Deepening Participation, Deepening Local Democracy?
The State of Local Participatory Governance in Ireland

Cian Finn, BA, MA
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University of Limerick

Supervised by Dr. Chris McInerney and Dr. Frank Häge

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Abstract

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Cian Finn

In response to a decline in traditional forms of political participation and growing dissatisfaction with and distrust of democratic and public institutions, public authorities have engaged or have been required to engage in widespread democratic experimentation, particularly at the sub-national level. This experimentation, characterized as an integral component of elite-led ‘governance driven democratization’, has led to the proliferation of participatory processes which exist alongside and supplement institutions of representative democracy.

The growth of formal institutions of participation which represents the development of participatory approaches to governance extends the surface area of the state and places citizens and public officials in more frequent and sustained contact. Since 1996, local authorities in Ireland have implemented formal participatory processes which enable the direct participation of citizens and civil society in policy formation. Despite the increased opportunity for citizens and civil society to participate, there is a persistent literature detailing dissatisfaction with ‘consultation fatigue’ and the ‘cosmetic’ or ‘tokenistic’ nature of participation in Ireland and internationally.

This research measures and explains variation in the depth of civil society participation within three sub-national participatory governance processes; County/City Development Boards, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees, and Strategic Policy Committees. Using mixed methods research in a nation-wide study, the depth of participation is analysed with reference to key concepts such as voice, influence, trust and legitimacy. Further, the study connects the public administration and participatory democracy literature in the analysis of participation through the attitudes and experiences of public officials, elected representatives as well as citizen and civil society participants.

In doing so, the study produces a more comprehensive and holistic analysis of participatory governance and identifies important explanatory factors including the capacity and motivations of citizens, institutional design, and the conduct and disposition of public officials and elected representatives. The research demonstrates that while the extent of arenas within which civil society voices can be heard is considerable, they do not enjoy a commensurate level of influence, leaving public policy dynamics largely undisturbed.
Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is the work of the candidate alone and has not been submitted to any other University or higher education institution in support of a different award. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

Signed: Cian Finn    Date: 06/03/2017
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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Sean and Patricia. I am grateful for your encouragement and support throughout my education.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLG</td>
<td>Better Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>City/County Development Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLG</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Community and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHPCLG</td>
<td>Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDD</td>
<td>Empowered Deliberative Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAMA</td>
<td>Local Authority Members Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCDC</td>
<td>Local Community Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGMA</td>
<td>Local Government Management Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTACC</td>
<td>Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAPP</td>
<td>International Association of Public Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITM</td>
<td>Irish Traveller Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESC</td>
<td>National Economic Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESF</td>
<td>National Economic and Social Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTACC</td>
<td>National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>Participatory Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESP</td>
<td>Programme for Economic and Social Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Putting People First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPN</td>
<td>Public Participation Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCA</td>
<td>Qualitative Comparative Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Social Housing Investment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMI</td>
<td>Strategic Management Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Strategic Policy Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAP</td>
<td>Traveller Accommodation Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

In response to a decline in traditional forms of political participation and growing dissatisfaction with and distrust of democratic and public institutions, public authorities have engaged in widespread democratic experimentation, particularly at the sub-national level. This experimentation has been characterized as an integral component of elite-led ‘governance driven democratization’ (Warren 2009b). The current practice of political participation is diverse and varies in size and scale. Democratic experimentation and innovation has led to the proliferation of participatory institutions or processes which supplement and exist alongside institutions of representative democracy (Smith 2009). Elite-led or governance driven processes are often “top down” and originate primarily from public administration with limited consultation with civil society in terms of remit and institutional design (Lowndes 2002, Warren 2009b). The growth of participatory institutions represents the development of participatory approaches to governance or what is often described as participatory governance. Participatory governance represents the extension of the surface area of the state in which citizens and public officials are in more frequent and sustained contact and engage in policy making and oversight (Wampler and McNulty 2011).

Participation is considered a form of democratization, an effective method to solve complex governance problems, and as a means to enhance the legitimacy of and citizens’ trust in public institutions and policies (Wright and Fung 2003, S peer 2012, F ung 2015). According to many supranational institutions, “participation” is a central pillar of good democratic governance and improves public policy (OECD 2001, Council of Europe 2008). Good governance, which includes transparent and accountable public administration, is seen as key to economic growth and social equality (United Nations 2009). However, despite the increased opportunity for citizens and civil society to participate within participatory institutions, there is a persistent nature detailing dissatisfaction with the “cosmetic” or “tokenistic” nature of participation (Pateman 2012, G anuza and B aiocchi 2012). Many participatory institutions are considered trivial in which participants possess little influence and the types of issues discussed are constrained (Fung 2015). Consequently, an important research strand within the study of participatory democracy/governance concerns the extent...
to which citizens can exercise voice, influence, and determine decisions on issues that
directly impact their lives (Task Force on Democracy 2012).

Since 1996, local authorities in Ireland have implemented new forms of governance
including participatory institutions which enable the direct participation of citizens and civil
society. These institutions are top down created at national government level but
implemented at local level. While lacking decision-making authority, these processes are
designed to engage in policy formulation and, sometimes, oversight, and facilitate sustained
interactions between citizens/civil society and public and elected officials. Recent reform has
emphasised the importance of public participation to the future of local democracy and local
government in Ireland. Participation was identified as key to the strengthening of local
democracy in the Local Government Reform Act 2014. In ‘Putting People First’, the
government white paper on which he based his legislation, the need for local
government to provide greater opportunities for citizens and civil society to participate in
decisions that affect them and increased role in policy formulation and public service
delivery is acknowledged (Department of the Environment Community and Local
Government 2012). This is further strengthened in the Open Government Partnership Ireland
Action Plan recently published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The
document highlights the importance of supporting and enhancing public participation in
policy-making and developing capacity within public administration to achieve this
(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016).

1.2 Research Aims, Context and Rationale

This study has a descriptive and an explanatory objective. The descriptive objective
is to assess the depth of participation in local participatory governance in Ireland between
2009 and 2014 in three distinct participatory processes in all local authority areas: Strategic
Policy Committees (SPC) and Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees
(LTACC) and City/County Development Boards (CDB). The actors permitted to participate
within SPCs, CDBs and LTACCs include citizens, representatives of community and wider
civil society organisations, local elected political representatives, and national and local
authority officials. Within this, the research has attempted to answer the following two
questions:

1 Ethics approval for this research was granted by the University of Limerick Arts, Humanities, and Social
   Sciences ethics committee in May 2014-reference number 2014_05_04_AHSS
Q1: In light of the increased opportunities for civil society participation in formal local governance processes in Ireland, what is the depth of participation in the selected cases? In reference to the theoretical and empirical literature, it is possible to make the distinction between ‘increasing’ and ‘deepening’ citizen and civil society participation (Smith 2009). The depth of participation in this study is analysed with quantitative and qualitative data. The perceived depth of participation is measured quantitatively through a composite measure of respect and equality of voice, influence, trust, and legitimacy within each institution. Further, the qualitative data focuses on the ability to discuss and influence wider local government policy and the level of authority of the process. While primarily concerned with civil society, the depth of participation of local authority officials and elected representatives who participated alongside civil society is also examined.

Q2: What explanatory factors influence the depth of participation in the selected cases?

A comprehensive review of the literature identified diverse factors including the individual characteristics and motivations of citizens and civil society participants, institutional design, as well as the conduct and disposition of administrative and political actors within local authorities. This will be analysed through qualitative and quantitative data. While focused on local participatory governance in Ireland, the findings of the research make a contribution to the broader body of knowledge within participatory governance.

This study and subsequent research design was conceived in order to assess the practice of participation in Ireland and in light of the existing theoretical and empirical literature. It is intended to serve as a contribution to the further development of methodological pluralism within the study of participatory governance and the use of larger scale empirical analysis and measurement (Galais et al. 2012). While there has been a recent comparative empirical turn in the study of participation, existing studies are predominantly case study based (Smith 2011, Wampler 2008). Empirical studies have, for the most part, focused on a small number of so-called best practice cases of participatory or democratic innovations such as Participatory Budgeting (Smith 2011). This approach, it is argued, has resulted in a general failure to produce reliable overall assessments of the practice of participation within countries and states; and has led to a view that the benefits of participation tend to outweigh the costs or problems associated with it (Font et al. 2012). The study of participatory governance and supplements to representative forms of democracy, it is argued, requires a more comprehensive analysis of sub-national practice (Goodhart et al.
In addition, few existing empirical studies have analysed the perceptions of actors who participate in participatory processes and their sense of empowerment (Talò and Mannarini 2015).

In a recent review of research into ‘Direct Public Engagement’, Nabatchi and Amsler highlight a number of necessary areas of further research. The authors argue further research in the following areas of local participation is required; (a) how the context and setting of participation, including the attitudes of senior officials and elected representatives, affect the design and outcome of participatory processes (b) the motivations of sponsors and convenors and its implications for the participatory process (c) how the design of participatory processes affect the rate of citizen participation and (d) how public officials, elected representatives and public actors interact and experience participatory processes (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014).

While it is often difficult to conduct larger scale comparative analysis within participatory governance, the standardisation and uniformity of local participatory processes in Ireland facilitates a comparison of participatory experiences within and across local authorities. The key role of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, and national government, more generally, in the creation of participatory processes has resulted in a standardisation of institutional design. Each process is designed nationally but administered and implemented locally. As a result, the institutional factors or processes therefore are constant throughout the cases. This is in contrast to other European states, for example, the Netherlands, where administrators at the local and municipal levels possess more autonomy and flexibility in designing and initiating participatory processes resulting in diverse motivations, rationales and institutional designs (Geurtz and van de Wijdeven 2010). Further, this policy context enabled research on administrative and political actors who are statutorily required to facilitate and participate within participatory processes designed and introduced by central government.

Within the existing literature on participatory democracy/governance, the use of conceptualisation and analytical frameworks is more evident than subsequent measurement. The development of so-called ‘thicker’ forms of democracy and the subsequent concern with the depth of participation in governance has led to a search for instruments of measurement to assess participation on a comparative basis. A recent comprehensive report from the American Political Science Association entitled ‘Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation and Economic Citizenship’ proposes the development of measures of so-called ‘thicker’ forms of democracy (Goodhart et al. 2012).
As there are no widely applied measures of participation in participatory governance, the study has developed a composite measure of the perceived depth of participation within each participatory process. This is undertaken in full consideration of the tasks of conceptualisation, measurement and aggregation (Goertz 2006). The measurement of a social science concept requires the identification and careful use of indicators (Goertz 2006). An indicator can be defined as a tool “that indicates the state or level of something, [or] a device providing specific information on the state or condition of something, in particular a gauge or meter of a specified kind” (Botero et al. 2011, p.155). The selection of indicators of the perceived depth of participation is carried out in reference to the existing theoretical literature. The measures and indicators are operationalised through a survey questionnaire of key participants and analysed through statistical analysis. The questionnaire probed participants’ perceptions of the depth of participation within each process as well as a number of potential individual level explanatory variables.

In addition to civil society participants, the study probed the actions and beliefs of all actors involved in each participatory process. Examining the experiences of officials and local elected representatives within local participatory governance and the nature of their relationships with civil society actors helped to explain variation in the depth of participation. This approach produced a more holistic assessment of the functioning of the three processes and set the experiences of civil society participants in a broader context.

In sum, the contribution of this thesis can be divided into four strands. These include the contribution to the knowledge of citizen and civil society participation in Ireland, a specific analysis of the role of public and elected officials within participatory processes, the further application of mixed methods within existing research, and the extension of research from case study to a larger comparative analysis of subnational practice.

1.3 Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 2 of this study engages in a comprehensive review of the existing theoretical and conceptual literature on participation and governance; and highlights the predominant methodological approach and prioritisation of conceptualisation and theory over measurement. This discussion emphasises the growing methodological pluralism within research of participation, the need for larger scale comparative analysis and a more comprehensive assessment of subnational practice.
Chapter 3 provides the national context for the study of participatory governance in Ireland including the development of the participatory governance landscape and the origins and functions of the three participatory processes. In addition, a discussion of Irish Travellers and their relationship with the Irish state is provided to situate the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in a wider context. This chapter highlights the historical weaknesses of local government and democracy in Ireland and the key role of central government in local government policy. The primary role of the centre is evident in the development and implementation of local participatory governance and in recent local government reform. Participatory processes are implemented locally but originate outside the local authority. This context of institutional design has implications for the facilitation and implementation of local participatory governance in Ireland.

Chapter 4 will identify key concepts for analysis in respect to the depth of civil society participation and potential explanatory variables. In terms of the depth of participation, key concepts are identified including voice, influence, trust and legitimacy. In terms of explaining variation, individual characteristics of civil society, institutional design, and the conduct and disposition of public and elected officials are highlighted as potentially significant variables.

Chapter 5 will narrow the conceptual focus and detail the precise operationalization of key concepts, both the dependent and independent variables, used to measure the depth of participation in the quantitative analysis. The accurate measurement of concepts necessitates precise operationalization. The chapter will also detail the hypothesised relationship between the depth of participation and the individual explanatory variables examined in the regression analysis. The selected explanatory variables include socio-demographic variables, personality factors, and wider political and associational links.

Chapter 6 explores and justifies the overall methodological approach taken. This includes case selection and research design, the ontology and epistemology of the study, the use of mixed methods, the attempts to identify and invite the target population to participate in the research, and the design and launch of the questionnaire. The use of regression analysis and Factor analysis is also discussed. The limitations of the methodological approach and its impact upon the data collected and subsequent analysis is acknowledged throughout the chapter.

Chapter 7 details the results of the multiple regression analysis in which the relationship between individual explanatory variables and variation in the perceived depth of participation
is explored. This chapter also provides an analysis of statistical differences between the different types of actors in respect to the composite measure within and across the three participatory processes. This analysis demonstrates statistically significant differences between public and elected officials and civil society in respect to the perceived depth of participation, and within civil society. The regression analysis which examines the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and the individual characteristics of civil society actors demonstrates the significance of age, general personal efficacy and political trust. Income is also significant until the membership of specific civil society pillars is controlled for.

Chapter 8 explores the qualitative data gathered in the context of the depth of participation. The qualitative data emphasises the importance of institutional design including the formal rules and level of authority and the conduct and disposition of administrative and political actors within each participatory process. The data indicates that processes are often dominated by local authority officials who can restrict the range of issues discussed and restrict the level of policy discussion. Furthermore, the chapter explores the legitimacy of participation and the conduct of civil society from the perspectives of local authority officials and elected representatives. There is evidence of a lack of political support for civil society participation within local government and questions as to the extent of civil society accountability and representativeness. This includes a belief that many civil society representatives, particularly from the Travelling community, are concerned not with policy but with personal interests.

Chapter 9 engages in detailed analysis of the findings of the research in the context of the theoretical literature and in the context of local participatory governance in Ireland. This analysis focuses on the significance of institutional design, the difficulty in balancing representative and participatory forms of democracy, the capacity and disposition of public administration to facilitate participatory governance, as well as the capacity of civil society. In light of the findings of the LTACC, which reveal considerable dissatisfaction and conflict between members, an analysis of the provision of Traveller accommodation and the relationship between Travellers and local authorities is conducted.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion chapter. The chapter contains a summary of the research findings and addresses the two research questions. The chapter further explores the contribution of the study within specific areas; the policy and practice of local participatory governance in Ireland, the broader literature, and the methodological
contribution of the study. Finally, potential areas of future research are identified including
the further development of measurement within participatory governance research and an
detailed analysis of the relationship between socio-demographic and personality factors and
the experience of participation. In the context of Ireland, issues such as the need for greater
attention to institutional design amongst policy makers and additional mechanisms to reduce
tension and build mutual understanding between LTACC participants and further support for
Travellers to meet the costs of participation are identified.

1.4 Overview of Findings and Significance

This dissertation identifies a number of important issues in local participatory
governance in Ireland. While these issues will be explored in further detail throughout the
dissertation, the following section will discuss them in brief. The research demonstrates that
while the extent of arenas within which civil society voices can be heard is considerable, they
do not enjoy a commensurate level of influence, leaving public policy dynamics largely
undisturbed. Participation is widely perceived to be “tokenistic” with participatory processes
perceived as “talking shops”. The ability to influence policy and the outputs of public institutions
is crucial to the depth of participation and the study emphasises the problems inherent in advisory structures which lack authority or the ability to impact public policy.
Perceptions of “tokenistic” participation lead to cynicism and dissatisfaction with local
government. The lack of tangible outcomes and perceptions of tokenism undermines
relationships with administrative and political actors and erodes trust in local government.

The depth of participation within cases is influenced by a range of factors
including the individual characteristics and motivations of civil society participants, aspects
of institutional design, and the role and disposition of public and elected officials. Participatory processes are facilitated and implemented by public administration. Irrespective of the level of authority or how well designed; the experience of participation is dependent upon the conduct and support of public officials who must possess the capacity for
and disposition towards collaborative forms of policy making and integrative forms of public
leadership. Participatory governance, however, has considerable implications for the
traditional role of public administration and its relationship with citizens and civil society.

The successful implementation of participatory governance therefore demands
capacity building within public institutions and greater emphasis on less bureaucratic and
instrumental forms of administration and policy making. Further, local elected and public

officials must have some sense of ownership of institutional design and broader support for participatory governance. This is not always the case in the Irish context where participatory institutions are top down, and originate within national government. The facilitation of local participation does not signal commitment or positive disposition towards participatory governance within local government. This top down, national, one size fits all approach to the design and implementation of participatory processes is problematic leaving local authorities without adequate ownership or the ability to adapt processes to better suit local circumstances. This national design also produces processes with institutional features which constrain the depth of participation including the location of each process within the formal administrative and political realm of the local authority.

Participation is considered a supplement to and exists in parallel to representative democracy. It is designed to address democratic deficits and deficits within traditional forms of policy making. However, the further deepening of participation necessitates a willingness to share authority and influence and a greater disposition towards the inputs and preferences of civil society actors within politics and public administration. This is challenging as the more substantive participation of civil society within local government reduces the influence of elected representatives and presents challenges to existing conceptions of democracy and the appropriateness of democratic decision-making. Further, the preferences of some civil society groups may present particular challenges for public authorities as is the case with Irish Travellers in this study. Therefore, the implementation of participatory forms of governance requires balancing between divergent forms and understandings of democracy and democratic authorisation and representation, and a greater willingness on behalf of public authorities to share influence and authority.

For civil society actors, the study demonstrates a considerable level of personal capacity is required to participate effectively and engage in deeper forms of democratic participation. Capacity includes efficacy, knowledge, self-confidence and strength of personality. Training and capacity building is crucial to the development of efficacy and knowledge. This is of particular relevance in the case of participants from social excluded or marginalised groups. Capacity can be developed through active membership of associations and civil society organisations as well as formal training provided by public institutions and institutional designers of participatory processes. Finally, this research demonstrates the importance of competence, knowledge of relevant policy issues, and acting in the wider public interest, to the effectiveness and legitimacy of civil society participation. In addition,
civil society participants must be accountable to and act in the interests of the constituencies they represent as well as demonstrate a concern for the wider public interest within participatory institutions. Accountability and concern with the wider public interest is important for the level of trust of public officials in civil society actors and the overall legitimacy of their involvement in local decision and policy-making. The following chapter will explore the wider theoretical and empirical literature.
Chapter 2 Concept Definitions and Review of Theoretical and Empirical Literature

The first section of this chapter will distinguish between different forms of political participation and define key concepts within the study. This is undertaken to bring clarity to the concept and practice of participation and to situate it within participatory processes or institutions. The second section explores the broader theoretical underpinnings of participatory governance through a discussion of participatory, deliberative and associative models of democracy. This discussion provides the theoretical underpinnings of the diverse forms of participation, highlights key differences with representative democracy as well as the implications of participatory governance for traditional conceptions of policy making and participation. The final section will engage in a review of the existing empirical literature and highlight the methodological focus of existing research.

2.1. Political Participation, Participatory Governance, and Participatory Institutions

This section will clarify and distinguish between so-called traditional and emerging forms of political participation and terms used within the literature on participatory democracy and governance. This is to acknowledge the diversity of participation and to distinguish involvement in participatory governance from traditional and emerging forms of democratic and political participation. For the most part, research on political participation has focused predominately on the act of voting. However, there has been an increased focus on the growing diversity of political participation (Fung 2006, Ekman and Amnå 2012). Citizen participation in politics and wider civic engagement is a key characteristic of democracy. More broadly, political participation can be understood as citizens’ activities which affect politics (van Deth 2014). Political participation is also characterised as an action undertaken by ordinary citizens to influence political outcomes (Ekman and Amnå 2012). The practice of political participation is diverse and wide-ranging including voting, joining interest groups and political parties, and engaging in protest or social movements.

A distinction between ‘latent’ and ‘manifest’ forms of political participation is made. Manifest political behaviour includes actions, either individual or collective, intended to influence government decisions and political outcomes. Latent behaviour, however, is more informal civic engagement, for example, the participation of citizens in a community in order
to improve the lives of disadvantaged groups or to shape the community’s future (Ekman and Amnå 2012). This often proceeds in non-formal arenas or ‘popular spaces’ which are brought about by civil society or organisations (Cornwall 2004). Citizens are increasingly disengaged from additional forms of participation (Norris 1999, Dalton 2004, Farrell 2014). The evolution from traditional political participation to so-called emerging forms of participation is evident (Stolle et al. 2005, Smith 2005). Emerging forms include involvement in participatory institutions in which members of the public are invited to participate in structured processes of decision and policy making.

The participation of citizens and civil society in governance is a diverse and multifaceted concept and open to significant interpretation. The ambiguity surrounding the concept of participation within the practice of participatory democracy and governance has been highlighted also. With the global proliferation of participatory processes and the development of ‘governance driven democratization’, participation is considered a relatively ambiguous and vague term both conceptually and politically (Cornwall and Brock 2005, Warren 2009b, Baiocchi and Gauza 2014). The conceptualisation of the practice of participation emerges from a diverse range of actors including professional practitioners, advocacy groups, international organisations such as the World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as democratic theorists and academics. To some extent, the contrasting terms and definitions (and realisation) of participation is reflective of the disjunction between the so-called governance driven and the more radical democratisation ethos of participatory democratic theory. It also has roots in the divergent conceptualisation of democracy as an instrument or method and as an educative or transformative process.

Key concepts within the study of participation, it is argued, are not well defined or formulated (Frewer and Rowe 2005). Conceptions such as participation and civic engagement serve as umbrella terms for a variety of methods to include the public more directly in governance (Rowe and Frewer 2005, Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). This is evident from the proliferation of terms used to describe this practice including public engagement, citizen engagement, civic engagement, public participation, citizen participation, community participation, public deliberation, deliberative democracy, network governance, empowered participatory governance, and collaborative governance. The diversity and widespread practice of participation means practitioners often conflate terms and use mismatched definitions. This conflation, it is argued, leads to confusion surrounding the
meaning of concepts and even stymies the development of theory and practice (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). Research of participation, therefore, lacks clarity and consistency of language. This is common in social sciences where concepts often are defined in different ways (polysemy) but these different terms can mean the same thing (synonymy) (Gerring and Barresi 2003).

A wide variety of definitions are evident. Rowe and Frewer, for example, define (public) participation as the “practice of involving members of the public in agenda setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations/institutions responsible for policy development” (Rowe and Frewer 2005, p.512). It is also defined as a process in which individuals take part in decision making in the institutions, programs, and environments that affect them (Mannarini and Talò 2013). The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) defines participation as an “exchange between citizens and government, between those who make policy and people affected by policy choices” (EAPN 2011, p.i.i). According to Webler and Tuler, participation is a “variety of procedures for enabling diverse members of the public to be active participants in decision-making, referred pol icy options, and in some cases decision-making” (Webler and Tuler 2001, p.30). Nabatchi and Amsler, meanwhile, define ‘direct public engagement’ as “in-person and online processes that allow members of the public (i.e., those not holding office or administrative positions in government) in a county, city, town, village, or municipal authority to personally and actively exercise voice such that their ideas, concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into governmental decision making” (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014, p.3). It is argued that academic research and indeed practice would benefit from a more explicit acknowledgement of the qualitative differences in these definitions in addition to increased clarity and coherence in the use of such terminology (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014).

‘Participation’ or ‘civic engagement’ is often situated more directly in the realm of participatory democracy and governance. Participatory democracy is understood as a process which involves the participation of the wider population in decision making and implementing community policies, raising issues and providing solutions to them (Tumanyan and Shahbazyan 2011). It is also defined as a form of collective action between citizens and political elites that blends elements of direct and representative democracy and potentially constrains politicians’ decision-making (Aragones and Sánchez-Pagés 2009). ‘Participatory governance’, meanwhile, situates citizen participation directly within governance processes and institutions. It involves the direct engagement of the population in issues of importance to
their lives. Participatory governance affords citizens increased access, voice and influence and signals a new form of interrelations and interactions between citizens and public authorities (Goodhart et al. 2012).

Irrespective of definitions or the terms used, participation often takes place in formal participatory mechanisms or processes. The increase in opportunities to participate more directly within governance has led to proliferation of participatory institutions which proceed alongside or in parallel to representative and bureaucratic institutions (Rowe and Frewer 2005, Smith 2009). New institutions of participation have been characterised as ‘democratic innovations’. Smith defines democratic innovations as “institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process” (Smith 2009, p.1). These can be considered structures through democratic outcomes are realised and as a medium through which democratic agency is articulated. Processes and mechanisms are also described as so-called upstream or quasi-legislative processes used to create, shape, and implement policy (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). While varying in scale, participatory institutions have increased significantly over the past thirty years and are now considered a component of the normal political and administrative sphere (Galais et al. 2012). Participatory processes are institutionalised more frequently at the sub-national level. Increased participation at the local level is understood as a form of institutional re-engineering in which governors and civil society have in unison explored ways to increase citizen influence in local affairs (Wampler 2012, Zittel and Fuchs 2007). Participatory engineering is defined as the “purposive attempt of political elites to positively affect the level of political participation by increasing institutional opportunities to participate” (Zittel and Fuchs 2007, p.1). The importance of the local or subnational arena is echoed by McPherson and Pateman in their theories of participatory democracy (Pateman 1970, MacPherson 1977). Governance driven or elite led processes are often top down or designed and implemented with limited consultation with citizens and civil society in terms of policy remit and formal rules and procedures (Warren 2009b, Hoppe 2011).

Participatory theory and practice, it is argued, has evolved from questions of should the public participate in governance to questions of how and how much the public should participate (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). It is possible and important therefore to distinguish between increasing and deepening participation. Increasing participation can refer to the growth in the opportunities and numbers involved in political participation. In the context of participatory governance, the objective is often to increase the participation of marginalised
and hard to reach groups. ‘Deeper’ participation has been defined as “any change which allows a more direct, sustained and informed participation by citizens in political decisions” (Smith 2005, p.18). In addition, a report of the American Political Science Association’s Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World highlights the potential to ‘deepen’ democracy through participation. Participatory governance deepens democracy, the report argues, by expanding and institutionalising opportunities for all citizens to shape and influence decisions, increasing accountability, legitimacy and responsiveness, and empowering citizens to take a greater role in governing themselves. This can be achieved through ‘co-governance’ in which citizens and elites cooperate, deliberate and decide on policies in specially designed processes (Goodhart et al. 2012). Making reference to the empirical literature on Participatory Budgeting in Brazil, the report argues that participatory governance has the potential to ‘deepen’ democracy by (a) increasing the rate and quality of citizen participation and providing citizens with greater access, voice and influence, (b) replacing the clientelist relations between citizens and elites with ones based on deliberation and public reason and (c) improving state performance and political outcomes. This more substantive participation increases public access to state institutions and affords citizens an increased role in decision-making and policy-making (Goodhart et al. 2012).

More direct forms of participation are often described in the academic literature and by practitioners as ‘public’, ‘citizen’ or ‘civil society’ participation. It is possible to make a distinction between participatory processes which allow the involvement of ordinary members of the public and those which encompass members of associations and groups (Smith 2009). The term public encompasses citizens within a population acting individually or as part of civil society or community organizations. In the context of this research, however, the term citizen does not mean an naturalised or native member of a state but an inhabitant of a local area. Citizen is also used to make a distinction between ‘client’ and ‘consumer’ which are often used by public administration to describe its relationship with the public (Feldman and Khademian 2007). While providing increased opportunities for citizens and civil society to participate more directly in governance, it is possible to identify a diverse range of actors who participate. These include citizens, representatives of civil society organisations such as community groups, lay stakeholders, professional stakeholders or representatives of professional or ganisations, political representatives, and administrative elites or public officials (Fung 2006).
Citizens within participatory institutions are often members and representatives of civil society organisations. Civil society can be understood as an arena or space in society where collective action occurs, where individuals come together voluntarily and participate in formal and informal meetings, and organisations and associations (Melena and Heinrich 2005). According to Diamond, civil society is an arena in which citizens are empowered and where citizens can develop skills relating to democratic power sharing, negotiation and collective action (Diamond 1994). The CIVICUS index defines civil society as “the arena between family, government, and market where people voluntarily associate to advance common interests” (Melena and Heinrich 2005, p.346). This sphere includes a broad range of organisations and interest groups in which citizens can act individually as well as collectively.

It must be acknowledged that civil society is not homogeneous and does not encompass a single public sphere. In reality, civil society encompasses a myriad of different associational forms and civil society organisations (CSOs) can have diverse and even conflicting aims, objectives and values. Furthermore, these groups may wish to remain distinct and detached from the state and refuse to engage in forms of participatory governance. Dryzek, for example, conceptualised civil society as a place in which the people choose to live their lives and solve collective problems. Advancing an independent understanding of civil society which is distinct from the state, he identifies a number of activities CSOs may be involved in including: changing the terms of political discourse, legitimating different forms of collective action, convening policy-oriented fora; and generating responses from government as a result of fear of political instability (Dryzek 1996). However, in reality, complete detachment from the state is seldom feasible for CSOs and the involvement in formal participatory institutions has implications for the role and status of civil society. This necessitates the movement of civil society into the state sphere and more formally into the realm of public authorities. This embeds civil society and citizens into the institutions of the state and incorporates government officials into civil society also, blurring the lines between state and civil society and altering traditional state-society relations (Wampler 2012).

In summary, citizen, civil society or public participation is an ambiguous concept and the practice and research of participation or engagement often lacks clarity and consistency of language. Participation in this study is distinct from traditional political participation such as voting in elections and joining interest groups and political parties, or non-formal forms of
participation including advocacy and participating in social movements. It is a form of participatory democracy and governance, and concerns the extent to which citizens and civil society actors can exercise voice, influence and determine decisions that are important to them or affect them (Goodhart et al. 2012). This more direct form of participation is non-conventional and institutional as it consists of the involvement of citizens in new forms of political activity and enables them to be connected with political and administrative decision-making (Galais et al. 2012). Within this, members of the public acting individually or as members of civil society organisations participate directly alongside public officials and elected representatives. In contrast to traditional forms of participation, their interests and concerns are not mediated by elected representatives. While not electoral, participants may vote and participate after being selected through voting procedures. Although often comprising of individual members of the public, this engagement is often a collective endeavour carried out by citizens aimed at directly producing or determining public services and political outcomes in their communities (Johnson 2014). The following section explores the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of participation in further detail.

2.2 Theories and Models of Democracy

The participation of members of the public in participatory institutions has implications for traditional political participation as well as democratic representation. The shift to more direct forms of citizen and civil society participation and the institutionalisation of participatory governance has clear roots in the theories of participatory, deliberative and associational forms of democracy and the recognition of deficits within representative democracy and government. This section of the chapter will explore the theoretical underpinning of participation and situate this participation in the wider context of the development and evolution of modern democracy. Before the substantive discussion of key theoretical arguments made by advocates of participatory and deliberative forms of democracy, this section will outline the theoretical development of modern democracy and representative government and some more established rationales against more substantive forms of citizen participation.

2.2.1 Modern Democratic Theory

Despite its many variants, democracy, according to Held, is a form of government in which the people rule, and involves a form of community in which there is a degree of
political equality among people (Held 2006). Most conceptions of democracy are built on the foundation of popular rights, equality, and empowering people to govern their lives (Alexander and Welzel 2011). Democracy is considered instrumental and developmental simultaneously, be neficial to individuals and society, and a n effective legitimate instrument of decision-making. Depending on the theoretical perspective, moreover, democracy can represent a set of institutions or the ideological justification or means to challenge and alter them (Blaug 2002). By the late twentieth century, a distinct form of democracy, considered primarily as a method or as a set of institutional arrangements, became dominant in western society. This contained constitutional frameworks of representative elected government, adult suffrage and the right of citizens to form and participate in independent political associations and interest groups (Dahl 1956, Pateman 1970). The vast majority of liberal-democratic theorists supported representative democracy where representatives are elected in accordance with formal procedures. For much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a pessimistic and proceduralist view of democracy and the capacity of citizens therein were articulated by, amongst others, Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter. Both theorists advanced a vision of democracy with limited participation and societal development.

Democratic theorists of the period were largely pessimistic concerning the role of ordinary citizens in democracy and their potential contribution to government. This pessimism concerns about the capacity and motivations of citizens within modern subnational participatory governance have been raised (Talpin 2011, Warren 1996). Democracy was conceptualised more as a procedure or method to elect decision-makers and can be considered a rejection of the classical Athenian model. Schumpeter, for example, understood democracy primarily as an instrument and advocated electoral competition for political leadership. He considered democracy a political method of a n institutional arrangement, and defined democracy as “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people’s vote” (Schumpeter 1976, p.269). His writings had a considerable impact upon the development of democratic theory post World War II and aligned closely with many in the West who, perhaps influenced by Communism, considered mass participation and mobilization of citizens as dangerous (Held 2006).

In contrast to emerging forms of more substantive participation, citizens could expect no more from democracy than to select political representatives and to elect governments. In
Schumpeter’s negative attitudes toward citizen participation are evident, arguing “the electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede, so that it is leaders who must be active, initiate and decide” (Schumpeter 1976, p.283). He contended that the political arena is taxing for suitably competent individuals, never mind citizens who lacked rationality and sufficient information to make competent and informed decisions. The electorate is weak and excessively emotional with political issues distant from their lives. Citizens, he maintained, discussed politics without a sense of responsibility and in an ignorant and infantile manner. Public policy formation was the terrain of those suitably experienced and qualified with democracy the rule of the professional politician not the people. Consequently, a so-called division of labour between citizens and representatives was essential with political parties and the political ‘boss’ the essence of politics (Schumpeter 1976).

This pessimism is evident in the writings of other influential theorists of that time. In *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Robert Dahl argued lower socio-economic groups were the least politically active and likely to possess authoritarian sympathies. Dahl equated political equality with universal suffrage (Dahl 1956). However, Dahl later challenged the minimalist or proceduralist view of democracy and argued that democracy extended beyond government formation and procedure. Democracy was not merely an outcome but an important process also. Further, he also recognised the inequalities within the democratic process due to social and economic inequalities generated by capitalism (Dahl 1989). Much of contemporary liberal democratic theory regarded the participation of minority elites as crucial and the non-participation of ordinary citizens as an effective bulwark against political instability (Pateman 1970). In the view of many liberal theorists, excessive or unchecked democracy contributed to despotism, revolt from the masses, and the tyranny of the majority (Barber 1984). Much of the post-World War II scholarship on democracy and democratization, it is argued, has treated the root concept of democracy as fixed (Munck 2013). In this view, democratic theory had become largely a theory of system stability focused primarily on the effective institutionalisation of electoral democracy (Goodhart et al. 2012). This predominant conception of democracy advocated limited citizen participation apart from the act of voting and joining political parties (Held 2006).

However, the concept of democracy is open to interpretation and a distinction between ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ forms of democracy is made (Munck 2013). It is also possible to distinguish between different models, principles or varieties of democracy which contrast...
with liberal and electoral democracy (Coppedge et al. 2013, Held 2006). The twentieth century witnessed the articulation and justification of new variants including pluralism, democratic socialism, deliberative and participatory forms of democracy (Held 2006). There is a considerable existing literature outlining different forms of democracy or alternatives to electoral or liberal democracy. For some, the growth of these so-called ‘non-hegemonic’ conceptions of democracy are in response to the ‘elitism’ and failings of existing democratic practice (de Sousa Santos and Avritzer 2007). The following section will explore the development of participatory, deliberative and associational forms of democracy which have informed the development of citizen participation within participatory institutions increasingly institutionalised at the sub-national level.

2.2.2 Participatory, Deliberative and Associative Democracy

As outlined, the term “participation” is ambiguous and often used as an umbrella term to describe a myriad of emerging forms of democratic participation which contrast with traditional participation in representative forms of democracy. Irrespective of the term used, current forms of participation formalised within participatory institutions have clear roots in participatory, deliberative and associational theories of democracy. This section will highlight these underpinnings and engage in a brief discussion of each of the theories. This discussion is critical in establishing concepts and indicators in the analysis of the depth of participation. The review, for example, emphasises the importance of voice and influence and highlights key differences with representative democracy. As participatory processes of ten proceed within and in parallel to existing representative and bureaucratic institutions, these theories also present an insight into the difficulties balancing participatory and traditional democratic practice, as well as its implications for the traditional decision and policy making and the role of citizens in this.

The term ‘Participatory Democracy’, it is argued, has roots in Arnold S. Kaufman’s arguments in favour of a participatory politics (Mansbridge 1995). It began as a slogan of the ‘New Left’ student movement of the 1960’s which advocated the democratisation of universities. This movement later spread to the workplace amidst arguments in favour of greater worker control of industry (MacPherson 1977). Participatory democracy as articulated by Pateman and MacPherson, argues Held, reimagined the terms of reference of democracy. Their theoretical work, which emerged through a combination of the political upheavals of the nineteen sixties, debates within the ideological left and dissatisfaction with liberal and Marxist thought, served as a leading alternative to the so-called legal democracy of the new
right and the competitive elitism advocated by Schumpeter (Held 2006). The broader theory of participatory democracy is often considered a supplement to liberal democracy and an effective means to address its many deficits. Although initially articulated as an alternative to liberal democracy, participatory democrats do not advocate the replacement of representative democracy with participation.

Participatory democratic theory is built on a number of normative foundations. A participatory society, it is argued, can achieve political equality and self-development. Direct citizen participation can better realise democratic ideals, reduce inequality within society, and serve an important social and political educative function (Pateman 1970, B arber 1984). According to C arole P ateman, t he t heory of participatory democracy is “built around the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another” (Pateman 1970, p.42). “C itizens”, she argues, “have the right to public provision, the right to participate in decision-making about their collective life and to live within authority structures that make such participation possible” (Pateman 2012, p.14). A 2012 article by Pateman, which reflects on existing deliberative and participatory practice, identifies what is considered by the author as the most important components of the theory of participatory democracy. These elements include (a) the interaction of the capacities, skills and characteristics of individuals with authority structures that make participation possible, (b) the opportunity for individuals to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives as well as political life and (c) structural reform of undemocratic authority structures (Pateman 2012). The desire for increased participation along side representative institutions demands greater opportunities or democratic institutions to participate. Such participatory institutions are a means to address the many weaknesses of liberal and aggregative democracy and to extend the realm of collective decision-making to new spheres of governance and society (Goodhart et al. 2012). The realm of political activity therefore is expanded in an effort to ‘democratize democracy’ and democratic decision-making. To satisfy the participatory ideal, argues Pateman, participation must impact public action and interact with authority structures (Pateman 2012). In addition, this form of democracy has an explicit communicative or discursive dimension with the collective will formulated not through electoral competition but through discourse and deliberation.

Benjamin Barber’s discussion of participatory theory is more developed than Pateman’s and his theory expands participatory democracy from the workplace to all of society. His conception of Strong Democracy is considered a modern and more practical form
of the radical conception of participatory democracy (Barber 1984). Critical of liberal democratic pluralism’s depiction of politics as “nothing more than the chambermaid of private interests”, Barber sets out an alternative vision of politics based on civic education, community and participation (Barber 1984, p.18). “Democracy”, he argues, “is neither government by the majority nor representative rule: it is citizen self-government. Without citizens there can be only elite/mass politics” (Barber 1984, p.211).

If participatory democracy incorporates a democratic system in which “citizens literally rule themselves, directly and participatorily, day in day out, in all matters that affect them in their common lives”, Strong Democracy is less demanding. It is a form of democracy in which “all of the people govern themselves in at least some public matters at least some of the time” (Barber 1984, p.xiv). This is a system of self-government by citizens as opposed to representative government on behalf of citizens. Strong Democracy deals with public disputes and conflicts through an enduring process of deliberation, decision, and action; and proceeds in institutions at both local and national realms that encourage common talk, common decision-making and political judgement. (Barber 1984). According to Barber, talk is fundamental to democracy allowing citizens to overcome narrow self-interests, to justify and renew political beliefs and convictions. It can build community, maintain rights, produce societal consensus and resolve conflict. He articulates nine functions of strong democratic talk which include the articulation of interests, bargaining and exchange, persuasion, agenda-setting, exploring mutuality, affiliation and affection, maintaining autonomy, witnessing and self-expression, reformulation and reconceptualization, and community building as the creation of public interests, common goods, and active citizens (Barber 1984).

Deliberation is also a feature of participatory governance. While representative democracy focuses on aggregative outcomes through voting, deliberative theorists argue the essence of democratic legitimacy is the capacity of those affected by a collective decision to deliberate in the creation of that decision (Barber 1984, Dryzek 2002). Deliberation has been defined as “a process whereby groups of people, often ordinary citizens, engage in reasoned opinion expression on a social or political issue in an attempt to identify solutions to a common problem and to evaluate those solutions” (Stromer-Galley 2007, p.3). Deliberation concerns free, equal and open communication related to matters of public concern by the actors affected (Myers and Mendelberg 2013). Deliberative democrats are concerned with the extent to which democratic processes and institutions should be built on so-called reasonable political judgement, not the empirical will of those who participate in politics (Held 2006).
Deliberative democracy is considered a process that “creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions” (Young and Benhabib 1996, p.121). In this view, citizens and civil society actors involved in this process are not motivated by solely rational or instrumental concerns. Instead issues are considered in terms of the common good as deliberation involves discussion and the exchange of views. Through deliberation, individuals are obliged to justify their opinions, consider the merits of alternative arguments, give reasons, and are more willing to change fixed preferences (Dryzek 2002, Teague 2006). Deliberation, therefore, can enable participants to learn more about policy-making and result in more legitimate and better thought-out decision-making that develops from collaborative and joint action. It offers the potential for more inclusive and just decision-making. Consequently, deliberation is considered a necessary condition in securing legitimacy and rationality in collective decision-making (Cunningham 2001).

While both deliberative and participatory forms of democracy are considered a means to address the weaknesses of representative democracy, participatory theory has come under criticism from numerous deliberative democrats who criticize the theory’s often fuzzy utopianism and the absence of empirical evidence supporting many of its normative claims (Warren 1996). However, the relationship between deliberative and participatory schools is complex (Mutz 2006). Participation extends deliberation and other forms of collective political actions into more diverse spheres of society. Similar to advocates of participatory democracy, deliberative theorists believe in the capacity of ordinary citizens to contribute meaningfully and intelligently to politics. Therefore, deliberation like participation is widely considered an instrument of deeper democracy and a more substantive form of political participation (Goodhart et al. 2012, Fung and Wright 2001). However, while deliberation is considered participatory as it involves citizens and elites deliberating on collective issues of importance, both have distinct and different theories of democracy. Deliberation can be considered a necessary but not a sufficient condition of participatory democratic theory (Hilmer 2010). Furthermore, in contrast with radical participatory theorists such as Pateman, many advocates of deliberation do not believe a transformation of democratic structures is necessary (Hauptmann 2001).

The potential combination of deliberation and participation is evident in Empowered Deliberative Democracy (EDD). EDD is an institutional model of participatory democracy and situates deliberative and participatory theory within formal structures of governance. Drawing on real-life experiences in Brazil, India, and the United States, this concerns the
resolution of specific and tangible societal problems, seeks to secure the active participation of those affected by the problems in question, and the use of deliberative processes to solve these problems (Wright and Fung 2003). This form of participation is deliberative and involves the direct influence of citizens on public action particularly on issues of importance to the lives of participants. EDD therefore represents a fundamental change in how governments include citizens and civil society actors in democratic decision-making and public administration (Fung 2003a). It is worth emphasising that this is institutionalised at the subnational or local level and necessitates participation in deliberative decision making in arenas with considerable power, not in advisory and consultative mechanisms.

Finally, the connection between associations and participatory forms of governance must be acknowledged. Indeed, it is common for existing participatory processes to facilitate the involvement of the public as members of associations and civil society organisations as well as individuals. Associative democracy is not a homogeneous concept and embodies differing perspectives on the role of associations in governance. One model of associational democracy argues that associations can represent lower socio-economic groups and can help solve the problems faced by poorer citizens in society largely through advocacy, interest representation and effective interest organisation (Cohen 1997). Others refer to the role of associations as part of a robust and vibrant civil society, which does not necessarily participate in processes of governance, but rather serves as a check and balance on government behaviour (Gaventa 2006). In the case of Irish Travellers, associative democracy is of particular relevance to this study.

Hirst advocated for associations as the primary instrument of democratic governance and social and political affairs. Associations, he contended, are a “supplement and healthy competitor” for so-called “dominant forms of social organisation, representative mass democracy, bureaucratic state welfare, and the big corporation” (Hirst 1993, p.42). In this substantive theory of associative democracy, associations perform an enhanced role in social and economic governance taking on activities that the state cannot or does not wish to deliver. This public service delivery role for associations and community organisations is increasingly evident in an era of New Public Management.

Although considered as distinct modes of democracy, a number of scholars consider associations as key in the revitalising of participatory democracy where they share public power in addition to advocacy in interest groups arenas (Fung 2003a). The participation in, and membership of, associations stimulates face to face engagement and develops citizens’
civic skills. Politically, an increased influence for associations, for example, community and parent organisations in decision-making can boost democratic outcomes and improve political and administrative accountability. This role is similar to EDD and participatory governance with associations practicing deliberative communication internally and with administrative and political elites (Fung and Wright 2001, Cohen 1997, Goodhart et al. 2012).

From this discussion, a number of key areas within the broad field of participatory democracy and governance are apparent. The theories of participatory, deliberative and associational democracy, which have influenced both the conceptualisation and application of the modern shift to participation, highlight the importance of voice and influence and increased opportunities for citizens to participate directly in governance as well as through civil society organisations. The discussion also highlights the contrast with representative democracy and traditional forms of decision-making within democratic institutions.

2.3 A Review of the Empirical Literature

This section of the chapter will engage in a review of the existing empirical literature and outline its methodological focus. The traditional focus within the existing literature is theoretical and conceptual. However, there is a growing prioritisation of empiricism in the field of participatory democracy and governance, and use of mixed-methods research. The study of participatory democracy has begun to address the so-called divorce between normative theory and empirical political science (Smith 2011). Research of deliberative and participatory democracy, argues Thompson and Smith, has, for the most part, progressed with a divorce between theory and empiricism with normative theorists largely dismissive of empirical findings and empirical studies not engaging adequately with theory (Thompson 2008, Smith 2011). This is echoed by Pateman, who argues participation should not be treated only as a “normative argument, concerned with ideals” (Pateman 2012, p.10).

Empirical studies have focused on a small number of so-called best practice cases of participatory institutions (Smith 2011). A case study approach assumes the data from selected cases can represent a broader population (Gerring 2004). However, there is a growing awareness of the potential benefits of extending research from case studies to larger scale analysis (Burton 2009, Gaventa and Barrett 2010, Font et al. 2012). The case study approach, it is argued, has resulted in a general failure to produce reliable overall assessments of
participatory practice within countries and states; and has led to a view that the benefits of participation tend to outweigh costs and problems (Font and Galais 2011, Wampler 2008). The need to evolve from in-depth case studies to larger comparative analyses of different participatory institutions within and across regions is acknowledged (Speer 2012, Wampler and McNulty 2011). According to Wampler and McNulty, the study of participation demands a greater comparative analysis of the different type of participatory institutions across a wide spectrum of countries and regions to better validate claims about its positive effects on participants and governance (Wampler and McNulty 2011). These larger scale comparative studies can potentially produce a better understanding of each participatory process including examples of more substantive forms of participation (Font et al. 2012). A more rigorous investigation of how institutional design affects outcomes and the influence of the participatory process on the motivation of actors to participate is also advocated (Fung 2007, Smith 2011).

Researchers have begun to engage in this through the increased use of quantitative and comparative methods. A 2012 issue of the Revista Internacional de Sociología gives an overview of the range of diverse methods used by researchers within the study of participation. The opening article references the use of large N, small N quantitative research, experimental research, ethnography, case study research, and comparative studies. This methodological pluralism, argue the authors, represents maturity within the sub-field of participatory democracy (Font et al. 2012). This is echoed by Smith who argues the study of democratic participation has witnessed an empirical and “institutional turn”. Scholars, he argues, now focus less on the desire for more participation and more on the context of citizen participation and the consequences of institutional design. This evolution represents a “middle ground” and has begun to address the so-called traditional “division of labour” between normative theory and empirical political science (Smith 2011, p.9).

Comparative research has grown with the proliferation of democratic innovations and participatory institutions (Ryan and Smith 2012). Comparative mixed methods research within the field appears most developed within the study of Participatory Budgeting. For example, Wampler analyses the conditions which ‘deepen’ the quality of democracy drawing on the differing success of Participatory Budgeting institutions throughout Brazil. The study explains the divergent outcomes of eight separate budgeting processes and identifies two key explanatory factors, ‘strong mayoral support’ and the ‘type of civil society activity’, i.e. cooperation and contestation. The study develops a theoretical framework, is based on both
primary and secondary research, and engages in detailed comparative analysis. The findings underline the importance of elite support and the capacity of civil society to engage in deeper forms of participation (Wampler 2008). Wampler also analyses the extent to which Participatory Budgeting in Brazil has mobilised low income groups with the use of a range of quantitative methods including survey research and logistic regression (Wampler 2007a). The study analyses eleven of thirty-five municipalities in Brazil which had implemented PB for a period of at least seven years. The author administered the questionnaire to a pool of elected PB citizen delegates. The study develops two separate models to explain respondents’ attitudes, individual level socio-economic characteristics and aggregate level municipal data. PB results indicate, has the potential to empower lower income groups in the public sphere and alter state-civil society relations based previously on clientelism and corruption. PB can ‘deepen’ democracy when participants are rewarded with significant levels of authority (Wampler 2007a).

The comparative approach is further developed by Ryan and Smith in their analysis of Participatory Budgeting outcomes using ‘Fuzzy Set’ or ‘Qualitative Comparative Analysis’ (QCA) methods (Ryan and Smith 2012). The study applies QCA to evaluate and being to explain the divergent outcomes of Participatory Budgeting in six cases across the globe. This analysis has the primary aim of explaining the key conditions in which Participatory Budgeting is effectively institutionalised. The primary outcome is ‘citizen control of participatory decision-making’ and the selected ‘influencing conditions’ concern fiscal independence, participatory leadership, civil society demand, and initial bureaucratic support. The authors are explicit about their methodological approach and clearly define and operationalize the selected variables. Moreover, data is calibrated transparently with the use of qualitative continuous measurement scales. The analysis also indicates that the presence of initial bureaucratic support even in the absence of other conditions can produce citizen control on decision-making (Ryan and Smith 2012). This is significant and further indicates the importance of public administration to participatory governance.

2.3.1 Weaknesses within Empirical Literature

Despite the growing methodological pluralism within the literature, weaknesses of existing studies and approaches to empirical research have been highlighted. More broadly, the need for researchers to be more explicit about methodological choices and research design has been referenced (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). In terms of evaluating participation within formal participatory institutions, research is criticised for a failure to discuss and
explore methodological and research design in detail (Burton 2009). There is criticism of existing approaches to evaluation. Critics argued that use of normative frameworks to evaluate participatory mechanisms has not been carried out in a systematic basis, or resulted in a considerable volume of accurate data to assess the supposed benefits of participation to individual participants or to governance (Burton 2009, Rowe and Frewer 2004). This is a consequence of the lack of standard frameworks to assess processes and clarity of how evaluation should be undertaken. Existing studies lack systematic and generally applicable measures and evaluation tools (Frewer and Rowe 2005, Rowe et al. 2008). According to some, the assumptions and findings of specific studies of participatory processes are weakened through poorly defined definitions of effectiveness, a dearth of measureable data and valid and accurate methods of measurement (Rowe et al. 2008).

There is a dearth of robust indicators of process outcomes despite the perception of ‘outcome failure’, and a lack of evidence to establish the normative claims of participatory mechanisms to potential democratic goods and positive benefits of civic engagement (Burton 2009, Frewer and Rowe 2005, Harvey 2009, Gaventa and Barrett 2010). This, it is argued, weakens the normative claims of the positive effects of participation. As a result, the extent to which participatory mechanisms justify the normative claims of participatory theorists cannot be answered definitively (Speer 2012). Further, the existing literature, argues Nabatchi and Amsler, lacks comprehensive analyses of participants’ assessments and satisfaction with participation and the impact of participation on the work of public authorities. These aspects are integral to assessing the relationship between context, process, institutional designs and outputs in participatory governance (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). Although, in the context of Participatory Budgeting in Brazil, the impact of participation on public institutions and civil society has been examined (Touchton and Wampler 2013, Wampler 2015).

Criteria for evaluating participatory institutions can be based on normative and empirical considerations (Harvey 2009). Normative criteria often have democratic and theoretical foundations, with empirical criteria more concerned with outcomes and objectives and the extent to which these are achieved. In this mode of evaluation, ‘success’ is determined by ‘results’ and ‘outcomes’ (Harvey 2009). The attempt to engage in procedural or instrumental outcome-based evaluations is subject to criticism. While considered to be more empirical, it is argued that attempts to examine the outcomes of participatory institutions through current evaluation frameworks largely ignore or underplay participatory
experiences, or how the actions of participants influence outcomes (Harvey 2009). This form of evaluation prioritises the outcome of the participatory process and, as a result, excludes the experience of key participants including administrative and political elites who are largely understood in ‘instrumental’ terms. This approach also lacks a rigorous assessment of the extent of democratization and the quality of democratic participation. Consequently, this can ignore or undermine the experience of participants (citizens, officials and politicians) whose insights and experiences are integral to the assessment of participatory governance.

Smith has also identified some weaknesses within existing approaches to the comparative analysis of institutions. The institutional focus, he argues, has taken two different approaches, ‘principal-application’ and ‘reflection on practice’. Principal application, the most common approach, prioritises the articulation of a set of normative principles for a particular democratic theory that advances the creation of more sophisticated analytical frameworks which are subsequently applied to institutional designs (Smith 2011). This is criticised as selected cases either serve to strengthen theoretical foundations or show distance from a particular normative principle. The predominant focus on theory is also considered insufficient because theoretical and normative frameworks do not accurately account for the complexity of the participatory process. ‘Reflection on practice’, argues Smith, is more useful and can result in a more vigorous analysis of how democratic principles are realized through a detailed focus on institutional design and practice. This form of analysis may have implications for the normative ideals inherent in existing participatory theories and demonstrate the institutional circumstances in which these ideals are or are not achieved (Smith 2011). The reflection on practice approach lends itself to comparative analysis across participatory cases. This is important as participation research, it is argued, is dominated by so-called ‘practice stories’ in which effective participation is stymied through the behaviour of cynical elites (Burton 2009). The methodology of this study can be considered a form of reflection on practice in which the relationship between the depth of participation and a range of potential explanatory variables, including the characteristics and motivations of actors and institutional design are examined. Further, the measurement and explanation of the depth of participation focuses on the experiences of a diverse range of participants including elected and public officials.

According to Burton, the traditional lack of empirical scrutiny of participation may be a consequence of the normative concerns of participatory and democratic theorists as well as the methodological difficulties experienced in the creation of evaluative frameworks. Further,
the normative and theoretical focus of much of the literature has roots in the so-called rights based ethos of participation, in which criticism of participation is akin to criticism of the citizens right to participate (Burton 2009). It must be acknowledged that the sheer diversity and plurality of democratic innovations or participatory processes has complicated the evaluation of participation for researchers. The assessment of the outcomes of participation, argue Gaventa and Barrett, is complex (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). For example, participation varies in scope and scale and institutional designers have experimented with a large number of different institutional designs (Bryson et al. 2013, Fung 2015). This is further complicated as actors, including designers, often possess divergent goals, motivations and desired outcomes (Klijn et al. 2010). The study of processes within local government, it is argued, is complicated by the different and complex organizational structures of local authorities as well as the contrasting purpose of and motivations behind the establishment of institutions (Lowndes et al. 2001). Participatory processes are distinct in design and aim. Subsequently measures and results cannot be easily generalized to other cases (Mannarini and Talò 2013). Further, larger scale comparative analyses require larger sources of reliable data which are not always available or obtainable (Font et al. 2012).

2.3.2 Existing Measures of Democracy and Participation

This study measures the perceived depth of participation through quantitative analysis. The following section details existing measures of democracy and participation and the overall use of measurement within the literature. Measurement of social science concepts, it is argued, is beneficial to our knowledge about politics and governance. Measurement in social sciences can be defined as the assignment of numbers to observations according to rules. Measurement, according to Schedler, is the translation of concepts and realities into the language of numbers (Schedler 2012). More broadly, the consideration afforded by scholars to measurement within political science and its subsequent application in empirical studies is lacking (Munck and Verkuilen 2003, Munck 2009). In the view of Munck, accurate measurement of the ‘quality’ of democracy requires an extension of the concept of democracy beyond electoral democracy (Munck 2013). The need to develop and operationalize measures of deeper democracy and more direct forms of participation has been highlighted (Goodhart et al. 2012). The majority of existing empirical measures, as exemplified through a variety of indices of electoral and liberal democracy, measure a ‘thin’ concept of democracy, which is operationalized primarily as electoral competition and the rule of law (Munck 2013). Such measures have been criticised for a disconnection between...
conceptualisation and classical democratic theory (Bühlmann et al. 2012). Standard measures of democracy primarily differentiate democratic from non-democratic regimes. They do not adequately address the so-called democratisation of democracy, the growth of participatory governance and the so-called democratisation of democracy, the growth of participatory governance and the extent to which citizens possess opportunities to influence key decisions and play a more active and substantive role in governance (Goodhart et al. 2012).

Primarily due to its normative and theoretical foundations, conceptualisation is prominent than measurement in the existing literature. In addition to the theoretical work of Pateman and Barber, the literature has produced a number of analytical and evaluative frameworks including, amongst others, Arnstein’s ‘Ladder of Participation’ and Fung’s ‘Democracy Cube’. Fung’s ‘Democracy Cube’, for example, offers a comprehensive framework to assess participation through three key components of participant selection, the mode of communication and decision, and the extent of authority and power. In this regard the author identifies three important questions in assessing the scope of participation: who participates? How do they communicate and make decisions? What is the connection between their conclusions and opinions on one hand and public policy and action on the other? (Fung 2006). In addition, Burton proposes three similar questions which can serve as a starting point in the conceptualisation and measurement of participation. These include (a) who should participate; (b) At what level of decision-making; and (c) in what relationship with elites in formal decision-making responsibility? (Burton 2009).

In the context of larger scale empirical research the aforementioned theoretical frameworks and definitions of participation are seldom operationalized or measured (Burton 2009, Rowe et al. 2008, Fung 2006). This is not intended as a criticism of these conceptual frameworks or their authors but rather to emphasize the gap between the conceptualization, measurement and aggregation within the current literature and justify the measurement of indicators of participation in reference to empirical cases. However, similar to the extension of research from case study to larger scale research designs, there is an emerging strand within the literature engaged in the development and application of indicators and measures. Existing attempts at measurement within participation are commonly divided between frameworks which focus on procedure or outcomes and those which assess developmental aspects of the participatory process. Despite the complexity and diversity of participation and the varied design and rationale of participatory processes, there is a growing effort to develop measures applicable to participatory institutions. The most common aspect, it is argued, is the
deliberative part of the process which, irrespective of the intended outcome, is a fundamental aspect of participation (Mannarini and Talò 2013).

Indeed, the practice of measurement is more developed in the field of Deliberative Democracy where researchers have developed measures to evaluate the quality of deliberation. Attempts to measure deliberation can be divided between micro and macro analytic approaches in addition to direct and indirect measures of deliberation (Bächtiger et al. 2009). Macro-analytical approaches are evident through measurement instruments including the Discourse Quality Index and Stromer-Galley’s index of deliberative content (Stromer-Galley 2007, Steenbergen et al. 2003). Stromer G alley’s coding scheme of the quality of deliberation is composed of six measures: Reasoned Opinion Expression, Sourcing, Disagreement, Equality, Engagement and Topic. The contribution of this index is two-fold. Firstly, the scheme clearly operationalizes deliberation. Secondly, the author develops and presents a robust and transparent coding scheme.

The measurement of participatory processes is much less developed. However, Mannarini and Talò developed two measurement instruments, the “Deliberative Process Perceived Quality Scale” (DPPQS) and the “Outcome Rating Scale” (ORS). The criteria used in these measures are based on prior work of Rowe and Frewer and Stromer-Galley amongst others (Rowe and Frewer 2000, Stromer-Galley 2007). The scales divide the participatory or deliberative process into three phases: dialogue, understanding, and outcomes as part of the ORS. The measures are based on the subjective responses of participants and are used ex-post after the process ends. The scales comprise of 33 items with agree/disagree scales (from 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) (Mannarini and Talò 2013). The primary aim of the study (in addition to the construction of the measure) is to explore the relationship between subjective experience and future behaviour. The two measures reviewed above are most concerned with the quality of discourse and are applicable to one off participatory or deliberative processes. Talò and Mannarini also developed the ‘Participatory Behaviours Scale’ with four dimensions: formal political participation, activism, civic participation and disengagement (Talò and Mannarini 2015). Using a theory led approach, the measure consists of 28 items across the four dimensions and is designed to determine the extent to which citizens engage in specific behaviours. ‘The following list includes a list of behaviours characterizing civic and political engagement. Can you indicate to what extent you recognize these behaviours as your behaviours?’” Respondents must select
1-strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. These measures represent the development of measurement within the existing empirical literature.

In summary, the opportunities for citizens and civil society to participate directly in formal governance processes continue to proliferate, particularly at the sub-national level. This participation is distinct from traditional representative forms of democracy and government in which the concerns of citizens are mediated by elected representatives. After defining and introducing the concept of participation, this literature review explored the theoretical basis and rationale for participatory democracy and governance. While the practice of participation does not always meet the standards of participatory and deliberative theorists, these theories underpin the practice of participation and the institutions of subnational participatory governance. Gaps within the empirical literature and weaknesses of existing research have been highlighted. There is a growing awareness of the need to engage in more systematic studies of the dynamics of participatory processes and subsequent outputs and outcomes as well as measurement of key concepts (Smith 2011, Goodhart et al. 2012).

Further, additional research on the context and setting of participatory processes and the motivations of process designers can strengthen normative assumptions and existing theory (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). Existing theoretical frameworks and conceptual definitions are infrequently operationalized or measured across a large number of cases (Rowe et al. 2008, Burton 2009, Goodhart et al. 2012). Measurement within the research of participation remains in its relative infancy and there is scope for the further development of measures and indicators. However, a review of the existing empirical literature emphasizes the growing methodological pluralism within the broad field of participatory democracy and governance. The field of participatory democracy and governance is undergoing methodological development and maturity and the growing diversity of methods including measurement is evident (Galais et al. 2012).
Chapter 3 Local Government and Local Participatory Governance in Ireland

The aim of this chapter is to provide a national context for the study of local participatory governance in Ireland which takes place within or in parallel to local government. This necessitates a focus on the powers and functions of local government and its historical development. This will help situate the inclusion of civil society actors as well as the presence of local governance processes such as Strategic Policy Committees, Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees and City/County Development Boards in a wider cultural, historical and political context. However, this context has implications for facilitation and implementation of participatory governance within local government in Ireland. Historically, subnational government in Ireland has been weak with little functional autonomy and an absence of financial independence. For the most part, local government policy has been top down and driven by central government. This is largely the case in the development of local participatory governance also. The first section of the chapter will give an overview of local government powers and its broad functions. The second section will explore the gradual, incremental reform of local government and the development of the participatory governance landscape. Finally, the origins and rationale for the three participatory processes will be discussed as well as Irish Travellers and their relationship with the Irish state.

3.1 Local Government, Structure and Functions

Ireland is characterised as one of the most centralised European liberal democracies with weak structures of subnational government which, by and large, is answerable to and financially dependent on central government (Connaughton 2009). The association between central and local government is a symmetric and has been likened to a principal-agent relationship (Callanan 2003b, Haslam 2003). In terms of its functional capacity and autonomy, local government in Ireland is widely characterised as weak (Quinn 2003). In contrast to many European states, local government performs a limited role in areas of education and health while the absence of a system of local taxation has rendered it heavily dependent on central government for funding. The two traditional functions of local government in Ireland centre on providing various services and administering/implementing national policies. In contrast to many other European states, with the exception of housing, local government in Ireland had little involvement in the provision of social services. The
areas of responsibility of local authorities are predominantly housing, roads, water, environment and recreation and amenity.\(^2\)

Traditionally, local government in Ireland could only act with powers granted by the Oireachtas. The legal formalist doctrine of *ultra vires*, which constrained local government to perform functions outlined in law, ended with the introduction of the Local Government Act in 1991. The general principle of *ultra vires* is that the actions of the executive must be authorised by statute. In the case of Ireland, local government action was dispersed across a wide body of statute law. This centralisation is considered an enduring feature of Irish politico-administrative culture. The structure of local government developed in Ireland is often described as a ‘managerial system’ of local administration (Adshead and Quinn 1998). The basic principle of the managerial system is the legal dichotomy of reserved powers of councils and the executive functions of management, each mandated through central government legislation (Adshead and Tonge 2009). This is evident in the key executive role in policy formation and implementation exercised by city and county managers in the provision of local services (Connaughton 2009). The increase in authority for local authority managers came at the expense of the role of local elected representatives.

Prior to the Local Government Reform Act 2014, local government was divided into 29 county and 5 city authorities as well as 80 town councils. The local authority system was led by elected county councillors and administered by county and city managers who were hired by the Local Appointments Commission for a period of seven years. The functions of local government are divided into two primary categories, reserved and executive. In contrast to many other European states, the County or City Manager possessed decision-making powers alongside the reserved functions of elected representatives (Callanan 2004a). In the context of the so-called traditional politico-administrative dichotomy local officials in Ireland enjoyed significant influence over local policy. Traditionally, a function of a local authority not expressed in law as a reserved function is an executive function and thus the responsibility of the County Manager and the local authority’s team of Directors of Services (Sheehy 2003). Managers, it is argued, enjoyed a considerable amount of formal and informal power. For example, managers were responsible for the construction of the local authority budget which is then approved by the elected members (Forde 2005).

\(^2\) The provision of water services has been removed with the creation of ‘Irish Water’ under the Water Services Act 2013, which combined the public water and wastewater services of all Local Authorities under one national service provider.
Reserved functions are concerned with policy and provide the framework through which the manager and authority staff work (Callanan 2004a). Reserve functions are adopted by elected representatives and include the adoption of the Council budget, the power to borrow money, and make or revoke by-laws. Senior local authority officials also advise elected representatives in the performance of their functions. Since ‘Better Local Government’ (BLG) each manager has a team of Directors of Services with the responsibility of administering and providing services in a specific function of the local authority. The Director of Service also provides advice and administrative support to the relevant Strategic Policy Committee. This altered the role of the County Manager somewhat as the new system of directors resulted in a delegation of managerial operational responsibilities from the County Manager to his team of directors (Sheehy 2003). The role of senior officials such as Director of Services is significant within local participatory governance in Ireland.

3.2 Historical Development of Local Government in Ireland

One explanation for the relative weakness of local government and local democracy in Ireland relates to the development of the state after independence. The weakness of local government in Ireland can be understood in the political and cultural context of the ‘Irish Free State’ which largely adopted the structures of British government and administration. In addition, independent Ireland witnessed the emergence of a somewhat contradictory political culture built upon support for democracy, allegiance to the political system, paternalism, clientelism, personalism, authoritarianism, and a mix of centralism and localism (Quinn and Connaughton 2009, Garvin 2005, Ferriter 2005). The local administrative machinery of the Irish Free State inherited from British rule was based on the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898. The main aim of this Act was to put county government on a representative basis (Haslam 2003). The 1898 Act, which is the last major reform of local government in Ireland before independence, established the county as the main unit of administration and the county council as the primary instrument of administering local government. Although it broadened the franchise, this system was not autonomous or particularly responsive to local communities with local authorities largely understood as agents of central government.

In 1922, independent Ireland consciously absorbed rather than adapted the institutions of the British state. These institutions represented stability for those now in charge (Connaughton 2009). The years immediately after the birth of the Irish Free State is notable for a commitment to further centralisation. Political elites consciously and purposely built a
The new government which assumed command of the state prioritised functional efficacy and pragmatism over democracy and accountability (Adshead and Tonge 2009). In addition, the uncertainty and conflict caused by the subsequent civil war solidified the commitment to strong central leadership at the expense of local democracy (Ferriter 2001). The change initiated by the Cumman Ná Gaedheal government during the 1920’s prioritised the reform of local administration and personnel over an expansion of the provision of local government functions. The gradual introduction of the management system, solidified in law through the County Management Act, 1940, increased bureaucratisation and served as an efficient means to downgrade the functions of local councils widely regarded at the time as incompetent.

In addition to the political prerequisites of the time, it is clear the pursuit of centralisation has roots in the values of political and administrative elites to which sub-national authority was largely unattractive. Local government was seen by many Irish nationalists as a British invention and anti-national (Ferriter 2005). Despite strong roots in localism and a desire to develop rural life, many Fianna Fáil members wished to abolish local government during the nineteen thirties (Ferriter 2005). The retention of local government bodies wrote Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Sean MacEntee, in 1934, is “gradually becoming an expensive anachronism” (Ferriter 2001, p.15). Local elected councils were seen as having little value for an independent Ireland. Culturally, argues Garvin, both local government and democracy did not coalesce with the values of Irish nationalists who wished to take power from local councils perceived as vulnerable to the malign influence of so-called ‘unsuitable people’ and ‘moral mediocrity’. The leaders of independent Ireland, argues Garvin, were ‘unenthusiastic democrats’ unwilling to give citizens the autonomy to look after local affairs (Garvin 1996). However, this centralisation, argues Callanan, emerged not from an ideological assault on local government but rather a set of government decisions “often motivated by a simple assumption that the centre know best” (Callanan 2003 a, p.475).

The overall ambivalence towards local government is further reflected in its absence from Bunaireacht Na hÉireann, the 1937 Constitution. Indeed, local government in Ireland would lack specific constitutional recognition until the inclusion of Article 28A into the constitution after a referendum in June 1999. Prior to this, it was common for national governments to postpone local elections. In general, this suspension of local democracy was not met with any significant objections from citizens (Ferriter 2001). Uniquely in the context
of government in Europe, little significant reform of local government took place in Ireland after World War II. Between 1970 and 1985, however, successive Irish administrations did engage in an analysis of how local government could be improved publishing a series of policy papers and reports. One white paper entitled ‘Local Government Reorganisation’ was published in 1971. This report, however, did not propose any shift in the services delivered or administered by local government (Keoghan 2003). By and large, Ireland’s weak structures of local government had continued upon Ireland’s entry to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. By this time, local government in Ireland had become “locked in a creation of Victorian Britain and nineteenth century legislation adapted for Ireland” (Connaughton 2009, p.75).

The initial period of its status as a member of the EEC witnessed further centralisation during the 1970’s and 1980’s. The abolition of the domestic rates is an example of this and local authorities became more dependent on central government grants. Consequently, local revenues reduced by approximately fifty per cent. The abolition of rates further reduced the autonomy of local government in Ireland and its reliance upon central government for finances (Adshead and Tonge 2009). The economic crisis of the 1970’s, however, brought the control exercised over local government by the central executive into sharp focus as government in Ireland faced increased pressures to engage in planning and industrial development. Moreover, dissatisfaction with the status of local administration had become a relevant political issue by the end of the decade (Ferriter 2001).

In summary, local government in Ireland, argues Haslam, did not recover from so-called ‘Benthamite Ideology’ and the centralism brought about by Ireland’s status as a dominion of the British Empire (Haslam 2003). Reforms introduced after the post war period did not broaden its function and capacity. Local government in Ireland is characterised by legal formalism, a general mistrust of localism, and an unwillingness to devolve significant power and functions as in other European states. Local government was not attractive to the revolutionaries who inherited the Irish Free State and subsequent governments. There was little demand from local councillors and citizens to change this practice. The Irish electorate, it is argued, may have been somewhat comfortable with a mix

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3 The shortfall in revenue from rates, it was argued, would be replaced by state grants. However, this was amended in 1983 when local authorities were required to levy local service charges. Such service charges were difficult to implement and enforce, however.

4 Benthamite Ideology is generally considered to encompass individualism, legalism and positivism.
of authoritarianism and democracy (Ferriter 2001). The weakness of local government in Ireland, argues Lee, is indicative of a paradox, namely the gap between the ability of the Irish to carry out its political and social affairs and the myth of self-reliance and self-sufficient state (Lee 1985).

3.3 Local Government Reform: From Government to Governance

This section will discuss the reform of local government in Ireland and the shift from government to governance. In addition to governance, there has been reform of operational components including financial management and recruitment within local government. Broadly, it is possible to identify both internal and external drivers for local government reforms, the development of the participatory governance landscape and the shift to more ‘bottom up’ approaches to subnational governance in Ireland. The impulse to reform local government, argues Chubb, emerged from an acknowledgment that sub-national government in Ireland had no resemblance to an ‘administrative jungle’ (Chubb 1992). This situation developed gradually from decades of ad hoc and disorganised attempts to address these weaknesses, as well as the existence of a myriad of subnational agencies now in operation. Further, as will be discussed in further detail below, the perceived success of ‘National Social Partnership’ had significant implications for the substance of local government reform in the 1990’s. Social Partnership in Ireland was initiated by national government in 1987 as a response to economic crisis, while the Better Local Government white paper emerged from the Department of Local Government, Heritage and Environment. Two significant developments discussed below are the Barrington Commission and Social Partnership. In terms of external drivers, this section of the chapter will discuss the influence of Europe.

3.3.1 The Influence of Europe

While the actions and preferences of national government actors are of fundamental importance, it is clear Europeanisation and the general adaptation to European norms has influenced the character and substance of the reform of local government in Ireland and the shift from government to governance. Europeanisation is characterised as the process by which EU policy-making impacts domestic structures and the processes by which domestic

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5 ‘Social Partnership’, a tri-partite or corporatist arrangement between government, trade unions and business groups, built on the work of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) established in 1973 under the auspices of the Department of An Taoiseach.
structures adapt to Europe (Rees and Connaughton 2009). Member States upon entry to the EU face pressures to adapt European norms and procedures. EU membership provides learning and policy templates as well as formal pressures to adapt governance structures and procedures. The European Union has encouraged the increase in local government capacities and the inclusion of a wider array of actors in local decision-making. Engagement with European regional policy has contributed to new institution building at subnational level.

In response to European Community (EC) regional policy, central government was compelled to reorganise local development policy and increase the participation of those affected by reforms at the local level. The 1988 reform of regional structural funds solidified partnership as a fundamental component in the management and delivery of regional policy. Prior to this, regional development policy was top down and concerned with national economic policy. Soon, European Structural and Cohesion funds had conditions attached including an emphasis on creation of partnership structures at the local level which involved civil society. These structures functioned largely outside or ran in parallel with the local government system (Adshead and Quinn 1998). The increase in EU-related initiatives required a considerable development in the capacity of regional structures culminating in the creation of eight regional authorities in 1993. Further, the European influence on National Development Plans stimulated the development of local partnership processes in areas of urban and rural development (Adshead and McInerney 2009).

Europe influenced the gradual reform of local government also. The European Charter of Local Self-Government devised in 1985, states “local self-government denotes the right and ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to manage and regulate a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and within the interests of the local population” (Callanan 2003b, p.4). The charter was signed by the Irish Government in 1997. A constitutional referendum held in 1999 brought Ireland into line with the rest of Europe and in compliance with the European Charter of Self Government. The text of the provision affirmed local government’s responsibility in promoting the interests of the local community and in defining local priorities. In addition, the most recent Local Government Reform Act 2014 has clear influences from Europe. In the view of one senior official in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, there is an awareness of the need to develop the capacity of local government in Ireland to that in other European states.

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6 This is exemplified by the 1994–1999 National Development Plan which included a specific Operational Programme devoted to Local Urban and Rural Development carried out, in part, through partnership processes.
In addition, documents from the Council of Europe have influenced the development of ‘Public Participation Networks’ (Interview Department of Environment Official 1 2014). The literature produced by the Council of Europe including the European Charter of Local Self Government and the Council of Europe’s *Code of Good Practice in Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process* influenced the design of Public Participation Networks (PPNs) (Interview PPN Working Group Members 1 and 2 2014).

### 3.3.2 Internal Drivers and the Significance of National Government

In the interpretivist constructivist view of Europeanisation, it is possible for member states to become socialised into European norms via diffusion, learning and persuasion. However, it is important not to overstate the influence of Europe on the reform of local government in Ireland. European norms and regulations can be mediated by domestic factors. Domestic factors, such as institutions, policies and culture, can assist or thwart adaptation and change (Rees and Connaughton 2009). In reality, the changes and reforms brought about by participation in European affairs has not affected all levels of government in Ireland equally (Connaughton 2009). The effects of Europeanisation, it is argued, have been diluted by Ireland’s history, political and social culture, nationalism and centralised structures of administration and government (Quinn and Connaughton 2009). For example, as outlined, between entry to the EEC in 1973 and 1985 there was no major reform of local government in Ireland. The impact of Europeanization, argues Connaughton, “was far less overt in terms of institutional structures and official awareness within local authorities” (Connaughton 2009, p.69).

Reform of local government in Ireland and the development of participatory governance therefore is not the direct result of Europeanisation. While providing learning and in some cases the stimulus to reform, changes in the structures of local government have distinct national characteristics and priorities. Internally, there was a growing awareness of the need to address the functional and structural inadequacies of local government within the national civil and public service and amongst some national politicians. The key driver of reform in Irish public administration, including changes to local government, was the senior civil service (Connaughton 2009). Local government reform was promoted largely by senior civil servants and not politicians as in a number of European states.
3.3.3 Barrington Commission and Report

An important stimulus for local government reform was the ‘Advisory Expert Committee on Local Government Reorganisation and Reform’ led by Tom Barrington. The committee published a series of recommendations in 1991, known as the ‘Barrington Report’, after the most comprehensive analysis of the system of local government undertaken in Ireland. The content of the report is reflective of a growing hostility in the 1970’s and 1980’s to centralisation and the growth of the state (Ferriter 2001). However, it must be emphasised that many of the issues highlighted by Barrington were referenced in the ‘Devlin Report’, a report of the ‘Public Services Organisation Review Group’, published in 1969. Devlin was critical of the doctrine of ‘ultra vires’ and identified the problem of central control of local government (Devlin 1969). Nevertheless, the Barrington Report, also critical of centralisation in Ireland, highlighted the lack of local energy, initiative and flexibility in dealing with changing economic and social circumstances. This lack of initiative, the report argued, was a consequence of rigid uniformity and poorly developed local democratic institutions. The importance of political commitment to the reform of local government and the need for local government in Ireland to be considered a ‘valid partner’ in government as well as a ‘legitimate democratic entity’ was recognised (Barrington 1991).

Barrington’s main recommendations included constitutional recognition of local government, devolution of functions to local government, greater attention to the policy role of councillors, financial independence of local authorities from central government, improving the responsiveness of local government to the public, and the relaxation of the system of ‘ultra vires’ (Barrington 1991). Without question, the report had a significant influence on BLG and its findings were generally accepted by the then government (Keoghan 2003). This led to the introduction of the Local Government Acts of 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994 which formally introduced many of Barrington’s recommendations but not the decentralisation of key functions and powers. The Local Government Act 1991 did relax the ‘ultra vires’ doctrine and introduced broad powers of general competence for local authorities to now act in the interests of local communities. There was also recognition that local government in Ireland was, in effect, hamstrung financially. If local government was to perform a greater role in the local community fiscal reform was required. In reality, the reforms introduced in the 1991 Act were determined by financial and technical dependence upon central government (Adshead and Tonge 2009).
3.3.4 Social Partnership

The national governance landscape which formalised the inclusion of new groups of actors in policy and political decision-making through ‘Social Partnership’ had an impact on the development of local participatory governance (Adshead 2011). In response to difficult economic circumstances and political instability in the late 1980’s the minority Fianna Fáil government pursued a more inclusive and consensus based approach to economic development. Social Partnership, initially a tri-partite or corporatist arrangement between government, trade unions and business groups, built on the work of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) established in 1973 under the auspices of the Department of An Taoiseach.

Social Partnership in Ireland, synonymous with the state’s economic growth during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period, is understood as a web of governance comprising “multiple sets of engagements between government departments and civil society actors” (Connolly 2008, p.8). For some, partnership indicated the government’s willingness to surrender its unique position in policy-making in favour of a more inclusive and consensus based approach (Adshead and Quinn 1998). National Social Partnership, extended to include community and voluntary organisations in 1996 to negotiate the fourth agreement, ‘Programme 2000’, formalised and institutionalised a new relationship between the state and civil society. The government had established the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in 1993 with responsibility to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific programmes and measures outlined in partnership agreements with a particular focus on issues of equality and social inclusion.

The extension of partnership to the ‘Community and Voluntary’ pillar influenced the reform of local government and creation of the local participatory governance landscape in Ireland, increasing civil society’s proximity to and ability to communicate with both elected representatives and central government. The work of the NESF, however, was largely overshadowed by the NESC which at first did not include the community and voluntary groups. The less cohesive and homogenous community and voluntary sector did not integrate into national partnership as successfully as the traditional corporatist partners with voluntary organisations critical of government and civil servant attitudes and behaviour. Much of the

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7 “Celtic Tiger” is the term used to describe the economy of Ireland from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s which saw rapid economic growth and prosperity.
sector’s focus on issues such as equality and social inclusion, it is argued, presented a challenge to a process largely concerned with matters of pay and taxation (Adshead 2011, Meade 2005). The inclusion of the community and voluntary organisations impinged upon existing relationships between unions, business and national government actors. In the view of other participants, the community and voluntary pillar were largely unable or unwilling to adapt to the existing culture of partnership. Despite the formal inclusion and participation of community and voluntary organisations, they are regarded as having little success in widening the scope of the debate on issues of social inclusion (Connolly 2008). The contradictory nature of the sector’s involvement in the process is captured by Murphy who states; “while there is no overwhelming case to stay in social partnership neither is there an overwhelming case to leave. The Community and Voluntary Pillar’s exit from social partnership is unlikely to make front-page news nor is our departure likely to change the nature of ideological debate in Ireland today. Remembering how hard it was to get a foot in the door, we know that if we leave, the door will be slammed shut behind us” (Murphy 2002, p.87).

However, the perceived success of partnership would influence the subsequent reforms in local government in the 1996 white paper BLG which praised the achievements of partnership at both local and national levels, arguing it had enabled communities “to take responsibility for their own affairs in an important exercise in participative democracy” (Government of Ireland 1996, p.29). More specifically the influence of partnership is evident in the composition of Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) which include ‘external members’ comprised of representatives from the business, union and community and voluntary sectors in governance subcommittees within the local authority. Partnership and the economic crisis of the 1980’s also contributed to an increased role for local civil society actors in local development through community based partnerships. The partnership agreement, Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), for example, influenced the establishment of ‘Area Based Partnerships’. These bodies represented the first series of governance processes created to tackle issues of local economic and social development. Similar to other structures, membership of ‘Area Based Partnerships’ commonly comprised representatives from trade unions, business and community and voluntary sectors.

However, it appears that central authorities made a conscious decision to establish such partnerships and bodies in parallel to local government, which played a limited role. This resulted in two divergent systems, one of functionally limited local government and a
collection of local development networks with little or no coordination (McInerney 2008). This led to the dearth of cohesion and alignment of development bodies and local government referenced in BLG which states; “through lack of resources and inability to respond to problems which transcend their traditional functions, local authorities have tended to be bypassed by the growth of new forms of community development organisations, many of which are attracting state and European Union (EU) support” (Government of Ireland 1996, p.8). BLG advanced efforts to align and coordinate the parallel systems with the aim of enhancing local democracy through allowing communities and their representatives to influence service delivery and the decision-making processes of local government (Forde 2005, McInerney 2008).

3.3.5 ‘Better Local Government’

After the relaxation of ‘ultra vires’ under the 1991 act, local government could now operate more independently. However, local authorities continued to operate under financial constraints and reform of local government continued to be on the national political agenda. The changing government in 1994 did not impact this. The Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left so-called ‘Rainbow’ Coalition government, pledged to reform local government in its new programme for government. The Devolution Commission, established in 1995, made a series of recommendations on the devolution of functions to local authorities. Although these recommendations were not acted upon, the ‘Rainbow’ Coalition sought to reform local government in 1996, initiating Better Local Government through the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

BLG can be considered a critical juncture in that it brought about substantial changes in the structure and capacity of local government. With origins in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and influenced by the perceived success of Social Partnership, the white paper centred on enhancing local democracy, serving the customer better, developing efficiency, and providing proper resources for local authorities. While BLG did not propose a significant transfer of powers from central to local government, it can be said to have inspired future legislation which extended competences to local authorities to better tackle issues of local importance. The document pledged to enhance local democracy mainly through constitutional recognition of local government, a reorganisation of the committee system, strengthening the role of local councillors and to reform financial management and methods of recruitment (Keoghan 2003). The paper highlighted a need to increase the influence of
elected representative’s vis-à-vis council officials, and to enhance their role in policy-making (Callanan 2005).

BLG has been criticised for a dearth of consultation with local authorities and the wider community. It is regarded by some as a form of centralised ‘top down’ local reform. BLG was introduced by the Department of Environment and Local Government with little or no consultation. After its introduction, the ‘Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of the Local Government and Local Development Systems’ did consult with social partners, elected representatives, the City and County Managers Association, County Enterprise Boards, and the national Community and Voluntary sector (Forde 2005). However, there was little substantial involvement of the local community. The taskforce did not engage in a more extensive country-wide consultation with citizens and local communities which, according to critics, could have fostered a greater connection between communities and local governance (Forde 2005). This is significant in the Irish case as, according to BLG, local government in Ireland “developed largely from a judicial system introduced under a colonial regime and from town corporations with limited community involvement; it tends therefore to lack the deep community roots that form the basis of continental local government” (Government of Ireland 1996, p.14). This is significant in the context of the cases in this study and will be explored in further detail in subsequent chapters.

A number of core features of BLG were incorporated into law through the Local Government Act 2001, which solidified the enhanced role of elected members, supported the involvement of local interests in policy-making and helped to modernise local government through national legislation (Government of Ireland 1996). Crucially, it also encouraged a move away from local government as solely a deliverer of services to a facilitator and coordinator of local governance (McInerney and Adshead 2010). In the Irish context, with the creation of SPCs and the inclusion of civil society actors, the act signalled a shift toward a more participatory culture within local governance (McInerney and Adshead 2010).

3.4 The Local Participatory Governance Landscape in Ireland

Having explored the shift from government to governance in Ireland and outlined the broad functions of local government, this section of the chapter will discuss the creation and characteristics of the participatory processes researched in the thesis as well as the actors involved. Since the publication of the BLG document, a number of local governance
processes including Strategic Policy Committees, City/County Development Boards and Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee have been introduced. Other mechanisms with this landscape, such as County Childcare Committees, LEADER and RAPID, are not part of this study. RAPID or “Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development” was established in 2001. The RAPID process originated from a national partnership agreement and lacks a legislative base. Initial attempts were made to include RAPID in this study. However, the economic crisis of 2008 saw the reduction of government funding for the project, including RAPID coordinators employed by local authorities. This led to the effective suspension of the process within local government in 2012 and 2013.

Participatory processes in Ireland are top-down and originate from national government. The selection of SPCs, CDBs and LTACCs is justified in terms of their location within the participatory governance landscape and their contrasting origins and focus. SPCs reformed existing local government committees with the addition of civil society actors and are embedded within the administrative environment of the local authority with distinct norms and values. CDBs can be considered a quasi-independent process supported by specialised local authority staff. The LTACC represents a largely issue-specific process which involves the participation of a marginalised group underrepresented in traditional democratic arenas. The issue of Traveller accommodation is a persistent “wicked” problem in Irish policy. Table 1 gives an overview of the key features of the three processes. The following section will discuss the origins and structure of each process in detail.
Table 1 Key Features of Local Participatory Governance Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>CDB</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>National Policy</td>
<td>National Policy</td>
<td>National Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Local and National Public Officials, Chairs of SPCs and town councillors, Local Development and Civil Society</td>
<td>Local Authority Officials, Social Workers, Local Councillors, Traveller representatives</td>
<td>Local Authority Officials, Local Councillors, Social Partners, Environment and Community and Voluntary Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function / Focus</td>
<td>Local Development</td>
<td>Traveller Accommodation</td>
<td>Different Policy Areas of Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/Review</td>
<td>Weak-No formal oversight</td>
<td>Weak-NTACC</td>
<td>Weak-No formal oversight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support / Servicing</td>
<td>Specialised staff Community and Enterprise section of Local Authority</td>
<td>Housing Section Local Authority</td>
<td>Senior Officials across Local Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.1 Strategic Policy Committees

Strategic Policy Committees were legislated for in section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001. Prior to the act, their remit and structure were developed by a series of guidelines published in 1997 and later revised in 1999. The SPCs system established a committee for all major service areas in the local authority. SPCs, which replaced an existing local authority committee system of local councillors, are advisory, not decision making, and accountable to the full elected council. Policies recommended or approved at SPCs are sent to the full council which has the final decision under its reserved functions. In addition, a ‘Corporate Services Group’ in each local authority was introduced comprising the different chairs of SPCs. This group was intended to function as a so-called mini cabinet in local government thereby strengthening the role of elected representatives and SPCs.

As outlined, SPCs were influenced by the perceived success of social partnership at national level. The guidelines for the operation of SPCs were drafted by a committee appointed by national government which included representatives of different social
partners. Two thirds of the membership consisted of elected members of the council with one
third comprising of so-called sectoral interests from the broad range of civil society. This is
based very much on the experience and format of national partnership with the involvement
of community and voluntary organisations, trade unions and business interests. However, for
the most part, politicians were not involved in national partnership discussions. This is a key
difference between SPCs and national partnership processes. SPCs expand the range of
participants of partnerships to include environment or ganisations and in some cases
representatives of academic institutions. Interestingly, the election mechanism for the
sectoral interests on SPCs varies. Trade unions and business organisations could nominate
their representatives through national organisations. The community and voluntary groups,
however, were required to select its representatives through local processes most commonly
the local ‘Community and Voluntary Forum’ or ‘Community Platform’. These entities
generally comprised a wide variety of local community groups and associations ranging from
cultural or ganisations to groups with a distinct social inclusion focus. Environment
representatives were generally selected from local Environment organisations. This was
largely the same in the case of the CDB.

Each local authority set up four or five SPC focused on specific policy areas. However, the precise structure of each SPC is a matter for each individual local authority. Following the 1999 local elections, each local authority drew up a so-called SPC scheme which detailed the number of SPCs, the policy focus, number of members as well as the representation of sectoral interests. The range of issues discussed at SPCs includes housing, planning, and environment and transportation issues. Each SPC is serviced by the senior local authority staff with responsibility for a particular area, most commonly the Director of Service. However, specialised staff or additional capacity building for public officials was not provided.

In terms of local participatory governance, the creation of SPCs is significant. It introduced the concept of formal participation in local governance and can be understood as a blending of representative and participatory forms of democracy (McInerney and Adshead 2010). However, while SPCs are an attempt to supplement representative democracy, the extent of their participatory nature has been disputed (Forde 2005). In reality, the strengthening of the role of the elected representative in policy and decisions was a key aim in their development. A more robust role for councillors in policy, it was hoped, could serve as a democratic counter-balance to the power of the manager and senior officials (Adshead
and Tonge 2009). Existing study and evaluation of SPCs is rather limited. However, criticisms identified previously include minor logistical issues concerning meetings to more significant matters such as their relationship with the wider local government sector and the attitude and performance of members. A report undertaken by the Irish Public Administration in 2004 argued “SPCs will not work unless their members (both elected representatives and external members) treat them seriously, demonstrate a commitment to engage in policy matters, contribute to SPC discussions, and take ‘ownership’ through accepting responsibility for SPC recommendations” (Callanan 2004b, p.6).

3.4.2 County/City Development Boards

City/County Development Boards (CDBs) were established in 2000 in part to respond to the challenge of the increased integration of public and local service delivery and to better integrate local government and local development in Ireland. Similar to SPCs, they originate from the BLG white paper and were subsequently legislated for in the 2001 Act. 34 Boards were set up, one in each of the different local authority areas. One of the primary aims of the CDBs was to join up local government and local development and to enhance co-ordination, co-operation and integration amongst existing local bodies primarily through the production of a local development plan or strategy. In broad terms, local development entities in Ireland had a remit to promote social and economic inclusion but previously local government had played a limited role in this.

One of the main functions of the CDBs was the creation of an economic, social and cultural development strategy for each local authority area. CDBs normally numbered about 29 members from a diverse range of sectors and organisations. The membership of each CDB was comprised of local authority officials (most commonly the County Manager) and local elected representatives, most commonly the chairs of the SPCs and some town councillors, representatives of local statutory agencies, including FÁS, Enterprise Ireland, and the Department of Social Protection, as well as representatives of local development groups and agencies. Similar to SPCs, community and voluntary representatives were drawn from the Community and Voluntary forum. Moreover, representatives of environment organisations could participate.

While occupying a quasi-independent status within and alongside the local authority, each CDB was serviced by senior local authority officials and chaired by a member of the local authority. According to guidelines “a Board shall, insofar as is provided by this
section, operate under the aegis of the relevant county council or city council it is otherwise independent in the performance of its functions” (Government of Ireland 2001, p.103). Further, according to the act, “a public authority, local authority, or other body which is represented on a Board, shall insofar as is not inconsistent with the performance of its functions— (i) co-operate with the Board in its work, and (ii) endeavour to comply with a request from the Board in respect of information of relevance to its functions” (Government of Ireland 2001, p.104). This has led to criticism of the rather confused nature of the process in which the CDB is designed to be independent of the local authority yet was chaired by an elected member and serviced by senior local authority officials (McInerney and Adshead 2010). In 2000, substructures including ‘Social Inclusion Monitoring’ (SIM) working groups were established within each CDB. SIMs had the remit to enhance co-ordination and advance joint action on issues of social exclusion.

Similar to SPCs, academic study and evaluation of CDBs is rather limited. Although lacking a formal national evaluation or monitoring structure, the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government instructed each County/City Development Board to carry out a review of its strategy in 2005, while a national independent review of CDBs undertaken by the Department of Environment was published in January 2008. This review included a survey of senior local authority officials but did not extend to community and voluntary organisations and officials from statutory agencies. While not comprehensive, the report did seek the views of non-local authority actors including community and voluntary participants (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2008). This report highlighted the importance of personnel to the effectiveness and success of each CDB. According to the report, CDBs can ‘punch above their weight’ in terms of influencing the co-ordination of local service delivery where key local authority personnel, for example Director of Service for Community and Enterprise, are of a very high quality and have excellent reputation, skills and relationships with other organisations (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2008). However, in situations in which this is not the case, the effectiveness of CDBs was called into question. “CDBs, according to one contribution to the report, were effective where there is a spirit of goodwill and cooperation between agencies, and where objectives are clear and actions/programmes are clear” (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2008, p.54).

Key issues affecting the level of engagement with CDBs also highlighted in the review included the nature of individuals nominated and the degree of guidance on their role
by their parent organisation/agency/department; level of awareness of best practice in facilitating effective integrated service delivery; the quality of personnel; training; the nature of informal relationships; and the level of incentives of respective parties to engage in co-ordinated local service delivery. In addressing the nomination of social partners and the specific role of community and voluntary representatives, the report references the importance of ensuring the best and most representative individuals who understand specific local requirements are nominated. The importance of resources to support the participation of community and voluntary representatives was also highlighted (Indecon International Economic Consultants 2008).

3.4.3 LTACC and Irish Travellers

This section will discuss the origins and rationale of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC). First, a brief discussion of Irish Travellers and Traveller accommodation policy will be conducted. This detailed discussion is necessary as the LTACC is focused on a “wicked” problem, Traveller accommodation, and involves the participation of a marginalised group with a historical difficult relationship with the Irish state. The LTACC encompasses the participation of members of the Travelling community as well as settled representatives of Traveller organisations and projects. In consideration of this, it is worth exploring the characteristics of the Travelling community in Ireland as well as its historical relationship with the Irish state.

The Pavee Community, known colloquially as Travellers, is a small indigenous ethnic minority. According to the 2011 Census, an estimated thirty to forty thousand Travellers reside in Ireland or approximately 7,765 Traveller households defined as containing at least one Traveller. This represents approximately 0.6 per cent of the overall population, 90 per cent of whom were born in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2012). The 2011 census figure on the Traveller population represents a 32 per cent increase since 2006. According to a report undertaken on behalf of the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC) in 2014, the number of Traveller families within each local authority area varies considerably. The county with the highest number of Traveller families in the country is Co. Galway (1,120 families), followed by Co. Dublin (994 families), Cork (816 families) and Limerick (652 families). In addition, the total number of families identified by
the local authorities as living permanently in their local authority areas as of 2014 was 9,095 or 98% of all Traveller families (KW Research and Associates 2014).

Travellers are generally considered one of the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups in Irish society (Helleiner 2000, MacLaughlin 1996, Royall 2010). Issues such as racism, social exclusion, lack of recognition of cultural identity have been identified as key health issues (All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010). A growing body of research indicates Travellers are more likely to experience poorer outcomes across a range of indicators including employment, health, education and training (Coates et al. 2012). According to the Central Statistics Office, Irish Travellers are more likely to be unemployed, to leave school early, and to lack access to a car and technology such as the internet (Central Statistics Office 2012). Poverty levels for Travellers remain high due to a range of issues including high unemployment and dependence on social welfare.

Travellers have been long regarded and regard themselves as distinct from other sections of Irish society. Travellers are characterised as an indigenous minority with a distinct culture, value system and common language. While they share nationality, language, race and religion with the settled Irish population, Travellers are considered distinct from mainstream Irish society due to their shared common cultural practices, values, language, customs, oral traditions and nomadism. This is based on distinctive cultural practices, the Ghammon language, as well as genealogical linkages (Keane 2005, MacLaughlin 2000, Royall 2010). While Travellers and Traveller organisations sought recognition of ethnicity and specific ethnic status, the Irish state refused to designate Travellers as an ethnic minority until February 2017. Much of the academic literature on Traveller ethnicity describes nomadism as a key feature of Travellers’ ethnicity (Hayes 2006, O’Kelly 1994). Nomadism is considered central to the understanding of Traveller society and has standing social, cultural and economic functions for Travellers. Nomadism represents a different understanding of accommodation, of work and of life in general, it is not simply a lifestyle choice, argue Traveller advocates (Hayes 2006). While the vast majority of Travellers are no longer nomadic, nomadism remains important to Traveller identity and culture. Scepticism surrounding the ethnicity of Travellers and the importance of nomadism is evident in local government and this will be discussed in the context of the depth of participation in chapters 8 and 9.
The role of local government in the provision of Traveller accommodation is significant and local authorities have a clear policy remit and authority in the area. The number of Traveller families accommodated by or with the assistance of local authorities has risen since the introduction of the LTACC, NTACC and the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act (Coates et al. 2009). For example, approximately 60 per cent of Irish Traveller families are housed with the direct assistance of local government. This rises to 85 per cent when Travellers in the private rented sector in receipt of public subsidies is included (Coates et al. 2015). Accommodation for Travellers is provided across a range of options including standard local authority housing which is financed from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP), Traveller-specific accommodation such as group housing and halting site bays, funded through 100% capital grant, private housing assisted by local authority or voluntary housing bodies, private rented accommodation and through their own resources. This funding is allocated by the department and must be drawn down by local authorities.

Policy on Traveller accommodation has evolved incrementally and has been shaped to some degree by the findings of three main reports (Coates et al. 2015). Historically, Irish settlement policy considered Travellers as poor Irish who would absorb and become members of the settled community with increased access to education, housing, and employment (Helleiner 2000). The approach of the Irish government to the issue of Traveller accommodation has been described as a shift from policies of “assimilationism to integrationism to (weak) multiculturalism” (Norris and Winston 2005, p.815). The ‘Report of the Commission on Itinerancy’ in 1963 represents the first official state response to the Travelling community in Ireland. The Commission marked a noticeable shift in social policy from anti-interventionism to more direct state involvement (Crowley 2005). The main pillar of this policy was the assimilation of Travellers, referred to as ‘itinerants’ throughout the report, into the general community through housing of Travellers in standard accommodation units. The Commission’s report advocated the settlement, reintegration and “absorption” of Travellers into the general population as well as their rehabilitation. Government adopted much of the report’s recommendations as policy. Increased access to education and standard housing, it was argued, could ‘civilise’ Travellers and solve the ‘problem’ of itineracy and residing on the road. This report, argues Crowley, mobilised a national settlement, assimilation, and rehabilitation programme for Travellers.
In comparison to the 1963 document, ‘A Report of the Travelling People Review Body’ (1983) represented a departure for Traveller accommodation policy. The review established in January 1981 by the Ministers for the Environment and for Health and Social Welfare was tasked with reviewing existing policies and services for Travellers. It argued for an end to the policy of assimilation or ‘absorption’ of Irish Travellers into settled communities. Instead, the report emphasised the integration of both communities and the construction of Traveller specific accommodation including group schemes. It advocated the building of halting sites only in cases where Travellers did not wish to be accommodated in standard housing. In the years after the 1983 review, the numbers of Travellers in halting sites increased as did the numbers of Travellers accommodated in Group Housing Schemes.

In 1993, a ‘Task Force on the Travelling Community’ was established to “advise and report on the needs of travellers and on government policy generally in relation to travellers, with specific reference to the co-ordination of policy approaches by Government Departments and local authorities” (Task Force on the Travelling Community 1995, p.67). The group published a report in 1995 which placed an emphasis on inequalities experienced by Travellers and emphasised their cultural distinctiveness, focused on key issues such as health, education and housing and the nature of relationships between Travellers and the settled community. The report recognised the importance of nomadism, extended family, and language as key features of Traveller culture. Traveller culture, it recommended, should be recognised and taken into consideration. The provision of settled, Traveller specific accommodation and short term transient sites to better facilitate nomadism was endorsed.8

However, the provision of Traveller accommodation has been criticised for a so-called policy implementation deficit (Norris and Winston 2005). Underspending of the Traveller specific accommodation budget is evident in the under delivery of units of accommodation identified and targeted within Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAP) and by the 1995 Taskforce report. This is a consistent feature of the provision of accommodation and predates the recent economic crisis. This underspending by local

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8 The provision of 3,100 units of accommodation, incorporating 900 standard and group houses, 1,200 serviced bays on permanent halting sites was recommended. In addition, a network of serviced transient halting sites providing 1,000 bays throughout the country to cater for the normal patterns of movement of Travellers was endorsed. Following consideration of the report, the national strategy for Traveller accommodation incorporating the principal recommendations of the task force in relation to Traveller accommodation was adopted by then Government on 26 March 1996. A new national programme for Traveller accommodation was to be located within the local government sector.
authorities was acknowledged by the Irish government in its submission to the European Committee of Social Rights (European Committee of Social Rights 2016). Opposition from settled residents and local elected representatives to both the housing of Travellers in settled local authority accommodation, as well as the development of Traveller specific accommodation particularly halting sites, has been highlighted as significant to the provision of Traveller accommodation (Fanning 2012). In 2005, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, for example, acknowledged that the opposition of local residents was the key barrier to the implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAP) (Department of Justice 2005). The importance of support of local communities has been identified by senior local authority officials in this research and elsewhere who argue the successful implementation of TAPs is not solely the responsibility of the local authority.9

The opposition of residents and political representatives to accommodating Travellers is a historical issue in Ireland and can be traced back to the 1940’s and 1950’s (Helleiner 2000). The opposition of local residents to Traveller accommodation is often manifested in legal proceedings and planning objections. Under planning regulations, local authorities must publish notices in the media on all developments to facilitate consultation. This includes Traveller specific accommodation. Publishing details of proposed units of accommodation enables opposition from residents groups to Traveller accommodation and can result in planning delays. These objections can hold up or prevent the delivery of accommodation, including the implementation of units set out in TAPs. The issue of Traveller accommodation is considered politically sensitive for many local councillors. Support for Traveller accommodation is considered detrimental to a local councillor’s electoral success with opposition to Traveller accommodation likely to increase the political support for local candidates in some communities. This was acknowledged by a number of local elected representatives interviewed in this research.10

Despite the emphasis of the Task Force and subsequent legislation on Traveller culture, government policy has placed restrictions on the realisation of a nomadic lifestyle in recent decades. Elements of acts governing Traveller accommodation and subsequent

9 Dick Brady, Chief Executive of Dublin City Council, addressing an Oireachtas Committee in 2013, argued “A successful programme requires the support and goodwill of the Traveller community and also that of potential neighbours and local communities.”

10 The contentious issue influences national politics also. For example, one former TD explained the loss of her seat in a general election, in part, due to her refusal to oppose agreed units of accommodation. She described how local residents’ associations within her constituency sought guarantees from election candidates to oppose Traveller accommodation (Fanning 2012).
legislation have made the nomadic lifestyle of Travellers more difficult. Under Section 32 of the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act, local authorities are empowered to evict Travellers from public land and from the roadside. Travellers’ homes could be confiscated or removed if considered unfit for human habitation due to a lack of proper services, if they are likely to interfere with public or private amenities or likely to pose a considerable risk to personal safety or public safety. The government introduced the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act in 2002 which further strengthened the power of local authorities and An Garda Síochána to evict Travellers from public land.11 According to the government, the legislation was introduced as a means to prevent large-scale encampments but was used widely on families living on their own or in smaller groups (Humphreys 2003). Such legislation makes it difficult for nomadic Travellers to adhere to the law particularly in the absence of a network of adequate transient sites. This is significant as according to the recent report of the European Committee of Social Rights published in May 2016, only five local authorities provide official sites of transient accommodation (European Committee of Social Rights 2016).

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) has foundations in national legislation governing the provision of Traveller accommodation. The 1995 report from the Taskforce resulted in a statutory duty to consult with Travellers on the issue of accommodation. National legislation on the provision of Traveller accommodation was introduced in 1998 leading to the establishment of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACC) in local authorities. Sections 20, 21 and 22 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 require each local authority to establish a LTACC and to create a Traveller Accommodation Programme in consultation with the LTACC. The primary functions of LTACCs include (a) to advise in relation to the preparation and implementation of any accommodation programme for the functional area of the appointing authority concerned (b) to advise on the management of the accommodation for Travellers and (c) to provide liaison between Travellers and members of the appointing authority concerned (Government of Ireland 1998).

Each LTACC is established for five years after local authority elections. Membership generally consists of local authority officials and local elected representatives as well as

11 Part 11A was inserted into the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994 and amended section of the 1998 act. This made trespass a criminal offense. Nomadic Travellers could be arrested without a warrant and forced to move on without any alternative accommodation being furnished.
Travellers and representatives of Traveller organisations. Elected representatives should comprise no more than half of each committee, however. The nomination of LTACC Traveller representatives is most commonly facilitated through local Traveller groups and Traveller projects. However, in some cases, Traveller representatives have been selected by local authorities and in a small number of cases, representatives were selected through the Traveller Health Projects and Interagency Groups (Irish Traveller Movement 2011). Similar to SPCs, the LTACC is embedded within the administrative system of the local authority. By and large, the responsibility for the operation of the process resides within the departments of housing and is administered by senior officials including the Director of Service for Housing. Further local authority support may be provided by Senior Executive Officers, Administrative Officers, Traveller Liaison Officers, Traveller Accommodation Officers and Social Workers. This varies across the different local authorities.

The establishment of the LTACCs represents an introduction of a participatory governance dimension into the provision of Traveller accommodation at the local level in Ireland with the participation of Travellers, representatives of Traveller organisations, local authority officials and local elected representatives (McInerney and Adshead 2010). LTACCs are an attempt to introduce a forum on the contentious issue of Traveller accommodation in communities as well as advise the authority on the preparation of subsequent implementation of the TAP. Crucially, the LTACC also represents the primary mechanism for the engagement of Travellers with local government and one of the few mechanisms for their participation in Irish politics and policy making. LTACC guidelines instruct local authorities to take “reasonable steps” to implement TAPs. Although the committees can advise the local authority on aspects of the draft accommodation plan, subsequent adoption is a reserved function of elected members of the local authority. Local councils are required to produce a programme but there is no requirement to draw down funding or any sanctions for failing to provide units set out in the TAP.

3.5 Summary and PPN

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the role and function of local government and the development and origins of the participatory governance landscape in Ireland. Within this, the establishment and structure of the three participatory processes under study in this research was discussed. In addition, Traveller accommodation policy, Irish Travellers and their relationship with the state was explored. The chapter emphasises the limited functional
The development of participatory governance in Ireland is largely a consequence of national government policy which was carried out with limited consultation and partnership with local communities and local authorities. In contrast with other international examples, the creation of participatory processes within local government in Ireland is not indicative of support of public administration or local politicians for participatory democracy or a belief in its merits. The development of participatory governance in Ireland is an example of largely top-down policy making. The national thrust of policy in this area deprives local authorities of a sense of ownership on the institutions of participatory governance.

The centralised approach to policy in the realm of public participation is further evident in the context of recent reform of local government in Ireland, and the overall system of civic engagement with local authorities, Public Participation Networks (PPN). PPNs are designed to take an active formal role in policy-making and oversight activities in the local authority’s area of responsibility and serve as the primary conduit through which each local authority connects with the community & voluntary and environmental sectors. Since 2014, the PPN is the primary mechanism for the selection of citizens and civil society actors to participate within local participatory institutions. Similar to the origins of SPCs, LTACCs and CDBs, PPNs, which now structure the overall relationship of civil society with local government and involvement in local participatory governance, were designed nationally but are implemented locally according to strict guidelines.

The establishment of PPNs in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 follows a report of the ‘Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government’ published in December 2013. The group was tasked to make recommendations concerning more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision-making process at local government level by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and to replace the ‘Community and Voluntary Fora’ structure. The working group operated in a short time frame and completed its work in approximately eight weeks. The short time frame placed constraints on their ability to work and engage in institutional design. For example, the draft report of the working group was not put out for consultation with the public although the group did receive some written submissions. Some members of the working group were dissatisfied with the amount of time available to complete its work. While the process was not entirely satisfactory to all members, the group endeavoured to reach the best possible
outcome considering the time constraints and parameters set out by the Minister of the Department.

One member indicated:

*I would have been much happier with a process in which we would have taken submissions, where we have sent out a draft for consultation, where we would have had hearings even, where people could come in and present.* (PPN Working Group Member 1)

The member also reflected:

*It [the timeframe for the establishment of PPNs] was far too tight. I would qualify that by saying I am a realist in the political situation and something was going to get put in, something was going to be done. Some type of structure was going to be put in place. So, it was much better for us to come up with something that was possible within the timeframe within the parameters that had been set. And I think we did that.* (ibid)

The PPN is a further example of largely national design and local delivery and their establishment suggests a top-down; one size fits all approach within participatory governance continues. Further, the lack of time afforded to the group to engage in institutional design and engage in wider consultation is indicative of a lack of capacity and planning within national government in the area of local participatory governance.
Chapter 4 Identifying Concepts for Empirical Inquiry

This chapter will identify areas of potential importance to assessing and explaining variation in the depth of participation. While not representative of all relevant areas of research within participatory governance, a comprehensive review of the literature highlights key concepts such as voice and influence, trust and legitimacy and potential explanatory factors which can influence this. This discussion is intended to provide justification for the selected concepts used to examine the depth of participation in this study. The precise operationalization of these concepts for the purpose of measurement through quantitative analysis will be explored in chapter five. The first section will identify concepts of importance to the dependent variable or the depth of participation. The second part will deal with key theoretical arguments which identify potential explanatory variables that may cause variation in the depth of participation. The explanatory variables include both institutional and individual level factors. The individual level factors include the actions and disposition of public and elected officials as well as the characteristics, capacities and motivations of public participants who take part.

4.1 The Depth of Participation

4.1.1 Voice

Voice and communication is of clear significance to participation and participatory democracy. Irrespective of the level of authority of the participatory process, voice is a means for citizens to shape and to influence policy and decisions. Traditional forms of political voice include contacting public officials and political representatives or engaging in protest activities. However, voice within participation is direct and not mediated by elected representatives. Participatory governance involves face to face encounters between public administration, elected representatives, and members of the public in which citizen and civil society actors personally exercise voice, increasing the likelihood that their ideas, concerns, interests, and values are incorporated in decisions taken by public authorities (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). In the context of participation, voice is a means for citizens to express preferences directly to political and administrative elites without political representatives, to form judgements collectively through reason, and shape future decisions and democratic outcomes (Goodhart et al. 2012, Fung 2006).
Voice is a key theme of the deliberative and participatory democracy literature. Proponents of more deliberative forms of collective decision making emphasise the importance of reasoning and persuasion in which citizens become wiser and more understanding of different views and perspectives through discussion (Fung 2004). According to Barber, ‘talk’ is fundamental to democracy allowing citizens to overcome narrow self-interests, and to justify and renew political beliefs and convictions (Barber 1984). The importance of communication has been highlighted by Young, who in the ideal of communicative democracy considers “democracy as a process of communication among citizens and public officials” (Young 2000, p.52). Smith, moreover, identifies the opportunity to discuss and debate policy as an element of deeper participation (Smith 2005). Increasing citizens’ voice, it is argued, can potentially make public institutions more accountable and responsive to the needs of the public and their demands (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). Within participatory processes, communication and dialogue is understood as the means in which actors interact and behave (Mannarini and Talò 2013). Communication therefore has the potential to shape how public officials and citizens understand each other, make decisions, and solve problems (Bartels 2013). Fung identifies several modes of communication within a participatory process including listening, expressing preferences, giving advice or expertise, as well as bargaining, negotiating and deliberating (Fung 2006).

However, communication in a democratic process can be one-way, or top-down from elites to citizens, reciprocal, and/or deliberative (Gastil 2008). Public presence or increasing the opportunity of members of the public to participate does not equate with having substantive opportunities to give voice and to influence the participatory process or public policy. Voice may be dominated or controlled by some types of actors, for example public officials and elected representatives who participate with citizens. Many studies reveal how the number of citizen actors is related to their subsequent confidence and willingness to contribute to proceedings. Also, the conduct of chairpersons and facilitators are crucial in ensuring the quality of voice between different actors (Smith 2009). Participation and deliberation, argue Fraser and Young, can serve to reproduce inequality through the dominance of particular societal groups, their narratives and preferences. This is largely a consequence of so-called false consensus based on the views and concerns of the dominant actors generated within more discursive forms of democracy in addition to the privileging of certain forms of dialogue and diction (Young 2000, Fraser 1992, Young 1996).
Participatory processes as well as deliberative arenas can privilege certain forms of speaking over others. For example, norms of proper speaking can lead to bias against people with accents or who express themselves emotationally. Young describes the potential for participation to produce internal exclusion in which certain people’s contributions and perspectives dominate discussions or giving greater weight within participatory or deliberative processes (Young 2000). The instrumental rationality of public officials, it is argued, can clash with the communicative rationality of citizens which is often less concerned with the efficient fulfilment of goals and objectives (Kelly 2004). This may lead to a preference for more so-called dispassionate and “disembodied” reason giving within public administration in contrast to the narrative or emotive style of members of the public (Young 2000). In situations in which voice and styles of communication do not mesh, citizens and public officials may have to develop communicative capacity, which is understood as the ability to recognise and break through dominant patterns of communication by adapting the nature, tone and conditions of their conservations to the situation at hand (Bartels 2013).

In light of this discussion, the extent to which participants within participatory processes possess the opportunity to give voice, to discuss and debate policy, and the degree to which contributions are respected by public officials and elected representatives is of significance to the depth of participation.

4.1.2 Influence and Levels of Authority and Power

A key focus within the literature is the distinction between the levels of authority of participatory processes which vary to a significant degree. It is clear that the extent of citizens’ authority is a critical dimension within the conceptualisation of more empowered forms of participation. One of the primary aims of institutions of participatory governance, or ‘thicker’ or ‘deeper’ forms of democracy, in addition to the normative concerns of so-called ‘radical democrats’, is to empower citizens to play a greater role in governing themselves (Goodhart et al. 2012, Barber 1984, Pateman 2012). The authority of participation can vary from advisory or consultative bodies to power sharing in co-governance or so-called ‘empowered’ forms of participatory governance (Fung and Wright 2001).

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has identified a ‘spectrum’ of public participation from informing, consulting, involving, collaborating to empowering citizens (IAP2 2007). This definition is notable as the authors are explicit in distinguishing between participation, information and consultation. Information and
consultation do not afford real authority to citizens. The IAP2 identifies seven core values of public participation. These include the right of participants to engage in decision-making, the recruiting those potentially affected by governance decisions, and providing citizens the information required to participate meaningfully (IAP2 2007). Indeed, citizens’ ability to influence decision-making is often regarded as fundamental to the assessment of a participatory process or democratic innovation. ‘Beyond the Ballot’, identifies five distinct categories of participation, ranging from consultation, deliberation, direct democracy, e-democracy, and co-governance (Smith 2005).

In a more radical conceptualisation, Arnstein’s ‘Ladder of Participation’, which distinguishes between different levels of participatory power, places citizen manipulation by elites at the bottom and “citizen control” at the top (Arnstein 1969). Arnstein’s view of citizen participation equates participation with power. A participatory process that fails to transfer authority to citizens, she argues, is ‘tokenistic’ (Arnstein 1969). According to Carole Pateman, participation is the equal right of participation in decision-making (Pateman 1970). This ethos is echoed in her 2012 article, ‘Participatory Democracy Revisited’, in which she argues citizens have “the right to participate in decision-making about their collective life and to live within authority structures that make such participation possible” (Pateman 2012, p.15). The importance of the participation of citizens in decision-making is echoed by Benjamin Barber who maintains citizens should take part directly “not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently enough and in particular when basic policies are being decided and when significant power is being deployed” (Barber 1984, p.151).

In most recent attempts to conceptualise participation, decision-making capability distinguishes ‘participation’ from participation defined with adjectives such as ‘empowered’ or ‘deep’. Similar to Pateman, Fung, in his concept of ‘empowered’ participation, argues that “people should have substantial and equal opportunities to participate directly in the decisions that affect them” (Fung 2004, p.4). The importance of authority or power is echoed by Wampler who, when discussing the deepening of democracy, argues, “if an democratic governments are unwilling to delegate real authority to citizens, participatory programs are more likely to be formal shells with little policy or democratic content” (Wampler 2008, p.77). Participatory processes with limited levels of authority and influence, it is argued, undermine the ‘deepening’ of democracy and participation.

In the view of any theorists, the lack of decision-making power equates to ‘emasculated’, ‘pseudo’ or ‘cosmetic’ participation (Arnstein 1969, Pateman 2012, Pateman...
1970). There is a growing awareness and dissatisfaction with so-called “pseudo” or “tokenistic” participation (Pateman 2012). Participation as currently facilitated and institutionalised, it is argued, has largely failed to fulfil its democratizing and decision-making potential (Pateman 1970, Pateman 2012, Barber 1984, Burton 2009). More critically, Leal argues that participation has been stripped of much of its political and transformative elements with the “governance driven” application of participation largely as a sanitised depoliticised instrument to maintain and justify the status quo (Alejandro Leal 2007). This encompasses dissatisfaction with the development and facilitation of participatory processes by public authorities.

A conflict between so-called governance driven participation and demands from civil society and participatory democrats for more empowered participation is apparent. From the perspective of public and elected officials, citizen participation is typically concerned with citizen input instead of citizen empowerment. It is a means to gain citizen advice and improve services thereby increasing the legitimacy of public policies and not a means to devolve authority to citizens and civil society (Warren 2009a). It is possible for the outcomes or outputs of participatory processes to be ignored by public authorities (Smith 2009). Collective outputs formed in a deliberative and an egalitarian manner during the participatory process may not be implemented by public authorities or transformed into public action (Fung and Wright 2001). Participatory processes, therefore, can produce collaborative and inclusive outputs which are not implemented and do not become public policy. The most substantive form of influence is when decisions or outputs of processes become public policy and are transformed into public action (Pateman 2012, Fung 2004).

However, much of the participatory governance landscape within sub-national government does not devolve decision-making authority to citizens and civil society. Participatory institutions are consultative or advisory or perhaps co-decision making. The participatory processes in this study are largely advisory and lack authority or power vis-à-vis democratic institutions. That said, they offer the potential for citizens to influence different aspects of policy-making and involve sustained relationships between members of the public and political and administrative elites. In light of this study makes the distinction between citizens’ perceived influence within the participatory process, the level of authority of the participatory process, and the ability to determine and influence wider public policy. Assessing the extent of influence is not a simple question of decision-making power. Public influence within participatory processes, for example, includes agendas or the types of issues
discussed as well as wider policy influence and decisions (Smith 2009). The measure of perceived influence operationalised in chapter 5 will measure the perceived influence within each case while the qualitative data will expand this to focus more on the impact on wider local authority policy and the level of authority of each participatory institution.

4.1.3 Democratic Participation and Legitimacy

Legitimacy has been an important driver in the proliferation of experiments with participatory forms of democracy and governance. Participation is considered a means to boost the legitimacy of government decisions amidst a decline in trust and support of democratic institutions. Legitimacy is increased through the injection of citizen preferences more directly into the policy-making process, thereby potentially producing a greater alignment between the public will and the decisions of public authorities (Fung 2015). In this view, legitimacy is both a driver and an outcome of deeper and substantive forms of democratic participation. Legitimacy, it is argued, can produce a ‘reservoir’ of support or goodwill for democratic institutions and their outputs (Weatherford 1992). The democratic legitimacy of government has been described as the citizens’ willingness to accept the actions and decisions of governors even if these actions and decisions do not align with their preferences and/or goals (Gustavsen et al. 2014a). It is considered a product of the collective beliefs of the public in relation to the acceptability of government or the product of citizens’ attitudes and beliefs about government (Johnson 2014).

The legitimacy of government or a democratic institution is understood as an endorsement of that institution at a normative or moral level (Gustavsen et al. 2014b). The legitimacy of government includes judgments concerning the acceptability or appropriateness of the democratic process and the extent to which it functions in an acceptable manner (Roos and Lidström 2014). It is possible that individuals can make these judgements according to particular political ideals or values including fairness and equality (Johnson 2014). More broadly, legitimacy refers to beliefs in the normative appropriateness of institutions, structures and actors. It is commonly understood as the belief that authorities, organisations, institutions and social arrangements are appropriate, proper and just (Tyler 2006).

The concept of legitimacy has various implications in the context of participatory governance, however. Legitimacy can be considered from the perspective of citizens and of political and administrative actors. Legitimacy can involve the perceived appropriateness of
participatory institutions, public policy, and public authorities. In contrast with traditional representative democracy and government, public authorities of ten evolve authority and influence over public policy and political decisions to citizens in participatory forms of governance. This involves direct relationships between different types of actors and the reorganising or reshaping of modes of government and relations between ordinary citizens and administrative and political actors (Johnson 2014). The participatory process or ‘democratic innovation’ functions alongside, often in parallel, to traditional forms of representative democracy (Smith 2009). Participation therefore has implications for the traditional role of elected representatives, the nature of democratic representation and their influence within governance as well as the role of public officials (Montanaro 2012, Bryer 2007). Thus, the more substantive role of citizens in this places potential importance on the legitimacy of participation among public officials and elected representatives. This highlights the legitimacy of participatory governance within politics and public administration itself which is considered a supplement or a means to address democratic deficits. The concept of legitimacy is relevant to public and elected officials who essentially share influence and authority over public policy-making with the public. This involves a further distinction between the legitimacy of participatory governance within public administration and the legitimacy of the participatory process which is set up and facilitated within public authorities from the perspective of citizens and civil society.

4.1.4 Trust

Citizen trust is considered important to democracy and democratic government as well as the shift to participatory governance and participation as an administrative and political reform strategy (Rosanvallon 2008, Jackson et al. 2011b, Kaina 2008a, Putnam 1993). In the context of participation and democracy, trust is multifaceted. Enhancing citizen trust in democracy and government is considered a potential benefit of more substantive participation within participatory institutions. Increased citizen trust can be considered a key outcome of participatory governance. Furthermore, trust can influence relationships between participants and the extent to which citizens and public officials engage in participatory forms of governance (Yang 2006, Yang 2005). Consequently, questions of trust can involve trust of public officials in the capacity and intentions of citizens, trust of the public in officials and public authorities, as well as judgements concerning the capacity and effectiveness of participatory processes or the level of trust in participatory processes to generate consensus.
and deliver agreed outcomes. The concept of trust, therefore, is diverse and relevant to citizens and civil society as well as public officials and elected representatives.

A review of the literature on trust further highlights its potential significance to participatory governance and relationship with concepts such as influence and legitimacy. More broadly, trust can have two distinctive dimensions: perceptions of competence and motivations or shared interests (Hardin 2006, Warren and Gastil 2013). It is also characterised as citizen’s perception of fairness and level of satisfaction with the outcomes of democratic institutions (Grimes 2008, Kaina 2008b, Bouckaert and Vandewalle 2003). According to Barbalet, for trust to be relevant it must make a difference in how a person acts. The act of giving trust to another actor produces and sustains an activity that would not otherwise be possible or attainable (Barbalet 2009).

The act of giving trust requires the exercising of judgement. To exercise this judgement, individuals must have knowledge of other actors’ competence, skills, interests as well as a belief in their impartiality and fairness. According to Hardin, citizens often do not have direct experience of the workings of democratic institutions and the conduct of officials to make accurate judgements concerning competence and motivations (Hardin 2006). This means that they often lack the expertise or knowledge to evaluate their actions and analyse their trustworthiness (Jackson et al. 2011a). Consequently, it is difficult for citizens to accurately trust institutions because they lack knowledge and understanding of how they function (Hardin 2001). However, participation involves the direct involvement of citizens and civil society in policy making of ten on issues directly relevant to their lives. This facilitates new roles for citizens and encompasses interpersonal relationships based on more sustained interactions.

Participation enables citizens and public officials to build the knowledge and understanding of institutions and other actors to trust. In many participatory governance processes, public officials and citizens are of ten considered equals in the pursuit and development of priorities and problem solving strategies. This contradiction in official roles can potentially foster mistrust and conflict between citizens and public officials and subsequent relationships (Fung 2004). These relationships and interactions enable citizens to trust based on experiences and knowledge of public authorities. Participatory processes, however, exist within existing democratic institutions with re-existing procedures and power dynamics. The participation of citizens, elected representatives and public officials in policy making processes, often on wicked issues, raises the potential for competing or incompatible interests.
and preferences. If interests diverge it is possible for the concerns of citizens not to be acted upon or incorporated into policy or outcomes.

Trust can further be complicated by the so-called ‘starting conditions’ or the existing relationships or shared histories between participants which may be based on mistrust, antagonism and even hostility. In relation to starting conditions, Ansell and Gash reference three important factors; imbalances between the resources or power of stakeholders, the incentives that stakeholders have to collaborate and the prior history and relationships of participants. Perceptions of the other are hardened and initial conditions are characterised by disharmony and low levels of trust between future collaborators (Ansell and Gash 2008). The collaboration between actors from minority or socially excluded groups and administrative and political elites may be influenced by prior animosity and existing negative perceptions of the other. A lack of trust, therefore, can reflect deeper social, economic, class, racial and cultural divisions embedded in wider society and remain difficult to reconcile. This is of potential relevance in this study with the participation of Irish Travellers within the LTACC.

As well as citizens, the question of trust is of significance to public officials who must design and implement participatory processes. The creation and subsequent facilitation of participation place considerable demands upon actors and institutions. It can create situations of risk and uncertainty between actors, be time-consuming and resource-intensive (Yang 2006). Public officials must invest time and resources in formal institutions of participation yet may feel that processes are costly, inefficient and ineffective due to the incompetence of citizens and the inherent design or structure of participatory processes. At the individual level, officials may also consider other participants, whether elected representatives or from civil society, as unable or unwilling to contribute effectively to the process or to local government more generally. The level of trust of officials in citizens therefore is said to influence the extent to which they promote and respond to participatory initiatives. This degree of trust may have links with the views of public officials concerning the desirable role and influence of citizens in governance and the legitimacy or appropriateness of a deeper role for citizens. Therefore, in addition to knowledge and performance, trust is impacted by perceptions of organisational and social norms concerning identities, desirable behaviour and roles of administrative and citizen actors in governance (Yang 2006).

Finally, in addition to trust in the participatory process and public officials who facilitate this, trust can also determine the extent to which members of the public engage in a participatory process and interact with public authorities. Citizens with low social trust and
low levels of trust in political institutions are less likely to participate (Uslaner 2008). In this regard, the significance of trust can be complex. For example, while trust can determine the extent to which actors engage, citizens who distrust public institutions can participate to oppose public authority or monitor its actions more closely (Laurian 2009). Trust in democracy and government; however, may be further eroded if the experience of participation is not satisfactory.

In summary, trust is an important concept in analysing the depth of participation. The absence of trust of officials in the capabilities and intentions of citizens has been cited as a stumbling block in the realization of more substantive forms of participation (EAPN 2011, Laurian 2004, Yang 2005). There is evidence a lack of trust has hampered participation at the local governance level in Ireland (McInerney and Adshead 2010). However, the potential importance of trust to citizen participation and participatory forms of governance is multi-faceted including the extent of public officials’ faith in the capacity and intentions of citizens. From the perspective of citizens, it encompasses questions of trust in public authorities and those who represent them, as well as judgements concerning the capacity of participatory institutions to understand and deal well with what matters to them. Trust is a contested social science concept and depending on its conceptualisation and operationalization it can be considered as an explanatory factor as well as an indicator or outcome of deeper participation. In this respect, existing levels of social and political trust can determine the extent to which citizens engage in political acts.

4.2 Part Two Variation in the Depth of Participation

In addition to the descriptive objective, this thesis attempts to identify key variables which can explain variation in the depth of participation. Due to the location of participation within the realm of public administration and alongside existing representative institutions, a complete analysis necessitates a focus on subnational government systems, the institutional design of participatory processes, the public institutions which facilitate and public officials who work within them, in addition to characteristics and motivations of the citizens who participate. However, in practice, a full examination of all potential explanatory factors is not possible in the context of one dissertation or research project.
In broad terms, it is possible to identify a number of diverse factors which can be situated at the individual and institutional level. Individual factors include the characteristics and motivations of citizens and other key actors. Institutional factors encompass the institutional design of participatory processes as well as the wider institution in which the process is situated. In addition to the motivations, capacity and characteristics of citizens and public officials, the rules and structure of participatory processes shape the participatory experience and influence the depth of participation. The institutional design can determine the authority of a process, who participates, in what numbers, and shape how participants communicate and make decisions. However, the presence of particular rules or design of institutions or the capacity of participants cannot fully account for the depth of participation or the outcomes of participatory processes. The implementation of institutions depends upon individuals also. This study will focus primarily on the capacity and characteristics of civil society participants, the conduct and disposition of public and elected officials as well as the institutional design and rules of each participatory process.

4.2.1 The capacity and characteristics of citizens

Having highlighted the potential relevance of individual and institutional level factors, this section will focus on key theoretical arguments concerning the capacity and characteristics of citizens. In this task, it is possible to focus on socio-demographics, cognitive and personality factors, political and association links, as well as their motivations to participate. Participation has implications for the traditional division of labour between citizens, elected representatives and public officials, and is considered more demanding than traditional political activities such as voting (Warren 2009b). Citizens must possess various civil and political skills as well as knowledge of relevant issues to participate effectively. Common criticisms of participation and those who participate within participatory institutions tend to focus on the competence, efficacy and motivations of citizens. Citizen participation, it is argued, is largely dependent upon the quality of citizens who participate (Talpin 2011).

Deeper and more substantive forms of democratic participation, it is argued, are unrealistic due a lack of competence, knowledge, and interest on behalf of members of the public. This view of the competence of citizens has roots in the view of Schumpeter and so-called democratic realists who are sceptical of the capacity of ordinary citizens to play a more substantive role in governance (Schumpeter 1976, Held 2006). There is a belief that ordinary citizens are politically and ideologically indifferent, unsophisticated and lack a stable vision of public policy and concern with the wider public interest (Kinder 2006). This, it is argued,
affects citizens’ ability to engage in decision-making on complex issues of governance and renders them incapable of contributing meaningfully to policy making. Others have raised questions about increased democratic contestation for citizens without mediation by political representatives (Warren 1996).

Participation is widely understood by participatory democratic theorists as a means to empower and create more competent democratic citizens. Indeed, for many participatory democrats this development is an important feature and outcome of participatory democracy (Pateman 2012, Barber 1984). However, the qualities or skills required to engage successfully in direct democratic participation must be developed and nurtured which may take time (Talpin 2011). In reality, citizens may lack the knowledge of issues to make a meaningful contribution to policy or decision making. According to Warren and Gastil, to make good decisions and to make an effective contribution, citizens must possess knowledge and be aware of their interests and values, aware of others’ issues, possess an understanding of the social and material conditions of society, and the potential wider impact of policies under consideration (Warren and Gastil 2013). This is also echoed of citizens demonstrating a so-called ‘enlarged mentality’ and willingness to forego individual interests (Smith 2009). However, members of the public may be more interested in personal or parochial objectives and this is key to the legitimacy of citizens and civil society who participate (Talpin 2011).

Participation places an emphasis on the personality of citizens including levels of personal efficacy. Perceptions of efficacy, it is argued, are important factors in how individuals think, feel and behave and can vary across activities and contexts (Bandura 2012). Self-efficacy beliefs are considered as so-called ‘knowledge structures’ which are reflective of the level of control citizens exert over issues which affect their lives (Vecchione and Caprara 2009). Efficacy has implications for expectations, goals and can influence individual and collective behaviour. Individuals’ beliefs in their ability to achieve goals through individual action is considered a powerful motivator of political action (van Zomeren et al. 2013).

Furthermore, in participatory arenas, citizens may have to practice contentious and cooperative forms of participation (Wampler 2007b). However, conflict inherent in democratic contestation, it is argued, can inhibit individuals participating (Ulbig and Funk 1999). While this may be overstated, according to Warren, it is unrealistic to expect citizens to choose engagement in conflict-oriented politics over other forms of
engagement including family, friends and recreation (Warren 2009a). This places an emphasis on the potential for conflict and need to engage in political debate and discussion with public and elected officials. Some members of the public may find this conflict and contestation difficult and unsatisfactory.

There is also considerable political information asymmetry between citizens as well as considerable imbalances in knowledge between citizens and political and administrative elites who participate within participatory institutions. The dependence or reliance of citizens upon elites for information and resources is problematic and brings the autonomy of citizens into question. At its worst, this dependence may result in elite capture. Participation raises the danger of ‘elite capture’ in which civil society does not advocate the interests of the poor but reproduces the socio-economic hierarchies of society (Cornwall 2004, Luckham et al. 2000).

More substantive forms of democratic participation can be costly for citizens and many citizens have scarce political resources at their disposal (Warren 2009a). The so-called costs of participation include time, effort, resources, and money (Laurian 2009). Citizens with greater societal and associational ties and links may find the costs of participation less. Participation and active membership of civil society and political organisations/associations may provide citizens with both resources and tangible skills (Wallman Lundåsen 2015).

Generating interest in citizens to participate has been described as a trade-off between time for influence and power (Fung 2004). Citizens must believe the costs or demands of participation do not out weigh the benefits. However, the costs of participation including attending meetings can be high. Such costs may be met more easily for citizens of higher socio-economic status (SES). SES is a key demographic variable in political analysis and has potential significance to participatory governance. SES is considered important to political efficacy as well as overall representation and participation in democracy and government. It is influential to social and political interactions and relationships. Due to their disconnection from sources of societal influence, citizens of lower SES groups, it is argued, are less likely to feel politically efficacious. In contrast, as well as higher education and income, citizens of higher socio-economic status, are more likely to be better informed about political issues and have a greater range of social, financial and cognitive resources to engage in political participation more successfully (Caprara et al. 2009). Poorer citizens, it is argued, are less likely to participate because of a lack of time, resources and perceived efficacy. Evidence suggests those who are better off or better educated are more likely to participate.
New forms of citizen engagement are considered a means to address democratic deficits within representative and bureaucratic institutions. Increasing and deepening participation of lower SES and citizens less likely to participate in traditional democratic arenas is considered an outcome or benefit of participatory forms of governance (Goodhart et al. 2012). However, some evidence suggests participatory governance is more likely to be successful under conditions of wealth, higher levels of education and societal homogeneity with citizens of lower socioeconomic groups often performing worst in participatory processes (Smith 2009, Fung 2004, Talpin 2011). Citizens of higher income groups and with higher levels of education or those already represented in traditional democratic arenas may participate more regularly and/or successfully.

Consequently, participatory processes are often criticised for failing to increase or deepen citizen participation across social groups and for reinforcing the participation of those groups who are most likely to influence decisions in traditional democratic fora (Abers 2003, Talpin 2011). In response, public officials and facilitators of participatory processes may have to create incentives for participation and be proactive in facilitating citizens from seldom heard/hard to reach, or disadvantaged or marginalised groups. In practice, self-selection methods of citizen recruitment can favour wealthier individuals and individuals of higher socio-economic status (Smith 2009). Further, the beliefs and goals of citizens of lower socio-economic status may be considered inappropriate and incompatible with the objectives of public authorities. Consequently, attempts to generate consensus or produce outcomes based on the desires of minorities or socially excluded groups in unison with political and official actors who may possess particular moral preferences or indeed prejudices is more complicated (McInerney and Adshead 2010, Young 2000). Socially marginalised groups or minorities can also lack access to the knowledge and perspectives inherent in the culture of the dominant group as participation proceeds based on norms not shared by all participants. These perspectives can differ radically and prove difficult to reconcile (Myers and Mendelberg 2013). Consequently, in practice, participatory governance can result in new democratic deficits and forms of political inequality when wealthier citizens or those already represented in democratic arenas participating in greater numbers (Warren 2009a).

The above discussion has identified the importance of the characteristics, capacity and motivations of citizens who participate. The review of the literature has highlighted the potential importance of the socio-economic status of citizens including income and education,
their objectives and motivations to participate, as well as their involvement in organised associations. These factors have potential implications for the perceived depth of participation. It is hypothesised that higher levels of efficacy, education and income will have a positive relationship with the depth of participation. This will be explored in further detail in chapter 5.

4.2.2 Implications for Public Administration and Public Officials

In attempting to account for the outcomes or perceived success of participatory processes, much of the focus is on the capacity and motivations of citizens and the importance of institutional design. However, participation functions within the administrative realm of public authorities and alongside existing democratic institutions. Located within sub-national authorities, the values, beliefs and actions of administrative and political actors are of potential significance. In addition to democratisation, the shift to more direct forms of public participation can be situated in the reform and the emergence of new paradigms of public administration and the shift from government to governance. Described by Pierre and Peters as a “notoriously slippery concept”, governance involves a wider range of actors involved in governing (Pierre and Peters 2000). According to the United Nations Development Programme, governance denotes “the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and the private sector” (Nahem and Sudders 2004, p.1).12

Viewed from a governance perspective, increased participation is reflective of the changing character and attributes of modern states. In recent decades, political and administrative elites have engaged in extensive policy formation in cooperation with local and international actors, have sought the participation of the private and third sectors in the production of public services, and actively devolved and shared power with sub-national or local authorities (Robinson 2008). As a result, state policy springs from a more complex and inclusive process between non-state actors, networks and administrative and political elites. As outlined, the proliferation of participatory institutions has also been characterised as elite driven ‘governance driven democratization’ (Warren 2009b).

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12 The definition continues: “It is the way society organises itself to make and implement decisions-achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations.”
The location of much of participatory governance within local and public authorities’ places considerable responsibility on public administration. In many respects, public officials and political representatives determine the purpose and level of authority of a process before it begins. The central role of public officials and politicians creates considerable ‘elite discretion’ in which designers can carefully select and frame issues and limit the range and scope of representation and issues discussed. More cynically, the contribution of citizens and civil society can be managed by elites who do not wish to reduce their influence on policy and are unresponsive to policies that challenge existing norms. Participatory processes are largely subject to the discretion of political and elected elites and officials who must determine whether decision-making authority and whether citizen demands can be accommodated within their interests and parliamentary structure. Embedded in these participatory institutions, argue Wampler and McNulty, are political agendas that reflect the designers’ public and private interests. Thus, the rule structure embedded in the new participatory institutions reflects the interests of their designers. The further deepening of democracy, it is argued, may depend on the new ‘complementarities’ between representative and participatory forms of democracy. The importance of ‘interlocking institutions’ and cohesion between administration, politics, and civil society has been identified. Participatory forms of democracy may also be considered incompatible with elected democracy and traditional local authority decision-making and/or undesirable by political and administrative elites. However, the role of public administration extends beyond institutional design and the delegation of authority. Public officials are asked with operating the machinery of participation which places significant responsibility on public officials to deal with all aspects of the process, including ensuring all participants are heard and, where necessary, to resolve difficulties or tensions that may arise. This role has implications for bureaucracy, previously a central component of the traditional model of public administration. As increasingly administrators and officials seek the input and knowledge of societal actors in the complex task of governing, participation has implications for the traditional role and values of the public official and his/her relationship with ordinary citizens (in addition to the traditional...
relationship between citizens and elected representatives). Participation alters the traditional role of the administrator as ‘expert, implemen ter and ruler’ and the citizen as ‘client, voter, and customer’ (Callahan 2007, p.1187).

Participation and collaboration is a strand of de-bureaucratisation and evidence of the decline in the traditional model of public administration (Hughes 2012). Bureaucracy, based on rational and legal authority, is impersonal, hierarchical, rigid, and built on formal structures with clear rules and regulations (Hughes 2012). Common criticisms of bureaucracy highlight its inefficiency, rigidity, and disconnection from citizens (Olsen 2008). The bureaucratic principles of professionalism necessitated non-professional interference from the public and politics resulting in an effective separation of state and society. In contrast, participation demands joint problem solving and closer interaction between citizens and officials at the policy interface. The formal inclusion of civil society actors in policy making processes impacts the typical working relationship between officials and political representatives as well as formal and informal rules and standard conduct in governance (Bryer 2007).

The hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of traditional public administration therefore appears to be at odds with more sustained collaboration between officials, citizens and civil society (Hughes 2012). The creation of participatory spaces and the institutionalisation of formal collaboration between citizens and officials involve the tacit assumption of the need for officials to alter their legal-rational bureaucratic ethics and traditional roles (Bryer and Sahin 2012). Elements of participatory democracy, however, may be incompatible with the traditional rules-based ethos of public administration. The shift to deeper more substantive forms of participation can produce a tension within public administration between the traditional treatment of citizens as customers and voters and the increasing need to collaborate with them as partners (Vigoda 2002, Geurtz and Van de Wijdeven 2010). It is argued, therefore, that to incorporate greater participation in modern governance, public administration must evolve from ‘technical-rational’ to a ‘citizen participatory’ culture (Bryer 2007).

In the context of governance, in which the predominant view of the relationship between the public and public administration is increasingly seen as one of partnership between the public and administration, the most recent local government white paper in Ireland, “Putting People First”, has recognised the importance of administrative change to better facilitate and respond to participation. This includes fostering a supportive political and administrative culture as well as new skills to respond to citizen input.

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13 The most recent local government white paper in Ireland, “Putting People First”, has recognised the importance of administrative change to better facilitate and respond to participation. This includes fostering a supportive political and administrative culture as well as new skills to respond to citizen input.
collaborators, this is often exercised through cooperation with citizens and stakeholders (Bryer 2007). Alternatively, the scope for such collaboration may be narrow and as a result the response of administration is one of negotiation in which public officials must balance the demands of stakeholders with internalised professional and institutional norms and procedures. This balancing, argues Bryer, can be understood in terms of administrative responsiveness (Bryer 2009). However, existing forms of governance and administrative practice can be well entrenched and resistant to change in decision making and policy making. Existing local authority structures and practice can be used as a means to resist participative discourses and attempts to initiate new forms of governance (McKenna 2011).

In addition to challenging the traditional role of the public officials and their values, participation may pose challenges for the capacity of public institutions and the officials who work within them. More practically, participatory governance creates further tasks for officials to carry out. Public officials are now considered more active in the policy process due to their enhanced role in organising and administering networks and facilitating participatory governance mechanisms (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, Wright and Fung 2003). This undertaking is often complex and demanding. For example, officials may have to identify, recruit and subsequently support actors from otherwise marginalised and socially excluded groups (Torfing and Triantafillou 2013). In dealing with inexperienced actors not yet accustomed to active involvement in governance, officials may have to be proactive and creative in maximising their participation (Feldman and Khademian 2007, Smith 2009). Despite their best intentions, public officials can experience difficulty in mobilising or recruiting citizens as well as ensuring they possess the commitment, knowledge and skills required to engage more deeply in governance (Fung 2004). Further, public administration must deal with a greater number of stakeholders and balance the demands of multiple actors. Public officials may not possess the expertise to facilitate this or the resources. Participation therefore can be viewed by public officials as a strain on existing capacity and as an obstacle to hurdle (Abers 2003).

In sum, participation has significant implications for the traditional role of public administration and its relationship with citizens. Public and elected officials must possess the capacity and will to, first, develop processes, second, facilitate them, and, thirdly, implement the decisions which emerge from them (Wright and Fung 2003). Public and elected officials, however, may not wish to share influence and consider participation as a challenge to their traditional roles and authority. The devolution of authority and influence from elites to
citizens, however small, may be resisted. Public administration may consider citizens as ill-suited or unable to contribute meaningfully to policy and decision-making. The facilitation and implementation of participatory processes raises questions about the capacity of public administration and its implications for the traditional role of public officials. Participation requires public administration to adapt from the ethos of traditional bureaucracy to the ethos or logic of participation. Administrative support for participation can be understood as a form of collaborative responsiveness, which is concerned with the extent to which administrators are amenable to new modes of thought and action (Bryer 2009).

It is hypothesised that the capacity and disposition of public officials is significant to the depth of participation within the cases. Situated within the administrative and political realm of local authorities, public (and elected) officials will have to practice more inclusive forms of policy making and be amenable to new modes of working. This includes procedures for agenda setting or establishing the types of issues discussed as well as influence on policy and decisions. The role of administrative actors in operating the machinery of engagement and the impact of this on the depth of participation within subnational governance in Ireland will be discussed in further detail in chapter eight in reference to the qualitative data.

4.2.3 Institutional Design

The institutional design of participatory processes is also of significance to the depth of participation. Much of the existing literature emphasises the importance of institutional design and its effects on the quality or success of participation and deliberation (Fung 2003b, Smith 2009, Bryson et al. 2013). Within this context, the institutional design of participatory processes and the wider public institution in which it is facilitated is important. Institutional or contextual factors concern procedures, rules and norms as well as the broader setting in which participation takes place (Myers and Mendelberg 2013). At the institutional or contextual level, participation is shaped by the formal choices made by designers. This can include the structure of participation including the number of citizens, the type of activities and the dominant modes of communication and decision. The institutional design of participatory processes shapes the nature of public engagement and relationships between participants. The structure or design therefore enables or constrains the collective and distributive power of participants. Collective power relates to the power of groups to do something while distributive concerns the power of some groups over others (Koch 2013).
Institutional design concerns how institutions can or should be created, and how they are adopted to function correctly and efficiently. It is considered a means to solve collective problems and improve the functioning of democratic institutions. The task of institutional design is considered complex and challenging. Effective design demands learning, adaptation and attention on the effect of structure on outcomes (Olsen 2009). Design choices may be influenced by beliefs and wider institutional factors. A democratic institution such as a participatory process does not occur spontaneously. The design of participatory institutions is purposeful, context specific and influenced by local and national conditions. Democratic institutions such as participatory processes are influenced by the broader political and institutional context in which they proceed. This can place constraints on the development of institutions and how they function in practice (Olsen 1997).

More broadly, institutions can be understood as formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of political and social phenomena (Hall and Taylor 1996). Institutions, it is argued, can structure the exchange of information or various types of behaviour as well as impose sanctions. Institutions therefore can be understood as form of ordering and structuring of systems, parts and actors. “Formal organizations and formally organized institutions”, argues Olsen, “are conceived as collections of rules and standard operating procedures, pre-defined patterns of thought and action, including but not limited to legal rules and procedures, and resources” (Olsen 2009, p.4). Political-institutional conditions can influence both individual attitudes and actions. Depending on aims, institutional designers, it is argued, seek to make institutions more accountable, efficient, fair, functional, representative or rational (Olsen 1997).

Institutional design places an emphasis on rules which are defined as the formal arrangements that are used to structure the participatory process (Lowndes et al. 2006). “Rules”, it is argued, “are shared understandings among those involved that refer to enforced prescriptions about what actions (or states of the world) are required, prohibited, or permitted” (Ostrom 2011, p.17). Rules can be formal (rules in form) and informal (rules in use) and constrain, guide and shape behaviour. Rules determine how actors should interact, create roles for participants, and set desirable actions and behaviours (Lowndes et al. 2006). Rules therefore standardise the role and functions of participants as well as particular behaviours and practices. Formal rules and procedures, however, are considered a ‘double edged sword’ in which interactions are heavily regulated and formalised. Actors can use formal rules in certain situations to control and block the discussion or resolutions of
issues (Wagenaar 2007). In addition, rules can be ambiguous or interpreted in a particular way by relevant actors (Olsen 2009). After their development and introduction, support for democratic institutions such as participatory processes cannot be assumed or taken as given. A participatory process may be judged deontologically in which actors make a judgement as to whether it is an effective or appropriate way to deal with particular issues. Participatory processes may face opposition and resistance from public authorities and other participants. Prescribed rules and procedures may not be adhered to or supported (Olsen 2009). Resistance to new institutions and modes of operating can be considered a form of institutional identity and the expression of particular beliefs and concerns.

In summary, the design of participatory processes including rules and operating procedures can to some degree shape the participatory experience and influence the level of participation before engagement takes place. It is hypothesised that aspects of institutional design such as excessively formal rules and procedures and the location of activities of the process within the environment of the local authority have a negative relationship with the depth of participation within the cases. Further, the wider context of institutional design in which processes are developed nationally and implemented locally may also have a negative impact on the depth of participation. The local officials and elected representatives who are tasked with operating the machinery of engagement lack ownership of local participatory governance in its current institutional design. The central government responsibility for the development of participatory institutions does not necessarily produce support for or the capacity within local government to facilitate participation. As outlined, the operation of participatory processes, no matter how well designed, depends upon capable actors who understand how they should function, who are supportive, and who possess the capacities and skills to ensure they function effectively (Fung 2004). The impact of institutional design will be explored further in chapter eight.

4.3 Summary and Identifying Key Concepts For Further Analysis

So far this chapter has identified and discussed some key theoretical arguments within the existing literature. This endeavour has been undertaken to identify key concepts and theoretical arguments to answer the two main research questions through mixed methods research. In the context of the broad field of participatory democracy and governance, this process helps to provide the theoretical justification to analyse the depth of participation and to develop measures and indicators. In terms of the depth of participation, this chapter has
highlighted the significance of the extent to which citizens and civil society actors exercise voice, influence the work of participatory processes and broader local government policy, express trust in and believe participatory processes function appropriately or legitimately.

These concepts are also multidimensional and multi-faceted, however. Voice can include the predominant types of communication such as deliberation or expressing preferences, the frequency of communication within participatory processes and the perception of equality and respect of voice. Influence can encompass the extent to which participants impact the agendas or the types of issues discussed, their overall level of policy influence, and their impact on political decisions. The discussion of trust revealed how it can be operationalized as a dependent variable as well as an explanatory factor in the context of participatory governance. It is possible to consider trust as an outcome or benefit of participation through which successful participation boosts the level of trust between citizens and public authorities. Further, existing levels of social and political trust can impact the extent to which citizens engage in different forms of political participation. From the perspective of public officials and elected representatives, meanwhile, questions of trust and legitimacy in volve beliefs in the appropriateness and merits of participatory forms of governance.

To satisfy the study’s explanatory objective, some possible relevant explanatory variables were identified. A review of the literature highlights the potential significance of individual and institutional factors. For example, the rules and structure of participatory processes can to some degree shape the participatory process. Based on the express purpose of the process, participation can offer the potential for the public to consult with local authorities or share-decision making powers on particular issues. Moreover, the formal rules can recommend active deliberation on particular issues of importance to communities or indicate that public participants must predominately listen to the views of experts and elites. The structure or design of processes therefore shapes interactions and enables or constrains the collective and distributive influence or power of participants.

However, in addition, it is proposed that the behaviour, beliefs and characteristics of individuals are important and influential also. The presence of particular rules alone cannot fully explain behaviour or outcomes. This emphasises the multi-dimensional aspect in attempting to explain variance in the depth of participation and the relevance of both individual and institutional level factors. The ‘governance driven’ nature of participation places a clear responsibility on public (and elected officials) to design, facilitate
and implement participatory processes. The location of participatory institutions within public authorities renders the disposition, responsiveness and values of officials fundamentally important to the participatory process and the experiences of participants. However, the operation of the machinery of engagement has implications for the traditional role of officials as well as traditional democratic decision-making and representation.

From the perspective of citizens, participatory governance demands considered judgment or the possession and deployment of knowledge and expertise to be effective and legitimate (Smith 2009). Irrespective of the level of authority afforded to the participatory process, the capacity of skills and social characteristics of participants, and the perceived capacity of citizens, is of potential significance. The quality or capacity of citizens to engage in political action, and the perceived efficacy of this action, is influenced to a considerable degree, by the level of resources at their disposal. This places potential importance on the socio-economic status of citizens and civil society actors and their broader political and associational links. After identifying key variables, the precise operationalization of indicators is necessary to engage in measurement through quantitative analysis. This task will be undertaken in the following chapter.
Chapter 5 Operationalization of Dependent and Independent Variables in Quantitative Analysis

The primary objective of the thesis is to examine the depth of participation and explain variation in this through mixed methods research. Chapter seven will explore the results of quantitative analysis which measures the perceived depth of participation within each participatory process amongst civil society participants and a number of individual level explanatory factors. The previous chapters discussed the conceptual underpinnings of participatory forms of governance and identified key theoretical arguments within the literature and important concepts for further study. The review of the literature identified concepts such as voice, influence, trust, legitimacy and explanatory factors such as socio-demographics, efficacy, trust, and wider political and associational links. Further, this analysis identified the need to construct a multi-dimensional measure of the perceived depth of participation which cannot be measured with a single indicator.

This chapter will justify the selection of and detail the precise operationalization of the key variables used in the regression analysis. Quantitative analysis involves conceptualisation, measurement and aggregation and methodological issues can begin at the initial level of definition and conceptualisation. Theory therefore helps to define a concept, probe its core dimensions, and to identify important dimensions or indicators (Saylor 2013). After conceptualisation, valid measurement requires precise operationalization and selection of the measurement level (Goertz 2006, Bollen and Bauldry 2011). The measurement of concepts must be justifiable and transparent at all stages of the measurement process (Goertz and Mahoney 2013). This study has developed a measure of the perceived depth of participation through the operationalization of indicators of respect and equality of voice, influence, trust in, and the legitimate or appropriate functioning of the participatory process. Indicators are observed variables that measure a latent variable (Bollen 2011). The responses to these indicators are theorised to be driving a latent sense of the perceived depth of participation within each process (Bollen and Bauldry 2011).
5.1 Conceptualisation and Operationalization of Indicators of Depth of Participation

5.1.1 Respect and Equality of Voice

Voice is a crucial concept within participatory governance. In participatory governance, members of the public can personally exercise voice, increasing the likelihood that their ideas, concerns, interests, and values are incorporated in decisions taken by public authorities (Nabatchi and Amster 2014). This encompasses a range of different types of communication from expressing preferences, deliberation and policy debate and discussion (Fung 2006). Participant voice can be understood as the ability/capacity to express opinions and preferences within participatory processes. The indicators of voice in the composite measure concern the extent of perceived respect and equality of voice according to each type of actor. As voice may be dominated or restricted by actors, an assessment of the extent of voice must measure the degree to which citizen actors possess substantive opportunities to communicate during the process. This is of significance as the opportunity for citizens to participate or to be present does not mean they are afforded an equal opportunity to voice preferences or to contribute to proceedings. In practice, the right to participate does not equate with equality of voice or mean that the contributions of participants are respected by others (Smith 2009). Potentially, this is of added significance in the participation of marginalised or so-called hard to reach groups such as Irish Travellers (Young 2000). The importance of respect and equality of voice is also based upon the importance of fairness in the deliberative literature or the equal opportunity to act in all aspects of a participatory process (Mannarini and Talò 2013).

The analysis of ‘voice’ in the quantitative analysis concerns the equal opportunity of actors to exercise voice during the participatory process and the perceived respect of participants’ contributions. The indicators assess the extent to which participants believe they had the opportunity to speak and contribute to proceedings and that these contributions were respected by others. The mode of communication and the extent to which public actors could debate policy and express preferences and the role of institutional design as well as political and administrative actors in this will be explored in the qualitative data analysis in chapter eight. Some of the following measures echo the ‘Deliberative Process Perceived Quality Scale’ (Mannarini and Talò 2013). Perceived equality and respect of voice are measured through the following indicators.
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning this committee:

In general, everyone had the opportunity to speak and to make themselves heard

I had the opportunity to express my views as I would have liked

Some SPC/LTACC/CDB members dominated the discussion

Other members restricted my opportunity to speak

In general, other members respected my point of view

Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

5.1.2 Influence

The indicators of influence measure the perceived influence of citizens and civil society participants in each participatory process. The ability to shape and influence decisions is considered a fundamental question in assessing the depth of participation as well as assessing the strength of broader participatory democracy/governance principles. However, in practice, most subnational participatory processes do not live up to the ideal of citizen control and do not devolve significant decision-making power to members of the public. Assessing the extent of influence within participatory institutions is not a simple question of authority and decision-making power. Influence therefore is a multi-faceted concept in the context of local participatory governance. This includes the potential for citizens to influence the work of each participatory process, the types of issues discussed, the ability to determine and decide public policies and the outputs of public authorities (Smith 2009).

The measure of influence in this study is built on the idea that nature of power extends beyond influence on decisions or voting. For example, it is possible to identify four distinct stages of a decision-making process, problem definition, option analysis, option selection and implementation (Smith 2009). In influence can be identified at each of these four stages. ‘Power’ and influence can be exercised in setting the agenda of a decision-making process or the types of issues discussed. This is reflective of a so-called two dimensional conception of power (Hay 2002). Agenda-setting is important in participatory processes as power can be exercised through deciding which issues are discussed and debated and those which are constrained (Smith 2009, Fung 2015). Agenda setting requires formal and informal procedures within a participatory process which may be conducted in collaboration with civil society. However, administrative and political actors can control or constrain the range of
issues discussed and potentially remove contentious issues from the process limiting public voice to the discussion of so-called ‘safe’ topics or topics deemed appropriate by elites (Fung 2015).

The measure of perceived influence is guided by the existing concept of subjective influence or perceived external efficacy of participants. This is the perception of the degree of and individual’s influence on the overall functioning of a political system. One fundamental aspect of subjective influence is the perception of how amenable a political institution is to the influence of citizens individually or collectively (Vecchione et al. 2014). It is possible to make a further distinction between so-called ‘regime based efficacy’ or the perception of the political system’s responsiveness as a consequence of rules and procedures, and ‘incumbent based’ efficacy or the perceived responsiveness of elite actors in government or political office (Craig et al. 1990).

External efficacy or ‘perceived system responsiveness’ is the belief of how likely elite actors (public officials and elected representatives) are willing to respond to individuals (Bowler and Donovan 2002, Saris and Gallhofer 2007). Elected representatives and local authority officials are key actors within the cases in this study. They participate alongside civil society actors but due to the location of the processes within the administrative and political realm of local authority are crucial to how each process functions and local authority policy making. Consequently, in addition to perceived influence on the work of the overall process, the perception of extent to which elected representatives and public officials cared about what civil society actors thought is considered an indicator of influence and of significance to the perceived depth of participation within each process.

The measure of influence in this study refer to participants subjective influence on the work of the participatory process and the types of issues discussed as well as the extent to which local authority officials and elected representatives cared about what they thought. Perceived influence is operationalized in the study with the following measures:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with following statements:

I had a say about the types of issues discussed by this process

I influenced the overall work of this process

Local authority officials in this process cared about what I thought

Elected representatives in this process cared about what I thought

90
5.1.3 Trust in the Participatory Process

The previous chapter identified key arguments concerning the potential significance of trust to participatory governance and to democracy more broadly from the perspectives of citizens and public officials. Trust is of potential significance in more substantive forms of democratic participation and within participatory processes which encompasses more direct involvement in policy making and closer interactions between citizens and administrative and political actors. The following section will provide theoretical justification for the development of indicators of trust in the participatory process and detail their precise operationalization. Trust within the broader social sciences is a contested social science concept with no definitive definition or consensus as to its exact meaning (Barbalet 2009, Shapiro 1987). Measuring trust is considered complex and according to existing conceptualisations is influenced by an actor’s predisposition to trust, the trustee’s perceived character, capability, motives, predictability or behaviour. Consequently, when attempting to measure the extent of trust within a democratic institution it is important to focus on existing understandings of trust within political theory and political studies for guidance.

Trust, it is argued, has affective and cognitive foundations. The cognitive aspect of trust involves a choice to trust others on the basis of particular criteria. Such criteria can include past experience, competence, knowledge, performance and social characteristics (McAllister 1995). The so-called affective foundation of trust meanwhile has roots in perceptions concerning the motives of others. Indeed, different elements of trust evident within the literature include so-called instrumental, moral, and experience based components (Uslaner 2008, Warren and Gastil 2013).

Trust is constituted through expectations as well as cognitive judgements concerning the behaviour of others. Moreover, these perceived motivations render individuals more or less trustworthy in particular contexts (Hardin 2006). The concept of political trust is commonly divided into two distinct dimensions; competence and motivations (Hardin 2006, Warren and Gastil 2013). This involves judgments about the overall competence of actors and judgements concerning their interests and motivations (Warren and Gastil 2013). In terms of competence, individuals are required to make a judgement on whether others are competent to make good decisions. This judgement will require knowledge concerning an actor’s skills, knowledge and competency. The second dimension of this understanding of
trust comprises judgements concerning the interests, motivations and values of actors and institutions. In this dimension of trust, actors make judgements whether their interests align with others (Warren and Gastil 2013).

This echoes Hardin’s conception of trust as ‘encapsulated interests’ (Hardin 2006). In the understanding of trust as ‘encapsulated interests’, accurate perceptions of trustworthiness require sustained relationships between individuals to judge the extent to which an individual’s interests are encapsulated in the interests of the truster. This trust is not general and relates to specific actions or situations. Trust therefore concerns the extent to which we believe others have the right intentions towards us and are competent to carry out what we trust them to do (Hardin 2006). Or trust is present when actors believe actors in a relationship have an incentive to act in each other’s interests and incorporate the interests of others into their own (Choudhury 2008).

In the context of participatory governance, it is important to acknowledge the similarity between measures of perceived influence and trust as ‘encapsulated interests’. More broadly, aspects of political trust have been linked with perceptions of subjective influence (Craig et al. 1990). So, while considered a distinct concept, the operationalization of trust has connections with perceptions of elite responsiveness. Further, the distinction between trust in individuals and institutions is complicated in the context of government and politics, including participatory governance. Political and administrative actors are essential to the functioning of democratic institutions and the conduct of individuals can serve as a proxy for trust in an institution. Due to the key role of public officials and elected representatives within the cases in this study, the indicators of trust in the participatory process can be considered related to perceptions of trust in other key actors also.

Based on the understanding of trust as ‘encapsulated interests’, this study has operationalized two indicators of trust in the participatory process. The measure of trust in the participatory process is focused on trust in the process. The indicators focus on the perceived understanding of their interests and concerns and the perceived extent to which the process dealt or responded to those interests and concerns. Trust in shared interests focuses on the alignment between the interests and priorities of the process and each actor. Trust in dealing well with concerns focuses on the ability or willingness of the process to act upon what mattered to civil society actors.
Reflecting upon your experience of this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

This Process understood my concerns (or the things which mattered to me)

This Process dealt well with my concerns (or the things which mattered to me)

Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

5.1.4 Legitimate and Appropriate Functioning of the Process

The previous chapter identified the potential importance of legitimacy to democracy and more substantive forms of citizen participation. The qualitative data in chapter eight will explore the legitimacy of the broader concept of participation and institutions of participatory governance from the perspectives of public and elected officials in this study. The measure of legitimacy in the quantitative analysis focuses on the perceived legitimacy of the participatory process. Before the precise operationalization of the measure of legitimacy or the appropriate functioning of the participatory process, this section will engage in a brief theoretical discussion of the concept of legitimacy. This, in conjunction with the significance of legitimacy identified previously, is intended to justify the operationalization of the indicators in the quantitative analysis.

Legitimacy is a contested social science concept or a “slippery” concept to handle (Jackson et al. 2015). In general, legitimacy refers to beliefs in the normative appropriateness of institutions, structures and actors. It is commonly understood as the belief that authorities, organisations, institutions and social arrangements are appropriate, proper and just (Tyler 2006). Legitimacy boosts compliance with rules and regulations as well as cooperation between individuals and organisations. The organisational viability of democratic institutions is strengthened when rules and practices are considered legitimate and are widely adhered to. Consequently, it is considered important to the success of democratic institutions and structures (Tyler 2006). According to Beetham, legitimacy encapsulates expressed consent (or perceived duty to obey), shared beliefs, and conformity to established rules (Beetham 1991). In this view, legitimacy is perceived obligation to institutions and social arrangements and emanates from a sense of obligation that encourages deference to the rules of authorities because they are considered appropriate, fair and just. Actors are more likely to comply with the rules of a process when they consider them legitimate (Tyler 2006). Legitimacy, therefore, encourages actors to defer voluntarily to decisions, rules and social arrangements without the threat of sanctions (Tyler 2006). This involves shared acceptance of rule or rules
from affected actors within a group or community (Bernstein 2011). Non-compliance with a process or procedure is considered evidence of a lack of legitimacy.

The legitimacy of a democratic process or institution can be understood in reference to normative and empirical legitimacy. The normative conception sets out parameters according to which an institution or organisation is legitimate and meets specific substantive requirements (Jackson et al. 2008). Normative legitimacy therefore is established if a process is justifiable on mutually accepted, well-founded reasons or shared common values. Empirical legitimacy is achieved when the process is accepted, or perceived as right and just, by a large number of relevant actors (Warren and Mansbridge 2013). In the empirical sense, a norm or an institutional arrangement is legitimate if it finds the approval of those who are supposed to reside in this group (Bottoms and Tankebe 2012). An individual’s judgement of the legitimacy of a process or institution, it is argued, involves an assessment of the similarity of its objectives and behaviours and their values and objectives (Jackson et al. 2011a). Something or someone can be considered legitimate if based on shared beliefs and values or expectations and are constructed according to cultural understandings and social discourses (Häikiö 2012).

Legitimacy therefore can be conceptualised and operationalised as two distinct constructs. The legitimacy of an institution or authority can be determined by levels of acceptance, adherence and compliance. The first concerns the obedience or adherence to rules or institutions, and the second concerns a so-called moral alignment between the values of institutions and participants or the public (Jackson et al. 2008). An actor confers legitimacy on an institution when he/she feels an obligation to obey, feels it expresses shared beliefs, and follows consistently and fairly its own internal rules and procedures (Jackson et al. 2008). Those subject or involved in an institution must consider its processes and procedures as just and proper. The measure of legitimacy in the composite measure focuses on the normative aspect of the concept and the extent to which the participatory is perceived as appropriate and fair. A process or arrangement can be considered legitimate if it is perceived as appropriate, proper and just (Tyler 2006).

This study has operationalized measures of legitimacy in the participatory process based on the perceived appropriateness of the functioning of the process, how it reached its decisions, and perceptions of fairness and equal treatment. As participatory institutions involve decisions and collective outputs, a distinction between general functioning and decisions is made.
Reflecting upon your experience of this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

This Process functioned in an appropriate manner

This Process reached decisions in an appropriate manner

On this Process all members were treated equally

Strongly agree, agree, neither disagree or agree, disagree, strongly disagree

In summary, while not representative of all key concepts relevant to the depth of participation, this section provided the theoretical justification and detailed precise operationalization of indicators such as respect and equality of voice, influence, trust in, and the legitimate or appropriate functioning of the participatory process for the purpose of the quantitative analysis. Accurate and valid measurement requires precise operationalization and the selection of a measurement level. The measure of the perceived depth of participation is conducted at the individual level and indicators are derived from existing concepts and theories. The selected indicators are theorised to be driving a latent sense of the perceived depth of participation. This will be tested through Explanatory Factor analysis in chapter 7. The next section of the chapter will operationalize the potential individual level explanatory variables.

5.2 Operationalization of Potential Explanatory Variables

Chapter four identified a number of potentially important factors in explaining variation in the depth of participation. In broad terms, these factors can be divided into individual and institutional factors. Within the individual level of analysis, a further distinction was made between citizens, and elected and public officials. Chapter seven will detail the results of the regression analysis which measures the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and a series of explanatory variables comprising the individual characteristics of civil society actors. This section of the chapter provides the theoretical justification of chosen explanatory variables, details their hypothesised effect on the dependent variable, and their precise operationalization in the study. In broad terms, these individual variables can be situated at the socio-demographic, associational and personality level.
5.2.1 The Characteristics and Capacity of Citizens

For many participatory democrats, citizen participation is fundamental to democracy, citizen development and as a means to create competent democratic citizens. However, common criticisms of participatory democracy focus on the capacity, competence and motivations of citizen participants (Papadopoulos and Warin 2007, Talpin 2011). The quality or capacity of citizens to engage in political action, and the perceived efficacy of this action, is influenced to a considerable degree, by the level of resources at their disposal. These resources can be financial, human and inter-organisational in nature. Human resources are characterised as the knowledge and skills individuals and groups have to engage in political action (Mayne 2010). The regression analysis will explore the effect of the socio-demographic variables of age, gender, income and education on the perceived depth of participation amongst civil society participants.

Income and education can be considered indicators of an individual’s socio-economic status. SES is a contested concept with no exact definition. Indicators of SES vary and encompass several dimensions including income, education, occupational status, social class and race. It is common for measures of socio-economic status to measure peoples’ access to certain economic and social resources including education and income. In this sense, SES cannot be measured “directly” and is an example of a latent variable (Saris and Gallhofer 2007). SES has been defined in broad terms as an individual’s access to financial, cultural, human and social resources and the overall standing of a person in the social stratification system of society (Bollen and Bauldry 2011). According to Oakes and Rossi, SES is “differential access (realised and potential) to desired resources” (Oakes and Rossi 2003, p.775). The following section will discuss the hypothesised effects of income, education and age on the perceived depth of participation.

Education

The link between wider political participation and education is well documented. Education is commonly used as an exogenous variable in predicting political participation in which citizens of higher education are considered more willing and able to interact with and participate in the political system (Kam and Palmer 2008). Education, it is argued, enhances skills necessary for participation including cognitive ability, knowledge, and civic skills. Education increases cognitive ability and the level of political information to assist citizens in making sense of politics and policy-making. Further, education can enable citizens to gain
higher income and higher prestige occupations and further their involvement in a range of civil society organisations. Consequently, through education citizens can be placed into important networks which subsequently facilitate all types of political participation (Kam and Palmer 2008).

The importance of education in participatory governance is of potential greater significance. The processes in this study involve policy making on a range of complex matters and require high levels of knowledge and information. To participate more deeply and to influence decisions and policy, citizens may require considerable levels of technical knowledge and the capacity to understand these issues. Consequently, education is hypothesised to have a positive effect on the perceived depth of participation.

**Income**

Similar to education, income is widely considered to have a positive association with wider political participation and political efficacy. Higher income increases the resources at the disposal of citizens to engage in a variety of different forms of participation. It also places citizens into networks where more likely to be engaged in different types of political activity (Levin-Waldman 2013). The effect of income on political participation and participatory forms of democracy is nuanced. Similar to education, it is understood that citizens of higher income groups or those already represented in traditional democratic arenas may participate more regularly and/or successfully. However, in contrast to the link between high SES and political engagement, it is possible for poverty and economic hardship to increase political interest and participation, particularly on areas of direct importance to the lives of citizens (Neundorf et al. 2013). This has been a key insight from institutions of participatory governance globally, most notably Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre.

However, considerable evidence suggests the experience of citizens from lower economic and socially excluded groups is not as successful or satisfactory. Citizens in lower income groups are less likely to feel politically efficacious (Caprara et al. 2009). Furthermore, citizens from lower socio-economic groups often perform worst in participatory arenas with citizen participation more likely to be successful under conditions of wealth, high levels of education and societal homogeneity (Smith 2009). In addition, attempts to generate consensus or produce outcomes based on the preferences of lower income or socially excluded groups can be more difficult. The beliefs and goals of these participants may be
considered inappropriate or undesirable by public institutions. Consequently, income is theorised to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable in this study.

**Age**

While not necessarily an indicator of SES, age is a key socio-demographic variable and has been positively correlated with all aspects of political activity. Traditionally, family and education are considered important agents of political socialization in which the context in which citizens grow up impacts political interest and subsequent engagement. In addition, interest in politics increases with age, particularly the shift from adolescence to adulthood (Neundorf et al. 2013). It is argued that as citizens get older, they become employed, educated, less geographically mobile and more integrated with communities. In addition, older citizens may develop the habit of participation in which prior experience increases the likelihood of future and more diverse forms of political participation (Valentino et al. 2009). They may possess more time to engage in political activity and have more knowledge about politics and policy (Brady et al. 1995). Older citizens, therefore, are better able to meet the costs of political participation as well as being more active membership in civil society and political organisations. This is of potential significance to participatory governance as the costs and demands of participation including time and levels of technical knowledge required are often higher. Consequently it is proposed that age has a positive association with the depth of participation.

The socio-demographic indicators are operationalised with the following items in the questionnaire.

Which best describes your total annual household income?

1: Under €20,000 2: €20,000-€24,000 3: €25,000-€29,000 4: €30,000-€34,999 5: €35,000-€39,999 6: €40,000-€49,000 7: €50,000-€74,999 8: €75,000-€99,999 9: €100,000-€149,000 10: €150,000 +

What is the highest school or degree completed to date?

0: None 1: Incomplete primary 2: Primary completed 3: Incomplete secondary 4: Secondary completed 5: Post-secondary trade/vocational school 6: University undergraduate degree incomplete 7: University undergraduate degree completed 8: Postgraduate diploma 9: Master’s degree (MA MBA or MSC) 10: Ph.D.

What is your age? 16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+
The quantitative analysis also examines the relationship between gender and the dependent variable. Gender is operationalized through the following item.

*What is your gender? Male or Female*

### 5.2.2 General Self Efficacy

In addition to socio-economic status, perceptions of efficacy of individuals are considered important in explaining political behaviour and the extent of political participation. The direct engagement of members of the public in participatory arenas renders the capacity and efficacy of citizens potentially more significant than traditional forms of participation such as voting. Perceived general self-efficacy in this study is a belief in the ability to be effective and influential in democratic institutions and participatory forms of governance. Self-efficacy beliefs are considered essential components of an individual’s personality (Bandura 2000). General personal/self-efficacy is considered important to actions and behaviour. Recent socio-psychological studies have located political efficacy within broader understandings of human agency and social cognition, and highlight the importance of perceived self-efficacy in judgements concerning citizens’ capacity to be effective in political contexts (Caprara and Vecchione 2013).

Efficacy is a statement of capability and is related to individuals’ beliefs in their capabilities to achieve particular accomplishments (Bandura 2012). While measures of efficacy are increasingly context specific or domain specific, individuals may possess a general level of self-efficacy which applies in different aspects of their lives (Bandura 2006). The sense of efficacy within politics is connected to perceptions of achieving results or particular goals through actions. The perception of political efficacy has been defined as “feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, that is, that it is worthwhile to perform one’s civic duties” (Campbell et al. 1954, p.187). According to Morrell, political efficacy and self-efficacy can be considered dimensions of the same concept and relate to perceived ability of individuals to influence politics (Morrell 2005).

Perceptions of efficacy are linked with motivations and actions. It is argued that individual judgements concerning the ability to be effective in the political realm are linked to the amount of time and effort in individuals are willing to engage in political activity (Vecchione et al. 2014). A perceived lack of efficacy, it is argued, impacts an individual’s willingness to engage in political activity and impacts the extent of political engagement. For
example, if citizens’ do not believe in their ability to perform certain tasks or achieve particular outcomes then they are less likely to pursue objectives and persevere in the face of challenges. Perceptions of efficacy may also reflect citizens’ capacity to meet the costs of participation and engage more substantively in the participatory process. It is hypothesised that higher levels of general self-efficacy have a positive effect on the perceived depth of participation.

The study measured respondents’ sense of general self-efficacy which is not domain specific. Due to the length of the questionnaire only six items from Schwarzer and Jerusalem’s general self-efficacy ten item scale were selected (Schwarzer and Jerusalem 2010). This does not measure self-efficacy as comprehensively as the original measure.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5- strongly agree:

- It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals
- Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations
- I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort
- I remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities
- I can usually handle whatever comes my way
- If someone opposes me, I can usually find the means and ways to get what I want

5.2.3 Conflict Avoidance and Willingness to Engage in Debate and Discussion

Conflict and debate is a common feature of political participation which is also a social activity. Similar to efficacy, the willingness to engage in contentious political discussion and debate is considered an important personality trait in determining the extent of political participation. The link between conflict avoidance and political participation is consistent with social psychological research on citizens’ handling of non-political disagreements (Mutz 2002). Some have suggested that, on average, citizens are conflict averse and prefer to leave politics to politicians (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Existing studies of political participation have highlighted negative relationships between conflict avoidance and more public acts of participation such as protesting and political discussion (Blais and St-Vincent 2011).
As outlined, it is possible to distinguish between different types of participation include voting, engaging in political protest, contacting public officials, joining political parties and interest groups as well as deliberation and participation in participatory institutions. Politics and democratic contestation can be cooperative, consensual as well as conflictual. According to Ulbig and Funk, democratic contestation involves social and political conflict which can influence the type of political participation engaged in by citizens. The extent to which conflict is relevant to political participation may depend on the type of participation, and on the social context, in which this participation takes place. The extent to which social conflict is a feature of political participation depends on whether the act of participation is public or private and whether participation is aimed at personal or particularistic goals or far reaching change. More intensive forms of participation involve expressing beliefs, opinions and preferences which may be opposed by others (Ulbig and Funk 1999).

This has particular relevance to participatory institutions in which participation is potentially more demanding than the act of voting. As outlined, this involves the entry of citizens into public and political arenas alongside elected representatives and public officials often on issues of direct relevance to their lives or communities. In these arenas, citizens may have to engage in contestation to express preferences, engage in agenda setting and monitor the implementation of specific policies or outcomes of processes. Such arenas are potentially demanding for citizens and those who are uncomfortable with conflict and contentious discussion may not choose to participate, participate effectively, or adapt to the demands of the participatory process as well as others.

Moreover, political decision-making or policy making involves bargaining, compromise and the exercise of power and influence. This can involve disagreement, rancour and compromise between different groups of actors with divergent interests, objectives and values. Citizens may have to be proactive and forceful in voicing their opinions in governance arenas. Participatory governance therefore often requires citizens to practice cooperative and contentious politics. Citizens must cooperate with public officials in order access/receive information, to facilitate meetings, and engage in negotiation. Without cooperation, public officials may have diminished interest in facilitating participation. However, too much cooperation may result in the co-optation of civil society by public officials. Contestation, therefore, involves protecting interests and enables citizens to voice...
preferences and ensure agreed upon outcomes are actioned by public authorities (Wampler 2008).

In the Irish case, this has added significance as evidence suggests the entry of civil society actors in political arenas alongside administrative and political actors can be daunting and intimidating (McInerney and Adshead 2010, O’Connell 2006). These actors enter into formal arenas within the administrative realm of the local authority with a pre-existing culture and established modes of working. In addition, civil society may be fewer in number than local authority officials and elected representatives with their opportunities to contribute regulated by these actors. The hypothesis is that the willingness of participants to engage in debate and discussion has a positive association with the perceived depth of participation. Willingness to engage in debate is measured with the following indicators.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5- strongly agree:

It is often better to give in on arguments rather than antagonizing people

It is important to get one’s point across even if others don’t like it

When people debate political issues I often feel uncomfortable

5.2.4 Political Affiliation

The study examines the relationship between political affiliation and the perceived depth of participation. The regression analysis will also consider the impact of participants’ membership of specific civil society pillars. At the individual level, widespread engagement and participation in electoral politics, including affiliation with a political party, has long been referenced as an indicator of a vibrant democracy (Pacheco and Owen 2015). While political party membership appears to be in decline, and political parties are no longer considered mass organisations, political parties have traditionally served as the link between citizens and democratic leadership (Slothuus and de Vreese 2010, Van Biezen et al. 2012). Traditionally, political parties help citizens make choices by simplifying policy choices and educate them to take more informed decisions by providing information. Political parties therefore can mobilise citizens and help them to form partisan identities, and shape citizens’ decisions by mobilising, influencing and structuring choices among political alternatives (Leeper and Slothuus 2014).
Political and associational links, therefore, have the potential to increase the capacity and efficacy of citizens in political contexts. As discussed, individual political behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors including material and cognitive resources (Valentino et al. 2009). Studies of political efficacy have highlighted the link between involvement in political parties and perceptions of competence to engage in political acts as well as perceived responsiveness of the political system (Caprara et al. 2009). Political parties and party membership is considered important to citizens’ political efficacy, knowledge and socialisation. Party affiliation may increase citizens’ sense of societal influence and integration within communities. In addition, political involvement is understood as a habit in which citizens engaged in political activity become more likely to engage in future political activities (Valentino et al. 2009). Globally, the success of participatory governance initiatives has been linked with support from a broader political project and when it does not oppose existing power relations (Hickey and Mohan 2005, Wampler 2008, Rodgers 2007). Membership of political or organisational has been identified as a strong determinant of participatory governance in Europe with participation in participatory institutions considered a stepping stone to politics or a means to revive political careers (Talpin 2011). However, many participatory processes are focused on specific policy areas and have little connection with party politics and formal political institutions (Warren 2009a).

Potentially, political affiliation can provide important ‘socio-political’ learning for citizens where they develop confidence, practical political skills as well as interest in the political realm and in specific political issues. Participation in organised associations such as political parties, it is argued, provides members with tangible skills such as organisational and communication skills (Wallman Lundåsen 2015). Therefore, involvement in a political party can increase citizens’ sense of competence, knowledge, and access to resources as well as develop political networks and relationships with political actors. Current or prior involvement in a political party can involve experience in group activity aimed at achieving political objectives. Further, it may also increase citizens capacity and confidence to engage in more demanding forms of communication and discussion (Beaumont 2011). Political affiliation may also have positive effects on the level of trust in the political system and the perceived responsiveness of political institutions. Consequently it is hypothesised that current

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14 In the case of Irish participatory governance, this perception is common amongst local elected representatives who often consider civil society participants as potential future political rivals and adversaries.
or past political affiliation will have a positive association with the perceived depth of participation.

Political affiliation is measured with one survey item: which of the following best describes your affiliation with a political party: never belonged, used to belong but do not currently, belong but do not actively participate, belong and actively participate.

5.2.5 Social and Political Trust

Despite operationalizing a measure of trust as encapsulated interests in the participatory process, this study has identified the level of both social and political trust of citizens as potential explanatory variables. This level of trust has potential implications for the extent to which citizens participate in participatory processes and relationships with other participants. More widely, trust is considered important to the functioning of democratic institutions, to collective action and to the collaboration of citizens and public authorities. Trust, like efficacy, influences individual and collective behaviour helping to reduce social complexity and coordinate collective action (Kaina 2008b). It can provide certainty or uncertainty about an individual’s future behaviour and shapes expectations of others. The following section will discuss the potential relationship between social and political trust and the perceived depth of participation and detail how these indicators are operationalized in the study.

Social trust can be considered a form of interpersonal trust and is distinct from political trust or trust in political institutions (Putnam 2007). Generalized social trust is defined as the perception that most people are part of your moral community and can be trusted (Uslaner 2008). Social trust acts as a lubricant of social coordination and is said to sustain a cooperative social climate, to facilitate collective behaviour and to encourage a regard for the public interest and make participation in public and civic life less risky (Putnam 1993, Zmerli and Newton 2008). This involves social connections between truster and trustee when individuals de pend up on others, when individuals feel un certainty concerning the attitudes of others, and when an element of risk or vulnerability is involved in these actions (Jackson et al. 2008).

Social activities, it is argued, are more likely to be successful in situations of cooperation and trust in which individuals assume others can be trusted or do not have to demonstrate they can be trusted before reciprocation (Hay 2007b). However, interpersonal trust, argues Uslaner, is built on an important moral foundation (Uslaner 2002). Trust in
others involves an important moral dimension in which actors may not trust others considered or perceived as unlike them (Uslaner 2008). This so-called moral trust is largely unconditional and not dependent upon everyday experiences and even perceptions and experiences of reciprocity. Consequently, it serves as a statement about how actors should behave, and involves expectations about honesty and certain types of desirable or acceptable behaviours (Uslaner 2008). Trust, therefore, is also a ‘moral’ value, one which is stable, enduring and dependent upon the perception of the extent to which others share your fundamental ethical principles and standards (Uslaner 2008). Moral or particularised trusters, however, are less likely to trust others perceived as not part of their own community. As a result, some people can be considered as possessing a higher disposition to trust. Consequently, in these cases, trust between individuals and groups is often particularized with cooperation between these actors less likely and more difficult (Uslaner 2002).

Social trust is seen as inherent to social relationships and influential in social situations, including face-to-face meetings and relationships between individuals, organisations, institutions and the state. This trust is considered of potential importance to participatory forms of governance as it often requires investment of time and resources from and sustained social cooperation and interaction between diverse individuals. Politics including participatory forms of governance therefore can be considered as social activity which functions best in situations of trust and cooperation between different types of actors. Those with low social trust, it is argued, are less likely to participate in politics and find the activity of participation more difficult to perform. According to Uslaner, the most demanding forms of civic engagement and political activities, which ties us to others considered unlike ourselves, depend a great deal on levels of generalised social trust (Uslaner 2008). Cooperation between people perceived as different requires a positive view of others different from ourselves and believe they are trustworthy.

Social trust, therefore, is considered important to a cooperative environment and the facilitation of collective behaviour (Zmerli and Newton 2008). In addition to implications for cooperation, levels of social trust have been linked with perceptions of the responsiveness of political actors and institutions or perceived external efficacy. Consequently, it is possible for social trust to influence the conduct of citizen and civil actors during the participatory process and the extent of their participation. Social trust is considered lower in situations of social diversity and in a reason of lower societal heterogeneity. In this respect, it is suggested that members of a social group are more likely to feel at ease with members of their own group.
(Putnam 2007). Some evidence suggests that social trust is lower amongst members of ethnic minority groups (Hooghe et al. 2009).  

Social trust is theorised to have a positive relationship with the perceived depth of participation. However, similar to indicators of socio-economic status, the presence of low social trusters within participatory processes does not mean they are less willing to engage in more substantive forms of participation. It is possible for low social trusters or particularized trusters to act on the basis of distrust and engage in contested forms of democratic participation and conflict with political and administrative actors. However, they are more likely to have a dissatisfactory experience and poorer relationships with public and elected officials and this could impact the perceived depth of participation.

General social trust was measured with the following three items in the study. This measure is based on the measure of general social trust in the European Social Survey.

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:*

*(Network) There are only a few people I can trust completely*

*(Interpersonal) If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you*

*(Helpfulness) Most people just look out for themselves*

*Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree*

**Political Trust**

Political trust relates to trust in political actors as well as trust in political institutions. It is possible to operationalize indicators which evaluate levels of trust in individuals and trust in institutions. Studies indicate that citizens’ trust in political institutions and political parties is in decline (Dalton 2004, Norris 1999, Biezen and Poguntke 2014, Farrell 2014). This decline in trust is considered detrimental to democracy. However, some make arguments in relation to the importance of distrust to democracy in which criticism of political authority fosters debate and scrutiny of democratic institutions (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003). According to some, social trust is important or a precursor for political trust. Citizens who trust others are also likely to trust political institutions (O'Sullivan et al. 2014). However, some dispute this by Uslaner who considers social trust which relates to trust of generalised others and political trust or judgements of government performance and performance and  

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15 This has potential important implications for participatory institutions which involve direct participation of ethnic minority groups such as members of the Travelling community within the LTACC.
responsiveness as distinct (Uslaner 2002). It is possible therefore to distinguish between social or interpersonal trust which comprises trust in individuals and institutions. Institutional trust, it is argued, implies that an institution is trusted to carry its tasks and serve collective interests in a reliable, competent and secure fashion (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000). As outlined, in the political realm, the distinction between trust in individuals and institutions is not clear.

Members of the public may be motivated to engage with public authorities on the basis of political trust and distrust. In context of policy-making, public authorities are often perceived as barriers to access resources by certain groups and/or the implementation of public policies. Higher levels of political trust are hypothesised to have a positive relationship with the perceived depth of participation. In theory, higher levels of political trust increase the likelihood of citizens engaging in political participation including participatory forms of governance and cooperating with public officials as well as perceptions of participatory process and the responsiveness of administrative and political actors. Actors who interact with public officials in policy making activities with existing low levels of political trust may perceive them as unwilling or unable to implement agreed upon outcomes.

The precise nature of the theoretical relationship of political trust to the dependent variable is subject to debate, however. It is possible that the depth of participation has a positive association with the wider political system and is an outcome of the experience of participation. In this understanding, political trust is not a cause but rather an outcome of the participatory institution. One further possibility is that political institutions are not causal or an effect of the dependent variable but is instead epiphenomenal. Consequently, the measure of trust exists alongside the experience of participation but is not a direct cause or outcome of this experience. However, despite this debate, it is hypothesised that participants’ level of political trust has a positive association with the depth of participation for civil society actors.

Political trust in this study was measured using indicators similar to those found in the European Social Survey and the Irish National Election Study. These indicators focus on trust in national political institutions as well as national political actors.

How trusting are you of each of the following? Political Parties, Dáil Éireann, National Government, The Civil Service, An Garda Síochána, The Courts.
Very trusting, fairly trusting, neither trusting or untrust, not very trusting, not at all trusting

In summary, the measurement of social science concepts requires precise operationalization (Goertz 2006, Saris and Allhofer 2007). This chapter explored the development of indicators of the perceived depth of participation and individual level explanatory factors which may influence this for the purpose of the regression analysis. To assist in measurement for the purposes of this study, detailed conceptualization and operationalization of the dependent and independent variables was conducted. These factors include participants’ aspects of socio-economic status including income and education, levels of general self-efficacy, political trust, and willingness to engage in political debate. The following chapter will explore and justify the overall research design and methodological approach of the study.
Chapter 6 Methodology

Methodological decisions are critical in empirical research, to data gathering, and subsequent data analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to explore and justify the methodological approach taken during the study. The methodology of this study is driven by the aims of the research and the attempt to answer the two primary research questions; (a) what is the depth of participation and (b) what factors explain variance in the depth of participation in the selected cases? In the context of research within the field of participatory governance, more generally, and subnational governance in Ireland, the aims of the research presented a number of methodological challenges. The attempt to expand the analysis of local participatory governance in Ireland from case study to larger scale analysis, and the objectives of description and explanation guide the overall methodological approach. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the ontology and epistemology underpinning the research and the use of mixed methods. As surveys often generalize findings from a sample to a broader population, a breakdown of responses across each process and each type of participant will be provided. Moreover, the limitations of the methodological approach and its impact on data and findings will be discussed throughout.

6.1 Ontology and Epistemology of Study

Political research, argue Marsh and Furlong, should proceed with the awareness and understanding of ontology and epistemology as such assumptions shape and determine the approach to political enquiry. Ontology and epistemology can be understood as the ‘skin’ of a researcher’s approach to social science enquiry (Marsh and Furlong 2010). Ontology is concerned with ‘being’, with what is or what exists in ‘reality’. In terms of political research, this can be extended to political being, to what is politically, to what exists politically, or to political ‘reality’ (Hay 2006). Epistemology, in contrast, is a theory of knowledge and reflects our view of what can be known and how it can be known (Hay 2006). It is possible to distinguish between ontological and epistemological approaches with profound differences in understanding of the natural and social world. Consequently, recognizing and understanding the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of a particular theoretical or methodological approach is of importance (Hay 2007a).

Foundationalism and anti-foundationalism, for example, serve as opposing pillars in ontology. Positivism, which argues the world exists independently of our knowledge, is one
form of foundationalist ontology. Positivists seek to test causal hypotheses and advocate the separation of empirical and normative questions. Positivist epistemology focuses on causal relationships, the testing of hypotheses, and makes use of quantitative methods. Quantitative data is used to measure relationships that are directly observable. Anti-foundationalism, such as interpretivist approaches, in contrast, is a theory which argues no one foundation on which beliefs and knowledge claims are built, focusing more on meaning and less on explanation (Marsh and Furlong 2010).

The methodology of this study is located within the pragmatic paradigm which encompasses mixed philosophical positions (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). Pragmatism provides epistemological justification for mixing approaches and methods and rejects the incompatibility of qualitative and quantitative data (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). Pragmatism involves post positivist and interpretivist approaches which is considered natural to combine statistical analysis with myriad forms of qualitative analysis. The adoption of this position is practical and is guided by the objectives of the research and the desire to produce a more comprehensive analysis of participation. The study is guided by the belief that there is nothing inherent in the properties of a quantitative and qualitative approach that prevents them being used by researchers of different epistemological positions (Read and Marsh 2002, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Moreover, the study agrees with the argument that the positivist separation between ‘facts’ and ‘values’ is both artificial and detrimental to political research (Goodhart et al. 2012).

The methodology of the research encompasses qualitative and quantitative analysis and is concerned with description, explanation and understanding. While the research tests hypotheses and involves some elements of post-positivist research, the study rejects the strict dichotomy between both positivism and interpretivism. Both the quantitative and qualitative data explores the nature and meaning of participation for participants and involves some degree of subjectivity. The research is cognisant that in individuals an act on the basis of their beliefs and references and that these beliefs and references are often rooted within objective factors such as job position, gender and class (Bevir and Rhodes 2010). Therefore, the potential for the interpretation and understanding of social phenomena to affect outcomes is recognised. As the world is socially constructed, social structures can shape and are shaped by the social world, and are developed through the actions of actors. In this regard, actors act on the basis of beliefs and values. Moreover, values, which reflect the broader social world in which people operate, can be used to justify actions (Bevir and Rhodes 2010). This is in
keeping with the pragmatic philosophy in which knowledge is viewed as constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and exist in (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Further, the study does not take either a strictly structural or agential approach and is cognisant of the potential importance of both structure and agency. Traditionally, structure and agency are considered as opposites. However, it is possible to identify both structural and agential factors in most social and political contexts. It is a belief of this study that individuals can and do act consciously but are situated within specific contexts which involve an uneven distribution of opportunities and restraints (Hay 2002).

6.2 Mixed Methods

In keeping with the pragmatic philosophy, this study utilises both quantitative and qualitative analysis and is a form of mixed methods, blended or integrative research (Johnson et al. 2007). The primary focus of qualitative data, it is argued, is on meaning and understanding. It can identify how individuals interpret their experiences and surroundings. This is in contrast to quantitative data, which focuses primarily on the amount of something and the relationships between variables analysed through statistical analysis (Merriam and Tisdell 2015). Mixed methods research recognises the similarities between quantitative and qualitative research in which research questions are addressed through analysis of empirical observations coming from personal experience, observation or experiment (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). A mixed methods approach is cognisant of the limitations of all types of data including large scale quantitative research. Consequently, it is important to combine this data with qualitative sources to deepen and strengthen analyses (Font et al. 2012).

This combination has the potential to combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the realisation of broader research objectives. The purpose of this approach can be summed up in terms of triangulation, complementarity, initiation, development and expansion (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Triangulation can be used as an instrument of validation, and as a means to gain new information, and to build a deeper understanding of an issue (Flick 2004). Due to the potential significance of institutional design as well as the behaviour of actors, a comprehensive analysis of the depth of participation in these cases, necessitates a focus on institutional and individual level factors and the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. The use of mixed methods can potentially produce more comprehensive analysis in which the significance of individual and
institutional factors are considered and a larger number of participants are invited to take part in the study. The use of mixed methods is also undertaken in the context of growing methodological pluralism in the field of participatory governance and the prioritisation of conceptualisation over measurement within existing literature (Galais et al. 2012, Goodhart et al. 2012).

The study follows a largely sequential mixed analysis in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered at different stages. However, this is not clear cut as qualitative methods were used throughout the research, including the development and improvement of the questionnaire prior to its launch. The questionnaire also provided respondents with the opportunity to provide in-depth qualitative feedback. In this sense, respondents provided qualitative and quantitative data. That said, the study engaged in extensive qualitative data collection after the questionnaire and the interviews and focus groups were for the most part conducted after this. Qualitative data was used to expand upon or to supplement the survey data. This helped to explore the results of the questionnaire in further detail and to determine important factors in the variation of the depth of participation.

Therefore, the interview data and focus groups were used to triangulate data, to expand the extent of understanding, and to set the results of the statistical analysis in a wider context. Finally, mixed methods are also evident in the approach to measurement. According to some, the attempt to engage in measurement should be free from subjective judgement. In the traditional positivist view, inquiry must be objective based on precise rules and observable facts. However, for measurement to be empirical and scientific it must be grounded in shared concepts, shared realities, and shared rules of translation, all of which require the use of judgement by the researcher (Schedler 2012). For example, interpretation and judgement is required in the use of Factor analysis which, although primarily a statistical method, requires researchers to name factors and interpret what factors mean. This is considered a form of qualitative coding (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009).

6.3 Research Design and Case Selection

The development of the participatory governance landscape in Ireland and the origins and relevance of these processes were discussed previously. This section discusses the case selection and the research design of the study in further detail. The research analyses the depth of participation in three local governance processes in all local authority areas in Ireland: Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACCs), Strategic...
Policy Committees (SPCs), and County/City Development Boards (CDBs). The reference period of the study is between 2009 and 2014. As discussed, one of the motivations of the research is to expand the study of participatory governance in Ireland from case study to larger scale analysis through a comprehensive analysis of subnational practice. The research, which assesses participation across three distinct processes and from the perspectives of different types of participants, is a within and across unit research design (Gerring 2004). While it explores the experiences of local authority officials and elected representatives, the primary unit of analysis is civil society participants and the depth of civil society participation.

The selection of these participatory institutions is justified in terms of their location within the participatory governance landscape, in addition to their contrasting origins and policy focus. SPCs reformed existing local government committees with the addition of civil society actors and are embedded within the administrative environment of the local authority with pre-existing norms and values. In contrast, CDBs, which focused on broad issues of local development including social inclusion, can be considered a quasi-independent entity, supported by specialist local authority staff who were often recruited outside the local government sector. While embedded within the administrative realm of the local authority, the LTACC is a largely issue specific process, namely Traveller accommodation. However, the LTACC formalised the participation of a marginalised and socially excluded group largely underrepresented in traditional democratic arenas. Further, the issue of Traveller accommodation is a persistent “wicked” problem in Irish public policy and the relationship between Travellers and the Irish state has also been problematic. According to Smith, participatory processes can produce certain democratic goods in different ways (Smith 2011). It is important, therefore, to assess the depth of participation within diverse and similar cases. While possessing similar features, analytical variation is evident within the institutional design, policy focus and remit of the three participatory institutions. This offers the potential to analyse diverse participatory experiences and to build theories to account for any differentiation.

Research should produce data that is both internally and externally valid. According to Gerring, internal validity refers to the correctness of a hypothesis or causal inference with respect to the sample (the cases actually studied by the researcher) while external validity refers to the correctness of a hypothesis with respect to the broader population (cases not studied). The key element of external validity thus rests upon the representativeness of the
sample and responses received (Gerring 2004). The study of three local governance processes throughout Ireland helps to increase the study's internal validity and is more representative of the reality of local participatory governance in Ireland (Yin 2009). With this in mind, an effort was made to ensure adequate geographic representation of respondents throughout the different local authority areas. Further, in reference to the data compiled from local elected representatives, an effort was made to ensure both geographical and cross-party representativeness. In terms of ensuring and explaining variation in the depth of participation in Ireland, a national study increases the generalizability of the study. A national comparison of Irish cases can establish strong internal validity and produce generalizable results relevant to the sample studied, and possess a high level of transferability to other ‘out of sample’ cases (Slater and Ziblatt 2013). It is hoped, therefore, that this design will be able to explain and account for any variation in the depth of participation within and across the selected cases that findings possess strong validity in the context of participatory governance in Ireland.

To answer the primary research questions, the dissertation explores the depth of participation in reference to qualitative and quantitative data. In terms of explaining variation, the hypothesised relationship between the depth of participation and the individual characteristics of civil society participants are tested through quantitative analysis. This analysis tests a number of hypotheses in respect to the relationship between the depth of participation and variables such as education, income, social trust, and personal efficacy. Further evidence in respect to these variables is provided in reference to the qualitative data. The perceived depth of participation of local authority officials and elected representatives is not included in the regression analysis and the majority of the explanatory variable survey items were not a part of the questionnaire for non-civil society participants. The context of their participation differs from civil society participants and the hypothesised relationship between variables such as income; efficacy, social and political trust and the depth of participation are not relevant to political and administrative actors. However, the quantitative analysis does examine statistically significant differences in respect to the composite measure across the different types of actors.

The relationship between the depth of participation and institutional design and the role of public administration and elected officials is examined primarily through the qualitative data gathered. By potentially providing a richer understanding of how the constraints of the rules and procedures of each process, and the disposition and conduct of...
administrative and political actors, impact the depth of participation, the qualitative data was considered a more effective approach for these potential explanatory variables. There is relatively small variation in institutional design across the cases, so the focus is instead to examine participants’ experiences of how the processes are designed and how this impacted the extent of their participation. It is reasonable to hypothesise that the looser institutional design of the CDB and its quasi-independent status could produce deeper participation. However, while not tested directly through hypothesis testing, the relationship between the dependent variable and participating within each process controlling for the other individual level variables is examined in the regression analysis. This will be discussed further in chapters seven and nine. More detailed hypothesis testing on the impact of institutional design to the depth of participation across diverse cases is a potential avenue for further research.

6.4 Data Collection and Data Gathering

This section will outline the criteria used to identify and target the research population and the effort undertaken to invite this population to take part in the research. This study commenced in October 2013. After a pilot phase, the primary data gathering commenced in November 2015. The data analysis phase commenced in late spring 2016 which continued until the autumn of 2016. Participants were targeted based on their membership or involvement with the three participatory processes between 2009 and 2014. They were targeted using purposive sampling in which respondents are selected to participate according to predetermined criteria relevant to the specific research objectives (Onwuegbuzie and Collins 2007). In May 2014 local authority elections were held to form new membership of local authorities nationally. As a result, the three processes in this study were dissolved and new participants were subsequently elected to reflect the changing membership of local authorities between 2014 and 2019. The end of the five year period provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their experiences.

A database of the members of each process in each local authority area between 2009 and 2014 was compiled prior to the May 2014 elections. As there is no one central database with a comprehensive list of participants or their contact details, this was a complex undertaking. To compile the database, an extensive analysis of local authority websites and annual reports was conducted. This helped to identify the vast majority of potential participants within each process. The contact details for participants were subsequently
gathered over the next 12 months in conjunction with local authorities, civil society organisations and through independent research. A small number of local authorities published the names and full contact details of the participants in their entirety either online or in annual reports. Some local authorities provided the contact details of participants upon request with the permission of those involved. However, in some cases, local authorities did not provide sufficient information and some were non-responsive to contact via email.

Informal partnerships were developed with many civil society groups to better target the population. Further, the study benefited from the assistance of the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) who agreed to raise awareness of the study within local government. In cases where the contact details of participants were not available, the Community and Voluntary Fora were contacted to help distribute the questionnaire to participants. In the case of the LTACC, the research engaged with an ethnic minority population who may be considered a ‘hard to reach’ group or ‘seldom heard’ group (Kelleher et al. 2014). An informal partnership with the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), the National Travellers Women’s Forum and local Traveller projects assisted in identifying a nd inviting T ravellers to p articipate. A s discussed, t he LTACC Traveller representatives are divided between members of Traveller organisations, who may be settled Irish, and ordinary members of T he Travelling community (most commonly supported by Traveller organisations). For the most part, LTACC representatives are nominated and selected through Traveller local and national projects and organisations. Some LTACC representatives are full-time or part-time employees of these or ganisations with many serving as Accommodation and Primary Health Care officers.

Consequently, Traveller representatives were invited to participate through personalised emails and through informal partnerships with Traveller development projects and advocacy groups. As is common with researching so-called marginalised, hard to reach groups or seldom heard groups, many Traveller representatives did not have access to computers, email or the internet. Consequently, a paper copy version of the questionnaire was provided via local Traveller groups and projects who returned the questionnaire. Due to illiteracy, a small number of Traveller representatives completed the questionnaire with the assistance of a Traveller project worker who returned the questionnaire to the researcher on their behalf. The hard copies were returned to the researcher and inputted manually into the survey software. The task of inviting Travellers and other civil society actors to participate was further complicated by the effects of the 2008 economic crash in
Ireland which has resulted in a considerable decline in funding for Traveller projects and community and voluntary organisations (Harvey 2013). Currently, a number of local authority areas no longer have functioning Traveller organisations, while many Traveller projects have been recently subsumed in primary health care with little funding to support wider Traveller participation in local government and issues of accommodation. Despite this, the cooperation of organisations such as the Irish Traveller Movement ensured the invitation to participate was extended to a large proportion of the target population. The decline in funding for Traveller organisations has implications for the democratic participation of Travellers in local government. This will be discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters.

6.5 Survey Method and Technique

A survey questionnaire using Fluid Survey software served as a primary data gathering instrument to measure participants’ perceptions of the depth of participation and the individual explanatory variables in the quantitative analysis. Due to the number of local authority areas in Ireland and the number of actors who participate in each process from civil society, politics and public administration, a survey was considered a valuable and effective method to contact participants in all local authority areas. A survey questionnaire with space for qualitative data therefore could potentially reach a wider cohort of participants with this data supplemented with a smaller number of in depth interviews and focus groups. A self-administered online questionnaire was used to invite participants to take part. It is possible to distinguish between different survey techniques including: a self-administered survey (hard or soft-copy); an interviewer administered telephone survey and an interviewer administered face-to-face survey (De Vaus 2002).

Each survey technique has particular strengths and weaknesses. The self-administered survey technique available online and in hard copy was deemed the most appropriate method for this research study in the context of potential methodological benefits as well as financial and human resources available. This was made possible with the availability of contact details such as the email addresses of potential respondents from all spheres after the development of the respondent database. For example, local authority officials were widely contactable via email. The vast majority of local elected representatives were contactable via email also. In addition, while access was complicated by a decline in funding for community and voluntary organisations, a substantial number of representatives from wider civil society
were contactable via email and through various civil society organisations and networks. In cases where telephone contact details were available, contact was made to raise awareness of the questionnaire and invite participants to take part.

Moreover, there are many potential methodological benefits to a self-administered questionnaire which must be acknowledged. One weakness of survey questionnaires is social desirability bias which increases measurement error (Saris and Gallehofer 2007). This facilitates respondents to avoid questions and potentially answer more sensitive items honestly. The anonymity of the online questionnaire, it was hoped, could reduce the incentive of respondents to respond in a socially desirable way (Dolnicar 2013). In contrast with telephone or interviewer questionnaires, self-administered surveys, it is argued, enable respondents to answer at their own pace increasing the comprehension and consideration of each survey item. They can also minimise the so-called interviewer effect and increase respondent anonymity and confidentiality, which may reduce problems of social desirability and other forms of bias. This can potentially better facilitate the answering of sensitive questions.

For the purposes of targeting the population and gathering the data, three versions of the questionnaire were produced. Potential respondents were divided into three main categories; local authority officials, local elected representatives, and so-called “external members” including community and voluntary representatives, representatives of environment groups, representatives of Traveller organisations and ordinary members of the Travelling community, as well as Social Partner representatives. In the case of the CDB, invitations to participate in the research were sent to relevant national public officials within statutory agencies including the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Enterprise Ireland. Each version of the questionnaire had a slightly different invitation letter and layout and was addressed directly to each type of respondent. Most questions in each version were identical, although questions not considered relevant to a particular type of actor were excluded. Moreover, extra questions on attitudes to “external” or civil society actors were included in the questionnaire administered to officials and elected representatives.

The online invites were facilitated through the use of Fluid Survey software which provided a number of functional benefits. The software’s invites to officials facilitated distinct personalised invitations for each type of actor. The survey software enabled the use of

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16 However, this study does not research the participation of Agricultural/Farming organisations.
complex branching logic to make the questionnaire more respondent friendly in the context of each process and each type of participant. To distinguish clearly between each participatory process, respondents in each version of the questionnaire were instructed to select the process they participated on during the period at the beginning of the questionnaire. With branching rules, subsequent questions within the online questionnaire referred specifically to that specific participatory process and no other. Again, this was undertaken to ensure each questionnaire was specific and relevant to each type of actor, to exclude irrelevant questions, and to reduce the complexity of and the time to complete the survey. The data derived from the different questionnaires were later combined into one dataset for quantitative analysis.

The primarily online method of targeting the survey population has strengths and weaknesses and it is important to acknowledge the potential impact of this on the data gathered and subsequent analysis. The online approach likely skews the responses from those who are regular users of email and social media. Representatives without an active email address or who do not use email and social media regularly are less likely to complete the questionnaire. In terms of local authority officials, attempts were made to contact those who had retired or left the local government sector after 2014 and in the wake of reduction in the size of the public sector in Ireland. However, it is likely retired and/or ex local authority officials who no longer use local authority emails are underrepresented in the responses. This has potential implications for subsequent data analysis and the results of the research. It is important to stress that additional methods were used to make contact with respondents, however. In cases where email communication was not possible, contact was made by phone or through civil society organisations.

All data gathering instruments possess potential strengths and weaknesses which impact the reliability and validity of the data gathered. This section will discuss the steps taken to ensure the survey instrument was valid and reliable. In presenting survey items, researchers must consider a number of factors which may influence responses and impact the validity and reliability of survey data. Survey presentation is important as issues such as ambiguous wording, the direction of item wording, and the range of response provided can impact upon the validity and reliability of subsequent data (Krosnick and Presser 2010). This was addressed in the construction of and presentation of the questionnaire and attempts were made to ensure questions and statements were clear, concise, meaningful and unambiguous to respondents. It was one of the key aims of the pilot study which will be
discussed further later. The questionnaire was designed to provide a clear and logical sequence for respondents and reduce incongruent sequencing of items. In general, questions were grouped according to concept. The questionnaire mixed the ordering of response options from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The altering of response formats decreases the likelihood of respondents ‘satisficing’ or answering questions on autopilot without careful consideration of the questionnaire items (Krosnick and Presser 2010). The mixing of response options was programmed using the survey software.

The measurement of attitudes and beliefs are considered ‘non-factual’ and best achieved with use of scales. Survey scales must be reliable and possess units of measurement with so-called theoretically valid ‘anchoring points’ that can give meaning to scores. Response scales must provide respondents with enough variation to adequately display their response without reducing clarity of meaning or inducing conflation or redundancy (Krosnick and Fabrigar 1997). This is significant as the presentation of items and scales to respondents presents a cognitive challenge to respondents. Survey scales demand a matching or mapping process from respondents who must assess their own attitude or belief conceptually and subsequently identify the value that most closely resembles that attitude (Krosnick and Presser 2010). This requires a conscious and explicit decision of behalf of the researcher to, firstly, questioning the suitability of the use of such scales and, secondly, the number of points provided to respondents on each scale. Within this, the validity of the measurement instrument requires that the selected scale adequately covers the range of potential responses and that respondents can adequately interpret or comprehend each point. Respondents must be given enough options to accurately reflect their response. Providing too few options or too many can bias results (Krosnick and Fabrigar 1997).

With this in mind, a decision was made to follow the standard five-point agree/disagree scale with the questionnaire which included a ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option. Sometimes, this option is excluded to encourage respondents to express a firm positive or negative attitude. The use of this response option may encourage participants to select it as a safe option or to hide true attitudes or values. The inclusion of the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ option, however, is justified in relation to the nature of attitudes and experiences and it was considered important to include this option to better reflect the true attitudes of respondents. It must be acknowledged that the answers of respondents based on scales can be interpreted differently. In short, some groups or individual respondents can have differing understandings of questions and response categories such as strongly agree,
agree, disagree etc. (King and Wand 2007). It is of paramount importance that all or most respondents can agree in their interpretations of the meaning of each scale point (Krosnick and Presser 2010). A differing understanding of a particular point on a scale can result in two respondents with a similar attitude selecting different positions. This affects the reliability and validity of survey responses. This is a potential limitation of all survey data including the results of the quantitative analysis in this research.

6.6 Pilot and Launch of Questionnaire

The launch of the final questionnaire commenced in early December 2015 through three distinct methods. Firstly, utilising the Fluid Survey invite tool direct personalised invitations were sent to civil society, local elected representatives, and local authority officials via email. This involved a direct survey invite via email with a link to the survey and invitation letter explaining the research study. The invite software tool generated a unique link for each respondent. This personalised invite approach allowed greater flexibility from the perspective of respondents but also enabled the researcher to send targeted reminders based on who participated but had not completed the questionnaire. Secondly, in the case of non-personalised invites, the questionnaire was distributed through local authority mailing lists and community and voluntary organisations providing an anonymous access link with a cover letter inviting participants to take part in the study. A generic link and invitation letter was provided. Lastly, a hard copy of the questionnaire was sent to respondents without access to computers or email.

Prior to this, the questionnaire was tested during a pilot phase, considered an important aspect of any survey study. As outlined, the operationalization of complex theory and multi-dimensional concepts through survey research is considered difficult (Saris and Gallhofer 2007). Piloting, it is argued, can reduce problems associated with subjectivity and differing interpretations of survey items and scales thereby reducing measurement error. It also provides the researcher with the opportunity to sharpen the language of closed ended survey questions and, where necessary, to make them more precise. The questionnaire was piloted in November 2015 with three civil society actors, three local elected representatives and two local authority officials. Afterwards, a number of interviews with participants in person and via telephone were conducted to gauge their understanding of the questions. The aim of the feedback was to reduce respondent confusion and to sharpen the wording of items. When respondents completed the questionnaire, questions were asked about survey
introduction: its content, length, item wording and their overall comprehension of the items and the language used. The interviews helped to determine how respondents understood the questions and indicators.

In general, the respondents demonstrated an understanding of the questions, satisfaction with the length of the survey, and expressed no difficulty comprehending the questions. However, some questions were amended to improve their clarity for participants resulting in a few minor changes to the final questionnaire. For example, interviews with local elected representatives resulted in the inclusion of the distinction between an ‘ordinary member’ and ‘Chairperson’ of each process. It is possible for local elected representatives to chair the process resulting in different actions/behaviour than an ordinary member. The post pilot interview with officials also resulted in some minor changes to the questionnaire. While key participants, local authority officials are ‘ex-officio’ members not full ‘members’ of each process. Consequently, the wording of the questionnaire was amended to reflect this. For example, references to ‘other members’ in some items were amended to ‘members’ to account for this distinction. In addition, in reference to concerns surrounding anonymity and confidentiality, a question asking officials to specify their job position within the local authority was removed. Lastly, some argued the anonymity and confidentiality of the study should be clearer in both the invitation letter and the introductory cover page of the online questionnaire. Both the invitation letter and cover page of the questionnaire was amended in light of this.

6.7 Survey Response and Survey Sample

This section will detail the response to the questionnaire. While attempting to reach an entire population, survey research can generalise findings from a sample to a larger population. As outlined, considerable effort was made to identify and contact the target population and ensure the findings of the study are representative of local participatory governance throughout Ireland during the period. The depth of participation in the study is analysed through participants who participated on a consistent and sustained basis during the five year time period. As discussed previously, it was not possible to obtain an official list of membership of each process in each local authority area. The database compiled identified over 1900 potential respondents across all types of all participants within the three processes. This included approximately 900 local elected representatives and 300 local authority officials. The launch of the questionnaire revealed inaccuracies between the official
memberships of each process as per local authority documents used to build the database. While listed as official participants of each process in local authority documents, some indicated they were not members or had participated before 2009. Further, many potential respondents indicated a lack of consistent and meaningful engagement between 2009 and 2014 and did not wish to take part in the research or felt they could not take part. It was common for those respondents to state that they participated at the beginning perhaps for a period of six or twelve months or attended one initial meeting. Further, the analysis of local authority documents revealed places designated to potential respondents were left vacant or one designated number of a civil society pillar participated on two processes at the same time during the same period. This is evident in all three processes and across all types of actors and makes determining the exact response rates across each process difficult. This practice was commented upon by several local authority officials who highlighted a lack of engagement from local elected representatives and civil society actors during this period. Additional research into the disengagement or lack of participation among these respondents and within broader civil society is an important avenue for further research in the context of participatory governance. Explanations include the specific selection mechanisms, a lack of capacity and support, and perceptions of “tokenism”. This will be discussed further in chapter 10.

Table 2 details the number of respondents to the study per category of participant and the number of estimated active target respondents in each category. The estimated target population is calculated in reference to the number of places identified in local authority documents as well as the actual take up of those places and the number of active participants during the period. This assessment was made in reference to local authority documents including minutes of meetings and correspondence with participants. However, in some instances the actual take up of places and active engagement during the period are likely lower than the estimated number and the exact response rate is difficult to determine.

The under participation of civil society is most evident in the context of Traveller representatives. Most commonly, depending on the size of the local authority area, 3, 4 or 5 places were reserved for Traveller representatives on each LTACC. A total of 43 responses were received from Traveller representatives. In terms of participating on a consistent basis throughout 2009 and 2014 the number of active Traveller representatives is likely around 100. In addition to an analysis of documents such as minutes of LTACC meetings, contact with local authority oficia

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members of the LTACC did not participate at all or very infrequently during the period. In reference to local authority documents, a similar lack of engagement with the LTACC is evident on behalf of elected representatives who often did not attend meetings. A high turnover of Traveller representatives is evident in many local authority areas with non-engaging participants being replaced by new members. This is primarily the case for ordinary members of the Travelling community or representatives who are employed within or supported by Traveller organisations. Due to the non-participation of Travellers it was uncommon for Traveller representatives to participate on LTACCs in different local authority areas. Further, independent research revealed that, contrary to national guidelines, the LTACC did not function on a regular basis in at least three local authority areas. In these areas, the LTACC met infrequently, if at all, during the time period of the study.

Table 2 Number of Respondents and Estimated Active Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Actor</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Estimated Active Target Population</th>
<th>Included in Quantitative Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and Voluntary</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Civil Society</strong></td>
<td><strong>242</strong></td>
<td><strong>645</strong></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Development</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Agency Officials</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The geographic spread is wide ranging with responses received from all local authority areas across the different types of actors. Not all respondents answered every question. In the quantitative analysis, respondents who did not answer one or more of the relevant questions are excluded. This led to a reduction in the number of cases included in the final analysis with a total of 201 included in the civil society analysis and 593 for the total analysis including elected representatives and public officials. The extent of non-completed responses within civil society can be explained, in part, by the length of the questionnaire and...
the sensitive nature of some of the survey items in respect to the hypothesised explanatory variables the majority of which elected and public officials were not required to answer. To test if an increase in the number of cases would impact the results of the quantitative findings, additional testing with multiple imputation was conducted with Stata. However, this analysis did not change the significance of the results and the listwise deletion method was retained.

In terms of the response rate of local authority officials, the study received 58 responses for SPCs, 38 for LTACCs and 21 for CDBs or a total of 117 responses. According to the database, this represents a response rate of approximately 40 per cent of officials. While some respondents did not wish to indicate their local authority area, the responses from officials were well distributed geographically. For example, in the context of the LTACC, officials from at least 21 different local authority areas responded. This extends to over 25 local authority areas for SPCs. The local elected representative survey received a total of 231 completed or partially completed responses out of a potential population over 900 including 172 for SPC and 39 for CDBs. Similar to public officials, it is possible for county councillors to participate on two or more different processes during the period and SPC chairpersons could be CDB members.

In the case of the LTACC, local elected representatives did not respond to requests to participate as readily as the SPC or CDB. Only 20 responded to the LTACC questionnaire and the response sample lacked representation from Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael councillors. Consequently, it is not representative of the target population and is not included in the quantitative analysis for the LTACC in chapter 7. Additional attempts were made in partnership with the LAMA to boost response rates amongst local elected representatives for the LTACC. The lack of response from local elected representatives can be explained, in part, by the controversial nature of Traveller accommodation and often conflictual relationship between representatives of Traveller organisations and local politicians. To gain the perspective of elected representatives who participated on the LTACC, 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted with county councillors from different political parties.

6.8 Qualitative Data Comments, Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

The research collected a substantial volume of qualitative data through the questionnaire which provided respondents the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback and to discuss their experiences in further detail. The majority of all types of respondents provided qualitative feedback at the end of each questionnaire producing a substantial volume
of qualitative material which further explored questionnaire responses and other key aspects of their experiences in often substantial detail. Further, twenty six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the different actors including senior local authority officials, local elected representatives and a variety of civil society participants. Four focus groups were conducted, two with members of the Travelling community and two with members of community voluntary or ganisations and environment groups in separate geographic locations. Focus groups had approximately between 4 and 12 participants and were used for practical reasons. In the context of members of the Travelling community, they facilitated contact with multiple members of a “hard to reach” group at the same time and location. To explore broader policy on participatory governance in Ireland and recent reform in the area, interviews with two senior civil servants in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and two members of the ‘Working Group on Citizen Engagement’, responsible for the creation of the PPN, were also conducted.

After the initial invitation to participate in the questionnaire, a further invitation to engage in qualitative research was made. The selection of interviewees was purposive and guided by the participatory process and geographical considerations. This was to ensure adequate representation across each process and throughout Ireland. It is important to acknowledge the potential bias in terms of the method of qualitative data collection, however. For example, it is reasonable to assume that, in the case of civil society, those motivated to engage in interviews and focus groups are more likely to have a negative experience of participation and seek to articulate this. This is also relevant in terms of the qualitative feedback within the main questionnaire. To assess the general tenor of the qualitative data within the civil society questionnaire, each response was coded into three broad categories, positive, negative and neutral. Of the approximately 150 substantive responses, 90 were coded as negative. Negative comments focused on a range of issues including voice, influence, tokenism, the functioning of each process, and the conduct and disposition of elected representatives and local authority officials. However, the research attempted to triangulate claims made in the qualitative data in light of the contributions of local authority officials and elected representatives. For example, this is evident in the context of administrative dominance of agendas and the extent of conflict within the LTACC which is acknowledged by all types of actors involved.

The interview questions were guided by the key descriptive and explanatory concepts. The interviews were oriented by a list of pre-determined questions. However, a semi-
structured approach was adopted and additional follow up questions were asked to probe an interviewee’s response further and/or to clarify issues and matters arising (Hopf 2004). The qualitative data, including comments within the main questionnaire, was coded with NVIVO software. Training in NVIVO software was undertaken to assist in this task. Coding is a form of qualitative content analysis which most commonly uses individual themes to guide analysis. A code is a researcher generated construct that symbolizes or translates data which involves the interpretation of data and a so-called lens or filter to do so. Codes are understood as words or short phrases that symbolically assign a so-called summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for language or visual data (Saldaña 2015). The data was coded in reference to concepts such as voice, influence, trust, and legitimacy as well as the relevant explanatory variables.

6.9 Measurement, Composite Measure and Factor Analysis

This section will explore the rationale for the development of the composite measure of the perceived depth of participation. The study seeks to build on the conceptual and theoretical work within the literature through the empirical application of theory and concepts to cases through measurement. The theoretical discussion identified relevant indicators of the depth of participation within participatory governance. The selected dimensions and indicators are not considered as entirely comprehensive of participation in participatory forms of governance, however. Measuring all components of participation in participatory forms of governance is not necessarily practical for one research project. The dependent variable in the quantitative analysis is constructed with reference to existing theory and is an attempt to present a manageable and practical research challenge.

Measurement in social sciences can be defined as the assignment of numerical values to observations according to rules. In the case of measurement of concepts such as democracy or direct participation in governance, researchers must form measures which link the conceptual dimensions of the phenomenon under study with observations (Munck 2009). Concepts within the social sciences lack standardized units of measurement but through the use of clear and transparent rules it is possible to assign values to observations and observe phenomena. This has also been described as quantification or the assigning and meaning of numbers (Schedler 2012). Each task in the measurement process, however, must satisfy validity and reliability which reduces measurement error. The specific components of the dependent variable in this study are organised according to the separate but interrelated tasks
of conceptualisation, measurement and aggregation (Goertz 2006). Indicators of respect and equality of voice, influence, trust and legitimate functioning of the process were selected in reference to theory and later validated through Factor analysis.

A measurement instrument such as an index or composite measure is a tool to generate data (Munck 2009). This approach allows researchers to measure the effects of a single cumulative variable (or concept) rather than the individual effects of a set of variables (or concept sub-dimensions). Using multiple items or measures of an underlying latent variable is considered more reliable than a single indicator (De Vaus 2002). Due to the complexity and diversity of participation, any instruments of measurement must be multidimensional and cannot be measured directly. However, the robustness of a composite measure is dependent on the quality of underlying variables. This emphasises the importance of reliability and validity as well as the importance of concept measure consistency (Goertz 2006).

Composite measures can consist of dissimilar variables with little or no conceptual unity. They are considered as exact linear combinations of the individual indicators. While the dependent variable in the quantitative analysis combines different indicators into a composite measure, their selection is not arbitrary. The composite measure is constructed and validated through Factor analysis. Factor analysis is useful in the context of this research as it examines the extent to which each of these indicators is driven by the same underlying latent variable. Participants’ responses to the indicators are theorised to be driven by an underlying sense of the perceived depth of participation within each participatory institution. Through this analysis, it is possible to find common underlying dimensions within the data. By reducing a data set from a group of interrelated variables to a smaller set of factors, factor analysis achieves parsimony by explaining the maximum amount of common variance in a correlation matrix using the smallest number of explanatory constructs. This reduces the number of variables by describing the linear combination of the indicators that contain most of the information. A factor can be described in terms of the variables measured and the relative importance of them for that factor (represented by the value of \( b \)). Factor scores used in the quantitative analysis represent a composite score for each individual on a particular factor (Field 2009).

The use of Factor analysis is justified in terms of the desire for validity. This analysis provides construct validity for indicators and evidence of the relationship between the individual indicators and the underlying latent concept. The indicators which are theorised to
be driving responses to a latent sense of participants’ depth of participation have some degree of conceptual unity. They are correlated theoretically and empirically. The indicators measure a dimension of the overall concept as defined. The indicators of perceived respect and equality of voice, influence, trust in and the legitimate functioning of the participatory process drive change in the overall perceived depth of participation (Bollen and Bauldry 2011). While based on theory, the non-use of Confirmatory Factor Analysis is justified in terms of the exploratory nature of the research and data. A confirmatory base in which to test the measure or model is lacking in this case.

After factor extraction, scores are developed to determine a respondent’s position on the dependent variable. A statistical approach to aggregation and weighting is used with the factor method. It is possible to take a more theoretical approach and following either a family resemblance or necessary and sufficient condition structure which are the two most common approaches to structuring social science concepts. A necessary condition is one that cannot be substituted for. This implies a crisp, dichotomous view of concepts and their constitutive dimensions in which membership is all or nothing (Goertz 2006). In contrast, a family resemblance structure is less stringent and demands that the secondary dimensions of the concept exceed a particular standard. The absence of one conceptual dimension can be compensated by another. While similar to family resemblance in the sense that a low score is compensated by a higher score on another indicator, the factor method by its definition assigns different weights to different indicators based on factor loadings. This approach seeks to maximize validity by producing factor scores that are highly correlated with a given factor and to obtain unbiased estimates of true factor scores.

The weighting and scores for the measure in this study was formulated using regression weights. A regression weight scheme is commonly used when obtaining a score for individuals. In this approach, the sum of squared differences between the variable of interest and sum scores should be minimal. When comparing the means of different groups, it is possible to make use of Bartlett Weights in which the sum score is an unbiased estimate of the variable being measured and only shared factors have an impact on subsequent factor scores. This approach is considered beneficial in the comparison of groups (DiStefano et al. 2009). Consequently, the factors scores used in the regression analysis are derived through regression weighting and the tests for the differences between each type of
participant through Bartlett Weights. As these scores are unbiased estimates of the dependent variable, Bartlett Weights are considered appropriate when scores are used to compare differences between groups (DiStefano et al. 2009).17

6.10 Linear Regression Analysis and Kruskal Wallis Test

The final section of this chapter will discuss the use of linear regression to explain variation in the perceived depth of participation and the approach used to test for statistically significant differences between groups. A primary goal of accurate quantitative measurement is to identify the strength and significance of the impact of independent variables on a dependent variable (Coppedge 2012). Regression models are statistical constructs which attempt to model what is occurring in a dataset. An indication of the fit of the regression model between the independent variable and the outcome variable is represented by the $r$ (or Pearson coefficient). The $R^2$ value is used as an indication of the amount of variation in each outcome variable which is attributable to variation in the predictor variable in bivariate regression (or predictor variables in multivariate regression) and details its explanatory power (Kohler and Kreuter 2012). The regression coefficient is used as a measure of this relationship. The coefficient indicates the amount of increase in the dependent variable predicted by a 1 unit increase in the independent variable holding all other predictors constant (Kohler and Kreuter 2012). If a predictor variable is not significant, the coefficient is not significantly different from 0. Therefore the values measure the change in a participant’s level of the dependent variable for a one unit change (standard deviation) in the explanatory variable.

The regression analysis outlined in chapter 7 was undertaken with the use of robust standard errors. They are considered robust in the sense they are correct even in the presence of some types of violations of the model. Robust standard errors, it is argued, can deal with some failures to meet assumptions, such as minor problems about normality, heteroskedasticity, or some observations that exhibit large residuals, leverage or influence. Violations of assumptions can lead to biased estimates of coefficients. Robust standard errors make adjustments in coefficients that take flaws in the data into account. For such minor problems, the robust option may effectively deal with these concerns. The point estimates of the coefficients are similar to ordinary OLS. While this takes into account issues concerning

17 Parallel tests were conducted with scores extracted through Regression Weights which revealed no change in differences between groups identified in the quantitative analysis in chapter 7.
heterogeneity and lack of normality, it does not mean researchers can misspecify models (Long and Freese 2014).

Tests were conducted to determine if the models met the assumptions of linear regression including the normality of residuals which must be normally distributed. Tests were conducted to determine departures from normality including the Shapiro-Wilk test which confirmed the normality of residuals. Additional tests were conducted to check for collinearity which implies that two or variables are near perfect linear combinations of one another. When more than two variables are involved it is often called multicollinearity. The primary concern is that as the degree of multicollinearity increases, the regression model estimates of the coefficients become unstable and the standard errors for the coefficients become inflated. This was determined through a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test. VIF and Tolerance indicates the level of collinearity between regression predictor variables. A VIF value greater than 10 is a cause for concern, or an average VIF value substantially greater than 1, may indicate a biased regression. A tolerance value (which is 1/VIF) below 0.1 indicates a serious problem, and a tolerance value below 0.2 indicates a potential problem. VIF tests indicated that collinearity is not an issue in the regression models.

As outlined, the perceived depth of participation of local authority officials and elected representatives is not included in the regression analysis. The context of their participation differs from civil society participants and the hypotheses which inform the analysis such as age, income, efficacy and political trust are not relevant to political and administrative actors. However, the quantitative analysis also examines statistically significant differences in respect to the composite measure across the different types of actors. This analysis is relevant in the context of the existing literature, which identifies the important distinction between the role and perspectives of citizens and civil society and that of political and administrative actors who participate within participatory institutions (Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). Differences between civil society and political and administrative actors have implications for the functioning of participatory forms of governance. This raises the importance of the diverse experiences and perspectives of political and administrative actors.

This is also relevant in the context of specific cases under analysis. As outlined, while designed at the national level, each process is administered by and facilitated within local authorities. The role of political and administrative actors within each process as well as their location within the local authority places considerable responsibility on elected and public...
officials. Local elected representatives participate alongside civil society actors and serve as chairpersons. Local authority officials, moreover, possess administrative responsibility but are also key actors in the development of policy and subsequent outcomes which may or may not emerge. Due to national design and local implementation, these actors lack ownership or influence on institutional design. Their involvement does not dictate local political or administrative support for civil society participation or participatory form of governance. Further, the formal rules of these participatory processes in this study distinguish between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ members. In terms of the language and location of these cases, civil society actors are coming from outside into the local authority with pre-existing relationships, norms, and modes of working. This context emphasises the importance of measuring and analysing the perceived depth of participation amongst the different types of participants.

The tests for statistically significant differences were conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis test which is an alternative to one-way ANOVA for comparing groups. It is often referred to as an ANOVA with ranks and an extension of the Mann-Whitney Test for comparing two groups. Kruskal is a nonparametric method not requiring the normality assumption. The test statistic uses only the information in the data ranking the observations and compares mean ranks for the various groups. The test statistic is larger when the differences among the mean ranks are larger. This test was conducted as ANOVA has restrictive assumptions about normality and concerning the distributions of the groups under analysis. For example, the groups must have equal variances, and the measures in each group must be continuous, normally distributed variables (Agresti and Finlay 2009).

The Kruskal-Wallis H test is an omnibus test statistic which does not reveal which values of the independent variable are statistically significantly different from each other. This is carried out through Dunn’s Multiple Comparison post hoc test with the Sidak adjustment (Dinno 2015). A Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test is used in the case of the LTACC, in which comparisons are made between Traveller representatives and local authority officials. Although the variables do not always meet the assumptions of ANOVA, an analysis of variance with the Sidak adjustment for multiple comparisons of means was conducted in parallel. The significance of the differences between groups is the same as the Kruskal test.

In summary, this chapter explored the design of the empirical study and the overall methodological approach taken. The context surrounding the pilot and launch of the questionnaire and a breakdown of responses was also provided. The following chapter will discuss the results of the quantitative analysis.
Chapter 7 Quantitative Analysis Chapter

This chapter explores the results of the quantitative data analysis. The first section of the chapter details the construction of the composite measure. The dependent variable was created through the selection of indicators in light of a review of the existing conceptual/theoretical literature, and operationalised through survey items. The composite measure was constructed using Factor analysis, which indicated the presence of an underlying factor. Secondly, the differences between different types of participants are discussed. This analysis demonstrates statistically significant differences between participants within civil society and between civil society and local authority actors. Lastly, the result of the regression analysis, which highlights the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and individual variables including age and self-efficacy, is explored.

7.1 Constructing the Dependent Variable

This study has developed a measure of the perceived depth of participation through the operationalization of indicators of respect and equality of voice, influence, trust in, and the legitimate or appropriate functioning of the participatory process. Factor analysis was undertaken on the 14 items to build the composite measure. This was carried out to determine the extent to which the variation in responses to the survey items is explicable by a ‘common’ factor. The combined factor analysis is to confirm the extent to which the items relate to each other and correspond to an underlying latent construct. In this case, the extracted factor is theorised to be the perceived sense of the overall depth of participation. The details of the factor analysis are presented in Table 3.
### Table 3 Factor Analysis Depth of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, everyone had the opportunity to speak and to make themselves heard</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had the opportunity to express my views as I would have liked</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some committee members dominated the discussion (reverse code)</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other committee members restricted my opportunity to speak (reverse code)</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, other members respected my point of view</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority officials cared</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives cared</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I influenced the work of the process</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a say about the types of issues discussed</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process functioned appropriately</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process reached decisions appropriately</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All treated equally</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understood my concerns</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealt Well with my concerns</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracted Eigenvalue</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Variance Explained (%)</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Iterated Principal Factoring (IPF) method was used. This obtains estimates of communalities using squared multiple correlation coefficients but rates the solution to achieve better estimates (StataCorp 2013). The factor was rotated (using an oblique Oblimin procedure) to improve the interpretation of the loadings. The choice between oblique and orthogonal rotation is largely determined by whether the factors are related or independent. In oblique rotation, factors are allowed to correlate, and in the case of the perceived depth of participation, the underlying indicators are related conceptually. Determining the number of factors was conducted with reference to eigenvalues and scree plots. The scree plot in Figure 1 indicates the presence of one factor to extract. In reference to the scree plot, the cut-off for selecting factors is the point of inflexion of the curve.
Figure 1 Scree Plot of Eigenvalues

Eigenvalues were used as the primary criterion to determine whether a factor is statistically robust and to determine if an underlying factor solution is acceptable. While the minimum value for an eigenvalue is open to interpretation, conventional practice establishes an eigenvalue of 1.0 (Field 2009). This is often referred to as the Kaiser Criterion which is based on the idea that these values represent the amount of variance explained by a factor. The most basic justification for the Kaiser rule is that there is little sense in adding a factor that explains less variance than is contained in one individual indicator. The eigenvalue of 1 represents a substantial amount of variation (Field 2009).

Only one factor had an eigenvalue of > 1 and in line with the Kaiser criterion, and with reference to the scree plot, only one factor was maintained. The combined measure has 14 different items or variables and the eigenvalue of the extracted factor is 6.7. The factor explains approximately 48 percent of the total variation within the indicators. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) value is used to determine whether the factor is reliable for the sample size. KMO takes values between 0 and 1, with small values meaning that overall the variables have too little in common to warrant a factor analysis. Values of 0.5 to 0.7 are considered mediocre, and between 0.7 and 0.8 as good indication of the ability of factor analysis to produce reliable results for the current sample size (Field 2009). The KMO equals 0.92 and the individual KMO values are all 0.86 or above, thus well above the acceptable limit.

As only one factor was extracted in the current analysis, the factor loadings in Table 3 represent the strength of the linear relationship (correlation coefficient) between the extracted
underlying factor and each indicator.\textsuperscript{18} While there is no agreed upon criteria, in general, factor loadings of 0.30 or above are considered significant. A loading below 0.3 is indicative of a weak-moderate relationship between each item and the underlying factor. For sample sizes of 200-300, factor loadings of 0.364 and 0.298 respectively are considered appropriate. However, as the value of the loading does not give an indication of the significance of a variable to the factor, interpreting loading values below 0.40 is not advised (Stevens 2012). The values of factor loadings were each above .44 and therefore above the acceptable limit.

In addition, scale reliability analysis was conducted. The alpha coefficient can be considered a test of the reliability and unidimensionality of a composite measure. This relates to the unidimensionality of a scale or the extent to which the individual items represent an underlying factor or construct. The individual indicators yielded very good reliability with a Cronbach $\alpha$ coefficient of 0.92 or 92 per cent of the error in the scores or composite scores is internally reliable. Additional tests were conducted for multicollinearity. Multicollinearity means items may be redundant as indicators of an underlying construct questioning the unique contribution of each item to the construct (Field 2009). None of the inter-item correlations were above 0.8, which is indicative of multicollinearity. This exists when two or more items are closely linearly related. Due to the $\alpha$ coefficient and in part because these indicators exhibit strong face validity and construct validity it is possible to consider the composite a robust measure of an underlying construct of perceived depth of participation.

A measure of each respondent’s score of the depth of participation was created using factor scores through the regression method. Regression factors scores predict the location of an individual on a factor. The scores are standardised to a mean of 0 with the variance=squared multiple correlation (SMC) between the item and factor. These scores are linear combinations of the observed variables which consider what is shared between the item and the factor. This procedure is said to maximise the validity of scores (DiStefano et al. 2009). Moreover, a regression method is considered optimal as it provides weights with the highest possible correlation between the factor and scores. The factors scores were standardised using the measure’s standard deviation. A standardised variable (sometimes called a z-score or a standard score) is a variable that has been rescaled to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.

\textsuperscript{18} It is important to acknowledge there might be a difference in interpretation between estimating a single factor within factor analysis and extracting a single factor from a factor analysis that involves estimating several factors.
zero and a standard deviation of one. For a standardised variable, each value indicates its difference from the mean of the original. Common factors are supposed to be normalised to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. However, in practice the estimation method seldom yields a standard deviation of 1 unless an exact solution to the factor model is found (StataCorp 2013). The Kurtosis value indicates the extent to which the data clusters around the end of the distribution or if data is heavy tailed or light tailed relative to a normal distribution. The Kurtosis value for normal is 3. The Kurtosis value for the measure is 2.3, indicating a small degree of leptokurtic kurtosis. Skewness is a measure of the symmetry or lack of symmetry of the frequency distribution. The skewness for normal data is zero. The value for the measure is -0.35. This indicates the data is skewed to the left. However, as the value is between -0.5 and 0.5, it is possible to consider the distribution of the data as approximately symmetric.

7.2 Comparison of Different Types of Participants

The following section explores the differences between each type of actor across all processes in respect to the dependent variable of the depth of participation. The three participatory processes in this study involve the participation of civil society, political and administrative actors. These pillars include representatives of Community and Voluntary organisations, Environment organisations, Social Partner organisations (business, employers and Trade Unions), the local development sector, Travellers, local elected representatives, officials from state agencies, and local authority officials. This measure of the depth of participation excluded the two items on elite responsiveness as the questionnaire did not ask elected representatives and local authority officials the extent to which other elected representatives and officials on each process cared about their thought. However, it was constructed using the same method of Factor analysis.19

Figure 2 details a box plot for factor scores on the dependent variable for each type of participant across all three processes. Based on these descriptive statistics, there are clear differences. Local authority officials and elected representatives indicate a perceived deeper level of participation within the processes. The box plots are reasonably small indicating less variation in the range of scores in comparison with civil society actors. Traveller representatives indicate the lowest perceived experience of participation. The box plot for

19 The results of this analysis were similar to the composite measure used in the regression analysis. One factor was extracted in reference to the Kaiser Criterion. The eigenvalue was 5.2.
Environment representatives is the tallest indicating a wider range of scores for Environment representatives in comparison with other groups. Closer investigation indicates differences between Environment representatives who participated on the SPC and CDB. There is a range of responses within the Community and Voluntary pillar also. Environment representatives on the CDB indicate a lower sense of participation and are often critical of the process and the conduct of the local authority. This is a contrast with Community and Voluntary actors who are generally more positive in their experience of the CDB in comparison with SPC. There is a specific SPC dealing with issues of the environment within each local authority and there is a sense amongst participants that the CDB lacked focus and interest in the environment. Social Partner organisations which encompass members of trade unions and business groups express deeper levels of participation in comparison to the other civil society groups. Further, the box plot is smaller indicating less variation in their scores. These findings will be explored in further detail with the qualitative data.
Dunn’s post hoc test with the Sidak correction indicates statistically significant difference in terms of perceived depth of participation across the types of participants on all three processes, $\chi^2 (7), = 125.061, p = 0.0001$. There are statistically significant differences between local authority officials and elected representatives and the four main civil society pillars. In general, local authority officials score higher within each process compared with Community & Voluntary representatives, Traveller representatives, Environment representatives and representatives of Social Partner organisations. This is repeated for the local elected representatives who have a statistically significant higher level of participation compared with the other civil society participants with the exception of the Social Partner group. Interestingly, the difference between local authority officials and elected representatives is not significant. The differences within civil society are interesting. Traveller representatives indicate a lower level of participation compared to the other pillars. These differences are statistically significant compared with Community & Voluntary and Social Partners but not Environment representatives.
Figure 3 illustrates a box plot for different types of participants within the SPC. The graph indicates higher scores amongst elected representatives and local authority officials with higher median values. With respect to elected representatives, there are a number of clear outliers but the plot is relatively small indicating some degree of consistency in scores. Moreover, the graph indicates a greater range of scores within Community and Voluntary and Environment respondents in comparison with local authority officials, elected representatives and representatives from the traditional Social Partner organisations. A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed statistically significant differences across groups of SPC participants, $\chi^2 (4) = 46.061$, $p = 0.0001$. In general, local authority officials, both elected and non-elected, have a higher perceived depth of participation. Statistically significant differences are evident between civil society and local authority officials and elected representatives although the difference between Social Partners and elected representatives are not significant.
Figure 4 illustrates the differences in the depth of participation between types of CDB members. The data, for the most part, demonstrates smaller differences between members. It confirms the difference in the depth of participation between SPC and CDB Environment representatives. CDB Environment representatives indicate a lower perceived depth of participation compared with SPC members. Community and Voluntary representatives’ scores are similar to the other types of participants though there are some outliers. According to the Kruskal tests, the differences between groups is much smaller, $\chi^2 (6), = 16.186, p = 0.0001$. Statistically significant differences are evident between Environment representatives and local authority officials, officials from state agencies, and elected representatives. On the LTACC, clear differences are evident between Traveller representatives and local authority officials, $\chi^2 (6), = 38.111, p = 0.0001$ (see Figure 5). This is reflective of contrasting as well as the often combative and conflictual relationships evident within the LTACC.
In general, the largest difference among groups is between local authority officials and other types of actors across all three processes. These differences are evident in Table 4 which details the results of Dunn’s test for pairwise comparisons with the Sidak correction. The table demonstrates statistically significant differences between local authority officials and civil society participants most notably representatives of Community and Voluntary organisations and Traveller organisations. The difference between local authority officials and Social Partner participants is smaller albeit significant in the case of the SPC. Table 4 also indicates the smaller distance between CDB members and local authority officials in comparison with the SPC and LTACC.
Table 4 Differences between Local Authority Officials and Other Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Process</th>
<th>Type of Actors</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Processes</td>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td>-6.61</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traveller</td>
<td>-8.81</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>0.0051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Development</td>
<td>-5.15</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>0.0096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>0.2031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td>-5.02</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-4.68</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-2.81</td>
<td>0.0244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-1.44</td>
<td>0.5350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>0.1125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-3.49</td>
<td>0.0050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>0.8236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Development</td>
<td>-2.68</td>
<td>0.0073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>0.6940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>0.5003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTACC</td>
<td>Traveller Representatives</td>
<td>-6.60</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis has demonstrated statistically significant differences between diverse types of participants in respect to the perceived depth of participation. Clear differences between local authority officials, elected representatives, and civil society actors are evident. These differences represent interesting findings in the context of participatory governance in Ireland and in the context of wider theoretical literature. In general, the largest differences are between local authority officials and civil society, most notably Traveller representatives. As discussed, these participatory processes functioned within the administrative realm of local authorities and are administered by senior local authority officials. Officials through their professional duties have a considerable level of responsibility for each process and indicate a statistically significant, deeper sense of participation within each process. There are also clear differences within civil society. Within Community and Voluntary and Environment pillars, tall box plots indicate a range of responses. In terms of each process, the differences on the CDB are smaller and less significant in comparison to the LTACC and SPC. In the case of the LTACC, it indicates widely divergent experiences between public officials and Traveller representatives. The qualitative data indicates administrative dominance of agendas and voice.
during meetings and activities of SPs and widespread dissatisfaction amongst Travellers with most aspects of the LTACC. Chapter 8 will explore these issues in further detail in reference to the qualitative data gathered.

7.3 Results of the Linear Regression Analysis

This section will present the results of the multivariate regression analysis of the perceived depth of participation for civil society participants. The factors relate to socio-demographics, aspects of personality, as well as their wider political and social associational links. These include variables such as age, gender, income and education, personal efficacy, their willingness to engage in debate and discussion, political affiliation, social trust, and political trust, which were operationalized in Chapter 5. With robust standard errors, the results of the multivariate regression of the five models are presented in Table 5, which details the results of five separate models.

As it is possible that levels of efficacy and trust may be influenced by socio-demographic factors such as education and income, the distinct models are presented to demonstrate the effects of different types of variables separately and then in combination. This facilitates an analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable and the combination of socio-demographic variables and other explanatory factors. The first column presents the model of variables including social trust, political trust, and political affiliation, willingness to engage in debate, personal efficacy and the length of participation. As the perceived depth of participation may depend on the length of engagement, it is controlled for in the analysis. The vast majority of respondents participated for between 4 and 5 years. However, in the case of the LTACC, which saw conflict between Traveller representatives and local authority actors, some Traveller representatives participated for less time than this.

Model 2 is a model of the socio-demographic variables of age, gender, education and income. Model 3 assesses the combination of socio-demographic variables and other theoretical variables. The fourth column presents the combined model with the addition of dummy variables representing respondents’ membership of each of the four main civil society pillars. The Traveller category is used as the base category. The final column presents the combined model with dummy variables indicating participation on each of the three processes. The LTACC is the reference category. As Traveller representatives are the sole civil society representatives, the LTACC category is identical to the Traveller category in the previous model.
Table 5 Results of Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(1) Trust/Personality</th>
<th>(2) Demographic</th>
<th>(3) Combined</th>
<th>(4) Type of Participant</th>
<th>(5) Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.219***</td>
<td>0.159**</td>
<td>0.154*</td>
<td>0.166*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0567)</td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.074)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.130)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>(0.161)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.053)</td>
<td>(0.049)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
<td>0.082*</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Trust</td>
<td>-0.040^</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>-0.041</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.0249)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Efficacy</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.127*</td>
<td>0.016*</td>
<td>0.160*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.065)</td>
<td>(0.061)</td>
<td>(0.079)</td>
<td>(0.081)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Debate</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0333)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.041)</td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Affiliation</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.056)</td>
<td>(0.057)</td>
<td>(0.076)</td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Trust</td>
<td>0.41***</td>
<td>0.365***</td>
<td>0.351***</td>
<td>0.361***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.072)</td>
<td>(0.074)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Participation</td>
<td>0.86^</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.499)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(.066)</td>
<td>(0.68)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm &amp; Vol</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.248)</td>
<td>(1.65)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.24)^</td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>0.65*</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.445)</td>
<td>(0.415)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>9.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05
There is no effect for gender in any of the models. Controlling for the variables there are no differences between male and female participants. Age, however, is a significant variable in all models. Age has a positive association with the depth of participation and older participants indicate a deeper perceived level of participation. This is in line with hypothesised expectations. It is argued that, as citizens get older, they become employed, educated, less geographically mobile and more integrated with communities. They are better able to meet the costs of political participation and are more active in civil society organisations (Neundorf et al. 2013, Valentino et al. 2009). Further, the significance of age of respondents may reflect the general level of experience participating in governance and engaging with the state, in which older participants have greater levels of experience and knowledge of how local government functions, as well as knowledge of the relevant policy area. The significance of age therefore may be a consequence of these factors. The significance of age here is important in the context of the wider literature on participation which has highlighted the underrepresentation of younger citizens in institutions of participatory governance (Talpin 2011).

As outlined, levels of income and education are indicators of socio-economic status and are considered significant factors in the extent of political participation and the experiences of participants within participatory forms of governance. Education is considered a key predictor of wider political participation, essential to citizens’ knowledge and their ability to understand complex policy issues. Contrary to the hypothesised effects, however, education has a negative association but is not significant in any of the models. Income is significant in models two and three. This is in line with hypothesised effects. Participants in higher income categories express a deeper perceived participation but this effect is reduced when controlling for the participation in a specific process and being a member of a specific civil society pillar. The reduction in the effect of income when controlling for membership of a specific pillar and process in models four and five reflects differences in experiences between Traveller representatives and other civil society actors particularly Social Partner participants.

It is possible that the effects of the education and income variables are reduced by the membership of participants in civil society organisations. The existing theoretical literature has emphasised the positive effect of membership in organisations on citizens which, argue associative democrats, provide educative and social benefits. In this regard, associations can serve as a conduit for political discussion, provide citizens with information, increase civic
skills, and develop critical faculties (Fung 2003a). These organisations, therefore, can increase knowledge and help citizens meet the costs of participation. Further, the experience of participation for citizens belonging to particular civil society pillars in these cases may depend more on identity to a particular organisation and its objectives. Membership of a particular civil society organisation is often associated with specific issues, such as the environment, Traveller accommodation, and in the case of many Social Partners, aspects of local commerce. Similarly, the preferences of representatives of business groups, who focus on economic development, are often more closely aligned with the preferences of local authorities in Ireland than issues of the environment and Traveller accommodation.

Participation within voluntary associations may reduce the impact of political affiliation or membership of political parties also. Being active in political parties was theorised to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. Studies of political efficacy and perceived influence have highlighted the link between involvement in political parties and perceptions of competence to engage in political acts as well as the perceived responsiveness of the wider political system. Political affiliation can provide political knowledge and learning to citizens (Caprara et al. 2009). Further, political involvement may involve relationships with and increase levels of perceived responsiveness of local administrative and political actors. However, the variable is not significant in the analysis.

The study also operationalized a measure which probes citizens’ willingness to engage in debate and discussion. As outlined, the willingness to engage in contentious political discussion is considered an important personality trait in determining the extent of political participation. Due to their location within the administrative and political realm of the local authority, the cases under study are considered challenging arenas for civil society participants or “external members”. Processes can be dominated by administrative and political actors and processes are generally chaired by elected representatives and administered by local authority officials. This measure was theorised to have a positive association with the perceived depth of participation. The measure, in fact, has a negative association with the dependent variable but it is not significant in the models. This contrasts somewhat with the qualitative data which emphasises the importance of strength of personality to participation and making an impact within each participatory process through being forceful often in the face of perceived marginalisation by chairpersons and local authority officials.
It is possible that this strength of personality factor is better captured in the quantitative analysis by the measure of efficacy. General self-efficacy is the belief in the capacity to be effective and achieve particular accomplishments. It is considered significant in explaining political behaviour and involvement in politics and governance, and the perceived responsiveness of elites and the ability to be influential in political contexts. Efficacy is also linked to effort and the amount of time citizens are willing to devote to particular objectives (Caprara and Vecchione 2013). The measure of efficacy is significant in all models. Controlling for participation in each process and being a member of a particular pillar, it has a positive relationship with the dependent variable in Models 4 and 5. These results dictate the importance of efficacy to being influential in political contexts and dealing with the challenges posed by participating in these specific cases. As outlined, the qualitative data also highlights the importance of strength of personality to participating. This will be discussed in further detail in the subsequent chapters.

The models also explore the relationship between the depth of participation and indicators of social and political trust. Politics including participatory forms of governance can be considered a social activity which functions best in situations of trust and cooperation between different types of actors. Generalised social trust can be considered a form of interpersonal trust and is distinct from political trust or trust in political institutions (Putnam 2007). Those with low social trust, it is argued, are less likely to participate in politics and find the activity of participation more difficult to perform (Uslaner 2008). Social trust was theorised to have a positive relationship with the perceived depth of participation but it is not significant in the models. It is possible that social trust will influence an individual’s broader attitudes to democracy and decision to participate within civil society or organisations and within participatory governance. Once involved, however, it is not a factor in the subsequent act of participation and in interaction with administrative and political actors. According to social capital theory, social trust and wider political trust are related and reinforcing although the nature of this association has been disputed (Uslaner 2002, Z Merli and Newton 2008, Newton and Z Merli 2011). The measures of social and political trust, however, are not associated for respondents in this study. His study distinguishes between trust in other members of society and trust in political institutions.

The measure of political trust is significant in all models and has a positive relationship with the perceived depth of participation. It is the most significant variable in the models. The association between the perceived depth of participation in each participatory
process and trust in wider political institutions is clear. This is evident in bivariate regression which indicates trust has a positive association with the dependent variable. With robust standard errors, the R Square is 0.17. The regression coefficient is .44 with a t-stat which tests the null hypothesis that the value of this coefficient is 0. So, for a one unit increase in the depth of participation we can expect a .44 unit increase in trust. In model 5, it is a 0.36 increase.

The hypothesised effect was that general political trust is a positive predictor of the perceived depth of participation within cases and general levels trust in political institutions has a positive effect on the perceived depth of participation. However, the direction of its precise relationship to the dependent variable is subject to interpretation. It is possible that the experience of participation and the perceived depth of participation have a positive association within trust in the wider political system. Consequently, this level of political trust is an outcome of participation with positive experiences within participatory processes boosting trust in the wider political system. Negative experiences, in contrast, have the opposite impact.

Another possibility is that trust in political institutions is not causal or an effect of the dependent variable but is instead epiphenomenal. Further insight into the nature of the relationship between the dependent variable and political trust is provided in models without this variable. Without the measure of political trust, the differences between Traveller representatives and Community and Voluntary and Social Partners are significant but not in comparison with Environment representatives. Moreover, the differences between participation on the LTACC and SPC and CDB are significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that political trust reduces the differences between the perceived depth of participation across each process and within civil society. The implications of this association for participatory governance and public institutions will be explored in further detail in chapter nine.

The fourth model which included dummy variables representing membership of different civil society pillars reveals differences within the different types of civil society actors. The R-Square of the model is 0.31 or 31 percent of the variation in the depth of participation is explained by the variables in the model. The difference between Traveller representatives and representatives of Social Partner organisations is significant. Similar to the analysis of groups discussed earlier, these actors possess a higher level of perceived depth of participation in comparison within Travellers. Social Partner organisations include trade unions and employers and business groups such as local chambers of commerce. Actors from
these organisations have a long tradition of engaging with the state at local and national levels. As outlined, these actors, particularly members of business groups, have additional channels in which to influence local authority policy and greater access to senior officials and elected representatives. Further, in comparison with Traveller representatives on the LTACC, their participation and objectives poses less of a challenge for the local authority and are more in line with local authority objectives and broader local government policy. The differences between Travellers and the other civil society groups are not significant, however.

In the final model, age, efficacy and political trust are significant predictors of the depth of participation controlling for participation within a specific process. The R-Square is 0.33 or 33 per cent of the variation is explained by the variables in the model. The difference between civil society actors on each participatory process is not significant controlling for the other variables, however. The lack of statistical differences between each process is interesting considering the level of dissatisfaction amongst Traveller representatives and the clear differences between them and other civil society participants on many of the individual indicators. As discussed above, this also emphasises the importance of age, general self-efficacy and political trust. The results of the quantitative analyses may also indicate the significance of additional factors such as institutional design, the location of each process within the administrative and political realm of the local authority, and the conduct and disposition of administrative and political actors.

In summary, this chapter presented the results of the quantitative analysis and the steps undertaken to construct the composite measure using Factor analysis. The quantitative analysis has examined the relationship between individual level explanatory variables and the perceived depth of participation as well as the differences between distinct types of participants within and across each participatory process. This data demonstrated statistically significant differences between different types of participants and, in the case of civil society actors, some tall box plots indicating a range of responses from participants within the same civil society pillar. Chapter eight presents the qualitative data. This analysis reveals the significance of factors such as institutional design and the role of administrative and political actors to the depth of participation and provides additional context and insight into results of the quantitative analysis.

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20 This was a theme within the qualitative data which highlighted pre-existing relationships between local authority officials and business representatives in particular, and the role of business representatives in shaping local authority policy.
Chapter 8 Qualitative Data Analysis

This chapter examines the depth of participation through the qualitative data gathered. As well as the individual characteristics of participants, the qualitative data demonstrates the importance of institutional design including formal rules and the level of authority of each process, as well as the role and conduct of local authority officials and elected representatives who participate alongside civil society. It also highlights the distinction between expressing preferences and views and the opportunity to engage in policy debate and discussion, the extent of influence within each process and wider influence in local government. This data provides additional context for the results of the quantitative findings including the statistically significant differences between different types of participants’ particularly civil society and local authority officials and elected representatives, and within civil society. To provide a link with chapter 7, and to identify any contradictions between the quantitative and qualitative findings, a breakdown of some individual indicators across the different types of participants is also provided. The chapter will explore the qualitative data in the context of the key indicators of the depth of participation; voice, influence, trust and the legitimate functioning of each process.

8.1 Voice

Voice in this study concerns the perceived respect and equality of voice and the extent of policy debate and discussion within the participatory process. In general, civil society participants indicate they had the opportunity to express preferences during the process and to make contributions. The indicators of respect and equality of voice show that the majority of civil society participants believe they had the opportunity to express their views during the process. Moreover, the majority do not believe other members restricted their opportunity to speak although Travellers and Environment representatives on the CDB are more divided on both indicators (see table 6).

21 The midpoint or neither agree or disagree option is excluded from the tables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>I had the opportunity to express my views as I would have liked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>LTACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Actor</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Other participants restricted my opportunity to speak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>LTACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Actor</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, when provided with the opportunity to comment further on their experiences within the main questionnaire, civil society participants are widely critical of administrative and political dominance of voice, limited policy debate and discussion, and the often political nature of dialogue at meetings. This is also reflected in the other qualitative data gathered and is most relevant in the context of the SPC. This raises a contradiction between the qualitative and quantitative data. The contradiction may reflect a distinction
between the opportunity to express views and more substantive opportunities to discuss and debate policy. Limited policy discussion is a persistent theme within the qualitative data. As outlined in chapter 6, it is also possible that the qualitative data collected over represents negative experiences although these issues are widely acknowledged by local authority officials and elected representatives as well as civil society actors. Perhaps, this also demonstrates the weakness of “the opportunity to express my views” indicator and/or its less than optimal wording. It is possible respondents did not fully register “the as I would have liked” part of the item or the item does not measure what was intended.

However, the “dominated discussion” indicator in the questionnaire does hint at some of the themes of the qualitative data (see table 7). A majority of Community & Voluntary representatives, representatives of Environment organisations, and Traveller representatives expressed agreement that some participants dominated the discussion. In the case of representatives of Environment organisations, this belief is stronger in the CDB than the SPC.

**Table 7 Indicator of Voice (2) “Dominated Discussion”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>CDB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actor</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Voluntary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section explores the extent of voice through the qualitative data. The formal rules of each process mean the communication is ordered by chairpersons who are elected representatives while overall administrative responsibility for each process is in the hands of senior local authority officials. Chairpersons must call on all participants to speak and ensure equality of voice. In respect to the qualitative data gathered, chairing can be poor, effectively
excluding civil society from discussions. Further, voice, during SPCs in particular, is often dominated by local authority officials and elected representatives. The dominance of communication by local authority officials and elected representatives at meetings and activities of the process has a negative impact on civil society participants’ opportunity to give voice and to debate and discuss policy.

8.1.1 Administrative Dominance of Voice and Limited Policy Discussion

Civil society actors (and many elected representatives) were often critical of the conduct of officials during activities and meetings of each process. Specific criticism focuses on the practice of local authority officials filling meetings with presentations. This is more pronounced in respect to the SPC than the CDB or LTACC. Presentations, according to local authority officials, are intended to inform participants of local and national government policy. However, this practice is criticised for reducing the opportunity of other participants to discuss and debate policy issues. Also, the content of these presentations and associated policy documents are often not circulated to civil society members in advance of meetings, again restricting their ability to make informed contributions on these issues.

This is described by one SPC participant who reflected:

This was my first involvement with an SPC, it was the Planning SPC. I was disappointed that the procedure consisted of multiple presentations of papers and information on aspects of planning and development followed by a ‘one question per member’, followed by a summary response from the person who made the presentation. There was no scope for active formulation of policy, and often the date for making submissions on a policy (to government) had passed by the date of the presentation. The issues raised by the members in their ‘one question per members’ were not recorded in the issued minutes, and therefore there is no record of any policy discussion or opinions. (Civil Society Representative 1)

Another SPC member reflected:

I found the SPC, while well intentioned, to not be a very good use of people's time on occasion. More than thirty people would gather to have a presentation that they could read in their own time, and this restricted the amount of time given to active debate and discussion. (Civil Society Representative 29)

This is echoed by another SPC member within the main questionnaire who argued:
We listen to presentations on national government policy long after there's a chance of making a contribution. With Strategic Policy Committees, one would assume the committee is there to suggest policy but this doesn't happen. The sectorial representatives and the elected representatives seem to be just an audience for the presentations by officials. (Civil Society Representative 16)

This practice is criticised by many local elected representatives also. A long standing SPC elected representative and current SPC chairperson reflected:

There is a practice in my local authority of officials filling up most of the time with presentations and that is pretty much what they do. And SP Cs are used to rubberstamp policy when the officials have drawn up the policy. (Local Elected Representative 7)

Many civil society and elected representatives argue that presentations are a “controlling” mechanism and serve as a means for local authority officials to fill up meetings and reduce discussion, particularly on difficult issues for local authority management. In contrast, participants often praised the less formal structure to activities and meetings of the CDB. The subcommittees of the CDB provided them with more opportunities to give voice during the process. However, while not held as frequently as the SPC, a number of CDB members expressed dissatisfaction with CDB meetings being filled by the presentation of reports from local authority officials. Similar to the SPC, this left other participants with little time to respond or debate their contents. One reflected:

I felt my presence on the CDB was a waste of time. There was no discussion of plans that I could contribute to. We were presented with reports of work done by the local authority after it was completed. (Civil Society Representative 2)

This is echoed by another CDB civil society member who reflected:

Meeting times were filled with very long presented reports - which were rarely circulated in advance and the discussion of the reports was limited. (Civil Society Representative 3)

While many Environment respondents felt the CDB afforded little opportunity to contribute to proceedings on environmental issues, one did reflect:

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22 In addition to the comments within the main questionnaire, the practice of filling meetings with presentations is a theme of all qualitative data gathered from civil society and elected representatives.

23 This was expressed by CDB representatives in the different types of qualitative data gathered.
My role on the CDB was to assist in the formation of an Integrated Framework / Strategy on Energy & Climate Change. I found the members of the board to be very interested and engaged in how my goals related / interconnected with their own, and how a low carbon economy would benefit society. (Civil Society Representative 20)

Administrative dominance of voice was acknowledged by local authority officials particularly in the context of SPCs. Local authority officials agree they are the primary contributors to the SPC, arguing SPCs are responding to national policy and that presentations are necessary to inform members of key policies relevant to each process. Further, some officials and elected representatives believe civil society participants were concerned more with their own personal interests and did not seek to make contributions to SPCs based on policy. However, this complaint was not directed at members of environmental organisations and some environment representatives indicated that they could give presentations during SPC meetings, thereby informing the local authority of key issues of interest to them.

8.1.2 Conduct of Chairpersons and Elected Representatives

In addition to the role of senior local authority officials, the conduct of chairpersons is of importance and can impact the extent of civil society voice within each process. Formal rules dictate that each process is most commonly chaired by elected representatives, a position which comes with a financial stipend. Contributions at meetings must go through the chairperson who calls upon members to speak. This places considerable responsibility in the hands of local councillors to ensure equality of voice and to ensure civil society participants are included in discussions. The importance of proper facilitation and chairing of meetings was emphasised by all types of members, elected representatives, local authority officials, and within civil society, throughout the qualitative data.

While the quantitative data indicates the general belief in the respect and equality of voice, the exclusion of “external” members was acknowledged by some local authority officials and some elected representatives. Some civil society participants criticised the conduct of chairpersons who did not introduce them formally to the committee at the

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24 These issues were acknowledged by officials interviewed and are prominent in the qualitative feedback within the main questionnaire.
25 From the perspective of some local authority officials, environment representatives are considered the most knowledgeable external actor on matters of policy and less concerned with “personal” agendas.
beginning of the process or call on them to speak during meetings. In these cases, participants feel they were disregarded by the chairperson, and to some extent, by officials during their first year of involvement in particular. Consequently, a number of civil society participants within the Community & Voluntary pillar felt marginalised.

All types of actors emphasised the importance of having a fair chairperson to ensure greater inclusivity. The importance of chairing for inclusivity was emphasised by some elected representatives also. The exclusion of “external” members was acknowledged.

One current SPC chairperson and ordinary SPC member between 2009 and 2014 commented:

> It doesn't happen in all of our SPCs but what happens in some of them is that they tend to be dominated by councillors. So, the chair is going to be a councillor. Sometimes the person chairing does so in a way that councillors will be familiar with in terms of procedures and formalities and sometimes does so in a way which excludes civil society. So, they sometimes can be quite excluded. (Local Elected Representative 2)

One former Chairperson argued:

> The role of Chairperson is critical in the performance of SPCs. A strong, fair and proactive chair can facilitate great progress and make members comfortable to contribute. This is critical to the SPC achieving its goals. (Local Elected Representative 8)

Another councillor reflected:

> The position of Chair was dominated by local elected representatives, with no opportunity for the community or voluntary sector to take the lead, apart from offering them vice chair, which was, in my opinion, tokenistic. The SPC lacked representation from the grassroots such as disability sector and ethnic minorities. (Local Elected Representative 5)

The importance of effective chairing for civil society participation is highlighted by one SPC member who reflected:

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26 This was expressed by some civil society actors in the different types of qualitative data.

27 The potential benefits of allowing non-elected members to serve as chairpersons were highlighted by elected representatives and some officials in comments within the main questionnaire and interviews. It was also raised by some civil society actors.
In addition to poor chairing, the political nature of dialogue was highlighted. Civil society participants and local authority officials criticised the often political nature of meetings which are held in public with the media in attendance. This leads to competition amongst elected representatives for speaking time and impacted the ability of civil society to express voice and to discuss issues. The political aspect of discussion is considered a means to generate political sound bites in the media and engage in political campaigning. The often political nature of discussion and indifference to civil society members was acknowledged by many elected representatives also who recognised its impact on the ability of civil society to give voice.

A civil society participant argued:

"Primarily, the elected members had little or no interest in discussing strategic policy matters being instead largely focused on day-to-day matters of service delivery pertaining to their own electoral areas. Many of their contributions seemed intended not so much to influence decisions of the SPC but to get publicity in the local press. (Civil Society Representative 26)"

While the politicised nature of dialogue is not as prominent as the SPC, some CDB participants were also critical of the conduct of elected members. This is articulated by one CDB who commented:

"The CDB never followed through on its plans and never properly evaluated its work. It got bogged down in politics especially with local councillors trying to score points and disrupt the business of the CDB. (Civil Society Representative 17)"

This section has highlighted the key role of chairpersons in facilitating civil society voice as well as the culture of political dialogue during meetings, which, in some cases, restricted the opportunity for civil society to express voice. In the context of the SPC, and to a lesser extent
the CDB, this section highlighted the limited opportunity for policy debate and discussion as well as administrative and political dominance of voice.

### 8.1.3 Voice, Conflict and LTACC

Due to the often combative and strained relationship between members, the nature of voice within the LTACC differs to the CDB and SPC. Consequently, voice within the LTACC is discussed separately in this section. Traveller representatives indicated an ability to give voice and express their views and preferences. In addition, many expressed the ability to discuss issues informally with local authority officials outside of the formal activities of the process. However, in the view of some Traveller representatives, the chairing and agendas of meetings did restrict their ability to express their views on issues of importance to them which, in their view, are unwelcome within local authorities. This reduces the discussion of key issues of importance within the Travelling community including culturally appropriate accommodation.

In contrast to the SPC and CDB, dialogue is often argumentative and confrontational. Verbal conflict and disagreement between stakeholders across most aspects of the LTACC and the provision of Traveller accommodation is evident. The relationship between Traveller representatives, local authority officials and elected representatives is poor and hostile in a number of local authority areas. The abandoning of meetings is not uncommon.28

One local authority official reflected:

*The LTACC is frequently confrontational and often ends badly. It’s quite normal for Travellers to walk out.* (Local Authority Official 4)

A former LTACC chairperson reflected:

*We were only supposed to have 6 meetings per year but we ended up having a good deal more than that because they kept on suspending the meetings. They turned into a farce with roaring and shouting from both the settled community and Travellers and elected officials.* (Local Elected Representative 12)

There is a lack of shared understanding of issues of importance and possible solutions amongst the different stakeholders. For example, Traveller representatives are criticised for their unwillingness to acknowledge and discuss issues of importance to the delivery of

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28 This is acknowledged by local authority officials, elected representatives and Travellers who participated in the research.
Traveller accommodation, particularly problems concerning the ongoing management of sites including issues of criminality and anti-social behaviour. These include the cost of the maintenance of existing Traveller sites, according to officials and elected representatives, is exorbitant due to criminal and anti-social behaviour. These costs place a considerable financial burden on the local authority. Conflict within the LTACC, they argue, originates because Traveller representatives do not wish to acknowledge or discuss these issues and their implications for the lack of delivery of Traveller specific accommodation.\textsuperscript{29} From the perspective of Traveller representatives, however, conflict is often a consequence of duplicity, and sometimes prejudice, from local authority officials and elected representatives who lack the desire and will to deliver Traveller specific accommodation and implement the accommodation preferences of Travellers.\textsuperscript{30} In some local authority areas, however, the creation of additional channels of dialogue by officials and councillors with Travellers has helped to reduce disagreement and tensions. These informal arenas take place between meetings in order to address issues of concern and build understandings between participants outside of the formal environment of the LTACC.

Interestingly, many local authority officials and elected representatives admitted they feel restricted in the opportunity to express their views honestly on Traveller issues more generally in a public forum such as the LTACC. Local authority officials are often hesitant in expressing their opinions on issues of ethnicity, nomadism, and crime due to concerns over political correctness and the implications arising out of this.\textsuperscript{31} Privately and under anonymity, some local authority officials and elected representatives who participated in his research cast doubt on Traveller ethnicity and the current importance of nomadism to Traveller culture during interviews. However, they do not feel comfortable articulating these views openly in a public forum such as the LTACC.

In summary, this section has demonstrated that while civil society participants expressed the ability to express voice during each process, many were critical of administrative and political dominance of voice during meetings and the conduct of officials and chairpersons in excluding them from discussion and reducing the level of debate on key policy issues. Due to institutional design, considerable responsibility lies in the hands of local authority officials and elected representatives in ensuring equality of voice between all

\textsuperscript{29} This was highlighted by many LTACC officials during this research.
\textsuperscript{30} This is a persistent theme amongst Travellers within the qualitative data.
\textsuperscript{31} LTACC officials expressed this hesitance during interviews.
participants and encouraging debate on policy. The quantitative and qualitative data indicates some degree of difference in respect to voice, however. The quantitative indicators revealed the majority of civil society actors believe they could express their views and were not restricted from speaking. In contrast, the qualitative data reveals often strong criticism of local authority officials and chairpersons. These issues are also acknowledged by local authority officials and elected representatives. In the case of Travellers and the LTACC, the qualitative data indicates combative dialogue between LTACC members with arguments and disagreement during meetings.

8.2 Influence and Trust

This section will explore the qualitative data with respect to perceived influence and trust. As outlined in chapter five, there is some degree of overlap between concepts such as influence and trust. For example, the understanding and operationalization of trust as "encapsulated interests" encompasses ideas of influence and the level of responsiveness of others. The quantitative data indicates lower perceived influence on the work of each process and the level of responsiveness from officials and elected representatives. This is in comparison to the perceived respect and quality of voice. For informative purposes, the following table, Table 8, demonstrates the perceptions of actors within each process in respect to one indicator of trust and influence.
### Table 8 Indicators of Influence and Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>I influenced the overall work of this Process</th>
<th>This Process dealt well with my concerns or what mattered to me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LTACC</td>
<td>SPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Actor</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indicators show division within civil society and between civil society and local authority officials. In the case of the LTACC, while less than half of Traveller representatives express the ability to influence the LTACC, only 15 per cent agree that the process dealt well with their concerns. While nearly a majority of Community and Voluntary actors expressed agreement they influenced the overall work of the CDB, only 38 per cent agreed it dealt well with what mattered to them. The table also illustrates general higher level of perceived influence between the CDB and SPC for Community and Voluntary representatives although the opposite is the case for Environment representatives. The general belief amongst local authority officials that they influenced the process and that it dealt well with their concerns is clear and this contrasts with civil society perceptions.

These themes are evident in the qualitative data also which emphasises the perceived inability of many civil society respondents to influence the work of each process.
and a more persistent belief in the inability to influence wider local authority policy. Those who did feel influential within the SPC, LTACC and CDB, often argue it lacks power vis-à-vis the local authority and local government decision making. Influence within each process does not necessarily deliver tangible outcomes on policy. There is a clear lack of trust in the local authority to deliver outcomes. For example, on the LTACC, the strongest criticism of Traveller representatives is the lack of satisfactory accommodation outcomes, not the inability to influence the LTACC and associated Traveller Accommodation Programme. This section will explore the perceived influence in the context of agendas and the types of issues discussed, as well as the overall ability to influence local authority policy and the level of trust in the process to deal effectively with what matters to participants.

8.2.1 Agendas and Types of Issues Discussed

Within participatory governance, influence relates not only to decisions but to the types of issues discussed. Civil society participants and elected representatives across all three processes express dissatisfaction with the range of issues discussed and the dominant influence of public officials on the agendas of each process. Civil society participants expressed frustration with the “controlling” of agendas by local authority officials in particular and a lack of engagement between them and officials on possible items for discussion prior to meetings. Again, while relevant to the CDB and LTACC, this is most pronounced in the case of the SPC. This is reflected in the quantitative data also, for example, an indicator of agenda setting from the questionnaire (see Table 9) indicates that the difference between participants in the extent of agenda setting. Local authority officials and elected representatives expressed higher levels of agenda setting compared with civil society participants while Traveller representatives express higher levels of agenda setting than other civil society actors.

32 The other response option was “occasionally”.

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Table 9 Frequency of Agenda Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>CDB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTACC</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
<td>Rarely/Never</td>
<td>Often/Very Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Actor</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>CDB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of the SPC, Community and Voluntary and Environment respondents expressed difficulty in contributing an item to the agenda of a SPC meeting, as well as some frustration with the “controlling” of agendas by local authority officials. Participants who sought to place an item on the agenda of a meeting expressed resistance within administration particularly on a topic considered “controversial” by officials. There is a persistent belief that agendas were strictly managed, and when successful in contributing an item that this item would be placed the bottom of the agenda to delay or reduce discussion.

In the case of the SPC, this is articulated by one community and voluntary representative who argued:

*By and large, everyone was given the space to speak and be listened to. However, I never felt that major policy decisions were being made in this forum. My key observation on the manner in which the SPC operated was that it was run and largly controlled by the managerial staff of the local authority. In essence, the way in which issues were presented and dealt with, meant that at times when certain motions and issues for discussion, that were not in line with management thinking were declared out of order, and were put off until subsequent meetings and so on. (Civil Society Representative 8)*

Another SPC participant argued:
The setting of the agenda for the SPC was also problematic. This appeared to be normally done by the officials of the council. I can't recall any call for agenda items ever being issued prior to meetings. In many instances, the agenda items consisted of 'reports,' 'updates' or 'reviews' with the officials conveying information to the members of the SPC. (Civil Society Representative 7)

This was echoed by another SPC member who reflected:

The agenda items rarely reflected what it is that the Community & Voluntary sector would want to see primarily being discussed. Since the agendas are mainly influenced by what the Council Executive sees as their main issues, it was difficult to take SPCs seriously. (Civil Society Representative 24)

Although not as prominent, this practice was a feature of the CDB also. In some cases, Community and Voluntary members expressed difficulty in influencing the agenda of meetings particularly on so-called controversial issues. These respondents complained agendas were strictly managed and when successful in contributing an item that this topic would be placed at the bottom of the agenda to delay or reduce discussion.

One CDB participant argued:

The agenda of meetings was strictly managed - it took me almost two years to get an item listed on the agenda and discussed. Items that might be controversial were put to the very end of the agenda so they would not be reached by the end of the meeting. They would be put to the bottom of the agenda for the next meeting. (Civil Society Representative 18)

Moreover, some environment representatives felt the CDB was not open to or serious about issues of Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

The administrative dominance of a agendas was highlighted by local elected representatives, including chairpersons, who also often complained about the “control” of CDB and SPC agendas by local authority officials. Similar to civil society actors, these councillors argued that officials would resist the inclusion of particular items and/or place them strategically at the end of agendas to reduce the likelihood of meaningful discussion.33

A former CDB member reflected:

33 This was expressed by local elected representatives 1, 2, and 3 in interviews and other councillors within the main questionnaire.
I found the CDB to be a talk shop with the agenda dominated by the local authority and with little if any participation from the committee members or any opportunity made available to them to have input. I found it a massive waste of resource hours from leading members of statutory and non-statutory organisations. Many members I spoke with said they did not know what the purpose of the CDB was about, and considered it a waste of time, but attended as they felt it was expected of them. (Local Elected Representative 11)

A SPC chairperson spoke of a culture of “control” amongst some local authority officials on the issue of agendas arguing:

*There is a cultural resistance amongst officials within the local authority to any change or to amend policy. So they fight quite hard against any change at all to policies at SPCs. That pretty much makes SPCs redundant.*

The councillor continued:

*So, you have a cultural practice of agendas which are much more set by management. The default practice is that management do it and I think until there is a cultural shift to try and step back from that to try, to get it to be more by the members that won’t happen. It is a type of controlling mechanism. I would say it is a cultural thing from officials really. They are filling up agendas with presentations and sooner or later for us to change that we will have to be assertive. It will get to the point of confrontation and we’ll have to be assertive about it.* (Local Elected Representative 2)

While rejecting accusations of “control”, the administrative thrust of SPC agenda setting, similar to voice, is widely acknowledged by local authority officials. Officials indicated they are “empowered” to set the agenda of the SPC in their capacity as meeting administrators.34

This is summed up by one official who argued:

*As Senior Executive Officer, I was charged with the role of "Meetings Administrator" for the functioning of the SPC. This effectively empowered me to set the agenda for SPC meetings as the chief official responsible for setting the

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34 This was referenced by most local authority officials interviewed and features in the comments provided within the main questionnaire.
agenda of the meeting and preparing or overseeing the presentations and policy papers presented to the SPC. (Local Authority Official 3)

In the view of some local authority officials, the administrative dominance of agendas is a matter of necessity and a consequence of the status of SPCs within local government. They reference the weak policy role of local government in Ireland which renders the content of much of SPCs driven by and responding to national government legislation.

One official reflected:

Most SPC meetings involve dissemination of information on the latest central government scheme or policy with little policy role for the SPC. This is very frustrating for the membership when it dawns on them that they really have very little role in setting or even shaping policy. (Local Authority Official 5)

Further, some officials criticised the lack of interest on the part of other members to contribute items to the agenda of meetings particularly on issues of policy. From the perspective of many civil society and local elected representatives, however, agenda setting was not performed in collaboration with other members; and officials are reluctant and or unwilling to engage in more collaborative and inclusive forms of agenda setting.

Traveller representatives also criticise the conduct of senior local authority officials who seek to manage and control the range of issues discussed. In their view, many issues concerning Traveller accommodation and Traveller culture are considered unwelcome and therefore restricted by local authorities. This extends to meetings as well as elements within Traveller Accommodation Programmes. Furthermore, Traveller representatives are critical of local authority officials for including items on the agenda of meetings such as crime and anti-social behaviour, which from their perspective, are not relevant to issues of accommodation and the remit of the LTACC. However, Traveller representatives indicate a greater capacity to influence the types of issues discussed in comparison to other civil society participants. This emanates, in part, from activism and strength of personality in which Travellers are willing to protest and criticise the conduct of the local authority during meetings.

Disagreement about agendas and the types of issues discussed however can lead to conflict between Traveller representatives and local authority officials and elected representatives during meetings.
8.2.2 Influencing Policy and Trust in the Process

This section will explore the perceived ability to influence wider local authority policy, and the extent to which each process dealt well with the concerns of civil society; operationalized as an indicator of trust in the process. The quantitative data indicates differences between different types of actors in Table 8 in the perceived ability to influence each participatory process. Moreover, many participants who felt influential on the work of the SPC, LTACC and CDB complained each process lacks power vis-à-vis the local authority and local government decision making to implement its outputs and their objectives. Participation is widely considered to be “tokenistic”.

In terms of influence, there is a belief amongst civil society that decisions relevant to each process are often made outside between officials and elected representatives without their input. In the case of the SPC, for example, many civil society participants complained outcomes were predetermined and simply raised at the SPC for formal approval or “rubber stamping”. This is also a complaint of some elected representatives who focus on the overriding influence of local authority management.

One SPC member argued:

*The SPCs did not appear to exist to shape council policy but merely to rubber stamp the policies that were presented as ‘fait-au-complit’. The impression from the council officials was that this was one more boring and irrelevant piece of ‘PR’ to make it look as if the Council cared.* (Civil Society Representative 10)

This was expressed by elected representatives also. One reflected:

*The SPC met once a month. Local authority officials used it as a “rubber stamp”. They did not want elected or community members interfering in their work and would not take seriously the input of the group.* (Local Elected Representative 9)

Another argued:

*SPC membership knowledge & decision making capacity was not built up adequately to enable new policy initiatives or to alter direction of existing local government policy. The agenda was primarily legislation and official led. The outcomes of the SPC were then presented to Council as prima facia final policy*
documents. The SPC process could be used as a delaying mechanism by officials to kick to touch issues from Council level. (Local Elected Representative 6)

This belief is evident in the case of the CDB also. A CDB participant reflected:

My experiences on the CDB here in the county were that it was largely a rubber stamping process where major de cisions in respect to policy, inter-sectoral collaboration and budgets were made outside of the meetings. It is a county where conservatism dominates the political agenda and strongly influences the operation and policy of the local authority. (Civil Society Representative 11)

In general, civil society participants who feel they could influence the work of each process and that each process understood issues of importance to them, argue it lacked the ability/or willingness on behalf of the local authority to implement recommendations and deliver tangible outcomes. These participants expressed dissatisfaction with the level of responsiveness of the local authority to them on issues of policy and issues of importance to local communities. Being influential and giving voice within each process does not equal influence on local government policy. This is a clear source of dissatisfaction for many civil society participants.

A SPC participant reflected:

The Housing SPC was not particularly productive nor is there a really opportunity for the members to influence policy making at a local level. It is more a case of Local Authority officials updating members on the practical implementation of policy. Issues and challenges are of course discussed and members are given an opportunity to have their say, but there is a sense of going through the motions. (Civil Society Representative 9)

Environment representatives and Community and Voluntary representatives with a social inclusion focus, in particular, complained that the limited number of policy recommendations made by the SPC would be not advanced by the full council. This is also relevant to the CDB which had a number of issue specific sub-groups in addition to main CDB activities and meetings. One such entity is the Social Inclusion Monitoring (SIM) working groups. The thematic sub-groups of the CDB provided participants with more opportunities to give voice and to influence the process. Further, the CDB produced a main development strategy as well as a range of issue specific strategy documents which provided the opportunity for civil society to influence local authority policy. However, m any
participants expressed the belief that the board was a “talking shop” with little power to make decisions or influence policy. There is criticism of the lack of measurable or tangible outcomes despite the good collaborative work undertaken by the CDB, particularly the thematic subgroups. Consequently, plans produced by the CDB were often not followed through fully by local authorities. This belief is articulated by one member who argued:

While the CDB operated in a fair manner, it had a weakness because it had no power to implement any of the decisions that were agreed. This did lead the common held view that they were only ‘talking shops’. (Civil Society Representative 5)

Another civil society representative reflected:

The CDB was a forum in which a lot of very important community issues were discussed. However, the CDB had no real resource or authority to bring about its objectives. (Civil Society Representative 18)

The inability to influence policy is a consequence of the advisory nature of the cases as well as the level of responsiveness of the local authority; including senior local authority officials and elected representatives. Criticism of the advisory nature of each process is common amongst all types of civil society actors. However, the policy remit of local government in Ireland is also of relevance. Many local authority officials acknowledge the inability of civil society to shape policy but focus on the inherent weakness of policy making within local government in Ireland. More generally, the inability of local authorities to influence wider policy is summed up by one official who argues:

In reality, the local authority produces very little policy. The vast majority of policy is set by national government and central government departments. The Local Authority is local administration of central government policy. This is very frustrating for members when it dawns on them that they really have very little role in setting or even shaping policy. (Local Authority Official 7)

The level of control of the centre over the local, argue officials, constrains all aspects of local governance including the ability to respond to stakeholders and to formulate and implement policy. The inability of S PCs, C DBs and local authorities to deal with the concerns of civil society is primarily a consequence of the lack of power of local government in Ireland, not the indifference or lack of willingness on behalf of the local authority.
Consequently, the inability of the processes and local authorities to deal with the concerns of civil society is largely a consequence of the lack of power of local government in Ireland.

A lack of trust and civil society dissatisfaction with the inability to influence policy and deliver tangible outcomes is most apparent in the case of the LTACC. Traveller participation in the LTACC is motivated for the most part by the provision of Traveller specific accommodation. While funding is allocated by national government, local authorities have primary authority and responsibility for the provision of Traveller accommodation in Ireland. The lack of progress on accommodation is a considerable source of conflict and dissatisfaction within LTACCs and a majority of Traveller representatives expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of progress on the delivery of Traveller specific accommodation agreed in TAPs. Consequently, the LTACC is considered tokenistic and a “box ticking” exercise for the Irish state.

This belief is captured by one Traveller representative who argued:

*The LTACC functions according to the guidelines of LTACCs. The Traveller representatives are, generally, listened to and plans are made in accordance with the TAP. However, it is an advisory committee and therefore the decisions in relation to Traveller accommodation lie solely with public representatives. They will never vote in favour of the local Traveller community as to do so would not be popular with voters and would jeopardise their seats in the council. The recommendations of the LTACC have never been taken on board and there is noting the Traveller representatives can do about it other than highlight it and that makes no difference to the outcome. The lives of the Travellers in Ireland will never be improved as long as accommodation programmes lie with the local authorities.* (Civil Society Representative 12)

There is a strong and widespread belief amongst Traveller representatives that elected representatives and local authority officials are hostile and resistant to the delivery of units of Traveller specific or culturally appropriate accommodation despite the adoption of TAPs which is a statutory requirement. The perceived lack of progress and hostility on behalf of local government informs much of the perspective of Traveller representatives in relation to the LTACC and other political institutions. Traveller representatives speak of institutional blocks and barriers, and openly question the level of administrative and political commitment
within local government and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to providing culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers.\textsuperscript{35}

The lack of outcomes is problematic for Traveller representatives who feel they disappoint their communities through collusion and complicity in the lack of progress. This belief is summed up by one representative who reflected:

There is little point to the LTACC. By sitting on such committees, we are just colluding with local authorities and giving the impression that we are on board with their lack of action when it comes to implementing the TAPs. The LTACC is a dangerous place for Travellers, in particular if you are anyway politicised and able to challenge the status quo as this seems to rub egos up the wrong way. I would never sit on a LTACC again. It is awful to think that us Travellers are expected to endure such horrible spaces. They should be abolished or reformed and those present should receive some very basic training around treating all members with courtesy and respect. LTACCs are a disaster. (Civil Society Representative 14)

Local authority officials and elected representatives, in contrast, place emphasis on the recent economic crisis for the failure to deliver agreed units in the TAP. Moreover, they argue that the majority of Travellers do not want Traveller specific accommodation and question the extent to which the Traveller representatives understand the accommodation preferences and needs of ordinary Travellers.\textsuperscript{36}

This widely held view within local authorities is described by a senior LTACC official who argued:

Another issue I had, and we did a census where we asked every Traveller family in the area, we asked them if accommodation was to be provided instantaneously, if money was no object and there were no obstacles were in your way, what type of accommodation would you prefer? In excess of 80 per cent of people we interviewed stated a preference for housing as in social housing or Traveller specific group housing scheme. Only a very small

\textsuperscript{35} The government, however, has reiterated its commitment to the adequate provision of culturally appropriate accommodation and supporting Traveller culture, identity and heritage in the draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020.

\textsuperscript{36} This is referenced by many officials and elected representatives interviewed. However, in contrast, left wing or so-called “pro Traveller” councillors will dispute the demand amongst Travellers for settled accommodation as argued by local and national government officials.
proportion of those people wanted to live in traditional halting sites with a caravan. However, what I noticed in the last few years is that the Traveller groups started to push Travellers to want to be in halting sites but they don’t here because we interviewed them and we gave them carte blanche to tell us what accommodation suited them and only a very small percentage wanted to locate in traditional halting sites or a caravan bay set up. (Local Authority Official 4)

This is echoed by another senior official who questioned the demand for culturally appropriate accommodation despite the advocacy of local and national Traveller organisations, arguing:

You have the whole cultural aspect being thrown in your face. But when you bring an individual family in and you ask them what you want, it is a house. Put them outside with someone else, and it is a halting site they want. We are taking what they put on the form, and, in most cases, they are putting down houses. It is a big debate nationally but when you corner the individual, it is a house they want... It is because they can raise children in a healthy and safe environment. Sometimes that can be quite frustrating when you hear all this pandering, and then when you ask them, they say it is a house we want. There is an element of group think. When they are in groups, they will go with flock, for want of a better word. When you have them individually, this is what they want. In many cases, they are in the private rented market quite happy and all they aspire to is a house of their own. (Local Authority Official 15)

The dispute over the accommodation preferences of Travellers is source of distrust between local authorities and Traveller representatives.

This section explored the perceived level of influence and the extent to which the participatory process dealt well with the concerns of civil society and the ability to influence local government policy. The qualitative data indicates a strong perception of tokenism and that the agendas and types of issues discussed are often dominated by local authority officials. Civil society participants are critical of the responsiveness of local authority officials and elected representatives to their objectives and the inability to influence local authority policy. This is most pronounced in the case of Travellers. In addition to the conduct of local authority actors, the inability to influence local authority policy is reflective of the
advisory nature of each process and the often limited policy remit of local government in Ireland. This emphasises the importance of institutional design and the wider role and remit of local government in Ireland.

8.3 Legitimacy of the Process and Civil Society Participation

This section will explore the legitimacy of the process within civil society in addition to the legitimacy of civil society participation and local participatory governance from the perspective of the local authority. Measures of the legitimacy of the process in the quantitative analysis concerned the extent to which participants believe each process functioned and reached decisions appropriately and participants were treated fairly and equally. The quantitative data indicates a considerable degree of dissatisfaction in relation to this amongst civil society actors, Travellers in particular (see Table 10). Furthermore, higher levels of satisfaction among Community and Voluntary members on the CDB compared with the SPC is evident. This, again, is the opposite for representatives of environment organisations.
Table 10 Indicators of Legitimacy of Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>CDB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Actor</strong></td>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>LTACC</th>
<th>SPC</th>
<th>CDB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Actor</strong></td>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Partners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Authority Officials</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More generally, while critical of the broader commitment to Traveller accommodation, the LTACC was considered satisfactory by Traveller representatives in a number of local authority areas. This is a consequence of a number of factors particularly the presence of “pro” Traveller elected representatives who serve as chairpersons. Some Traveller representatives and local authority officials believe the LTACC in their area functioned as a model of best practice. In a small number of local authority areas, Traveller representatives served as chairpersons. Further, any civil society participants reflected well on their experience participating during the period. One Environment SPC member reflected:

*I am very interested in the environment and was very happy to serve on this SPC. I feel I learned a lot and it was a great experience to see all that is involved in each department.* (Civil Society Representative 21)
A SPC Community and Voluntary member commented:

_I enjoyed my stint on the SPC. I met interesting people and got an insight into local policy issues._ (Civil Society Representative 28)

A Community and Voluntary CDB member reflected:

_I am very glad to have had the opportunity to sit on this CDB as it gave me a different insight on the local authority and other organisations sitting around the table._ (Civil Society Representative 30)

This echoed by another member who reflected:

_My experience of the CDB was positive. It was a good forum for discussion and sharing of information and there was a good rapport between the various representatives. However, it did not appear to me to be a decision-making body but rather a forum for communication and co-operation._ (Civil Society Representative 19)

However, similar to the quantitative indicators, the qualitative data indicates a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with how each process functioned particularly in the case of the SPC and LTACC. The analysis of the qualitative data indicates this is impacted by institutional design and the conduct and disposition of local authority officials and elected representatives. This will be discussed in the following sections.

### 8.3.1 Formal Rules

The perceived inappropriateness and inequality between members is influenced by many of the issues highlighted earlier, including the administrative dominance of voice and agendas and exclusionary chairing. However, it is possible to identify some additional factors which impact wider perceptions of appropriateness. Civil society participants across all three processes were often critical of the formal rules and the location of each process within the administrative and political culture/environment of the local authority. The location of meetings within the formal council chamber is a persistent criticism and has implications for the functioning of meetings and the inclusion of civil society actors.

The perceived inappropriate functioning of each process relates to the facilitation, scheduling and location of meetings and activities. Civil society participants (and many elected representatives) across all three processes indicated that meetings were scheduled at inconvenient times and locations. This was problematic for those in employment with
meetings, they argue, scheduled to suit local authority officials. The impact of this is summed by one civil society participant who reflected:

Because of the dysfunctional nature of the SPC, the time commitment involved and the scheduling of SPC meetings during normal office hours, my attendance tailed off towards the end of the five-year term. I had a poor attendance record, as there really seemed to be very little point to proceedings, and it was difficult to find a way to engage. (Civil Society Representative 23)

In addition, dissatisfaction relates to conduct during meetings. Agenda, reports and policy documents not being circulated in advance of meetings is a frequent complaint. Consequently, participants felt they had little time to respond to the issues raised and to debate the substantive content of relevant reports. Further, in some cases, civil society participants across all three processes indicated that minutes of meetings did not accurately reflect the nature of discussion. This is a source of dissatisfaction for civil society participants. However, in the case of the LTACC this produced conflict and protest. According to some Traveller representatives, the minutes of meetings composed by local authority officials do not reflect the true nature of discussion within the LTACC and certain issues raised by Traveller representatives. This conduct is considered a means for local authority officials to exclude controversial issues or criticisms of the conduct of the local authority from the official record of meetings.

In practice, civil society participants or “external members” are outsiders coming into the local government system with pre-existing culture, rules, modes of working and relationships. Many respondents emphasised the need to learn the formal and informal rules and how each process operated with the local authority environment. They reference becoming more effective participants after this learning process. This is acknowledged within public administration also. According to one senior local authority official:

They (external members) are coming into a very formalised structure, the SPCs, so it is chaired by one of the councillors, standing orders, agendas; it is structured and managed by the local authority framework in how it operates. And you need to be a strong person to be able to come in, sit down and feel comfortable in that type of setting. That is not always the case with the people who are selected. (Local Authority Official 2)
Participating in this environment can be a steep learning curve for “external” members. This is perhaps most relevant in the case of the SPC. This is described by one Environment representative who reflected:

*I was definitely more effective as an environment representative in my last year, than my first year. I knew some of the elected representatives before I joined and that made it easier, but walking into a council chamber to join a large group of people who know each other and the system well is a challenge.* (Civil Society Representative 4)

This representative also focused on the formal nature of proceedings:

*The structure of the meetings, the microphones, formal proceedings, comments through the Chair, minutes being taken, long reports and presentations by officials, does not lend itself to an open exploration of issues.* (ibid)

This is not solely relevant in the case of the SPC or CDB. Traveller representatives expressed the importance of learning about the LTACC and formal and informal rules of the local authority system also. This raises the importance of capacity, efficacy and strength of personality for civil society actors to deal with the formal local authority environment.

In contrast with the SPC and LTACC, many civil society participants on the CDB praised the relative independence from the local authority and the additional areas to influence policy such as the thematic subgroups. CDBs, while within the local authority, differ with SPCs and LTACCs in terms of their institutional design and the role of local authority officials. While chaired by elected representatives and supported by administrative officials, the boards were intended to be somewhat independent of the local authority and the extent of political involvement is less. In contrast with the SPC and LTACC, the boards were supported by specialised staff, often recruited outside of the local government sector with additional expertise in community development and other relevant areas. However, the experience of CDB demonstrates how the effect of institutional design and formal rules can be influenced by the conduct of senior local authority officials. Some respondents indicated that in their view the CDB was controlled and dominated by certain groups, particularly the County Manager leading to the marginalisation of civil society. This is described by one member who reflected on the CDB in one local authority area:

*In its initial years, the Director of Community & Enterprise strived to ensure that the CDB was as autonomous from the local authority. This was gradually...*
undermined by the actions and attitude of some elected members but especially by other senior officials of the local authority.

The participant continued:

In the later stages of the CDB, the County Manager took full personal responsibility and authority for economic policy and of any initiatives as far as possible. This obviously both weakened the relevance of the CDB and signalled further the lack of priority that other members need to place in the Board. The final stage in the marginalisation of the CDB was the decision on the County Manager's instruction to move meetings into the County Council chamber... The messaging was clear. This was a “County Manager & County Councillor show” primarily. (Civil Society Representative 6)

This emphasises the effect of institutional design as well as the conduct of local authority officials in their interpretation of rules to the appropriate functioning of each participatory process.

8.3.2 Disposition of Elected Representatives

The quantitative data indicates that not all civil society participants feel they were treated equally within each process. In reference to the qualitative data, this perception is impacted by the conduct and disposition of elected representatives who participate alongside civil society participants. Criticism of elected representatives relates to their perceived indifference and at times hostility to the overall participation of so-called “external members” within the local authority. There is a perception that elected representatives consider the participation of civil society actors as a threat to their own position and as undermining of their role as elected representatives. A common criticism of civil society among elected representatives is that the real agenda of civil society is to use SPCs or CDBs to raise their public profile in order to subsequently run for election. They often question the motives of civil society members who participate within local participatory governance.

This mind-set is well described by one long serving local councillor who argues:

I do work very closely with and I come from the community sector and I am involved in the scouts and I am secretary of my residents association, I co-founded the local history society. I was chairperson of several community employment schemes, so I come from all of that. But at heart, and
fundamentally, I am a democrat. I think politicians are elected to represent a balanced interest and not a vested interest. And I do have a problem with you know ‘every committee has to have some person from the environment or the community’.

The councillor continued:

And if you look, very often, the people who end up being on the SPCs and so forth, very often there is not a very long gap between defeated candidates and the people who end up on the committees and future election candidates. I would do it too. But is that really what we want? You have all these other people on it who say they are representative but are they really? And I do have concerns with indirect representation which is questionable. (Local Elected Representative 13)

The broader attitude to civil society is described by a SPC chairperson who reflected:

The external representatives can vary. Some come from closed shop insider processes that no one is aware of and some are from political parties who see it as a stepping stone for future elections. And some do seem to represent themselves, their own personal view. That is not always the case and sometimes they bring a lot to it. That is much the same as councillors sometimes. Some represent their own personal views. Some represent the views of their communities. Some bring expertise, some do not. You often get this from the discourse from councillors around the country, you will get well “I am the elected representative for a local area, these people are not”. This resentment or they feel threatened. (Local Elected Representative 3)

This belief is held within civil society. One former CDB and SPC member argued:

Some elected councillors saw the community and voluntary reps as a threat to their own seats. As a woman, I was often made to feel like ‘oh the blondie one has something to say’. One, in particular, often dominated the meetings. It was lucky for me that I had the capacity and education to be able to participate. Others may not be so fortunate and could have felt out of their depth. (Civil Society Representative 25)

According to another participant:
There’s a lack of understanding of how valuable these committees could be if they were properly facilitated. Councillors are not trained as facilitators and do not understand the point of these committees. "Who elected you" would be a common retort. Councillors are just beginning to get used to sharing in these committees but there is a long way to go. (Civil Society Representative 15)

Another reflected:

Many times SPCs were used as constituency clinics for elected members and although the SPC experience was far more positively disposed towards community representatives than the first round of SP C's under Better Local Government, I do still feel that the community and voluntary input is not valued enough. (Local Elected Representative 12)

This attitude among many elected representatives was acknowledged by local authority officials. One reflected:

Local authority members initially found it very difficult to listen to and respect the voice of community activists whom they often perceived as a threat and a possible future political adversary. (Local Authority Official 1)

Further criticism of the conduct of local councillors includes poor engagement during meetings. This involves signing the register and leaving shortly afterwards, texting and checking emails during meetings, poor attendance as well as political grandstanding. Again, such issues were confirmed by many local authority officials who participated in the research.

Traveller representatives are highly critical of the conduct of elected representatives on the LTACC and within the local authority more generally. Many Traveller representatives claimed a lack of respect from elected representatives, as well as open and hidden prejudice. They criticise a lack of interest or indifference to their views and contributions particularly on the issues of Traveller specific or culturally appropriate accommodation. Non-Traveller LTACC members reject charges of discrimination and prejudice, however. The most specific criticism from Travellers concerns the opposition of many local councillors to Traveller specific accommodation in particular. According to Traveller representatives, these elected representatives are often duplicitous adopting Traveller Accommodation Programmes to meet statutory requirements but then working to undermine the implementation of elements of the

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37 This was also acknowledged by local elected representatives 1, 2 and 3 in interviews.
TAP and prevent the delivery of accommodation afterwards. As Traveller accommodation is unpopular within many local communities, support for Traveller accommodation is potentially damaging to the political careers of local councillors.

This is highlighted by many Traveller representatives. One argues:

*LTACCs are made up of some councillors that are there purely there to protect the interests of their local constituents. They can have very anti-Traveller agendas. My experiences are that LTACC chairs can be very weak and can lead themselves to be influenced by officials. Promoting equal rights for Traveller accommodation is not a very popular topic within local authorities. The cost, vandalism, dumping, horses and crime will always be highlighted as barriers. There is very little will there and those who are in favour of Traveller accommodation are in the minority.* (Civil Society Representative 27)

This section highlighted the effect of the conduct and disposition of elected representatives on the perceived level of equality between participants and the appropriate functioning of each participatory process. The following section explores the legitimacy of each process and the conduct of civil society from the perspective of local authority officials and elected representatives.

### 8.3.3 Appropriateness of Participatory Governance and Civil Society Participation

It is common for elected representatives and local authority officials who participated in this research to question the motivations of civil society actors and the rationale for local participatory governance in its current institutional design. They express concerns about the extent to which civil society participants are accountable, and the extent to which they are representative of the wider community. From the perspective of elected and public officials, many external members displayed a lack of interest in policy and were concerned with personal rather than the wider public interest.38 Further, the purpose and value of SPCs to local government in their current design are questioned within senior local administration which considers SPCs to be ineffective and superfluous. For many officials, in practice, SPCs are not strategic or policy focused. Instead they serve as means to explain and inform members and external members of policy. This is of ten used as a justification for

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38 This is echoed in the quantitative data somewhat. For example, approximately 61 per cent of officials surveyed agreed Traveller representatives wanted to further their own interests (this is lower with respect to representatives of community and voluntary organisations at 30 per cent).
administrative dominance. Local authority officials feel they have to “drive” the work of SPCs.

This belief is summed up by one senior local authority official who argues:

_The SPC agenda is driven of ne cessity by t he senior man agers of t he local authority. It can be superfluous to need because the working relationship and accountability already exists between the executive and the elected members. External interests are present only for what they think they can get from the local authority to further their own interests or agenda. The wider public good is not their priority. That is our priority, however, as public servants. In general, we set the policy and drive it through whether we had an SPC or not. They are obligatory and a box ticking exercise._ (Local Authority Official 8)

From the perspective of local authority officials, SPCs are often weakened by a lack of expertise and interest from external members and elected representatives on matters of policy. Many officials criticised the lack of interest on behalf of the other members to contribute items to the agenda of meetings on policy matters relevant to each SPC. Non-executive members, argue local authority officials, are not interested in policy but on so-called non-strategic or personal “transactional” issues many of which are not relevant to SPCs. Consequently, the concerns of civil society participants were considered irrelevant or outside the remit of the SPC. In addition to a lack of interest, these participants, they argue, did not engage with or inform themselves of key policy documents. Consequently, civil society and the majority of elected representatives abdicate their role and responsibility for the functioning of the SPC and associated policy to the executive. For the most part, however, this criticism was not directed at representatives of the Environment pillar who are considered to have an in-depth knowledge of issues relevant to the SPC and the capacity to contribute to policy.

This belief is also evident in the context of Traveller representatives and the LTACC. From the perspective of local authority officials and elected representatives, while in broad agreement that the LTACC functions appropriately, the LTACC is often undermined by the conduct of Traveller representatives who represent personal interests. This is problematic for local authority officials and local councillors who are concerned primarily with the interest of the wider local community not the problems of individual Travellers and Traveller families.
within the LTACC. Consequently, many of the issues discussed by Traveller representatives are considered personal and irrelevant to the LTACC.

This widely held belief within local government is summed up by one official who argued:

* A big weakness of the LTACC is that Travellers were generally there for specific personal issues and when those issues were sorted, they were gone, they had no interest. That is why we tended to target the specific Traveller representative groups to try to eradicate that. It worked more successfully from 2009-2014 but it was not completely successful because there were Travellers there for their own personal objectives, and when they were met or it was realised they would not be met, and there was no point being there, they removed themselves from the equation. (Local Authority Official 4)*

On the other hand, many Traveller representatives claimed a lack of respect by local authority officials and elected representatives, a lack of interest in their objectives and contributions during meetings, as well as prejudice. Local authority officials, however, stress the values of procedural fairness with all committees of the local authority. They argue that processes are fair and allow all members to express their views and that all members are treated with respect. They also reject accusations of discrimination and prejudice and are highly critical of Traveller representatives for making them. From the perspective of many local authority officials and elected representatives who contributed to the study, Travellers are treated better than most settled residents. Rejecting the criticism of Travellers, the local authority, they argued, is more accommodating and willing to satisfy the needs of Travellers in their pursuit of accommodation than other settled residents. These issues will be explored in further detail in the following chapter.

**8.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the qualitative data gathered through interviews, focus groups and comments within the main questionnaire. It also de-tailed some descriptive statistics from the questionnaire to supplement this data. The qualitative analysis provides some additional context and insight into the differences in the experiences of participation amongst the different types of participants and within civil society highlighted in the quantitative analysis. It also highlights the importance of institutional and individual based factors in explaining variation in the depth of civil society participation within the cases. As
administrative responsibility lies within public administration, criticism of the functioning of each process is focused on the conduct of senior local authority officials. In addition, the disposition and often hostility of elected representatives to the participation of non-elected members from civil society impacts perceptions of equality within each process. This chapter also examined the legitimacy of participation and the conduct of civil society from the perspective of local authority officials and elected representatives. Dissatisfaction among senior local authority officials with SPCs and the contributions of many civil society participants within each process is evident. From this analysis, a number of key themes emerge in respect to participation in Ireland and in the context of the wider literature. The difference in experiences between civil society and local authority actors, the effect of institutional design, and the conduct and disposition of public administration and politicians, has implications for implementation and functioning of participatory governance processes in Ireland and more broadly. These issues will be explored in further detail in the next chapter.
Chapter 9 The Depth of Participation

This chapter will analyse the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data in detail while making links with the broader theoretical and conceptual literature explored earlier. Chapter seven measured the depth of participation across groups and within each process and assessed the relationship between the depth of participation and individual level factors. The quantitative data highlighted the relationship of age, income, personal efficacy, and political trust to the perceived depth of participation for individual participants and demonstrated statistically significant differences across distinct types of participants. Chapter eight identified the impact of additional explanatory factors not measured directly in the regression analysis including institutional design and the role of officials and elected representatives. Both the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate differences in the experiences across each process, the different groups of actors, and within civil society. The findings of this study identify a number of important issues with implications for participation in Ireland and in a broader context. The first section of this chapter will focus on institutional design. The next section will focus on the implications of the data for key actors including local public officials, elected representatives and civil society participants. The third section will explore the implications of participation for the resolution of “wicked” problems and the democratic participation of minority groups. The final section will discuss the individual characteristics of civil society participants as well as some of the key variables identified in the regression analysis, including trust and personal efficacy, in further detail.

9.1 Institutional Design

This section will explore the significance of institutional design, specifically the context of national design, the significance of formal rules and procedures and the level of authority of each process. Institutional design concerns how institutions can or should be created, and how they are adopted to function correctly and efficiently. The existing literature has highlighted the importance of institutional design to the participation of citizens and civil society and the outcomes of participatory institutions (Fung 2003b, Smith 2009). Institutional design in the Irish case is a consequence of national policy and the development of participatory governance has been largely driven by central government. The participatory processes are largely top down with origins and rationales which exist outside the local authority. The development of participatory governance at the local level does not signal commitment or support on behalf of local authority officials and local elected representatives.
The context and method of institutional design does not give senior local government officials much influence or ownership of the development and establishment of participatory processes. From the beginning, this creates conditions for poorly functioning processes and limited civil society participation. Further, the capacity within national government and local government in the area of participatory democracy and governance is low. This has been acknowledged in the recent Open Government document and is evident from practice (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016).

The design of participatory processes, it is argued, must be flexible and sensitive to specific contexts (Hoppe 2011). Institutional designers are encouraged to evaluate and redesign or adapt on a regular basis in light of relationships between rules and outcomes (Bryson et al. 2013). To facilitate more effective forms of participation in Ireland, designers and officials in charge of processes have to demonstrate greater flexibility and adapt formal procedures in light of poor participatory experiences. However, due to limited national oversight, participatory processes are not evaluated by national policy makers on an on-going or systematic basis. Limited oversight and the absence of meaningful reform demonstrate a lack of attention to institutional design and a awareness of the impact of this design on outcomes. National institutional designers are reluctant to adapt rules and procedures. This is particularly relevant in the case of the SPC and LTACC which have seen no significant modification to institutional design since their creation. The CDB was reformed in 2014 and is now the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). However, the LCDC is now more firmly located within the administrative realm of the local authority but is formally independent in the performance of its functions.

9.1.1 Formal (and Informal) Rules

In general, rules standardise the role and functions of participants within governance systems. Rules can be formal (rules in form) and informal (rules in use) and constrain, guide and shape behaviour, and determine how actors should interact and set out desirable actions and behaviours (Lowndes et al. 2006). Many civil society representatives criticised the formal procedures within participatory processes, for example, the practice of speaking through chairpersons and the formal role of local authority officials in the creation of agendas. This is most apparent in the context of the SPC and LTACC. Meetings and activities of each process can resemble the formal monthly meetings of elected representatives within the council chamber.
While not tested directly, the looser institutional structure and quasi-independent status of the CDB, it was argued in chapter six, could potentially produce deeper forms of participation. In contrast to the SPC and LTACC, the CDB utilised thematic substructures such as Social Inclusion Monitoring (SIM) groups which provided additional opportunities to give voice and to influence the process and wider local government policy. Indeed, civil society participants raised the less formal structure to activities and meetings of the City/County Development Boards within the qualitative data. Further, quantitative tests for differences between different types of actors explored in chapter 7 indicated less distance between CDB civil society actors and local authority officials across the different indicators and the composite measure (with the exception of Environment representatives). However, similar to the SPC and LTACC, there is a strong perception of “tokenism” and a lack of tangible policy outcomes. Further, the results of the regression analysis revealed no significant difference between CDB participants and other civil society participants. On balance, in reference to both the quantitative and qualitative data, this suggests that the different institutional features of the CDB did not have a significant impact on the overall depth of participation for respondents in this study.

Formal rules may be trumped by the conduct of public and elected officials, particularly in the context of weak national oversight and limited support for participation within local government. Public officials can use formal rules to control situations and block the discussion or resolution of issues, to hide behind formal rules and use them as a shield particularly in situations of conflict and disagreement (Wagenaar 2007). In this study, the negative effect of formal rules on dialogue and agenda setting was often worsened by the conduct of local administrative and political actors and their interpretation of procedures. More specifically, chairpersons were not inclusive of all actors, and agendas were often managed and controlled by local authority officials and local politicians, with little consultation with other civil society participants. This is evident in the quantitative data also. For example, the indicator of the frequency of agenda setting presented in chapter eight indicated a higher level of agenda setting amongst local authority officials in comparison with other participants.

The CDBs were supported by specialised administrative staff largely recruited outside of the local authority. Many of these officials possessed considerable community or local development and expertise. However, evidence from the CDB indicates that in some cases, the conduct of local authority officials particularly senior management contributed to
administrative dominance and undermined its capacity to act with some level of independence from the local authority. This places emphasis on the key role of public administration and local elected representatives in their interpretation of formal rules within local governance in Ireland. Consequently, no matter how well designed, the implementation of participatory processes depends upon capable actors who understand how they should function and possess the capacities, disposition and skills to ensure they function effectively and are inclusive of all participants. The specific disposition and role of these actors within each participatory process will be discussed in further detail later.

9.1.2 Authority and Power

Another key aspect of institutional design is the extent of authority afforded to participatory institutions. The evidence from this study raises the importance of authority and power identified in much of the existing literature. This literature poses the question as to whether the proliferation of participatory processes represents a genuine commitment on behalf of political and administrative elites to democratization and a greater devolution of authority to citizens and civil society (Pateman 2012, Smith 2011). Many participatory processes have emerged at the same time as NPM reforms of public administration and, in some cases only, as a component of a more fundamental alteration in the relationship between the state and society. The proliferation of participatory processes can be understood as ‘governance driven’ as well as in response to the normative demands of so-called ‘radical democrats’ and pressure from civil society (Warren 2009b, Pateman 2012). Participation is promoted by advocates of neo-liberal NPM ideology as well as those who promote a more far reaching transformation and democratisation of societal and political institutions. This emphasises the competing rationales for participatory forms of governance.

For participants in this study, the ability of civil society to influence policy and deliver tangible outcomes for their respective organisations and in the wider public interest is important. However, the largely advisory nature of each participatory process and the perceived inability to influence local authority policy is a source of dissatisfaction for participants involved in all three processes. The data gathered demonstrates the distinction between having influence within each process and the capacity of each process (and local authority) to impact public policy and deliver tangible outcomes. While the extent of arenas within which civil society voices can be heard is significant, they do not enjoy a

39 This is apparent in the spread of Participatory Budgeting globally.
commensurate level of influence, leaving public policy dynamics in most cases undisturbed. In the cases where civil society actors felt they had an influence on aspects of policy, they often criticised the level of actual delivery of tangible outcomes. This is most relevant to Traveller representatives, representatives of Environment organisations, and Community and Voluntary participants with a social inclusion focus.

In the case of the SPC, CDB and LTACC, the lack of outcomes and influence on policy renders each process a “talking shop” with participation largely “tokenistic”. Interestingly, criticism of the so-called tokenistic nature of participation was not as evident from members of local business groups within the Social Partner pillar. In reality, participants from business and employer organisations possess alternative avenues to influence national and local authority policy. For example, business representatives are most commonly the head of local chambers of commerce. This is a position with pre-existing relationships with senior local authority officials and other formal and informal opportunities to influence local authority outputs and policies. These alternative avenues of influence are not as widely available to other civil society participants. Further, the objectives and preferences of these actors are often more closely aligned to the local authority than those of Traveller representatives and civil society actors with a specific social inclusion focus. Their objectives and preferences pose less of a challenge to local authority officials and local councillors. This is supported within the quantitative data. The quantitative analysis, for example, indicates a higher depth of participation in comparison with other civil society participants. This difference is significant in comparison with Travellers controlling for the other explanatory variables in the regression analysis.

The advisory nature and perceived lack of responsiveness on behalf of the local authority raises questions about the rationale for engagement in powerless arenas and the impact of ‘pseudo or ‘tokenistic’ engagement on civil society, its role within democracy, as and the nature of its relationship with the state. Tokenistic participation emphasises the pitfalls of engagement in ‘invited spaces’ and the willingness of civil society organisations to participate despite dissatisfaction and frustration and the absence of tangible outcomes (Cornwall 2004). Traveller organisations, for example, have openly questioned the nature of participating within the LTACC and the impact of their participation on their identity and autonomy. This has culminated in a recent boycott of the LTACC and NTACC in protest at the lack of accommodation outcomes for Travellers.
The institutionalisation of local participatory governance in Ireland represents the potential for the extension of citizenship and increased opportunities for formal participation. It does not, however, represent further democratisation, a deepening of democracy, or a greater sharing of authority with citizens and civil society (Pateman 2012). This is of further relevance in the context of recent local government reform in Ireland. Irish government policy has identified the importance of participation to local democracy and the problem of consultation fatigue. *Putting People First*, a white paper on the future of local democracy, identifies the need for local government to provide greater opportunities for citizen and civil society participation in decisions that affect them and to move beyond existing forms of participation. The document highlighted the prevalence of ‘consultation fatigue’ and the need for a more direct involvement of citizens in the decisions that affect their lives. It states that “civic engagement can only be sustained if people believe that they can influence decision-making and that their views are taken into account” (Department of the Environment Community and Local Government 2012, p.158).

However, the same document re-emphasises the primacy of representative democracy and the need for participation to complement the existing structure of decision-making in local government. The primacy of elected representatives and deeper participation is not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, the findings from this study raise questions about the potential for deepening participation and dealing adequately with acknowledged consultation fatigue in the absence of administrative reform and a greater willingness to share influence within the local government sector. The case of the LTACC and Traveller accommodation, which is widely criticised for a lack of delivery of Traveller accommodation, suggests that, in some cases, the primacy of elected representatives may have to be qualified or restricted in favour of more formal institutions of co-governance or less politicised institutions of policy making (European Committee of Social Rights 2016).

### 9.2 Competing Dispositions and Roles: Officials, Elected Representatives and Civil Society

The previous section explored the importance of institutional design and the wider context of the implementation of participatory governance in Ireland, most specifically the national design of participatory processes and the limited ownership of the institutional design of SPCs, CDBs and LTACCs within the local government sector. This section will focus on the importance of disposition and support for civil society participation within local
public administration and politics. The wider empirical literature highlights the importance of administrative and political support and reform to participatory governance. A common theme in this literature is the importance of cohesion between public administration, politics, and civil society to more substantive forms of participation (Geurtz and Van de Wijdeven 2010, Wampler 2015). Political and bureaucratic support is a form of power in which officials and political actors can seek to further, restrict, or derail participation (Ryan and Smith 2012, McKenna 2012).

The evidence presented in the study corroborates this perspective within the literature. It is clear that the capacity and disposition of public officials and elected representatives and their relationship with civil society has significant implications for participatory governance in Ireland. More substantive forms of participation require a shift in the disposition of local authority officials and elected representatives as well as capacity building. However, this is complicated as the shift to participatory forms of democracy and the increase in participatory governance arenas has direct implications for balancing participatory and representative forms of democracy, the role and status of political representatives, and of public administration. The following section will explore this in the context of public officials and elected representatives.

9.2.1 Role and Disposition of Public Officials

Public administration plays a key role in facilitating civil society participation in Ireland. However, there is considerable evidence of poor disposition, limited understanding of, and a lack of support for participation, within local public administration. Participation which impacts the traditional role and conduct of public officials has not been facilitated with more collaborative forms of responsiveness and leadership. This ranges from the scheduling of meetings and activities of each process to communication during meetings, and non-collaborative forms of agenda setting. A perception of administrative “control” is prevalent amongst civil society and many local councillors. Administrative dominance impacts the ability of civil society to agenda set and to discuss and influence policy. Quantitative tests for differences between civil society and local authority officials presented in chapter 7 demonstrated significantly significant differences with respect to the depth of participation. Local authority officials indicate a statistically significant higher perceived depth of participation in comparison with civil society. This is most apparent in the case of Community and Voluntary representatives on the SPC, Travellers within the LTACC, and
Environment actors on the CDB. The level of responsiveness to the inputs of civil society and poor attempts at inclusion are key reasons of contention. From the perspective of civil society participants, senior local authority officials (and local elected representatives) are perceived to be unwilling to share influence and power and to allow civil society participants to influence local authority policy. This conduct on behalf of officials is corroborated by many local elected representatives who are widely critical of the administrative conduct and the level of responsiveness of public officials to their inputs also.

The central role of public administration is acknowledged by local authority officials themselves who feel the agenda and work of the process is largely their professional and statutory responsibility. Public officials also criticise the weak policy role of local government in Ireland and the importance of national legislation for the administrative dominance of processes, particularly the SPCs. While the advisory nature of each process and the limited policy remit of local government are of significance, it is clear that within the parameters of existing rules and institutional design, a shift in the conduct and disposition of local authority officials is necessary. However, as outlined, this must be considered in the context of the wider relationship between local and central government. Each process was designed at national government level but is implemented throughout local government in Ireland. National design and local delivery places considerable responsibility for participation within the hands of local government officials without generating real ownership or support for the process and broader concept of participation. This system of design and delivery does not generate administrative support for or understanding of the merits of participatory forms of democracy. Further, local authority officials may not possess the capacity to adequately respond to the direct inclusion of citizens and civil society within local authority policy making. The role of local authority officials on SPCs and LTACCs is largely one of professional obligation and necessity. This was somewhat different on the CDB which employed specialised staff often recruited outside the local government sector.

From the perspective of some local authority officials who participated in the research, the SPC and LTACC are unsatisfactory, and something to be “managed” by local government. Further, officials in the study often questioned the benefit of civil society participation to the local authority within existing formal institutions and the capacity of civil society participants to contribute meaningfully to local authority policy. Officials were also critical of the motivations of civil society participants including their overall concern with the wider public interest. Instead of formal participatory arenas, some officials instead propose
more informal consultation with citizens and civil society within local communities. These findings emphasise the importance of administrative disposition and support for participation amongst public officials in Ireland and elsewhere, as well as the broader context of institutional design.

9.2.2 Role and Disposition of Elected Representatives

This section will consider the role and disposition of elected representatives in further detail and emphasise the implications of participation for representative democracy and traditional understandings of democratic accountability, representation and legitimacy. Participation functions as a supplement to existing political and administrative institutions and involves balancing between representative and participatory forms of democracy. The previous chapter presented considerable evidence of resistance to the inclusion of “external” members within local authority processes. There is often an absence of support from councillors for the inclusion of civil society or an awareness of the potential merits of this participation. Civil society participants from all sectors complain of antipathy and a lack of respect from elected representatives. They criticise the ambivalence, indifference, and at times, hostility to the presence of unelected members. This is evident in the conduct of many local elected representatives within activities of CDBs and SPs and L TACCs. There is evidence of the marginalisation of civil society within participatory processes by elected representatives who act as chairpersons.

The further deepening of participation is reliant upon a shift in disposition of local elected representatives and a greater willingness to share influence on local authority policy and decisions. However, the experience of participation in Ireland demonstrates the complexity of balancing representative and participatory forms of democracy and the significance of contrasting forms of democratic legitimacy. The participation and influence of “unelected” actors is considered by many councillors who participated in this research as undermining the democratic mandate of local politicians. The indifference to civil society is, in part, a consequence of a perceived lack of democratic legitimacy of alternative forms of representation. Local politicians question the democratic legitimacy of civil society, their motivations and overall concern with the wider public interest. They are considered as unelected, unrepresentative and unaccountable to the wider community. In contrast, councillors are authorised electorally and thereby representative of and accountable to local communities. Further, civil society participants particularly from community, environment
and business organisations are considered as possible future political adversaries and possible rivals in future elections.

This tension or conflict is also reflective of the shifting conceptions of democratic representation within modern democracy. In addition to the proliferation of participatory processes, there has been a growing number of ‘self-authorised’ actors who make representative claims on behalf of citizens and constituencies affected by particular issues. Self-authorised representatives are on-electoral and found predominately within civil society and the public sphere. These representatives are unique in that they are subject to different methods of democratic authorization and accountability. These claims, it is argued, are often a consequence of the deficits of traditional electoral representation which is often asymmetrical and inadequately dispersed throughout society (Montanaro 2012). Participatory democracy therefore acknowledges the influence of citizens and the traditional form of representative democracy and the concept of a legitimate political or democratic representation.

The deepening of participation and the increased influence of civil society over policy and the outputs of public institutions reduces the level of authority of elected representatives and their influence on policy and decisions. This may be resisted on behalf of local politicians, however (McKenna 2012). The sharing of influence is of particular relevance in the Irish context due to the limited authority and functional remit of local government. Local elected representatives are critical of administrative dominance of local government and they often lack the ability to shape policy themselves. This, in part, explains the reluctance to share influence with civil society. While potentially difficult to reconcile, the disposition of elected representatives towards participatory democracy and the tension between alternative forms of democratic representation and policy making has implications for the further development of participatory governance in Ireland and requires further scrutiny by national policy makers concerned with local government and local democracy.

9.2.3 Leadership, Training and Capacity Building

The previous section emphasised the importance of a shift in disposition from public and elected officials towards participatory governance. In addition, the significance of knowledge and technical capacity within public administration to facilitate and implement participatory governance must be acknowledged. Participatory governance has considerable implications for the traditional role of the public servant and alters relationships between citizens and public officials. With increasing citizen demand for involvement in decision-making, training and capacity building are critical for the success of participatory governance in Ireland.
making and growing citizen/civil society capacity and knowledge, senior officials within public administration are increasingly challenged to adjust how they facilitate and enable greater citizen voice and influence (Ricardo et al. 2016). The hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of public administration laid down in traditional theories of public administration is not always compatible with more sustained collaboration between officials, citizens and civil society (Denhardt and Denhardt 2015, Moore 1995, Alford and O'Flynn 2009). As is evident in the Irish case, adapting to more collaborative and inclusive forms of policy making is often complex and demanding.

The capacity and resources of local public administration to deal with these changes and engage in more collaborative forms of leadership is of significance. One crucial aspect of capacity building within public administration is leadership. It is possible to make a distinction between instrumental, collaborative and integrative forms of public leadership. It is suggested that in general there has been inadequate attention paid to public leadership within the field of public administration and within public administration scholarship (Liddle 2010, Morse 2010, Kellis and Ran 2012). The importance of skilled political or administrative leadership to the effectiveness of participation has been identified in the wider participatory literature (Fung 2004, Fung 2015). Robust and effective leadership, it is argued, can transform participation into an institutionally valid and effective process (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012, Geurtz and Van de Wijdeven 2010).

Collaborative and integrative forms of leadership are considered a means to enhance civic engagement. Consequently, a shift away from instrumental leadership and specific investment in more collaborative types of leadership within public administration is necessary. However, the need to develop capacity within public administration is evident from the findings of this research. There is limited understanding of collaborative leadership at both local and national levels in Ireland. Specific training can develop the capacity of officials to engage in more collaborative methods and to better respond to civil society participants. However, the development of this capacity as well as the implementation of more collaborative forms of policy making requires additional resources for local public administration which are not readily available. Local authority officials in Ireland do not receive formal training in the area of participation or in how to engage in more
The development of participatory processes at national level did not come with a corresponding training or capacity building programme for local public administration. Training and capacity building could be provided by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government but the existing commitment to capacity building within national government is questionable. This is further evident in the context of recent local government reform and establishment of PPNs. Training for all relevant participants was not finalised long after the passing of legislation and the establishment of PPNs within local authorities. The need to develop leadership capacity within public administration has been identified by Ireland’s Open Government Partnership National Draft Action Plan 2016-2018 on enhancing citizen participation. However, the document does not mention any specific measures or actions in this area (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016).

In summary, this section has highlighted the key role of public officials and elected representatives and the importance of a shift in disposition to the further development of participatory governance. This is challenging as the more substantive participation of civil society in participatory processes has implications for the traditional role of public administration and elected representatives within representative democracy. This is of particular relevance in the Irish case as, due to national institutional design, local authority officials and elected representatives lack ownership of participatory governance. Disposition and support for civil society participation is of key significance but is more complicated in this context. The evidence in the Irish case suggests that officials and elected representatives are not always well disposed towards more substantive forms of participation and lack understanding of more collaborative forms of policy making. Participatory processes are often regarded as something to be managed by local authority officials and the more substantive participation of civil society in policy making presents a challenge to the status of elected representatives and their influence on local authority policy and decision making. This section raises the importance of leadership and capacity building within public administration to better facilitate and implement institutions of participation also. The failure to facilitate more substantive forms of participation may not be a consequence of resistance or opposition alone. Participatory governance poses considerable challenges to public

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40 This is expressed by local authority officials who participated in this research and in interviews with national government officials.
41 This was confirmed in interview with officials from Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
administration and may require capacity building and specific training within local authorities as well as additional resources. This has been lacking in local government in Ireland since the development of the participatory governance landscape in Ireland with the introduction of BLG in 1996.

9.3 Participatory Governance and “Wicked” Problems

The following section discusses the issues raised by the democratic participation of marginalised or seldom heard groups and dealing with so-called “wicked” problems within participatory governance. The findings of this research indicate the difficulty inherent in the participation of marginalised/seldom heard groups and institutions of participatory governance which deals with so-called “wicked” problems. Wicked problems are often described as complex, unpredictable, and intractable. They denote a variety of particularly complex, persistent, and resistant problems within public policy in which the nature of the problem and the potential solutions are strongly contested (Head 2008). Such problems present considerable challenges for public institutions and those who work within them. The sources of these problems are diverse and multi-faceted and are generally associated with institutional complexity, multiple interests and objectives and values of diverse stakeholders. Wickedness may also be a consequence of local politics and the value systems of the political and institutional context in which they exist, which may further complicate resolution (Geuijen et al. 2016, Wexler 2009).

The case of Irish Travellers and the provision of Traveller accommodation in Ireland is a key illustration of this. Local government has authority and a clear policy remit in the area of Traveller accommodation. The criticism of “tokenistic” participation identified earlier is most evident in the context of Travellers and Traveller accommodation in which the LTACC is considered a “box ticking” exercise. The quantitative data demonstrates significant differences in respect of the composite measure of depth of participation between Traveller representatives and local authority officials. These differences are the largest within the cases in this study. Further, in reference to the qualitative data, relationships between Traveller representatives, officials, and elected representatives are argumentative, conflictual and hostile in many local authority areas. Specific criticism focuses predominately on the “tokenistic” LTACC structure, lack of meaningful accommodation outcomes, as well as the conduct of administrative and political actors who seek to delay, prevent and undermine the implementation of Traveller specific accommodation. Discrimination against the Travelling
community in the area of accommodation, argue Traveller representatives, is a
enduring feature of accommodation practice and policy. However, local authority and national officials
emphasise the progress made in reducing the numbers of Travellers living in unsuitable accommodation
and highlight the reduction of the Traveller accommodation budget in the wake of the recent economic crisis as barriers to delivery.

Under the relevant legislation, local government must take ‘reasonable’ steps to implement Traveller Accommodation Programmes. However, there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to implement agreed units of accommodation in TAPs. The lack of delivery on agreed units of accommodation and the lack of progress on culturally appropriate or Traveller specific accommodation is widely criticised both nationally and internationally. In May 2016, the European Committee of Social Rights, a committee of the Council of Europe, stated Ireland is violating the rights of Travellers because of its failure to provide a adequate accommodation. Despite progress made and the policies put in place by government to improve the accommodation of Travellers, there is a shortfall in accommodation in violation of Article 16 of the European Social Charter. According to the ruling of the committee, Irish law and practice violates the rights of Travellers in four areas: the lack of Traveller accommodation, the inadequate condition of many Traveller sites, and the inadequate safeguard for Travellers threatened with eviction and the carrying out of evictions without necessary safeguards (European Committee of Social Rights 2016).

Further, there is a lack of agreement on the nature of the “problem”, more specifically the extent of demand for Traveller specific accommodation and barriers to its delivery. Officials and many elected representatives, for example, play down the demand of Traveller specific or culturally appropriate a accommodation. The majority of Travellers, they argue, now seek standard local authority housing or private rented accommodation. Officials refer to the annual assessment of need carried out by local authorities which indicates Traveller preferences for standard units of accommodation. This demand is disputed by Traveller representatives who cast doubt on the veracity of these figures. In reality, dissatisfaction with the LTACC and the provision of Traveller accommodation is a component of the historical problematic relationship between Travellers and the Irish State and conflict between Travellers and local elected representatives reflects the historic opposition to Traveller accommodation within local communities. From the perspective of Traveller representatives, local politicians are barriers to the implementation of accommodation. Conflict arises over different views on the behaviour, culture and lifestyle of Travellers.
Opposition to Traveller accommodation, according to many local councillors, is voicing the legitimate concerns of local residents and being an effective public representative. Traveller anti-social behaviour and criminality is harmful to local communities but is not acknowledged by the Travelling community. It is also common for elected representatives to question the place of Travellers within the social fabric of local communities and their desire to become better integrated into Irish society. However, it is important to make a distinction between councillors from the more established parties such as Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and those from left wing parties and left wing independents who tend to be more supportive of Traveller-specific accommodation and have more productive relationships with Traveller representatives. In some respects, this echoes the support or greater disposition amongst left wing parties/governments for participatory democracy and the inclusion of minority groups within policy making evident in the wider literature on participatory governance.

While often critical of the conduct of Traveller representatives, local authority officials and elected representatives are generally in agreement that the LTACC functions appropriately and that all members including Travellers are treated fairly and with respect. This is clear from the quantitative indicators of legitimacy outlined in chapter eight but this view is not shared by Traveller representatives who are more critical of the LTACC. For example, 83 per cent of Traveller representatives expressed disagreement with the idea that all LTACC members were treated equally. Further, local authority officials and some elected representatives expressed the belief that Traveller representatives are treated better than other civil society participants in local government. This extends to the treatment of Travellers within Irish society more generally. Local authorities, they argue, are more accommodating and willing to satisfy the needs of Travellers in their pursuit of accommodation than other settled residents. In this view, Travellers are not treated as equals but better than ordinary citizens. Rejecting the criticism of Travellers, the local authority is more accommodating and willing to satisfy the needs of Travellers in their pursuit of accommodation than other settled residents including the willingness to ignore and tolerate anti-social behaviour and criminality and the violation of tenancy agreements. This treatment, they argue, emanates from a fear of being accused of discrimination and the indifference of the state to address and solve the social problems endemic within the Travelling community.

Cooperation and collaboration between public institutions and stakeholders and the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in policy making is considered an effective approach to deal with “wicked” problems (Head 2010). In the context of the LTACC and Traveller representatives.
accommodation, however, existing institutional arrangements and methods of collaboration are largely unsatisfactory to Travellers representatives and advocacy organisations and ineffective in dealing with the provision of Traveller accommodation. The disagreement in relation to the LTACC, the provision of Traveller accommodation, and the poor relationship between Travellers and local government reflects the wickedness of the accommodation issue and inability of the current system of delivery to deal adequately with this.

Similar to institutional design, the persistence of Traveller accommodation as a wicked problem and the inability of the LTACC and local authorities to deal effectively from the perspective of all affected stakeholders, emphasises the need for local and national policy makers to reflect on the current system of the provision of Traveller accommodation within local communities and the role of the LTACC within this. This is of importance as nomadism and the ability to travel are regarded as central to Traveller culture and identity. The recent increase in the number of Traveller families in private rented accommodation has significant implications for Traveller society and the trend of housing of Travellers in standard accommodation is reflected in accommodation figures. For example, according to the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC), the number of Traveller families living in the private accommodation sector including with local authority assistance increased from 421 in 2002 to 3211 in 2013. The 2013 figure represents 32 per cent of the total number of Traveller families (NTACC 2014). This demands further attention and clarity concerning the accommodation preferences of Travellers is needed.

9.4 The Participation of Minority/Seldom Heard Groups

The LTACC and the inclusion of Travellers within local government also highlight the complexity of the formal democratic participation of marginalised groups. More broadly, participatory governance is often designed to address democratic deficits such as social exclusion and the under representation of marginalised groups within traditional democratic arenas. However, maximising the participation of social excluded groups is complex, demanding and requires specific commitment and resources. Much of this responsibility falls on public administration and their willingness to maximise the participation of these actors and adequately consider, reflect and respond to their interests and objectives.

This study highlights the need for further support for members of the Travelling community to participate within local governance. The period of this study revealed a large
turnover of Traveller representatives and poor participation rates amongst designated LTACC members, some of which is explained by the perceived “tokenism” of the LTACC and unsatisfactory accommodation outcomes. However, there is a lack of support for Traveller representatives to meet the costs of participation and to develop the capacity to participate more effectively. This is most relevant for members of the Travelling community who are not members of local advocacy or organisations or interest groups. Local and national Traveller organisations have provided support to many ordinary Travellers since the creation of the LTACC. However, this support has diminished as a result of a decline in funding of community development or organisations and voluntary sector more generally in the aftermath of the recent economic crisis in Ireland (Harvey 2013). Some local Traveller projects have been defunded or absorbed into other civil society and state structures and many local authority areas no longer have functioning Traveller or organisation. The active democratic participation of ordinary members of the Travelling community requires further resources and there is a need to maximise participation rates. However, the democratic participation of Travellers was not addressed directly in the recent reform of local government and the establishment of the PPN in 2014. The awareness of the need to support the participation of Travellers within national and local administration is uncertain. Local authority officials who participated in this study acknowledged the challenges of Traveller participation in local government but did not demonstrate an awareness of the need to better support Travellers to participate. This is seen largely as a role for Traveller advocacy organisations.

In practice, the active participation of citizens from marginalised groups like Travellers is often complicated, and inequality and hierarchies can persist within participatory processes. The opportunity to participate does not mean these participants will be listened to or their preferences will be considered or implemented by public institutions (Young 2000). Accommodating the interests and objectives of these groups is more of a challenge for public authorities. To achieve this, public authorities may have to take steps to reduce institutional inertia and address the imbalance of power between themselves and members of these groups (Barnes et al. 2007). It is clear that preferences of Traveller representatives within the LTACC present difficulties for many local authorities and the capacity and willingness of local and national government to accept and deliver the objectives of Traveller representatives, most notably Traveller specific accommodation, is questionable. The case of Traveller accommodation, therefore, raises questions about the extent to which public
institutions are willing to respond to the interests and preferences of marginalised groups and implement policies which may be challenging for local communities.

This section has demonstrated the complexity inherent in the participation of marginalised or seldom heard groups and the difficulty of dealing with so-called wicked problems within participatory governance and within society more generally. The LTACC is the primary mechanism of engagement between Travellers and local government who are largely unrepresented and disengaged from traditional democratic arenas. The research highlights the need to boost participation rates amongst Traveller representatives particularly those who are not members of Traveller organisations or employees of Traveller advocacy organisations. This is essential to ensure the LTACC extends surface area of the state and addresses democratic deficits such as underrepresentation of the Traveller community within local government and local democracy in Ireland.

9.5 Individual Characteristics and Capacity of Civil Society

The previous sections have focused on the importance of institutional design and the role and disposition of elected representatives and public officials. This section will focus on the individual characteristics and capacity of civil society participants. The quantitative data which analysed the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and potential explanatory variables identified some key variables to the depth of participation. These include age, personal efficacy and political trust. This section will explore the results of these findings in more detail.

9.5.1 Age, Socio-Economic Status and Personal Efficacy

The regression analysis demonstrated the significance of age to the depth of participation. Age has a positive association with older participants indicating a deeper level of participation. The significance of the age of respondents may reflect the general level of experience participating in governance and engaging with the state, in which older participants have greater levels of experience and knowledge of how local government functions as well as knowledge of the relevant policy area. Further, more widely, as citizens get older, they become employed, educated, less geographically mobile and more integrated with communities. Consequently, they are better able to meet the costs of political participation and are more active in civil society organisations (Neundorf et al. 2013, Valentino et al. 2009). This finding is significant in the context of the wider literature which
has highlighted the underrepresentation of younger citizens in participatory governance who do not participate or are not motivated to participate (Talpin 2011). The significance of age and the relative overrepresentation of older citizens within participatory processes in Ireland and internationally requires further attention from policy makers. One possible solution is to alter the selection mechanism of participation. This is important to ensure that institutions of participatory governance in Ireland do not simply reinforce the participation of groups and individuals already represented and influential in traditional democratic arenas, and extend the surface area of the state.

The thesis examined hypothesised relationships between indicators of socio-economic status such as income and education and the depth of participation. Evidence from the international literature indicates participation is often more successful for citizens of higher economic status. Education is also considered a predictor of wider political participation, essential to citizens’ knowledge and their ability to understand complex policy issues. In the context of participatory governance, education can help citizens meet the costs of and deal with the demands of participation. Education, in contrary to hypothesised expectations, is not a significant variable in quantitative analysis. Income was a significant variable in three of the five models but the relationship between income and the depth of participation is reduced when controlling for the participation in a specific process and being a member of a specific civil society pillar. This reflects differences in experiences between Traveller representatives and other civil society actors, particularly Social Partner participants.

The experience of participation for actors belonging to particular civil society pillars in these cases may depend more on identity to a particular organisation and its objectives not socio-economic status. Membership of a particular civil society organisation is often associated with specific issues, such as the environment, Traveller accommodation, and in the case of many Social Partners, as pects of local commerce. Similarly, the references of representatives of business groups, who focus on economic development, are often closely aligned with the preferences of local authorities in Ireland than issues of the environment and Traveller accommodation. Further, it is possible that the impact of education and income are reduced by the active membership of participants in civil society organisations. The existing theoretical literature has emphasised the positive effect of membership in organisations which can provide educative and social benefits. Associations serve as a conduit for political discussion, provide citizens with information, increase civic skills, and develop critical faculties (Fung 2003a). These organisations, therefore, can
increase knowledge and help citizens meet the costs of participation and reduce the impact of lower socio-economic status.

The quantitative and qualitative data identified the importance of personal efficacy. The measure of self-efficacy was a key variable in the regression analysis. Perceived self-efficacy is a statement of capability and is related to individuals’ beliefs in their capabilities to achieve particular accomplishments (Bandura 2012). Perceptions of efficacy of individuals are considered an important factor in explaining political behaviour and the extent and nature of citizen involvement in politics. In addition, the qualitative data highlighted the importance of general strength of personality, of self-confidence, and of being assertive and forceful within each process. For civil society participants, this is often necessary to overcome perceived attempts at exclusion or marginalisation caused by ineffective chairing and administrative dominance of activities and meetings. Reflecting on the participation of civil society members, it is common for elected representatives and local authority officials to emphasise the importance of self-confidence and strength of personality to participate in the local authority arena also. While often critical of their representativeness and their level of democratic accountability to the wider community, councillors also acknowledge the importance of strong personalities to the participation of “external” members.

In the case of the LTACC, the importance of efficacy and strength of personality is also apparent. However, in the case of Traveller participants, this assertiveness and strength of personality is not always related to perceived deeper participation or inclusion. Traveller representatives particularly from advocacy organisations, whether members of the settled community or Travellers, have considerable experience in campaigning and protesting on issues relevant to the LTACC. Their level of knowledge of the issues relevant to Traveller accommodation and the strength of their personalities is evident from focus groups and interviews. However, the willingness to campaign, to engage in protest, and to be assertive contributes to conflict within the LTACC itself. Many Traveller representatives are willing to challenge local authority officials and elected representatives and to engage in acts of protest within and outside the LTACC. Examples of this include ensuring the minutes of meetings accurately reflect discussion and withdrawing from meetings in response to perceived misconduct on behalf of local authority. In some cases, Traveller representatives can dominate the content of LTACC meetings through contestation and protest. This is acknowledged by a number of Traveller representatives and other stakeholders.
The importance of efficacy and strength of personality is significant as the qualitative data also indicates that many participants across the different civil society pillars entered into SPCs, CDBs and LTACCs without fully understanding the formal rules and nature of the participatory process and the operating procedures of the local authority. In these cases, civil society representatives spoke of a steep learning curve and having to learn both the culture of the local authority and the formal and informal rules of the participatory process. This places an emphasis on training and capacity building for civil society representatives as well as public and elected officials. Supporting civil society representatives to participate more effectively, to better interact with local authority officials and elected representatives within the local authority is important to the future of local participatory governance in Ireland.

9.5.2 Participation and Trust

The research has highlighted the relationship between the depth of participation and trust in wider political institutions. Participatory governance is considered a means to boost trust in democratic institutions and legitimacy of public policy (Fung 2015). Trust is considered an indicator of outcomes of deeper participation or so-called ‘deeper’ forms of democracy (Goodhart et al. 2012). The quantitative analysis in chapter seven demonstrates the positive association between the perceived depth of participation and trust in the wider political and administrative system for participants in this study. This finding raises the importance of participatory governance to trust in democratic institutions and the implications for the experiences of citizens within participatory processes on levels of trust. According to Hardin, trust requires substantial knowledge of the intentions and motivations of others and the exercising of judgement (Hardin 2006). Participatory governance which involves sustained interactions between citizens and local authorities enables citizens to exercise judgement to trust public officials and elected representatives and wider public institutions.

The relationship between political trust and the depth of participation also highlights the potential for unsatisfactory participatory experiences to undermine existing levels of trust in democracy and public institutions and to produce conflictual or strained relationships between public administration and members of the public. This is further evident in the qualitative data. Many civil society actors indicated less faith in and increased cynicism of local government as a result of their experience of participation within “tokenistic” arenas. While the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and political trust is
relevant to all types of civil society participants in this study, the impact of participation on trust is most apparent in the context of Travellers and the LTACC. The democratic participation of Travellers within the LTACC and sustained interaction with public officials and elected representatives on the issue of Traveller accommodation has eroded levels of trust in political and administrative institutions in Ireland, and, in some respects, further undermined the relationship between the Travelling community and the Irish state.

In summary, this section has explored some of the key findings of the regression analysis in further detail, discussing the importance of personal efficacy and strength of personality and the positive association between the perceived depth of participation and trust in wider political institutions. The analysis has also highlighted the importance of capacity within civil society to engage in more substantive forms of participation.

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the significance of the findings of chapter 7 and 8 in the context of participatory governance in Ireland and in reference to the wider theoretical and empirical literature. This research has engaged in a holistic analysis of local participatory governance highlighting important institutional and individual level factors through mixed methods research. The study connects the public administration and participatory democracy literature in the analysis of participation through a focus on public officials, elected representatives and public participants. From this analysis, a number of key factors are of importance to the deepening of participation within local governance are apparent. Designers of institutions of participatory governance must focus on a number of important areas for the future implementation of participatory governance in Ireland. These include issues of institutional design including formal rules and the level of authority of each process, the capacity and disposition of officials and elected representatives, as well as the capacity and motivations of citizens and civil society. The following section will provide a brief summary of these factors identified in the chapter.

1. The national one size fits all approach to the design and implementation of participatory processes is problematic leaving local authorities without adequate ownership or the ability to adapt processes to better suit local circumstances. While a national commitment to participation is positive, its implementation through top down processes is often counterproductive. This is further evident in the recent creation of PPNs.
2. Participatory processes must be well designed, flexible and adaptable. The institutional design of participatory processes in this study is formal and inflexible. In addition to their location within the administrative and political realm of the local authority, formal rules and inflexible structures and their interpretation by public administration have clear implications for the participation of civil society actors and their overall contribution to each process.

3. Local elected and public officials must have some sense of ownership of institutional design and broader support for participatory governance. This is not always the case in the Irish context where the participatory institutions originate within national government and the facilitation of local participation does not signal a commitment or positive disposition toward participatory governance.

4. Participatory processes are facilitated and implemented by public administration. Irrespective of the level of authority or how well designed; the experience of participation is dependent upon the conduct and support of public officials who must possess the capacity for and disposition towards collaborative forms of decision making and integrative forms of public leadership. Participatory governance, however, has considerable implications for the traditional role of public administration and its relationship with citizens and civil society. The successful implementation of participatory governance therefore demands capacity building within public institutions and greater emphasis on less bureaucratic and instrumental forms of administration and policy making.

5. Participation in “tokenistic” arenas produces widespread dissatisfaction and frustration and has negative implications for the relationship between civil society and the state, and the level of trust in wider political institutions. The ability to influence policy and the outputs of public institutions is crucial to the depth of participation and study emphasises the problems inherent in advisory structures which lack authority or the ability to impact public policy. Perceptions of “tokenistic” participation and lack of tangible outcomes produce cynicism and erode trust in local government.

6. Participation is considered a supplement to and exists in parallel to representative democracy. The further deepening of participation necessitates a willingness to share authority and influence and a greater disposition towards the inputs and preferences of civil society actors within politics and public administration. This is challenging as the more substantive participation of civil society within local government reduces the influence of...
elected representatives and presents challenges to existing conceptions of democracy and the appropriateness of democratic decision-making. The preferences of some civil society groups may present particular challenges for public authorities, as is the case with Irish Travellers. Therefore, the implementation of participatory forms of governance requires balance and harmony between contrasting forms and understandings of democracy and democratic authorisation and representation. However, this is complicated in practice and inadequate attention is paid to harmonising participatory and representative forms of democracy by national policymakers and within local authorities in Ireland.

7. For civil society actors, the study indicates a considerable level of personal capacity is required to participate effectively. Capacity extends to knowledge, self-confidence and strength of personality. Training and capacity building is crucial to the development of competence and self-confidence to participate. This is of particular relevance in the case of participants from social excluded or marginalised groups. Capacity can be developed through active membership of associations and civil society organisations as well as formal training provided by public institutions and institutional designers of participatory processes.

8. Finally, this research demonstrates the importance of competence, knowledge of relevant policy issues, and acting in the wider public interest, to the effectiveness and legitimacy of civil society participation. In addition to knowledge, civil society participants must be accountable to and act in the interests of the constituencies they represent as well as demonstrate a concern for the wider public interest within participatory institutions. This has clear implications for the level of trust of public officials in civil society actors who participate and the overall legitimacy of their involvement in local decision and policy-making.
Chapter 10 Conclusions

The opportunity for citizens and civil society to participate directly in policy making continues to grow both in Ireland and internationally. The terms engagement and participation are used to describe the diverse methods afforded to citizens and civil society to engage in governance and influence decisions of importance to their lives and wider society (Rowe and Frewer 2005, Nabatchi and Amsler 2014). Irrespective of the terms used this form of direct participation is often institutional and takes place in purposely designed participatory mechanisms or processes which balance and sometimes integrate representative and participatory forms of democracy. These participatory processes have increased significantly over the past thirty years and are now considered a component of the ‘normal’ political and administrative sphere (Galais et al. 2012).

‘Thicker’ or ‘deeper’ democracy, it is argued, can increase the rate and quality of citizen participation through improved access, voice and influence, an increased opportunity to shape policy and decisions, and to perform a more active role in government (Goodhart et al. 2012). As set out in the introduction, despite the growth of opportunities to participate the literature highlights dissatisfaction with the ‘cosmetic’ or ‘tokenistic’ nature of participatory democracy/governance (Pateman 2012). It is in this context that the thesis has attempted to answer two primary questions through mixed methods research. The thesis is concerned with exploring two interconnected themes: (i) analysing the depth of participation and (ii) explaining variation in the depth of participation.

These themes were examined through a national study of civil society participation in three participatory processes in Ireland between 2009 and 2014. The experiences of local authority officials and elected representatives and their disposition to participatory governance and civil society participation were examined in parallel. This mixed methods analysis of the diverse perspectives of civil society participants as well as administrative and political actors enables a more comprehensive and robust assessment of local participatory governance in Ireland during this period.

Section 10.1 of the final chapter will provide a brief summary of the thesis. Section 10.2 will address the research questions and the main findings of the research. Section 10.3 will explore the findings of the study in the context of local participatory governance in Ireland and discuss the contributions of the research to the theoretical and empirical
Section 10.4 will explore the implications of this study for further research in the area of local participatory governance.

### 10.1 Summary of Thesis

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and outlined the significance and rationale of the research. A review of the theoretical literature on which the overall research was based was provided in chapter 2. This chapter provided an overview of concepts within participatory democracy/governance and the theoretical underpinning of participation. In the final section of the chapter, the growing methodological pluralism and commitment to larger scale comparative analysis within existing research was discussed.

Chapter 3 sets out the context for the development of the local participatory governance landscape in Ireland and the broader shift from government to governance. The status of local government in Ireland, its functional remit and relationship with national government was discussed. The creation and institutional design of the three participatory processes were explored in detail, as was the relationship between Irish Travellers and the Irish state.

In light of the descriptive and explanatory objective of the study, key areas of inquiry in the context of local participatory governance were explored in chapter 4. Important concepts such as voice, influence, trust and legitimacy were identified as significant to the depth of participation. Potentially significant explanatory factors were identified including the capacity and characteristics of citizens and civil society, institutional design, and the conduct and disposition of public administration and elected representatives.

Chapter 5 operationalized the theoretical framework to measure the depth of participation in the quantitative analysis. It provided a theoretical and empirical justification for the operationalization of measures of voice, influence, trust, and legitimacy in the context of local participatory institutions. The individual explanatory variables theorised to influence the perceived depth of participation were operationalized and the hypothesised relationships between independent and dependent variables were explored.

Chapter 6 presented the methodology of the study including overall research design, ontology and epistemology, and the different quantitative and qualitative elements encompassed in this mixed methods research. The steps undertaken to collect data and the limitations of the overall methodological approach were outlined. Chapter 7 presented the results of the quantitative analysis and the development of the composite measure of the depth of
participation through Factor analysis. The quantitative analysis included the results of multivariate regression which measured the relationship between the perceived depth of civil society participation and individual characteristics of civil society participants. Moreover, statistically significant differences in the perceived depth of participation between the different types of participants from civil society, public administration and politics were analysed.

Chapter 8 presented the analysis of the depth of participation through the qualitative data gathered. This data, collected through document analysis, interviews, focus groups and comments within the questionnaire, analysed the extent of voice, influence, trust and legitimacy from the diverse perspectives of civil society, elected representatives and local authority officials. The qualitative data identified the significance of institutional design and the role of administrative and political actors to the depth of participation within the cases.

Chapter 9 provided an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings in the context of the wider theoretical literature and participatory governance in Ireland. The chapter discussed institutional design, the key role of public administration, the complexity of balancing representative and participatory democracy and the problem of “tokenistic” participation from the perspective of civil society. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the relationship between the perceived depth of participation, efficacy and trust in wider political institutions highlighted in the quantitative analysis.

10.2 Addressing the Research Questions

The thesis was guided by two primary research questions: What is the depth of participation in local participatory governance in the selected cases? Which factors explain variation in the depth of participation in the selected cases?

To examine the depth of participation the study relied on quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings of the study reveal while the opportunity to express views and preferences within each participatory process exists the actual opportunity to influence the participatory process and broader local authority policy is significantly less visible. The quantitative data measured the depth of participation through a survey questionnaire and subsequent statistical analysis. The measure of depth of participation was operationalized through indicators of respect and equality of voice, influence, trust in and the legitimate functioning of the participatory process, and constructed and validated through Factor analysis.
Despite the perceived respect and equality of voice identified in the quantitative analysis, the opportunity to discuss, debate and deliberate on matters of policy is often limited. From the perspective of many civil society and elected representatives, local authority officials are reluctant to discuss and debate certain issues of importance to local communities and to include other stakeholders in agenda setting. This is a persistent theme within the qualitative data and acknowledged by all types of actors. While reported in all three processes, such limited discussion of policy is most apparent in the case of the SPC which is often dominated by local authority officials and lacks a strong policy making focus. In the case of the LTACC, discussion and debates are argumentative and conflictual in many local authority areas and are reflective of the wider problematic relationship between Travellers and the Irish state.

From the perspective of many participants, participatory processes are “talk shops” and participation is “tokenistic” with limited impact on public policy. Due to the advisory nature of the cases, the limited policy remit of local government, and the perceived lack of responsiveness of the local authority, participation within each process does not necessarily produce tangible outcomes for civil society. The perception of tokenism raises questions about the participation of civil society within powerless participatory arenas and the impact of this on its relationship with the state. This is most apparent in the context of Travellers and the LTACC. While Travellers can contribute to local authority policy through Traveller Accommodation Programmes as well as the overall LTACC process, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of delivery of units of Traveller accommodation and resistance to Traveller specific or culturally appropriate accommodation.

In terms of indicators of trust in and legitimacy of the participatory process, the quantitative data indicates that a significant cohort of civil society actors do not believe the participatory process dealt with their concerns or that all participants were treated equally. This is in contrast to that of local authority officials and elected representatives who participated alongside civil society. The quantitative analysis also demonstrated statistically significant differences in the perceived depth of participation between elements of civil society and local authority officials and elected representatives. This is most pronounced in the case of Travellers, Environment CDB representatives and SPC Community and Voluntary actors. This is further evident in the qualitative data which demonstrates the dominance of administrative voice and agenda setting within participatory processes, most clearly in the case of SPCs.
In addition to analysing the depth of participation, the thesis explains variation in this through diverse but important explanatory factors including institutional design, the conduct and disposition of administrative and political actors as well as the individual characteristics of civil society participants. Consequently, the research provided an insight into the impact of individual and institutional factors on the extent of participatory governance. The quantitative analysis focused on the relationship between individual characteristics and the perceived depth of participation within the cases. This demonstrated the importance of age, general self-efficacy and political trust to the perceived depth of participation. Income was a significant variable until membership of a particular civil society pillar was controlled for. This highlighted significant differences between Travellers and representatives of Social Partner organisations. In contrast to hypothesised expectations, levels of education, social trust and willingness to engage in discussion and debate were not associated with the dependent variable in the cases.

In terms of personal attributes of participants, it is clear that self-efficacy and overall strength of personality is a significant factor in the overall experience of participation. Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate the importance of confidence, efficacy and strength of personality. Strength of personality is considered necessary to prevent marginalisation and ensure fairer treatment from local authority officials and chairpersons. General strength of personality is of significance as the entry into participatory processes in the administrative and political realm of the local authority demands adaption not only to the demands of participation but the pre-existing culture and practices of officials and elected representatives within the broader local authority.

The analysis also demonstrated the clear association between the experience of participation and levels of trust in the wider political system. Participatory governance is generally considered a means to address democratic deficits and to boost the legitimacy of and trust in public institutions. This finding demonstrates the relationship between the experience of participation and its implications for trust in wider political institutions. In the case of Irish Travellers and the LTACC, the potential for participatory governance to further erode trust and undermine relationships between citizens and political and administrative actors is evident. However, this is also relevant to many representatives from environmental and community and voluntary sector organisations who indicated increased levels of cynicism and lower levels of satisfaction with and trust in local authorities after participation in “tokenistic” arenas.
The qualitative analysis demonstrated the significance of institutional design and the conduct and disposition of public administration and elected representatives to participation. Formal rules enable and constrain the nature of participation within the cases. The participatory processes in this research are built on formal rules and guidelines and function within the administrative and political norms of the local authority. Meetings and activities often take place within the full council chamber in which dialogue is regulated by political chairpersons. Meetings and activities of each process can resemble additional meetings of elected representatives within in the council chamber of the local authority. Due to the key role of officials and elected representatives the complex interaction between individuals and institutions is evident. The interpretation of rules and procedures by political and administrative actors is of significance and the findings of the study reveal the impact of the conduct and disposition of political and administrative actors to the extent of civil society participation. Local authority officials have administrative responsibility for each process while, in most cases, chairing roles are performed by local councillors.

Chapter 7 highlighted statistically significant differences between local authority officials, elected representatives and sections of civil society in respect to the overall perceived depth of participation within the cases. The research demonstrates how local authority officials can dominate aspects of the participatory processes including the range of issues discussed. In the case of the SPC, for example, agendas are largely driven by officials with limited consultation with other participants. Local authority officials, in particular, often do not demonstrate collaborative responsiveness or a disposition towards new forms of policy formulation such as shared agenda setting. In addition, there is evidence of the political nature of discussion within the cases and the marginalisation of civil society by local elected representatives. Alongside this, the legitimacy of civil society participation and their right to participate within the local authority is questioned by many local elected representatives who believe that formal inclusion of civil society actors within local government undermines their democratic mandate and the local system of representative democracy.

While implemented locally, the participatory processes have national origins within central government policy. The processes are top-down with origins and rationales which exist largely outside the local authority. As a result, there is evidence of a lack of local support for participatory governance, limited understanding of its potential benefits, and weak capacity to deepen participation within local authorities. The findings of this research demonstrate the potential significance of individual and institutional level factors in
explaining variation in the depth of participation. Deeper and more substantive forms of participation depend on the capacity and motivations of citizens and civil society, institutional design as well as the conduct and disposition of elected and public officials.

10.3 Contribution of the Study

The thesis makes a contribution to the literature in three areas: the growing paradigm within the field of participatory governance committed to methodological pluralism; the policy and practice of local participatory governance in Ireland, and to the broader theoretical literature of participatory governance. By analysing the depth of participation and examining potential individual and institutional explanatory factors, this research has produced findings of potential significance to researchers and practitioners who are interested in participatory governance in Ireland and internationally.

10.3.1 Methodological Contribution (General and Irish Specific Level)

In general, the study is a contribution to the emerging effort to extend research within the study of participatory governance from its roots in theory and conceptualisation to increased measurement and comparative empirical analysis (Font et al. 2012, Goodhart et al. 2012). The so-called divorce between theory and empiricism within the research of participation has been remarked upon as well as the need for comprehensive analyses of participation within and across regions (Smith 2011, Speer 2012). Through the use of theory and measurement, this study is a bridge between normative and empirical enquiry and addresses the so-called traditional division of labour between normative and empirical science. With a mixed methods design the study is situated within the growing methodological pluralism of participatory research (Galais et al. 2012). The use of qualitative and quantitative methods has demonstrated the potential benefits of mixed methods which helped to produce a holistic understanding of participation from the perspectives of different types of actors.

Measurement is considered important to all areas of political science and there is an awareness of the need to develop measures of participatory governance (Goodhart et al. 2012). Statistical analysis to measure and explain variation in the depth of participation in terms of individual characteristics of participants was conducted in this research. This analysis was guided by the interrelated tasks of conceptualisation, measurement and aggregation (Goertz 2006). As there is no widely applicable (composite) measure of the depth
of participation, the study developed and operationalized a measure based on existing theoretical and evaluative frameworks. The composite measure was operationalized primarily through a survey questionnaire and aggregated and validated through Factor analysis. A conscious effort was made to be explicit about the operationalization of key concepts within study and their relationships with other variables. The use of measurement in this study is considered a contribution to the development of measures of participation as well as its application within existing research.

In the context of Ireland, the research represents the first large scale national study of local participatory governance in Ireland, building upon a small number of completed case studies. The study engages in a more comprehensive analysis of subnational practice and represents the extension of existing research from case studies to larger scale national analysis (Forde 2005, McInerney and Adshead 2010, Callanan 2005). A review of the existing empirical literature revealed a lack of national studies of formal participation in local governance in Ireland. Further, in the context of research of marginalised or seldom heard groups, considerable effort was undertaken to invite the Irish Travelling community to participate. This demonstrated the inadequacy of traditional approaches to data collection and necessitated a variety of different methods of engagement including informal partnerships with Traveller organisations and field trips to Traveller specific accommodation sites. Consequently, the study produced a comprehensive assessment of the experiences of Travellers who participated in local government in Ireland and their relationship with local politicians and public administration.

Lastly, the methodology employed in this study connected participatory and public administration research. The experiences of other types of participants including public officials were measured and analysed in parallel to civil society. The comparison of the perspectives of civil society with public and elected officials provided additional context and insight into the functioning of participatory governance in Ireland and the diverse experiences of different types of actors within participatory processes. This methodological approach which examined the actions and perspectives of public and elected officials provides a unique insight into key aspects of local participatory governance in Ireland. Through the measurement of the experiences of public and elected officials, it was possible to demonstrate, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the differences in experiences and to identify explanations for these differences. This approach also highlighted the significance of
politics, public administration, as well as institutional design to the depth of civil society participation.

10.3.2 Policy and Practice in Ireland

This study represents the most comprehensive research into local participatory governance in Ireland and identifies issues of significance to the future of civic engagement in Ireland, to local democracy, and the functioning of participatory processes within local authorities. The broader findings of this thesis have significant implications in the context of recent local government reform and the ongoing Open Government Partnership conducted by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Local Government Reform Act 2014, for example, places a clear emphasis on the importance of ‘public participation’ to the strengthening of local democracy. Consultation fatigue within civil society and local communities and the need to provide more substantive opportunities for citizens to shape policy and the outputs of local authorities has been recognised in Putting People First and reemphasised in the Open Government Partnership Action Plan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2016).

The quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in this research suggests that despite twenty years of highly institutionalised forms of participation and commitment within national government, the practice of local participatory governance remains weak, underdeveloped and lacking in dynamism. The general satisfaction with participatory processes, the conduct and disposition of public officials and elected representatives, as well as levels of perceived influence on local government policy, is low. From the perspective of many civil society participants, participation is “tokenistic” and the ability to influence the outputs of participatory processes and broader local authority policy is often lacking. There is considerable evidence of an administrative dominance of participatory processes. Local authority officials are often the primary contributors to voice during meetings, drive agendas and the range of issues discussed.

More broadly, the overall structure of local government and its relationship with the centre has clear implications for the operation of participatory governance in Ireland. In terms of functions and policy, the influential role of national government restricts the remit of local government and its capacity to act independently of the centre. The limited policy remit of local government also restricts the opportunity for citizens and civil society to influence...
policies that affect their lives. In the SPC, in particular, this raises questions as to the extent to which local authorities can discuss debate and shape policy in the absence of a more significant policy-making remit for local government. Further, local and national level capacity within public administration is an ongoing weakness and there is inadequate investment in participation and in operating the machinery of participation. The strengthening of local democracy and the deepening of local participation necessitates administrative and political support as well as capacity building within local authorities. However, little attempt has been made in Ireland to enhance the capacity of local authorities in this area.

This research has highlighted the impact of national design and local delivery on the functioning of local civic engagement in Ireland. In general, local participation in Ireland lacks some of the important features of participatory governance in other states such as broader administrative and political support and the ability to be flexible and adapt features of institutional design after evaluation of experiences and outcomes. National institutional design has produced formal and inflexible processes of participation. In the majority of cases, dominant national level processes operate in the absence of any visible, comparable local level impulses towards deeper forms of participation and democracy within local authorities. This raises the question as to whether national drive has stifled the development of more organic and innovative processes within local authorities or whether a commitment to participation exists within local government. The extent of support for and understanding of the merits of deeper participation within local authorities is questionable. The development of the participatory governance landscape in Ireland does not represent a commitment on behalf of local public administration and local politicians to the concept of participation or an understanding of its potential merits.

Despite the national commitment to participation and the key role of central government in institutional design, there is limited or ineffective national monitoring of the practice of participation as well as in attention to the impact of institutional design to the outcomes of participatory processes. The recent establishment and implementation of PPNs is further evidence of the top-down approach to civic engagement and a corresponding lack of capacity, support for and understanding of the new PPN system within local authorities. PPNs were designed in a short time period and implemented in each local authority area according to strict national guidelines. The PPN is a further example of largely national design and local delivery and
suggests a similar top down, one size fits all approach continues within policy approaches to participation and local democracy. The dominance of the centre in the area of local participation is further evidence of the historical lack of trust of central government in local authorities highlighted in chapter three. Further, in light of the findings of this study, the historical legacy of administrative or managerial centred local government with limited local democracy further complicates the development of deeper forms of participation and ongoing reform of local democracy and government.

The research has revealed indifference and opposition of local elected representatives to participation and the complexity of balancing representative and participatory forms of democracy in Ireland. In many instances, the inclusion of civil society actors is considered a threat to local councillors and undermining of their mandate as elected representatives. This is of increased significance in Ireland as despite the renewed focus within national policy on more substantive citizen engagement, participation remains and is intended to remain primarily a consultative process. The primacy of elected representatives and their principal responsibility and accountability for decision-making within local government has not changed and is emphasised in recent reform documents (Department of the Environment Community and Local Government 2012). The evidence presented in this research highlights the potential difficulty in implementing more substantive forms of participation particularly in the context of limited attention to the impact of institutional design on outcomes within national government and limited support for formal participatory institutions within local authorities.

In respect to the LTACC, the research has provided further evidence of the often poor relationship between members of the Travelling community and the Irish state and the persistence of Traveller accommodation as a complex, intractable or “wicked” problem. Local authorities have the primary remit in the provision of housing under the Housing Traveller Accommodation Act 2001. As an institution of participatory governance, the LTACC can be considered a means to address democratic deficits and enhance policy making in this area. However, Traveller accommodation remains an intractable problem in Irish public policy and the LTACC, designed to plan, oversee and monitor the implementation of Traveller accommodation in local communities is, in many local authorities, dysfunctional and marked by conflict between members.

It is clear that the overall system of provision of Traveller accommodation in Ireland is weak and ineffectual despite the presence of a national monitoring structure. A significant
underspending of the Traveller accommodation budget and consistent under-delivery of agreed units of accommodation is evident. The numbers of Travellers accommodated in the private rented sector has increased significantly in the last decade despite the commitment of Traveller organisations to culturally appropriate accommodation and a commitment from national government to Traveller culture and identity. The research demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the LTACC to oversee the implication of accommodation and the inability or unwillingness of local and national policy makers to provide culturally appropriate accommodation to members of the Travelling community. The failure in the area of Traveller accommodation has attracted national and international criticism and scrutiny (Holland 2013, European Committee of Social Rights 2016). Much of the evidence suggests participation on the LTACC has further undermined relationships between the Travelling community and the Irish state. The case of Irish Travellers further demonstrates how low levels of trust in political institutions, particularly for hard to reach groups, are further eroded by involvement in participatory processes that lack the capacity or often the intent to generate tangible outcomes and solutions.

10.3.3 Broader Literature

The findings of this study highlight a number of areas of importance to participatory governance in the context of the wider literature particularly in the context of the proliferation of top down processes within participatory governance. The research has demonstrated the significance of institutional design within participatory governance. Formal rules of participatory processes shape the nature of participation and interactions between key participants; for example, overly formal procedures of dialogue and agenda setting can restrict voice and influence and undermine trust. The impact of institutional design underlines the importance of evaluation and the willingness of designers to adapt processes in light of the relationships between rules and outcomes (Bryson et al. 2013). To facilitate more effective forms of participation, the findings of this study demonstrate how policy makers must pay closer attention to the impact of rules and procedures on the extent of participant voice and influence. This encompasses a need for greater flexibility and a willingness to adapt formal procedures in light of poor participatory experiences and outcomes. This is of importance, as is highlighted in the existing literature, poorly designed processes can produce cynicism and frustration (Fung 2015).

However, no matter how well designed, participatory institutions need individuals with the capacity and motivation to ensure they function effectively. The existing literature
has highlighted the key role of public administration in operating the machinery of engagement and the implications of participation to the traditional role of public officials and its bureaucratic ethos (Bryer 2007, Fung 2004). Although the significance of the conduct of officials within participatory processes is perhaps under served in the existing literature, the research demonstrates how the conduct of public officials enables and constrains civic engagement (Newman et al. 2004, Wampler 2008). This study examined relationships between local authority officials, elected representatives and civil society and the key role of public administration in interpreting and operating the machinery of participation. Poor disposition and understanding amongst public officials inhibits meaningful participation and undermines relationships between civil society and the state. Public officials must be amenable to new methods of engagement with civil society and display a greater commitment to collaboration and inclusive policy making. In situations of limited support amongst officials, measures to adjust and improve disposition need to be pursued. This, however, must be fostered and incentivised within public administration.

Within this, the significance of the capacity of public administration to operate the machinery of participation is clear. The further development of participatory governance within local government requires development in collaborative and less instrumental forms of public leadership and administrative practice. Developing the capacity of public administration to operate the machinery of participation is crucial in the current governance context in which public administration is expected to implement participatory processes and engage in more inclusive forms of policy making. More collaborative forms of responsiveness within public administration can potentially produce more effective and satisfactory participatory experiences and better integrate citizens with participatory institutions. This is most apparent in the case of hard to reach or marginalised groups such as members of the Irish Travelling community. The participation of marginalised groups presents a clear challenge for public officials in terms of maximising their participation and implementing preferences and policy objectives. This is made more difficult in the absence of additional capacity and resources within public administration.

The example of Ireland demonstrates the limitations of centralised policy making and local delivery for institutions of participatory governance. National level motivation towards participation, however well intentioned, cannot substitute for local level commitment and drive. Excessively rigid, centrally designed, top down participatory institutions may stifle the potential and the need for local level creativity and innovation. Examples from international
practice such as The Netherlands and Brazil have demonstrated the importance of the local motivations and rationales. This encompasses the autonomy of public officials and civil society to develop participatory processes to address specific local issues, and broader support for and understanding of the merits of participation within public administration and politics.

Further, the study has demonstrated the complexity of balancing representative and participatory forms of democracy and the importance of cohesion between civil society, politics and public administration (Wampler 2015). Participatory processes proceed alongside existing representative democratic arenas but are considered a means to address the democratic deficits of traditional forms of democracy and policy making. However, the inclusion of citizens and civil society alongside elected representatives reduces the influence of politicians and has implications for traditional democratic representation, authorization and accountability (Montanaro 2012). The study has highlighted the often antagonistic and uneasy relationship between civil society and elected representatives within participatory processes and resistance from politicians to sharing authority and influence. In such cases, there is a need for tensions between diverse forms of democracy to be recognised and managed, and for the legitimacy of participatory democracy and the formal inclusion of civil society actors in policy making to be asserted and recognised. Again, the potential for clashes between representation and participation is magnified in top down processes which may lack support amongst political representatives.

From the perspective of many citizens and civil society who participated in this research, the importance of influence and authority is clear (Smith 2009, Pateman 2012). Participation within top down consultative arenas leads to perceptions of tokenism producing cynicism and dissatisfaction with local government and local public administration. In contrast to the potential aims and benefits of participatory governance, participation in perceived “tokenistic” arenas can undermine trust in political institutions, the legitimacy of public policy and the relationships between public and elected officials and civil society actors (Fung 2015). The participation in largely powerless arenas poses questions for the broader democratic role of civil society and its relationship with state. In such instances, the act of participation in these formal or invited spaces dominates and runs the risk of crowding out popular expressions of participation and democratic contestation (Cornwall 2004). This raises questions as to whether civil society should reject participation in so-called “tokenistic” arenas. In the Irish case, the value of participation for civil society in “tokenistic” processes
has been raised by local and national Traveller organisations who decided to withdraw from formal participatory institutions such as the LTACC in late 2015.

Participatory governance is considered a means of public authorities to increase the surface area of the state and to increase the point of contact between citizens/civil society and public officials. Through more direct participation, citizens and public officials, it is argued, can engage in more frequent and sustained contact. This of particular importance to so called marginalised or seldom heard groups and citizens underrepresented within traditional democratic arenas (Wampler and McNulty 2011, Smith 2009). The LTACC, however, demonstrates the difficulty in fostering the participation of ordinary members of the Travelling community who require support and additional resources to meet the costs of participation. In the case of Irish Travellers, there is a clear requirement on behalf of policy makers to incentivise and support the participation of citizens who are less likely to participate and are underrepresented in traditional democratic arenas. This is crucial to ensure institutions of participation address democratic deficits and weaknesses of existing democratic institutions (Smith 2009, Fung 2015). The significance of age to the perceived depth of participation identified in the quantitative analysis is interesting in the context of the wider literature which has highlighted the overrepresentation of older citizens in participatory governance (Talpin 2011). The lack of engagement of younger citizens which mirrors patterns of participation in traditional democratic arenas is a weakness of current participatory institutions. Institutional designers and policy makers both in Ireland and internationally may have to pay closer attention to incentivising and supporting younger citizens to participate within participatory governance.

10.4 Implications for Future Research

The findings of the research highlight a number of issues for future research in the field of participatory governance in Ireland and in a broader context. In terms of explaining variation in the depth of participation, the relationship between individual level factors such as age, income and education as well as aspects of personalities of participants were examined. The research highlighted the relationship between the perceived depth of participation and general self-efficacy, age and, to some extent, income. Further analysis of the experiences of citizens and civil society within participatory processes, both positive and negative, in the context of indicators of socio-economic status and personality factors is required, however. This is a relevant topic of non-participation of citizens or their lack of...
engagement also. The research has identified selected participants within the cases who did not participate or disengaged from participatory institutions. It is argued that existing participation research does not focus enough on actors who do not participate including political actors (Font et al. 2012). Disengagement and a lack of participation were clearly evident in the case of ordinary members of the Travelling community who, while selected, did not participate on the LTACC. Future research in these areas has the potential to be interdisciplinary in nature combining political science and social psychology through mixed methods. In addition, the nature of involvement of citizens in civil society organisations and the impact of their participation on the capacity of citizens to engage in participatory governance and their subsequent relationships with public and elected officials’ demands further empirical scrutiny (Fung 2003a). Further research can identify the extent to which participation in associations and organisations help citizens, particularly of low social status, to develop capacity and to meet the costs of more demanding and substantive forms of participation.

The tensions demonstrated between representative and participatory approaches to policy making also highlights the need for further research into the contradictions and difficulties inherent in implementing participatory processes within and alongside existing representative and bureaucratic institutions. Further empirical research into the attitude and disposition of elected representatives within participatory institutions and more collaborative forms of policy making is required. The tension between civil society and elected representatives has implications for power sharing and understandings of democratic legitimacy and representation. Further, the study has highlighted the key role of public administration in operating the machinery of participatory governance. However, the often poor disposition toward participation demonstrated in this research suggests a need for further research into the perspectives of officials on participatory governance and the merits of formal participatory processes. This necessitates a specific focus on the ethics and values of public administration and the impact of more participatory approaches to policy making on this. Further, the lack of capacity within public administration highlights the importance of enhancing new forms of collaborative leadership and responsiveness. This is of particular relevance in an era of collaborative and integrative public leadership and Public Value approaches to public administration in which public officials are expected and required to engage in more sustained contact and collaboration with citizens and local communities.
Collaborative policy making is considered a method to address “wicked” problems such as Traveller accommodation. In light of the findings of this study, the potential for institutions of participatory governance to address and solve complex social issues requires additional research (Head and Alford 2013). Further, the study has highlighted the conflict amongst LTACC stakeholders in relation to the accommodation preferences of Travellers. In situations of conflict and disagreement between LTACC members, additional measures to reduce tension and develop mutual understandings are necessary.

Methodologically, this study belongs to the pragmatic paradigm. It is the understanding of this approach that quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined to better answer research questions and produce better understandings and explanations (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). The further use of mixed methods in the context of participatory governance and a closer consideration of how best to combine both approaches is an area of importance with implications for future research. This is of potential relevance in exploring the impact of institutional design with respect to qualitative and quantitative data. The impact of institutional design on the depth of participation in this study was examined primarily through the qualitative data gathered. However, further quantitative analysis of the impact of diverse institutional designs to the experience of participation is a potential avenue of future research in Ireland and internationally.

Further, the study has measured experiences of participation and developed indicators of the depth of participation through quantitative methods and statistical analysis. An ongoing, active commitment to measurement can improve existing knowledge and make a contribution to the growing methodological pluralism within participatory democracy and governance. The further development of robust and generally applicable indicators of deeper participation and deeper democracy within institutions of participatory governance is necessary, however. This can be undertaken through collaboration and dialogue between academics and researchers. Measurement of concepts is important to both theory and practice. It has the potential to help theorists to reflect on or revise the values of participatory democracy and/or advocate other processes or institutional designs to better realise these values (Fung 2007, Smith 2011). The further use of measurement within participatory governance can produce a robust assessment of key concepts and help to assess the extent to which values of participatory democracy are realised through current participatory processes and the gap between participatory ideals and the practice of participation within participatory governance.
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Appendix A: Questionnaire for Civil Society Participants

Civil Society Representatives… Your Experiences and Participation in Local Governance 2009-2014

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this national study of participation in local governance in Ireland between 2009 and 2014. The invitation to participate in this research is based on your involvement with CDBs, SPCs, or LTACCs from 2009-2014. This questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. All responses will be treated anonymously and confidentially. No data that can identify individual respondents will be published or made publically available afterwards.

This research seeks to determine the functioning of local government bodies and to gain an insight into your experiences within local governance.

Your participation in this survey is taken as an indication of your consent to participate. This research has full ethics approval from the University of Limerick (Ethics approval 2014_05_04_AHSS).

If you have questions or need any further information about the study you may contact:

Cian Finn, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick Email: cian.finn@ul.ie

Dr. Chris McInerney, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick, Tel 061 234800, Email: chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie

Dr. Frank Haege, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick, Tel 061 234897, Email: frank.haege@ul.ie

If you have any concerns about the research you also have the right to contact the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee: Chairperson Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, AHSS Faculty Office, University of Limerick, Tel: 061 202286, Email: FAHSSEthics@ul.ie
(A) On which of the following committees did you participate between 2009 and 2014?

Note: if you participated on more than one committee during this period please select and answer for the one you served for the longest period of time or you feel you had the most involvement with.

☐ SPC
☐ LTACC
☐ CDB

(B1) Please select the organization/sector you represented or were affiliated with for the purposes of this Process.

_________________________________________________________________________

(B2) If other, please specify

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
(C) What was your local authority area between 2009 and 2014?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

(D) Approximately how long did you participate on this LTACC between 2009 and 2014?

☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1-2 Years
☐ 2-3 Years
☐ 3-4 Years
☐ 4-5 Years

(E) Are you a member of the Travelling Community?

☐ Yes
☐ No

(F) How often did you engage in the following activities during your participation on this Process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended scheduled meetings of this Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated with local authority officials outside of meetings of this Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated with other civil society representatives outside of meetings of this Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated with elected representatives outside of meetings of this Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored the implementation of local</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(G) Reflecting on your experience communicating on this Process how often did you engage in the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listened to the views of other members</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-evaluated your views after listening to other members</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated the solutions offered by other members</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted on decisions/positions</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed an item to the agenda of a meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(H) Reflecting upon communication on this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general everyone had the opportunity to speak and to make themselves heard</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had the opportunity to express my views as I would have liked</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some members dominated the discussion</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other members restricted my opportunity to speak</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general other members respected my point of view</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(I) Thinking about your involvement with this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I am well qualified to participate on a Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I was well-informed about the issues discussed by this Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes the discussion seemed so complicated that I couldn't really understand what was going on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I did as good a job on this Process as the other members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(J) Here are some statements people make about themselves. To what extent are they true for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Not all true</th>
<th>Not very true</th>
<th>Neither true or untrue</th>
<th>Fairly True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone opposes me, I can usually find the means and ways to get what I want</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

259
(K) Reflecting upon your personal contribution please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority officials on this Process cared about what I thought</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Representatives on this Process cared about what I thought</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected representatives on this Process cared about what I thought</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a say about the types of issues discussed by this Process</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I influenced the work of this Process</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(M1) Prior to or during your participation on this Process did you have any specific policy objective(s) you wanted to achieve?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't Know

(M2) If yes, please feel free to provide a description of your objective(s)

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

260
(N1) Here is a list of statements that may be important in peoples’ decision to participate on this Process. Which, if any, of the following do you consider being the most important to you? Please select up to three.

- Part of my employment responsibilities
- Desire to produce better local authority policy
- Desire to influence local authority policy
- Desire to represent the individual needs of ordinary citizens in my local area
- Desire to influence decisions which impact my community
- Desire to monitor the actions of the local authority
- Desire to oppose the local authority
- Desire to represent my own personal interests
- To increase my organization’s visibility in the local authority
- Desire to voice my organization’s interests/preferences
- Desire to improve my community
- Desire to improve the lives of residents in my local authority area
- Other

(N2) If other, please specify...

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
(O) Thinking about your involvement with this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Process understood my concerns and/or the things which mattered to me</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Process dealt well with my concerns and/or the things which mattered to me</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P) Reflecting upon your experience of this Process to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, this Process functioned in an appropriate way</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, this Process reached decisions in an appropriate way</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On this Process all members were treated equally</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Q) Please indicate your level of interest in the following…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Very interested</th>
<th>Fairly Interested</th>
<th>Neither interested nor uninterested</th>
<th>Not very interested</th>
<th>Not at all interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority policymaking</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The specific issues discussed by this Process</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing the individual needs of individual citizens in your community</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing decisions which affect your local area/community</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running for elected office</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving local democracy</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(R) How trusting are you of each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Very Trusting</th>
<th>Fairly Trusting</th>
<th>Neither trusting or untrusting</th>
<th>Not very trusting</th>
<th>Not at all trusting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Politicians</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Local Authority</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dáil Éireann</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Government</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Garda Síochána</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Courts</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(S) Thinking about other people in general to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are only a few people I can trust completely</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people just look out for themselves</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(T) How important were the issues discussed by this Process to you?

- ○ Not at all important
- ○ Not very important
- ○ Neither unimportant nor important
- ○ Fairly important
- ○ Very important
(U) Which of the following best describes your affiliation with a political party?

- Never belonged
- Used to belong but do not anymore
- Belong but do not actively participate
- Belong and actively participate

(V) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
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(W) The following questions are being asked to find out if people of different ages, gender, education etc... have different perspectives on their participation and involvement in local governance. All responses will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

(W1) Are you?

- Male
- Female
(W2) What is your age?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

(W3) What is your highest level of education completed to date?

- None
- Incomplete primary
- Primary completed
- Incomplete secondary
- Secondary completed
- Post-secondary trade/vocational school
- University Undergraduate Degree
- Postgraduate diploma
- Master’s degree (MA MBA or MSC)
- Ph.D.
Which of the following best describes your present situation with regard to employment?

- At work full-time (30 hours or more per week)
- At work part-time (less than 30 hours per week)
- At work as relative assisting/unpaid family member
- Unemployed and seeking work
- Student
- Retired
- Engaged in home duties
- Long term sick or disabled
- Other, please specify... ______________________

Which best describes your total annual household income?

- Under €20,000
- €20,000-€24,999
- €25,000-€29,999
- €30,000-€34,999
- €35,000-€39,999
- €40,000-€49,999
- €50,000-€74,999
- €75,000-€99,999
- €100,000-€149,999
- €150,000+

Finally, please feel free to comment further on your involvement with this Process …

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
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## Appendix B: List of NVIVO Codes

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<td>Collaborative Responsiveness (Local Authority)</td>
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<td>Efficacy and Personality</td>
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<td>Costs of Participation (Civil Society)</td>
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