How Pensions has been portrayed in the Irish Public Press from 1983 - 2013?

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Table of Contents

1   ABSTRACT

Ireland is going through a period of transformation. The financial crisis canceled the economic and social progress and it underlined the structural deficits of the Irish, European and Global economy. Ireland is faced with the long term challenges of an ageing workforce, public finance sustainability and modernizing its pension systems. The aim of this research is to understand the key areas and factors that are affecting the Irish pension system. The author wishes to use the medium of Irish newspapers to gauge how the pensions phenomenon is being portrayed in the Irish Public Press. The aim of this research is to how the Irish public press are portraying pensions as this is the main medium that is informing the Irish population's knowledge of the pensions phenomenon. The aim is to ascertain if the Irish population understand the main challenges facing the Irish pensions system.

2   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Finally I would like to thank my baby girl Allegra. Allegra was the best baby who slept so well and gave Mommy the time to complete this research. Mommy is very grateful.

Thank you so much for all your support.

3   DECLARATION

This case report is based upon the independent analysis of the signed student Ms. Catriona Harper, except where clearly and specifically referenced as otherwise.

4   INTRODUCTION

The study of the pensions phenomenon is necessary and worthy as it is a phenomenon that will affect both every existing and future citizens of Ireland. As this research paper will illustrate, the future funding of the pension system poses fundamental issues to governments on an economic, moral and social standpoint.

4.1   Ageing Workforce and Demographic Change

As clearly articulated by Bijak and Kupiszewska (2008), there has been a lot of research demonstrating the effects of ageing populations, labour force deficits and longevity issues caused by the ageing process, the authors believe the challenge of the ageing process will become the "overwhelming phenomenon all over Europe". In 2012, the World Bank Report on International Patterns of Pension Provision II, explained that the "world will substantially age in the decades to come". The further reported that the "rate of population aging is accelerating and can be anticipated to proceed at an increasing rate given the continuing rapid increases in life expectancy in virtually all countries". The fundamental issue facing the pensions system is the demographic change which will "result in a relatively declining number of workers and an increasing number of retired" (Bijak et al 2008.).

4.2   Public Sector System

In the scenario of Irish public sector pensions, they are funded on a pay as you go system (PAYG); the consequence of the pending demographic change will mean in many countries that pensions payments will exceed the contributions. This will have vast consequences for the funding of public sector payments in years to come. The OECD Report, 2011 explains that the future fiscal burden of public sector pensions can be substantial, the valuation and disclosure of these promises in some countries lacks transparency, which may be hiding potentially huge fiscal liabilities that are being passed on to future generations of workers.

Keyfitz (1985) provides some explanation of the sensitivity to demographic changes of rates of return on social security contributions under the pay as you go system financing. Keyfitz (1985) explains that demographic changes can be primarily "adverse to future workers since their contribution rates must of necessity be increased to maintain the same ratio or retirement benefits to current salaries".

4.3   Funding of State Pensions

In 2010 the Government commissioned KPMG to produce a report which audited the Social Insurance Fund; this is the fund which pays the State Pension via employees PRSI contributions. The report issued alarming results in relation to pension payments. The significant findings of this report alone are reason enough for the pensions phenomenon to be studied, the findings are:

- In the medium to long term, pension related expenditure is projected to become the predominant component of the Fund expenditure, rising from 57% in 2011 to 85% in 2066.

- The significant increase in pension-related expenditure is attributable to Ireland's rapidly altering population structure and in particular the large rise in the over 65 year old population which is projected to increase from 11% of the total population in 2010 to 15% in 2020 and further to 24% in 2060.

- Simultaneously the pensioner support ratio is projected to decline from 5.3 workers for every individual over 65 in 2010 to 3.9 workers by 2020 and to 2.1 workers by 2060.

It is important that we bear in mind that this report examined the future payments of the state pension (old age pension) only. This report does not discuss the future funding of public sector pensions which is funded from the Government finances also. The below table illustrates the potential funding challenges facing the Irish Government relating to the Social Insurance Fund alone.

Shortfall in Insurance Fund		
Period	Euro (Billions)	% of 2011 GDP
5 Years	9	6
10 Years	20	13
20 Years	52	33
30 Years	103	66
To 2066	324	207
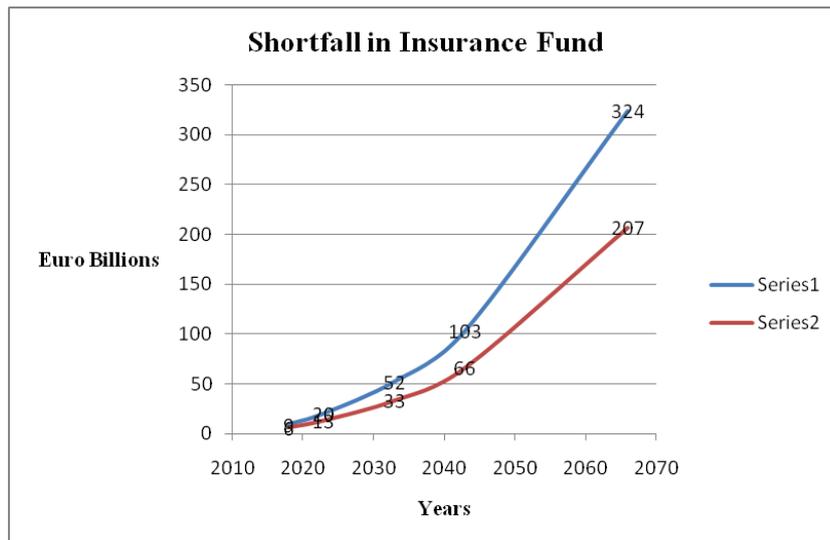
The information supplied in the above table alone is justification as to why the pensions phenomenon needs to be further explored.

4.4   Private Sector Pensions

In Ireland it is not compulsory for private sector employees to enter into mandatory pensions, as opposed to public sector workers who are automatically entered into a pension scheme. At a recent conference of the Irish Association of Pension Funds in 2012, it was estimated that only 51% of private sector workers are paying into a private pension fund.
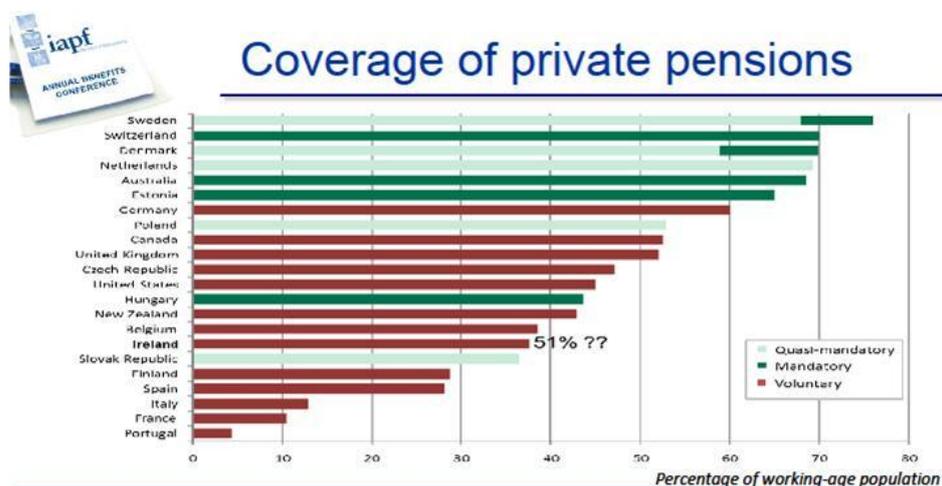
This means the remaining 49% of workers will be fully reliant on the state pension to sustain their retirement years. Taken into account that in the coming years there will serious questions raised regarding the ongoing sustainability of funding a state pension with decreasing number of workers, the Irish Government will be faced with serious challenges to fund the various types of pensions.

4.5   Demographic Shift

Currently 16% of the world population is aged over 65 with Europe having the highest amount of older people globally; it is higher than all developed nations in the world. The demographic shift of an ageing workforce is currently predominantly a European issue; however it will become a significant concern that will affect the entire developed western world (Winklemann, 2011). This demographic shift will question the sustainability of pension systems. Almost a decade ago, Cowell (2004) argued that the demographic shift is the "time bomb threatening European pension". As Turner (2004) accurately summarised that in order to afford continued, guaranteed pensions, people will have to save more, pay higher taxes and work longer.

All information gathered and outlined in the literature review supports Cowell's view that pensions is a ticking time bomb. The pensions phenomenon must be explored and studied in more detail as it is something that will affect every citizen in Ireland. The author's core research aim is to understand how pensions is being portrayed in the Irish public press from 1983 to 2013.

Mass media have the power to influence knowledge; beliefs, values and social relations, on a wide source of issues including our understanding of the pension phenomenon and the general pensions system (Fairclough,1995). The choice of content analysis of newspapers is the most suitable methodology to explore the research questions of how pensions are portrayed in the Irish public press. Newspapers are a prime source of information and set the agenda in the public's consciousness. As a consequence, they are most appropriate source of data to understand how the pensions phenomenon is viewed and to gauge how this ticking time bomb is being portrayed in the public domain. The author wishes to understand is there any correlation between the academic literature and trade publication which suggest that the pensions phenomenon is a ticking time bomb. The time bomb is primarily because of the ageing population, longevity in terms of how long people are living post retirement and the role of the Irish government in addressing the funding issues of the state pension, public sector pensions and private pensions. The author wishes to explore are these the issues that the mass media is reporting in our newspapers. Hence the research question is how are pensions being explored in the Irish Public Press? When this question is answered, we will have further clarification if the information in the literature review can be correlated with how pensions are being portrayed in the Irish public press. Newspapers are a rich source of data which inform public opinion, by understanding how pensions are portrayed in the Irish public press it will help the author to understand is the ordinary Irish citizen who reads newspapers aware of the issues facing the various pensions.

In particular the key issues that the literature review raises are:

1. The affects of a ageing workforce
2. Issue of Longevity
3. Role of the Irish Government
4. Funding of Various Pension Schemes
5. Potential Solutions

- **The affects of a ageing workforce**

  Currently the impact of the pension system on the Irish economy is relatively small as Ireland has a relatively young population with almost 45% of the workforce aged under 35 (OECD Report, 2008). However the old age dependency ratio is due to rise significantly as illustrated above. The OECD Report (2008) reported that the budgetary cost of the state pension is approximately 5% of GDP, this reflects the young workforce. However this is projected to rise considerably by 2050. Logic would dictate that the burden of financing the pension system in 2050 will shift from social security contributions (PRSI contributions) towards general taxation.

- **Issue of Longevity**

  Another significant concern for Ireland is the number of years that people are likely to enjoy in retirement. As the OECD Report (2008) stipulates the average life expectancy at 60 rose by 3.6 years between 1995 and 2005. This is a significant concern for Ireland as it is a major risk to the sustainability of the pension system. The OECD Report (2008) concludes "this is a major risk for the pension system; the increase in longevity has been consistently underestimated in demographic projections. With its young population, Ireland is particularly exposed to this risk as mortality rates are less predictable in the future".

- **Funding of Various Pension Schemes**

  In recent times various Government reports have raised these issues most notably the Pensions Green Report and the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes commonly referred to as An Bord Snip Report. The latter report outlined the significant concerns facing the Irish Government regarding the payment of existing and future pensions. In 2009, the report stated that the more accurate cost of public sector pensions will

amount to €7.7 billion. This is based on the annual accrual cost of€5.4bn each year over and above the €2.3bn cash cost of the 2009 existing pensions.

Currently public service defined benefit pensions are serviced on a pay as you go system. In the coming years the cost of servicing these pensions will become significantly more costly. As the OECD Report (2008) concludes "the increase in payouts from public sector pensions will account for less than one third of the overall rise in pension spending by the government in 2050". The OECD report also highlighted the issue with the arrangement of the payment of existing pensions for retired public sector employees. The report explains "pensions in payment to existing pensioners are updated in line with the wages of workers currently doing the similar jobs to those previously undertaken by the retired person (pay parity), rather than prices as is typical in private defined benefit schemes". Going forward, future Government will be challenged to see if this arrangement can continue.

The OECD Report (2008) also highlights the potential issues with private pension savings needing to increase as private sector savings are required to fill the retirement savings gap. The report concludes that many people may not be saving enough to "fill the gap between the state pension and a decent retirement income".

The pensions phenomenon is a time bomb from every perspective of the pensions system. There are huge issues relating to the funding of the state pension and public sector pensions. In relation to private sector pensions, there are concerns that the defined benefit schemes are vastly underfunded and those involved in defined contribution schemes will not have enough funds to sustain their living standards in their retirement years. According to Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012), Ireland's underfunding of defined benefit schemes has "increased from 8.1% in 2007 to 19.0% in 2008 and to 19.4% in 2009".

- **Potential Solutions**

  The Irish Government will be tasked with finding and implementing solutions to address the PAYG public sector pensions, the challenge of funding the state pension as the population continues to age, the issue of private sector pensions not providing enough rewards for financial sustainability in post retirement years and the issues of longevity. This is an area where more academic research is required. Much of the literature review is centered on many authors agreeing on the challenges of dealing with ageing populations and longevity, the literature review is also consistent that the Government will play a vital and absolute necessary role to address the pensions systems, however more academic literature and debate is required to identify and discuss the specific solutions that the Government can implement.

- **Role of the Irish Government**

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The author wishes to understand how pensions are portrayed in the Irish public press. Will the portrayal unravel information regarding these five areas as highlighted above?

The outcome of this research is to enhance the understanding of the pension phenomenon. The newspapers are a rich source of data that heavily influences the general public's opinion. Will our findings correlate and support the information provided in the literature review. By answering the research question of how pensions are portrayed in the public press, it will help the author to ascertain how pensions are portrayed in relation to the five key areas presented in the literature review. This is the current and future contextual position of the pensions phenomenon and the rationale for carrying out this research.

4.6   Dissertation Structure

Chapter one provides an overview of the extant literature regarding the pensions phenomenon. The author has discussed the main factors and key areas of the challenges within the Irish Pensions System. The factors and key areas here act as the catalyst for the methodology and findings chapters, as these are the topics that are discussed and explored in detail. The author has endeavoured to create a synthesis of information regarding the key areas of the Irish Pensiosn system and how they are related and linked.

Chapter two discusses the specific research question that this research aims to answer and provides more information regarding the pensions phenomenon. This chapter contextualises the research issues and research objectives that will be explored. The research question is clearly stated and the author identifies and explains the aims and objectives of this research paper.

Chapter three will discuss the methodology used. The author will explain how the research strategy and philosophy was employed and implemented. The author will provide a detailed overview of the non typical methodology used and will give the reader a detailed guide of the steps carried out to conduct this research. The author will summarise the research methodology used to achieve the core aim of this research to answer the research question, in conjunction with the desired outcome of the research.

Chapter four will discuss the findings and provide a summary of the study using trend analysis. The aim of this chapter is to detail the main findings and their specific relationships to the research question and research objectives whilst also identifying the areas of the literature review that support or do not support the research objectives as highlighted in chapter two. The author will highlight the key findings for the reader.

In chapter five, the author will link the findings of chapter four with the key areas identified in the literature review. The core aim of this chapter is to identify the important findings and how they relate to the previous studies on the pensions phenomenon. The author will also discuss the limitations of the methodological approach that was implemented.

Chapter six, the final chapter will identify conclusions as a result of the data that is gathered in relation to the research question and research objectives as detailed in chapter two. The author identifies recommendations for consideration for future of viability and the main issues concerning the Irish pensions systems and also additional research possibilities.

5 CHAPTER ONE - LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Pensions Overview

Ireland's pension provision belongs to the Anglo Saxon Model. This means that the responsibility for all financial benefits belong to a single government department. As Agudo and Garcia (2010) explain, this model is characterised by a universal system where the pension payment is low and covers all of the population. As a result, private pension play an important part of the retiree's income. The Pensions Act of 1990 is the main legislation in Ireland; amendments were made in 2008 and 2009. The legislation states that a retired citizen is entitled to a state pension when they reach retirement age; the pension level is dependent on the number of contributions made by each citizen. For public sectors workers, it is compulsory to pay into a pension. In the case of private sector workers this is not the case, although a significant proportion pays into private pension plan whether they are occupational or personal.

There are two main types of pensions in operation in Ireland; defined benefit and defined contribution. Defined benefit schemes are more generous as they normally as a rule guarantee to pay a pension comparable to a percentage of the salary, normally to the amount of 66%. With this type of scheme, employees are guaranteed to receive a certain amount. This guarantee is not available in the defined contribution schemes. The final value of your pension upon retirement is completely dependent on the contributions made by the employer and employee and importantly how well the pension funds have been invested.

With defined benefit schemes the burden of paying is with the employer and there are concerns that employers will not be able to financially honour these commitments as we will see throughout the research paper. In the case of defined contribution schemes, there are concerns that the schemes will not provide enough financial rewards to ensure an adequate standard of living.

As the author studied and analysed the vast pensions literature, it became obvious that there were five main themes or key areas that of the pensions phenomenon. These are discussed in details in this chapter. They are:

- Ageing workforce
- Longevity
- Role of Government
- Pensions Solutions
- Pension Funding

In 2007, the Irish Government produced a Green Paper on Pensions which identified various reform options to the current pension system. The report concluded that the existing defined benefit public system is not sustainable, whilst also conveying their issues with the decrease in the number of defined benefit schemes as it deemed the "retirement benefits under defined contribution schemes are too low" and "that move to a defined contribution pension involves a change in the allocation of risks from employers to employees" (Assa, 2011). The government report also stipulated that defined contribution schemes may lead to inadequate income at retirement age.

5.1.1   Ageing Population and Workforce

The World Bank Report (2012), explains that demographic distributions are a function of the patterns of fertility, mortality, and migration in each country. These factors establish the future age distribution of populations that are imperative to the "long term dynamics and financial viability of a pension system". The report further explains that the share of elderly citizens (over 65) in developed countries is projected to increase from 15.3% in 2005 and 26.1% in 2050, which represents an increase of two thirds.

The European Commission produced the Europe 2020 Strategy Report which identified the main challenges that the European Union needs to overcome; globalisation, pressure on resources and an ageing population and workforce. Obviously an ageing population and workforce have significant concerns for the pension system. As the report explicitly states "demographic ageing is accelerating. As the baby-boom generation retires, the EU's active population will start to shrink as from 2013/2014. The number of people aged over 60 is now increasing twice as fast as it did before 2007 – by about two million every year compared to one million previously. The combination of a smaller working population and a higher share of retired people will place additional strains on our welfare systems".

As life expectancy is increasing, the average person retiring today aged 65 has a life expectancy of 20 to 23 years (Irish Pensions Board, 2011). This has a significant concern for the sustainability of our current Irish pension systems in the public and private sector as illustrated in the following table:

	2006	**2026**	**2056**
Numbers at Work	2,000,100	2,268,000	2,125,000
Aged Over 65	464,000	844,000	1,532,000

Numbers at work per person over 65	4.3	2.7	1.4

Source: (Irish Pensions Board, 2011)

As the above table illustrates, in 2006 there were 4.3:1 people working to support the pensions of older workers. In 2056, this ratio changes dramatically decreases to 1.4:1.

By 2050 33% of people in developed countries will be 60 or older and most of them will be female. By 2015 in Ireland, 40% of the workforce will be over 45 and the number of young people entering the workforce is falling as lower birth rates feed through into the working age population (Forum on the Workplace of the Future, 2005). Labour forces are affected by the number of individuals who retire annually, as it has a direct impact on the economy's ability to produce goods and services (Rodriguez et al., 2003). In the future, employers will have an increased reliance on older workers as a source of labour. EU member countries will experience demographic changes "characterized by a decrease in mortality and fertility rates leading to a growing proportion of older people with effects on the working population" (Winklemann, 2011).

In 2009, the median age of the European population was 40.6, it is projected to be 47.9 by 2060 (EU Demographics Report, 2010). The ageing population structure can be attributed to low fertility rates and an increase in life expectancy. The key findings relating to the ageing population structure of this report are:

- By 2014, the working age population (20 – 64) will start to shrink, as the baby boom cohorts born immediately after World War II are now entering their sixties and retiring.
- The number of people aged 60 and above in the EU is now rising by more than two million every year, this is roughly twice the rate observed in the last EU Demographic Report of 2008.
- The working population is also ageing, as the proportion of older workers in employment increases compared to the cohorts made up of younger workers.

In summary, the change in demographic shift and ageing population "constitutes a classic slow burning fuse rather than a sudden acute crisis but with potentially profound implications for intergenerational conflict and the place of the state in society. The so called pension time bomb means an aging population reduces the relating size of the taxpaying population and the sustainability of the pay as you go pension systems" (Lodge and Hood, 2012). By 2029/2030

Britain's public expenditure will increase by an extra 4-6% of GDP to meet the costs of an ageing population (Glennerster, 2010).

5.1.2 Longevity

As already stated European Countries have ageing populations which results in the issue of longevity arising. The improvement in life expectancy ages has come to be seen as a problem or crisis in the context of pension provision (McCarthy, 2013).

McCarthy (2013) explains that longevity is an issue as citizens are living longer than previous decades, this will be a continuing issue to contend with as citizens are living longer. Hills (2007) explain that forecasting for pension sustainability will become complicated as the Britain like Ireland is an ageing society. An ageing society results in increased longevity. For society longevity is a positive but it has serious consequences for the funding retirements for further retirees (McCarthy, 2009). Longevity is part of the catalyst of the pension time bomb. As Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012) accurately summarized the pension time bomb as a result of longevity and the combining influence of an ageing workforce. The result of this is a smaller workforce who is contributing to their own and other retirement funds. This time bomb is prevalent on an international basis as illustrated below:

Ratio of Population Aged 20-65 to Population Aged 65 and Over
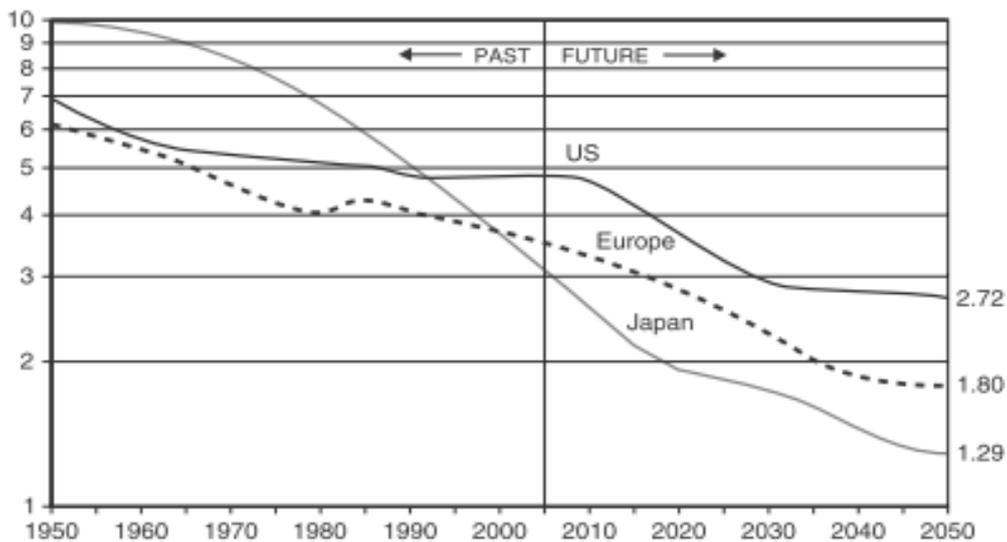

Source: Cotter, Blake & Dowd (2012)

The figure shows the changing age distributions over time (1950-2050) in three regions, the US, Europe and Japan.

In 2041, the Irish landscape of those working relative to those who are retired will decrease significantly, with a ration of 6.2 decreasing to 2.13 for males Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012).

Population Dynamics in Ireland Present and Future

As Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012) accurately conclude this demographic shift alone poses a significant concern for the sustainability of existing pension systems taking no account of any other flaw in the existing pension system.

If longevity was the only issue regarding the providing for pensions, Hill (2007) explains there is a strong argument that equity between the various generations should result in the state pension age rising in proportion to the life expectancy of the various generations in some way. However the sustainability of the pension system also is affected by the result of the decline of fertility rates after the baby boom in the United Kingdom.

In the case of defined benefit pension schemes, the investment risk is the responsibility for the employer. As Utureanu, Nitu, Duhnea, and Ghita-Mitrescu (2011) correctly conclude the employer takes care of the longevity risk also.

Longevity risk has grown increasingly important in recent years in capital markets. As Blake, Courbage, Macminn, and Sherris (2011) explains mortality rate advancements globally are placing more demands on governments and pension funds, as well as individuals, to deal with the longevity risk they face.

The length of time people are expected to live has increased by 25 to 30 years in the last century; this has a significant affect on retirement finances (Antolin, 2007). This may mean individuals are being forced to reduce their standard of living in their retirement years as individuals may outlive their resources.

5.1.3 Role of the Government

Currently Ireland and other European Union countries are existing in an age of austerity dealing with fraught banking systems and public expenditure deficits. In previous ages of austerity, it has resulted in a "refocusing of what states do, bringing new demands on executive government and leading to changes in the public service bargain or social partnership over matters of reward, competency, and loyalty (Hood and Lodge 2006). The below table indicates the various types of austerity measures adopted by various countries including Ireland and Britain:

Measure	Countries
Pay freezes	Bulgaria (2011–2013), Italy (2010–2013), Poland (2011), Slovenia 2011), France (2011–2013), Luxembourg (2010), **United Kingdom (2010–2012),** Spain (2010)
Pay cuts	Germany (2.5%), **Ireland (15%),** Greece (15%, with 8% cuts in allowances and 10% cuts in pensions), Portugal (3.5–10% 2010), Croatia (6% 2009), Bulgaria (10% 2010), Romania (25%, with 15% cuts in benefits), Spain (5%), Hungary (8%), Estonia (8%), Latvia (15–50%), Lithuania (11%)
Hiring Freezes	Austria, Canada, France, Greece (2010), **Ireland,** Italy, Japan, Spain, Portugal
Downsizing Plans	**Ireland (12% 2010–2014),** the Netherlands (15% over 4 years), Poland (10%), **United Kingdom (23% in central government civil service),** Greece (20% 2011–2013), Romania (15%), Estonia 15.5% (2007–2010), Japan (5% since 2005), Slovenia (1% per annum since 2004), Germany (up to 6% over 4 years), Estonia (11% 2008–2010), Latvia (29%)

Source: OECD, ETUC, Financial Times, The Guardian (http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/nov/03/ministers-earmarkcivil-service-job-cuts).
ETUC, European Trade Union Confederation; OECD, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

When social partnership agreements are agreed they have significant consequences to the pension schemes of public and private sector employees. As the banking crisis in 2008 manifested into a sovereign debt crisis, the countries as identified in the above table experienced a "intensification

rather than a reversal of recent public sector trends, which cut public sector staffing, wages and pensions" (Lodge and Hood, 2012).

Palacios and Whitehouse (2006) concluded that public sector pensions tend be more generous than private sector pensions as they offer more favorable terms and require lower funding levels. The sustainability of fiscal policies in being questioned.

Public sector workers can make up a substantial proportion of the workforce as illustrated below:
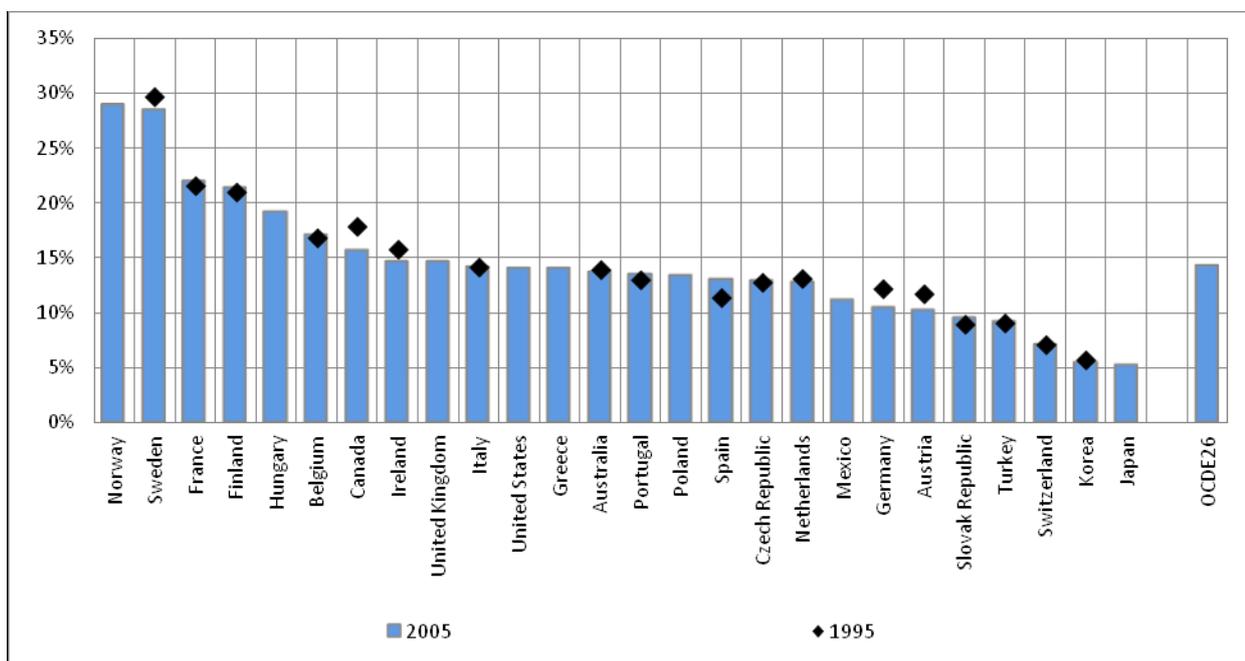
As the chart illustrates government workers make up a substantial section of the labour force of many OECD countries, with the OECD average at close to 15% of the total.

The financial viability and the social adequacy of pension systems have come increasingly to the fore (De Deken 2007, Gora and Palmer 2004). By 2029/2030 the United Kingdom's public expenditure will increase by an extra 4-6% of GDP to meet the costs of an ageing population (Glennerster, 2010). Lodge and Hood (2012) point out that not only will the additional cost of servicing public pensions place additional pressures on those who are working; it will also place social and distinctive pressure on the reward element of social partnership agreements, "the relatively generous pensions to which public servants are entitled". They further argue that potentially public sector employees could

potentially clash with groups who are in receipt of less generous pensions but this group are funding the more generous pensions through their taxes.

Another source of potential contention relates to the pension arrangements for retired public sector workers. As Callan, Nolan, Keane and Walsh (2010) explain in Ireland it must also be pointed out that public sector pensions of retirees have not been affected by the recession as the pensions of retired public sector workers were not decreased in alignment with existing public sector workers pay. Retired public sector employees seen the value of their pension increase in alignment with existing public sector employees during the Celtic Tiger but have been insulated from the pay cuts in recent years. The authors also espouse that with further fiscal consolidation required to address the public finances "continuation of the insulation of pensioners may be increasingly open to question".

Originally when the old age state pension was introduced, many believed that it was an "enemy of self reliance and thrift and it would make a large proportion of the population reliant on the state in their old age" (Moloney and Whelan, 2009). This has proven to be accurate. The state funded pension accounts for ninety percent of income for sixty percent of the retired population in Ireland (Hughes and Watson, 2005).

Governments and Social Partners will be faced with difficult decisions as necessary and austerity type adjustments will have to be made to address underfunded pension and welfare systems. These adjustments could potentially include a reduction in benefits, increasing the age of retirement and raising taxes.

The main issues facing Governments and Social Partners will be the sustainability of pension systems and the future of Europe's Labour Supply (Winklemann 2011). Turner (2004) explains that in order for Governments to afford "continued guaranteed pensions, generations after the baby boomers will have to save more, pay higher taxes and work longer". As a consequence, Governments are understanding that older workers will play a significant role in the economy as their continued involvement in the labour market may contribute to securing economic productivity whilst helping to sustain pension and social welfare systems (Roseveare, Leibfritz, Fore, and Wurzel, 1996; Fougère,. and Mérette, M. 1998).

Government will have to contend with balancing budgets whilst contending with more senior citizens and less workers. From the Governments perspective the ageing population will decrease the growth

of government revenues, thereby requiring higher contributions from the working population. This will be serious contentious issues that Governments and Social Partners will encounter.

Governments in their role as policy makers must also contend with the issue of the underfunding of defined benefit schemes in the private sector and the future payment of public sector pensions. Governments must accept that the underfunding of private defined benefit pensions is prevalent and is an issue that they must address (Cotter, Blake and Dowd, 2012).

In relation to public sector pensions they are funded on a pay as you go system. Governments will encounter serious issues meeting these obligations as already explained there will be less citizens in employment to support this pension system. The scale of future payments to public servants is very significant. The Comptroller and Auditor General Report on Public Service Pensions 2009 stated the following:

- The accrued value of the public service pension liabilities at 31 December 2008 was estimated at approximately €108.4 billion before deduction of assets held within funded pension schemes and before allowance for the National Pensions Reserve Fund assets.
- When contributions including PRD are taken into account net outflows of €157 billion are projected to occur over the period 2009 - 2058.
- Gross pension outgoings as a percentage of GNP are projected to rise significantly over the next 50 years from 1.6% to 3.6% by 2058. Currently, net public service pensions absorb 0.5% of GNP and assuming GNP grows as projected it will be necessary to devote 1.8% of GNP to meet those costs by 2058.

The report also made the important conclusion regarding the existing accounting reporting mechanism; "the recognition of the cost of pensions only at the point of payment is not an adequate basis of reporting the true cost of pensions". This is a significant issue facing the Government and Social Partners.

The literature is consistent that the underfunding of defined benefit schemes, the expected shortfalls of defined contribution schemes to provide adequately for retirement and the unsustainable Pay As You Go Model for public sector and old age pensions will demand serious policy decisions from the Government.

As (Hagemann and Nicoletti, 1989) explain, another issue facing Governments is the interaction between changing demographics and Pay As You Go pension schemes relates to intergenerational

equity. If policies remain unchanged, the full weight of dependency ratios will shift onto future generations. Hagemann et. Al (1989) further espouse that it is reasonable to hypothesize that the delaying of policy amendments increases the possibility that future workers will bear the weight of future pension funding requirements. This could be a huge source of contention with existing workers and could result in protests.

The dialog between the social partners is an important element in addressing the various issues with pension schemes. As Utureanu, Nitu, Duhnea, and Ghita-Mitrescu, (2011) explain the risk sharing between the members of the pension system and employers can be a solution. The authors further explain that the recent financial and economic crisis raises questions about the "intergenerational fairness and redistribution in defined benefit schemes".

5.1.4   Funding of Pensions

In 2001 the European Council proposed a set of goals for pensions; the aim was to ensure pension systems are adequate, financially sustainable and adaptable to suit environmental considerations.

The key considerations as summarised by (Utureanu, Nitu, Duhnea and Ghita-Mitrescu, 2011) were:

1. Increasing the retirement age whilst discouraging early retirement. The aim is to encourage elder employees to remain in employment and thus increasing the gender equality.

2. Increasing the use of multi-tiered pensions systems - this is the aim of European member states but each member state can reduce the public pension sector pay bill if it is Pay As You Go. In relation to the private sector, it encourages the use of defined contribution schemes.

3. Introducing measurements for managing adequacy gaps; this means facilitating access to pensions for disadvantaged parts of society and increasing support for these with lesser pensions.

4. Gender dimension: as women tend to earn less than men and tend to have longer career breaks primarily due to childcare and different social responsibilities. This means their pensions may be lower. In parallel to this women tend to live longer than men.

The impact of the financial and economic crisis and the decreasing economic growth rates has illustrated the additional fiscal pressure upon the financing and those contributing to pensions.

5.1.5   Pensions - The Solution

Hagemann et. Al (1989) proposes that governments should look at a policy of creating a fund to provide for future pensions of existing workers. They espouse setting contribution rates that are

greater than the Pay As You Go requirements. This would enable an accumulation of capital reserve which could be used as a cushion against demographic and economic issues.

Another option available to governments is to reduce benefits of future retirees. There are various options available for this. Hagemann et. Al (1989) suggested decreasing the degree of "indexing pre retirement earnings and/or lengthening the qualifying period for receipt of full benefits". Another approach considered by Musgrave (1981) is to equate pensions to Net Salary as opposed to Gross Salary.

From the Government's perspective, policy must be amended to address the Pension time bomb. The extant literature provides support that factors such as an ageing workforce and longevity will force the Government to make choices to address the overwhelming evidence of financing future pension requirements. Whether the Government further increases the retirement age, reduces benefits or introduces legislation for existing workers to pay more to their pensions, the Government must adapt policy for the inevitable change that the transition to an older population will still increase the cost to each worker of supporting pensioners. The view supports the inevitable future that the productivity of a reduced workforce will have to support a larger dependent population, (Hagemann et. al 1989).

Carter (2010) explains that longevity and economics are the catalyst for pension reform efforts. Carter (2010) espouses that existing and future pension reforms in European countries will result in bulked up country wide defined contribution plans. Carter raises the point that if governments change their focus from Pay As You Go systems to defined contribution schemes, the "ongoing shift to private defined contributions plans from defined benefit plans will accelerate". This has already taken place in the past decade in France, Germany and Sweden. They have created funded defined contribution schemes. These schemes were generated with the intention of easing the burden of unfunded state systems. The Nordic countries are at an advanced stage of addressing their issue of contending with an ageing population. This solution comprised of increasing the contributions made to defined contribution schemes, ensuring that defined contribution schemes are available to all and thus shifting away from the more expensive defined benefit schemes which are more difficult to fund.

5.2   Literature Review Summary

A core aim of this research paper is to understand how pensions are portrayed. Are they portrayed in a positive, negative or neutral manner? The author wishes to examine the pensions phenomenon under the main five key areas that have been derived. These five areas are as a result of the studying and analysing of the vast amount of pensions literature review. The five areas are the ageing workforce, longevity, the role of the government, pensions funding and pensions solution.

6 CHAPTER TWO – RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of this research is to contribute empirical data to the under researched area of pensions with particular reference to how the pensions phenomenon is portrayed in the public press. This is the specific research question that this research will endeavour to answer. Many commentators have discussed the future issues of funding the pension system but there is very little literature that examines whether the theory discussed in academic articles correlates with the opinions and viewpoints of the popular press. This is the core aim of this research. By understanding how the popular press is portraying pensions, we will gain a deeper understanding of what the ordinary Irish citizen understands about the pensions phenomenon.

The aim of this research is to identify a number of sub objectives which will give a more comprehensive understanding of how pensions are portrayed in the Irish and British public press. A number of specific sub objectives have been identified below which will form the basis of this deductive approach to research. However the use of the research methodology of content analysis will also enable the researcher to observe general findings based on the trends and correlations that the codebook will produce when the data is being analysed. The author would expect this will offer further insights into future area of research surrounding the pensions phenomenon.

From reading through the pensions literature, the author wishes to explore pensions from a number of facets which are the aim of this research.

6.1 Aims of Research

Ireland belongs to the Anglo Saxon Model regarding pension provision. This means that the responsibility for all financial benefits belong to a single government department. The implementation of this model means the Irish Government plays an enormous role in addressing the various issues associated with the Irish pensions system. These issues will form part of the research objectives of this research paper as discussed below:

Ageing Workforce

As the literature review illustrates, Ireland will face significant difficulty funding their various pension schemes due to an ageing population. This is supported by research carried out by Winklemann (2011), Lodge and Hood (2012) and Glennerster (2010). Almost a decade ago, Cowell (2004) argued that the demographic shift due to an ageing population is the "time bomb threatening

European pensions". If the ageing workforce is the most significant issue regarding the pensions time bomb, will this be captured and how will it be portrayed in the popular press? This is an objective of the research paper.

Longevity

The Irish state and companies based there will face significant difficulty funding their various pension schemes due to longevity of people spending more of their lives in the retirement stage. This is supported by research carried out by McCarthy (2009), Hills (2007), Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012) and McCarthy (2013). Will the public press report this? Will it be portrayed how long people are now living and are going to be in receipt of their pensions.

Governments and Social Partners Role in the Future Provision of the Pensions System

- As Ireland will face significant difficulty funding their various future pension schemes, the Government in their role as policy maker will be expected to address the funding issue through the payment of higher taxes, increasing retirement ages and saving more. This view is supported by Lodge and Hood (2012), Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012), Glennerster (2010) Winklemann, (2011), De Deken (2007), Turner (2004), Gora and Palmer (2004).

- As Ireland will face significant difficulty funding their various future pension schemes, the Government and Social Partners will become under pressure to continue paying defined benefit index linked public sector pensions with a reduced working force whilst private sector workers will have less generous pensions. This will cause challenges to the Government and Social Partners from an economical, social and potentially industrial relations perspective. This view is supported by Hood et. al (2012).

- The Government and Social Partners will face increasing challenges from current public sector workers. Currently retired public sector pensioners are not affected when current public sector pay is cut. However when current public sector workers pay is increased, retired pensions are index linked and will gain from the increase in pay. This will become a source of contention as the number of public sector retirees will increase dramatically in years to come due to longevity. This view is supported by Callan, Nolan, Keane and Walsh (2010).

- The Irish pension system is set up in a manner that all workers can avail of an old age pension once they have paid enough PRSI contributions. Some authors argue that knowing this payment is available acts as a deterrent for employees to pay into additional pension schemes to properly

financially provide for their retirements. This view is supported by (Moloney and Whelan, 2009; Hughes and Watson, 2005).

Will the public press report or raise any of the above regarding the role of the Government?

Pensions Solution

Once would expect much of the literature review and findings to discuss the various potential solutions to the pensions solution. Various authors including Hagemann and Nicoletti, (1989) propose that governments should examine a policy of building a fund to provide for future pensions of existing workers. They suggest changes to existing pension schemes; this will be discussed in more detail in the literature review. A core research objective is to understand the extent of solutions that are available to address the Irish pensions system. The author wishes to understand the types of solutions and ultimately ascertain will the public press report, and if they do, to what extent do they portray any of potential solutions to the Irish pensions system.

Pension Funding

Authors such as Haagemann et.al (1989) discuss the potential challenges facing the Irish Government regarding the funding of Pay As You Go public sector pension scheme; they articulate the view that this will have significant issues for intergenerational equity as future workers may be expected to fund the pensions for existing workers. Various reports from the OECD , most notably the 2011 report Funding In Public Sector Pension Plans, explains that the fiscal burden of public sector can be an unknown and as a result may be hiding potential enormous fiscal liabilities that will be passed to future generations of workers.

As (Hagemann and Nicoletti, 1989) explain, another issue facing Governments is the interaction between changing demographics and Pay As You Go pension schemes relates to intergenerational equity. If policies remain unchanged, the full weight of dependency ratios will shift onto future generations.

- In the medium to long term pension related expenditure is projected to become the predominant component of the Fund expenditure, rising from 57% in 2011 to 85% in 2066.

- The OECD Report Funding In Public Sector Pension Plans 2011, explains that the future fiscal burden of public sector pensions can be substantial, the valuation and disclosure of these promises in some countries lacks transparency, which may be hiding potentially huge fiscal liabilities that are being passed on to future generations of workers.

- In relation to private sector workers, the OECD Setting the Pension System on the Right Track Report (2008), explains that there will be issues relating to the value of private sector workers as to whether they will be adequate for a decent retirement. There is also the challenge of addressing the underfunding of defined benefit schemes for private sector workers (Cotter et al, 2012); this will also be discussed in more detail in the literature review chapter.

Given that the future funding of the Irish pensions system is a significant issue to be addressed, the author wishes to understand if newspaper articles are discussing the funding of the Irish Pensions system.

Overall Trends

As the author used content analysis to analyse data, this methodology is conducive to analysing data to examine trends, common denominators, differences and frequencies. This will enable the author to examine the pensions phenomenon by sector, by decade, by types of pension schemes, the general portrayal of pensions in newspapers, the funding issues of particular schemes, the portrayal of the ageing workforce, portrayal of longevity, suggestions or lack of solutions regarding the future funding of pension schemes and the portrayal of the role of the Irish Government. From a research perspective, the data collected will determine what trends are generated.

7   CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology and instrumentation used in the study are discussed. The purpose of this research is to question how pensions are portrayed in the Irish Popular Press from 1983 – 2013. As the literature review illustrates, there are significant issues associated with the pension phenomenon most notably the ageing workforce, longevity, the role of the government, funding of pensions and pensions solutions.

The author wishes to understand what the understanding of ordinary citizens is regarding the pensions phenomenon. Newspapers are the most common source of information regarding pensions for ordinary citizens. The majority of ordinary citizens do not read academic articles, trade publications or government reports. The author aims to gain a deep understanding how the public press are portraying pensions through the medium of newspapers as this is the main public medium that influences Irish citizens. In order to explore this, the author will employ the content analysis methodology to analysis how newspapers are portraying newspapers.

Newspapers are the most appropriate source of data to answer the research question. One can argue that the public press are objective and unbiased however, Fairclough (1995) and Patton and Johns (2007) are of the belief that no text is can be described as purely objective but rather they have ideological undertones regarding the social norms that exist within society.

As already stated, the majority of ordinary Irish citizen does not read academic journals, trade publication or governmental reports. Within these publications, they clearly articulate and explain the fundamental issues with the various pension systems. The use of the content analysis methodology of newspaper articles enabled the author to see if the newspapers were reporting and presenting the same issues with the various pensions systems as the literature review highlighted. Fundamentally, the newspapers articles that cover pensions will provide a comprehensive understanding how pensions are presented in the public domain and help answer the research question: How Pensions are portrayed in the Irish public press. To answer this question, A content analysis of newspaper articles featuring pensions appearing in the Irish popular press from 1983 to 2013 will occur.

Although there is a significant amount of information regarding pensions available in publications, it can be complicated to adapt this data into a systematic manner to make it understandable and manageable, Gephart (1993). Content analysis acts as a catalyst for simplifying, understanding and studying textual material.

Although content analysis is not a usual method in pensions research, a content analysis of documents enables the researcher to gain an understanding of beliefs and social norms surrounding the pensions phenomenon Patton and Johns (2007). The use of the content analysis methodology also enables the author to gauge how the pensions system and the future issues relating to the pensions systems are being portrayed in the public domain.

The literature review suggests that the issues relating to the ageing workforce and changing demographics, longevity and the role of the government are significant factors regarding the pension solutions and the funding of pensions. The literature review suggests that there will be catastrophic consequences for the future funding of pensions. The author wishes to understand if these issues are being portrayed in the public press. Is the public press reporting the potential issues that an ageing workforce, longevity and the role of the government will have with the future funding of pensions. Fundamentally, the author wishes to understand if there is any correlation between how the academic articles are portraying versus what the newspaper articles are portraying.

The prominence of pensions in the public press enables the author to study and analyse how this phenomenon is presented in the public domain as the Pensions system will affect every Irish citizen. Employers and employees read major newspapers more regularly than academic journals. Abrahamson (1991, 1996) articulate the viewpoint that the popular press has more affect on what happens in companies than academic research. This is the main reason why the author chose newspapers as a source of data and why the content analysis methodology was implemented. The content of newspapers are not necessarily about the facts of the world but ideas and beliefs articulated from certain ideological viewpoints (Fowler, 1991). A more accurate description is that news is the "end product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selection of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories" (Hall, Crichter, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978).

The content analysis of newspaper articles enabled the author to determine the extent of press portrayal of pensions based on selected key terms which are derived from a review of the pensions literature and the sample of newspaper articles.

7.2   Research Philosophy

This research is grounded in a pragmatism approach as pragmatism is rooted that the most essential determinant of the research philosophy adopted is the research question. This is the nature of the research question of this proposal. The research is of a positivism view; with positivism, "knowledge develops by investigating the social reality trough observing objective facts" (Blumberg, Cooper and Schinder, 2008). This is the philosophical foundation of this research. A core aim of positivism is to create theories which help us to understand the relationships between phenomenia.

The author aims to establish the relationship between the theory and observations and identify causes and effects to the specific research question and overall research aims of this research. The author is adopted a deductive quantities approach by identifying a series of categories that are identified through the literature review. These categories are the common views of leading academics that will be used in the content analysis methodology analysis of newspapers articles. The coding of these categories using primarily nominal data will enable the author to test whether her observations from the literature review can be supported and to assess the extent of detected causalities that can be applied on a generic basis.

7.3   Unit of Analysis

By definition content analysis calls for the quantification of content elements (Berelson, 1971). As a basis for counting relevant aspects of the content, certain standard subdivisions of it must be used, this research proposal content analysis will determine the extent of press portrayal of pensions based on selected key terms which are derived from a review of the pension literature and the sample of articles. This research proposal is interested in how pensions have been portrayed in the Irish and British public press. Hence, the unit of analysis is the attitudes, portrayal, perception and understanding of pensions.

7.4   Research Strategy

Content analysis is a methodology which provides protocols for efficient analysis of large sets of data with textual components Content analysis enables the researcher to "reduce many words of the text into fewer content categories, such data reduction can be done at the level of the word, sentence,

theme, paragraph or even the entire text" (Weber, 1990). Content analysis is the most suitable methodology for the author to answer the research question of How are Pensions Portrayed in the Irish Press. This methodology gives a defined set of protocols and processes to make sense of multiple sources of qualitative data such as texts (Krippendorff, 2004). Essentially content analysis is a quantitative approach that "uses structured techniques to analyse data" (Sonpar and Golden-Biddle, 2008).

For the purpose of this research paper, the definition of content analysis as defined by (Krippendorff, 2004) will be employed content analysis is a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text".

7.5   Research Sample

The author retrieved pension data from the Nexis online database; this is the main source for newspaper articles. This database contains the full text of both national and regional newspapers in both Ireland and Britain. This database enabled the author to access newspapers articles from 1983 to 2013. The databases afford the author the ability to generate searches and extract all newspaper articles relating to pensions.

This database contains the full text of major national and regional newspapers in Ireland, UK, Europe and Worldwide. Within Nexis, a specific search for those articles related to the search 'Pensions' and reports can be generated to retrieve those articles that relate to pensions. The first search involved typing the word pensions for the main Irish broadsheet papers. After all articles were studied and reviewed, the total sample of all Irish articles amounted to 1095 articles. Thus, the newspaper articles that contain information regarding pensions represented the sample population for this research paper.

The newspaper articles that contain information regarding pensions represent the sample population for this proposed research. The Irish newspapers articles will be based on the main broadsheet newspapers which include the Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, The Irish Times, Sunday Business Post, Sunday Tribune and Sunday Independent. These are the newspapers which are read most commonly by the ordinary Irish citizen. To understand the ordinary citizen's viewpoint of the pensions phenomenon, it is necessary to research the material that they read. The author did not use the Financial Times newspaper, the reason for this is twofold. Firstly the author's aim is to gain an

understanding of how newspapers are portraying pensions, which obviously influences the opinions of ordinary citizens who read newspapers and not academic articles. The majority of citizens read the main Irish broadsheets. Readers of the Financial Times tend to understand key financial, economics and governmental issues. The author wants to analyse how the pensions phenomenon is portrayed through the main newspapers that are read by the majority of ordinary citizens.

Regarding the sampling of articles, "unlike purely quantitative studies, sampling strategies in content analysis do not focus on probabilistic sampling aimed at representing a larger population" (Patton and Johns, 2007). As Krippendorff (2004) explains the fundamental cornerstone of content analysis deals is used with various sampling techniques, "sampling decisions in content analysis are concerned with ensuring that the questions one is interested in can be studied through the chosen sample". As Krippendorff (2004) importantly outlined and explained, "these textual units are not a sample of a population of texts; they are the population of relevant texts that have been pre-screened for inclusion in the study".

When using content analysis, the author must have a clear understanding that sampling in content analysis requires confirmation to ensure that each article is relevant to the research question (Krippendorff, 2004) (Patton and Johns, 2007). This is a fundamental component of content analysis.

7.6   Research Instrument

A fundamental component of content analysis is to ensure that the sample of articles retrieved is relevant to the research question i.e. how pensions are portrayed in the Irish Public Press. When the author carried out the various searches of each newspaper, the author ensured that only articles that are relevant to how pensions are portrayed are used.

7.7   Content Analysis Design

When implementing the content analysis methodology, there are two steps involved; the identification of categories and the creation of the codebook.

7.7.1   Part One - Identification of Categories

The establishment of categories required the identification of variables involved after a thorough review of all literature relating to pensions. The categories employed for this research are categories that are most meaningful to how pensions are portrayed. When using content analysis as a research methodology, the literature review acts as a catalyst to identify those variables and categories of interest. As already discussed in the literature review, the five key areas that were identified were:

- Ageing workforce

- Longevity

- Role of government

- Pension funding

- Pensions solutions

These are the five key areas that the content analysis methodology will focus on.

The categories that were used were:

1. Newspaper

2. Name of Article

3. Year

4. Month

5. Industry Type

6. Sector

7. Type of pension scheme

8. Gender

9. Portrayal of pensions

10. Funding of pensions

11. Longevity

12. Ageing populations

13. Solution

14. Social Partnership

15. Role of Government

- The first five categories Newspaper, Name of Article, Year, Month and Industry Type were used for information purposes. The remaining categories of Sector, Type of pension scheme, Gender, Portrayal of pensions, and Funding of pensions, Longevity, Ageing populations, Solution, Social Partnership and Role of Government were selected as a result of the literature review. Each academic articles reviewed raised each of these categories. The overwhelming areas that the literature review focused on was the ageing workforce, longevity, role of government, pension funding and pensions solutions. These are the five key areas that will be analysed.

As a result, the aim of the author was to correlate what the academic articles were saying in relation to pensions and to see what the newspapers were reporting in relation to pensions in relation to the identified categories.

7.7.2   Part Two - Creation of Codebook

The pensions literature review suggested that the following categories would enable the author to gain a full understanding of how pensions are portrayed in the public domain. The second part involved each article been quantitatively coded and using nominal data for:

- Industry type: the author identified a list of common industries in the workplace.
- Sector type: this category was divided into Public, Private or Both. The review of the literature review suggested that the portrayal of pensions in the public and private sector may be viewed very differently. The author wanted to unravel how the pensions phenomenon was portrayed from a public and private sector.
- Type of pension scheme: the literature review raised different issues and concerns regarding the different types of pensions schemes. This category was divided into defined contribution, defined benefit, both and not stated.
- Gender: the author wished to examine of there were any pension issues associated with gender. There was no overwhelming evidence of this in the literature review, the author wished to see if the public press reported any issues or correlations between pensions and gender. The categories were divided into Yes, No or Not Stated.
- Portrayal of pensions: this category is of fundamental importance in the author understanding how pensions are viewed in the public press. The categories used are positive, negative or neutral. The literature review would suggest that the pensions phenomenon is predominately viewed as negative as there is very little positivity associated with pensions.
- Funding of pensions: a large amount of the literature review is concerned with the future funding of pensions and in most cases the lack of funding for future pensions. The author is particularly keen to see if this information is being portrayed in the public press. This category is asking: Does the article mention the funding of the pension scheme? The categories used are Yes or No.
- Longevity: the literature review explains as a result of citizens living for longer they will be in receipt of their pensions for more years than previous generations. The author wishes to establish: Does the article discuss the issue of longevity? The categories used are Yes or No. Again this is

an important category, if citizens do not understand that they will be relying on their pension for more years than previous generations.

- Ageing workforce: the literature review is extensive in its general consensus that the ageing workforce is a significant factor in the future viability of pensions. It is an important factor in analysis if existing models will be sustainable in the future. The author wishes to establish does the article discuss the issue of an ageing workforce? The categories used are Yes or No.

- Solution: general consensus from academic researchers is that solutions need to be generated to address the various pension related issues. It is important that the author ascertains if potential solutions are being discussed in the public press. The author wishes to establish does the article discuss the issue of pension solutions? The categories used are Yes or No.

- Role of Government: this is a very important category. The role of the government cannot be underestimated in address the pension issues. It is important that the author ascertains if the role of the government is being discussed in the public press. The author wishes to establish does the article discuss the issue of the role of the government? The categories used are Yes or No.

Each article will be coded manually coded for:

Category	Data
Newspaper	Name of Newspaper
Article Title	Name of Article
Year	Year article was wrote
Month	Month article was wrote
Industry type	Does the article refer to a particular industry (a pre-define list will be created)
Sector	Does it relate to public sector, private sector or both?
Type of pension scheme	Is it defined contribution, private defined benefit, public sector defined benefit scheme or the state based pension (old age pension)?
Gender	Does it refer to any differences to male or females?
Portrayal of Pensions	Is the article portraying pensions in a positive, negative or neutral manner?
Funding of Pensions	Do articles clarify if the pension scheme is underfunded?
Future Funding	Do articles state the impending future issues regarding the future funding of

of Pensions	pensions schemes?
Longevity	Do articles discuss the issues regarding longevity and the funding of pension schemes?
Ageing Populations	Do articles discuss the issues regarding ageing populations and the funding of pension schemes?
Solution	Do articles suggest a solution or reform to address the future funding of pension schemes?
Role of Government	Do articles emphasize the increasing role of Governments in the future funding of pensions?

All articles were summarized on a Microsoft Excel sheet; each article had a separate row and columns for each coding category. The second part will involve each article been quantitatively coded and using nominal data for each category.

The rationale of identifying a category is to enable a classification of data on the basis of selected concepts. This required the author to develop a coding scheme and coding text from the chosen sample of newspaper articles. After the coding stage was completed, items placed in each category were scaled, where upon counts in frequency or intensity are made.

The author tackled reliability in two ways. Firstly, categories are developed after thorough reading of all relevant articles. The author will then re-classify all articles to ensure they were classified in a regular and accurate manner. Secondly, a second person will be asked to code all articles to ensure accuracy; this will reduce the scope for bias and erroneous coding. Analysis will be carried out using MS Excel.

As Berelson (1971) concluded, a category is valid when two independent measures of the same phenomenon yield the similar results. Reliability is achieved when the categories are assembled, the same research process will yield the same results within stated confidence limits Berelson (1971).

As Berelson (1971) concluded, the categories must be designed to fit the research topic. This is why the author identified the key areas from the literature review and then asked questions that would reveal if and how the key areas were being portrayed in the public press. By quantitatively coding using nominal data, this information is interpreted through the lens of pensions. This will enable the author to measure the intensity and frequency of occurrence of variables represented by each

category. By employing content analysis, it enables categories to be evaluated in terms of validity, reliability and objectivity. The integrity of content analysis stands or falls by its categories. The formulation and the definition of appropriate categories take central importance. Since the categories contain the substance of the investigation, a content analysis can be no better than its system of categories (Berelson, 1971). After categories were identified, a codebook using Microsoft Excel was created which contains variable definitions and keywords that measure those variables. Please see appendix 12.1 for a snap shot of the completed codebook.

The content analysis methodology employed by the author contained the following steps as concluded by Krippendorff (1980), Miles & Huberman (1994), Neundorf (2002), Weber (1990). These are:

- The identification of categories of interest evidenced in data based on the literature review.
- Formal coding of data based on a codebook, thereby ensuring consistent application of the coding scheme.
- The use of computerised packages, MS Excel is used.

7.8 Data Analysis and Data Collection

The quantitative analysis enabled the author to analyse and synopsise the trends in the data. The quantitative analysis involved the use of assessing frequencies and trend analysis. The author will examine how pensions are treated i.e.(Positively, negatively or neutral). The author will draw conclusions to see if there is an equitable distribution amongst the varied categories as outlined above. The author's overall aim is to understand the pensions phenomenon better by "grouping and then conceptualising objects that have similar characteristics" (Patton and Johns, 2007).

The data collection method for the purpose of this research will be in the form asking the questions as outlined in section 7.7.2 of each newspaper articles and typing the answer into an excel sheet which forms a codebook (please see appendix 12.1).

7.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is the "study of the right behaviour and addresses the question of how to conduct research in a moral and responsible way" Blumberg et al, 2008). The author's intention was to carry out this research in a moral, responsible and ethical manner. The author will ensured that all data is interpreted and presented correctly. The authors aim is to conform to the ethical obligation towards my research fellows and the overall research community, this means ensuring people are not misled

by my results and findings, being open and honest about the limitations of my research (Blumberg et al, 2008).

7.10   Limitations

The author had envisaged using newspaper articles from both Ireland and England. This was not possible as when a search was carried out over too many articles were retrieved. This would be a possibility if this were a PHD study.

8   CHAPTER FOUR - RESEARCH FINDINGS

8.1   Introduction

This chapter will provide results and help us deepen our understanding of the pensions phenomenon by understanding the research question: How Pensions are portrayed in the Irish Public Press? The data analysis was carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Methodology chapter. The author will gauge how pensions are portrayed in the public press, is it in a positive, negative or neutral manner. The quantitative study illustrates a summary of the major trends in how pensions are portrayed in relation to the five key areas as outlined in the literature review and research aims. The five areas are:

- Ageing workforce

- Longevity

- Role of Government

- Pension Funding

- Pension Solution

The author will examine each of the five areas in relation to articles related to the public sector only, articles related to the private sector only and those articles that made reference to both the public and private sectors in the specific articles. The reason for this is as the author analysed the various articles for the literature review, it became apparent that there are different and similar issues and challenges facing the public and private sector which need further exploration.

8.2   Findings

8.2.1   Portrayal of Pensions

A cornerstone part of the analysis involved, understanding how pensions are portrayed in the Irish Public Press is to ascertain for each article if pensions were treated in a positive, negative or neutral manner.

How are pensions portrayed in the Irish Public Press from 1993 – 2013?
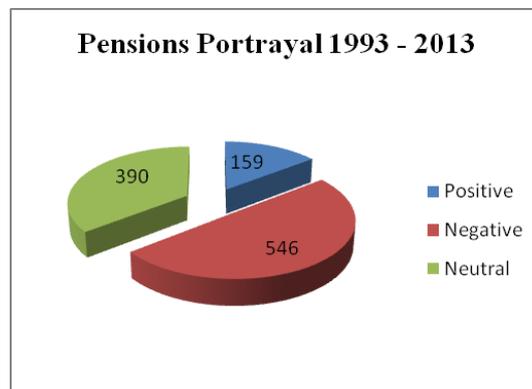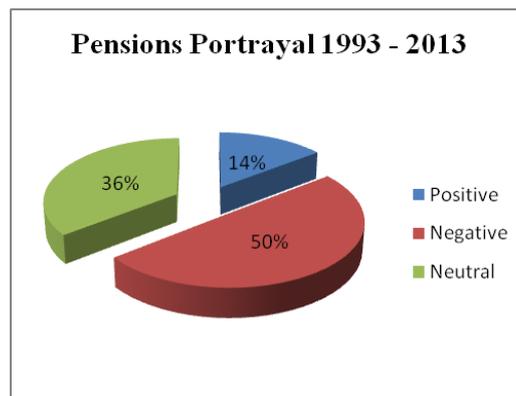
Overall pensions are predominately portrayed in a negative manner. As the above pie charts illustrate, 50% of all articles are portrayed in a negative manner in comparison with a 14% positive portrayal. 36% of articles are portrayed in a neutral manner.

The author then examined how the newspapers were portrayed by sector? To determine this, for each article the author determined if pensions referenced by public sector only, the private sector only or did the articles relate to both.

How are Articles Portrayed by Sector?
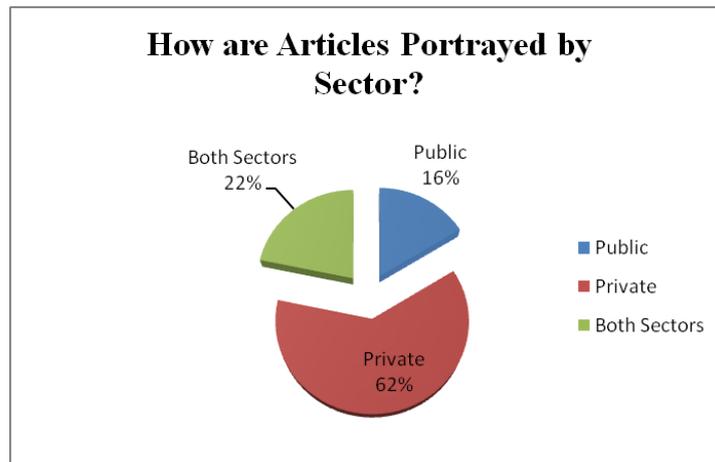
Overall the overall majority of newspapers coverage relate to the private sector. A small minority of 16% relate to the public sector. This finding is surprising, the issues facing the Irish pensions system are of equal value to both sectors as the pension systems affects every Irish citizen. The above chart would suggest that the higher portrayal of private sector articles would indicate that this is predominantly a private sector issue.

For the proposer of this research, a content analysis of 1095 articles which discussed pensions was carried out. The author examined which of the five areas were discussed most frequently in the newspaper articles.

| Key Area	Number of Newspaper Articles
Ageing workforce	104
Longevity	81
Role of Government	417
Pension Funding	291
Pension Solution	290
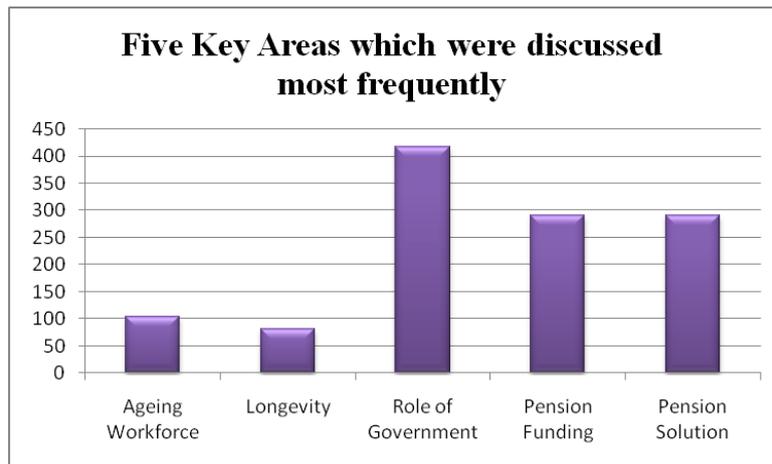
As the above table and chart illustrates, the role of the Government is the key area which was discussed and referenced the most. This was followed by Pension Funding and then Pension Solution. Longevity was the area that was discussed the most which was followed by ageing workforce in second place.

The author then analysed the articles in relation to each of the five key areas.

8.2.2 Ageing workforce

As the literature review illustrates a large proportion of academic articles support the viewpoint that the ageing workforce will have significant impact on the Irish pensions system. For each article, the author verified if the Ageing factor was discussed in the article, the answer was Yes or No.

Does the Articles discuss the ageing workforce?

9%

91%

■ Yes
■ No
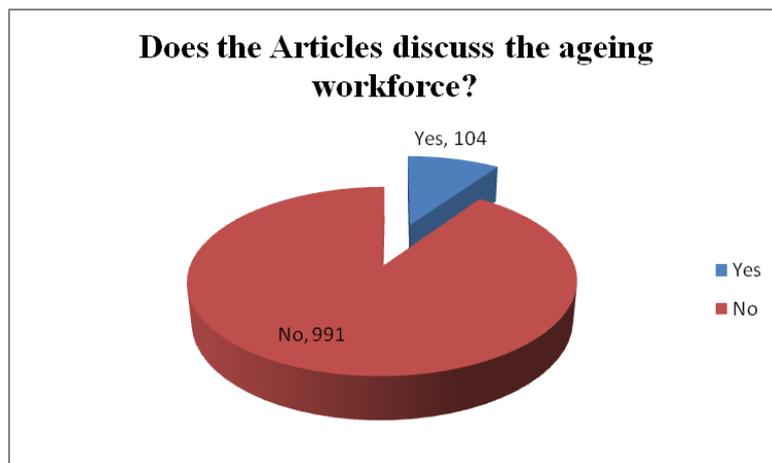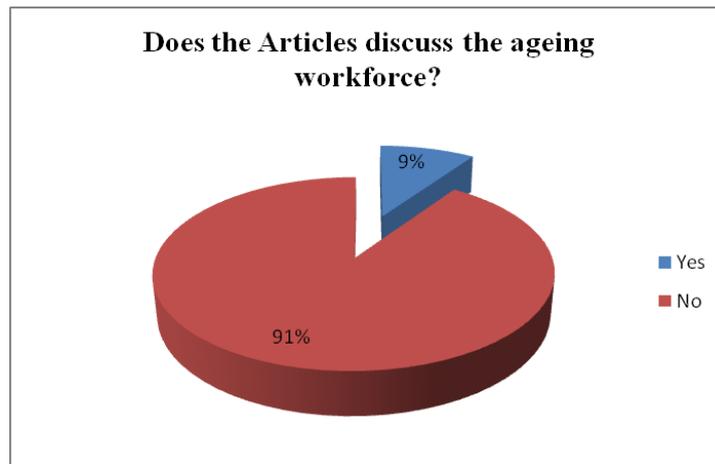
The results here were very surprising; only 9% of articles discussed the ageing workforce factor and its affect on the Pensions system. Ageing workforce is one of the most important catalysts contributing to the viability of pension schemes; this is not being illustrated in the Irish public press. The author wished to examine this further to understand what sectors the 9% related to.

How are Articles Portrayed by Public Sector in relation to Ageism?

Does the Articles relating to the Public Sector discuss the affects of the Ageing Workforce?

Yes, 9

No, 169

■ Yes
■ No

Does the Articles relating to the Public Sector discuss the affects of the Ageing Workforce?

Yes
5%

No
95%

■ Yes
■ No
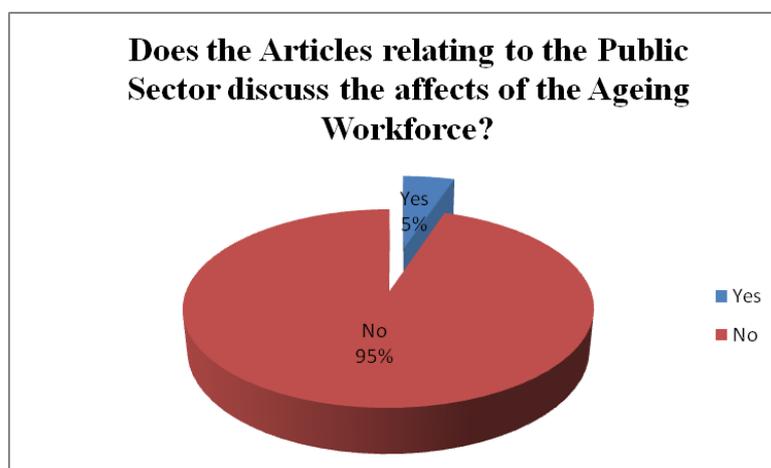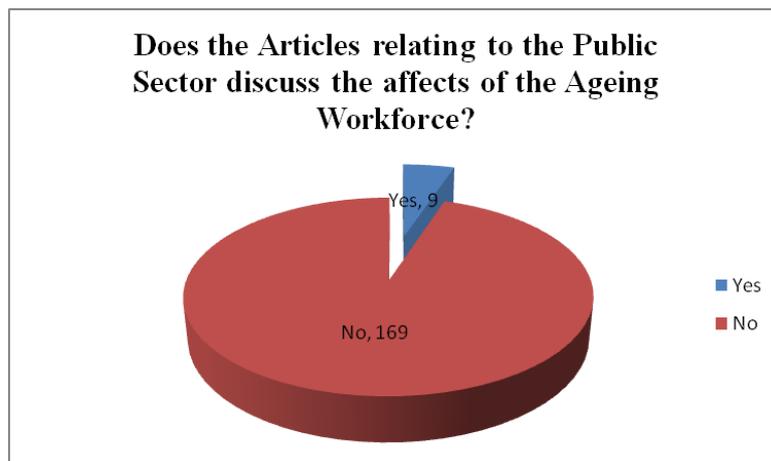
Again the findings here were surprising, only 5% of all public sector newspaper articles discussed the issue of ageing workforce even though it is an enormous challenge in maintaining the existing Pay As You Go Defined Benefit Public Sector pensions.

How are Articles Portrayed by Private Sector in relation to Ageism?

The author carried out a similar analysis for the private sector related newspaper articles in terms of their ageing workforce portrayal.
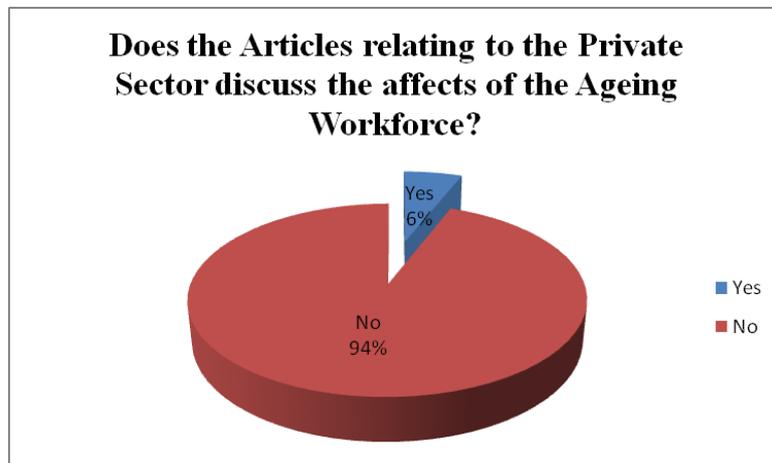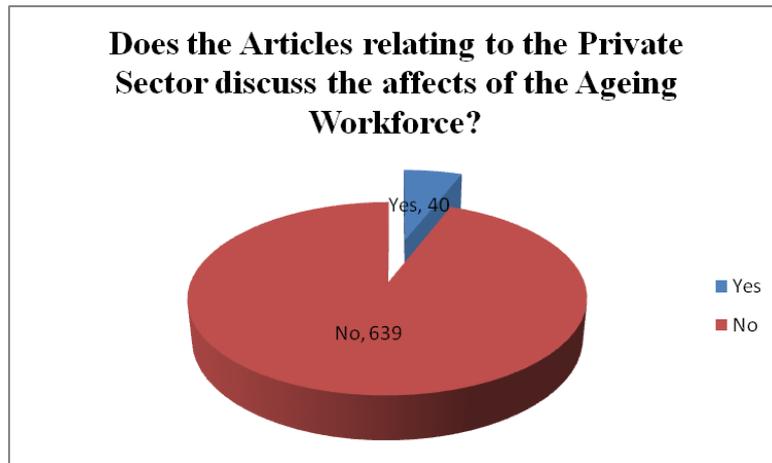
Again these results were surprising, only 6% of articles discussed the ageing workforce factor. Like the public sector results, this is surprising. The pensions literature has produced and continues to produce volumes of articles stating that ageing workforce is the main catalyst contributing to the pensions time bomb but the newspaper articles are surprising low in their coverage and portrayal of the ageing workforce factor.

8.2.3   Longevity

Like the ageing workforce, longevity is portrayed in the literature as another key factor that is contributing to the issues relating to the Irish pensions system. The author would expect that there would be a significant amount of newspaper coverage regarding longevity. For each article, the author verified if the longevity factor was discussed in the article, the answer was Yes or No.

Does the Articles discuss the affects of Longevity?

Yes, 80

No, 1015

- Yes
- No

Does the Articles discuss the affects of Longevity?

7%

93%

- Yes
- No
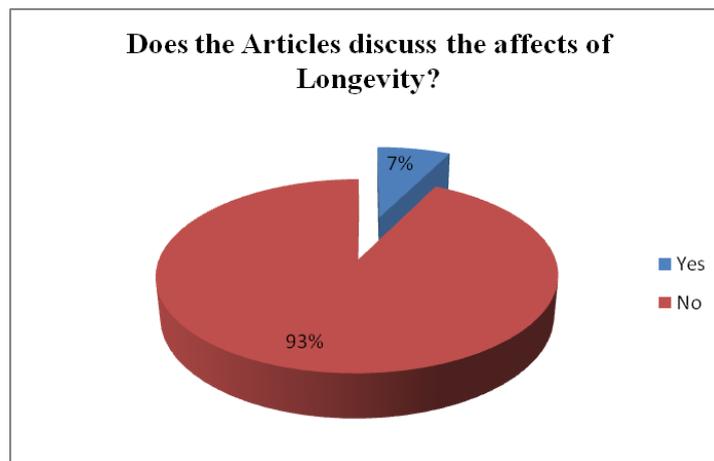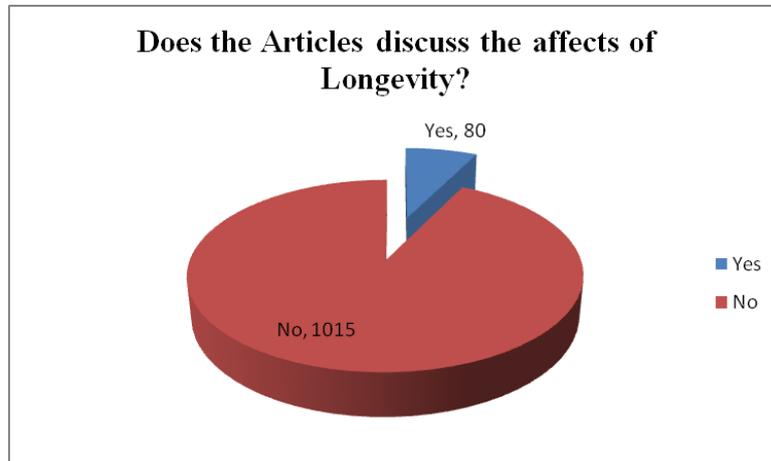
Only 7% of articles discussed the longevity factor. Like ageing workforce, academic authors and trade publication reports strongly argue that the issue of longevity is a key catalyst contributing to the pension time bomb. Because of the very strong general consensus from the literature review of the significant relationship between longevity and its affect on the Irish pensions system, the author would have expected more coverage to have appeared in the Irish public press, one would have expected a higher percentage than 7%.

The author wished to examine this further to understand what sectors the 7% related to. In relation to the public sector, 6% of articles discussed the longevity issue as illustrated below. Again this is surprising, the fundamental issue facing public sector pensions is the ongoing sustainability of the existing pensions Pay As You Go model. Longevity means that retirees will be drawing their pensions for many more years than previous generations. The Pay As You Go Model is much more expensive, as already explained it is a defined benefit based scheme that tends to be index linked to existing rates of salary for existing workers. Yet only 6% of articles are discussing the affects of longevity.

How are Articles portrayed in the Public Sector by Longevity?
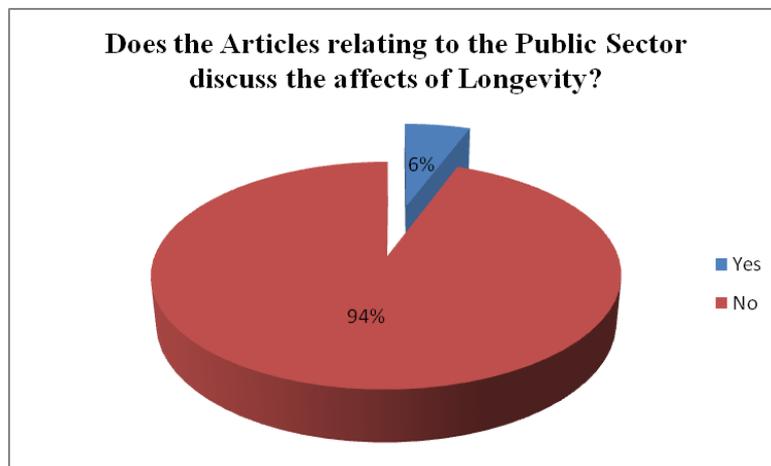
**How are Articles portrayed in the Private Sector by Longevity?**
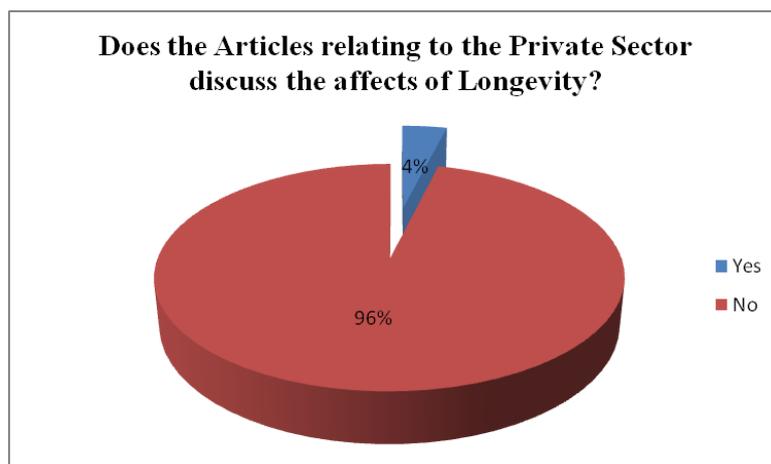
The private sector finding of 4% is interesting for two reasons. Firstly for those who are entered into a defined contribution scheme their standard of living has dramatically reduced as this type of scheme will not guarantee a fixed amount. As already explained throughout the literature review,

longevity will result in retirees drawing from their pension scheme for longer so the annual amount will be decreased in comparison with previous generations who have a shorter length of life post retirement years. Secondly in relation to private sector workers that are involved in defined benefit schemes, there are huge risks to the financial viability of these schemes as a large proportion is currently underfunded. This alone, plus the affect that retirees will draw from their defined benefit pension scheme for longer would lead this author to expect that there would be more than 6% of coverage of this in newspaper articles.

8.2.4   Role of Government

For each article, the author verified if the role of government factor was discussed in the article, the answer was Yes or No.

As the literature review illustrates when the issue of the pensions phenomenon is discussed, the role of the government is discussed at length. As a result the author would expect that the coverage of newspaper articles would be well presented. As the below chart indicates 38% of articles discussed the role of the Irish Government in relation to the fundamental research question of this paper How are Pensions Portrayed in the Irish Public Press?

**Does the Articles discuss the Role of the Government?**
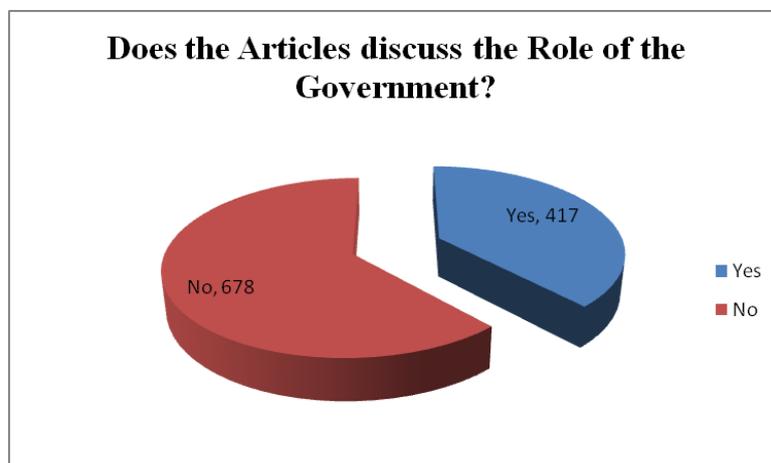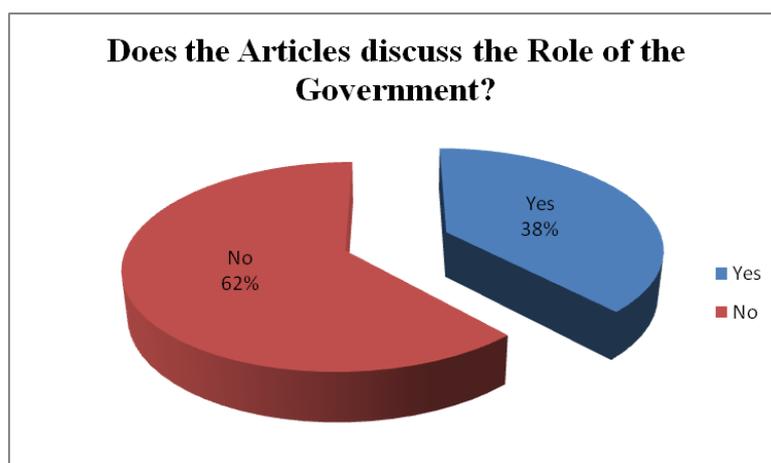
This percentage correlates with the general opinion and consensus of the literature review. A large amount of the literature discusses the role of the Irish Government. This finding was expected as Ireland belongs to the Anglo Saxon Model; this model places the responsibility for all financial benefits belong to a single government department. Throughout the literature review, the role of the Government is discussed in detail. The author would expect the role of the Government to feature prominently.

As the above charts illustrate, 38% of articles discuss the role of the government in relation to the pensions system. Over one in three articles discussed the role of the Government. This is a significant increase to the number of articles discussing the role of the government in comparison with how ageing workforce and Longevity were discussed.

How are Articles portrayed in the public sector in relation to the Role of the Government?

The author further analysed the role of the Government in relation to the different sectors. In relation to the newspaper articles that related to the public sector specifically, 43% of these articles discussed the role of the Government. This is illustrated below.
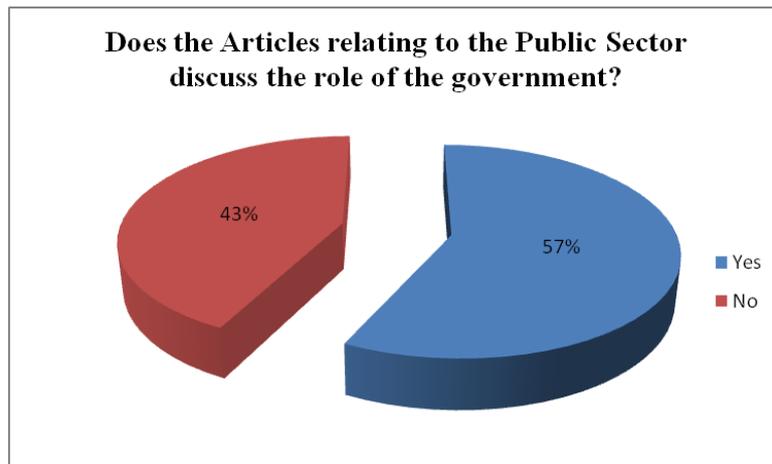
Does the Articles relating to the Public Sector discuss the role of the government?

43%

57%

■ Yes
■ No

How are Articles portrayed in the private sector in relation to the Role of the Government?

The author further analysed the role of the Government in relation to those articles that relate to the private sector specifically. Only 4% of articles discussed the role of the Government as illustrated in the below chart. This is a significant difference between the 43% relating to the public sector.

Does the Articles relating to the Private Sector discuss the role of the government?

4%

96%

■ Yes
■ No
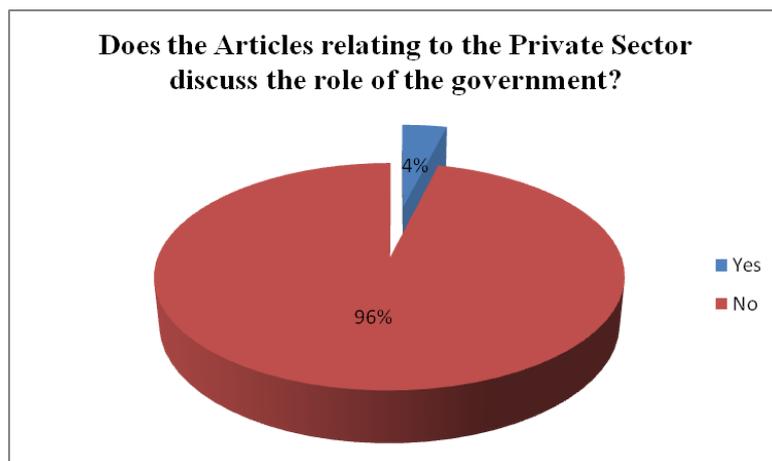
8.2.5   Pensions Solution

The Academic articles, various Governments based produced reports and trade publications have produced various solutions with the aim of addressing the challenges of the Irish Pensions system. The combined literature shares the common denominator view that the existing pension system is faced with a series of challenges which needs solutions. As a result, the author would expect newspaper articles to have a significant coverage of newspaper articles regarding pension solutions.

Does the Articles discuss the a Solution to the Pensions debate?

Yes, 290

No, 805

■ Yes
■ No

Does the Articles discuss the a Solution to the Pensions debate?

Yes
26%

No
74%

■ Yes
■ No
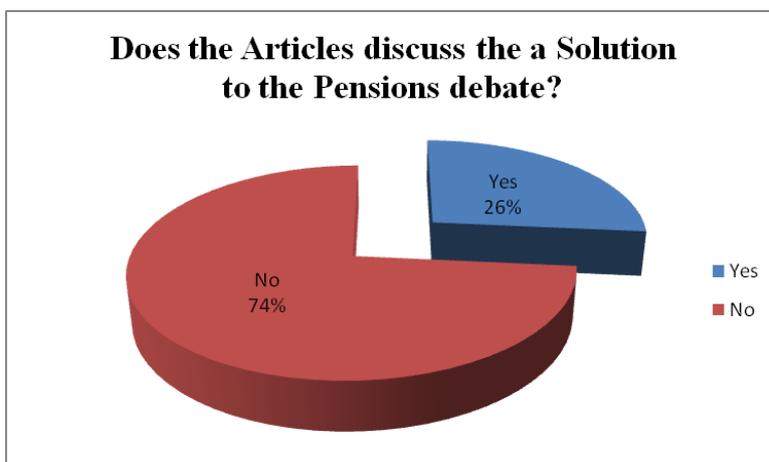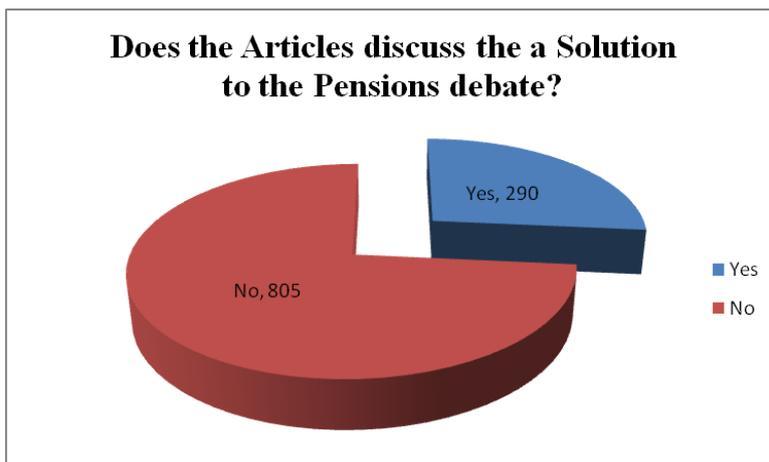
As the above chart illustrates, 26% of articles discussed potential solutions to the Irish pensions system. A quarter of all articles discussed the potential solutions to the pensions system. The author further investigated how the 26% related to each sector.

How are Articles portrayed in the public sector in relation to Pensions Solution?
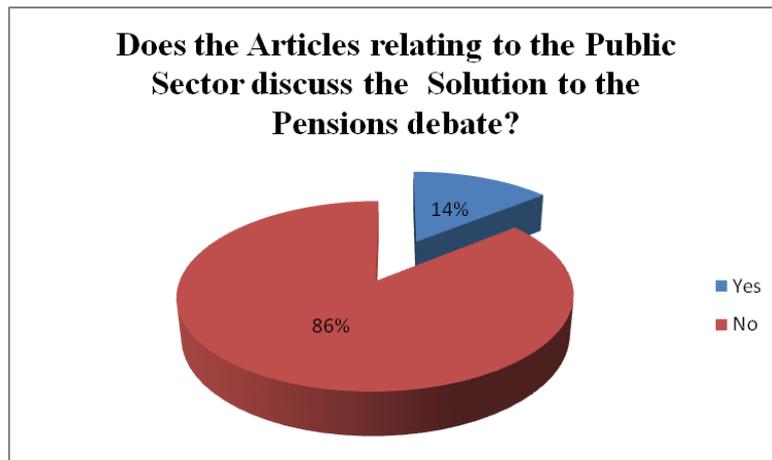
As the above chart illustrates, 14% of all articles regarding the public sector discussed the key area of the solution to the pensions debate.

How are Articles portrayed in the private sector in relation to Pensions Solution?

In relation to the private sector, 25% of all private sector articles discussed the key area of the solution as illustrated below.
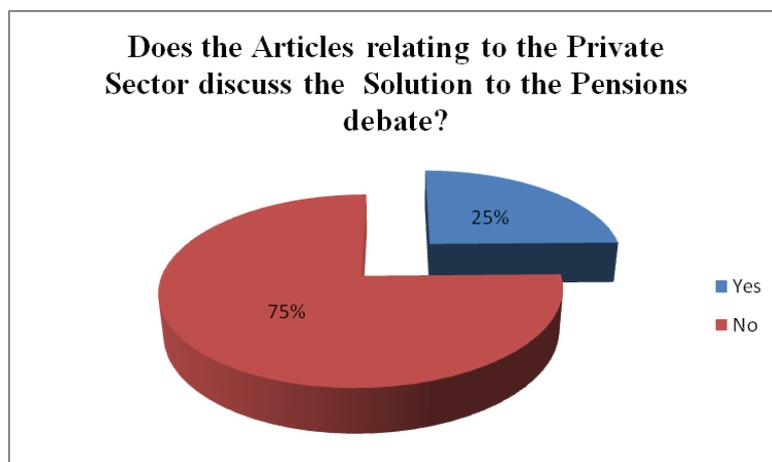
The author examined the articles that referenced both the public and private sector; this yielded the following result as illustrated below. 41% of articles discussed the solutions to the pensions debate.

How are Articles portrayed in both sectors in relation to Pensions Solution?

Does the Articles that discusses both the Public and Private Sector discuss the Solution to the Pensions debate?
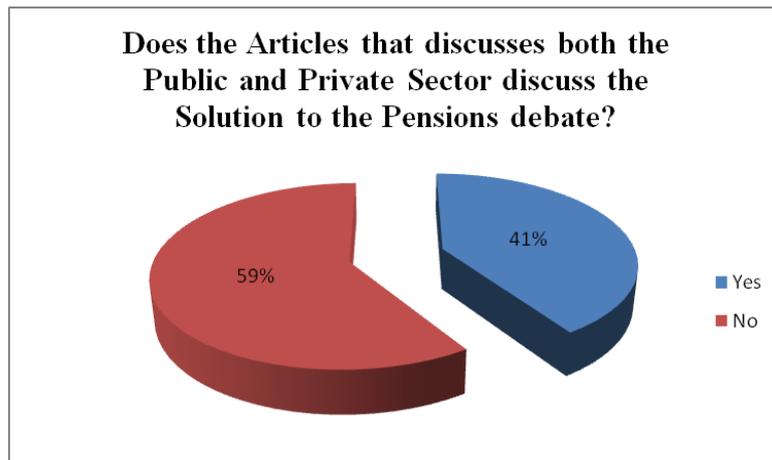
In summary the findings relating to the solutions to the pensions debate are significant. 25% of articles relating to the private sector, 41% relating to both sectors and 14% relating to the public sector. On paper this would suggest, that the private sector face more of a challenge in relation to finding a solution to their pension issues than the public sector.

8.2.6 Funding of Pensions

In relation to the discussions regarding the funding of pension schemes, the academic articles, various Governments based produced reports and trade publication all share the viewpoint that this is catastrophic concern regarding the future viability of the Irish pension system. This is the main reason why the author would expect a significant portrayal of newspaper articles reported to discuss the funding of pensions.

Does the Articles discuss Pension Fundings?
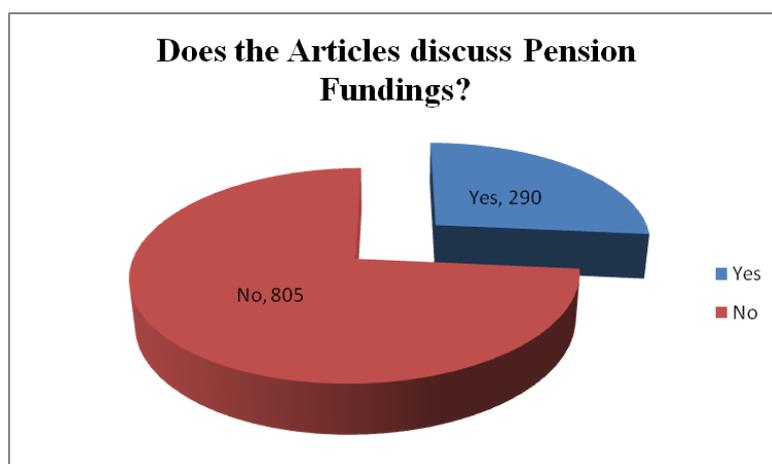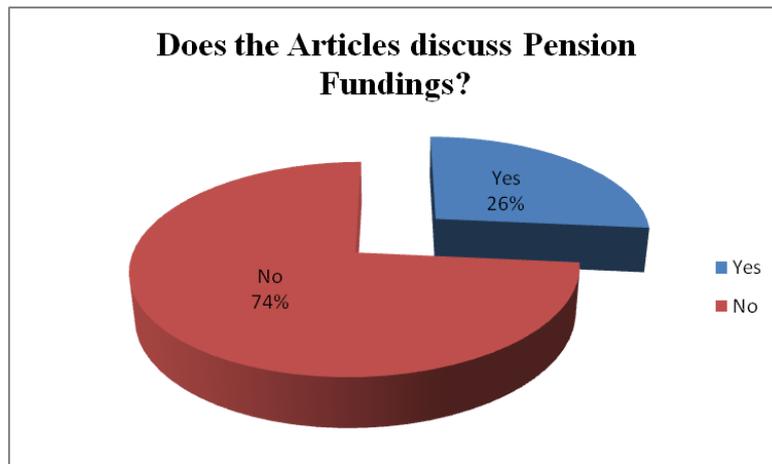
The charts indicate that 26% of all articles discuss the funding of pension, one in four of all newspaper articles produced discuss the funding of pensions. The author then examined the breakdown of this 26% by sector.

How are Articles portrayed in the public sector in relation to the funding of pensions?

In the public sector, 34% of all articles discussed the funding requirements. This is significant; a third of all public sector articles discussed the funding of their Pay As You Go pension system.
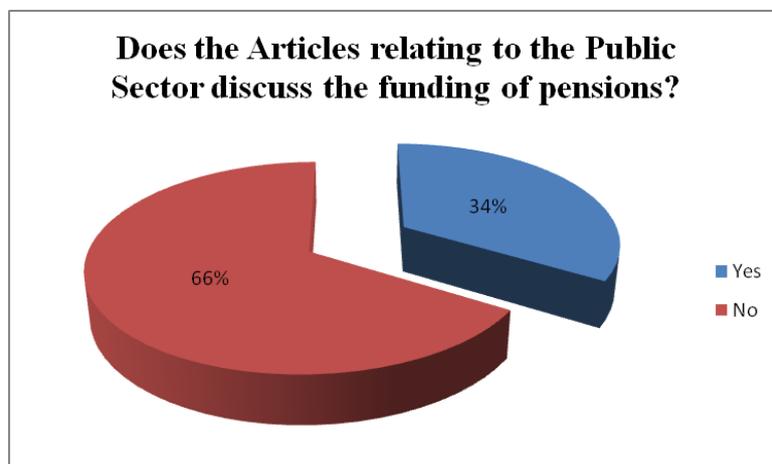
How are Articles portrayed in the private sector in relation to the funding of pensions?

In relation to the articles relating to the private sector, 22% of articles discussed the funding of pensions scheme.

Does the Articles relating to the Private Sector discuss the funding of pensions?

22% Yes
78% No
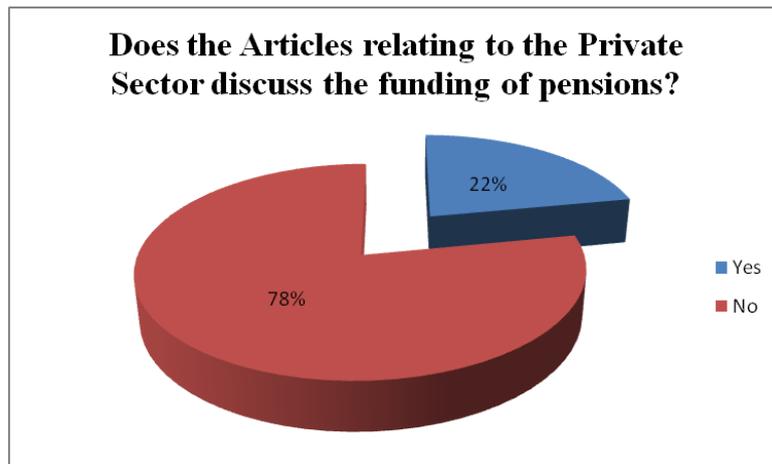
When the author examined does that discuss both the public and private sector discuss the funding of pensions, the findings are significant. On average one in three articles 34%, discuss the funding of pensions as illustrated below.

Does the Articles that discusses both the Public and Private Sector discuss the funding of pensions?

34% Yes
66% No
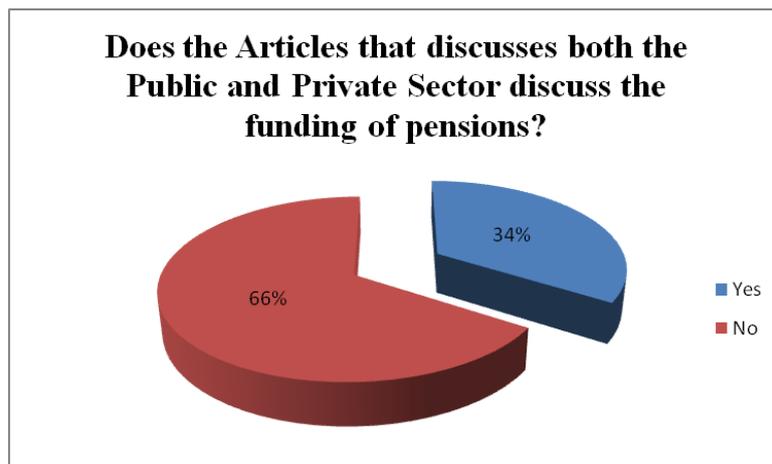
8.3   Findings Summary

The key findings of this research and to answer the main research questions; pensions are predominantly portrayed in a negative manner, 50% of all articles are viewed negatively. 62% of all articles relate to the private sector specifically in comparison with 16% of public sector articles.

In relation to the five key areas the role of the Government is the most reported area. The Public Press discusses the role of the Government on a larger scale in comparison to the four other areas. This is logical as because of the Anglo Saxon Model that Ireland operates, the Irish Government are the main party involved in designing and implementing pension policy. The key area of the role of

the Government will form the consequences as to what happens to the four key areas; ageing workforce, longevity, pension funding and pension solutions.

From reading the literature review, the five key areas of ageing workforce, longevity, pensions funding, pension solutions and the role of the government emerged. By analysing the trends and the amount of articles that reported each area, the author has derived the important viewpoint that the role of the government is the pivotal key area that will address the pensions system. The actions of the government will determine what happens with the four other key areas of ageing workforce, longevity, pensions funding and pension solutions. This explains why the public press is more likely to report pensions in terms of the role of the Government than the other four areas.

The findings would also indicate that the pensions solutions and funding requirements are as a result of the ageing workforce and longevity. This would explain why ageing workforce and longevity are not reported as widely as the other key areas; they are the cause and not the affect.

9   CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

9.1   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss how the findings relate to the main points raised in the literature review. The author will highlight the important aspects of the findings and how it relates with the research question and objectives. The author will also discuss the limitations of this research taking into account the methodological approach used.

9.2   Portrayal of Pensions

For pensions, one would expect that the portrayal would be negative and simplified (Patton & Johns, 2007) and this was the case. Given that newspapers have a preference for negative stories (Fowler, 1991) journalists are more likely to centre on the negative effect of pensions than any positive characteristics. Pensions were predominantly portrayed in a negative manner. Half of all articles, 50% portrayed pensions in a negative manner. This was expected as the literature review is extensive in its coverage in explaining the enormous difficulties facing the pensions systems. Many newspaper articles used the words "crisis" and "time bomb" when discussing the pensions systems. The five areas under research were also predominantly discussed in a negative manner.

9.3   Ageing Workforce

Bijak et.al (2008) are of the viewpoint that the ageing process will become the overwhelming phenomenon all over Europe". The authors accurately summarised that the most challenging issue facing the pensions system is a future workforce that is reducing which will be required to support an increasing number of retirees. To provide some numbers behind the viewpoinrt ofBijak et.al (2008), the Government commissioned the KPMG report of 2010 stated that the pensioner support ratio is forecasted to decrease from 5.3 workers for every individual over 65 in 2010 to 3.9 workers by 2020 and to 2.1 workers by 2060.

The ageing workforce is a global issue and challenge that the global economy has to contend with, however it is a problem that Europe is already facing. As Cowell (2004) articulated that the demographic shift is the "time bomb threatening European pension system".

The Europe 2020 Strategy Report explained that Europe's population will begin to shrink from 2013 onwards, this means that Europe must content with a reducing workforce, an increased number of retired citizens thus meaning additional financial pressures on governmental finances and welfare systems.

As Turner (2004) accurately explained that in order to afford continued, guaranteed pensions, people will have to save more, pay higher taxes and work longer. Against this literature review backdrop the author would have suspected a significant amount of articles that would discussed the impact of the ageing workforce process on the Irish Pensions System. This was not the case. As the findings illustrated only 9% of articles discussed the ageing workforce process. The Public Press acts as an important medium to inform citizens about an array of topics.

In an Irish Times article reported in 1995, author Jill Kerby explained that a major discussion was occurring regarding the state of Ireland's pension provision. Ms Kerby went on to describe Ireland state's provision as a "ticking time bomb", a view shared by Cowell (2004). Ms. Kerby explained that the pension system is only successful when there are enough working tax payers to support those that are not working. She described this as being the "root of the pensions problem".

Both academic articles and newspaper articles agree that the ageing process is a significant problem to the provisions of the pension systems. There is a difference though in the reporting of this. Within the academic literature there is an overwhelming body of articles stating this. There does not appear to be this overwhelming body of information in relation to ageing workforce appearing in the popular press. The findings of 9% are middling. This author would argue that the role of the Public Press is to inform its public. The articles that were reviewed were very accurate in their portrayal. Many articles such as Ms. Kerby's clearly articulated the issue ageing workforce has on the pensions system.

When the author further analysed the ageing workforce issue against sector, interesting results were found. 9% of all public sector articles discussed the affects of an ageing workforce. The issue of an ageing workforce is the main issue concerning the future funding of public sector Pay As You Go System pensions. Keyfitz (1985) explained how Pay As You Go System pensions are very dependent and interlinked with any changes in demographic changes. If the working population reduces, it poses fundamental questions whether these pensions can be financed. The author would have expected this finding to be more significant as an ageing workforce is the single most important factor that will impact the future viability of public sector pensions. The affects of the ageing

workforce will also have consequences for the intergenerational conflict. Lodge and Hood, (2012) described the intergenerational conflict as a result of the pressure placed on a reduced workforce to finance the pay as you go pension systems.

The results regarding the discussion of an ageing workforce for private sector newspaper articles were also interesting, only 6% of private sector related newspaper articles discussed the ageing workforce issue. The newspaper articles stated that the main reason defined benefit schemes were closing were for two reasons. Firstly there were being replaced with the defined contribution schemes that removed the sole financial burden from the employer. Secondly newspapers reported that as the workforce to pensioners is decreasing in the coming years, this would place pressures on the funding of defined benefit schemes. These newspaper articles provide a direct correlation between the affects of an ageing workforce and the closure of defined benefit schemes. Although some newspaper articles reported this, this author would have expected that more private sector articles would have discussed the ageing workforce issue.

9.4   Longevity

Longevity is a major concern for the future viability of the pension system as citizens are living longer. McCarthy (2013) and Hills (2007) share the accurate viewpoint that increasing longevity has severe repercussions for the funding requirements of retired workers and their pension schemes. In 2007 a Sunday Business Post newspaper article entitled "Cracks emerge in Pension Policy", the author explains that longevity issue alone is a significant reason why employers are no longer implementing defined benefit schemes as they are too costly due to citizens living longer in their retirement years. The longevity risk is placing, more demands on pension funds (Antolin, 2007). Antolin (2007) further espouses that increasing longevity means that retirees may have to adapt their standard of living as there is the potential risk that individuals may outlive their resources. The literature review is overwhelming in its support that longevity is a serious catalyst of the pension time bomb.

Only 7% of all newspaper articles discussed the longevity issue, this is surprising. The articles that did discuss the longevity issue clearly articulated the viewpoint that longevity has huge issues with the future funding of pensions.

In the Irish Independent article reported in February 2009, entitled "Public Pensions the Sticking Point", the author clearly articulates the issue that longevity is having on the future funding on public sector pensions. The article explained:

"By 2060, the average life expectancy for men will be 87 years, and for women 91 years, which means the State will be paying pensions for longer. The Government's Green Paper on pensions says this represents an "excessive future risk to the Exchequer".

It can be concluded that longevity is a serious cause of the pensions issues in both the private and publics sector and illustrated above. Longevity has such a catastrophic influence on the future funding of pensions that the author would have expected it to be more widely reported that 7% of all newspaper articles.

From reading the vast amount of newspaper articles and reviewing the findings of this research, author has concluded that the findings would also indicate that the pensions solutions and funding requirements are as a result of the ageing workforce and longevity. This would explain why ageing workforce and longevity are not reported as widely as the other key areas; they are the cause and not the affect.

9.5   Role of Government

The literature review and the findings clearly detail the prominent role that the Irish Government plays in addressing the Irish pensions system. This explains why 38% of all articles discussed the role of the Government in the newspaper articles. This is the main key area that was discussed in all newspaper articles. The literature review produced a vast array of articles regarding the role of the Government in relation to the Irish pensions system. The author expected the role of the Government to feature extensively in the newspaper articles.

The literature review and findings identify the following areas that must be discussed in relation to the role of the Government:

- As clearly articulated by (De Deken 2007, Gora and Palmer 2004), the role of the Government will come under pressure in future years as they will have to address the socially adequacy of pension systems. The financial pressure of servicing existing public sector pension arrangements will place huge pressures on the state's finances. Lodge and Hood (2012) support the viewpoint that the government will come under pressure to explain why existing and retired private sector workers will have to pay for the more generous defined benefit pension schemes of public sector

workers. Many private sector pensions are not indexed linked unlike the public sector workers. As the author read the newspaper articles a number of articles explained the point that public sector pensions are more generous than private sector pensions.

In February 2009, the Irish Independent published an article called "Public pensions - the sticking point". This article correlated with the viewpoints of De Deken (2007) and Gora & Palmer (2004). The newspaper article explained that all public sector workers can receive 50% of their final income and a tax free lump sum. The pension payment amount is linked to the pay scale of the pensioner's former job position. As a result, when public sector workers are awarded pay increases, retired public sector workers will receive an increase in their pension payment. Workers in the private sector who are part of the defined contribution scheme, will receive none of these benefits, their pension payments will be much less generous.

- The government will be tasked with addressing the issue of the underfunding of defined benefit schemes in the private sector (Cotter, Blake and Dowd, 2012). This issue was also highlighted in various newspaper articles. This view was compounded in the newspaper articles that were part of this research process. In 2011, the Irish Examiner published an article called "75% of defined benefit pensions in deficit". In this article, it explained that 47% of all defined benefit schemes did not comply with the Pensions Board funding standards.

- The literature review and findings are united in their view that a large part of the role of the government will be to meet the funding requirements of the public sector Pay As You Go pensions. The sustainability of this pension model will face significant challenges. The Comptroller and Auditor General Report on Public Service Pensions 2009 estimated that accrued value of the public service pension liabilities at 31 December 2008 was estimated at approximately €108.4 billion before deduction of assets held within funded pension schemes. This report also made the concluded that there were significant questions regarding the true financial costs of the public sector pensions as it raised queries regarding the existing accounting reporting mechanism used by the Government.

- The future viability of the State Pension will also be challenged. The KPMG report of 2010 explicitly states that pension related costs is forecasted to rise from 57% in 2011 to 85% in 2066. The Social Insurance fund administers all state pension payments and all other social welfare payments. Again this poses significant challenges for the government. The pensioner support ratio will from 5.3 workers in 2010 to 2.1 workers in 2060. This is a huge concern, as a newspaper article in the Irish Examiner in 2012 entitled "Almost half relying on state pension"

reported that 47% of the population will be entirely dependent on the state pension as the only source of income in retirement years.

- According to Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012) there are concerns that defined contribution schemes will not yield enough resources for retirees to sustain their standard of living in the retirement years. Again this viewpoint appeared in newspapers where they raised concerns whether defined contribution schemes could yield significant enough financial rewards.

9.6 Pensions Solution

Authors such as (Winklemann, 2011; Lodge and Hood, 2012; McCarthy 2009; Glennerster, 2010 and Cowell 2004) have used the words ticking time bomb to describe the Irish Pensions system. From the overwhelming support in the literature review, the author would expect a significant amount of newspaper articles to discuss potential solutions to the crisis.

The findings revealed that 26% of all articles discussed potential solutions to the pensions issues. In relation to private sector pensions 25% of all articles relating to the private sector discussed a solution. One would expect this as a significant concern is the number of workers who are not paying into a pension. A number of newspaper articles recommended that a mandatory pension scheme was introduced for all. This compounds the information discussed in the literature review. The 2013 OECD Report which reviewed Ireland's pensions systems highlighted that Ireland and New Zealand are the only OECD countries which do not have a mandatory pension scheme to compliment the State pensions. Without the introduction of paying into a mandatory pension, pensioners will be faced with diminishing standard of living levels in their retirement years. As already stated, 47% of all workers will solely rely on the state pension. Only 14% of articles related to the public sector discussed the pensions solutions. This is logical as existing public sector pensions have no concerns regarding their pension provisions. The challenge will come when existing public sector workers retire and the workforce ageing profile has changed. This is when huge pressures will be placed on the state finances.

9.7 Funding of Pensions

The literature review, findings and newspaper articles convey a very bleak future regarding the funding of all types of pensions schemes. As already discussed there are enormous challenges regarding the deficit if defined benefit schemes, the viability of the state pension and the sustainability of index linked Pay As You Go public pensions schemes. Many distinguished authors

such as Cotter, Blake and Dowd (2012), Winklemann, (2011), Lodge and Hood (2012), McCarthy (2009) and Glennerster, (2010) have all discussed the challenges of funding the different type of schemes. There is one particular newspaper article published by the Irish Independent in 2010 that properly articulates the gravity and scale of the seriousness of the future viability of all the different type of pension schemes. The article is entitled "Pension tax bill will be double the cost of NAMA". This newspaper article explains that the cost of public pensions is set to be more than twice the €40 billion cost to the State of toxic loans agency NAMA. In this article the Professional Insurance Brokers Association, said the Government must ensure that they are fully informed of the estimated €116 billion cost over the next sixty years to service public sector and state pensions in their current format. This newspaper article helps provide support to the findings in relation to the key area of pensions funding. 26% of all articles discussed pension funding. Interesting this increased for public sector related articles, this increased to 34% and for private sector workers was 22%.

9.8   Discussion Summary

From reading the vast amount of newspaper articles, pensions are portrayed in a negative manner. The author has concluded that the ageing workforce and the longevity issue are the main causes to the pension problem. This was obvious from the overall consensus in the literature review and findings. However the author would have expected these two areas to have appeared more frequently in the public press, both appeared 9% and &% respectively. In terms of the author's findings, a significant proportion of articles 26% discussed potential pensions solutions. Solutions ranged from the introduction of mandatory solutions for all workers, the application of further tax relief on pension contributions made by employees, the closure of defined benefit schemes in both private and public sector and the recommendation that a proportion of all GDP is paid to the National Pensions reserves fund.

In relation to the funding of pensions, the 26% of newspaper articles discussed the funding of pensions. The funding in relation to private sector funding was based on the concerns regarding under deficit defined benefit schemes. In relation to defined contribution schemes, the newspaper articles reported that employers were favouring this type of scheme because of its cost. The newspaper articles also discussed how defined contribution schemes may not adequately fund the retirees retirement with enough financial rewards and may lead to a reduction in their standard of living. Newspaper articles also reported on the significant concerns of the future funding requirement for the state pension and pay as you go public sector pensions. Like the literature review, they discuss real concerns in trying to fund these pensions schemes in future years.

The role of the government was the overall key area that was portrayed predominantly in the public press, a respective 38%. The academic articles and various trade publications all emphasise the centre stage role that the government has in relation to addressing the pensions issues. The author was expecting a large amount of newspapers to appear relating to the role of the government.

Citizens do not read academic articles, trade publications or government reports; their prime source of information comes from newspapers. Newspapers have significant influencing powers on their readers. Hence the logical decision to use newspapers as the source of data and content methodology occurred. Content analysis enabled the author to adapt large amount of text into a systematic scheme that could be interpreted and analysed. The limitation of this methodology is the amount of time involved in coding the newspaper articles. In hindsight the author would have liked to carry out content analyse of newspapers articles from Ireland, German and the United Kingdom. The reason for this is Germany and the United Kingdom working populations are ahead of their shift in terms of their ageing profile. The author would ideally like to draw comparisons from other countries to understand how they are portraying the pensions phenomenon.

This research process was simple in each approach and design in terms of determining how pensions were portrayed and also how the five key areas were portrayed. As the findings were unravelled and statistics were reviewed both from the academic articles and newspaper articles, it became concerning about the level of funding that pensions will require in the future. This issue alone with the effects of ageing and longevity can be described as the biggest challenge that the government will face in years to come. This is the area that this author would like to study in more detail.

10 CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSIONS

The author's aim was to fundamentally understand how pensions were portrayed in the Irish public press in the years 1983 to 2013. The Irish pensions system will eventually affect every Irish citizen. The author wished to examine this portrayal under five key areas as highlighted in the literature review and research aims chapters. The author can conclude that ultimately the pensions portrayal is largely a negative one. All viewpoints from both the academic articles and newspaper articles provide support for this. From reading the literature review of pensions, the author expected that the Irish pensions system would be viewed in a negative manner as was illustrated in the findings section. This is another a factor as to why so manner commentators use the words "crisis" and "time bomb" when discussing the pensions system.

As the summary findings articulated, the role of the government appeared most frequently in the public press. The author had expected this to occur. Ireland's Anglo Saxon pensions model means that the Irish Government is ultimately responsible for the pension provision to each Irish citizen. The OECD Report 2013 Review of Irish Pension System and some newspaper articles were very critical of the role of previous governments and their indecision regarding the implementation fundamental changes that would address the issues in the public and private pensions. The report explained that even though previous governments have commissioned various reports by various bodies, no action had been taken. Irish public and private pensions face a deepening crisis as previous governments have taken no reform actions and the Irish citizen is now paying the price. The newspaper articles identified the important role that the government has in relation to the pensions system but they also provided more information regarding the challenges that face the government, and there are many This includes the need to address the issue of not having mandatory pensions for all workers in the state. Currently pension coverage across workers and sectors is unfair and unjust. The Irish government must examine the under funding levels of defined benefit schemes. In relation to defined contribution schemes, there is a real concern amongst academic and newspaper articles that these will not provide any adequate level of financial reward for the retirement years.

In the private sector, there is ample evidence that companies are closing defined benefit schemes as they are too costly and the risk lies solely with the employer. There is unequal treatment of private and public sector workers in this regard. In the public sector index linked defined benefit schemes are still in operation.

The index linked defined benefit schemes will pose significant challenges to the government due to the issues of an ageing workforce and longevity. The government will face tough decisions in future years as it how it determines it can fund the Pay As You Go scheme. Will this result in increasing taxes or increasing retirement ages? Commentators in both the academic and newspaper articles have commented on what the true cost of these pensions are and what are the real financial pension liabilities that will appear on the Irish state balance sheet. This is a real concern as potentially the government does not know or understand the true value of the pension liability of public sector workers.

The government will also face really difficult decisions in relation to how it will fund the state pension. The Social Insurance fund was in a deficit of €1.5 billion in 2011. This is at a time when the pension dependent ratio is high.

As the KPMG 2010 audit report illustrated 85% of the Social Insurance fund will be required to fund the state pension in 2066. This is a real concern. What will happen to the other social welfare payments such as child benefit, carers allowance and job seekers allowance that are paid from this fund. This must also be taken into account when it has been reported that 47% of workers are not paying into a pension scheme. The level of this liability coupled with the public sector liability has gigantic consequences for future economic policies.

As the findings illustrate the role of the government is central to addressing the other four key areas that the literature review highlighted. The role of the government and the policy choices that it implements will have a domino effect on the pensions solutions and the funding of pensions.

The ageing workforce and longevity issue will continue to add pressure to the sustainability and viability of Irish pensions; they are fundamentally the causes of the pensions issues. A reduced working force and retirees living for longer are factors that the government cannot change. Again the solutions that are adopted by the government will be of significant importance.

This research paper has identified the significant amount of areas that require further research. A study of the true cost of publics sector pensions needs to occur, as this has huge financial considerations for the state. The author would also suggest carrying out a study to understand if citizens are properly understanding of the value of their defined contribution pension scheme. This

can be done through questionnaires as people may not be aware of the true value of what their defined contribution scheme will be.

11 APPENDIX

11.1 Codebook

Newspaper	Article Name	Year article was wrote	Month article was wrote	Industry type	Sector	Portrayal of pensions	Funding of pensions	Longevity	Ageing Populations	Solution	Role of Government
Irish Times	Guide to pension trustees	1993	December	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	New booklet on pensions	1998	August	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Heffernan to chair Pensions Board	1995	December	N/A	Both	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Pension proposals	1997	May	N/A	Both	Negative	Yes	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	IAPF publishes pension guide	2003	February	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Pensions plan welcomed	1999	July	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Pensions plan welcomed	1999	July	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Kierans appointed Honorary Consul General in Luxembourg	1998	November	N/A	Both	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	Age Action seeks linked pensions	2000	October	N/A	Both	Neutral	No	No	Yes	No	No
Irish Times	ISME plea on pensions	1997	May	N/A	Private	Neutral	No	No	No	No	No
Irish Times	De Rossa warns on alarmist claims	1997	February	N/A	Both	Negative	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

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