in the 1990s, privileged the analysis of those social relations, as well as the ideology, that are enmeshed in exchange and commoditization. Similarly, context defined as domination, power, or hegemony reflects the more recent concern with ideational systems and, importantly, the resurfacing of the political domain after a period of neglect because of the primacy given to economic concerns.

Context constructed as a sociospatial dimension in anthropology, however, has tended to cross-cut social relations, economy, polity, and ideology. This is because it had a different origin and history within the discipline. It reflects the move from studying bounded units (e.g., bands, tribes, villages, etc.) in the earlier years of anthropology to a current recognition of the contingency of local sociocultural life. In this sense, space as context serves to structure our historical understandings in a fashion that complements the other two contextual strategies.

All this is not to suggest that the construction of context is always a deliberate act. Very often, the nature of the context emerges seamlessly out of conceptual choices and the research problem. Moreover, although the specification of context has a methodological dimension in that it tends to emerge out of the kinds of data encountered in the field, context is more often seen by anthropologists as an outgrowth of the theoretical premises that underlie the study. Thus, the construction of context complements, in a theoretical way, the choice of small-scale locale, which is seen, in contrast, as a heuristic or methodological, and not a theoretical, device.

What all this suggests is that historical anthropology, however defined, reflects the flavor, trends, and biases of the discipline at large. To that extent, we suggest that historical anthropology is not a field or subdiscipline. It is simply one way of doing anthropology. It is not, at least not so far, specifically linked to any particular paradigm or theoretical orientation.

Local-Level Research: Two Empirical Explorations

To illustrate the nature and usefulness of local-level research in historical anthropology, and as examples of historical ethnography, we present briefly two cases drawn from our ongoing researches in Ireland.[10] Both cases demonstrate the advantages of collecting and analyzing data from a small-scale locality.

Case 1: Retailers and Retailing

In our endeavor to gather historical and contemporary information on all categories of people in Thomastown, county Kilkenny, we sought data on retailing and shopkeepers as far back as could be traced. We began with a list of all retailers active in the 1980s and worked back, via archival and oral sources, through the sequences of proprietors of each shop, noting also owners of shops that had closed at earlier times. From this work it proved possible to construct a continuous record back to about 1840 although disparate information was available on some earlier retailers. Since 1840 the number of retailers in Thomastown at any time ranged between thirty-seven and fifty, with a total of some four hundred in all. Systematically, we sought data on the origins and tenure of these retailers, their kinship connections, and those of their spouses; on their children's careers and marriages; on the kinds of goods and services supplied and the changes in these and in shop premises through time; on the activities of retailers outside of their shop businesses; and on retailers' strategies, values, and attitudes as these changed over the years.

To accomplish this task, we used a variety of sources: the knowledge and memories of Thomastown people; family histories and genealogies; parochial registers of baptisms and marriages; such business ledgers and shop records as we could discover; valuation records made for local taxation purposes; all items in the county newspapers that referred in any way to retailers; Poor Law Union and Rural District Council minute books and records; legal records from the national Deeds Registry, Land Registry, and National Archives; local school registers; and minute books of local associations.[11]

In accumulating this information, it was crucial that it formed part of an intensive and wider anthropological enquiry in the chosen locality. We collected data for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on other categories of people, other kinds of economic activities, and all kinds of social and political affairs. As a result, a good deal of invaluable information about retailers

was obtained indirectly—as a by-product, as it were—from enquiries about nonretailers and nonretailing matters in and beyond the locality. A few brief examples will illustrate this. Bequests and references to retailers in other people's wills only became known to us because we looked at *all* wills probated for *all* people who had lived in the locality. Information on retailers was gained from other people's genealogies and family histories, from accounts of political events and charitable organizations, from other people's cases in the local courts, and so on. Clearly, without this additional information our data would have been significantly poorer and, therefore, our insights into the lives of retailers less satisfactory.

For a small locality such as Thomastown parish (population in 1846, 7,410; 1981, 2,650), it proved possible to obtain an almost comprehensive record of all retailers who were in business during a period of about 150 years, together with a great deal of information on their activities, strategies, ideas, and social relations. To accomplish this for a much larger number of retailers—say, for a larger town or a whole region—would scarcely be possible with that degree of intensity. This is because a larger number of retailers presupposes a larger number of contemporaneous nonretailers and their relationships and activities. This means that information would be required on *all* those other people, *all* political events, *all* court cases, and much more in the sure expectation of discovering important data on the retailers. Moreover, a larger number of retailers would require resort to sampling procedures with problems of sample selection in an unknown population.[12] Potential biases could arise as some retailers were more prominent publicly, or more successful, thus leaving behind better records and more persistent memory, while others led a quieter life and left meager record. In addition, sampling would exclude an unknown number of different kinds of individuals and businesses: for instance, larger and smaller businesses, inherited and purchased shops, varieties of specialization, and lengths of tenure. And to produce a stratified sample using these criteria would, in turn, have required the comprehensive research to have been done beforehand. In short, a larger-scale study could never be as comprehensive as a holistic one in a smaller locality. It would, necessarily, be a rather different kind of study, less intensive, valid enough for some purposes, of course, but yielding different kinds of results.

What, then, is to be gained for understanding the history of retailing from an intensive anthropological study? First, a high degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness are possible. The researcher can trace virtually all careers, social linkages, and activities of many kinds for the complete range of retailers. Inter alia, this is valuable in detecting repetitive and changing patterns of tenure, or retail practices or marital strategies, throughout the period and for different kinds of businesses. It also furnishes a profusion of in-depth case studies for analytical and presentational purposes.

Second, such accumulation of data prevents an artificial homogenization of the category of retailer, allowing clearer recognition of differentiation amongst

the various retail specialties and combinations of them, or amongst the different sizes of businesses. It raises apparently simple, but effectively complex, questions as to what was a "shop" and who was a "retailer." For example, what, if anything, was common to, on the one hand, the butcher whose shop became a smaller part of a most profitable business that included livestock rearing and trading and the wholesaling of meats and, on the other hand, a small grocer, open at all hours, with a few feet of counter and a limited range of goods, or the man who sold insurance policies from his own house? In our research project, these kinds of questions raised issues concerning the theoretical validity and analytical inclusiveness of such key concepts as "lower middle class" and a Marxist "petite bourgeoisie."

Third, comprehensive local-level data allow one to address generalizations that have been assumed in macro studies. For example, we were led to review and to revise the common assumption that small businesses are inherently family enterprises in which wives and children are essential participants. Another assumption that has been taken for granted by historians and sociologists is that, in Ireland, retailers have largely been recruited from farmers' families, have married into such families, and have maintained strong relationships and cultural commonalities with farmers. For Thomastown retailers, this stereotype proved to have only limited validity. Another general assumption in Irish historiography has been that retailers have been prominent, as leaders and executives, in political organizations and protest movements. This has not been the case in Thomastown. In the light of local-level historical data, such macrogeneralizations can be questioned, demonstrating the need and the way to modify and elaborate them and indicating the processual significance of associated socioeconomic conditions.[13]

Case 2: The Great Famine, 1845–1849

A seminal moment in Irish history was the so-called Great Famine produced by the repeated failure of the potato crops. Its story has long been told through a well-developed Irish historiographic tradition that was formulated in the later nineteenth century as part of an indigenous land reform and nationalist movement. It is a story that all Irish people "know"—regardless of class, age, or locality. What they know, briefly, is the following.

In an overpopulated country of poor tenant farmers and rapacious absentee landlords, people lived on potatoes and sold all their other produce to pay rents. A series of potato failures after 1845 caused massive starvation and fever, which the British state, with its laissez-faire policy, failed to alleviate. Minimal government efforts included, first, some public works projects in the early years to provide employment so that people could buy cheap food; then soup kitchens; and, finally, a total reliance on the harsh and hated poor law and workhouse. Given the unconcern of landlords alongside the state's ideology, financial austerity, and racism, the Irish starved.

Until today, this story is "common sense" in Ireland, having been disseminated through school texts, political rallies, and churches for more than a century. Revisionist historiographic work in the last few decades has moderated the story somewhat.[14] Statistical analyses of counties have shown that famine was unevenly distributed and that the west of the country was worst affected. Demographic analyses also have shown that the poor (laborers and small land holders) were, by far, the worst afflicted. Nevertheless, contemporary historiographic work still takes its research agenda from the nationalist version. It is therefore concerned mainly with two issues: the way in which the structure of the pre-Famine economy contributed to the Famine and the trajectory of the Famine itself (mortality rates, British policy, etc.). In this macro approach, the experiences of small localities are ignored, except for apt illustration, in favor of statistical modeling and national, or sometimes regional, patternings. Qualitative data, when used, are taken largely from the west of the country where famine was most dramatically experienced.

In our own archival and field research in Thomastown, we explicitly sought data on the Famine in the locality and region. However, county newspapers, government reports, parliamentary sources, and local stories yielded only meager information. Did this mean that we could say nothing about this major historical event? Was local-level research so narrow in its focus that such a great event could not be addressed? Could we not do "real" history because of our concern with the local level? Was the only way to do history the way of the orthodox historian—with events and memories from a diverse multitude of places amalgamated into synthetic, homogenized versions?

We collected what we could at the time. It was only recently, though, that we tried to write an article on the Famine. We scoured our files for our few references. We also began to look more consciously at what was missing, such as reports of potato yields, of deaths, and of extensive admissions to the workhouse. We also looked at what had been happening in the locality in the decades prior to the Famine—not only in its economy, but in its political and ideological life, and in the everyday relations between landlords, tenant farmers, and laborers. What emerged was a story that was different from the nationalist or revisionist one, and this was because different topics and issues necessarily formed its framework.

In this story, very briefly, we argue that a "culture of dearth"[15] had underwritten relations between the gentry and the poor in the decades prior to the Famine. At times of severe and exceptional distress, the "deserving poor" were temporarily relieved, amidst public fanfare, by the moral and material interventions of locally resident landlords and notables. Such public crisis relief worked, for example, in the post-Napoleonic depressions of 1816 and 1820, high unemployment in 1830, and virtual famine in 1840. Not surprisingly, the first potato failure in 1845 elicited no response. Local gentry saw it as a minor problem that would be dealt with as usual if conditions worsened.

All this is possible because of the anthropologist's intensive knowledge of the interrelated facets of local social life such that particular matters of interest can be seen within a local context—as well as in more macro contexts of region and nation—and, therefore, the effects from and upon contingent factors. Moreover, it is possible for the anthropologist to go beyond the data that have survived and to appreciate the significance of what is missing—in the Famine case, for instance, both the kinds of local newspaper reports that were published and the kinds of information that, deliberately or not, were ignored.

Local-level description and analysis need not—indeed, must not—be merely self-contained and of interest only to those already concerned with the particular locality. Nor is the anthropological task to supply local cases that may be used to exemplify macro generalizations. Rather, the results of local-level research—both the "facts" and the analytical conclusions—must be shown in their relation to macro processes such as state formation and penetration, colonialism, class relations, economic innovations, demographic trends, and so on, so as to contribute to identifying and understanding them. In so doing, new ways of seeing and assessing old historical phenomena may emerge and new foci of attention may be generated—all with the potential of reformulating both research agenda and theoretical patternings.

To take a single example: our own particular study led us to focus on the progressive penetration of the colonial state into local affairs. This was a process that had begun well before the Famine years but intensified during them. This appears to contrast with the common emphasis on the failure of the state to deal adequately with the horrendous conditions of starvation and fevers in Ireland and on the laissez-faire doctrine of the British government of the time, which made it reluctant to interfere with market conditions and the rights and power of landlords. There is, however, no reason to conclude that this is an unacceptable inconsistency. The colonial state may well have not done what was needed in the circumstances—although the idea that it could and should have done more indicates a notable assumption about the capability and responsibility of the state to intervene (by people at that time or in later decades). However, what the state did provide—at least in our locality—was strictly under its own burgeoning bureaucratic control. It therefore superseded the previous culture of dearth dominated by landlords and notables. To what extent this was a local phenomenon is as yet unclear, although we strongly suspect that it was not so restricted. It was, in a particular time and context, a part of the development of the colonial state in Ireland. It was also a new Famine story, a different way of seeing (both empirically and theoretically), and a potential basis for an expanded research agenda in future. This kind of result, in our view, is the contribution of contextualized, locality-based research and of historical anthropology.

Notes

1. This strategy was referred to as "scale reduction" in Silverman and Gulliver 1996, where parts of the present argument appeared.
2. This distinction was first proposed in Silverman and Gulliver 1992.
3. Examples include Silverman 1980, Behar 1986, Sider 1986, B. O'Neill 1987, Parman 1990, Adams 1994, and Gulliver and Silverman 1995.
4. Early examples include Dening 1980, Netting 1981, Wolf 1982, Silverblatt 1987, Hastrup 1990, and Sabean 1990.
5. Some examples are Sharp and Hanks 1978, Sahlins 1985, Parmentier 1987, Hoskins 1987, Tonkin and Chapman 1989, and Ohnuki-Tierney 1990.
6. A good example of such local variations was given for Alpine Italy in Cole and Wolf 1974.
7. Examples by Irish historians are Donnelly 1975, Hoppen 1984, and K. O'Neill 1984. See also Tilly 1984.
8. This is discussed at length in Silverman and Gulliver 1992 and Rogers 1992.
9. See, for example, Vincent 1982, Roseberry 1983, Smith 1985, Comaroff 1985, and Trouillot 1988.
10. Field and archival research in a small town and its hinterland—Thomastown, county Kilkenny—began in 1980 and continues. To date we have each logged more than forty-eight months in the field. See Silverman and Gulliver 1986, Gulliver and Silverman 1995, and Silverman 2001.
11. A more complete account is given in Gulliver 1989.
12. Our own investigations strongly suggest that lists of retailers in commercial directories—so often used for larger-scale studies—are not altogether reliable. Some retailers, often the smaller ones or those situated beyond the commercial center, and some specialties were not included.
13. Detailed discussion of these questions is in Gulliver and Silverman 1995.
14. Historical revisionism in Ireland is commonly taken to have begun with Edwards and Williams 1957. Brief discussions were given by Foster 1986 and Fanning 1988. See also Mokyr 1983 and Ó Gráda 1989.
15. We take this term from Vincent 1992.
16. In 1848, the Kilkenny Poor Law Board, comprising mainly landlords and gentry, was summarily dissolved, and state-appointed paid officials took over.
17. A more detailed study of the Famine years in the Thomastown area is in Silverman and Gulliver 1997.

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